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## **RADIO PAKISTAN: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE**

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**Keywords; Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC); Radio Pakistan; socioeconomic development in Central Punjab through the agricultural programs on radio Pakistan.**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose of study:** This study investigates the role of “Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), commonly known as Radio Pakistan,” in influencing socioeconomic development in Central Punjab (2008-2013).

**Methodology:** The article comprises of qualitative study based on data collected from 35/35 radio programmers/producers employed at the three stations in Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha. This article assesses the role of radio in socioeconomic development in Central Punjab through specific information questions (SED 1-40) from the programmers and listeners each respectively. The author developed questionnaire in-depth interviews of 35 radio programmers and producers (22 males and 13 females).

**Main Findings:** The qualitative study analyzed programmers' comments on topics, content, budget, expert opinion, and caller queries and suggestions for the improvement of the programs and finds that the radio meets/strives hard minute by minute to meet the audience expectations by adjusting/upgrading the content concerning socioeconomic domains on daily basis through the exchange of information between the programmers and listeners/callers during 18 hours daily transmission (agriculture two hours daily).

**Applications for the study:** Overall, this research qualitatively examines the role of Radio Pakistan in socioeconomic development in Central Punjab through the surveys of the programmers and listeners about the radio/government program policies, quality, topics, guests' knowledge of topics (Annexure-I & II) Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha stations, and recommends that programs can be made more beneficial through investment in programming and advancement technology in the targeted areas.

**Novelty of this study:** The first of its kind, the study assumes that Radio Pakistan has substantially contributed in socioeconomic development in Central Punjab, catering to economic (agriculture) needs of Pakistani public. The study uses these the needs as the indicators of economic development (keeping in mind the radio transmission is dependent on independent government/radio policies, topics, budget, expert advice, caller queries for various targeted radio programs) for measuring the role of Radio Pakistan in socioeconomic development in Central Punjab.

## Introduction

### Statement of the problem

Radio Pakistan is a government owned medium, which works under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). It is a public service broadcasting medium, and its policy is to promote the healthy and positive change in the lives of the listeners by focusing on socio-economic development. Two types of channels work under Radio Pakistan that include the Medium Wave and FM channels.

Radio Pakistan provides entertainment, information and education to all the sectors of the society. All the channels remain ON AIR for about 18 hours daily, includes FM 93, FM 94, FM 94.5 and all the medium wave channel range, and in addition the FM 101 broadcasts 24 hours transmission for youth. This study analyses the agricultural programs broadcast from the three radio channels, Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha in the Central Punjab during the period of 2008-2013. These cities have an agricultural background and having main agricultural activities. Radio Pakistan play an active role in providing necessary information/reports to the farmers about the seasonal crops and the government facilities regarding agricultural tools and helping materials.

All the programs of Radio Pakistan are well planned and conceived by the seasoned programmers prior to the broadcast date. These scheduled programs are approved by the Radio Pakistan's headquarter. The broadcast timings of the programs are scheduled according to the availability of the target audience twice a day. The student's program timings are usually scheduled in the evening, while programs for the house wives are usually scheduled in the morning.

Radio is the part of the people's lives. They take advice from the radio. It influences on their lives as an old buddy. Radio broadcasts programs focusing on all the spheres of life in the society including religious, agriculture, economic, children, women, senior citizens, labor, and music. The content and topics of programs are generally decided according to the ongoing socio-economic political as well as cultural events in the society.

The radio has a rich influence on its audiences. For this reason, the Radio Pakistan invites the experts as participants very carefully in order to ensure the excellence of the programs transmitted. Like in the agriculture program, all the participants are from agriculture and livestock departments.

### **Impact of Radio**

Since social growth brings the economic prosperity, Radio Pakistan fulfills this responsibility by focusing on the social change in the rural as well as in the urban areas of Pakistan. There are high number of programs on Radio Pakistan's credit in this respect e.g. it broadcasts programs on the Punjabi culture, molding them in the local system in such a way that people get knowledge about their cultural lives. As a result of this they can promote their culture. The radio programs also educate the listeners about the importance of the education as one of their basic needs for improving their style of life. It enables them to earn more than their normal share through the education which they gain through Radio.

Pakistan is an agricultural country. A great part of its economy stands on agriculture. Its farmers are often unaware of the latest trends in the farming systems. The Radio Pakistan guides them and provides them information on the trends through its programs. Listeners rely on these programs. Radio Pakistan continuously broadcast information about the different seasonal needs of the farmers like the availability of the urea in the market, availability of the parts of the agricultural tools, seeds distribution by the agriculture department, sugarcane supply to the factories. The local radio stations also announce information about the latest business trends.

### **Significance**

As Radio Pakistan is government owned medium, it fulfills all its responsibilities in a very good manner. The major economic indicator is agricultural programs, in which radio broadcast programs about the different crops in their season, weather condition, latest trends in agriculture and provides all the information regarding agriculture, considering it a duty as the prime medium of broadcast. Radio Pakistan since its existence, broadcast programs on agriculture, about different crops, their growing and cutting seasons and government policies regarding crops. It works as a government mouthpiece and it performs all the duties without charging any fee for the programs for the listeners.

### Research Questions:

Research questions are the path for conducting a research. Questions pop out in researcher's mind while she is trying to initiate a 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 social lives of the rural areas?
- Have the economic conditions of rural areas changed due to radio?

### Literature Review

#### Rural broadcast

In the agricultural programs, an audience enjoys and takes full benefit of agricultural programs. The methods of radio for socio economic growth are significant. The in charge agricultural program involves the persons from the agriculture department to fulfill the requirements of the farmers, so that they can get their answers.

Seventy percent population of Punjab is engaged within agriculture or associated professions. They don't have access to television. The only source of agricultural education and information is the radio. Several programs are broadcast from Radio Pakistan in the regional languages of these three focused cities i.e. Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha. They help farmers get knowledge more effectively which is not possible if other languages are used. There are different programs on agriculture, e.g. Jithay teray hal wagday [Where you plough the field], Khet khet haryali [Green everywhere] and Sohni dharti, [Beautiful land] which Radio Pakistan have been regularly broadcasting since decades from three rural cities of Central Punjab, from which others can be predicted. These programs are still being listened by the farmers in rural areas of Punjab. It is important to note that these programs are aired in Punjabi language, which is the regional language in Central Punjab. The number of radio listeners is higher than the number of television viewers. It was found that 65% farmers listened to radio programs while 63% farmers view agriculture programs on TV. One may say that this difference is negligible but the point here is that in the modern world of technology and mass media radio is still competing with the apparently dominant data sources. It is still one of the best sources of information and education in rural Punjab (Abbas, Muhammad & Ashfaq, 2010, pp, 1560-8530).

Considering that Pakistan is still emergent, and a generous percentage of its countryside people still does not have, the entry to energy and other conveniences, radio has a very important role to play as a channel of mass information (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002, pp, 46-51). Radio has an advantage on other electronic media by being portable and free from the fixed source of electric energy. The canvas of the Radio Pakistan programs is as widespread and diverse as the people in the Pakistan. the people about their social issues.

The Radio Pakistan with its rural developments interventions constantly seeks to improve and transform the well-being of the communities that reside in the rural areas in all aspects. The programs develop as well as support the sustainable rural development to include the improve of the governance at the local and provincial levels, secondly development of the institutions as well as their capacities in areas such as education sectors, training, research as well as extension, savings, marketing etc. All these programs have a major factor of the local public especially the rural communities ([Mahmood, 2005](#)).

This approach of the rural development has changed significantly over the years which used to be driven by the constant shift of the paradigm in the intellectual, social, economic and

political spheres among the others. The governments especially the ones of the less developed countries had moved from bureaucratic systems to democracy systems. For example, Kenya had adopted a new constitution in 2010 which ushered two levels of the governance consisting of central national government and 47 different county governments. This system has greater impetus to rural development since the county governments were expected to spearhead the socio-economic development of their respective devolved units. The necessary statutory as well as policy frameworks have been put in place to support the distribution of the national resources in the manner which ensures that no part of Kenya is untouched by the efforts to improve the welfare of citizens. A proper fund was developed for the citizens of Kenya, which ensured that all the counties received their share in terms of education, health, safety, security, sanitation, roads, infrastructure and electricity among others ([Kivindu, 2012, pp. 22-26](#)).

Community participation is critical to the success of any rural development effort since it breeds a sense of ownership thus giving the target community the power to literally chart and influence their development agenda. This inclusive approach serves to integrate the traditionally marginalized sections of the community that include women, youth, disabled persons and the minorities. Radio gives them a chance to participate into the development decision-making and implementation process; thereby bringing to the fore and thus catering for their special needs ([Naqvi & Baloch, 2011, pp. 33-35](#)).

The radio has come up with a wide range of evolving programs which have contributed positively towards participating in the development of changing people's lives towards a better environment ([Buren, 2000, pp. 60-63](#)). The program topics covers farming, well-being, matrimonial values, environment, traditional matters, basic rights, equality, law enforcement, spiritual lessons and harmony along with the understanding. Regardless of drawbacks in the quality of programs, radio word mode of communication with the rural public is much better than expected (Tuttlebee, 1999, pp, 38-44).

The broadcast bulletins include both the regional language and English language programs which boost the flow of valuable information across the villages (Cooke & Romweber, 1977, pp, 110-114). These programs attribute experts, specialists and opinion advisors who deliver frequent issues of interest to the public ([Faulder, 1984, pp. 36-39](#)). The regional people contribute in programs content by sending letters and calling the stations or editors. The programs for example agricultural talk shows attribute all the stations, which have become one of the most significant ways of communal contribution.

### **Radio and women empowerment**

Programs are produced in approachable and concerned manner by the women comperees to generate a sense of fitting between the women society regarding socio-economic development. Items of women's programs comprise: news as well as its contextual explanation, music of women's selection, conferences of working as well as prominent dignitaries, cooking, domestic, fitness, beauty and diet, dress and trend, business ventures and community education ([Owen, 1970](#)). Radio Pakistan has designated special time for the women listeners. For instance, include: weekly women programs from all stations in Urdu and local languages. Women's programs are exclusive spectators' programs. It is almost an international trend to allot specific time for women listeners from almost all the broadcasting stations (Bogart & Andrew, 2000). In developing countries including Pakistan, programs for women have special motives. They rouse awareness about their rights and responsibilities, improve the economic productivity of women

folks, provide them entertainment through items of interest in their own every day spoken languages and styles and give educative messages([Sharma, 2011](#)).

Radio has helped in the development of thinking as now the women have entered into broadcasting and they are willingly sharing their views and opinions from which communities are benefitting them. Radio plays an important role for women because it promotes their cultural, political, social and economic vision and empowers women. A number of studies have proved that the radio is a very strong tool in changing the lives of women. Cultural and social restraints as well as the lack of education affect women and their families in many ways. Women bear an uneven burden of the world's poverty, though south Asian women have been playing a leading role in economic, social, political and cultural fronts (Abbas, Muhammad & Ashfaq, 2010). Their contribution in promotion of the health, nutrition and education of the family is also quite visible in western world. Our own Islamic history guides us on women helping out and earning as well as working with their other halves in the betterment of their lives, almost in all the social and economic sectors (Soola, 2002).

Considering the opposition to female education in KPK and Baluchistan, the Radio Pakistan in fulfilling its duty to give education and knowledge to these people in order to bring the changes in their societies as well as makes their economic lives better. KPK and Baluchistan have almost the same problems in this respect. That is why the researcher is considering them combine here. The people of KPK and Baluchistan do not like television in their houses or even in the public places. They consider it the tumor for the society. They are very strict about their social norms, culture and especially about the religion. That is why they are lagging behind socially and economically.

### **Economic prosperity through radio**

Pakistan is the agricultural country. A greater part of its economy stands on agriculture. However, its farmer is unaware of the latest farming trends as he does not have the access to the latest information systems. The Pakistani farmer still relies on Radio Pakistan. Considering these facts, the Radio Pakistan started several programs to educate the farmers about latest farming trends that will lead them to the economic prosperity. For example, the programs "Kisan de Gal (The Farmer's Voice)", 'jithay teray hal wagday (Where you plough the field)', and 'khet khet haryali (Green everywhere)' are still aired in Punjabi. These programs were started in late 1980 and still on aired. The content of these programs is very specific; to educate the farmers about latest farming trends in Punjabi language, making it easy for them to understand. The program aims at bringing the economic prosperity for the rural folks. In KPK, Sindh and Baluchistan, government started several programs to educate the farmers in their regional languages e.g. "Wassan Basi" in Sindhi and "Pkahir Raghly" in Baluchi and "Kar kila" in Pashto at the same time for KPK (Abbas, Muhammad & Ashfaq, 2010).

### **Research Methodology:**

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 the 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 researcher will try to make comparison between different provinces of Pakistan on the basis of 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 researchers to give recommendations after analyzing the problems.

## **Results & Discussion:**

### **Role of Radio Pakistan in economic development**

**Analysis of agricultural programs.** The economic development through Radio in central Punjab is of great importance because of the fact that Pakistan is basically an agriculture depending country and to get more and more crop, it is necessary that the farmer will know the better growing techniques as well as new trends in agriculture. Radio Pakistan is having a liaison between the agriculture departments as well as with the farmers, so that it is very easy to understand the problems of the farmers.

**Topics.** The topics of the agriculture programs are selected according to the requirements of the farmers and the department. Basically, the seasons of different crops need different type of supervision and guidance, so the agriculture department deals with the required information.

In this regard the Program Managers responded that topics of the problems are according to the Government policies, talks and discussions of agricultural experts and advices to the farmers. Development in Agriculture sector, talks about different seasonal crops, guidance of farmers, take care of domestic animals, how to get good seeds, usage of different types of urea, latest technical equipment regarding agriculture.

These topics cover all the information regarding agriculture like crop seasons, their take care, pesticides, urea, and technical equipment. These topics provide farmers all the information regarding agriculture and livestock, the urea, pesticides and crop season information. The topics are regarding the crop seasons, government policies for sugar, cotton and wheat production, and urea availability, look after of domestic animals, question answers of the experts. Create awareness among the farmers about the crops and their seasons, domestic animals and their viral diseases, new trends in agriculture.

The program producers stated that the topics consist of advices of agriculture experts, talks on different topics regarding crops, our economy and our crops. Topics in agricultural programs are cultivation of crops, time for urea application, take care of crops and supply to the markets. The topics are basically to provide information to the farmers, for example seeding time, pesticides information, urea usage and crop cutting seasons. Topics are agriculture related and livestock issues like crop seasons, pesticides, urea and transportation to the market. Special programs are arranged for the people living in the villages and towns, new technologies in the field of agriculture and livestock and new researches in this field. Talks regarding different crops, Vegetables, Fruits and pulses, livestock related matters and policies of the agriculture department. Topics of the agricultural programs covered all the crops, their growing season, cultivation problems, procedures and livestock affairs. Agricultural activities, types of cultivation, new technologies in agriculture, livestock, usage of pesticides and urea in these areas.

All the respondents stated that the topics are according to the requirements of the farmers, these topics cover the crops of the season. Also, the topics must be very simple so that farmers can easily understand the information given in the program. Another important factor is the language of the program.

**Policy.** The policy of these programs is derived according to the needs of the farmers or



the grower. Especially the programs regarding the crops, seasons or fertilizers availability and their uses. This policy varies from area to area and season to season. The policy of Radio Pakistan is always farmer friendly and trying to provide them every important information, agriculture and livestock department is with continuous liaison with Radio Pakistan. The current policy is very good and fulfills the requirements of the agricultural and livestock department.

Current policy is good but an increase in the field programs and radio mela type programs is beneficial for the farmers. Current policy of radio Pakistan is the best, as it derived from the best experts of the Pakistan. The policy is very good and fruitful for the farmer, so that they can share their problems in time. Increase in the timings or provide separate channel for the farmers as we are agricultural country, will be good, reach to the farmers easily.

Pakistan is an agricultural country so that its basic requirement is to increase the air time and provide more and more opportunities for the farmers to get easy loans and get access to the experts. Radio Pakistan broadcast all agricultural and livestock programs without any charges, free of cost, it will be good if we give incentive to the producer for the production outside the studio, so that good quality programs will be produced. Current policy is better in my opinion. To implement national agricultural policy is the goal of Radio Pakistan. Farmer friendly policies are beneficial for them. The programs must be produced in accordance with the problems of the farmers. Still the radio is very popular in the farmers and they listen its advices and programs with interest, these programs are very popular among the farmers. To build a strong and green Pakistan is our goal, so a comprehensive policy is applied in the area.

Radio Pakistan has to broadcast more and more programs for the farmers and rural program. The policy of Radio is to highlight the problems of the farmers and rural area people and solve them accordingly.

Almost all the respondents stated that policy should be farmer friendly, covers their problems, guide them and provide them entertainment in their free time. Grower and farmer need entertainment and luxury, so that the policy will be acceptable for the all farmers.

**Presentation style:** The presentation style of the agricultural programs is very simple and in local languages, so that farmers can easily get the information. These programs must be catchy and interesting; folk music is an important segment of these programs, which increases the involvement and interest of the public.

The presentation style consists of talks, discussions, seminars and radio reports regarding different crops, also queries of the farmers through question answers. The presentation style consists of Talks, Documentaries, Interviews, Features, and radio reports. Agricultural program includes talks, discussions, documentaries, radio reports, features and question answer programs for the farmers. The style of presenting the program is very simple, because these are for the farmers and rural population, so that in an easy and simple style we provide them the information.

Compering about agriculture, talks, seminars, radio reports, radio means in the villages are the presentation style of these programs. Different presentation styles are adopted like Talks, Interviews, Features, folk songs and Radio Reports. Talks of the experts, Interviews of the experts and successful farmers, met office reports, seminars on problems of farmers and information about the urea, pesticides and sprays. The style of presentation is in the simple and easy language, so that the farmers can easily understand the issues. Magazine programs are presented which includes all the formats even folk music and talks, Interviews and radio reports. Talks, Interviews, Features, Documentaries, and government policies announcement is also the part of the presentation style. Agricultural news about the availability of the urea, pesticides,



different sprays and talks, interviews with experts, radio reports, documentaries and features. Talks, Interviews of the experts and successful farmers, seminars, radio mela in the village. Question answers of the farmers about agriculture and especially about livestock, and publicity campaigns of the government. Information to the farmers in all the formats and question answers in live programs.

Radio Pakistan's efforts are always there to motivate farmers and rural people about agriculture and through talks, discussions, features and question answers program we fulfill the requirements of the audience. Every format of the broadcasting to help the farmers and rural people like talks features and reports on different issues regarding agriculture.

The respondents described about the presentation style of these programs, which is for the target audience means the farmers. Radio Pakistan planned and present these programs without any benefit, just to educate and inform the farmers and villagers about almost all the important topics benefitted to them.

**Problems.** The problems during the recordings and production of these programs are mostly about the expert availability and not the technical issues. Although the agriculture department appointed an officer from their department so that it is very helpful for the programmers to arrange the program.

In this regard the program managers responded that as such no problem faced by the producer because all the broadcasting stuff was the duty of the agriculture department and they provide all the information and experts to participate in the programs. The agricultural programs are well conceived so there are very few problems that they faced. It is very difficult to reach the actual farmers of the rural area near any metropolitan city.

Most of the producers are not aware of the agricultural terms and language, so that they need proper guidance for this and they invite agricultural officers for this. As such no problem is there because these programs are well conceived and consists of latest techniques so that no big problem arises. Lack of new talent and fewer budgets are the problems of the producer.

Mostly no sponsors are available for the program, less air time; involvement of experts is less as compared to the requirement of the program. It is very difficult to send the information to the farmers in time that lives in far areas; a fool proof system is a need of the day. Fewer budgets are the main problem due to which many programs are not produced for the farmers.

Less availability of the experts in time is a very great problem. No problem in producing these programs. Duration of the agricultural programs is very less, so that only one topic can be discussed. Actually, we are agriculture country so that we do not face any problem. It is difficult to invite the actual farmer in these programs to share their experiences.

The respondents stated that the problems are basically due to non-availability of experts and also the talks are for different areas and the crops having different growing season, so to calculate proper time is very important.

**Suggestions.** There are different suggestions in this regard, outdoor programs are always more interesting and acceptable for the farmers. In outdoor recordings the farmers feel comfortable and involved, so an outstanding program produced. The norms, culture and music discussed in these programs will be very popular among the villagers.

In this regard the program managers responded that the programs must be according to the new technologies, new urea and pesticides may be used for the crops, and liaison with the met office is a must. We should inform about the latest trends in the agriculture and livestock, also an increase in the number of audiences participated program helps a lot. We should contact different organizations to increase the relationship between far areas farmer and agricultural

companies. Being a national medium, it is our duty to provide the latest information to the farmers, so that they can enjoy new techniques in agricultural sector.

It is my suggestion that if these programs recorded in any of the rural area, these will be a hit, because the farmer can ask any question from the experts. The producers must produce agriculture program outside the studio, in any village or town, it increases the opportunities for the farmers to consult with the experts.

An increase in the air time is a need of the day, invite experts of machinery in the studio for the guidance of the farmers. The producers must do homework for the program so that they can easily fulfill the needs of the farmers on crops cultivation and cutting seasons and also role of urea and pesticides in the growing season. Interviews with the experts in the field of agriculture and livestock are beneficial for the farmers to understand the new techniques as well as problems occurred in the growing seasons. As new techniques came day by day in the market, this information must reach the farmers in time.

The farmers must fully aware about the pricing of their crops, and use of new techniques in the agriculture. Introduce the new techniques in the agriculture and increase the number of interviews of the experts. An increase in the air time is highly recommended and medium wave channel is a must for this purpose. More and more participation of the farmers and people having cattle farm houses, so that they can share their experiences. These programs are in local languages, and more air time is a requirement of the program. To get success in these programs, it is necessary to broadcast new techniques in agricultural sector along with maintenance of the cattle and sheep farm houses.

Almost all the respondents stated that outside recordings are more beneficial and interesting for the village peoples. Also, the programs of cultural events, rituals, norms and especially folk music will increase the interest for the farmers.

## **Conclusion**

Agricultural programs. The programs of Radio Pakistan are planned and prepared according to the needs of the farmers. They vary from area to area and season to season. The policy of Radio Pakistan is to inform and educate the farmers about the crops, fertilizers, and the government facilities available for them during the growing seasons of crops. Whether it's cattle farming or livestock or urea availability, Radio Pakistan is always there to help the farmer. This means it is farmer friendly and is in continuous liaison with the farmers.

The presentation style of these programs is usually very simple. It is presented in local languages, with the help of experts and according to the season. An officer and a livestock expert from the Agriculture Department is deputed at every Radio station to guide the farmers and cattle farmers about everything. It is their duty to provide all the relevant information to the villagers. Usually the magazine programs are broadcasted, which includes talks, discussions, information regarding crops/livestock/cattle farming etc. along with entertaining programs, especially folk music.

## **Limitations:**

Radio Pakistan broadcasts these programs on national level, without any monetary benefits since it is its duty to ensure the well-being of the people of the nation. Due to this, Radio Pakistan also faces budget shortages which creates problems for them. In addition to this, the biggest problem is the unavailability of proper experts. Sometimes, no sponsor is available for the programmers.

Another important issue is that not all the producers are aware about agriculture or about anything related to agriculture.

The staff suggests that these programs should be recorded outside the studio, in the rural areas. Previously, agricultural programs were recorded outside but now, it is very difficult due to the limited budget and unavailability of sponsors. The employees want the government to introduce new farming technologies, give the farmers updated information about new and more effective pesticides, and a constant liaison with MET office will be beneficial for the farmers.

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