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A STUDY ON THE LISTENERSHIP PATTERN OF RADIO MEDIUM AMONG FEMALE YOUTH POPULATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI REGION

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ABSTRACT

Radio is the most effective and affordable medium among the various other mediums because of its mobility and its other special characteristics like It doesn't require any usage of internet and it informs, entertains and educates the public about various aspects. According to the studies of UNESCO, Radio's audience is consistent throughout the day for adults 18+. 40% of the public listen to radio at around 7am and it remains consistent until 6pm which is the prime time of radio listenership. In accordance with UNESCO studies, Radio counts for 86% of the total time adults aged 25-54 spend listening to main audio platforms. Over the past ten years, Youth Radio projects have been popping up across the world in various shapes and forms. From Bolivia to Bangladesh, New York to New Delhi, and Kinshasa to Kuala Lumpur, Radio Stations are seeing the benefits of getting youth on the airwaves. The Human Rights reports says that, in the process of Radio Production, the youth become conscious of social issues and become responsible citizens. Already, the program is running in 20 schools and colleges across eight cities of Andhra Pradesh. Children are able to understand their rights and responsibility and create a better world. Chennai has more than 6 FM Radio channels which are operational. FM Radio Stations in Chennai play Tamil, Hindi and English music. Popular FM stations in Chennai include Suryan FM and Radio Mirchi and Hello FM. The two private FM stations, Radio Mirchi FM and Suryan FM seem to be popular among the listeners, especially the youth in Chennai City. Youth in the age group of 21 to 30 preferred Radio Mirchi to the top slot with 53.03% audience. Fever FM is a growing radio network in Chennai and the most preferred Radio station for youth with listenership of over 60%. Most respondents, regardless

of gender difference, prefer to listen to the radio in the evening. Slightly more male respondents seem to have time to listen to the radio in the morning as they prepare for the day. It appears both female and male are on par listening to the radio during lunch break. Females of age 12-25 years, listen to radio more than that of men. Men listenership is more than women only after the age of 55 years according to reports. Thus the researcher studies the impact of the listenership of the Radio programs across the youth population with special reference to Female category in the city of Chennai. The questionnaire was circulated among the female youth population with 20 questions. Data was analyzed and reviewed.

KEY WORDS: Radio Programs, Radio production, Youth Population, Listenership

Introduction

Radio is widely used mass communication medium and has a great potentiality in dissemination of information as the radio signals cover almost entire population. With the advent of transistors this medium has reached the common man in urban and rural areas of India. It has the advantages like being handy, portable, easily accessible and cheap. It is the most portable of the broadcast media, being accessible at home, in the office, in the car, everywhere at any time. Radio is effective not only in informing the people but also in creating awareness regarding many social issues and need for social reformation, developing interest and initiating action. For example, in creating awareness regarding new policies, developmental programs, new idea, etc. Another important of radio as a medium of mass media is that it caters to a large rural population which has no access to TV. In such places, All India Radio's programs continue to be the main source of information and entertainment. The various roles and functions played by radio in the society are Information, education, entertainment, agenda setting, behavioral change agent, mobilization of society towards common goals, psychological support in the society.

A survey was conducted to study the listenership pattern of radio among young adults. This survey is in questionnaire format with 15 questions targeting people who fall into the category of age gap of 18-25. The questions were clear and comprehensible to people from different fields and also pitched in questions to understand the impact of radio advertisements on listenership

patterns. The questionnaire started from general demographic questions and continued with questions to understand their opinion about radio as a medium of entertainment. Then the questions plunged into the specifications to satisfy the motive of our survey.

The overall study shows us that only a handful pick radio during their free time. To be more specific the statistics of radio listeners have dropped by 10% in the last year due to online streaming services. Just as BBC television faces its toughest competition from Netflix and Amazon, and other online services are a more fearsome opponent than commercial radio stations when it comes to listeners. Many experts fear that radio might face its end soon. Yet radio didn't lose its power when it comes to attracting people with its PSA's or announcements. It is the case as people feel they are in direct contact with someone. So thus we can strongly recommend radio to be an educative medium that can create an impact in the minds of audience though losing its hand in entertainment slowly.

Entertainment is a form of activity that holds the attention and interest of an audience, or gives pleasure and delight. Although people have different preferences when it comes to choosing their entertainment, they are mostly recognizable and also familiar. In the modern times entertainment is strongly provided to people from the media industry (which is now also known as entertainment industry). Radio, television, print, magazines, social media are the entertainment sources that fall under the broad umbrella of media industry. Radio industry has taken up entertainment factor very seriously and has taken great steps to increase their listenership. Days are gone when people wait for a song from a single radio station. In contrary, now we have a wide range of radio channels and also online radio broadcasting to increase its coverage.

India is the fastest growing wireless market, with almost half of the mobile phones population having a built-in FM radio, in addition to transistors/radio sets and car audio systems.³ This shift of radio industry to portable devices aids the future industry growth. Thus this feature has also attracted users from

metropolitan cities. According to Industry, the current radio penetration levels are estimated to be ~35-38% overall and 77% in Metros.

Studies show that even the generation z will be an active radio listener in the upcoming years with growing technology.

To get a deeper understanding about whether radio advertisements are an hindrance to its listenership level growth, as said earlier, we conducted a survey. We got about 90 respondents, with maximum of female, who attended all the questions to the best of their knowledge. The analysis of the report are as follows:

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

Based on our survey it is seen that maximum prefer playing games in mobile which come to about 84.7%. Few of them chose to read books while free which is 12.9%. And very few listen to radio. As per the survey it rounds upto 12%. Other hobbies have a minimal followers.

WHEN DO YOU LISTEN?

Based on our research it is seen that maximum listen to radio in car or while travelling which come to about 62.8% along with 9.3% of people who are involved in some kind of physical activity. It is surprising to see about 10.5% listen to radio during breakfast.

HOW LONG YOU LISTEN TO RADIO:

70.2% listen to radio for 15-30 minutes. Therefore it takes up the first. About 13.1% listen to radio for 30 to 45 minutes. But radio failed to be attracting and holding listeners attention more than that.

WHY NOT PREFER RADIO FOR ENTERTAINMENT:

Having many online streaming apps and the capacity to create our own playlist, about 39.5% prefer to listen to their own music. With this statement

in hand, it is shocking to see how nearly 32.6% avoid radio due to its advertisements. 14% of them feel there are less music options and 5.8% feel lack of visuals is quite annoying in this industry.

WHY PREFER RADIO FOR ENTERTAINMENT:

When it comes to reasons for choosing radio for entertainment, about 49.4% enjoy music in radio, 30.6% listen to get news updates, 20% enjoy straight read programs and feel an immediate connect with the presenter.

WHICH RADIO STATION YOU PREFER:

All radio stations have more or less equal listeners who might be slightly floating from one station to another. The percentage of radio listeners in each station are Radio Mirchi 57.1%, Big FM 16.7%, Fever FM 11.9%, FM Rainbow 6%. It seems radio mirchi is proudly in its top position.

IS RADIO APPS USED BY YOU?

It is shocking to see such an unison answer for this question. Almost 95% of them do not have a radio app. Fallen out of this cup are few spills who have the AIR app or the NEWS ON AIR app to get daily news update.

CAN RADIO APPS INCREASE LISTENERSHIP COUNT:

Maximum have them do not have a clear opinion on the changes that might occur in the radio industry due to radio apps. These counts up to 54.9%. Yet it is motivating to see that 39% of them believe this concept will revolutionize radio industry.

YOUR PREFERENCES IN THE APP:

This question is to make the audience the active participants and put themselves in that situation before coming to a conclusion. More than half of them, that is, 70% of them request the apps to have lyrics while the song is on.

Following that 17.5% wanted information about the song in radio apps. Other options are too minimal to be noted.

ADVERTISEMENTS IN RADIO:

This question has report which falls into almost equal portions. Giving out the statistics, 30% do not mind ads as long as it is relevant, 35% do not mind general ads and the final 35% do not prefer to advertise in radio industry due to lack of attention from the listeners.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INFLUENCED BY RADIO ADS:

With the evidences from our research, it is heart breaking to know that 58.5% feel that radio ads are not influential. Following that 28% of them are unsure and 13.4% have nodded their heads positively.

WHAT FACTORS ATTRACT YOU TO RADIO ADS:

This question is to understand the positive aspects of radio advertisements. 33.8% of them feel that radio ads are attractive for being short and crisp. And

24.7% enjoy the jingle in radio ads. Adding to this, 19.5% feel that radio PSAs to be attractive element as they are very informative. And about 14.3% of them feel it has a high degree of relevance. And the remaining fall into the others category.

DOES RADIO ADS AFFECT YOU:

In contrary, This question is to see the negative aspects of radio advertisement on its listeners. Asked people whether they avoid radio for its continuous ads, 43.6% have nodded YES and 16.7% NO. The remaining are in the neutral state of may be or may be not.

WOULD YOU PAY FOR NOT LISTENING TO ADS:

Having said people hate ads and it annoys them, will we go to the extreme of paying to stop ads? Asked this question to the respondents, we have got a clear cut answer as to the majority, 81.8% have nodded a NO. Whereas the remaining 18.2% have accepted this deal.

CONCLUSION

From the survey, it is evident that youth nowadays choose wisely their preferences for entertainment when it comes to radio. Radio stations take numerous steps to retain back their listeners. Though in the recent times there had been development of online radio, people tend to continue to listen to commercial radio in spite of hindrance of advertisements. People spend most of their time on mobile phones lately. Even then only few choose to listen to radio over online games. When researched it was found that many listen to radio only at the time of travelling. But radio failed to be attracting and holding listeners for not more than 30 minutes. Many people prefer radio for listening to music and some to get news updates. Radio catches the attention only if the programs are interesting and humorous. When we questioned the public on which radio station they preferred the most, interestingly Radio Mirchi topped the list. Advertisements are usually not preferred by the listeners. From the survey those people who listen to advertisements are mostly attracted to the jingles. Radio advertisements are not considered as an influential tool for promoting products. Though people dislike advertisements in-between the programme, people would not pay to avoid them.

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