**FM – A NEW GENERATION IN BROADCASTING**

FM – very much heard these days. For long, listeners have been accustomed to hearing medium wave and short wave points of transmission, or say frequencies at which one can tune to a radio station of one’s choice. With the advancement in programs side of broadcasting, progress has also been made in the technical side of broadcasting. In fact the two sides lead each other in the mutual growth of the subject of broadcasting.

FM, frequency modulation, the nomenclature set for new type of transmission, are not long range radio stations like the old fashioned radio stations many of which are called global stations due to their large range of beaming across the world.

It should not sound too technical to students of mass communication to understand some technical aspect of the FM radio broadcasts. Here we may not indulge in understanding how wave theory and electromagnetic way of sending message affects communication through air, but it is certainly like a doctor understanding some equipment for better usage, or an architect perceiving some vital functions of some new software meant for designing and construction of buildings on modern lines.

# Amplitude & Frequency Modulation

In the case of Amplitude Modulation, or the AM broadcast, the sound waves after put along the electromagnetic waves, are only given a treatment to the amplitude of the wave, and not its frequency. Measured in volts, the amplitude is the number of times you can amplify a wave to give it a strength to a desired level.

# Advantages & Disadvantages

The AM has been strong and could be transmitted to more distance as compared to FM but problem with AM is that it interacts more with static charge like coming from the thundering clouds, or the waves emitting from other sources as a spark plug of a motorbike and the likes. At times the interference goes to a level that distortion so created does not allow a listener to hear what is being broadcast. The quality of transmission has to be compromised, sometime, beyond normal level of tolerance of your target listeners.

On the contrary, the FM way of transmission is less prone to interferences caused by static charges or electrical sparks. Due to high frequency, its waves show resistance to other waves and take the original broadcast strongly to end point of its range of transmission which is fairly less than the one possible with AM mainly because the transmission of the FM is based on the physics principle of Line-in -Sight. More it rubs with the ground, weaker it becomes as a signal. So a higher and powerful transmitter will ensure a clear transmission by an FM station from listeners’ point of view.

# Low Cost

The cost of setting up an FM radio station is very low as compared to a traditional radio station. But still, the equipment required includes; transmitter, main studio and two small studios, control room where most equipment is installed and one continuity studio. A set of computers loaded with multimedia software, set of headphones and a high quality radio set should suffice to make things rolling.

# The FM Broadcasting Products

In their nature the programs meant for an FM station are only little different from the ones you can hear from AM station, the fact that an FM station is not heard at a far off place, however, reduces its utility as a commercial brand broadcasting facility. But local area advertisers are much inclined to exploit an FM station in their region to publicize their products, and that earns money for the FMs.

The regular programs include talawat, naat, qawwalies, national songs and folk songs. But as is the practice, film and album songs with a touch of pop and rock are the hot favorites for the disc jockeys, though a ghazal here and some musical insertion there also continues.

# Handling the Broadcast

Well, at the FM stations you need back-to-back programs. The program schedule, which must be made on weekly basis, should ensure that programs are in hand to ensure continuity. What is killing for an FM station, is a pause, or pauses of inordinate length. Even a couple of seconds silence will lead to tuning to other stations and causing a permanent loss of your build-up audience.

Performing as an anchor-person on FM station is not an ordinary broadcasting attitude. The talent must be trained enough to understand the exact requirement

of his/her job. The script must be practiced regularly and all property, of speech should be exploited to keep the interest of your listeners in tact.

# The Difference

Though not a rule, the practice is to avoid airing long discussions, talk shows or other serious natured current affairs programs. Dramas are one entity yet not known widely to the FM stations. Latest music albums, interactive-talking to listeners through telephone, taking their e- mails or ordinary mail in between musical programs are the hallmark of their broadcast.

# Some FM station Services

As a regular feature a number of FM stations are doing some services, very useful to listeners, especially who are traveling; weather reports after regular intervals like it is raining at the highway near Hyderabad, DG Khan, Gujranwala or Shahrah e Karakrum. Currency exchange rates, PIA flights or some train timings also mark their approach to keep supplying such useful announcements to the listeners.

**OBJECTIVES OF BROADCASTING IN PAKISTAN**

At the time of the emergence of Pakistan there were just three radio stations, i.e.; radio station Lahore, radio station Dhaka and radio station Rawalpindi, in the newly born country.

Some specific areas were figured out in which the broadcasting in Pakistan concentrated in the coming years. Right from the start until the early 90s of the last century, Radio Pakistan, which was later turned to be called Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation in 1972, enjoyed complete monopoly in the realm of radio broadcasting. This monopoly was though disturbed with the emergence of F.M. broadcast in the private sector, but still the public sector medium enjoys the maximum approach to people with a wide range of radio stations, F.M. and A.M. both, in every nook and corner of the country.

F.M. broadcast in third world countries in general and in Pakistan in particular, unfortunately and mistakenly indeed, has been perceived as the kind of broadcast that is meant to play music and nothing else. Hence the objective of setting up F.M. channels in Pakistan has been narrowed down to putting the meaningless compering and all-the-time music, without any planning and potential, on air.

The A.M. broadcast, however, has selected certain important areas to broadcast for, may well be called the objectives of broadcasting in Pakistan. They are as under:

**1. Information**

To give information about something is to convey about it. Information may be from any realm of life ranging from science to art, from beneath the earth to unlimited depths of skies, from religion to humanities, from tangibles to intangibles. Radio tries to bring to listeners every possible information that they must know about.

**2. Education**

To educate people is a process of teaching and training; to improve knowledge and develop skill. Radio, being a mass medium does manage to present education–oriented programmes in its transmission.

**3. Entertainment**

People wish to get entertained as well. So radio, broadcasts entertainment programmes comprising music, drama, disk-jockey, and comedy programmes.

**4. Islamic ideology**

Since Pakistan is an Islamic country which was struggled for in the name of Islam therefore as a responsible medium, Radio Pakistan has been performing appreciate-able role for the promotion and preaching of Islamic teachings in the Light of Quran, Sunnaah and Hadith.

**5. Ideology of Pakistan**

Two-nation theory provides blood and soul to the ideology of Pakistan which seeks its roots in Islam. Radio Pakistan is playing a vital role in illuminating the ideology of Pakistan in the listeners, especially in our youth.

**6. Promotion of culture**

Pakistan is a land of different regions and varied cultures. These cultures represent their respective people and add rainbow colours to the vast canvass of Pakistan. Radio Pakistan is doing its best to promote and preserve this picture of heterogeneous cultures by producing programmes strongly portraying the beauty of different lands such as Sindh, N.W.F.P., Balochistan, Azad Kashmir and Punjab.

**7. Promotion of regional languages**

As mentioned above Pakistan is blessed with different lands and heterogeneous yet rich cultures and any culture of a land is incomplete without its own medium of expression that is language. Through the language it is possible not only to preserve a culture for next generations but also for its promotion and

propagation. Radio Pakistan manages to make programmes in regional languages. Presently programmes are being produced in the following 21 languages:



**8. National Unity**

A nation is always comprised of many races and people possessing various thought, beliefs and opinions. So is with Pakistan. All Pakistani people making one Pakistani nation are free to have their own beliefs, political associations and opinions, but they are not strong unless they are united. The prime objective of any country’s media must be to frame its matter and content in such a manner that the national unity may be achieved and strengthened. So is doing radio Pakistan, efficiently and effectively indeed.

**9. To boost up nation’s morale at adverse hours**

Yet another important objective of Radio Pakistan is to keep the nation’s morale high at the hours of challenge, dejection, panic or trial. For instance soon after the emergence of Pakistan the first and foremost challenge in front of Pakistan was the rehabilitation of muhajerin who migrated from India in flocks and flocks. They were miserable. They were heavy-hearted. They were lonely on their own homeland. Radio Pakistan presented programmes to share their desolation and provided them necessary information and guidance.

The final departure of the father of the nation, Quaid-e- Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the first aching and the most agonizing episode in the history of the nation. Radio Pakistan, not only, broadcast a moving and touching commentary of the last journey of the great leader, but tried to pacify the people of Pakistan as well.

The war of 1965 proved yet another trial of nerves and patience of the nation. Radio Pakistan’s services, it

rendered during the war, are unforgettable indeed. The highly moving blend of the selfless passions of the ace poets of the country, the heart touching sentiments of the leading singers and the subtle and sublime creativity of the musicians and composers created treasured tunes and memorable melodies. The blood-exiting *taranas* and national songs sung by *Madam Noor Jehan* composed by *Kaley Khan* and produced by *Azam Khan* are still capable enough to ignite the sentiments and emotions of every Pakistani.

The morning of October 8, 2005 left humanity with utmost grief and agony in Azad Kashmir and northern areas of Pakistan when a gigantic earthquake shook the plates beneath the earth and killed people on the earth in thousands and thousands turning the lofty mountains upside down. It was the real traumatic and disastrous episode in the history of Pakistan, people had ever witnessed. At this hour of fear and tear, Radio Pakistan and other private F.M. radios went to the ups of the shattered cliffs and to the downs of the injured valleys and provided the best of the services to the grief – stricken victims of the natural calamity.

**10. News Coverage**

Yet another important objective of radio broadcast is the coverage of news since on radio news bulletins go on air almost round the clock. News gathering and writing for radio is more different and difficult process than doing the both tasks for other media like newspaper and TV. Radio puts news on air after every four or five hours in the bulletins of different durations from five minute