



Role of Radio Pakistan in Advancing Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas

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Abstract

This doctoral study examines the role of Radio Pakistan in influencing socio-economic development in Central Punjab through its radio stations situated in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Sargodha by analyzing the policy, content and the format of the programs related to socio-economic development focusing on the social indicators of religion, healthcare, education, culture, and politics as well as economic indicators of agriculture, trade & business, small & medium enterprise, infrastructure, and China Pakistan Economic Corridor during 2008-2013. The research design of this study included the qualitative approach of research. Survey method from radio listeners of Radio Pakistan Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha. Although a lot of appreciable work has done by the radio which is the biggest source of information in rural areas but still more work is needed to be done. Through radio Pakistan, it is now easier for women to get an education without making opponents to their parents and strict family heads.

Key Words: Rural, Development, Women, Change, CPEC, Economic Conditions

Introduction

Radio is one of the oldest modes of communication in the world. In Pakistan, it has the same status. In the modern world of technology, one may think that radio has lost its place. But it is not true. The facts are different. In Pakistan radio is still the best mode of communication in both rural and urban areas. There are facts about the radio which are a reality in the modern world of advancement in Pakistan. Facts tell that the majority of our rural areas still rely on this mode of communication to gain information and news and other social material for recreation (Shah, 2015). Radio has the largest listeners in Sindh (60%). So, Sindh is at the top of this list. After that Baluchistan (53%), KPK (52%) and then Punjab (19%) come respectively (The percent are taken from hundred for each province). It testifies that there are still so many listeners of radio in the current world of innovation. Reasons are easy to access, easy installation and most importantly the cost-friendly mode of communication (Jumani, 2011). The farmers of Pakistan have greatly benefited from the information given on the radio by the government to protect their crops (Bogart & Andrew, 2000). The researcher shall discuss the socio-economic impact of radio Pakistan in the rural areas of Pakistan. For this, the researcher shall conduct the qualitative analysis method (Bosch, 2010). Moreover, the negative role of radio will also be discussed in this research because everything has its pros and cons. In the end, the author would give recommendations that may be helpful for future research (Buren, 2000) (McLeish, 2005).

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research study are to analyze the impact of radio in the development of social and economic advancement in rural areas (Curran, James, Gurevitch, & Michael, 1993). Moreover, the researcher will identify the reasons which hinder in the way of socio-economic development in rural areas.

Research Questions

Research questions are the path for conducting research. Questions pop out in the researcher's mind while she is trying to initiate research (Ekong & Sokoya, 1982). The research questions whose answers the author is going to find out are:

- Why Radio is still the best mode of communication in the rural areas of Pakistan?
- What changes radio has brought in the social lives of the rural areas?
- Have the economic conditions of rural areas changed due to the radio?

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- What sorts of socio-economic development are brought by radio?
- Does the existence of radio in the current world of technology owe the emotional attachment of people of Pakistan or not?

Research Methodology

The research methodology is the strategy to conduct and complete the research. Without having proper research methodology, a researcher cannot end his research. There are two types of research methodologies; qualitative and quantitative (Faulder, 1984). The researcher shall adopt qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis includes the personal interviews, the research from journal articles, research papers. Moreover, the statistical analysis will also be included in this research in which the researcher will try to make a comparison between different provinces of Pakistan based on radio use. It will help the researcher to critically evaluate the use of radio among different people of Pakistan (Mattelart, Armand, & Michele, 1998). It will also be helpful for the researcher to give recommendations after analyzing the problems.

Current Problem

Currently, radio is still the best mode of communication and education in rural areas. And one of the reasons is the distance of rural areas from technology (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002). Pakistan is still an underdeveloped country and the majority of its rural areas are lagging from the necessities of life, so technology is too far from their approach. Initially, after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, there was no mode of communication other than radio because of our backwardness. So, the government also considered it the lifeline to accomplish several challenges (Folarin, 2000). These challenges included the rehabilitation of migrants as well as to convey the messages from the government. So, all these events testify that radio Pakistan has an emotional attachment with the general public (Radio.gov.pk).

Other than these, a lot of problems other problems are present due to which people are bound to use the radio in rural areas of Pakistan. Some of them are:

- There is a lack of education in rural people due to which their mind is still fundamental about technology.
- They thought that TV and mobiles will destroy their inherited culture.
- The social norms of rural areas do not permit them to opt for the latest technology
- There is no communication network in the majority of the rural areas of Pakistan, especially in southern Punjab.
- Society is formed by educated women but the interior Sindh, KPK and southern Punjab and tribal areas of Baluchistan don't have such concepts. Women are still living in these areas like the Iron Age economy.
- Women are kept in strict Purdah and there is no concept of the TV or other latest communication modes because their heads of families think that these things bring the destruction of social norms. So, they still rely on the radio for information.

The importance of radio in the society of Pakistan can be clearly understood by widespread terrorism. Since then the terrorism has come to Pakistan, they also use the radio to target the local people and to convey their message to them (Mahmood, 2005). They knew very well that the poor people in Pakistan, especially those who are living in KPK, FATA and Baluchistan, rely only on the radio channels. They set up their radio channels and conveyed their message of terrorism through them. They also used this source of information, for one thing, more, and that is the easy installation of a radio station. They made the headquarters in the far areas of FATA and Afghanistan and started to educate the people in favor of terrorism. By doing so, they affected a lot of population and the results are in front of everyone. The majority of the terrorists reside in our tribal areas.

How Researcher Achieve the Purpose

Considering the facts mentioned above, there are still active listeners of radio Pakistan in the rural areas of Pakistan. The major cause of this popularity of radio among rural folks is its cost friendliness (Khan & Joseph, 2008). The radio is approachable to everyone. Unfortunately, the majority of our villagers are poor and they cannot afford the modern means of communication like television and the internet. They are still relying on the radio because it is cheap. In other words, social life in rural areas is still in the Iron Age. So, people bring the radio with themselves while going somewhere. It is easy to hold, works without battery (although only a small cell is needed to operate it). It does not require any charging. And having these adorable facilities, it is equipped with all the latest standards. A person can hear the news, political debates, talk shows and much more on it (Zaman, 2015).

The social life of the rural areas of Pakistan is still like a hundred years ago. There is no social development in rural areas still. That is why; our majority of the rural areas are the hub of the criminals that lead to terrorism. People need to be given the civic sense to participate in society as a whole. Facts tell that 6 out of 10 crimes are committing in our rural areas. This is

the heartrending spectacle (Servaes & Malikhao, Participatory communication: The new paradigm. , 2005). People living in rural societies don't have much more to do in their daily lives. In short, the social norms in rural areas are still out of practice in the modern world. Let us discuss province wise socio-economic impact of the radio Pakistan (Geniets, 2011).

There is a general thinking that television is the most effective way of communication nowadays. The government is inclined towards television rather than radio. But still, the radio is the voice of the nation as discussed above. The rural areas of Punjab are still lagging socially and economically (Khan, et al., 2013). The economic growth can only be started if the society plays its role as a whole in the positive directions. Unfortunately, the rural areas of Punjab are deprived off from all these factors. Social growth comes with education and re-education.

The eye-opening fact is that all the revolutionary work was done through the community radio stations (Khawaja, 1997). Because radio was the only source of information in China other than television at that time. And this revolution was not achieved only by mere announcements. It was the education which they have given to their people. Their leader Mao Axetung pointed out this fact of social and economic change and modern china is the testimony of it (Shah, 2015). Unfortunately, the rural areas of Punjab and in the broader sense entire Pakistan are still lagging in education and other social benefits (Khan & Joseph, 2008). That is why people don't have the wide thinking. They are living with narrow thinking. This thinking can only be changed if they are equipped with the education (Onabajo, 2001). The majority of the population in Punjab lives in rural areas. The reason is that Punjab is an agricultural province. It needs more to be educated as compare with the others in this respect. During the last 10 years, the government of Pakistan started several programs with the collaboration of the radio Pakistan to educate the rural people of Punjab and to give them the awareness about the agricultural methods and pesticides. It brought fruitful results to them. For example, Allama Iqbal Open University has started the distance learning programs for the people of rural areas. It is the basic purpose in the formation of this university to educate the rural people especially the women who are bound with their strict social norms.

Social growth brings economic prosperity. For this, radio Pakistan was already fulfilling this responsibility to bring the social change in the overall society generally and especially in the rural areas of Pakistan. There is number of programs on the radio Pakistan's credit in this respect. It started the cultural programs according to the Punjabi culture and molded them in the local cultural system in such a way that people get knowledge about their cultural lives. As a result of this, the rural areas of Punjab are now civilized as compare with the past. Especially, the farmers are now more aware to control their crops. They are now more educated than in the past. Resultantly, their economic condition has changed almost totally. They are now earning more than their share through the education which they gained from the radio (Scroft, 2004).

Economic Prosperity Through Radio

Pakistan is an agricultural country. A greater part of its economy stands on agriculture. Our farmer is unaware of the latest farming trends and as I have discussed above that person living in rural areas don't have access to the latest information systems (Khan, Khalid, Khan, & Jabeen, 2011). They still rely on radio Pakistan. Considering these facts, the government started several programs to educate the farmers about the latest farming trends that will lead them to economic prosperity. For example, a program "Kisan de Gal", is still aired in Punjabi. This program was started in 2000 and still on aired. The content of this program is very specific; to educate the farmers about the latest farming trends in their local Punjabi language, because it is easy to understand for them. Other than this, the core theme of the program is bringing economic prosperity for the rural folks. Similarly in Sindh and Baluchistan, the government started several programs to educate the local farmers in their regional languages e.g. "Wassan Basi" in Sindhi and "Pkahir Raghly" in Baluchi and Pashto at the same time for KPK (Zaman, 2015).

Vocational Training Programs for Women

Vocational training programs such as "Selai Ghar" in the year 2000, "Ao Parhay" in the year 2003 and others were proved very fruitful for the rural social and economic development. The focus of these programs was mostly women because the government has the policy to educate rural women (Hussain, 1997). Women living in the strict social norms especially in KPK and Sindh are greatly benefited from these programs. They have developed their cottage industries and are still earning handsome income (Barnard, 2000). They don't charge a single penny for that. It is bringing economic change in their lives also. Distance learning programs have made their lives easy. They don't need to go to school for education. Although the schools have their importance in the process of education there are no schools in the majority of the interior Sindh. Another factor is the fundamental thinking of the people. Parents do not want to send their daughters to schools. Through radio Pakistan, it is now easier for women to get an education without making opponents to their parents and strict family heads (Abbas, Muhammad, & Ashfaq, 2010) (Rogers, Braun, & Vermilion, 1977).

Considering these facts of the people of KPK and Baluchistan, the radio Pakistan is still fulfilling its duty to give education and knowledge to these people for bringing the changes in their societies as well as in their economic lives. KPK and Baluchistan have almost the same problems in this respect (Naila, 2011). That is why the researcher is considering them

combine here. In KPK the condition is the same as that of the Sindh. But the background is different. The people of KPK do not like television in their houses or even in public places. They consider it a tumor for society. They are very strict about their social norms, culture and especially about religion (Naim, 2011). That is why they are lagging socially and economically.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, I have concluded that even though the world has progressed but we are still very far in technology advancement, especially our rural population needs to be given importance. Although a lot of appreciable work has done by the radio which is the biggest source of information in rural areas but still more work is needed to be done. In the USA there are more than 150 local radio stations (Hanif, 2010). They also know that people who are living in far-off areas or who are on travel cannot watch television. They rely on the radio. That is why in Pakistan, radio is still very much important because of considering these facts. It cannot be replaced with modern technology (Bashir, 2010). It has its own pace and own recognition which the television does not have. During the last 10 years, the government of Pakistan started several programs with the collaboration of the radio Pakistan to educate the rural people of Punjab and to give them the awareness about the agricultural methods and pesticides. It brought fruitful results to them. That is why the government has started the distance learning programs through the radio as well as on television. It not only equipped the rural folks with education but also brought a social change in their lives. They are very strict about their social norms, culture and especially about religion (Naz, 2008). That is why they are lagging socially and economically. It was the education which they have given to their people. Their leader Mao Axe Tung pointed out this fact of social and economic change and modern china is the testimony of it.

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