



## A STUDY OF RADIO CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNG AUDIENCES IN BANGALORE

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### **Abstract**

*In an era dominated by digital streaming services, traditional media like radio continue to coexist and adapt to shifting audience preferences. This study investigates the radio consumption habits of young audiences in Bangalore, with a focus on their listening patterns, preferences, and the relevance of FM radio in the digital age. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys and informal interviews among college students aged 18 to 25 across different institutions in the city. The study reveals that while many youths still engage with radio particularly during travel or as background media—there is a significant shift toward on-demand audio content such as music apps and podcasts. Factors such as content relevance, language, interactivity, and the presence of celebrity radio jockeys influence continued engagement. The findings also indicate that although FM radio is no longer the primary medium of entertainment for many, it retains cultural and emotional value, particularly through regional programming and live updates. The paper concludes by suggesting how radio stations can innovate to stay relevant among the youth by blending traditional broadcasting with digital platforms.*

**Keywords:** *Radio consumption, FM radio, youth audience, Bangalore, digital media, listening habits, podcasts, streaming platforms, media convergence, audience engagement.*

### **Introduction**

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages, which maintain, develop and improve human relationships. Radio is the major source of communication. Radio has always been a part of our lives. The word “Radio” is defined as the medium of sending and receiving messages through the air, using electromagnetic waves (Apuke, 2017). Everette M. Rogers defines radio forum as follows: “A radio forum is a small listening and discussion group that meets regularly in order to receive a special radio programme, which the members then discuss (Hall, 1978:1). India is the treasure house of traditional and modern media of communication. India has produced great sages, saints and scholars who are acknowledged as great inter-personal communicators. British colonial rule was responsible for the commencement of radio broadcasting as an instrument of political propaganda in India. It was developed as a prominent means of communication in the post-independence era in India. FM radio stations are owned, managed and controlled by the market forces in the age of globalization. The growth and development of FM radio contains three phases in India. In Phase III of FM licensing, smaller towns and cities are opened up for FM radio. India, more than 350 private radio channels are running and broadcasting their programmes, even illiterates can use this medium, particularly in a developing country like us .FM Radio among young audience is quite popular in India for its diverse programme formats and the listeners if Bangalore have their own way of consuming the content with regional language Kannada’s dominance. FM Channels in Bangalore has different purpose of their serve there listeners, with various programmes related to youth like, music, food, city, traffic, weather, awareness, and entertaining them with unique programmes.

### **Review of Literature**

Radio, one of the oldest forms of mass communication, has its origins in the early 1900s and continues to maintain its significance in the evolving media ecosystem. Despite the proliferation of modern



technologies such as television, the internet, and social media, radio has demonstrated a unique capacity for resilience and adaptability. Scholars Michael and Jason (2002) assert that although radio no longer retains its status as the dominant home-based medium, it remains relevant within specific cultural, demographic, and geographic contexts.

William Siemering (2009) highlights radio's inherently democratic nature, emphasizing its accessibility and affordability, particularly for marginalized communities. Unlike print or digital media, radio does not require literacy or costly infrastructure, making it a powerful communication tool across social strata.

In the Indian context, All India Radio (AIR) continues to function as a state-run legacy broadcaster, but the media landscape has undergone significant transformation with the rise of FM radio. The FM boom especially since the early 2000s has redefined audio consumption habits, particularly among urban and semi-urban youth. FM channels have shifted focus to more localized, entertainment-driven, and youth-centric content, making radio both commercially viable and culturally relevant. Scholars such as Mehta (2008) argue that FM programming plays a vital role in shaping youth culture and musical preferences, while also influencing social attitudes.

Radio's adaptability is further evidenced by the emergence of community radio and digital podcasting, both of which have redefined traditional broadcasting norms. Community radio, in particular, empowers local voices and promotes participatory communication, offering a platform for issues often overlooked by mainstream media. Podcasting, meanwhile, has attracted younger, tech-savvy audiences by combining the traditional audio format with the flexibility and interactivity of digital platforms. In Bangalore a city known for its youthful population, cosmopolitan culture, and strong media consumption patterns radio continues to hold a niche but notable place in the media diets of young listeners. Several studies (e.g., Sharma & Reddy, 2016) have found that Bangalore's youth engage with radio content not just for music, but also for infotainment, lifestyle programming, and social commentary.

Therefore, while radio faces increasing competition from digital media, its evolution through FM, community radio, and podcasts has helped sustain its relevance among younger audiences. Its affordability, mobility, and localized nature ensure that it remains a vital, if evolving, element of contemporary media consumption especially in urban centers like Bangalore.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate the radio listening habits and preferences of young audiences in Bangalore. The design enables the researcher to describe existing trends, attitudes, and behaviors without manipulating variables.

The target population for the study comprises young individuals aged 18 to 30 years residing in Bangalore. A sample size of 101 respondents will be selected through convenience sampling, primarily from colleges, universities, and urban neighbourhoods. This sampling method is chosen due to accessibility and relevance to the study's objectives.

**Primary data:** Collected using a structured questionnaire that includes both closed-ended and limited open-ended questions to obtain quantitative and qualitative insights into participants' listening habits and preferences.



## Objectives

1. To examine the patterns of radio listening among young audiences in Bangalore.
2. To identify the types of radio content preferred by youth, such as music, news, and talk shows.

## Findings

The study revealed that radio continues to be part of the media consumption patterns of young audiences in Bangalore, particularly among those aged 22 to 25 years. A majority of respondents within this age group reported listening to the radio regularly. Female participants outnumbered male respondents and showed a higher level of interest in radio content. FM radio emerged as the most preferred format, followed by online radio and podcasts. Among the various content types, music was found to be the most popular, while news, talk shows, and educational programs also attracted significant attention.

Most participants indicated that the morning hours were their preferred time to listen to the radio, often while preparing for the day or commuting. The majority of respondents reported listening to the radio a few times a week, while others engaged with it only while traveling. The primary reasons cited for listening included easy accessibility, free availability, and entertainment value. Many participants also mentioned that they use the radio as background audio while performing other activities. Kannada-language programs were particularly favored, highlighting the importance of language, locality, and cultural relevance in shaping radio preferences. FM channels that focus on local culture, city life, and youth-oriented content demonstrated higher engagement and loyalty among listeners.

## Results

The results of the study further confirmed distinct patterns in radio listening habits among Bangalore's youth. Most respondents were between 22 and 25 years of age, followed by those aged 18 to 21 and 26 to 30. A majority of participants were female, with smaller proportions identifying as male, other genders, or preferring not to specify. Approximately 60% of the respondents reported that they listen to the radio, while 40% said they do not. Among those who do listen, most tune in a few times per week, while a smaller group listens daily, rarely, or only while traveling.

FM radio was identified as the most preferred platform, followed by online radio, podcasts, and community radio. Morning hours were the most popular listening period, although some respondents preferred the afternoon, evening, or night, depending on their routines. Music was consistently identified as the most favored type of content, followed by news, talk shows, educational programs, and interviews. The main reasons cited for radio listening included entertainment, free access, and ease of use. Respondents aged 22 to 25 were the most active listeners, with males and females showing similar interest levels. However, respondents identifying as "other" or "prefer not to say" reported slightly lower engagement with radio.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that radio remains relevant in the media habits of young people in Bangalore, even as digital and on-demand platforms continue to grow in popularity. The age group between 22 and 25 years represents the most active segment of radio listeners. FM radio continues to dominate as the preferred form of traditional broadcasting, with music and news being the most commonly consumed types of content. Morning emerges as the most popular time to listen, largely due to convenience and routine.



Young audiences appreciate radio because it is free, easy to access, and entertaining. Many respondents use it as background media while engaging in other activities or while commuting. Although digital streaming services and podcasts have become significant competitors, FM radio continues to hold cultural and emotional value, particularly through regional programming and local engagement. Overall, radio persists as a complementary medium in the lives of young audiences, maintaining its relevance through its accessibility, community connection, and adaptability to changing media trends.

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