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Sustainability of Community Radio Stations in Haryana: An Assessment of Institutional, Social, Financial and Technical Sustainability

Dr. Rachna Saini

Assistant Professor, Department of JMC, GCW, Sec-16A, Faridabad

(This paper is an extract of researchers PhD thesis. Researcher had formulated CR-SAC, criteria of measuring sustainability of community radio. Under which she is measuring sustainability of six community radio stations)

ABSTRACT

Community radio has emerged as an important participatory medium for enabling local communities to articulate their concerns, access locally relevant information and participate in development communication. This study examines the sustainability of selected Community Radio Stations (CRSs) operating in the Haryana–National Capital Region using a multidimensional assessment framework covering institutional, social, financial and technical sustainability. The study employs the Community Radio Sustainability Assessment Criteria (CR-SAC)(Saini 2021), under which each of the four dimensions is divided into five sub-components, with each sub-component further assessed through five indicators. The assessment combines quantitative scoring with evidence gathered through interviews with CRS officials, stock-taking of station facilities and practices, and Focus Group Discussions with CRS officials and community members. Six sampled stations—Apna Radio, DUCR, Hint CR, JIMS CR, Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat—were assessed on the four dimensions. The findings reveal substantial variation in the overall sustainability of the sampled stations. Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat emerged as the strongest performers, each securing an overall score of 85, followed by JIMS CR with 73, DUCR with 65, Hint CR with 61, and Apna Radio with 56. The NGO-based stations demonstrated particularly strong performance in social, institutional and technical sustainability, while the educational-institution-based stations showed relatively weaker performance in community engagement and financial diversification. The findings suggest that strong community participation, participatory governance, trained human resources, diversified funding, technical preparedness, partnerships and institutional autonomy collectively contribute to long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Community Radio, Sustainability, Institutional Sustainability, Social Sustainability, Financial Sustainability, Technical Sustainability, Community Participation, Haryana, Community Media.

INTRODUCTION

Community radio occupies a distinctive position within the media landscape because it is intended to function as a participatory, locally oriented and community-centred medium. Unlike commercial broadcasting, which is primarily organised around market considerations, or public broadcasting, which operates within a broader national public-service mandate, community radio is expected to respond to the informational, cultural, social and developmental needs of specific communities.

The significance of community radio is particularly pronounced in societies characterised by linguistic, cultural, geographical and socio-economic diversity. At the local level, mainstream media may not adequately represent the everyday concerns of marginalised or geographically dispersed communities. Community radio can address this gap by creating opportunities for local people not merely to consume media but also to participate in programme production, identify issues, provide feedback and articulate community concerns.

The Indian policy framework explicitly emphasises this participatory character. The Government of India's Community Radio Guidelines(2006) require programmes to be of immediate relevance to the community, encourage programming around developmental, agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social welfare and cultural issues, and require at least 50 percent of content to be generated with the participation of the local community. The guidelines also emphasise local languages and dialects and require stations to preserve broadcast recordings for three months.

Thus, the existence of a community radio station does not automatically imply that it is sustainable as a community institution. A station may have adequate equipment but weak community participation; it may have a strong community presence but inadequate financial resources; or it may have financial support but lack institutional mechanisms for participatory governance. Sustainability therefore needs to be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon.(SAIMED, 2006)

The existing literature increasingly recognises this multidimensionality. Research on Indian community radio has examined sustainability through combinations of social, organisational, technical and financial indicators. Arya and Kashyap, for instance, assessed Indian community radio stations through indicators including social equity, social cohesiveness, programming and feedback management, organisational and human-resource management, technical management and financial management. Their study also found differences between NGO-operated and educational-institution-operated community radio stations.

The importance of community participation has also been repeatedly established. A recent Indian study argues that community participation is an essential component of sustainable community broadcasting and examines participation in the functioning of community radio stations. UNESCO has likewise emphasised the role of community radio in access to information, community participation and grassroots development.

Against this background, the present study examines the sustainability of six selected community radio stations associated with the Haryana/NCR region. It moves beyond a narrow understanding of sustainability as financial survival and assesses sustainability through four interconnected dimensions: institutional, social, financial and technical.

The study is particularly significant because it permits a comparison between stations operating under different institutional arrangements. The sample includes NGO-based as well as educational-institution-based stations, thereby providing an opportunity to examine whether institutional context is associated with differences in sustainability performance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the institutional sustainability of selected Community Radio Stations with reference to management, vision and mission, governance, collaborations and partnerships, and training.
2. To examine the social sustainability of the selected stations by analysing their knowledge of the community, community participation in programming, membership structures, research practices and community outreach.
3. To evaluate the financial sustainability of the selected Community Radio Stations with reference to financial management, annual budgeting, financial policies, community involvement and fundraising mechanisms.
4. To assess the technical sustainability of the stations in terms of in-house production facilities, equipment maintenance, broadcasting capacity, signal quality and reach, technical personnel and studio infrastructure.
5. To compare the sustainability performance of NGO-based and educational-institution-based Community Radio Stations.
6. To identify the strengths and areas of vulnerability in the sustainability architecture of the sampled Community Radio Stations and examine the implications for their long-term functioning.
7. To develop an integrated understanding of community radio sustainability in which institutional capacity, community participation, financial resilience and technical preparedness are considered mutually reinforcing dimensions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and evaluative research design to assess the sustainability of selected Community Radio Stations. The study combines structured quantitative scoring with qualitative information obtained from station-level interactions and community engagement.(MIB Report, 2007)

The sustainability assessment was undertaken through the Community Radio Sustainability Assessment Criteria (CR-SAC) framework developed for evaluating the position of Community Radio Stations on a sustainability spectrum. The framework evaluates sustainability through four major dimensions: Institutional Sustainability, Social Sustainability, Financial Sustainability and Technical Sustainability.

Sample

The study covers six selected Community Radio Stations:

- Apna Radio
- DUCR
- Hint CR

- JIMS CR
- Gurgaon Ki Awaz
- Alfaz-e-Mewat

The sample includes stations associated with educational institutions as well as NGO-based stations, allowing for comparative assessment across different organisational contexts.

Sustainability Assessment Framework

The CR-SAC framework divides sustainability into four dimensions. Each dimension consists of five sub-sections, and each sub-section consists of five statements/indicators. Thus, each sustainability dimension is assessed through 25 indicators.

The assessment follows a binary scoring system:

- 1 = affirmative/indicator fulfilled
- 0 = negative/indicator not fulfilled

Responses were derived from interviews, stock-taking of the position and facilities of the CRS, and Focus Group Discussions with CRS officials and community members.

Consequently, each dimension has a maximum score of 25, while the overall sustainability assessment has a maximum possible score of 100.

Dimensions of Sustainability

A. Institutional Sustainability

Institutional sustainability was assessed through:

1. Management
2. Vision, Mission and CR Policy
3. Community Radio Governance
4. Collaborations and Partnerships
5. Training and Workshops

The institutional dimension examines whether the station has appropriate management structures, permanent human resources, community representation, governance mechanisms, institutional policies, partnerships and training systems.

B. Social Sustainability

Social sustainability was assessed through:

1. Knowledge about the Community
2. Involvement in Programming and Programme Production
3. Membership/Clubs at CRS
4. Research
5. Community Outreach Programmes/Activities

This dimension assesses the extent to which the CRS remains embedded within its community and whether community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in and influence the station.

C. Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability was assessed through:

1. Maintenance of Finance
2. Annual Budget
3. Financial Policy
4. Involvement of Community in Financial Matters
5. Fundraising Activities

This dimension assesses both financial management and the station's ability to diversify and maintain sources of revenue.

D. Technical Sustainability

Technical sustainability was assessed through:

1. In-house Production Facilities
2. Maintenance of Equipment
3. Broadcasting
4. Signal Quality and Reach
5. Technical Staff and Studio

This dimension measures whether the station possesses adequate infrastructure, technical personnel and systems necessary for uninterrupted and effective broadcasting.

Data Collection
The assessment draws upon three principal sources:
Interviews: Information was obtained from CRS officials concerning management, finances, programming, training, technical facilities and other operational practices.

Stock-taking: The physical and operational status of the stations, including equipment, production facilities, studio infrastructure and technical arrangements, was assessed.

Focus Group Discussions: Discussions with CRS officials and community members provided information relating particularly to community participation, programming, feedback and engagement.

Data Analysis
The collected information was converted into indicator-wise binary scores. Sub-section scores were obtained by adding the scores of the five indicators within each category. Dimension-wise scores were subsequently calculated by aggregating the five sub-sections.

Overall Sustainability Score = Institutional + Social + Financial + Technical Sustainability Scores
Since each dimension has a maximum score of 25, the maximum overall sustainability score is 100.This scoring mechanism facilitates comparative assessment among the sampled stations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community radio has traditionally been understood as a form of participatory media that enables communities to articulate local concerns and participate in communication processes. (Tavhiso, M. (2009))Its significance lies not simply in providing another broadcasting channel but in creating opportunities for communities to become active participants in media production.

UNESCO's work on community radio in India highlights issues such as capacity building, sustainability, technology, policy, knowledge sharing and community experience, demonstrating that the sustainability of community radio involves considerably more than the continuation of transmission.

UNESCO has further emphasised the role of community radio in providing access to information and knowledge, facilitating community participation and supporting grassroots development.

The Indian policy framework similarly conceptualises community radio as a locally relevant medium. The Community Radio Guidelines emphasise developmental and community-oriented programming and require significant participation of the local community in content generation.

Early discussions of community radio sustainability frequently focused on the station's ability to remain financially operational. However, subsequent research has increasingly recognised that financial survival alone cannot ensure sustainability.

A 2017 study on sustainability in the Indian community radio sector explicitly examined social, technical, financial and institutional sustainability, demonstrating the interconnected nature of these dimensions.

Community participation is one of the defining characteristics of community radio. A station that operates without meaningful participation from its target community risks becoming institutionally similar to other forms of broadcasting.

Arya et al. examined community participation in the functioning of Indian community radio stations and highlighted participation as an essential component of sustainable community broadcasting.

Research on community radio participation has also demonstrated the importance of involving community members in programme production and broadcasting. A comparative study of stations operated by a State Agricultural University, Krishi Vigyan Kendra and NGO examined participation among community respondents and linked participation to the broader sustainability of the stations.

Institutional sustainability relates to the organisational capacity of a station to maintain effective management, governance, human resources, partnerships and internal systems.

The literature indicates that organisational structure matters because community radio stations operate within diverse institutional contexts. NGO-operated stations and educational-institution-based stations may have different levels of autonomy, human resources, community engagement and financial dependence.

Arya and Kashyap's assessment of Indian Community Radio Stations specifically distinguished between stations operated by educational institutions and NGOs. Their study found differences in perceptions of organisational and human-resource management as well as other sustainability indicators.

Research on community radio in South Asia has suggested that advertising and other revenue mechanisms can contribute to financial viability, although the financial model has to be adapted to the specific operational context of community stations.

The Indian literature similarly indicates that financial management is an important determinant of sustainability. Arya and Kashyap's research included financial management as one of the core indicators of sustainability and found variations among different types of stations.

An important finding from the present dataset is that annual budgeting is relatively strong across all six stations, with every station obtaining the maximum score in this category. However, the stations differ substantially in financial diversification and fundraising.

Technical capacity is a necessary condition for the continuity and quality of radio broadcasting. Technical sustainability includes not only the availability of equipment but also maintenance systems, trained personnel, backup arrangements, studio infrastructure and signal reach.

The present assessment demonstrates that all six stations possess core in-house production facilities, including audio mixer consoles, editing software, computers/laptops and backup transmitters. However, differences emerge in programming and scheduling software, maintenance arrangements, broadcasting hours and signal quality.

The literature on Indian community radio also highlights technology and capacity building as important dimensions of sustainability. UNESCO's documentation of community radio in India identifies technology and capacity building among the critical issues confronting the sector.

RESEARCH GAPS

The existing literature provides considerable evidence that community radio sustainability is multidimensional and involves social, institutional, financial and technical factors. However, three gaps remain particularly relevant.

First, a significant portion of the literature focuses on individual stations or relatively small case studies. There remains value in comparative station-level assessment using a common set of indicators.

Second, studies frequently examine financial or community participation issues independently. Fewer assessments integrate institutional, social, financial and technical sustainability into a single comparative framework.

Third, there is a need for more region-specific evidence examining whether different institutional models of community radio produce different sustainability outcomes.

The present study attempts to address these gaps by applying a common CR-SAC framework to six stations and comparing their performance across four dimensions. The study is therefore not merely an assessment of individual stations but an attempt to identify patterns associated with different organisational contexts.

DATA ANALYSIS

Sustainability Assessment through CR-SAC

An evaluation sheet to assess the sustainability of the sampled Community Radio Station (CRS) of Delhi and its National Capital Region (NCR) has been prepared. For this, the researcher has developed CR-PAS to assess the respective positions on sustainability spectrum. The assessment/ evaluation is done in 4 types of sustainability namely Institutional, Social, Financial and Technical. Each sustainability type is sub-divided into five sections that cover the particular sustainability type fully. And each of such section is further sub-divided into 5 statements that represent that particular sub section. If the response of the statement is in affirmative than I score is assigned against the particular statement. And if the answer is in negative then, zero is assigned against such statement. The response against each statement is taken from interviews, stock taking position of CRS, Focus Group Discussion with the CRS officials and CRS Community members.

1. Institutional Sustainability

Table-1 Management of CR

Sub-points	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon kiAwaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a)Station lead by field professional from radio	1	1	0	1	1	1
(b)Atleast2 employees are permanent (salaried)	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c)CRMC is present	0	1	1	1	1	1
(d)50 %of CRMC are from community	0	1	0	1	1	1
(e)Employee record is maintained	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	3	5	3	5	5	5

Management is an important indicator of institutional sustainability ina CR and elsewhere. Both NGO based Community radio stations namely Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat scored 5 in their assessment apart from other stations like DUCR and JIMS CR which also scored the same. They have all the items fulfilled as elaborated in the table: They have Station Heads from the professional field; have at least 2 permanent employees; they have Community Radio Management Committee (CRMC) with 50%members from the community itself. Apna Radio is the only CRS which has no CRMC.

Table 2 Vision, Mission and CR Policy

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon KiAwaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a)Vision of CR is documented	0	0	0	0	0	1
(b) Mission of CR is documented	0	0	0	0	0	1
(c)visionis clear to staff/Listene rs	0	0	0	0	0	0
(d) CR has also own policy for managing the station	0	1	1	1	1	1
(e)Government CR policy followed	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total points	1	2	2	2	2	4

All the stations reported that Government CR policy that exists is being followed. All CRS reported that their own CR policy exists. All but one exceptAlfaz-e-MewatreportednottohaveMissionstatement/policydocumented.Also, no vision statement is documented by either of the CR Sexcept Alfaz-e-Mewat.

Table 3 Community Radio Governance

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Community is involved in programming related decisions	0	1	0	1	1	1
(b) CRMC meeting is held twice annually	0	1	1	1	1	1
(c) FPC is Prepared aper recommendation of CRMC	0	0	0	0	1	1

(d) Easy access to CR station/ its premises	1	1	1	0	1	1
(e) CRMC members are changed accordingly	0	1	0	0	1	0
Total points	1	4	2	2	5	4

Gurgaon ki Awaz is the only CRS in the category to score 5 across all the evaluative categories while DUCR and AEM stand second with a score of
4. The educational institution-based CRS Apna Radio reported not to have conducted CRMC meeting twice annually. JIMS CR offers not so free access to the community in general and rests of the stations are pretty free in providing access to their communities.

Table 4 Collaborations and Partnerships

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Collaboration/ exchange on program production	1	0	1	0	1	1
(b) Partnership with financial bodies	1	1	0	1	1	1
(c) Sharing of content on EDDA	0	0	0	1	1	1
(d) Community groups partnership	1	1	1	1	1	0
(e) Collaboration/ association with agencies like commercial/Public radios.	1	1	0	1	0	0
Total points	4	3	2	4	4	3

Apna Radio receives pre-produced programmes for broadcast from other CRS. Both NGO based CRS provide programmes to other CRS and scored overall 5. All but 2 CRS share their content on *Ek Duniya Anek Awaz*(EDDA)which is a global platform for content syndication/ sharing.

Gurgaon ki Awaz scored highest in terms of Institutional sustainability's sub-section-Collaborations and partnerships. Hint scored least 2 score and Alfaz-e-Mewat scored 3.

Table 5 Training programs

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) undertakes trainings for community people	0	0	0	1	1	1
(b) undertake trainings for CR operational staff	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) undertake technical trainings for technical staff at CRS	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) undertakes interns/ trainees	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) undertakes at least 5 such program	1	1	0	1	1	1
Total points	4	4	3	5	5	5

All the CRS report to have arranged technical trainings for their technical staff which may include editors, producers etc. Also, all the CRS reported to have arranged trainings for their operational staff. All the CRS except Hint CR declare that they conduct training programmes for community members also so that their participation in CRS becomes more meaningful, and intense. CRS except DUCR and Hint scored full in this subsection of Institutional sustainability. DUCR and Hint scored 4 and 3 respectively.

2. Social Sustainability

Table 6 Knowledge about community

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Community is identified	1	1	1	**1**	1	1
(b) Needs and Problems identified	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) Every year community mapping is done	0	0	0	0	0	0
(d) Multi channel feedback gathered	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Monthly CR public meeting/ event	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total points	3	3	3	4	4	4

Three CRS scored namely JIMS CR, Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat scored 4 which is highest on social sustainability's Knowledge about Community component. These stations identified their community, had more knowledge about them, identifies their needs and problems and organised monthly CR/public meeting though neither of the station reported not to have conducted annual community mapping. Educational Institutional based CRS didn't organise any public event or meeting. All the CRS reported using multi-channel feedback gathering. NGO based CRS Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat along with JIMS CR scored 4 each while rest of the CRS scored lower 3 in this sub section of social sustainability.

Table 7 Involvement in Programming and program production

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Programming as per community feedback	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Community has a say in deciding content/issues in broadcast	0	1	0	1	1	1
(c) at least 50 % local talent is used in radio programme production	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) multilingual programmes in regional language/s	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Folk music/ folk songs programmes use local performers	0	1	0	1	1	1
Total points	3	5	3	5	5	5

All the CRS report that they programme as per the feedback/choices of community members and broadcast them in regional language/s prominent among the immediate community members. Al the stations also report that at least 50 % talent used in programme production is from local talent pool. Though not all CRS report playing folk music or songs programme with local performers. DUCR, JIMS and the other NGO based CRS scored 5 in this subsection of social sustainability.

Table 8 Membership/clubs at CRS

	Apna Radio	DUC R	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) CRS has a listeners club involving members from the community	0	0	0	0	1	1

(b) Meetings are held regularly of such clubs	0	0	0	0	1	1
(c) Decisions are implemented/consider ed from those clubs	0	0	0	0	1	1
(d) awards or recognition is given to community members	0	0	0	0	1	1
(e) has representation to both women and men	0	1	0	0	1	0
Total points	0	1	0	0	5	4

CRS Membership clubs admitting people from the community are present in only NGO based CRS - Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat in which meetings are regularly held, suggestions emerged from such meetings have values and sanctity as they are implemented accordingly and suitably. Time to time awards and recognition is given to both the community members by the NGO based CRS. Rest of the 4 CRS do not have such clubs for community interaction, promotion and representation. The score in this subsection are 5 and 4 for Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat respectively.

Table 9 Research at CRS

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Research about community	1	1	0	1	1	1
(b) Programming research	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) Programme feedback research	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) Need and requirement research	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e)Listeners research	0	1	1	1	1	1
Total points	**4**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**5**	**5**

Almost every station has performed some kind of research at CRS. These include community research, programme research, need and requirement research and listener's research to understand various functional aspects of CRS. Hint has reported not to conduct research about community.

Table 10 Community Outreach program/Activities

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Information/ marketing campaigns	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Field visits to community	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) CRS promotion campaigns	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) Arrange station visits for community people	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) General interaction/ meeting with community	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total points	4	4	4	5	5	5

NGO based CRS Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat have scored highest in this subsection about outreach programmes/activities along with Hint radios. They have reported to engage in a range of outreach activities in their immediate communities like station visits, promotional campaigns, field visit to community etc. The NGO based CRS are found to be more engaged with their community compared to other categories of CRS like educational institution based which include Apna CR and DUCR.

3. Financial Sustainability

Table 11 Financial Sustainability- Maintenance of Finance

Maintenance of Finance	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Constant source of income	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Maintenance of finance is not only from one source.	0	0	1	1	1	1
(c) Successfully done at least one project from National or International agency	0	0	1	1	1	1
(d) Advance Planning of maintaining finance	1	1	1	1	1	1
Station is not dependent only on its parental organization	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total points	2	2	5	5	5	4

Financial sustainability is one of the crucial sustainability which can affect the status and operations of a CR in both short term and long-term effects. All CRS report to have a constant source of income. All CRS but one have completed one or another project which is also a source of income for CRS. All CRS report to plan in advance about finance. Only 2 NGO based CRS report to have capability of sustaining without any help from parent organisation.

Table 12 Annual Budget

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Annual budget s planned	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Annual expenditure is visualized	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) Annual audit is done	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) Strategic effort done to achieve the budget	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Reviewing of Previous budget	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total points	5	5	5	5	5	5

Annual budget is planned, annual expenditure is visualized, annual audit is done, reviewing of previous budget is done by all CRS. On this aspect, CRS score high 5 score. This shows finance is handled quite rigorously by all CRS which is also a requirement and also an efficient way to operate.

Table 13 Financial Policy

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Financial committee (FC) exists	1	1	0	0	1	1
(b) Financial Policy exists	1	1	0	0	1	1
(c) Discussion of FP with community membsers	0	0	0	0	0	0

(d) Maintenance of financial records	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e)Finance staff is hired	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total points	4	4	2	2	4	4

Every CRS in the study has a Financial Committee except Hint CR and JIMS CR but a clear-cut financial policy exists in the case of Apna Radio, DUCR, Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat. All CRS have reported to have hired specialized/ separate staff to handle financial affairs. JIMS and Hint CR reported that they don't have any financial policy as such.

Table 14 Involvement of Community in financial matter

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Financial statement is discussed in CRMC meeting	0	0	0	0	0	0
(b) Balance sheet is shared with the community	0	0	0	0	0	0
(c) community involved in purchase decisions	0	0	0	0	0	0
(d) CR publishes the monthly income and expenditure to the community	0	0	0	0	0	0
(e) Rate contracts are prepared in consultation with the community	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Among all CRS Financial statement is not discussed in CRMC meeting and community is also not a part of purchase decisions made at CRS. Also, neither of the CRS publish monthly income and expenditure details.

Table 15 Fundraising activities

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Through Advertising	0	0	1	1	1	1
(b) Through announcement s	0	0	0	0	0	0
(c) Through projects	0	0	1	1	1	1
(d) Through memberships	0	0	0	0	0	0
(e) Through sponsorships	0	0	1	0	1	1
Total points	0	0	3	2	3	3

Apna Radio and DUCR declared that they didn't engage in any fundraising activities. While Hint CR, JIMS CR, Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-E-Mewat were found to be undertaking widest range of fundraising activities compared to other CRS in our sample and got equal score of 4 each.

4. Technical Sustainability

Table 16 In-house production facilities

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Audio mixer console	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Programme scheduling software like GRINS	0	0	0	1	1	1

(c) Audio editing softwares	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) Minimum three computer/ Laptop for broadcast & Editing	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Back up transmitter	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total points	4	4	4	5	5	5

Production house facilities like Audio mixer console, audio editing software, minimum 3 computers/ laptops and back up transmitter is found in all the 6 Community Radio Stations (CRS). While Programming and scheduling software-GRINS is available with only JIMS and the 2 NGO based CRS namely Alfaz-e-Mewat and Gurgaon ki Awaz and were also the scorer of 5 points each. While the rest of the CRS scored 4 each.

Table 17 Maintenance of equipment

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) AMC for equipment	0	0	1	1	1	1
(b) Insurance of studio	0	0	0	0	0	1
(c) Routine maintenance by technical staff	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) Equipment protocol in place	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Timely purchase of equipment as per requirement.	1	0	1	1	1	1
Total points	**3**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**

All CRS except educational institution based Apna CR and DUCR have their Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) in place while none of CR except Alfaz-e-Mewat has got insurance cover for their CRS. All the stations acknowledge to undertake routine maintenance of their studios and equipment by technical staff. All CRS have equipment protocol in place. Alfaz-e-Mewat scores high 5 followed by Hint, JIMS and Gurgaon-ki-Awaz with 4 score.

Table 18 Broadcasting

	Apna Radio	**DUCR**	**Hint CR**	**JIMS CR**	**Gurgaon Ki Awaz**	**Alfaz-e-Mewat**
(a) Minimum 8-hour broadcast during a day	0	0	1	1	1	1
(b) Phone-in-Program facility	0	0	1	0	1	1
(c) Keep content broadcast for the last 3 months	1	1	1	1	1	1
(d) power backup/ generator	1	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Without technical break broadcasting/continu ed broadcasting	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total	2	2	5	4	5	5

The 8-hour fresh broadcasting is followed by Hint, JIMS CR, Gurgaon-ki-Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat CRS. Educational based CRS have less than 8-hour broadcasting in a day. NGO based CRS have maintained continuous broadcasting without any break due to technical break ups. They have phone-in programme facility and a power backup generator. They along with all CRS keep broadcast content for 3 months at least in line with CR guidelines. NGO based CRS have highest score of 5 along with Hint CR.

Table 19 Signal quality and reach

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) High Signal quality	1	1	1	0	1	1
(b) Distribution of radio signal in all directions equally	1	1	1	0	1	1
(c) There is no frequency clash among CRs established closely	1	1	0	0	1	1
(d) Signal reach is there for a minimum of 10 KMs radius	1	1	1	0	1	1
(e) transmitter faces no obstacle	0	0	1	1	0	1
Total points	4	4	4	1	4	5

All CRS report no problem in quality of signals though JIMS CR report some problems related to signal quality. Transmitter of Apna radio and DUCR faces obstacle because transmitter is old since they have been running Community Radio for almost 10 years.

Table 20 Technical Staff & Studio

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
(a) Trained staff for handling equipment	1	1	1	1	1	1
(b) Staff can handle minor breakdowns	1	1	1	1	1	1
(c) Community members are also trained in basics by technical staff of CRS	0	1	0	1	1	1
d) Studio Area as per guidelines.	1	1	0	1	1	1
(e) Studio with Acoustic	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Points	4	5	3	5	5	5

All CRS report to have trained staff for handling equipment at CR stations including minor breakdowns. Except stations Apna Radio and Hint, other CRS admit to train Community members in basic production process. All the CRS have Acoustic studios.

TOTAL SUSTAINABILITY MATRIX

Table 21 Total Matrix- Institutional Sustainability

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
Management style	3	5	3	5	5	5
Vision & Mission and CR Policy	1	2	2	2	2	4
Community radio Governance	1	4	2	2	5	4
Collaboration & Partnerships	4	3	2	4	4	3
Training & Workshop	4	4	3	5	5	5
Total	**13**	**18**	**12**	**21**	**21**	**21**

JIMS CR, Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat scored highest in institutional sustainability overall scheme. Apna Radio, which is government educational institution-based CRS could score only 13. Management style, Training & Workshop and Governance are the strong sectors in Institutional Sustainability of NGO based CRSs and DUCR.

Table 22 Total Matrix-Social Sustainability

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
Knowledge about community	3	3	3	4	4	4
Involvement in programing & Program Production	3	5	3	5	5	5
Membership clubs at CRs	0	1	0	0	5	4
Undertake research	4	5	4	5	5	5
Community Outreach Program/Activities	4	4	4	5	5	5
Total Marks	**14**	**18**	**14**	**19**	**24**	**23**

The top scorer in Social Sustainability assessment are NGO based CRS- Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat with the scores in social sustainability as 24 and 23 respectively. Almost all CRS have undertaken research to understand various aspects of CR functioning and Community. NGO based CRS outperform other stations in Community outreach programmes or activities.

Table 23 Total Matrix-Financial Sustainability

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
Maintenance of Finance	2	2	5	5	5	4
Annual Budget	5	5	5	5	5	5
Finance Policy	2	2	2	2	4	4
Involvement of Community	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fundraising Activity	0	0	3	2	3	3
Total Marks	**11**	**11**	**15**	**14**	**17**	**16**

The overall financial sustainability score is highest for NGO based CRS Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat which is 17 and 16 respectively. DUCR and Apna Radio both government educational institution-based CRS doesn't involve in any fundraising activity apparently due to the surety of funds in case of government set up.

Table 24 Total Matrix-Technical Sustainability

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
In House Production Facility	4	4	4	5	5	5
Maintenance of equipment	4	3	4	4	4	5
Broadcasting	2	2	5	4	5	5
Signal Quality and Reach	4	4	4	1	4	5
Technical Staff & Studio	4	5	3	5	5	5
Total Marks	**18**	**18**	**20**	**19**	**23**	**25**

Again, NGO based CRS are the two top scorer in the section of Technical Sustainability with Alfaz-e-Mewat scoring full 25 and Gurgaon ki Awaz scoring close 23. Apna CR and DUCR scored comparatively low 18 while Hint Radio and JIMS CR which are both private educational institution-based CR scored in the middle score range of 20 and 19 comparatively.

Table 25 Total Matrix –Sustainability

	Apna Radio	DUCR	Hint CR	JIMS CR	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	Alfaz-e-Mewat
Institutional Sustainability	13	18	12	21	21	21
Social Sustainability	14	18	14	19	24	23
Financial Sustainability	11	11	15	14	17	16
Technical Sustainability	18	18	20	19	23	25
Total	**56**	**65**	**61**	**73**	**85**	**85**

The overall score of the six sampled CRS of NCR is 85 for both NGO based CR Gurgaon ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat. While Government educational Institution based CR- Apna Radio and DUCR remained on the lower side i.e. 56 and 65 points respectively. The 2 private educational institution-based CRS- Hint and JIMS CR score 61 and 73 points respectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The overall sustainability matrix demonstrates substantial variation among the six stations. Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat jointly occupy the highest position, with 85 points each. JIMS CR follows with 73, DUCR with 65, Hint CR with 61 and Apna Radio with 56.

Overall ranking

Rank	CRS	Overall Score	Broad institutional category
1	Gurgaon Ki Awaz	85	NGO-based
1	Alfaz-e-Mewat	85	NGO-based
3	JIMS CR	73	Educational institution-based
4	DUCR	65	Educational institution-based
5	Hint CR	61	Educational institution-based
6	Apna Radio	56	Educational institution-based

The pattern is particularly striking because the two NGO-based stations occupy the first two positions.

Institutional Sustainability

JIMS CR, Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat obtain the highest institutional sustainability score of 21, followed by DUCR at 18, Apna Radio at 13 and Hint CR at 12.

The NGO-based stations demonstrate particularly strong performance in management, governance, training and community-oriented institutional structures. Gurgaon Ki Awaz, for example, scores 5 in management and governance, while Alfaz-e-Mewat also records strong performance across these categories.

A major institutional weakness across the sample is the absence of formally documented vision and mission statements. Except for Alfaz-e-Mewat, the stations do not report a documented vision, and only Alfaz-e-Mewat records both vision and mission as documented.

Social Sustainability

The social sustainability results show an even stronger distinction. Gurgaon Ki Awaz scores 24, Alfaz-e-Mewat 23, JIMS CR 19, DUCR 18, while Apna Radio and Hint CR score 14 each.

The strongest distinction is visible in community membership and listener clubs. Gurgaon Ki Awaz obtains the maximum score of 5 and Alfaz-e-Mewat scores 4, whereas the other stations have very limited or no formal listener-club structures.

This suggests that social sustainability is closely associated with mechanisms that transform the community from an audience into an active institutional stakeholder.

Financial Sustainability
Financial sustainability scores range from 11 to 17. Gurgaon Ki Awaz leads with 17, followed by Alfaz-e-Mewat at 16, Hint CR at 15, JIMS CR at 14, and Apna Radio and DUCR at 11 each.

The most important weakness is community involvement in financial matters. None of the six stations received a positive score on any of the five indicators under this category. Financial statements were not discussed with the community, balance sheets were not shared, communities were not involved in purchasing decisions and monthly income-expenditure information was not published.

This is an important finding because it reveals that financial sustainability and financial transparency are not necessarily the same thing. A station may have adequate financial management while still lacking participatory financial governance.

Technical Sustainability
Alfaz-e-Mewat emerges as the strongest station technically, scoring a full 25/25, followed by Gurgaon Ki Awaz at 23, Hint CR at 20, JIMS CR at 19, and Apna Radio and DUCR at 18 each.

The strongest technical performance of the NGO-based stations is associated with their in-house production facilities, maintenance systems, broadcasting continuity, technical staff and signal-related infrastructure.

The technical results also reveal specific weaknesses. For example, only JIMS CR and the two NGO-based stations have programme scheduling software such as GRINS, while the educational-institution-based stations score lower on this indicator.

CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrates that sustainability of community radio is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be reduced to financial viability or technological capability alone. Institutional strength, social embeddedness, financial resilience and technical preparedness collectively determine the ability of a Community Radio Station to function effectively and continuously.

The comparative assessment of six selected Community Radio Stations reveals considerable differences in sustainability performance. Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat emerge as the most sustainable stations, with an overall score of 85 each, while JIMS CR occupies the next position with 73. DUCR, Hint CR and Apna Radio record progressively lower scores of 65, 61 and 56 respectively.

One of the most significant findings is the strong performance of the NGO-based Community Radio Stations. Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat perform particularly well in social sustainability, institutional sustainability and technical sustainability. Their stronger community outreach, listener engagement, participatory mechanisms and community-oriented institutional practices appear to contribute significantly to their overall sustainability.

The social sustainability findings are especially important. The strongest stations demonstrate greater engagement with their communities through programming, outreach, research, local talent and listener clubs. Gurgaon Ki Awaz and Alfaz-e-Mewat score 24 and 23 respectively in social sustainability, substantially above the other stations. This suggests that community participation is not simply an ideological principle of community radio; it can also function as an institutional resource that strengthens long-term sustainability.

At the same time, the study identifies a significant weakness across the entire sample: limited community participation in financial governance. None of the six stations received a positive score on the indicators measuring community involvement in financial matters. This represents an important gap between participatory programming and participatory institutional governance. Community radio stations may involve communities in content production while excluding them from decisions concerning financial management and resource allocation.

The financial findings further demonstrate that financial planning is relatively well established but financial diversification remains uneven. All six stations undertake annual budgeting, expenditure planning, auditing and budget review. However, Apna Radio and DUCR report no fundraising activities, while other stations use combinations of advertising, projects and sponsorships. This indicates that financial sustainability requires not only prudent financial administration but also diversified and sustainable revenue strategies.

Technical sustainability is comparatively strong across the sample. All stations possess basic production infrastructure, trained technical staff and acoustic studios. However, differences in scheduling software, maintenance contracts, insurance, broadcasting hours and signal quality indicate that technical sustainability remains uneven.

The study also reveals that institutional ownership or organisational context may be an important factor in sustainability. The two NGO-based stations occupy the top two positions overall, while the educational-institution-based stations occupy the remaining four positions. This pattern should not automatically be interpreted as a causal relationship, particularly because the study is based on a small purposive sample. Nevertheless, the consistency of the pattern across institutional, social and technical dimensions suggests that organisational autonomy, community embeddedness, partnerships and resource mobilisation deserve closer examination in future research.

An important conceptual conclusion of the study is therefore that sustainable community radio should be understood as a balance between institutional capacity and community ownership. A technically sophisticated station without meaningful community participation may not fully realise the principles of community radio, just as a highly participatory station without adequate financial and technical resources may struggle to survive.

The findings also reinforce the need to move from a station-survival approach to a sustainability ecosystem approach. Such an approach would involve stronger institutional governance, regular community mapping, formal listener clubs, participatory financial transparency, diversified revenue models, systematic training, technical maintenance and stronger collaborations among community radio stations.

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