

Popular FM Radio station and listening habits in Greater Noida

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Abstract

This study is stipulated by rapid rise in the number of FM Radio Stations. The overall aim is to study the frequency of listening to radio among the selected audience as well as their preferred timings. It also finds which stations are popular among the audiences and the most popular category of program. Our focus is on the awareness and listening habits of people regarding FM Radio. In all, 100 students of Sharda University from 10 schools of various disciplines responded to the field work. 70 villagers residing in 7 villages and 30 urban dwellers residing in 3 sectors of Greater Noida participated in our survey. The respondents included not only residents of the villages but also five teachers from various schools.

Keywords Listening habits, Radio, Frequency, Radio station

1. Introduction

Radio was quite popular in the earlier days as it was the only medium of mass communication available. Later television came and there was a decrease in the listenership of radio was observed. Gradually, the popularity of television increased on the cost of radio listeners. In modern world a new media has arrived called the 'new media' so, now seeing the listening habits of 'audience would be interesting. Communication in today's date is considered very powerful. Radio, being a medium which can be afforded by everyone, plays a vital role in mass communication.

India has an estimated more than 180 million radio sets, reaching over 99 percent of its one billion inhabitants ^[1].

These mere figures are enough to tell us the popularity of FM or any other kind of radio among the population. Radio has been from very beginning considered as an effective means of mass communication. Earlier it was the only medium which was available. A very big reason of its popularity was that it does not require any pre-requisite and even the one who was uneducated could listen and understand what was being conveyed. With the advent of television a decrease in the listenership of radio was seen but commercialization of radio marked in the increase of listenership of radio again. Radio in today's date has revived its original value and it is quite popular among the citizens of India.

One of the reasons why FM Radio has revived its lost identity is because of the improvements in technology, competition and an increased reach of the Radio. Increased number of owners of cars in India has made it easy to listen to radio even while travelling. Another big reason is the introduction of different patterns with the FM pattern. Like music, drama, quiz and other participating programmes which have the involvement of the audience which make it participating and the audiences connects with it more rather than being a passive audience.

In this fast changing world everyone wants to remain in touch with the ever changing events. Radio is believed to be talking newspaper. We need not read the newspaper and exert our eyes. Lying down in our easy chair or bed, we may listen to the important news from the farthest corner of the world. Even illiterate people can keep themselves abreast of world events by listening to the radio. So broadcasting is a boon for the literates and illiterates alike.

2. Objective of the study

The study was planned with the following broad objectives in consideration

1. To understand the FM listening habits of people of Greater Noida
2. Frequency of listening radio of the people
3. To determine the timings of listening radio in a day
4. To find out the Radio stations which are popular among people
5. To determine the preferred Program format

3. Review of literature

Majority of Indian population is illiterate and with most of them living in rural areas, radio has been the most important and most effective medium for providing information and stimulating new attitudes wherever it has reached. Communication by word of mouth alone had been possible until radio was used to spread the word.

Radio is everywhere. Sets are common in the bedroom, in cars, in offices, on city streets, in kitchens and in other places. Radio survived by becoming a localized medium, with special appeal to a well-defined demographic group that advertisers wished to reach. Radio turned to programs that were geared to the local community.

Of all the mass media, radio has the widest reach as well as the widest coverage. With over 132 million radio sets of which 78 million are FM receivers, radio reaches almost the entire population of India; the geographical coverage too is nationwide (98.3%).

Area of research

With the commercialization of radio a lot of FM radio channels have grown. Because of which channel faces very tough competition from the other channels. It is rightly said the success of one is on the cost of another so in the area of greater Noida, I conducted a study on the habits of the people of this area. This study was conducted among the students of Sharda University and adjoining villages which comes under 30 km of distance from Sharda University. The survey was conducted between 7th February and 15th march, 2014.

Data

Frequency of radio listeners in a week

In order to find out which radio station is popular among its audiences it's very important to find out its regular audiences, hence in response to this query we treated respondents who listen to radio 5-6 days a week and we treated them as regular listener, those who listens 4-5 days a week as frequent listeners and someone who listens 2-3 days a week are termed them as occasional listener and people who listen less than that are termed as rarely never listeners

About 21% campus student said that they listen to radio almost every day. Another 14% were frequent listeners. About 31% were only occasional listeners as they listened to it only 2-3 days in a week. Remaining 34% were non listeners.

Distribution of respondents in rural areas in above showed that 36% were regular listeners, 25% were frequent and 29% occasional listeners. Rest 10% was the group of those who were non-listeners. Combination of both the categories reveals that while 22% were non listeners, the rest were distributed equally between regular and occasional listeners and constituted almost 30% each. Only 20% were frequent listeners.

Analysis by different variable showed that women were more inclined to radio than men in rural sample. But the urban sample presented the reverse trend, the same analysis by other two variables like education level and SEC factor was alone done and is presented in diagram below.

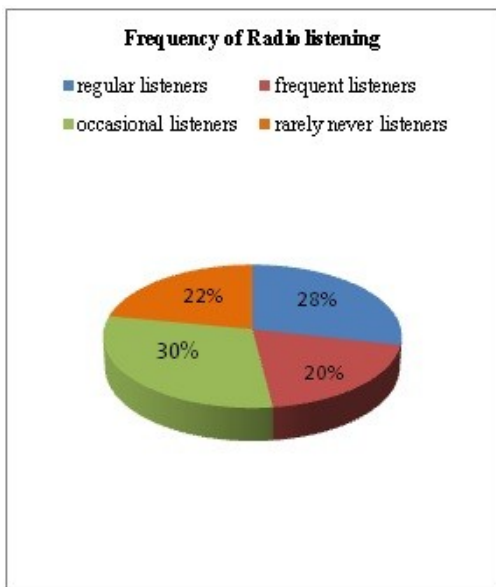


Figure 1

Normal Timings of Radio Listening In a Day

With commercialization of radio, radio became 24 hr, so it had time specific audiences as well. For example in morning generally 30% of the population is travelling for their offices in some mode of transport, whether it is their own car or some public transport. So mostly radio is on. Similarly every time has their specific audiences. Also it is very important to know which audiences are there at what time to schedule the show according to audience preferences. Most of the stations now a day's operated round the clock and hence provide nonstop entertainment to their listeners. Therefore, the pattern of listening to radio during the day was assessed on two hourly basis starting from 6am. Peak time of listening was noted between 8-10 PM among both men and women and it was 27.5%. Apart from this the time slot 10pm to 12 pm was also quite popular as 23% of the audience is involved. Further between 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm, and 6pm-8pm about 18% of the audiences were listening. At all other times of the day, it varied between 13% and 23%. It shows that radio listening is almost throughout the day and one tune to it as per one's convenience.

This analysis has been done according to sex and educational level of the respondents.

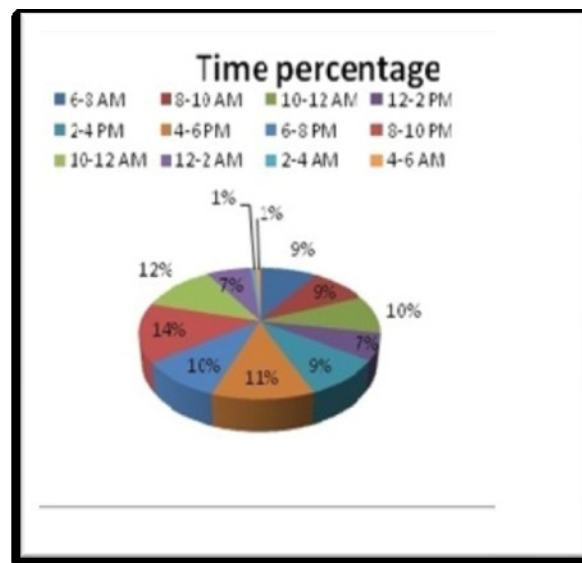


Figure 2

Radio Stations normally tuned in

As the time has passed various radio stations have emerged and with each passing day there's a new station which is being added to the list. Moreover every station is there with a motive as some are Community Radios and some are there to cater to a specific need. A radio listener in Delhi has now the option of tuning-in more than a dozen of stations on his set. Multiplicity of such radio stations has not only increased the interest of radio lovers but has also provided freedom to choose the best suited one at that point of time. The factors which differentiate one station from the other is the formats of program which are prevalent on that station also some stations are there for a specific motive so if the audience is there for that reason so, it would definitely be attracted towards that station. This has increased attachments to radio of a common listener. Among all these stations, **Radio Mirchi** with 48.5% and **Red FM** with 47.5% were most popular both among men and women. They liked these stations for their vivacity and entertainment spirit. Jockeys were full of lively chat that enthralled them through and through. Apart from these two stations Radio City with 21.5% was also quite popular

Other popular stations were like Radio One and Radio FM with 20.5% which contained good songs and healthy information content too.

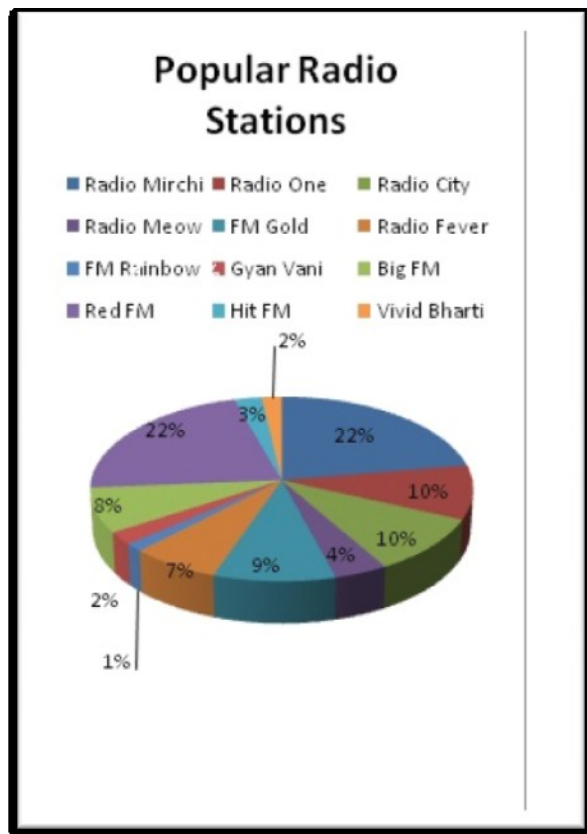


Figure 3

prefer, mostly the answer were songs whether old or new so, that shows the interest of people in music. One reason for the popularity can be as it automatically changes the mood of the audience and they enjoy while listening to songs rather than listening to some serious talks they will prefer to listen songs.

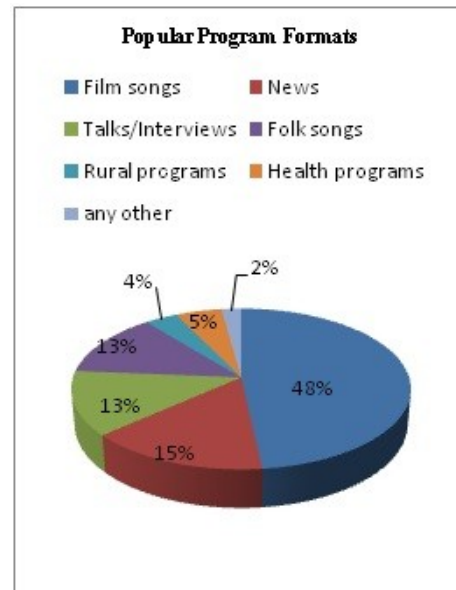


Figure 4

Program formats listened normally

It is basically the types of programs which attracts the audiences and hold them so it's not the name or any other thing which is the reason of popularity of any radio station. It is the type of program which is being broadcast on that station. As soon as there is something that doesn't appeal to them leads to switching to some other station. On the pattern of types of program listened, film songs were quite popular among urban and rural respondents that is 63.2% and 27.8% respectively. After film songs 24.2% talks and interviews were popular in urban areas while 17.8% people in rural areas were found of folk songs. Apart from these news and health programs were popular among the urban dwellers while in rural areas news and various other programs were quite well-liked. Over all film songs then news and talks/ interviews, folk songs were popular respectively. On being asked the type of program they

Factors effecting growth of the Indian economy

- **Growing Media and Entertainment Business** Media and Entertainment Business is expanding at a very fast rate and whether it's rural or it's urban area the figures are increasing with the growth in time. And today no one is there who can remain isolated without using any kind of media whether it's traditional media (radio and television) or its new media (social media, web media). We require something or the other. Radio having the advantage to win the illiterates has an upper edge especially in rural areas where the numbers of illiterates are more in comparison to urban areas.
- **Growth of the Indian Economy** Indian Economy is growing at a very fast rate. Indian market is now seen as the emerging biggest market in coming time. Apart from China India is the second country which is

attracting investors in Asia. All this definitely have an impact on the listening of radio patterns as well.

4. Conclusion

The endeavor to find out the prevailing trends of people's habit of spending time in the company of FM Radio culminated in the form of this paper. It throws light on current tradition of availing media benefit by the people in this region.

Some of the prominent observations of survey are as follows

- Regular listeners of radio in the area were 36% and 23% in rural and urban areas respectively followed by 14% and 25% frequent listeners that are those who tuned to radio 4-5 times in a week. It means half of the people in the region listen to radio frequently.
- Women were more inclined to radio than men in urban sample as compared to rural respondents. It is perhaps because they spend more time at home than men.
- Evening time between 8-10PM is the peak time of radio listening for both campus students and rural respondents. However, it is now evenly spread in the entire day schedule that about one third of the people keep their radio sets on.
- Radio mirchi and Red FM are two most popular radio stations for which about fifty percent respondents evinced their interest. These two stations were actually way ahead in terms of popularity.
- Film songs are the favorite of most of the respondents (43%) followed by news items (13.5%) folk songs and talks were other two formats that attracted people.

With each passing day a new radio station is being functional so, to survive in the race of competition it is very necessary that radio station study their audiences and then cater to them. With the popularity of music, stations should also not forget to cover topics like health programs which spreads awareness about the pandemics like dengue and

swine flu, family planning as the population of India is crossing all its bars, cultural reawakening because in having a competition with the west we gradually are forgetting all our old values and beliefs which we need to revive them again and finally social developmental issues which is very important for a healthy tomorrow.

5. Limitation of the study

The survey is limited to only 200 (Male 119, female 81) respondents, which is a major limitation of the study, because as per the reports of national census of India 2011 report Greater Noida has population of 102,054 out of which 55,540 are males and 46,514 are females. Also the time taken for the survey was less; if enough time would have been there this research could have been better.

6. Recommendation for further study

Further studies can be done by enlarging the sample size of respondents. Also giving more time to have discussions with the respondents would also help in understanding the reason of popularity of a particular radio station and why not the other. And apart from radio, television and new media can also be included to have a valid data of media usage.

Annexure

Table 1

Frequency of listening									
Variables	Sample size	Regularly(6-7 days in a week)		Frequently(4-5 days in a week)		Occasionally(2-3 days in a week)		Rarely never	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sex									
Male	119	39	32.8	24	20.2	29	24.4	27	22.7
Female	81	18	22.2	15	18.5	31	38.3	17	21
Educational Level									
Illiterate	21	9	42.9	5	23.8	2	9.5	5	23.8
High School Pass	67	19	28.4	14	20.9	21	31.3	13	19.4
Graduate	66	16	24.2	8	12.1	24	36.4	18	27.3
Post Graduate	33	8	24.2	11	33.3	8	24.2	6	18.2
Professional Course	13	5	38.5	1	7.7	5	38.5	2	15.4
SEC Factor									
Elite Class	8	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50	0	0
Rich Class	71	18	25.4	11	15.5	22	31	20	28.2
Upper Middle Class	55	14	25.5	15	27.3	17	30.9	9	16.4
Middle Class	19	10	52.6	5	26.3	9	47.4	10	52.6
Lower Middle Class	8	7	87.5	3	37.5	7	87.5	5	62.5
Working Class	7	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0
BPL Families	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	200	57	28.5	39	19.5	60	30	44	22

Table 2

Normal timings of radio listening in a day										
Time chunk	male			Female			Total			%
	Urban	rural	total	urban	rural	total	urban	Rural	total	
6-8 AM	8	15	23	7	5	12	15	20	35	17.5
8-10AM	11	11	22	3	10	13	14	21	35	17.5
10-12PM	2	22	24	2	10	12	4	32	36	18
12-2PM	2	12	14	3	8	11	5	20	25	12.5
2-4PM	3	21	24	1	11	12	4	32	36	18
4-6PM	6	18	24	10	9	19	16	27	43	21.5
6-8PM	6	19	25	3	9	12	9	28	37	18.5
8-10PM	9	22	31	9	15	24	18	37	55	27.5
10-12AM	10	19	29	10	7	17	20	26	46	23

12-2AM	5	8	13	8	5	13	13	13	26	13
2-4AM	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	2	3	1.5
4-6AM	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	3	1.5
Base	59	60	119	41	40	81	100	100	200	100%

Table 3

<u>Radio Stations tuned</u>											
S.No	Radio Station	urban			Rural			Total			%
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1	Radio Mirchi	21	20	41	36	20	56	57	40	97	48.5
2	Radio One	6	3	9	19	13	32	25	16	41	20.5
3	Radio City	11	7	18	17	7	24	28	14	42	21.5
4	Radio Meow	5	3	8	5	5	10	10	8	18	9
5	Fm gold	7	1	8	21	12	33	28	13	41	20.5
6	Radio Fever	11	8	19	8	3	11	19	11	30	15
7	FM Rainbow	0	1	1	5	0	5	5	1	6	3
8	Gyan Vani	1	3	4	4	2	6	5	5	10	5
9	Big FM	9	4	13	19	2	21	28	6	34	17
10	Red FM	16	17	33	37	22	59	56	39	95	47.5
11	Hit FM	3	3	6	5	0	5	8	3	11	5.5
12	Vividh Bharti	3	0	3	5	0	5	8	0	8	4
13	AIR Delhi	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0.5
	Base	59	41	100	60	40	100	119	81	200	100

Table 4

<u>Program format preferred</u>						
Program Format	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Film songs	42	63.2	25	27.8	67	43

News	15	22.7	6	6.7	21	13.5
Talks/interviews	16	24.2	2	2.2	18	11.5
Folk songs	2	3	16	17.8	18	11.5
Rural programs	2	3	3	3.3	5	3.2
Health programs	6	9.1	1	1.1	7	4.5
Any other	0	0	3	3.3	3	1.9
Total	66		90		156	

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