

The Need for Rural Communication for development in Ukhrul district of Manipur, India: Impact of Radio

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Abstract: The world is dynamically changing world and we are held together through communication between individual, different sections of the same society and among various societies and nations of the world. The proper and continuous flow of information and communication shapes the society in every level of human development. Mass Media have become a powerful tool for giving information, entertainment and entertainment effecting the masses since time immemorial. Media can kill or built anything it intends to. As society change and nation grows we need to grow in social, moral, spiritual, intellectual and environmental realm too. We are rejuvenated, fascinated, educated, entertained and informed about the happenings through different tools of media. Life without media is just void.

This study is concerned with radio listening habits and its impact in all the spheres of life in Ukhrul district of Manipur. The geographical setting is way different from urban setting. The levels of modernization greatly differ from the mainland. In this developing era, radio is one of the important medium to get information and be informed on what is happening in and around the world. Radio helps rural dwellers directly with news, new ideas, prepares listeners to accept new changes, gives entertainment, information and education. Radio has a great potential in social change and social development. Government could use it more to impact the lives of the villagers by introducing new program content related to new development schemes and projects.

Index Terms: Manipur, Ukhrul, Tangkhuls, Radio Development, Tangkhul Programs, Rural Dwellers, Community Radio Station

1.INTRODUCTION

The concept of rural communication refers to the communication of news about rural areas. It consists of gathering newsworthy information about rural areas, disseminating the information in any form of journalistic writing and presenting them through a mass medium. Rural areas are those areas that are totally based in the countryside. Such rural dwellers need information about the happenings in the society, so as to make them have a better living. Communication will play a very significant role in helping the rural dwellers to live a worthwhile life. Thus, the rural dwellers need accurate information that will enable them to live and appreciate the activities of the government of the day. The rural dwellers need information on several issues including information on health, education, farming, new schemes, projects and loan opportunities offered by the government irrespective of their educational or social background. The importance of radio in social change and development in rural communities is undeniable. Radio can impact the people at grass root level for community development, social integrity and national consciousness. During crisis, the government relied heavily on the mass media like Radio in holding together the people; not only in terms of crisis, but also for the continuous peaceful coexistence of the different ethnic groups.

1.1.Brief History of All India Radio, In Manipur

All India Radio, Imphal was started in the year 1963, 15th August. There are three transmitters in Imphal. The language in which programs is Manipuri. The programs are also broadcast in six major dialects of the state viz.,

Hmar, Paite, Kabui, Mao, Thadou and Tangkhul. The composition of programs are News, spoken word programs, Drama, Music (folk light) etc. There are five Studios namely, 1. Playback Studio 2. Talk studio 3. Drama Studio 4. Music studio and 5.FM Studio. The area covered by AIR, Imphal are Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Chandel, Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Senapati and Ukhrul. Programs zone covered by the station is the entire state of Manipur with population covered 27,21,756 (according to provisional Census 2011).

1.2 Brief History of Ukhrul District

Manipur remained a single district having ten sub-divisions till November,1969 while the present Ukhrul District was one of them. As a result of district reorganization in 1969, the former ten sub-divisions were reorganized into 25 sub-divisions and the entire Manipur state having one district hitherto was divided into 5 districts namely, (i) Manipur Central (ii) Manipur North (iii) Manipur East (iv) Manipur West and (v) Manipur South District. The present Ukhrul District then known as Manipur East district (Sl. No. iii) was one of them. The village Ukhrul became its district headquarters. It comprises 5 subdivisions namely, (1) Ukhrul North (2) Ukhrul Central (3) Phungyar Phaisat (4) Kamjong Chassad (5) Ukhrul South having their headquarters respectively at Chingai, Ukhrul, Phungyar Phaisat, Kamjong Chassad and Kasom Khullen. Under Manipur Gazette Notification No.174 dated August 5,1983, the name of the district became known as Ukhrul District after the name of the District headquarters as in the case of other districts

Ukhrul District was first marked out as a Sub-Division in 1919 by the then British-India. Later it was upgraded to a District in the year 1969 by the Govt. of India. Ukhrul District is about 84 kms from Imphal-the land of the colorful Tangkhuls was marked out first a Sub-Division in 1919 during the British Raj. Then in November 1969 it was upgraded to a full-fledged district, bearing the nomenclature of Manipur East District. The Ukhrul district lies in the north-eastern corner of Manipur State and it extends between latitudes of 24° 29' and 25° 42' N and longitudes of 94° 30' and 94° 45' E approximately. The district is border with Nagaland and Myanmar on the north and north-east, districts of Senapati and Imphal East on the north and north-west and Thoubal and Chandel on the South-West and South. The total area of the district is 4544 sq.km. as next to Churachandpur (4,570 sq.km.). The district has 213 inhabited villages and 67 uninhabited villages. The inhabitants are mostly local tribal people.

1.3 Ukhrul District at A Glance

- A. Area - 4544 sq. km.
- B. Population
 - (i) Total - 183,998
 - (ii) Male - 94,718
 - (iii) Female - 89,280
- C. Literacy rate - 81.4% (approx.)
- D. No of Inhabited & Uninhabited Villages – 280
- E. Altitude - 913 m - 3114m (MSL)
- F. Temperature - 3 Degrees Celsius to 33 degrees Celsius
- G. Rainfall - 1600 mm to 2100mm
- H. Location 24 N to 25.41 N, 94 E to 94.47 E
- J. Main Roads:

- (i) Imphal - Ukhrul-Jessami (NH-150) -199 km.
- (ii) Imphal - Kamjong (BRTF) road -127 km.
- (iii) Imphal - Phungyar -Tengnoupal (NH-39) -104 Km.
- (iv) Imphal - Kasom Khullen (PWD) - 55 km.

The Tangkhul Nagas form the majority ethnic group in this district. Ukhrul district is the home of the Tangkhuls. Most of the senior section are illiterate but the youths are highly educated community, hardly have they abandoned the traditional way of life. They are rural dweller and depend on agriculture for living. Most of them are farmers. The flow of information (with the use of newspaper, TV, internet) in Ukhrul is par below average because of many problems and challenges like bad transportation and communication, power supply is irregular, traditional way of living etc.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Radio

Radio implies a two-way process, which involves the exchange of views from various sources and the adaptation of media for use by the communities. It allows members of a community to gain access to information, education and entertainment. Radio encourages villagers to take an active part in the development process or even better to take their own initiative to improve the living conditions in their communities. Radio simplifies the scientific jargon on particular topic. It is able to explain the difficult usage of words in simpler and ordinary language that laymen understand.

2.1.1 Characteristics of Radio

Radio has its own strengths as well as weaknesses, like other mass media or for that matter like anything else in this world. As it has some characteristics which are shared with the other mass media, namely television and newspaper, radio has also its own distinct characteristics that never been shared with others. As a matter of fact, it is these distinct strengths that make radio a very significant potential medium for social development.

According to Robert McLeish in his book “Radio Production” he listed out more than ten characteristics of radio. They are:

- 1) The Speed of Radio as Information.
- 2) Radio Speaks to million.
- 3) Radio Speaks to the Individual.
- 4) Radio Makes Mental Pictures.
- 5) Radio Has No Boundaries.
- 6) The Simplicity of Radio.
- 7) Radio Is Cheap.
- 8) The personality of Radio – Radio is an aural medium.
- 9) Radio for change – Radio “acts as a multiplier of change”.
- 10) Radio is Portable.

- 11) Radio for the disadvantaged
- 12) Radio teaches
- 13) Radio has music
- 14) Radio can surprise
- 15) Radio can suffer from interference

Radio has also some limitations. For example, unlike newspaper radio is a momentary medium. As long as the listener is not in time for the news, he/she will miss it. It is also liable to suffer from interference like noise, poor signals, limited reach in certain areas, top-down approach, limited airtime and inappropriate programming.

According to Milan (2008), community media is about “access to information”, “voice to marginalized groups”, and “people participation” (p. 26). Thus, empowerment as a process and participation as an approach gives significance to all forms of community communication. That is up to the point that “the practice of community communications will depend upon how far the notions of access and participation are accepted within socio-political contexts”. The importance of community communications lies in the achievement of the concepts of empowerment and participation.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study presents the result of the findings in interview and questionnaire mode of data collection which helps with the figure and outline for the paper, “**The Need for Rural Communication for development in Ukhrul district of Manipur, India: Impact of Radio**”. Interview and Questionnaire method were used for collection of data. Both Primary and Secondary data were used to conduct the study. The data obtained from primary sources are considered as population and sample of the study.

3.1 TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

Primary Data: The data is collected through Interview & Questionnaire method to the population on 5th Dec 2017, & 15th Dec 2017 at Nambashi Khullen Village and 12th Dec 2017 & 3rd Jan 2018 at Halang Village, Ukhrul District, Manipur.

Secondary Data: The data is collected from Journals and Government related documents and books.

3.1.1 FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The findings and analysis on demographic profile, media services, media habits, media ownership, media opportunities and media challenges in the use of Radio in Ukhrul district of Manipur which will help us to know about the impact of radio in the lives of the rural dwellers. The Tangkhuls settled in hilly region (Ukhrul District) where the flow of information is not smooth & adequate. It is hard to have an access to print media like, daily newspapers such as, Sangai Express, Poknapham and The Aja Daily etc. Newspaper cannot and never reach on time due to lack of distribution and proper infrastructure. News and information of the moment because stale by the time it reaches Ukhrul. During the meantime, people got the news and information only by means of Radio broadcast. Accessibility of media like, print, electronic and news media in the hilly region is a guardian knot for the people. Television has its own limitation due to transmission and irregular electricity supply.

Radio is an important tool for entertaining, informing, educating and socializing the society. Because of this reason, Radio acted as a vital Medium that can contribute to the development of rural community. Rural dwellers

are left out on the developmental issue as a result of the level of literacy, income, way of living, profession and service delivery of the Government Sector. However, Radio is accessible, quite affordable, portable, easily maintainable and can be tuned in anytime and anywhere. Majority of people inhabited in Ukhrul District who are engaged in daily manual works, cultivators, farmers, shopkeepers, Drivers, Carpenters, Senior Citizen, and Home Makers etc. are in love with Radio broadcast. They turned on their Radio, listen to what is broadcast and carry on with their work accordingly. Due to lack of proper infrastructure such as roads, electricity, mobile network, internet connection, financially challenged, and technically illiterate, majority of the population cannot access to Television, Satellite TV, Social Network as well as Print Media like, local newspapers or magazines. Therefore, reaching out to the masses of Ukhrul District, Radio broadcast is the effective means of communication which fulfills the basic requirement for information and development. Because a good and positive communication can always bridge the gap between the reach and the unreached. A saying by most the communication scholars, “Information is knowledge. Knowledge is power.”, owing to this, the use of mass media is very important and necessary for communication and attitudinal change in the process of social development. The goals of social development can only be attained by effective communication, wide opening of opportunities and dissemination of information to all the masses of in and around Ukhrul District equally and effectively.

3.1.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The audience composed of different social group with different age, sex, profession, and educational background. The audience represent a wide range of possible respondent. Majority of the respondents surveyed were men (50%), women accounted for the remaining 44%. 43% of the respondents were youths. This show that Radio has younger listenership and youths are more likely to hear about and try out a new Radio station. Middle-aged (36-45yrs) and senior citizen group (46 and above) were 20% each. Majority of the population engaged in agricultural activities and handful of people works in Government sector. According to 2011 census, Ukhrul District has a total worker of 87,929 comprising of 67,724 were main workers and 20,205 were marginal workers. The main workers are classified as cultivators, agriculture, laborers, workers in household industry and manual workers. 30% of the population are unemployed as they are still students. (refer table 1,2,3 & 4)

Table 1: Demographic - Profile

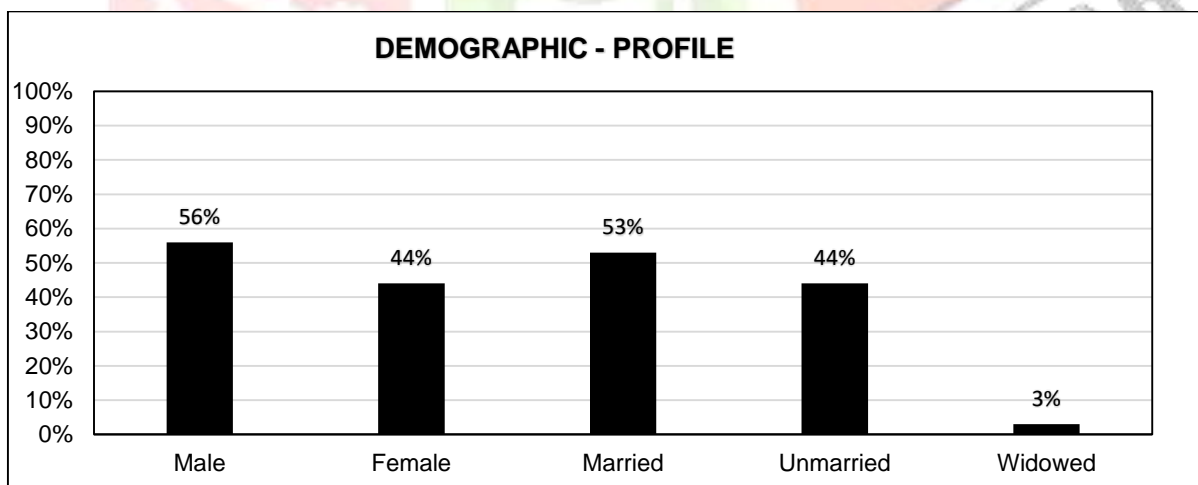


Table 2: Demographic – Education

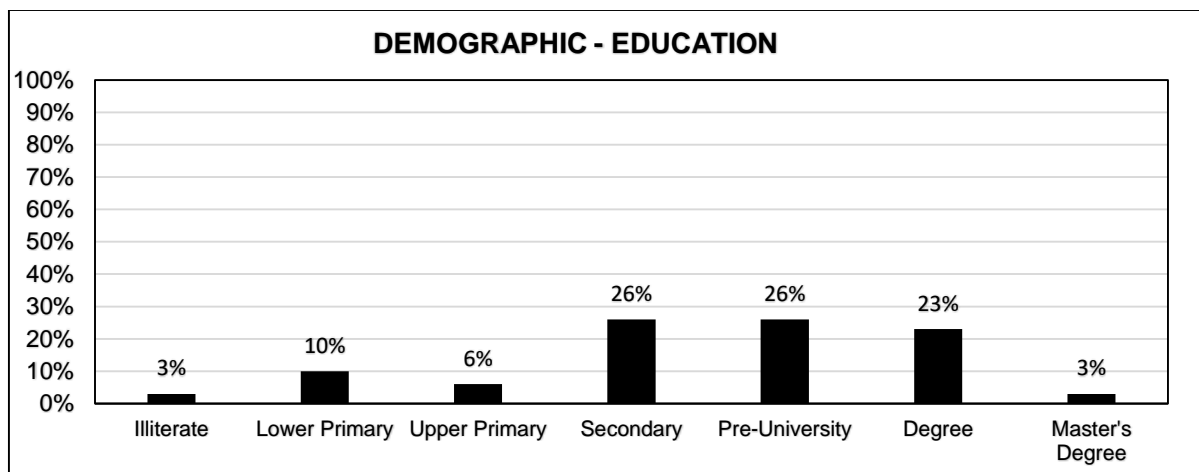


Table 3: Demographic – Profession

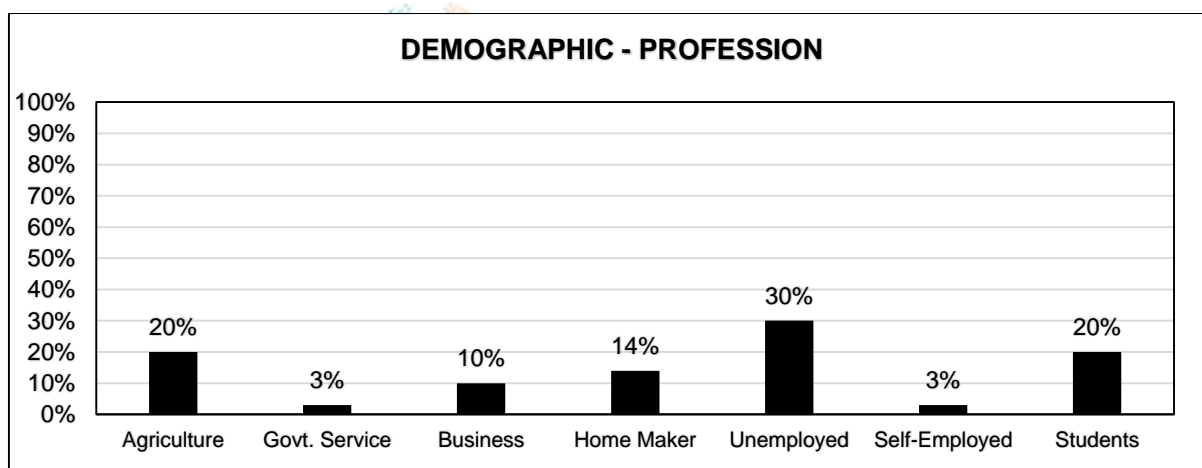
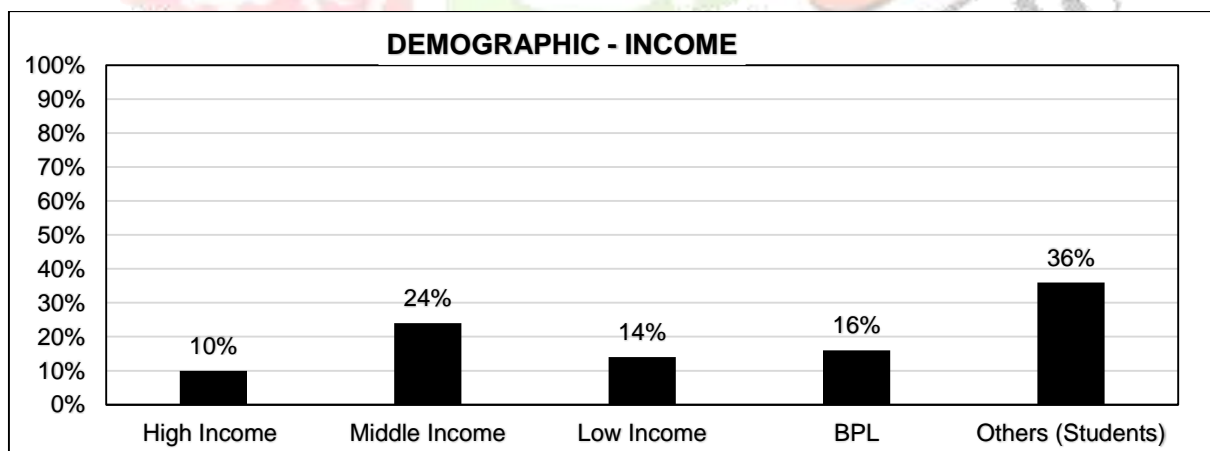


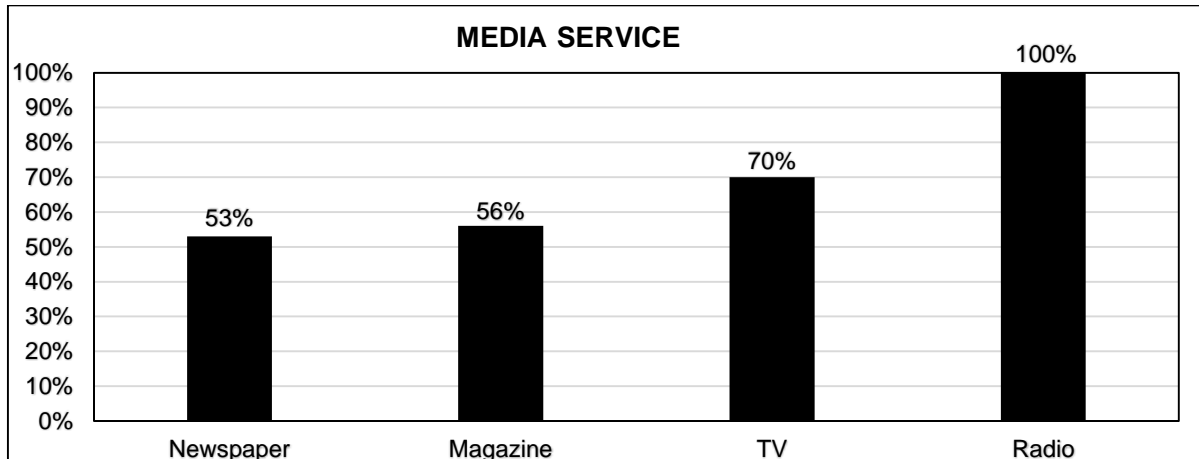
Table 4: Demographic – Income



3.1.1.2 MEDIA SERVICES

As shown in Table 5, The Media services availed to the respondents are newspapers 53%, Magazines 56%, TV 70% and Radio 100%. It clearly shows that everyone listened to Radio. Print media such as newspapers and magazines have low-readership.

Table 5: Media Service



3.1.1.3 MEDIA HABITS

Preferred Program and Channels

Here respondents are asked to select more than one options out of 10 programs. News was the most preferred with 73% where music follows with 50% of the audience. Sports (33%) and information updates (26%) indicates that these programs are more popular with younger audiences. 70% of listeners preferred Kangla Channel, 66% prefer Sangai Channel and remaining 30% prefer Vividh Bharati. Respondents are given choices for more than one language preferences play an important role in selection of Radio Channels. (refer tables 6& 7)

Technical Challenges

Some technical challenges include poor network (30%), no electricity (16%), can't afford/costly (3%) and 43% of the audience states that there is no technical and are freely accessible to Radio broadcast. (refer table 8)

Table 6: Most Preferred Program

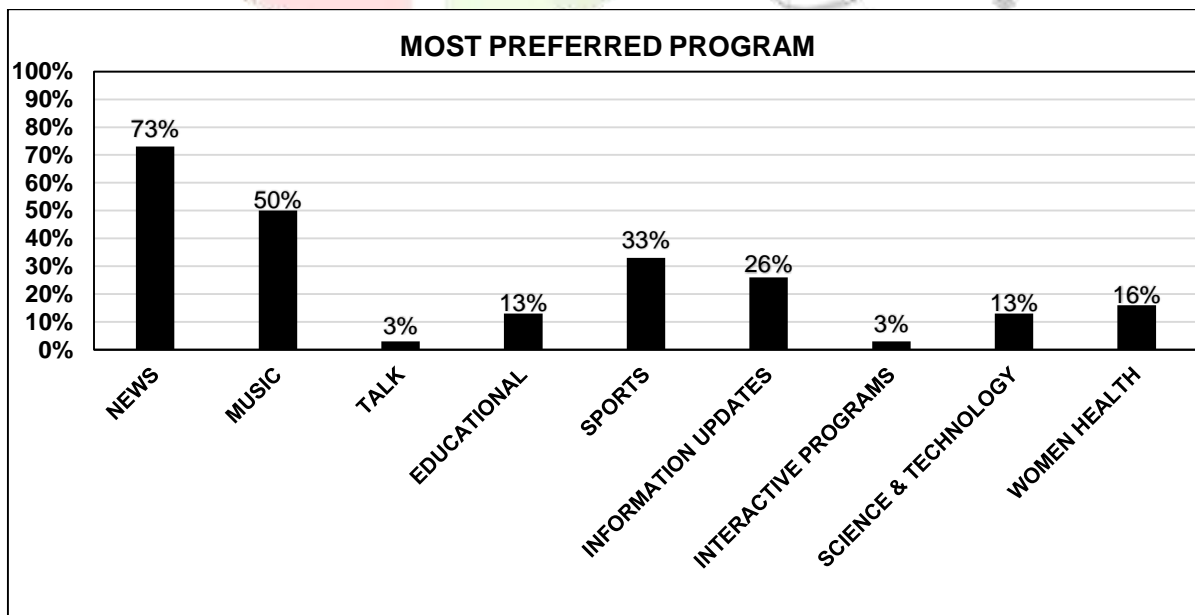


Table 7: Most Listened Channel

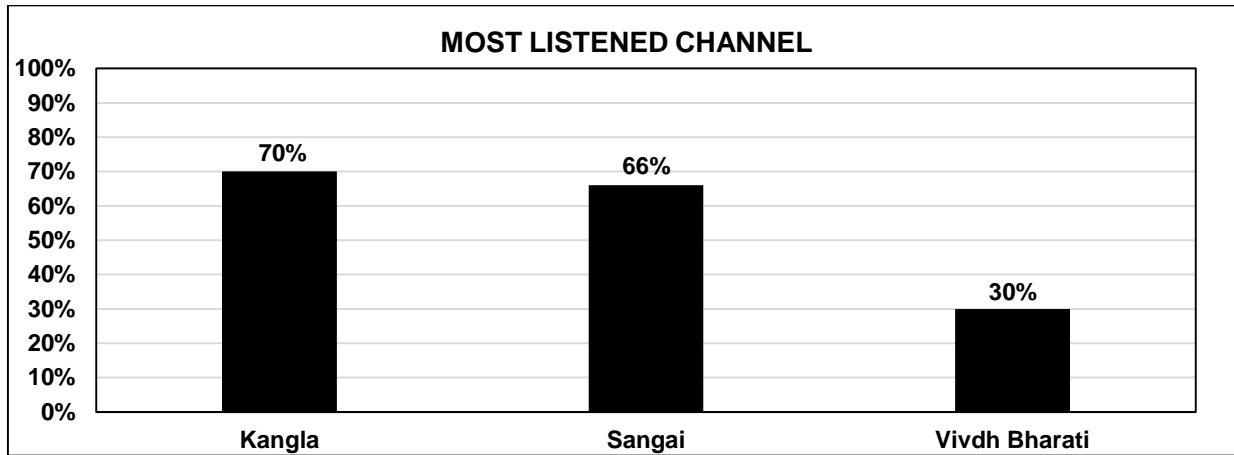
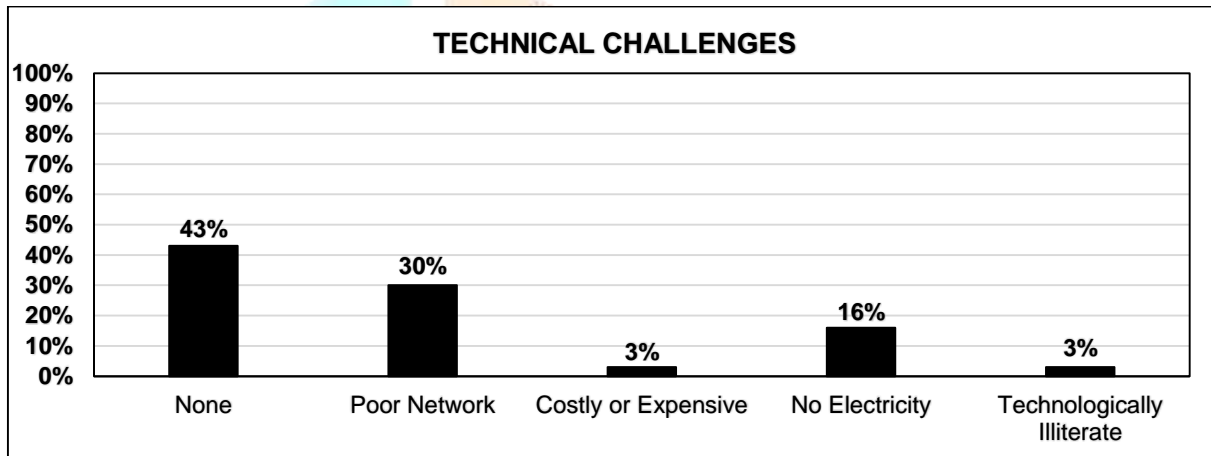


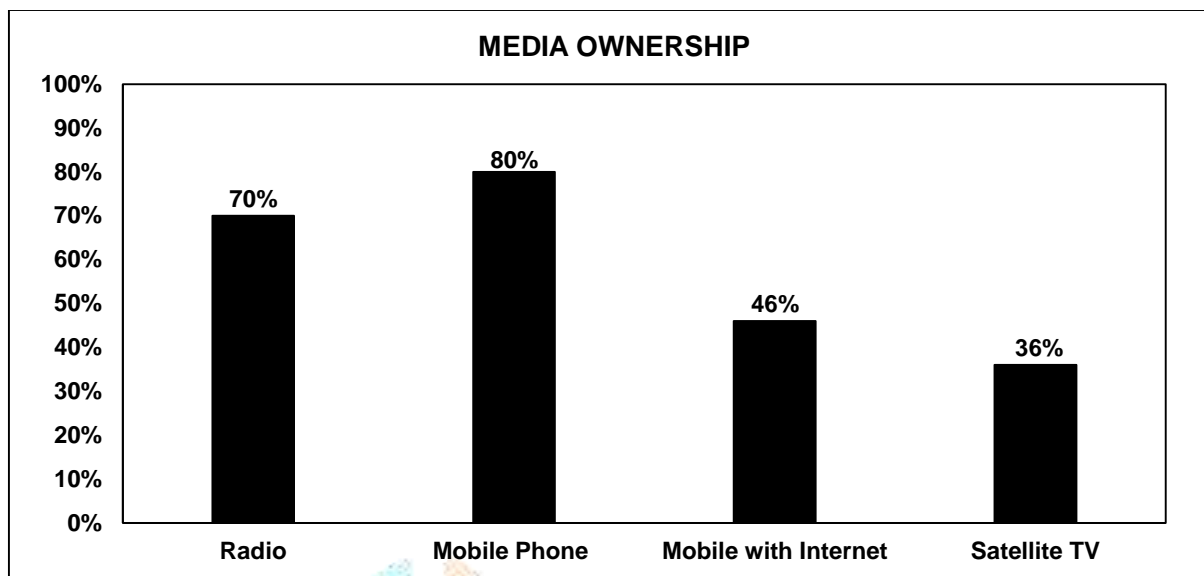
Table 8: Technical Challenges



3.1.1.4 MEDIA OWNERSHIP

In this study, 80% have mobile phone and 40% have phone with internet to access social media like Facebook, Twitter, Emails, and Instagram. Few household comprising 36% have satellite TV connection. Due to bad network and no electricity supply in some part of the District, it is hard to own a TV. Radio ownership has 70% of the population. Every household have a Radio and it plays a vital role in getting information and entertainment. (refer table 9)

Table 9: Media Ownership



3.1.1.5 MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

The population states that Radio listening increase environment concern, promotes inter-cultural relations, provides better connectivity, increases knowledge, gives entertainment, facilitate better social get together, participation among the audience, awareness about the new Govt. Schemes and projects, facilitate problem solving abilities in time of crisis and natural disaster. Moreover, Radio helps in better sensitization of governance and development. This clearly shows that Radio Broadcast helps people in having social connection along with information, education and entertainment. Radio plays an important role in reaching out the masses who are unable to get other media accesses like TV, Internet, Newspaper or Magazines. Listening to Radio impacted 93% of the listeners. As Radio is affordable and every mobile phone without internet have inbuilt radio app, this make the rate and reach of Radio tremendously accessible and rapidly increases the listenership. In some remote villages in Ukhul District, there is shortage of Radio receiver which is one of the major hinderances in the use of Radio broadcast for development. The number of languages spoken plays an important in decreasing the rate and reach of listeners as there are more than 250 sub-dialects even though Tangkhul dialect is a common language for communication in Ukhul District. The differences in tone, pronunciation & intonation made it difficult to comprehend the Tangkhul Program.

Action taken after listening to Radio

63% of the respondents acted after listening to Radio. These are the few actions taken up by the listeners :-

1. Sanitation Scheme
2. New Government Schemes like Housing
3. Agricultural & Environmental Awareness
4. Ration Card/Ration distribution
5. Aadhar card enrolment
6. Old aged pension distribution
7. Postponement of travelling because of bandh & protests

The most preferred medium to get information is Radio (74%), follows by TV & Mobiles (Social Network) with 13% each. (refer tables 10 &11)

Table 10: Acted After Listening to Radio

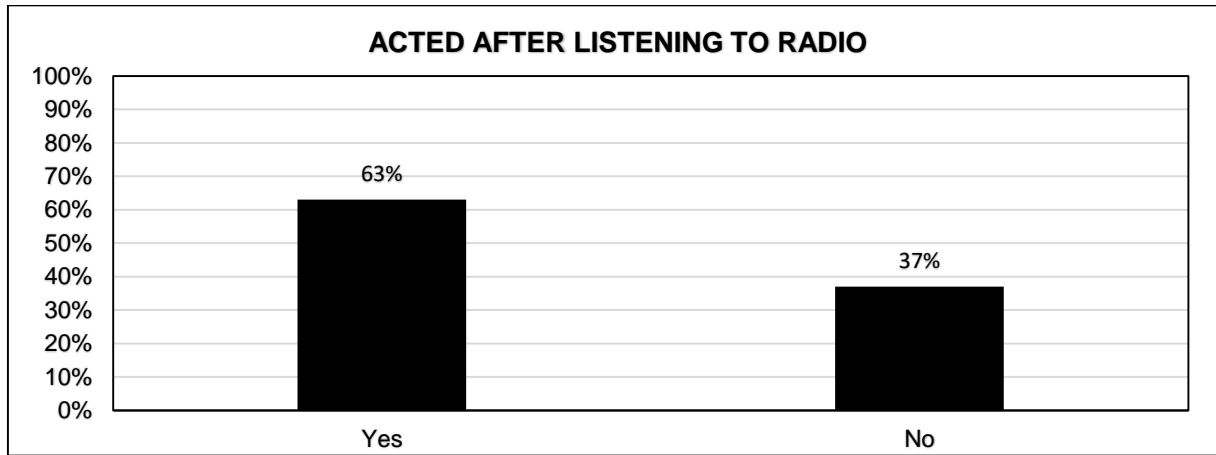
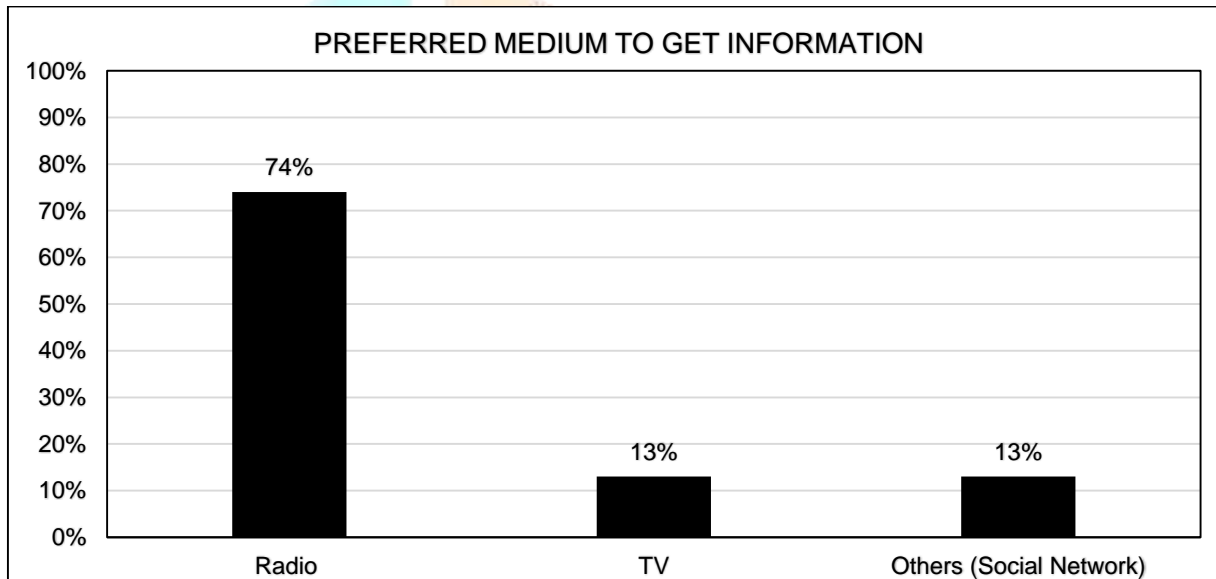


Table 11: Preferred Medium to Get Information



3.1.1.6 MEDIA CHALLENGES

100% of the population states that Radio listening increase environment concern, promotes inter-cultural relations, provides better connectivity, increases knowledge, gives entertainment, facilitate better social get together, participation among the audience, awareness about the new Govt. Schemes and projects, facilitate problem solving abilities in time of crisis and natural disaster. Moreover, Radio helps in better sensitization of governance and development. This clearly shows that Radio Broadcast helps people in having social connection along with information, education and entertainment. Radio plays an important role in reaching out the masses who are unable to get other media accesses like TV, Internet, Newspaper or Magazines.

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Majority of the population (97%) have found that cultural content of 30 minutes Tangkhul Program is useful and important in day to day life. The reach and radio listeners are increasing gradually. 97% of the population discussed what is heard on the radio with their families, co-workers and friends.

100% of Radio listeners have agreed that the information disseminated by listening Radio program is quite relevant to the needs of the society. Also suggested that they would want to add new program content such as, sports, Career guidance, Developmental programs, youth program, parents talk show, health program and traditional & cultural programs. 16% of the respondents stated that the information regarding Scholarship distribution, service delivery of government sector and job vacancy related information weren't timely disseminated. And this is due to poor network, unavailability of Radio accessories and natural disturbances.

There are many major problems prevailing in Tangkhul Villages in Ukhrul District due to geographical challenges and bad infrastructure. However, these are the five major pressing problems faced by the people. They are as follows:

- 1. Health and Roads 87%
- 2. Education 74%
- 3. Drinking water 60%
- 4. Sanitation 54%
- 5. Environment 40%

There are few more challenges which are still prevailing and improving such as pollution, drainage, electricity and service delivery of Government programs etc., where listeners felt that they aren't more important than the above-mentioned problems. All these problems can be improved and developed through the reach of Media where it highlighted the major problems and help in creating awareness and make our daily life easier & accessible. Media plays a vital role to bring about changes in the unreached section of the society to bring development and social change. Communication is the basic root of development and act as a positive catalyst for positive change. (refer tables 12,13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18)

Table 12: Impact of Listening to Radio

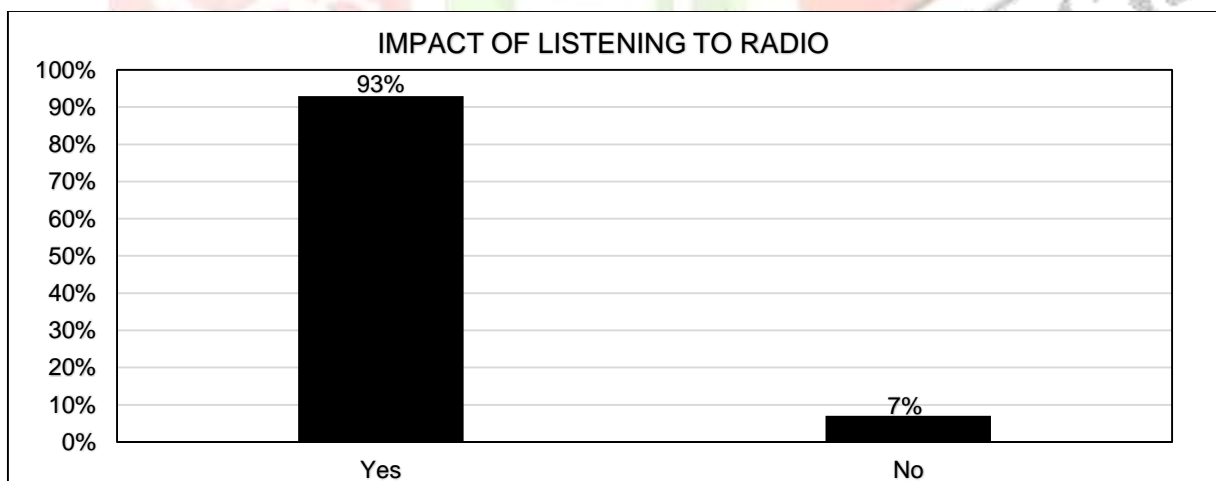


Table 13: Discussion of Issues Heard on Radio

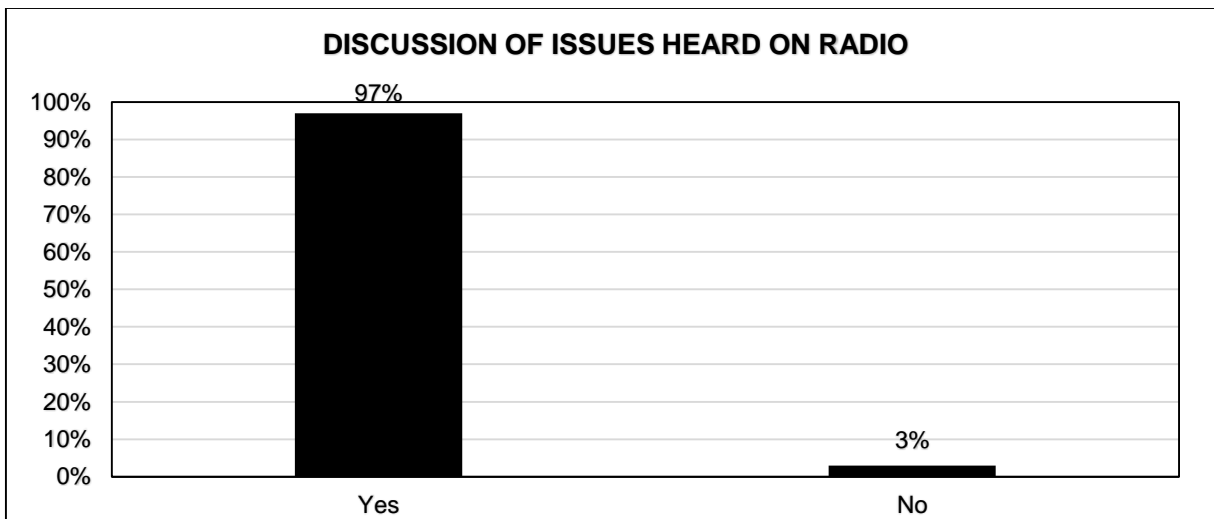


Table 14: Reach of Radio

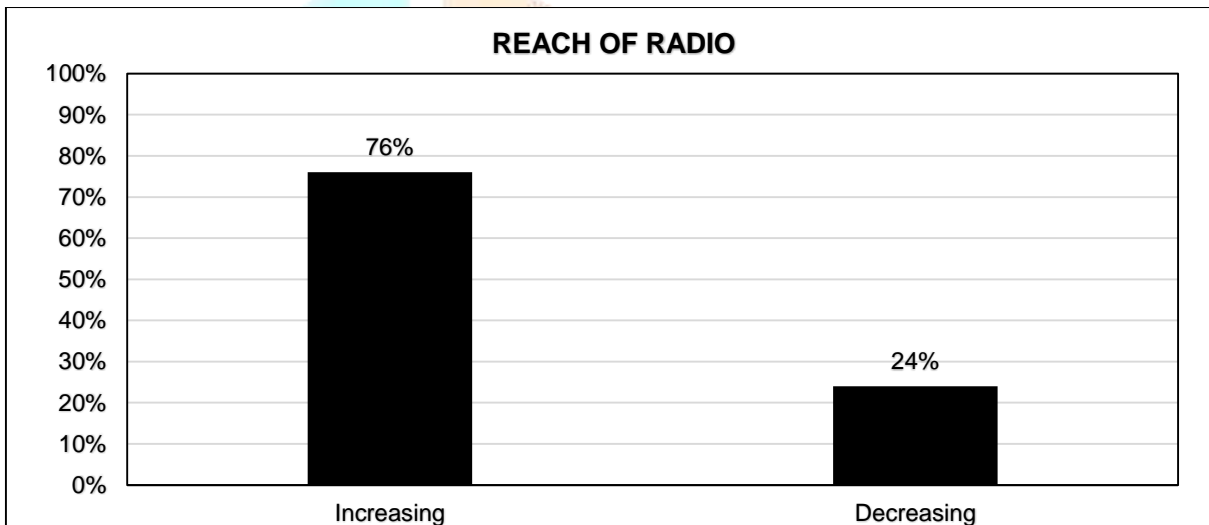


Table 15: Rate of Radio Listener

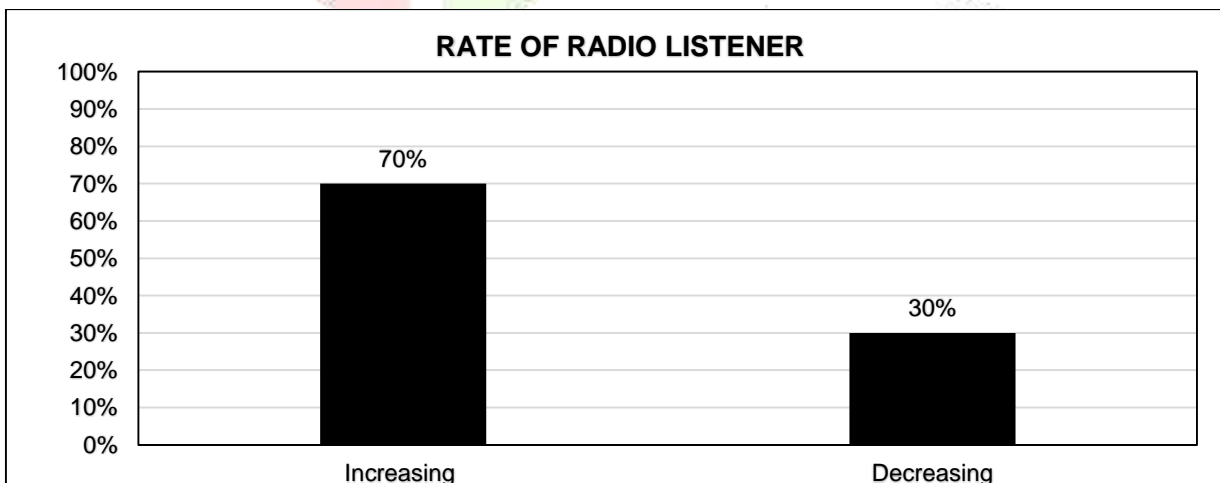


Table 16: Impact of Tangkhul Program In Radio

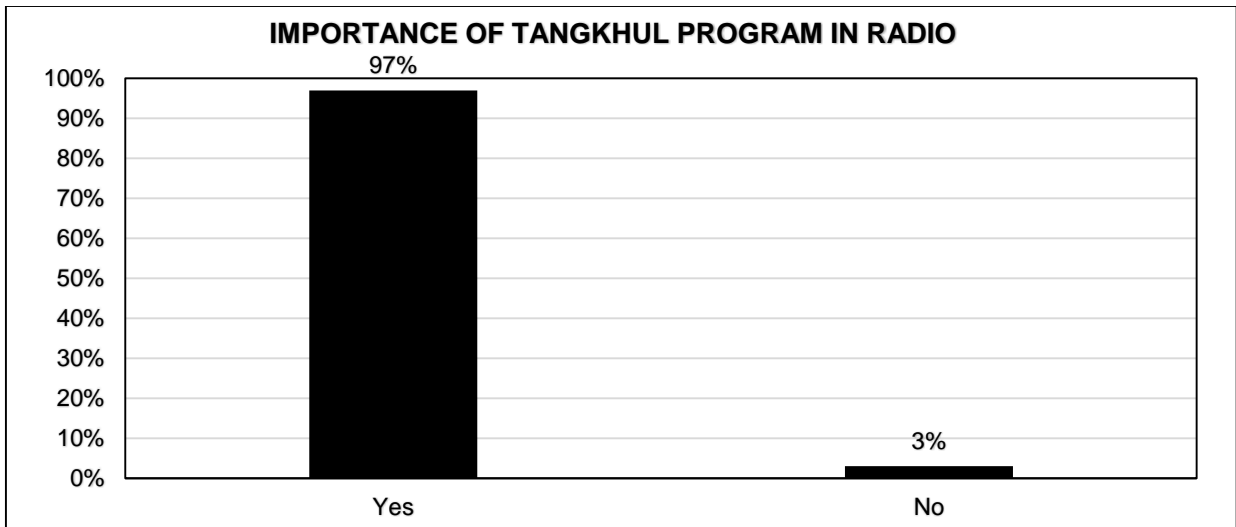


Table 17: Timely Dissemination of Information

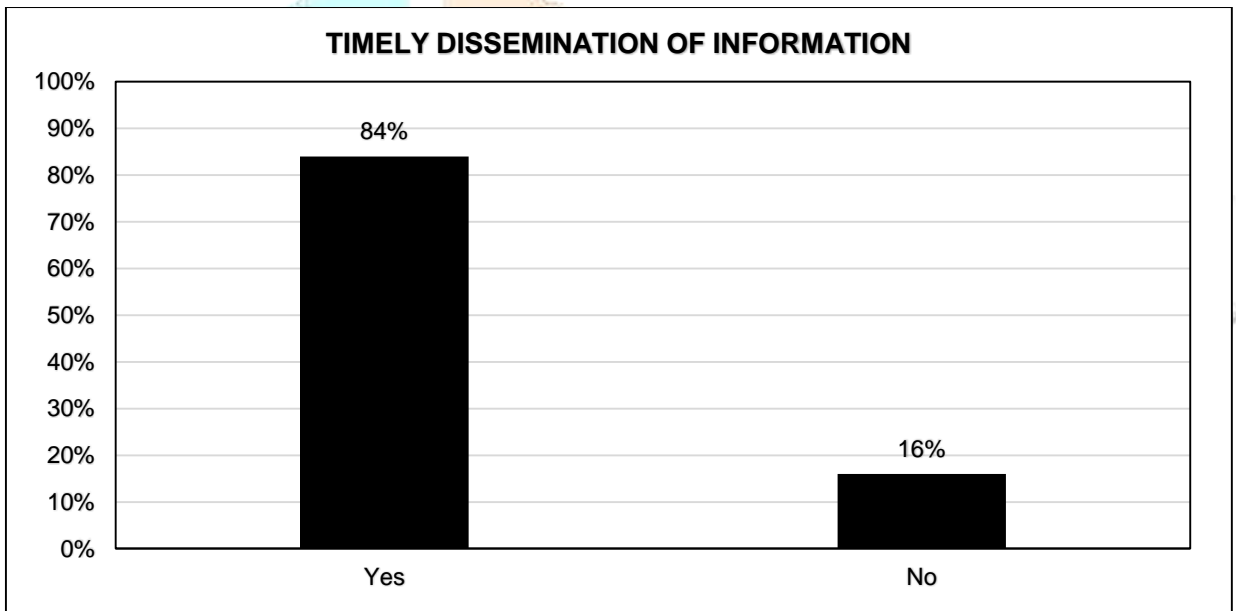
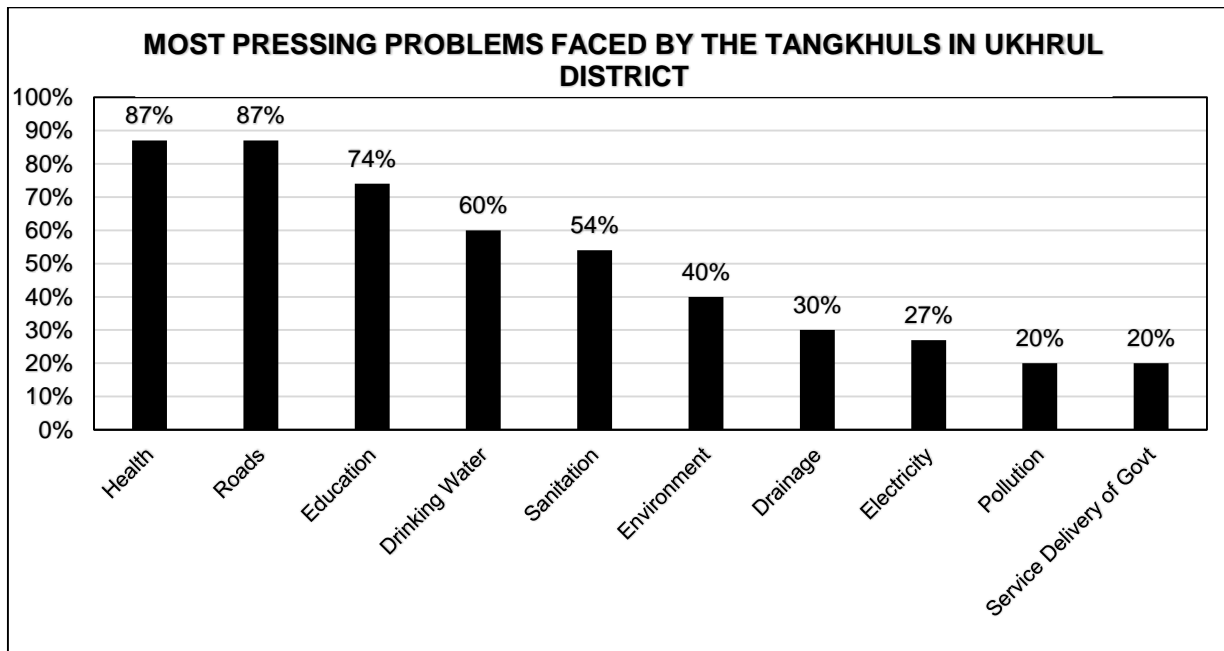


Table 18: Most Pressing Problems Faced by The Tangkhuls In Ukhrul District



IV. Conclusion

Over 70% of the populations lived in rural areas of the developing country. In Manipur, as an agrarian society most of the population lives in rural and hilly areas. It is evident that poverty is the main challenge not only for the ruralists but also among the urban dwellers though relatively the problem is much severe in the rural areas of the country. The nature of life in most rural communities is that of a survival manner. The communities need basic life necessities like food, shelter, and clothing, all mainly got from agriculture. For purposes of this paper, we shall take Ukhrul district, as an area of reference. Ukhrul is confronted with a number of developmental challenges. Some of the problems faced by the people of Ukhrul District are:

1. Poor electricity supply.
2. People used primitive method of cooking, living and farming. And they have trust on this method like 'Meiphu' or 'Chula'.
3. Most of the youths are unemployed.
4. Literacy is the major problem in rural development program. Low literacy rate among women having adverse effect on their skills development, employment productivity, family welfare and education of their children.
5. Bad transportation and communication facility.
6. Everyone wants to go to the main cities like, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore & Chennai etc. So, because of that rural people's remains as ignored part by the policy maker as well.
7. Policy makers prepare policies, programs for betterment of the rural people but, if these programs are not implemented very well then have no use.
8. Poor health status due to lack of clean water, hygiene, sanitation and drainage facilities; inadequate healthcare facilities and poor quality of life.
9. Poor infrastructure for receiving timely information on development opportunities, market demand price of commodities, new technologies, and development policies of government etc.

The challenge government faces in achieving this goal centrally lies in its communication strategy as a denominator to cause change. This calls for communication approaches that target and involve the communities. Newspaper can't reach on time when local newspaper reaches the district the news became stale. Magazines and

bookstore are few in number where publication became outdated. Television has its own limitation because of bad electricity and poor transmission. Only few families can afford extra power backup supplies or inverter and get a set up box. So, when it comes to flow of information in Ukhrul, it is quite passive. I remember a saying “more information, more power” and how it is adapted and people run here and there to listen to important news. Most of the people are from poorer group engaged in agriculture, small handloom worker, artisans, and manual worker. They have no time to sit and enjoy watching television or surfing the internet. To reach to them, radio is one of the best approach. I have seen some shopkeepers, daily wage, driver and farmers turning on their radio set and listening to what is broadcast and working happily. This medium can easily be maintained and it becomes a necessity in the lives of the people at Ukhrul. Thus, a basic requirement for development, is not possible without communication, communication that is significant for behavioral and attitudinal change is not possible without adequate information. Coronel said that “addressing poverty requires not just a transfer of economic resources to the needy but also making information available to the poor so that they can participate more meaningfully in political and social life”. The attainment of social development goals is very uncertain without ample opportunity not only to disseminate information to various parts of the society but also to communicate with them effectively. Through development experts, journalists/mass media, etc. Manipur got the highest radio listener in the country. In relation to the mass media landscape of Ukhrul, there is a very high expectation for radio to play the main role in the dissemination of development information, among urban and rural dwellers simply because, compare to other mass media (television, newspaper or internet), Radio is much more pervasive, accessible and affordable. Though Tangkhul is the common dialect there are more than 300 sub dialects. As it is unrealistic to establish nationwide radio programming, it is also a big challenge for radio stations that are established in regional area to serve as a means of development while they exclude some of the ethnic languages from being a means to communicate their respective ethnic groups. To use mass media, especially radio effectively and efficiently so that to make development information accessible to the majority of Tangkhuls and then alleviate the grave poverty, it is unavoidable task to sort out most of the impediments including those which are mentioned above.

Radio ranked as the most popular means of disseminating information, regardless of the geographical set up. It is very appealing because of some distinguishing features of interactivity, its capacity to provoke dialogue and to seek the participation of local population with lower production costs and extreme resourcefulness. This means that Rural Development is an action and initiative taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban areas and remote villages. It doesn't merely mean knowing or having awareness of a certain programs or schemes from the Govt. or private sector. The goals of development communication will be served adequately only when these happenings are reported in the media. This will ensure that large section of the people will come to know about it. In Ukhrul District, Manipur, Radio became an integral part to spread information, updates, schemes and projects about a new happening which will keep the people to come nearer to a better life with higher standard of living, social progress, solution for problems like health, education and the like.

The unique nature of the Radio is that, it appears to be one medium of communication that the rural dwellers can easily identify with. Thus, this brings the need for the establishment of Community Radio Station in the various rural villages of Ukhrul District. Government Media, organization, stakeholders, need to consider Radio developmental programs/projects in rural communities; how a village dweller use Radio to benefit and how can radio meet or provides their needs? In spite of the challenges, Radio still have opportunity for development in Ukhrul District of Manipur. To conclude, radio is the most efficient and effective as well as appropriate medium for rural settings as it impacted the people with real participation and the two-way communication ensured for a better living habits among the different strata of the rural dwellers of Ukhrul district of Manipur.

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