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# **Income Inequality and Rural-Urban Divide: A Mobile Vaani Network Campaign**

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October 2013

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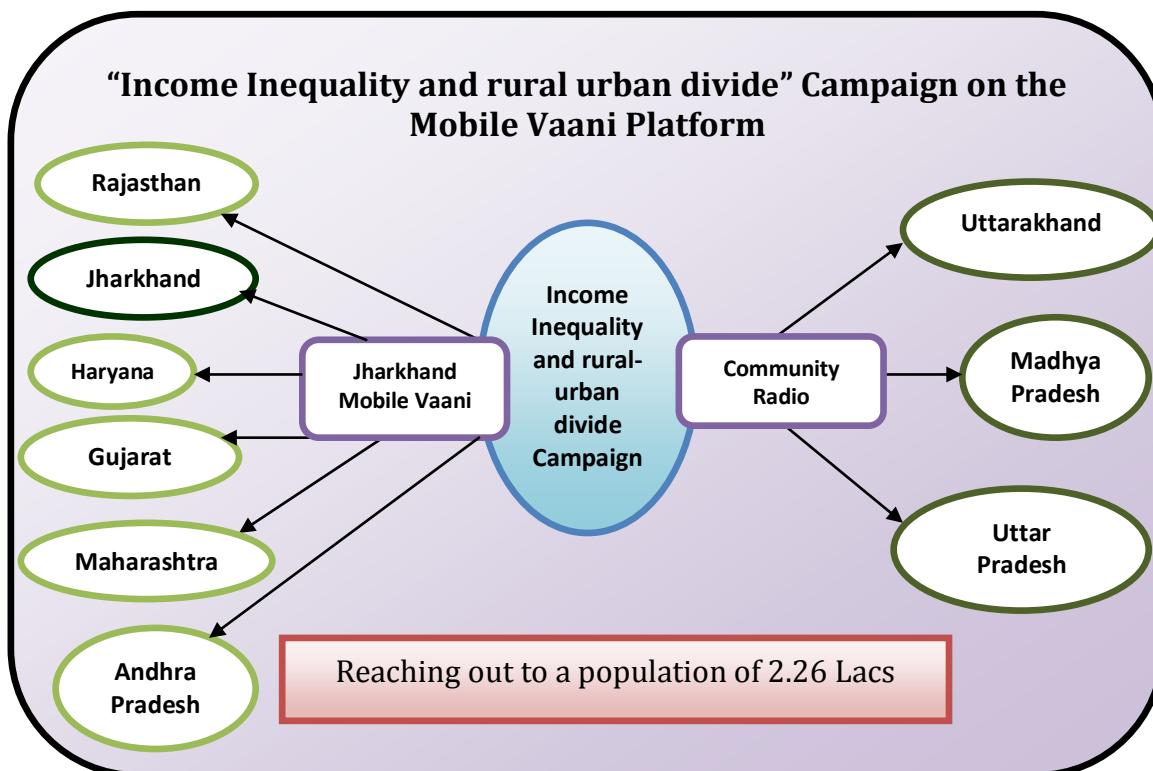
October 2013

Gram Vaani Community Media Pvt. Ltd.

## Executive Summary

Gram Vaani conducted a campaign on Income Inequality and Rural-urban divide through Jharkhand Mobile Vaani and four community radio station partners from Uttrakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The campaign was organized by Oxfam and was executed through the Mobile Vaani partnership program. The campaign started on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and went on until 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The campaign aimed to focus on the condition of income inequality in the rural regions of India and the issues this inequality has given rise to. Through the campaign callers from across four states of India expressed their concerns and views on the issues of income inequality and rural-urban divide, along with sharing their experiences on the situation.

Along with being active on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (JMV), this campaign was also taken up by four Mobile Vaani partner CR stations - Kumaon Vaani Community Radio situated in Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand, Henvalvani Community Radio situated in Chamba, Uttarakhand, Radio Dhadkan situated in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh and Lalitlokvani situated in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh. JMV and CR stations ran promos asking people about the reasons, implications and solutions regarding income inequality and rural-urban digital divide. A range of different activities such as doing live broadcasts and program production around this issue were also done to solicit people's opinion and initiate a discussion in the community about the issue.



JMV got calls from Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh apart from Jharkhand.

## 1. Introduction

Jharkhand Mobile Vaani has since the last one year emerged as a common platform for the people of Jharkhand to express their views, share their experiences and address their queries/questions/doubts on a myriad of issues they encounter on a day to day basis in their lives. In this capacity the callers and listeners of JMV have actively taken up issues pertaining to gaps in the service delivery systems of various government schemes, lack of awareness on social issues, better understanding of agricultural practices and others issues.

Gram Vaani conducted a campaign on Income Inequality and Rural-urban divide through Jharkhand Mobile Vaani and four Mobile Vaani partner CR stations - Kumaon Vaani Community Radio situated in Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand, Henvalvani Community Radio situated in Chamba, Uttarakhand, Radio Dhadkan situated in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh and Lalitlokvani situated in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh. The campaign was organized by Oxfam and was executed through the Mobile Vaani partnership program. The campaign started on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and went on until 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The campaign aimed to focus on the condition of income inequality in the rural regions of India and the issues this inequality has given rise to. Through the campaign callers from across four states of India expressed their concerns and views on the issues of income inequality and rural-urban divide, along with sharing their experiences on the situation.

### Statistics related to the campaign

**Duration** – 9<sup>th</sup> October – 26<sup>th</sup> October

**Number of items published** – 297

**Total number of calls** – 34,324

**Outreach population** – 2,26,725

**Community Radio partners** – Kumaon Vaani Community Radio, Uttarakhand, Henvalvani Community Radio, Uttarakhand, Radio Dhadkan, Madhya Pradesh and Lalitlokvani, Uttar Pradesh.

**Districts in Jharkhand from where callers participated on JMV** – Dhanbad, Bokaro, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Chatra, Dumka, Deoghar, Ranchi, Khunti, Koderma, Latehar, Lohardaga, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Jamtara, Gumla, and Ramgarh.

**Other states from where callers participated on JMV** – Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

JMV and CR stations ran promos asking people about the reasons, implications and solutions regarding income inequality and rural-urban digital divide.

Major objectives of the campaign were:

- To solicit people's responses on the reasons of income inequality and rural-urban divide
- To elicit people's expressions regarding the implications of income inequality and rural-urban divide
- To provide common ground for discussion on these issues in their communities and suggest solutions to overcome these issues

## **2. Campaign process**

For soliciting content for this campaign in the beginning, promos were prepared on the different aspects of the issue. In total three issue-based promos were prepared and played.

Promo Number	Promo Topic
1.	Reasons for income inequality and rural-urban digital divide
2.	Implications of inequality and rural-urban digital divide
3.	Solutions offered by the callers

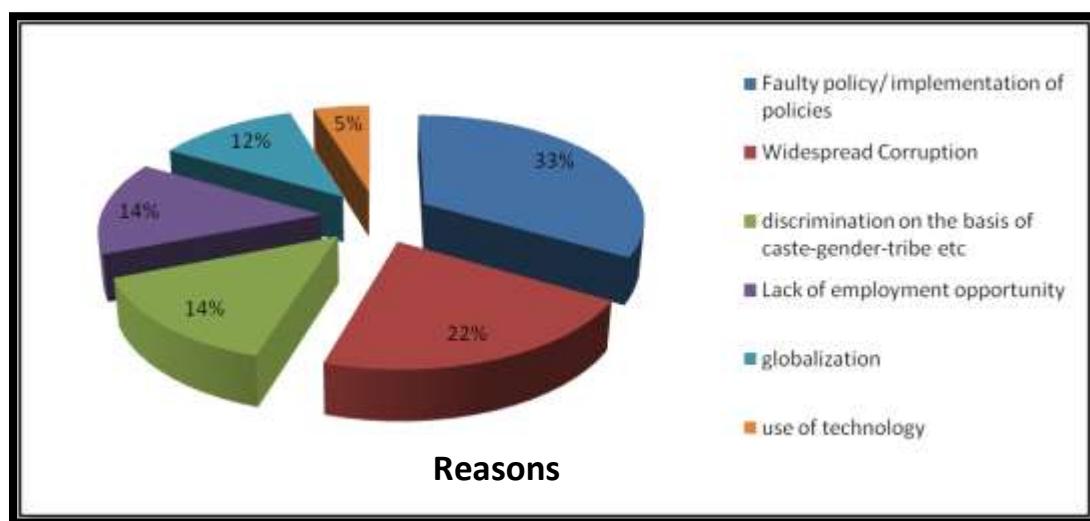
As a response to these promos, the content on JMV came in the form of opinions, information and entertainment. The people from the community also collected case studies and interviews of the people during the course of this campaign. Daily acknowledgement calls were given to content contributors on JMV thanking them for their efforts for participating in this campaign.

Similarly, the CR stations ran promos for soliciting responses from people on this issue. Additionally, they did live sessions by opening their phone lines for people to call in live on-air to have a discussion on this topic usually with a local expert. They also prepared a program stitching the feedback from across the Mobile Vaani network together which they broadcasted on their respective FM channels.

### 3. Community Feedback and Major Findings

#### Reasons for Income Inequality

33 percent callers felt that the policies at the ground level are either faulty in nature that they are unable to help people in income generation or are not implemented properly that they cause income inequality. Shailendra Sinha from Dumka feels that the Jharkhand Government has closed its eyes towards the development of the locals as there is no effective government policy to uplift the standard of living of the local people. He also felt that a lot of local talent is migrating out of the state as there are no effective policies encouraging the rural and tribal crafts of Jharkhand.



An additional 22 percent people felt that widespread corruption is to be blamed for the rising income inequality because the corrupt people make more money, thereby getting richer while the poor who have to pay money as bribes to get their work done get impoverished. Around 14 percent callers highlighted that discrimination exists in their society in the lines of caste, gender and tribe because of which these groups are excluded. Another 14 percent people attributed lack of adequate employment opportunities at the village level causing severe income inequality. A lot of people in the villages of Jharkhand, especially the tribal population create home based products such as baskets made of cane etc. for consumption at a household level, as many as 12 percent people felt globalization to be driver behind the failure of such small scale home based employment of village people since more durable plastic goods are available at cheaper prices, and no one wants to pay more for a local produce that are less durable and relatively more expensive. Lastly, 5 percent people felt that the use of technology has led to an increase in income inequality since those tasks that were done by humans are now done in a more efficient manner by using machines. Those who have more money can afford to have machines at their disposal, earning more money, those who

can't afford machines, are also out of the jobs because of the machines being able to do their work.

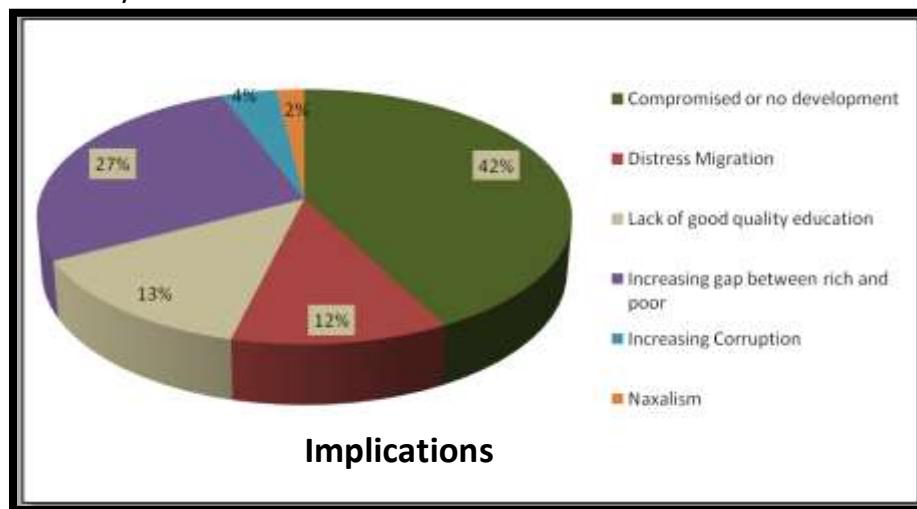
The income inequality cycle

Meenakshi from Hazaribagh called up to highlight that illiteracy and lack of good quality education is the main reason behind income inequality. In her message she elaborates as to how knowing English language has become a necessity in getting good jobs in the state, further adding that there are not good enough resources in the state who can teach good English to students. The schools which have good teachers are very expensive and the rural poor find it very difficult to shell out that amount of money to educate their children in such schools. Further lack of employment opportunities in the state leads to people migrating out of the state and being forced to work on lower minimum wages and hence exploited. She also sheds light on the state of corruption in Jharkhand. She concludes her message by saying that due to all these reasons the rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer, by the passing day.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/72822/>

### **Implications of Income Inequality**

While narrating their experiences, the callers expressed that the income inequality aggravates the distress of the rural poor in many ways. As many as 42 percent people felt that ever since Jharkhand has gained independent statehood there has been no development in the state. Further, 12 percent people reported distress migration to earn more money.



K.B. Sahay and Girish Chandra Verma from Deoghar called up to express their opinion. Verma shares that earlier when Jharkhand was a part of Bihar, it was said that Bihar is a

rich state but its people are poor. So, when Jharkhand was given statehood, hopes for more employment opportunities had risen among people but all these hopes got thrashed due to constant political instability in the state. No government could complete its full term in the entire 12-13 years of creation of Jharkhand as a state. Additionally, those who made the government just did the paperwork and no activity/work was observed on ground due to widespread corruption. Many ministers still have corruption cases lodged against them. Due to this situation there no fundamental facilities were made available at the village level be it good quality education or health related services. This compelled the youth of the state to migrate to states like Gujarat and Haryana for work or to adopt a naxal (maoist) ideology, as reported by 2 percent people.

**Naxalism on rise: Income inequality among one of the key factors**

Vipul Hazari from Mahuda, Baghmara Block, Dhanbad called up to express his opinion on income inequality in Jharkhand. He said that income inequality in the state has arisen due to lack of employment opportunities, for which people have to migrate out of Jharkhand and illiteracy. He further says that, as an implication to income inequality, lack of development in the state, a lot of agitated people have turned towards the maosit ideology. There has been a remarkable rise in naxalism because of this reason. He requests the government to take proper steps to avert this situation.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/74230/>

### **Solutions offered by the Callers**

The callers and participants suggested certain ways to deal with the situation.

- Callers voiced the need for better policies for stopping distress migration by providing employment and promoting self employment and tribal products.
- Further, people felt that investment in creating better rural infrastructure such as schools, hospitals etc. would save the poor people's money as they won't incur out of pocket expenditure to pay for private services that have better infrastructure and facilities.
- Callers felt that better implementation of government schemes would reduce inequality because the poor would receive their entitlements and dues which is not happening in the current scenario. As an example, many people who have job cards don't get employment when asked for, they don't get unemployment allowance, when they receive employment, they don't receive their wages. Better implementation of government schemes would help in checking such cases.
- Some of the other solutions suggested by the callers also include encouraging rural handicrafts and entrepreneurship, better family planning and population control and better socio-economic education and awareness.

**Better education, employment needed along with removal of discrimination from society**

Ramesh Kumar Maity from Chaas, Bokaro Steel City tells about the vicious circle of income inequality. He says that when a child is young, he should be given the best of everything – education, knowledge, morals etc. so when the child grows up due to good quality education, the child will grow up to be an intelligent person with a great job and income and keeping up with this standard, the person will educate his children utilizing the best of resources. He further says that if the beginning of something would be good then the entire process would be fruitful. In a similar manner, a little inequality isn't the problem, the problem is the stark inequality based on class, caste and tribe and societal discrimination norms for these. To end inequality in every way, all of us need to understand each other and work towards development in unity. Until the inter class/caste/tribe discrimination is not removed from the society, income inequality would remain.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/71614/>

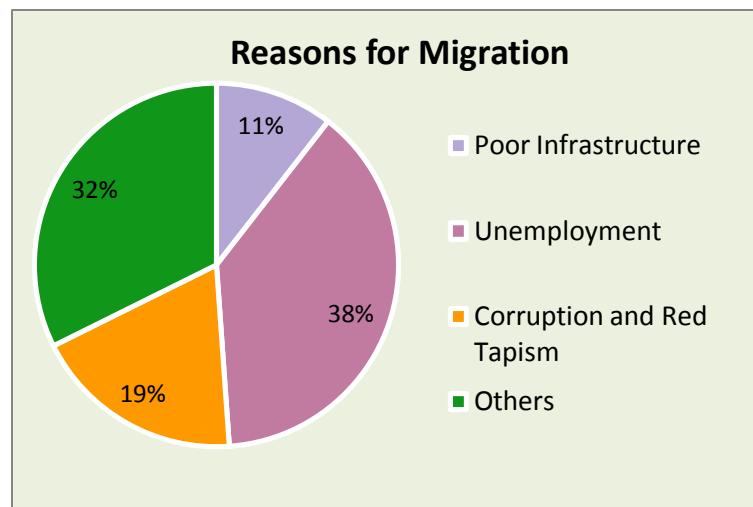
### **Highlighting the Rural-urban divide**

Distress migration, from rural to urban areas, is one of principal implications of the income inequality and it forces thousands of family to migrate either seasonally or yearly, in search of work and livelihood. Many migrant labourers who are resident of the states in which the campaign has been aired, called across from different states and places where they have migrated in search of work. According to them bad roads, lack of health facilities, poor infrastructure, no electricity, lack of quality-education, faulty implementation of government schemes, are the major reasons for migration, beside dearth of livelihood opportunities and unemployment. The problems echoed by them are also related to migrant workers' living condition and available health facilities and problems faced at work.

### **Major findings and observations:**

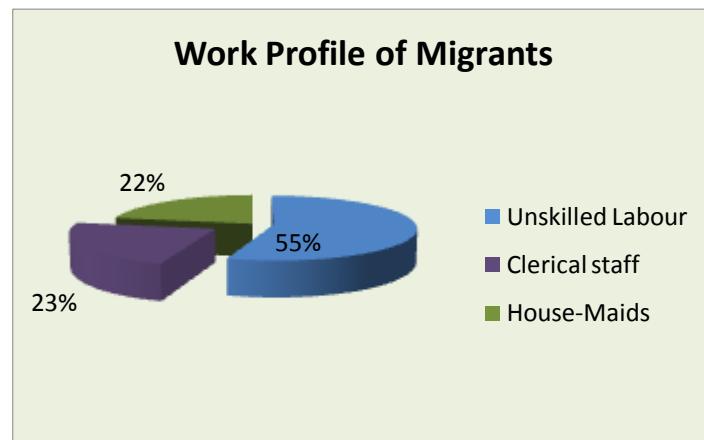
- 11 percent of the callers cited poor infrastructure - roads, electricity, water, education, as the major reason behind migration, while 38 percent held unemployment and consequent poverty as the prime reason behind distressed migration. 19 percent of all the callers blamed ineffective implementation of government schemes and associated red-tapism and corruption as the major contributing factors for which people are forced to seek livelihood through migration.

- Rest of the participants cited reasons like displacement due to construction of dam, mining etc, directionless youth and their trend of not willing to work in villages, hostile social environment for entrepreneurship and farming, lack of awareness about government schemes and entitlements, uneducated youth population, unstable

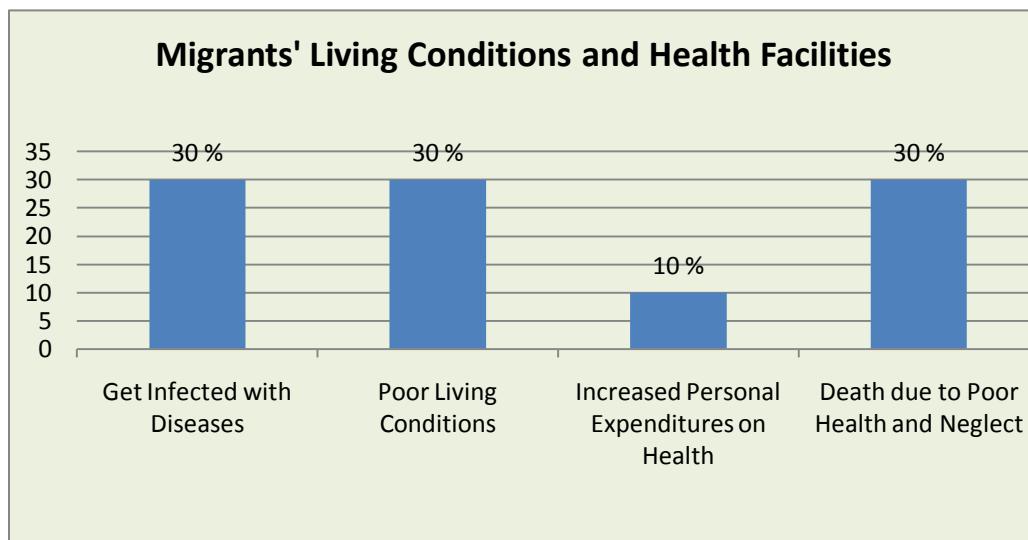


Government and rise of Naxalism, erosion of traditional employment skills, influence of middlemen and family and peer pressure to be contributing factors for distressed migration

- Some of the major trends as observed by the people suggested that educated youth migrate for better employment opportunity, while the poorest of the poor belonging to the tribal and schedule caste community mostly migrate to fight hunger and poverty. As many as 40 percent of the respondents held dire poverty responsible for their migration.
- 55 percent of the respondents migrate to work as unskilled-labourers in brick kiln, tea gardens and for casual labour. 23 percent migrate to work as driver, accountant, watchman or to work in call centres or supervisors at construction sites. 22 percent of the respondents mentioned that women migrate to work as housemaids.

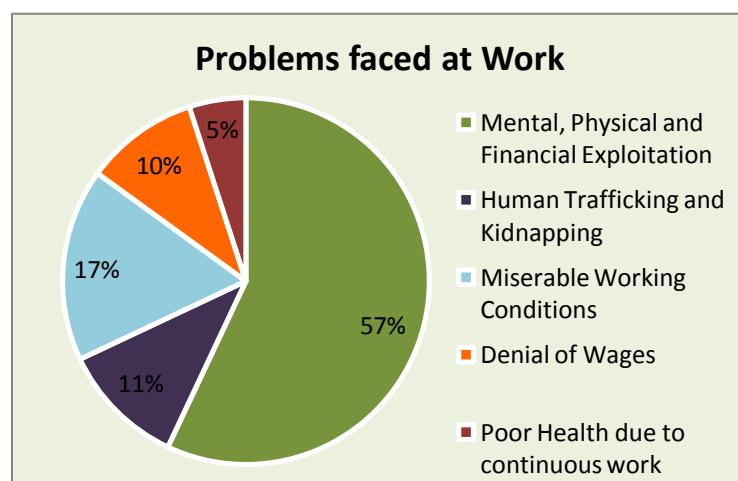


- 30 percent of the participants mentioned that the living conditions at the place of migration could be as bad as staying on foot-path at times. 30 percent of them yet again stressed that lack of health facilities and lack of spending capacity from their side often have sever health consequences related to migration. AIDS has been



highlighted as major concern for the migrants, who often lack the knowledge about it and hence fall prey to this deadly disease.

- 57 percent of the participants mentioned about physical, mental and financial exploitation as the major issue they face after migration. 17 percent specifically mentioned about over-time work with less payment, lack of proper food and forced labour as experienced by them.
- 11 percent of the contributors mentioned about human trafficking and kidnapping as a major reason for concern related to migration
- 10 percent of the migrants who participated in the campaign complaint about not getting their due wages
- Major issues highlighted by the caller regarding government schemes include, lack of awareness, corruption, delay in wage-payment, not giving work in writing, involvement of middle-men, unstable government, improper monitoring and implementation. 10 percent of the participants, including



government officials, social workers and community people although expressed that there are good government schemes in place to tackle migration. However a major chunk (28 percent) held faulty formulation and implementation of the existing schemes for migration induced by of unemployment and poverty.

**Some of the major suggestions provided by the caller to tackle this divide are as follows:**

**1. Government Schemes –**

- a. Proper implementation and monitoring of government schemes, including checks on corruption and interference by middle-men
- b. Knowledge dissemination and awareness building around the existing schemes

**2. Employment –**

- a. Creating employment for the educated youth
- b. Encouraging traditional skills and local entrepreneurship initiatives
- c. Building proper infrastructure for farming and agriculture
- d. Generating employment for unskilled-labourers in the existing and upcoming industries of the state

**3. Infrastructure –**

- a. Better infrastructure and accessibility towards basic services like education, drinking water, roads, electricity etc.
- b. Tackling problems related to mining and displacement

**4. Other –**

- a. Tackling issues related to naxalism
- b. Special schemes/ services for towards the tribal and scheduled caste communities

## 4. Mobile Vaani Network partnership

Along with being active on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (JMV), this campaign was also taken up by four Mobile Vaani partner CR stations - Kumaon Vaani Community Radio situated in Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand, Henvalvani Community Radio situated in Chamba, Uttarakhand, Radio Dhadkan situated in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh and Lalitlokvani situated in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh. These CR stations ran promos asking people about the reasons, implications and solutions regarding income inequality and rural-urban digital divide. A range of different activities such as doing live broadcasts and program production around this issue were also done to solicit people's opinion and initiate a discussion in the community about the issue.

### Community Radio Kumaon Vaani 90.4MHz

**Locale** – Supi Village, Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand; **Outreach** – Around 42,704 people

**Language of Broadcast** – Kumaoni and Hindi; **Duration of Broadcast** – 8 hours

#### Summary of activities taken up during the course of the campaign –

- **Promos** – Three promos were played by Kumaon Vaani to inform people about this campaign. The topics of the promos were same as the ones aired on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (for details, please refer section 2). These promos were put up for broadcast on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.
- **Live Slot** – For the time when the RJs of Kumaon Vaani do live calling and accept phone calls from the people of the community, they initiated a discussion on income inequality and rural-urban divide. Since live slots are proper conversations, there is a two way exchange of opinion that enriches the discussion. Many people called to share their opinion on the faulty government policies, poverty and corruption.
- **Mobile Vaani** – While the activities mentioned above were carried out only during slotted times on the FM, the station was also given their own mobile vaani number where people could call and be a part of the discussion 24x7. People frequently called to record their views and listen to the opinions left by others. The calls received on the mobile vaani platform were regularly moderated by the station staff.
- **Program** – To culminate the campaign, a perspective sharing program was produced by Kumaon Vaani where comments received on the campaign were stitched together with narration and broadcasted on their FM channel.

**People's speak** – Kalpana Bisht from Mukteshwar called up to say that the primary reason for income inequality in their region are lack of good quality education being available to them and lack of employment opportunities in their village. She concludes by saying that if government provides good quality education in schools and make

better policies for promoting employment opportunities at local level, then things can be made a lot better.

### Community Radio Henvalvani 90.4MHz

**Locale** – Chamba, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand; **Outreach** – Around 20,096 people

**Language of Broadcast** – Garhwali and Hindi; **Duration of Broadcast** – 6 and a half hours

#### Summary of activities taken up during the course of the campaign –

- **Promos** – Henvalvani put up three promos to inform people about this campaign. The promos were played on the same topics as Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (for details, please refer section 2). These promos were broadcasted on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.
- **Live Slot** – Henvalvani invited general people to call in live during their program and discussed different facets of the issue in detail, such as poverty, population explosion, lack of effective policies that deter migration, unequal distribution of income and stacking up of black money in swiss banks.
- **Mobile Vaani** – While the activities mentioned above were carried out only during slotted times on the FM, the station was also given their own mobile vaani number where people could call and be a part of the discussion 24x7. People frequently called to record their views and listen to the opinions left by others. The calls received on the mobile vaani platform were regularly moderated by the station staff.
- **Program** – As a conclusion to the campaign, a feedback sharing program was produced by Henvalvani where comments received on the campaign were stitched together with narration and broadcasted on their FM channel.

**People's speak** – Ashish Ramola from Tehri Garhwal presents three reasons for income inequality – the first one being unequal distribution of wealth, second one being population explosion and third being slow pace of development and irresponsible governance of economy. These lead to the deepening of vicious circle of poverty, where poor are getting poorer and rich are getting richer, with no hope for the rise in the standard of living of the poor people.

### Community Radio Dhadkan 107.8MHz

**Locale** – Shivpuri District, Madhya Pradesh; **Outreach** – Around 42,955 people

**Language of Broadcast** – Hindi; **Duration of Broadcast** – 12 hours

**Summary of activities taken up during the course of the campaign –**

- **Promos** – To inform their community about this campaign, Radio Dhadkan played three promos. The topics of their promos were same as the promos run on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (for details, please refer section 2). These promos were put up for broadcast on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.
- **Live Slot** – The discussion on Radio Dhadkan during the live slot was centred around the issues of poor policies, misuse of government schemes, lack of education and traditional ways of employment which in people's opinion led to the rich becoming richer and poor becoming poorer.
- **Mobile Vaani** – While the activities mentioned above were carried out only during slotted times on the FM, the station was also given their own mobile vaani number where people could call and be a part of the discussion 24x7. People frequently called to record their views and listen to the opinions left by others. The calls received on the mobile vaani platform were regularly moderated by the station staff.
- **Program** – Radio Dhadkan produced three programs by stitching together callers opinion received on this issue. These programs were broadcasted by Radio Dhadkan on their FM channel.

**People's speak** – Sarnam Singh from Shivpuri called up to express his opinion on income inequality campaign by saying that in their region there are no employment opportunities in their region. Additionally, those who are rich are able to afford good schools and quality education for their children. This leads to better groomed children and better opportunities for them to get placed at places where they can earn good income. On the other hand, those who are poor, rely on agricultural produce for their income, they are often not well informed and if their crop fails, their family goes into bare hand to mouth sustenance.

**Community Radio Lalitlokvan 90.4MHz**

**Locale** – Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh; **Outreach** – Around 60,790 people

**Language of Broadcast** – Hindi; **Duration of Broadcast** – 12 hours

**Summary of activities taken up during the course of the campaign –**

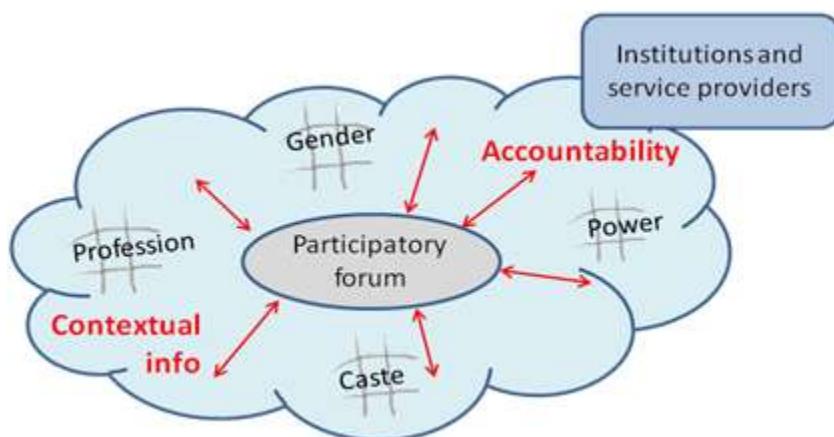
- **Promos** – To inform their community about this campaign, Lalitlokvan played three promos. The topics of their promos were same as the promos run on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (for details, please refer section 2). These promos were put up for broadcast on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.

- **Live Slot** – During the live slot, Lalitlokvani arranged for a panel discussion on this issue and brought a development practitioner, the village head (mukhiya), a teacher and a farmer on board. They discussed on the lines of poor policies, lack of education, poverty, and lack of employment opportunities in the villages.
- **Mobile Vaani** – While the activities mentioned above were carried out only during slotted times on the FM, the station was also given their own mobile vaani number where people could call and be a part of the discussion 24x7. People frequently called to record their views and listen to the opinions left by others. The calls received on the mobile vaani platform were regularly moderated by the station staff.
- **Program** – Lalitlokvani produced three programs by stitching together callers opinion received on this issue. These programs were broadcasted by them on their FM channel.

**People's speak** – Gaurav, Jai Singh and Sitaram from Lalitpur called up to say that the poor people are often voiceless and hence left behind. There is a dearth of employment opportunities in villages. Even to start a self employed initiative some capital is required, but the poor don't even have that much amount to start their own business. Hence government policies are needed to uplift the poor from the viciousness of poverty and raise their standard of living.

## 5. Theory of change: Bringing impact through community media

The figure below captures our theory of change of using participatory communication to enhance two community level dynamics, that is, access to **contextual information**, and sustained **accountability loops**, which leads to social change.



Jharkhand Mobile Vaani aims to enable just these information and accountability loops

We know that rural communities are segmented based on caste and power dynamics, with some segments being more aware than others, and able to avail more services than others. This becomes a vicious cycle that we claim can be broken through equitable access to community media forums. These forums allow communities to share information which helps them learn from each other by hearing stories in their own context, and thus improve awareness of their rights and entitlements significantly more than traditional forms of externally originated broadcast communication. This increased awareness helps create demand for services, which is transparently shared on the same forum and improves accountability by allowing communities to cite deficiencies and gaps in service delivery. This also helps generate critical data on service delivery that can be used by policy makers to understand problems and arrive at data-driven objective solutions.

## **6. About Gram Vaani**

Gram Vaani [meaning 'voice of the village'] is a social technology company based in Delhi. Earlier incubated at IIT-Delhi, we started in 2009 with the intent of reversing the flow of information, that is, to make it bottom-up instead of top-down. Using simple technologies and social context to design tools, we have been able to impact communities in significant ways - more than 2 million users in over 15 Indian States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Namibia and South Africa. More interesting than this are the outcomes of what we have done: Thirty rural radio stations able to manage and share content over mobiles and the web, corrupt ration shop officials in Jharkhand arrested due to citizen complaints, Women Sarpanches in Uttar Pradesh sharing learnings and opinions, citizen monitoring of waste management in Delhi. Our work has won several awards:

- International Knight News Challenge, 2008
- National Level Manthan Award for technology for development, 2009
- Economic Times Powers of Ideas, 2010
- Profiled in the top-10 innovative companies of India by Fast Company, 2011
- mBillionth Award in the news and journalism category, 2012
- Canada Rising Stars in Health award, 2012
- Finalist in Ashoka Changemakers 2012 and Vodafone Mobiles for Good 2012 contests
- mBillionth Award in the social inclusion category, 2013

### **Contact Us**

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