

The Changing Face Of Audio-Media In India During Post-Privatization Period: An Empirical Study

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INTRODUCTION

The liberalization and privatization has made deep inroads in almost all sectors. The broadcasting media is not an exception to this trend. With the changing needs of the audience, the need was felt to attract the listeners of radio. Till 1993, All India Radio was the only radio broadcaster in India and private players were not permitted to broadcast and participate in radio broadcasting. In 1993, the government took the initial step in the privatization of this sector and permitted private Frequency Mega Hertz (FM) Radio operators to buy airtime block on All India Radio's FM channels in the cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Goa.

On July 6, 1999, the government announced the Phase-I Policy and permitted the greater participation by the private sector in the FM Radio broadcasting business by allowing companies to bid for 108 radio channels in 40 cities. Under the Phase-II Policy in 2006, the Government has announced bidding for an additional 338 radio channels in 91 cities.

The Government of India initiated the process of not restricting the FM only for the purpose of entertainment; they have allowed 16 channels for teaching out of which six are on an experimental basis. Thus, the popularity of radio has enhanced and Indira Gandhi National Open University and the other universities are reaching to a large mass of the population for teaching. Along with 336 entertainment channels in 90 cities, the government plans to introduce 87 new FM channels, which will be used exclusively to teach students in remote areas of the country.

The Center would soon issue notifications for these channels. Out of these 87 channels, 36 would be used by Indira Gandhi National Open University to reply to queries and organize on-air classrooms. It proposes to broadcast lessons as part of an organized schedule for a large number of students simultaneously. The other channels would be opened to private players.

TABLE 1: Gyanvani – IGNOU'S Educational FM Channels

Serial No	Location	Frequency Mega Hertz
1.	Allahabad	107.4 MHz
2.	Bangalore	107.6 MHz
3.	Bhopal	105.0 MHz
4.	Chennai	105.4 MHz
5.	Coimbatore	91.9 MHz
6.	Delhi	105.6 MHz
7.	Kolkata	105.4 MHz
8.	Lucknow	105.6 MHz
9.	Mumbai	105.6 MHz
10.	Visakhapatnam	106.4 MHz
11.	Varanasi	Experimental Transmission
12.	Mysore	Experimental Transmission
13.	Jabalpur	Experimental Transmission
14.	Rajkot	Experimental Transmission
15.	Guwahati	Experimental Transmission
16.	Raipur	Experimental Transmission

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Some Campus- Based Community Radio Stations are given below:

1. ANNA FM: 90.4 MHz (Anna University, Guindy, Chennai).
2. MOP FM: 91.2 MHz (MOP Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai).
3. NILA FM: 90.4 MHz (Sri Manakula Vinaynagar College of Engineering, Pondicherry).
4. FM Radio7: 90.4 MHz (India International Institute of Management, Jaipur).
5. KONGU FM: 90.4 MHz (Kongu Engineering College, Erode).

News broadcasting is not allowed on private FM channels but many of the current new players are from the news media. Information and Broadcasting Ministry will probably allow the news broadcasting in a couple of years. Still FM channels broadcast news in different form and styles to attract the listeners.

The privatization or entry of private players in the field of broadcasting has an impact in general. However, no serious studies appear to have been made in this respect. Hence, a need is felt to assess the impact of privatization of the broadcasting media in general, especially on the listeners.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the privatization of the audio-media in India is only at its embryonic stage, not much literature is found on this subject as compared to other areas of research. With a view to obtain secondary data and information on the impact of privatization of audio channels, an attempt was made to scan available literature on the subject. Unfortunately, no sufficient literature is available on this subject till date. Some write ups have been published in different dailies, magazines etc. The Internet provides maximum possible relevant information on this subject.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is undertaken to assess the growing popularity of radio and its impact on the listeners. The general objective is to analyze whether the privatization of the audio media (that is the introduction of FM channels) has enhanced the popularity of the media. In specific terms, some of the objectives may be enumerated as follows: -

- To study the present scenario of audio-media.
- To analyze whether the big business houses are ready to invest in the broadcasting media like radio to make it a more popular medium.
- To identify the target group of the FM channels.
- To find out whether any attitudinal change has been created in the mind of the listeners.
- To assess the impact of FM radio as a medium of teaching, spreading of information, upliftment of lifestyle etc.
- To study the concept of campus based radio and how they are working for the societal benefits.
- To assess whether the quality of the programs and popularity of audio-media has improved after the introduction of FM channels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

The present study is exploratory and empirical in nature. The study is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary information is collected from different published materials viz. dailies, magazines, websites etc. For primary data on listeners' opinion, the field study was conducted in Barrackpur Municipal area within North 24-Parganas district of West Bengal. It is ascertained from the Barrackpur Municipality that it comprises of 24 wards. From each ward, some sample households were selected by Simple Random Sampling without Replacement and the respondents were selected by stratified sampling technique using quota sampling.

The population is classified into three strata -Students who are in the age group of 13 to 25 years, Working class and the people in the Domestic Front. The working class people are further subdivided into people engaged in white-collar jobs and people engaged in blue-collar jobs. From the 6390 households in the above-mentioned municipality, ten percent households i.e. 639 houses were selected. There are altogether 1872 respondents in the 639 houses where the survey had been conducted. The 639 households were selected at random from the 24 wards of Barrackpur Municipality. The respondents were provided with a questionnaire depending on the strata

to which they belong. Each questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of the general profile of the respondents; the second part comprised of the different factors related to listening radio after the introduction of FM channels.

A structured questionnaire was drafted initially and a pilot survey was done to finalize it for the primary data collection. The different traits are measured on a five point bipolar scale. Scores on different variables are computed by Likert's summated scale from individual traits. Suitable statistical techniques and scaling techniques were used to analyze the data.

THE PRESENT SCENARIO OF AUDIO-MEDIA IN INDIA

In the Phase-II policy, the government has announced bidding for an additional 338 channels in 91 cities. Several non-media companies in addition to almost all the serious print and TV players participated in the bidding. Radio Mirchi, a Times Group company, Radio City (earlier part of Star group; now held by GW Capital), Red FM (till recently an India Today group company), Suryan (a Sun TV grow up firm), Go FM (Mid-day- a joint venture between BBC and Mid Day Multimedia), Win FM (independent), Aamar and Power FM (both independent, but operated by Measat), many media biggies participated as well namely Zee, Reliance, India Today, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Bhaskar, Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhoomi, Dainik Jagran, Hindustan Times, Daily Thanthi, Jaya TV, Bag Films, Kumudam. The bids also drew interest from big and small non-media players like Muthoot Finance, Indigo (a Rajeev Chandrashekhar company), some builders, and other assorted players.

Sun TV group as well as the Reliance group has taken an all-India perspective. They have bid virtually everywhere, and have won most of their bids. Sun with 67 wins (out of 91 cities) and Reliance with 57 wins, have emerged as the two largest operators, followed by Radio Mirchi (25 wins + 7 existing) and Radio City (16 wins + 4 existing), which are the third, and fourth by size.

There have also been players who appear to have followed a large town strategy. HT with four stations at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore, Mid-day with six wins at Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Pune in addition to their existing Mumbai station and India Today with seven stations appear to have taken this route.

Beyond this, regional newspaper groups have also entered the fray — *Bhaskar* has been the most aggressive, winning 17 stations (two in Gujarat, five in Rajasthan, three in Punjab, six in MP and Chhatisgarh and one in Maharashtra), followed by *Dainik Jagran* with eight wins (four in UP, three in Haryana, Punjab and one in Bihar), *Daily Thanthi* (six in Tamil Nadu), *Malayala Manorama* (four in Kerala) and *Mathrubhoomi* (four in Kerala). *Rajasthan Patrika* appears to have lost out in Rajasthan (only three wins) but has gained a foothold in Raipur.

TV companies expanding into radio include Zee (eight wins) and Asianet (two in Kerala). Others like Bag Films (10 wins), Century (six), Positive (four), and a multitude of smaller bidders appear to have not followed any particular strategy.

In the Phase II policy, 1100 crores have been paid for the licenses. Sun TV (Rs 200 crore), Reliance (Rs 171 crore), Radio Mirchi (Rs 212 crore), Radio City (Rs 124 crore), Mid-day (Rs 97 crore), Bhaskar (Rs 51 crore) and Hindustan Times (Rs 75 crore) are the big spenders in Phase-II and account for 85% of the total Rs 1,100 crore that the government has collected in Phase-II.

The key question that remains to be answered is whether broadcasters will in reality launch their operations and whether there is enough money to be made in the business. Radio currently gets only 3% of the overall advertising space. While the worldwide average for radio is 8.7%. Radio in countries such as Philippines and Sri Lanka have upto 10-12% shares and so it remains to be seen where India will eventually settle. While Phase-II has ensured widespread participation by private players, what they do will determine how the industry grows.

For the listeners, there is a good chance that more choice of music will be available. The government still needs to work on a few issues. Since one player is not allowed multiple channels in one market, specialty channels/ niche music formats become difficult and hence there is lower profitability for the entire industry.

Overall, however, these policy glitches can be sorted out if the same spirit of pro-active collaboration, which went into the making of the FM Phase-II policy, persists.

BIG 92.7 FM, the FM radio venture of Adlabs Films Limited, backed by an investment of Rs 400 crores has rolled out 45 radio stations from March 2007. The company has launched the FM stations in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

Friends 91.9 MHz is a channel of Ananda Bazar Patrika Group. The Channel is focusing on friendship and promises to cut through the clutter of choices available on the radio and take the listeners back to the best years of their lives. The launch of this channel suggests that the big media houses like ABP are also coming in the FM Radio, which gives the listeners a lot to cheer about.

Radio Meow 104.8 MHz is a channel of the India Today Group. The channel has been launched specially for women. Different problems related to women are discussed during the course of the programs.

Fever 104 MHz is a channel of Hindustan Times Media and Entertainment and is launched to provide non-stop entertainment to the listeners.

The educational institutes in India are using FM Radio Channels to encourage the students. In the Garden City College, Bangalore a variety of shows are organized by the radio jockeys to help the students to study as well as have a good time on the campus. At the other end of Bangalore is R.V College of Engineering, where FM Radio is used to teach students.

Students in Delhi survive on a staple diet of campus radio (despite the commercial FM boom) called “AIR1 Apna Radio”; this FM channel is aimed at a frequency of 96.9 MHz. It covers a span of 10 km including the adjoining areas like Jawahar Lal University (JNU), Delhi University’s South Campus and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT,Delhi). The radio airs programs on social marketing and a few are given by government agencies like “Jago Grahak Jago”, a consumer help line program.

There are several success stories emerging from campus radios already. The students and lecturers of Jamia’s Mass Communication and Research Center (MCRC) went to the J.J. Colony at Okhla to hear the tale of slum dwellers. After the visit, these slum dwellers threw aside their hesitancy to visit the radio station (Jamia Radio 90.4 MHz) to share their problems.

Buoyed by the response, the ministry of information & broadcasting has issued the guidelines for encouraging community radio. An educational institution can apply for an FM license as long as it focuses on issues relating to education, health, environment and agriculture, rural and community development.

WEST BENGAL SCENARIO

In West Bengal, the private FM channels are getting popular day by day. The names of the private companies running FM channels in Kolkata is as follows:

Table 2: Private FM Channels in Kolkata

Channel Identity	Name of the Company	Frequency Mega Hertz	Year of Commencement
Radio Mirchi	M/s Entertainment Network (India) Limited	98.3	2001
Red FM	M/s Music Broadcast (Private) Limited	93.5	2003
Aamar FM	M/s Music Broadcast (Private) Limited	106.2	2003
Power FM	M/s Hitz FM Radio Private Limited	107.8	2003
Big FM	Ad labs Films Limited	92.7	2006
Friends FM	ABP Limited	91.9	2007
Radio Meow	India Today Group	104.8	2007
Fever	HT Media & Entertainment	104	2008

Two city institutes- Jadavpur University’s Radio JU (90.8 FM) had hit the air on April 14 2008, and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute’s SRFTI FM (90.4 MHz) went on air from the second week of May 2008.

EMPIRICAL DATA

General Profile of the Respondents

The respondents are classified into four categories. Their classifications are given below:

Table 3: Different Category of Respondents

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Students	668	35.68
People engaged in White Collar Jobs	752	40.17
People engaged in Blue Collar Jobs	188	10.04
People in the Domestic Front	264	14.11
Total	1872	100

The respondents are further classified on the basis of their age, education, income, gender and marital status in the following way:

Table 4: Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
13- below 25	787	42.04
25-below 37	553	29.54
37 –below 49	339	18.11
49 and above	193	10.31
Total	1872	100

Table 5: Educational Qualification of The Respondents

Educational Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Post Graduates and above	183	9.78
Graduates	729	38.94
Higher Secondary	435	23.24
Secondary	429	22.92
Below Secondary	96	5.12
Total	1872	100

Table 6: Classification of The Respondents On The Basis of Their Income

Monthly Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 5000	301	16.08
5000- below 15000	833	44.50
15000- below 25000	519	27.72
25000 and above	219	11.70
Total	1872	100

Table 7: Classification of The Respondents On The Basis of Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	976	52.14
Female	896	47.86
Total	1872	100

Table 8: Classification of The Respondents On The Basis of Marital Status

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	1053	56.25
Unmarried	819	43.75
Total	1872	100

LISTENERS' PERCEPTION ABOUT AUDIO MEDIA

From the observed data, some relevant information is extracted. In the following table, it has been tested whether the privatization of audio-media has increased its popularity or not.

Table 9: Calculated Z Value and p-value

Strata	Z-Value	p-value
Students	6.486	.0001
People in White Collar Jobs	2.828	.0024
People in Blue Collar Jobs	4.2857	.0002
People in Domestic Front	1.732	.0418

It can be concluded from the above table that ($Z = 6.486$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0001$) the students are of the views that the popularity of audio media has significantly increased after privatization.

It can also be concluded from the above table that ($Z = 2.828$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0024$) the people engaged in the white-collar jobs have opined that the popularity of audio media has increased after privatization.

Regarding the people engaged in the blue-collar jobs, the same conclusion has been drawn ($Z = 4.2857$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0002$).

For the people staying in the domestic front, they are also of the view that the popularity of audio-media has increased after privatization ($Z = 1.732$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0418$).

Table 10: Calculation of "D" Value On Spreading of Information After The Introduction of FM Among Respondents

Spreading of information is more after privatization than in Government Control	Observed No.	Observed Proportion	Observed Cumulative Proportion	Null Proportion	Null Cumulative Proportion	Absolute Difference
Students						
A lot	520	0.78	0.78	0.333	0.33	0.45
To some extent	112	0.17	0.95	0.333	0.67	0.28
A little	36	0.05	1.00	0.333	1.00	0.00
White Collar						
A lot	480	0.64	0.64	0.333	0.33	0.31
To some extent	180	0.24	0.88	0.333	0.67	0.21
A little	92	0.12	1.00	0.333	1.00	0.00
Blue Collar						
A lot	112	0.60	0.60	0.333	0.33	0.27
To some extent	56	0.30	0.90	0.333	0.67	0.23
A little	20	0.10	1.00	0.333	1.00	0.00
Domestic Front						
A lot	140	0.53	0.53	0.333	0.33	0.20
To some extent	76	0.29	0.82	0.333	0.67	0.15
A little	48	0.18	1.00	0.333	1.00	0.00

In the above table, Kolmogorov-Smirnov “D” statistic is computed for all groups of listeners $D = 1.36/\sqrt{n}$, where n is the sample size. For students, the computed value of $D = 0.45$. For the sample size 668, the critical value of D at 5% level of significance is $1.36/\sqrt{668}=0.052$. Hence the calculated value exceeds the critical value at 5% level i.e. the students are strongly in favour of the opinion that the spreading of information increased significantly after the introduction of FM channels. Similarly, for people engaged in white collar jobs, the computed value of $D=0.31$. For the sample size 752, the critical D value at 5% level of significance is $1.36/\sqrt{752}=0.049$. Hence the calculated value exceeds the critical value at 5% level i.e. the people engaged in white collar jobs are strongly in favour of the opinion that the spreading of information increased significantly after the introduction of FM channels.

Again, for people engaged in blue collar jobs, the computed value of $D=0.27$. For the sample size 188, the critical value of D at 5% level of significance is $1.36/\sqrt{188}=0.099$. Hence the calculated value exceeds the critical value at 5% level i.e. the people engaged in blue collar jobs are strongly in favour of the opinion that the spreading of information increased significantly after the introduction of FM channels. Same is the opinion for the people in the domestic front where the computed $D=0.20$ exceeds the critical value of D for sample size 264 at 5% level of significance which is $1.36/\sqrt{264}=0.0837$. Hence the people in the domestic front are in favour of the opinion that the spreading of information increased significantly after the introduction of FM channels.

Table 11: Time For Listening To Radio

To listen to radio Category	Less than 1 hour	1-3 hours	More than 3 hours	Total
Students	232	334	102	668
White Collar	459	239	54	752
Blue Collar	54	64	70	188
Domestic Front	121	100	43	264
Total	866	737	269	1872

A five point Likert Summated Scale was instituted to measure the different factors – spreading of information, impact of lifestyle and popularity of audio-media.

Table 12: The Distribution of Listeners Towards The Factors Contributing To Spreading of Information

Factors contributing for the spreading of information	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Updated Traffic News	891 (47.6%)	711(37.98%)	175 (9.35%)	61(3.26%)	34(1.81%)
Weather Report	866 (46.26%)	743(39.69%)	172(9.19%)	56(2.99%)	35(1.87%)
Sports News	931(49.73%)	699(37.34%)	162(8.65%)	52(2.78%)	28(1.50%)
General Knowledge	768(41.03%)	762(40.71%)	240(12.82%)	68(3.63%)	34(1.81%)

Table 13: The Distribution of Listeners Towards The Factors Having Their Impact On Lifestyle

Factors having impact on lifestyle	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education	911(48.66%)	693(37.02%)	198(10.59%)	48(2.56%)	22(1.17%)
Discussion on health	891(47.6%)	711(37.98%)	175(9.35%)	51(2.72%)	44(2.35%)
Pollution awareness	866(46.26%)	743(39.69%)	162(8.65%)	66(3.53%)	35(1.87%)
Social awareness	931(49.73%)	689(36.81%)	182(9.72%)	42(2.24%)	28(1.5%)

Table 14: The Distribution of Listeners Towards The Factors Contributing Towards Popularity of Audio-media

Factors contributing to the popularity of radio	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Presentation of the programs by radio jockey	901(48.13%)	721(38.51%)	155(8.28%)	61(3.26%)	34(1.82%)
Relaxation	846(45.19%)	743(39.69%)	192(10.26%)	56(2.99%)	35(1.87%)
Listening at time of work	831(44.39%)	799(42.68%)	182(9.72%)	42(2.24%)	18(0.97%)
Phone or SMS and gifts	778(41.56%)	732(39.1%)	260(13.89%)	68(3.63%)	34(1.82%)
Interview with celebrity	931(49.73%)	709(37.87%)	175(9.35%)	45(2.4%)	12(0.65%)

The respondents were asked to mention the channel which they like most. Their preferences are taken care of and presented in the following table:

Table 15: Preference Pattern of Different Channels

Channel Identity	No of Respondents	Rank
Radio Mirchi	335	1
Big FM	273	2
Red FM	243	3
Friends FM	199	4
Aamar FM	174	5
Power FM	152	6
Radio Meow	136	7
Fever	127	8
FM Rainbow	121	9
FM Gold	112	10

In the following table, it has been analysed whether the listening pattern is associated with gender, income, age and education of the listeners.

Table 16: Association of Listening Pattern and Different Factors

Factors	Chi-Square value	Table Value (at 5% level)	Decision
Gender	23.69	7.81	Listening pattern depends on gender
Income	34.61	16.92	Listening pattern depends on income
Age	31.57	16.92	Listening pattern depends on age
Education level	37.21	21.03	Listening pattern depends on education level

(Contd. on page 55)

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From Table 16, it can be concluded that the gender and the listening pattern are dependent and people of different gender have choice for different type of programmes. The listeners of different income strata have different listening style. Again, the listeners of different age groups have different listening style. Lastly, the listeners of different educational level have different taste of programmes.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

From the study it may be concluded that after privatization, audio media has made a strong impact on listeners. The listeners are getting more and more attracted towards the audio media. The nature of programs, the pattern of presentation, direct contact with the listeners have considerably developed and reached a new height in recent times. The information and the service utility provided by the audio media is also very helpful. The listening pattern of respondents depend on many factors namely gender, educational level, age, income level etc. The availability of the FM channels in the mobile has made it more popular. The audio-media is becoming an effective medium as big business houses are investing in it. The channels are increasing and they are trying to reach the masses. In addition to the prime objective of entertaining listeners, the other aspects like interviews with the celebrities, programmes on education and health, social and environmental awareness, updated traffic news, weather report, sports news etc. are making the audio-media more and more popular.

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