



Thematic analysis of radio contents broadcasted during Covid-19 pandemic

Dr. Rahman Ullah

Lecturer, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication,
Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat.
Rahman.jmc@gmail.com, Rahmanullah@kust.edu.pk

Mr. Fazli Wahid

Lecturer, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Kohat University of Science and Technology Kohat.
fazliwahid2288@gmail.com

Ms. Sidra

Lecturer, Department of Journalism and Mass communication, Women University Swabi
gabeena.khan@gmail.com

Abstract

Radio is still considered a useful medium for news and information amongst different mass media during natural disasters and global pandemics. Radio transmission easily reached the less developed areas with the lowest production costs. This study was designed to analyse major themes of the programs broadcasted by Pakhtunkhwa radio during the COVID-19 pandemic. And also find out the role of radio in education and creating awareness among the audiences regarding COVID-19. The researcher adopted qualitative methodology with thematic analysis to analyze the content broadcasted by Pakhtunkhwa radio during the COVID-19 pandemic. Total (100 days) programs from 26th March 2020 to 4th July 2020 was analysed. The finding of the study indicates that daily transmission included different programs includes, including Public Service Announcements, Special Messages, Dedicated Programs, Doctor in Studio, Media Briefing Coverage, News, Live Interviews with Experts and Doctors, and Music. The audience connected through messages, telephone calls and social media official Page. Asked the questions to reduce the misconception regarding COVID-19. The finding shows that radio content creates awareness and educates its audiences. This study also concluded that the KP government plays a key role in broadcasting factual news and information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Radio, COVID-19 information, Knowledge, Agenda setting, Government.



INTRODUCTION

Radio is still considered a powerful tool for education, information, and entertainment in developing countries, like Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Mali, Mexico, South Korea, South Africa, Zambia, Nepal, and Thailand, etc, it's vital used to disseminate information in a natural disaster, Health crisis, emergency (K.Venkatalakshmi & R.Chandrakeka, 2013; Koirala, 2017; Madamombe, 2005; Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010; Ullah & Jan, 2021; Ullah & Khan, 2017). During the earthquake (2006) in northern Pakistan, different radio stations started working to educate, inform and guide regarding the emergency in affected areas (Ullah et al., 2020).

Since the 2019-nCoV (COVID-19) occurred in the Chinese Spring Festival in Wuhan, China. The large populations in mainland China and worldwide are at risk, every day the figure of confirmed cases is growing which resulted in the epidemic (Li et al., 2020). Moreover, quarantine can reduce the danger of widespread infections. As the quarantine and traffic blockage should be continued until this epidemic is under control (Li et al., 2020). Particularly, there is a lack of research regarding this issue including participants from the general population. So, the audience interested to UpToDate themselves and get information, either from Newspaper, television, radio or internet.

Due to lockdown and social media posts regarding Newspapers spreading disease in covid 19 pandemic. The newspaper industry is very badly affected. People refused to take the printed Newspaper and Magazines (Sambhav, 2020). People read the online edition rather than risk their life to buy a newspaper (AFP, 2020). Due to the shortage of eclectic in developing countries, like Pakistan, television is not considered a useful tool of communication during the crisis. In the northwest of Pakistan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa included Tribal districts) lack of eclectic and internet facilities (3G and 4G) Mobile internet So, Radio is still considering a powerful tool for news and information in this part of the world. Different militant groups used radio to create terror among the audience (Ullah et al., 2020).

According to Sambhav (2020), Radio has developed as a reliable and credible source of news and information during the Covid-19 pandemic, in India 82 per cent of people spend more time listening to the Radio in the lockdown period as compared to the earlier. The eye-opening trend as per the study is that 32% of people ranked Radio as the most preferred media



for daily entertainment in the lockdown period (Rodero, 2020). People listen to the radio to entertain themselves and also be updated with credible information (Times, 2020). Giordano et al. (2020); Porshi (2020) has an opinion that Music improves their mood and helps in Reliefs Stress & Anxiety during COVID 19 Pandemic.

INFORMATION & PRS DEPARTMENT KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Information & PRs Department ensured its all-out support to the provincial government in its endeavour to stop spreading Corona Virus in the province. The Directorate General Information & PRs (DGIPR) played an active role in creating public awareness regarding the Coronavirus outbreak utilizing all mediums of communication to maximize outreach. An effective Radio Programming Strategy (RPS) had been devised to raise public awareness through FM Radio Stations. The FM Radio Stations Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, and Swat have been broadcasting special radio programs including 'Radio Clinic' to educate people and persuade them to adopt preventive measures.

All FM Radio stations of the Information Department have dedicated 16 hours of their daily transmission to the Corona Virus awareness campaign. A Public Service Messages is broadcast after every 15 minutes through FM Radio stations. They also air interviews of ministers and conduct interviews of experts who interact with the public through telephone calls.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

FM Radio is an important medium of communication in KP because of the unavailability of electricity and low literacy rate. radio had a massive role as an informative source amongst the listeners during Covid-19 and how the content of the radio is creating awareness during Covid-19. Pakhtunkhwa radio is a government owed radio and it reflects the policy of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. This paper is designed to analyze the information shared by Pakhtunkhwa radio and also find out the Major themes in the daily transmission during the Covid-19 pandemic.



OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To find out what are the major themes in the programs broadcasted for KP Radio during Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. To analysis the information shared by Pakhtunkhwa radio during COVID-19.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the major themes of the programs broadcasted by Pakhtunkhwa radio during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. To what extent did radio broadcast Covid-19 related content during the pandemic?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Radio is still considered an important medium of communication in many developing countries during the crisis and health emergencies (Afridi, 2018; Al-hassan et al., 2011; Gustafsson, 2013; Ignatiew, 2017; K.Venkatalakshmi & R.Chandraleka, 2013; Khattak, 2011; Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010; Tahir, 2010; Ullah, 2018). Radio plays a significant role in identifying, treating, tracing, perceiving, and understanding global pandemics (Wilson & Jumbert, 2018).

Radio has a very useful medium of communication and sharing information during natural emergencies and disasters. Like the 2006 earthquake in Pakistan. Different local FM radio stations started transmission in the affected area, to support the community and share useful information guidance regarding the emergency (Marcus, 2020).

According to Cocksedge et al. (2019), the traditional medium of communication like a radio play important role in education during this lockdown. It was found to be the most reliable source for news and information during the Covid-19 pandemic, the communication researchers Shalvee and Saurabh (2020) research study done in the top six metros of India, the study showed that during Covid-19 a total of 82 per cent of the population has listened to the radio. They further added that radio listenership has taken increased by 23 per cent in lockdown to 2.36 hours every day.



Ababa (2008) his opinion that Radio easily reaches a much larger area both in rural and urban in the country. It listens to both audiences either literate and illiterate, then other sources of information like TV, Print Media, or the internet. It creates a bridge between funding agencies, health experts, researchers, and scientists (Gralinski & Menachery, 2020), for effective and rapid global response (Ippolito et al., 2020).

The FM radio channels on-air various developmental programs that have positively contributed to changing the way of life. The themes of these programs can be about burning cultural issues, human rights, farming, and its advanced technology and techniques, law and order, peace and reconciliation, health precautions and first aid, marital values and social norms, environment cleanliness, democracy, religious teachings. In Such a program's opinion leaders and professional's experts address various topics of community interest to the listener. The audience participates in these programs through letters, phone calls, mobile messages, and emails. The news bulletins were broadcast in various languages including local languages, national languages, and international languages, which has enhanced the flow of information among the audience. (Ocwich, 2006)

In an underdeveloped country like Pakistan, where electricity is the major problem and there are limited sources of information, education, and entertainment, people show a keen interest in FM radio because it fulfils the needs of the people. Therefore, this is one reason for the popularity of FM radio channels. (Naqvi & Baloch, 2011).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher utilized the agenda-setting theory, as a theoretical framework, developed by Walter Lippmann, in the 1920s. The theory highlighted that the media determine what people think about different events and issues. Media set agenda regarding different events happened around use. It creates images in people minds, they react not to actual events but the images in their minds.

Radio is a cheaper medium of information in underdeveloped areas in the world. In Pakistan, especially Khyber Panthunkhawa (including Tribal districts), No other reliable sources of information are available for people. A traditional agenda-setting methodology was used to understand the local radio station's capability to inform and educate the audience about



COVID-19 through repeated airplay. During the crisis and health emergence, media create awareness and encounter misinformation and fake news among the audiences.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the qualitative method in the study, theme analysis of the radio programs of Pakhtunkhwa Radio, located in Peshawar. The researcher analyzed all programs which Broadcasted from Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar in (100 days) from 26th March 2020 to 4th July 2020 during Covid-19 while created by radio stations for creating awareness during the same time. The talk shows, special programs, interviews, phone-in programs, expert advice, and even ads were the centre of attention to rule out the usefulness of the content broadcasted by radio for the public. All recorded programs (100 days) were listening several times to find the research objectives. The Major themes were identified during the analysis of the Data.

RESULTS

The content analysis portion of this study looked at the 100 days awareness campaign regarding Covid-19 or Corona Virus Pakhtunkhwa Radio, Peshawar. The contents showed that transmission regarding Covid-19 or Corona Virus started from 26th of March 2020 to 4th July 2020, 100 days. With 17 hours daily (1700 in 100 Days) transmission in five (5) languages Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.2 MHz Peshawar managed to round the clock live transmission for awareness of the public. Pakhtunkhwa radios transmission consists of 17 hours daily which goes on air in two shifts morning and evening is from 7 am to 4 pm and from 4 pm to 12 midnight. The first shift starts at 7 am and ends at 7 pm. It airs one hour and thirty minutes program which is the Pashto language. A total of 593 hours of Covid-19 specific transmission were arranged. In the content dictated its thematic classification Further details are as follows.

1. Public Service Announcements

The data shows that radio broadcast Public service announcements 64 times every day which includes a statement, advice, and requests of the Prime Minister, Chief Minister, National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities, Relief Department, Health Department, and local authorities. The announcements include the “How to Protect Yourself & your family members from Covid-19” “Symptoms of the Covid-19” “Social Distancing”.



Table 1. Public Service Announcements

PSAs per Day	PSAs in 100 Days	Total Hours
64	6400	106

1.

2. Special Messages

The data shows that A Specialized message was broadcast 32 times every day in the transmission, that message was designed and aired for the mobilization of the general public in responding to the public health crisis and change in lifestyle. 45 sec to 60 sec each

Messages include a tribute to the doctors, health workers, the police, Pak Army, journalists, and presenters of the radio.

Table 2. Special Messages

Messages per Day	Messages in 100 Days	Total Hours
32	3200	53

3. Dedicated Programs

The data shows that radio broadcasted a dedicated program Exclusive designed regarding Covid-19 and broadcasted for updating the general public on the important decision undertaken by the provincial and federal governments. Each program was one hour in different languages. Urdu and Pashto. Two times a day,

Total 4 hours in single day broadcasting, the program includes updates regarding the lockdown in different areas, a new development in the covid 19, details of the different hospital, number of the cease reported, number of patients recovered, availability of ventilator, medicine.

Table 3. Dedicated Programs

Programs Per Day	Total Programs in 100 Days	Total Hours
4 Programs	400	400

4. Media Briefing Coverage

The data shows that the radio broadcast daily one media briefing regarding the Covid 19. Each briefing included Press releases, Press statements, Handouts, Press Notes, and fact sheets daily. The briefing was expected to have details about steps the government may take to protect.



Table 4. Media Briefing Coverage

Briefings Per Day	Total briefings in 100 Days	Total Hours
01	100	17 Hours

Media Briefing includes Implementation of lockdown in a different location. Newly infected patients, the total number of deaths, data of newly infected patients, and the ratio of the recovered Patients.

5. News and Reports

National news included different news items, regarding events that happened in the last 24 hours in Pakistan, mostly focusing on KP, this news bulletin also included News regarding the new Updates of Covid 19 in Pakistan. News regarding medicines development, News regarding lockdown different cities and areas, and News regarding new policy of the governments, local government. The average news bulletin is around about 5 to 10 minutes daily, so it is collected 17 hours in 100 days transmission during covid 19.

Table 5. News and Reports

News Bulletins Per Day	Total Bulletins in 100 Days	Total Hours
01	100	17 ours

6. Live Interviews – Experts and Doctors

The doctors and medical staff have updated information regarding Covid-19, And medical professionals have always considered the best sources of information during Health crises because Doctors do not share misleading information or wrong information. After all, Covid-19 is a new disease and misinformation can be hazardous. Doctors can act as advocates for sharing reliable information which they got from the source of information, included experts' views, Research Papers, Newspaper articles, and other multiple reliable sources, communicating compassionately and having the humility to admit to error.



Live interviews with Doctors and Health experts received a call, Messages during broadcasting. The answer to all the questions regarding the Covid-19. It is also discussed how to control Covid 19 and avoid COVID-19. They discussed coronavirus’s medications, vaccines, and antibiotics, public health measures, general public labels, educating citizens at every level (Hospital, offices, and houses), the death of doctors from the Covid-19 movement, vegetable cleanliness, rumours and misunderstandings, social mobilizations, telemedicine, etc.

And discussed the day-to-day health problems. Mostly those health issues link mental health, stress, and trauma during pandemics. Psychiatry Experts also participated in the programs, they talk about the mental, Psychologically, and physical problems of the audiences. Stress, tension, anxiety, and depression were discussed in this program. How people are disrupted mentally and what should they apply for it. Throughout COVID-19, violence against women. There is also a discussion of health issues. They invite Patients to share the quarantine experience of stress, panic, routine activities during Covid 19.

Table 6. Live Interviews – Experts and Doctors

Expert/Doctor Per Day	Total Experts/Doctors in 100 Days
01	100

7. Live Interviews - Government Representatives and Officials/Officers

Government representatives, officers/officials, and field experts were invited to speak on different initiatives of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and their response to the pandemic situation.

Table 7. Live Interviews - Government Representatives and Officials/Officers

Govt Officials Per Week	Total Officials in 100 Days
01	15

8. RJs presentation.

The data shows that Live presentations or RJs presentations were the major part of the broadcasting. Majority of the RJs doing discussions on issues and problems to get the attention of their listeners. Some of them are famous for



their unique style. Some of them provide high. RJ Shan Ullah, Ms. Flora Khan, Ms. Nadia Khan, Mr. Jamaal Khan, Ms. Fasiha, Ismail Khawaja, and Kamran Shah etc. Different types of music and musical programs broadcasted, included, Pashto Music, Urdu Music, English Music, movies songs, old songs, etc music has helped them to manage self-isolation, during pandemics and lockdown. Radio is perceived to satisfy the affective needs of its audiences. Affective needs contain all kinds of pleasure, enjoyments, entertainments, and emotions other moods of the audiences.

9. Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is an important part of the two-way communication process. Audience questions and feedback help the producers to design and redesign the program structure. During the Covid 19, the audience connects through SMS, Call, and Facebook pages to reduce the misinformation regarding Global Pandemic. Clear the minds. It helps to encounter negative propaganda. Roundabout 120 calls and SMS received and answer all the queries and answers of the audiences. The Facebook page of the radio new reach to 2875038 in 100 days of the broadcasting.

Table 8. SMS received (SMS Number. 8583)

Text Messages Per Day	Total Text Messages in 100 Days
120	12000

Table 9. Total Calls received (091-9214199)

Calls Per Day	Total Calls in 100 Days
120	12000

Table 10. Facebook Outreach

Number of New Likes in 100 Days	Engagement in 100 Days	Reach in 100 Days
13857	358103	2875038

The radio presenter and RJs focused on education, information, and Entertainment. Basic Education regarding the Covid-19, major prevents the spread of the Covid-19, like the symptoms of Covid-19, different between the general flu and Covid-19. New research in the field, for the general public and doctor also.



Key points were repeated during the broadcasting. Wash your hands, for at least 20 seconds. Try to avoid touching your mouth, face, eyes, and nose. Use your elbow during cough or sneeze, or use a tissue and throw it in the trash. Then, immediately wash your hands. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. avoiding crowds' places. Always wear a mask in public even if you don't feel sick. The masks should cover your mouth and nose. This prevents you from spreading the virus.

The share information regarding the Government new policy, lockdown in a different area, opening and closing of schools, colleges, market, shopping centres, updates regarding different hospitals, daily updates regarding new patients, number of the recover patients, number of total affected patients in the country and city. Radio Entertainment is used to reduce stress among the audience. Old and new music in different languages, light mood presentation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Radio still manages to be one of the most efficient and authentic sources of information and education during the different crises in the north of Pakistan besides the newspaper, television and internet. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa used different mediums for communication during Covid-19 to educate and inform the public. FM radio is one of them. Provisional government broadcasted 100-day (17 hours per day) special designed transmission regarding Covid-19 started from 26th March 2020 to 4th July 2020. Major themes included education and information regarding the Covid-19. Also creating awareness during the same time.

The Music was added to daily transmission to reduce the anxiety and trauma during the coronavirus pandemic. The radio broadcasted messages in five (5) different languages. A total of 593 hours of Covid-19 specific transmission were arranged.

The transmission included Public Service Announcements, Special Messages, Dedicated Programs, Media Briefing Coverage, News and Reports, Live Interviews – Experts and Doctors, Live Interviews - Government Representatives and Officials/Officers, and RJs presentation. All those designed programs help the audience to understand the Covid-19 global pandemic, get updated information on, new development and condition of the hospitals. The programs also included information regarding the Government new policy, lockdown in a different area,



opening and closing of schools, colleges, market, shopping centres, updates regarding different hospitals, daily updates regarding new patients, number of the recover patients, number of total affected patients in the country and city.

The feedback of the audience helps the management to design, structure and restructure the radio programs. During the Covid 19, the audience connects through SMS, Call, and Facebook pages to reduce the misinformation regarding Global Pandemic. Clear the minds. It helps to encounter negative propaganda. Roundabout 120 calls and SMS received and answer all the queries and answers of the audiences. The Facebook page of the radio new reach to 2875038 in 100 days of the broadcasting.

The radio presenter and RJs focused on education, information, and entertainment. Basic Education regarding the Covid-19, major prevents the spread of the Covid 19, like the symptoms of Covid-19, different between the general flu and Covid-19. New research in the field, for the general public and doctor also. Entertainment is used to reduce stress among the audience. Old and new music in different languages, light mood presentation.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Radio is used during crises, disasters, floods, earthquakes, and Tsunami, etc. Because it is one of the cheap and easily accessible mediums. Researchers also used it, because it gives better results during different crises and disasters. Covid-19 pandemic was also a crisis for the world and I practically implemented the radio with this study.

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