

### Working with Media to Create Change

In today's rapidly evolving environmental landscape, the responsibility of media extends beyond reporting events. It includes crafting compelling narratives that connect with audiences emotionally and intellectually, creating urgency for action while offering hope for a sustainable future. The session focused on the critical role of media in creating awareness and fostering action on pressing environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. It explored how diverse media platforms—radio, print, and social media—can collaborate with environmental advocates to inspire actionable change and promote sustainability. It aimed to empower participants, including youth, educators, and policymakers, with the tools and knowledge to effectively use media for environmental advocacy.

This session was dedicated to exploring how media and compelling storytelling can be leveraged to advance environmental awareness and action. It aimed to forge connections between participants and media professionals, offering crucial insights into effectively using creative communication to sway public opinion, influence policy, and foster collaborative environmental advocacy.



### Speakers

- Shri Trilok Sanghani, Assistant Director, Akashvani Ahmedabad
- Mr Shyam Parekh, Founder, DNA
- Ms Sneha Shahi, TTPC 2019 and YRE 2023 Champion, PhD Scholar, ATREE

### Presentations and Key Messages

**Shri Trilok Sanghani (Akashvani Ahmedabad)** emphasised the power of radio as a widely accessible medium, particularly in rural areas where internet access is limited. It highlighted radio's unique ability to evoke imagination, often referred to as "the theatre of the mind". Programmes like Dharti Nu Jatan were showcased as examples of how radio effectively addresses environmental issues and engages listeners through simple yet impactful messaging. The importance of leveraging the warmth

of the human voice and the simplicity of communication was also underscored as a means to connect with and reach diverse audiences.

**Mr Shyam Parekh (Founder DNA)** defined journalism as a pillar of democracy and a vigilant watchdog that highlights the need for change without crossing into activism. He emphasised the critical role of investigative journalism in uncovering hidden truths and raising awareness about ecological issues. Sharing impactful stories of ecological degradation, he spoke about the loss of Ahmedabad's water bodies and the destruction of grasslands caused by invasive species. Mr Parekh encouraged the youth to engage in responsible journalism and stressed the importance of unbiased reporting to inspire meaningful change.

*"Where journalism stops, activism starts." – Shyam Parekh*

**Ms Sneha Shahi** shared her inspiring journey of restoring a polluted river alongside a group of ten college students over three years, despite facing limited resources. She demonstrated the power of storytelling in connecting science with society and influencing community action. Additionally, she emphasised the importance of involving local stakeholders and simplifying complex scientific concepts to ensure broader understanding. Ms Shahi also advocated for using social media platforms, such as Instagram, as "digital scrapbooks" to document and share environmental initiatives, making them accessible to a wider audience.

### Key Recommendations from the Session

#### 1. Schools as Catalysts for Community Engagement Through Podcasts

- Podcasts can serve as a low-cost, easily accessible alternative to traditional media, making them ideal for schools.
- Students can use podcasts to share stories, highlight local environmental issues, and raise awareness within their communities.
- Schools can cover a wide range of subjects, such as climate change, waste management, and sustainable practices that resonate with their local community.

#### 2. Promoting Youth-Led Investigative Journalism

- Youth should be equipped with the necessary skills to conduct investigative journalism, focusing on ethics, fact-checking, and the importance of reliable sources.
- Social media offers a powerful platform for youth to share factual, well-researched content, making it possible to reach larger audiences and influence public opinion.

#### 3. Strengthening Collaboration Between Environmental Advocates and Media Professionals

- Strengthen partnerships between environmental organisations and media professionals to ensure accurate and wide-reaching communication of sustainability messages.
- Work together to create campaigns that highlight critical environmental issues, bringing together both expertise and outreach power.
- Use traditional media, digital media, and community-based channels to amplify messages, ensuring they reach diverse audiences across various demographics.

#### 4. Localised Storytelling to Reach Remote Communities

- Environmental messages should be adapted to the cultural contexts of local communities, connecting with their beliefs, traditions, and values.
- Use storytelling methods that are deeply rooted in local customs and languages, making the content more relatable and impactful.

### 5. Integrating Journalism and Storytelling Workshops in Educational Institutions

- Educational institutions should offer workshops focusing on journalism, storytelling, and media production to equip students with the tools needed for impactful environmental reporting.
- Provide practical training on writing, podcasting, video creation, and investigative reporting, ensuring students develop real-world skills.

### Quotes with attribution

*"Radio is the theatre of the mind. It has the warmth of the human voice and leaves a lasting impact."*  
– Shri Trilok Sanghani

*"Where journalism stops, activism starts."* – Shyam Parekh

### Audience Engagement

Mr Sreyas Sajeevan kicked off an engaging interactive session, moderating a lively discussion with the audience that sparked dynamic participation. Several key questions and insightful interactions emerged.

Yogendra Pandey, a teacher, inquired about the process of starting a student-led "Bal Radio" initiative, seeking practical insights into its operational feasibility and implementation. Mohd Asif, another teacher, stressed the need for formal journalism training programmes at the school level, highlighting the importance of equipping young minds with the skills necessary for effective storytelling and reporting. Rizwana, a fellow educator, brought attention to the challenges of reaching remote areas and suggested the potential of localised storytelling as a means to bridge this gap and foster deeper community engagement.

Adding an international perspective, a representative from Mongolia delivered an inspiring presentation on Peak Media House. Their work showcased innovative approaches to raising awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Mongolia. Through impactful storytelling and media campaigns, they demonstrated how their initiatives have successfully engaged communities and amplified the message of sustainability and global responsibility, enriching the audience's understanding of media's role in driving positive change.

### Challenges or Issues Discussed

Establishing community radio stations presents both legal and logistical challenges that can complicate the process. These obstacles often include navigating complex regulatory frameworks, securing necessary licences, and managing financial and operational resources. Additionally, misconceptions about social media often glamourise its potential outcomes, overlooking the significant effort and challenges involved in achieving success. While the accessibility and reach of

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social media can appear effortless, the reality is that sustained engagement, strategy, and resources are required to effectively build and maintain an online presence.