

Role of FM Radio on Pakistani Youth: Socio-Political Perspective

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Abstract

This research paper is being presented to know and evaluate the socio-political influence of FM radio on Pakistan youth. At the time of partition and inception of Pakistan, Radio Pakistan was the only electronic medium available in the country. Radio has been the most powerful and useful informative/ educative tool for the reason that it has excellent outreach as compared to all other electronic mediums; with passing years it has been turning into a neglected medium due to the policies of sitting governments who have used radio medium for propagation of their agendas and made this useful source of information, an extol tool which only focused actions of government, instead of disseminating education, highlighting different social, cultural and political issues and awareness campaigns for the masses. Concrete and stunning efforts are still required to get maximize yield and benefit from the radio medium in Pakistan.

Key Words: FM Radio; Youth, Social, Political

Introduction

Radio is the most reachable medium of communication because of its effectiveness specifically in rural areas where majority of people neither read nor write. Radio is very easy to run and maintain. In developing countries, listenership of radio is frequent than the other sources of communication e.g. newspapers, television etc. because of its production cost which is significantly lower than print and other electronic media. (Marc, 1997)

Leonard (1999) said that radio has much strength that cannot be matched with television. It is cheaper and it is mobile which could be listened in deserts and forests, fields, boats, on roads etc. It is transmitting rapid information. In times of disaster, such as hurricanes or earthquakes, radio is the lifeline of the affected people, bringing them essential information for their survival. Public radio deserves a better deal than it is getting. It has even been said that, if public broadcasting is to survive in the new communication world, it will be through radio and not television". (Fuller, 2007)

Radio airs diversity of programs as compare to other analog media such as information, debates, news, source of revenue generation, live commentary, weather reports, sports roundup, musical and entertainment programs etc. Radio is powerful source of information in backwards areas where other mediums are inaccessible. Radio is a reliable source and in case of emergent situations either a natural

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disaster, or severe storm or war between nations etc. because of its quality of portability and flexibility. (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2011)

Radio waves have been utilized all over the world during peace, wars, fulfillment of political agendas, campaigns particularly propaganda campaigns etc. Radio took the attention of masses when people relying on radio news and giving its preference on newspaper because people believe that the news broadcasted by radio is without any alternation. People also believe that radio presenter would not communicate false things. (Crowley & Heyer, 1999)

The revival of radio industry become possible after established of FM radios in Pakistan. It is truly said that FM radios have made revival of radio listening in Pakistan. Currently, more than two hundred (200) FM radios are working in the country and airing variety of programs including entertainment, infotainment to its listeners (Chaudhary, 2019). Keeping in view and importance of radio, the purpose of this research is to investigate and explain the role of FM radio on Pakistani youth and its socio-political impact as it is evident that majority of FM listeners are youth and the ratio of FM listeners has been increased as compared with recent past with the emergence of FM radio channels in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Research

The major objectives of this research work are:

To know the background of radio and FM radio

To know socio- political impact of FM radio on youth

To know and explore as how FM radio can achieve its objectives

Research Questions

1. Whether the listenership of radio increased since the inception of FM Radio in Pakistan?
2. Whether radio has revived in Pakistan after emergence of FM radios?
3. Whether FM radio programs fulfill the modern requirements of radio listeners with their healthy contents?

Significance

This research is intended to investigate and explore the FM industry in Pakistan as well as it will also elaborate socio-political impact and role of FM radio on Pakistani youth.

Delimitations of the Study

Keeping in view the requirements and available facilities, the current study is delimited to the role of FM radio as a change agent.

Statement of the Problem

This research paper will investigate the history and background of FM radio in Pakistan. Furthermore, it will also elaborate how FM radio transmission has gained popularity among youth and socio-political impact of FM listening on youth of Pakistan.

Review of Literature

Abila (1998) expresses about the enhancement of FM 100 listenership because of the fact that it presents unique and versatile programs. 80% listeners have shared that they used to listen FM 100 due to presentation of variety of programs which carries information, education and entertainment.

According to Erum (1998), a survey was conducted from the students of Punjab University, Lahore and results reveals that 99% of students listen radio and 57% of students are FM 100 listeners among them.

35% of students claimed that radio programs have impacted on them whereas 55% students have opined that radio listening has negatively impact on them.

[Ahmad \(1999\)](#) describes that radio business 70% increase in Rawalpindi and Islamabad after introduction of FM radios in Pakistan and 70% youth in twin cities keen FM listeners according to the researcher. The trend shows the popularity of FM radio among young listeners in Pakistan.

Masood (2000) describes that about 70% of people opine that the radio is an excellent source of getting information. 90% of farmers are of the opinion that their cotton production was increased due to listening of radio programs on cotton crops. 96% of farmers listen to agricultural programs on radio.

According to Riaz (2001) there are two basic reasons of popularity of FM 100, firstly freedom of expression and secondly, the feedback system through live calls.

Thomas (2001) describes that efficiency and significance of radio in current technological era could not be overlooked. Further, he states that radio is the best source and medium which is handy for educators and they can reach to mass audience at very low cost through radio medium in many areas of the world.

Syed (2002) illustrates the popularity of FM 100 and describes the results of a survey wherein 86% participants listen FM 100 and prefer to listen FM 100 transmission as compare to other FM radio channels.

Results of survey also depicts trend of FM 100 listeners in past couple of years for example in year 1995 the listenership was 90%, 88% in 1996, 75 % in year 1997, 86% in the year 1998, 1999 it was 90%, 87% it was 2000, in 2001 it was 68% and 85% in year 2002.

[Bashir \(2002\)](#) illustrates that Pakistani nation was not found of music listening before 1995, after launching of FM 100 by the private sector, people prefer to listen FM 100 transmission instead of PCB FM-101 channel, which shows the vivid future of FM radio industry in Pakistan.

Wagram (2002) illustrates that, fame of FM listening in Lahore can be measured by considering the fact that after beginning in 1998; broadcast of FM 100 has augmented radio listening in Lahore and listenership increased from 40.45% to 82.02% within 3 years. The popularity of FM 100 has increased in a very short time in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

Syed (2002) describes that 64% of people use to listen FM-101 broadcast out of 100 and majority of these people only listen songs on FM-101. FM-101 is an informative and entertainment channel, therefore the listenership of FM-101 listeners is increasing day by day.

According to Rawan and Siraj (2003), radio is very effective medium and truly called as "magic medium" due to its important role is mass communication. Radio medium is key source of airing mass education in Pakistan and different education-based programs are aired through radio medium across the country.

[Ahmad and Irfan \(2003\)](#) proposed that transmission hours of FM 101 should be increased and it is also required to include educational programs, music, information and religious and social awareness programs in the transmission. It is opinion of general public and media persons that community issues are also being aired on FM radio. Programs on target audience are also being broadcast.

[Abbas \(2004\)](#) states that FM radio stations have got the attention of advertisers as this medium is cost effective, excellent reception and easily accessible to local community. FM programs are listened and popular among different communities, age groups, professionals etc.

Naz (2008) illustrate that expansion, growth and transformation in FM radio in Pakistan are promising. FM radios are providing assistance, entertainment and education to general public and FM radio industry has established itself as a useful source of awareness and important tool of education due to which literacy and education rate is improving day by day in Pakistan.

[Ali \(2009\)](#) states that after the establishment of FM radio in Pakistan, the popularity of radio enhanced because FM radio provides information to the people living in remote areas having no access to other sources of mass media such as newspapers, television etc. FM radios also broadcasts different programs in regional languages which helps in bridging the gap among people living in other areas of country. FM radios are also helpful in raising awareness about different social evils such as extremism & militancy, feudalism etc.

[Dutta \(2010\)](#) illustrates that radio medium is still a big and main source of news, information and

entertainment provider for the masses in many vicinities and areas in India. Furthermore, private FM radio stations also exist which are transmitting information and entertainment for the masses beside All India Radio.

According to Naqvi et al (2011), mass audience prefers FM radio listening due to its appealing and exciting stuff. Programs on FM radios are popular among youth in Pakistan. Youth are keen listeners of entertainment programs, on the other hand people belongs to different age groups taken interest in listening programs on current affairs, talk shows, news etc.

According to Yaser et al (2011) radio medium is recognized as a main source of information provider in rural areas, where majority of people use radio medium to get education, information, entertainment and source of news listening. Radio medium is also popular in urban areas after the establishment of FM stations.

Kwakwa (2012) describe the significance and various features of radio listening in remote and far flung areas. He further states that large number of public listen to radio as radio medium not only provides education, information, entertainment, talk shows on current affairs, sports commentary, religious programs but also disseminate and raises different social issues such as health, poverty, law abidance etc.

According to [Cordeiro \(2012\)](#) radios are being used by general public since beginning. Radios industry has become an influential media industry which is revenue producer and generator since its inception. At present, radio medium has been reformed and developed into a cultural industry which is influential on the listeners culturally and socially.

Venkatalakshmi & Chandraleka (2013) describe that social awareness information is broadcasted on FM radios for awareness of their listeners which includes health, environment, safety measurement, education, gender issues etc.

Rehman (2014) considered that FM radios are more effective community medium as they air community related problems, source of promotion of regional voices and their policy of no sensationalism make them more dependable among audience as compare to other media sources.

Research Methodology

To analyze role of FM radio on Pakistani youth: Socio-political perspective, the researcher will examine the difference between traditional radio and FM radio and then means and ways by which FM radio has revived radio listening in Pakistan. Survey method has been used to study this phenomenon. A research questionnaire has been prepared and designed wherein research questionnaire consists of close ended questions. Sample size for said survey consisted of 2100 respondents.

Population

The populations of this survey consisted of radio/FM listeners particularly youth having age between 15 to 35.

Sampling

Two thousand one hundred (2100) respondents have been selected as a sample population for this research. The participants, who were common radio/FM radio listeners consists between age 15 to 35 are selected which comprises journalists, doctors, agriculturists, engineers, teachers, students and common public etc. Sampling frame designed for the said research consisted of education sector, public sector and private sector. Questionnaires in hard and soft form were distributed manually and online. Seventeen hundred (1700) questionnaires were manually distributed. Out of which, 1633 respondents have returned back the questionnaires which were scrutinized by the researcher and among these 1633 respondents, 1600 respondents have accurately filled out the questionnaires, left over respondents either have filled incomplete questionnaire or made cutting such questionnaire were rejected and 1600 responses were selected. Google Survey Form was utilized to get responses online. Accordingly, a link of Google Survey

Form was shared online on social media as well as e-mailed to different peoples. Resultantly, 457 responses were received wherein, 400 responses were selected and left over responses were rejected due to incomplete entries. Total, 2000 responses were selected from the respondents.

Analysis of Data

Present study has been undertaken with the help of a detailed target-based line survey to analyze and find out revival of radio medium in Pakistan through FM broadcast. A questionnaire was designed to conduct survey which contains close ended questions. The results of survey are accumulated and statistical analysis of results was performed by using SPSS (Statistical package for the social sciences).

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Demographical Analysis of Participants

Table 1 demonstrates the gender variables of the study. The participants of the study were two thousand out of which 1258 were male and 742 were female. The urban rural distribution of the participants belongs to urban area with 1298 and rural background 702. The participants were divided into four categories with respect to their age group. Five hundred and thirty-six participants belong to first category of 15-20 years age, six hundred and thirty-six participants belong to second category of age 20-25, four hundred and eighty-six participants fall in the third category of age 25-30 and three hundred and forty-two participants belongs to fourth category of age i.e. 30-35 years. The qualification of the respondents, ninety-five belongs to literate group who have known how to read and write, one hundred and forty respondents fall in the category who were matriculate, three hundred and one respondents fell in category of Intermediate, six hundred and fifty-one belonged to graduate group and eight hundred and thirteen fell in category of Masters and above. The professional category of respondents, 1199 participants belongs to student category, 142 educationists, 35 Journalists/Media persons, 43 participants were doctors, 96 respondents were engineer, 54 respondents were agriculturists, 113 were businessmen, 204 were government servants and 114 belonged to other working classes.

Table 1. Frequencies and Demographical Analysis of Respondents where n =2000.

1. Gender

	Male	Female
Frequency	1258	742
Percentage	62.9%	37.1%

2. Background

	Rural	Urban
Frequency	702	1298
Percentage	35.1%	64.9%

3. Age group

	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35
Frequency	536	636	486	342
Percentage	26.8%	31.8%	24.3%	17.1%

4. Education level

	Literate	Matric	FA/FSc	BA/BSc	Above
Frequency	95	140	301	651	813
Percentage	4.8%	7.0%	15.0%	32.6%	4.7%

5. Profession

	Student	Journalist /Media Persons	Engr.	Agriculturist	Businessman	Govt. Servant	Other
Frequency	1199	35	96	54	113	204	114
%age	60%	1.8%	4.8%	2.7%	5.7%	10.2%	5.7%

Q.No. 1: Do you Listen to Radio?

	Yes	No	To Some Extent
Frequency	1462	0	538
Percentage	73.1%	0.0%	26.9%

Table of question 1 demonstrates that 73.1% of participants listen to radio whereas 26.9% listen to radio occasionally. Results show that 100% participants listen radio as survey was conducted from such participants who are radio listeners.

Q. No. 2: If yes, how Often do you Listen Radio?

	Regularly	A few Times in a Week	A few Times in a Month	Rarely
Frequency	312	481	430	777
Percentage	15.6%	24.1%	21.5%	38.9%

Results of question 2 depicts that traditional radio listening is decreasing as only 15% participants regular radio listeners. 24.1 % participants are those who listen to radio in a week time whereas 21.5% participants listen to radio few times in a month and 38.9% participants are rarely radio listeners.

Q. No. 3: Do you Listen to FM Radio?

	Yes	No	To Some Extent
Frequency	2000	0	0
Percentage	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Results of question No. 3 reveals that 100% participants are FM radio listeners because of the fact that only such participants were selected for survey who FM radio listeners are.

Q. No. 4: Do you Listen FM Radio for what main Purpose?

	Entertainment	Information	Education	Development	Persuasion
Frequency	994	716	183	68	39
Percentage	49.7%	35.8%	9.2%	3.4%	2.0%

Results of question 4 depicts that 49.7 % of participants listen FM radio for entertainment, 35.8% participants listen FM radio for seeking information, 9.2% of respondents listen FM radio for education,

3.4% of participants listen to FM radio for development purposes and 2.0% respondents listen to FM radio for persuasion.

Q. No. 5: How Much Time you Spend Daily in Listening FM Radio Transmission?

	1-2 Hours	> 2 hours	> 3 Hours
Frequency	1179	662	159
Percentage	59.0%	33.1%	8.0%

According to results, 59% of participants daily listen FM radio for 1 to 2 hours, 33.1% of participants used to Listen FM radio more than 2 hours daily, 8.0% of respondents listen FM radio more than 3 hours. Results show that more than 50% of participants spent 1 to 2 hours in listening FM radio daily.

Q. No. 6: Up to what Extent do you think that Transmission of FM Radio is Helpful in Highlighting Different Social Issues?

	Greater Extent	Great	To Some Extent	Rarely	Not at all
Frequency	337	780	631	155	97
Percentage	16.9%	39.0%	31.6%	7.8%	4.9%

The participants were asked to share their opinion about the usefulness of FM radio programs in terms of highlighting different social issues. According to the results, 56% respondents are of the opinion that FM radios programs are helpful in raising different social issues whereas 31.6 % of respondents have the opinion that to some extent FM radio programs are helpful in highlighting / raising social issues. 7.8% of participants consider that FM radio programs are not much helpful in raising social issues and rarely such programs are aired on FM radios which are useful in highlighting various social issues and 4.9% of participants are of the opinion that programs on FM radio do not raise social issues.

Q. No. 7: To which extent do you think that FM Radio have Influenced the Youth in Terms of Brining Political Change?

	Manifestos of Political Parties	Coverage given to Political Processions	Voting Behavior	Voters Issues	Current Political Developments
Frequency	300	488	277	300	335
Percentage	15.0%	24.4%	13.9%	15.0%	31.8%

It was asked from participants to share their views about different types of political issues being highlighted on FM radio. According to the results, about 31.8% participants are of the opinion that current political developments are discussed on FM radio transmission whereas 24.4 % respondents have the opinion that coverage is given to political processions in FM radio programs. 15.0% respondents considered that different political issues are highlighted in FM radio political programs and 15.0% respondents considered that manifestos of political parties are discussed on FM radio programs.

Q. No. 8: What is your Opinion about the Programs Aired on Private FM Radios in Terms of Social Values and Political Setup?

	Ethical	Unethical	Average
Frequency	665	252	1083
Percentage	33.3%	12.6%	54.2%

According to results, majority of participants i.e. 54.2% have the opinion that FM radio programs are average rated, 33.3% respondents opined that the programs aired on FM radios are ethical, 12.6 % participants have opinion that programs aired on FM radio are unethical. Results depict that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the socio-political contents of programs aired on FM radios.

Q. No. 9: How would you Evaluate the Effects of FM Radio Programs on the Youth of Pakistan?

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Frequency	995	302	703
Percentage	49.8%	15.1%	35.2%

According to results 45.5% participants have the opinion that FM radio programs have positive impact on youth, 13.8 % participants considered that FM radio programs have negative impacts, 32.1% respondents have neutralized opinion, 6.0% participants opined that FM radio programs rarely effects the youth and only 2.6% participants have the opinion that FM radios programs did not affect on the youth. Results of the study illustrates that FM radio programs have positive impact on youth.

Q. No. 10: Up to what Extent do you think that FM Radio is Fulfilling the Requirements of the Modern Age?

	Greater Extent	Great	To Some Extent	Rarely	Not at all
Frequency	288	750	697	169	96
Percentage	14.4%	37.5%	34.8%	8.5%	4.8%

Results depict that 51.9.0% participants considered that FM radio programs are fulfilling requirements of modern age, 34.9% respondents opined that FM radio programs are satisfying the requirements of modern age to some extent, 8.5% have the opined that FM radio programs are rarely fulfilling the requirements and 4.8% participants considered that FM radio programs do not fulfill requirements of modern age. Majority of respondents are satisfied with the performance of FM radio programs.

Finding and Discussion

FM radios either commercial or non-commercial are working all over Pakistan and disseminating and providing education, information, infotainment and entertainment to the masses. The FM radio industry has rapidly developed in Pakistan since past few years. It is a fact that FM radio medium has revived the radio listening in Pakistan, the listenership of Radio Pakistan has been decreased due to increasing popularity of FM radio. FM medium has attracted the audience due to easy accessibility; therefore, it is progressing day by day and airing variety of programs to its listeners. People living in far flung areas were facing problems in accessibility of radio coverage and they were away from mainstream media due to non-availability but FM radio have successfully countered this problem and bridge this huge gape and brought the people of rural and backward areas closer to other parts of country.

Radio Pakistan has specific political and social agendas and its broadcast cannot cover scattered communities such as in Baluchistan, Sindh, FATA and southern Punjab. FM radios have bridged this gap and touched these voiceless peoples.

FM radio medium not only captured the market but also got attention of masses specifically youth. There exist many deficiencies which require to be addressed such as contents, more professionalism and perfection. Following are some findings that are observed after conducting the present research work:

FM radio assists people to exchange information. People get knowledge and information through radio. It transmits latest news to its listeners without any barriers.

FM radio is playing a vital role in molding behaviors and thinking of the youth towards old customs and traditions of the society as well as since the last two decades, there is a significant change in political setup of the country. FM radio has opened and widens the political ways in perspective of global political emerging trends.

Platform of FM radio provides opportunity to students and youth to show their potential and introduce their talent. Youth learn many good things from the contents of programs aired on FM radio such as enhancement of vocabulary, knowledge, information etc. Quiz programs, debate competitions and speeches of famous personalities are a big source of enhancement of knowledge and information for youth.

Radio programs also gratify needs and requirements of individuals and groups as well without any gender difference. Entertainment and musical programs make people joyful and happy. Such programs are influential on public in changing their attitude and behavior. Music is the most influential and impacting feature of FM radio broadcast which strike the minds of its listeners.

Opinion polls, different types of surveys are also being conducted in FM programs which allow the listeners to participate and share their views on different social & political issues. Audience could take part in these surveys and opinion polls via emails, making live calling, writing letters and through SMS service.

Overall FM radio has positive impact on its listeners. Listeners are satisfied with the contents aired on FM radio programs and programs aired on FM radios are fulfilling modern requirements. It is the reason that FM medium is gaining popularity in Pakistan and has revived the radio listening in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Radio medium has been revived in Pakistan after the appearance of FM radio. Radio was a neglected medium by the masses after development of other electronic media tools such as TV, cable, Internet etc. FM band gained popularity in Pakistan in a very short span due to versatile programs, better voice quality and accessibility to the mass audience. Now, FM radio is being listened to by the people belongs to every walk of life especially the youth. The potential of FM radio is not being utilized in Pakistan with its proper capacity as this medium can play very important and significant role in development and mass awareness. It has capacity to mobilize the society and provide instant information to the masses about various community issues including cultural, political and social problems.

It has also the potential to encourage and motivate people. FM medium could raise level of awareness by encouraging citizens and communities to participate in different social projects and political awareness campaigns and various political issues.

FM radio programs essentially require to develop and enhance the quality and standards as focus of some private FM radios in Pakistan is limited and tends towards airing entertainment only, rather raise mass awareness issues. Resultantly, the potential of this useful medium is being spoiled by linking it with entertainment only. However, public service announcements are also aired on FM radio, such as Labor Day, World AIDS day, Mother's Day etc. for awareness of listeners. It is necessary to effectively use the potential of this powerful media for betterment of society. Effectiveness and reliability of FM radio could not be ignored as FM radio has revived radio broadcast in the country and as despite all the technological growth and invention of other communication mediums as satellite TV, cable, Internet etc. Radio medium is still believed as one of the most effective tools of communication. It is the reason that FM radio listeners are increasing day by day and FM radio becomes an essential part of one's lives. FM radio not only generates awareness campaigns but also provides information and above all, it has also been used as tool of education and it is needless to say that FM radio is an entertainment device.

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