



Monthly newsletter on issues
of sustainable development

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES



**Radio Bundelkhand and its Gender Inclusive Approach
towards Climate Communication**

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Airwaves of Change: Radio Bundelkhand's Gender-Inclusive Revolution

Bundelkhand faces serious climate change challenges, but Development Alternatives is spearheading sustainable, community-driven solutions. In this editorial Maj. Gen. Rahul Bhardwaj highlights Radio Bundelkhand, a community radio station serving over 150 villages and promoting gender-inclusive climate communication. The station empowers women to engage in discussions on sustainable practices, inspiring individuals and training community journalists to report on local climate issues, enhancing resilience and empowerment among women.

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The Women Who Own the Mic

Radio Bundelkhand is a community radio initiative founded by Zeenat Niazi, focused on empowering local voices through participatory media. Initially, women were reluctant to participate, but sharing their stories on topics like migration, crafts, climate issues, and health increased their confidence and agency. The article discusses the station's evolution into a vital platform for local knowledge, empowering women and enhancing community awareness and action in response to changing weather patterns.



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The Missing Frequency: Amplifying Women's Voices in Climate Change Policies

The article by Zainab Ahmed highlights the increased vulnerability of women and children in rural areas to climate disasters, noting that women are 14 times more likely to die. Despite international frameworks promoting gender integration, only 23% of India's climate initiatives address gender issues. Community radios, like Radio Bundelkhand, play a crucial role in amplifying women's voices, and sustainable agriculture programmes have empowered them. The article advocates for dedicated funding and training for women broadcasters to ensure their perspectives are included in climate dialogues.

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From Static to Strength: How a Radio Show Wove Hope into a Couple's Journey

In the drought-prone village of Makara, Mannkunwar Vashnkar and her husband, Pramod, faced low income and debt after failed monsoons. In this article, Varsha Raikwar narrates how Radio Bundelkhand inspired the couple to revive bamboo weaving, a traditional craft. With training from Tara Gram, they gained skills and confidence. Mannkunwar found purpose in her work, highlighting women's potential and the empowering impact of community radio.



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Nampura: A Journey towards Self-Reliance through Organic Farming

In Nampura village, women traditionally worked in fields but lacked decision-making power. Manish Samadhiya writes about how Radio Bundelkhand transformed this by teaching them organic farming. With training, these women evolved from 'farmers' wives' to self-reliant farmers and entrepreneurs. Three years later, they are determined to expand their practices and confidently shape their future.

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The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Development Alternatives.

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Airwaves of Change: Radio Bundelkhand's Gender-Inclusive Revolution



Women engage in climate discussions, shaping solutions through inclusive radio communication

With its rugged landscape and arid climate, Bundelkhand is a canvas painted by contrasts. This plateau, marked by breathtaking landscapes, has also been scarred by a pattern of harsh climate—frequent droughts, shrinking water tables, and cracked, thirsty fields. For generations, it has been shaped by erratic monsoons and depleting natural resources and exemplifies the challenges of rural India in the face of climate change. When Development Alternatives (DA) chose this region as its *karmbhoomi*, it was not just a site of intervention. It became the ground where we innovated, learnt, and proved that communities can lead towards sustainable, equitable change even in the most demanding environments.

Society for Development Alternatives initiated Radio Bundelkhand in 2008, a

community radio station broadcasting from TARAgam Orchha and covering over 150 villages. This platform stands out—not just for its reach but for its approach. Envisioned as a bridge between knowledge and action, particularly in addressing climate challenges, Radio Bundelkhand was ahead in making climate communication gender inclusive. For a region where women juggle household responsibilities with agricultural work, yet their voices are often not heard in conversations about solutions, Radio Bundelkhand has become a trusted source of information, a platform for dialogue, and a catalyst for grassroots action.

What sets Radio Bundelkhand apart is its participatory approach. For 16 years, Radio Bundelkhand has emerged as a means for gender-inclusive communication, particularly in addressing the disproportionate impact of

climate change on women. It has not only changed the scenario through its powerful messaging but also turned up the numbers. Women are not just listeners of this radio station but active contributors. The same women who once hesitated to speak outside their homes now confidently discuss issues like organic farming and rainwater harvesting on air through programmes such as *Shubh Kal* (A Better Tomorrow) and *Khet Khalihan*. These women call in to discuss challenges, share solutions, and connect with experts—fostering a culture of collective problem-solving.

With an average of 2 lakh listeners spread across four major districts in the Bundelkhand region, our platform has broken down barriers, broadcasting the stories of these



Community radio empowering rural voices

women changemakers across villages and inspiring others to act. For instance, one of our regular listeners, Geeta Kushwaha, who had migrated to a metro city before COVID-19 due to uneven climate pattern, returned to her village during the pandemic, and was significantly influenced by agricultural tips on Radio Bundelkhand's programmes *Shubh Kal* and *Khet Khalihan*. Taking heed of these tips and following the steps suggested by the agricultural experts on these shows, Geeta switched to organic farming with her husband and now lives in her own village, earning a steady income.

Geeta is one such example among many. Stories of women adopting sustainable farming practices and reverse migration are among the many achievements of Radio Bundelkhand. Our recent video podcast, which was conducted in partnership with L'oreal Foundation on Climate Change and its impact on women, is another classic example of how we aim to put women at the forefront of our climate communication strategy. What started as individual action has become a silent revolution, fostering a culture of peer learning and collective problem-solving.

But Radio Bundelkhand's work is not limited to raising awareness. In partnership with local organisations, the station has trained community journalists to report on climate issues, ensuring that the stories broadcast are authentic, relatable, and deeply rooted in local realities. It collaborates with local and national experts to design content that bridges the gap between policy discussions and grassroots realities.

For Development Alternatives, the success of Radio Bundelkhand is a testament and reflection of the possible outcomes we witness when communities are empowered through inclusive, locally-driven solutions. Bundelkhand's history of climate hardship is a reminder that solutions to climate change do not always need grand technology or large-scale infrastructure. Sometimes, they begin with a voice on the airwaves—sharing a story, sparking an idea, and building a movement by offering inspiring examples of resilience.

In our *karmabhoomi*, Radio Bundelkhand is not merely a station. Instead, it is a lifeline for knowledge, and through it, we see how communication, when done inclusively and thoughtfully, can transform challenges into opportunities for collective action. This initiative is a prism through which people—particularly women—show that resilience is not just a response but a way of life. ▣

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The Women Who Own the Mic

This article is a curation of a conversation between Zeenat Niazi and Zainab Ahmed



A walk down memory lane: Team Radio Bundelkhand outside the studio in 2008

It always starts with a voice. Sometimes, a hesitant, timid one, testing the airwaves, afraid of its own sound. Other times, a bold, cheerful greeting, piercing the electric static with the certainty of someone who cannot wait to be heard.

On a warm winter afternoon, Zeenat Niazi, Chief Advisor of Circular Economy and Climate Resilience Programmes at Development Alternatives, the organisation that germinated the Radio Bundelkhand initiative, sat in her office in Delhi and remembered when the idea of a community radio station was just that—an idea. A dream formed in the offices of Development Alternatives, where conversations about participatory media and grassroots communication had been simmering for years.

When the opportunity came to create a station that would belong to the people, it was not just about amplifying voices; it was about shifting power. What once felt like an experiment now hums the melody of revolution. For the small team of journalists, researchers, and communications experts led by Indira Mansingh, it was a passion shared across communications and development professionals Shoma Biswas, Arpan Saxena,

Irfan Khan, Anuja Shukla, Ashok Shukla, and Zeenat herself. For this crazy team, Radio Bundelkhand was never just about transmission; it was about participatory action, field research, and, above all, transformation.

There were questions: how do you go beyond an idea of development and convert it into action? How do you transform conversations beyond informing policy and participating in policy design? How do you make a radio programme something that people do not just receive but own? Would people listen? Would they trust it? Could a community truly take ownership of a radio station?

No one had an answer. But they tried anyway. And then something remarkable happened.

The Airwave of Change

‘Good morning, Bundelkhand!’ called out the loud yet feminine voice of RJ Varsha Raikwar, her tone alive with a warmth that felt like rain on dry soil.

Somewhere in a home, a woman straightened her sari and leaned closer to the old radio set on her shelf as she waited eagerly for *Stree: Ek Kahani Meri Bhi*, a programme narrating the

story of women from everyday walks of life. In another village, a group of women huddled around a radio set as they took a break from their daily agricultural activity. Some of them had never set foot in a school, but they had byhearted the tone of *Shubh Kal*. The programme discusses sustainable farming, organic products, water conservation, climate change, kitchen gardens, nutrition, and decision-making.

But it was not always like this. The transformation had been slow yet steady.

At first, women were hesitant. They called in quietly, their voices unsure, inquiring about the crops that could survive the erratic climate change, the public funds they could access, the government schemes they could apply for, their rights, and ways to demand them. Some wanted to share a recipe. Others, a song.



Climate resilience through inclusive radio programs

Then came the stories.

One day, an artisan called in to understand the scope of bamboo weaving and where to source good-quality bamboo. A woman farmer shared her experience of migrating to Delhi with her husband and expressed her hope of reviving her land to avoid migrating again in the next season. Another singer called to tell how she had been dropped from her all-male group of singers and wanted to prove that she could achieve the same success as them. A young girl sought advice on what to eat as she started menstruating. A female farmer worried about losing her crops to untimely frost and tuned into Radio Bundelkhand.

These were tiny moments—two- to three-minute-long telephone calls—but they changed everything.

The team at Development Alternatives realised that these pressing issues, many of them linked to the changing climate, were not research materials in policy papers and scientific reports. They were someone's life, someone's source of income. Having spent years working on development programmes, sitting through lengthy meetings in air-conditioned halls where experts debated climate change, slinging away terms like 'resilience frameworks' and 'adaptation strategies' seemed poles apart from the local immediate and urgent concerns about people's daily lives and livelihood. Miles away from the comfort of these halls, climate change was here, distilled into unpolished questions asked by women who had never even heard of something called climate report: *'Will my family ever be able to revive their land? Will my generational craft be sold again? Will my music make any more difference? How do I know more about my menstrual health? Why does the air feel hotter now than when I was younger?'*

There was also local wisdom and an understanding of this slow change: *'The Mahua has flowered early this year, it may be an early summer, this will change our sowing cycle. The monsoon is delayed by two weeks, so we can no longer sow ground nuts. The wheat crop may be lost too, and we may have to migrate.'*

The station had not initially focused on gender, but the women had made it their own. They were not just listening to Radio Bundelkhand—they were shaping it. They discussed topics such as water scarcity, erratic rainfall, the increasing distance between their fields and the nearest source of survival.

The climate crisis was unfolding in their homes, on their backs, and in the calloused palms of their hands. And yet, they were not just speaking about loss; they were asking important questions: *What can we do? How can we help?*

***Kaun Banega Shubh Kal* Leader: The Contest That Was Not Just a Contest**

The answer to their queries lay closer than anyone could imagine. Development Alternatives has always believed that solutions must be local. So, when *Kaun Banega Shubh Kal* Leader was introduced



Winners of Kaun Banega Shubh Kal Leader held in 2010

in 2009, it marked one of the most transformative moments. A competition was designed to engage women-led self-help groups (SHGs) in climate action. But it was not just a game; it was a social experiment in action.

Across 250 villages, women-led SHGs identified climate challenges, devised solutions, collaborated with experts to implement them, and convinced entire communities to adopt these solutions. The results, however, were anything but simple. In just over a year, the winning group convinced around 400 people to switch to drought-resistant crops and adopt natural methods for retaining soil moisture and nutrients. These were not policymakers or scientists; they were women who took the issue into their own hands and walked towards making a change.

Because they knew.

They understood the repercussions of climate change. They had carried water pots for miles. They had witnessed their livestock weaken under the heat due to the loss of their traditional migration routes. They had left their safe homes to move to the sprawling cities. They had wiped the sweat from their foreheads, wondering how much more they could endure. Radio Bundelkhand served as the platform where they transformed their knowledge into action.

‘We saw these women—who had once been silent observers—become decision-makers. And we saw how their voices, amplified through the radio, reached beyond their own villages, creating ripples of change across the region. This was proof of something we had

long believed: women were not just affected by climate change. They were the ones solving it,’ said Zeenat.

When They Sang, They Sang About Survival

If you want to witness solutions in action and understand Bundelkhand beyond discussions and debates, Zeenat suggests you listen to its songs.

Folk music had always been the record-keeper of Bundelkhand’s past. The women of Bundelkhand have always sung. They sing while pounding grain, while putting their children to sleep, and while walking for miles with pots of water balanced on their heads. They also sing about migration, leaving for the cities, dry rivers, and empty fields. And now, Radio Bundelkhand has become a place preserving Bundelkhand’s presence by collecting these songs—not just as cultural artifacts but as oral archives of a changing climate, set to music.

A competition called Bundeli Idol, which was way ahead of its time, was launched in 2009. It was not just a talent show—a cultural document of over 450 original folk songs capturing what people felt but had never put into words. Songs about drought, migration, and the dreams of daughters who did not want to leave school. The station recorded and aired them, turning them into a folk history of resilience.

And this year, Bundeli Idol is all set to return on 13 February 2025. After 16 long years, I hope to witness young women, farmers, and artisans sing about the land beneath their feet, the air around them, and the



Winners of Bundeli Idol organised by Radio Bundelkhand in 2009

uncertainties of the future and to build a platform for the voices that had always been there—just waiting for a place to be heard. For Zeenat, these songs were just as crucial as the news. 'A song can tell you things that statistics never will,' she said.

The Next Fight: From Listeners to Leaders

But the buck does not stop here. The challenge now is what comes next.

Zeenat thinks about the new generation. About the girls forced to drop out of school because they cannot get there. About women dwelling in fear in metro cities because migration was the only option. Could the station be a space where they talk about their experiences, where they strategise, where they demand solutions?

She envisions a station that is more than just a distant voice on the radio; it is a physical space where women can walk in not only as listeners but also as producers, hosts, and decision-makers. They would have the opportunity to sit down, record their stories themselves, and take ownership of the conversation.

She also sees potential in reaching out to women who have left Bundelkhand—migrant women who have moved to cities and often lost their identities. Could they become correspondents for the station? Could *Radio Bundelkhand* serve as a bridge between those who have stayed and those who have left?

She also ponders over the digital revolution. 'The world is moving to smartphones and AI. Digital short formats are swiftly replacing radios, shifting the scope and space of community radios. And we know that the biggest mistake Radio Bundelkhand could make would be to stand still. But one thing does not change: we all love to talk, to make and share stories, to hear our own stories, to dream and share our dreams.

Radio had always been participatory, but it can be more welcoming, more open, more alive. What if the future were to be hybrid—where audio, video, and community journalism merge, transforming the station into a digital hub for rural voices? And what about the children? How can we engage them? Can we create a Radio Bundelkhand that is by the children, for the children, and of the children? How can the future leaders of the community shape the future of the radio?

The Women Who Never Left

Zeenat was told about a woman who had left Bundelkhand years ago and migrated to Gujarat but never left Radio Bundelkhand. She has followed those airwaves for the last 12 years.

Zeenat closed her eyes momentarily, letting the weight of those words settle.

Twelve years.

Twelve years of voices filled the airwaves. Twelve years of creating waves of change. Twelve years of testimonials of transformed lives. Twelve years of homesickness and nostalgia in the form of a radio station.

But was it ever about a radio station, or has it always been about women who had been told, for generations, to hush? And who, one by one, found the power of their voices in Radio Bundelkhand, which carried their questions, ideas, and demands.

And the beauty about finding the power of your voice is—once you have spoken, you do not go back to silence.

Not after 12 years. Not ever. ■

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The Missing Frequency: Amplifying Women's Voices in Climate Change Policies



Women-led discussions bridge the gender gap in climate policies

In the context of climate change, an often overlooked part is gender. And the numbers are striking. According to a 2023 report by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), women and children are 14 times more likely to lose their lives during natural disasters compared to their male counterparts. For women from rural and marginalised communities, climate change beyond an abstraction; it is an everyday reality they face directly. Yet, despite being majorly responsible for agriculture, water collection, and household energy, women continue to face unimaginable social and economic inequalities. This exclusion is not just unfair—it is damaging. When women are absent from decision-making spaces and when their lived experiences are disregarded in climate strategies, policies risk becoming disconnected from the realities on the ground.

This is where community media, particularly radio, comes into action to bridge this gap and amplify women's voices to enhance community resilience.

Globally, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has implemented gender equity through the Enhanced Lima Work Programme and the Gender Action Plan (GAP), which mandate the integration of gender considerations into all climate policies. The recent CoP29 held in Azerbaijan further reinforced these commitments, advocating for dedicated funding to gender-inclusive climate initiatives and clearer guidelines on embedding gender in climate communication strategies. These international frameworks highlight the critical role of communication in ensuring that women are not just recipients but active participants in climate action.

In India, national climate policies acknowledge the importance of gender-sensitive approaches, yet they often lack concrete implementation strategies. The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and its State Action Plans (SAPCCs) highlight the importance of gender-sensitive approaches and provide a framework for

addressing climate risks. However, only 23% of India's climate policies explicitly integrate gender issues, indicating a significant gap in policy implementation. Additionally, while the Community Radio Policy (2006) has been instrumental in supporting local media platforms, their potential in climate communication remains underutilised in the climate communication landscape. This example illustrates the need for policies to move beyond mere recognition to tangible action.


Operating across 150 villages, Radio Bundelkhand has successfully incorporated women's voices into the climate discourse. Its participatory approach ensures that rural women are not just passive listeners but co-creators of content. Programmes like *Shubh Kal* focus on sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and climate-resilient livelihoods, with over 1,000 women trained in climate leadership and media literacy. The station's communication model employs community radio reporters to act as a bridge between the farming community, scientists, and policymakers, enhancing community knowledge and voices on climate change impacts. The power of community radio lies in its ability to connect global climate priorities with local realities. Women in Bundelkhand, like Rekha Devi, a smallholder farmer, have transformed their agricultural practices after engaging with climate programming on Radio Bundelkhand. Her story is one among many, illustrating how community-led initiatives can drive behavioural change at scale. Collaborations with organisations like UN Women and organisations that back it, like L'Oréal or World Bank, have further strengthened the station's gender-inclusive programming, integrating expert insights with grassroots knowledge.

To scale such initiatives, policies must provide tangible support for community-driven solutions. Dedicated funding for gender-responsive community media is essential for establishing clear benchmarks for tracking gender inclusion in climate communication and integrating digital tools to expand audience reach. Government policies, international climate funds, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes must allocate financial resources specifically for community media projects amplifying

women's voices in climate discussions. Without sustained investment, these platforms remain underfunded and unable to scale their operations. Funding should support training programmes for women broadcasters, provide technological upgrades for community radio stations, and enable content production that reflects the realities of women facing climate challenges. International frameworks such as the UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan and commitments from CoP29 present a crucial opportunity to institutionalise these measures, ensuring that local media platforms receive the global recognition and support they deserve.

While radio remains a vital medium in rural areas, the shift towards digital communication presents a new challenge. This digital chasm threatens to leave women from marginalised communities even farther behind. Climate communication strategies must incorporate mobile applications, interactive voice response (IVR) systems, and social media engagement strategies designed specifically for rural audiences. Digital integration can enhance the reach of community radio, allowing for real-time engagement and two-way communication in ways that traditional broadcasting alone cannot achieve.

Climate action that excludes women is neither complete nor effective. The exemplary work of Radio Bundelkhand continually demonstrates that elevating women's voices is the key to a resilient community. Gender inclusivity in climate communication is not just an ethical necessity but a practical solution to ensure that policy and funding transform good intentions into measurable impact.

If climate action is to be truly impactful, it must start with the people living through these challenges. 

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From Static to Strength: How a Radio Show Wove Hope into a Couple's Journey



Mannkunwar Vashnkar and Pramod with a variety of their bamboo products on display

In the drought-prone village of Makara, where survival often feels like a relentless struggle against natural elements, lives a couple, Mannkunwar Vashnkar and her husband, Pramod. Their story of resilience is rooted in the deepest contours of the Bundelkhand region. This is not a tale of grand policies or philanthropy; rather, it is a quiet, understated revolution led by a community radio station. Guided by a voice on the radio, this couple has made their mark in the arid land where the horizon often brings more uncertainty than rain.

Mannkunwar, a seventh-grade graduate, had barely crossed the threshold of her home except to marry Pramod, who left school after fifth grade. Even after marriage, Mannkunwar, who was not oblivious to hardship, faced a similar struggle, and their lives were characterised by a constant rhythm of hardship. Pramod would spend the early mornings searching for daily wage labour, and their evenings were filled with the challenge of making sense of the little he brought home. Nights were heavy with the weight of unfulfilled dreams. After more

than two decades of marriage and raising two bright-eyed souls, this couple earned as little as ₹200-₹300 a day, barely enough to cover basic needs, let alone their children's education or any emergencies.

In their attempt to break free from this cycle, they took a loan of ₹10,000 from a self-help group, hoping to revive their agricultural efforts. Unfortunately, this aspiration was dashed by another failed monsoon. Debt hung over them as dark clouds, blocking any glimmer of hope they had.

Debt weighed on them as heavily as the unyielding sun, and with two children to raise, their prospects seemed bleak. When hope appeared elusive, Pramod's father suggested they 'tune into Radio Bundelkhand'. Initially, this phrase seemed as unassuming as the radio itself, but the static of the radio soon gave way to something far more profound. Radio Bundelkhand spoke directly to people like Mannkunwar and Pramod — artisans and labourers, mothers and fathers, and women navigating the challenges of invisibility and endurance. What followed was a programme that encouraged listeners to rediscover

forgotten crafts and local skills that had been abandoned as demand dwindled and markets shifted. This particular show reignited memories of the family's old craft: bamboo weaving. For Mannkunwar and Pramod, it was a craft their ancestors had practiced, but the radio made them see it anew—not as a relic of the past, but as a potential lifeline.

Inspired by the show and driven by the hope of new possibilities, Pramod reached out to Radio Bundelkhand's office and connected with Tara Gram, a livelihood initiative that offered training in bamboo artistry.

At Tara Gram, Mannkunwar and Pramod participated in training programmes that taught them to craft baskets, photo frames, pen stands, and decorative items. However, it was not just a technical education; it also provided a new perspective and a tangible yet transformative development within: confidence.

For Mannkunwar, this was a turning point. This training represented more than just a source of income; it was an escape from the confines of invisibility. Stepping beyond the confines of her home, she found herself in roles traditionally reserved for men. Encouraged to take the lead in aspects of design and sales, she learned to engage with markets, navigate logistics, and manage the business alongside Pramod. For a woman conditioned to be invisible in decision-making, this was a quiet revolution.

As they crafted bamboo products, they also created a new narrative for their family. As their confidence grew, so did their income.



The different bamboo products the couple weave, which has improved their livelihood



The couple presenting their product to the then chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan

The couple now earn between ₹15,000 and ₹20,000 a month, occasionally reaching ₹25,000. Their children began attending better schools—one in Gwalior and another in Prithvipur. Although the burden of poverty did not completely disappear, it became lighter, no longer serving as an anchor but a reminder of what they had overcome. Opportunities that once seemed impossible were now within reach.

For Mannkunwar, seeing her children thrive is a dream realised. 'I was hesitant at first,' she says, 'but this work has given me purpose. Women can and should be an equal part of every step.' Pramod, too, reflects on their journey with quiet pride. 'We are no longer worried about tomorrow. The radio gave us more than ideas; it gave us the courage to believe we could change.'

For Mannkunwar and Pramod, this journey was not just about bamboo or business. It was about reclaiming agency in a world that had often denied them even the smallest measure of control. Their story is a testament not only to the revival of a craft and the economic uplift but also to the power of communication—tailored, inclusive, and empathetic—to unlock the dreams of many. Radio Bundelkhand did not merely inform; it included. It wrapped hope in practical wisdom and amplified the voices that had been silenced by circumstance, broadcasting them until they echoed in the hearts of those willing to listen. □

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बदलाव की गूंज: रेडियो से सजे सपनों के रंग

साज-सज्जा के सामान ने संवार दी पति-पत्नी की जिंदगी

मानकुंवर वंशकार और प्रमोद वंशकार (पत्नी-पति), उम्र 40 व 45 वर्ष, ग्राम पंचायत मकारा, तहसील निवाड़ी, जिला टीकमगढ़ (मध्य प्रदेश) के निवासी हैं। मानकुंवर सातवीं तक पढ़ी हैं और प्रमोद पांचवीं तक। इनके परिवार में दो बच्चों सहित कुल चार सदस्य हैं। इनका व्यवसाय बांस से बने साज-सज्जा का सामान बनाना और बेचना है। दोनों की अनुमानित मासिक आय 15 से 20 हजार रुपये है।

प्रमोद ने पांचवीं और मानकुंवर ने सातवीं तक पढ़ाई की है। उनकी शादी को करीब 20 साल हो गए हैं। प्रमोद मजदूरी करते थे और मानकुंवर एक गृहिणी थीं। शादी के शुरुआती दिनों से ही दोनों आर्थिक तंगी से जूझ रहे थे।

बुंदेलखंड के सूखे और खेती की विफलता ने उनकी मुश्किलें और बढ़ा दीं। परिवार की आर्थिक स्थिति कमजोर थी, और मजदूरी से घर का खर्चा मुश्किल से निकल पाता था। बच्चों की शिक्षा और पोषण जैसे बुनियादी जरूरतों को पूरा करना एक चुनौती बन चुका था।



मानकुंवर वंशकार और प्रमोद अपने विभिन्न प्रकार के बांस उत्पादों के प्रदर्शन के साथ

मानकुंवर और प्रमोद दोनों ही अपने परिवार को संभालने के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे थे। प्रमोद दिनभर दिहाड़ी मजदूरी करते, जिससे मुश्किल से ₹200-₹300 की आमदनी होती थी। हालांकि, काम की अनिश्चितता के कारण महीने में केवल 15-20 दिन ही मजदूरी मिल पाती थी।

खेती का सहारा भी सूखे के चलते छिन गया। स्वयं सहायता समूह से 10,000 रुपये का कर्ज लेकर खेती करने की कोशिश की, लेकिन बारिश न होने से फसल बर्बाद हो गई। बच्चों की शिक्षा, पोषण और स्वास्थ्य पर इसका गंभीर असर पड़ा। इलाज के लिए भी पैसे जुटाना पहाड़ जैसा काम था।

परिस्थितियों से हार न मानते हुए, प्रमोद के पिता ने उन्हें रेडियो बुंदेलखंड सुनने की सलाह दी। इस सुझाव ने उनकी

जिंदगी में नया मोड़ ला दिया। रेडियो पर आजीविका कार्यक्रम सुनने के दौरान उन्हें महसूस हुआ कि पारंपरिक हुनर को फिर से अपनाकर वे अपनी आर्थिक स्थिति में सुधार ला सकते हैं।

कार्यक्रम में ऐसे उदाहरण साझा किए गए जो महिलाओं और पुरुषों दोनों को अपने संसाधनों का उपयोग कर आजीविका के नए साधन अपनाने के लिए प्रेरित करते थे। यह संवाद न केवल व्यावसायिक समाधान प्रदान करता था बल्कि इसमें महिलाओं की भूमिका और भागीदारी को भी महत्व दिया गया।

तारा ग्राम से ट्रेनिंग और नई शुरुआत

रेडियो बुंदेलखंड के माध्यम से प्रमोद और मानकुंवर तारा ग्राम से जुड़ गए। यहां उन्हें स्वयं सहायता समूह का हिस्सा बनाया गया और बांस से बनी वस्तुएं बनाने की ट्रेनिंग दी गई। मानकुंवर, जो शुरू में झिझकती थीं, ने इस ट्रेनिंग में न केवल भाग लिया बल्कि कच्चे माल की व्यवस्था से लेकर तैयार उत्पाद बेचने तक के काम में सक्रिय भूमिका निभाई।

इस दौरान उन्हें सिखाया गया कि कैसे पारंपरिक शिल्प को आधुनिक बाजार की जरूरतों के अनुसार ढाला जा सकता है। तारा ग्राम ने उन्हें बाजारों तक पहुंचने और उत्पादों की सही कीमत तय करने की जानकारी भी दी। यह पूरी प्रक्रिया मानकुंवर और प्रमोद के लिए नई संभावनाओं का द्वार खोलने जैसी थी।

ट्रेनिंग पूरी करने के बाद प्रमोद और मानकुंवर ने बांस से डलिया, फोटो फ्रेम, पेन स्टैंड और नाइट लैंप बनाना शुरू किया। पति-पत्नी मिलकर हर महीने ₹15,000-₹20,000 की आमदनी करते हैं। कभी-कभी यह ₹25,000 तक पहुंच जाती है।

मानकुंवर बताती हैं कि पहले महिलाओं के लिए घर की दहलीज से बाहर कदम रखना कठिन था, लेकिन रेडियो बुंदेलखंड ने उन्हें आत्मनिर्भर बनने का हौसला दिया। उनका कहना है कि महिलाओं को भी व्यवसाय में समान भागीदारी देनी चाहिए।

प्रमोद कहते हैं कि अब वे अपने बच्चों को अच्छे स्कूलों में भेज पा रहे हैं। एक बेटा ग्वालियर में और दूसरा पृथ्वीपुर में पढ़ रहा है। परिवार की जरूरतें पूरी हो रही हैं और भविष्य पहले से कहीं उज्ज्वल नजर आता है।

संवाद से बदलाव

रेडियो बुंदेलखंड की यह कहानी बताती है कि कैसे स्थानीय स्तर पर समावेशी संवाद न केवल जानकारी देता है बल्कि सशक्तिकरण का माध्यम बनता है। मानकुंवर और प्रमोद की सफलता इस बात का प्रमाण है कि जब महिलाएं और पुरुष समान रूप से संवाद और निर्णय प्रक्रियाओं में शामिल होते हैं, तो बदलाव की दिशा खुद-ब-खुद तय हो जाती है। □

Nampura: A Journey Towards Self-Reliance Through Organic Farming



Women in Nampura prepare organic compost, fostering sustainable farming practices

In the village of Nampura, women had always worked in the fields, but their lives were largely confined to their homes and farmland. They hesitated to speak up, refrained from stepping out, and had no influence in major decisions. Their daily routines revolved around household chores and farming, while a savings group, set up in their name, existed solely for financial security rather than empowerment. They had never truly been in charge of their own futures.

Then, one ordinary day, everything began to change. The team from Radio Bundelkhand arrived in the village under a sky dotted with light clouds, just as the women were busy with their daily chores. When asked about their savings and how they planned to use them, the women had no clear answers—

perhaps because they had never considered it before. However, one thing was certain: they were all farmers. And that is where the conversation began.

The radio team introduced the concept of organic farming to the group. At first, it seemed complex. Farming without chemical fertilisers and pesticides—was that even possible? But as the discussion progressed, a new thought took root—a realisation that they could do something different, something that would not only preserve their soil but also yield healthier crops.

Rammoorti Prajapati, the head of the savings group, took the lead. Alongside other women, she decided to embrace organic farming. They named their collective the 'Organic Agriculture Self-Help Group' and, for the first time, sowed wheat without chemical



A mother and daughter cultivate their land, securing a self-reliant future

fertilisers. It was a bold step, a leap into the unknown.

The first harvest was modest, with the yield lower than expected, yet their determination remained unwavering. The biggest breakthrough came when they sold their organic wheat at a higher price than conventionally grown crops. There was a market for chemical-free grains, and they were onto something significant.

Radio Bundelkhand did not stop there. Through its network, the women received technical training from the agriculture department. Terms like Ghanjeevamrit, Jeevamrit, and Dashparni Ark—which once seemed foreign to them—soon became an integral part of their farming routine. Gradually, they mastered the techniques of organic cultivation.

However, this transformation was about more than just farming. Women who once remained silent within their homes began to speak with confidence. They started sharing their experiences and engaging in meaningful discussions. Those who had once hesitated to participate in village meetings were now leading conversations on the benefits of organic farming.

Three years have passed since this transformation began. Today, these women

are not only safeguarding their farms but also their self-respect. They are no longer identified as merely 'farmers' wives' or 'housewives'; instead they have carved out new identities for themselves as organic farmers, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers.

Radio Bundelkhand, through its *Shubh Kal* programme and various initiatives, has amplified their voices, reaching households where women still believed that agricultural change was a man's domain. But Nampura's women proved otherwise.

Today, they are more self-reliant than ever. This year, they have resolved to expand their organic farming practices. They understand that the road ahead will not be easy, but they are determined to walk it on their own. They will shape their future—on their own terms.

Radio Bundelkhand is not just a radio station; it has become the catalyst of change. The women of Nampura are living proof of this transformation. □

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नमपुरा: जैविक खेती से आत्मनिर्भरता की ओर

नमपुरा गाँव की औरतें हमेशा से अपने खेतों में काम करती थीं, लेकिन उनकी दुनिया खेतों और घर के भीतर ही सिमटी हुई थी। बातचीत में झिझक, घर से बाहर निकलने में संकोच और बड़े फैसलों में कोई भूमिका नहीं। सुबह-शाम चूल्हा-चौका और खेत, यही उनकी जिंदगी थी। उनके नाम से एक बचत समूह जरूर बना था, लेकिन वह भी बस पैसे जोड़ने और भविष्य की चिंता में गुम था। वे अपने ही जीवन के फैसले लेने में सक्षम नहीं थीं।

फिर एक दिन, रेडियो बुंदेलखंड की टीम उनके गाँव पहुँची। वह एक साधारण-सा दिन था, जब आसमान में हल्के बादल थे और औरतें हमेशा की तरह अपने कामों में व्यस्त थीं। जब टीम ने उनसे पूछा कि वे अपनी जमा की हुई पूँजी का क्या करेंगी, तो उनके पास कोई जवाब नहीं था। शायद उन्होंने कभी इस पर सोचा ही नहीं था। लेकिन बातचीत के दौरान यह बात जरूर सामने आई कि वे सभी खेती करती हैं। बस, यहीं से बात शुरू हुई।



नमपुरा में महिलाएं टिकाऊ कृषि पद्धतियों को बढ़ावा देते हुए जैविक खाद तैयार करती हैं

रेडियो की टीम ने उन्हें जैविक खेती के बारे में बताया। पहले तो यह सब उन्हें बहुत जटिल लगा। रासायनिक खाद और कीटनाशकों के बिना खेती? क्या यह संभव भी है? लेकिन जैसे-जैसे बातचीत आगे बढ़ी, उनके भीतर एक नया विचार आकार लेने लगा। यह विचार कि वे अपने खेतों में कुछ अलग कर सकती हैं, कुछ ऐसा जो उनकी मिट्टी को जिंदा रखे और उनकी फसल को बेहतर बनाए।

राममूर्ति प्रजापति, जो समूह की अध्यक्ष थीं, ने बाकी महिलाओं के साथ मिलकर जैविक खेती अपनाने का फैसला किया। उन्होंने अपने समूह का नाम “जैविक कृषि स्वयं सहायता समूह” रखा और पहली बार अपने खेतों में बिना रासायनिक खाद के गोहूँ उगाने का साहस किया। यह उनके लिए किसी नए सफर की शुरुआत थी।

पहली फसल कुछ खास नहीं रही। पैदावार कम थी, लेकिन उनकी मेहनत और भरोसा बरकरार रहा। सबसे बड़ी बात यह हुई कि जब उन्होंने अपना गोहूँ बेचा, तो उसकी कीमत आम गोहूँ से ज्यादा मिली। जैविक अनाज की मांग थी, और इसका दाम बेहतर था। यह उनके लिए एक छोटा-सा लेकिन महत्वपूर्ण संकेत था कि वे सही राह पर हैं।

रेडियो बुंदेलखंड ने उनकी इस यात्रा को यहीं नहीं छोड़ा। कृषि विभाग के जरिए उन्होंने इन महिलाओं को जैविक खेती की तकनीकी ट्रेनिंग दिलवाई। घनजीवामृत, जीवामृत, 10 परणी अर्कक ये शब्द, जो पहले उनके लिए बिल्कुल नए थे, अब उनकी रोजमर्रा की खेती का हिस्सा बन गए। धीरे-धीरे, वे इस नई पद्धति में माहिर होने लगीं।

लेकिन जैविक खेती ने उन्हें सिर्फ उनके खेतों में नहीं, बल्कि उनके जीवन में भी बदलाव ला दिया। वे जो कभी चुपचाप अपने घरों में सीमित रहती थीं, अब खुलकर बोलने लगीं। वे अपने अनुभव साझा करने लगीं। पहले जो महिलाएं गाँव की चौपाल में जाकर बात करने से भी कतराती थीं, वे अब जैविक खेती के फायदों पर चर्चा करती थीं।

तीन साल हो गए हैं इस बदलाव को, और अब यह महिलाएं सिर्फ अपनी खेती ही नहीं, बल्कि अपने आत्मसम्मान की भी रक्षा कर रही हैं। वे अब खुद को खेतों में ही नहीं, बल्कि गाँव की निर्णय प्रक्रिया में भी शामिल देखती हैं। उनकी पहचान अब सिर्फ “किसान की पत्नी” या “गृहिणी” तक सीमित नहीं, वे अब स्वयं एक नई पहचान के साथ खड़ी हैं—कृषि जैविक किसान, व्यवसायी, और अपने भाग्य की निर्माता।

रेडियो बुंदेलखंड ने अपने कार्यक्रम “शुभ कल” और अन्य अभियानों के जरिए इस बदलाव को आगे बढ़ाया। इसकी आवाज उन घरों तक पहुँची, जहाँ औरतें अब भी सोचती थीं कि खेती में बदलाव लाना सिर्फ पुरुषों का काम है। लेकिन नमपुरा की इन महिलाओं ने यह धारणा बदल दी।

आज, वे पहले से ज्यादा आत्मनिर्भर हैं। इस साल उन्होंने तय किया है कि वे अपने खेतों में जैविक खेती का दायरा और बढ़ाएंगी। वे जानती हैं कि राह आसान नहीं है, लेकिन वे यह भी जानती हैं कि यह राह अब उनकी अपनी है। वे इसे खुद तय करेंगी, खुद चलेंगी, और खुद अपने भविष्य का निर्माण करेंगी।

रेडियो बुंदेलखंड सिर्फ एक रेडियो स्टेशन नहीं, बल्कि बदलाव की आवाज बन चुका है। और नमपुरा की ये महिलाएं उस आवाज का सबसे जीवंत प्रमाण हैं। □



Glimpses from Bundeli Idol 2.0



अपना रेडियो अपनी बातें

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AN EVENT WITH A CAUSE

Celebration of Bundeli Musical Heritage **BUNDELI IDOL 2.0**

13 February 2025
Deen Dayal Upadhyay Auditorium, Jhansi

WINNERS



Amit Kumar Ahirwar



Keshraj Badal



Ramrati Kushwaha

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