

ROLE OF MEDIA (RADIO) IN OPINION BUILDING IN RURAL MASSES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the role of radio in building opinion on different social issues among rural masses. The sample of the study consists of 300 social workers/opinion leaders of Sindh province. 18 items questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The results indicate that radio plays a vital role in building awareness, making opinion and guide the rural masses for solving their problems. The study also reveals that difficult language and technicality in program format make it difficult for the rural audience to understand themes of the program. The study recommends that opinion leaders may be invited to speak on important issues as they have direct influence in the rural masses.

INTRODUCTION

The first broadcasting house in British India was inaugurated in Bombay on the 23rd of July in 1927. However, after the year 1936, Delhi Radio played the leading role in popularizing radio programs. At the time of partition in 1947, India and Pakistan divide the assets of All India Radio, and Pakistan inherited three low powered radio stations at Lahore. Dacca Peshawar. A year later, Karachi the then federal capital, acquired a medium wave transmitter station, which added tow 50 kw transmitters soon afterwards in August 1949, Radio Pakistan formally inaugurated fine external services from Karachi and Rawalpindi came on the air in 1950. Since then the radio broadcasting services continuously expands throughout the country. The scope of its programs ranges from entertainment to education. The following table summarizes different categories of radio programs:

Table 1 **Program Categories**

Nature of program	Percentage of total time
Religious	12.5%
News and current affaire	11%
Women children and labor	5%
Youth/ student	3%
Armed forces	2%
Rule and farm	10%
Sports	2.5%

Drama/ teachers	2%
Publicity campaigns	2%
Science , technology and health	2%
Music	48%
<i>Half of time is devoted to information and education and the remaining half to entertainment.</i>	

Source: Golden jubilee of Pakistan: Basic facts, 1997, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, Islamabad.

It is worthy mentioning that majority of listening is the female rural population as indicated below:

Table 2 Size of listening

Description	Percentage
Urban	68%
Rural	74%
Mail	72%
Female	73%

Table 3 Radio Audience

Demographic Segments	Total %	Urban %	Rural %
All adults	22	23	21
Gender-wise			
Man	25	28	23
woman	15	17	12
Age-wise			
18 to 29	27	29	25
30-50	19	21	19
Above 50	16	18	15
Income-wise	19	18	19
Up to 3000	26	25	28
3001 to 7000	30	28	31
7001 to 15000	27	29	25
15000+			
Education –wise			
Illiterate/No formal education			

Up to primary	11	12	11
Up to Matric	20	19	21
Inter	27	26	27
Graduate	36	32	40
Post Graduate	29	29	29
	31	34	33

Source: All Pakistan Radio audience report (1990) Islamabad, Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

The role of information media with specific reference to rural development can only be defined from the scope of rural development activities has been properly out line and actual work is being done at the ground level. The primary purpose of information transfer in the context of rural development is to bring about a change in the quality of life of the people.

The utility of radio as a media information transfer for assisting development in particular rural development has been proved. Radio can be used to assist the activities of development workers. At times, communication media workers and development workers may be working at different levels and purpose.

Radio ranks in the top in the awareness and interest stages of learning. Radio communication is one of the fastest, most powerful, inexpensive and in many countries the only way of communication with rural people. It reaches people of all cultural, social educational and economic levels very quickly. Radio has enabled millions of villagers to receive information of all kinds, especially since the introduction of in expensive transistor models.

The need for technological change in today world is a great challenge to rural people. To meet this challenge, radio communication has proved to be a powerful force for social and change people mind. Radio is now seen as an important tool for national development and is much more than just as source of news and entertainment. However, national development in the broader sense does not mean only growth, but also gradual modification of individual and collective behavior. The promotion of human resources in any society therefore requires in addition to circulating goods, people and money, a constant flow of knowledge and know how as well as dissemination of information on national objectives and interests. Economic and social development are thus closely related to the spread of useful information as pointed out by Ghafoor (1994, p, 2).

Despite many efforts underway, the rural areas in Pakistan are still confronted with a backlog of problems and unmet needs. This might be the result of poor communications with rural people and a lack of their actives participation in the development process. Such problems call for the use of radio in rural development. One of the major obstacles being faced by radio broadcasting organization is the lack of adequate planning and financial resources.

The above discussion revealed that radio broadcast is significant to the human development as stated by Yousaf (1991, p,4) :

- It is fundamental social process and act which is dictated by the social norms.
- It involves the interchange of ideas, knowledge, thoughts and messages.
- It brings about desired effects alteration of some ideas, or the change in behavior.

Development of rural society where majority of population in Pakistan resides is not easy because of close inter relationship, which exists between social and non-social aspects. But, social change do take place because of the aggregate effect of individual adaptation to new environment communication, which plays a significant role, but in individual adaptation, their aggregation as well as the creation of new environment itself. So, increased communication facilities are necessary but not sufficient condition for bringing about development and social change. There exists strong coherence and close relationship between structures, communication and the development process. Radio can be used for bringing change in the opinion of rural masses.

Change will not take place smoothly and effectively unless people want to change. It is the generally increasing flow of information that plants the seed of change and furnishes climate for development. To Lakshamana (1966, p, 55) radio can aid people in the developing countries to have a better understanding of how other people live, and consequently to prepare their own lives with new insight. They are a liberating force as they move people from the bonds of isolation and distance, transporting them from a traditional society, then providing them with a capacity to conceive of situation and ways of life quite different from those are directly experiencing as quoted by Dua (1994, pp.34-35) that Communication helps a person, he found, to locate alternative ways of making a living, helps him to raise his family's' social and economic status, create demands for goods, raise literacy rates, shifts the influence from age old and traditional status to knowledge and ability, helps in the process of power change from heredity to achievement motivates the traditional leaders to define their power by raising their information level, in addition to so many other changes initiated and prompted by communication.”

Following is an example of attitude change in the people of rural Sindh due to a three minute radio broadcast:

Due to the three minutes specific broadcast the villagers of Phalkara helped the nearby villagers. They took initiatives for community development and achieved the following results;

- i. Establishment of community Center.
 - o Establishment of High School in the village
 - o Establishment of Animal Husbandry Hospital.
 - o Child and Mother Care Center.

There is generally accepted principle, says Schramm, (1967, pp.23-24) “ that, whenever it is decided to bring about a change in attitudes or behavior, two way communication is a condition of effectiveness in any campaign in any country that aims at changes. But it is especially important in developing countries, because of the especial responsibilities being placed on communication. The government in the developing countries must get the public reaction to make appropriate change in its approach accordingly. However, the influence of opinion leaders is also very important factor. Therefore, the information may be spread from resources via relevant channels to opinion leaders and from them by ways of personal communication channels to their followers as cited by Severin et al (1992, p. 194) who defined the personal influence of opinion leadership as “ personal influences was both more frequent more effective than any of the mass media, not only in politics but also on marketing, fashion decisions and more attendance”. It is obvious that one of the important implications of the two-step flow is the central place awarded to opinion leaders and to their interpersonal communication with their followers. In certain situations the radio can take over some of the usually interpersonal channels

of leadership. The voices of community development workers on radio are real contributions to their local reputations and images in the community. In like manner, it is useful to give status and visibility to those persons or acts that deserve to be emulated.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were as under:

1. To examine views of opinion leaders about radio programs.
2. To investigate the role of radio in opinion building of rural masses.
3. To access existing strategies of radio broadcasting.
4. To identify problems involved in radio broadcast for rural people.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

It was a survey study which involves use of questionnaire for data collection.

Participants

The sample of study included 300 social workers /opinion leaders in Hyderabad and Mirpur khas division of Sindh province.

Tool of Research

The related literature was reviewed in order to understand the role education radio. A questionnaire was developed for social workers / opinion leaders. Tool consisted of 18 items on a five point rating scale. It was coded as: Strongly Agreed = 5, Agreed = 4, Uncertain = 3, Disagreed = 2, Strongly disagreed =1

The instrument was concerned with gathering information and opinion of leaders about the products of various programs of radio in Pakistan on the basis of their actual performance in rural development. The instrument was divided into sections encompassing.

1. Profile of opinion leaders/ social workers
2. Purpose of radio
3. Radios utilization in rural development
4. View on existing programs of radio
5. Problems involved in rural broadcasting and their solutions

ANALYSIS OF DATA

After collecting data, it was tabulated for further statistical analysis. Chi-square test was used to infer from the data. The detail of the analysis is presented below:

Table 4 Response pattern of the opinion leaders.

Statement	Frequency & Percentage					Mean	Chi-square
	SA	A	U	DA	SDA		
It is my keen desire to work for development of village.	89 30%	191 64%	8 3%	6 2%	5 2%	4.2	$\chi^2 = 442.3(df4)$, $p < 0.0001$

There are several programs of development of rural masses but I do not think that rural people are getting any particular benefits.	54 19%	24 8%	72 24%	99 33%	49 16%	2.8	$\chi^2 = 52.3(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio provides guidance to rural people in solving the problems of rural development	64 21%	174 58%	14 4%	31 10%	17 6%	3.8	$\chi^2 = 297(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio programs are helpful to understand everyday problems.	146 49%	124 41%	14 5%	11 3%	5 2%	4.3	$\chi^2 =$ $317.2(df4), p < 0.0001$
The radio helps in developing practical skills	91 30%	119 40%	22 7%	38 13%	30 10%	3.7	$\chi^2 = 121.2(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Broadcasting provides guidance for the betterment of social values.	81 27%	185 62%	14 5%	9 3%	11 3%	3.1	$\chi^2 = 386.4(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio provides guidance on matters of community development	127 14%	77 26%	26 9%	28 9%	42 14%	3.7	$\chi^2 = 121.4(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio provides organized and special advices to rural people.	77 26%	86 29%	73 24%	34 11%	30 10%	3.5	$\chi^2 = 45.2(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Strategy adopted by radio for opinion making is suitable.	38 13%	136 45%	65 22%	43 14%	18 6%	3.4	$\chi^2 = 138.9(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio programs enhance information of people.	67 22%	197 66%	23 7%	11 4%	2 1%	4.1	$\chi^2 = 432.5(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Programs broadcast are according to the needs of the community.	33 11%	46 15%	38 13%	86 29%	97 32%	2.4	$\chi^2 = 57.6(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Language and presentation of radio program is more technical.	44 15%	57 19%	38 13%	98 32%	63 22%	2.7	$\chi^2 = 36.7(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio makes the rural people to realize their needs, problems and responsibilities.	85 28%	113 38%	29 10%	33 11%	40 13%	3.6	$\chi^2 = 92.1(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
With the help of radio programs leadership qualities can be created in rural areas.	47 16%	124 41%	21 7%	36 12%	72 24%	3.1	$\chi^2 = 108.4(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio provides advices to rural people to improve their lives.	98 33%	119 40%	43 14%	21 7%	19 6%	3.9	$\chi^2 = 140.3(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio plans to preserve social values in villages.	66 22%	171 57%	30 10%	21 7%	12 4%	3.9	$\chi^2 = 284.7(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$
Radio accelerates the pace of rural development in villages.	46 15%	192 64%	29 10%	21 7%	12 4%	3.8	$\chi^2 = 373.4(df4),$ $p < 0.0001$

Table 4 indicated that respondents were of the view that radio can practically reach a large segment of population and can accelerate the pace of awareness among rural masses. It further indicated that radio provides guidance to rural people not only in understanding and solving their problems but also give guidance for the betterment of social values and community development.

The opinion leaders supported the view that radio programs can contribute to:

- suppress evils
- stop crimes

- develop courageous leadership among the people
- develop the attitude for education
- prepares rural people for country development

They further revealed that there were several programs of development of rural masses but the rural people are getting any particular benefits as the language and presentation of the program is more technical and difficult to understand by common people of rural areas.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Any significant change in the life of an individual tends to introduce some degree of disharmony or instability in the way of his life activities, attitudes, and beliefs are organized. Radio is not very effective by itself in changing attitudes that are strongly held and deeply entrenched. But it is quite possible through radio to have some effect on lightly held positions that are not strongly defended, or on new questions concerning which there has been neither time nor information to build up strong attitudes. It is obvious that radio can be of great aid in decision-making that usually accompanies economical and social development. But it is equally obvious that their aid does not lie in frontal attacks on long valued customs or deeply held attitudes. These firmly held positions in the domain of personal influence and group norms. If change is to be made in firmly held beliefs and custom, interpersonal communication is normally needed and group change is usually involved. In such major changes the help of the radio is only indirect. It can broaden participation in policy debates; can bestow prestige and influence norms; and can help form tastes and contribute to a sense of belonging. When there are no deeply held attitudes, where the change desired is no more than a slight shift in existing attitudes, it can have direct effect.

The role of radio in a nation's development process has been widely accepted and it has been found to be a very effective in the development process of a country. Different researches have found a very high correlation between the development of media and the economic and social development of rural areas. Broadcast media have been able to help in development process by establishing a climate for change. The radio can do this by infusing mobility, widening horizons, focusing attention on the problems of development, and by raising the levels of aspiration. It is equipped to motivate and encourage popular participation, knowledge sharing and empowerment to facilitate efforts for development and communities have been broadly recognized. It can be used for involving people in national policies and goals for development. It was also found helpful in the development process by their power to effect and change attitudes, thus helping in the adoption of new methods and techniques for development. The results of the study concluded that:

Radio can practically reach a large segment of population and can accelerate the pace of awareness among rural masses. It provides guidance to rural people not only in understanding and solving their problems but also give guidance for the betterment of social values and community development. The opinion leaders were of the view that radio programs can contribute to:

- suppress evils
- stop crimes

- develop courageous leadership among the people
- develop the attitude for education
- prepares rural people for country development

It was also concluded that there were several programs of development of rural masses but the rural people are getting any particular benefits as the language and presentation of the program is more technical.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Radio programs may be prepared for rural masses as per their needs.
- Program time may be convenient to the rural people and the language and presentation of the programs may be simple.
- Technique of open broadcasting may be adopted for rural programs.
- Opinion leaders may be invited on radio to speak on important issues as they have direct influence on their followers.

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