

The Role of the Indigenous Radio Today and Its Impact on the Audience: The Case of Dambana FM in Sri Lanka

Authors : Dammika Bandara Herath

Abstract : A group of people who inherits a long history of existence within a particular country may be known as early inhabitants or indigenous peoples. In other words, they have not migrated to the particular territory from another part of the world and at the same time, they have inhabited the territory in issue prior to the time of a major invasion/migration. According to the UN, there are a number of unique attributes of the indigenous peoples: Self-identification as indigenous people, Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies, Distinct social, economic or political systems, Distinct language, culture and beliefs, Form non-dominant groups of society, Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. Indigenous peoples constitute 5% of the world's population. They are also known as tribal people, first people, native people, and indigenous people. Various indigenous communities can be found in about 90 countries in the world. Asia is home to approximately 70 % of these indigenous communities who have their own unique socio-cultural identities. Most indigenous communities remain isolated from the mainstream social, cultural, and economic institutions of their homeland. Yet, they inherited their own unique rights and responsible peculiar to their own group. These include: Protecting the socio-cultural heritage of the group, Protecting the unique identity of their community from socio-cultural changes in the mainstream communities, Protecting their land, Diffusing their cultural heritage to the future generation, Co-existing peacefully with other community .However, indigenous peoples encounter a lot of challenges as a result of socio-cultural change and legal restrictions in the world today. To assist the communities to face these challenges, the mass-media can play a significant role and the radio media has a purpose-built mechanism for this mission, known as the indigenous radio. In Sri Lanka, Dambana FM is such a radio channel based on the indigenous radio model. The target audience of this channel is the vedda / indigenous community of Sri Lanka. This study intends to the current role of the indigenous radio based on Dambana FM, of which the target audience is the indigenous community of Dambana. For the purpose of this study, interviews were conducted among fifty randomly selected respondents from the indigenous community of Dambana. As far as the findings of this study are concerned, problems in the quality of the programmed broadcasted and problems of transmission are the key issues faced by the indigenous radio in Sri Lanka. Based on the findings, the researcher seeks to develop a model to enhance the impact of the indigenous radio on its listeners in Sri Lanka.

Keywords : indigenous, communities, radio, vedda, culture

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