

## REACH AND IMPACT OF MEDIA IN BORDER AREA (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AANANDGARH, DISTRICT BIKANER, RAJASTHAN)

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**Abstract:** Extreme geographic conditions in bordering areas of Rajasthan have been a key factor in its lack of transport, scarcity of water and hence whole area has been under-developed. The Indira Gandhi Canal Project ushered a new era for the landless farmers, fertile land was allotted to them. As a result of this, increase in habitation was observed. Under such circumstances it is necessary to record and observe reach of media and analyze effects of media on behavior pattern of populace. While this is strategically relevant, it will also bring forth the forms of effective communication. Since no research has been done in above mentioned field, this can also be a tool for assessing impact and effect of media in lifestyle and standard of living in bordering area of Rajasthan. Results of this research can throw light on reach of mass communication media and future projections and possibilities for the same. Anandgarh district, Bikaner, Rajasthan has been selected as it fits in research parameters, i.e. it is located close to the international border and is densely populated compared to other such villages. These reasons make it perfect representative for such study. Observation has indicated that lack of transportation and inaccessibility to print media are chief factors as per information provided by "interview schedule". Television is of not much use because of irregular electricity supply. Although after introduction of D.T.H., notable rise in number of televisions has been observed. On the other hand a few people specially senior citizen, used radio for both entertainment and following news. But at the same time more relevant news such as decisions and announcements by local and district authorities are never broadcast on radio hence depriving locals of more relevant and important information. Although Approximate every household has a mobile phone but in spite of this, there is lack of Mobile Network. So, social Media is also not an effective medium for news sharing. After considering all these factors, community radio may emerge as a worthy carrier, but poor mobile networks render it useless, leaving community radio as only choice.

**Keywords:** Development Communication, Media Literacy, Impact of media, Effect of Media

**Introduction:** This is an era of mass media communication. Through mass media communication, reports or messages are delivered to the public. In the absence of information a person feels himself isolated from the society. It is believed that the person, country or nation which has the most information, dominates other countries or nations. Development of a country, nation and society depends upon information. After the age of Liberalization and development of television, mediums of mass communication developed rapidly in our country. Whether it is decision of any government or any other important news, it reaches in every nook and corner of the country in no time. But it's not necessary that impact and accessibility of mass media communication is equal at everywhere. It is affected by various elements found in the particular areas like resources, demographic condition, geographical position etc. Especially in the bordering areas of the country the lack of transportation facilities and complex geological conditions (for e.g. huge difference between maximum and minimum temperature, sandy storms, water shortage etc.) further complicates the accessibility to the mediums of communication. For this purpose the Indian government started Border Area Development Project in 1997-98. After starting this project, basic facilities like health centers, schools and roads were

developed to an extent. Whereas road construction by the BRO has eased the access of print media like news papers to the bordering areas.

In context of Rajasthan, the role of Indira Gandhi Canal Project is noteworthy. This project reduced water crisis and contributed in increasing grain production. Therefore it provided revised means of livelihood to the local people. But in the extreme border areas of Rajasthan where the population is sparse due to extreme temperature and sand storms, border villages still lag behind in adequate infrastructure. Therefore adequate access to the means of communication is still not there. Although in recent years, the growing pace of electrification and a slight increase in BADP budget has brought some significant changes here and constructed new government buildings, schools and road connections and this improved the chances to get more communication means.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To research on the access of media in the border areas of Rajasthan.
2. To assess the trends towards media among villagers in border areas of western Rajasthan.
3. To study the relevance of the media on life near the international border and use of it in day to day life.

4. To study the role of media in changing the living standard of people residing near the border.
5. To explore the accessibility of mass media communication in the border areas and their foreseeable possibilities.

**Research Methodology:** Interactive observations, informal interviews and interview schedules were chosen for the research. Because most of the residents are either illiterate or only literate. Their understanding to the questionnaire or inability to answer the samples was estimated. Therefore interactive observation and unplanned informal interview after interview schedule helped more in collecting accurate data. Residents who were below 16 were not included in the interview and had only informal interviews with women respondents. Women respondents were expected to answer only those questions which were asked by their husband or son. In this situation informal interview and friendly conversation helped in gesture about the work. The researcher spent two days in Anandgarha village. During this time the standard of life and quality of life was closely monitored.

**Discussion and Results:** Interactive observation of three days revealed that the access to DTH services helped people to live in the contact of national-international news but the insufficient electricity supply is a big obstacle. Balram Poonia said that after mobile phones people have sidelined radio sets because radio was used more for listening songs than news. Since this feature is also available in mobile phones, the dependence upon radio has constantly reduced. But due to low accessibility to the mobile networks, still mobile phones are not trusted mediums of information. So the TV show bulletins and contacts in urban areas are the primary source of information.

The researcher found in observation and geographic verification that Anandgarha is less than 4 km away from the international border. But due to some avoidable errors it is posted as 212 km on Border Area Development Project Website. Local people and even head of the village (*sarpanch*) don't know about the wrong information due to lack of internet facilities. Though panchayat headquarter is linked to optical fiber network but still people are not internet friendly. Therefore TV is only active medium of information of outer world. Though there are only 54 TV sets in the village but the audience number around 400. Because this village was established by allocating land to displaced families of *Charan* caste from Pakistan and displaced *Jat* families from Mahajan Field Firing Range. Three quarters out of the total population is from only these two castes and all are from the same clan. In such a circumstance one TV in a family benefits other families freely and without any objection. Here one TV is source of

information for around 10- 15 people. And the families which cannot afford a TV watch it in other families of their clan. However only 26 radio sets are left till now. Interactive observation and responses in 42 interview schedule and informal interviews revealed that after arrival of DTH services in 2004 and mobile phones in 2008, radio sets were not repaired after getting some mechanical problems. This is why that people prefer music to news in radio sets. There people preferred to download or get their favorite songs in the memory card of their mobile phones to repairing old radio sets. This is why the number of radio sets in the village is falling steadily. Although radio listeners in total respondents, 83% still seeks news in the radios. Among these are 17% are either preparing for competitive exams or upper secondary level students or remaining are senior citizens. So the positive thing is that radio is seen as a source of news and other information as well as source of entertainment. Hindi service by BBC is appreciated by senior citizens. Ex soldier Sardar Lakshman Singh said that BBC broadcast neutral news. for example about Indo - Pak relation where TV channels try to spread war fearing sentiments but BBC broadcast neutral news and clears the panic among people. Sardar Lakshman Singh has serviced Indian army and participated in 1971 war with Pakistan. He said there is few media means to raise local issues. While discussing over news analysis Devilal, Durastdan Charan and Lalchand Jat told that India Pakistan news and water level in Ingstidan are heard eagerly. Other than these news are heard but not as eagerly as they are heard. Narsinghdan Charan said that land mafia has created pits in the area in search of gypsum but the media has never raised this issue. Had the news come in the media, local or district level action would have been taken action against them.

The transportation service is done by only two buses which run at 11 am and 4 pm. These buses are the only source of 8-10 copies of a news paper *Rajasthan Patrika*. Other than Gram Panchayat office, *Gram Seva Sahakari Samiti* and government Higher Secondary Schools only 2 shops and three houses wait for newspaper till late. That is why only electronic media is accessed for news and communication. About 33% respondents (all male) told that they watch television for news only. 67% were interested in other programs like daily soap, movies, religious programs, sports etc. But informal and unstructured interview revealed that during India Pakistan war only news channels are preferred. The researcher did not find any preference in channels. In informal interview it is known that women watch only those programs which their husbands or children watch. They were not especially inclined towards any daily soap. Because of their busy schedule of agricultural work in farm land, cattle

rearing and other household works they don't get enough time to watch television.

Maximum people are not satisfied with news over radio. The local people said that radio and TV can provide national and international news only for example they got the news of demonetization on the same day. But they don't get state or district level news by these sources. Whereas local issues are also not raised by any media house. for example water stealing from canals, soil deposition in canals, breakdown of electricity poles by sand storms, and their late repairing, stealing of solar plates from solar plants and no compensation for farmers whose land was under acquisition for fencing the border are some of the issues which were never raised by any media house. Though in a newspaper, published from Bikaner *Dainik Yugpaksh* raises local issues sometimes but expected results are still awaited. So the people are expecting some medium of communication which can resolve the local issues in addition to giving nation and international news.

Interactive observation and interviews revealed that due to lack of mobile network, access to social networking sites is almost zero. Network can be accessed only on the roof of Panchayat office. Though local government officers, teachers and some young boys own android phones in which they have installed apps like *facebook messenger* and *whatsapp*, but they work only in city. School teacher Yogesh Bhati said that he is from Bikaner and stays in the village for 6 days and 5 nights. So he has installed *whatsapp* but it does not work here. Ex Sarpanch Durastdan Charan said he has a *facebook* id but he can login only when he goes to bloc office. He finds it quite interesting that without spending much he is connected to the social media. In interactive

observation, it is found that people are becoming more aware about modern technology like aqua guard, washing machines because of TV. The researcher also found Indian cricketer Virat Kohli's fan like Anand Singh Sodha, Mukesh Poonia who have shaped their beard like the cricketer. Mobile phone is used only in taking photographs, in contacting bloc office and listening music. Because it is a bordering area, mobile towers are not installed. As per local people installed mobile towers can be wrongfully used by Pakistani people and armed forces.

**Conclusion:** In bordering area, extreme geographical condition and a long distance from bloc and district office further minimize the future possibilities of easy access to print media. In electronic media, television sets will increase in number for sure with passage of time. DTH has played an important role in connecting people to the outer world. Even TV sets were increased in number after DTH services.

Electricity scarcity can be avoided by motivating people for domestic solar plants so that TV can become a constant source of media. Government and telecom companies should solve the mobile network problems, by keeping strategic issues in mind. Community radio can play a constructive role by discussing on local issues and making a way for district and state level government decisions to the public. Government and other organizations need to work for a community radio services because here 96% houses own mobile phones with FM services which can be easily connected. By this act, people of this extreme border land can be connected to and actively involved into the communication revolution despite formidable geographical obstacles.

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