

Date:08/03/2008 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/03/08/stories/2008030852480300.htm>

[Back](#)

[Tamil Nadu](#)

Kongu FM carves a niche among Erode listeners

Karthik Madhavan

'From three hours in the initial days, the broadcast has now reached 12 hours'

Photo: M. Govarthan



In demand: Kongu FM has overwhelming patronage from listeners, who ask for more and more programmes. —

PERUNDURAI: With examinations round the corner, it will be good if there is a programme to address students' examination fears, suggests Kalaiarasi, a Plus Two student of the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School here. Like her Madeswaran, who hails from Kallakulam village, too has a demand: he wants announcements on power cuts in his locality.

They are just two of the hundreds of listeners who travelled long distances to gather here recently to have a say in what the Kongu FM Community Radio should broadcast. For, the listeners believed that true to its name the radio broadcast of the Kongu Engineering College would be cent per cent community-based.

In deference to their wishes, the College management has ensured that the radio service remains just that. "Kongu FM is a platform for the local community to voice their needs, share their aspirations, ambition and abilities," says K. Thangaraj, the chief coordinator of Kongu FM and a faculty at the Department of Physics at the College. For example, the community radio managers, involving the local community who are also the listeners, has conducted 'Kongamma Kelamma!', a Department of Science and Technology-supported science project for women.

Mobile recording

Dr. Thangaraj says Kongu Community FM has a mobile recording theatre which it takes to villages to record the science programme as well as others. That aside, the FM also brings villager-listeners to studio to record programmes and also showcase its facilities. So much has been the participation, that the College students and listeners vie with one another to present programmes, the professor adds. The college's Women Development Cell, Industry Institute Partnership Cell, Humour Club, Creativity and Fine Arts Club and other associations contribute programmes regularly.

Such arrangements are possible because of the college management's initial investment of Rs. 25 lakh and a recurring annual expenditure another Rs. 6 lakh for development. The dividend of this investment is to be seen in the duration of programmes. "From three hours in the initial days, the broadcast has now reached 12 hours," Mr. Thangaraj says.

That is not all. The Kongu FM Community Radio has won the best community radio award, Radio Duniya 2008 Award, competing against 27 community radios.

The college management and listeners are no doubt happy and not overjoyed. There is a thorn in the flesh: In the frequency the community radio broadcasts, there is a disruption from the All India Radio's Kodaikanal FM.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu