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Exposure of Radio as a Medium of Communication and its Effectiveness in Rural India: A Study in Manipuri Community of Assam

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Abstract:

The present paper is an attempt to understand the popularity level of radio and to understand the mode of listening radio as audio-media of communication in rural areas. It is based on empirical study conducted in two Manipuri villages in Cachar district of Assam. The data was collected from one respondent of each household of the two villages by using interview schedule technique. The findings of the study revealed that the role of radio is quite significant in both the villages as it fulfils certain specific needs of the Manipuri community through different programmes which helps in maintaining the basic traits of their culture, though it has been reported as a diminished media in a number of recent village studies.

Keywords: Audio-media, Communication, Manipuri Community, Radio

1. Introduction

Radio is the radiation (wireless transmission) of electromagnetic signals through the atmosphere or free space (Rudolf F. Graf, 1974). Before the invention of television, radio was a very popular audio - medium for communication and entertainment in both urban and rural areas. In recent decades though the demand of radio is decreasing after coming out of television, it still acts as one of the important mass media in bringing up the society towards development. This medium also helps in maintaining or reviving the old and out of practice customs and traditions in rural areas.

2. Review of Literature

As the communication has a vast role in developing and bringing change in the society, social scientists have been attracted towards the study of the communication process since the early part of the 20th century. Attempts to develop a general approach to social theory that emphasized the role of communication in social life were initially made by some social scientists under Chicago School (Cooley 1902, 1909; Dewey 1927; Mead 1934). Following the view, so many studies on communication have also been carried out in other parts of the world. Here, a few analyses of some important contributors cited regarding radio has been included:

Patel (1968) studied on the effectiveness of Radio as a medium of communication, and revealed that the respondents did not feel the necessity of listening to radio for information on family planning since the interpersonal communication serves their purpose.

In a dissertation, Kakoli Bora (1994) opined that in Assam, 63 percent of rural populations were radio listeners. Since the literacy rate of rural population of Assam is still very low, the AIR and Doordarshan have an important role in providing education as well as information.

Singh (1995) highlighted that radio now fulfills very specific needs of the urban middle class to audio-visual media has been tremendously increased in the recent past.

Denise Grey-Felder (2003) emphasized that radio can be used as the mass media for its ability to give voice to local concerns. Radio can work as the first appropriate point of focus and can then be linked into national outlets.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the popularity level of radio in rural areas.
- To understand the mode of listening radio as an audio-medium of communication in rural areas.
- To understand the effectiveness of radio among the rural people.

4. Methodology of the Study

- The study was conducted in two distinct Manipuri villages- named i) 'Jarultola' (consists of 103 households), and ii) 'Chandpur' (consists of 168 households) in Cachar district of Assam.
- The total respondents were 271 of which 137 were male and 134 were female.
- The data was collected by using a highly structured interview schedule.
- One prominent family member from each household of the two villages was selected as a respondent and interviewed to elicit the data.

5. Background of the Study

The background of the respondents is analyzed on the basis of sex and age distribution.

Sl. No.	Sex	Villages		Total	Percentage
		Jarultola	Chandpur		
1.	Male	53	84	137	50.55
2.	Female	50	84	134	49.45
	Total	103	168	271	100

Table 1: Sex wise distribution of the respondents

The data in table 1 revealed that out of 271 respondents, 50.55 percent were male and 49.45 percent were female.

Sl. No.	Age group	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	11-20	06	08	14	5.16
2.	21-30	21	36	57	21.04
3.	31-40	33	33	66	24.36
4.	41-50	33	26	59	21.78
5.	51-60	15	09	24	8.85
6.	61-70	08	09	17	6.27
7.	Above 70	21	13	34	12.54
	Total	137	134	271	100

Table 2: Age wise distribution of the respondents

The data in table 2 showed that 24.36 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 31-40 while 21.78 percent belonged to the age group of 41-50 and 21.04 percent were in the age group of 21-30. Again, 12.54 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of above 70 while 8.85 percent were in the age group of 51-60, 6.27 percent in the age group of 61-70 and 5.16 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 11-20.

6. Exposure and effectiveness of radio

6.1. Ownership of Radio

To analyze the status of ownership of radio set, the respondents were asked whether they have radio or not. The distribution of ownership status of radio set is shown in table 3.

Sl. No.	Whether have any radio	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
0.	No	69	71	140	51.66
1	Yes	68	63	131	48.34
	Total	137	134	271	100

Table 3: Ownership of Radio

From the data in table 3, it is confirmed that 48.34 percent of the respondents had radio sets in their households while 51.66 percent of the respondents did not have radio set and they did not have the habit of radio listening.

6.2. Mode of Listening Radio

Sl. No.	Mode of listening radio	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Regular	42	37	79	29.16
2.	Irregular	26	26	52	19.18
3.	Don't listen	69	71	140	51.66
	Total	137	134	271	100

Table 4: Mode of listening radio

The data in table 4 highlighted that 29.16 percent of the respondents were regular radio listeners while 19.18 percent were irregular listeners and 51.66 percent were radio non-listeners.

6.3. Frequency of Listening Radio in a Week

Sl. No.	Frequency of listening radio	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Daily/High	42	37	79	29.16
2.	3-4 days/ Medium	02	06	08	2.96
3.	1-2days/Low	08	04	12	4.42
4.	Sometimes occasionally/Very low	16	16	32	11.80
5.	Don't listen	69	71	140	51.66
	Total	137	134	271	100

Table 5: Frequency of listening radio in a week

The findings shown in table 5 indicates that 29.16 percent of the respondents had high degree of listening radio i.e., they listen radio daily, whereas 11.80 percent were in the very low degree level, as they listen radio sometimes occasionally. On the other hand, 4.42 percent of the respondents were in low degree while 2.96 percent were in medium degree in listening radio and 51.66 percent of the respondents did not listen radio.

6.4. Daily time spent on radio by regular listening respondents

Sl. No.	Time spent	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Less than one hour	07	06	13	16.45
2.	1-2 hours	23	22	45	56.96
3.	3-5 hours	08	08	16	20.26
4.	More than 5 hours	04	01	05	6.33
	Total	42	37	79	100

Table 6: Time spent on radio by regular listening respondents

The data in table 6 revealed that out of the 79 respondents who were regular listeners, 56.96 percent spent daily 1-2 hours while 20.26 percent spent 3-4 hours, 16.45 percent spent less than one hour and 6.33 percent of the respondents spent more than 5 hours daily on listening radio.

6.5. Time spent on radio by irregular listening respondents in a day

Sl. No.	Time spent	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Less than one hour	11	08	19	36.54
2.	1-2 hours	10	12	22	42.30
3.	3-5 hours	05	06	11	21.16
4.	More than 5 hours	00	00	00	00
	Total	26	26	52	100

Table 7: Time spent on radio by irregular listening respondents

The data in table 7 revealed that out of the 52 respondents who were irregular listeners, 42.30 percent spent 1-2 hours while 36.54 percent spent less than one hour and 21.16 percent spent 3-5 hours in a day . There was no one who spent more than 5 hours in a day on listening radio.

6.6. Programs listen on radio by the respondents

Nowadays, though Television has become an important medium for entertainment and communication, radio is also used basically to listen local news and film songs of local languages in rural areas. To confirm it, the data has been analyzed and shown in table 8.

Sl. No.	Programs listen on radio	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Local News	60	46	106	39.11
2.	Manipuri Film songs	48	40	88	32.47
3.	Manipuri Plays	27	22	49	18.08
4.	Sport News	10	09	19	7.01
5.	Manipuri Classical Music	22	20	42	15.49
6.	Bhajans	17	09	26	9.59
7.	Manipuri Children's programs	16	10	26	9.59
8.	Educational	17	10	27	9.96

Table 8: Programs listen on radio

The data in table 8 revealed that out of 271 respondents 39.11 percent of the respondents listened local news while 32.47 percent listened Manipuri film songs. On the other hand, 18.08 percent of the respondents listened plays, while 15.49 percent listened classical music, equally 9.59 percent listened children's programs and Bhajans, 9.96 percent listened educational programs and 7.01 percent of the respondents listened sports news on radio. Moreover, most of the respondents use radio to listen local news and other Manipuri programs broadcasted from All India Radio, Silchar and All India Radio, Imphal.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

It can be noted from the findings that though, radio is reported as a diminished media in some recent research studies, in this study, it is found quite significant. Little less than half (48.34 percent) of the respondents listened radio. Moreover, mode of listening radio is also remarkable as among the radio used respondents, majority of the respondents have high degree and most of them spent 1-2 hours a day in listening radio. As regards to radio programs, most of the respondents listened local news and culturally related programs like film songs, plays, classical music etc. which play a leading role and pave the way to revive and maintain the traditional Manipuri Culture. One more thing may be noted here is, it seems from the findings that the mental standard of the respondents is quite high as most of them are interested in those programs which are beneficial for day to day life and for their society.

In short, it may be noted that the role of radio is quite significant in both the villages as it fulfils certain specific needs of the Manipuri community through different programs which helps in maintaining the basic traits of their culture, though it has been reported as a diminished media in a number of recent village studies.

Therefore, it requires a further research study to focus on the question that to what extent localization of the contents and language of communication determine the effectiveness of a particular mass media and popularize it in a particular community.

8. Notes

- In recent decades though the demand of radio is decreasing after coming out of television, it still acts as one of the important mass media in bringing up the society towards development.
- The mental standard of the respondents is quite high as most of them are interested in those programs which are beneficial for day to day life and for their society.
- Radio fulfils certain specific needs of a particular community through different programs which helps in maintaining the basic traits of a particular culture.

9. References

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