

Community radio brings out hidden talent of village women, men

For Sunita Chandel looking after her family was a full time job - till she discovered the joys of being a radio reporter. The housewife from a village in Uttar Pradesh now records and edits programmes for the community radio and has encouraged other women to follow suit.

'It is difficult for me to believe that as a daughter-in-law of the village, I am actually recording programmes, doing editing and in fact solving issues of women,' said Sunita, a radio reporter of Alapur village of Lalitpur district, about 350 km from here.

'I am both happy and proud today that I have succeeded in becoming a community reporter,' she said.

Lalit Lokvani, the community radio, is a joint initiative of a Sai Jyoti Gramudyog Seva Sansthan, an NGO working in the rural areas, and Unicef.

'If it is difficult to step out of the home for a daughter-in-law, believe me, it is even more difficult for a daughter, but I held my ground and today I have set an example for the village girls,' said Varsha, a young community reporter.

Sunita and Varsha were speaking at an interface with reporters here and both had stepped out of Lalitpur for the first time.

Bhagwan Das, another reporter, said: 'The community radio is like getting a chance to see the real issues of the people and through our work we have been able to provide solutions.'

Said Mridul Srivastava, station director of Lalit Lokvani, 'Community radio is the real voice of the people; it is a communication service that caters to the interests and needs of a certain area, its culture, craft, cuisine and above all social and development issues.'

Srivastava and his team of 12 village reporters, including two women, were provided technical training in reporting, researching, programme production and broadcasting.

Augustine Velaith, communication specialist, Unicef, said: 'Unicef saw the potential of this communication medium and selected Lalitpur, one of its integrated project districts, for setting up the maiden community radio station.'

'Such interactive sessions with the real people help broaden the vision of the media,' said Kulsum Talha, secretary general, Media Nest, an organization that works for the welfare of mediapersons and their families.

The media initiative was organised at the Uttar Pradesh Press Club here by Unicef and Media Nest.

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