

The Role of 'Mann Ki Baat' in Enhancing Community Development among Tribal Communities: A Study

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the role of the popular radio program 'Mann Ki Baat', hosted by the Prime Minister of India, in promoting the development and empowerment of tribal communities across the country. The program has become a vital medium of mass communication, reaching remote areas where other forms of media often fail. It plays a unique role in addressing the concerns of marginalized groups, including tribal populations, by highlighting their culture, success stories, and developmental challenges. Through regular episodes, 'Mann Ki Baat' shares information about health care, education, digital literacy, environmental protection, and employment opportunities relevant to tribal communities.

One of the key strengths of the program is its ability to connect emotionally with the listeners using simple language and relatable stories. By featuring tribal achievers and their contributions to society, the program not only inspires individuals but also promotes pride in tribal identity. It encourages listeners to participate in government schemes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, and digital inclusion initiatives. These messages create awareness, increase civic engagement, and build confidence among tribal people to actively contribute to their own community's progress.

Overall, 'Mann Ki Baat' serves as an effective tool for bridging the communication gap between the government and tribal communities. It strengthens the relationship between citizens and the state, promotes inclusive development, and motivates tribal populations towards self-reliance and sustainable growth.

Keywords: Mann Ki Baat, tribal development, community empowerment, government schemes, media communication, rural awareness, motivation, tribal welfare, inclusive growth, success stories, cultural identity

INTRODUCTION:

India is home to one of the world's largest tribal populations, with over 700 officially recognized tribal communities living across various regions of the country. These communities, deeply rooted in indigenous knowledge systems, cultural heritage, and traditional practices, have historically resided in remote and forested areas, often disconnected from mainstream society. Despite decades of government efforts and development programs aimed at improving their conditions, many tribal populations continue to face challenges in accessing quality education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and basic infrastructure. In such a context, effective communication becomes a crucial bridge to connect these marginalized communities with the state, promote awareness, and encourage active participation in the development process.

One of the most impactful and inclusive communication initiatives in recent years is 'Mann Ki Baat', the monthly radio broadcast hosted by the Prime Minister of India, launched in October 2014. The program was conceived as a means of engaging directly with citizens across the country, sharing updates on government policies, raising awareness about social issues, and showcasing inspiring stories of ordinary people who bring about change in their communities. While not targeted specifically at any one demographic, 'Mann Ki Baat'

has increasingly highlighted the voices, struggles, achievements, and aspirations of India's tribal population. Its strength lies in its simplicity, emotional resonance, and widespread reach—especially in areas where access to television, internet, or newspapers may be minimal or entirely absent.

Radio continues to be one of the most accessible and reliable forms of media in India's remote tribal regions. Unlike digital platforms, radio does not depend on literacy, expensive devices, or internet connectivity, making it a perfect medium for disseminating information to tribal populations. '*Mann Ki Baat*' leverages this strength by delivering content in clear, relatable language, often featuring translated versions through regional All India Radio stations. This accessibility ensures that tribal listeners receive not only general messages of national interest but also information relevant to their local context, cultural identity, and development needs.

Over the years, the program has spotlighted a variety of stories that celebrate tribal life—ranging from women entrepreneurs working in the food processing sector, to students from Eklavya Model Residential Schools achieving academic milestones, and community groups engaged in water conservation and afforestation drives. These stories serve as motivational tools, encouraging other members of tribal communities to recognize their own potential, take pride in their cultural roots, and actively contribute to local development. They also help correct the lack of representation that tribal communities often face in mainstream media, providing visibility and validation on a national platform.

In addition to showcasing inspiring stories, '*Mann Ki Baat*' plays a strategic role in creating awareness about key government schemes tailored to tribal welfare, such as the Van Dhan Yojana, Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana, and various skill development initiatives. These schemes, while robust in design, often fall short in execution due to gaps in communication and community outreach. By highlighting such programs in an emotionally engaging and easy-to-understand format, '*Mann Ki Baat*' enhances their reach and effectiveness, empowering tribal listeners with the knowledge and confidence needed to access these resources.

The program's inclusive, courteous, and emotionally compelling tone is another important feature. The program fosters a sense of national pride, belonging, and trust in public institutions by showcasing tribal traditions, celebrations, and contributions on national stages. This strategy promotes inclusive growth and sustainable development by giving tribal communities a sense of recognition, respect, and inclusion in the larger Indian story.

This study aims to examine how '*Mann Ki Baat*' supports the development of tribal communities in India through motivational storytelling, strategic information dissemination, and emotional inclusion. It explores how the program contributes to increasing awareness, promoting self-reliance, and strengthening civic participation among tribal populations. Ultimately, the research highlights the powerful role of media—particularly radio—as a tool for bridging divides, empowering marginalized communities, and advancing the vision of an inclusive, equitable, and united India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Stuti Saxena (2016), in the paper titled "*Mann Ki Baat: Radio as a Medium of Communication by the Indian Premier, Narendra Modi*," offers an insightful analysis of how the Prime Minister's radio program has redefined political communication in India. The study explores how *Mann Ki Baat* uses radio—a medium still widely accessible in rural and remote areas—as a strategic tool to directly engage with citizens, including marginalized and less literate populations. Saxena highlights the unique communication style of the program, which is characterized by informal language, emotional tone, and storytelling. This personalized approach helps create a sense of connection and trust between the speaker and the audience.

The paper also examines the thematic diversity of the program, which includes social issues, environmental concerns, public health, grassroots achievements, and national campaigns like Swachh Bharat and Beti Bachao. According to Saxena, this wide range of topics enhances the relevance of the program across different segments of society and promotes civic engagement. More importantly, the study positions *Mann Ki Baat* not just as a broadcast, but as an innovative governance tool that strengthens democratic dialogue, builds national identity, and fosters a participatory model of communication. This analysis provides a strong foundation for

understanding the broader impact of *Mann Ki Baat*, especially in contexts such as tribal and rural development, where traditional media often fails to connect with the people effectively.

Sonal Mobar Roy, C. Dheeraja, Digambar A. Chimankar, Anuradha Palla, Raj Kumar Pammi, and G. Narendra Kumar. (2023), in their study titled “Envisaging Development Through Amrit Sarovar’s: A Study of Mann Ki Baat Cases for Revamping Water Storage and Conservation,” discuss how the Mann Ki Baat radio program has helped create awareness about water conservation in rural India. The study focuses on the Amrit Sarovar initiative, which aims to develop and restore water bodies across the country. The authors show that the stories and examples shared in Mann Ki Baat have inspired people at the village level to take action. By sharing success stories of local communities working together to save water, the program has motivated other villages to do the same.

The Researcher explain that Mann Ki Baat is not only useful for spreading information about government schemes, but also helps people feel more responsible and involved in water conservation. The simple language and emotional appeal of the program help people understand the importance of saving water and change their behaviour. Roy, Sivakumar, Sahoo, and Kumar conclude that Mann Ki Baat has helped bring back traditional ways of managing water while also supporting modern development goals. Their research shows that when used in the right way, media like radio can be a powerful tool for encouraging community development and protecting the environment.

Research Gap:

- The existing studies do not focus on the specific impact of Mann Ki Baat on tribal communities in terms of identity, inclusion, and empowerment.
- They lack analysis of how the program influences awareness, behaviour, and participation in development among marginalized tribal populations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a quantitative content analysis approach to examine how *Mann Ki Baat* contributes to the development of tribal communities in Karnataka. The quantitative aspect involves a detailed content analysis of selected episodes of the program, specifically focusing on segments related to tribal issues, success stories, government schemes, and community development efforts. By systematically analysing the frequency and themes of references to tribal communities, this method will help quantify the extent to which the program addresses tribal concerns. This analysis will be useful in identifying patterns, communication strategies, and the role of Mann Ki Baat in raising awareness, promoting inclusion, and motivating participation among tribal populations.

Research Area:

The focus of this study is on the role of the Mann Ki Baat radio program in promoting the development of tribal communities in India. For this purpose, selected episodes of Mann Ki Baat that highlight tribal-related contentsuch as success stories, cultural references, government schemes, and community effortswill be analysed. The study will specifically focus on the representation and inclusion of tribal issues in the broadcast, and how these messages contribute to awareness, empowerment, and participation within tribal regions.

Sample:

For the purpose of this study, a few selected episodes of the *Mann Ki Baat* radio program that specifically highlight tribal communities were chosen for analysis. These episodes include references to tribal culture, success stories, government welfare schemes, and local development initiatives. The sample focuses only on the content where tribal-related issues are directly mentioned, aiming to understand how the program contributes to creating awareness, promoting inclusion, and supporting the development of tribal communities in India

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. Due to the time constraints, only 3 tribal issued episode taken
2. Due to the time constraints only February 23, 2025, April 30, 2023, May 26, 2024

Objectives:

- To understand how the program supports the development of tribal communities.
- To see how the program spreads awareness among tribal people.
- To know how 'Mann Ki Baat' motivates tribal communities for better living.

Data Analysis:

In this study, data analysis means carefully going through selected *Mann Ki Baat* episodes that talk about tribal communities. The content is studied to find common themes such as tribal success stories, cultural mentions, and government schemes. These points are grouped and explained in a simple way to understand how the program helps create awareness, supports development, and encourages tribal communities. This helps in drawing useful conclusions for the study.

Content Analysis:

Mann Ki Baat has become an important platform for sharing stories and messages with people across the country, including those in remote tribal areas. Through this content analysis, the study focuses on how the program presents issues related to tribal communities such as their culture, achievements, and development schemes. The aim is to understand how these messages are delivered, how often tribal topics are highlighted, and what kind of impact they may have on awareness and community participation. This analysis helps explore the role of media, especially radio, in connecting the government with tribal populations and promoting their development.

1. Mann Ki Baat program supports the development of tribal communities

1. April 30, 2023 – Community Water Conservation and the Amrit Sarovar Mission

Focus Area: Bilkerur Village, Bagalkot District, Karnataka Community Involved: Local tribal and rural communities (possibly including the Lambani community)

In the 100th episode, PM Modi celebrated the Amrit Sarovar Mission, focusing on the efforts of the people of Bilkerur village, where tribal and rural residents together rejuvenated drying water bodies. While no individual was named, the mention honours the community-led approach to water conservation in a semi-arid region of Karnataka.

Interesting Insights:

- Involvement of local youth and tribal farmers who voluntarily cleared silt, built bunds, and deepened ponds.
- Linked the initiative to employment under MGNREGA, improving livelihoods while serving the environment.
- It shows how traditional knowledge of water use is blending with government schemes to ensure sustainability.

May 26, 2024 – Tribal Women Entrepreneurs & Bamboo Craft Promotion

Communities Involved: Tribal women artisans from Chamarajanagar, Uttar Kannada, and Bastar (Chhattisgarh)

Products Mentioned: Eco-friendly bamboo products such as baskets, furniture, and daily utility items

While the episode didn't mention specific names, it lauded tribal women across states who are promoting bamboo-based livelihoods, connecting tribal traditions to modern markets. Many Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Karnataka, like those in Joida (Uttara Kannada) and Kollegal (Chamarajanagar), have received support under the Van Dhan Yojana.

Interesting Insights:

- PM Modi mentioned how these tribal women are turning “jungle ki daulat” (wealth of the forest) into income-generating products.
- The narrative encouraged using e-commerce platforms to sell local tribal goods across the country.
- The focus on sustainable products aligns with India's green development goals and climate responsibility.

February 23, 2025 – Soliga Tribe's Role in Wildlife Protection

Community Mentioned: Soliga Tribe, Biligiriranga Hills, Karnataka Notable Leaders: Kenchaiah and Madegowda (well-known members of the Soliga tribe who work to protect tribal rights and forests)

In this Mann Ki Baat episode, Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the Soliga tribal community for helping protect wildlife, especially in the Biligiriranga Swamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. Because of their efforts, the number of tigers and other wild animals in the forest has increased. The Soligas have lived in forests for a long time. Today, they help the government take care of the forests, thanks to the Forest Rights Act, 2006, which gives them legal rights to live and work in the forest.

Interesting Insights:

- The Soliga people believe the forest is holy and treat animals like family.
- PM Modi said their way of living peacefully with nature teaches everyone a good lesson about protecting the environment.
- They also collect plants from the forest for medicine in a way that doesn't harm nature. This shows how they take care of the forest while also earning a living.

Mann Ki Baat Program spreads awareness among tribal people

In the *Mann Ki Baat* episode aired on February 23, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about the Soliga tribal community from the Biligiriranga Swamy Temple(BRT) Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. He appreciated their work in protecting tigers and forests. The Soligas have lived in the forest for generations and follow eco-friendly traditions. By sharing their story on a national platform, the Prime Minister showed how tribal communities play a big role in saving the environment. This message helped other tribal people feel proud of their culture and made them aware that their traditional knowledge is valuable to the whole country.

In the episode aired on April 30, 2023, PM Modi shared the success of Bilkerur village in Bagalkot district, Karnataka, under the Amrit Sarovar Mission. In this village, tribal and rural people worked together to clean and refill water ponds that had dried up. This helped solve water problems in the area. The Prime Minister used this example to show how simple efforts by people can make a big difference. By sharing this story, the

program created awareness about water conservation, teamwork, and using government schemes to improve villages. It also motivated other tribal communities to take part in similar work.

On May 26, 2024, the Prime Minister talked about tribal women who make bamboo items like baskets, furniture, and decorations. These women, from tribal regions including parts of Karnataka, use forest resources in a sustainable way to earn a living. PM Modi praised their hard work and encouraged people to support such eco-friendly products. He also said that these women are helping India become self-reliant by using local materials. This story made tribal listeners aware of how their traditional skills can turn into business opportunities. It also showed that tribal women can become strong and independent with support from government schemes and self-help groups.

‘Mann Ki Baat’ motivates tribal communities for better living

In the February 23, 2025 episode, Prime Minister Modi praised the Soliga tribe of Karnataka for their dedicated efforts in wildlife conservation at the Biligiriranga Swamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve. The Soligas were recognized for living in harmony with nature and protecting forest animals like tigers. This motivated tribal communities by showing that their traditional lifestyle and knowledge are important to national goals. By giving them a platform, the program inspired pride in their culture and encouraged them to continue their eco-friendly practices with confidence.

In the April 30, 2023 episode, PM Modi shared the story of Bilkerur village in Bagalkot district, Karnataka, where local tribal and rural communities worked together to revive dried-up water bodies under the Amrit Sarovar Mission. This success story showed how people at the grassroots level can bring change by taking part in development programs. It motivated tribal communities by showing that their participation in local efforts can improve daily life, solve water problems, and create a cleaner environment. It also encouraged them to take leadership roles in their own development.

In the May 26, 2024 episode, PM Modi highlighted the work of tribal women artisans who were making eco-friendly bamboo products. These women turned their traditional skills into income, helping their families and communities. The episode motivated other tribal women by showing that self-reliance is possible with small steps, and that the government supports such efforts through schemes like Van Dhan Yojana and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). It also encouraged the use of local resources in a sustainable way to improve economic conditions.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly shows that Mann Ki Baat plays a powerful role in supporting the development and empowerment of tribal communities in India. Through its wide reach, simple language, and emotional storytelling, the program brings attention to tribal culture, achievements, and challenges that are often ignored in mainstream media. By highlighting inspiring stories, such as the Soliga tribe's efforts in forest conservation, community-led water projects in Bilkerur village, and bamboo-based entrepreneurship by tribal women, the program not only creates awareness but also motivates tribal people to take pride in their identity and take part in development.

Mann Ki Baat spreads useful information about government schemes like Van Dhan Yojana and Amrit Sarovar, helping tribal listeners understand the opportunities available to them. It also builds confidence and encourages participation in local development. The show connects tribal communities to the larger national conversation, giving them recognition and a sense of belonging.

Overall, the program acts as a bridge between the government and tribal communities. It motivates them to improve their lives through better awareness, self-reliance, and community action. This shows that radio can still be a powerful tool for social change, especially in remote and underserved areas. Mann Ki Baat stands as a unique example of how inclusive communication can support tribal welfare, promote cultural respect, and contribute to India's goal of inclusive and sustainable development.

FINDINGS:

- Mann Ki Baat helps in spreading awareness among tribal communities by using simple and relatable stories in the local language.
- The program has highlighted tribal contributions, such as the Soliga tribe's work in forest and wildlife protection in Karnataka.
- It has promoted community participation by sharing success stories like Bilkerur village's water conservation efforts under the Amrit Sarovar Mission.
- Tribal women entrepreneurs have been appreciated in the program for making bamboo-based products, motivating others to start similar work.
- The program encourages the use of government schemes like Van Dhan Yojana and MGNREGA by informing tribal communities about their benefits.
- Radio is an effective medium for reaching tribal populations who live in remote areas with limited internet or TV access.
- The emotional and respectful tone of the program builds trust and helps tribal people feel included in national development.
- Mann Ki Baat promotes tribal identity and pride by recognizing their culture, skills, and traditional knowledge.
- It serves as a platform to connect government messages with people who are often left out of mainstream communication channels.
- The selected episodes show that tribal-related content is present, but not frequent, indicating the need for more focused coverage.
- The program motivates tribal youth and women to take leadership roles and become more self-reliant.
- Overall, Mann Ki Baat acts as a bridge between the government and tribal communities, helping in spreading awareness, increasing participation, and encouraging development.

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