



Mass Media Usage and Exposure of Sabar Tribal Community: A Study

Abhirup Bhadra*¹, Dr. Rahul Amin²

Abstract

It is a general perception in the society that tribal communities are under privileged in all the socio-economic spheres due to sociological background. Mass media fails to emphasize and address the issues in general for their growth and overall development of the tribal community. The study tried to understand the exposure of mass media tools like radio, television, print as well as other social media and their role and usage in an endangered community namely Sabar tribe residing at Galudih under East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand state. The role of mass media is undeniable in terms of development and social change. This paper tries to investigate and understand the mass media exposure and accessibility of the vulnerable Sabar tribal community. The study found that the mass media exposure and literacy level is very poor amongst the people of the community which is resulting the lack of awareness about their livelihoods and various developmental schemes of the government. From the field data it is seen that almost all the respondents covered under the study do not have mass media exposure except a few who read newspaper occasionally and that is less than seven percent. On the other hand, individuals of this community do not have any social media account. Data also reflects that community members neither have accessibility to television nor they watch television. This paper finds that traditional media and gram sabha are the most effective and preferable means of communication in the Sabar community.

Keywords: Mass media; Development communication; Social change; Sabar community; traditional media; Gram sabha

- 1 Student of Journalism and Mass Communication Arka Jain University, Jharkhand
- 2 Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Arka Jain University, Jharkhand

*Corresponding author:

Abhirup Bhadra

✉ abhirupbhadra0@gmail.com

Student of Journalism and Mass Communication Arka Jain University, Jharkhand

Citation: Bhadra A, Amin R (2022) Mass Media Usage and Exposure of Sabar Tribal Community: A Study. Global Media Journal, 20:53.

Received: 14-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. gmj-22-69218; **Editor assigned:** 16-Jul-2022, PreQC No. gmj-22-69218 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 30-Jul-2022, QC No. gmj-22-69218; **Revised:** 04-Aug-2022, Manuscript No. gmj-22-69218 (R); **Published:** 12-Aug-2022, DOI: 10.36648/1550-7521.20.53.314

Introduction

Mass media are the tools that disseminate information or messages in form of visuals or text to the mass, for different purposes like entertainment, news, etc. The word when bifurcated raises two different words mass means the audience at a large number and media which is the medium through which the information passes. The era of world can be divided into two sectors broadly first the primitive world where the advent of print brought its own importance and second the world where mass media are utilized for the development of society.

According to Wilbur Schramm a mass media is the round some devices for circulating same message at same point of time. Radio, television, cinema cable, press as well as the tools of new media like pagers, iPods, cellular phones, satellites, computers, electronic mails and internet can be said as the organ of mass media.

Mass media functions in its own way but with the same goal of spreading information just like other traditional media. The difference lies in the medium and the reach of the channel, where the traditional media has a limited reach, the mass media tools have a greater reach at a point of time. The main aim of mass media is to spread information-to inform the people about their surroundings and the connect them with the outer world in the form of news, entertaining videos, advertisements, social media contents etc. which creates a umbrella of information under which the world resides. Mass media plays a vital role in shaping up the society, by diffusion of culture, food habits, dressing sense and ideas from different corners of the world.

But the access to the mass media in backward countries like India is still restricted because of poverty, low literacy levels and little familiarity with major speaking languages which dominates the media world today. The media concentration is more saturated

among the urban parts compared to the rural parts where the traditional medium of communication is more prevalent.

Mass media and communication for development

"Development communication is the science of human communication linked to the transitioning of communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic, overall growth that fosters equity and the unfolding of the individual potential [1]. The media has a pivotal role in the functioning of the society, enhancing the dynamic range of poverty of the mass to a state of where people are fully satisfied. Media such as television, press and cinema disseminates variety of information and puts up the areas of concern to the world and forces to think upon them. Mass media plays an important role between the government and people providing information, entertainment well as development strategies [2].

Mass media due to its reach to a large number of audiences at a single point of time can address a certain issue with an immediate effect that pierces the minds and provokes to revert. After the advent of television(1959), the print(1556) and radio(1923) the country saw a transformation from a state where group discussion ,gram sabha, Ramayan Mahabharata session ,paintings, wall cravings, symbols and gestures were some of the major communication techniques which got modified into new forms and widened its reach ,thus leading to development.

Media, society and development

Media and societal development are interconnected with each other .the tribal groups which are marginalized form a backward society, which has to be in the lime light. To do that, different platforms of media are required to work for them as media will give them a platform to raise voice, bargain for development goals, understand their needs and see their stand on the country.

Mass media and tribes

A tribe is viewed, as a social group existing before the development of, or outside, states. A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient and not integrated into the national society; they have their own beliefs and culture which is often linked with nature [3].

India home to large number of tribes (8.6% of the total population) where the development counts less than the outer world. On a whole the general concern about the tribes are the derogating health status, education status as well as endangered cultural values. The mass media has a capacity to preserve their traditional values and uplift their cultural and spiritual thoughts to the outer world to enrich their essence of such section of the society. Over the last 60 years the situation of tribes has been worse due to economic deprivation and lack of basic need [4]. So media provides a hope to bring a change due to its large reach and capability of penetrating into the people. Tools of mass media have such as radio television print etc. have an equal importance for tribes as to uplift their socio economic,socio culture and their socio democratic status. The health and education are now

being monitored by the government in various forms, like audio messages in speaker are played in the local language, posters of family welfare schemes and women health are put up on the wall of the block offices, gram sabha and jantadarbars are now held regularly under the jurisdiction of district magistrate of the district just to empower the tribal section of the country.

Tribes of Jharkhand

The scheduled tribe population of Jharkhand as per 2011 census is 7087068 which is 26.3% of the total population of Jharkhand, out of which Gumla district has the highest number of ST population followed by Koderma district which have the lowest. Out of 30 notified tribes Santhal having population of 2410509 which is 34% of the total population of ST followed by Oraon, Munda and Ho.

Sabar tribe of Jharkhand

In the forested areas of east singhbhum district the hunter collectively known as the Sabar community lives in great distress with a total number of 86,110 which is barely 0.27% of the total population. The Sabars are mostly found on the on hilly forested areas of south eastern Jharkhand particularly in the districts of East Singhbhum, Potka. The Sabar also known as Shabar Saora are one of the Adivasi of Munda ethnic group who were mentioned in the Hindu epic Mahabharata, are mostly engaged in hunting and foresting for their livelihood [5].

The marginalized group is mostly occupied in forest related activities like bringing woods from the forest and selling them, hunting small animals, some of the families have goats and sell their milk to survive their livelihood. The young generation is mostly involved in deep boring activities earning a daily wage of around 500 rupees. The communication system within the tribe is very limited and simple in nature; they are confined to verbal communication techniques among themselves and mostly depend on gram sabha for external information [6].

Literature review

Rao and Gupta stated that mass media communication is a better way of development for these tribal sections that has attained a certain level of socio-economic development. By exposing them to mass media tools like newspaper, television, cinema their mind and behavior can move to a positive side.

Kachhap and Saw (2016) in their paper - A mapping stature regarding problems and its associated factors of Tribal Communities of Jharkhand suggested that giving proper guidelines to the tribal people and allowing them to participate in main stream activities will help them to get into the lime light as well as developing their skills in the field of arts and spreading awareness about health among themselves will give them a positive mindset towards living a sustainable life Miah (2017) in impact of social media on tribal stated that social media has proved its capacity to change the society specially the tribal parts from health development to improved farming techniques [7].

Pandey, Pandey, Pandey (2012) in Mass media and rural development-A study of Palamau commissioner of Jharkhand State mentioned the usage of internet based communication

tools and the usage of mass media in the rural state, where the ICT based technologies can help them in decision making behavior, give a overall market look, empower rural communities and will effectively target marginalized group for the development.

Methodology

The survey method was followed for this study with the help of a structured questionnaire followed by in-depth interviews and the researcher covered all the adult inhabitants that is forty individuals of the community residing at the village as sample for this study. The study was conducted in Sabar tribal community who reside in a forested part namely Galudih under East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand.

Data interpretation and analysis

(Table 1).

The above table 1.1 reveals the gender distribution of the whole community, where male were total of 15 in number where 5 out of the total were under 21-30 age group, 7 were among 31-40 age group and rest 3 were among 40-60 age group. On the other hand females were 25 in total among which 8 were under 14-20 age group, 11 were under 21-30 age group, 5 under 31-40 and rest 1 was under 40-6- age group (Table 2).

The table 1.2 shows the educational qualification of the Sabar tribes, where the illiterates were total of 34 out of which 12 were males and 22 were females. 3 males were under std.6-9 as well as 2 females were studying between class 1-5 and 1 girl was from class 6-9 (Tables 3 and 4).

The above table 1.4 shows that out of 40 respondents both men 15(37.5%) and female (62.5%) do not watch television at all. Inference-the data reveals that 100% of the total community is

Table 1. Gender wise distributions of the respondents.

Gender distribution				
Age	14-20	21-30	31-40	40-60 and above
Male	-	5	7	3
Female	8	11	5	1
Total	8	16	12	4

Table 2. Educational status of the respondents and gender wise distribution.

Educational status				
Gender	Std 1-5	Std 6-9	Std 9-12 and above	Illiterate
Male	-	3	-	12
Female	2	1	-	22
Total	2	4	-	34

Table 3. Newspaper reading habits and gender wise distribution of the responses.

Newspaper reading habits				
Gender	YES	NO	SOMETIMES	TOTAL
Male	-	15(100%)	-	15
Female	2 (5%)	22(55%)	1(2.5%)	25
Total	2(5%)	37(92.5%)	1(2.5%)	40(100%)

deprived of watching electronic mass media tool, the television mostly due to lack of television set, lack of electricity in remote areas and illiteracy (Table 5).

The table 1.5 shows that out of 15 male respondents, 8(20%) never listen to radio, 7(17.5%) listens radio sometimes, on other hand 22(55%) of female respondents never listens to radio, 3(7.5%) female respondents listens to radio sometimes.

Inference -the majority 30(75%) of the population do not listen to radio, which shows that the listenership of this media is very low (Table 6).

The above table 1.6 reveals the number of respondents who have access to social media account. The tribe is totally deprived from the access of internet therefore 100% of the population is not having social media account.

Inference – the result shows that the total population is deprived of internet, modern smart phones thus they do not have social media accounts (Table 7).

The data from table 1.7 reveals that out of the total population, 2(5%) male relied on friends that is interpersonal communication, 13(32.5%) relied on gram sabha which is group communication as their source of information on governmental schemes, on the other hand 25(62.5%) female relied on gram sabha for the source.

Inference -the data shows that more of one to one communication and traditional media platforms are trusted more by them rather mass media tools (Table 8).

The table 1.8 reveals that 15(37.5%) of the male preferred traditional media for their choice of communication, whereas 25(62.5%) of the female respondents too opted traditional media.

Table 4. Television viewership habit and gender wise distribution of the respondents.

Television viewership habits				
Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Male	-	15(37.5%)	-	15(37.5%)
Female	-	25(62.5%)	-	225(62.7%)
Total	-	40(100%)	-	40(100%)

Table 5. Radio listening habits and gender wise distribution among the respondents.

Radio listening habits				
Gender	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Male	-	8(20%)	7(17.5%)	15(37.5%)
Female	-	22(55%)	3(7.5%)	25(62.5%)
Total	-	30(75%)	10(25%)	40(100%)

Table 6. Social media accessibility and gender wise distribution of the respondents.

Social media accessibility			
Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	-	15(37.5%)	15(37.5%)
Female	-	25(62.5%)	25(62.5%)
Total	-	40(100%)	40(100%)

Table7. Sources of information about governmental schemes and gender wise distribution among the respondents.

Sources of information about governmental schemes							
Gender	Friends	Radio	Television	Newspaper	Social media	Gram sabha	Total
Male	2(5%)	-	-	-	-	13(32.5%)	15(37.5%)
Female		-	-	-	-	25(62.5%)	25(62.5%)
Total	2(5%)	-	-	-	-	38(95%)	50(100%)

Table 8. Media preferences for communication and gender wise distribution of the respondents.

Media preferences for communication				
Gender	Traditional media	Mass media	Social media	Total
Male	15(37.5%)	-	-	15(37.5%)
Female	25(62.5%)	-	-	25(62.5%)
Total	50(100%)	-	-	50(100%)

Inference -due to lack of proper electricity, literacy, the best way for communication for these tribes are traditional way of communication, specially one to one like gram sabha, public announcement in their native language.

Findings and Conclusion

The data from the above analysis clearly reveals that mass media exposure is very low in this community and they are least bothered about the usage of mass media for their awareness and development. The adult family members are mostly involved into manual deep boring unskilled jobs and some seasonal activities which earns them livelihood, the girls and women are subjected to household work and sometimes go to the forest to collect

woods and sell it to the local market for earning money to support their family. It can be concluded that education level is quite low, which is a major concerns for the under development causes only few of them are attending local schools. The proliferation of mass media tools is limited because either of no electricity, illiteracy, poverty and less curiosity and media awareness.

From the above findings it can be said that majority of the community members are reluctant and do not show interest to mass media for their information and growth. The community members of sabar tribe mostly relies on interpersonal communication as well as traditional media platforms like gram sabha as their vital source of information.

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