

## Radio Listenership among Youth of Leh

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### Abstract

*The most important role of any media is to educate, inform, aware and entertain the people. Since its inception in India in the year 1927, All India Radio has been playing a major role in transforming the lives of millions and especially those residing in the far-flung areas or border regions of the country. Ladakh is one of the regions where radio plays an important role as a medium of information gathering and dissemination. The present paper aims to study the importance of radio in a region like Ladakh where Internet is in short supply and All India Radio has been an important source of information and entertainment. The study aims to understand the radio listenership patterns of youth and how it has changed with the advent of new media.*

**Keywords:** Radio, Entertainment, Information, Newspaper, Ladakh

### Introduction

The traditional concept of communication is that we use communication to express our inner purposes, attitude, and feelings to the external world, to produce shared-ness between the speaker and the audience. Communication is essential for social change and development. It permeates every process of human life and this characteristic makes it vital for the growth and development of the society. Today the society is more complex than it was decades ago making the process of communication more complex and indirect. Without communication, there would be no shared life. Human societies without communicating with one another do not constitute a social structure. Hence, the concept of society and communication are interdependent and one cannot exist without the other (Mathur, 2001).

‘Media’ is also often used synonymously with communication or they are tools or technologies that can facilitate information and entertainment through dissemination. These tools play one of the pivotal roles in influencing our day-to-day life. Choosing an appropriate channel is vital for effective communication as each channel has different strengths and weaknesses. Technology has greatly transformed the way we communicate (Dingwell, 2016). The advent of telephones, emails, instant messaging, social media, and video conferencing has expanded the possibilities of connecting with others across vast distances. These technological advancements have increased the speed and accessibility of communication, allowing for real-time interactions and breaking down geographical barriers. Communication in a modern democratic society is the vehicle for involving the people in social, political and developmental processes, for facilitating public debate and decision-making reaching consensus on important issues (Sikka, 2007).

However, communication is not without its challenges. Misunderstandings, language barriers, cultural differences, and noise can hinder effective communication. Active listening, empathy, clarity, and the ability to adapt communication style to the audience are crucial skills in overcoming these challenges and ensuring successful communication. Effective communication is the process of exchanging information for mutual understanding (Garg, 2023). It is essential in personal, professional, and social contexts. It enables individuals to express their needs and desires, resolve conflicts, build trust, and collaborate with others. In the workplace, effective communication is vital for team cohesion, problem-solving, and achieving common goals. In personal relationships, communication is key to understanding, empathy, and maintaining healthy connections. Communication is the sending and receiving of message from one person to another (Rice, 2003). It is the act of transferring information from a source or sender to the destination or receiver. The process of communication starts with the sender and ends at the receiver. The sender's experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skill, perceptions, and culture influence the message (Eke, 2020).

### **Mass Communication**

Mass Communication is the process by which a group of people or large organisations creates a message and transmits it through some type of medium to a large anonymous heterogeneous audience. Mass Communication is the study of communicating with the masses using different media like radio, television, Internet, newspaper etc (Kumar, 2020). Mass Communication is the process of how content of mass communication persuades or affects the behavior, attitude, opinion or emotion of the receiver. Different programmes in media are designed to enlighten, inform, educate and entertain all sections of society. A large section of India's population lives in rural areas. The mass media technologies are increasing day by day all over the world (Savita, 2017). Mass communication is the sending of messages to a large heterogeneous audience with the help of different mediums like books, press, cinema, radio, television, video and internet.

Mass Communication or mass media are devices that multiply and take it to a large audience at the same time. According to Berge – “Mass Communication involves the use of print and electronic media such as newspapers, magazines, film, radio or TV to communicate the large number of people who are located in various places often scattered all over the country or the world.” The term mass communication must have at least five elements including a large audience, low cost, rapid distribution, rapid delivery, undifferentiated and heterogeneous audience etc. Mass Media are designed to reach a large audience at the same time.

The origins of mass communication can be traced back to the development of writing systems and the invention of printing presses. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century by Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized the dissemination of information, allowing for the mass production of books and other printed materials. The subsequent evolution of technologies like the telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and the internet further expanded the reach and impact of mass communication. During the early times, radio communications were not very clear, so operators typically relied on the use of Morse code messages (Solymar, 1999).

### **Radio**

Radio brought a unique entertainment opportunity for people especially those residing in the far flung areas. Mass Media in India especially television and radio has been playing a vital role in disseminating information in the rural areas. There has always been a need to exchange news and messages among the people and the advance of new radio enables us to deliver information very promptly and more effectively. Radio is the wireless transmission of signals through free space by electromagnetic radiations of frequency significantly below that of visible light called radio waves. The invention of radio began when Heinrich Rudolf Hertz proved Maxwell's electromagnetic theory between 1886 and 1888. Guglielmo Marconi, started working on the concept of creating long-distance wireless transmission systems based on the use of Hertzian waves (radio waves) in 1894. Guglielmo Marconi founded the British Marconi Company in 1897 and started communication between ships at sea and coast radio stations using a number of patents.

The role of radio completely changed during World War-I when it was basically used as a tool of propaganda and sending and receiving of messages by the military forces (Szymura, 2014). Like other parts of the world, Radio in India was started by young Amateurs who were highly influenced by Europe and America. Radio broadcasting in India can be divided into three categories - Public radio, Private radio and Community radio (Pathak, 2019). In countries where access to internet is limited and illiteracy are high, radio plays a major role in sharing news and information. Radio is a great way to reach isolated communities. Radio is often used as a tool for education, communication and health campaigns.

### **All India Radio**

The early radio stations in India were started in 1920s. Radio Club of Bombay broadcast its first programme in June 1923 and Calcutta Radio Club in November 1923. The Madras Radio Club started broadcasting on July 30, 1924. In 1930, broadcasting came under direct control of the government (Sarmah 2017). Initially radio was placed under Department of Industries and Labour under the name 'Indian Broadcasting Service'. Radio has a wider reach in India since its inception in the year 1923 by Radio Club of Bombay and others. In 1927 the private Indian Broadcasting Company LTD was authorized to operate two privately owned transmitters at Bombay and Calcutta. The programme was created to generate awareness. In 1935, radio broadcasting began in the princely state of Mysore with the name Akashwani (The voice from the sky). Finally on 8 June 1936, it was renamed as 'All India Radio' (Baruah, 2017). AIR officially known since 1956 as Akashwani is radio broadcaster of India and a division of Prasar Bharti. In 1935, Prof. M.V. Gopaldaswamy, Professor of Psychology in the University of Mysore set up a small transmitter of 30 watt power at his residence especially for Carnatic music and talks in Kannada (Kumari, 2018).

AIR programme pattern combines three main elements- A National channel providing programmes of countrywide interest and significance, a zonal service from each of the four metropolitan centres (Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras) and Regional services from individual stations each catering to the needs and interest of its respective area. Public broadcasting is a platform where people of all background, age, gender etc are welcomed and considered equals. It is an information and education tool, accessible to all and meant for all, whatever their social or economic status. Its role is not limited to information and cultural development only but it must also appeal to the imagination of the people as well as entertain them (Ahlawat, 2018).

With the increase in number of radio stations, audience fragmentation also began and which gave a chance to radio broadcasters to attract audience and also differentiate the programmes. (Jafri, 2015). FM Broadcasting began on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1977 in madras and was expanded during 1990s. Vividh Bharti is one of the best known services of AIR. It is commercially most accessible of AIR networks and is popular in large cities.

### **All India Radio Leh**

All India Radio Leh was established on 25 June 1971 in Leh district with its first commissioning on 25.06.1971. In the beginning months there used to be just one transmission for 2 hours in a day. Then in late 1970s, it was increased to 3 transmissions. In 1980, AIR Leh started relaying news in Ladakhi. The very first programme to be broadcast was filmy music and folk music. In 1970s, letter based song farmayish called "Chakdisi julan" started. Radio plays an important role in communication and information sharing in this part of the world that remains cuts off from rest of the country for almost six months. Ladakh is a geographically isolated land surrounded with rugged mountains. In this area internet and television connection is not very successful due to its geography. 90 percent of the houses in Leh owns a radio set because it requires less energy, its cheaper, portable and literacy is not a barrier.

## Objectives

The study focuses on the pattern of Radio Listenership among youngsters (age group 15-26) in Leh town.

1. To study the extent of radio exposure within age group 15-26 years.
2. To study pattern of radio usage among youth from different background, family, educational level, gender.
3. To study nature of programme and station preference within the specific age group.
4. To examine how much time youth spend in listening radio.

## Methodology

The study was conducted on 90 students (41 male and 49 females) from different schools and college of Leh town by using Clustering and Simple Random Sampling method.

Sampling: Out of the total sample, 79 respondents were literate and 11 were illiterate youth.

As the research needed both educated and uneducated youth of Leh, educated were selected by going to different schools (Cluster sampling) and questionniere were distributed during lunch and free time (Random Sampling) and uneducated youth were selected through Simple Random Sampling.

## Result

The present study showed that radio has maximum reach in almost every part of Leh, so 100% of the respondents said they have a radio set at home. 95% of the houses have one radio set and 5% have two radio sets. As maximum number of the respondents is school going students 48% of them listen to radio only on holidays, 30% spend 1-2 hours on radio in a day, 17% listen to radio for 3-4 hours and only 5% spend 4-5 hours on radio. 36% of the youth said they have been listening to radio from last (1 to 5) years, 21% respondents is listening to radio from (5 to 10) years, 23% listen radio from (10 to 15) years and 20% have been listening to radio since childhood.

The purpose of listening to radio is different among the youth. 23% of them listen to radio for entertainment as they listen only songs, 13% use radio for information like news, 11% listen to radio for education like health and youth programme and 53% respondents said that they listen to radio for all the above given purposes. There is a huge difference in the usage of different media by the youth. 13% of the respondents said they use television, internet is used by 17% of the respondents, 9% use newspaper and very small number of the youth i.e. only 8% listens to radio.

Maximum number of the respondents (53%) answered yes that they use all the above mentioned media. The preference of radio as a medium is different for different individual. 13% of the respondent said, they prefer radio as a medium because it's cheap, 14%prefer radio as it has largest reach, 13% responded that they prefer radio as it is portable and these days radio is available in your mobiles, 12% said it does not need electricity while other medium like television and internet needs electricity, and 43% responded that they prefer radio because of all of the above given conditions. 35% youth responded that they listen to radio when they are alone in their rooms, 14% listen to radio with their friends and enjoy the programmes together and 51% listen to radio with their families.

Many of the respondents have written that they listen Ladakhi news, children programme, youth programme, Hello Farmaish (phone in programme), family drama, programme by Jammu and Kashmir bank, Ankhen Hein Anmol and Roshni. Maximum number of them responded that they listen to FM Rainbow that is relayed directly from Delhi for 3 hours everyday. Out of the total sample 20% said they like hello farmaish the most, 12% said their favorite is Ladakhi news, youth programme is liked by 18% of the sample, 38% of the

youth love to listen Rainbow India and 12% like children programme.

Only 9% of youth listen to programmes that are in English, 21% listen to Urdu programmes, 31% prefer listening to Hindi programmes and 39% listen to programmes that are in Ladakhi language. As radio is the only medium which you can use while doing other works also. So maximum number of the respondents i.e. 72% said that they do other activities also while listening to radio and 28% responded that they do not involve themselves in other activities.

AIR is preferred by 44% of the youth, Vivid Bharati is preferred by 18% as compared to other stations and 38% responded that they prefer stations other than AIR and vivid bharati. Very few of them have participated in any radio programme. Only 13% respondents have participated and 87% have not participated in any radio programme yet. Majority of the youth said that they like the content of the programmes. 93% responded like the content and only 7% responded that they don't like the content of the programmes. 36% responded believe that the programmes broadcast from AIR Leh is upto mark, 3% said it's not upto mark, 17% responded said they don't know and 44% responded that the content of the programmes needs to improve.

76% youth responded that there is change in the content of the programme from the last few years and 24% responded there is no change in the content. 50% youth believed that radio plays a positive role in shaping up of a society, 7% responded negative, 31% responded that radio plays both positive as well as negative role and 12% said they don't know. 62% youth feel that with the coming of new media radio listenership is decreasing while 38% feel radio is still very famous. Every household in Leh has a radio set, as it is the only medium which has maximum reach in almost every part of Leh. In some areas television signals are not received due to geographical constraints and the only way to stay connected to the outside world is through radio.

During my research about "Radio listenership among youth (15 to 26) years of Leh", I found that 53% of the youth uses all types of media like radio, TV, internet and newspaper. As maximum of the sample that I took were school or college going students, 48% of them responded that they listen to radio only during holidays and 30% said, they spend 1 to 2 hours every day listening to radio. 23% of them listen to radio for entertainment purpose and few of the youth listen to news, 53% of them responded, they use for entertainment, education and information purpose. There is no such difference in preference of radio as a medium as all of them prefer radio because it is cheap, accessible and most important does not need electricity.

Leh is a place where families still share one radio set and all sit together and listen to family drama, Kesar saga and Health programme. Maximum of the youth responded that they listen to radio with their families. They listen to programmes like Ladakhi news, hello farmayish, family drama, health programme, youth programme, Ankhein hein anmol and roshni. But most of the youth listen to FM Rainbow that is relayed directly from Delhi for 3 hours everyday. FM Rainbow and hello farmayish are the two most famous programmes among youth. They prefer listening to programmes that are in local language or in Hindi. As radio is the only medium that people use while doing other work, 72% said, they do other activities like washing clothes, cooking, doing homework, walking or travelling in a bus or a car.

The station preference was different for different youth. 44% prefer listening to programmes broadcast from AIR Leh, only 18% listen to Vividh bharati and as many as 38% tune to FM rainbow. Only 13% of the children of age group 15 to 17 has participated in radio programmes like children programme and hello farmayish. Majority (93%) of youth are satisfied with the content of the programme of AIR Leh. As there is always room for improvement, 44% of the youth responded that the programmes needs to be improved, 36% responded that the programmes are upto mark and 17% responded that they don't know. AIR has been trying to bring changes in the content and also add new programmes, 76% of youth feel there is good change in the content from the last few years. 24% don't see any change. Radio plays an important role in shaping up of a society, and 50% of responded said it plays positive role, 31% responded it plays both positive and negative roles and few of them 7% said it plays negative role. With the coming of new media like internet, television and newspaper, radio listenership is decreasing. Only 38% youth responded that is still very famous, rest of them

said with the coming of new technology radio is losing its importance.

### Discussion

Among different mediums of communication, radio has been a major source of information for rural and far flung areas of the country. Due to its low cost, portability and less energy need, it has always been a preferred medium. The current study shows that even after the advent of many new mediums, radio still plays a vital role in information dissemination and entertainment in Leh as the region remains cut off from the rest of the worlds and internet is always in short supply. Every household in Leh has a radio set, as it is the only medium which has maximum reach in almost every part of Leh. In some areas television signals are not received due to geographical constraints and the only way to stay connected to the outside world is through radio.

The study conducted by (Sarmah, 2017) showed that radio plays an important role especially in the field of education and women health. Interactive radio or community radio programmes helped in opening up of a dialogue between the teacher and the student. Radio also provides an easy channels for bring to the masses useful information on agriculture, animal husbandry and current political thoughts. (Savita, 2017). However the present study shows that youth prefer radio for entertainment and information related programmes.

According to a study conducted by (Sana, 2015) shows that people listen radio mostly during Sundays and spend maximum time. In the present study it has been observed that youth spend around 2-3 hours listening to radio on weekends doing household chores. According to (Shukla, 2019) FM stations are promoting campaigns like Save the Sparrow, and other environmental and social issues like health, sanitation, environment etc. The present study also finds that radio plays a positive role in shaping of the society. A study conducted by (Garg, 2020) found that people listen to radio during their travelling and preferred place of listening radio is home. Many respondents said they listen to radio 'alone'. It was also observed in the present study that people mostly prefer radio when they are alone.

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