

"DEHLEEZ" MAKES WAVES

A.I.R.'s Hindi serial on insights into Adolescent Sexuality to be broadcast in Regional Languages

"DEHLEEZ" (Threshold), the All India Radio's first major attempt to use soap opera format for sensitizing and educating the adolescents has created a sort of record in popularity.

Audience Research showed that some 94 lakh people were aware of the programme and 80 lakh people were regular listeners. Some 11,000 listeners had enrolled with the A.I.R. to conduct regular listening and provide feedback.

"DEHLEEZ", an offshoot of the landmark study "Population Socialisation among Indian Teenagers" conducted by the Population Foundation of India (with its Executive Director, Mr Harish Khanna as the Principal Investigator) in collaboration with the Population Development Programme of the Cornell University (U.S.A.) and the Operations Research Group (India), received such a tremendous response from the teenagers (for whom the programme was meant) that A.I.R.'s Director General, Mr Shashi Kapoor announced at a Press Conference held at Akashvani Bhavan on December 6, 1994 that despite the current television explosion, Radio was still most powerful and cost-effective social communication tool. Ms Usha Bhasin, Director of the 52-episode series which concluded in the last week of October 1994 exuded rightful pride on the successful conclusion of the soap opera which is bound to prove a trend setter in harnessing mass media for creating healthy attitudes among the youth on matters relating to sex, inter-gender relations, family life problems, STDs and AIDS etc.

The private character of Radio provided the young

listeners in 11 to 20 years age group greater ease to tune in the intimate atmosphere of the home and get answers to questions they may have hesitated to ask their parents or teachers.

Mr Harish Khanna said that during the investigations for the first study, 17,185 students of classes 9 to 11 (13,404 boys and 3,781 girls) had been questioned on population, family life and sex knowledge. That provided a fair basis for a major communication effort to reach the most sensitive segment of the population. While Ms Dipali Nath of ORG did a commendable job during the investigations for the study, Ms Sandhya Dhingra of the PFI rendered painstaking assistance in coordinating the programme with the A.I.R.

For sensitive handling of the subject, writers, producers and education specialists were invited by the Foundation to work together. The script of the first part of the serial was written by Mrs Tripurari Sharma, and of the subsequent parts by Nalini Bhardwaj, Alka Pathak and Rakesh Joshi. While Mukesh Saxena provided the lyric for the title song, the music was created by Bhajan Sopori. The highlight of the series was a prologue and epilogue by the famous theatre and film personality, Amol Palekar.

It may be mentioned that "DEHLEEZ", the weekly serial in Hindi was broadcast in 20-minute episodes from 30 stations of the A.I.R. in the Hindi-speaking areas for a whole year. In view of the unprecedented success of the experiment, A.I.R. has decided to broadcast this programme in other regional languages, over a period of time.