

Radio As A Tool For Women Empowerment In Villages: A Study On Perception Of Radio In Adi Tribe Of Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Mass media can play a key role in bringing out desirable changes in women's life by empowering them through creating awareness about their rights and help raise their status even in traditionally-rooted tribal society. Unlike in other conservative societies, women in tribal society in Arunachal Pradesh, though patriarchal in nature, enjoy a sense of freedom of speech and expression. However, they are deprived of various rights such as the rights to claim inheritance of their parental property as their customary law does not provide for it. In such a situation the mass media in general and radio in particular have been creating awareness about women issues and rights through women-specific programmes thereby promoting women empowerment in the society. While the level of importance given to women issues has been directly or indirectly decided by the kind of mass media, the All India Radio Itanagar and All India Radio Pasighat have been playing a key role in women empowerment in tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh since their inceptions. Along with changes in media exposure and usage patterns, the status of tribal women in rural areas of Arunachal Pradesh has been undergoing transformations enabling them to contribute to the overall development of the society. Based on a recent study, this paper explores the role of radio broadcasting particularly the All India Radio Itanagar and All India Radio Pasighat in promoting women empowerment in tribal society particularly the Adi women of East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: media, radio, Adi tribe, women empowerment, Arunachal Pradesh.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mass media including radio has the power to build a society by creating awareness about various social issues. Besides keeping audience informed and updated, media also educate them about human rights and to address social problems. Mass media can play a key role in bringing out desirable changes in women's life by empowering them through creating awareness about their rights and help raise their status even in traditionally-rooted tribal society. Though the tribal society in Arunachal Pradesh is patriarchal in nature, women to some extent enjoy a sense of freedom of speech and expression. But, when it comes to legal rights they are deprived of various rights such as the rights to claim inheritance of their parental property and women's non-participation in major decision making process of any social institutions like the Kembang² as their customary

law does not provide for it. While explaining the processes of Sanskritization and Westernization to understand religious, cultural and social change in society, Srinivas (2017) observes that a society would develop only if the status of women is raised.¹ Thus, empowering tribal women becomes crucial for developing a tribal society which is a very challenging task.

In such a situation the mass media in general and radio in particular have been creating awareness about women rights and issues through women-specific programmes thereby promoting women empowerment in the society. Radio continues to play an important role in the development of rural society with its advantage of affordability, portability and less power consumption while reaching to large number of people specially in remote rural areas. Radio being one of the cheapest media of

mass communication plays a vital role in the lives of rural women as it creates awareness by providing information and education while improving their skills besides promoting social, cultural, political and economic development. As most of the radio programmes are designed to fulfil the objectives of catering to different target groups including women, keeping in mind the social issues and languages, radio broadcasting medium has been considered as a powerful tool for changing the lives of women in society. While recognizing that the participation of women folk is very limited in different developmental activities, the All India Radio provides exclusive women programme chunks that cater to the specific areas of interest to them.

While the level of importance given to women issues has been directly or indirectly decided by the kind of mass media, the All India Radio, Itanagar (Primary Radio Station) and All India Radio, Pasighat (Local Radio Station) have been playing a key role in women empowerment in tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh since their inception. Along with changes in media exposure and media usage patterns, the status of tribal women in rural areas of Arunachal Pradesh has been undergoing transformations enabling them to contribute to overall development of the society. Based on a recent study, this paper explores the role of radio broadcasting particularly the All India Radio Itanagar and All India Radio Pasighat in promoting women empowerment in tribal society particularly the Adi women of East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were-

1. To study the role of radio broadcasting in promoting women empowerment in rural areas of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. To assess the level of awareness about women programmes among Adi community of East Siang district.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out adopting a quantitative survey method in five remote villages of the East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The villages were Rani, Taki Lalung, Sibbo, Ngopok and Rengging. A sample of 200

respondents from radio households in the five villages were selected through simple random sampling method for collecting the primary data. 35.0 percent of the total population has been selected from Rani Village which constitute 70 respondents. 32.5 percent respondents has taken from Ngopok village which constitute 65 respondents, whereas 15.0 percent respondents has been selected from Taki-Lalung village, which is followed by 10.0 percent from Rengging village and 7.5 percent from Sibbo village. by employing interview schedule as a data collecting tool. The secondary data were collected from various sources such as government documents, books, journals, newspaper articles etc.

4. AREA OF THE STUDY- EAST SIANG DISTRICT

Arunachal Pradesh had initially five districts, namely Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap but after attaining its statehood, many new districts were created out of the original five districts with state's capital town at Itanagar in Papum Pare district (Dupak, 2017). The original Siang district was bifurcated into two-East Siang and West Siang in 1980, thus East Siang came into being. The name of the district is derived from mighty Siang River. With the passage of time, a total of seven districts were created from the erstwhile Siang district. These are East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, Siang, Lower Siang, Lepa Rada and Shi-Yomi. Presently, the state has twenty-five districts. As an administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh, East Siang has an area of 4005 sq. km. and a population of 99,214 including 50,116 males and 49,098 females. Out of the total population 27.85 percent lives in urban region while 72.15 percent resides in rural areas (Census 2011). The district has a literacy rate of 73.54 percent. Pasighat, the oldest town of the state, is the headquarters of East Siang district which is bounded by Upper Siang on the north, Assam in the south, Lower Dibang Valley in the east and West Siang in the west.²

5. THE ADI TRIBE

The Adis are one of the most progressive ethnic communities of Arunachal Pradesh, mostly inhabiting the Siang Valley with their concentration in East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Siang, Siang and few parts of

Lower Dibang Valley districts. Koley (2018) writes that the Adis were formerly known as 'Abor', combination of a number of prominent sub-groups, which includes Padam, Minyong, Shimong, Ashing, Pasi, Karko, Bokar, Bori, Ramo, Palibo, Milang, Tangam, Panggi. Each of these sub-groups has some salient features in respect of culture and language of their own. They are hospitable and freedom loving tribe, and claim themselves as brave and expert warriors.³ They follow Donyi-Poloism while a few have converted to Christianity.⁴ The Adis are primarily agriculturists and practice jhum cultivation on hill slopes besides practicing wet rice cultivation traditionally. The women are expert weavers while men are experts in production of handicraft items. Therefore, for dress and costumes, they were self-sufficient.⁵ They celebrate a number of festivals like Solung, Aran, Pime etc.⁶

6. RADIO BROADCASTING IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

In Arunachal Pradesh, the first All India Radio station was established at Pasighat on 6th March 1966. At present, the state has altogether five AIR stations located at Pasighat, Itanagar, Ziro, Tezu and Tawang thereby reaching the remotest areas in the state with their variety of national and local programmes. Among the five AIR stations, the AIR Itanagar is a primary radio station while the other All India Radio stations are local radio stations. These radio stations have been rendering services by producing a variety of programmes in local languages and dialects besides Hindi and English. They also broadcasts tribal folk music, talks, interviews and discussion on various issues of development. Apart from these, special audience programmes, light music, current affairs and news-based programmes are also broadcast. Besides the five AIR stations, the state also has one private Big FM channel at Itanagar and one Arun FM under AIR station, Itanagar.⁷

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was carried out adopting survey method in five remote villages of East Siang district. A sample of 200 respondents from radio households was selected for the study. Accordingly, the data interpretation was done to identify the role of radio broadcasting in

promoting women empowerment in rural areas as well as the level of awareness about women programmes among Adi community of East Siang district.

7.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

i) Gender of Respondents

All the respondents were females. The reason behind taking all women respondents is that they would be able to express better about their empowerment rather than the males.

ii) Age of Respondents

The respondents were categorised in four age groups - 19-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years and 45 years and above. The 19-24 years age group accounted for 33 respondents which constituted 16.5 percent, 25-34 age group comprised 76 respondents constituting 38 percent of the respondents. 35-44 age group tallied 39 respondents which constituted 19.5 percent while 45 years and above age group amounted to 52 respondents comprising 26 percent. The age group of 25-34 years had the highest respondents as the youngsters in this category listened more to radio programmes for different kinds of information.

iii) Occupation of the Respondents

As per the data, 33.5 percent of the respondents were engaged in farming or agricultural work and they acquired less education qualification. This category comprised highest number of respondents with 67 respondents which was followed by 21.5 percent in student's category. 12.5 percent of the respondents was engaged in business and comprised 25 respondents, whereas 10.0 percent of the respondents were engaged in government services, which was followed by 9.0 percent unemployed, 5.0 percent were self-employed, 2.5 percent were engaged in private jobs and 6.0 percent were in 'others' category.

iv) Educational Qualification of the Respondents

The education level of the respondents is an important variable for empowerment. The highest 26 percent of the total respondents was in 'matriculation' category who have passed 10th standard. 20.0 percent of the respondents was in 'under-matric' category while 18.0 percent were in 'post graduate and above'

category. 16.5 percent of the total respondents was graduates whereas 16.0 percent of the respondents were illiterate. However, 3.5 percent of the respondents were in 'under-graduate' category and were continuing their study.

v) Marital Status of the Respondents

The marital status of the respondents was classified into two sections i.e. married and unmarried. According to the survey, 63.0 percent of the total respondents were married consisting of 126 respondents, whereas 37.0 percent of them were unmarried. It shows that more married people were interested to listen to radio programmes in villages.

vi) Income of the Respondents

The annual income of the respondents has been classified into five sections i.e. No Specific Income, Rs.30-50 thousand, Rs.51-60 thousand, Rs.61-99 thousand and Rs.1 lakh and above. 37.0 percent of the total respondents comprising 74 respondents were in 'No Specific Income' category. This category consist of students, unemployed and housewives. 29.0 percent of the respondents were earning Rs.61-99 thousand annually which constitute 58 respondents, followed by 27.5 percent earning Rs. 51-60 thousand, 4.5 percent had income in between 1 lakh and above and 2.0 percent earned Rs.30-50 thousand.

7.2 Respondents' Ownership of Radio Set

The data show that 76.0 percent of the total respondents which constitute 152 respondents owned radio set in their house, whereas 24.0 percent of the respondents did not own radio set. According to the data, it can be concluded that the villagers were more depended on radio for information. The data indicate that 100 percent of the respondents listened to radio programmes, irrespective of whether they owned personal radio set or not.

7.3 Respondents' Preferred Language on Radio

The data indicate that 61.5 percent of the total respondents which constituted 123 respondents preferred local dialects or language on radio, whereas 34.0 percent of the respondents, which

amounts to 68 respondents prefer Hindi language on radio. 4.5 percent respondents prefer English language. Thus, we can say that many people live in rural areas like radio programmes because most of the radio programmes broadcast in their own mother tongue.

7.4 Respondents' Access to Information from Media

The findings reveal that the respondent villagers were not using newspapers to access any kind of information in their area. 98.5 percent of the total respondents had access to radio for information while 1.5 percent of them said they did not listen to radio for informational purpose. Thus, on the basis of these data we can say that radio is popular in rural areas for accessing any kind of information on different issues. 62.0 percent of the total respondents consisting of 124 respondents had access to television for information, whereas 38.0 percent of the respondents did not have access to television for any kind of information. Only 32.5 percent of the respondents could access Internet for informational purpose whereas 67.5 percent of the respondents could not access Internet for information. Hence, on the basis of these data, it can be said that the Adi Community in the villages of East Siang district were using less Internet for accessing information.

7.5 Respondents' Radio Listening Patterns

i) Respondents' Listening to AIR Pasighat and AIR Itanagar

According to the survey, 56.0 percent of the total respondents listened to All India Radio, Pasighat for different kinds of programmes, whereas 44.0 percent of the respondents did not listen to AIR Pasighat. 81.0 percent of the total respondents listened to All India Radio, Itanagar, whereas 19.0 percent respondents did not listen to AIR Itanagar. Hence, from the data we can say that the radio programmes broadcast from AIR Itanagar were listened more by the people living in rural areas.

ii) Respondents' Listening to Radio Programmes

Table-1: Respondents' Listening to Radio Programmes

Types of Radio Programmes	Frequency	Percent
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News Bulletin and Dialect News	150	75.0
Talk Shows on social issues	108	54.0
Women related programmes	99	49.5
Purpose of listening radio is to Keep themselves updated	115	57.5

According to the survey, 75.0 percent of the total respondents comprising 150 respondents listened to news bulletins and dialect news in radio, while 25.0 percent respondents did not listen to news bulletins in radio. 54.0 percent of the total respondents amounting to 108 respondents listened to talk shows on social issues in radio, while 46.0 percent of them constituting 92 respondents did not listen to such programmes in radio. The data indicates that 49.5 percent of the total respondents, which constitutes 99 respondents were active listeners of women related programmes broadcast from radio, whereas 50.5 percent which constitutes 101 respondents did not listen to such programmes in radio. From the above data, we can say that though there was less number of listeners of women programmes, there were women in villages who think women status

should be uplifted for overall development of the family.

57.5 percent of the total respondents were accessing radio programmes to update themselves whereas 42.5 percent respondents said they did not access radio to update but either for entertainment, knowledge or time pass.

7.6 Role of Radio in Creating Awareness Among Women

Each form of mass media plays a key role in creating awareness among the people about issues and problems. Radio as a powerful medium of mass communication creates awareness about different issues among women through various programmes.

Table-2: Radio Programmes in Creating Awareness Among women

Response	Frequency	Percent
Radio progs create awareness on social and cultural issues	164	82.0
Radio progs benefits on education sector	84	42.0
Radio progs like Mahila Jagat benefits village women in their empowerment	186	93.0
Radio's role to bring change in traditional dressing pattern among women folk in villages	36	18.0
Radio helps in changing practice of festivals celebration enhancing women's participation in such celebrations	198	99.0
Radio progs brought awareness about hygiene and sanitation and women plays lead role to bring these changes in villages	199	99.5
Radio progs on agri-horticulture help women farmers to improve their production	172	86.0

As per the data, 82.0 percent of the respondents (164 respondents) agreed that radio programmes created awareness on social and cultural issues of society, whereas only 18.0 percent of the respondents did not agree with the statement. Hence, based on the above data, we can say that majority of the respondents in rural areas believed that radio programmes helped in creating awareness on social and cultural issues. The data indicate that 58.0 percent (116 respondents) disagreed with the statement that radio programmes benefits the education sector in rural areas, while 42.0 percent of the

respondents agreed with the statement. Hence, we can say that, only 42 percent of the respondents thought different radio programmes benefited in education sector in villages.

The data indicate that 93.0 percent (186 respondents) agreed with the statement that different radio programmes based on women benefited village women to empower themselves in all aspects, whereas 7.0 percent of them were neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement as they were in 'Cannot Say' category. The above data also show that 18.0

percent of the respondents agreed with this statement that the radio plays an important role to bring change in traditional dressing pattern among women in villages. 23.0 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 59.0 percent (118 respondents) fall under 'cannot say' category. Based on the above data, we can say that radio plays a little role in changing traditional dressing patterns among women in villages.

The data indicate that 99.0 percent (198 respondents) agreed with the statement that the practice of celebrating traditional festivals was changing and women's participation was more in such celebrations, whereas only 1 percent of them were neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

99.5 percent of the total respondents comprising 199 respondents agreed with the statement that radio programmes based on hygiene and sanitation brought awareness about hygiene and sanitation in the villages and women played a lead role to bring these changes. Only 0.5 percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The data show that 86.0 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that radio programme based on agri-horticultural production helped women farmers to improve their production in villages, whereas 14.0 percent of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Thus, based on the above data, we can say that radio

programmes helped women farmers in villages to improve their economic status and financially empowered them in the society. The data also indicate that 86.0 percent of the total respondents agreed with the statement that radio was the most influential tool for socio-cultural empowerment of women especially in villages, whereas 5.0 percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement. 9.0 percent of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

The data show that 71.0 percent (142 respondents) agreed with the statement that the issues related to women were appropriately addressed in radio programmes, whereas 9.5 percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement. 19.5 percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

7.7 Respondents' Perceptions about Radio

People have their own perceptions about mass media including radio. They may have perceptions about radio in terms of its role in disseminating information crucial for a society, educating and entertaining the masses. The respondents were asked about their perceptions about radio. Their responses are given in the table below.

Table-3: Respondents' Perception about Radio

Response	Frequency	Percent
Radio is an important tool in society	76	38.0
Radio creates awareness about govt. schemes	73	36.5
Radio is Govt mouthpiece	26	13.0
Radio helps in preserving culture	25	12.5
Radio is most influential tool for socio-cultural empowerment of women	172	86.0
Women related issues addressed in Radio Progs	142	71.0
Radio as credible source of information	197	98.5
Radio as main factor for Growth in the status of women in your society	200	100.0

The data in the above table show that 38.0 percent of the total respondents thought that radio was an important tool in society, whereas 36.5 percent of them said radio create awareness about government schemes. 13.0 percent of the respondents believed that radio was a government mouth piece while 12.5 percent of the respondents said radio helped in preserving

local culture of a tribe. Referring from the above data, we can consider that radio still occupies a vital place in society especially in rural areas to disseminate information to rural masses.

98.5 percent of the total respondents considered radio as the most credible source of information especially in rural areas, whereas only 1.5 percent

respondents did not agree with the statement. Hence, from the above data, it is clear that majority of the respondents in rural areas believed that radio disseminates different kinds of information. According to the data, 100 percent of the respondents noticed that there was a steady growth in all aspects in the status of women in society, especially in rural areas. They were of the view that women in today's society shoulder the responsibility of their male counterpart in almost all fields including farming, business, etc. 100 percent of the respondents agreed that radio was a factor for the steady growth in the status of women in rural areas besides other mass media. According to the data, it is clear that the role of radio is vital to raise women's status among rural masses.

8. RADIO AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Recognizing less participation of women folk in different developmental activities, the All India Radio allocated time chunks exclusively for women programmes that aims to provide information, entertainment and to educate women folk of their rights. Various programmes on issues of working women, their legal rights and gender equality, reproductive health, nutrition, education of children etc. were relayed from AIR stations across the nation. Besides relaying women related national programmes, AIR Itanagar and Pasihat also broadcast Weekly Talk Show- Aaj ka Mehmaan, wherein exclusive interviews were conducted with renowned women personalities like Taba Yall Nabam, legendry artist (21-03-2021, 8 pm), Dr. Bengia Mala Ko- lead actress of Mera Dharam Meri Maa, first feature film from Arunachal Pradesh (21-03-2021, 7 pm), Biki Para- senior artist (14-03-2021, 7 pm) and Radhilu Chai- Chairperson Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (08-03-2021). AIR Itanagar also relay jingles/spots on various government schemes to empower women like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre, Women Helpline, UJJAWALA, Mahila Police Volunteers, Mahila Shakti Kendras etc.

Highlighting the positive role of a women in tribal society, AIR Itanagar had also conducted exclusive interviews with women achievers who were successful in making quality of life better for themselves and those around them. Some of the women achievers who have broken

gender barriers and make the state proud in different fields of politics, arts, social work, etc. are Ponung Doming- first female Lieutenant Colonel from Arunachal Pradesh, Anshu Jamsenpa- an Indian mountaineer and the first women in the world to scale the summit of Mount Everest twice in a season, Jaweplu Chai- first female judge from the state, Tongam Rina- journalist and human rights activist, Ngurang Meena- social worker, Mamang Dai- a poet, novelist and journalist. In 2017, Mamang Dai was conferred the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel 'The Black Hill'.

Many such inspirational stories like that of Phil Yoyum- manufactures handmade soap, Joram Rosy- gives training on pottery making, Minami Apang- designer and several other females would definitely motivate young girls and women across Arunachal Pradesh. They become the role models for many women who want to stand independent in life. In this context, radio has been working as a catalyst for women empowerment as it explores the potentiality of each and every hardworking woman to achieve their goals.

Considering radio as one of the most influential tool for empowerment of women in villages, majority of the respondents believed that different women related radio programmes including mahila jagat, talk shows on women achievers, spots and jingles on promoting women rights like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre, Women Helpline, UJJAWALA, Mahila police Volunteers, Mahila Shakti Kendras etc. were very effective which were specifically designed to cater to village women in their own dialects or languages. Also, the issues of the village women were appropriately addressed in All India Radio in various programme formats.

9. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN VILLAGES

Women empowerment in villages can be achieved in various aspects of rural life. Women participation is more in eradicating social menace in society, in preserving mother tongue and in increasing average age of girls for marriage etc. The respondents were asked about these aspects and their responses are shown in the table below.

Table-4: Women Empowerment in Villages

Response	Frequency	Percent
Women participation is more in eradicating social menace in society	26	13.0
Women participation is more in preserving mother tongue	196	98.0
Average age of marriage for female should be above 20 years	132	66.0

The data show that 46.5 percent of the total respondents which constituted 93 respondents disagreed with the statement that the women's participation was more in eradicating social menace in society. They were of the view that radio programmes had helped a lot in eradicating social menace like drugs and alcohol in society but the participation of women in this regard was not higher in comparison to their male counterparts. Only 13.0 percent of the respondents agreed with this opinion whereas, 40.5 percent of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The data indicate that 98.0 percent of the total respondents, which constituted 196 respondents agreed with the statement that women participation was more in preserving mother tongue in villages, whereas only 2.0 percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. From the above data it can be inferred that women in villages were more concerned to make their children learn their own mother tongue despite the popularity of Hindi and English languages.

According to the survey, 66.0 percent of the total respondents, which constituted 132 respondents were of the view that the average age of marriage for a female should be above 20 years, whereas 34.0 percent respondents were of the view that the perfect age of marriage of a girl should be above 20 years. From the above data it can be inferred that the people in rural areas were changing their mind-sets toward girl child. The system of child marriage is almost nil in villages now a days. They want to empower their girl child in society by providing them with quality education.

10. MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study include the fact that radio is popular among villagers of East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh for accessing any kind of information on different issues. 76.0 percent of the respondents owned radio sets in villages of East Siang district and 100 percent of the respondents listened to radio

programmes though they did not own personal radio sets. The study reveal that radio is still occupies a vital place in rural areas as 38 percent of the population are of the view that radio is an important tool in society, whereas 36 percent people says radio help to create awareness about government schemes. It is also considered as most credible source of information in rural areas and they were more depended on radio for information in comparison to other medium of mass communication.

Another major finding is that majority of the respondents listened to All India Radio Itanagar in comparison to All India Radio Pasighat. While 75 percent of the population preferred listening radio for news bulletins or dialect news, only 54 percent women preferred listening talk shows on social issues. Though there was less number of listeners of women programmes, there were women in the villages who said that women's status should be uplifted for overall development of the society. It could be inferred that the majority of the village women opted radio for accessing information as 98.5 percent of the total respondents listened to radio for information purpose. The respondents were of the view that radio programmes should be prepared in local dialects or languages so as to understand it easily by villagers and also to preserve their own mother tongue. They believed that different radio programmes help in creating awareness on social and cultural issues of society.

The respondents had noticed a steady growth in all aspects in the status of women in society, especially in rural areas. They were of the view that women in today's society shoulder the responsibility of their male counterparts in almost all fields including farming, business, etc. whereas, all the respondents agreed that radio played a key role in the steady growth in the status of women in rural areas besides other mass media. They were of the view that, women's participation was more in traditional festival celebrations and they also performed equal responsibilities in such programmes.

Since women were more concern with hygiene and sanitation, 99 percent of them were of the view that women played a lead role to bring awareness about hygiene and sanitation in villages and bring changes in this field. On the other hand, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that radio programme on agri-horticulture production helped women farmers to improve their production, thus indirectly helping them to improve their economic status thereby financially empowering themselves in society.

Another major finding is that women in villages are more concerned to make their children learn their own mother tongue despite the popularity of Hindi and English languages as 98 percent of the respondents said that women participation was more in preserving mother tongue in villages. As the people in rural areas were changing their mind-sets toward girl child, the system of child marriage was almost nil in villages now a days. They want to empower their girl child in society by providing them good quality education as majority of respondents were of the view that the average age of marriage for a female should be above 20 years. On the issue of social menace, the rural women respondents were of the view that radio programmes had helped a lot in eradicating social menace like drugs and alcohol in society but the participation of women in this regard was not higher when compared to their male counterparts.

II. CONCLUSION

The status of women in any society is a matter of concern. As most of the women who live in rural areas are not aware of their rights, so it becomes a challenging task to empower them with their rights and power. Though mass media

is vital in disseminating such information to nook and corners but one cannot ignore the significant role of radio in spreading information to rural masses on various women related issues. Radio being one of the cheapest mass media of communication, rural people still rely on it for any kind of information. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that mass media in general and radio in particular have been creating awareness about women issues and rights through women-specific programmes thereby promoting women empowerment in the society. While the level of importance given to women issues has been directly or indirectly decided by the kind of mass media, the All India Radio Itanagar and All India Radio Pasighat have been playing a key role in women empowerment in tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh since their inceptions. Women related radio programmes broadcast from AIR Itanagar and AIR Pasighat definitely benefit the village women in some or other ways thereby promoting women empowerment in tribal society particularly the Adi women of East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, radio (AIR Itanagar and AIR Pasighat) has been working as a catalyst for women empowerment and explore the potentiality of every women to achieve their goals. Along with changes in media exposure and usage patterns, the status of tribal women in rural areas of Arunachal Pradesh has been undergoing transformations enabling them to contribute to the overall development of the society. It helps the women to break the gender barrier and stand independently in society.

Notes and References