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**Deutsche Welle - AMIC**  
**Seminar on**  
**RADIO PROGRAMMING**  
**IN A MULTIMEDIA AGE**

**COUNTRY PAPER – MALDIVES**

*jointly organised by*



**Deutsche Welle Radio Training Centre**  
**Köln, Germany**

*and*



**Asian Media Information**  
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## **RADIO BROADCASTING IN THE MALDIVES**

The Voice of Maldives now in its 37<sup>th</sup> year of broadcasting in the country began with the minimum necessities for a radio station, and since then has developed over the years into a full fledged station, with major advancements, specially in recent years, both in the technical area and in the quantity and quality of programmes produced. The simple one channel station has evolved over the years into the now 5 channels of broadcasting. These five channels are named, 'Dhivehiraajeyge Adu', 'English Service', 'Adhuge Adu', 'FM (Radio 1)', and FM (Radio 2)'. A variety of both entertainment and educational programmes are broadcast on all these channels.

Being the one and only broadcasting station in the country, great caution has to be taken that while also providing entertainment, that it also address current social issues and act as a vehicle for creating awareness amongst the general masses on such issues. If the number of radios in the household is any indication of the stations popularity and its wide audience, the fact that almost every household in the country has at least one radio is proof enough of the importance of the radio station in the country. Furthermore, unofficial surveys done in various islands show that apart from the entertainment programmes a number of important social and educational messages given via the various programmes are having considerable impact. Now that telephone services are available in most of the outer islands, there is also keen audience participation in programmes where it is catered for.

Programmes of the Voice of Maldives start with 'Dhivehiraajeyge Adu' at 5.30 am. And the programmes on this channel continue until 9 am. It starts again 7pm and continues until 10.45 pm. When the station closes broadcasting for the day. The programmes brought on 'Dhivehiraajeyge Adu' is varied. These include programs on religion, health, agriculture, education, sports, current affairs as well as special programmes for women, youth and children. Most of these programmes are aimed at trying to assist the people to improve their living by creating greater awareness on important social, health and educational issues. In addition Dhivehiraajeyge Adu also broadcasts news 4 times a day during its hours of broadcasting. These four news bulletins are brought at 7am, 2pm, 7pm, and 10pm. Both local and international news is covered in each of these news bulletins.

Voice of Maldives also broadcasts programmes in English for two hours daily from 5 to 7pm. The target audience for the 'English Service' are the expatriates living in the country as well as people in countries which receive the station's signal. As such the programmes broadcast on this channel have a different focus. Programmes covering the local history and culture as well as the country's environment and special socio-economic development programmes being carried out in the country are covered on the English Service. Every effort is made to make the programmes as informative and entertaining to the target foreign audience.

'Adhuge adu' begins broadcasting its transmission at 9am and continues till 5pm. The format of the programmes on Adhuge Adu are very different from those broadcast on

'Dhivehiraajeyge Adu'. Instead of having set 15 or 30 minute programmes on certain issue or area, the programmes broadcast here are much shorter and covers a variety of different areas. These include various programmes on health, agriculture as well as cookery and entertainment programmes. In addition, updated news headlines are broadcast hourly on this channel. A bulletin of local and international news is also broadcast every 24 hours. Adhuge Adu programmes are broadcast on 1.449 MegaHz.

FM (Radio 1) programmes which continue from 8 pm. To 12 pm. are mainly musical entertainment programmes. These include mainly Dhivehi (the local language) songs and Hindi songs. In addition, it also covers local and regional news every hour. FM Radio 1 is broadcast on 104 MegaHz.

Transmissions of FM Radio 2 is brought on the 99 MegaHz. FM Radio 2 programmes begins at 9 am and end at 2.30pm and is broadcast on all days except on public holidays. On public holidays programmes begins at 9 am and end at 5pm. While a variety of awareness programmes are included in its broadcast, much time is also devoted to songs and music. These include popular Dhivehi, Hindi and English songs for which people can send or phone in their requests.

The recent introduction of broadcasting direct from the outer islands ( islands outside the capital ) is one of the major achievements in the history of radio broadcasting in the

country. Even though the country's national radio station is over 36 years old, all broadcasting up to 1998 was carried out only from the capital Male'. This is not due to a lack of such a desire or a need, but more so because of many factors which had hindered such a development. The geographically fragmented nature of the country, with the tiny 200 islands dispersed over a vast stretch of ocean poses major problems both logistically and financially to commence broadcasting from the outer islands. However, this service was begun on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1998. On Friday and Saturdays atoll news is now brought directly from the 20 atolls of the country. Two media centres have now also been established in the atolls, one in the Southern most atoll and one in the North. A half our programme is broadcast from these two media centres during the weekend. These programmes mainly highlight what is going on in the atolls during the weekend. Both these programmes and the news is produced by people who had been given training by the Voice of Maldives.

While the Voice of Maldives has achieved much in its 36 years of broadcasting in the country, there is still much scope for improvement. For such developments we need to further our technical expertise in the area as well as provided relevant training and upgrading in the area of programme development. We believe strongly that, specially considering the geographical nature of our island nation, that radio will remain the principal source of not only entertainment, but also a major vehicle to reach out to the masses, creating greater awareness on vital issues related to both the well being of the individual and to the society as a whole.

☆ Fathimath fiuza  
Voice of Maldives