

# Property Rights and Women: A Mobile Vaani Network Campaign

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**Gram Vaani Community Media Pvt. Ltd.**

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## 1. Introduction

Gram Vaani [meaning 'voice of the village'], a social technology company based in Delhi, aims to reverse the flow of information; that is, to make it bottom-up instead of top-down using simple technologies and social context to design tools.

Mobile Vaani (MV) is such a voice-based technology innovated by Gram Vaani, that enables the community to raise their voices, share their concerns and express their take on social issues. Along with Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (JMV), the Mobile Vaani platform consists of Community Radio Stations partners across India.

The Mobile Vaani platform emerged as a common platform for the people of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and many other states of India to 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 MV 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.

With the same intention to engage the listeners of MV about issues and nuances regarding 'Women's Property Rights', Gram Vaani, in partnership with Oxfam has conducted a campaign on this topic through Jharkhand Mobile Vaani (JMV) and Community Radio Stations. The campaign saw participation from some of the most marginalized sections of the society and was able to capture reactions and views across the diverse socio-economic fabric.



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## 2. Rationale

Women and their rights regarding property ownership have a crucial and critical role in addressing the gender inequalities that this patriarchal society has long practiced to subjugate women. The norms and practices around patriarchy have, in all possible ways, ensured the age-old subjugation of women to continue and flourish in ever-new shades. The society that portrays women as a lesser mortal, thus, has also fashioned traditions and culture that not only deny women to exercise any right on property, but also has designed explanations and rationales to support this practice. Property signifies social status, dignity, relations of power and domination. It not only, thus, contributes towards economic independence of women, but also positively impact the social status and power dynamics, the lack of which are chief in nurturing patriarchy.

According to Agriculture Census Data 2010-11, 8 out of 10 rural women actively participate in agricultural work. However, only 12.8% women own farming land and the total area owned by women farmers are as less as 9.3%. Land Ownership survey of 2007 highlights this disparity of property ownership where only 6.5% women own any land, while 87.6% men owns land. The remaining 2.9% are jointly owned. This glaring disparity in owning land or other forms of property significantly affects the decision making power of women. If we consider the case of agriculture alone, then data suggests that women, in spite of accounting for the major share of labour in farming, has very limited say in deciding which crop to sow, where or whom to sell the produce. Women's access to Kisan Credit Card is also abominably low and so is their presence in Land Committees of Gram Panchayat.

The campaign, thus, aimed to cover all these aspects, along with information on laws and policies regarding Women's right to property, to provide awareness to all the listeners about the existing schemes and provisions which will help close the gap in terms of property ownership.



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### 3. Executive Summary

The aim of the camping was to create awareness among the listeners and callers of MV on the issue of Women's property rights and also to solicit their understanding and reactions on the topic. In this regard the campaign could be divided in to two major approaches: providing information to increase awareness and soliciting people's feedback and comment to understand their take on the issue.

Keeping this in mind, the campaign was structured in a fashion to first highlight and discuss the meaning of property right and its significance for women. This covered questions like:

- What is property right?
- Status of women in terms of property right
- Women and land rights
- Women's property rights for paternal and marital property
- Property rights of widows
- What are the laws and policies regarding these? And,
- Case studies of successful women provided by Oxfam.

Following this the campaign focused on issues related to women's property rights like economic independence, women and unpaid labour, and significance of participation in the workforce. One of the principal elements of the campaign was also to highlight what rural people thinks about the issue of women's property rights. The solicited reactions and views of the callers in this regard can be categorized in to three major areas: reasons that affect women's right to property, implications of lack of property right for women and possible solution to deal with the issue. The following section of the report deals with all the forms of responses.



## 4. The Campaign

### Statistics

**Duration** – 31<sup>st</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2013

**Outreach population** – 2, 26,725

**Number of Calls Received** – 43,393

**Number of contributions received-** 80

**Number of contributions from women callers** – 15

**Number of contributions from men callers** - 65

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

**Community Radio partners** - Henvalvani Community Radio, Uttarakhand, Kumaon Vaani Community Radio, Uttarakhand, Radio Dhadkhan, Madhya Pradesh, Lalitlokvani, Uttar Pradesh.

The campaign that started on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013 and was continued till 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2013, aimed to focus on the highlighting issues related to Women and Property Rights, by providing information and awareness to the listeners of JMV and CRS. Through the campaign callers from across 19 districts of Jharkhand and 4 states of India participated and expressed their concerns and views on the topic. The comments, feedback and reactions received during the campaign can mainly be categorized in five major groups:

<b>Women and paternal property</b>
<b>Women and marital/ husband's property</b>
<b>Women and agricultural land ownership</b>
<b>Women and unpaid labour</b>
<b>Women, their right to property and economic independence</b>

## **Campaign Process:**

The content of the campaign was a combination of narrative information in the form of episodes and promos, and feedback, comments and views of the listeners of JMV and CRS. On JMV 6 episodes were prepared and run on scheduled slots. Similarly, the CRS also crafted episodes and narration based on the content they received from their listeners. The episodes contained narration on the subtopic, comments, reactions, views from listeners and interviews of experts. Following section will provide a brief of the episodic content:

**Episode 1** – <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/80742/>

- What is Property Right?
- How are women placed/ status of women in terms of Property Right in general?
- Why women should have a right on property?
- Data regarding women's participation in division of labour related to agricultural labour.

**Episode 2** – <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/82388/>

- Women and significance of economic independence,
- Women and unpaid labour,
- Women and equal rights at place of work
- Laws and policies regarding women and property rights

**Episode 3** – <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83694/>

- Reasons contributing towards lack or absence of property rights for women
- Patriarchy/ subjugation of women/social custom,
- Lack of awareness, lack of policy/law, lack of policy implementation, practice of dowry, house-work, lack of education, early marriage, and poverty.

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**Episode 4** - <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/84550/>

- Implications lack or absence of property rights for women,
- Violence against women, illegal-trafficking domestic violence, subjugation of women, economic dependence,
- Limited access to benefits like Kisan Credit Card and agricultural loans.
- Success stories of women who had access to property rights.

**Episode 5** - <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/86208/>

- Solution or approach towards ensuring women's right to land and property
- Better policies and laws, awareness about the process to exercise rights on property
- Constitutional rights for Women

**Episode 6** - <http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/87304/>

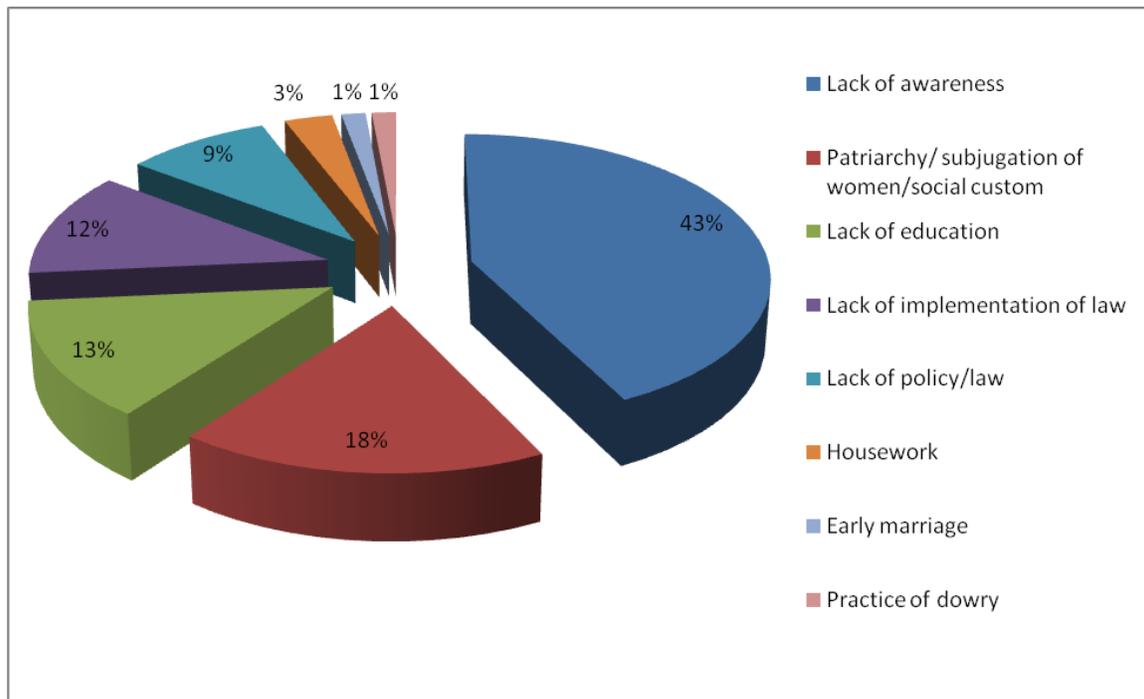
- Recap and reflection on the campaign

## **Reflection of People's reaction: An analysis of the data**

### **Reasons for lack or absence of property rights for Women:**

**Major reasons as shared by the callers are:**

1. Lack of awareness
2. Lack of education
3. Lack of policy/law
4. Lack of implementation of laws/ policies
5. Housework
6. Patriarchy/ subjugation of women/social custom
7. Early marriage
8. Practice of dowry



### Some of the responses:

Prateek Kumar from Giridih shared his views on women and their right to property. According to him women should be given equal rights to paternal property. However, he mentioned that in rural India people are often influenced by religious and cultural believes which by their nature subjugate women from their basic rights. He provided the example of performing last rites of a deceased family member, where a woman by hindu religious law is restricted from performing the rites. Similarly, the status of women in the family in terms of property is also limited keeping her secondary position in view.

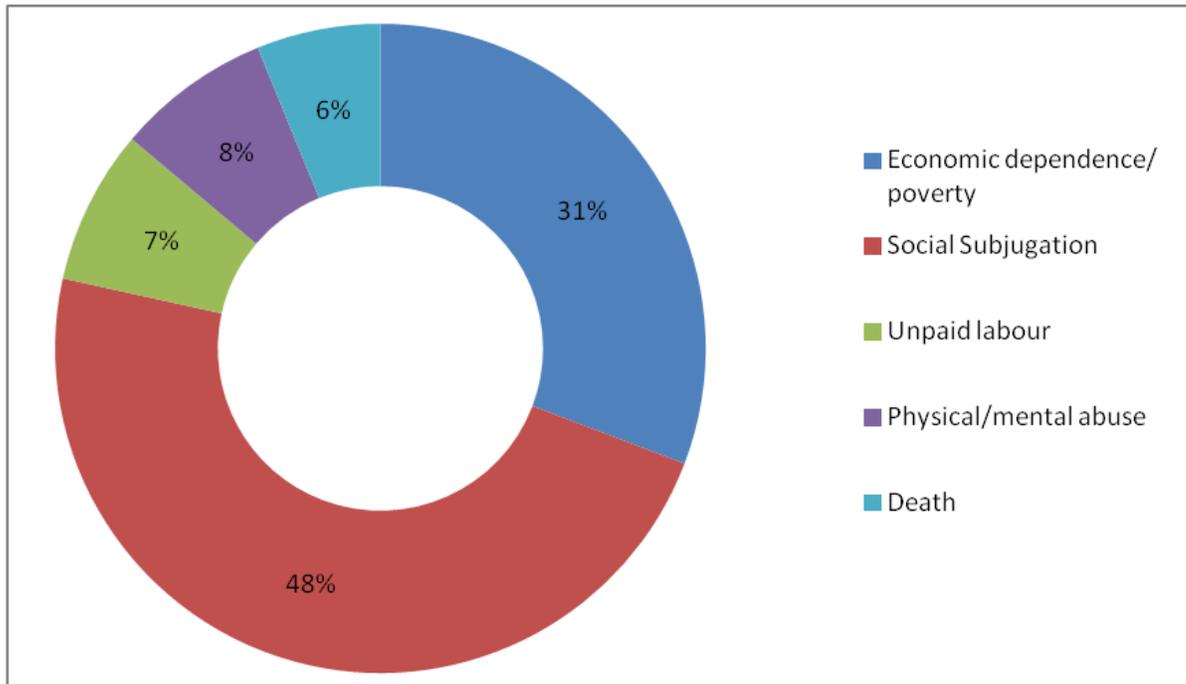
<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/81388/>

Kailash Giri from Chandrapura Bokaro shared his view on the issue and mentioned that though women has rights over paternal properties but they seldom get a share of the property owing to the patriarchal laws of the society. He expressed that it is because of the patriarchy and its inherent belief that women, even after being major contributors in household and agricultural work, are treated as secondary member of the family. He further stressed that women's contribution in family and agriculture activities are crucial for their survival. According to him the society and specially the nurturer of patriarchal values should change their attitude and women should be made aware of their rights.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/82454/>

### Implications of lack or absence of property rights for Women:

1. Economic dependence/ poverty
2. Social Subjugation
3. Unpaid labour
4. Physical/mental abuse
5. Death



### Responses of callers:

Suleman Marandi from Dumka expressed that women should get their rights over paternal property. He explained that right over paternal property provides women with the economic independence which is imperative for surviving in the society and in its absence women either has to stay in dire poverty or as a burden on her family. He further added that many a times women who becomes widow or who remains unmarried are treated badly by their family members since they are not given any rights over the property and in many cases they are forced to commit suicide.

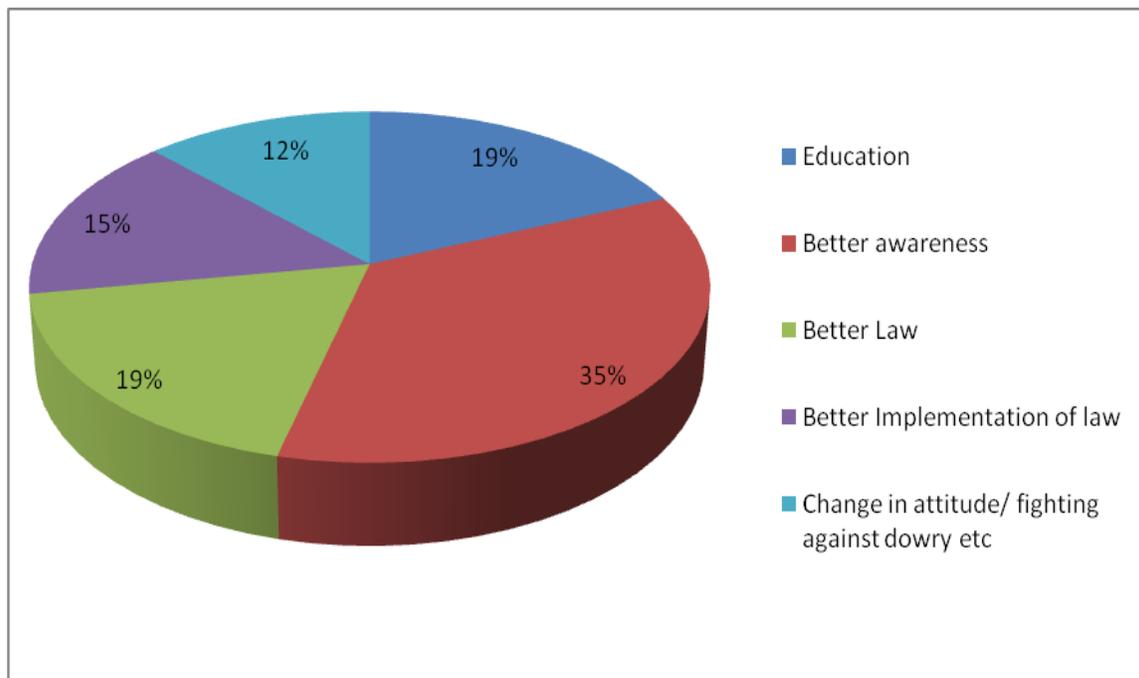
<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83132/>

In an interview with Kailash Giri, Bodhi Ram Mahto from Chandrapura Bokaro expressed that if women are not given their rights to properties then the society in near future will be facing grave consequences. He presents his thoughts through a couplet and backed his views with the fact that a woman labours from dawn to dusk to look after the family. He mentioned that though women are getting aware about their rights with each passing day, we should not wait for the day when there will be revolution, rather we should start acknowledging their contribution and accepts their rights.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83256/>

### Solutions offered by the Callers:

1. Education
2. Better awareness
3. Better Law
4. Better Implementation of law
5. Change in attitude/ fighting against dowry etc



### Responses of callers:

Malharun Miyan from Dumka supported that women should get equal rights over property. He shared that not only within the family but also in work-place women should get equal treatment and wage for their labour. He expressed that economic independence of women is crucial to live life with dignity and to ensure this women should get access to education. According to him education is not only the key to exercise equal rights of women but an educated woman inurn will be able to educate the mind of her family members.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83279/>

In an interview to Shailendra Sinha, journalist Virendra Kumar Jha from Dumka expressed that women's right to property is crucial to reinforce their respect and dignity in the society. He mentioned that without economic independence women are ought to be treated as secondary in the society. Mr. Jha further stressed that cultural and religious belief do not endorse the view to treat women as equals, in spite of the fact that there are enough laws to ensure equal rights of women on the property. Hence, there is a need to change this attitude.

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/84513/>

### Some more links:

Status of women and property rights in tribal areas of Jharkhand:

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/84510/>

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/81050/>

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/81099/>

Experience sharing of a woman who has not been given right to property:

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/87238/>

Interviews with district official –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/84958/>

Interview with Civil Lawyer –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83238/>

Views on importance of education –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/89024/>

Women's name should be included in property deeds –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/88001/>

Do not differentiate between girls and boys –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/81402/>

Women's right to property could stop violence against women –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/82266/>

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Songs and poetry on women and property rights –

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/82341/>

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/81786/>

<http://voice.gramvaani.org/vapp/mnews/10/show/detail/83274/>

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## **5. Recommendations:**

Major recommendations as reflected from the comments of the callers are:

1. Devising ways to increase awareness among both men and women about women and their rights on properties, about the existing provisions to claim the rights and also to change age-old patriarchal custom oriented bias.
2. Ensuring women's education, so that they understand the value of economic independence and are able to exercise their rights to attain that.
3. Implementation of laws that ensure women's right on properties and also to make the processes of availing these laws more user friendly.
4. Women's names to be included in property deeds and deals should be made mandatory.
5. Stringent laws and strict implementation to stop any kind of discrimination against women.
6. More government schemes and provisions like IAY that ensure women's right on the created asset or property.

## 6. Conclusion

The campaign, though officially ended on 21<sup>st</sup> November, has continued to stir discussions among the callers of Mobile Vaani platform on issues related to women and their equal status in the society. Since this campaign was followed by another campaign initiative on 'Violence against Women', people's reaction regarding the discriminatory practices against women in the society has seen new heights on the MV platform. Let us conclude with an overview of the CRS whose participation has enabled the reach of the campaign to extend to the corners of our listener community.

### 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, Henvaivani 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 women and their rights to property. 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. 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 women and property rights. 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.
- **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.

### Community Radio Henvaivani 90.4MHz

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

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

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

- **Promos** – Henvaivani put up three promos to inform people about this campaign. The promos were played on the same topics as Jharkhand Mobile Vaani. These promos were broadcasted on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.
- **Live Slot** – Henvaivani invited general people to call in live during their program and discussed different facets of the issue in detail, such as patriarchy, women and their contribution in farming, lack of awareness, etc.
- **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 Henvaivani where comments received on the campaign were stitched together with narration and broadcasted on their FM channel.

### 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. 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 cultural bias, lack of awareness, economic dependence of women and ways that could contribute towards a change in attitude.
- **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.

### Community Radio Lalitlokvani 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, Lalitlokvani played three promos. The topics of their promos were same as the promos run on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani. These promos were put up for broadcast on the FM channel as well as on their mobile vaani number.
- **Live Slot** – Live slots in Lalitlokvani revolved around the discussion of whether women should have equal rights to paternal and marital property, what are reasons they should or should not have the right and what are the implication of having no right over property.
- **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.

## 7. Abbreviations:

JMV- Jharkhand Mobile Vaani

MV – Mobile Vaani

CRS – Community Radio Stations

IAY – Indira Awas Yojana

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