

Sustainability Challenges to Radio in Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Communication, being a vital element of human society; keep intellectuals of society always busy with challenges and innovations. Though Language being a major player in communication; media took it one level up and made it easy and accessible. In different era there were different media which served effectively in the domain of communication. After Gutenberg's invention of printing press and development in industries; the channels of communication became faster. On the timeline of media, there was one era which was ruled by a comprehensive and lively medium i.e. Radio. News, Sports, Music, interviews, talk shows and many programs were broadcasted to large number of audiences at a same time with less human efforts; that's the beauty of this medium.

In India; radio has a history of last eight to night decades. But in digital age, specifically after popularisation of Smart phones and internet; radio has started facing certain issues. Even after introduction to television in India, Radio was priority but today radio has succumbed to the challenging face of digital revolution. One of the vital issue that Radio is facing, is Sustainability amongst teenagers. Radio in, digital age has lacking in gaining popularity amongst young population.

To analyse the sustainability of radio amongst the young adults, researcher has taken a topic on "Sustainability Challenges to Radio in Digital Age". This paper will try to figure out the causes of downfall of radio in young adults as they are the future industry catalyst and potential users. Though there are few radio applications for smart phones, still radio is falling short in meeting the expectations of the young generation; especially the age group of 16yrs – 21yrs.

Keywords: Radio, Sustainability, Challenges, Digital age, Traditional Media

1. INTRODUCTION

In the age of technological advancement and Digital revolution, the lifestyle of human has changed a lot. Our behaviour, our buying patterns, means of entertainment everything has changed. Smart phones revolutionised the communication process. On a single platform we can speak to a person, buy products, watch movies and videos, listen songs, book cab, create presentations and documents, click photos and what not. On the other hand it is necessary to study the effect of this revolutionised technology on traditional media. Radio, the first electronic medium of mass communication has a history of more than a century. It was the 'trend setter' invention and innovation at its time. It was a complete package of social, political and cultural concerns of society. Considering diversity in India, Radio has wider range of infotainment programs and audience too. That is why it is a powerful medium. Radio is not only interactive but it is free of costs. But analogue transmissions and territorial barrier is major concern in digital age. Digital Audio entertainment sector is rapidly changing but radio's growth is steady and slow. This is where the problems starts for radio. Digital platforms like Ganna, Savan etc; the younger generation (age 16 to 21) very much comfortable with it. These platforms are taking away radio audience like Netflix and Amazon Prime is doing with T.V.

Another important aspect is, listeners want to control their playlist and thus digital platform makes it easier for them. Consumers have become platform agnostic. The content is King and costumer's preference is paramount. Hence the challenge is not one radio channel to another, challenge is all radio channels against the ever-changing technology around it. So this is the right time to start discussion on what challenges radio is facing and the new opportunities that can be encashed by radio for its survival and growth in Digital age.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology for the current research is quantitative analysis. Survey method is used to collect primary data and secondary data is collected through research articles, journals etc. A sample of 100

respondents (age 16 – 21) on the basis of stratified random sampling, had given questionnaire and survey has been conducted.

3. RESULTS

The result of survey made it clear that Radio is not the favourite medium for young adults. The graphs and pie charts below are the clear evidence of it. These graphical information indicates the percentage of listeners, frequency, time, program type, content, controlling the playlist based on 78 respondents.

Radio Listeners percentage



Fig 3.1

Frequency of Listening radio

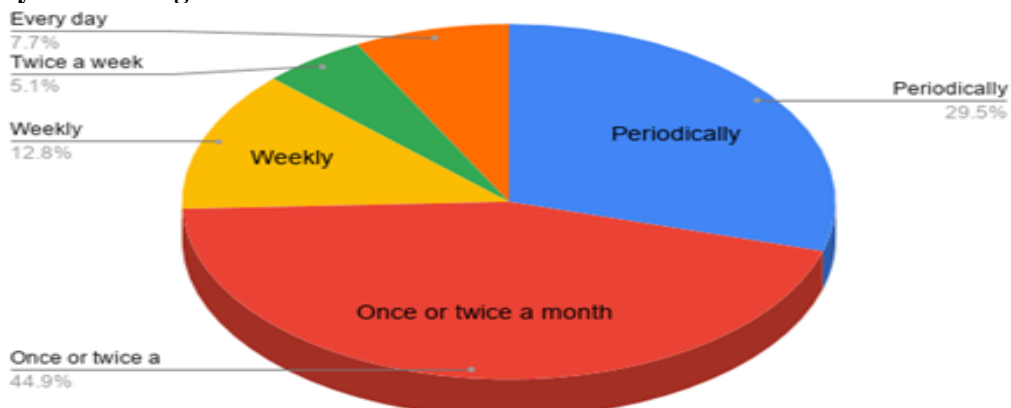


Fig 3.2

Time Spent on Listening Radio

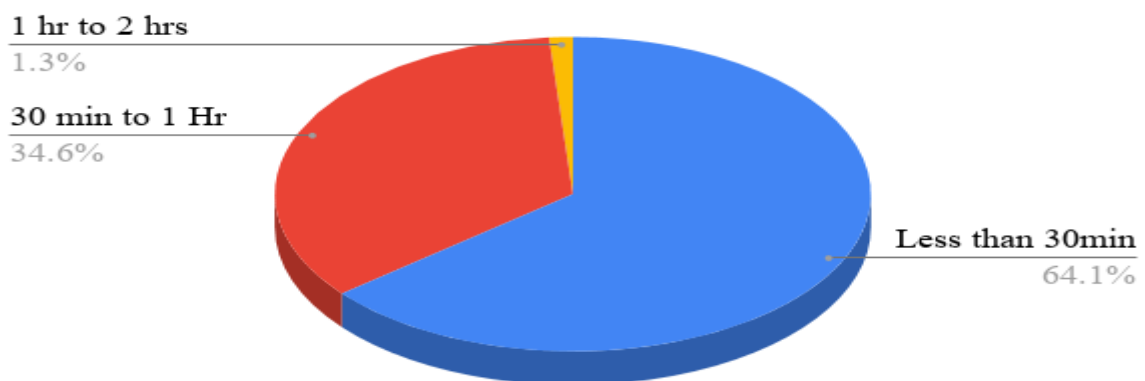


Fig 3.3

Types of radio Program Listen

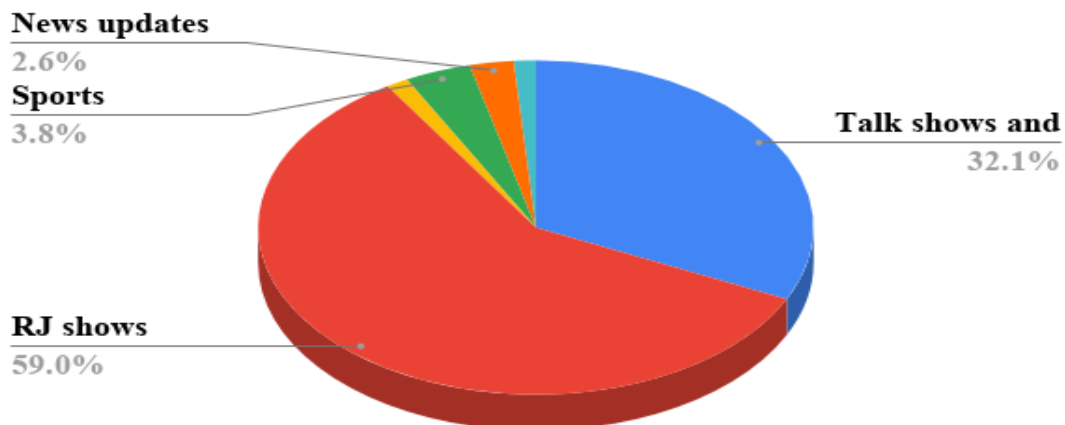


Fig 3.4

Medium on which Radio is Listen

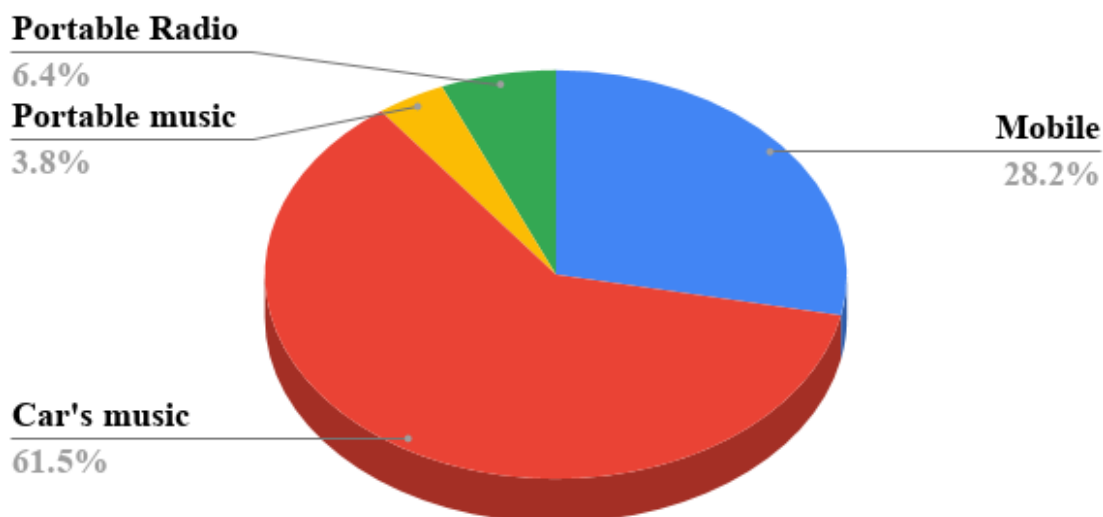


Fig 3.5

On digital platform which apps

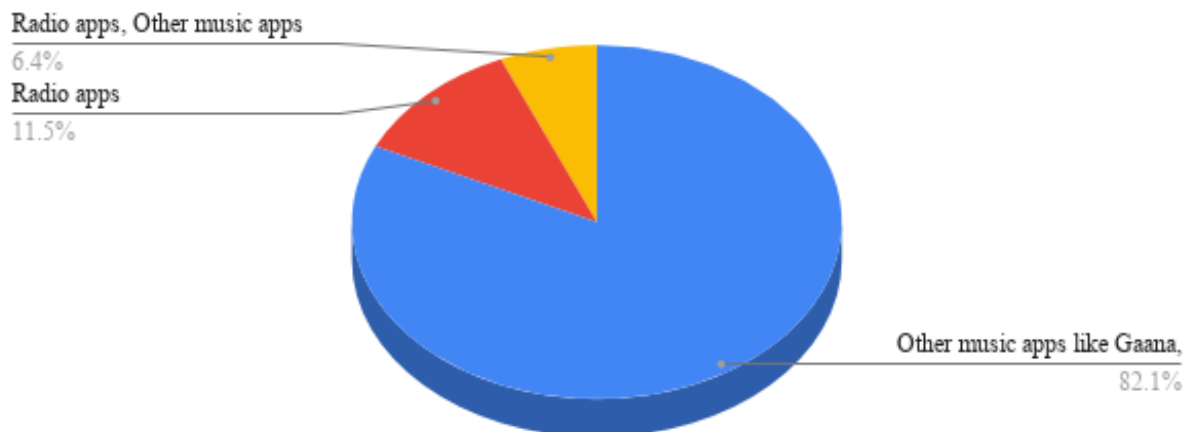


Fig 3.6

Why comfortable with it

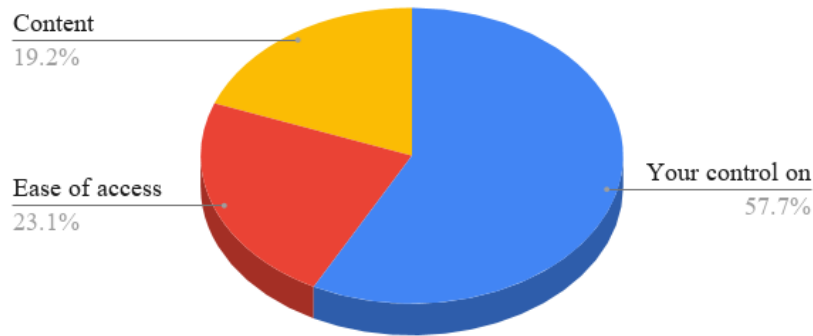
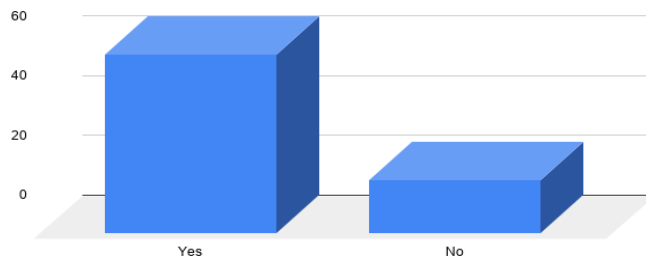


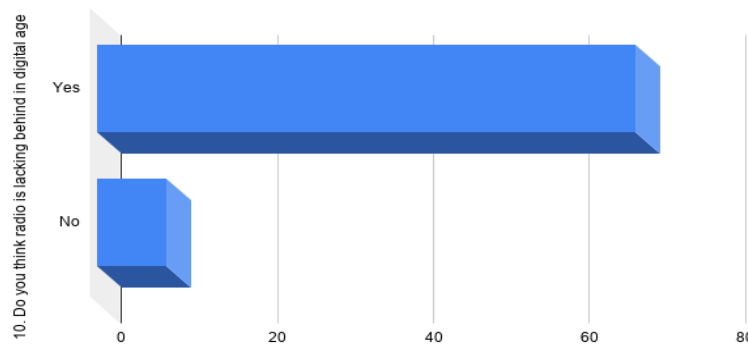
Fig 3.7

9. Do you think radio broadcast must be available on social media platform?

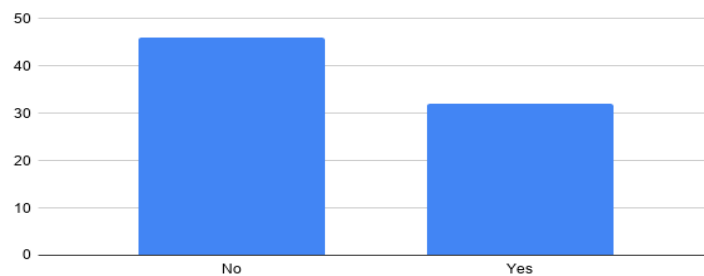


9. Do you think radio broadcast must be available on social media platform?

10. Do you think radio is lacking behind in digital age



Do you think in future radio will still attract young adults with reference to digital platform?



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4. DISCUSSION

In the above pie chart (Fig 3.1) the Radio listener's percentage is 74.4% which is very much promising result for radio. But in the next pie chart (Fig 3.2) shows that the listening frequency is very less that is either periodically (29.5%) or once or twice a month (44.9%) This is what the researcher trying to bring to the notice. The next pie chart (Fig 3.3) the average time spent to listening radio is less than 30 min. which shows the very less intensity to listen radio. In Fig 3.4 and Fig 3.5 the statistics elaborates that the listeners consume radio for entertainment purpose (RJ show: 59%) and mostly they listen on the car's music system (61.5%) which indicates that when user want to cut the time or when their primary activity is different and that demands more concentration, they listen radio. This focuses more on radio's secondary position.

Figure 3.6 indicates that 82.1% uses digital platforms like Gaana, Savan over radio apps and fig. 3.7 come up the interesting stats that is 57.7% of the respondents are comfortable with these digital platform because they can control the play list. Figures (3.8, 3.9 and 3.10) are projects that the young adults want dynamic changes in radio as entertainment medium. Fig. 3.8 indicates that young adults want radio to be part of social media. Fig. 3.9 and fig 3.10 states that the radio is lacking behind and many of the respondents don't think that radio will make a comeback.

5. CONCLUSION

The research work thus elaborates that the young adults are rarely use radio as an entertainment medium. They are happier to use digital platforms. There is one generation which still use radio effectively but they are more often senior citizen or middle aged population. Once this generation is pass, then the actual trouble will take place. So here is the scope for the discussion in reference to *sustainability of radio in digital age*. These age group of 16 – 21 age are the future catalyst and if they are not comfortable with radio then radio will be static medium and will die soon. In the broadcast industry radio has a major role to play but how? There are few adaptations already done by radio channels by introducing radio apps but still adaptation and acceptance of audience is big concern. Few remedies or suggestions that may lead to revival the radio in future:

- **PERSONALISED RADIO OR CONTROL THE PLAYLIST**

Radio being broadcasting Medium it has territorial restrictions. Another important observation is once we turn on the channel, we can only listen whatever is broadcasted. Like mobile playlist or other apps we can't control the medium. These are the major obstacles; but if radio broadcasting can be shifted to personalised radio or somewhere listeners can control the playlist, then there is a wider scope for radio to be sustain longer period of time.

- **CENTRALISED RADIO**

This is another suggestion for radio's survival. Right now there are many channels on FM and AM. So every channel has its own character and broadcasting style, but if these walls can be broken for few programs and on pilot basis if radio start broadcasting same programme on all stations there are chances that listeners can turn to radio. Or on the other hand if they give access to listen any program at any time that might also be worked.

This research has studies the sustainability challenges to radio in young adults' domain and the study showed that the future consumers of this medium are very much far from radio as entertainment media. There are few limitations radio have as a medium itself but opportunities can be created to sustain the radio. Overall it's all about the initiatives of radio broadcasters which will decide the future of radio; right now they have challenged by Digital Platforms.

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