

ONLY A SINGLE PROGRAMME IN RADIO CAN GIVE A FEELING OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE WORLD

MD. ABDUL HOQUE¹

Deputy Director, Bangladesh Betar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Accepted for publication: November 30, 2008

ABSTRACT

Md. Abdul Hoque. 2009. *Only a Single Programme in Radio Can Give a Feeling of Being a Member of the World.* *j. innov.dev.strategy* 2(3): 18-29

'*Sal Gittal*' is one of the programme broadcast from Bangladesh Betar, Dhaka for the Garo people. Within last thirty years they have had enormous benefit like lyricists, singers, artists come from them, they could present their language and culture in the national radio, which gives them inspiration to protect and flourish their culture and heritage. On the other hand Rakhaing has no radio programme of their own. So their language and culture has no significant development, even diminishing day by day. Some of the Rakhaing people are now trying to retrieve their language, culture and heritage. Study findings showed that the Rakhaing feel them excluded from the world; and only a single programme in radio can give them a feeling of being a member of the world. Sustainable livelihood means to live with the close harmony without losing ecosystem both in economical, social, environmental and cultural elements. Or other ways we can say live without the degradation of economical, social, environmental and cultural elements of an indigenous group is sustainable livelihood. Radio has the strong role in the sustainable livelihood of indigenous people. Mother language is the most powerful instrument of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. Promoting the recognition and practice of mother language media, especially radio, has its unique role. Radio is the cheapest, easiest, strongest and personal medium that can be useful every moment of a person's life, though he/she is at works. So the radio has an impact on the indigenous people's sustainable livelihood.

Keywords: Rakhaing, sal gittal, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The Garo, an indigenous group living in the northern region of Bangladesh, have their own radio programme broadcast in their native language once a week. The programme was encouraged by the government with the decision in 1976 to produce the native language programme '*Sal Gittal*' (The New Sun). The Garo write and produce the programme entirely themselves while a government appointed producer verbalizes the government's policies through the programme. The Garo have had their own language radio programme for about 30 years, focusing on issues relevant to their daily life which have benefited them enormously.

Another indigenous group, the Rakhaing who live in the southern coastal region of Bangladesh, has no radio programme in their native language. The Rakhaing are poor and marginalized people who could benefit from the introduction of a native language radio programme with a focus on issues specifically relevant to them. Access to native language radio programmes affects the well being of a group of people.

Background of the Study

1. Childhood Memory of Oral History

Childhood memories of oral telling story have a strong influence on a child's thought patterns and therefore, on a person's life. I was born and grew up in the district of Patuakhali where the Rakhaing people mainly live. In my early years I listened to various different oral stories of the Rakhaing people and found it interesting to learn about them.

Later, I studied at the Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh. It was far from my birthplace and from the Rakhaing people, but close to the Garo people. One of my friends, Subarna Cisim, from the Garo group studied with me and through him I became interested in learning about the Garo as well.

My job as a programme organizer for the farm broadcasting unit of Bangladesh Betar (Radio Bangladesh) in Dhaka and the opportunities it gave me to visit and interview people from both these groups about agricultural farming, enhanced my previous interest in learning about them. Moreover, the UNESCO conference on "*Knowledge in the Next Generation; Major Challenges Regarding the Sustainability of Indigenous Cultures*" hosted by the University of Tromsø, Norway in 2004, expedited my decision on the focus to organize this

¹ Deputy Director, Bangladesh Betar. Had done his M.Phil in Indigenous Studies, University of Tromsø, Norway

thesis. My working and practical knowledge regarding indigenous programme broadcasting from Bangladesh Betar helped me to contrast the two groups. Of them, one group has had its own programme since 1976 and other group has not yet launched on a broadcasting programme.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

Radio plays a very powerful role in modern life. It is the cheapest medium for easy access information, it is portable and one can listen while performing many tasks. It has the power to reach people in any corner of the world within a short time. In any emergency or natural disaster like Tsunami and Sidr radio becomes the most vital source of information. It also plays an important role in the daily affairs of the local and global community. Hence the role of radio in modern society cannot be underestimated. In Bangladesh there are strong oral traditions, which maintain important values in social life. Radio can easily promote these oral traditions to people of all levels and status.

3. Mother Language

As a tool of communication, the mother language has a powerful role in the formation of the individual, and is "the most powerful instrument of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage." In recognition of this phenomenon UNESCO followed up the proclamation of the International Mother Language Day by promulgating the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in November 2001. Protection of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and combating illicit traffic in cultural goods and services are some of the several aims of this declaration².

Language is at the heart of humanity's intangible heritage. UNESCO's goal on the eve of International Mother Language Day 2004 was to protect the world's oral histories to revitalize the rich cultural diversities present in the world through its educational and cultural programmes and promote languages as a means of communication and interaction. Promoting the recognition and practice of mother language media, especially radio, has its own unique role.

Indigenous people traditionally live in the remotest areas of a country. Newspapers and other print media are usually out of their reach and television is too costly for most indigenous people to afford. However, radio can promote native language in an easy and acceptable way in all spheres of life. For indigenous people, the indigenous language radio programmes are a very welcome contribution to the notion of promoting native language.

*'Radio can promote traditional knowledge that acquired and preserved through generations in an original or local society, which consists of experience in working to secure subsistence form of nature'*³.

By promoting traditional knowledge through a consistent flow of information in a mother tongue, radio performs a vital role in the sustainable livelihoods of indigenous people.

4. Radio as a Medium

*Radio is often described as the "captive electronic medium" because it reaches people while they are doing other things - in their cars, on the way to and from work, in their homes and offices, even while they exercise with a Walkman'*⁴.

An interview I had with a popular Member of Parliament (MP) in Bangladesh went something like this: He willingly stated without my asking; "I do not listen to the radio. My driver listens". I asked him what he does during his commuting time; he smiled and said, "Oh, I also listen during this time". I ventured, "Do you get more time to watch television than to listen to the radio?" He laughed loudly and said that he didn't. Then suddenly he said, "Yes, I listen to the radio".

² Message from H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the Fifty-Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly as on 21 February 2003.

³ Nils Jernsletten: Sami Traditional Terminology PP. 86

⁴ www.kctcs.net/newspublications/stylebook/mediatypes.htm. This was a study subjected to 'working with the media' in America.

This underestimation and overlooking event happens all over the world whether it is in developed or developing countries. The importance of radio has not decreased; instead it has increased with many new dimensions for all kinds of people; educated, non-educated, indigenous and non-indigenous, rural and urban. I found people walking, jogging, running and cycling wearing radio headphones, listening to the radio as they went. I have also seen this in England and in Norway. If we are to consider the significance of the various types of media for the indigenous people; the most entertaining tool and popular medium is television; the most permanent medium are those of print; the most accessible medium is the radio. Additionally, radio is a medium of linguistic and cultural continuity and at times, of survival.⁵ Radio is congenial medium for indigenous language groups as it is based on oral and aural communication. It enables users of those languages to communicate without recourse to the printed word.

5. Indigenous Broadcast in the World

Indigenous people are more inclined towards electronic media, especially radio. According to the Brundtland report in 1987⁶, some communities – so called indigenous or tribal peoples – remain isolated because of such factors as physical barriers to communication or marked differences in social and cultural practices. The isolation of many such peoples has meant the preservation of a traditional way of life in close harmony with the natural environment. Their very survival has depended on their ecological awareness and adaptation. But their isolation has also meant that few of them have shared in national economic and social development; this may be reflected in their poor health, nutrition, and education. These communities are the repositories of vast accumulations of traditional knowledge and experience that links humanity with its ancient origins⁷. Radio as a medium can help them to come forward into the mainstream of the whole world.

Localized radio and television that include indigenous dialects and cultural mixes make for successful communication within the indigenous groups and allows their value's systems to diffuse within the localities. The first indigenous broadcasts in North America were on Alaskan radio in 1930s, but despite Alaska's nearly thirty-year head start, Canada is the world leader in indigenous broadcasting⁸. The British developed specific British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) units for Scotland (1932)⁹. Norway experimented irregularly with programmes in Sami (Lapp) starting from 1934 and later developed a regularly scheduled Sami service in 1946 for the northernmost region of the country. Finland followed suit a year later. Iraq introduced a Kurdish language service in 1939¹⁰.

Most indigenous media / radio stations were established with a strong sense of purpose as represented by the following list¹¹:

1. To 'rescue' the language, chiefly by using it in daily broadcasts but also perhaps by direct language instruction.
2. To increase a sense of self-esteem on the part of the indigenous population, both in their historical traditions and in their achievements in contemporary society.
3. To combat the negative images of indigenous peoples held by the majority of the population.
4. To work for a greater degree of cohesiveness among indigenous peoples, often so as to develop greater political influence locally, regionally, and nationally.
5. To provide a visible and audible symbol of indigenous society so that both indigenous and majority cultures would be aware of each other.
6. To provide an outlet for the creative production of, for example, indigenous singers, instrumentalists and poets.
7. To provide another source of employment for the indigenous community.

⁵Valerie Alia and Simone Bull, 2005: pp-108

⁶ In 1987 the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) drew attention to the fact that economic development often leads to deterioration, not an improvement, in the quality of people's lives.

⁷ Brundtland report 1987, pp:114-115

⁸ Ibid: pp-107.

⁹ Donald R. Browne; 1996: pp-15

¹⁰ Ibid:pp-15

¹¹ Ibid: pp-59

6. Indigenous Broadcasting in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, radio is the most important source of information for the indigenous people. There are 45 groups¹² of ethnic minority / indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Betar (Radio Bangladesh) has twelve regional stations throughout the country. Every station has operated one or more daily or weekly radio programmes for these ethnic minorities since 1976. Two out of twelve regional stations have been established in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh where people of ethnic minorities are more concentrated. Therefore, radio maintains a strong role in their sustainable livelihoods. Bangladesh was the role model for the conceptualisation of *International Mother Language Day* and the decision of the Bangladesh government to produce radio programmes for the indigenous people in their own languages is particularly noteworthy. This study consolidates the significant role of radio in the sustainable livelihoods of the Rakhaing and the Garo people in Bangladesh. For these reasons the specific objectives of the study were

1. The contrast of the effect of the radio programmes between the Rakhaing and the Garo ethnic groups and
2. Socio-cultural effects of the native language radio programmes in the indigenous people's subsistence and sustainable livelihood

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Radio programme for indigenous people in Bangladesh Betar

It is said that Bangladesh Betar had a starring role in the building of the nation during and after the War of Independence. The same can also be said of its role in encouraging the maintenance of the sustainable livelihoods of Bangladesh's indigenous people. There are both formal and non-formal indigenous radio programmes broadcast from the different radio stations of Bangladesh Betar. These include programmes that are broadcast in the dialect of the local representative race of indigenous people. Lists of indigenous programmes are as follows.

Table 1. Programme for indigenous (Tribal) peoples

Sl No	Name of the stations	Name of the programme	Broadcasting time	Days of the week	Representative indigenous group	Total time in a week
01	BB ¹³ , Dhaka	<i>Sal Gittal</i>	17.10-17.45	Friday	Garo	35 minutes
02	BB, Chittagong	Paharica	16.05-16.30	Everyday	Chakma, Tripura and Marma	2 hrs 55 minutes
03.	BB, Rajshahi	Madol	14.30-15.00	Wednesday	Santal and Oraon	30 minutes
04	BB, Rangpur	Mahua	15.30-16.00	Tuesday	Santal and Oraon	30 minutes
05	BB, Sylhet	Mridhanga	15.05-15.30	Sunday	Manipuri	25 minutes
06	BB, Rangamati	Girisur, Rangasur	15.15-15.35	Everyday	Chakma, Marma, Tangchanga	2 hrs 20 minutes
07	BB, Thakurgaon	Shalpial	16.30-16.45	Alternative Sunday	Sawntal	8 minutes
08	Cox's Bazar	Rakhaing Gan	15.50-16.00	Monday	Rakhaing	10 minutes
Total time in a week for indigenous (Tribal) people						07 hrs 20 minutes

2. *Sal Gittal*

Among the indigenous radio programmes, *Sal Gittal*, my research programme, began broadcast from Bangladesh Betar Dhaka on 11th April 1976. The programme duration is 35 minutes. The Garo people chose the time of broadcasting. And it permitted them to come back from their work in the fields and sit together to listen the programme. The programme description follows overleaf.

¹² IWGIA, the Indigenous World 2004, pp 290.

¹³BB=Bangladesh Betar

Table 2. Programme Description *Sal Gittal*

Name of the Programme	'Sal Gittal'
Meaning of the name	'New Day' or 'New Sun'
Language of the Programme	Garó
Indigenous Group represented	Garó
Time of Broadcast	5.10 pm every Friday
Duration of the Programme	35 minutes
Participants of the programme	Garó people
Contents of the programme	Talks (Education, Culture, Farming, Health, Sanitation, Nutrition etc.), News, Feature (Short Drama), Jingles, Songs, Interviews and listeners' replies
Name of the Broadcasting Stations	Bangladesh Betar, Dhaka
Area coverage	Most of the country

3. Rakhaing And Garó In Bangladesh

A. Rakhaing

The Rakhaing live in the southern part of the country, mainly in the coastal districts of Patuakhali and Barguna under Barisal Division. They also live in the coastal districts of Cox's Bazar under Chittagong Division. The Rakhaing of Patuakhali live in the southern part of the country, in the coastal ring of the Bay of Bengal between 21°48'16'' and 22°36'10'' North latitude as well as between 89°52'30'' and 90°38'55'' East longitude¹⁴. The word "Rakhaing" is derived from the word "Rakkha"¹⁵, in Pali meaning "conservation". "Rakhaing" denotes the name of the people who conserve faithfully the beauty of their norms, values, languages, culture and tradition. According to the population census 1991¹⁶ total 16,932 Rakhaing people lived in Bangladesh under Barisal and Chittagong division. Of them 3415 lived in district of Patuakhali and Barguna and rest in Cox's Bazar district.



Picture 1. Rakhaing women

Rakhaings are the first people to inhabit the southern Patuakhali and Barguna districts

The Rakhaing people claimed their new lands by cutting away the jungle in greater Patuakhali and Chittagong areas. No people had lived in this area before them; they were the first to settle the islands and are so called the 'First People' (Adibashi).¹⁷ I talked with different relevant personalities about the Rakhaing people in Bangladesh. Kazi Ali Reza, Head of UNIC¹⁸ Bangladesh, strongly told me that "they (the Rakhaing people) are the indigenous people of that area as they came, settled and inhabited the area first."

B. Garó

About 575,000 (1997 IMA) Garó people lived in the bordering areas of the Indian State of Meghalaya, Garó Hills District; West Assam, Goalpara, Kamrup, Karbi Anglong Districts; Nagaland, Kohima District; Tripura, South Tripura District; West Bengal, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar Districts. According to the 1991 population census in Bangladesh, a total of 102,000 Garó people lived in the northern part of Bangladesh. (Picture 2¹⁹) They were mainly in areas under greater Mymensingh District at latitude 25 degrees- 26 degrees N by longitude 90 degrees-91 degrees E. Later, The Garó spread to Nalitabari, Kalmakanda, Durgapur,



Picture 2. Garó women

¹⁴ Bangladesh District Gazzetteers: Patuakhali

¹⁵ Promotion and Preservation of Rakhaing Language Culture & Handicrafts, Workshop report, Preface

¹⁶ Statistical Pocketbook Bangladesh 2002; pp-140

¹⁷ National Seminar on Promotion and preservation of Rakhaing Language, Culture and Handicrafts; pp-2

¹⁸ United Nations Information Center

¹⁹ Sources internet

Sreebardi, Barhatta, Dhobaura, Haluaghat, Purbadhala, Phulpur, Fulbaria, Bhaluka, Madhupur and other places of Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur and Tangail Districts. Some Garo live in Sunamganj of Sylhet, Sreepur and Kawraid of Gazipur and Raumari of Kurigram. Many Garo, once living in the Bangladesh territory, migrated to the Indian State of Meghalaya. Modhupur Garh area under the district of Tangail, is the most important place for the Garo people. In Bangladesh, the Garo people live in the 36 Upazillas of the following 12 districts: -

Name of the Districts	Populations
Tangail, Maymensingh, Jamalpur, Netrokona and Sherpur	Densely
Sunamgang, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Hobigang, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Gazipur	A few

One Garo high school teacher also told me in the following language “in all respects we are indigenous people”.

OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS

Historical Development of Indigenous Radio Programmes

Indigenous radio programmes began broadcasting at the beginning of the twentieth century when Bangladesh was not yet in existence. Shortly after the independence of Bangladesh in 1976, Bangladesh Betar started indigenous radio programmes from several of its stations. Some of the stories of these beginnings are written below.

*A. Radio and Indigenous Programmes and Their Historical Development*²⁰

Dr. Jafar Ahmad Hanafi, Director, Cox’sBazar Cultural Centre and a regular artist on Bangladesh Betar, is one of the many artists who were very much engaged in beginning a programme for indigenous people. I was fortunate enough to interview him during my visit to Cox’s Bazar District. He spoke in detail about the beginnings of the indigenous programme, especially in Bangladesh Betar, Chittagong. I interviewed him at his office.

Jafar Ahmad: - “As I can remember it was the month of November, 1976. The Regional Director of Bangladesh Betar, Chittagong called me and conferred the task to organize a programme for indigenous people. They gave me a time frame of around 15 days. They gave me all kinds of logistical support like a car and relevant people to assist me. Communications were not as good as they are today. It was a notable event to have the then President of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman, officially visit the Rangamati subdivision (at present Rangamati Hill District) of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The indigenous people of CHT, the Jhummah, demanded to the president to be broadcast a radio programme among their many demands. The president made a commitment to them that such a radio programme would be broadcast with in the next month. Accordingly, he passed the order to the radio authority. The radio authority chose me as I had studied of one of the major 11 groups of indigenous people in CHT. At that time I had a different job in another organization. The radio authority requested of my organization to be given leave for at least 15 days. Thereafter I began my task; I received the much needed car and fuel to allow me to collect the necessary artists from the indigenous groups. There were no formal artists or singers among these groups; however, I collected some of the people I knew to me from my previous studies. It was very risky to travel to the remotest areas, but we managed it and collected artists we needed to start up the programme. The artists were not familiar with radio equipment and although they felt comfortable with their indigenous instruments, radio did not allow the use of such instruments; after all, radio has its prestige. The radio programme also forced them into a situation because of they had to practice in the Bangla language and the station’s instruments. Many artists lost their voice while trying to cope with radio station instruments; also some of the material they performed lost its traditional sound and became modern. Slowly but surely we managed in succeeding to write the script and organize the programme. Later we named the programme “Paharika”. The programme is now broadcasting in different indigenous languages seven days in a week. A huge number of letters started to come into the station about the programmes. Nowadays it is a lot easier to organize the programmes as lot of artists have begun emerging. I think programme could be more interactive and captivating for the indigenous people”- Interview end.

The above is a short history of the programme “Paharika” which started on April 6th 1976 in the Bangla language. It turned into a tribal language programme from August 20th 1979. As far as I could understand this

²⁰ The history of Paharica programme was written in a booklet published on 28th October 1978. The booklet was about Tribal Programme of Bangladesh Betar Chittagong. Importance & area of Paharica programme was described in the booklet. The editor of the booklet was Dr. Jafar Ahamad Hanafi.

was a perspective decision from the president because many parts of the indigenous world at that time started broadcasting in their own languages.

“Sal Gittal” an Historical Programme for the Garo People

Mr. Michael Mritunjoy Rema from the Garo community was chosen along with his colleague Dipok Mrang, to organize this programme. Mr. Rema completed his bachelor degree in music and since 1973 has occasionally participated in radio folk programmes. According to Mr. Rema, *the decision was made by the then president of Bangladesh to broadcast a radio programme for the Garo people as the first step in protecting their culture and heritage. Later, he established the Birisiri Cultural Academy in Netrokona District. The Birisiri Cultural Academy is mainly for Garo people and a small portion of Hazong*²¹. He informed me about the beginnings of the programme and how tough it was to organize. *The Garo people had chosen the name themselves and that nowadays they have the benefit of contributions from a lot of artists, scriptwriters and lyricists. Some lyricists even became nationally recognized figures; Tiresk Nokrek is one of them. The Garo people are attempting to secure their own private radio channel. The programme ‘Sal Gittal’ was broadcast on sundays in the beginning and was interlinked with christian prayer time. People don’t want to miss either the programme or church for prayer so the government changed the day of broadcast to fridays. The Garo people had showed expressed their grief over the broadcasting time as the news items had been cut from it without their prior consent. This is an indication of how much the Garo people like and enjoy their programme. The cultural academy in Birisiri, Netrokona has done a lot of research regarding this and help to maintain its running in the proper way.*

Sanjeeb Drong, Dhaka²²

‘Radio plays a good role in the life of the Garo people, especially in rural areas. The Garo language, music, stories, histories are reflected in the programme. Another good side is that the Garo are running the programme. Indigenous people often do not have access to information. In this situation, the radio programme, Sal Gittal plays an important role’.

He also mentioned that *‘in a 40-minute programme, the producer tries to include informative talks every week*²³. *The talks include social and economic development, the development of indigenous women, agriculture, promotion of the handloom, horticultural development, indigenous youth leadership, income generation programme, importance of business, education and so on. It has a great impact on Garo life. The rural Garo listen to this programme every week. Sal Gittal does not only include songs, stories or cultural items, but it includes the problems and issues of the Garo people and the challenges they face in their life. They can also learn from the talks and the discussion programmes about economic, social and cultural development.’*

B. No Programme for the Rakhaing People in the Radio

When the government organized the indigenous programmes for different indigenous groups in different radio stations in 1976, the Rakhaing group did not manage to secure a programme of their own on Bangladesh Betar Khulna or Dhaka. Even after the establishment of Bangladesh Betar Barisal in 12th June, 1999, they have not yet managed any programme for them. My fieldwork (Picture 3) indicates that this is due to the lack of proper organization and leadership²⁴ among them. Moreover, the cultural academy, which had been established for them and with other indigenous groups, is now derelict (see picture-above). In addition, the RDF Chairman²⁵ in an interview expresses a differing point of view. Part of his reply is given below:-



Picture 3. Rakhaing Cultural Institute -wrecked

Mr. Ushit Maung:- *In 1976, the late President Ziaur Rahman established cultural academies in some tribal areas such as: Garo Cultural Academy, Mymensingh, Tribal Cultural Academy, Chittagong Hill Tract,*

²¹ Another indigenous group in Mymensingh and Netrokona districts of Bangladesh

²² Indigenous leader among the Garo people wrote many books regarding indigenous issues

²³ At the beginning the programme was 40 minutes but now it is 35 minutes; He mentioned 40 minutes

²⁴ Immediately after the independence of Bangladesh a repression on Rakhaing community suddenly broke-out in most of the Rakhaing villages in the form of robbery, looting and raping by the local majority, which causes lack of proper organization and leadership

²⁵ Ushit Maung is the chairman of RDF

Monipuri Cultural Academy, Sylhet, Tribal Cultural Center, Cox's Bazar and Buddhist Cultural Academy, Taltali, Barguna and so on. However, he did not establish any welfare associations apart from the radio programmes Chakma and Marma broadcast from Chittagong radio center once a week for one hour, and also a telecast tribal cultural programme on BTV by the name of "Banoful". The Rakhaing cultural team from Cox's Bazaar participated once only in the programme "Banoful". I did not find any initiatives to protect indigenous languages in the period of President Ziaur Rahman. Even now there is no provision to learn indigenous languages in government primary schools in Bangladesh. As the President of the Rakhaing Buddhist Welfare Association, I appealed several times to the authorities to arrange a radio programme for the Rakhaing people. It is not from our ignorance, but from our lack of importance to such a programme.

He also added that 'One Buddhist Cultural Academy was established in Taltali during the government of President Ziaur Rahman under Ministry of Home Affairs. However, in some regions those cultural academies are now totally damaged and operate no activities. The members of the last sitting Management Committees of the Academy were totally illiterate and the committee was formed in the presence of UNO²⁶, Amtali. The Rakhaing community from time to time submitted this allegation to the government authority of "UNO, Amtali upazilla". But, the authority did not take any initiative to find a solution. Regarding these concerns, two groups formed within the Rakhaing people, which initiated conflict. The promotion and preservation of Rakhaing culture and literature lacked local government initiatives to solve the problems to develop an operational cultural academy. The annual budget and government fund to run the program and to repair the academy was nil.

He thought it would be useful for the Rakhaing to have a radio programme in their language. He also said that the continuation of the programme was possible as; that 'We are well-equipped and have available artist, lyricists, scriptwriters and performers for continuing the programme'.

Suggestion for Development of Indigenous Programme

Suggestions have come from both the listeners (indigenous peoples) and the artists.

From the Rakhaing people, their first and foremost demand or suggestion was that a Rakhaing programme should be started from the Barisal Radio centre where interviews of experienced people of the indigenous society should be broadcast. They want a weekly indigenous radio programme in their own language like 'Paharika' in Chittagong and 'Sal Gittal' in Dhaka. They also suggested that the programme should be livelihood oriented and that educational and religious programmes should be incorporated. Rakhaing artists should be contacted in Bangladesh Betar Barisal. They hope the programme will enhance the exploration of culture, language and heritage. Having their own programme means developing their culture.

By comparison, the Garo have had their own programme since 1976 and mentioned that time should be increased to two times a week and improve the programme both quantitatively and qualitatively. They demanded that music, Serengji, Ray Ray²⁷ should be increased. They also suggested that realistic and constructive programmes with due suggestions from the community will make the programme livelihood oriented.

SUMMARY

Benefits of Indigenous Radio Programme

In spite of these shortcomings, still we found that radio plays a significant role in the sustainable livelihood of indigenous people. Here are some examples; in the beginning, the indigenous programmes were in Bangla, later they began broadcasting in various indigenous languages; radio has created an awareness of education, sanitation and family planning; indigenous groups have found themselves to be members of a world indigenous community; the indigenous groups have found inspiration to protect and disseminate their language, culture and heritage which in turn has encouraged the promotion of lyricists, singers and writers among themselves. According to Krisna Chandra²⁸, the broadcasting of Chakma music every week on a fixed day provides incentives as they are broadcasting their own songs on the radio and they receive money as honoraria. Even a few indigenous artists are now working abroad, for example²⁹; (1) *Sourav Chakma (Tintin)* of Rangamati Hilly

²⁶ UNO= Upazila Nirabahi Officer:

²⁷ Local indigenous instrument.

²⁸ Chakma sangit prosange du'ti kotha; Krisna chandra chakma

²⁹ Ibid-41

district is studying in music at the Canberra Institute of Technology and doing his thesis on 'Indigenous Musical Instruments & Hands with Western Fusion'; (2) **Susmriti Chakma (Dipu)** has completed his degree in classical music in India and is now playing as a duo with Ustad Dilshad Khan in Mumbai. Since the programme *Paharika* began in Bangla in 1979, indigenous groups have come forward to execute and perform their own programmes in their languages. Although there is some development and progress, there is still a lot more to be made.

Sami Radio and Indigenous Media Cooperation³⁰

We, the entire group of Masters' Students of Indigenous Studies at the University of Tromsø, Norway, participated in an excursion tour to Karasjok, in northern Finnmark, Norway, from 3rd–6th April 2005, where the Sami³¹ Radio Centre is situated. On April 4th, 2005, we visited the radio centre and joined in on a brief session of '***Sami Radio and Indigenous Media Cooperation***' presented by Mona Solbakk and Ravdna Buljo, editors of Sami Broadcasting, Norway. This same paper was developed and presented by Mona Solbakk and Nils Johan Hætta on 26.04.06 to another group of Indigenous Studies students.

To make a comparison of the situation between the indigenous radio programmes of Bangladesh Betar and Sami Radio, some of the information from both power point presentations is given below.

Connecting the indigenous world

- NRK and Sami Radio have strongly expressed the wish to profile the world's indigenous peoples on radio and television.
- We hope that we can obtain partners so that our experience and resources can contribute to linking the world's indigenous communities in a media network.

Comparing these developments of Sami Radio from 1946 to 2006, to those of the indigenous programmes in Bangladesh, it is noted that Bangladesh is remarkably far behind in development. Moreover, it is reducing its programme production due to lack of available money and support.

Right for an Indigenous Radio Programme for the Rakhaing People Is Obvious

According to the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples; "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages. They also have the right to equal access to all forms of non-indigenous media. States shall take effective measure that state-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity"³². On the other hand, a fundamental principle of the state policy of Bangladesh is to; "Adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people"³³. Following the above mentioned articles from draft United Nations declaration on rights of indigenous people and Bangladesh constitution, my fieldwork suggests that every community of indigenous people has the right to express, protect and develop their culture and heritage in their own way. But the Rakhaing is missing out on such an opportunity as it has no radio programme in their language and their people are aware of the diminishing of their culture in the future. They believe that if they had a radio programme in their own language, there would be people among them who would be interested in training, performing and finally broadcasting their programme, thus helping to protect and promote their language, heritage and culture.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable livelihood of indigenous people is the harmonious lives of indigenous people where there are no harmful influences on their traditional livelihood with nature and at the same time, are in good relations with the whole world. Knowledge of education, health and sanitation is important for maintaining the relation with the world. As indigenous people tend to live in the remotest areas of a country, radio becomes the most important means of communication; in addition, it is the cheap, easily accessible, portable and a captivating media, which

³⁰ This was a power point presentation about sami radio and indigenous media cooperation during the excursion tour of the students of Masters' programme for indigenous studies, university of Tromsø, Norway as on 04.04.2005. I was one of the students in that excursion tour.

³¹ The *Sami* are considered to be a group of Indigenous Peoples that live in the polar region in what today comprises the Northern area of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. From the South, the traditional *Sami* region extends from femenden in Norway's Hedmark County in Idre in Dalarna, Sweden to the North it stretches to the Kola Peninsula in Russia and down to Finland in the southeast.

³² Article 17 of Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples

³³ Article 23 of Bangladesh Constitution

can be listened to whenever people are at work. Therefore, it is well recognized as being useful in the sustainable livelihood of indigenous people. Such radio programmes have a lot of potential for the sustainable livelihood of the indigenous people in Bangladesh. Radio is not only a pioneer in their sustainable livelihood, but it is also the most effective in this regard. However, it is not the only form of media that helps indigenous people to sustain their livelihood. Therefore, there is a need for the joint incorporation of all media (television and newspapers). From the nineteenth century, media was used against indigenous people, as they were not involved with media management. However, when indigenous people involve themselves it becomes a tool for the protection and promotion of their language, heritage and culture. Many of the world's indigenous people are managing indigenous media by themselves; the Sami in Norway and the Aborigines in Australia are just two of the many examples. To make more use of media for sustainable livelihoods there needs to be more research on indigenous people and the use of the different media available to them.

REFERENCES

Books and Journals

- Bangladesh Land Forest and Forest people; Published by society for Environment and Human development (SHED), 44/8 West Panthaphat (2nd Floor) North Dhamondi, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh: 2nd Edition 1998.
- Banglapedia; retrieved as on 15.01.06 from Banglapedia. Search. Com bd/HT/G_0043.htm-26, Copy right by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Betar Bangla; Issue No 76, Year 32, Bhadrao- 1412, 16th August-15 September 2005 issue as a whole.
- Betar Bangla; Special feature: Bangladesh Betar has been awarded “Swadhinata Award 2006” we are proud we are happy. Page 5-6. Issue No 83, Year 33, Baishakh- 1413, 14th April – 14th May 2006;
- Biswas, Dr. A A; Ethnography of a coastal people in Bangladesh; A thesis submitted to the University of Dhaka for the degree of doctor of philosophy; Department of sociology, University of Dhaka, 1996.
- Chambers, R. and G. Conway, Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century. IDS Discussion Paper 296, IDS Brighton. 1992
- David Morley; “Spaces of identity”, Understern eyes Media, Empire and Otherness. August 1995.
- Donald R. Browne; Electronic media and indigenous people, a voice of our won? Iowa State University Press/Ames: 1996.
- Draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Drong, Sanjeeb; Adibashi Maye; Published by Natundhara; 38/2 Ka banglabazar Dhaka 1100: August 2004.
- Fardon, Richard and et.el (Edited), 2000; African Broadcast Cultures, Radio in Transition: James Curry Publishers 2000.
- Fisk, John. Introduction to Communication Studies; 2nd edition; rout ledge, Taylor & Francis Group; London and New York: 2004.
- George M. Foster, traditional Societies and technological Change, allied publishers Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1973.
- Jo Tacchi, Don Slater, Greg Hearn; UNESCO; Ethnographic Action Research; A user1`s handbook developed to innovate and research ICT application for poverty eradication.
- Joshua Meyrowitz; No sense of Place, The impact of electronic media on social behavior; Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford; 1985.
- Khan, Abdul Mabud; Patuakhali Zelar Buddha Samprodaya (Buddist Community of Patuakhali District), CLIO, A journal of History department, Jahangir nagr University, Dhaka, Vol.I., June 1983.
- Maung Ba aung; Shaangraeing: A Folk festival, the Rakhaing review, ed., Bangladesh, rakhaing Buddhist Welfare association, Cox`s Bazar. March 1984.
- Maung Ba Aung (Maung Ba); Bangladesh er Rakhaing Samprodaya, Etihash, oitijya O Jibondhara; Published by the writher: 2003.

- Mustafa Majid; the rakhaines, Exiles in their own kingdom. Published by UPL, Dhaka. Bangladesh; June 2001.
- National Seminar on promotion and preservation of Rakhaing language, culture and handicrafts; organized by Rakhaing Development Foundation (RDF); Funded by World Bank, Dhaka Office; 2003.
- Porsanger, Jelena: "An Essay about Indigenous Methodology" Nordlit 15(Summer 2004), pp. 105-120 (Compendium for HIF-3620 Representations and self representations year 2006); 25 March 2004.
- Public broadcasting: Why? How World Radio and Television Council 1340, Saint Joseph Blvd. East Montreal (Quebec) Canada J2J 1M3. Copy right May 2000.
- RDF: Organizational profile, Rakhaing Development Foundation (RDF), 2C/9 Pallabi, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216; Published 2006.
- Statistical Pocketbook Bangladesh 2002; Bangladesh Bureau of statistics, planning division, Ministry of planning, Government of the people's republic of Bangladesh; April 2004.
- The Indigenous world 2004; IWGIA Copenhagen 2004; Classensgade 11E DK 2100- Copenhagen, Denmark. 2004.
- Thompson, John B. The Media and Modernity, A Social Theory of The Media. Polity Press, 65, Bridge Street, Cambridge CB21UR, UK; 1995.
- Valerie Alia and Simone Bull, Media and Ethnic Minorities, Edinburgh University Press. Ltd, 22 George Square, Edinburgh: 2005.
- Workshop report, Promotion and Preservation of Rakhaing Language Culture & Handicrafts, organized by Rakhaing Development Foundation (RDF). December 2002 and January 2003.
- W.W. Hunter, A statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. V, London, 1875.

Publications

- Baseline Survey; Strengthening Rural Broadcasting project, Bangladesh Betar by Mitra and Associates, 2/17 Iqbal road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh; 20 May 1999.
- A profile, External service, Radio Bangladesh; Published by the Director General, Radio Bangladesh and edited by ATM Mafizul Haq, Director, External Services, 121, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka. Printed at BRAC Printers, Dhaka in June 1994.
- Bangladesh Betar 25 basor (25 year of Bangladesh Betar); Cover story; Written by kazi mahmudur Rahman. Published in 1997.
- Bangladesh Betar: Facts and Figures; Dhaka, January 10, 2004.
- Radio Bangladesh; Tathopatrav (Information Booklet); Sadar Daptar, 121, 121, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka- 1000. Transcribed and edited by Liasion and Listeners Research wing, Radio Bangladesh: Published in November 1991.
- Randezvous; A collection of International Indigenous day – 2005; Editor; Sharot Jotty Chakma, publication; Randezvous publication parishad, Chittagong University.
- Evaluation of the Impact of the programmes of Population planning cell, Bangladesh Betar; 1997

Internet

- Developing Radio Archives in Laos and Bangladesh 22/03/2005 (UNESCO/AIBD) retrieved 26.03.2005 from http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=18417&URL_DO=_DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION_=201.html
- Information for All (IFAP); An intergovernmental Programme of UNESCO retrieved 26.03.2005 from <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ifap>
- International Mother Language Day 2004 retrieved 26.03.2005 from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28497&URL_DO=_DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION_=205.html

Statement by B. E. Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to United Nations at the Second Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, New York 21 May 2003.

Culture History and Documentary film about Bangladesh. Bangla Internet TV Bangladesh Betar-Microsoft Internet Explorer retrieved as on 25.11.2005 from <http://www.bangladeshlive.net/979295.html>

Identification of indigenous peoples; Retrieved as on 28.12.2005 from <http://www.iwgia.org/sw641.asp>

Definition of Indigenous People; Retrieved as on 28.12.2005 from http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/Indigenous_Peoples/ipp-002.asp

Message from H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the Fifty-seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 21 February 2003 retrieved, as on 27th May 2006 from <http://www.un.org/ga/presidedt/57/pages/speeches/statement210203-motherTongue.htm>.

The Sustainable Development of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations- Definition of sustainable livelihoods, retrieved as on 14.02.06 from <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/sei/sustainability/ livelihoods/def.html>

Working With the Media. The Different Types of Media. Daily newspapers. The 1600-Plus daily newspapers- "dailies"- in the United States retrieved as on 12.02.06 from www.kctcs.net/newspublicatons/stylebook/mediatypes.htm

Newspaper

Daily Nayadiganta; 167/2 inner circular roads, Eden Complex, Motijheel, Dhaka- 1000; Bangladesh. Published as on 28th April 2006. (In Nagor-Moha Nagar sub area).