NITYANANDA JANAVANI
91.2 *Fm*

NITYANANDA
JANAVANI COMMMUNITY
RADIO STATION

EMPOWERING UNHEARD VOICES

TARANG

**SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
COMMUNICATION (SBCC) TRAINING**

NITYANANDA
JANAVANI COMMMUNITY
RADIO STATION

EMPOWERING UNHEARD VOICES

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

MESSAGE

West Bengal progressed far in social indicators- Education, Health, WASH and in some cases it's position is better than national average. But there are still some geographical pockets where social indicators are still lagging behind. Purulia is one of those districts. Government of West Bengal is making all efforts with support from UNICEF to reach these extra miles to achieve SDGs. Community awareness and mobilization is one of the major catalyst to bring this change. Community Radios like "Nityananda Janavani" are playing significant role in bringing this change.

Although key messages are being disseminated consistently, innovations are necessary in these communications, particularly for understanding the communication needs of the most marginalised and hard-to-reach communities and delivering them information suited to their context and requirements. Being most effective media to reach out to such communities, community radio provides information to marginalised groups on their rights and entitlements. It also acts as a platform for these communities to raise their voice and concerns.

UNICEF financed to set up Nityananda Janavani at Laulaha Village in Puncha Block of Purulia District of West Bengal with support from MANT, a Purulia based NGO. Nityananda Janavani programmes also reach out to a large part of the adjoining Manbazar-1 block of the district. Nityananda Janavani has been meeting the information and communication needs of tribal communities in its coverage areas. It has also become a forum for these communities to share their traditional and local knowledge and lived experiences. Nityananda Janavani is now being managed by Community Radio Management Committee with a skilled team of community volunteers who works as radio jockeys and content producers. Nityananda Janavani has been effectively creating awareness on child rights, health and nutrition, menstrual hygiene and sanitation, harmful effects of child marriage, and various other government schemes and programmes.

UNICEF engaged New Concept Centre for Development Communication (NCCDC), an independent professional agency, to conduct the process documentation of Nityananda Janavani. The document captures and presents the detailed processes involved in setting up and running Nityananda Janavani community radio station. It articulates the need and relevance of community radio specifically for marginalised communities and also brings to the fore implementation challenges faced in sustaining such a programme. Special thanks are to the community members who candidly shared their views and feedback about the community radio and gave their time to the documentation team. Finally, I would like to thank UNICEF C4D Specialist for leading the partnership for this successful community radio station right from the very beginning. I hope the process documentation offers useful learnings on design and implementation of community radio projects and can be a handy guide for programme implementers and development practitioners working in the area of community media and development communication.

Mohammad Mohiuddin
Chief, UNICEF Office for West Bengal

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

A baby now called
Nityananda Janavani

This documentation verily captures the impacts created by a community radio over its supposed takers and lucidly narrates the nuances of all the important aspects of the processes that this radio station has come through. Several aspects have been covered diligently enough to make us relive many of the pains and pleasures we had to pass through. Nearly a decade ago, when MANT and UNICEF had discussed and conceived the idea of this radio station. We drew the roadmap. We started crawling on it and soon began taking baby steps. We staggered, steadied, again tumbled, got up and walked. On the way, we were joined by a few community members; as we stepped up firmly, more community members and experts joined in. As months passed by, the volunteers' capacity of developing radio programmes emerged and our movement got rhythmic; the rhythm was roughed up by challenges. The journey was sometimes obstructed by severe financial constraints, and on occasions by technical and procedural hiccups. But these hiccups and hindrances were surmounted. We followed our guiding principle: never say die. A reading of this documentation really makes us nostalgic about all those heartwarming experiences and emotions we all went through while nurturing this baby now called Nityananda Janavani.

MANT understands, and the same has been recorded in this documentation as well, that the merit of a community radio lies in its power to reach the unreached. With high tribal population, Purulia has marginalised communities which face multiple deprivations. A large section of its population is also deprived of the so called mainstream media such as television and radio. Consequently, many villages in the district remain media dark with few means of information and entertainment. Nityananda Janavani was launched to bring to the fore these deprivations and address them through impactful edutainment.

MANT embarked on a long and arduous journey of launching Nityananda Janavani because it could not only reach the tribal communities but also give them a voice to share their stories. Viewing Nityananda Janavani as a medium of empowerment and change, MANT worked with the community to develop programmes and generate content compatible with their social, cultural and economic needs. Despite all the pains and pleasures, some of them mentioned in the beginning of this note, Nityananda Janavani gained wide acceptance and ownership of the community. This is the most satisfying feeling.

It is now run and managed by the community volunteers and a Community Radio Management Committee at the helm. Nityananda Janavani is often called by people as their own station. Since the content is aired in local tribal dialects including Santhali and Kurmali, Nityananda Janavani is listened widely in the communities it covers. The programmes and themes are also selected and prioritised by the community. Thus, MANT only plays a catalytic role in running Nityananda Janavani. MANT's vision for near future, is to make Nityananda Janavani completely owned and sustained by the community. Our counterparts who may be thinking to initiate and run community radio stations in different parts of the country would find this document useful in drawing lessons for effective planning and implementation.

Dr. Chandidas Mukherjee
Secretary, MANT

Nityananda Janavani –
our stories through our medium

Nityananda Janavani, our community radio station, came into being in 2010 with the support of MANT and UNICEF. Right from the beginning, the community radio involved participation of community members. Communities' priorities and needs became the basis of radio programming. Issues and themes that concerned and interested our communities are presented through Nityananda Janavani. The community volunteers from many of our villages have become successful radio jockeys. Equipped with improved knowledge and skills, acquired over the years through a series of trainings, on various social issues such as child marriage, malnutrition and sanitation and hygiene, the volunteers work in the community as confident change agents. They inform, educate and lead their fellow community members by example.

Nityananda Janavani is also an excellent medium of presenting our local culture, music and knowledge. Many community artists of Purulia have participated in Nityananda Janavani programmes. These programmes showcase communities' lives and stories and the people identify with them.

It would not be wrong to say that Nityananda Janavani has been able to meet communication and entertainment needs of tribal communities of Purulia. Resultantly, the community values Nityananda Janavani as its own resource. The radio station derives strength from its strong connect with the community. We feel community radio stations such as Nityananda Janavani which meet the needs of their audiences from the marginalised communities are not only relevant but are very essential too. Such communication media must be promoted. We express our solidarity with all community-run and owned initiatives like Nityananda Janavani! This document presents the story of our community radio station. We hope our story will inform readers about the potential that the community media wield to inform and empower communities.

Shantigopal Goswami
Member, CRMC
Nityananda Janavani

CONTENTS

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

ADIBASHI LAKCHAR MANCHA
(SANTHALI)
MANT, LAULARA

NITYANANDA JAN
91.2 Fm

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
CNA	Community Needs Assessment
CRMC	Community Radio Management Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAVP	Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GP	Gram Panchayat
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
MANT	Manbhum Ananda Ashram Nityananda Trust
MIB	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RJ	Radio Jockey
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
TSA	Technical Support Agency
WPC	Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing

91.2 FM
নিত্যানন্দ জনবানী
চল শোনাই
চল শুনি

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

The Genesis

Given India's diversity and geographical variations, developmental efforts to provide communication platforms to different groups and communities are critical. Media assumes a pivotal role in awareness creation and making people's voices heard. Media such as television, radio and newspapers not only inform and educate but effectively bring out the opinion of the masses. Many media outlets have made provisions for audience participation and segmentation and have therein become more accessible to the people they serve. However, they still fall short of meeting accessibility and specificity of purpose for many groups such as tribal, underprivileged and minority, and geographically remote communities. Community media including community radio through active participation of their audiences has emerged as a strategic and effective medium to reach out to the marginalised groups.

Community radio: A powerful medium for social change

- ✓ Driven by principles and values of social development and collective good
- ✓ Generates and disseminates socially relevant content
- ✓ Context specific and sensitive
- ✓ Embraces local knowledge and traditional heritage
- ✓ Caters to hard-to-reach media dark areas

Community radio – A medium for social and behavioural change

The importance of community radio—as a voice-based medium for community empowerment and democratisation—is immense, particularly in rural and tribal areas where literacy levels are generally low. Valuing traditional wisdom and local knowledge, community radio treats people as active creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients. It is driven by social development objectives of involving and motivating people, co-creating knowledge with them and changing their attitudes and behaviours. It evokes a grassroots attitude and fosters free flow of opinions and ideas. It seeks to educate and entertain, to inform and share ideas, and to create a platform for people to make their voices heard.

India's adoption of community radio as a promising medium of empowering communities has been recent. Until recently, only educational institutions were allowed to set up campus radio stations having a transmission range of 10-15 km. In 2006, the scope was expanded to also include non-profit agencies, agricultural research institutes, and schools to set up community radio stations. Despite several attempts to streamline the approval process, the growth of community radio stations in India has been slow. As per the latest Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) data, about 250 stations are operational in India which is abysmally low vis-à-vis the size and population of the country. Most non-government and civil society organisations (CSOs) do not have sufficient funds to operationalise and sustain community radio as it requires high level of specialised knowledge, technical expertise and know-how. Further, there are not many government schemes and programmes in place to support community radio stations. These factors have hindered the growth of community radio stations in India.

[1]http://wdfindia.org/CRBGUIDELINES041206.pdf
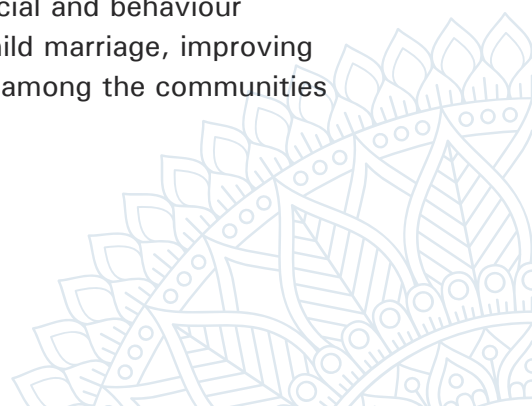[2]https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/CRSS_Guidelines.pdf

Nityananda Janavani - Tapping the untapped potential of community radio

To tap the potential of community media for social change, UNICEF adopted the Communities' Empowerment through Media Innovations Approach. Under this approach, UNICEF has supported development partners in setting up community radio stations in its focus districts in seven states including Purulia in West Bengal. The need for setting up a community radio station in Purulia was recognised because of high concentration of tribal population in the district. Many tribal villages in Purulia have little or no access to channels of communication catering to their linguistic and cultural sensibilities and local context. Many of these villages are media dark and do not have the opportunities to raise their concerns, problems and aspirations through effective media platforms.

With the vision of providing a medium for tribal population to share their stories, UNICEF supported the launch of Nityananda Janavani in Purulia in 2009. Envisaged as a platform to bring in social change, Nityananda Janavani community radio station aims at equipping communities with knowledge, motivation and skills to improve their lives. It promotes social and behaviour change through locally sensitive programmes on ending child marriage, improving nutrition and health and promoting hygiene and sanitation among the communities in its coverage area.

Nityananda Janavani: Voice of the Voiceless

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

1 One of the first community radio stations for tribals

2 Creates and airs content in tribal dialects such as Santhali and Kurmali

3 Managed and run by community

4 Sustained operations for about 10 years

5 Addressing social issues such as child marriage, health and nutrition, education, hygiene and sanitation, and livelihoods
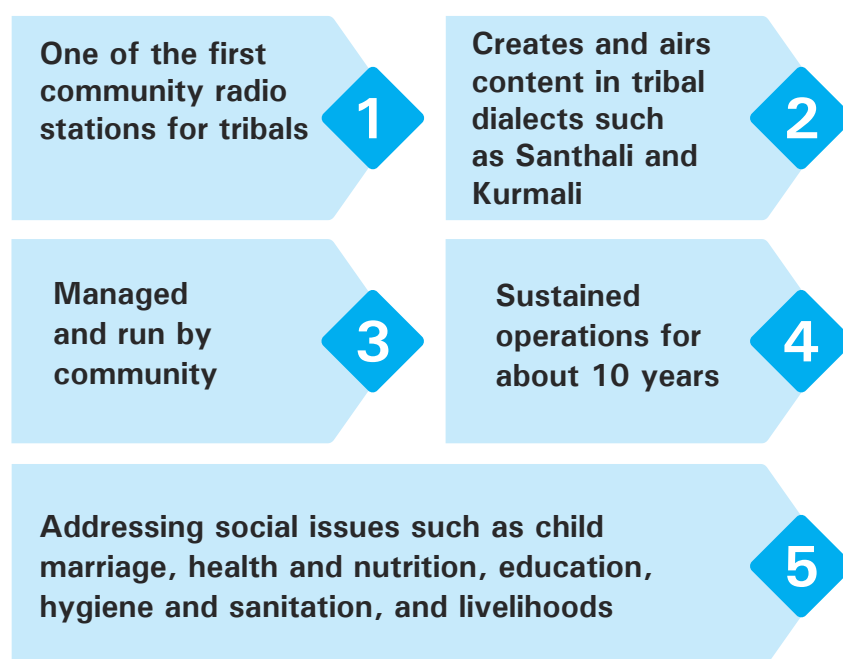
Nityananda Janavani's journey began in 2010 when Manbhum Ananda Ashram Trust (MANT), a Purulia based non-government organisation (NGO), set up the community radio station. Drishti, a Gujarat based agency, provided the technical support to run the station. Right from its inception, Nityananda Janavani was envisioned as a radio station run by the communities for the communities in Puncha and Manbazar-I blocks of Purulia. Volunteers from the community were trained as station managers, RJs and content producers and they became the driving force behind running Nityananda Janavani.

Despite facing numerous financial and technical challenges, Nityananda Janavani has continued to function successfully for almost a decade. While MANT has been aiding Nityananda Janavani's operation, community volunteers have taken complete ownership of the management of the radio station including capacity building, content design and programme production. It has also brought in many innovations such as production of programmes in different tribal languages like Santhali and Kurmali, and creation of Listeners' Group to expand the reach and sustainability. The vision is now to transform Nityananda Janavani into a completely sustainable radio station owned and managed by the community.

Continuing the decade long journey

Nityananda Janavani has emerged as one of the first sustainable radio stations serving tribal communities in West Bengal. It has continued to run even after the phasing out of funding support by UNICEF since 2015, owing to the passion and zeal of the community volunteers.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

NITYANANDA JANAVANI

TRANSFORMING LIVES

"Nityananda Janavani changed my life forever", says Srimanti Hembram, one of the first tribal community radio jockeys (RJs) of West Bengal. She lives in a remote tribal village called Dhulipara in Puncha block of Purulia and hails from the tribal Santhali community. She joined Nityananda Janavani around nine years back as a community volunteer. She fondly remembers the day she was selected for the training and excitedly says,

> **"**
> I had never imagined that I could ever step out of my village, leave aside becoming an RJ; it was really a dream come true for me.
> **"**

"I had never imagined that I could ever step out of my village, leave aside becoming an RJ; it was really a dream come true for me". During her stint at Nityananda Janavani, Srimanti has had profound experiences of exploring and honing her talent, sharing Santhali culture through radio programmes and creating awareness on issues of health, nutrition and hygiene in her targeted villages.

Since her childhood, Srimanti aspired to study and secure a job. However, she had to leave school after completing class 10 to shoulder household responsibilities. Even though she could not complete higher education, she excelled in folk arts and acting. She began to do community-based theatre and performed in folk groups in remote areas of Jangalmahal, like Raipur, Bandwan and Bagmundi blocks. During one such folk event, she was approached by the Nityananda Janavani team to work as a community volunteer. She was both thrilled and nervous after getting the offer. Used to acting and performing live in front of large crowds, she was unsure of communicating with people remotely through radio. The team convinced her and she challenged herself to learn the technical and creative aspects of radio production. Through training and on-the job learning, Srimanti became adept at recording, studio management, script-writing, voice toning and modulation, and audience engagement. She has produced and aired many radio programmes on topical social themes in Santhali. Her programmes have been very well-received by the listeners. She has become a local celebrity of sorts. While all this makes her happy, she gets most elated when other girls and women of her village express a desire to be like her.

Going beyond her personal story, Srimanti also traces the impact of Nityananda Janavani on her community. She notes improved knowledge and awareness of community members on sanitation and hygiene as the most perceptible change. Earlier, open defecation was widely prevalent in her village. But after listening to Nityananda Janavani programmes and awareness activities of community volunteers, people leveraged funds under Swachh Bharat Mission to construct toilets. Similarly, programmes on menstrual hygiene coupled with community meetings and discussions dispelled myths around menstruation and promoted the use of hygienic menstrual absorbents and their disposal. Likewise, Nityananda Janavani increased people's awareness on issues of health, nutrition, livelihoods and agriculture in tribal areas of Puncha and Manbazar-I blocks of Purulia. According to her, airing content in Santhali was possibly the most important factor in helping communities accept and apply the knowledge they gained through the radio programmes.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Srimanti's story is out of–the ordinary and truly inspiring. Not many young girls and boys in her village get the opportunity to complete their school education or have a career. Low literacy levels, abject poverty and lack of information have been long-standing barriers to development in many tribal areas of Puncha block in Purulia. But with the launch of Nityananda Janavani, ripples of change have been felt as people now have access to information in both Santhali and Bengali languages. Their awareness on various social issues has increased as they are regularly listening to radio programmes on health, nutrition, sanitation and livelihoods. They look forward to these programmes as they are in their own language, and produced and presented by RJs of their own community. Many of them proudly call Nityananda Janavani as their own radio station!

Srimanti's story gives a peek into the impact Nityananda Janavani Community Radio Station created for communities in Purulia. The radio station steered by community members has demonstrated the effectiveness of community media in awareness creation, changing attitudes and practices and thereby engendering social change. This process document captures the genesis and evolution of Nityananda Janavani as a medium of 'communication for change'. The document elaborates upon the key processes undertaken; positive effects and achievements made; and challenges faced while operationalising and running the radio station.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

NITYANANDA JANAVANI

A WONDERFUL IDEA

Ashok Mahato, a yoga propagator from Purulia, describes Nityananda Janavani as a wonderful medium of communication and messaging for local communities. He further congratulates MANT for taking the initiative to meet the information needs of local communities. He adds, "I know starting the radio station was not easy and took time but it is now functioning very effectively". Ashok further relates why he is so impressed with Nityananda Janavani: "The community radio takes up issues of relevance to people and reaches the target audience in their own language. One might wonder whether people actually listen to Nityananda Janavani programmes or not. But I can vouch for its reach."

Ashok is one of the many key community influencers who have felt the difference brought about by Nityananda Janavani in people's lives. Being an ardent yoga practitioner, Ashok has dedicated his life for propagation of yoga. He strongly advocates the practice of yoga for preventive and promotive health. He aims to continue to give yoga lessons free of cost to more and more people in Purulia. He is thankful to Nityananda Janavani and its implementers for contributing to the cause of yoga.

While many people come to Ashok for learning yoga, he is always trying to expand its reach. To this end, he got associated with Nityananda Janavani for presenting two radio programmes on giving yoga lessons free of cost. Unaware of the listenership of the community radio, he was pleasantly surprised that so many people contacted him, expressing interest in learning yoga. Many of them are now learning yoga from him. He feels very happy that he chose Nityananda Janavani as the medium to popularise his life-long passion of yoga. He feels loved and respected, as more people reach out to him.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

The Idea Takes Shape

Establishing connect with communities to catalyse social change is a challenging process. Many development initiatives reach out to marginalised communities by use of large-scale information, education and communication (IEC) and mass media strategies. Though these are useful, they may not be enough to address contextual specificities. It is important to feel the pulse of the local context and situations to effectively communicate with people. It is in situations like these, community media such as community radio assume significance as they are attuned to local sensibilities. With this realisation, the need to initiate a community radio in Purulia was articulated.

Collective efforts yield concrete results

Recognising community radio as a potent medium of behaviour change communication (BCC), the idea to launch Nityananda Janavani was mooted by UNICEF in 2009. The intent was to not only offer a medium of communication but to enable marginalised communities cherish and share their local culture and heritage through community radio. The District Administration was also brought on board as a key partner and was informed of all the important decisions taken to set up the community radio station. UNICEF floated an expression of interest and MANT was selected as the NGO to implement the community radio programme.
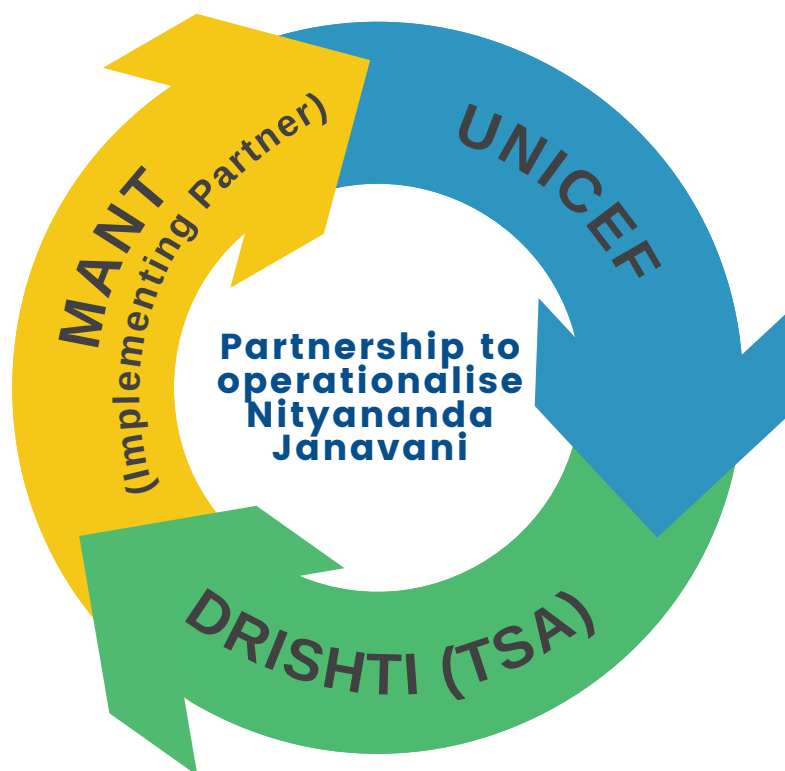
UNICEF viewed community radio as an enabler to the process of social change and development. Purulia being one of the high priority districts of UNICEF needed such community-based strategic interventions with increased reach and acceptance among local people. Community radio was posited as a strategic medium to harmonise and bolster various UNICEF supported interventions for children in the district. Thus UNICEF, by following the due process of NGO partner selection, decided to support MANT in implementing the community radio programme.

The selection of MANT by UNICEF as the conduit to conceptualise and operationalise the community radio initiative was no surprise. MANT was in a way the obvious choice because of its extensive work in Purulia district. With a good understanding of the needs of the local community, particularly tribal communities, MANT had a strong community presence. Their strong belief in community ownership made them confident that they could set up a radio station which was truly community-driven and not NGO-run. Language plays a crucial role in communicating to local and tribal people. MANT, with its expertise in communicating both in Bengali and tribal dialects, was excellently positioned to build a strong bond with communities. They also had a good appreciation of local culture, traditions and tribal nuances.

In 2010, MANT signed a partnership agreement with UNICEF. Under the partnership, it provided technical and financial support to MANT to launch the community radio programme. Resultantly, the Nityananda Janavani community radio was initiated in October 2010.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

MANT (Implementing Partner)

UNICEF

DRISHTI (TSA)

Partnership to operationalise Nityananda Janavani

Right at the beginning, a major challenge in starting community radio was to obtain the license from seven different authorities including the six central ministries and the state government. It was an uphill task. The starting of a community radio station involves several pre-requisites: staff and volunteers had to be trained; a sufficient number of episodes had to be created to ensure uninterrupted functioning of the radio station once started; and the episodes were to be prepared with active community involvement, so not only were the volunteers from the community selected, the content also was generated by them.

In October 2010, a Community Radio Management Committee (CRMC) was formed. This comprised of local key influencers who had a cultural background and had expressed interest in getting involved in the community radio programme. The CRMC played a vital role in the functioning and sustenance of the community radio.

> *Purulia is one of the most backward districts in West Bengal. It requires focused development initiatives. Innovations such as community radio can be very helpful in creating awareness among marginalised groups about government schemes and efforts. Thus, Nityananda Janavani is a very useful medium of awarenes s creation.*

**Anindya Gautam,
District Nodal Officer-SBCC, Purulia**

Until a broadcasting licence was obtained, narrowcasting was done and the content tested among the local communities. As contours of the initiative took shape, a strong need for technical expertise and support was felt to operationalise Nityananda Janavani. After a lot of deliberation, a partnership was established with Drishti (a leading development communication organisation based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat). Drishti came on board as the Technical Support Agency (TSA) through a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNICEF, MANT and Drishti in 2011. With its technical know-how and years of experience of running community radio stations, Drishti played an instrumental role in making Nityananda Janavani functional. It assisted both in the procedures involved in obtaining the broadcasting license as well as in developing initial content and training the staff and volunteers on various aspects of running the community radio station. It was ensured that the content developed adhered to UNICEF's vision, mission, beliefs and principles. The collective efforts of MANT, Drishti and UNICEF marked the beginning of Nityananda Janavani.

Reaching the unreached

The selection of blocks in Purulia district for community radio outreach also required some hard thinking. Purulia on the whole fares low on many development indicators and remains one of the most underdeveloped districts in West Bengal. However, it was felt that within the district, community radio should reach out to those who were the most marginalised and were living in media dark areas cut-off from a majority of communication efforts.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Puncha and Manbazar-I blocks with large tribal population and socio-economic indicators lagging behind other blocks were consciously selected for the initiative. It was thought that if the communities in these blocks could be capacitated to drive the community radio station, then it would be an exemplary achievement. Resultantly, MANT, UNICEF and Drishti with cognisance of the District Administration worked in synergy to initiate Nityananda Janavani in Puncha and Manbazar-I blocks of Purulia.

## Community needs assessment fosters evidence-based action

As soon as Drishti—the TSA—was on board, a community needs assessment (CNA) was conducted among 750 households in 20 villages during April-May, 2011. The CNA was aimed at profiling the communities, their communication needs and potential audience and identifying radio programming priorities. A mixed-methods approach including quantitative survey and focus group discussions (FGDs) was adopted to conduct the assessment. The FGDs especially gathered information on access and barriers to communication resources; level of social discussion among the different communities; and major challenges faced by each of these communities. The FGDs were also employed to understand community expectations and aspiration from the community radio station. They also served as a forum to motivate and convince the community to own the responsibility

> " *The CNA was an essential exercise to understand the interests and communication needs of the target audience. The findings revealed that radio was a preferred medium of communication and content in local language was in demand. The assessment guided the initial content generation and presentation process.* "
>
> **Debarun Dutta, Drishti, Gujarat**

of running the community radio and acquiring necessary skills and capacity for its effective management. A communication ecology mapping exercise was conducted to understand relationships between people's social interactions, discourse, and communication media and technology.
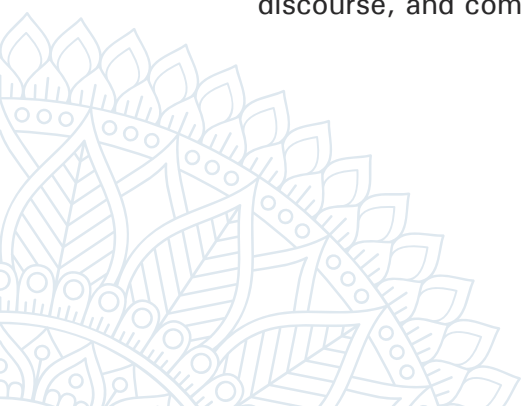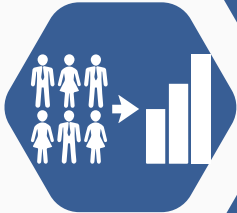
The key findings of the CNA revealed various facets of the community profile:

Demographic profile

- High proportion of tribal population
- Majority follow Hinduism
- High levels of poverty
- Dependence on subsistence agriculture

Socioeconomic profile

- Low literacy levels
- Information on health, sanitation, hygiene and livelihood and employment schemes scarce
- Presence of witch doctors
- Water scarcity a pressing concern
- Violence and discrimination against children prevalent in some communities

Media profile

- Radio most popular means to access information and heard more than once mostly at home
- Radio considered an important source of information, education and entertainment
- Info-trainment (combination of information with entertainment) is the preferred format of radio programmes
- Local news preferred choice of programme over the radio
- Some information received through the radio was useful
- A radio suited to local context airing content in the local language preferred by majority
- Contributions by the community in different forms and at different levels could be made for the community radio
- Chaupal was a preferred place of discussion for men
- Not many people read newspapers
- Film songs and music videos were the most liked programme on television
- Existing media platforms did not air locally relevant content and information

These findings of the CNA were extremely useful in audience segmentation and understanding the profile of audiences. They also informed the selection of programme themes, development of content, and presentation style.

A multidimensional effort for social change

Nityananda Janavani's conception hinged on the principles and values of social inclusion, equity and development. These values were aptly articulated in its key objectives:

1 Increase knowledge, attitude and skills of the communities, mainly the marginalised groups, particularly women, children and adolescents.

2 Provide education in rural areas in general and under-served areas in particular as a medium of communication for change.

3 Facilitate dissemination of clear, action-oriented, locally appropriate and straightforward information in a constructive and democratic way for the marginalised communities.

4 Sensitise the immediate and extended social environment and advocate changes needed in the existing social structure and norms.

5 Become a hub for sharing traditional knowledge and cultural heritage for social change.

Since its inception, Nityananda Janavani has been run by community volunteers who were assigned to produce 90-100 minutes of radio programmes per month. These programmes touched upon various themes such as health, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, agriculture, livelihoods, indigenous knowledge and culture of tribal communities among others.

Nityananda Janavani complemented UNICEF, MANT and government-run efforts to create awareness and change people's knowledge, attitudes and skills. The information transmitted through Nityananda Janavani was reinforced by its community volunteers and MANT team through street plays, community visits and discussions. Therefore, the community radio did not work in isolation as a mere tool of communication but became a part of multidimensional initiative for ushering in social change.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

TESTIMONY OF CHANGE

Mr Sujoy Banerjee, Sabhadhipati, Zila Parishad, Purulia has witnessed the extensive efforts put into establishing the Nityananda Janavani community radio station. He says, "Setting up a community radio station is not easy, it entails lot of preparation and complex approval process from various authorities. But hats off to the implementers of Nityananda Janavani who did not give up". He adds, "Arranging funds and putting in place quality infrastructure are fundamental steps in making the radio station functional. But most challenging part is to motivate the community to run the station and Nityananda Janavani team was able to do this successfully. Even though the process has taken time, it is really worthwhile".

He further notes that not many media and communication channels reach tribal areas of Purulia. In such media cut-off areas, people neither have a source of information nor entertainment. Nityananda Janavani has brought in technology, infrastructure and human resources to change this situation. The continuous production of radio programmes in local language and on local issues through a well-equipped studio has really worked well.

He also underscores the importance of training and capacity building exercises organised by the Nityananda Janavani team in skilling the community volunteers. The effects of the same are visible in terms of quality and richness of content generated by them. According to him, one of the differentiators has been the production of content which is appealing to the tribal masses. Sharing stories of tribal community by their own people has brought all the difference.

He reports that many youth in the community have been trained as community volunteers of Nityananda Janavani. They have become RJs and do programmes on issues such as ending child marriage, menstrual hygiene and promoting gender equality. These aware and informed youth sensitise their own families and communities, triggering a process of critical thinking. Now they question the existing norms and practices. Apart from this, communities have also become more aware of government schemes and provisions. This has increased the uptake of services such as demand for menstrual hygiene products, toilet construction and increased awareness on voting rights. For this reason, Mr Sujoy calls Nityananda Janavani a 'community owned medium of development'. So far, Nityananda Janavani has benefitted the communities in myriad ways. He is hopeful that Nityananda Janavani will continue to work towards Purulia's development.

Like Mr Sujoy, many other district officials commend Nityananda Janavani's evolution over the years. They appreciate the collaborative efforts taken by NGO partners and community volunteers to operationalise the radio station. There is a broad consensus that Nityananda Janavani has appealed and reached the tribal masses. Though this process has been long, it has been a fruitful one!

A lot of thought went into planning and implementation Nityananda Janavani. Mr Sujoy's testimonial has given a glimpse of the processes undertaken to get the community radio station up and running. These ranged from team deployment, capacity building, content generation, programme production and gauging community response. The timeline of Nityananda Janavani brings out the key steps followed in setting up a community radio station. It also highlights the initiatives taken to amplify the reach for lasting impact.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

Implementing
Nityananda Janavani

Nityananda Janavani was implemented in a well thought out and phased manner, involving three distinct phases. These included the formative, the testing and the production phase. Each of these phases was conceptualised as intrinsically linked steps of a cycle which is 'on-going'. For instance, the CNA fed into the content generation process, resulting in the production of various radio programmes. Once these programmes were aired, community feedback and responses were sought and communities were revisited by the Nityananda Janavani team to capture their needs afresh. The findings of these exercises again guided the content generation, giving rise to a new set of programmes.

Implementation Process

Community People	Understanding Expectation, Need, Problem	Community Dialogue
Narrowcasting	Content Development- Focus on Solutions	Broadcast
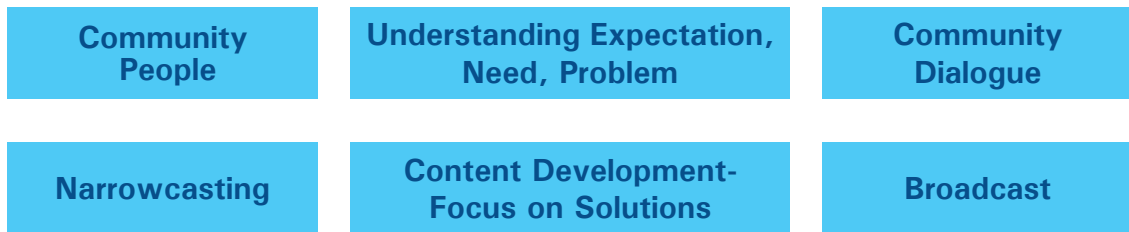
Implementation Phases

Formative Phase

- Formation of core team
- Constitution of CRMC
- Community needs assessment
- Initial orientation and field trip
- Community awareness on community radio station
- Community needs assessment

Testing Phase

- Recruitment and training of community volunteers in radio programming
- Pilot production and testing
- Narrowcasting
- Setting up of community radio station

Production Phase

- Creation of programme bank
- Narrowcasting and campaign
- Broadcasting
- Strengthening Implementation

Formative phase

The formative phase spanned across 2010-2011. It entailed preparatory work and developing an understanding of various aspects of community radio.

Formation of core team: As a key programme requirement, the appointment of Project Coordinator and three Supervisors in October 2010 marked the beginning of this phase. This core team learnt the basics of community radio by connecting with available media resources and reviewing existing literature.

Constitution of Community Radio Management Committee: In the same month, a CRMC was constituted. The CRMC had representation of key community influencers having a cultural and creative background and expressed interest in community radio. The CRMC was envisaged as the primary community-based mechanism to oversee the management and operations of community radio in the long-run. It was also seen as a link between MANT team and community members. Thus, it was the first step to bring in community ownership 'by design' in the implementation process.

Initial orientation and field trip: To prepare the core team and CRMC for their initial roles and tasks, an orientation was conducted by the UNICEF's State and District Consultants in November 2010. This orientation was coupled with a field trip to Lalitpur community radio station in Uttar Pradesh. The trip provided first-hand knowledge and practical exposure to the team on the functioning of a community radio station.

Community awareness: The field trip to Lalitpur enabled the team to understand the significance of community engagement and participation while initiating a community radio station. Drawing lessons from the field trip, the enthused core team proactively began to create awareness in the community around the idea of having their own radio. The team visited different villages and informed them about setting up of the community radio station. Community awareness activities intensified once Drishti came on board in March 2011. Drishti facilitated focused village-level orientations and workshops on community radio. A total of 20 such community awareness workshops were conducted.

Community needs assessment: Under Drishti's guidance, a comprehensive community profile and needs assessment was conducted by trained community volunteers during April-May, 2011. It provided insights into the radio station's potential audience and identified programming priorities. The CNA clearly identified the demographic, socio-economic and media profile and preferences of the communities, an understanding of which is essential for the successful operation of any community radio programme.

The FGDs conducted during CNA also exposed the communities to the idea of having their own community radio. This really motivated the community for fund generation and contribution to the development and running of their own community radio. They looked forward to a medium which could understand their needs and contribute to their holistic development, while at the same time provided a platform to keep alive their rich traditions and heritage. Another valuable outcome of the needs assessment was the identification of rich talent available in the communities which could be moulded to generate relevant and near-to-life radio content.

Testing phase

In the testing phase, the selection of quality community volunteers, their intensive training and field testing of initial programming were completed.

Recruitment and training of community volunteers: In March 2011, the first orientation of community volunteers was conducted by Drishti. A total of 32 volunteers participated in the orientation. The need and importance of community radio, understanding community's needs and roles and responsibilities of community volunteers were discussed during the orientation. The same set of volunteers was oriented again in May 2011. Based on their performance during the two orientation workshops, 15 community volunteers were recruited as 'community reporters'. A detailed criteria was developed and followed to select these reporters. Parameters such as talent for singing, writing, poetry, readiness to learn, dedication and commitment to work for the community were kept in mind.
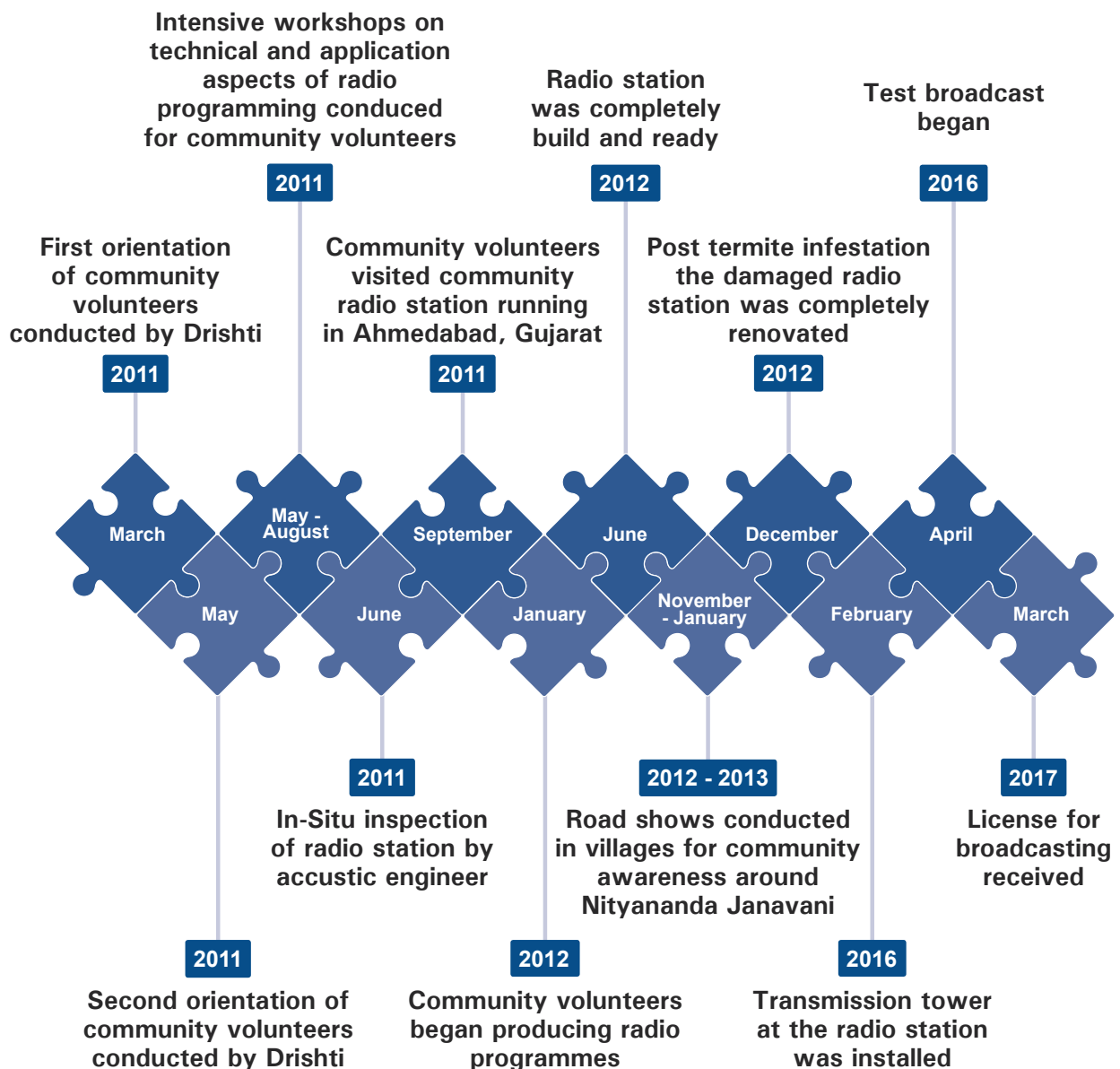
The selected reporters were then trained by Drishti on the difference between mainstream media and community media, radio content production, recording and presentation. Four intensive training workshops covering technical and application-based aspects of producing and presenting content were conducted from May-August, 2011. A 10-day training on script writing and use of microphone was also organised. Additionally, a 10-day training was conducted on narrowcasting techniques. The volunteers were also provided training on computer literacy and application to store and archive the content. For practical exposure, the reporters also visited the community radio station in Ahmedabad on September 20, 2011. These training efforts were instrumental in readying the volunteers as content producers and RJs.

Pilot production and testing: The process of content production began in 2010 under the guidance of trainers from Drishti. The content produced was reviewed for quality and appropriateness by the TSA. The content was also pilot tested at the community level in select villages. The community reporters who produced the content were assessed. By 2012, these reporters could produce 90-100 minutes programme per month in four episodes of 20-25 minutes each. These were first narrow casted in villages following schedules prepared by the Nityananda Janavani volunteers and community representatives. On an average, 30 to 40 narrowcasts were conducted per month, a phenomenal achievement for a budding radio station.

Intensive training in radio programming

The Nityananda Janavani's team of community volunteers enhanced their capacities in radio programming and content generation through various trainings. Within a short span of one year, the community volunteers produced 30 to 40 narrowcasts per month—a phenomenal achievement for a budding radio station.

Setting up the radio station: The site for the installation of community radio station was finalised by MANT in consultation with its technical partner and UNICEF. In June 2011, an in-situ inspection of the radio station by acoustic engineer was conducted. Post the inspection, a proper plan to design the studio was formulated. Based on this plan, the renovation of the building was taken up and the acoustics were properly set up. High quality equipment including recorders and mikes and studio system were installed. Sound proofing of the recording studio was done. The radio station was completely ready by June 2012. However, soon after, the station was infested with termites, causing widespread damage. This posed a huge financial challenge. MANT team along with CRMC members mobilised funds to repair the station. With proper pest control and termite proofing, the station was repaired and renovated by the end of 2012.

Intensive workshops on technical and application aspects of radio programming conduced for community volunteers
2011

Radio station was completely build and ready
2012

Test broadcast began
2016

First orientation of community volunteers conducted by Drishti
2011

Community volunteers visited community radio station running in Ahmedabad, Gujarat
2011

Post termite infestation the damaged radio station was completely renovated
2012

March | May - August | September | June | December | April
May | June | January | November - January | February | March

In-Situ inspection of radio station by accustic engineer
2011

Road shows conducted in villages for community awareness around Nityananda Janavani
2012 - 2013

License for broadcasting received
2017

Second orientation of community volunteers conducted by Drishti
2011

Community volunteers began producing radio programmes
2012

Transmission tower at the radio station was installed
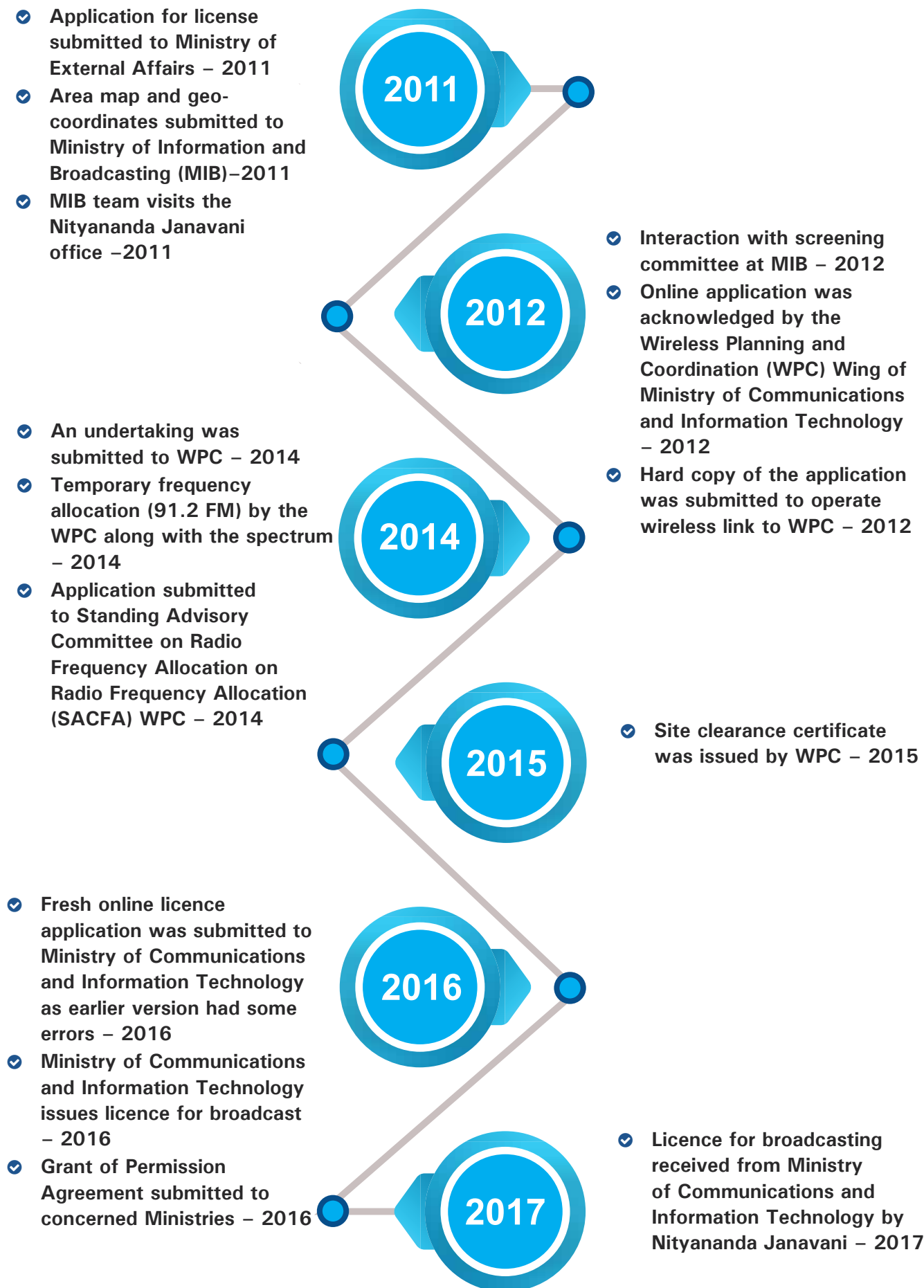**2016**

Production phase

Creation of programme bank: In order to get approval from the government for broadcasting, a substantial programme bank has to be created. Since Nityananda Janavani had been narrowcasting programmes, they were able to build a rich programme bank. Prior to the broadcasting, a comfortable archive of 520 hours of programme content was tested and ready to go on air. The programmes comprised both on social and cultural themes. Key social themes covered were health, hygiene, nutrition, education, child marriage livelihoods and other government schemes and programmes. Folklores, songs, art, cultural history and indigenous knowledge on use of herbs formed part of the cultural content.

Narrowcasting and campaign: The narrowcasting continued to reach out to the communities. As the radio station became operational, community awareness campaigns were conducted to increase listenership. In late 2012 and early 2013, roadshows were conducted in all the villages of the project area for popularising Nityananda Janavani.

Around the same time, Nityananda Janavani team also met the government officials and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) members of Puncha block to inform and sensitise them on the aims and purposes of Nityananda Janavani. During these meetings, active support of the officials which was crucial for the sustenance of community radio programme was sought. These meetings created an enabling environment for broadcasting through the community radio station.
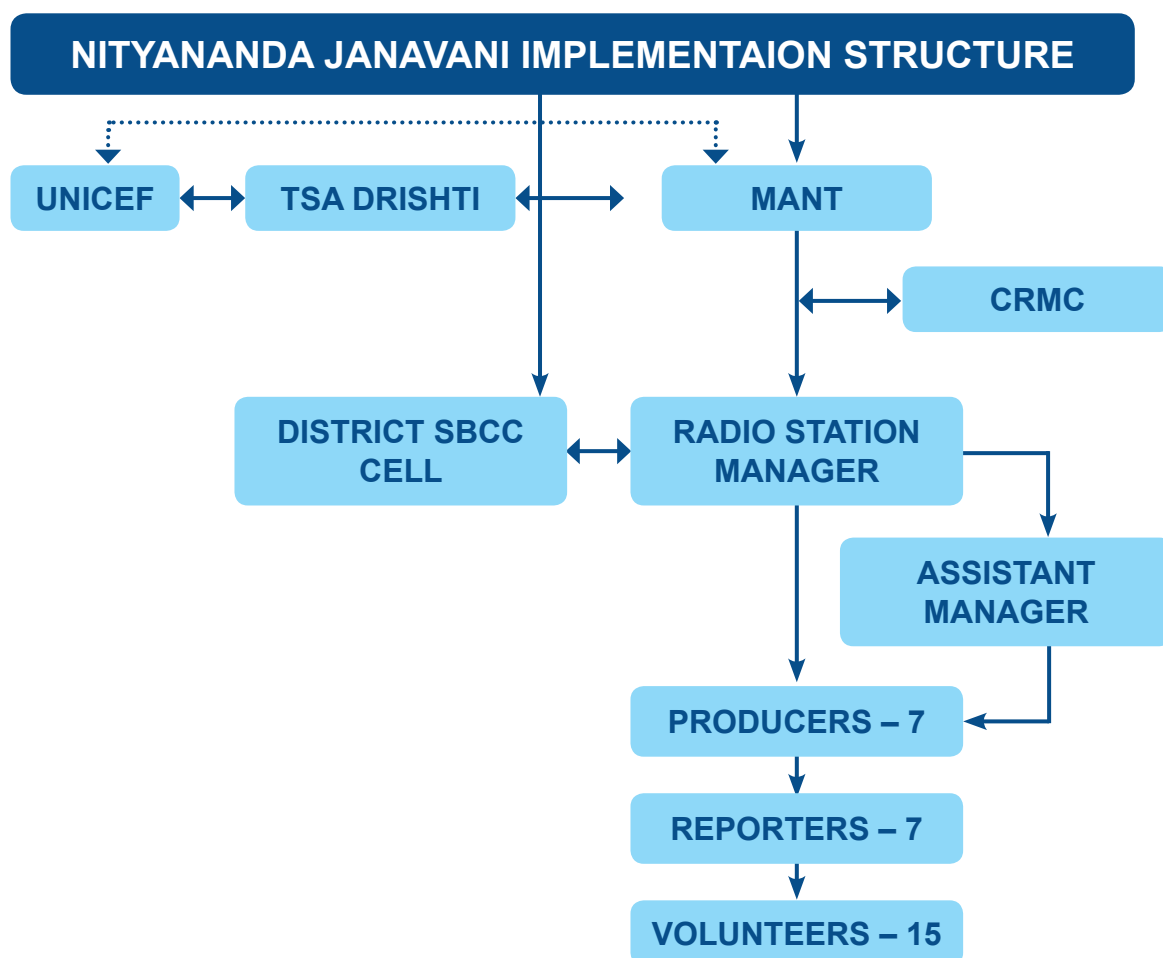
Broadcasting: The most critical step for broadcasting through community radio is to seek the necessary government approval. This was a long-drawn process which began in 2011. The figure below depicts the steps followed to seek the government's approval with a broad timeline.

2011

- Application for license submitted to Ministry of External Affairs – 2011
- Area map and geo-coordinates submitted to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)–2011
- MIB team visits the Nityananda Janavani office –2011

2012

- Interaction with screening committee at MIB – 2012
- Online application was acknowledged by the Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) Wing of Ministry of Communications and Information Technology – 2012
- Hard copy of the application was submitted to operate wireless link to WPC – 2012

2014

- An undertaking was submitted to WPC – 2014
- Temporary frequency allocation (91.2 FM) by the WPC along with the spectrum – 2014
- Application submitted to Standing Advisory Committee on Radio Frequency Allocation on Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA) WPC – 2014

2015

- Site clearance certificate was issued by WPC – 2015

2016

- Fresh online licence application was submitted to Ministry of Communications and Information Technology as earlier version had some errors – 2016
- Ministry of Communications and Information Technology issues licence for broadcast – 2016
- Grant of Permission Agreement submitted to concerned Ministries – 2016

2017

- Licence for broadcasting received from Ministry of Communications and Information Technology by Nityananda Janavani – 2017

As the approval process was underway, an MoU was signed between UNICEF, MANT and Drishti to take the work forward. While UNICEF provided funds for the procurement of tower and transmitter, Drishti continued to provide technical assistance to prepare the team for broadcasting and self-sufficient operation. Drishti's support phased out in 2016 and the radio station team began to manage the operations on its own. The radio station is well staffed with radio station manager, seven RJs/producers, seven reporters and 15 community volunteers. The team manages the station, produces the content and carries out outreach activities. The honorarium for these staff members is covered through the corpus funds of MANT (see figure below for implementation structure).

> **Nityananda Janavani manages the radio station independently**
>
> *2016 was a challenging yet breakthrough year for Nityananda Janavani team. In 2016, Drishti's technical support phased out and the Nityananda Janavani team began to manage the radio station on its own. The team executed all activities of technical maintenance, creative programming and community reach independently.*

NITYANANDA JANAVANI IMPLEMENTAION STRUCTURE

UNICEF ↔ TSA DRISHTI ↔ MANT

MANT ↔ CRMC

DISTRICT SBCC CELL ↔ RADIO STATION MANAGER

RADIO STATION MANAGER → ASSISTANT MANAGER

ASSISTANT MANAGER → PRODUCERS – 7

PRODUCERS – 7

REPORTERS – 7

VOLUNTEERS – 15

Efforts to obtain the license from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology were accelerated in 2016. The transmission tower at the radio station was installed and test broadcast began in 2016. The license for broadcasting was finally received in March 2017 and the broadcast started from June, though the formal inauguration was held in July. Since Nityananda Janavani had already acquired enough experience through narrowcasting and had an adequate repository of radio episodes, regular broadcasting started seamlessly.

The aerial radius of Nityananda Janavani station is 15 km. It is one of the first NGO-run community radio stations in the state of West Bengal. Broadcasting started on a humble scale in seven gram panchayats (GPs) in Puncha and Manbazar-I blocks. Since then, the reach has expanded to 27 GPs in three blocks of Hura, Puncha and Manbazar-I with a combined listenership of more than 120,000 people.

Since then, regular broadcasting is done from 6 am to 9 pm on weekdays and from 6 am to 10 pm on weekends. Broadcasting is done in Bengali and Santhali. Special emphasis is given to content around education, health and culture—issues which are close to the lives of people. Besides child marriage, other narrow-cast topics relate to nutrition, agriculture, immunisation, maternal health and career counselling. Cultural programmes presenting music, folk art and cultural and local heritage of Purulia such as Purulia Express are an integral part of the broadcasts. Local and well-known artists come to the station and prepare their own programmes. They write new songs and set them to popular tunes. Community members contribute by sharing their messages. New artists are given a slot of three to five minutes in order to popularise them and build them into popular artists. Thematic experts are invited for question and answer sessions on specific topics such as agriculture and farming.

To reinforce the messages, campaigns in the community are conducted on various issues, closely linked with the broadcasts. These include skits, group discussions and community visits. Efforts are made to start a campaign every six months on different topics. The user response on earlier broadcasts informs the content and format of the next programme. The six-month programmes are structured into broadcasts on specific programmes.

These are aired twice every week. In addition, two live programmes are presented every fortnight. In every village, at least five narrowcasts are done to seek feedback and understand their impact.

Community radio broadcast is limited to a 15-17 km radius. The challenge is to intensify the coverage within this limited distance. To offset this problem, the broadcasts are delivered to the community through 30 Radio Listening Centres[3] located in several villages in the programme blocks. The signature tune, created by eminent musician Abhijit Basu, has become a popular household melody, announcing the start of broadcast. No less than 60 programmes are broadcasted and narrowcasted every month.

Strengthening implementation

During Nityananda Janavani's transition from narrowcast to broadcast phase, the team has taken several steps to strengthen the implementation. These aim at increasing self-sufficiency, building greater community ownership and expanding and deepening reach for sustenance.

Building community ownership: The CRMC has become responsible and accountable for the radio station. It is functioning well and is actively performing the following roles and responsibilities:

- ✔ Identifies the local issues/problems of backward and remote areas as themes for radio programmes.

> *The method adopted in the running of Nityananda Janavani cannot be straitjacketed into a top-down or a bottom-up approach. The aim of MANT is to facilitate members of the community to create and deliver radio programmes that will benefit the entire community. MANT does not intervene in determining the theme of the programme, or the way it should be created. It takes care of the technical aspects of broadcasting. CRMC and community volunteers have been empowered to take care of the programmatic aspects.*

Nirmalya Mukherjee, Director, MANT

---

[3]The Radio Listening Centre is a portable device relaying pre-recorded programmes. These should be distinguished from the Listener's Groups which comprise a set of listeners who give feedback on Nityananda Janavani programmes after carefully listening to them.

- ✅ Gives detailed inputs on selected themes to the radio station team for designing the programme.

- ✅ Creates awareness about Nityananda Janavani among the communities.

- ✅ Identifies local talent and links them to the radio station team.

- ✅ Attends monthly CRMC meetings to discuss the management of the radio station, take key decisions and address challenges and technical issues.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Along with CRMC, key community influencers such as PRI members, local and religious leaders have been reached out. Community outreach activities such as meetings and discussions are conducted to sensitise community members on issues of child marriage, girls' education and protecting children's rights. The year 2018 witnessed the sustained organisation of community-based activities and training sessions. The first Betar Sabha (radio programme) involving adolescent girls was held in January. Religious leaders of different communities such as the nikah qazis, purohits and layas were called together in the year in order to sensitise them to the need for ending child marriage and promoting girl's education.

A two-pronged strategy for ending child marriage

Child marriage incidences are high in Purulia. Since child marriage is a complex and socially embedded phenomenon, a two-pronged strategy was set in motion to address it. First, a campaign against early marriage was conducted among adolescents and their parents, highlighting the risks and the strict legislation that is in force. The second strategy revolved around a series of sensitisation programmes for the Santhali (tribal) priests called laya, Hindu priests called purohit and Muslim priests called nikah qazi, who solemnise marriages in the area. The programme recognised their potential in changing existing social norms pertaining to child marriage. For this, they required to be strategically mobilised and sensitised around the issue of child marriage.

The methodology of sensitisation workshops included audio-visual presentations, interactive sessions with minor girls and experts. For adolescents and their parents, programmes were prepared in an edutainment format wherein songs, stories and dance (during narrowcast by the community radio reporters and volunteers) were used to transmit messages related to child marriage and the concomitant legislation in force.

Community reporters and volunteers prepared the programmes relating to the issue of child marriage in local language after a thorough research and field work. They visited the villages with radio magazines prepared for the purpose of making girls and their parents aware about the harms of early marriages, and provisions of law and government programmes which could be availed by the adolescent girls for regular school education. Elected representatives of the local government were also sensitised through these workshops.

Initially, specific formats were designed to map local marriage ritualists. Community radio reporters and volunteers were deployed to map and inform them and monitor their activities for the prevention of child marriage in their catchment area, and record the same on prescribed monitoring formats. Communication messages and materials on religious, cultural and social aspects of child marriage were developed for the orientation of faith leaders.

Sensitisation workshops were organised during August to October, 2015 and the campaign for adolescents was conducted till December 2015. Twenty-one narrowcasts were organised and attended by 436 adolescent girls and their parents. Community reporters and village journalists were entrusted to visit the faith leaders twice a month for the purpose of follow up and to prepare reports on

key indicators. They also visited parents to make them aware of problems of early marriage and legal consequences of the same.

Initially, faith leaders showed resistance as solemnising marriages was their occupation. In the initial phase, community reporters visited them for interpersonal communication and convinced them that early marriage was against the law and that it applies for everyone. Local government support was availed of at this time. Elected leaders also played a supportive role. Gradually, the resistance diminished and faith leaders became trusted stakeholders in the intervention.

Custodians of child protection

The effect of these workshops was evident when two purohits, Mr Sridhar Chattopadhyay and Mr Basudev Mukhopadhyay of Charanpahari Kali Mandir (Goddess Kali temple) in Puncha, declined to solemnise the marriage of a boy who was less than 21 years. Since they were sensitised during the Nityananda Janavani workshops, they were suspicious of whether the groom had attained the legal age of marriage. Refusing to leave anything to chance, they asked the families for age proof of both the bride and the groom. Upon verifying the Birth Certificates of both, they found that the boy was still a minor. They not only refused to perform the marriage rituals but also strongly advised the families to reject the practice of child marriage for protecting their children's future. The incident became very popular and set an example for other religious leaders.

Ensuring a steady stream of community volunteers: The community ownership model of Nityananda Janavani rests on community volunteers. Once a batch of community volunteers is trained and ready, many of them learn on-the-job and become RJs and producers. A number of them, despite taking jobs, volunteer part-time with Nityananda Janavani and produce and present radio programmes. Some of them drop-out as well but more than 60% of such volunteers have remained associated with Nityananda Janavani on a part-time and/or regular basis. However, the process of training and motivating a new set of community volunteers continues. This ensures a steady stream of community volunteers. College students, community youth and other interested members are continuously trained to enlarge the pool of community volunteers. The strategy is to build a local resource pool who are members of the community and will work as change agents using radio as a medium.

CRMC → COMMUNITY → VOLUNTEERS → REPORTERS → PRODUCERS → CRMC

Management & monitoring (CRMC → COMMUNITY)

Training (COMMUNITY → VOLUNTEERS)

Training (VOLUNTEERS → REPORTERS)

Training (REPORTERS → PRODUCERS)

Continuous and intensive capacity building: A large number of recurrent training programmes have been conducted for the radio station team including community volunteers. Since the inception of Nityananda Janavani, 104 volunteers have been trained. Up till 2016, these trainings were conducted by Drishti. Training workshops have been conducted on editing, production, narrowcasting and participatory communication. Since 2018, training on technical aspects has been conducted by another technical support agency called Ideosync, a Delhi-based media agency. Intensive and in-depth in nature, the training workshops were organised in three phases. These training programmes were supported by the District Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Cell, Purulia. Specific topics dealt with during these trainings included the preparation of CRMC charter, designing a democratic process for nominating them and spelling out their roles and responsibilities. To develop the skills of community volunteers, basics of sound, handling studio equipment, making studio recordings and transmission process were explained and demonstrated in detail. To ensure self-sustenance, the team was also trained on proposal writing, fund raising and mobilisation.

Local talent development: Various initiatives have been taken for local talent development. A three-day workshop was organised in August, 2016 for tribal singers under the signboard of Prantaraag to finetune their skills. This was followed by a three-day workshop under the banner of Adiraag to promote folk songs composed by well-known bards such as Tusu, Bhadu and Jhumur of Purulia. Two workshops were held on the traditional heritage of the music of "Jangalmahal". One workshop was exclusively on Santhali culture and music. The other workshop focused on various genres of folk cultures in the region such as Tusu, Bhadu and different types of Jhumur.

Partnerships: MANT team forged a strong partnership with the district administration with the help of District SBCC Cell. Owing to their efforts, the Additional District Magistrate and District Nodal Officer visited the radio station and assured their support to all future activities of Nityananda Janavani.

The Cell has leveraged funds from district IEC budget for Nityananda Janavani. They have also supported the recent training and capacity building of radio station team and community volunteers. The District SBCC Cell members have also assisted

> " *District SBCC Cell has supported us in training and capacity building. Owing to their presence, interface with the district administration has become smooth. The Additional District Magistrate and the District Nodal Officer visited the station and appreciated our work and have promised to support us.* "
>
> **SK Manjur Ali, Radio Station Master, Nityananda Janavani**

the Nityananda Janavani team in mobilising religious leaders and PRI members during community outreach activities. Their presence has ensured the participation of religious leaders in discussions related to ending child marriage. It is otherwise difficult to mobilise community leaders on these issues. The District SBCC Cell, the district administration and Nityananda Janavani have established a strong partnership.

The collaboration with other CSOs was also established. Nityananda Janavani partnered with National Foundation of India in 2018 to run a project called Tarang on menstrual hygiene. The project involved production and broadcasting of radio programmes on various facets of menstrual hygiene in Santhali and Bengali. Similarly, in 2019, Nityananda Janavani entered in collaboration with the Election Commission of India, and UNESCO produced programmes on voter awareness in Santhali and Bengali and narrowcasted them in remote villages of Purulia.

Convergence: Nityananda Janavani has also partnered with the district administration for the dissemination of information on government schemes and programmes. In 2018, Nityananda Janavani took up a project called Kanyashree Betarsabha involving capacity building of adolescent girls as RJs. Likewise, Nityananda Janavani has also developed jingles for creating awareness on voter rights and duties. Partnering with the Health Department, Nityananda Janavani organised a special Betarsabha (live programme) to create awareness on HIV and AIDS on World AIDS Day. Officials from Chief Health Medical Office and Primary Health Centres were invited as expert speakers for the programme.

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Kanyashree Betarsabha – An adolescent empowerment platform

The Government of West Bengal has been implementing Kanyashree Prakalpa Scheme. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for ending child marriage by linking adolescents to school education and other skill development opportunities. Nityananda Janavani has become the district administration's media partner to popularise this scheme. One of the initiatives taken by Nityananda Janavani as part of this partnership is, producing a radio programme called Kanyashree Betarsabha. The programme covers topics concerning adolescents such as education, having a career and marrying at the right age. This programme is produced and presented by adolescent girls under the guidance of radio station team.

Adolescent girls who are part of Kanyashree Clubs are invited to the radio station, then the team engages them in participatory discussions. The adolescents share their issues and concerns, and topics relevant to them in these discussions. Once the topics are brought to the fore, a programme structure is designed and girls are trained on anchoring and radio jockeying. Once ready, the adolescent themselves record the programme. This pre-recorded programme is then broadcast in areas covered by the radio station wavelength. The recorded programme is then sent to the district administration for sharing in other blocks. These pre-recorded programmes have been successfully used to create awareness on Kanyashree scheme in different parts of Purulia. Adolescents participating in the programme have shown visible improvement in their confidence and awareness levels. So far, seven betarsabhas involving more than 25 adolescent girls have been organised.

Audience segmentation and generating locally relevant content:

Initially, mothers and adolescents were targeted through Nityananda Janavani. But from 2017, the coverage expanded to new thematic areas. Being a community radio station, it had to serve the needs of all sections of the local population. So agriculture, livelihoods, drinking water, health of elderly were introduced into the broadcast schedule. If the radio broadcasts could assist in creating better livelihood opportunities and improved living conditions in the community, then that directly impacted the lives of girls and mothers as well. Further audience segmentation exercise was carried out to include themes for different segments of the community. Themes were segregated age-wise, language-wise and community-wise. Effort was on to cover themes responsive to all these parameters and air programmes on schedule suited to timing during which different listeners are available, for instance, airing programmes for men in the evening, for elderly early morning and for women during noon.

Creating audio-visual content: Nityananda Janavani did not limit itself to the creation of only audio content. To creatively transmit the messages for greater retention among the listeners, videos were also developed. These included capturing success stories from the communities. The videos showcased stories of tribal community volunteers and men, women and youth who were influenced by Nityananda Janavani activities. Apart from this, short videos based on realistic script set in local context have also been prepared. Some of these videos touch upon themes of sanitation, use of toilet and menstrual hygiene. Recording of folk music and songs has also been done in the form of music videos. For example, Dibi Durga is a popular Santhali music video developed by the team. MANT's professional photographer and videographer assist in the creation of these videos.

Completing feedback loop through listener's groups: The formation of Listeners' Groups has been adopted as a strategy to seek feedback from the community. The aim was to form a group of 10-12 people in different villages who listen to Nityananda Janavani programmes and give their feedback on the content. A total of 30 such Listeners' Groups have been formed. They regularly listen to the radio programmes and not only give their feedback but suggestions to improve the content. They also suggest new and relevant themes which should be covered in Nityananda Janavani programmes. This is an effective mechanism to get community's feedback and perspectives on content. The plan is to form more such groups. For 2019, a target of 50 Listeners' Groups was set. The intervening elections slowed down this process a bit. Of the 30 groups formed, some are very active while others need to be strengthened. Paying due attention to quality than quantity, the team is strengthening the existing groups before forming new ones.

Attractive branding: A lot of creative effort went into the design of the logo of the radio station. The logo relates to the tribal culture in the target area as well as the fact that Nityananda Janavani is a medium through which communities are able to share their stories and make their voice heard. The tagline "Unheard sweetness" is very apt. It resonates with the purpose and goals.
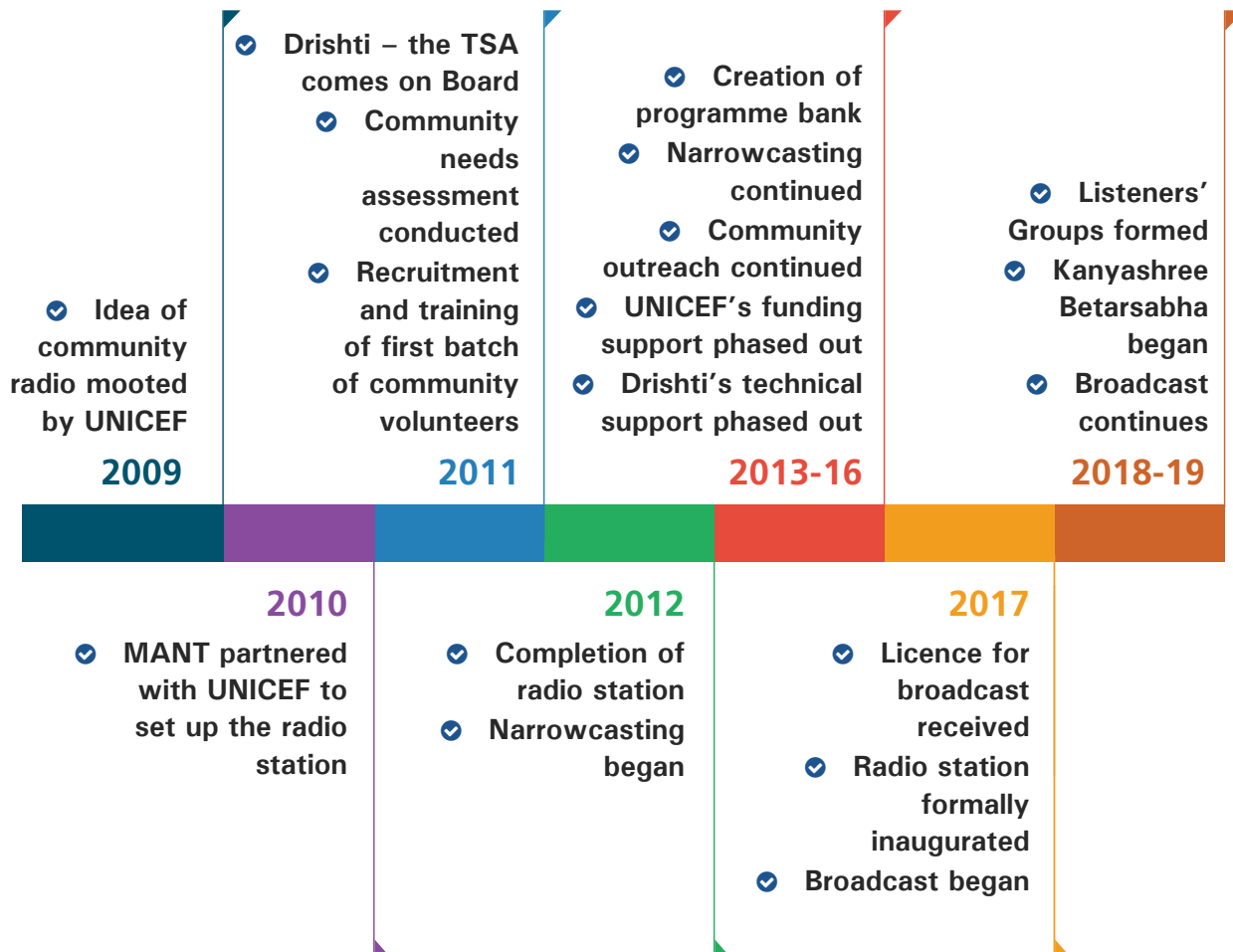
Nityananda Janavani has made effective use of mobile and social media platforms such as Facebook. The team regularly shares updates on programmes and celebration of events. The branding has improved the content recall of the community. Nityananda Janavani has helped communities connect with different behaviour change perspectives and social norms.

Innovations: Mobile Apps have been recently introduced to expand the reach. They primarily target adolescents. Radio programmes and videos are available on the App. Mobile penetration in non-tribal areas is 32% while it is as low as 12% in the tribal areas of Purulia. This low penetration barrier was overcome by approaching tribal youth clubs and popularising the App. The coming of Jio has increased the penetration even in tribal areas. So, an excellent opportunity has opened up for the introduction of a web-based radio.

Key Milestones in Nityananda Janavani's Journey

2009
- ✔ Idea of community radio mooted by UNICEF

2010
- ✔ MANT partnered with UNICEF to set up the radio station

2011
- ✔ Drishti – the TSA comes on Board
- ✔ Community needs assessment conducted
- ✔ Recruitment and training of first batch of community volunteers

2012
- ✔ Completion of radio station
- ✔ Narrowcasting began

2013-16
- ✔ Creation of programme bank
- ✔ Narrowcasting continued
- ✔ Community outreach continued
- ✔ UNICEF's funding support phased out
- ✔ Drishti's technical support phased out

2017
- ✔ Licence for broadcast received
- ✔ Radio station formally inaugurated
- ✔ Broadcast began

2018-19
- ✔ Listeners' Groups formed
- ✔ Kanyashree Betarsabha began
- ✔ Broadcast continues

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

"Mustering the courage to raise voice against the evil practice of child marriage was by no means easy for me. But I did it." This is how Yamuna Mudi begins narrating her story. A young woman from Mudidi Village of Puncha Block, Yamuna has set an example for many girls of her village. She was 15 when her parents fixed her marriage with a local boy of her community. She had not seen or met the boy. Around the same time, Nityananda Janavani came to her village to create awareness on child marriage. They performed a skit. Yamuna says, "She watched the play with rapt attention as it related to her life so closely". The protagonist of the skit was a victim of early marriage and early pregnancy and she died while delivering the child. Shaken by the ending of the skit, Yamuna became aware of the harmful impact of child marriage. Upon watching the play, she went back home with brooding questions about her future. She was scared of the fact that her fate might be similar to the character of the skit.

Confused and scared, she took a brave decision to talk to her father. She explained to him her apprehensions and concerns. But her father refused to listen to her and was not ready to cancel the marriage. Though disappointed, Yamuna did not give up. What she did afterwards was astounding. She stole her father's phone and called the groom. She requested him to call off the wedding. The groom and his parents listened and the wedding was cancelled. Her father was furious, he could not fathom how Yamuna took such a big decision. Enraged, he asked Yamuna to leave the home. All alone, Yamuna

stepped out. She contacted the Nityananda Janavani team for help. The team with the assistance of the Block Development Officer arranged for Yamuna's stay. For five to six months, she lived at her uncle's place and then in a local hostel. All this while, she continued her education. She affirms, "I did not know what I was going to do but I wanted to complete my education".

Yamuna is still studying. Once she turned 18, she married a man of her choice. She says her husband Mithun and in-laws are very supportive, and they want her to study further and complete college. Yamuna aspires to wage a fight against child marriage in her area. Recognising her fearless spirit and efforts to raise voice against child marriage, Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal awarded her a certificate and cash price of INR 5,000. Yamuna is thankful to Nityananda Janavani for changing her life and destiny.

She shares that many religious leaders have also been counselled by Nityananda Janavani team. She was aware that one of the purohits had declined to solemnise one marriage after knowing that the groom was below of 21 years. This incident was highly reported by the local and leading media.

Like Yamuna, many more girls have experienced changes in their knowledge and attitude towards life. They have become aware of their rights. They feel empowered and voice their views openly. The adolescent girls exposed to Nityananda Janavani vehemently oppose child marriage and take action to prevent them. Many such stories showcase the visible social change being catalysed by Nityananda Janavani in the intervention communities.

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা

২১ হতে ছ'মাস পাত্রের, বিয়ে দিলেন না পুরোহিত

Real life stories like those of Yamuna Mudi reflect changes that the community radio programme and its outreach activities have brought in Purulia. They re-establish the importance of community radio as a powerful tool for development among marginalised communities. Child marriage prevention, awareness on menstrual hygiene and sanitation are some of the important themes around which Nityananda Janavani has activated a process of social and behaviour change. It has also benefitted communities in myriad other ways. Creation of a cadre of community volunteers and increasing demand for and establishing linkages with government services are some other tangible outcomes.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

Community Response and Achievements

Nityananda Janavani is an outcome of persistent efforts. A long wait for acquiring the community radio license, extensive preparatory tasks, local capacity building and, above all, reposing faith in the wisdom of local communities have led to notable achievements. The community has responded favourably and enthusiastically to the radio broadcasts. Local talent has mushroomed. Completely managed and run by community, Nityananda Janavani is now on the path of becoming financially self-sustainable.

> "
> *We really like the Nityananda Janavani programmes. They are in our language and they relate to us. We want more such programmes to be aired. The RJs and presenters are from our communities. It is nice to hear them.*
> "

Bishlokha Mandi, Community Woman, Dhagara Village, Manbazar-I Block, Purulia

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Cheerful community response – An indicator of success

The airing of the community radio programmes has generated a great deal of enthusiasm among target communities. This is not surprising. The programmes are geographically and culturally close to the hearts of adolescents, parents and other stakeholders. They are aired by the people of their community. Local artists who otherwise had no opportunities to showcase their talent, received training and generated interesting and relevant content. The programme format and content is so appealing that people eagerly wait for Nityananda Janavani programmes. The programmes inform, educate and entertain, thereby making community radio a medium of edutainment. People learn from and enjoy the programmes. Immediate feedback from the community is garnered directly during narrowcast sessions. The radio volunteer holds discussion with the community members present during narrowcast sessions about the content of the broadcasts. They make sure that all the relevant messages reach the community and are understood. If the community members have difficulty in recalling certain messages, then care is taken to add focus to the content and deliver the same.

Interactions between Nityananda Janavani team and the local community had to be conducted in the Santhali dialect. So doctors, accredited social health activists (ASHAs) and anganwadi workers (AWWs) who come from the community were used as intermediaries and change agents. Demand for narrowcast and broadcast on more issues has also been expressed by the communities listening to Nityananda Janavani programmes.

Awareness generation for demand creation

An intrinsic intent of various Nityananda Janavani programmes was to make the community aware of services available to them. With more access to information on health, education, agriculture and livelihoods scheme, the communities have become informed and demand quality basic services. Faith leaders, service providers, school teachers and local government representatives are also more sensitised to these issues and make communities aware of the same. As a result, uptake of various schemes such as Kanyashree Prakalpa, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and immunisation among others increased.

Communication for social change

Bringing change is one of the key objectives of community radio. Therefore, it was important to ensure that not only the community appreciated and understood the messages but also practised them. To achieve desirable change, programmes were supplemented by community outreach activities. Through these activities, people were directly reached, and face-to-face discussions on programme content and need to change existing practices were emphasised. Interactions with the community were structured and adapted to their local needs. Since the community volunteers—their own members—drove this process, there was high acceptance. For example, issues such as handwashing, sanitation and water conservation are not only to be understood but also put into practice. Likewise, the issue of retaining the girl child in school and delaying marriage until the legal age were prioritised. These behaviours changed in many intervention villages.

> " *I listened to programmes on menstrual hygiene on Nityananda Janavani. They talked about using pads and disposing them off properly, and not bathing in pond as its water is unhygienic. I learnt and practised all this. This reduced the infection and white discharge I earlier had.* "
>
> **Parul Soren, Community Woman, Loto Village, Manbazar-I Block, Purulia**

Repository of traditional knowledge, culture and identity

An important outcome of Nityananda Janavani has been the increasing desire among the community to document their traditional knowledge. For instance, the traditional local version of the Ramayana or the healing potency of local medicinal plants are not at all documented. Developing radio content around these issues while continuing to focus on the developmental issues is being assessed. Nityananda Janavani has been able to record and archive Santhali Ramayana, extensive use of local herbs and various home-based remedies. Programmes encompassing cultural heritage, indigenous and traditional knowledge, folklores, music and other form of arts are highly appreciated by the communities. They feel that the community radio embraces, cherishes and values their culture. Thus, they consider the community radio station as their own. This strengthens the connect between Nityananda Janavani team and the larger community, and draws them towards the radio programmes.

> **"**
> *Nityananda Janavani is helping the revival of our lost cultural heritage. It broadcasts our traditional knowledge, folk music and stories. It talks about our local life and situation. We really like it.* **"**
>
> **Krishni Pada, Community Member, Dhagara Village, Manbazar-I Block, Purulia**

> **"**
> *The best part about Nityananda Janavani is that it is bringing back our lost and often ignored cultural heritage. It is a very good thing and that is why I feel it is my own channel.* **"**
>
> **Shibhnath Tudu, Community Member, Dhagara Village, Manbazar-I Block, Purulia**

Community volunteers as change agents

Community volunteers are at the heart of Nityananda Janavani programme. Their dedication to work, motivation and commitment has been successfully driving the community radio. They consider it as their own initiative and rightly so. Working on a voluntary basis without any salary, they spend considerable amount of time in running the radio station in a professional, efficient and participatory manner. They also bring in their local experience and expertise to content and programme production. The volunteers have been skilled to not only produce and present programmes but also connect with communities. In this process, their own attitudes and behaviours have changed. For instance, they strongly advocate that child marriage is a violation of children's rights in their own families and communities. Many community volunteers after being trained, changed their own menstrual hygiene practices by using hygienic menstrual absorbents in place of cloth. They also actively create awareness on menstrual hygiene and family planning among adolescent girls and young women and men of their own communities.

> " *I have been working as a volunteer at the community radio station. I have learnt a lot here, people in my community now know me as a Nityananda Janavani worker. Even though I do not get paid a salary but I enjoy working as a volunteer. After all it is my station and meant for my people. Like me, other volunteers also work here, and they see community radio as an opportunity for their own development and growth. That is why we spend time and effort to make all our programmes a success.* "
>
> **Krishnipada Tudu, Community Volunteer, Nityananda Janavani**

Equipped with all the right information and skills, they go back to the communities as knowledgeable resource persons and role models who influence others. People listen to them and trust them. They enjoy high credibility and acceptance. Even though they may not be directly associated with the radio station, they will remain in their communities and continue to facilitate a process of social change. Empowerment of these volunteers and transforming them into community's own change agents is thus implicit in the model of community radio.
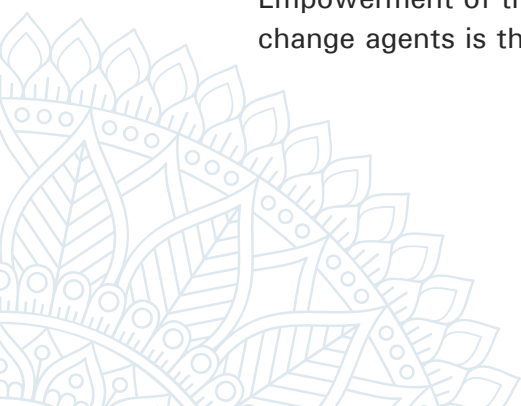
All-out efforts for independent operation

In the initial phases of implementation, high quality strategic and technical guidance was provided to the team through UNICEF and Drishti, and later by Ideosync. With the help of multiple trainings, exposure visits and on-the job learning, the team became highly skilled and honed their talent of anchoring, radio jockeying, creative content generation and operating the radio station. They also developed substantial skills in engaging with the community. As support from the external agencies phased out, the team rose up and took complete onus of running the radio station. Visible improvements were seen in different aspects of functioning.

The team independently conducted detailed FGDs to expand their theme coverage. They developed programmes which not only had local flavour but deeper relevance for the community. They actively blended local culture with messages on social issues to develop programmes based on infotainment. The programmes developed independently by the team showed significant improvement in terms of quality and had high listenership. Similarly, the team also devised newer ways of training fresh batches of community volunteers. As they were aware of the fact that in the absence of TSA, conducting frequent training in workshop mode was difficult, they opted for on-the job training. The new batch of volunteers was trained with the use of practical demonstration of how work goes on in a radio station. The strategy has so far worked well and reaped good results. With the technical assistance of Ideosync trainings conducted in 2018, the team is in the process of developing skills in proposal writing, fund raising and forming partnerships. Applying knowledge and skills acquired during the training, the team is now actively looking out for various avenues of resource mobilisation. The team is closely working with the District SBCC Cell to partner with the district administration and different line departments for Nityananda Janavani's sustenance.

> *We have seen community radios operating in other parts of the country but many of them find difficulty in sustaining the operations on their own. In case of Nityananda Janavani, the CRMC has been very active and they have made sure that the radio station team works hard to produce quality programmes which are liked and well-received by the people. This is not the case everywhere. In some places, such committees are only on papers without any real role and power. But the CRMC in Purulia is working very well.*

Debarun Dutta, Drishti

Community-led CRMC takes ownership

Nityananda Janavani is being managed by a very active CRMC. Representing community opinion and interests, CRMC regularly reviews content and programmes produced. They give their suggestions and recommend inclusion of new themes. In many instances, CRMC has explicitly expressed the need to include fresh themes and create programmes relevant for different listeners of the community. This has ensured that the radio station team works hard to ensure novelty, creativity and relevance in the programmes they develop. Inputs of CRMC have been valuable in quality improvement of programmes aired by Nityananda Janavani. The CRMC meets regularly with the radio station team and discusses all management issues, monitors their functioning and addresses challenges faced. Thus, CRMC plays a pivotal role and has become the main vehicle for ensuring community participation and ownership. In the long-run, CRMC has the potential to be empowered enough to manage the community radio on their own without any external support.

Unflinching commitment of the implementing partner

MANT has undeniably played an instrumental role in making Nityananda Janavani a huge success. The organisation was the right choice to initiate the programme with its extensive work experience in West Bengal.

> *As a necessity, a local NGO, or CSO, has to facilitate the beginning of a communication medium like community radio station such as Nityananda Janavani. Based on my experience, I can say that the careful selection of a local NGO is extremely important for proper development and sustenance of such media. Therefore, UNICEF spent quality time for indemnifying potential partners. MANT was finally selected through a rigorous process. During the selection process, MANT demonstrated to have all the competencies required to start and develop a sustainable community radio. It has sound knowledge of the local context and experience of implementing participatory development projects in underprivileged and hard-to-reach communities in Purulia. Commitment to facilitate change and, most importantly, their work has created respect and good influence in the target communities to be covered under the community radio programmes. Despite many challenges, they worked relentlessly to implement the community radio. This is possibly one of the key factors behind the success of Nityananda Janavani.*

Nasir Ateeq, C4D Specialist, UNICEF

Building upon its past knowledge and experience, MANT was able to synergise support and effort of different agencies to make Nityananda Janavani a reality. Though MANT played a central role in operationalising the programme, it prioritised community ownership at each and every step. MANT put in all efforts to make its vision of setting up a community owned radio a reality. It is heartening to note that for MANT, Nityananda Janavani was not just a programme but a valuable resource for community. Due to this, despite phase out of funding support, MANT ploughed in resources to enable Nityananda Janavani thrive through community efforts.

Efforts are recognised and appreciated

Owing to its reach to tribal and other backward areas of Purulia, Nityananda Janavani has been hailed as a medium to reach the marginalised. However, above all, Nityananda Janavani's potential to bring change among communities by dissemination of right messages has been acknowledged the most. The awards and recognition won by Nityananda Janavani are listed below:

- ● Recognised by the Grand Jury as a Special Mention for the year 2015 for Developing Participatory Content for Welfare of Tribals in West Bengal at the 4th NGO Challenge South Asia 2015, New Delhi

- ● Presentation in Maiden SBCC Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2016 on the success of community radio in prevention of child marriage

- ● Paper titled 'Success of Community Radio in Addressing Child Marriage in Purulia, West Bengal, India' published in IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science in March 2016

- ● Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, USA promoted the published paper

- ● Presentation in 2nd SBCC Summit in Bali, Indonesia in April 2018 on 'Impact of Community Radio in Generating Awareness on HIV/AIDS among Tribal People'

- ● Presentation in 49thWorld Lung Conference held in Hague, The Netherlands in October 2018 on 'Impact of Community Radio on Tuberculosis Treatment Adherence'

- ● Santhali music video 'Dibi Durga' shown at Rainforest Fringe Festival in Kuching, Malaysia in 2019; 17th Dhaka International Film Festival, Bangladesh; First International Indigenous Film Festival, Bhubaneswar; and 12th International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala

- ● A Crowning Glory video documentary film won certificate of excellence in 8th Kolkata Short Film Festival, 2019

BELIGUMA'S SANITATION STORY

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

Located in a remote area of Puncha block, Beliguma is a tribal village. About a year ago, open defecation was widely prevalent in the village. Women used to feel both scared and ashamed while defecating in the open. Incidence of food and water borne diseases was also high, particularly among children. Most of the villagers were unaware of the Swachh Bharat Mission and Mission Nirmal Bangla of the Government of West Bengal.

At that time, Nityananda Janavani's programmes on sanitation and hygiene aired in Santhali were intently listened by the community. The community volunteers also visited the village to create awareness about the schemes. They conducted discussions with village sarpanch and other panchayat members. The process of availing benefits under the above mentioned schemes was also explained. This motivated a few community members and they began to apply for financial support for toilet construction from the government. Slowly, these families constructed toilets. After observing them, more people were encouraged and began the process of toilet construction. Within a short span of time, out of 30 households in the village, almost 20 constructed toilets. The remaining are also in the process of getting funds sanctioned for the same.

The women of the village are very happy with this change. Alka Baske, one of the early adopters of change, says, "I got the toilet made, then other families also began to do the same. Toilet construction has reduced open defecation and the village is now cleaner. I comfortably use toilet and do not go out. This is a big relief. I am hopeful very soon all families will have their own toilets and our village will be open defecation free".

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

UNDETERRED BY CHALLENGES

"Becoming Nityananda Janavani's Radio Station Manager is an honour for me. I feel proud and that keeps me going", explains SK Manjur Ali. Trained as part of the first batch of community volunteers, Manjur has been associated with the community radio programme since 2011. Working as a salaried staff of Nityananda Janavani, Manjur sometimes spends 11 hours at the radio station. He says, "I get a lot of satisfaction working here". Sometimes, his family complains that he spends more time at the radio station than at his own house. He jokingly replies, "Nityananda Janavani is also my home".

For a living, Manjur gives tuitions but he enjoys work at the radio station. He describes Nityananda Janavani's journey as one with many ups and downs. However, neither Manjur nor his team gave up during the challenging times. At the beginning, gaining confidence of the community was difficult. Many women and men were not ready to come out and share their real life stories. But with the help of focused and strategic community engagement, many men and women came forward to contribute to radio programmes. As the community came on board, other problems cropped up. On various occasions, the team grappled with technical glitches. Since Drishti was not based in West Bengal, addressing technical issues such as re-alignment of antenna in bad weather conditions and equipment wear and tear became a problem. However, the team with the help of local assistance from telecom technicians aligned the antenna and resumed the normal functioning of the radio station.

Manjur also remembers the time when the studio was damaged by termite attack. It was a difficult time for the entire Nityananda Janavani team. Despite this, the team did not halt the operations and continued work in makeshift arrangements. As the momentum picked up and things were running smoothly, the onerous process of bringing self-reliance began. "We knew this would happen as Nityananda Janavani is a community radio and has to be run by the people of Purulia. But still, running operations on our own was not easy." As UNICEF and Drishti's support phased out, the radio station team and MANT took the lead. Efforts were put in to form partnerships, bag other projects and raise money through various avenues. Manjur adds, "The difficulties still persist, but our team is committed and we all value Nityananda Janavani as it is our radio, run by us". The community is also supporting us and we are determined to continue Nityananda Janavani. Summing up, Manjur exclaims, "We want to set an example of how a community radio should run for others to follow and learn from".

Challenges are inevitable during the life cycle of a programme. They may emanate at different stages of planning, implementation or sustaining the operations. The same was true for Nityananda Janavani. Gaining community participation, managing infrastructural wear and tear and funding, and human resource crunch were some of the challenges that the Nityananda Janavani team grappled with. In spite of these, Nityananda Janavani continued its work without compromising quality. This was possible because just like Manjur, the radio station team and community volunteers share the spirit of not giving up amidst challenges. Due to their tenacious and unflagging spirit, they have surmounted many obstacles.

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

Overcoming Challenges and Learning Lessons

Being the first community radio station in a predominantly tribal area, Nityananda Janavani embarked on an ambitious journey. The vision of building community ownership from step one was not an easy process. The team faced enormous challenges and complexities. Challenges in the initial phases pertained to eliciting community participation to licensing and setting up infrastructure. Sustenance, mobilising funds and gaining total ownership of community are complex issues the team contended with in later phases.

Gaining entry - The teething challenges

In a tribal community which has been marginalised for centuries, and where social norms and taboos are highly entrenched, long and persistent efforts are required. An intervention cannot be carried out in haste. At the same time, it has to be technically competent and ready to utilise opportunities when they spring up. Community members, especially women, were not very keen to share their hopes, aspirations and expectations to thousands of listeners over a community radio. There was also an expectation that the community radio should pay them for getting broadcast content. The radio team had to spend long hours with community members, explaining to them that the radio station was being built to serve them using their own experiences.

Gradually, as the community radio station started functioning, the community members began witnessing tangible results and realised that their demands for better access to quality services are now being voiced through a powerful medium. The government administration also responded positively to community demands. Community members came forward to become RJs or volunteers or to share their stories. In the initial stages, adolescent girls were reluctant to participate in a programme on menstrual health and hygiene management. Now they are confident to come in front of the microphone and air their experiences.

Setting up a radio station - An onerous process

Considerable amount of time and energy was spent by MANT in the process of seeking approvals for running the community radio. The process of seeking approvals from different central ministries was time-taking and required the know-how of technical procedures. Substantial documentation and paper work, along with prerequisites such as a trained team and a ready programme bank, had to be ensured. There were hiccups in submitting the right documents which also delayed the approval. It took about five years to get the official broadcasting license and formal opening of the radio station. This was indeed a testing for MANT to sustain efforts which could have been deadlocked at any moment as the community mobilisation efforts had just begun and Nityananda Janavani was nascent and fragile. The team did not give up and lose hope. Till this time, they worked with strategic carefulness to reach out to the communities through narrowcasting, outreach activities, audio-visual and folk media. The strategy worked and prior to actual broadcast, Nityananda Janavani had already become quite popular and well-known in the target communities.

Maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure

Setting up and running a community radio involves complex processes and technology. Sometimes the solution for a technical problem cannot be found nearby. For instance, in February 2015, while fixing up a tower, a team had to be sent to Ahmedabad to learn how to set up the antenna. But even with that knowledge, there was no local agency who could fix the antenna on top of the tower. With great effort, the problem was solved. Again in 2018, the antenna got twisted, affecting the quality of the programme. This again required casting the net wide for a service provider.

High quality infrastructure was put in place while setting up the radio station. However, its maintenance and upkeep became a challenge when the studio was damaged by termite attack due to water seepage as the studio had been housed in an old building constructed during 1930s. The team successfully overcame the problem by inducting high quality roof treatment. In addition to this, the team is extra cautious to keep the station premises clean and dirt-free. With very little resources, technical and infrastructural challenges had to be innovatively solved.

Retaining fresh batches of community volunteers difficult

Getting community volunteers to assist in outreach has been a big challenge. Many young volunteers often go for further studies and take up jobs in other cities, as expected. Even though many community youths have been showing a lot of interest in doing radio programmes, their association with Nityananda Janavani may not last long due to rigorous selection and training processes. Last year, 31 adolescents applied to become volunteers. But a stringent selection process, which defines a set of minimum skills in singing, dancing, writing or other capabilities, has kept them out. A radio station cannot run merely on the enthusiasm of community members. Community radio volunteers do need definite capacities in programme preparation and audience selection.

Difficult to seek constructive feedback

Radio being a one-way medium of communication does not allow for immediate feedback from listeners. However, in case of community radio, the feedback of listeners is critical to generate content suited to their needs. Initially, the CRS system had to reach out to the community to encourage them to provide feedback on the broadcasts. To this end, FGDs were conducted with the community, however, these had limited results since the community was not used to such interactions. They were not used to expert interviews. Rather, they responded well to personal anecdotes. In order to address this problem, Listeners' Groups

were formed. These groups listened to the programmes religiously and reviewed them with a critical perspective. Some of these groups are very active and doing really well. They are giving valuable feedback to improve the radio programmes. This has resulted in positive changes, and the themes and content chosen by the community are being presented through Nityananda Janavani. On the other hand, to overcome the difficulties in getting feedback from the community, Nityananda Janavani arranges a live programme daily in its schedule.

Complete community ownership – A slow process

Nityananda Janavani's CRMC has been working very effectively. The members are accountable and they duly fulfill their management and monitoring responsibilities. However, they still look at MANT for guidance and making final decisions. They are hesitant to completely oversee the radio station which should be the case in the long run. To inculcate complete ownership among CRMC and the larger community, a lot of effort is required. MANT has been constantly working towards helping CRMC to lead from the front. The programme team has been emphasising that the radio station belongs to the community. This process is gradual but the aim is to accomplish this in a time-bound manner. It is expected that by 2022, the radio station will achieve its goal of becoming a truly community-owned and operated station.

Fund mobilisation a persistent struggle

In 2015, precisely when the radio station project was picking up momentum, the earlier arrangement with UNICEF came to an end. There was an interregnum when the programme staff had to continue in spite of funds drying up. This made them resolve to identify their key requirements and look at funding options.

Extended technical and financial support – A shot in the arm

The signing of the MoU with UNICEF and Drishti in 2014 for technical support and capacity building came as a shot in the arm. Support was also received from a Delhi-based organisation, Ideosync, and the expenditure was shared by UNICEF and MANT. The decision to take technical help in various challenging areas from renowned national level organisations was an excellent step. This exposed the programme staff to the best technology and management principles available anywhere in India. It made the project management resolve that their reporters, artists and technicians should be constantly exposed to the best there is in community radio broadcasting.

As the support from external agencies is ending, the radio station team is working hard to mobilise funds from different resources. Some funding has trickled in from the district administration and through project partnerships with other agencies. But still there remains a large funding gap. To make the programme more sustainable, more avenues for fundraising have to be explored. These could be partnering with the government, securing advertisement sponsorships among others as well as ads from the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP). While doing that, care has to be taken that the community ownership as a priority should not take a backseat. The choice of content and programmes, and the way they are aired should emerge from the community. No commercial or alternative intent should guide this. Thus, Nityananda Janavani team will need to tread a careful and balanced path to generate funds.

Nityananda Janavani deals with the following challenges commonly faced by radio stations in the country:

Challenges faced by radio stations

Huge work pressure on the existing staff

Maintenance of hardware and software

Holding regular workshops for volunteers, meetings for content development

Access and use of copyrighted materials – unable to afford the royalties to be paid for copyrighted materials

Infrastructure problem - internet

Exploring, identifying and cultivating new talents and building capacity of local community and volunteers to enhance their ability to adapt, and get acquainted with tools and technology

Ensuring strong focus on "local" music, events, people and issues, especially coupled with "global" relevance

Akash Banerjee/MANT/2019

TAKING LEAD FOR THE FUTURE

> " I have been a CRMC member of Nityananda Janavani. As part of the CRMC, I shoulder the responsibility of managing Nityananda Janavani. Initially I was not sure I could take this responsibility but then we were trained and now we are being prepared to take care of the radio station with very little support of MANT "

shares Durga Rani Besra. Working as an ICDS Supervisor, Durga knows her village and surrounding areas well, she understands the local context and is popular in the community. Owing to all these qualities, she became an excellent choice for a CRMC member. While joining the CRMC, she was a bit sceptical whether she would be able to provide her inputs in the running of Nityananda Janavani but as she was trained, she became confident. She is now actively participating in all the meetings of CRMC, she meets the radio station team and assists them in choosing themes for programmes. She supports the community volunteers and producers in outreach activities as well.

She reports that being a CRMC member has helped her in work and personal life both. She has become more aware of menstrual hygiene and adolescent issues due to which she is able to motivate the mothers and young girls to avail ICDS services. At a personal level, she feels more confident and capable of raising her voice and concerns on different platforms. Durga calls Nityananda Janavani as her own station and feels very responsible for it. She has been both a CRMC member and a listener. She likes to listen to the radio programmes and enjoys them. Feeling more accountable to continue the radio station, especially after reduced external support, she adds, "I know we need to do more as ultimately, the community has to run the station but we need a little more support from MANT and slowly we will be able to do it".

Like Durga, many other members of the community feel responsible for making Nityananda Janavani a continued success. In the times to come, Nityananda Janavani has to traverse a tough path for success. The imminent tasks include developing a sustainable financial model and achieving complete self-reliance. Concurrently, empowerment of community is essential to enable them gain complete ownership of the community radio. A time-bound goal of 2022 has been set for accomplishing these goals. The team is working hard and the way forward to retain momentum is clear for them!

Basudeb Mondal/MANT/2019

Retaining the Momentum

The community radio station, Nityananda Janavani, was established in a predominantly rural and tribal area which was shunned by mainstream media because of its remoteness and its variants of dialects and culture. Regular TV and radio programmes were incapable of understanding the trials and tribulations of tribal communities. These programmes did not factor in the needs and priorities of the community and did not result in desired benefits and outcomes.

It is precisely in these conditions that a community radio station has an edge, particularly when it is owned by the community. The conceptualisers and operational staff of Nityananda Janavani made it their principle that they will not repeat the mistake of creating another externally driven programme. Right from day one, community members were involved not only as stakeholders but key drivers of the programme. The CNA study brought out the key concerns of the tribal community, its different audience segments, and language and cultural aspects that need to be kept in mind for a successful community radio programme.

This was easier said than done. Mobilising a community which was extremely marginalised and suspicious of external influencers creeping in was an extremely challenging task. The programme team took up this challenge head on. They hold high respect for the community's knowledge and traditions. Several studies were done to understand their context and needs.

The entire journey has been one of building trust and drawing the community to share their own stories and create their own programmes. Nityananda Janavani is now undoubtedly on the path of becoming a completely community run radio station and not an NGO orchestrated station. The broad range of issues that it deals with now, from immunisation to information on government schemes and job opportunities, have built a tremendous level of sustainability of this promising initiative.

Satisfied with setting up a community run radio station, the programme management is now taking several steps to ensure its sustainability and complete ownership of the community. Empowering the CRMC members and making them responsible and accountable is an important strategy for building community ownership. The implementing partner MANT is trying to reduce its involvement and encourage more say of the larger community through CRMC in governance and management matters.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on quality content development by community volunteers and radio station team on their own. The creation of quality Listeners' Group to increase the reach and seek feedback on community radio are some of the other steps taken to involve the community more effectively.

A positive development is that the government administration at the district and block levels recognises the power of radio station and has come forward to support the initiative. The increasing reach of the radio station has provided an impetus to demand for quality services, which is bound to bring about better convergence among government programmes and service providers. The team is making efforts to raise funds by making partnerships with CSOs and the government. Care is being taken to look for collaboration which aligns with Nityananda Janavani's ideals and vision of community well-being and equitable development. Possible avenues for achieving financial sustainability could be as follows:

1 Proactively leveraging funds from annual IEC budget of the government to create awareness on social development schemes and programmes.

2 Partnering with other NGOs, sharing common vision of community participation and empowerment to execute projects and programmes.

3 Initiating community-based marketing and advertising for local produce and products.

4 Creating a community managed corpus by mobilising funds from the community under the leadership of CRMC, thus ensuring greater community ownership of Nityananda Janavani.

MANT has also envisaged its handholding support to the programme for the years to come as immediate withdrawal may not be feasible. The approach is to gradually phase out support and bring in increasing self-reliance. With these concerted efforts, it is expected that Nityananda Janavani will be on road to become a completely sustainable community radio station by 2022.