

ROLE OF FM RADIOS IN NEWS AND INFORMATION: A STUDY OF FM RADIOS IN PESHAWAR, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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Abstract

The study was conducted to examine the role of FM Radios in the dissemination of different type of news and information through various contents in their daily broadcasting. To achieve the objectives of the study, as quantitative methodology, the researchers used the survey technique for data collection. A questionnaire was distributed among 300 respondents in Peshawar city, while data was collected through the simple random sampling method. The findings of the study revealed that each of the eight FM Radio stations working in Peshawar, which cover most of KP, PATA, FR and FATA, have their own objectives of broadcasting, like education, information and entertainment. The study shows that the number of designed programs broadcasted for FM radio stations for news and information fulfil the needs of the audiences in Peshawar. This research has also shown the compatibility with the Uses and Gratification Theory.

Keywords: *FM Radio, News, Information, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Radio plays a significant role in informing, educating and enlightening the public about current situations affecting their lives. It also performs an entertainment role through music, Drama, talk shows, live sports and other soft angles that appeal to such societies. Thus, Ezeokoli (1984) says that "broadcasting involves a systematic dissemination of educational entertainment, information, programmes and other features for simultaneous reception by a scattered and mass audience which receives the programmes individually or in relatively small groups."

In 1947, Radio Pakistan was established after the independence. It provided services in few cities. Radio is the most common and cheapest medium of Information, education and entertainment in both rural and urban areas for the people.

The first FM Radio station was established in Karachi, by Pakistan broadcasting corporation, as a musical Channel. FM Radio rapidly grew due to a high quality of sound. Secondly, it broadcasted programmes in local languages and dialects which attracted a large audience (Pakistan, 2015). Besides Radio Pakistan, a Number of FM radio stations broadcast news and information programs, but most radio content is music and entertainment.

Radio is a dominant media in Pakistan, especially in rural areas, because of excessive load shedding and lack of TV signals. It is also popular in urban areas due to airing latest songs and music.

According to a survey conducted by a private sector research entity Group in Pakistan on FM stations in 25 cities, Radio listeners increased from 13 to 14% over a year. Listenership is high amongst lower and elite upper strata of the society. An overwhelming majority of 87% listen to radio through mobile phones (Pakobserver, 2014).

In 2002 PEMRA issued licenses to private FM Radio stations in Pakistan. The major purpose was to improve the standard of information, education and entertainment. It was established to enlarge the choices available to the people of Pakistan (PEMRA, 2008).

This study has been designed to find out the role of legal FM Radio Stations in news and information, with special focus on FM Radio channels in Peshawar, the capital of KP. FM Radio stations broadcast specially designed programmes which promote news and information to the people living in Peshawar and surrounding areas.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE PESHAWAR VALLEY

In the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and even in Central Asia, no other place has achieved such a prominence as the valley of Peshawar, a region having witnessed to the rise and fall of many civilizations and dynasties. Peshawar is the most north-western district of the Indian Empire.

The city of Peshawar, standing about 1,000 feet above the sea, at a distance in a straight line North West of Lahore of 225 miles and west of the Indus of 44 miles, respectively, is important as a historical place, and as the emporium of the Afghan and Central Asia trade. During the Mughal period, Peshawar was attached to the Suba of Kabul.

Then, it was called Bagram and sometime by Peshawar. It is bounded on the east by the Indus, which separates it from Attock and Azarah. On all other sides it is encircled by mountains, at the foot of which, except on the south-east, the administrative border runs. (Zahida, 1991)

The Peshawar valley is hemmed on three sides by mountains and on the fourth by a river. The shape of the valley is almost elliptical and circular, about thirty-five miles in diameter, extending from the Indus to the Khyber. Viewed from above, it appears as a vast plateau, whose vivid expansion of green is in contrast to the grey precipitous slopes of the hills, its real form being that of a huge basin into which flow the waters, from the surrounding hills. This basin is mainly drained by the Kabul River and by other countless tributaries. The Peshawar valley is bounded to the north by the Malakand Pass. For a long time, it served as a road to travellers from China and Kashghar to the Peshawar valley. (Zahida, 1991)

In the south part of Peshawar lies the Kohat Pass, the abode of the Afridi tribes and in the west - the world-famous Khyber Pass. For centuries, this pass has enjoyed a romantic position and even today it is an important milestone in the history of Indo-Pakistan. Peshawar lies between 33° 43' and 34° 32' N, and 71° 22' and 70° 45' E with the greatest length of 86 miles, its greatest width being 54 miles.

The mountain ranges of Himalyas are a great boon for the people of this area, assuring a formidable barrier to an army, though small bodies of traders and missionaries had been crossing over them through difficult routes. It is the connecting link between Central Asia and India. (Bernier, 1976)

The merchandise thus finding its way to Peshawar consists principally of fruits of many kinds, sheep-skin coats (postin) ermine and Sambur furs, Camera hair over-coat (Choogha), Camel's hair cloth (Barak), silken clothes and horses. (Khan, 1993)

The effects of the physical features have exercised a great influence on the history. Placed naturally in a place which gives to it a crowning position, it serves as the gateway to India and to every invader from the north, being considered the road to an Empire.

Peshawar lies on the route of invaders from the north towards India. Peshawar also served as a resting place for adventurers and conquerors. The Mughal Emperor, Humayun, regarded the holding of Peshawar as a real beginning to the conquest of India. Strategically, the importance of Peshawar increased manifold due to the Khyber Pass. (Zahida, 1991)

This has been the most important pass, which begins near Jamrud in the west of Peshawar, twists through the hills for about thirty miles in a north-westerly direction till it debouches at Dakka (Afghanistan) (Khan, 1993).

No other pass or highway in the world has left such a deep impact on the history of nations as the Khyber Pass. Therefore, the Peshawar valley can rightly be called as the birth-place of numerous civilizations. All the Aryans, Greeks, Taranis, Mongols, Iranians and western peoples entered the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent through it, among millions of traders, travellers, adventurers, scholars, writers and poets.

Babur was an astute general, he knew the strategic importance of this valley. First, he consolidated his rule, be-friended the Tribal Chiefs and, with their support, moved towards Delhi. (Bernier, 1976)

Akbar was well aware of the importance of the Khyber Pass and Peshawar. He established a chain of forts and bribed the Pathan Chiefs to

firmly up-hold his authority in the Peshawar Valley.

Its strategic importance is further supported by the popular saying that those who hold the Khyber and Peshawar also hold in their hands the key to India. Peshawar, since times immemorial has been the link of trade, culture, civilization and human intercourse between Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. (Khan, 1993)

3. BRIEF HISTORY OF PESHAWAR

The word Peshawar originated from the Sanskrit word 'Pushpapura', that meant the city of flowers. The flowers of Peshawar were also delineated in the memories of Mughal Emperor Babar. The Kushan Kings of Gandhara came to Peshawar over 2,000 years ago. The Mughal emperor Babar came to Peshawar in 1530 A.D. The Mughal emperor Akbar, grandson of Babar, formally gave to Peshawar its current name, which means 'a Place at the Frontier'. During the Mughal empire period, Peshawar saw significant advancements in its bazaars and fortifications, followed by the reign of Sher Shah Suri with another boom period, particularly the construction of Shahi Road from Delhi to Kabul, running through the tremendous Khyber Pass. Over the centuries, Peshawar has been the entry point to invaders and conquerors - such as Alexander the great, the Mughal kings and Mehmood Ghanznavi, all having traveled through the famous Khyber Pass that traverses the Afghan border. (Subhan, 2003-04)

4. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

Peshawar is the provincial Capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as the largest city of the Province and main center of local administration. Therefore, the city district enjoys incredible historic, economic, military and political importance. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) adjoining Peshawar from three sides, with Mohmand Agency lying to the North, the Frontier Regions (Semi-Tribal regions) of Kohat and Bannu to the South, Khyber Agency to the West, while two settled districts of

Charsadda and Nowshera are located in the North and North-East part, respectively, the Afghan border being approximately 40 Km to the West. Predominant language of the area is *Pashtu*, followed by *Hindko* and the national language *Urdu*. (Subhan 2003-04)

Location and Area

Peshawar lies between 33° 43' and 34° 32' N, and 71° 22' and 70° 45' E with the greatest length of 86 miles, its greatest width being 54 miles. The total area of Peshawar district is 1,257 km (485 sq mi) (DCR Peshawar, 1998).

Population and Density

According to the 1998 census, the total population of Peshawar is of 2,019 millions (Male=1,061,000, Female=958,000) *i.e.* 11.38% of the total population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, out of which 46.62% were migrants from other parts of the province and also from other provinces of Pakistan. Over 46% of the district population was under 15 years of age. In 1998, the population of Peshawar District was 5 times more numerous than in 1951, increasing by 81.40 % between 1981 and 1998, the intercensal period (17 years), with an average annual growth rate of 3.56%. During 1972 to 1981 (8.46 years), the increase was of 37.92%, and the growth rate was of 3.89%. During 1951 to 1972 (11.67 years), this increase was of 52.55%, at a rate of growth of 3.70% (Population Census Peshawar, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Every media is being set up to disseminate information to the public to gratify and satisfy its needs and demands. This study investigates the role of FM Radio stations in news and Information content broadcasting from Peshawar city among the audience and its degree of satisfaction.

The significance of the Study

The area of study is essential, because Peshawar is located in a very important position on the globe. Secondly, FM Radio stations became popular over a very short span of time. They impact on the lives of its listeners. A high number of FM Radio stations operate in Peshawar. The study will provide baselines for research and

also guide the FM Radio Stations Owners or Managers, Government, Policy Makers, Producers, reporters and Advertisers to evaluate audience's needs and satisfaction and decide on the use of the FM Radio for Development, Empowerment of Youth and Women, Skill Development, Education, Information and Encounter Extremism and terrorism in the KP, FATA, FR and PATA, once known that the FM Radios are very powerful and most available sources of communication in the region.

Objective of the Study

To explore to what extent the informational contents of FM Radio Channels satisfy the needs of the audience.

Hypothesis

It is more likely that the news and Information Content broadcasting for FM Radio satisfy the audiences in Peshawar.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study aims to establish the satisfaction level of the audience from FM radio channels. The research activities previously done in connection with the topic at hand have also been discussed in detail and a critical view has been given thereof. The accepted response of radio listeners was the provision of local news and information (Forde, Foxwell, & Meadows, 2001).

Radio is the most common medium of information in the developing countries. It is so attractive that, in Latin American states, Africa and Asia, there are powerful radio waves which broadcast information, music, news, education and talk show in the local language.

The FM radio is not only used for entertainment and commercial purposes, but it also provides information on different social issues like education, health, environment, safety and emergencies, natural resource protection - like weather, crops and livestock production, etc. (K.Venkatalakshmi & R.Chandraleka, 2013).

Radio is still considered as a dynamic communication medium in many developing countries. Even with the advancement of technology in communication, radio is still an available mass medium, affordable and accessible

to a large number of audiences mostly in rural areas.

The United Nations Organization of Food and Agriculture (UNFAO) 2010 has been encouraging the radio for the development in the last few decades. It is providing support in all aspects of radio management and set-up to different member countries. The Rural Radio Project, on one hand, supports capacity building, community mobilization and other benefits for the project.

According to INTERNEWS Network 2007, radio has a vital role to disseminate information in natural disaster and emergency situations. With the earthquake in Northern Pakistan in 2006, many radio stations started working for the association, reporting aftermath and offering guidance in the affected areas.

The Production of News and current affairs programmes are an important part of community broadcasting, keeping the community informed on what happened around (Forde et al., 2001).

In agriculture, radio communication is considered a notable means of communication and a source of information in developing countries, as in Canada, where agriculture-based programmes are the prime consideration of radio broadcasting for about half a century (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

Elihu Katz in 1959 presented the Uses and Gratification Theory, which involves "a shift of focus of the communication research from the communicator purpose to receiver's purpose or Audience purpose. It determines what functions mass communication is serving mass media audience" (Tankard, 1992).

Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory suggests that why and how media users should actively find out specific media to satisfy people's needs (Severin & Tankard Jr, 2000). Beside the other media effect theories or Mass Communication theories, that question "what do media do to people?", the Uses and gratifications theory focuses on "what do people do with media?" (Katz, 1959).

The theory also highlights that a media consumer takes an active part in finding out a

source that fulfils and satisfy his/her desired needs and gives support to increase knowledge, education, social interactions and escape tension (Severin & Tankard, 2000).

The Uses and Gratification Theory has an empirical value today, because it gives an idea to mass communication research scholars, a "viewpoint through which a number of theories and ideas regarding mass communication or mass media is selected, utilization, and also impact can be observed"(Baran, Baran, & Davis, 2012).

A number of researchers established the selection patterns and motives of audiences for mass media. (Cantril & Allport, 1935) Examples include research work on the use and gratifications approach of radio audience; on reading newspapers (Herzog, 1940), or a gratification study on radio quiz programs (Stanton & Lazarsfeld, 1944) on the selection of different mass media genres. Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) assert that people connect or disconnect themselves with others people using mass media, and thus satisfy their social and psychological needs (Cantril, 1942).

Hass (1973) identified 35 needs, structured into 5 large categories (West, Turner, & Zhao, 2010) including Cognitive Needs, Social Integrative Needs, Personal Integrative Needs, Affective Needs, Tension Release Needs. In the current study, the researcher applied only two aspects of Uses and Gratification Theory, namely the Cognitive and personal integration needs.

This study focuses on how People satisfies their cognitive and personal integrative needs to listen news and information content broadcasted form FM Radio station in Peshawar.

Cognitive Needs (Getting information knowledge, and information)

People listen to the FM Radio for acquiring knowledge and information etc. that satisfy their cognitive needs. Each listener has a different need, e.g. Local News, National News, Sports, Educational News or other educational information programs. To obtain knowledge and information, they listen to the Radio and satisfy their cognitive needs.

Examples: Radio news, Educational and Informational Programmes, in-depth interviews documentaries. Etc.

Personal Integrative Needs (Credibility, stability, status)

Also called self-esteem need, it uses media to assure social economic status in the social system, to gain credibility and to stabilize. People listen to the radio to improve their status of life by listening to advertisements of new products, new offers, including clothes, jewellery, and furniture. Hence, the media helps the audience to get a change in the lifestyle.

Examples: Advertisements, Lifestyle Show, Life Show

Theory Application

The researcher has used the Uses and Gratification Theory to explore the satisfaction role of FM Radio in news and information. People and audience use media to fulfill their desired needs, like Cognitive Needs, Personal Integrative Needs, as presented by Hass (1973).

Research Methodology

The methodology involves a strategy and outlines or plans the research used to make a way for best results (Howell, 2012). A researcher has to formulate the approach or method applied, namely to define the means or modes of data collection, or how a specific outcome, results or conclusions are to be calculated. (Kothari, 2011)

The present study was based on a quantitative method, while the survey technique was used for data gathering. The researcher developed a questionnaire to find out the possible answers or results of the hypothesis of the problem and objectives. Data was collected through simple random sampling methods from 300 residents of Peshawar city. To find out the contents of the selected FM stations at Peshawar, the researchers collected and analyzed the program cue sheets and explored the different contents broadcasted daily, on whose basis he cretaed data collection for the target population. Data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS: version 19).

Variables of Study

a. Independent Variables

The independent variables are the conditions or characteristics used by the researcher to determine their relationship with the observed state of affairs (Ndagi, 1984). The independent

variable is either a stimulus or a treatment for the study. In this research, FM Radios are the independent variable.

b. Dependent Variables

These are variables whose characteristics are being predicted when the statement of the hypothesis is made. They change as the researcher manipulates the independent variables (Ndaogi 1984). They are response variables, depending exclusively on the independent variables, being therefore the effect of the independent variables. In this study, the dependent variable is the satisfaction of the audiences regarding news and information contents broadcasted by FM Radios.

Data analysis

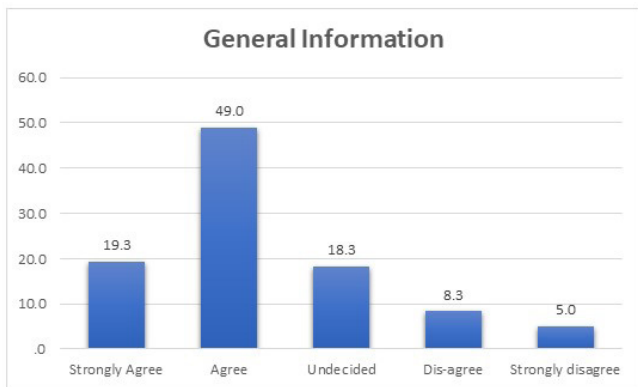


Fig. 1. Information Content Broadcasting for FM Radio in Peshawar

Figure 1 shows the overall data regarding general information broadcasted from FM radio stations in Peshawar. According to it, 19.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 49% agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar broadcast general information from their respective channels. However, 18.3% respondents were undecided, while 8.3% disagree and 5% strongly disagree, considering that no useful information is provided by these FM Channels. Thus, it is obvious that most of the listeners agreed that general information is being provided.

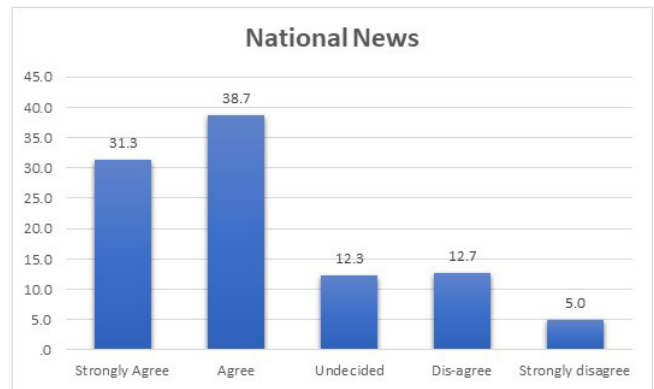


Fig. 2. Data regarding National news broadcasted from FM radio stations in Peshawar.

According to Fig. 2, 31.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 38.7% agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar broadcast National news from their respective channels. 12.3% of respondents were undecided, while 12.7% disagree and 5% strongly disagree that National news is broadcasted by these FM Channels. Thus, the figure indicates that most of the listeners agreed that national news is being provided.

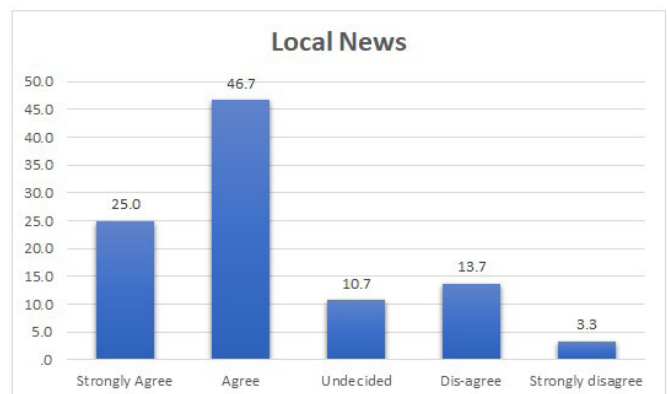


Fig.3. Local news broadcasted from FM radio stations in Peshawar.

According to Fig. 3, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 46.7% agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar broadcast local news from their respective channels. 10.7% of respondents were undecided, 12.7% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed that local news is broadcasted by these FM Channels. Thus, the figure indicates that most of the listeners agreed that local news is being provided.

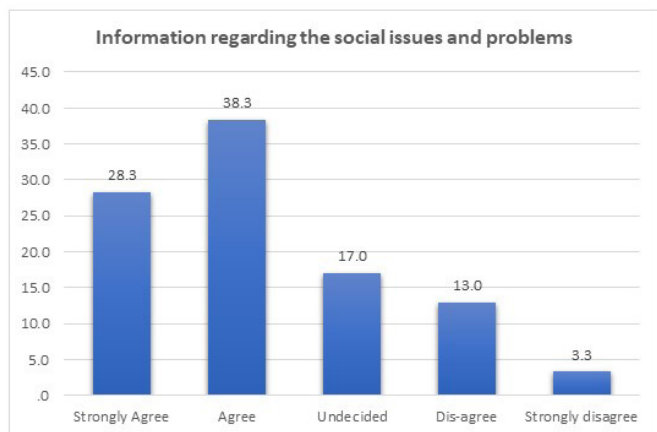


Fig. 4. Social issues and problems of the community, as broadcasted from FM radio stations in Peshawar.

According to Fig. 4, 28.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 38.3% agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar broadcast information on social issues and problems, as faced by the people of the community from their respective channels. 17% of respondents were undecided, 13% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed that such information is shared by these FM Channels. Thus, the figure indicates that most of the listeners agreed that FM channels

discussed social issues and problems faced by the people.

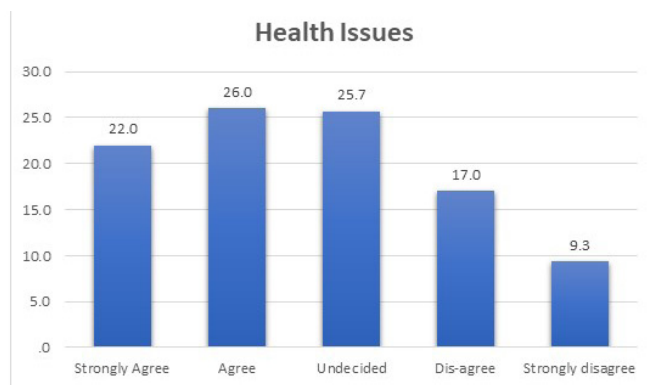


Fig. 5. Health issues broadcasted on FM radio stations in Peshawar.

According to Fig. 5, 22% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 26% agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar discuss the health issues by their respective channels. 25.7% of respondents were not sure, while 17% disagreed and 9.3% strongly disagreed that such information is shared by these FM Channels. Thus, the figure indicates that most of the listeners think that health issues are generally not covered by the FM channels.

Table 1. Chi-square Test for Association of News and Informational Contents Broadcasted by FM Radios Station in Peshawar

Test Statistics					
	Variables	Chi-square	D.F	p-value	Conclusion
News and Informational Content	General Information	151.267 ^a	4	.000	Significant
	National News	122.167 ^a	4	.000	significant
	Local News	172.302 ^c	4	.000	significant
	Information regarding the social issues and problems	180.800 ^a	4	.000	significant
	Health	29.233 ^a	4	.000	significant

Table 1 shows the Chi-square values, where the null hypothesis has been rejected at a 5% level of significance. As a result, an alternative hypothesis has been accepted.

Table 1 shows that a high frequency of respondents had agree overall news and informational Content including (General Information, National News, Local News, Information regarding the social issues and problems and Health) and broadcasted by the FM Radio station in Peshawar satisfied the needs

of the audience. The results also verified that FM Radio stations play a significant role in providing information in Peshawar.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION (ADD U AND G THEORY)

The study revealed that 68% of the respondents strongly agreed that the FM stations in Peshawar broadcast general information from their

respective channels, while 13% disagreed. According to the content of FM Radio stations, the results showed that there was a number of programmes providing general information and, secondly, RJ talks about different topics during live shows and audience call and SMS and participate in Live Show.

The study also showed that 69% of the listeners agreed that national news is being provided, as six out of the eight radio stations broadcast national News in news bulletin daily. Included here are FM 101, FM 107.4, FM 106.2, Mazan Radio, FM 92.2, FM 91.6.

The study also unveiled that 71% of the listeners agreed that local news is being provided, as four out of the eight radio stations broadcast local News in news bulletin daily, namely FM 107.4, Mazan Radio, FM 92.2, FM 91.6.

The research also confirmed that most of the listeners agreed that FM channels discuss social issues and problems faced by the people, namely five out of eight radio stations: FM 101, FM 107.4, Mazan Radio, FM 92.2, FM 91.6.

The study revealed that 48% of the listeners think that health issues are generally covered by these FM channels. 28% of them think that health issues are generally not covered by these FM Channels. The contents showed that there are some designed programmes for Health, like Doctor in Studio, and secondly presenters discussed some health problems. Public Services Massage (PSM) also covered some extended health issues and educate the audience about different diseases. FM 92.2 plays a very important role in PSM.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Peshawar is known as one of the oldest city in Asia. Traders of the whole world came to invest their money over here, as it linked the city with Afghanistan and Central Asia. Strategically, the city of Peshawar played a vital role in all periods due to its physical position on the map - the ancient and legendary Peshawar, the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, famous as the meeting place of Central Asia, Afghanistan and sub-continent.

Due to its importance, the government of Pakistan established Radio stations which broadcast News and other entertainment contents to rejoice and unite the people, appearing as the main source for flow of information. With the passage of time, the city expanded. Nowadays there exist eight FM radio stations on air round the clock, with entertainment and news, easily covering the Peshawar city, the FR areas and FATA territories.

The FM channels mostly cover local news, national news, current affairs, health, education, social issues and other problems of the society. Nowadays, these channels become the main source of information. The government also broadcasts announcements and official's orders through FM channels. Recently, the current provincial government introduced a new trend, for live shows and talks on people's problems, offering good instructions.

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