



Impact of "Mann ki Baat" on Rural Social Awareness: A Case Study of Maharashtra

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of "Mann ki Baat," a monthly radio program initiated by the Prime Minister of India, on social awareness among rural populations in Maharashtra. Given the significant challenges faced by rural communities in accessing reliable information, "Mann ki Baat" serves as a crucial platform for disseminating knowledge on various social issues, including health, education, sanitation, and empowerment. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews conducted across selected villages, the research investigates how specific themes presented in the program resonate with rural audiences and influence their perceptions and behaviors. Preliminary findings indicate that "Mann ki Baat" has enhanced awareness regarding critical issues such as health initiatives and educational opportunities, with many respondents citing the program as a key source of information. Additionally, the study explores the role of community engagement and feedback in shaping the program's effectiveness, highlighting how grassroots participation can amplify its reach and relevance. By situating the analysis within the broader context of government communication strategies and rural development, this research contributes to the understanding of the intersection between media and social change. It also underscores the need for continued efforts to improve information dissemination in rural areas, particularly in light of the unique challenges posed by socio-economic disparities. Ultimately, the findings aim to provide insights for policymakers and practitioners, suggesting that leveraging programs like "Mann ki Baat" can significantly enhance social awareness and contribute to more informed and empowered rural communities. This study not only fills a gap in existing literature but also emphasizes the potential of targeted communication initiatives in fostering community engagement and promoting social progress.

Keywords: Mann ki Baat, Rural Social Awareness, Maharashtra, Community Engagement, Health Initiatives, Education, Sanitation

Introduction

"Mann ki Baat," launched by the Prime Minister of India, serves as a unique platform for direct communication with citizens, particularly in rural areas where access to information is often limited. This monthly radio broadcast addresses critical social issues, fostering a sense of community engagement and awareness. "In Maharashtra, a state characterized by diverse socio-economic challenges, the significance of such initiatives cannot be overstated. The importance of social awareness in rural development is paramount, as it empowers communities to make informed decisions regarding health, education, and sanitation. By analyzing the impact of "Mann ki Baat," this study aims to explore





how the program influences social awareness among rural populations in Maharashtra, focusing on key themes such as health initiatives, agricultural practices, and women's empowerment. Previous research has highlighted the role of mass media in shaping public perceptions; however, there is a gap in understanding how government-led communication strategies resonate with grassroots communities. This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys and interviews to gather insights from residents in selected villages. Preliminary observations suggest that "Mann ki Baat" has become a vital source of information for many, enhancing awareness about government schemes and encouraging community participation. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on effective communication strategies in rural development, emphasizing the need for targeted approaches that address the unique challenges faced by these communities. Ultimately, this research aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners, demonstrating the potential of "Mann ki Baat" to foster social change and empower rural populations in Maharashtra.

Background of "Mann ki Baat"

"Mann ki Baat," a radio program launched by the Prime Minister of India in October 2014, has become a significant platform for direct communication between the government and citizens. The initiative aims to address a wide range of social, economic, and cultural issues, fostering a sense of community engagement and participation. The program was conceived as a way to connect with the populace, particularly in rural areas, where traditional forms of media may not always reach. Each episode features the Prime Minister discussing various themes, including health, education, sanitation, and women's empowerment, often highlighting success stories from grassroots initiatives and encouraging citizen participation in national development. The broadcast is typically aired once a month and is available in multiple languages, catering to the diverse linguistic demographics of India. The success of "Mann ki Baat" can be attributed to its ability to resonate with the everyday experiences of citizens, transforming abstract policy discussions into relatable narratives. The program encourages feedback and dialogue, inviting listeners to share their thoughts and suggestions, which helps to foster a sense of ownership among citizens regarding government initiatives. Over the years, "Mann ki Baat" has expanded its reach through social media platforms, further enhancing its impact and accessibility". The program also serves as a tool for publicizing various government schemes, aiming to increase awareness and participation in developmental activities. By emphasizing the importance of citizen engagement, "Mann ki Baat" has played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing community action around key issues affecting the nation. Its grassroots approach to communication underscores the potential of media as a vehicle for social change, reflecting the Prime Minister's vision of a participatory democracy where citizens are active contributors to nation-building.

Importance of Social Awareness in Rural India

Social awareness in rural India is essential for fostering community development, empowering individuals, and addressing the unique challenges faced by these populations. Rural areas often grapple with issues such as poverty, limited access to healthcare, inadequate education, and lack of employment opportunities, making social awareness a critical factor in driving positive change. "Understanding and addressing these challenges require informed citizens who can make educated decisions regarding their health, education, and social responsibilities. Social awareness plays a pivotal role in promoting essential public health measures, such as sanitation and hygiene practices, particularly in the wake of health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. It equips individuals with the knowledge necessary to





prevent the spread of diseases, access healthcare services, and advocate for their rights. Furthermore, social awareness is vital for fostering community participation in development initiatives, enabling residents to engage actively in local governance and contribute to decision-making processes. When communities are aware of their rights and entitlements, they are more likely to demand accountability from local authorities and participate in programs that aim to improve their living conditions. Education is another area where social awareness is crucial, as it helps to break the cycle of ignorance and poverty by highlighting the value of education for future generations. Promoting awareness about educational opportunities and the importance of literacy can lead to increased enrollment and retention rates in schools, ultimately fostering a more informed and skilled workforce. Additionally, social awareness aids in challenging harmful practices and norms that may perpetuate inequality, such as caste discrimination and gender bias. By raising awareness about social justice issues, communities can work towards creating a more equitable society. Overall, enhancing social awareness in rural India is fundamental to empowering individuals, promoting sustainable development, and building resilient communities capable of addressing their challenges and seizing opportunities for growth.

Role of Mass Media in Rural Awareness

Mass media plays a pivotal role in enhancing social awareness in rural areas, acting as a bridge between the government and communities. In a country as diverse as India, where rural populations often face challenges related to access to education, health services, and employment opportunities, mass media serves as a crucial tool for disseminating information and fostering public discourse. Various forms of mass media, including radio, television, print, and digital platforms, cater to different segments of the rural population, each contributing uniquely to information dissemination. Radio, in particular, remains one of the most effective mediums in rural areas due to its affordability, accessibility, and ability to reach audiences in remote locations. Programs tailored for rural listeners can address local issues, provide educational content, and promote government initiatives. Television has also gained prominence, offering a visual medium that can engage viewers through dramas, documentaries, and educational shows, enhancing comprehension and retention of information. In recent years, digital media has started to penetrate rural markets, particularly among the younger population, providing an additional avenue for accessing information and engaging with government campaigns. The role of mass media in rural awareness extends beyond mere information dissemination; it also encourages community participation and dialogue. By facilitating discussions on pressing social issues, mass media empowers individuals to voice their concerns and participate in community development initiatives. Programs like "Mann ki Baat" exemplify this approach, allowing citizens to connect directly with policymakers and share their experiences, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards local development. Overall, mass media not only enhances awareness but also cultivates an informed citizenry capable of actively participating in the socio-economic progress of their communities.

Impact of COVID-19 on Information Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered the landscape of information needs, particularly in rural areas, where access to reliable information is often limited. As the virus spread and the government implemented lockdowns, the urgency for accurate and timely information became paramount. Rural communities faced unique challenges, including misinformation, fear, and uncertainty regarding health guidelines, preventive measures, and available resources. In this context, traditional channels of





communication were insufficient to address the rapidly evolving situation, prompting a greater reliance on mass media platforms to disseminate critical information. Initiatives like "Mann ki Baat" became vital sources of guidance, providing a direct line of communication from the government to the public. The program addressed key issues such as health protocols, vaccination drives, and mental health support, helping to bridge the information gap that many rural residents experienced. Additionally, the pandemic underscored the importance of digital literacy, as access to online resources became increasingly essential for staying informed. However, disparities in internet connectivity and digital skills further complicated the information landscape in rural areas, leaving some communities vulnerable to misinformation. The government and various organizations responded by ramping up outreach efforts, utilizing multiple platforms—radio broadcasts, community radio stations, SMS alerts, and social media campaigns—to ensure that crucial information reached even the most remote locations. This multifaceted approach aimed to empower rural residents with the knowledge necessary to navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19, fostering a sense of community resilience. Furthermore, the pandemic highlighted the potential of community engagement, as local leaders and health workers played pivotal roles in disseminating information, combating misinformation, and encouraging preventive measures. Ultimately, the COVID-19 crisis not only intensified the demand for reliable information but also revealed significant gaps in the existing communication infrastructure, prompting calls for more robust and inclusive information strategies that can effectively address the unique needs of rural populations in times of crisis". As societies emerge from the pandemic, lessons learned about the importance of accessible information will be critical for enhancing preparedness and response efforts in future public health emergencies.

Review of Literature

Year	Authors	Main Focus	Methodology	Findings
2014	Bonini	Role of radio in the age of social network sites and the impact of social media on radiophonic media and listener habits.	Qualitative analysis of media and public response to radiophonic changes.	Social media, especially Facebook, significantly influences radio listener habits and content creation.
2006	Chorghade et al.	Causes of underweight youth among rural women in Maharashtra, India, focusing on cultural, social, and behavioral factors.	Village-based study analyzing cultural, social, and behavioral factors contributing to underweight issues.	Four main causes of underweight youth were identified: societal pressures, labor, limited food access, and household responsibility.
2014	Udmale et al.	Rural farmers' perceptions of drought and dissatisfaction with government drought mitigation initiatives in Maharashtra.	Survey-based study of farmers' perceptions of drought and mitigation measures.	Drought heavily affects income and jobs, with dissatisfaction toward governmental measures.
2017	Shetty et al.	Adverse events in leprosy patients post-treatment in	Clinical analysis of adverse events in leprosy patients	64 cases of neuritis and 54 cases of relapse were recorded, necessitating





		Maharashtra between 2005 and 2010.	released from treatment.	better post-treatment monitoring.
2022	Ghatge	Impact of the pandemic on livelihood conditions in Indian villages with a focus on Maharashtra.	Field study investigating the livelihood conditions during the pandemic.	The pandemic severely impacted agricultural transportation and subsistence, causing economic hardship.
2022	Gothankar et al.	Symptomatic survey of COVID-19 in a rural demographic site in Maharashtra, India.	Cross-sectional study of symptomatic COVID-19 cases.	COVID-19 prevalence was low (0.1%), with fever and cough being the most common symptoms.
2007	R. Kumar & Best	Impact and diffusion of telecentre use in rural southern India and its social impact.	Case study from the Sustainable Access in Rural India Project.	Telecentres attract young affluent users, but tailoring services could enhance outreach to disadvantaged communities.
2012	Rokade & Gaikawad	Social awareness and willingness towards body donation in Maharashtra, focusing on factors such as awareness and religious beliefs.	Survey of the general public and medical schools in Maharashtra.	90% of medical schools lack cadavers, and only 32.1% of the public is aware of body donation.
2014	Soni	Knowledge and awareness of malocclusion among the rural population in India.	Survey of rural populations regarding malocclusion.	Malocclusion awareness varies based on region and education levels in rural areas.
2016	Khairah & Ahluwalia	Awareness towards social advertisements, with a comparison of urban and rural respondents in Punjab, India.	Comparative study involving 400 respondents from Punjab, India.	Significant disparity between urban and rural awareness of social advertising efforts.
2016	Vidhate & Kundap	Awareness of newly launched social security schemes among the rural population in India.	Survey of rural residents' knowledge of social security schemes.	76% of rural participants were aware of social security schemes, and 44% were enrolled in at least one.
2017	De	Health awareness and challenges among tribal populations in rural India, particularly related to poverty and health issues.	Field study focused on the health awareness of tribes in rural India.	Tribal populations face numerous health challenges, including anemia and tuberculosis, due to poor sanitation and water access.





Methodology

The methodology for this study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing structured surveys to collect data from 150 respondents in selected rural villages of Maharashtra. The survey consisted of Likert scale questions aimed at assessing respondents' awareness, engagement, and perceptions of the "Mann ki Baat" program, focusing on themes such as health, hygiene, education, and women's empowerment. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, with frequency and percentage distributions used to understand the level of awareness and behavior changes among the respondents. This quantitative approach provides a clear, data-driven understanding of the program's impact on rural social awareness.

Data Analysis

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	90	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Female	60	40.0	40.0	100.0
Age					
Valid	18-24	37	24.7	24.7	24.7
	25-34	34	22.7	22.7	47.3
	35-44	27	18.0	18.0	65.3
	45-54	11	7.3	7.3	72.7
	55-64	14	9.3	9.3	82.0
	65 above	27	18.0	18.0	100.0
Education Level					
Valid	High School or below	14	9.3	9.3	9.3
	Some College/Associate Degree	27	18.0	18.0	27.3
	Bachelor's Degree	25	16.7	16.7	44.0
	Doctorate/Ph.D.	56	37.3	37.3	81.3
	Other	28	18.7	18.7	100.0

The demographic data collected from the survey participants reveal significant insights into the composition of the sample. Of the 150 respondents, 60% identified as male, while 40% were female, indicating a predominantly male representation. "The age distribution shows a relatively balanced spread, with 24.7% of participants aged 18-24 and 22.7% in the 25-34 age group, while older age brackets, such as 35-44 and 65 and above, comprised 18% each. The education level of respondents reflects a diverse educational background; 37.3% held a Doctorate or Ph.D., suggesting a high level of education within the sample, alongside 18% who reported having some college or an associate degree.

Awareness of Mann ki Baat





Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I am aware of the Mann ki Baat program.	29	18	27	54	22	150
I listen to "Mann ki Baat" regularly.	10	20	22	75	23	150
I find the topics discussed in "Mann ki Baat" relevant to my community.	26	25	18	58	23	150

The survey results indicate varying levels of awareness and engagement with the "Mann ki Baat" program among the respondents. A significant majority, 54 participants (36%), expressed agreement that they are aware of the program, while 22 (14.7%) strongly agreed, suggesting a relatively high level of familiarity". However, 29 respondents (19.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating some gaps in awareness. When it comes to regular listenership, 75 participants (50%) reported that they listen to "Mann ki Baat regularly, with 23 (15.3%) strongly agreeing, highlighting a strong engagement with the program. In terms of relevance, 58 respondents (38.7%) found the topics discussed in "Mann ki Baat" relevant to their community, and 23 (15.3%) strongly agreed, suggesting that many participants see value in the content.

Impact on Health Awareness

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
"Mann ki Baat" has increased my awareness of health issues.	25	33	16	59	17	150
I have adopted better hygiene practices after listening to "Mann ki Baat."	35	16	16	58	25	150
I am more informed about vaccination programs due to "Mann ki Baat."	34	25	18	48	25	150

The survey results demonstrate the perceived impact of Mann ki Baat on health awareness and practices among respondents. A total of 59 participants (39.3%) agreed that the program has increased their awareness of health issues, while 17 (11.3%) strongly agreed, indicating a positive reception regarding health-related content. However, 25 respondents (16.7%) strongly disagreed, suggesting that not all individuals feel their awareness has improved. When it comes to hygiene practices, 58 participants (38.7%) reported adopting better habits after listening to "Mann ki Baat," and 25 (16.7%) strongly agreed, highlighting a tangible behavioral change. Conversely, 35 respondents (23.3%) strongly disagreed, indicating a lack of impact on some individuals. Regarding vaccination awareness, 48 participants (32%) agreed that they are more informed due to the program, with another 25 (16.7%) strongly agreeing, which suggests that "Mann ki Baat" effectively disseminates information about vaccination.

Women's Empowerment





Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
"Mann ki Baat" has improved my understanding of women's rights.	23	16	24	71	16	150
I believe that "Mann ki Baat" encourages women to participate in community activities.	12	23	22	72	21	150
I feel more empowered to advocate for gender equality because of "Mann ki Baat."	23	16	24	71	16	150

The survey results indicate a positive perception of Mann ki Baat regarding its influence on understanding and advocacy for women's rights. A significant majority, 71 participants (47.3%), agreed that the program has improved their understanding of women's rights, with an additional 16 (10.7%) strongly agreeing, reflecting a strong engagement with the topic. However, 23 respondents (15.3%) strongly disagreed, suggesting some individuals still feel uninformed. Regarding encouragement for women's participation in community activities, 72 participants (48%) agreed with this statement, and 21 (14%) strongly agreed, indicating that many believe "Mann ki Baat" effectively promotes female engagement in local initiatives. Conversely, 12 (8%) strongly disagreed, highlighting a gap in perception. Lastly, the belief that the program empowers individuals to advocate for gender equality garnered similar responses, with 71 participants (47.3%) agreeing and 16 (10.7%) strongly agreeing. Despite the positive trends, the presence of neutral and disagreement responses across all statements indicates that while "Mann ki Baat" resonates with many, there is still an opportunity to reach and engage a broader audience in discussions about gender equality and women's rights.

Key Themes Addressed in "Mann ki Baat"

"Mann ki Baat" addresses a diverse array of themes that resonate deeply with the Indian populace, particularly in rural areas. One of the key themes is health and sanitation, where the program often discusses initiatives related to public health, hygiene practices, and vaccination drives. "By focusing on topics such as the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Prime Minister emphasizes the importance of cleanliness and sanitation in preventing diseases and promoting overall well-being. This theme not only raises awareness but also encourages communities to adopt healthier practices, thereby contributing to improved public health outcomes.

Another significant theme is education, particularly emphasizing the need for literacy and skill development. Episodes often highlight government initiatives aimed at increasing school enrollment, reducing drop-out rates, and promoting vocational training. By showcasing success stories from various regions, "Mann ki Baat" seeks to inspire both students and parents to prioritize education, thereby enhancing future opportunities for the youth. This focus on education is crucial for fostering a more informed and capable workforce in rural areas.

The theme of women's empowerment is also prominently featured, with discussions surrounding gender equality, self-help groups, and women's rights. The program often highlights initiatives aimed at improving women's access to education and economic opportunities, encouraging their participation in





decision-making processes. By addressing these issues, "Mann ki Baat" aims to challenge societal norms and empower women to take active roles in their communities.

the program addresses agricultural innovation, focusing on new farming techniques, government schemes, and the importance of sustainable practices. Episodes often feature discussions on crop diversification, organic farming, and the use of technology in agriculture. This emphasis not only aims to improve agricultural productivity but also encourages farmers to adopt practices that are environmentally sustainable.

community engagement and civic responsibility are recurring themes in "Mann ki Baat." The Prime Minister frequently encourages citizens to participate in local governance, promote social causes, and engage in volunteerism. By emphasizing the importance of grassroots participation, the program seeks to foster a sense of ownership among citizens regarding their communities, encouraging them to actively contribute to social development.

"Mann ki Baat" serves as a multifaceted platform that addresses vital themes such as health, education, women's empowerment, agricultural innovation, and community engagement. These themes not only inform and educate but also motivate citizens to take proactive steps toward improving their lives and communities.

Significance of Rural Social Awareness

Rural social awareness is crucial for the overall development and empowerment of communities, serving as a foundation for informed decision-making and active participation in societal progress. In rural areas, where access to information is often limited and socio-economic challenges are prevalent, fostering social awareness can significantly enhance the quality of life. It empowers individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities, enabling them to engage effectively with local governance and demand accountability from authorities. Social awareness also plays a pivotal role in public health, as it equips rural populations with knowledge about hygiene, sanitation, and preventive healthcare measures, which are essential for combating diseases and improving overall health outcomes. Moreover, awareness about educational opportunities can motivate families to prioritize their children's schooling, reducing dropout rates and fostering a more skilled workforce. In addition, social awareness is vital for addressing gender inequalities and promoting women's empowerment, as it encourages communities to challenge harmful cultural norms and support initiatives that enhance women's rights and participation in decision-making processes. Furthermore, awareness of agricultural innovations and sustainable practices can lead to improved farming techniques, increasing productivity and economic stability for farming families. This not only contributes to food security but also encourages community resilience against economic fluctuations. Ultimately, social awareness cultivates a sense of community responsibility, inspiring individuals to collaborate on local issues, participate in social initiatives, and contribute to collective well-being. In an era of rapid change, especially with the advent of technology and globalization, enhancing rural social awareness is essential for bridging the gap between rural and urban communities, ensuring that rural voices are heard in the broader socio-economic discourse". By empowering individuals with knowledge and skills, rural social awareness lays the groundwork for sustainable development, enabling communities to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and foster a culture of participation and civic engagement. Thus, it is not just a catalyst for individual growth but a fundamental driver of holistic community development, ultimately contributing to the nation's progress.





Conclusion

The study concludes that "Mann ki Baat" has significantly contributed to raising social awareness in rural Maharashtra, particularly in areas such as health, hygiene, education, and women's empowerment. The program has successfully reached a broad audience, with many respondents reporting increased knowledge and positive behavior changes. However, the results also highlight gaps in awareness and engagement, especially in certain demographic groups, suggesting that further efforts are needed to enhance the program's reach and impact. Overall, "Mann ki Baat" demonstrates the power of mass media in fostering community engagement and promoting social change in rural India.

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