

Radio as a Tool to Connect an Unconnected Nation

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the potential of radio in the context of India as a developing nation, using SEWA's experiment with radio programming as an example of an underdeveloped best practice. In the process of SEWA's attempt at using radio to reach rural audiences, they inadvertently came across the reason why *All India Radio's* development programs do little to "develop" communities. Using *Rudi no Radio* as an example, this paper will discuss how SEWA's radio program in its early stages attempted to use the *All India Radio* model to empower their community of self-employed women across the state of Gujarat. What SEWA found through targeted focus groups and research surveys was that in community radio, strong connectivity was the key to empowering communities. Said another way, in order to move a community to action, that community needs both a conducive environment and appropriate tools to make lasting change. Simply providing information through radio is not enough to further develop and empower communities. Rather, the formula seems to be: start with producing compelling content, actively partake in the process of engaging with listeners, which often leads to fostering strong connections, and ultimately can lead to giving a voice to the once voiceless.

Overlooked by the government, of which *All India Radio* is an extension, is the use of radio as an immensely powerful, and largely untapped, medium of communication for the areas of India where televisions and schools may not reach. Poverty and lack of opportunity remain just two of many underlying causes of a range of development problems in a country like India. If rural development is an agenda on the government's long list of national priorities - to usher India in as a more forceful competitor in foreign markets, to make the lives of its own citizens better, and to inch closer to reaching the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals - this paper aims to show that radio is an extremely powerful, and often underutilized, tool in achieving that agenda.

This paper aims to also illustrate and contextualize the effects of using radio to both inform and educate, with the hope that other NGOs, government organizations and development advocates, can create, amend and adjust their current programming to have a wider reach with a stronger effect.

1.1: Introduction: The Power of Radio

Parvatiben Rajputh and her family in Soneth village, of Gujarat's Banaskanta District, are all avid radio listeners. But they haven't always been. When her father was younger, he only studied up until the 2nd grade because of obligations and responsibilities at home. Though he halted his formal education at an early age, he still had a strong interest in learning. Lucky for him, there was a "master" in his village that took the time to teach him concepts relevant to his own life, i.e. how to keep accounts for farm businesses and how to read and write. When he was raising his own children, who also were unable to go to school because it was too far from their farmstead-home, Parvatiben's father took it upon himself to educate the five of them.

Without any sort of significant formal education, Parvatiben was able to recall a lot of the information she heard in the *Rudi no Radio* program, which was a one-time occurrence in this particular research project. Generally, when we spoke with women and men that had little-to-no formal education, their recall of the messaging in our episodes was hardly on point, likely because they lived in environments that did not value or nurture education. But in Parvatiben's family, her father understood its value, and took it upon himself to sharpen his children's skills and intellect, which allowed new information coming into their household to go further. When Parvatiben wrote a letter to the program, she confessed that it was actually not her handwriting because her handwriting is not very good. So she dictated a letter to her brother, who wrote in to the *SEWA* office for her.

From Parvatiben and her family's example, the *Rudi no Radio* research team came away with the idea that in order to help foster an environment in which targeted messaging is heard and understood, radio can be an extremely useful tool. Parvatiben and her siblings had the experience of being raised in a family where education was valued, and as such had an innate interest in learning new things. This scenario is certainly not the norm in small villages, but it was inspiring. The beauty of radio as a development tool is that it doesn't require one to be able to read and write in order to process information. It just requires them to be able to listen and comprehend. Effective education is not only restricted to those with formal schooling. And Parvatiben showed us that.

Through this research project, we learned that households like Parvatiben's are not the only ones that benefit from the medium of radio. Kunda Dixit, editor of the *Nepali Times*, says about the radio programming: "South Asia's born-again digiterati will scoff at unglamorous AM radio, but the fact remains that no other medium today comes close to matching its reach, accessibility and affordability."² According to the Census Bureau of India, almost ¾ of the nation's population resides in rural areas; the exact proportion is 72%.³ Now imagine all of those areas receiving the same information concerning AIDS and its methods of infection (in a locally-appropriate language that is accent-specific), with communities coming together to discuss the infection and its presence in their own villages. Imagine areas learning about best practices in farming, with agro-scientists

² Dixit, Kunda. "The Relevance of Radio." Speech given at South Asia Kathmandu Conference. August 2002. <<http://www.indiatogether.org/opinions/talks/kdixit-02.htm>>.

³ 2001 Census Results. Government of India. *Ministry of Home Affairs website*. <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/census_online/population.html>.

working with village groups to provide hands-on education. Imagine these rural areas not only being connected to information that is directly applicable and useful to their livelihoods, but also playing an active role in promoting a broader understanding in their own villages. From my vantage point, it's all wishful thinking without the use of participatory radio as a means of communication, to help connect the innumerable geographically disparate but psychologically similar parts that make up a entire nation.

Dixit ends his conference speech with, "Democracy can only work with participation. [And] Participation can only happen with communication."⁴



SEWA Organizer Krishna Solanki interviews Rudi no Radio listener Madhuben Khandvi of Ahmedabad district on the importance of education in her village.

⁴ Dixit, Kunda. "The Relevance of Radio." Speech given at South Asia Kathmandu Conference. August 2002. <<http://www.indiatogether.org/opinions/talks/kdixit-02.htm>>.

2.1: Background on the Rural Radio Movement in India⁵

I turned over another development article in the Indian Express and sighed. There is such big talk about “developing India” but what does that really mean? And who really wants it to happen? The government comes off as a passive stakeholder, while non-government groups within and outside of India seem more active. There has been a war raging over 'development' for the past better half of a century in India. Everyone seems to agree that development comes from empowerment. And empowerment happens at the grassroots level. If the government is so interested in empowering its citizens, why not explore the potential of a medium that has the furthest reach, the most efficacious approach?

⁵ Resources used for the early history section of the following timeline (unless otherwise indicated) were taken from 3 sources: a document titled "The History of Community Radio" by UNDP, "Peripheral Voices, Central Concerns: Community Radio in India" by Prashant Sharma, and Kumar Kanchan's "Radio Broadcasting Policies in India." Detailed bibliographic information on these sources is located in Annex I of this report under *Works Cited*.

2.2: The Rural Radio Movement in India: A Timeline

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| 1885 | Indian Telegraph Act was passed, which gives exclusive privileges of the establishment, maintenance and working of wireless apparatuses to the nation's governing body. (The amended version of which is still in use today.) |
| 1927 | <p><i>Indian Broadcasting Corporation (IBC</i>; an amateur broadcasting organization) was set up in India, while the country was still under British rule. Community Radio appeared in many forms during this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✦ Decentralized✦ Rural✦ Local✦ Experimental |
| 1930 | <i>IBC</i> went into liquidation; Government of India took over broadcasting under the name of the <i>Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS)</i> . |
| 1932 | Punjab's Rural Reconstruction Commissioner, Frederick Brayne, conducted an experiment in rural radio broadcasting in Lahore. |
| 1933 | <p>-Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act was passed, which made the possession of radio receivers and wireless equipment without a license an offence.</p> <p>-As a result of Brayne's experiment, Charles Strickland, former registrar of Indian Friendly Societies, suggested the setting up of district radio stations for rural development. These stations should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✦ Use small transmitters✦ Broadcast folk songs and folk theatre in local dialects✦ Provide news on agricultural issues |
| 1935 | <p>Strickland's experiments did not last, and most efforts were swallowed up by the then established national broadcasting service (<i>ISBS</i>).</p> <p><i>Note: Though broadcasting began in India as a private venture, even after it rolled into the hands of the British government, the Indian princely states were given the right to construct and use transmitters and collect fees for receiving sets as specified in the Government of India Act 1935. This governmental grip on radio airwaves has continued up to today.</i></p> |

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| 1936 | <p>-A 20 Kilowatt station was set up in Delhi at 18 Alipur Road as the first new center for broadcasting under the new scheme of expansion and development of <i>ISBS</i>. -<i>ISBS</i> changed its name to <i>All India Radio</i>.</p> |
| 1941 | <p><i>AIR</i> officially moved to what is known today as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.</p> |
| 1947 | <p>India's independence year; Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Mountbatten and Mohammed Jinnah broadcasted the partition of India on <i>AIR</i> airwaves.</p> |
| 1956 | <p>Farm Radio Forums were set up in 150 villages across five districts of the Western Indian state of Maharashtra as a collaborative effort between <i>UNESCO</i> and <i>All India Radio</i>. In this model, selected farmers in villages would meet at an appointed hour, listen to a radio broadcast collectively through a community radio set and then discuss the content in a setting moderated by a convener. This was the first attempt to solicit people's participation in the form of feedback.</p> |
| 1957 | <p><i>AIR</i> became known as AkashVani, which literally means "cosmic or celestial voice."</p> |
| 1959-1964 | <p>The Farm Radio Forums movement gained strength, as there were 7,500 forums working from about 30 radio stations in India, and farmers not only gained information on agricultural techniques, they were also invited to participate in decision making involving their work. However, after 1964, nothing more was heard about these forums. It is said that <i>AIR</i> failed to capitalize on lessons learned from the <i>UNESCO</i> collaborated project and that it just remained an experiment (and a quite successful one at that).</p> |

April 1966

The Chanda Committee, appointed by the government to study radio and television practices in India, criticized *AIR*'s program policy. They made the following claims:

- ✦ The government was knowingly overlooking issues surrounding development in India.
- ✦ A technical infrastructure built with public resources was being misused for propaganda of public policy and as a vehicle for setting political agendas.
- ✦ *AIR* programs are unpopular because there is not a research system in place to gauge the quality of programs from the listeners' perspective. The report says that listeners' research is a necessary part of most broadcasting systems, and that "without a continuous and intimate touch with its audience, a broadcasting system cannot fulfill the purpose for which it exists nor can it ensure maximum listening to its programs in preference to others."
- ✦ The UNESCO collaborated project titled Farm Radio Forums was very successful in bringing attention to radio's immense potential to carry development messages to poor, rural Indian homes.
- ✦ "It is only through institutional change that *AIR* can be liberated from the present rigid financial and administrative procedures of government."

1966

-The year of India's Green Revolution
-*AIR* played a pivotal role in broadcasting information relaying new techniques and practices to bridge the gap between agricultural innovation and grassroots farmers. *AIR*'s broadcasts in TamilNadu persuaded farmers to adopt high yielding varieties of rice, which lead to the new variety to become known as the "radio paddy." This was the second example of how *AIR* had a hand in effectively using localized broadcasts to address rural needs, specifically the needs of farmers. However, again, this was just another short-lived experiment, as the structure of *AIR* and its philosophy behind broadcasting remained top-down.

1967

Vividh Bharti, *AIR*'s commercial radio service, was inaugurated.

1970

The Government of India "carefully considered" all of the Chanda Committee proposals, but in the end declared "*the present is not an opportune time to consider the conversion of AIR into an autonomous corporation.*"

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| 1975 | Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a national emergency in India, during which <i>AIR</i> was misused as a ‘government organ.’ In her address to <i>AIR</i> station directors, she said: “ <i>While anybody is in government service, they are bound to obey the orders of the government. If they feel that the government policy is not right, they are unable to obey, or they have some other views which they want to express, nobody is stopping them from resigning and joining any organization where they will have that freedom.</i> ” Credibility became less important, as <i>AIR</i> became a propaganda tool for the former prime minister and her policies. |
| 1982 | <i>News Policy for Broadcast Media</i> was released in May of 1982 as the product of an advisory committee that was working to restructure media organizations to facilitate a more professional outlook in response to the Indira Gandhi ‘state of emergency’ episode in 1975. The guidelines of this publication continue to be followed still today. |
| 1993 | Indian airwaves were opened up to private concerns. However, licenses were expensive, and only large media organizations with considerable economic clout were able to attain them. Also, programming remained focused in urban areas, with an emphasis on the benefits of mainstream media and its consumers. |
| 1995 | The year of a landmark Supreme Court judgment, in which airwaves in India were declared “public property” and were to be used to promote public goods and ventilate the plurality of views, opinions and ideas. The judgment, however, in essence said that, yes, airwaves are public property, but their use has to be controlled and regulated by a public authority in the interests of the public to prevent the invasion of their rights. |
| Sept., Oct. 1996 | VOICES, an Indian NGO, brought together 60 people from <i>AIR</i> , educational institutions, NGOs, and journalists to debate the issue and formulate a strategy to pressure the government to act on the 1995 Supreme Court judgment by setting up a framework for the facilitation of community radio. The result was the Bangalore Declaration on Radio. The group requested that the government grant licenses for NGOs to set up community radio stations. |
| 1997 | <i>AIR</i> has 187 broadcasting stations that are catered to by about 300 transmitters. Over 97% of the population can access stations on <i>AIR</i> ’s extensive radio network, which covers about 90% of the geographical area of India (Pasha 7) ⁶ . |

⁶ Pasha, A.R. *Community Radio: The Voice of the People*. A VOICES Publication. Bangalore, India, December 1997.

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| 1999 | <p>-The Government of India opened up airwaves to commercial broadcasters; Private companies in India would be allowed to set up 101 independent FM stations in 40 cities. Of the 148 frequencies identified for 40 centers, 40 have been reserved for educational channels to be operated by the human resource development ministry without the payment of any license fee. In this way, the government covertly ignored the community radio push, as heavy license fees are being charged for opening India's first private radio stations, which would keep these spots open solely to commercial broadcasters.</p> <p>-DDS Initiative started in Andhra Pradesh, in which the Deccan Development Society is working with UNESCO on a radio-based "Women Speak to Women" project. The program is run by local dalit women who are busy narrowcasting the over 150 hours of programs that have been made on issues that affect the surrounding 75 villages. A studio has already been made in this area, however, the villages are still waiting for the government to grant them a license to broadcast programs on radio airwaves.</p> |
| Dec. 1999 | <p>Birth of KMVS's <i>Kunjali Panchchi Kutchji (the Crane of our Kutch)</i> community radio program in the Kutch district of the state of Gujarat. This program uses <i>All India Radio-Bhuj</i> airwaves to broadcast their programs in the Gujarati dialect of Kutchi, a language which is a point of emotional identification for most of the local people. The majority of the programs that are broadcasted on <i>AIR-Bhuj</i> airwaves, which covers the entire Kutch district, are produced in the state language of Gujarati.</p> |
| July 2000 | <p>A Community Radio Consultation was organized in Hyderabad, an initiative which called for a 3-tier system of broadcasting in India: "<i>a state-owned public service network (existing framework), commercial private broadcasting, and non-profit, people-owned and managed community radio stations.</i>" There was no movement to action from the government.</p> |
| Aug. 2001 | <p><i>Chala Ho Gaon Mein</i>, sponsored by two local non-profit organizations – Alternatives for India Development (AID) and Manthan Yuva Sangathan – began as a community radio program in Jharkhand, and reaches 45 villages of the district of Palamau on state-owned airwaves. The initiative will be financially backed by The National Foundation for India for the next 10 years.</p> |

- Dec. 2002 The Government of India announced a new policy to grant licenses for radio stations to educational institutions that would be willing to meet certain guidelines. (*Note: Although the new policy was in response to the decade long campaign for community radio, this announcement limited the scope of community radio stations to educational institutions, making the whole policy read as the campus radio policy rather than the community radio policy.*)
- Feb 2003 *Mana Radio*, in Orvakal village of Andhra Pradesh, which was launched 4 months prior with the backing of the World Bank, was taken off the air by officials who seized the transmitter saying they had received an advisory from the central authority's monitoring agency because it has not been licensed and was thus illegally owned according to the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885.
- March 2003 UNESCO-supported *Namma Dhwani (Our Voices)* community radio started in Boodikote, Karnataka as an alternative broadcasting outlet that uses a roundabout technical solution that doesn't violate India's laws. *Namma Dhwani* broadcasts cable-audio casts through villagers' television sets through the use of an audio cable that was installed in individual homes.
- Feb. 2004 *Anna Radio, 90.4* was launched at Anna University in Chennai as the first educational institution to launch a "successful" community radio program. 90.4 airwaves reach a radius of 8-10 kilometers surrounding the campus, and 10 hours of programs are broadcast everyday. The focus areas of broadcasts include education, health, environment, women's issues and community development.
- April 2005 *SEWA* began its experiment in community radio with a program called *Rudi no Radio* that is broadcast through local *AIR* airwaves, and has seen the impact that an interactive, participatory community-oriented radio program can have on developing communities.
- March 2006 Bihar authorities shut down the "Radio Raghav" station that was founded in 2003 by Raghav Mahto, after the courts ruled that it was in violation of the 1885 Indian Telegraphs Act. Police lodged a complaint against Mr. Mahto, and information ministry representatives seized his equipment. The station is believed to have been launched for less than \$1, and it broadcasted a range of education programs, local news and music to a radius of 20 kilometers around the village of Mansoorpur in Bihar.⁷

⁷ Tewary, Amarnath. "The Amazing DIY Village FM Radio Station." *BBCNews Online*. February 24, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/4735642.stm>.

2.3: Definition of the Four Institutionally Recognized Players in the 'Radio for Rural Development' Movement

Player #1: All India Radio (AIR)/Akashvani⁸

All India Radio, officially established in 1936 as *AIR* and in 1957 as *Akashvani*, exists today as a Government of India monopoly as it controls the majority of the nation's airwaves. *AIR* is a semi-commercial, government-owned operation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Today, *AIR* broadcasts national and local programs in Hindi, English and sixteen different regional languages through five regional offices across the country. (The North Zone in New Delhi; the North-East Zone in Guwahati, Assam; the East Zone in Calcutta; the West Zone in Bombay; and the South Zone in Madras.) *AIR* has developed into one of the largest media networks in the world, as it consists of a network of 209 broadcasting centers (which include 113 regional and 76 local radio stations). The broadcast coverage of 89.66 per cent by area is received by 98.84 per cent of the people in 24 languages and 146 dialects in home service.

According to *AIR's* mission statement, the government monopoly strives to: "To provide information, education and wholesome entertainment, keeping in view the motto, 'Bahujan Hitaya, Bahujan Sukhaya,' which means the benefit and happiness of large sections of the people." Under this statement, they propose to:

- ✦ use the medium of radio to uphold India's democracy
- ✦ present objective information concerning local, state, national and international issues
- ✦ promote the interests of the country as a whole keeping in mind the diverse culture of this nation
- ✦ produce programs that aim to "awaken, inform, enlighten, educate, entertain and enrich"
- ✦ produce programs relating to developmental activities and all their facets
- ✦ serve the rural, illiterate, developing classes through radio programming
- ✦ promote social justice and combat exploitation
- ✦ and promote national integration.

The benefits of *AIR/Akashvani* rural development programs include:

- ❖ Cuts across the technologically/electrically connected barrier; radio can reach homes that are not connected to the outside world by phones or electricity.
- ❖ Cuts across the illiteracy barrier (as information dissemination occurs in a way that does not require one to be know how to read or write).
- ❖ Programs are made by professionals in the field of radio broadcasting, and thus are, in theory, acoustically pleasing to listeners. (Although often times, professional urban broadcasters often have limited knowledge of rural development issues.)

According to *AIR's* website, the majority of programming coming out of their station includes news, music and spoken work programs. In specific reference to *AIR's*

⁸ All information from this section was taken from the *All India Radio* website: www.allindiaradio.org.

programming in the rural development arena, a goal towards which they have been working for on and off since their inception in 1936, *All India Radio* produces a number of in-house programs that aim at providing information to village areas across the country. Specifically, in the case of *All India Radio Ahmedabad-Vadodara*, one in-house production, titled *Khedut Mandal*, gives advice and information to farmers relevant to their crops and weather patterns. Another few, *Rang Rang Vadaliya*, *Yuva Vaani*, *Sahiyar*, and *Vadlo*, all aim their messages at children, youth, women and elders in that order.

To establish connections with their audience, *AIR* uses three methods: research, letters and phone calls. Within *AIR* departments, there exists the ARC, or the Audience Research Cell, department. This first method of research, however, is less about the qualitative impact of individual programs, as *AIR-Ahm.*'s Research Unit leader Manubhai Solanki tells me, but rather more about the quantitative numbers of listeners in terms of actual listening vs. normal listening and frequency of listenership.⁹ He said that *AIR* generally does not research individual programs to find out their impact, use or effect at the grassroots level, unless there is an order that comes from the national government to do so. And generally then, the research is still conducted along the same quantitative methodology unless otherwise indicated by the national government funding body.

The second method, letters, is also quite limited. If listeners would like to write letters into any program that *AIR* broadcasts, they are invited to, but *AIR* neither sends responses back to them nor tries to maintain that connection with their listeners in any other way besides airing their letters on an in-house production called "Savinay Vinanti Ke." Generally in this set-up, listeners pose questions to *AIR* through letter, and *AIR* attempts to answer them on this program. The third method of establishing a connection with their audience is "Savinay Vinanti Ke"-related, as *AIR* also accepts phone calls from listeners that have questions they want to ask guest experts on air. However, these phone calls are not recorded prior to programs; there is a particular time period during which listeners have to call in to ask questions, and if they do not call within that time slot, they cannot get in touch with *AIR* broadcasters.

Bharat Rajgor, a newsreader for the *AIR-Ahm.* News Department, tells me that up to ten years ago, *AIR* would go into rural areas and arrange concerts with the local people, making use of their local, musical skills. But now due to recent financial crunches, they stopped within the last five years.¹⁰ He also recalls that his station used to invite people from rural areas into the *AIR* studio in Ahmedabad to record their localized, musical talents to be used for broadcast. And in compensation, *AIR* would not directly pay the rural musicians for their recordings, but rather send checks to the municipal schools in the artists' villages. However, this practice also stopped about five years ago due to budget cuts.¹¹

⁹ Solanki, Manubhai. Head of Research Unit at *AIR-Ahmedabad-Vadodara*. Personal Interview. 10 May 2006.

¹⁰ Rajgor, Bharatbhai. Newsreader for *All India Radio-Ahmedabad-Vadodara*. Personal Interview. 20 April 2006.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Player #2: Community Radio (in its purest form)

Community radio is defined, simply, as “radio which is of, by and for the community.”¹² Specifically, community radio is a people’s radio that not only perceives people as the listeners of media content, but also as the creators and the producers of programs. Community radio is distinguished from other radio initiatives by three primary elements: not-for-profit, community owned and managed and community participation.¹³ Community radio is generally a low-cost, low-powered and local reach initiative that addresses issues relevant to the particular communities that it is serving.

The benefits of community radio are as follows:

- ❖ Cuts across the technologically/electrically connected barrier; radio can reach homes that are not connected to the outside world by phones or electricity.
- ❖ Cuts across the language barrier, as community radio endeavors generally operate on local dialects.
- ❖ Cuts across the illiteracy barrier (as information dissemination occurs in a way that does not require one to be know how to read or write).
- ❖ The range of broadcasting is usually within the 15 kilometer radius, which allows for a more holistic approach to development, as communities tend to develop as groups instead of individually.
- ❖ The two-way participatory process allows for more sharing of information amongst the community (as opposed to disseminating of information), which not only allows a platform for feedback from community members, but sows the seeds for people’s governance.
- ❖ The potential for communities’ development is optimal, as community radio initiatives tend to work for the foundational, basic rights of community members.
- ❖ The costs associated with setting up a community radio initiative are economical and sustainable.
- ❖ In the end, community radio can create enormous opportunities for growth and poverty reduction.

The Government of India has not been in favor of de-monopolizing their stronghold on radio airwaves in India to members of rural populations since back when the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885 was passed, stating that the Central Government has the exclusive privilege of “establishing, maintaining and working telegraphs.”¹⁴ That act still remains in practice today, as the government is very wary of giving airwaves to rural areas. Their reasoning stems from three primary issues: concerns about technological issues, social hierarchy related concerns, and last, the majority of the concern seems to revolve around the issue of national security.¹⁵ The government fears that legalizing broadcasts by private agencies might be of aid to groups with separatist agendas. Then the danger

¹² “Concept Note on Community Radio.” *UNDP Community Radio Network* website. 2004. <<http://www.communityradionetwork.org/toplinks/archives/con.%20note%20on%20CR>>.

¹³ “Background Paper on Community Radio in India.” A *UNDP* Publication. <http://www.undp.org.in/events/CRadio/Bgnd_Nt_Cmmty_Rdio.pdf>.

¹⁴ Sharma, Prashant. “Peripheral Voices, Central Concerns: Community Radio in India.” 21 August 2002. <<http://www.thehoot.org/story.asp?storyid=webhoothootL1K0821021&pn=1>>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

would be that these groups would be in a position to further their agendas, and the government will have helped facilitate it by legalizing community radio.¹⁶ However, Media anthropologist Prashant Sharma believes this premise is fundamentally flawed because “disaffection occurs largely when a group is marginalized or disenfranchised.”¹⁷ He says that if anything, community radio would become a catalyst of the integrative role that a government should be playing in the development arena. Sharma says that the government’s fear here is unsubstantiated because it should be working the other way around; a nation that consists of empowered communities is, by nature, more secure.

In India, there are a few organizations that can be classified as community radio stations in the purest sense.

- ❖ DDS in Pastapur, Andhra Pradesh – primarily uses the narrowcasting approach; emphasis is entirely on involvement of a community of illiterate, dalit women. Programs are recorded at the DDS studio in Pastapur, and then sent to 75 villages in which DDS works, where members of the DDS *sanghams* sit and listen.¹⁸ Since its inception in 1999, seven years later DDS is still waiting on the government for their application for a community radio license to pass.
- ❖ Namma Dhwani in Budikote, Karnataka – uses all three forms of participatory programming: AIR Channel broadcasting, cable connections in villagers’ homes and group listenings in the form of narrowcasting. The two elements that make Namma Dhwani a community radio initiative in the purest sense are the audio-cable connections in village homes and the narrowcasting factor.¹⁹

Because of the vast potential of the medium of community radio and its impact on development, NGOs, development organizations and educational institutions have also begun exploring their power to attempt to effectively use radio airwaves to make a difference. From these initiatives is where the community radio hybrid initiatives stem.

¹⁶ Sharma, Prashant. “Peripheral Voices, Central Concerns: Community Radio in India.” 21 August 2002. <<http://www.thehoot.org/story.asp?storyid=webhoothootL1K0821021&pn=1>>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ “Community Radio Initiatives in India.” UNDP *Community Radio Network* website. 2004. <<http://www.communityradionetwork.org/>>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Player #3: The NGO/Akashvani Enterprise

To build a community radio station, or even to fill out an application seeking a license from the government to acquire your own airwaves, is not an easy task. Often times, NGOs may not have the infrastructure, the expertise or the training to take on the endeavor of having so many hours per day of broadcast time that needs to be filled. And so was born the NGO/Akashvani Enterprise, a sort of hybrid of the community radio initiative in India. In this case, *AIR* branches lease weekly time slots to NGOs, in which it is up to the NGO organizers to create a program. Relying heavily on audience feedback and input from field workers, these programs are written, directed and produced by a team of professional-on-some-level communicators that are working in association with the NGO. In this scenario, the response to the program has generally been quite positive. And NGOs often maintain connections with their listenership through various means, including conducting field interviews for the purpose of broadcast, similarly conducting phone interviews, inviting listeners to the studio for recordings, maintaining written correspondence with consistent listeners, narrowcasting in listeners villages, and through the conduction of qualitative research. In this model, there is little involvement of listeners in the direct production or broadcast of the program, however the response to these programs has been very positive. The benefit of this approach is that there is a wider reach when using *AIR* airwaves to communicate with an audience. If an NGO is extremely dedicated, the community participation element will exist, the degree of which depends on the dedication of the NGO, however, in this model, there is less of the community ownership element.

The benefits of the NGO/Akashvani Enterprise are as follows:

- ❖ Cuts across the technologically/electrically connected barrier; radio can reach homes that are not connected to the outside world by phones or electricity.
- ❖ Cuts across the language barrier, as community radio endeavors generally operate on local dialects.
- ❖ Cuts across the illiteracy barrier (as information dissemination occurs in a way that does not require one to be know how to read or write).
- ❖ The range of broadcasting is greater (and can even cover entire states in some cases), making the reach wider, and thus the probability of messages reaching more listeners is greater. (Although this compromises the holistic approach of development in favor of the more individualized approach depending on the degree of dedication of the NGO.)
- ❖ The two-way participatory process allows for more sharing of information amongst the community (as opposed to disseminating of information), which not only allows a platform for feedback from community members, but sows the seeds for people's governance. (This benefit, again, depends on the dedication of the NGO.)
- ❖ The semi-professionalism factor (or rather, the access to professional broadcasters factor) often allows the messages being broadcasted to be acoustically pleasing to listeners, and often times more listeners will tune in because of the entertainment factor, thus effectively widening the program's reach.

- ❖ In the end, this approach to community radio can create enormous opportunities for growth and poverty reduction, depending on the degree of dedication of the NGO.

This community radio model is the model that SEWA decided to attempt most recently in April 2005. However, there are two other organizations that have garnered nationwide attention that have also been working with *AIR* to broadcast their programs on higher frequencies:

- ❖ Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghatan's *Kunjali Panchchi Kutchji* in Gujarat – KMVS in the Kutch district of Gujarat bought a 30-minute time slot on *AIR Bhuj* in 1999 and trained some of their NGO's organizers to be community reporters for a radio program called *Kunjali Panchchi Kutchji (The Crane of our Kutch)*. They have gained a wide amount of popularity in that area and have aroused the attention of the community through special investigative features on local issues, including water, literacy, alcoholism, healthcare, etc.²⁰
- ❖ AID-Bihar's *Chala Ho Gaon Mein* in Jharkhand – Even though AID-Bihar has bought a 30-minute time slot off the local *AIR* station in Daltonganj, their approach to the task of development in the district of Palamau in Jharkhand is quite different than KMVS's. For the *Chala Ho Gaon Mein* program, local volunteers were trained to conduct interviews for broadcast and villagers are encouraged to come and see how programs are being produced by their own neighbors who had come forward to volunteer.²¹

²⁰ "Community Radio Initiatives in India." UNDP *Community Radio Network* website. 2004. <<http://www.communityradionetwork.org/>>.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Player #4: Educational Institutions

In December of 2002, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting deregulated airwaves for the educational sector by offering to grant not-for-profit, non-commercial radio station licenses to educational institutions across the country. There is a lack of clarity in the terminology that was used in this effort, as the government termed these "community radio" stations, whereas the rules and regulations of the stations match what is known as "campus radio" across the world.²² However, even after these airwaves were opened up for educational institutions to grab a hold of, ministers in Delhi were still quite wary of the idea of allowing private, unregulated community radio within the borders of a country like India. According to freelance journalist Frederick Noronha, a *Washington Post* article that was printed soon after the February 2004 launch of first educational institution in India to obtain one such license (Anna University of Chennai), one such minister was quoted as saying: "We have to tread very cautiously when it comes to community radio. As of today we don't think that villagers are equipped to run radio stations. People are unprepared, and it could become a platform to air provocative, political content that doesn't serve any purpose except to divide people. It is fraught with danger."²³

Interestingly enough, it is not easy to obtain a broadcasting license under this legislation; the procedure for application is elaborate. Each submission is required to go through four departments (the Ministries of Home, External Affairs, Defense and Human Resource Development) for clearance, after which the Telecoms department allocates a frequency for station operation.²⁴ Moreover, once airwaves are finally granted to educational institutions, implementation coupled with expensiveness adds to the difficulties associated with sustainability.

On September 30 of 2005, the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA) received the go-ahead from the government for broadcasting programs as a licensed community radio station. Programs air on *MICA Vaani*, which transmits its programs at the frequency of 90.4 MHz to a five kilometer radius surrounding the campus.²⁵ The license was granted on the premise that *MICA Vaani* would use airwaves to broadcast programs that promoted rural development in the villages that surround the campus. Ravi Dixit, former head of the Broadcasting Management Program at *MICA*, said in an interview for the *Business Standard* that the new station has two primary objectives: first, to allow *MICA* students hands-on training as managers and producers in the realm of radio broadcasting, and second, "All this in keeping with the essence of a community

²² *Community Radio in India: Step by Step*. A VOICES and UNDP Publication, 2004.

<http://www.communityradionetwork.org/leftlinks/comm_radio_hdbk>.

²³ Noronha, Frederick. "Ten Years Too Late, Community Radio in India Yet to Meet its Date." 29 March 2004. <http://www.communityradionetwork.org/toplinks/archives/CR_to_meet_its_date>.

²⁴ *Community Radio in India: Step by Step*. A VOICES and UNDP Publication, 2004.

<http://www.communityradionetwork.org/leftlinks/comm_radio_hdbk>.

²⁵ Thakkar, Mitul. "Mudra School Radio Goes on Air." *Business Standard*. 27 September 2005.

<<http://www.business-standard.com/bsonline/storypage.php?autono=201357>>.

radio station that is in the community, about the community, for the community and by the community."²⁶

Mahima Sud, a first year post-graduate student at *MICA*, is a current volunteer for the new radio program there. Mahima has worked primarily on the programming and production aspects of the broadcasts. She says the entire group is about 60 volunteers large and everyone comes together to research, plan for, and implement programs that attempt to involve the rural communities surrounding the campus. But Mahima, a native of Bangalore, says that is quite difficult to do when only four volunteers of the 60 can speak in Gujarati. And of those four, only one is from Ahmedabad. The other three are from Bombay and have accents that are different from the dialects of the local area they are serving through their program. So when they go in the field to conduct interviews or try to galvanize villagers' interest in coming to the studio for recordings, the language issue becomes a problem. "Villagers understand about 80% of our Hindi – if the terms are simple enough – and then they speak back in Gujarati, which we sometimes don't even understand."²⁷ In addition to the language barrier, Mahima also sees issues regarding the sustainability of these government-licensed community radio stations at educational institutions. There are often days when they have no content to fill the three hours of airtime they have per day because when exam time rolls around, coupled with the fact that garnering villagers to play a more active role is difficult for many reasons, *MICA Vaani* is not high on anyone's list of priorities. She fears that the regulations on outside advertisements that would bring in foundational revenue for the program, as well as the lack of monitoring of *MICA Vaani's* activities by the licensors themselves, will affect the both the effectiveness and sustainability of 90.4 airwaves.²⁸

Along with the government's move to open up airwaves in 2002 to educational institutions interested in building rural communities, they gave *IGNOU* (the *Indira Gandhi National Open University*) the task of coordinating the licensing in 40 cities across India.²⁹ As of the writing of this report, only 21 had been granted. The full list of institutions that obtained broadcasting licenses through this legislation, as well as their challenges and successes, was not easily available for reference.

²⁶ Thakkar, Mitul. "Mudra School Radio Goes on Air." *Business Standard*. 27 September 2005. <<http://www.business-standard.com/bsonline/storypage.php?autono=201357>>.

²⁷ Sud, Mahima. 2nd Year Student at *MICA*, the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad. Personal Interview. 2 April 2006.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Menon, Jaya. "Building Communities on the Airwaves." (as a part of the *India Explained, India Empowered* series.) *The Indian Express*. 14 September 2005. A1.

3.1: SEWA's Attempt to Educate through Radio, General Background

The Self-Employed Women's Association is defined as a movement, rather than an organization. Founded in 1972 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, SEWA is a trade union of low-income women who earn their livelihoods in the informal economy. SEWA's primary objectives are to increase the self-reliance as well as the economic and social security of its members. To pursue these goals, SEWA organizes its membership into trade organizations and cooperatives, provides services of various kinds, advocates for change in the wider policy environment, and builds institutions to manage and sustain its activities. Over the years, SEWA has built a sisterhood of institutions including: SEWA Union, SEWA Bank, SEWA Cooperative Federation, SEWA District Association, SEWA Social Security, SEWA Housing, SEWA Marketing and SEWA Academy.

Within the sisterhood organizations of SEWA, the SEWA Academy has been a focal point for capacity building, communications and research efforts since 1991. Since then, SEWA has found that communication plays a very crucial role in the development and struggles of poor, women workers. Communication services prove to be the backbone of SEWA's efforts in grounding and establishing the voices of its members. More importantly, communication serves to help mainstream the issues and achievements of low-income women. From this, public opinion is formed in their favor, which in turn influences policy decisions.

Under SEWA's Communication umbrella within the SEWA Academy fall four categories: print, video, electronic and radio. SEWA currently publishes a fortnightly newsletter called *Ansooya*, as well as another called *Akash Ganga*, which is aimed at an audience of adolescent girls. They additionally have a very established Video SEWA unit, in which women put together documentary type videos for both informational and public policy use. And last under the Communication department, SEWA posts a bi-monthly newsletter on its website at www.sewa.org.

The SEWA Academy has come quite far in maintaining a sense of connection with their members. However, SEWA believes that they are leaving a potential audience out: the poor, illiterate, self-employed workers who do not own televisions. Considering the fact that the combination of low-cost and wide-reach makes radio an ideal medium of communication in developing countries, SEWA Academy's interest in the community radio movement in India materialized in 2005 with a rural development program aimed at the self-employed women throughout Gujarat. They found that while the print medium requires literacy skills, the electronic medium requires computer skills, and the video/television medium requires the possession of a television, which is quite expensive, the medium of radio was an untapped source of education and communication to even the remotest of villages in India.

Rudi no Radio

As a result of both SEWA's original thoughts, and then later, their observations, SEWA assembled an informal team of organizers with creative talents to develop pilot programs

in radio broadcasting. On April 16, 2005, SEWA broadcasted its first community radio program, entitled *Rudi no Radio* (Rudi's Radio), a weekly 15-minute program produced and broadcast by organizers of SEWA for a rural audience. In each episode, Rudiben is informally sitting and talking with local members of her village about things that affect them as women and as laborers. The program is symbolically named after the first member of SEWA who worked to spread SEWA's wings to rural areas. In that spirit, the program extends to the Ahmedabad-Vadodara area on the government regulated *All India Radio-Ahmedabad (AIR-Ahm.)* airwaves, and gauging from listener response, SEWA estimates that 500,000 listeners are tuning in weekly for the show. At any given time, there are up to four people working on the program, and they spice up the scripts with an element of entertainment that both serves to effectively educate and affect members of the rural community.

The way the program was set up at the beginning, *Rudi no Radio* had 30 slots on *AIR-Ahm.*'s airwaves, paid for by SEWA. Saturday, November 26, 2005 marked the 30th show. After the pilot program, based on listener response letters, SEWA decided to keep the show running in its same weekly slot. Each show has its own topic. For example, some of the topics covered so far include: nutrition, environment, the practice and benefits of gram haat (which is the utilization of local businesses and local products), and water harvesting methods, just to name a few. For *Rudi no Radio*'s October 8th show, entitled *Women's Power*, Jotikaben from the village of Bayad came to Ahmedabad to talk in the show about how women in her village took it upon themselves to fix broken hand pumps when the men refused to. Now that the men have seen it done, and much more, done by their very own wives, Jotikaben says that their husbands are more willing to listen to the women now than they were before. Additionally, as it is now, the radio department receives anywhere from 25-50 letters and phone calls weekly from avid listeners who tune in to their show and have something positive to say about it.

For many reasons, SEWA has decided to take a different approach in communicating with their rural audience. After the 30-episode pilot program, SEWA organizers were interested to find out how effective Rudi and her friends really were in reaching, but more importantly affecting, its listeners in Gujarat. SEWA wanted to find out the issues affecting their audience – be they health issues, social issues both in and outside of the home, cultural issues, sanitation issues, monetary issues – and find out the most effective ways to help them overcome these. Connecting in all ways possible to their audience was, and continues to be, SEWA's end goal.

Before we take a look at the results of some of that research, let us see a timeline of events that illustrates how difficult and time consuming it was for an organization as large as SEWA to work with the inefficient, bureaucratic framework of India to break into the community radio movement.

3.2: Timeline (from Idea to First Broadcast)

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1988 | <p><i>An idea was born.</i> Elaben Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, was on an assignment for the <i>National Commission for the Self Employed</i> that took her traveling through many villages in India. There, she got a firsthand look at some of the well-known advantages as well as lesser known disadvantages of radio for India's rural communities. Radio was indeed the most comprehensive, furthest reaching medium for communication at that time, but there were two other issues: most radio sets in villages at that time were not as cheap as they are today, and additionally, they were more commonly owned by panchayats ("village mayors") and not villagers. The idea of using radio as a means of communication for self-employed women was born, but the lack of direct benefit to self employed women did not warrant further pursuance.</p> |
| 1996 | <p>The talk of starting up a SEWA Radio unit to communicate to self-employed women started again, as by this time radio was the cheapest method of electronic communication in India. However, the lack of government structure at this time only prodded SEWA to begin building radio contacts, as opposed to ardently attempting to get involved in the radio movement.</p> |
| Sept., Oct. 1996 | <p>Two SEWA organizers attended the VOICES-sponsored workshop on radio broadcasting in India, of which the outcome was the Bangalore Declaration on Radio, which requested that the government grant licenses for NGOs to set up community radio stations. However, again, because the radio broadcasting situation in India was uncertain, SEWA chose not to get involved right away.</p> |
| Dec. 1996 | <p>After the Bangalore Declaration of Radio was released, SEWA attendees of the Bangalore workshop organized a presentation on the environment of community radio in India, and ideas for a SEWA community radio station started materializing. They even went as far as to give the station a name: <i>SEWA Vaani</i>.</p> |
| March, May 1997 | <p>Two big workshops on radio broadcasting policies in India were held again with the hopes of favorable legislation being passed, but as nothing was, SEWA stepped back and waited for government support to emerge.</p> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Jan. 26, 2001 | An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 on the Richter scale shook the state of Gujarat. Through SEWA's rehabilitation efforts, they again saw the importance of radio. Villagers in the regions of Kutch, Gujarat that sought safety during the rumbles of the quake told SEWA organizers that it was only because of radio that they were saved; when all other communication links went down, radio remained. They heard through the radio what areas were badly hit and what areas needed to retreat from their homes and seek safety. SEWA saw the immense benefits of radio in crises situations and began compiling the costs associated with building a radio station. However, SEWA got caught up in the rehabilitation work the earthquake left behind through its other branches. |
| 2002 | The state of Gujarat faced another crisis situation when riots broke out in Ahmedabad post the Godhra train incident. SEWA's energies got sucked into this and radio was again put on the back burner, as national broadcasting policies still had not changed. |
| 2003 | Through various other SEWA projects, coupled with the environment of technology's role in India's development, SEWA began catching the ICT bug. |
| 2004 | SEWA began actively pursuing their potential involvement in the community radio movement. A SEWA organizer began researching the environment of radio broadcasting in India by attending forums and meetings and visiting NGOs already involved in radio broadcasting. She presented her findings in the form of a "Possibilities for SEWA's Involvement in the Radio Movement" paper. For reasons concerning reach, SEWA chose the NGO/Akashvani Enterprise model, and began organizing a radio department at SEWA Academy, composed of organizers with a lot of passion for radio, but no official training in radio broadcasting. |
| Sept. 2005 | SEWA began having conversations with Indicorps, an organization that calls in qualified Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to their country of origin to spend a year at an Indian NGO. SEWA drafted a radio project description with Indicorps that detailed their need for an individual that had a experience in the field of communications. |
| April 16, 2005 | SEWA broadcasted its first community radio program, entitled "Rudi no Radio," from <i>AIR-Ahmedabad-Vadodara</i> airwaves. |
| Sept. 2006 | The Indicorps fellow (yours truly) joined SEWA, and has since been working to push SEWA's radio initiative forward through training organizers in the fundamentals of radio broadcasting and helping to measure the effectiveness of their program at the grassroots level. |

3.3: *Rudi no Radio's Impact Study*³⁰

Research Methodology

A. Finalization of Components to be Studied

After conducting the 30-episode pilot program, SEWA Radio was interested in finding out a few things about their listenership. First, are they reaching the audience that they had originally targeted in terms of societal status, education level and geographical area? Second, among their originally targeted rural and generally poorer areas, why are people not listening? Third, what is the impact of the program? Are the messages that are being sent being used?

The answer to the first question required conducting qualitative research in the form of a questionnaire that inquires about individual circumstances in terms of occupation, salary, geographic area, etc. The second question could be answered both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative, because it can be determined if occupation/salary keeps them from purchasing a radio. And qualitative, because it may be discovered that another factor is actually the issue, such as lack of knowledge of the program. The third question could be answered by holding a series of focus groups in areas where communities get together and listen. The results from this research method would be entirely qualitative because SEWA is aiming to find out how this information that they are broadcasting is being used. The detailed results of the focus group are located in the annex of this report.

B. Questionnaire Methodology on the Ground

The primary reason for this study is to gauge both the current and potential impact of the *Rudi no Radio* program, and then use the feedback from those surveyed to decide where SEWA Radio can go from here. The questionnaire for listeners will define the *Rudi no Radio* listenership demographic to see if SEWA is reaching their originally targeted audience, as well as find out what sort of impact, if any, the program is having on their lives. The questionnaire for non-listeners will to define why others within the originally targeted audience are not listening, and if it is something within SEWA Radio's scope to change.

Examples of key questions to be posed in the Listeners' Questionnaire include:

- Demographics questions (including occupation, salary, family size, living situation, owners of televisions, children's education, parents' education, etc.)
- Frequency of listening (every week? when he/she remembers?)
- What is it about the *Rudi no Radio* program that makes him/her listen? (name all characteristics of *Rudi no Radio* that might be appealing, and have listener rate them.)

³⁰ All information below concerning the *Rudi no Radio* Impact Study, 2006 is abbreviated for the sake of the reader. For a copy of the full research study, the SEWA Academy office in Ahmedabad, Gujarat can be contacted at sewaacdy@icenet.net or mail@sewa.org.

- Has listener applied any of the things learned from Rudi and her friends to their own life? (in terms of nutrition, saving money, starting a business, etc.)
- If listener were in charge of *Rudi no Radio* programming, what kinds of things would Rudi and her friends talk about on air? What kinds of things would they not talk about?

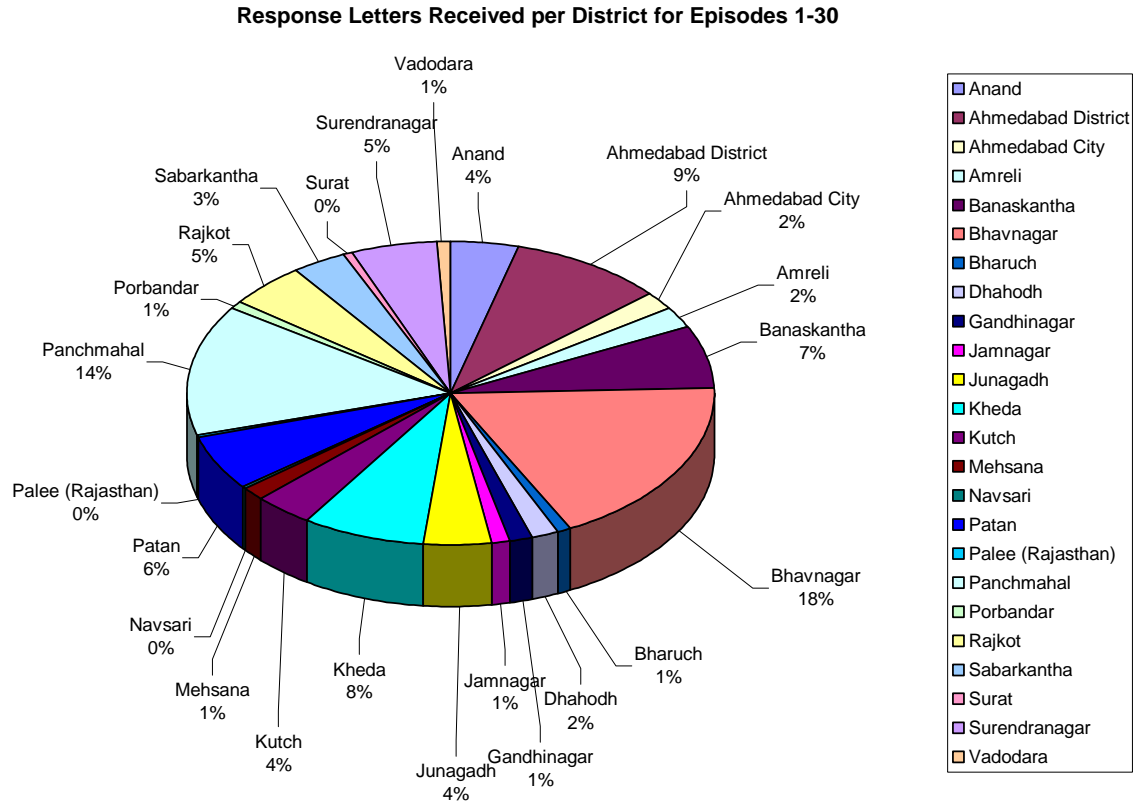
Examples of key questions to be posed in the Non-Listener's Questionnaire include:

- Demographics questions (including occupation, salary, family size, living situation, owners of televisions, children's education, parents' education, etc.)
- Is non-listener familiar with either SEWA or *Rudi no Radio*?
- Does non-listener listen to radio? Does he/she own a television?
- What types of programs does non-listener listen to on radio/watch on television?
- What would appeal to non-listener in a radio program? (rank in order of preference: songs, news, radio plays, advertisements, religious programming, historical stories, etc.)

After the questionnaire portion of the field research/data analysis phase is complete, the SEWA Radio team plans on incorporating all comments and suggestions into the *Rudi no Radio* project, with the potential to expand outside of radio to something like using street plays as a mode of communication and education for poor, self-employed women. The main, bottom-line goal of the radio program is to reach out to low-income, self-employed women and let them hear information that would be beneficial to their lives, information that they are not otherwise hearing from other sources.

C. Pilot Program Response

Throughout the duration of the pilot program, *Rudi no Radio* received 584 response letters from a total of 23 districts within the state of Gujarat and 1 district in the state of Rajasthan. From these 584 respondents, a total of 211 households were responding. (Some respondents write multiple times or from different names within one household in response to separate episodes.) Below is a pie graph showing from where *Rudi no Radio* has been receiving response letters for episodes 1-30.



From this response information, an original questionnaire methodology was conducted. Because there are often respondents that sign each postcard with a different family member's name, or even with a different district or village name, SEWA speculated that the actual number of respondents was less than the number written above. And so for research purposes, a 25% random sample of the listeners that responded was taken.

Research Limitations

As only about one-fourth of respondents of the original listenership of *Rudi no Radio's* Pilot Program were surveyed through questionnaires and focus groups, summarizing this information into one conclusive demographic is not going to be all-inclusive. Therefore, in this research, all conclusions will not actually be conclusions, but rather indications of both *Rudi no Radio's* impact and listenership demographic. Additionally, due to the vast area over which this research was conducted – throughout the entire state of Gujarat – some other research limitations presented themselves along the way. Additional limitations are detailed below.

Listener Questionnaire Limitations:

- ❖ **Transportation** to some of the particularly far off villages from where *Rudi no Radio* respondents were sending postcards was dependent on the state bus system and individual rickshaws timetables that made runs to and from further villages that were not accessible by bus. In some cases, there was no transportation going into particular areas, or buses stopped running early in the day not allowing for a same-day return trip for researchers, so researchers returned to the office and those areas were left un-surveyed.
- ❖ The **sample** for this project ended up being ¼ of the original *Rudi no Radio* Pilot Program listenership. This sample may not have been large enough to entirely and unerringly define the *Rudi no Radio* listener demographic, therefore all findings relevant to listeners presented in this report are indicative as opposed to conclusive.

Non-Listener Questionnaires Limitations:

- ❖ This research was conducted over the entire state of Gujarat, and in some cases, there was a slight **language** barrier between city Gujarati speakers and village Gujarati speakers. This occurred more often with non-listeners with little education that were only familiar with the Gujarati dialect of their own areas as opposed to the Ahmedabad Gujarati dialect.
- ❖ As the questionnaire would take up at least a half-an-hour of the non-listener's **time**, often times in the middle of it, they would get up and leave saying they didn't have time to fill out a long questionnaire that was of no benefit to them. This was one of the major limitations of the non-listener questionnaire in this research project.
- ❖ Non-listeners in this project were surveyed not for the purpose of defining the non-listener demographic, but rather to find out some of the ways that non-listeners were connected to information outside of their own communities; this **sample size** of non-listeners was not large enough to entirely and unerringly define the *Rudi no Radio* non-listener demographic, therefore all findings presented for non-listeners are in no way conclusive *or* indicative of this particular group.

Findings

Profile of Rudi no Radio Listeners

Personal Information

96% Gujarati Speakers

98% Hindu

20% below the age of 20 years old

40% are young adults (Ages 21 to 40)

32% are older adults (Ages 41 to 60)

8% are senior citizens (Age 60+)

52% are males

48% are females

64% married

30% unmarried

4% widowed

1% divorced

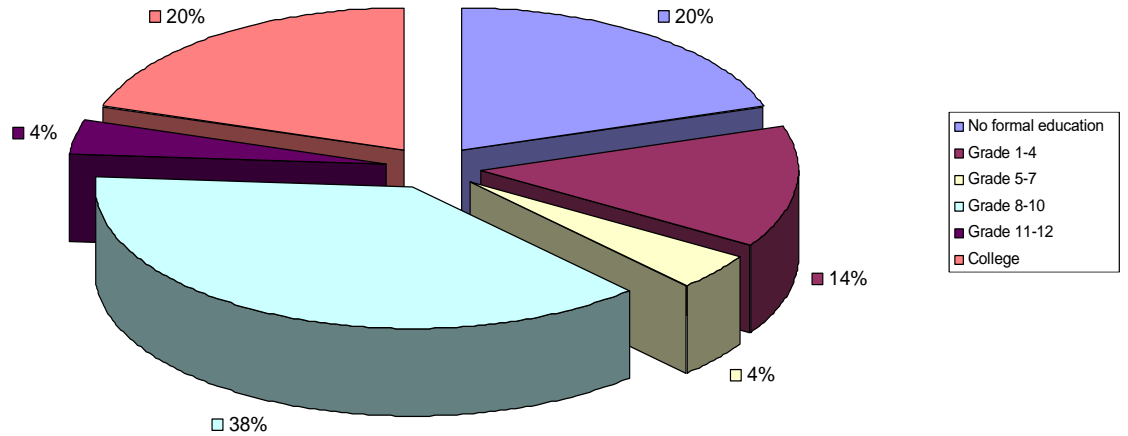
*Out of the female listeners, the 42% of listeners comprise of the older adults 41 to 60 age group.

*Out of the male listeners, 42% of listeners comprise of the young adults 21 to 40 age group.

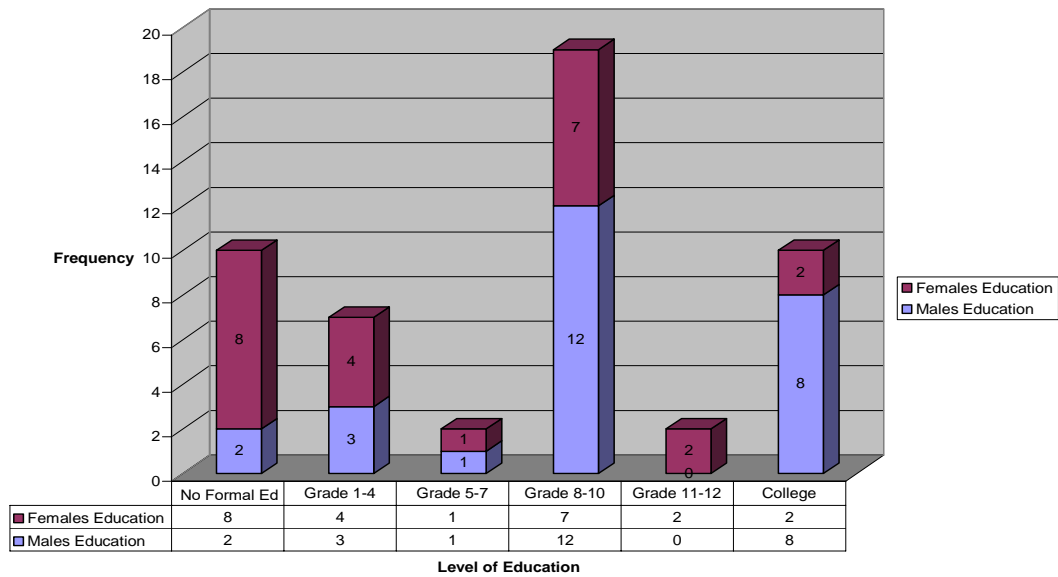


Radio listener Khaniben of Ahmedabad often cooks to the beat of her radio/tape player.

Education Level of Listeners



Education Levels Between Genders



*Women have a higher rate of illiteracy among the listeners, as well as a lower rate of achieving a college level of education.

*Currently, 20% of all listeners are still studying, while 18% are not and 62% are not of the proper age to study.

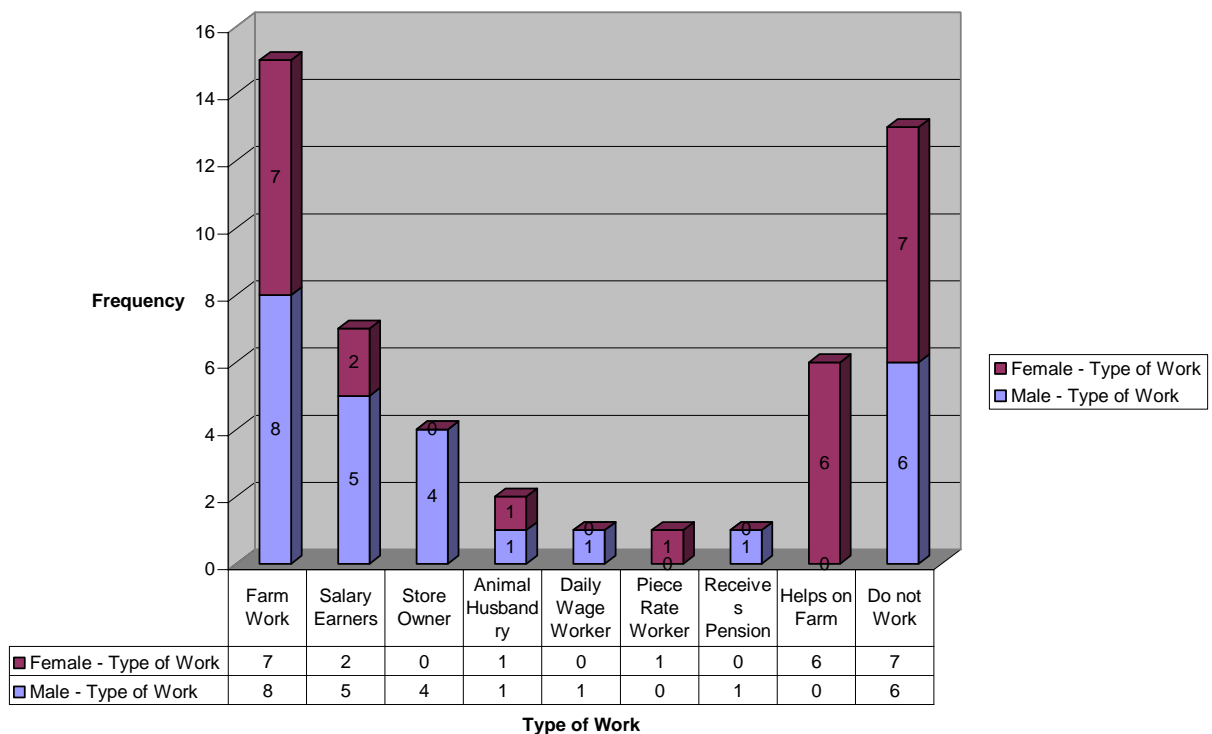
Listener's Livelihood

31 of 50 respondents are the main bread winners of their homes; the other 19 listeners either help with the family's primary business or spend their days maintaining the home and raising the children and do not work for an income.

Of the 31 respondents who work for an income

- ❖ 48% are involved in farm work
- ❖ 23% work for monthly salaries
- ❖ 13% own their own stores
- ❖ 7% work in animal husbandry (earn income from the milk their animals produce)
- ❖ 3% work for a daily income (diamond factory worker)
- ❖ 3% do piece rate work (sew clothes from home)
- ❖ 3% are retired (receive pension)

Male and Female Livelihoods



*Of the women that are involved in farm work, 6 of 7 commit to farm labor on an availability basis in their villages as opposed to work on their own farms.

Monthly Income:

- 29% earn Rs. 100-1000
- 26% earn Rs. 1001-2000
- 23% earn Rs. 2001-3000
- 6% earn Rs. 3001-4000
- 16% earn Rs. 4001+

Listeners' Radio Information

- ❖ 90% have a radio in their homes
- ❖ 4% listen to radio at their neighbor's
- ❖ 4% of listeners' radios are broken
- ❖ 2% sold their radios for income

- 62% have electricity in their homes
- 38% listen to program on battery powered radios

- 38% of listeners had recently acquired their radios within the past 5 years
- 18% of listeners have had radios in their homes for over 30 years

- 67% bought their radios themselves
- 22% received their radios as gifts
- 11% said their radios have been in their homes for ages



A local Ahmedabad store owner weighs peanuts and garbanzo beans to the evening rhythms of AkashVani.

The Listening Aspect

Radio Frequency Information.

- ❖ Most popular radio stations for listeners were:
 - Akash Vani Ahmedabad-Vadodara – 90% of respondents listen
 - Akash Vani Rajkot – 70% of respondents listen
 - Vividh Bharthi – 60% of respondents listen
- ❖ 76% of listeners listen to their radios everyday (66% listen on Saturday, 58% listen on Sunday)
- ❖ 46% of listeners listen to their radios at 12:00 noon throughout the week.
- ❖ 62% of listeners listen to their radios at 7:00 PM throughout the week.
- ❖ 96% of listeners listen to their radios at 8:00 PM (the current time of the *Rudi no Radio* program) throughout the week.

Committed vs. Fleeting.

Because *Rudi no Radio* is a program that is broadcast for 15 minutes per week, we thought it might be especially noteworthy to ask respondents when this program airs, on what station, and at what time. 94% responded correctly to the day question. 96% responded correctly to the station question. And 88% responded correctly to the time question. This showed us that some of the people that are listening and responding to our program might only be interested in the prizes that we give out every few episodes. This information indicates that the majority of *Rudi no Radio* listeners are committed, whereas a few might have listened a handful of times and not remembered much about the program post-listening.

Best Method of Spreading the Word.

- ❖ 82% of listeners heard about *Rudi no Radio* through an advertisement on the radio.
- ❖ 8% were switching dials on their radios and happened to catch it.



***Rudi no Radio* Information**

On the Night of the Program:

60% of respondents listen with 1-2 others (of these, 30% listen to the program alone)

44% of listeners that listen in respondents homes are 25 years old or younger (out of the 165 people that were listed as listeners but not respondents on our survey). This indicates that the younger crowd is indeed interested in the program, which helps us further define our audience beyond respondents.

- ❖ 70% of respondents listen inside their homes.
- ❖ 18% listen in a community plot that is outside of their home.
- ❖ 8% listen while at work (on the farm or at the store)

36% of respondents listen to *Rudi no Radio* calmly, when all other work has been done for the day. This number indicates a percentage of respondents that are extremely interested in the program and may sit down to take notes. During the research phase, researchers recalled that the majority of respondents that listen to the program when all of their other work for the day was done were more likely to either take notes on what they would hear or have a better memory of the information that they heard. 28% listen to *Rudi no Radio* while doing other work, and 28% listen to it while eating.

50% of listeners directly said they listen to *Rudi no Radio* to be connected to the outside world. Radio is their source of information about issues and developments relevant to them in their respective areas. 46% of listeners say they listen to *Rudi no Radio* for the entertainment aspect.

68% of respondents said they discussed what they hear on *Rudi no Radio* to others in their villages. And of these, 35% discuss only with family members that live both inside and outside of their homes. This shows that in a medium such as radio, it is easy for the information to stop inside of the listener's family and not make it past that boundary unless something is otherwise organized to surpass that. Only 10% say they are empowered enough to talk about the program to village elders, such as teachers, panchayats, village health officials, etc.

***Rudi no Radio* Dialect/Timing Preferences.**

The *Rudi no Radio* program is broadcasted in the rural dialect of Gujarati, with SEWA organizers trying to emulate the dialects from different parts of Gujarat. In response to this effort, 58% of listeners found *Rudi no Radio*'s language to be good, while 36% found it to be more than good. Only 2% of listeners (1 listener, in this particular sample) said that she didn't understand the little bit of Hindi that was used in the program.

The current time of broadcast is a good time for 94% of listeners. The other 6% have issues with being free on Saturday evenings at 8:00, and see the morning as a better time for broadcast.

74% of respondents were not happy with the 15 minutes of programming because they didn't think it was enough time for substantial messages to be delivered through the airwaves. Of those, 84% believe that the program should be lengthened to 30 minutes.

Currently, *Rudi no Radio* uses a variety of formats for its programming. Every episode is set up in a conversational format, as 5-6 women are sitting together discussing issues relevant to them and their village members. Often times, in between that conversational format, actors act out particular scenes for the purpose of sending messages to the audience. *Rudi no Radio* also taps into the entertainment pull for many listeners by writing songs relevant to episode themes. In reference to this, 52% of listeners think a conversational format for *Rudi no Radio* would be most effective in getting messages across. Another 40% think a drama format is the way to go, while 26% are most attracted to folk songs.

Other Media.

- ❖ 26% of listeners own televisions as well as radios, of which about half watch less than an hour everyday in the early evenings for entertainment and informative purposes.
- ❖ 30% of radio owners also own tape recorders, which they primarily listen to in the mornings for less than an hour a day for primarily entertainment purposes.
- ❖ Only 6% of respondents own CD players in their homes.
- ❖ 4% own a DVD/VCR player.
- ❖ More information on television's connection to radio listenership for the Rudi no Radio program is located in the Section titled "Radio's Connection to Television" on page 39.

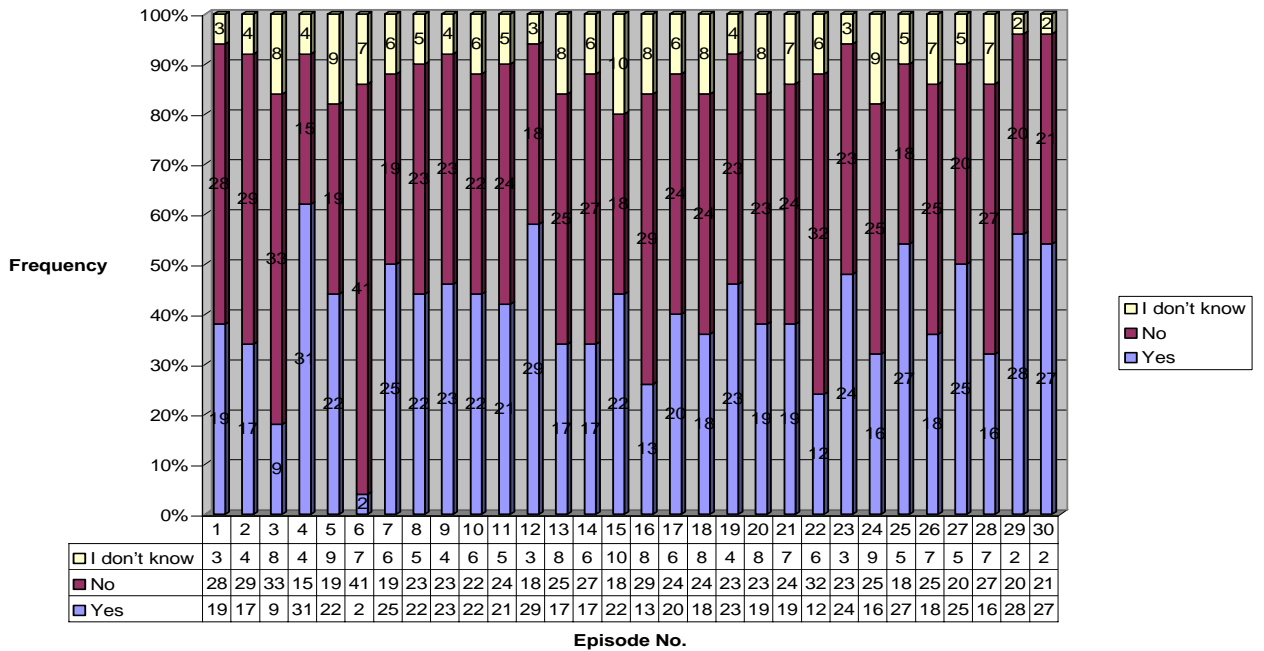
SEWA Members?

12% of those listeners that were surveyed were joined with SEWA through one of its rural level activities (10% of whom had SEWA insurance).

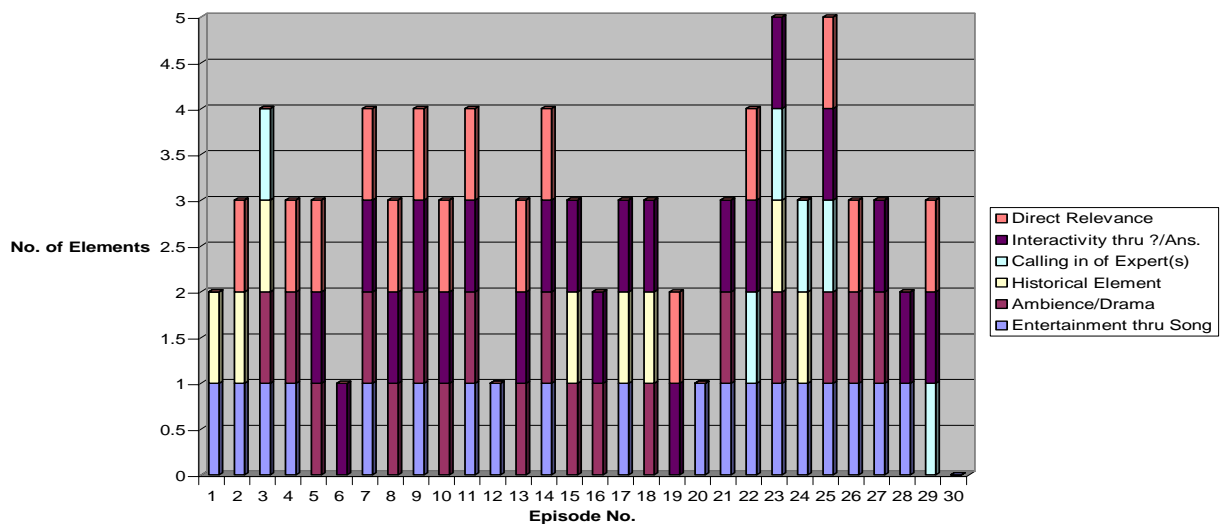
Perceived Impact for Episodes 1-30

Below is a chart detailing respondents' memories on individual episodes that were a part of the 30-episode pilot program of *Rudi no Radio*. Below that is another chart detailing the elements of each episode. Summary/Indicative results written below both charts.

Listenership by the Episode



Elements of Episodes 1-30



Definition of each Element:

- ❖ Direct Relevance: in relation to the general topic of an episode; something that would provide listeners with a particular tool or with information that can be applied to their own lives for the purposes of development
- ❖ Interactivity through Quest./Ans.: *Rudi no Radio* tries to get their audience to interact with them by asking a question at the end of some episodes, to which if the listener sends in a correct response, they have a chance at winning a prize.
- ❖ Calling in of Expert(s): the use of outside experts that are introduced in episodes as knowledgeable characters that impart information concerning a particular topic/issue
- ❖ Historical Element: almost the opposite of direct relevance; in most cases both elements do not appear together (with the exception of Episode No. 2, Gandhiji's Swadeshi Movement episode, because the idea of using/supporting products from one's own nation for economic purposes is still relevant today). If the topic/issue concerns historical information, it would fall under this category.
- ❖ Ambience/Drama: where *Rudi no Radio* characters would take on different roles or act out made-up scenarios in an attempt to better illustrate information as opposed to directly talking about it
- ❖ Entertainment thru Song: episodes that contain songs in them, from folk songs to festival related songs to songs written by SEWA organizers

Analysis:

After the first few episodes (as data indicates that only 18-28% of respondents tuned in early enough to the program to hear those episodes), the graph above indicates that direct relevance is one of the major factors indicative of respondents' memory of episodes. When the topic presented in the episode is directly related to the respondent, they seem to recall the content better. Out of the entire 30-episode *Rudi no Radio* Pilot Program, 15 episodes contained the direct relevance element. One of these episodes was not well remembered in comparison to the rest because it was broadcast as the second episode, and many listeners did not begin tuning in until after the fourth.

The episodes that were most recalled had some of the highest levels of recollection from respondents, ranging from the lowest at 36% to the highest at 62%. There were 11 episodes in this category, and all episodes contained the direct relevance element. The topics of these episodes are listed below.

- ❖ *Episode 4: Proper Water Storage Practices*
- ❖ *Episode 5: Local Treatments for Summer Diseases*
- ❖ *Episode 7: Reducing Unnecessary Expenses at Weddings*
- ❖ *Episode 8: Environmental Issues: The Fight Against Pollution*
- ❖ *Episode 9: SEWA Bank and the Importance of Financial Security*
- ❖ *Episode 10: Bhim Agyaras: the Farmer's Festival*
- ❖ *Episode 11: How to Maintain a Nursery Business*
- ❖ *Episode 19: Nutritious Recipes with Simple Ingredients*
- ❖ *Episode 25: SEWA Insurance I: Health Insurance*
- ❖ *Episode 26: SEWA Insurance II: House/Property Insurance*

❖ *Episode 29: The Use of Solar Energy and its Benefits*

Another three episodes that had the element of direct relevance to listeners' lives were not so well remembered for different external reasons explained in the full form of the *Rudi no Radio* Impact Study, 2006.³¹

The least recalled episode was Episode 6, in which only 4% of respondents remembered hearing it. Titled "ICT as a Development Tool," this was a topic that people at the grassroots level may hold a lesser understanding of because the exposure to ICT in village areas is quite low. This further indicates the importance of the direct relevance element in relation to respondents' memory of information presented in the *Rudi no Radio* program.

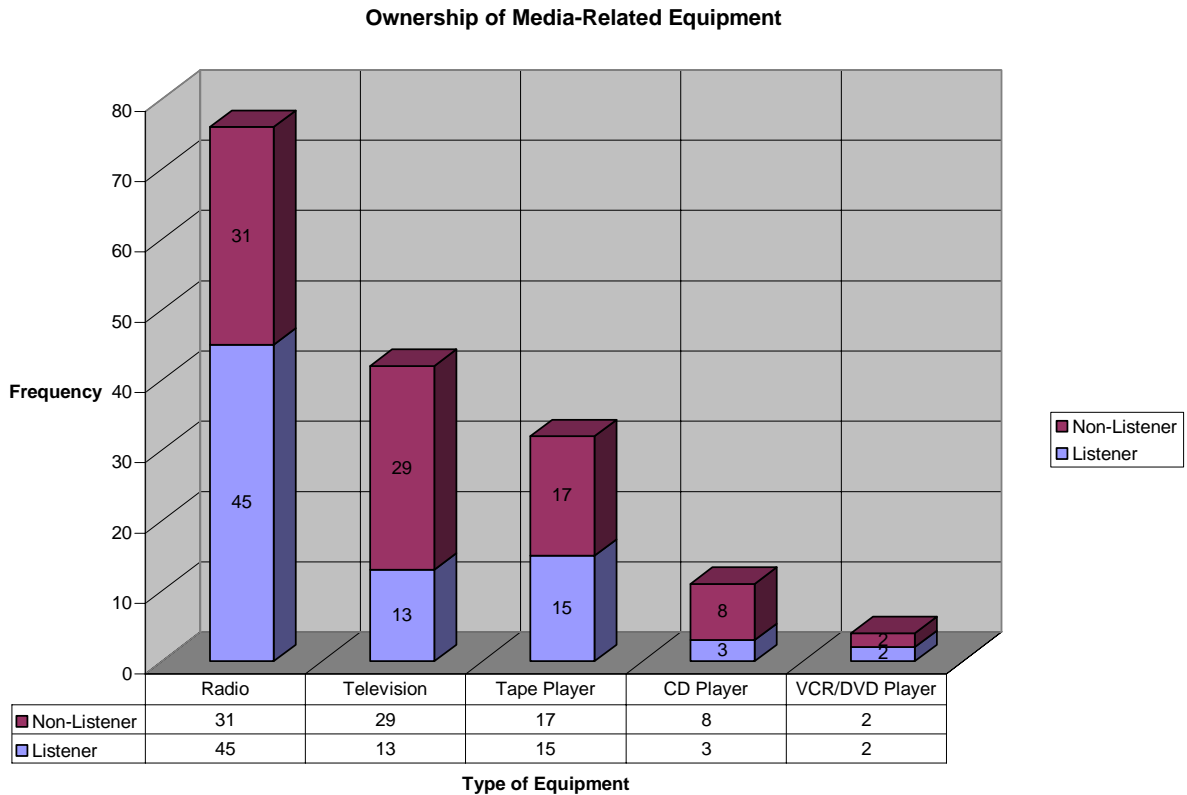
The entertainment element, which for the purposes of this research is being defined as whether or not there was a song in an episode, is also an important factor in recollection. However, because the entertainment element is so interspersed throughout all 30 episodes, it is difficult to pull clear data that points to indications of entertainment being the primary pull for recollection. Yet, in the field, when researchers were conducting the non-listeners' questionnaires, they found that when after the questionnaire was completed, and non-listeners were interested in hearing the *Rudi no Radio* program, most non-listeners that heard it would be able to more clearly articulate the message of the program if there was a message-oriented song (generally written by SEWA) in the episode content. For example, in the home/property insurance episode (Episode 26), there was a song in the middle of the episode detailing the importance of getting home insurance because of risks associated with not having it. And afterwards when the researchers asked what the non-listeners got out of the program, they would recite back the catchy lyrics of the song as the message.

Last, the Response Letter Programs, in which *Rudi no Radio* characters would share some of the well-written thoughts/ideas/feelings on the program from respondents that have been conversing through postcards, had a higher rate of recollection among respondents. On average, 50% of respondents recalled these episodes, and in the field, many often expressed that they would anticipate hearing their names on the response letters program and feel a great sense of pride that their postcard had made the cut when they did hear it. This indicates that being connected with the audience is something that listeners are seeking. Often times in the research, respondents would be ecstatic that representatives (in our case, researchers) of the *Rudi no Radio* program had come to visit them at their home, and were being called upon to give valuable input to make the program better. Sharing this connection with listeners is extremely important in order for more learning to occur through the use of radio as a communication tool. The level of memory of response letter episodes indicates that the communication cannot end with just the program; communication is more effective if it oversteps those boundaries.

³¹ For a copy of the full research study, the SEWA Academy office in Ahmedabad, Gujarat can be contacted at sewaacdy@icenet.net or mail@sewa.org.

Radio’s Connection to Television

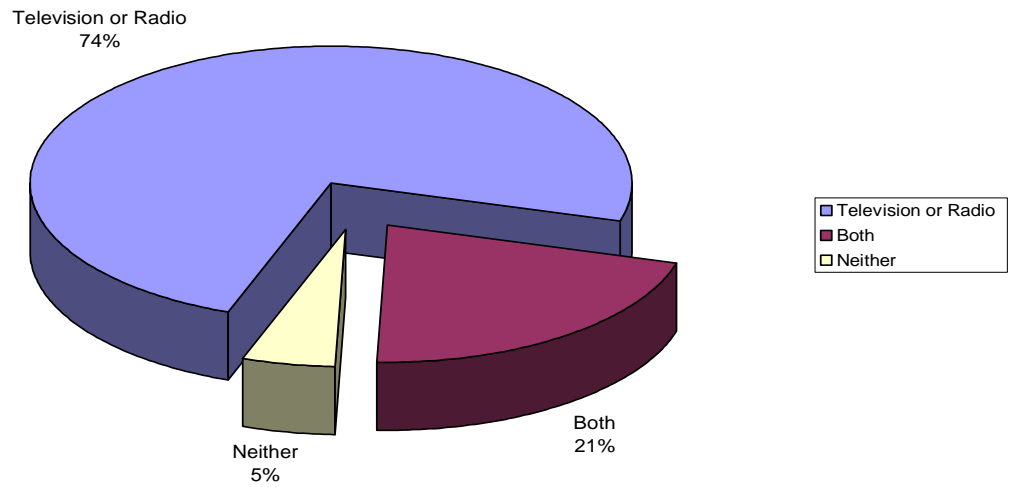
In this study, radio and television ownership varied quite vastly across the *Rudi no Radio* listener and non-listener categories. Below is a chart that indicates the ownership of media-related equipment (radio, television, tape recorder, CD player, DVD/VCR player) across the two primary groups: listeners and non-listeners. 50 listeners and 50 non-listeners were surveyed for this report.



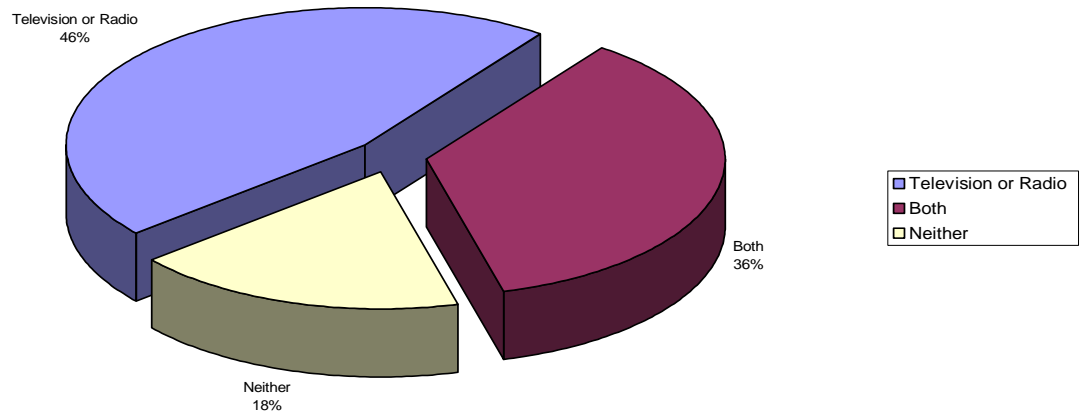
This chart indicates that 26% of *Rudi no Radio* listeners are likely to own a television, whereas 58% of non-listeners of the *Rudi no Radio* program are likely to own a television. The ownership of tape players was roughly the same for both groups, although non-listeners of the *Rudi no Radio* program were more likely to own a CD player.

The charts below illustrate the degree of difference in radio and television ownership across both groups.

Listener Television/Radio Ownership

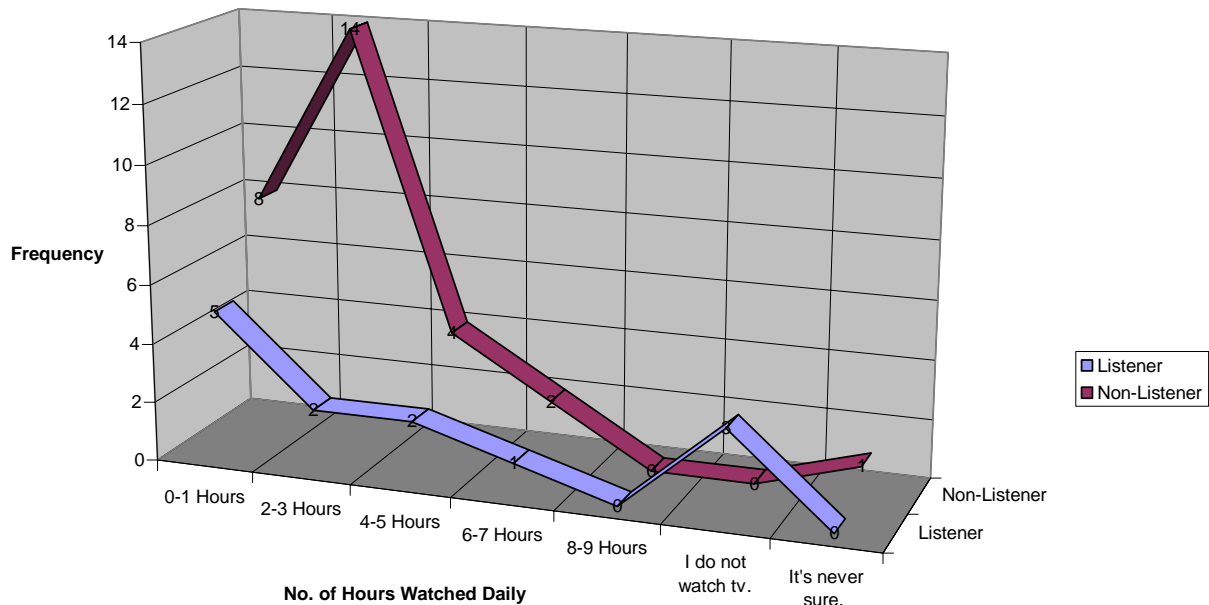


Non-Listener Television/Radio Ownership



Non-listener television owners are indicated to have had more of an interest in television as opposed to radio, whereas listener television owners are indicated to have had more of an interest in their radios. 38% of *Rudi no Radio* listener television owners reported that they enjoyed watching serials and 23% said they enjoyed watching news. Of the non-listener batch, 59% had a greater interest in serials, whereas 21% were interested in news. Of *Rudi no Radio* listeners, only 38% were interested in television for its entertainment aspect, whereas among non-listeners of *Rudi no Radio*, 72% were interested.

Listener & Non-Listener Television Habits



| | 0-1 Hours | 2-3 Hours | 4-5 Hours | 6-7 Hours | 8-9 Hours | I do not watch tv. | It's never sure. |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| Listener | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Non-Listener | 8 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Out of those surveyed as non-listeners of the *Rudi no Radio* program, 56% said they did not listen because they didn't know about the program, while 38% said it was because they did not own a radio. This data, along with the radio-television data above, indicates that one of the most likely reasons that those surveyed as non-listeners of the *Rudi no Radio* program do not listen to radio was because they have less of an interest to do so due to external factors such as the ownership of a television or the lack of ownership of a radio. This reasoning also applies to the low rate of listenership within the city of Ahmedabad – ownership of a television and general lack of interest in the low-income areas SEWA was originally targeting to reach. However, even though there may be less interest in radio as a general means of communication among those surveyed as non-listeners, that does not mean that there is no potential for interest. When word spreads and communities begin benefiting from the information they hear on the radio, interest can develop. Just because this data indicates that there was less of an interest in radio in general among the non-listener crowd does not mean there is no potential for that interest to develop.

Impact Study Relevance

The primary purpose of this impact study was to identify listeners and their circumstances, begin to understand the effect, and consequently potential, of the program and identify best practices for the Radio Team to effectively move forward. Therefore, the information presented below is primarily to provide recommendations for the radio team to move forward. However, I believe some of these findings provide insight into what rural audiences are hearing and what more they are asking to hear, as it may relate to other organizations or individuals looking to break into the community radio movement in India. Abbreviated information on the relevance of this program, and recommendations to move forward, are disclosed below.

I. Particulars- Time, Day

Thursday Evenings at 8:00 ...

94% of respondents said that 8:00 PM on Thursday evenings was a good time for the *Rudi no Radio* program to air because they are all at home and free to listen to radio at that time. Of the non-listeners, 80% said that 8:00 PM on Thursday evenings is a good time, whereas the other 20% said it was not. Of the 20% for whom it is not a good time, 10% said because mornings was better for them (8:00 AM), 4% said they don't have any free time during the day at all, 2% said their radio doesn't pick up the station very well, and the last 2% said they were not interested in listening to a radio program at all.

15 Minutes of Programming ...

Of the listeners, 26% of respondents said that 15 minutes of programming for *Rudi no Radio* was fine, whereas the other 74% said that it was not. Of those, 62% said the program should instead be 30 minutes because more information can be divulged in that time frame and they would remember better if the issues *Rudi no Radio* presents were talked about more in length. Among the interested non-listeners, 32% say the program should be 15 minutes and 46% say the program should be 30 minutes.

II. Reasons for Listening

50% of listeners of *Rudi no Radio* report that they listen to the program because it is an outlet for them to gain information on the world outside of their villages. 46% say they listen because it is entertaining. (Of those surveyed that do not listen to the *Rudi no Radio* program but do own a radio in their homes, 71% listen to their radios for the entertainment purposes.) Other listeners of *Rudi no Radio* cite more specific reasons for listening, as detailed in the abbreviated chart below. (Some information was cut out for the sake of the reader.) The response is taken from 50 of the programs respondents, and individual respondents often gave more than one answer.

| Reasons | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| To gain more information on the outside world. | 25 |
| To be entertained. | 23 |
| To gain more information on the environment. | 13 |
| To gain more information on animal husbandry. | 10 |
| To gain more information on health. | 10 |
| To gain more information on women. | 8 |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| It is relevant to my life (in reference to my age). | 7 |
| To learn more about AIDS. | 6 |
| To be religious (listen to gurus' preachings). | 5 |
| To get more information on salt workers. | 5 |
| To get more information on farms. | 5 |
| Because I get responses written back to me. | 4 |
| To gain information on general knowledge on different subjects. | 4 |
| To gain information on village development. | 4 |
| (Total # of responses shown/Total # of responses in report) | (129/148) |

III. Issues to be Discussed

Rudi no Radio Listeners

Of the 50 *Rudi no Radio* listeners surveyed, 30% are interested in hearing more about employment opportunities from the program, while 22% are interested in hearing more about farm information, 18% about relevant issues that concern women and 18% about issues related to health. Below is an abbreviated table of all of the issues about which listeners were asking to hear more information.

| Type of Information | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| Employment information (through side jobs as well, like stitching; give trainings on skill sets) | 15 |
| Farm information (relevant to farmers, including where to sell products, best cropping practices, etc.) | 11 |
| Information concerning the awakening/empowerment of women; relevant issues that concern women | 9 |
| Health (diseases, ayurvedic medicines, old remedies) | 9 |
| Children's Issues (education, development, growth) | 8 |
| Environment information | 6 |
| How to keep village/home clean | 5 |
| For uneducated women, give education information | 5 |
| Information concerning dowry; how to lessen costs during wedding by doing a samu lagan (even when it is not the norm in the village; convincing in-laws it's a better system than dowry) | 4 |
| SEWA Bank information (how to save money) | 4 |
| Information concerning youth (young men and women) – things they should be looking to for their futures (i.e. things they may not know about like ICT and its importance) | 4 |
| Animal husbandry information | 4 |
| Old outdated traditions (that are no longer important, but still practiced; blind faith issues) | 4 |
| Information concerning castes and their inequalities (and how to lessen that gap) | 3 |
| How to keep bodies clean (for health reasons) | 3 |
| How to save water | 3 |
| (Total # of responses shown/Total # of responses in report) | (97/125) |

Rudi no Radio Non-Listeners

Of the 50 non-listeners surveyed, 40% were interested in hearing songs in the form of bhajans (Indian religious songs), duha (a type of Gujarati lyric), garba (a type of Gujarati dance music) and folk songs. 12% of non-listeners are interested in hearing information concerning the caste system and issues that directly affect their own communities. The general interest in radio as a tool for education was less among those non-listeners surveyed, therefore the total number of responses is reflected in that lack of interest. Below is an abbreviated table of all of the issues that non-listeners were asking to hear more information about.

| Type of Information | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| Songs, Bhajans, Duha, Garba, Folk songs | 20 |
| Information on different castes/communities and their latest news | 6 |
| Plays | 5 |
| Information on farms | 4 |
| How to teach children; raising children | 4 |
| Cooking Healthy Foods | 4 |
| Women's issues | 4 |
| (Total # of responses shown/Total # of responses in report) | (47/65) |

Analysis: Because of the lack of interest factor that separates listeners from non-listeners, the primary piece of significant information that can be pulled from this section is the fact that entertainment is the underlying factor in reaching rural communities. Presentation in a way that attracts their attention seems to be the foundation for education that can occur among these communities through the use of a medium like radio.

IV. Best Medium of Communication

Of the listener group, 98% of those surveyed believe that the best mode of communication for them to receive information on the messages they are asking to hear is through radio, while 2% believe the information would be better received through television. Of those that believe radio is the best means of communication, 52% believe that its current format of a conversational program is fine, whereas 40% are more interested in the drama aspect of relaying information. Another 26% of respondents are interested in hearing information through folk songs so that they would better understand and retain the messages.

Of the non-listener group, 62% of those surveyed believe that one of the best modes of communication for them to receive information on the messages they are asking to hear is through radio, while 52% believe television is one of the best modes. (Some of those surveyed listed both methods as valuable means of communication.) 28% of non-listeners are interested in more direct communication through the production of street plays in their own villages and 24% of non-listeners are interested in receiving information through discussions in their villages in a formal, organized setting.

V. Primary Suggestion: Increase in Interaction

From the unrecorded feedback that many of the researchers were receiving when they visited *Rudi no Radio* respondents in the field, they found that the primary thing listeners seemed to be itching for was a greater connection to their audience. And as researchers recorded answers to the issues respondents are interested in hearing more information about through Rudi and her friends, many of them in post-field meetings communicated that radio by itself is not enough of a pull to move listeners to action. They need to be more involved and more connected to *Rudi no Radio*. And although only a few people asked to be more connected to Rudi and her friends through different methods such as gatherings and field visits, researchers said that throughout the field research phase, it was implicitly understood that in order for the learning aspect to increase at the grassroots level through this program, the connection aspect has to increase along with it.

VI. More Concrete Suggestions

When in Jamnagar, a district of Gujarat that is about 400 kilometers away from Ahmedabad, we were asking a non-listener of the *Rudi no Radio* program about some of the problems and issues that were prevalent in her village and what methods she thought would be effective in helping ease those problems. Not sure where to start in answering our question, she inquired further and we gave her the example of education, and how in another village we had visited that week in Kheda, many women were saying that education was an issue for them because there was less of an emphasis on the importance of women being educated there. A woman that was sitting across the room was perplexed with our example. She said to us, “Women educated up through college walk around here with heavy water pails on their heads and spend their days doing house work. What kind of message is that to us for wanting to get an education?”

Gujarat is a large state, and it is going to be difficult to reach women that are over 400 kilometers away from AIR's main broadcasting station in Ahmedabad. In the spirit of working to make the program and its listeners more connected, SEWA is ready to begin working with the listeners that are closest to the city of Ahmedabad. This would include doing things such as narrowcasting in different places where a rapport has been established between *Rudi no Radio* organizers and listeners, conducting field visits in which listeners are given a voice and a chance to talk about the issues that affect them, and most importantly, using SEWA's established presence in different districts for listeners to use as their headquarters for bringing issues to the table that affect them, their families and their communities. Showing the audience that they have a large degree of ownership over what they hear on their radio sets at home is an immensely powerful tool for empowerment.

4.1: SEWA vs. AIR: A Comparison of Developmental Programming

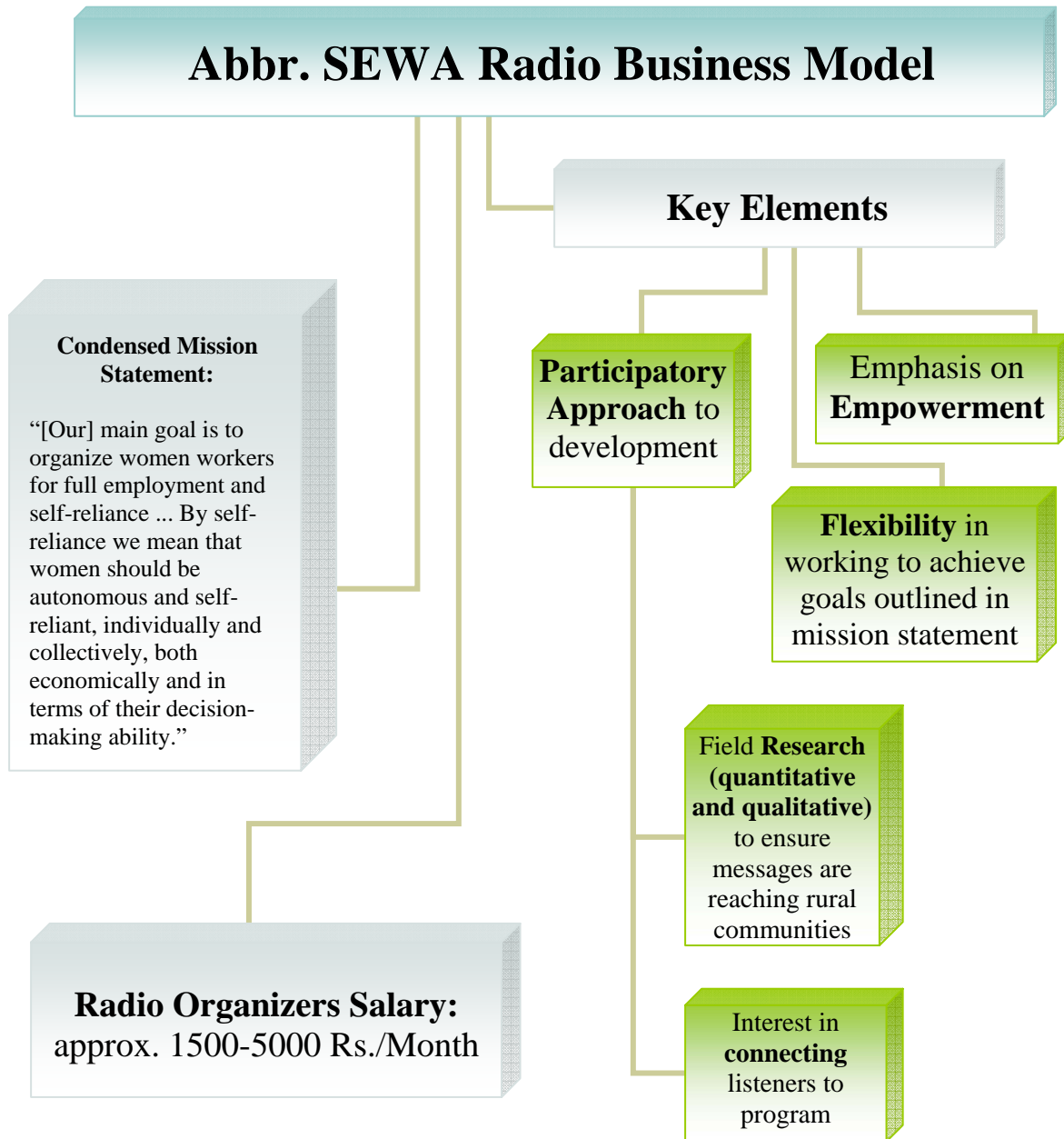
Although their foundational reasons for rural programming seem to be similar, there are a few key disconnects between the government-regulated AkashVani's method of broadcasting and NGOs working to bring information and education to eager, rural listeners. On that note, I thought it might be worth looking into the similarities and differences in the business models of these two players involved in the movement to bring radio to rural communities.

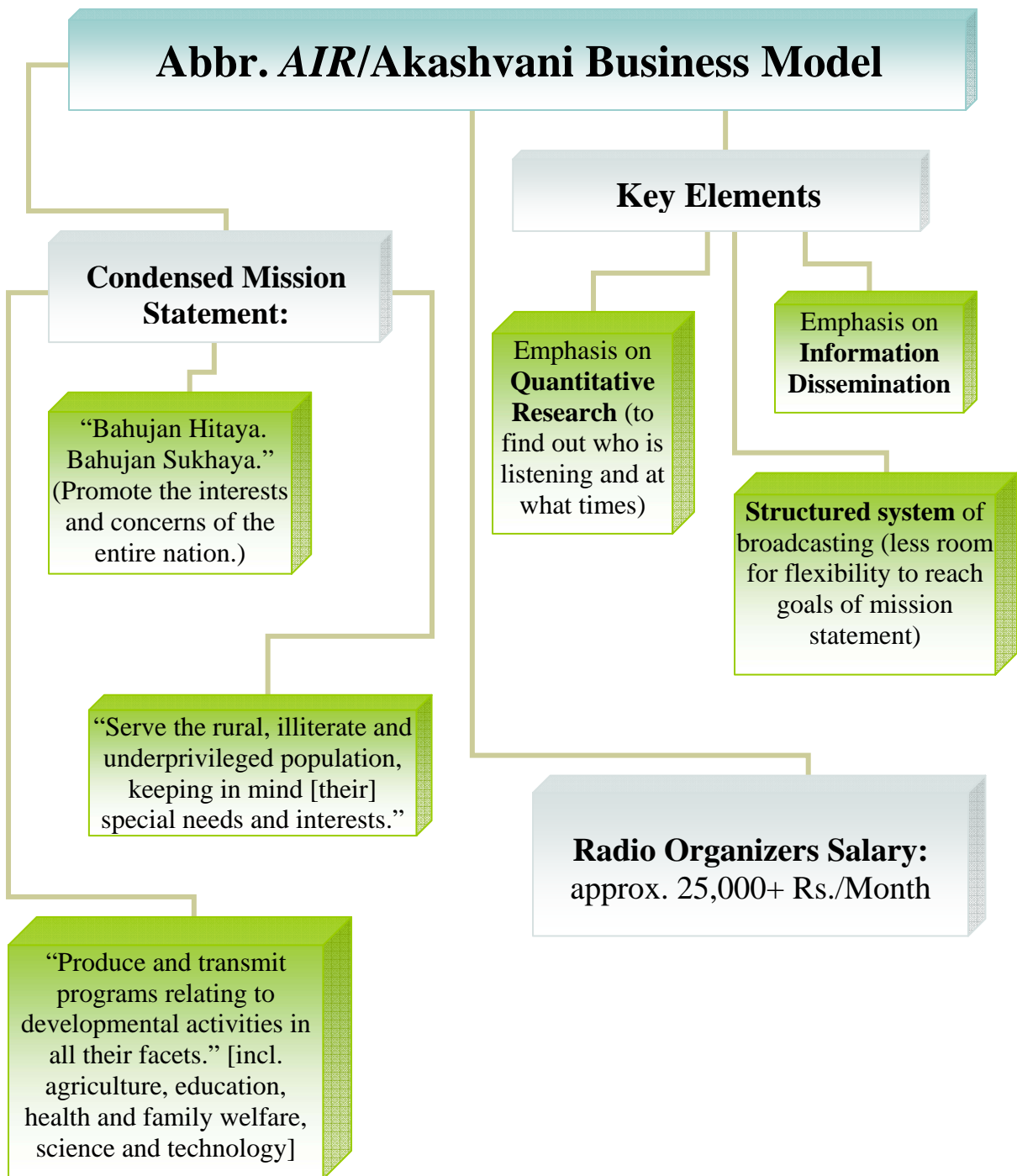
(Note: The abbreviated models illustrated in the flow charts on the next few pages are only in reference to rural programming.)



SEWA Organizer Shantaben Koshti reciting lines at a weekly Rudi no Radio recording.

4.3: Business Models Comparison





5.1: Recommendations: Where To From Here?

“Technology will be the leveling force in this country. It will bring about a social revolution that will serve to push India forward.”³²

In light of all successful radio experiments to-date, I believe the power of participatory radio for rural communities of India is undisputed. Looking forward, I'd like to reflect on some of the challenges we have seen thus far in the scope of radio for rural development.

First, there exists a discrepancy with mission statements and their follow through. *AIR* seems to have this challenge when it comes to rural programming; under *AIR*'s abbreviated business model above, only 1 of the 3 components of *AIR*'s mission statement is actively being met. The first two components have to-date not been addressed. *“Bahujan Hitaya. Bahujan Sukhaya.”* In order for *AIR* to make strides in meeting this aspect of their mission statement, to promote the interests and concerns of the nation, they would need to re-evaluate the demographic they serve and its congruence with the majority rural demographic of India. A second challenge from a government perspective is *AIR*'s pledge to “serve the rural, illiterate and underprivileged population, keeping in mind [their] special needs and interests.” With a business model that doesn't support a qualitative method of research to ensure that their messages are indeed reaching the target population with "special needs and interests," the sincerity and effectiveness of their attempts at doing so are ambiguous at best. With its current structure, *AIR* appears unable to meet the diverse expectations of the majority of society when there is no structure in place for gauging the efficacy of their messages.

Second, in solely adopting the approach of using community radio in its purest sense (as in the small scale, 5-20 kilometer radius model), we are ignoring the fact that there exist hundreds of thousands of additional kilometers of rural areas that will remain unserved. This model of community radio is an effective one in practice, but due to the lack of scalability, is not sufficient alone. In order to move closer to the Millennium Development Goals that are to be reached by 2015, India needs efforts that operate at a larger-scale. Coincidentally, radio is one medium that operates on a large scale in a country like India, which is not connected by language, culture or any other electronic media. Organizations, including the government, with strong interests in rural development have an opportunity to work towards making institutions work *for* them.

Third challenge: much of government funding in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting seems to be top-heavy, with the majority of funding short-sidedly going towards paying the salaries of *AIR*'s employees, as opposed to partnership programming with local NGOs, field research to gauge regional needs, on site programming, etc. Good

³² Bhatt, Siddharth. Retired professor and Indian foreign policy writer. *As guest speaker at Indicorps Workshop 2.* Sughad, Gujarat. 19 January 2006.

salaries can be justified if the output is fruitful. In this instance, that does not appear to be the case. NGOs, like *SEWA*, are actively working to ensure that messages of necessity and relevance are reaching rural communities on salaries that are 1/5 that of government employees.

Fourth, under the current systems in place, the majority of local communities are not actively involved in implementing or actualizing their learnings from radio, which comes across as both a gap and a considerable opportunity. Under the *AIR* model, no effective method of cross communication, thus no substantial two-way connection or cooperation, exists between the producers and the change agents in rural areas. Based on this alone, it would not be a stretch to say that no measurable progress is taking place.

A fifth challenge: the national government proves that they are not thinking in the long-term when eagerly granting licenses to educational institutions that have a notably lower capacity for educating and engaging communities through radio. NGOs that are passionate about rural development, embedded in many of the communities they serve, and see the power and potential of radio in rural communities, are very interested in receiving these licenses from the government so that they can better serve their communities, but thus far haven't been granted any. The government's prioritization of short-term solutions over long-term solutions is problematic.

Number six: the lack of transparency that exists in the NGO/AkashVani Enterprise is murky. Even though both share similar mission statements in reference to rural development, they are unwilling to work together in a sustainable manner to ensure that messages of importance are reaching desired audiences. Instead, it becomes a game of the strength of personal networks connected to *AIR* executives that might be able to help lower or waive broadcasting fees for radio programs. This lack of transparency, and underlying lack of cooperation, seems to hinder forward progress. If *AIR* had a system in place that required them to work with local expert NGOs in the development of radio programs, such as allow NGOs to use their production studios or have members of their existing staff serve as script editors to ensure that non-self-promotional messages are reaching rural audiences, efforts and results would be much improved.

The primary issue involving the 'radio for rural development' movement in India, which underlies all six issues stated above, is one of cooperation. Stakeholders seem quick to blame other institutions for not providing an all-around effective model of radio for rural development. Cooperation seems to be a necessity, and my primary recommendation is that local, regional and national leaders together review the history of the radio movement in India, find the places where mistakes have been made, and work to revamp the system to more effectively and actively address its core mission statement. Handing out community or campus radio licenses is not a viable answer because it is not an integrated approach considering all the players. The entire infrastructure is in need of redevelopment. There are many vocal believers in the rural radio movement for a country like India, especially when the potential for development through such a ubiquitous medium is so high. Media anthropologist Prashant Sharma says that

“Community radio in India at the moment stands on the threshold of fundamentally changing the basic notion of the role media can play in the empowerment of people.”³³ But the fact remains, India will struggle to use the medium of radio to its maximum potential until a re-grouping, re-structuring and re-definition of what it is that rural India needs is embarked on. Even if that means re-grouping, re-structuring and re-defining an age-old institution that has been around since the beginning of the radio movement.

³³ Sharma, Prashant. “Peripheral Voices, Central Concerns: Community Radio in India.” 21 August 2002. < <http://www.thehoot.org/story.asp?storyid=webhoothootL1K0821021&pn=1>>.

6.1: Conclusion: On Connectivity

Every week, when *Rudi no Radio* response letters come in from the field, the entire radio team gathers in the *SEWA* Academy office to sit down together and read their listeners' reactions to their program. From an office environment, it can be difficult to maintain a strong connection with the audience you are trying to reach through a radio program. And so when the radio organizers sit down to see how their program is being received at the grassroots level, it's an exciting time. Reaching self-employed women of the informal sector of the state of Gujarat in a way that educates, affects and inspires is a lofty task, and when their weekly hour-long sharing session begins, the organizers are excited because they know that this is currently as close as they come to connecting with the people they are working so hard to reach. *These letters are the first connection.*

During these sessions, there are a few individuals the radio team notices that stick out for different reasons. One of these notable postcard respondents is Ravjibhai Becharbhai Sodha-Parmar of the Kheda District in Gujarat. He has written over 20 postcards to the *Rudi no Radio* program since its inception in April of 2005, all of which talk about his love for the program's characters, how beneficial the presented information is for his community, how he drops everything he does at 7:55 on Saturday evening when the program comes on so that he won't miss a minute of the "too-short" 15-minute episode. From being told by the radio team about Ravjibhai's eagerness and enthusiasm for the program, the research team was doubly interested in meeting him.

The second connection with Ravjibhai was made on the 31st of January, 2006. After a long morning of changing buses and rickshaws, we finally made it to Ravjibhai's home, only to be greeted by a family that said he wasn't there at the moment, but he'd be back within the hour. After spending the past three hours trying to find his home based on just a postcard with an address written on it, we'd decided we'd be better off waiting for him to get home.

One hour turned into ten minutes, and we were greeted by an overeager man that first told us how upset he was that we didn't call to let him know that we were coming. We explained that with this particular research project, all we had to go on is a postcard and address because most respondents don't write their phone numbers in their letters. Satisfied with the answer, but not with our having to have had to wait ten minutes for him to get home, we began with our questionnaire.

Ravjibhai has only had a radio in his house for the past two years. But with the interest in which he turns that machine on everyday, you would think it was the last 200 years. Four servings of tea and about an hour and a half later, the questionnaire was complete and we had to leave to go meet another listener that day – Rathibhai – that lived in the Kheda district, but was about an hour away from Ravjibhai's location. However, after we finished with our survey, Ravjibhai wanted more. He wanted to know more about the program, about the characters and about the listeners. So as we were getting ready to leave for Rathibhai's home, Ravjibhai asked if he could join us! We had never had a

request like this come up before. And not seeing any sort of harm in it from a research standpoint, we agreed. So a very excited Ravjibhai got on the bus with us, we switched to another bus, then to a rickshaw and made it to Rathibhai's house with two things in tow: another long questionnaire and the over-eager Ravjibhai Becharbhai Sodha-Parmar of Prakashnagar. One listener meeting another; one listener finding out more about another that turns his radio on as religiously as he himself does. They were connected with that turn of the knob on Saturday nights, but never knew it. *This was connection number three.*

Throughout the *Rudi no Radio* research phase, SEWA was interested in seeing not only its impact at the grassroots level, but also things that could be done to make it a better program that better serves its listeners. After meeting Ravjibhai of Kheda, we began seeing the benefits of connectivity between the listeners themselves, as well as between SEWA and its program listeners. *Rudi no Radio* was originally connected with their audience through the response letters listeners would send in to the program and the letters radio organizers would write back to them. And when the research phase began and researchers began meeting the postcard respondents to define *Rudi no Radio* listeners, connection number two was defined. But Ravjibhai of Kheda was able to show us as researchers that a connection between SEWA and listeners is not where the connectivity and interaction should end. Connection between each other is something that has immense potential because when the interaction level increases, so too does the learning.

After this initial research phase, it is high up on the list of suggestions for the SEWA radio team to find ways to both better connect and, consequently, engage their listeners. In this type of environment – in an environment of connectivity – more community-driven education takes place, as opposed to individual-driven. We believe that when communities are empowered in the process expand the boundaries of their little villages, communities are changed.

Two of the most ardent believers in the rural radio movement in India are quoted as saying: “Broadcasting can do more in a few years in the general spread of knowledge than all other methods of education put together in a lifetime.”³⁴

That statement is one of the best illustrations of the potential power of radio in a country like India. There is a long and windy path ahead, but if all players involved in the movement to connect rural communities to life-changing information and each other, well that would be just the start of something tremendous.

³⁴ Page & Crawley as quoted in Sharma, Prashant. “Peripheral Voices, Central Concerns: Community Radio in India.” 21 August 2002. <<http://www.thehoot.org/story.asp?storyid=webhoothootL1K0821021&pn=1>>.

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Annex II: Acronyms/Terms Explained

| | |
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| <i>AIR</i> | <i>All India Radio</i> , officially established in 1936 as <i>AIR</i> and in 1957 as <i>AkashVani</i> , exists today as a Government of India monopoly as it controls the majority of the nation’s airwaves. <i>AIR</i> is a semi-commercial, government-owned operation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. |
| <i>IBC</i> | <i>Indian Broadcasting Corporation</i> , a private, amateur broadcasting corporation that was formed in 1927 when India was under British rule. The <i>IBC</i> went under liquidation in 1930 when the Government of India took over broadcasting under the name of the <i>Indian State Broadcasting Service</i> . |
| Indian Telegraph Act of 1885 | A piece of legislation that was conceived in 1885 which gave exclusive privileges of the establishment, maintenance and working of wireless apparatuses to the Government of India. In other words, the government owns all of the nation’s airwaves, and does not allow other organizations to exercise radio broadcasting rights unless a license has been granted. The slightly amended version of this act is still in use today. |
| <i>Indicorps</i> | <i>Indicorps</i> is a non-profit organization that offers one- and two- year competitive public service fellowships throughout India for People of Indian Origin who want to better understand India, develop a stronger sense of identity, and challenge themselves to make a difference in the land of their heritage. |
| <i>ISBS</i> | <i>Indian State Broadcasting Service</i> , the first government-run experiment in broadcasting that started in 1930 and continues to exist today under the name of <i>All India Radio</i> . |
| LRS | Short for Local Radio Stations, a third tier of broadcasting that was set up by <i>All India Radio</i> to provide utility service to a small area. The first LRS began in Nagercoil in the state of Tamilnadu in the 1970s. Today, <i>AIR</i> runs 76 LRSs in India. |
| <i>MICA</i> | <i>The Mudra Institute of Communications</i> , an university with a focus on communications management that received a broadcasting license from the national government in September 2005. |
| Ministry of Information and Broadcasting | The Indian Ministry under which <i>AIR</i> falls at the national government level. |

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| NGO | Non-Government Organization; in the context of India, NGOs are private organizations that generally function to bring development to various communities. NGOs are not run by government rules or regulations, although they can sometimes receive government funding. |
| <i>Rudi no Radio</i> | A 15-minute program produced and broadcast by organizers the SEWA Radio unit at SEWA Academy that is aired weekly on <i>AIR-Ahmedabad-Vadodara</i> airwaves for a rural audience. In each episode, Rudiben is informally sitting and talking with local members of her village about things that affect them as women and as laborers. The first episode was broadcast on April 16, 2005. |
| SEWA | The <i>Self Employed Women's Association</i> , a trade union that was founded in 1972 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, which comprises of low-income women who earn their livelihoods in the informal economy. |
| SEWA Academy | The capacity building institution branch of the larger umbrella organization of SEWA that was founded in 1991 and works to build the capacities of SEWA members through the tools of communications and research. The Radio SEWA unit of SEWA Academy is a recent addition to the institution in April 2005. |
| Supreme Court Judgment of 1995 | A pivotal hearing that acknowledged the larger issue of the rights of individuals over radio airwaves; the court ruled that airwaves or frequencies are public property, although restrictions must be put on broadcasting to prevent its misuse. To date, the government has made a few token attempts to deregulate, but no framework is in place for NGOs looking to get involved in radio broadcasting. |
| UNESCO | The <i>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</i> that has been supporting the efforts to make India's airwaves work for the people since 1956 when it partnered with <i>AIR</i> to implement the Farm Radio Project. UNESCO works on an international level, and has since undertaken and supported many projects aimed at rural development through the medium of radio in India. |
| United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) | A set of numerical time bound targets that express key elements of human development as defined by the <i>United Nations</i> . The eight MDGs – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDs by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint that was agreed to by all the world's countries at the start of the millennium. |
| <i>Vividh Bharti</i> | <i>AIR's</i> commercial radio service that was inaugurated in India in 1967. |

Annex III: Rudi no Radio Episodes 1-30 Topics List

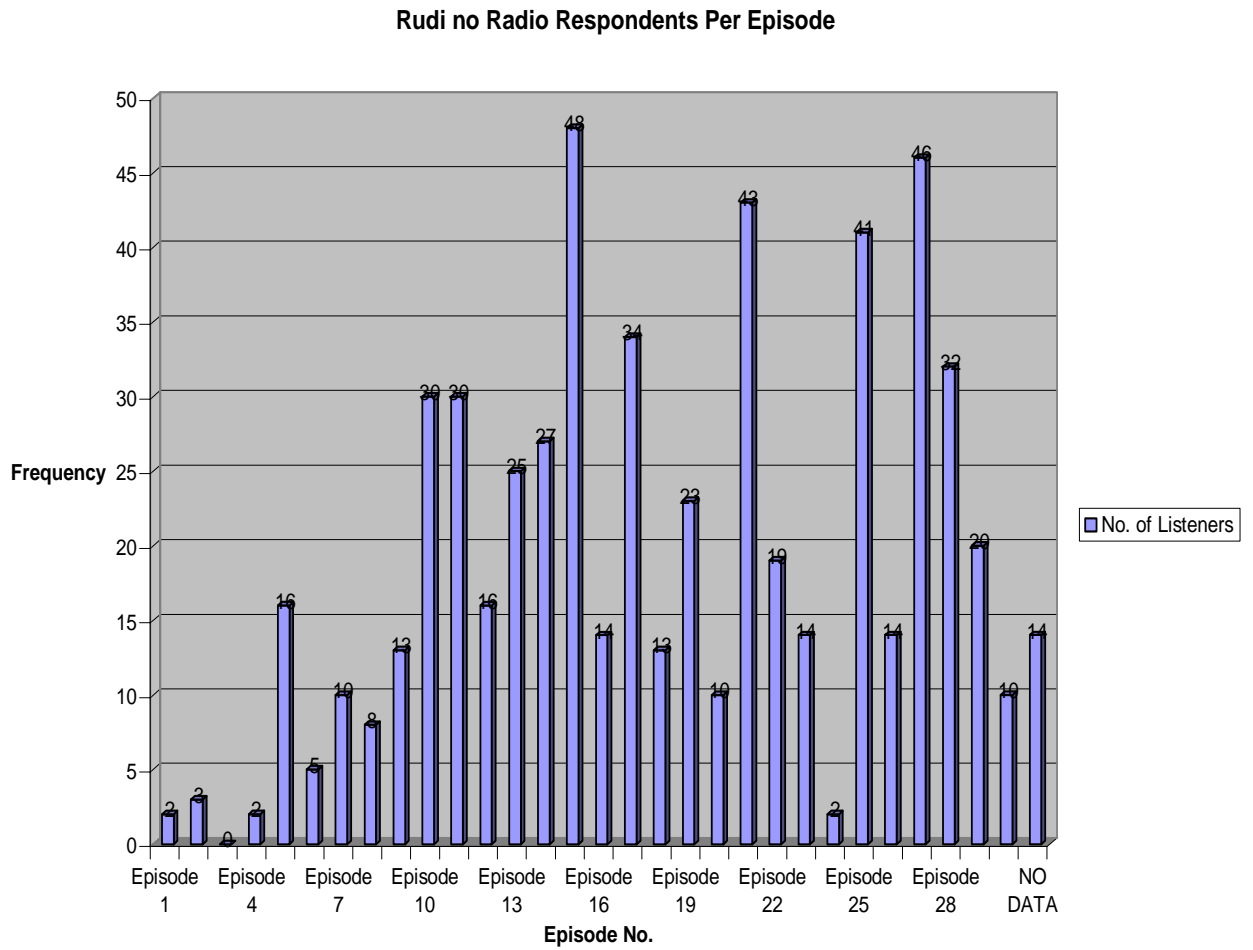
| Rudi no Radio Episodes 1-30 | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Epis. No. | Telecast Date | Episode Topic | Content |
| 1 | 16/04/2005 | Gandhiji's Salt March & Plight of the Salt Worker | On 12 th March 1930, Gandhiji held a "Dandi Yatra" (Salt March) to demolish the tax on salt. That situation and how SEWA has taken the initiative to help the circumstance of the salt worker today was been explained in this episode. |
| 2 | 23/04/2005 | Swadeshi Movement | For propagation of local employment and self reliance, Gandhiji favored Swadeshi (of one's own country) products. In today's scenario at the grassroots level, there is more of a direct benefit in the promotion and use of local products. |
| 3 | 30/04/2005 | Gandhiji's South Africa incident | Gandhiji strongly believed in non-violence and self-respect. In this episode Gandhiji's South Africa's incident has been dramatized to show the power of individuality and working against odds to accomplish a foundationally noble goal. |
| 4 | 07/05/2005 | Proper Water Storage Practices | Most of the villages in Gujarat are facing very serious problems with drinking water. On that direction, SEWA gave some tips on how to save clean and safe rain water in a village setting. |
| 5 | 14/05/2005 | Local Treatments for Summer Diseases | Many village women have to work on farms during the summer. Due to the harsh sunlight, mosquitoes in excess and an increase in dust and germs in food, preventions, precautions & care for summer diseases were presented here. |
| 6 | 21/05/2005 | Use of ICT tools at the Grassroots Level | The use of ICT tools for development and SEWA's involvement in the IT sector was discussed. Some experiences of SEWA women were also narrated. |
| 7 | 28/05/2005 | Reducing Unnecessary Expenses at Weddings | For the sake of tradition and elaborate performances, people spend a lot of money on marriage ceremonies, even when the resources may not be available. With the help of SEWA's wedding song, this episode advised listeners on ways in which they can decrease their expenses. |
| 8 | 04/06/2005 | Environmental Issues: Fight Against Pollution | SEWA Aarogya Bhagini's (SEWA Health) role in maintaining environment, and ways to do so, were presented here. |
| 9 | 11/06/2005 | SEWA Bank | This episode discussed the role of SEWA Bank in providing financial services to Self-employed women |

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| | | | to expand their businesses and effectively make their lives better. |
| 10 | 18/06/2005 | Bhim Agyaras: Farmer's Festival | For a farmer, this episode discussed the importance of Bhim Agyaras, the farmer's festival, and how village people celebrate it. |
| 11 | 25/06/2005 | How to Maintain a Nursery Business | Often, at the grassroots level, alternative forms of employment are actively sought in times when other income is not coming into the home due to external circumstances. This episode discussed one such option through the building of nursery plantations by going through the process of starting one's own. |
| 12 | 02/07/2005 | Response Letter Episode 1 | Organizers read all response letters of episode numbers 1 to 11 and shared some of the well-written thoughts/ideas/feelings on this new program from respondents that have been conversing through postcards. |
| 13 | 09/07/2005 | Recent Flood and Disaster Response | Days prior to this episode, some areas of Gujarat were facing flood situations, as there was an excessive amount of rainfall in some areas. This episode discussed safety and precautionary measures for listeners, as well as detailed the reality of the issue and ways that listeners could help flood victims from their own villages. |
| 14 | 16/07/2005 | Gram Haat, Rudi Bazaar | The reality of middle men cheating product producers en route to the mainstream market is a reality for many farmers and cultivators. This episode discussed one way to bypass that issue through explaining the work of SEWA's Gram Haat, Rudi Bazaar in Ahmedabad. |
| 15 | 23/07/2005 | Guru Purnima, Teacher's Day | This episode talked about the meaning behind the Parvati fast that many young village girls partake in around this time of year. It explained its significance in relevance to Guru Purnima, which is a day when all people should be recognizing and honoring all of the influential teachers in their lives. |
| 16 | 13/08/2005 | Parivartan Yojana, SEWA Housing | SEWA's Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) helps to provide and show slum dwellers the seven basic facilities for a better livelihood. This idea was explored by Rudi and her friends in a grassroots setting. |
| 17 | 20/08/2005 | 15 th August and Raksha Bandhan | This episode not only detailed the importance of India's Independence Day (Aug. 15) and Raksha Bandhan, but also took a business angle by describing the importance of these holidays in a financial sense. |
| 18 | 27/08/2005 | Janmastami: Lord | Through the celebration of Lord Krishna's birthday, |

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| | | Krishna's Birthday Celebration | SEWA made a connection to the Child Care Centers they run across the state of Gujarat for the children of self-employed women who would benefit from having a safe place to keep their children while they are at work. |
| 19 | 03/09/2005 | Nutrition day | Working from a kitchen that may have few supplies, but a lot of potential for healthy recipes, in this episode, we helped rural women find the vitamins and minerals hiding in their pantries through the sharing of simple-but-nourishing recipes. |
| 20 | 10/09/2005 | Response letters | Organizers read all response letters of episode numbers 13 to 19 and shared some of the well-written thoughts/ideas/feelings on this new program from respondents that have been conversing through postcards. |
| 21 | 17/09/2005 | Academy & Literacy | By the demand of SEWA members, SEWA had started literacy classes which are organized in members' own locality. In this episode we visited a SEWA literacy class and discussed the importance of knowing how to do things like sign ones own name or read bus/train signs. |
| 22 | 24/09/2005 | Adolescents' Training | For the holistic development of young adolescent girls, SEWA publishes a monthly magazine titled <i>Akash Ganga</i> . This episode discussed the importance of the development of adolescent girls, and also detailed SEWA Academy's new computer class initiative for this age group. |
| 23 | 01/10/2005 | Gandhi Jayanti | Gandhi Jayanti marks the birthday of India's most prominent independence fighter. The <i>Champaran Incident</i> was narrated in this episode where Gandhiji's fought for the unorganized workers of Bihar. |
| 24 | 08/10/2005 | Navratri and women power | As SEWA's main drive in their movement to bring self-reliance and full employment to workers of the informal sector is to empower women to realize their potential, this episode used the festival of Navratri as an example of a women's power holiday. With the help of grassroots level participants, SEWA illustrated a few examples of women's empowerment. |
| 25 | 15/10/2005 | Vimo SEWA-I | Vimo SEWA is an integrated program aiming at providing social protection to SEWA's members through insurance. This episode describes to listeners the need and benefits of health insurance. |
| 26 | 22/10/2005 | Vimo SEWA-II | To spread awareness about the importance of house and property insurance, SEWA organizers performed |

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| | | | a short drama that illustrated the importance of being ready to face crises before they happen. |
| 27 | 29/10/2005 | Pre-Diwali | For the purpose sharing with listeners the reasons behind the Diwali cleaning that every household goes through, this episode uncovered that truth and necessity, as well as prepared for the Diwali festival with <i>Rudi no Radio</i> listeners. |
| 28 | 05/11/2005 | Diwali and Id | The Hindu and Muslim faith have quite important holidays around this time of year – Diwali and Id – and together, these two holidays allow for various businesses to boom, especially at the grassroots level. This episode went into the particulars of business prosperity at such a busy time of the year. |
| 29 | 12/11/2005 | Solar Energy | SEWA Bank helped the <i>Rudi no Radio</i> team introduce the solar cooker to listeners, a device which replaces the traditional Indian pots and pans that use up a lot of energy in all the following areas: gas, kerosene, electricity, time, sticks and matches. |
| 30 | 26/11/2005 | Response letters 3 | Organizers read all response letters of episode numbers 21 to 28 and shared some of the well-written thoughts/ideas/feelings on this new program from respondents that have been conversing through postcards. |

Annex IV: Response Letter Distribution Across Episodes



Annexure IV (continued): Response Postcard Examples

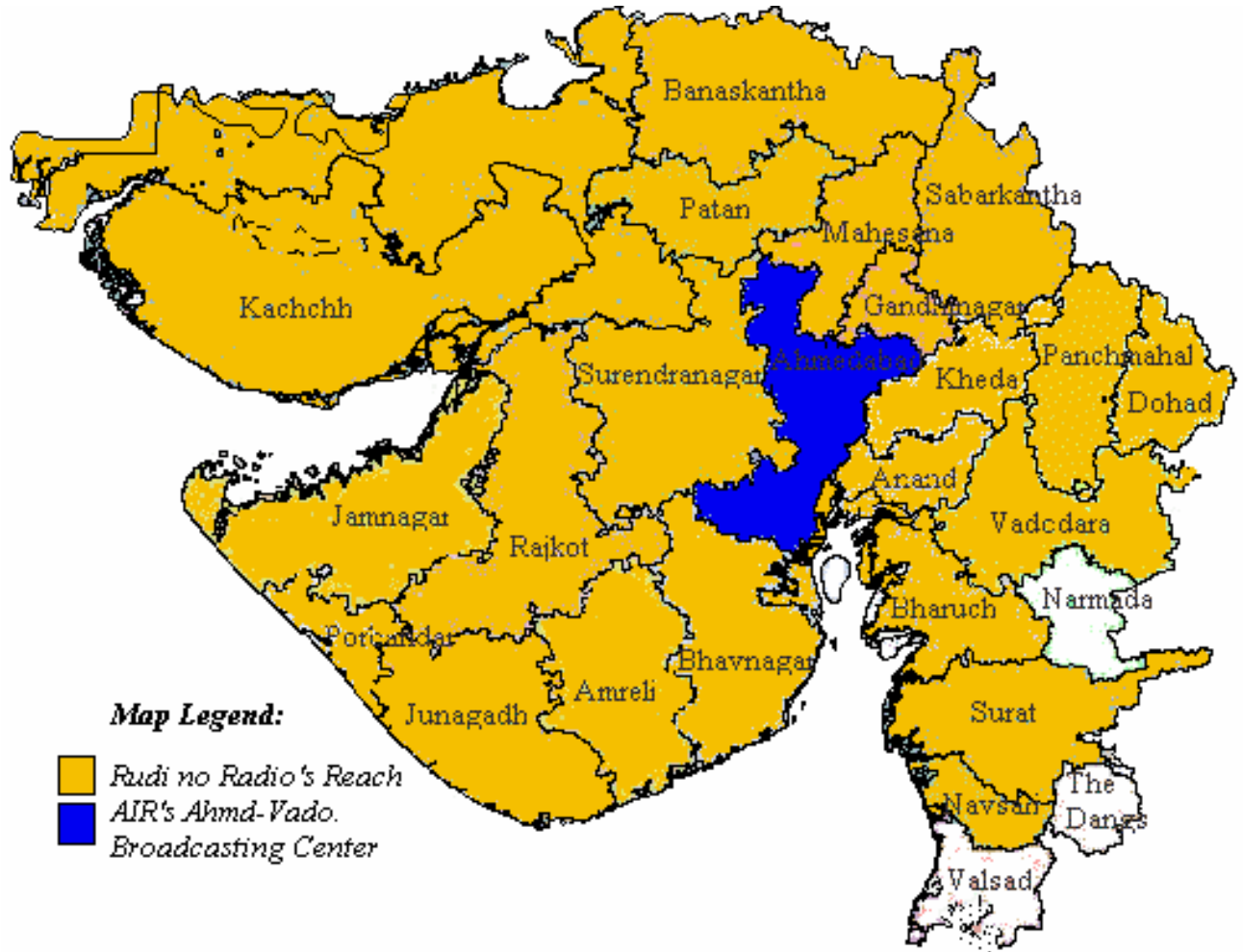


**'RUDI NO
RADIO'
RESPONSE LETTERS
for Episode 28 -**

DIWALI & IDD

Annexure V: Rudi no Radio's Reach

Rudi no Radio's Reach in the state of Gujarat



Gujarat's Population Data

(Source: 2001 Government of India Census Data)

| Geographic Area | Total Population | Total Males | Total Females |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Total | 50,671,017 | 26,385,577 | 24,285,440 |
| Rural | 31,740,767 | 16,317,771 | 15,422,996 |
| Urban | 18,930,250 | 10,067,806 | 8,862,444 |

Annex VI: Rudi no Radio Impact Study, 2006 Focus Group Findings

Data Collected from Focus Groups

BOX 1 LISTENER FOCUS GROUPS

Districts: Bhavnagar, Panchmahal
Number of Focus Groups Held: 2
Total Number of Participants: 18
Total Number of Radio Listeners: 18
Primary Occupation: Farming, Teaching
Illiteracy Rate: 56%
Educated up to 7th Grade+: 44%

Means of Communication to Outside of Village:

- ❖ Primary: radio*, conversations with neighbors, community
- ❖ Secondary: telephone, television*
- ❖ Tertiary: newspaper

*Note: These participants had more of an interest in radio as opposed to television because the radio is more mobile. They say that because the majority of them are farmers, portable radios come in most handy.

Enjoyable Elements of *Rudi no Radio*:

- ❖ Rural language
- ❖ Entertainment aspect
- ❖ Interactivity with Question/Answer section
- ❖ Relevancy of issues discussed
- ❖ Songs (Folk, Old, Bhajans)
- ❖ Folk Stories

Impact/Uses of *Rudi no Radio*:

- ❖ Use of *Rudi no Radio* as a teaching tool in conversation (not in its hard format) with other primary/secondary school teachers in the village
- ❖ Women listen to *Rudi no Radio* in evenings while they are doing work (men listen at rest)
- ❖ Farm information is the most relevant to their community (appreciate episodes on seeds, their prices, good harvests, water issues, etc.)
- ❖ After focus group, uneducated women said that they would write letters through their husbands

BOX 1 CONTINUED

Suggestions on Programming Particulars:

- ❖ Increase *Rudi no Radio* by 15 minutes.
- ❖ Broadcast two episodes per week.
- ❖ Connect to/Engage the audience by going out into villages to record programs
- ❖ Send CD/tape of *Rudi no Radio* to be used as a teaching tool in village schools.
- ❖ Provide women with information on education and employment through not only radio, but also through trainings, discussions, plays – creative ways to engage them and get them involved.
- ❖ One participant said the use of electronic equipment (such as solar lights, radios, radio recorders) are of great use at the grassroots level because once they learn how to use it, they are effectively pushed forward.

Suggestions on Programming Content:

- ❖ Give episodes on the following:
 - How to make homemade medicines
 - How to cook nutritious foods from farm ingredients
 - Information to stop the use of tobacco products for health reasons
 - Present all postcard writers' names in one episode
 - Issues relevant to young girls (how to wash clothes, buy clothes, keep bodies clean)
 - Information on animal husbandry (necessary medicines, practices)
 - Information concerning the environment (in relation to farming)
 - Dangerousness of continuing outdated traditions that are followed only for the sake of tradition and not truth/practicality/reality
- ❖ Make more of an effort to ensure that all of your language is in village dialect
- ❖ Use different languages/dialects from other villages

Note: Much to the surprise of the researchers, the Panchmahal focus group participants shared with researchers that this program should not be taken off the air. Participants said they would take it up as their own cause if the program were to be cancelled; they would organize, protest and spread the word about *Rudi no Radio* in order to keep it running and on the air.



***Rudi no Radio* Listener Focus Group in Bhavnagar**



BOX 2
NON-LISTENER FOCUS GROUPS

Districts: Bhavnagar, Panchmahal
Number of Focus Groups Held: 2
Total Number of Participants: 19
Total Number of Radio Listeners: 2
Primary Occupation: Farming
Illiteracy Rate: 84%
Educated up to 7th Grade+: 16%

Means of Communication to Outside of Village:

- ❖ Primary: talking with neighbors, members of community
- ❖ Secondary: television*, telephone
- ❖ Tertiary: radio*, newspaper

*Note: Notice the difference between methods of communication in the non-listeners group and the listeners group; the radio listeners have a pre-set foundational interest in radio, and less in television, whereas the non-listeners are more interested in television as opposed to radio.

Issues in Village:

- ❖ Male consumption of liquor
- ❖ Lack of unity/organization among villagers
- ❖ Panchayat in village not active
- ❖ Water issues when dam is not filled
- ❖ Lack of value for education
- ❖ No hospital in village
- ❖ Poverty among certain castes

Discussed Solutions:

- ❖ SEWA training for rural women.
- ❖ Organization of villagers into active groups.
- ❖ Use of children as teachers for their uneducated parents.
- ❖ Use of radio in a way that women would understand. (Stipulations: SEWA would have to provide radios and do programming only in Gujarati)
- ❖ Use of pictures or something otherwise entertaining or engaging to convey a message; words are less understood and less effective because uneducated women don't remember them.