

**A Study to Assess the Impact of the
Community Radio Station on the
Panchayats in Mewat**

**Submitted by: Seeking Modern Applications for
Rural Transformation (SMART)**

Introduction:

India reached a crucial milestone when it adopted the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and introduced three-tiered Panchayati Raj system to support governance at the grassroots level. Given the landscape of the country and multitude of villages, it was a significant decision that not only aimed at democratizing local administration but also bringing about developmental changes. It also sought to empower women by reserving at least one-third of the seats meant for direct election of members at each Panchayat for them.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution are said to have impacted over 600 million Indian people in 500,000 villages. Interestingly the percentage of women at various levels of political activity has risen from a dismal 4-5% to 25-40% recently.

Several civil entities and non-government organisations (NGOs) have been playing a critical role in sensitising people in the rural areas about Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), the Gram Sabha and the advantages. These NGOs have been using ICE – information, communication and education – initiatives to engage with the village community and make them partners in the implementation process. One of the successful ICE channels has been the community radio, which is being used to reach out to audiences in underprivileged areas by involving members of the community in the sustainability of their programme. This received a much-needed push from the telecom revolution that put mobile phones in the hands of masses, enabling them to listen to radio on their handsets apart from transistors. Expanding the user base exponentially!

As per Mr. Abhilaksh Likhi, IAS, who was doing a research on the communication and development, “Democratization of the communication process in rural areas through community driven tools such as community radio is an emerging area of focus yet to be fully unearthed.”

In Mewat, there are over 300 PRIs. This district, in the Indian state of Haryana is predominantly rural, with a population of 12, 00,000 inhabiting 532 villages in six blocks. The economic livelihood is dependent on agriculture or agro-based activities.

Despite its proximity to the capital, and the relative wealth of the rest of Haryana, Mewat has lagged behind in almost every area of development – the average family size is 7.5, 62% of households are living below the poverty line, and the literacy rate is around 54%

- even lower for women at only 37%. Lack of information about government policies among the people is one of the reasons for such impairment in the region. In addition, there have been irregularities in the implementation of government schemes as well as in the creation of infrastructure in terms of health, education, sanitation and hygiene.

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), set up in 2005 in Haryana, in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, still has a long way to go in order to meet its targets in the state. The health delivery system needs to be made more responsive to the health care needs of the people. This calls for the participation of local communities which can be very effective if driven through PRIs. But PRIs themselves need to implement Gram Sabhas to draw attention towards government policies and schemes besides addressing governance issues at that level.

The government reports repeatedly emphasise the need to forge a partnership and set up a platform for involving the Panchayati Raj institutions and community in the management of primary health programmes and infrastructure. There also has been a pro-poor focus, a bottoms-up planning approach, an effort to increase people's participation and decentralisation of services for better accountability. However, most of this exists only on paper in Mewat.

Although the Constitution of India guarantees equal rights for all, women continue to face serious barriers and constraints in their daily lives. Being a conservative and patriarchal society, Mewat generally perceives women as inferior to men. As a result, they face inequity in almost all spheres of life. They have restricted mobility and their access to resources and services such as health, education, employment and income is subject to consent from men. Their public roles are negligible and are generally not allowed to step into positions of leadership within the community. Even in reserved seats of the Panchayat, women when elected do not play any role in governance. The concept of *Pradhanpati* is common and the husband, father, son or brother-in-law, handles all issues.

While the region has seen an increase in women's participation - on the face of it - in the PRIs, it is lack of awareness, illiteracy, ignorance and economic hardships that have defeated the very purpose of them being elected in the Panchayats. There is a lack of understanding of their roles, responsibility and engagement with the community. Not just this, involvement of the representatives of all castes, communities and segments of society in the decision making process is also missing. An effective implementation of the government schemes could bring about a change only if the Gram Sabha functions as desired and the Panchayats form the requisite number of 'Gram Samitis' and other implementing and monitoring agencies.

Areas which need urgent attention in Mewat are training, capacity building, social auditing, development works and transparency, distribution of MNREGA cards and payment for work, among others. Participation of the community in the meetings and the ability to question needs to be inculcated in the people. There has been great dissatisfaction in the community regarding the implementation of government schemes

run/monitored and executed by the Panchayats, particularly the PDS, IAY TSC, MNREGA etc. To overcome some of these issues and to bring about awareness amongst the people about their roles and responsibilities in PRIs, SMART – an NGO working towards bringing socio-economic transformation in Mewat - implemented a five month intensive programme inclusive of extensive studies, group discussions and most importantly broadcasts through community radio – Radio Mewat - to reach out to as many people as possible and benefit them.

Project Summary:

After undertaking a series of developmental activities in Mewat over the years, SMART felt the need to educate the people about PRIs, their roles and responsibilities, and thereby, build synergies to bring inclusive growth in the region.

Since all developmental programmes of the government are to be implemented through Panchayats, SMART found a huge gap in their functioning, more so non-functioning in Mewat.

The NGO developed a three-pronged strategy spanning a little over five months (October 2012 – March 15, 2013) to gauge the level of awareness about PRIs among people, educate them and monitor the impact.

The key instruments SMART used to mobilise and sensitize people were:

- The community radio which recently received National Community Radio Award 2013 for innovative programming, and the Sustainability Award in 2012
- The format of narrow casting
- Focus group discussions

Information related to how Panchayats work, how to form committees, assure their effective implementation and how to reach out to the deprived and marginalized sections of society was disseminated through these channels.

Programmes on the same themes were broadcast on the community radio station, which was seen as a very effective communication medium that enabled greater mobilisation, participation and acceptance from people for the topic in the villages.

Two rounds of focus group discussions were held – one at the beginning of the project and the other towards the end. The NGO endeavoured to build pressure for Gram Sabha meetings through these discussions.

While the group discussions corroborated that there was a low level of awareness about PRIs, lack of accountability, among others, SMART found that most of this was led by

ignorance around the purpose and need for these institutions. Women, as expected, had almost negligible role to play.

The project began with a detailed survey of the people – segmented as the laymen, women and Panchayat members - in Mewat district that highlighted negligible understanding of importance of PRIs among them. This was conducted on a sample of 600 individuals and 10 groups of each segmented respondents from three blocks and 10 Panchayats of Mewat.

Post the dissemination of key information through Radio Mewat, SMART again undertook a survey among the same set of people. The survey findings showcased that Radio Mewat was successful in driving awareness around Panchayati Raj Institutions.

This leads us to believe that ICE channels like community radio can be extremely effective in reaching out to rural audiences, elevating knowledge around several government programmes and changing mindsets. It fulfills the objective of engaging people and making them partners in progress.

Along with on air activities, off air activities also play an important role in clarifying doubts, answering queries and in helping in the absorption of the information disseminated.

A sustained campaign will definitely increase awareness and change behaviours by instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability.

Timelines:

S. No.	Activity	Timeline
1	Questionnaire prepared for baseline survey	October 20-30, 2012
2	Questionnaire field-tested	November 2012 (2nd week)
3	Baseline survey	November 20-27, 2012
4	FGDs (1st round)	November 28-December 8, 2012
5	Available radio program broadcast	December 1, 2012 onwards
6	30 programmes created from recorded FGDs	December - January 2013
7	10 narrow casts (per month)	December - February 2013
8	Public meeting with key officials	January 2013
9	FGDs (2nd round)	February 2013
10	Endline survey	February/March, 2013

Names of Panchayats:

Sl. No.	Village	Panchayat	Block
1	Salamba	Salamba	Nuh
2	Norsehera	Norsehera	Nuh
3	Golpuri	Golpuri	Nuh
4	Gajarapur	Gajarpur	Nuh
5	Tain	Tain	Nuh
6	Mundheta	Mundheta	Punhana
7	Badali	Badali	Punhana
8	Bhadas	Bhadas	Nagina
9	Umra	Umra	Nagina
10	Rithat	Rithat	Nagina

Methodology Adopted:

The following underlines the activities undertaken as part of this project in brief:

- **Baseline Survey:**
 - A series of meetings were held with the people residing in the identified Panchayats to understand (October 1-15)
 - A questionnaire for the baseline survey was prepared in October (October 20th-30th)
 - The field testing of this questionnaire was done in the second week of November 2012
 - Changes were incorporated and the copies of the questionnaire were prepared. Field workers for conducting the survey were identified
 - The field survey was conducted from November 20-27, 2012
- **Focus Group Discussions:**
 - Over 500 people were approached in each of the Panchayats
 - These discussions were organised after the survey for over a period of 10 days
 - They were completed with different groups simultaneously in the same Panchayats and the data was collected
 - FGDs were recorded and 30 programmes for Radio Mewat were prepared in the next two months
- **Community Radio:**
 - Available radio programmes (pre-packaged) were broadcast from December 1, 2012
 - Every month 10 narrow casts were organised and were followed by discussions

- In each of the Panchayats at least 3 discussions were held in different locations
 - Pressure was built for Gram Sabha meetings, Sarpanches were interviewed and asked as to why committees and meetings were not formed and organised.
 - Radio Mewat became a platform for commitments and recording of grievances.
 - An event titled ‘Empowering Panchayats’ was held on January 8, 2013 and was chaired by Secretary , MoPR and was attended by the Ms Rashmi Shukla, Joint Secretary, MoPr , Ms Neerja Shekhar, Joint Secretary, MoPR , Ms Monica, Addl Director, Department of Panchayati Raj, Haryana and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mewat. The purpose of the event was to highlight the lack of information and understanding of the purpose and functioning of PRIs and also to provide a platform for understanding the system.
 - A mid-term review (informal) was held and the anchors on the radio stations engaged every night with listeners and callers on the functioning of the Panchayats
 - Discussions were recorded
- **End line Survey:**
 - In February, the work began on the end line questionnaire
 - The team carried out the end line survey from February 22, 2013. The data was collated by March 7, 2013.
 - The researcher analyzed the data and the report is being submitted for record.
 - **The overall outreach and general impact**
 - Overall, interactions with over 10,000 people in each of the Panchayats were held. Some Panchayat members were positive and willing to follow the rules, whereas some just refused to cooperate.

The activities mentioned above are captured in detail below:

Baseline survey:

Objective: Analyze awareness level among laymen, members of Panchayat and women in the district of Mewat around of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Research Methodology: A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out in order to investigate the current awareness of Panchayati Raj Institutions among the people of 20th district of Haryana state i.e. Mewat. The survey instrument was designed to obtain the data for this study in the District of Mewat. This study is more empirical in nature based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data pertaining to the present study was collected from the authentic reports on

PRIs of central and state government. To collect primary data, a well structured questionnaire was distributed with close-ended and open-ended questions among respondents. Convenient sampling method was applied. Although district comprises Nuh, Taoru, Nagina, Firozpur Jhirka and Punhana blocks, 431 villages and 297 Panchayats. But a sample was framed for the study of Mewat district. The survey was conducted in the three blocks and ten Panchayats of Mewat districts among 600 individual and 10 groups of each segmented respondents. The name of those three blocks are Nuh, Punhana, Nagina and the name of those ten Panchayats are Golpuri , Tain, Gajarpur , Mundheta , Rithat, Salamba ,Umra, Norsehera , Bhadas and Badali.

For data analysis, the study used descriptive statistical analysis and bar chart using the statistical software to describe the sample. Descriptive statistical analyses are based on frequencies and standard deviation. Usually researcher has focused on the highest frequencies obtained. The questionnaires (annexure 1) were divided for three segments of respondents i.e. members of Panchayat, layman and women candidates. Two hundred respondents and ten groups of segmented respondents from each selected segment were chosen for the analysis of current awareness of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Mewat district. Different segments were chosen to find the exact picture of awareness of PRIs in the district of Mewat.

Discussion and Analysis

As per the census of 2011, Average literacy rate of Mewat in 2011 was 56.10 % compared to 43.50 % of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 73.00 % and 37.60 % respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 61.20 % and 23.90 %. There is indeed a remarkable increase in the literacy rate.

- **Segmentation I: Analysis of Layman (Aam jan)**

Elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions are a stepping-stone in the direction of good governance. Free, fair, peaceful and participatory election processes ensure that people elect those candidates of their choice who can become responsive and accountable leaders of Panchayats later.

The Study of Layman shows that most of the respondents of the study consider Panchayati Raj Institutions as an opportunity to rule over the village by the people from the village itself, to take control over the village, to meet the local needs of rural communities and to ensure participation of rural communities in governing the village. It has been observed that if Sarpanch is a female candidate; In that case works were handled as per the directions of husband while very few respondents support the view that female candidates work individually and independently. Majority felt that she should work together with the husband. When researchers tried to find out at least three reasons why

female Sarpanch are not effective, the first and second reasons were that women do not know much about the Panchayat and women don't have knowledge of outside works respectively. The Third reason reflected a mixed result, The two points raised were that the spouse can manage the responsibilities better and that no one would listen to a woman as she has no say in development.

When open ended questions were asked in relation to *information and awareness on role & responsibility of Panchayat* to the layman, very mixed results were obtained. There was little clarity on role of Panchayat in education, sanitation, hygiene, infrastructure development etc. However all construction works like roads, buildings etc., were taken to be the Panchayat's work. Regarding the three qualities that should be inherent in the Sarpanch that the community elects there was a clear majority who said that the Sarpanch should be educated, sensible and one who will be capable of directing the village on the path of development respectively. A big portion agreed that women can be better Sarpanch. Many did not know the woman Sarpanch while some said they did not know that they had a female Sarpanch because they actually voted for a male candidate.

Villagers did not know that the Panchayat was accountable to them and had to report about the work done to the Gram Sabha. Most of them seem to be happy with the performance of the Panchayat and expressed satisfaction. Many of the respondents expressed their concern that they were not kept in the loop and did not know about the activities undertaken by the elected members. They expressed a desire to know about the fund allocation and how it was spent. They were interested in the social audit but did not know how to do the same. They felt that every villager was curious about the functioning of the Panchayat and were aware that it was their right to ask and make the Panchayat accountable.

As far as *information and awareness on Gram Sabha* was concerned, people either did not know about the meetings of the Gram Sabha or they were not organized till date. As per the respondents, even if Gram Sabha was organized sometimes, people did not know about the number of participants. Most of the times, the respondents were not aware about the number of times Gram Sabha met so far. Women did not participate in the meetings of Gram Sabha and if sometimes they did, they did not express their thoughts or share suggestions in Panchayat. Some of the prominent reasons for their passive participation were: it is not considered favourable to attend Gram Sabha meetings; they do not get spare time due to the work at home and lastly, how would women go when even men are not going for the meetings.

In case of *awareness of government schemes and equitable distribution of resources*, a majority of the survey participants was not aware about the employment given by Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). On the other hand, some people indicated that a few villagers were employed under the MGNREGS but shared that the Gram Sabha

does not launch any awareness campaign. Panchayat did not construct any toilet, nor placed any garbage box in the village and that no healthcare and cleanliness samiti was constituted.

There were close variances when asked about the visit of ANM sister in the village. A mixed results of yes, no and do not know were recorded but around 35% respondents agreed about the visit of ANM sister in the village. Usually there was no vehicle arrangement for transferring serious patients to hospitals. Panchayat does not constitute any village education committee and the schools in villages have no distilled water. The participants responded in positive about existence of an Anganvadi centre in the village.

When the participants were asked about the distance (kms) they had to travel to work – with regards to the MGNREGS – they were not aware about it. Mixed results of percentages were found when participants were asked about the name of those who can vote on the decisions of Panchayat. While some said Panchayat members and villagers, a few respondents said that they don't know about it. People knew that if Sarpanch did not call a meeting of the Gram Sabha, a complaint can be made in District Panchayat. About 40% respondents said that children get vaccination in the village and around 25% replied in negative on the same. More than 45% respondents agreed that no rural health committee is constituted in their Panchayat. The respondents were also asked about the schedule of mid-day meal. This received almost equal percentages of responses for daliya, sweet rice, salted rice and bakli. Amongst these, daliya received most replies.

Most of the villagers did not know about any special exemption to start a business for scheduled caste, backward class and weaker sections of the society in the village.

- **Segmentation II: Analysis of Members of Panchayat**

Panchayat is an indispensable component of the Indian political system. 'Panchayat' literally means assembly (yat) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the village community. Traditionally, these assemblies settled disputes between individuals and villages. Modern Indian government has decentralized several administrative functions to the village level, empowering elected Gram Panchayats. *Analysis of the members of Panchayat* show that most of the respondents count PRIs as a rule of village by the people of village to: meet the local needs of rural communities, ensure participation of rural communities in the rule of village, and make democratic decentralization in the governance of village. To understand the *role and responsibility of Panchayat* in the villages, respondents were asked about the schedule of meetings. While a section of respondents was unaware about the schedule. The three main responsibilities of the Panchayat were found to be: take

control over the village, prepare development plans and budget, arrange meeting in the village, present the plan in *Savani* meeting and govern the village of Panchayat. Key decisions were taken with the consent of Sarpanch in the Panchayat but a few mentioned that the decisions were taken by majority. Three main *sources of income of Panchayats* were observed to be the grants from government and local authorities and all types of grants and funds deposited by people respectively. Around 28% of the respondents were not aware of other sources of Panchayat's income.

Also, about the areas where Panchayat's income was spent it was found to be mostly on construction of roads & ponds, overall development of the village and schools, health centers and construction of toilets. The Sarpanch keeps Rs 10,000 cash from Panchayat fund for mobility and also for necessary work of the Panchayat.

On the question of the *responsibilities of committees*, around 46% respondents said that there was no Panchayat committee in their village but about 32% replied positively. There was no other committee in their village except Panchayat and around 8% shared that even if there were some other committees, they were not aware of them. Most were not aware about the ways to create committees in their villages.

In case of *the involvement of Gram Sabha in decision making*, the respondents stated that the Sarpanch & ANM had conducted previous meetings of Gram Sabha. However, some did not know about the discussion or implementation undertaken in those previous meetings while some shared that new schemes and previous reports were discussed. Most of the respondents were not aware of how many days prior to convening a general meeting of Gram Sabha, the members should be informed. Three good things of the last meeting were: everyone in the village came, new schemes were created and the issue of cleanliness was discussed. Survey participants feel that in order to make Gram Sabha meetings successful, young people should be encouraged to join the meeting, participation of women should be promoted, Scheduled Castes & backward classes should be included in addition to the group of literate women.

According to the sample study of the members of Panchayat, women did not participate in the meetings of the Gram Sabha. Even when they participated, they did not express their thoughts or suggestions. Most of the times women did not participate because they are pre-occupied with work at home, no one invites them or it is not perceived morally right for them to attend the meetings.

As far as the knowledge of government schemes is concerned, more than 50% members of Panchayat said that there wasn't any government plan running in their village while less than 50% respondents agreed that they knew of the government plans. The members of Panchayat emphasized on MGNREGS in their village and a major portion of respondents agreed that BDPO looked after the work of Panchayat at block level. State government should take steps to

organise village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority to enable them to function as units of self-governance.

- **Segmentation III: Analysis of Women**

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment provided a platform for women to contribute towards politics and decision-making at the grass root level by reserving one-third of the seats in Panchayats. It provides reservations for women in PRIs set up in two ways:

- a) For the office of the members and for that of the chairpersons
- b) for as per the clause (2) and (3) of Article 243(d), not less than one third of the seats meant for direct election of members at each tier of the Panchayats are to be reserved for the women.

In Mewat, though women's contribution has increased but lack of awareness, illiteracy, ignorance and economic hardships have in some way defeated the very purpose of the PRIs. There is a lack of understanding of their roles, responsibility and engagement with the community. The involvement of the representatives of all castes, communities and segments of society in the decision making process is also lacking. *An analytical study of women* in Mewat confirms that most of the respondents were not aware about the PRIs while some counted PRIs as the rule of the village by the people of village, to take control of the village, meet the local needs of rural communities, and ensure participation of rural communities in this local governance. Four questions were framed in the questionnaire to gauge the level of awareness about the *role and responsibility of Panchayat and Community* among the women in Mewat. They knew the name of the Sarpanch in their village Panchayat, agreed that a woman could become a Sarpanch and that they had also voted in the previous elections. On the contrary, most of the respondents said that they never met any women Sarpanch. When questions were asked around the *involvement of Gram Sabha in decision making*, a different picture came to the fore. These women were unaware of the schedule of Gram Sabha meetings and consequently, most of the women shared that they never attended a meeting of the Gram Sabha. Even If they attended the meeting once or twice, they did not discuss their view. However, the tragedy is that most of the women, even though elected, did not enjoy any position of authority or exercised any independence of participating in the development process. Women respondents said that they did not know about the participation of other women of their village in the decision of Panchayat.

When questioned about the *Government Schemes & Programmes*, they said, "The main work of the Anganwadi is to make food for the kids." Almost equal number of yes and no were found when asked about Panchayat's emphasis on vaccination of children and if Panchayat puts notice board for the same in the village. As per the opinion of the respondents, their Panchayat had no privileges for children and pregnant women. They were also not aware of the seats reserved for women in their Panchayat and what the educational qualification of women associated in their Panchayat were. If a woman wants to start a

business, respondent women were not aware about any privilege provided to them. Close variances between yes and no were found on the question around women campaigning in village for Panchayat elections. They were also unaware about the visit of ANM sister in their village. Panchayat did not construct any toilet or bathroom for women in their village. According to them, Sarpanch is responsible to get them cleaned on behalf of Panchayat in the village. They were also unaware about the plans running in their villages. Around 48% women did not know about MGNREGS. And, around 60% said that they never got the work through MGNREGS while 18% respondents informed of getting work through MGNREGS.

PRIs have an irreplaceable role to play in rural development. However, its ability to shoulder this responsibility is under the scanner due to issues related to governance, accountability, equity and gender participation. If PRIs are here to stay as prime holders of development projects, it is necessary that they are adequately capacitated and strengthened. Mechanisms need to be developed to make PRIs more responsible and accountable through capacity building of the entire village community.

Focus Group Discussions – Round 1

Project team of Radio Mewat conducted 10 FGDs in target 10 Panchayats.

Objective: Assess the level of information, awareness and understanding of the concept, systems and processes of Panchayati Raj Institutions among Panchayat officials and Gram Sabha members.

Process:

The team mobilized Gram Sabha Members and Panchayat officials to attend the FGDs in their respective villages.

On the day of the FGD, the team formally welcomed them and shared the objectives and the process of the activity.

Groups were formed from present audience.

All groups worked together on three different points:

- Current status of our village (*Hamara gaon kaisa hai?*)
- What would be ideal for our village? (*Hamara gaon Kaisa ho?*)

- What is our role and responsibility towards bringing about the required change? (*Apne gaon ko apne hisaab se badalne mein hamari kya bhoomika hai?*)

Day 1 - 24.01.13

1. Panchayat: UMRA

Total Number of participants: **More than 50** (recorded num is **28**. All names of participants could not be recorded)

It was observed that all groups have an ideal idea of a structure of their village and their requirements. They know that in their village all basic facilities should be available.

1. Groups demanded **clean and constructed roads, proper drainage system, drinking, irrigation and household water, toilets, school, health center, public transportation facilities, Panchayat and Aanganvadi building, increase in electricity provision timing, veterinary hospital or clinic etc.**
2. **Education** level should be **good** and teachers should teach properly. Some **elderly people** said that **they want to educate their girls but if there is no middle school for girls in village or nearby area, where and how they can send their daughters or granddaughters for education.**
3. Women have a huge demand of **toilets, water and transportation facility for pregnant women.** Women from Panchayat (Aanganvadi) complained that they do not have **'Ration' to cook and distribute.** They strongly demanded an **Aanganvadi building.** Common women of the group complained that **they don't receive medicine from ANM and most of the time ANM doesn't visit their village.**
4. Members of Gram Sabha accepted that **since last two and a half years of the session, no Gram Sabha was conducted in the village; if it happened anytime, they do not know the number of people who participated but they were either forced to sign for participation.**
5. Some of the **Panchayat officials** accepted that **no Gram Sabha was conducted** in their village. **They were also not aware of the schedule of Gram Sabha meetings**
6. Some **members of Panchayat** said that are neither **aware of any village committee,** nor about the **committee members and their responsibilities.** Since the time of their election, no one has given them

any **training of the working system and process**. (If it happened any time anywhere, they aren't aware of it)

7. **PRI members and workers are not aware of the government schemes**, which can support them to fulfill their basic needs. They are also **not aware of the process of availing benefits through the schemes and programmes**.
8. Neither Gram Sabha members nor Panchayat officials are aware of their **roles and responsibilities to run the system properly or get the benefits of schemes of systems provided by government**
9. Gram Sabha members stated that it is **the responsibility of Sarpanch to provide all these facilities**
10. Some of members of Panchayat and Sarpanch were blaming the middle level officials (District level)

The **outcome** of the exercise: there is a huge gap in information dissemination and awareness at village Panchayat and village level. There were no proper trainings provided to the elected Panchayat officials and Gram Sabha members on processes, systems and government schemes and programmes. (If they were organized anytime anywhere, then they weren't aware of them). There is lack of monitoring and evaluation system at the Panchayat level. While community wants to raise voice about their rights, lack of proper information, awareness, training and capacity building create an atmosphere of non-cooperation and distrust in Panchayats and villages. The speed and working process at district level PRI systems is creating a dissatisfactory atmosphere among Panchayat members. Political partisanship is also affecting these systems. Due to illiteracy most of the villagers, especially women are not able to read instructions or information, if it is available anywhere in the village.

Solution: To increase the level of awareness, run and implement the system effectively, it is important to

- Train the community and PRI officials at village and Panchayat level through multilevel training sessions
- Create awareness among the community through literate & illiterate friendly communication system. Ensure regular and continuous information dissemination on different issues among the community
- Ensure access of new technologies and modern education to the backward communities, especially women and girls

Strength: A good number of **Gram Sabha members** gathered for the FGDs. One or two of them were **ward members** and **member of Panchayat**. A few people in the groups were educated and the groups actively participated in the

exercise. Another noteworthy aspect was that women also participated in the exercise and one of them was an **Anganvadi worker**.

Challenge: Sarpanch and secretary, all committees and member of Panchayat didn't join the FGDs. Most of the women were illiterate and hesitated in participating in the exercise. Gram Sabha members from Schedule Caste were silent observers and did not join the groups for the exercise.

Day 1 - 24.01.13

2. Panchayat: RITHUT

Total number of participants: **More than 70** (recorded num is **25**. All names could not be recorded)

It was observed that all groups of members of PRI have an ideal idea of a structure of their village and their requirements. They know that in their village all basic facilities should be available.

1. Groups demanded **clean and constructed roads, proper drainage system, drinking, irrigation and household water, toilets, school, health center, public transportation facilities, Panchayat and Aanganvadi building, increase in electricity provision timing, animal hospital or clinic and employment in village etc.**
2. The Gram Sabha members of Rithut demanded **a survey for issuing the new BPL cards**
3. **Education level** should be good and appointed **teachers** should teach properly. Groups also demanded a school/ middle school for girls
4. Women put up a huge demand for **toilets, water and transportation facility for pregnant women and vaccination of children**. Women from Panchayat (Anganvadi) complained that they do not have '**Ration**' to **cook and distribute**. They strongly demanded for an **Aanganvadi building**. Common women of the group complained that **they don't receive medicine from ANM** and that the **ANM rarely visits their village**
5. Sarpanch and members of Gram Sabha accepted that **since last two and a half years of the session, no Gram Sabha was properly conducted in the village and they were not aware of its schedule.**
6. **Sarpanch** of Rithut complained that all plans and works get stuck at the higher level. They mentioned that many of proposals of the development work in villages and applications are not being responded to by the higher officials of PRI
7. Sarpanch and his available team pointed out the **slow working process of the higher authorities of PRI**. They blamed that **political pressure**

works in decision making and actions taken by departments. They also said that **people are not aware about the working processes and systems at higher level and they never get a reply to their applications and queries.**

8. **Panchayat members were not aware of any village committee except Panchayat Committee.** They were also **not aware** of the **committee members and their responsibilities.**
9. **Many of PRI members and workers are not aware** of different **government schemes and programmes.**
10. Neither community nor Panchayat members are **aware about their roles and responsibilities** to run the system properly or get the benefits of schemes of systems provided by government.
11. Gram Sabha members stated that Sarpanch has the responsibility of ensuring these facilities
12. Some of members of Panchayat along with Sarpanch blamed the middle level officials (District level)

The **outcome** of the exercise was that there is lack of information and awareness at village Panchayat and village level. There was a lack of proper training to the elected members and community on processes, systems and government schemes and programmes. (If they were organized anytime anywhere, then they weren't aware of them). There is lack of monitoring and evaluation system at Panchayat level. While community wants to raise voice about their rights, lack of proper information, awareness, training and capacity building create an atmosphere of non-cooperation and distrust in Panchayats and Villages. The speed and working process at district level PRI systems is creating a dissatisfactory atmosphere among Panchayat members. Political partisanship is also affecting these systems. Due to illiteracy most of the villagers, especially women are not able to read instructions or information, if it is available anywhere in the village.

Solution: To increase the level of awareness, run and implement the system effectively, it is important to

- Train the community and PRI officials at village and Panchayat level through multilevel training sessions
- Create awareness among the community through literate & illiterate friendly communication system. Ensure regular and continuous information dissemination on different issues among the community
- Ensure the access of new technologies and modern education to the backward communities, especially women and girls

Strength: A good number of **Gram Sabha and Panchayat members** gathered for the FGDs. **Sarpanch** of Rithut welcomed the facilitator's team and supported

in mobilisation of Gram Sabha members, available Panchayat officials and actively participated in group work. Though it was a mixed group, but youth participated as a separate group. People were eager to know the processes and systems of PRI. A few people in the groups were educated, including Sarpanch. Women also participated in the exercise, out of which three were **Anganvadi workers**. It was also a good sign that some of the women in the village are educated. They are married in some village families.

Challenge: All Panchayat members were not available in the village during the time of FGDs. Though women actively participated in the exercise but it was observed that all women were from upper class and literate. Women from lower, backward class and illiterate and poor community hesitated to participate in the exercise.

Day 2 - 25.01.13

3. Panchayat: Mundaita

Total Number of participants: 00

Mundaita has a very big challenge of non-cooperation and support. The team had several discussions via phone, personal visits to this village. It tried to talk but members were not ready to listen to anything. Hence, the focus group discussion could be undertaken in this village.

Day 2 - 25.01.13

4. Panchayat: Badali

Total number of participants: **More than 45** (recorded number - 3. All names could not be recorded)

It was observed that all groups of members of PRI have an ideal idea of a structure of their village and their requirements. They expect their village to have all basic facilities:

1. Community demanded **clean and constructed roads, proper drainage system, drinking, irrigation and household water, toilets, school, health center, public transportation facilities, Panchayat, electricity and employment in village, etc.**

2. **Education level should be good and teachers should properly teach students of the village.** Some elderly people said that they want to educate their girls but there is no school for girls.
3. Women have a huge demand of **toilets, water and transportation facility for pregnant women and vaccination of children.** Women made complaints against improper work of Aanganvadi. In turn, Aanganvadi workers said that they didn't receive funds. They strongly demanded an '**Aanganvadi**' building. Common women of the group made complaints that **they don't receive medicine from ANM and ANM doesn't visit to their village.**
4. Since last two and a half years of the session, **no Gram Sabha was conducted** in the village. They were also **not aware of its schedule.**
5. **Gram Sabha members were not aware** of any **village committee except Panchayat Committee.** They were also **not aware** about the **committee members and their responsibilities.**
6. **Gram Sabha and Panchayat members had no information** on the **number of government schemes and programmes, which can support them to fulfill their basic needs.**
7. Neither Gram Sabha members nor members of Panchayat were **aware of their roles and responsibilities** to run the system properly or avail benefits of schemes provided by the government.
8. Gram Sabha members said that Sarpanch had the responsibility of providing these facilities.

The exercise's **outcome** highlighted lack of information and awareness at village Panchayat and village level. There was a lack of proper training to the elected members and community on processes, systems and government schemes and programmes. (In case it was organized, they were not aware of them). There is lack of monitoring and evaluation system at Panchayat level. While community wants to raise voice about their rights, lack of proper information, awareness, training and capacity building create an atmosphere of non-cooperation and distrust in Panchayats and villages. Due to illiteracy most of the villagers, especially women are not capable to read instruction or information if it is available anywhere in village.

Solution: To increase the level of awareness, run and implement the system effectively, it is important to

- Train the community and PRI officials at village and Panchayat level through multilevel training sessions.
- Create awareness among the community through literate & illiterate friendly communication system. Ensure regular and continuous information dissemination on different issues among the community.

- Ensure access of new technologies and modern education to the backward communities, especially women and girls.

Strength: In Badali village, 2 separate groups worked on the activity at different times. Also, a good number of **Gram Sabha** gathered for the FGDs, but only one member of Panchayat and Aanganbadi worker participated in the exercise. Though it was a mixed group, but youth participated as a separate group. People were eager to know the processes and systems of PRI. Women group was able to identify the place of their requirements and needs in the picture of ideal village but had no idea of their role in changing the picture.

Challenge: All Panchayat members were not available in the village during the time of FGDs. Though women actively participated in exercise but it was observed that due to lack of literacy and exposure, they were not able to identify their roles and responsibility.

Day 3 - 26.01.13

5. Panchayat: SALAMBA

Total number of participants: **More than 70** (recorded num is **45**. All names could not be recorded)

Salamba is a Panchayat with a woman Sarpach from Schedule Caste. It has a different picture from the other nine Panchayats. Though the woman Sarpanch works with the help of a representative, she herself has little knowledge of the happenings in the village. She is illiterate and belongs to Scedhule Caste which further aggravates societal pressure when things do not work properly.

It was observed that all groups of members of PRI have an ideal idea of a structure of their village and their requirements. They know that in their village all basic facilities should be available.

1. Groups demanded **clean drinking, irrigation and household water, toilets for all and in schools, clean and constructed roads, proper drainage system, school, health center, public transportation facilities, Panchayat building, electricity distribution in other areas of the village, link road between Salamba to Ghjaseda, wall of Kabristan and wall & shade of cremation centre of the village should be constructed.**
2. There should be a **school for girls in the village**
3. Sarpanch should be **educated**.
4. Transparency in funds and activities is essential.
5. Continuous development process.

6. Women have a huge demand of **toilets, water and transportation facility for pregnant women and vaccination of children**. Women from Panchayat (Aanganvadi) complained of not having '**ration**' to **cook and distribute**. They strongly demanded for an **Aanganvadi building**. Common women of the group made complaints that **they don't receive medicine from ANM** and that **ANM rarely visits their village**.
7. Sarpanch and members of Gram Sabha accepted that **since last two and a half years of the session, no Gram Sabha was conducted in the village. They were also not aware about the schedule**.
8. **Sarpanch** and her representative complained that due to lack of political power and pressure, their funds are not getting cleared at the higher level. Due to this, they are not able to complete development work.
9. **There isn't any Panchayat department (village committee) except Panchayat Committee**. They are also **not aware** of the **committee members and their responsibilities**. **Since the time of their election, no one gave them any training of the working system and process**. (they were not aware about any such training, in case it was organized)
10. **PRI members and workers are not aware** of the all **government schemes and programmes**.
11. Neither Gram Sabha nor Panchayat members are **aware about their roles and responsibilities** to run the system properly or get the benefits of government programmes.
12. Gram Sabha members believe that Sarpanch has the responsibility to provide all these facilities, and Panchayat said the government has the responsibility to provide resources and approve the plans on time.

The **exercise's outcome** indicated a huge gap in information dissemination and awareness at village Panchayat and village level. There were no proper trainings provided to the elected Panchayat officials and Gram Sabha members on processes, systems and government schemes and programmes. (If they were organized anytime anywhere then they weren't aware of them). There is lack of monitoring and evaluation system at Panchayat level. While community wants to raise voice about their rights, lack of proper information, awareness, training and capacity building create an atmosphere of non-cooperation and distrust in Panchayats and Villages. The speed and working process at district level PRI systems is creating a dissatisfactory atmosphere among Panchayat members. Political partisanship is also affecting these systems. Due to illiteracy most of the villagers, especially women are not able to read instructions or information, if it is available anywhere in the village.

Solution: To increase the level of awareness, run and implement the system effectively, it is important to

- Train the community and PRI officials at village and Panchayat level through multilevel training sessions.
- Create awareness among the community through literate & illiterate friendly communication system. Ensure regular and continuous information dissemination on different issues among the community.
- Ensure access to new technologies and modern education for the backward communities, especially women and girls

Strength: A good number of **Gram Sabha and Panchayat members** gathered for the FGDs. **Sarpanch of Salamba** welcomed the facilitator's team and supported in mobilisation of Gram Sabha members, available Panchayat officials and actively participated in group work. Though there were mixed groups, but a number of youth participated as a separate group. People were eager to know the processes and systems of PRI. A few people in the groups were educated. Women (1 or 2 **Anganvadi workers**) also participated in the exercise. A few well-educated youth and former member of Panchayat had also participated. All groups actively participated in the process and tried to bring out the issues and requirements for the development of their village.

Challenge: All castes in the village were not represented in their proper ratio. Women from lower, backward class and illiterate and poor community were reluctant to take part in the exercise and were not able to give inputs due to lack of awareness of the systems and process. One of community member was so aggressive that the FGD could not be completed.

Achievement: Due to the aggressive behavior of one of Gram Sabha members, FGD was halted. Later, a small meeting was conducted with a few Panchayat people, in which current and former Panchayat officials participated. The meeting was a demo for the members of Gram Sabha, Panchayat and Sarpanch along with her representative, showcasing how they can organize a Gram Sabha and address issues one by one. It was also demonstrated how Gram Sabha members can help conduct any meeting peacefully and sort out issues collectively. After knowing the process, the participants accepted that they were not aware of this process and systems which led to fights among them. However, from next time onwards, they will try to conduct their meetings in a proper way, chalk out the plan and submit it to the government.

Such a scenario informs of a need to empower Panchayat officials and Gram Sabha members with information on PRIs through capacity building.

Day 3 - 26.01.13

6. Panchayat: Gajarpur

Total number of participants: Over **30** (recorded num is **25**. All names could not be recorded)

Gajarpur Panchayat covers three villages and is headed by a woman Sarpanch. Her brother-in-law works as her representative. Gajarpur Sarpanch is not active at all in Panchayat work and representative of Sarpanch was not supportive in this project. Hence, the exercise was conducted in village 'Karauli' under Gajarpur Panchayat.

All groups of members of PRI have an ideal idea of a structure of their village and their requirements. They know that availability of basic facilities is essential to their village

1. Gram Sabha members demanded **clean and constructed roads, proper drainage system, drinking, irrigation and house hold water, toilets, health center, public transportation facilities, electricity and employment in village etc.**
2. Demanded safety of school and watchman for it. (Gajarpur Panchayat) School building is very good but sanitation is a big problem.
3. **Gajarpur group shown their dissatisfaction with the educational system. Education system should be good and teaching and admission should not work only to increase the literacy rate, but to educate society about issues etc.**
4. **Group informed that nutritional food is not available in schools and mid day meal is only a formality**
5. Members of Gram Sabha accepted that **no Gram Sabha was conducted in the village and that they were not aware of the schedule of Gram Sabha.**
6. The group had little **awareness** about **some systems** and had complaints against MGNREGS. Groups informed that they raised their voices, informed concerned departments with proof against the irregularities in programmes and Panchayat (video on MGNREGS work norms) but **didn't get any reply. They feel political pressure is the reason behind this ignorance**
7. **Present audience inclusive of members of Panchayat and Gram Sabha was not aware of any village committee except Panchayat Committee. They were also not aware of the committee members and their responsibilities.**

8. Gram Sabha members believe that Sarpanch has the responsibility of providing these facilities

The **outcome** highlighted lack of information and awareness at village Panchayat and village level. No proper trainings were provided to the elected members and community on processes, systems and government schemes and programmes. (They were not aware of any training organized anytime anywhere). There is lack of monitoring and evaluation system at Panchayat level. While community wants to raise their voice about their rights but lack of proper information, awareness, training and capacity building create an atmosphere of non-cooperation and distrust in Panchayats and villages. Low speed and working process at district level PRI systems is creating a dissatisfactory atmosphere among Panchayat members. Political partisanship is also affecting the PRI systems at village level. Due to illiteracy most of the villagers, especially women are not able to read instruction or information, if it is available anywhere in village.

Solution: To increase the level of awareness, run and implement the system effectively, it is important to

- Train the community and PRI officials at village and Panchayat level through multilevel training sessions
- Create awareness among the community through literate & illiterate friendly communication system. Ensure regular and continuous information dissemination on different issues among the community.
- Ensure access of new technologies and modern education to the backward communities, especially women and girls.

Strength: A good number of **Gram Sabha members** assembled for the FGDs. About 2-3 Panchayat members, elderly Gram Sabha members and youth of the village Kaurali, (Gram Panchayat Gajarpur) actively participated in the exercise which called for group work. People were eager to know the processes and systems of PRI. A few people of groups were literate.

Challenge: All Panchayat members, including Sarpanch and her representative were not available in the village during the time of FGDs. Women were not present in FGDs. All three villages of Panchayat did not participate in the FGDs.

Community Radio – Radio Mewat

SMART utilised Radio Mewat effectively to implement its awareness drive. Several programmes discussing how Panchayats work, how to form committees, assure their effective implementation and how to reach out to the deprived and marginalized sections of society were broadcast through the community radio in Mewat.

Program format & episodes:

SMART along with Radio Mewat had created radio programmes on PRIs prior to the launch of this project. These were broadcast as soon as the baseline survey and first round of FGDs were conducted. These programmes had radio jockeys discussing the issues with active participation from the callers.

Apart from these, FGDs were recorded, of which 30 smaller episodes were created. Ten narrow broadcasts per month were done using these episodes which followed different radio formats consisting of radio plays, radio messages & folk songs, and radio discussions, among others. Feedback from listeners to these programmes was captured through direct calls, interviews or field surveys.

Focus Group Discussions – Round 2

During the first round, Sarpanchs of many villages were not ready to sit and discuss the related matters with us. Despite our repeated persuasion they were not ready to interact. After analyzing the entire situation we concluded that perhaps Sarpanchs wanted to avoid sharing any public platform with the members of Gram Sabha as they feared that villagers might talk against them and they may find themselves in an uncomfortable and unpleasant situation.

We also felt that as soon as any issue of Panchayat was raised the Sarpanchs were on their guard and felt that we were working against them. They somehow thought that our activities would harm them. So, during **second round** of FGDs we modified our line of action. We then started with villages whose Sarpanchs had not participated in our FGDs during our last exercise. We directly contacted Sarpanchs and told them that we would be working on the places suggested by them. The responsibility to collect the villagers too was entrusted to Sarpanchs. This time in the first two villages we had an experience exactly opposite to what we experienced earlier. Sarpanchs decided that venue of meeting would be '**Sarpanch ki kachahari**' but people were not ready to assemble there. The women did not attend the meeting at all. Few old people, certain religious leaders and few people favourable to the Sarpanchs were the only people present in these meeting and Sarpanchs expressed their inability to gather other villagers.

We once again changed our line of action and contacted villagers (GSM) from different areas of villages and talked to them in various groups. We tried to assess their knowledge, views and opinion about the issues. Village wise report of our second round FGD is presented herewith:

1. Panchayat : UMRA

Sarpanch: Haroon

“Madam how can we work towards development of our village, when our Panchayat is not even formed,” Sarpanch Harron of Umra village said after listening to the programme.

We tried enquiring about the hurdles affecting the **formation of** the Panchayat. The Sarpanch shared, **“People have difference of opinion and do not support Panchayat for completion of the work.”** He added, **“Leaders and workers of the opposition camp never agree on a common point and oppose the development plans of village.”**

In Umra, it was hard to gather all the Panchayat officials at one place. After several phone calls and networking exercises, it was a challenge to get all Panchayat related officials to share one platform. We then divided the team in two groups. While one team visited the village for mobilization of the community, the other team stayed back at same place and tried to **explain the issues and convince the Sarpanch, people present and Haji ji, the religious leader of the village.** In this discussion, we explained to them the **‘structure of Panchayat, roles and responsibility of its team members, importance of Gram Sabha and solutions for resolving the political conflicts of village and, to get the support of elected members of the opposing party.’**

The feedback of team was that **some of community people threatened Radio Mewat team and said that next time we visit the village, we won’t be safe”.**

None of the women were willing to join the meeting and one of the villagers said, “Hamari aurton ko bigadte hain aap log”. (He even refused to share his name) Finally, the programme was played to the small crowd present there. Sarpanch of UMRA and others **liked** the programme and accepted that the **information given in the programme was easy to understand and did not in any way hurt the religious practices and sentiments. “Ye to Gaon ke bhale ki baat hai, kyon Haji sahib?” Sarpanch said. Haji Sahib agreed.**

The first reaction of the listeners (including religious leaders, Sarpanch, 1 or 2 members, etc.) was that **for the first time through radio Mewat they came to know about the entire working process of Panchayati Raj institution and the structure of Panchayats.**

Sarpanch of Umra said that ever **since they were elected and took charge they were not aware of the process of formation of committees and structure of Panchayat.**

Sarpanch said, **“I am not aware that we can form committees and sub committees also with elected members of opposite parties. We are even not aware of the names of committees and their roles and responsibilities. We also do not have an understanding on how these committees can support in development work.”**

It was observed that **no one in the village (including PRI officials, at village level) were aware of the technical, official (constitutional) language and terminology of**

the PRI. They have no knowledge of their and their team's roles and responsibility and importance of the system.

After getting elected they have been working only on the development of their own area and not the entire village. **They only talk about political conflicts at ground level and are very protective of their religious practices. But after listening to the radio programme on PRI and holding discussions with Radio Mewat team, they agreed to form their committees and call Radio Mewat team for coverage of the process.**

Sarpanch said, **"I will call a Panchayat meeting and discuss the issue with all members of the Panchayat and start the process of formation of committees."** He agreed that the Panchayat and its committee formation process can resolve the internal political conflict of the village which is a major barrier to *the implementation of the development process in the village.*

They agreed that this process could motivate others. Sarpanch said, ***"The programme of Radio Mewat at no point hurts their religious sentiments and rather it is about the progress and development of the village. There is no harm in listening to this kind of information on Radio as it enriches us with information and helps develop our understanding. This type of information should reach each and every person of village and these kinds of radio programmes should be accessible to the community."***

Not only Sarpanch, but other Gram Sabha members present and participating in the discussion also accepted that **they were not aware of this process but now they will regularly listen to Radio Mewat. Gram Sabha members accepted that community is also responsible for the development of the Village.**

Some Gram Sabha members raised the issue of quality of education in the village school. They wanted to know how action can be taken against teachers who are not carrying out their duty properly. Sarpanch said, **"On any developmental issue first Gram Sabha or affected members should take action and if it doesn't work they should inform Sarpanch and Panchayat to get the support."**

2. Panchayat : TIEN

Sarpanch: Mubaraq

When we reached Tien village only two people were present at the 'Sarpanch ki kachahari'. We tried to gather more people and invited Sarpanch. Here too, the Sarpanch was accompanied by the religious leader of the community. We started the programme and tried to involve the women of the village, but in vain. None of the women folk participated in the programme openly. However, we observed that few women were curious enough to hover in the periphery looking at the proceedings from a distance, from windows and balconies of their homes.

Before playing our programme we explained our purpose of visiting the village. Some of the people present had already participated in the FGDs with us. The audience liked and appreciated the programme. We asked them what they liked about the programme and they told that the programme is very informative and it broadens their knowledge about the Panchayati Raj system.

The villagers informed that they are illiterate and do not have much information. The structure, functioning, duties and responsibilities of Panchayat were explained to them.

One of the group members who refused to divulge his name told that such programmes should be aired frequently as it will help in retaining information. He also said that for illiterate villagers an audio medium like radio will be very helpful in gathering information and empowering them in turn.

Previously the Sarpanch informed us that they have Panchayat and education committee in their village, but when we asked about the process of formation of these committees, he withdrew his earlier statement and said, “**Hamare gaon mein to koi samiti na hai ji, aur hame to ji is baare mein kuchh bhi pata nahin hai, na hamne pahle suna hai.**”

However, he promised to form these committees in future as Radio Mewat had explained the process of formation and other required aspects to him. He agreed to call Radio Mewat team to cover the process.

We said, “You are saying this on mike and this will be heard by 2.5 lakh people, including people in your village. So whatever you are saying on Radio Mewat, you have to do that. Radio Mewat will come to you again for a follow up.”

Sarpanch reaction was, “Madam ji, I am a politician, and politicians never keep their words. They are liars.” I said, but we are talking to Sarpanch and not to any politician. He then said, “Sarpanch is the smallest unit of Politics.”

I was surprised that after few minutes Sarpanch just refused to take any step ahead for applying the constitutional process.

Sarpanch of Tien argued that government is working on papers. He said, “Sarkar ki policy kagajan mein hi chal rahi hai, ganwan tak nahin aayi hai”

One of group members supported him and gave an example of a ‘Neher’ (stream) and how one of the ministers said that there is water in the ‘Neher’, but the water was only on papers.

It appeared that they felt that schemes are being announced at the higher level and not being implemented at the ground level and completed only on paper. They felt that at their level too the rules need not be adhered in practice and are meant to be on papers only.

Sarpanch also expressed his anger and disappointment at the way he was dealt with in government offices. He said, “Madam ji, hum kahe ke Sarpanch hain, aap

ye batao. Sarkari daftaran mein Sarpanchan ki kono tavajjo nahin. Hame to chaparasi tak nain poochta hai? Jabki hamare gaon mein to jab hum aate hain meeting mein to bade bujurg tak khade ho jate hain ki Sarpanch sahib aaye hain...”

He added that when the problems and issues pertaining to the villages have no importance for government officials then what can common people do. All development work and plans are pending and funds are blocked at higher level. The people present said, “Government and government officials discriminate against us. They don’t give importance to us and our issues.”

On the Gram Sabha issue, the villagers agreed that to work towards the development of the village and to help the Sarpanch is the collective responsibility of the villagers. However, when it was told that calling the Gram Sabha meetings and forming the committees are the responsibilities of Sarpanch only, all kept mum.

One of the group members raised the issue of the present education policy according to which every child is promoted irrespective of the fact that whether he/she has acquired the required knowledge or not. He felt that as the kids know that they will get through the class, they don’t study at all.

Sarpanch also raised the issue of the BPL category and said that for the sake of bringing down the poverty, the government declared expenditure of Rs. 32 daily as a cut off line. A person spends Rs.10 on smoking bidi everyday, so how can policy makers expect that he can manage the whole day in Rs. 32.

So, after the survey, meetings and interactions with the community, members of Gram Sabha and Sarpanch, it was concluded that first of all they are not aware of the roles, responsibilities, duties and structure of the Gram Panchayat and then even after having a fair idea they are not ready to work on that.

During an informal discussion with the Sarpanch of Tien, he refused to form any committee. He said, “Hum to nahin banyenge. Apko jo karna ho kar len. Koi fansi pe thode hi na chadha denge agar nahin banayenge.”

Our experiences with the Sarpanchs and Panchayat officials of these two villages made us think about re-strategising our functional strategies. Our visits and work experience in these villages taught us that if we try to reach out to the villagers through Sarpanch, people don’t participate and Sarpanchs too are eager to discuss the matter in presence of people who favour them. Sarpanch and his coterie are not well versed with Panchayati Raj system and even after the required information and knowledge is imparted to them, they are not keen to implement the system. Due to the political clout at the village level they are not afraid of any adverse repercussions. Moreover, even if

they think of working towards village welfare they don't get required co-operation at block and district levels.

While trying to meet the Sarpanchs and Panchayat officials we were not able to interact with the Gram Sabha. Hence we decided to meet members of Gram Sabha directly so that we might help in increasing their awareness.

Our next Panchayat was Gajarpur. The Sarpanch or the representative of the Sarpanch of Gajarpur have never extended the required co-operation to us. We started from village Karauli of Gajarpur Panchayat since four persons from Karauli are members of Gram Panchayat of Gajarpur.

3. Panchayat : Gajarpur, Village : Kaurali

With Panchayat & Gram Sabha Members (Ex-Sarpanch, Numberdar and AWW were present in FGD)

On reaching Kaurali village, Radio Mewat team found that some digging work was underway. We enquired whether the work in process is under MGNREGS, but we were informed that the construction work was for a mosque. To form a group, we spoke to villagers and found out that one of the villagers was ex-Sarpanch, Mr. Aas Mohammad. There were other people belonging to the same village. After organizing the group and informing them about the purpose of our visit, we played the programme.

The first feedback on the programme was, "Karyakrim achchha hai, hum samajh gaye aap jo baat bata rahe hain, magar hamare yahan kuchh bhi nahin hai."

One of the young members of the group shared, "There is no committee in our village Panchayat." However, he had no idea whether the reason behind this omission was the lack of information or awareness or was it intentional.

The group accepted that there should be committees in village and Gram Sabha should be conducted.

The collective opinion of the group was that for the planning and implementation of development work, committees should work in consultation according to requirement of the village.

The group shared that in the current session neither the Gram Sabha was conducted nor the members demanded an assembly of the Gram Sabha.

Ex-Sarpanch Aas Mohamd was present in the group and he shared that the people are not aware of their rights and those who have an understanding don't have any interest in the process.

The collective opinion of group members, including ex Sarpanch, was that transparency, whether it is financial or procedural, is possible if Gram Sabhas are conducted regularly.

One woman, who joined the discussion later shared that individual political differences affected the constitutional process. She said that the Gram Sabha meeting should be conducted at a common place where all community members can participate.

Ex-Numberdar of village accepted that financial information of the budget (expenditure and income) should be shared with all the members of the Gram Sabha, but it is never done. If they try to raise the issue of transparency, it is blamed that they are doing so as they belong to the opposite party.

He further added that the village development plan should be a consultative process and all community members, including women, should get representation in committees. Women should be trained. He also emphasized on the issue of capacity building of the women folk.

We enquired whether during his tenure he organized Gram Sabhas and he confirmed it.

Ex-Sarpanch Aas Mohammad shared his past experiences and current status of village education committee. He said that VEC (village education committee) should be properly formed with representation of all communities, including women. He added that the Chairman should be the principal and work should be done properly. He mentioned that in this Panchayat, it is not happening. He said, "Everyone's share is decided and very meager fund is spent on developmental work."

Talking on issue of corruption, he said that who would take the risk of exposing corruption. "I did in my session and sent many requests and applications to ADC. Instead of taking action against the corrupt officials, he levied the charge of asking bribe on me. The villagers and teachers blamed me," he said.

He further added that the situation could be changed through empowerment of communities by information dissemination and awareness generation: wall writing for literate people and radio programmes like this for illiterate ones. He said, "If Panchayati Raj Institution can be empowered in Mewat then PRI will be empowered across the country."

He said, "Panchayat should take opposite party member's support through placing them in committees and committees should be empowered and should know their rights. People should be educated and trained to ensure an empowered PRI in villages."

At another Mohalla/ward of the village, some other Gram Sabha members joined the discussion. One member of Panchayat was also in group. After playing the programme, when the team asked about their understanding on Panchayat, one of group representatives said that Panchayat is a coalition of Sarpanch and members of Panchayat.

On the question of committees, one of group member shared, **“The committees can only be formed if the Sarpanch is willing. There is no such committee in our village.”**

Group members agreed that **village development plan should be designed with the consultation of Gram Sabhas, but in this Panchayat no Gram Sabha was conducted. Plans were only designed by Sarpanch and members supporting him.”**

Member of Panchayat told that there are 11 members in the Panchayat out of which four members are from Kaurali village. When we asked one of the members about his role, he said **“Kaun poochhata hai Madam ji, sab kaam ho jata hai ander hi ander. Aur Sarpanch to kaam karti hi nahin, uska dewar karta hai. Kewal uska hi vikas hota hai, jo Sarpanch hai. Aap uska mohalla dekh lo aur baqi sadak aur raaste dekh lo. Yahan koi Gram Sabha vabha nahin hoti, sab Sarpanch ki marzi se hota hai. Aur shikayat bhi kaun kare karne se ka faiyda. Idhar hum shikayat karenge, udhar woh MLA ko phone karega, mamla rafa dafa, Sarpancha to bach jayega, ulte dushmani aur ho jayegi. Uska kya jayega.”**

Members of both the groups agreed that the situation can be changed. Some of the suggestions offered by the members of the groups are as follows:

- Capacity building of Panchayat and its members, including Sarpanch, through awareness programmes and trainings.
- Support to Sarpanchs and Gram Sabha members to help them in following the constitutional process.
- User friendly awareness programmes designed keeping in mind both the literate and illiterate villagers in the community.
- Radio programmes on this relevant issue should be broadcasted from Radio Mewat.

4. Panchayat : Salamba

“Yes, there is a structure of Panchayat and it has a working process, but it is observed often that Sarpanch work for developing his/her own area (Mohalla). You can compare between this mohalla and that of Sarpanch. You will find that in her area, there are well-constructed roads and good drainage system, but in this area, condition is worst, neither pakka road and good drainage system nor cleanliness. In this village there is no system, no structure and process. No Gram Sabha has been conducted here,” one of group member said during the discussion.

In Salamba, the group was enthusiastic and interested in the discussion. So after few minutes of the programme, group members directly started discussion. Some of the group members were following the programme on Radio Mewat and were well-informed on the issue. While there were others who did not have enough knowledge about the Panchayati Raj system.

After the programme and information sharing, we asked the assembled group on benefits of having a properly functioning Gram Sabha.

One person said, **“All internal conflicts between the villagers can be solved at Gram Sabha and Panchayat level and we need not go to police for every matter.”** That showed that all of them had not fully grasped the actual purpose, working and structure of Gram Sabha and Panchayat.

Youth in groups were informed that in their village there is a Sarpanch, secretary and members of Panchayat. They also knew that they are part of the Gram Panchayat, but they too needed clear understanding of the whole concept. Group members told that **there is no committee in their village and that none of the community members have any information about the records of work, programmes and finances.**

The members of this Gram Sabha put forward the demand of well constructed roads and cleanliness and expected radio Mewat-PRI team to convey their demands and grievances to Sarpanch and the concerned government officials. They were not aware of their right and power to question Panchayat on issues of drainage system and construction of roads.

5. Panchayat - Golpuri

“Ye gaon me paisa haiye nahee to karykram hove kaise aur gaon me vikas hove kaise. Yahan rasta nahee hai, nali sab bhari padi hai or nikas hove kaise gaon me paisa nahi hai,” said a member of Golpuri Panchayat after listening to our programme.

Drawing their attention to the content of the programme, Radio Mewat team once again explained to them that this programme is all about the structure and functioning of the Panchayat. When asked whether the funds for development of the village have reached the village Panchayat or is it with Sarpanch and whether he is utilizing it for the welfare of the village, one member of the group said, **“Sarpanch ke pas nahee hai, sarkar nahi de rahi.”**

On enquiring whether the Gram Sabha meetings are being conducted or not and if there have been people's participation, Radio Mewat team was informed that the meetings are being conducted and villagers too attend the same in large numbers. The inhabitants of this village collectively approach the higher authorities and local representative with the issues concerning village welfare. One of the group member said, **“Ham char bar MLA ke pas gaye lekin gaon ke liye koi paisa nahee manjoor hua. Gaon ka rasta khuda pada hai, namaz padhne ko nahi ja sakte, na pokhar me chirari ja sake, hamko bahut pareshani hai.”**

From the discussion with the group of Golpuri, it was concluded that the Panchayat in this village functions properly and the committees are also formed as per the laid down

structure of the Panchayati Raj system, but the development projects in the village are not be carried out due to non-availability of funds.

Giving the feedback of the programme, one woman from the group said, **“Hame kaaryakram achchha lagaa. Isme Panchayat aur uske kam kaj ki jankari di gayi hai. Radio Mewat ye achchha kam kar raha hai aur aage bhi karna chahiye. Ye jankari ek bar me samajh me nahi aayegi, aise bate roz batani chahiye.”**

A group of women said, **“Karyakram me gaon ke kam kaj ke baare me bat ki gayi hai, magar kam kaj hove kaise? Gaon me paisa to haiye nahi. Raasta nai hai, keeched bhara hai. Ripat ripat ke auraten gir rahi hai. Har taraf pani bhara hai. Mitti ger ke chal rahe hai ham. Dagda aadha banva ke chhod diya kyunki paisa nahi hai.”**

Women told the Radio Mewat team, **“Aap to hiyan baithe ho udhar rasta pe dekho jay bhai, bahute pareshani hai, hath jodibe ki bat hai, ise theek karvao.”** Radio Mewat team assured them that they will visit the area and will do a full assessment of it.

Women of this group were very angry. They said, **“Vote mangne aa jate hain magar kaam nahi karvate. Ham to bhai nahi denge vote.”** We asked them whether they have knowledge about functioning of the Panchayat and they said, **“Nahi hame to kuchh pata nahi Panchayat kaise kam karati hai.”** Seething in anger, they further added, **“Yahan to aise bahut aate rahate hai, kya kare kam to koi karvata nahi hai.”**

The women folk did not have any knowledge about village Panchayat, committees, Gram Sabha or the process of passing of proposals.

One woman complained about not receiving her pension. We asked her if she was aware that it is the responsibility of village Panchayat to help a widow get her pension. She told, **“Hame to yah nahi pata.”**

A male member of the group said, **“Mahilao ko koi jankari nahi hai. Kya aisa ho sakta hai ki inake liye gaon me school khul jaaye?”**

The team informed the group members that they can present the proposal for such a school to Gram Sabha. They were not aware of the process to prepare and submit the proposal. They expected Radio Mewat team to do the same for them. The team informed them that it can help them in providing the required information. Theoretically, the process can be explained to them, but it's their village and the steps are to be taken by them only. They understood the point and wanted to know about the system and its functioning so that they may proceed towards its implementation.

We found that though the local people and Panchayat officials do not have complete knowledge of the structure and functioning of the Panchayati Raj system, but they were eager to know and implement the same.

6. Panchayat – Norsehera

“Is gaon me to bhaiya kuchho nahi hua. Is gaon ki Panchayat aisi hi hai, Sarpanch aiso hi hai. Is gaon ki Panchayat to aap chod do. Is gaon me kuchh nahi ho sakta.” These were the sentiments expressed by an elderly person of the village after listening to the programme presented by the team.

In the beginning, not many people assembled at one place rather they were trying to assess our activities from a distance standing in small groups. Initially, they were not interested even to discuss and talk about the programme. Later, few people participated in the interaction and conveyed their opinion about the programme. They liked the programme and also appreciated the content and coverage of the radio programmes.

When asked that in what manner Radio Mewat has helped the villagers in enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the issue, they said, **‘Radio Mewat sab hal chal batate hai. Safai ke bare me batate hai, kheti ke bare main batate hai, Gram Sabha ke bare me batate hai.’**

We enquired what they learnt about the Gram Sabha through Radio Mewat. They said, “20-25 logo ki meeting karte hain har mahine aur fir jo kami hai apane gaon ki usaki bat karte. Use aage le jaye aur age ja kar report kare to aapaki sabaki sunvai hogi. Yahi sab sunvate hai usme.”

On the issue of formation of committee they said, **“Committee banane ko le kar yahan Mewat me koi ichhuk hi nahi hai.”**

Another person interrupted in the mid, **“Gram Sabha hai hi nahi hai yahan.” Others agreed with him.**

Villagers of Norsehera were very disappointed on the issue of Panchayat. They heard the programme, but were not enthusiastic about it. However, it was apparent that villagers do listen to the programmes of Radio Mewat because they informed us about some of the programmes related to Panchayati Raj. They also knew that Radio Mewat had recently won an Award.

From the group discussions, we concluded that due to inter-group rivalry and petty politics, Panchayat is not functioning properly.

7. Panchayat: Rithat

At Rithat, Radio Mewat team played the programme of PRI to assembled members of Gram Sabha. After that the team spoke to the group. They told that they liked the programme and one of the women said, **“Is karyakram mein Panchayat ke bare mein bataya gaya hai. Isme Panchayat ko lekar jo baaten kahi gayi hain, hum unko samjhenge.”**

One member from the audience said, **“Is gaon mein Panchayat ki taraf se ya gair Panchayat ki taraf se, jitani baat aap kah rahe ho, nahin hui hai.”**

The other audiences seconded his view. People said, **“Baat to aapne bahut achchhi batai, magar is gaon mein koi bhi kaam na hua hai. Sab kaam kaaj kagaj per hua hai. Apne pasand ke member banaye gaye hain. Gram Sabha nahi hui hai. Har maheene rashan bhi samay pe nahin aata.”**

On enquiring about the formation of the committee, the villagers informed, **“Koi committee na hai is gaon mein, kagaz mein sab kaam chal raha hai. Ve sab kaam apni marji se kar rahe hain.”**

Radio Mewat team asked that being a member of Gram Sabha whether they have asked why no committee was formed? **On this an elderly person said, “Humein to pata hai magar hum ka kahen, hamari to koi sunta hi nahin. Hame koi committee mein lete hi na. Ye sab to bade logan ka kaam hain, chhote aadmi ke kaam hi na hain ji.”** It was found that villagers did not have adequate knowledge about the working of the Gram Sabha and the responsibility of its members.

The same person continued that they don't get time from their work so how can they think about committees. Another member of the group said, **“Ye Panch isiliye banaye gaye hain ki ye enquiry karen na, ki kya ho raha hai? Gaon ke bade bujurg ke saath meeting karen ki gaon mein kya chal raha hai?”**

Radio Mewat team asked whether any meeting had been conducted in the village with villagers? Somebody from the group replied that no such meeting has taken place.

The outcome derived from the whole group discussion was that the villagers had little and vague information about the structure and the functions of the Panchayat. Some of people heard the programmes of Radio Mewat and tried to understand the same, but most of the villagers were not aware of the entire working process and system of the Panchayat.

8. Panchayat: Bhadas

In this village Radio Mewat team played the programme for the villagers and tried to know about the knowledge and information that the villagers had about the Panchayat structure and its working. The team also tried to gather information on whether the programme had raised their awareness levels and what are the ground realities of the Panchayat.

The house where we were conducting our group discussion was clean. However, the way that we took to reach the place was full of potholes with large pools of dirty water. There was no arrangement to clear the logged water.

After listening to the programme, women said that they liked it and one of them said, **“Aisa hai ji ki aapne ye jo karyakram bataya, sahi bataya, magar in baton per koi chal to nahi raha hai.”**

When they were asked whether they had ever approached the Panchayat about the problems they faced or had they ever attended the meeting of Gram Sabha, another woman said, **“Na ji na, hum to nahin gayi hain.”**

The women were not even aware of the Gram Sabha. They said, **“Gaon me to ji kabhi Gram Sabha hui hi nahin.”** They further added, **“Sarpanch to bas time pe hi aavat hain, jab vote ki jaroorat hoti hai.”**

It was found that people usually do not interact with the Sarpanch of the village. One of the women said, **“Sarpanch se koi baat tab kahi jaati hai, jab Sarpanch ka kaam aata ho ji, tab hi hum log bolte hain, baad mein to koi jawab hi nahin hai unke paas. Hum to chahte hain ki Panchayat theek se kaam karien aur hum logan ki madad karien.”**

After the group discussions Radio Mewat team concluded that there are few issues on which villagers want Panchayat to work and implement them for the welfare of the village. The major issues were laid down on paper and villagers were asked to sign, if they agreed to it. For the benefit of illiterate member of the group the matter was read out to them. All the women present there said that they fully agree that these work should be carried out. They said, **“Gram Sabha honi chahiye, gaon ki jaroorat ke kaam hone chahiye. Magar gareeb ki to aisi baat hai ki koi sunvai hove hi na.”**

After that Radio Mewat team interacted with the young and elderly of Bagadia Mohalla. Among the people of the group was also a member of the Panchayat. People of the group unanimously conveyed that in this village neither the Panchayat functions properly nor the people have any awareness about it. One member said, **“When we address the Panchayat member directly and try to know his awareness about Panchayati Raj system, he does not utter even a single word and keeps on smiling.”** Other member of the group said, **“Ji is gaon mein Panchayat sadasya se to kuchh leno deno hi nahin hai. Unhen to bas apani tankhwah se matlab hai. Sarpanch ko inse kya matlab. Wo to wahi karta hai jo use karna hota hai. Gaon ke vikas se use kuchh nahin lene dena.”**

9. Panchayat: Badali

In Badali village after playing the programme the team spoke to groups of men & women. From the feedback it was concluded that the women of the village were not aware of Panchayat and its functions. After that once again programme was played to them and everything was explained to them in detail. After this once again we spoke to them and asked the relevant questions like whether Gram Sabha meetings are organized in the village. If not, had the villagers contacted the Sarpanch to organize the meetings?

Women of the group said **“Hame is bare mein koi jaankari nahin hai. Na to kabhi hamne Gram Sabha ki maang ki, pata haiye nain. Samasya kisase kahen, kabhi aayen to kahen na.”**

Few people from the group of Badali village were regular audience of Radio Mewat and have heard Panchayati Raj programmes aired on the same. They met the Sarpanch regarding the development work of the village, but he informed that he did not have enough funds. So, it was not possible to get the required work done.

This group of men were also told about the radio programme separately. The team also explained that the programme talks about the structure and functioning of Panchayat.

One elderly person Mohd Khan said, **“Vo aur gaon ke sab log Panchayat se jude hue hain.”**

When team asked about the Gram Sabha meeting of Panchayat, he said, **“Hamare Sarpanch gareeb hain aur hamare dagade kharab hain. Sarpanch gareeb isliye hain ki unke paas paise nahin hain aur dagade banvane ke liye kya wo ghar se laga dega?”** He further told that Panchayat received the fund of about Rs 8-9 lakhs and it was spent and still work could not be completed. He again said, **“Puro ko puro to sab daku baithe hain, kha jaat hain.”**

The young members of the group told that their awareness of Panchayat is limited but they assured that in future they would listen to programmes of Radio Mewat and would express their views on these issues.

Most of the people of the Badali village had gone to Kot village to attend some religious function. There were very few people in the village with whom the team could talk about Panchayat.

10. Panchayat: Mundaita :

In Mundaita village after playing the programme and discussing the matter with the villagers, the team came to know that here Sarpanch has not initiated any programme towards development and welfare of the village.

The people did not have proper awareness regarding structure and function of Panchayat, but after listening to our programme they agreed that inhabitants of the village too have certain responsibilities towards proper functioning of village Panchayat.

Another group in the village had a physically challenged member, who was a regular listener of Radio Mewat. He said, **“Haan hum karyakram to sunte hain, magar jyada gaur nahin kiya hai isliye kuchh khas yaad nahin hai. Aur yaad rakhane se bhi kya fayda? Gaon mein to Sarpanch ki hi chalti hai. Gram Sabha hoti nahi. Log apni baat kisase kahen, ye hame pata nahin hai. Aur jo baat aap radio per batate hain ya yahan batai hai abhi, waisa kuchh yahan hai hi nahin.”**

A young man and a woman from the group also shared the same feeling. They said, **“Hamre gaon mein na to samitiyan hain and kabhi Gram Sabha hoti hai. Unhone yeh bhi kaha ki kuchh fayda nahin. Sarpanch se poochho to kahta hai ki paisa nahin aaya hai.”**

Radio Mewat team asked the group if the plans for development of the village were ever formed. If so how the planning is done.

The group told, **“Yojana kya hum apane ghar se bana den? Yahan to Panchayat hi nahin puri to kaam ka tareeka kya hoga? Paani ke paise lete hain aur paani nahin dete hain.”**

One of the members of the group said, **“Aap hame Panchayat ki baat bata rahe hain aur Panchayat ko hi Panchayat ke bare mein nahin pata hai, na uske kaam karne ke tareeke ka. Pahle Panchayat to samjhe, phir aam aadmi samjhe, per nahin, yahan to kisi ko kuchh pata hi nahin hai.”**

Radi Mewat team asked the groups to listen attentively to the programmes broadcasted by Radio Mewat and encouraged them to put questions so that their awareness and understanding about Panchayat might increase and they can develop proper understanding about their rights and duties.

Endline survey: questionnaire

An endline survey was conducted to underline the impact of activities undertaken through the community radio to up the awareness of PRIs

Research Methodology of the Study

This research used both qualitative and quantitative methodology to meet the objectives of the study and to investigate how the Community Radio can impact the level of information amongst PRIs and their behaviour through dissemination of information related to Panchayati Raj Institutions, their roles and responsibilities among the people of 20th district of Haryana state i.e. Mewat. The survey instrument was designed to obtain the data for this study in the District of Mewat. This study is more empirical in nature based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data pertaining to the present study was collected from the authentic reports on PRIs of central and state government. To collect primary data, a well structured questionnaire was distributed with close-ended and open-ended questions among respondents. Convenient sampling method was applied. Although the district comprises Nuh, Taoru, Nagina, Firozpur Jhirka and Punhana blocks, 431 villages and 297 Panchayats. But, a sample was framed for the study of Mewat district. The survey was conducted in three blocks and 10 Panchayats of Mewat district among 300 individual of each segmented respondents. The name of those three blocks are Nuh, Punaha, Nagina and the name of those 10 Panchayats are Golpuri, Taien, Gajarpur, Mudheta , Rithat, Salamba, Umra, Nosera , Bhadsh and Badali. For data analysis, the study used

descriptive statistical analysis and bar chart using the statistical software to describe the sample. Descriptive statistical analyses are based on frequencies and standard deviation. Paired sample t-test is applied to compare Base –line survey and end-line survey. Usually researcher has focused on the highest frequencies obtained. There were the questionnaires divided in three segments of respondents i.e. Members of Panchayat, Layman and Women candidates. Different segments were chosen to find the exact picture of awareness of PRIs in the district of Mewat to assess the impact of the Radio Transmission on Panchayats and their members through the programs.

Discussion and Analysis

- **Segmentation I: Analysis of Layman (Aam jan)**

After the dissemination of information through Radio Mewat, questionnaire was designed to know the awareness of Layman and it was found that the 99% respondents had heard about Radio Mewat, 95% people listen to it, 50% listeners like to listen to the radio in the morning and same in the evening. Almost 42% respondents have heard about the Panchayat program several times, but 46% heard about the Panchayat programme on Radio Mewat sometimes. They can know about the spending patterns of Panchayat. They can talk to the Sarpanch for the problems of village, know their responsibilities, information of the plans like PDS, Indira Awas Yojna, etc. They can check the records of Panchayat and about Panchayat system. The main information, they obtained are related to Gram Sabha, working style of pancahayat, responsibility of sarpach, responsibility of Panchayat, about committees and details of Panchayat.

The Study of Layman shows that most of the respondents of the study consider Panchayati Raj Institutions as a means to meet the local needs of rural communities and to ensure participation of rural communities. There are more men Sarpanchs in comparison to women and the names of Sarpanch are Kasadin (Male), Abdul Rahim (Male), Chutni (Female), Ajj (Male), Mumtaj Ali (Male), Harun (Male), Mubarak (Male), Ummar (Male), Makhmuli (Female) and Maharam (Female). It has been observed that if Sarpanch is a woman then in that case women Sarpanch works together with husband. It is a positive effect of Radio that shows that end-line survey depicts women Sarpanch work with husbands, but in baseline survey they work as per the direction of their husbands. When researchers tried to find out the reasons for why women Sarpanch do not work. The first and second reasons were that women do not know much about the Panchayat and the spouse can run the Panchayati system better. Third reason shows mixed results of two points i.e. women don't have knowledge of outside world and no one listens to women. When open and closed ended questions were asked related to *information and awareness on role & responsibility of Panchayat* to the layman, very mixed results were obtained.

Respondents replied that Sarpanch has the responsibility to look after the level of

education in the village and a huge percentage of population supports this. The three things people care when they choose a Sarpanch are that he/she should be educated, sensible and one who will direct the village on the path of development. A big section agreed that women can be better Sarpanchs. A huge percentage of the sample said that there are more women candidates in the Panchayat, although few said 'no' and some didn't know about it. A mixed result of yes and no was obtained when asked about the activities of the Panchayat. Some villagers said that no one tells them about the activities of the Panchayats and according to them it has been good. On the other hand, they said that they know that every villager has the right to know about the activities of Panchayat.

On the basis of the *information and awareness on Gram Sabha*, people mentioned that according to them it was not organised till date or they did not know schedule of meetings. A drastic change can be found in end-line survey, a big portion of respondents' accepted that the meeting of Gram Sabha is held in their village, but they did not know about the numbers of the participation of the candidates. Most of the respondents were unaware of the numbers of Gram Sabha meetings. Women do not participate in the meetings of Gram Sabha and even when they do, either they express or do not express their thoughts or the suggestions in Panchayat. The reasons for their passive participation was that they don't get spare time due to their household work and it is not considered good for them to come in the meetings of Gram Sabha. Why would women go when men are not going for these meetings is a common chorus.

On the ground of the *awareness of Government schemes and equitable distribution of resources*, a big portion of the study said that the employment was being given under MGNREGS in their Panchayat. Meanwhile, some people said that few villagers got the employment under the MGNREGS and that Gram Sabha does not launch any awareness campaign. Panchayat did not construct any toilet, placed any garbage box in the village and no healthcare and cleanliness samiti had been constituted. This area has shown a drastic change when it comes to awareness.

There were more 'yes' when people were asked about the visit of ANM sister in the village -- 33 % respondents agreed about the visit of ANM sister in the village. ANM comes and gives knowledge about healthcare. Usually, there was no vehicle arrangement for serious patients to ferry them to hospitals. Panchayat has constituted village education committee in the villages and the schools of villages had water purification facility. The response was positive about Anganvadi centre in the village.

When asked about the extent of the MGNREGS and at least how many kilometres does one have to walk to get to work, the respondents said that they had to walk 5 kilometres and don't know much about the scheme. A very mixed result was found about the name of the person who can vote on the decisions of Panchayat and results revolved around Panchayat members, people of Gram

Sabha and villagers respectively. People knew that if the Sarpanch did not call a meeting of the Gram Sabha, a complaint can be made in District Panchayat. Almost 70% respondents said that children get vaccination in the village and around 8% replied in negative for the same. A close result of yes and no were recorded in end-line survey about rural health committee of the Panchayat. A very close results of daliya, sweet rice, salted rice and bakli was obtained for the schedule of mid day meal while daliya was ticked by the highest respondents in the village. Most villagers didn't know about any special exemption for Scheduled Castes, Backward class and weaker sections of the society to start a business in the village.

- **Segmentation II: Analysis of Members of Panchayat**

After the dissemination of information through Radio Mewat, questionnaire was designed to know the awareness of members of Panchayat and it was found the 99% respondents had heard about Radio Mewat, 95% people listen to Radio Mewat, 57% listeners like to listen to radio in the morning and same in the evening. Almost 42% respondents have heard about the Panchayat program several times, but 46% heard about the Panchayat programme on Radio Mewat sometimes. Programmes like *Panchayati Raj Hamaro Raj* was most appreciated. They also like programmes related to agriculture and health. They learnt through Radio Mewat that they can complain, if the Panchayat does not work properly and they can enquire about the spending patterns of the Panchayat. They can talk to the Sarpanch about the problems of their village know and take information plans like PDS, Indira Awas Yojna etc. They can check the records of Panchayat too. The main information they obtained is mostly related to Gram Sabha, working style of Panchayat, responsibility of Sarpanch, responsibility of Panchayat, information on several committees and details of Panchayat. *Analysis of the members of Panchayat* shows that most of the respondents think of Panchayati Raj Institutions as an instrument to rule over the people, to meet the local needs of rural communities and to take control over the village.

For knowing the *role and responsibility of Panchayat* in the villages, questions were framed and respondents were unaware about the schedule of meetings, but according to few villagers there must be a Panchayat meeting once in fifteen days or once in a month. The three main responsibilities of the Panchayat were found to be, the preparation of development plans and budget, arrangement of meeting in the village, to take control over the village and to present that in Savani meeting and also to govern the villages in Panchayat. Decisions were taken in majority in the Panchayat, but few said decisions were taken with the consent of Sarpanch which shows the changes after the dissemination of information. Three main *sources of income for Panchayats* were observed to be grants from the government and local authorities, all types of grants and the funds deposited by people. According to the respondents, schools, health centers, construction of toilets, roads and ponds for the overall development of the village were the major fields where the Panchayat spent its funds. The

Sarpanch kept Rs 10,000 in cash from Panchayat fund for mobility and sometimes for Panchayat work.

On the question of the *responsibilities of committees*, around 18% respondents said that there was no Panchayat committee in their villages but 58% said that there was a Panchayat committee in their village. There were other committees like General Committee and social justice committee in the village except Panchayat. These and other committees have brought drastic changes and this is mainly due to the programmes which are aired on the radio. People were not even aware about the name of committees, but now they know about them. People were not even aware about the ways to create the committees in their villages.

Questions were formed to get the assessment on *the involvement of Gram Sabha in decision making*. As per the opinion of respondents, Sarpanchs & ANMs have conducted the previous meetings of Gram Sabha and work which has been done in the previous meetings was discussed. On the other side new schemes and social auditing too was discussed. Few people agreed that information must be sent ten days before convening meeting of the Gram Sabha. At the time of base-line survey, people even do not know of it. Three good things of the last meeting were: everyone from the village came, new schemes were announced and the issue of cleanliness was discussed. To make the Gram Sabha meeting successful, young people, women especially the literate section, Schedule Castes & backward classes should be encouraged to participate. According to the sample study of the members of Panchayat, women did not participate in the meetings of the Gram Sabha. If they participated, they did not express their thoughts or suggestions. Mostly, women did not participate because it is considered a taboo for women to attend such meetings. Also, they did not get spare time due to the work at home. Plus, no one invites women. As far as the knowledge of government schemes is concerned, members of Panchayat said that schemes like MGNREGS and Indira Awas Yojna are operational in their village. The members of the Panchayat emphasized on MGNREGS and government's plan in their village and a big portion of respondents agreed that BDO looks after the work of Panchayat at block level.

State government should take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority to enable them to function as units of self-governance.

- **Segmentation III: Analysis of Women**

After dissemination of information through Radio Mewat, questionnaire was designed to know the level of awareness of PRIs and Radio Mewat among women. The findings showed that about 97% respondents had heard the name of Radio Mewat. Also, the same percentage of women listens to Radio Mewat. While about 84% of listeners like to listen to the radio in the morning, 52% like to

listen to it in the evening. About 65% of the respondents had heard about the Panchayat programme several times, but 27% had listened to the programme on Radio Mewat sometimes. Around 94% respondents like *Panchayati Raj Hamaro Raj* programme the most. They learnt several things through Radio Mewat. They now know that they can complain if Panchayat was not functioning properly. They can know about the spending patterns of Panchayat and can talk to the Sarpanch about problems of the village. They can know their responsibilities and also information on the plans like PDS, Indira Awas Yojna, etc. They can check the records of Panchayat and about Panchayat system. The main information obtained by them was related to Gram Sabha, Panchayat's working style, Sarpanch's & Panchayat's responsibility, information about committees, details of Panchayat among others. The *analytical study of women* confirmed that most of the women respondents were not aware about the Panchayati Raj Institutions but a few feel PRIs is rule of the village by its people and makes the democratic decentralization of village's governance.

Four questions were framed in the questionnaire to know their awareness about the *role and responsibility of Panchayat and Community*. They knew the name of the Sarpanch in their village Panchayat - Kasadin (male), Abdul Rahim (male), Chutni (female), Ajj (male), Mumtaj Ali (male), Harun (male), Mubarak (male), Ummar (male), Makhmuli (female), Maharam (female) in respective villages. They agreed that a woman could become a Sarpanch and that they had also voted in the previous elections. On the contrary, most of the respondents said that they never met any women Sarpanch.

When questions were asked about the *involvement of Gram Sabha in decision-making*, a different picture came up after broadcasts through Radio Mewat. While women were unaware about the schedule of the meetings of Gram Sabha at the time of baseline survey, now those women are aware about the same and a majority claimed to have attended a Gram Sabha meeting too. Now, they also share their views in the meetings of Gram Sabha. However, the downside that most women getting elected and not enjoying any position of authority or independence of participating in the development process still remained. Respondent women said that a few other women come in the meeting but never express their thoughts.

Under the segmentation of *Government scheme & programs*, they said that the main work of the Aanganwadi is to make food for the kids and provide vaccination. Almost equal percentages of positive and negative replies were received when asked about Panchayat's emphasis on vaccination of children and if any notice board was put anywhere for the same. Now, they state that the Panchayat has such privileges for children and pregnant women. They were not aware of this during the baseline survey. They were also not aware of the number of seats reserved in their Panchayat for women and about the educational qualification of women associated with their Panchayat. But the radio programmes have brought in a revolution and empowered the women of Mewat

with information that was missing earlier. This endline survey also indicated that if a woman wants to start a business, respondent women are not aware about any privilege provided to them. Close variances between yes and no were judged for the women campaigning in the village for Panchayat elections. They also informed of the ANM sister's once in a week visit to their village. Also, according to them, the Panchayat did not construct any toilet or bathroom for women in their village and also that the Sarpanch is mainly responsible to get them cleaned on behalf of Panchayat. They were also unaware about government plans running in their villages and about 64% women did not know about MGNREGS and 26% said that they never got the work through MGNREGS whereas according to 46%, they did get work. Mixed responses were received about the payment for their work. Some of the respondents said that the management held the money and did not give to the workers.

Conclusion

All the participatory communication activities undertaken in the Mewat district illustrate how important channels like Community Radio have become to connect with the rural audiences, and empower them with the knowledge of government programmes, policies and schemes (PRIs in this case) among others.

The endline survey highlighted that the people of Mewat were better enlightened about the functioning of Panchayats, what benefits Gram Sabhas could bring to them than before. This could be achieved only through activities undertaken on-ground (FGDs) and on air/ off air (community radio).

Interestingly, women in Mewat listened to Radio Mewat quite often. By the end of the project, they were better aware about their roles in PRIs. The activities undertaken had also instilled confidence in them to participate in Gram Sabha meetings and also stay informed of key governmental schemes and policies that could help them.

As a result, community radio brings power and a plethora of possibilities to the people in rural areas. It provides a framework to engage communities, opportunities to work towards capacity building, preserving traditional culture & wisdom, besides bolstering PRIs.

A sustained campaign will prove to benefit the region by bringing in holistic sustainable development by instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability.