

Exploring Impact of “Dambana Radio” as an Indigenous Community Radio in Sri Lanka

D. D. Nirosha Neranjala Dissanayaka* , Mingxing He

School of International Journalism and Communication, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China

Email: *nirosha@spc.cmb.ac.lk, niroshaneranjala@gmail.com

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Abstract

The *Vedda* are the descendants of the “Balangoda Manavaya” who lived in Sri Lanka in prehistoric times. The original and native language of *Vedda* people is the “*Vedda (Vedi)* Language”. The indigenous community radio plays a vital role in protecting their rights for the freedom of expression. In 2010, Girandurukotte Community Radio station was launched as the “Radio Dambana”. Thereafter, it was transformed as community radio which was situated in the Dambana area. However, there is a lack of studies regarding the influence of Dambana radio to address socio-cultural matters, challenges and obstacles faced by the indigenous community. This research was developed to investigate the reasons for the popularity and challenges of Dambana radio among the *Vedda* community in the Dambana area of Sri Lanka. The purposive sampling technique, quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were applied in this research. The Dambana Radio is the only radio channel in Sri Lanka that targets the *Vedda* community of Sri Lanka to address cultural identities, values, rituals and arts forms of the Adivasis (indigenous) community. The Dambana radio was one of key media which convinced the significance of *Vedi* language. The elder people of Adivasis group gather around Dambana radio premises on Friday and listen to programs. Although the Adivasis elder people are interested in listening to Dambana radio, the younger generation is more interested in other radio channels which are available and audible in their area. The younger generation of Adivasis community is not interested in listening to Damabana radio due to adaptation to the novel communication modes. The main challenges were identified as dilapidated conditions in operational space, lack of resources and technology.

Keywords

Vedda, Dambana Radio, Community Radio, Indigenous Community, Cultural Identities

1. Introduction

“*Vedda*” term is derived from a Dravidian word which means “hunter”. *Vedda* culture is noticeable by continued interaction with both Sinhalese and Tamils which are the largest nationalities in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the *Vedda* people are generally believed to be descended from the island’s aboriginal population. They have continued a characteristic mode of life based on hunting and gathering until recently.

As stated by the archaeological evidence, the *Vedda* people are considered to be the indigenous inhabitants of the country. They are said to belong to the Neolithic community called “*Balangoda Manavaya*” (*Balangoda anthrop* or the subspecies of *Homo sapiens balangodanis*), dating from before 16,000 BC (Weerasekara, 2021, as cited in Senarath, 2023).

Indigenous peoples are heirs and practitioners of exceptional cultures and behaviors of connecting to people and the environment. They have reserved social, cultural, economic, and political features which are distinct from other dominant societies. Notwithstanding their cultural variances, indigenous peoples around the world stake common difficulties related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples.

Indigenous peoples have sought recognition of their cultural identities, their lifestyle, and their right to traditional lands, regions, and natural resources for years. However, during history, their rights have been violated due to many reasons. Hence, the indigenous peoples nowadays are arguable among the most underprivileged and vulnerable troops in the world (United Nations, n.d.). The indigenous people of Sri Lanka lived in the forest and made hunting as their livelihood. When comparing the past and present situation of the *Vedda* community, there are some similarities, changes of their culture, lifestyles as well as their own living conditions.

The terms of *Wanniya-laeththo*, *Vedda* and *Adivasis* the terms are used in order to introduce the indigenous people in Sri Lanka. The present study uses the “*Vedda*” term, which is now commonly used for the identification of indigenous people.

The *Vedda* heritages and cultural diversities have become an admirable event among outsiders which generates an extra income for them mainly in Dambana village, Uva Province in Sri Lanka. The *Vedda* community has increasingly moved their traditional living practices into current economic conditions and mediated practices.

They are using television, radio and mobile phones within their daily life. Some *Vedda* people are representing and participating with media events, programs and traditional events with their own indigenous identities. It is an obvious fact that the younger generation of *Vedda* are studying in the city schools. They are turning to modern technology such as wearing stylish clothes and using mobile phones.

The Kanda Arani and *Vedi Ratin Kanduratata* programs are broadcasted

through the *Welenda Sewaya* and *Kandurata Sewaya* respectively by other radio channels in Sri Lanka about the indigenous community. Dambana radio is the only Radio channel in Sri Lanka that targets the indigenous community of Sri Lanka. It is a non-commercialized radio channel and it gives lifetime experience to interact and hear the voice of the only indigenous community of Sri Lanka.

Several researches have been done pertaining to the *Vedda* people of Sri Lanka. Among them, there were Sri Lankan researchers as well as foreign researchers conducting the studies in various disciplines. However, the study pertaining to Dambana Radio is a timely requirement as it is on the verge of closure.

This research focuses on a study carried out in Sri Lanka pertaining to the “Dambana Radio” as a community radio practice which was aiming to fulfil the requirements of *Vedda* community in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to ascertain the reasons for the popularity, obstacles of operating, and challenges of Dambana Radio among the *Vedda* community in the Dambana area of Sri Lanka. The findings can help to understand how an indigenous radio channel works, features and indigenous community empowerment programs conducted by the *Vedda* community in Sri Lanka.

2. Literature Review

The only indigenous community in Sri Lanka called “*Vedda*” or “*Wanniya-laeththo*” (*Wanniya-laeththo* means forest dwellers who are residing and or close proximity to forest and its resources for their daily requirements), have inhabited dry monsoon forestry for more than 16,000 years of history. The *Vedda* are the original community group in Sri Lanka, but they did not influence the country. Afterward, the Indian immigrants established their settlement in Sri Lanka 2500 years after the *Veddas*. The *Vedda* have their peculiar unique legacy and call themselves as “*Wanniya-laeththo*”, which denotes “those of the forest” (Riswan & Bushra, 2020).

In Sri Lankan indigenous people’s context, the *Vedda* are the descendants of the “*Balangoda Manavaya*” who lived in Sri Lanka during prehistoric times. *Vedda* are strongly attached to trees, animals, streams, mountains, earth, rain, wind, fire, flowers and leaves. According to their specific language, *Wanniya-laeththo* means “people of the jungle”. Until 1950, the early forest-dwellers lived in the forests of the Eastern and Uva provinces of Sri Lanka (Weliange, 2017).

Non-indigenous peoples refer to all the indigenous peoples of Sri Lanka as “*Vedda*”, sometimes it can be translated as “hunters”. The name of “*Vedda*” is more of a categorizing than a name. It is used to describe underdeveloped or landless people who live on the edge of arable land near forests. In some cases, the term is also used for outlaws. These negative connotations have become commonly used to reflect “*Wanniya-laeththo*” slow social and economic status (Stegeborn, 2004).

Their legends, archeology, and recent life patterns suggest that they are descended from the island’s foremost hunters and gatherers. Since they have not yet

been absorbed into one of the Sinhalese or the Tamil two main societies, they kept their distinct physical and cultural characteristics. They maintain their basic needs through searching supplemented by the *Maduru Oya River*. The same conditions were achieved in south region by the *Ulhitiya Oya River* and the *Mahaweli Ganga* (Stegeborn, 2004).

The *Vedda* people represent only a small percentage of the total population of Sri Lanka. The current estimated number is between 5000 and 10,000. The population of *Anuradhapura Vedda* is predicted to be much higher than the population of the *Bintenne* and *Coast Vedda* peoples. As the names denote, the *Anuradhapura Vedda* are the people who live in and around Anuradhapura and *Vedda* in the *Bintenne* area are known as the “*Bintenna Vedda*”. The *Coastal Vedda* reside in the coastal areas in the eastern region of the country which is especially from Batticaloa to Trincomalee (Road Development Authority, 2017).

According to Seligmann & Seligmann (1911) each *Vedda* belongs to a *Warige* or clan, and among the large number of *Vedda* communities that still exist, exogamy is the absolute rule. Furthermore, associated descent in the maternal line is associated with exogamy, so the basics of the social system of the *Vedda* might, possibly, be summarized as a clan organization with female descent. There is no evidence, as far as we can determine, of a dual organization of the clans, but perhaps they originally had a territorial distribution. Ignoring for a moment such contentious matters, the *Vedda* clans are; *Morane Warige*, *Unapane Warige*, *Namadewa or Nabudan Warige*, *Aembela Warige*, *Uru Warige*, *Tala Warige*, and a number of other so-called *Warige* of lesser strength and importance, which perhaps may be local groups that have forgotten their origin and have assumed a name (sometimes noticeably a place name) by the way of usage.

The *Vedda* men traditionally dress below the waist, wear chest-length beards, and are armed with axes and bows. In their culture, women are in many respects men's equals. They are entitled to a similar inheritance. The *Vedda* social structure is a matrilineal exogamous clan organization based on the female line of descent. Monogamy is the general rule, although a widow would often marry her husband's brother as a means of support and comfort (widow's inheritance). They also do not practice a caste system (Uthayakumar, 2015).

Due to development in the construction industry, they had to leave their own traditional forests, but they resettled in the marginal areas of those forests. A few thousands of them now live in the villages of Dambana, Rathugala, Henebedda, Pollebedda, Vakare in Sri Lanka. “Dambana” is known as the administrative center of *Vedda*. Each *Vedda* village has its own rural leader (Weliange, 2017).

The Critiques of the repositioning of indigenous peoples have often been based on ethnic and moral issues. They have become adapted to an environment where they gather traditional knowledge and perform rituals and religious activities related to their traditional routines and reserves. The long-lived *Vedda* language is already disappearing due to repositioning. Subsequently some of their rituals and religious activities are tied to places or activities within their traditional environment, it is said that the displacement paves the way for culture

shock or psychological conflict among indigenous people (Chandrasena, 1993).

Their way of life is intimately linked to forest ecology. The restrictions that were put in place internally due to the scarcity of resources and their nomadic way of life influenced the division of the tribes into smaller groups. Each group includes a nuclear family or a few extended families. These clans live within clearly demarcated borders and territories. This fact has tacitly played a central role in shaping a unique but sustainable way of life for these “forest dwellers”.

The nature of the hunting, the collection of rations, the culture of the chena, and the size of the individual group have a direct bearing on the division of labor between each individual group. *Vedda* people rarely have personal effects. This facilitates their mobility and it harnesses their freedom. So, inevitably, some clans hold a distinct advantage to access for more natural resources and good hunting grounds.

There is no single universal definition for indigenous and tribal peoples, but the International Labor Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) provides a set of objective and subjective criteria that can be applied to identify these peoples in a given country. The Convention offers a practical and inclusive approach for the identification of the peoples concerned, while also emphasizing self-identification as one of the criteria.

It uses the terms “indigenous” peoples and “tribal” peoples, giving both groups the same range of rights. As defined in **Table 1**, the International Labor Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) sets out criteria for identifying the peoples.

This is also the case with regard to other international instruments, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007. Similar to the ILO Convention No. 169, the declaration does not furnish a single universal definition of the term “indigenous peoples” and underlines the significance of self-identification. With the intention of raising awareness about the needs of these indigenous population groups, the 9th of August marks the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. This was chosen in recognition of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations held in Geneva in 1982 (United Nations, n.d.).

As World Bank Policy observed, indigenous peoples are the poorest people among the poor. It is estimated that indigenous peoples represent about 5% out of the world’s population and they are 15% of the world’s poor population. These observations are of particular importance in the context of Asia, as the majority of indigenous peoples found in that continent. As surveyed around the 70 countries in the world, it is recorded that the 70% to 80% are distributed in the Asia and the Pacific regions.

Although the data about the indigenous peoples in Asia are limited, people still draw attention to investigate the social and economic hardships which indigenous and tribal peoples are exposed to.

Furthermore, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs has observed that many indigenous peoples in Asia face several issues such as loss of

Table 1. Subjective and objective criteria defined by International Labor Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

	Subjective criteria	Objective criteria
Indigenous peoples	Self-identification as belonging to an indigenous people	Descent from populations who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonization or establishment of present State boundaries. They retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status.
Tribal peoples	Self-identification as belonging to a tribal people.	Their social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community. Their status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.

Source: [Dhir \(2015\)](#) as cited in Understanding the Indigenous and Tribal People Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Handbook for ILO Tripartite Constituents. International Labour Organization, 2013.

control over land, natural resources, discrimination, marginalization, assimilation pressures and violent repression. It is understood that the focus should be placed on the indigenous peoples of “emerging Asia” on two aspects. As the first, the human rights of the vast population of indigenous and tribal peoples located in Asia should be respected and, secondly, their social and economic difficulties and their potential exclusion in particular due to poverty should be taken into account ([Dhir, 2015](#)).

The *Vedda* community is no longer just an indigenous group confined to jungle areas which are currently spread over the villages. Their mode of living, education and habits are dependent on their interaction with the mainstream society. They have a responsibility of maintaining the *Vedda* language, discipline and cultural elements to carry their inheritance to the future.

The *Vedda* People have now been accepted by the main society. The maintenance of their recognition as a result of the progressive inputs are vital to manage indigenous rights and identity among the society. Their exposure to the current society and technology would inevitably result in a change of their cultural identities. The action and interaction with outer societies would inevitably result in change of their language and cultural elements. However, it cannot be said that they should not get benefits from new media and technical devices.

3. Dambana Radio

In Sri Lanka and the other parts of the world, the majority of indigenous

people's cultures are on the verge of extinction due to a large number of reasons, while some others are even at risk of extinction. The concept of "community" in Sri Lanka is linked to a long history of "village ideology". The rural village is seen as the moral core of the nation which is defined as a "nation of villages".

This community ideal is closely identified with the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and the strong central government control exercised through large-scale technological projects such as dams and irrigation. This situation produces a strong language of loyalty to the community. At the same time, it idealizes the community as a unified "people" by potentially ignoring social divisions and multi-ethnicity. Finally, the allocation of resources within the community, particularly the flow of assets such as money, patronage, water or information into the locality are historically fraught with issues of power and complex institutional arrangements (Slater, Tacchi, & Lewis, 2002).

In 2010, the main Mahaweli Community Radio station, Girandurukotte Community Radio was launched as "Radio Dambana". Accordingly, it was transformed as community radio for the Sri Lanka *Vedda* community, which is situated in the Dambana area. The Dambana Radio service was started on 22nd of February 2010 according to the idea of Mr. Hudson Samara singhe who is the current president of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. The new radio studio was opened on 11th of February 2016 according to the tradition of the *Vedda* and radio programs are broadcasted on FM wave series 95.4. MHz. Indigenous community radio plays a vital role in protecting indigenous people's right for the freedom of expression.

The Dambana village is the prime *Vedda* settlement due to the presence of the present chief of the *Vedda* troupe, *Uruwarige* (Family name) *Wanniya-laeththo* (Given name). The *Adivasis* language is "*Vedi* language" which is different from the language of the main society of Sri Lanka and it is too difficult to understand this language to the general public. The identity of the *Vedda* community is preserved through their language. Thus, the identity of their language and cultural system of the indigenous population is spread through "Dambana Radio". *Uruwarige Wanniya-laeththo* made the voice in order to protect their inheritance.

Uruwarige Wimalaratne is pioneer communicator for the radio programs for the *Vedda* people in Sri Lanka. The "Dambana radio" is not targeted to receive advertising, promotion and sponsorships. Even though "Dambana Radio" was broadcasted over the sixty miles to cover the areas including Dambana, Henna-nigala and Dalukana, it was not covered the other areas such as Rathugala, Pol-labedda, Dalukana where tribal people live across these areas.

The community broadcasters can generally be defined as the independent, nonprofit and governed by the service of the communities. They form an important "third pillar" of the media alongside with the commercial and public broadcasters, and they are a crucial part of a healthy and pluralistic media sector.

Around the World, community broadcasting has emerged to help fill this major communication gap. It provides access to the basic information which can support them to improve their situation and get their attention when they are

required. The voiceless people can exercise their right to express themselves freely and access the information they need to bring about positive transformation through the community broadcasters.

The definition of community broadcasters is distinguished from public service and commercial broadcasters. They are specifically tailored in design and function to meet the needs of voice and informing rural populations, grassroots and/or minority groups. Community broadcasters can be seen as part of a broader concept of community media which also includes community newspapers and online community facilities (UNESCO, 2021).

The major contribution of indigenous peoples to cultural diversity has been recognized in various parties such as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) instruments, including the 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

According to the ancestral habitats, *Vedda* people always used to carry the *Keteriya* (An axe) with them. As a result of this, they have to face various difficulties due to the fact that an axe can be considered as a weapon outside of their tribal society. Taken into consideration of their all problems as distinct people, the opportunity to take the voice of the *Vedda people* to the world has now arisen. Accordingly, economic, cultural and legal support has been provided to the *Vedda* people through this Dambana radio service.

4. Methodology

This study focuses on exploring the impact of Dambana radio as an indigenous community radio. For getting complete insight of the scenario, the qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used to collect the information and data. Several physical visits were conducted to Dambana village, Badulle District in Uva Province for the qualitative and quantitative data gathering purposes.

The purposive sampling technique applied for collecting data and information and the focus group discussions conducted about 15 to 20 minutes with each respondent of the population of respected community and resource persons of the Dambana radio. This study is being conducted through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods.

4.1. Qualitative Technique

Qualitative technique can be defined as the method of research which focuses on gaining relevant information through observational, open-ended and communication methods. They are more exploratory which concentrates on gaining insights about the situation and to find the causes.

As a strategy to avoid the bias and other technical issues inherited to each selected method, as shown in **Figure 1**, this study illustrates a wide variety of qualitative methods such as literature review, focus group discussions, observations,

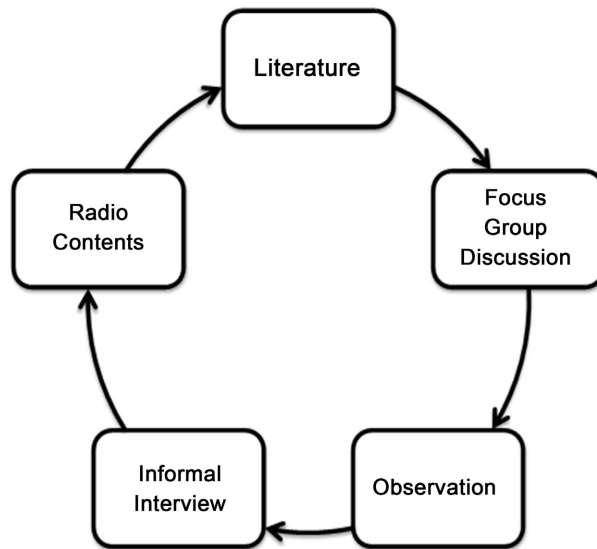


Figure 1. Qualitative research technique selected in this study.

informal interviews and the program contents review. The key questions were asked during the interviews such as the program genres, line-up, program content, contribution of radio channel for the betterment of *Vedda* community. Secondly, the potential of radio programs, their challenges, availability of facilities for conducting the programs and issues of maintaining Dambana radio were selected as other questions in this study. In addition to these questions, availability of staff and distribution of cultural identities of *Vedda* communities were clarified as another important query. The radio programs were identified as how to impact the indigenous community of Sri Lanka.

4.2. Quantitative Technique

For this method, three qualified people who had enough background understanding about the Dambana area and Dambana radio were used to interpret indigenous (their language called *Vedi* language) language and to keep contacts with *Vedda* people. It was necessary to get the support and guidance from two police officers who are working in the Dambana area due to rules and formalities. However, to produce better quality pieces of quantitative data collection, two *Veddas* (two indigenous peoples) assistance was received in this study. The respondents of the study were selected from Dambana indigenous village in Sri Lanka. The informal interviews were conducted with indigenous people in Dambana and a person assisted to interpret indigenous language into Sinhala language.

The formal questionnaires were designed and filled by the researcher while asking details from the *Vedda* community. More than 100 indigenous peoples of the Dambana area contributed to the research as respondents. Some indigenous people of the Dambana community were reluctant to respond due to their personal and social conditions. The purposive sampling technique was applied

when collecting data and information. The resource persons of the Dambana radio and educated people of the *Vedda* community also contributed to this study. The focus group discussions conducted between 15 to 20 minutes with each respondent with the Dambana *Vedda* community.

5. Results and Discussion

Among 100 representative samples of the indigenous people 67 *Vedda* peoples made contributions to the study.

5.1. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

As shown in **Figure 2**, in accordance with the selected sample of Dambana *Vedda* village, the male is dominating in the selected sample as it represents 58% out of the total respondents and females represent 42% out of the total sample. For the most of the cases, females are not trying to be highlighted in any event, but in this scenario the number of respondents is very close to male *Vedda*. This is a good sign of representation by the female *Vedda*.

The tribal people have to face various difficulties while integrating with the general society and carrying out their daily activities. Therefore, they are not interested in using their own *Vedi* language for communicating (2023). The schooling age children are more forward to respond to the visitors of outer society. The little children are shy and reluctant to communicate with the people of mainstream society. The children's dresses depict the designs of mainstream society. Nowadays, younger girls and boys wear frocks, denims, skirts, blouses and sarong, t-shirts respectively.

5.2. Age Distribution and Radio Listening of the Respondents

As illustrated in **Figure 3**, the number of respondents of the population represented different age categories. The majority of the respondents are 18 years who belong to the age category of 24 to 31 years. The second highest number is 14 years who are in the age from 18 to 24 years. When it comes to the trend of listening to the radio, it is quite surprising that the younger generation of the *Vedda* are interested in radio, that is 62% out of the total respondents. The rest of the 38% of the respondents of the radio listening are evenly distributed over the age of 32 years. However, the low trend of listening to the radio is from 53 years to 59 years, that is 3% of respondents.

When it comes to the insight of the respondents, the programs of the Dambana radio are conducted using traditionally built studio premises. Under the minimum facilities and technologies, they used to record the programs by using a mobile phone. Most of the radio programs are recorded in Dambana village and the rest of the programs in Rathugala area. They take outdoor recordings for the radio programs by using a mobile phone even though they do not have modern facilities to carry out programs at a standard level (interview, May, 2023).

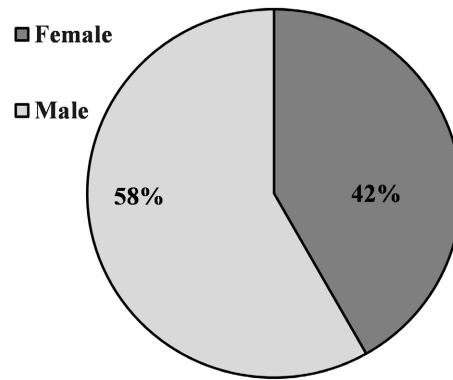


Figure 2. Gender distribution of the respondents.

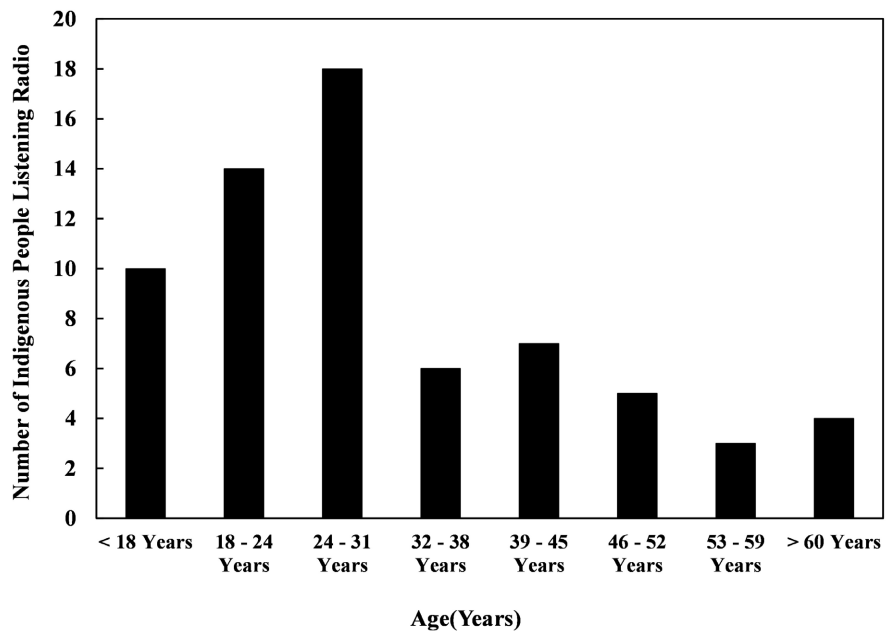


Figure 3. Relationship between age distribution and radio listening of the respondents.

5.3. Professional Distribution of the Respondents in Listening the Radio

As presented in **Figure 4**, a similar trend of listening to radio was observed in self-employment and farming profession, that is 19 respondents for each profession. It is clear that self-employed people are keener on listening to the radio than other professional people who live in the Dambana area. As a result, they can protect their personal income which can be heavily disturbed by wildlife activity such as wild elephant attacks, wild boar and other herbivorous animals. The next highest number of respondents (11 respondents) are tenant who are in the middle of surviving their personal issues. It is a normal condition that the rest of the 27% of the respondents are in the category of education who are students, government workers, technical officials, job seekers and the fishermen. So, there should be a valid reason for not listening to the radio such as technological development and evolution of smart mobile phones.

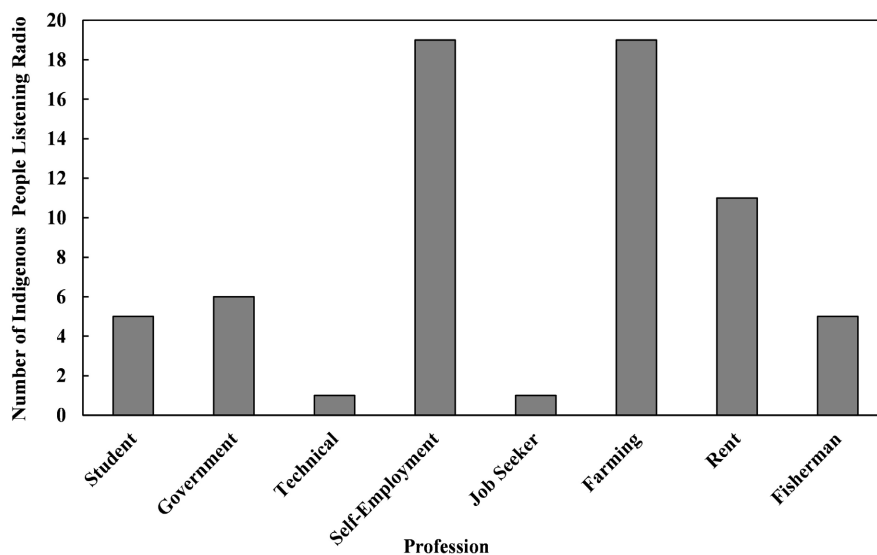


Figure 4. Relationship between profession and number of indigenous peoples listening to radio.

According to the discussion with *Vedda*, current livelihood has changed towards cultivations, searching for food in the forest and hunting. They are the descendants of hunter and gatherer society. They have extensive knowledge about the jungle and behavior of animals. Harvesting honey is an interesting task in indigenous culture. Uruwarige Wimalaratne said that when they know that some people outside the indigenous community have done illegal activities such as substandard businesses using the *Vedda* name and identities, especially preparing and selling low quality sweets as Bee's honey, Dambana radio has helped to socialize and publicize it among the *Vedda* people.

The tourists also have been attracted to the Dambana area as a result of hearing about the Dambana radio. This radio has been the reason and means for providing economic benefits to the indigenous people of Dambana area.

5.4. Distribution of Number of Indigenous People's Preference for Radio Channel among Respondents

According to **Figure 5**, the teenagers are not interested in listening to Dambana radio, but they seem to be listening to other popular commercial radio channels in Sri Lanka such as Sha FM, Hiru FM and Sirasa FM. The younger people who are in the age between 18 years to 24 years are also not tuning the Dambana radio, whereas their tendency goes to the commercial channels similar to the teenagers. However, the younger people show the highest number of radio listeners, that is 10% out of the total listeners. It seems that the adults are the only listeners of the Dambana radio which is about 21% out of the total listeners. As clearly shown in the Figure, the adults are trying to tune up all the radio channels compared to teenagers and younger generations.

It seems that the technological usage of indigenous people of the Dambana area has affected their lifestyle. In the early days, some *Vedda* people showed

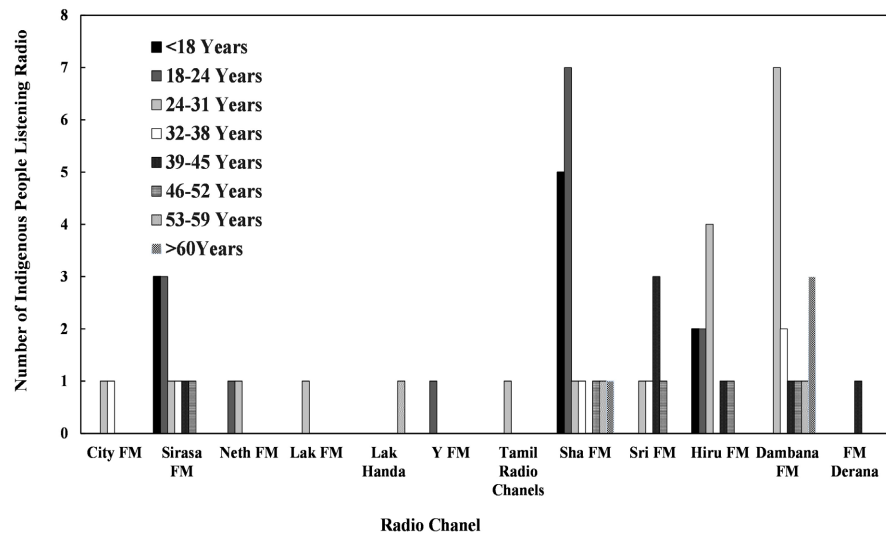


Figure 5. Relationship between radio channels and number of indigenous peoples listening radio.

reluctance to connect with the general society and carry out their day-to-day necessary activities. The reason for that was the problematic situation that arose due to the fact that the common people near Dambana area cannot understand the *Vedi* language they used for communicating.

According to the interview made with Uruwarige Wimalarathne, the variety of programs are broadcasted through Dambana radio. The “*Variga Vitti*” program examines *Vedda* tradition and they are continuously running a program on the practice of *Vedi* language.

The Dambana radio brings the discussion with *Wanniya-laeththo* (The leader of the indigenous people of Sri Lanka) every week from the leader’s house. The program “*With a Neighbour*” broadcasts every Monday of the week. The “*Bosat Daruwo*” Children’s Program, “*Irapaya Ena Welawa*” (*Irapojja Mangachchana Kala Matcha*), “*Hithlana Kav*” (Song Request Program), “*Binthanne Hendirikka Mal*” Children’s Program, “*Editorial*”, “*Dharma Discussions*” and “*Dharma Sermons*” on “Dambana Radio” are among the list of programs.

They are trying to align programs for all age groups to fulfil their requirements. For this purpose, the patronage of the thero of Giradurukotte Viharaya and the guidance and leadership of *Vedda* leader Uruwarige *Wanniya-laeththo* are the blessings for conducting these programs.

6. Conclusions

Nowadays, indigenous people live and interact with the common people of Sri Lanka to fulfill their requirements in education and other essential requirements. Only few people representing the *Vedda* community have even obtained state university education. Even though there are no significant developments of *Vedi* language and literature at present among their community, it is heard through radio when representing their traditional rituals as a creative media with a

unique rhythm based on *Vedi* language.

The *Vedda* community has no written or symbolic syllable system for their unique language. It is inherited by the oral tradition. The persistence of small culture within *Vedda* people in Sri Lanka is a challenging factor when conducting this radio channel to fulfill their requirements. It can be said that the Dambana radio service is the best opportunity for socializing the *Vedi* language.

Thus, the following are the conclusions derived through the research in respect of Dambana radio and its influence over *Vedda* community dwelled in Dambana area in Sri Lanka.

1) The *Vedda* community in Sri Lanka represents the ethnic identity and customs and culture which implies the ancestral and traditional rituals. At the stage of distribution of resources and facilities among indigenous communities, there's a lack of dissemination of resources amongst the indigenous community. It will pave the way for the divisions among indigenous communities.

2) Some members of *Vedda* community are more familiar with new technological communication devices and some of them have mobile phones. Accordingly, there's a threat of maintaining indigenous characteristics and other factors among *Vedda* community.

3) Younger people of the *Vedda* community in Dambana village are more connected and attracted to mainstream culture and modern technologies.

4) Indigenous peoples currently have more presence at the national level in Sri Lanka. The *Vedda* community has demands for their representation and voice to win and make a platform to acquire their rights. Through these opportunities they have a desire to gain autonomy, to win their rights through representing and to proper management of their resources.

5) Dambana radio is not audible clearly in the area due to technical and other issues. Currently it is not operating properly within the area as it planned. Currently, it seems that the Dambana radio station is in the verge of closure.

6) The Dambana Radio has been the reason to convince the indigenous people that the *Vedi* language also has importance in their society. This radio has helped to give a new hope and phase to the *Vedi* language and the people of *Vedda* community.

7) Dambana Radio has given a good opportunity to share the messages among the tribal people if any injustice occurred to them from the outsiders of the *Vedda* group.

8) The elder generation gather around Dambana radio premises on Friday and listen to programs. Although the Sri Lankan elder generation is interested in listening to Dambana Radio, the younger generation is more interested in listening to other radio channels which are available and audible in their area. The few other programs had changed their lives to make better changes, to overcome their behavioral changes.

The available place for Dambana radio in Dambana village is also in dilapidated condition and also, the existing equipment is not sufficient. Accordingly, maintenance of this radio is a challenging factor in the prevailing economic cri-

sis in Sri Lanka with the limited infrastructure, and resources. Furthermore, it is needed to protect this radio for the indigenous people of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, these findings can be used for identifying the indigenous community, their mode of living, and challenges faced by the Dambana Radio. Furthermore, these findings are helpful to take necessary steps to protect the rights of *Vedda*, their culture, inheritance and moribund *Vedi* language.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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