

## **Country-wide community radio consultation series kicks off in Mount Abu**

*The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's consultations on community radio begin at Mount Abu, Rajasthan*

### **December 21, 2012, Mount Abu, Rajasthan:**

A community owned Community Radio station can change the way development takes place in a community, enabling access to services, right to redress, ensuring justice, and promoting local culture and tradition.

With this note, the first three-day consultation on community radio in the series was inaugurated on December 21 at *Shantivan*, Mount Abu. The consultation was organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, in collaboration with OneWorld Foundation India – a leading community media organisation -- at Radio Madhuban, a popular community radio station.

During the inaugural address District Collector Madhan Singh Kala, Sirohi, said that the role of the medium of radio in India is very important, particularly if the programmes are made locally. He urged the community to make programmes in such a way that they inculcate positive attitude towards development.

RK Shrivastava, Assistant Wireless Advisor, Ministry of Communication & Technology, explained how the licensing processes are handled by two ministries - Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. For example, for community radio, the frequency ranges from 88MHz to 108MHz.

Talking about the role of community radio, Mruthunjay of Radio Madhuban said, "This is a world of TV and e-mail but since these are not accessible to everyone, radio has an edge as it covers a vast audience. Community radio is important because it's present even in remote villages," Agreeing with him, Karuna ji of *Brahmakumaris* added that community radio should be used to educate village folks about the pressing issue of disaster management.

Rajiv Tikoo, Director, OneWorld, informed the audience about the objectives of the consultation and status of community radio in the country. The event's aim is to give an insight to potential community radio license applicants into the process of application, capacity building, content generation, technology, management, ownership and sustainability of a Community Radio station, he added. Over 50 people from civil society organisations and educational institutions from Rajasthan and adjoining districts of Gujarat are participating in the consultation.

The government has so far received more than 1100 applications throughout the country, out of which 386 applicants have been issued letters of intent. And about 140 community radio stations are currently operational.

To help more NGOs and educational institutions to set up community radio stations, the ministry is holding a series of similar consultations in Orcha, Darjeeling, Vishakhapatnam, Ooty and many other places across the country. Overall there will be nine consultations in this season.

By Anubha Shukla

(OneWorld)