

Rural Radio Programme: An Effective Tool for Reaching the Unreachable on Biodiversity Conservation Issues



Photo: LI-BIRD Photo Bank

Radio broadcasting is one of the fastest and most powerful means for providing information and raising awareness of people living in rural and semi-urban areas in Nepal. Rural radio not only disseminates information to stakeholders but also provides a forum for sharing opinions on various issues related to the conservation and management of biodiversity. It is a cost effective and efficient tool impacting a larger audience and has positive implications to the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resource management in geographically difficult terrain.

Introduction

The in situ project has developed a wide range of methods and tools to increase awareness about the value of biodiversity conservation and its use. Among those, the rural radio programme is successfully tested as one of the means to increase awareness and dissemination of new innovations, technologies, process/methodology, research results, development and policy issues of both public and private concern and attention. It was broadcasted twice a week through Annapurna FM from Pokhara, with coverage of about 16 districts, with financial support from IPGRI. Realizing the significant contribution through initial review of the project, LI-BIRD continued the programme on its own at the later.

Rural radio means the radio broadcast that contains local contents with the active participation of rural people and other stakeholders. The objective of this rural radio programme is to sensitize different stakeholders on the importance and value of biodiversity conservation and use.

Methodology

Step 1

Setting up a multidisciplinary team responsible for launching and guiding the radio programme with clear roles and responsibilities

Step 2

Identification and allocation of appropriate broadcasting time for the radio programme

Step 3

Participatory designing of the day to day programme by a multidisciplinary team of professionals (issue based discussions, interviews, agriculture news and appropriate technologies, problem solving etc.)

Step 4

Establishing a database of contacts, linkages and networks with professionals and experts for problem solving and issue based discussion

Step 5

Periodic review by stakeholders and professionals and revision of the topic of biodiversity

Features of rural radio programme

- Includes local content and involves many stakeholders (participatory)
- Common forum to form public opinion on issues and concerns on agrobiodiversity
- Means to disseminate innovative ideas and information on agrobiodiversity
- Experience sharing and learning forum

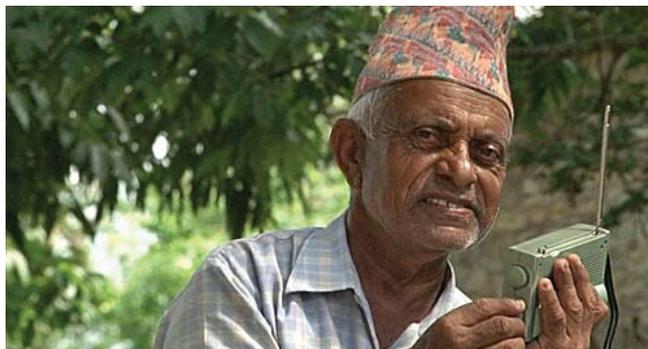


Photo: Mahesh Shrestha/LI-BIRD

LI-BIRDko Chautari

Radio broadcasting in local language with their own voices has been a powerful and comparatively cheaper medium to reach in huge mass. As one of such initiatives LI-BIRD implemented a rural radio programme 'LI-BIRDko Chautari' from 1st October 2001 with the initial financial support from Bioversity International International the then Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) in partnership with Anapurna FM, Pokhara.

Literally, Chautari in Nepali means a resting place under the shade of a tree. Traditionally it is an important place for meeting people, discussing and sharing information. IPGRI provided fund for the programme up to 31st October 2003. The programme was stopped for few years after the termination of IPGRI support. But due to higher demand and growing popularity and impact, LI-BIRD is still continuing the programme through its own resources. The programme was revived on July 2010 with the technical support from Ujyaalo Network of Kathmandu and Radio Taranga of Pokhara.

Now, the programme has revived with new format; Participatory Radio Magazine. Which is covering news, updates, reports and stories on agro-biodiversity, environment, natural resource management and climate change related issues. The programme use to bring into play materials generated by participatory methods of collecting local knowledge and practices generated from local farming communities. Technologies developed by the farming community, as well as the research outputs of university and research stations, are also used. These efforts 2 include sharing the methods and approaches developed in the project activities at local, national and international level. So, the programme format is in Participatory Radio Magazine. Farming communities are encouraged to provide suggestions and feedback. Prizes for the best questions and suggestions and the correct answers given for the month have been introduced to create interest and motivation among listeners. Winners are awarded with gift hamper each month to encourage people to participate in the programme and listen the programme in regular basis.

Every Friday from 7:15 to 7:30 PM 'LI-BIRDko Chautari' (15 Minutes Radio Magazine) is being broadcasted from 14 different radio stations all over the Nepal at the same time (Figure 1). Till now (reporting date is June 2012) 380 episodes have been aired. As a result, there has been increased public awareness of biodiversity issues in more than 40 districts of LI-BIRD's project sites; increased direct sharing of new findings and information with target communities; common forums for panel discussions between the farming community and high level policy makers; the integration of biodiversity education with traditional culture and literature; the bringing together of various stakeholders into common communication links; the documentation of value of local biodiversity; and the provision of feedback to local level conservation and development agencies.

Step 6

Feedback collection through a stakeholders review meeting and letters for refining programme; providing FM radio sets as prizes to listener quiz contests

Step 7

Programme monitoring and evaluation by a multidisciplinary team of professionals (survey, interaction, discussions, etc.)

Effectiveness of rural radio

Rural radio broadcasting has been a powerful and effective tool in creating awareness among farming communities and other stakeholders (Box 1). More than 50 listeners per week are contacting the radio programme, called LI-BIRD KO CHAUTARI, to solve their problems as well as contribute to the radio programme. This has created a forum among stakeholders through increased partnership and collaboration. Seven listeners clubs have been formed to listen to LIBIRD KO CHAUTARI and make it more interactive.

It was found that about 53% of the listeners of the programme were in between the age group of 25-50 years. About 56% listeners of the programme were found to be engaged in farming,

In a listeners' survey, after listening to this program, the majority (36%) of the listeners were found to discuss what they had heard with neighbors followed by discussion with their own family members (32%), farmers group (22%) and development workers (11%). Thus, rural radio programmes increase social cohesiveness among people and non-listener's are also benefiting from the programming.

Further reading

Baral KP, Sapkota TB, Adhikari A, Regmi BR, Aryal K, Shrestha PK, Sthapit BR. 2005. Rural radio programme: good practice for raising awareness on biodiversity conservation. In: Sthapit BR, Upadhyay MP, Shrestha PK and Jarvis DI, edited. On-farm Conservation of agricultural biodiversity in Nepal, volume II. Managing diversity and promoting its benefits. Proceedings of the Second National Workshop 25-27 August 2004 Nagarkot, Nepal. pp. 226-235

(Contributed by Krishna Baral, Tek Sapkota, Bharat Bhandari, Anu Adhikari, Smreety Dewan, Prakat Pageni, Anil Subedi, Madhusudan Prasad Upadhyay and Mahesh Shrestha)