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## The Role of Radio in Disaster Management: With Special Reference to Indian Radio

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### **Abstract**

After the independence, when the green revolution started in India, Radio played a very crucial role in spreading the message of revolution. Radio proved to be a very potent medium as it reached out to the masses in various entertaining forms like 'Chaupal', 'Gaon Ghar' etc. These programs helped the farmers to understand and adopt scientific and modern ways of farming for better productivity. Radio also reached out to the soldiers who were away from their homes and shows like 'Fauji bhaiyon ke liye' proved to be very successful and are running till date. This is one of the reasons that Sri Narendra Modi Prime Minister of India conveys his messages through his 'Mann ki Baat' on Radio once every month.

Radio is medium through which messages are broadcasted to a larger audience living in different locations. Radio always play a very important role in lives of public. The functions of Radio include information, education, entertainment, persuasion, providing a platform for debate and discussion, national integration and promotion of communal harmony. The growth of technology has made Radio available at different platform through different communication tools.

Radio always plays an important role in disaster management by educating the listeners about disasters; warning of hazards; gathering and transmitting information about affected areas; alerting the officials, relief NGOs and the public to specific needs; and facilitating discussions. Radio in recent years has helped sensitize listeners most effectively through forewarning and risk management. After the advent of FM Radio in urban areas, it became a very significant and liked medium for entertainment and information.

**Keywords:** Media, Radio, listeners, Chaupal, Fauji bhaiyon ke liye

## Introduction:

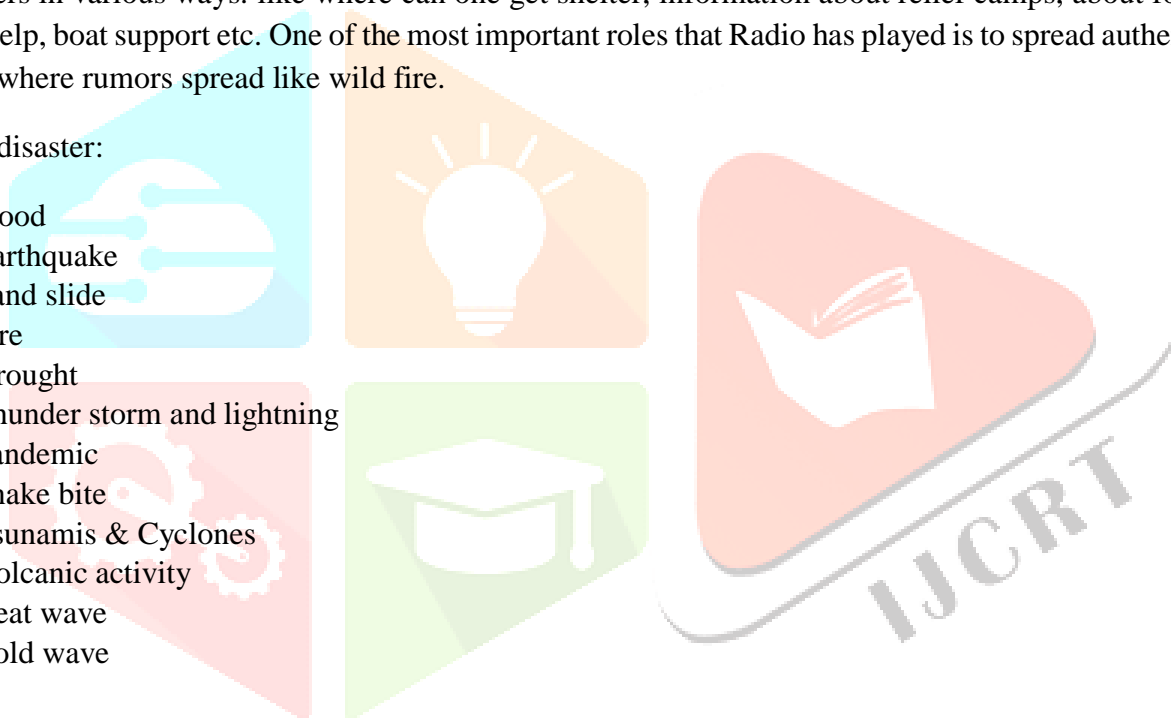
The research study aims to find vital role of Radio during any disaster. Radio as an important medium of communication has always been perceived as a powerful medium with maximum reach in a vast country like India. It is considered to be the most effective medium at the time of disruption and disaster. Government advices people to keep Radio sets with all residing in areas which are disaster prone.

Radio was a popular medium till the beginning of 90s when TV started becoming more popular but the advent of FM Radio is said to have revived Radio in India. In urban areas, FM Radio had a great impact and influence on the listeners. Radio Jockeys became very popular and attained a celebrity status especially among youth. With the growth of social media platforms, the voices which were heard and loved began to be seen and recognized adding to the fan base. The RJs became influencers and a part of the lives of listeners.

During Bihar's flood, Radio has played the responsible role of disseminating authentic and verified information to the listeners emerging as a very credible medium. Community Radio has broadcast many programs which have helped the listeners in various ways. like where can one get shelter, information about relief camps, about food distribution, medical help, boat support etc. One of the most important roles that Radio has played is to spread authentic information in a time where rumors spread like wild fire.

Types of disaster:

1. Flood
2. Earthquake
3. Land slide
4. Fire
5. Drought
6. Thunder storm and lightning
7. Pandemic
8. Snake bite
9. Tsunamis & Cyclones
10. Volcanic activity
11. Heat wave
12. Cold wave



Traditionally, Radio has played an important role by providing news and updates on disaster affected people and regions and thereby catalyzing relief and rescues operation. However, the role of Radio in identifying and serving people's information needs through the relief, recovery and enhancing preparedness to cope during disaster has not been fully utilized.

A World Health Organisation study says that communication can play a crucial role in enhancing the coordination among stake holders, coping abilities of people affected by disaster and accountability of service providers. Radio and communication can encourage people to take practical steps that enable them to cope more effectively with threats and hazards. It can also help to mitigate the impact of disasters when they occur, improve the effectiveness of early warning systems and help people to develop and share locally rooted adaptation strategies.

**Review of literature:**

According to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), every year on an average 1600 lives are lost due to floods. It also affects 75 lakh hectares of land and causes an average economic loss of Rs 1805 crore every year. In the last one decade, floods have resulted in a 0.1 percent loss to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the average loss in north-eastern states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Sikkim that are more prone to floods is 1.6 percent of their GDP. Assam, Bihar, parts of Meghalaya witness recurring floods almost every year.

Flood has become a recurring and continuous phenomenon in the Indian sub-continent. Several studies have proven that flood is one of the costliest natural disaster across the world and trends in India shows that the frequency of floods is increasing. Out of 649 disaster events between 1915-2016, 302 disaster were caused by floods ranging from river floods, flash flood and coastal floods. In the recent past, floods have occurred in areas that were earlier not prone to floods and their intensity has increased. The causes of flood range from climate change to cloud bursts, poor river and dam management, silting to rapid urbanization.

Li-Ling KUO, C. (1991) stressed about the role of media in education by emphasizing that, the process of teaching and learning is incomplete without using any form of media. Even though, it will be a time consuming effort to produce or determine the appropriate media to use for the teaching purposes, yet it is worth the effort. The public are less affected in this educational aspect due to the multifarious capabilities and contributions of the media. The media, especially the modern media play a very significant role in providing a favorable alternative for the continuation of educational programs and activities in India.

Gupta and Sharma (2015) emphasize that, Mass media positively diffuse significant health information that is relevant to our daily lives and making it possible for common people to decide and take appropriate action about their lives and health. During all disaster, radio remains the most reliable platform for the public to get health related information.

Sushil et al point out that, Mass Media play a crucial role in disseminating health information and increasing awareness about health education. Media including radio not only spread awareness but also inform and educate people over a period of time.

Singh, G and Pandey, N. noted that, Media is the reflection of our society and it depicts what and how society works. Either it is printed, electronic or the web, it is the only medium which helps in making people informed. It also helps in entertaining the public, educate and make people aware of the current happenings. (Singh, G. and Pandey, N.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To find out the relevance of Radio as a medium of Mass Communication.
2. To find out the effectiveness of Radio during times of disruption.
3. Provide information on use of Radio for disseminating information to build resilience for enhancing preparedness, response and recovery of communities affected flood or any other disaster.
4. Build an understanding about importance of life-saving and enhancing information during emergencies.
5. Describe to Radio program makers about significance of engaging with audiences including humanitarian aid workers and government officials using two-way communication approach.

### **Research Methodology:**

Secondary data analysis was used to understand the effectiveness of Radio during disaster. The Researcher leveraged secondary data analysis in an attempt to answer a new research question, or to examine an alternative perspective on the original question of a previous study. The steps followed to complete the study were:

Identification the topic of research

Identification of research sources

Collection of existing data: It was done through various sources like research papers, newspapers, data by government and non-government agencies, websites, etc.

Compiling and comparison: Once data was collected from credible sources, compilation and comparing of the was done.

Analysis of data: Analyzing of data to understand identify if all questions were answered.

### **Findings of the study:**

Radio as a means of Mass communication is an effective medium to reach out to a huge number of audiences in a short span of time. Its importance during disaster is tested many a times and it has been seen that Radio has proved successful to a large extent in disaster management, both before the disaster and after the disaster.

During disaster, people are not only suffering from disaster but also an over flow of information from multiple channels resulting in spread of fake news. In such a situation, Radio kept itself balanced in providing information as well as healthy entertainment.

In the modern information system, the world is suffering from a storm of fake news and platforms like social media can be blamed of giving speed to such fake news. In such circumstances, Radio maintains its integrity. Radio has always been a constant medium to all its listeners, both in good and tough times and Radio is one medium that has an across India reach.

### **Conclusion:**

With the growth and advances in technology, many old forms of communication have either suffered a setback or have been replaced by the newer and easier forms of communication. For example telegram has ceased to exist, hand written letters are hardly sent in a time where emailing and instant chatting options can be found in everyone's smart phone. But Radio has stood the test of time. Not all medium can match the credibility and the ability to entertain.

Radio, including FM and community Radio, has proven to be an effective medium for communities to monitor warnings and listen to emergency announcements.

It can be equally effective in reducing the distress by providing psychosocial support to communities and support in recovery. These stations being close to disaster prone/affected communities can act as a platform for them to voice their concerns and share inspiring stories of hope. During Bihar floods, community Radio stations became a mediator between the benefactor and the beneficiary. Community Radio stations through listener's club and continuous engagement with affected people work towards enhancing resilience of communities. Communities affected by floods and other natural disaster can access Radio on their mobile phones and Radio sets when electricity is not available. Radio has been an important communication platform for communities.

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## Some relevant links

National disaster management Authority link- <https://ndma.gov.in/en/media-public-awareness/disaster/natural-disaster/floods.html>

<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/M1cZ2bfYHSG7yCdHHvUozN/Are-floods-causing-more-damage-these-days.html>