

# RURAL BROADCASTING BY ALL INDIA RADIO IS A SOCIAL CHANGE AGENT

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**ABSTRACT:** It has been shown that radio broadcasting can be the most effective means of communication when used correctly. To be effective, radio needs to be integrated into a larger plan for rural development, paired with group receiving and debate, supported by a two-way communication channel via written word, as well as integrated into an overall strategy for the contemporary age. There are numerous vernacular languages in underdeveloped nations that are typically unwritten, and radio may be used to reach rural areas and communicate with people in these languages. Almost all countries have the potential to produce radio programmes that reflect their political, cultural, and moral ideals. Fifty-five thousand villages make up more than 80% of India's population. Many of the settlements are secluded both physically and psychologically. Much of India has not yet been well connected by roadways. In the United States, more than 75% of adults are illiterate. Today, All India Radio transmits rural programming in all dialects and roughly 50 dialects for over 30 hours a day.

**KEYWORDS:** All India Radio, Communication, Broadcasting, Development, Radio, Rural

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Radio is the most widely dispersed form of mass communication in every corner of the world. One instrument that may really be called "mass" in developing nations is radio, because it can reach large populations and has the infrastructure to receive radio transmissions. There is no other media that can reach as many people with the same degree of effectiveness for disseminating information, education, culture, and pleasure [4].

When it comes to ownership and programming, radio may be the least international communication medium of all. Aside from the promotion of a common language through music, radio is limited as a global medium of communication due to linguistic and technological obstacles [2]. According to the Mac Bride Report, only Bhutan, Liechtenstein, and San Marino were found to have no means of transmitting in a globe study conducted in 1973. By establishing a radio station in Bhutan, All India Radio aided the country's exclusion from the trio [1]. According to the research, there were around one billion receivers globally at the time of the evaluation, or about one in every four people on the planet. Increasing disparities in access to information and communication have made it difficult for governments to work toward greater equality in recent years. Let's take a look at the average number of radios per 1,000 people throughout the world to get an idea of the situation. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), only 142 people per 1,000 people in the world's poorest nations had access to radios in 1997. It's possible to say that South Africa is a First World country in the Third World. One hundred and ten times as many radios are in use per 1,000 people. It's not uncommon for disparities between countries to be substantial. In India, non-formal education has relied on radio broadcasts to reach school dropouts, illiterate people, farmers, and others, while formal education has relied on radio broadcasts to reach students in grades K-12 and beyond. Radio was also employed in elementary and secondary education, along with written literature.

## **BEGINNING OF RURAL BROADCASTING IN INDIA:**

At the Bombay Station, regular programming in Marathi, Gujarati, and Kannada began in 1933, with a community set constructed in Bhiwandi in the thane district as the first. In 1935, a few provincial administrations (North-West Frontier Province (now Pakistan)) offered funding for rural radio. After receiving a radio transmitter from England in the 1930s, the government of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan utilised it to broadcast a radio programme for rural listeners. As a result of these broadcasts and Punjab's government the following year, some 100 villages were given battery-operated radio sets. Rural broadcasting experience was gathered and the venture was not completely worthless. In certain cases, television shows were aired, and they proved to be both popular and successful in the teachings they conveyed. A rural development programme was also implemented in Madras during the early time. Even in metropolitan areas and municipal

parks, the Madras government erected community radio sets. AIR ultimately purchased the Peshawar and Madras radio stations and quickly began rearranging their service. The Punjab experiment of 1935 lacked adequate data to demonstrate the issues that may occur and the extent to which people would respond to radio transmissions. "to put it at the least, fifty in every thousands every day, and that growing inventiveness and very great labour is essential to supply adequate variations to retain the villagers' interest while at the same time "to pass across" desired information and education," said the experiment's results. "Villagers never hear in their houses: either they come to the loudspeaker or they don't listen," was another finding of the study.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths, the District Magistrate of Midnapore, undertook another rural broadcast experiment in Bengal in 1935 under the Midnapore Scheme. The programme was unable to proceed due to a lack of funding. It took two years for the State Government to grant money of Rs.870 for the installation of community sets in 15 villages.

Lahore's new radio station and the relocation of Punjab's government receiving sets from Delhi to Lahore meant that rural broadcasting was expected to be shut down in this part of the country [3]. It was only because Delhi was the headquarters that other states could follow suit. All India Radio's Research Department came up with a rural receiver that was easy to use and affordable enough to be widely adopted throughout India. Experiments had been ongoing for some time, and a lot of effort had been done, with this goal in mind. Research staff thought that direct contact with village receivers working under real-world situations was crucial if they were to attain the desired level of success. It was, however, essential that Delhi continue to serve as a testing ground for rural broadcasting projects. The Hon'ble Mr. E. M. Jenkins, Chief Commissioner of Delhi, launched the new programme on October 16th, 1938, with the goal of covering the whole Delhi Province with a network of receiving sets. Each of the 381 Delhi Province villages with a population of at least 600 is expected to be covered by the plan, which includes the construction of 120 receiving sets in the most densely populated areas. The Delhi Province has been split into 5 circles or zones, namely Najafgarh, Nangloi, Narela, Mahrauli, and Delhi, each of which will have a Charging Unit installed. Every hamlet will be within a 6- to 8-mile radius of a Charging Unit, making it easy to maintain sets even when the roads are impassable due to rain. The government of Bombay acquired 18 village sets in April 1937 and put 16 of them into service. With the help of a Director of Rural Programs and two mechanics, the Bombay Government established a rural development programme. Commissioner of Thana supervised the latter, and the Mumbai Station was instructed to broadcast an hour-long Marathi programme every day save Sundays. The Director of Rural Programs, chosen by the Bombay Government, was solely responsible for the running of the programme, which was funded by All India Radio. This arrangement didn't work out well for the company. Unappealing programmes and broken sets plagued the broadcasts. A major aspect of All India Radio's post-partition development was the supply of listening stations and programming for rural areas, both during and after the war [8]. For this reason, additional stations were established in rural towns, and new short and medium transmitters were built. A major shift in the role of AIR occurred when the first two five-year plans were enacted following the country's independence in 1947. Previously, the audience was mostly located in the city. Only a minor portion of the total broadcast was devoted to rural viewers. However, AIR's 28 stations (which existed) carried rural programmes in 48 languages for roughly 25 hours a day, from all 28 stations. Tribal territories have their own set of programmes, as well.

### **In India, The Situation With Radios:**

Radio sets were not made in India prior to the country's independence. They arrived from abroad. An import radio set cost Rs.400 or more, an amount that was out of the reach of most Indian families and those who had been living in Europe for a long time. Only those who could speak English, had access to electricity, and had a desire for elite Western culture were able to identify a distinct market. The government imposed a 50% import levy on radio equipment to cover expenditures, thereby excluding the majority of Indians from participating in radio transmission [7]. India's government introduced a new programme in 1954, under which the central government would pay half of the cost of each community, while the state government and the villages would pay half of the rest. They had to contain a loudspeaker and an aerial kit, although the pricing ranged from Rs.300 to Rs.250 for each pair. In certain states, the community pays the expense of maintaining community sets, whereas in others, the cost is paid for by the state. A uniform structure may now be put up in every state for the purpose of maintaining the system. Before discussing the Poona experiment, we need to familiarise ourselves with the Canadian Farm Radio Forum. The results of the Canadian National Farm Radio Forum project in 1952-53 have been released by UNESCO. Lessons learned in Canada were already being

used to build TV shows for rural audiences in France before they were revealed in the study. More studies were conducted in Italy and Japan as a follow-up to France's study, respectively.

Additionally, it was planned to do a pilot study in a South-East Asian nation based on the Canadian Farm Radio Forum's experience using a "conversation kind of radio show for rural listeners." 'An Indian Experiment in Farm Radio Forums' in Poona was the Indian government's offer and the experiment that was carried out.

### **ITS IMPLEMENTATION: THE POONA PROJECT**

Broadcasting in India has been around for 20 years at this point, and there were 7000 radios in use across the country. The number of settlements with a population greater than 1,000 inside AIR's listening range has risen to 29,000 at this time. Villagers listening clubs and agricultural forums did not exist in India before to the UNESCO Initiative, which began three or four years before the project started. This venture aimed to build two-way contact between the radio station's listeners and its programming on the Canadian model. Farmer's Discussion Groups When farm forums or village listening clubs were first established, the goal was to improve listening and gather programme content. AIR designated rural supervisors for this purpose at a few locations. During the years 1955-56, an opportunity arose to establish a trial project of Canadian-style farm forums. At the time, these clubs were barely functioning. Listeners were asked to participate in focus groups and surveys to gauge their reactions to the broadcasts.

#### **Project objectives:**

- Provide useful information to villagers on many elements of rural life and work; Educate the villagers on how to better their lives and their livelihoods.
- broaden their understanding of national and international ideas and initiatives; and
- After a long day of work, they can give healthy amusement in the evening.

#### **An overview of India's rural broadcasting system might be summarised thusly:**

- As a result, the programming is more communal than individualised. Because there are so few individual radio owners in rural areas, specific procedures must be created for the high number of rural community sets and organised listening.
- Only regional dialects and regional languages are used in rural programmes. This implies that, despite the fact that content for some broadcasts may be distributed from the central headquarters, regional.
- All facets of life in a hamlet are covered in broadcast programmes, not only agricultural ones. Music, dramas, and feature-length programmes are all equally valued.

#### **PROGRAMME PATTERN:**

News, market rates, and weather updates were the most common topics on the rural show, but there were also dramas, sketches, features, music—mostly folk music—and special segments for women and children. The show lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour each day. Types of programs such as interviews by krishi pandits (winners of State honours for agriculture, recording of village functions in the interior, external broadcasts of trips to model villages, infrequent quiz shows, have typically been a hit. Folk music and country plays of the traditional kind are quite popular. It is a long-standing tradition in India to give a programme in the form of a chupal (village club) of four or five elders, each of whom speaks a distinct dialect of the regional language. Throughout their casual banter, these characters provide nuggets of knowledge and guidance, and throughout the course of an hour of good humour and educational entertainment, they present a variety of lectures, playwrights, singers, mimics, and other performers. Some stations have developed 'stock characters' to give their broadcasts a more informal feel, however the actual use of these characters leaves a lot to be desired. In addition, there is an ex-soldier with an unusual personality that draws crowds. Loha Singh, the protagonist of a radio drama by All India Radio, Patna, is a good example.

#### **THE PROGRAMMES:**

On Sunday and Thursdays from February 19 through April 26, 1956, there were 20 special farm forum broadcasts of everyday rural hour programmes. The meeting lasted 30 minutes and took place between 6:30 and 7 p.m. local time.. On other days, Poona Station was obligated to broadcast the same rural programmes for the entire hour, as was the case on other days. A team of Bombay and Poona-based AIR producers was in charge of presenting the shows. There were a total of 20 topics that the crew was tasked with covering. A

committee of 10 experts in diverse domains was formed. The committee compiled nearly two dozen subjects with consideration given to geographical differences, seasonal needs, customs, and preferences of the general public. Producing teams then began preparing after the subjects were considered in two Subjects Committee sessions. In the rural hour programme, music, dramas, folk-songs and news are interspersed with remarks from a group of peasants who present these topics throughout their conversation. It was decided to alter this style for the particular farm forum programmes. When it came to the program's two divisions, songs and music were introduced, but there were only two: first the presentation (in any form from a play to an interview to a straight talk) of the selected topics; then a listening area where farm forum members could voice their opinions on those topics and have them addressed. There were only a few times when the show was split into more than two halves, and that was an exception. Listeners were able to devote their whole attention to the evening's topic, and sufficient material was conveyed during a long enough broadcast to cover it. A variety of approaches might be tested within the overall design framework. Traditional folk theatre style was used to generate the feature on village pests and the feature on village hygiene was used to produce the feature on village hygiene. Short lectures and interviews would follow certain segments, while folk songs, bhakti yoga (devotional songs), and other light music would accompany others. Many shows employed humour to highlight the difference between both the old and new ways of life. Rural programmes also sparked an interest in folk music and folklore, which has had an impact on the whole programme. Folklore treasures have been discovered, new artists have been presented, and the rural programme has narrowed a cultural divide between rural and urban areas. Most AIR stations that carried rural programming had a Rural Program Advisory Committee, which was made up of experienced farmers, people with an interest in rural and folk culture, and representatives of state governments' departments of agriculture, development, and information. Pamphlets and brochures from state governments' information departments have been useful in distributing to AIR stations, and several states have provided experienced workers from their programme sections [9]. It was first called "farm forum" during the trial run but was renamed to "radio rural forum" when the show was taken up nationwide, emphasising that the topic matter was to be broader than farming [6].

#### **EVALUATION:**

- As a means of disseminating information, radio has been a resounding success, beyond all expectations.
- As a way of passing on information, group discussions were a huge success.
- New village institutions, such as the Radio Farm Forum, have quickly evolved into decision-making groups capable of advancing local projects quicker than the elected panchayat. 3.
- Overall, the forum was a huge success, with the overwhelming majority of participants calling for it to be an ongoing element of the game.
- A few programmes received criticism for not being educational or fascinating, but the overall reaction to individual programmes was mostly positive.
- At 6.30 pm, it is clearly too early; the optimal time seems to be 7.30 pm.
- Everyone agreed that having two forum sessions per week was a decent schedule. Two days in a row were a success.
- Radio farm forums may be performed in most rural areas of India, even if just in five districts of Bombay State.
- When it comes to a radio farm forum's applicability, regional differences in preferences for music or drama will not be a factor in its application, but rather a factor in how it's prepared. Agricultural and hamlet issues vary greatly from one location to the next. In any event, the practise of forming groups of listeners who listen and talk together, record their conversations, and retain close touch with the station is likely to be very commonplace across the United States."

#### **KISANVANI - ALL INDIA RADIO'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH:**

Kisvanvani was launched on February 15th, 2004 under the new idea of narrowcasting by All India Radio to transform the hard-core agricultural programme into farmers' voice. Radio and television stations around the country carry out broadcasts of the programmes. The dissemination of new ideas, lab-to-land transfer, instruction in using contemporary scientific methods in agriculture and associated fields like horticulture and poultry farming, fisheries and rural banking are all part of the Kisanvani Program's mission. Regarding agricultural programming, All India Radio is currently employing its Medium Waves and Short Wave networks. FM transmitter broadcasting is a new developing technology. This has the ability to produce high-quality output and distribute local content in the region it covers.. Each of the 96 FM transmitters is expected to create a different local language/dialect programme for the agricultural community in accordance with the

Scheme. Each station produces a half-hour daily, six-days-a-week, fresh and pre-recorded programme, half of which comes from the stock [5].

### CONCLUSION:

Through its assistance to different farmer's training and practical literacy programmes, All India Radio has played a key role in bringing the latest technologies in agriculture to farmers' doorsteps. Consequently, the world's largest broadcaster, All India Radio, has also embraced narrowcasting to reach the tiniest of India's rural villages in a participatory method to improve the lives of farmers and their families. "The lesson that it carries for us is that when integrating creativity in our programmes, we should not disregard the current features," Baruah said.

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