



## ANALYSING THE ROLE OF FM RADIO IN FULFILLING EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL NEEDS IN URBAN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*FM radio remains a powerful medium in urban India, offering pluralistic content to cater to educational and information requirements. This paper investigates the extent to which FM radio acts as a vehicle to channel educational content, civic news, health guidelines, and occupational information, highlighting the cities of Delhi and Kolkata. The study determines disparate listening patterns for different age groups and assesses the educational usefulness of chosen FM channels like Gyanvani, Radio Mirchi, and Power 107.8 FM. Through a structured questionnaire provided to 150 respondents, the study examines the usage frequency of FM radio and the perceived worth of its education content. Findings indicate that although older age groups use FM radio more often for educational content, younger listeners prefer digital media. Also, Gyanvani is known for its educational content, while other stations such as Radio Mirchi are mostly regarded as entertainment-oriented. The study concludes that FM radio continues to be a significant source of useful information in urban India, especially for civic news and health information.*

**Keywords:** *FM Radio, Educational Content, Urban India, Information Access, Media Consumption, Civic Announcements.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

FM radio has been a part of India's media environment for decades, with a huge impact on shaping the opinions of people and spreading information among different sections of society. Even as



digital media took over, FM radio still managed to hold its own, especially in urban centers where its reach, immediacy, and variety of content made it a choice medium. In India, where the penetration of the internet is still on the rise and not every section of the population is exposed to digital platforms, FM radio continues to be a sure-shot source of entertainment, news, and important information. The present study attempts to understand the role of FM radio in satisfying the educational and information requirements of urban populations in Delhi and Kolkata cities.

Urban India, with its thriving metropolitans and heterogeneous socio-economic profiles, is mostly dependent on FM radio for a variety of information, such as civic information, health warnings, educational material, and career opportunities. To keep up with the growing need for time-specific and pertinent content, FM radio stations have modified their programs to respond to the educational demands of audiences. Frequencies such as Gyanvani, for instance, have gained popularity due to their educational programs, providing content that deals with academic, health, and public safety issues. This research aims to identify how FM radio, through its diverse content, works as a tool for education within urban areas, shaping the listeners' responses to significant issues within society.

Apart from educational programming, FM radio is also a vehicle for the dissemination of important information in urban settings. Weather reports, traffic information, civic announcements, and health and safety advice are essential to urban residents, and FM radio is an important source of up-to-date information. The popularity of FM radio, even with the advent of digital media, indicates its ongoing relevance in meeting the informational needs of a wide audience. Through an examination of the ways various age groups use and interpret FM radio for educational and informational content, this study hopes to offer useful insights into the changing role of conventional media in contemporary urban life, and how it may be used to cater to the needs of a variety of users in urban India.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Abellonosa and associates. (2011)** examined the effect of the Tri-Media Advertising Campaign on Liceo de Cagayan University enrolment and concluded that, since radio listeners have a different vocabulary than television or print, radio ads are very persuasive. It was found through



the study that FM radio proved to be effective as an advertisement tool for the programs and services of Lde CU because people could easily understand the messages that were being aired on the radio because it was an understandable vocabulary.

**Agrawal (2011)** examined the influence of radio broadcasting on Indian youths, he found that FM radio lived on a diet of the staple fare of Indian movie songs and soundtracks, creating minimal original music and noise. In accordance with the survey, youth listeners were listening to this category of music and songs that the FM radio channels in cities were broadcasting, as other listeners did. For FM radio broadcasting to survive India's difficult times, the researcher suggested that it be enhanced in terms of diversity, creativity, and quality.

**Ala-Fossi et al. (2014)** asserted that South Korean digital multimedia broadcasting was a multimedia enhancement of the DAB system and new audio and video encoding standards. Based on the research, the new system performed better than all other modern multimedia broadcasting systems. With the current competitive broadcasting scenario, the researchers suggested that FM broadcasting would be helped by the use of new technology and improved broadcasting methods.

**Balaba et al. (2012)** examined Cagayan de Oro City FM radio listeners via functional methods of broadcast media and discovered that FM radio stations functioned through sound approaches. The research revealed that FM radio programmers must follow the Philippine Broadcast Code in terms of language and content without compromising the quality of the programs. The researchers also recommended that gender-neutral and audience-oriented programming be broadcast by FM radio stations.

**Boscha and Mullins (2014)** discovered that Metro FM positively encouraged a black South African identity. The report indicates that the FM station was able to promote black pride, create a welcoming atmosphere for the development of culture, and encourage black individuals to participate actively in educational endeavors. To also assist in the understanding of radio in the region, the researchers also presented a historical description of one of the many possible black counter publics or spherules of the South African media landscape. The researchers advised FM radio stations to air development-, environment-, and culture-friendly programming in order to thrive and be more popular in the world today.



### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted using descriptive research design coupled with structured questionnaires to evaluate FM radio listening behavior, perceptions of education, and patterns of information access across 150 participants in Delhi and Kolkata. The data were computed using descriptive statistics and presented graphically in terms of tables and charts to uncover trends by age and city.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study takes up a descriptive research design to investigate FM radio listening patterns, educational perceptions, and information types accessed via FM radio among different population groups in two metropolitan cities, Delhi and Kolkata. The design facilitates an overall understanding of the utilization of FM radio by different age groups and their awareness of its educational material. The study further examines the role of FM radio as a source of information on civic, health, educational, career, and weather-related topics and seeks to establish the significance of the medium in the urban context.

#### **3.2. Data Collection**

Data for this study were obtained using structured questionnaires administered among respondents in Delhi and Kolkata. The questionnaire had questions regarding the frequency of listening to FM radio, opinions regarding the educational worthiness of the chosen FM channels (Gyanvani, Radio Mirchi, and Power 107.8 FM), and the sources of information accessed. Respondents were requested to put tick marks against their listening frequency (every day, weekly, rarely/never) and respond to whether they believed the channels are educationally worthy or not. In addition, they were asked about the kind of information accessed via FM radio, with categories for response being civic announcements, health & public safety information, educational exam updates, career & job announcements, and weather & traffic information.

#### **3.3. Sample Size**

The sample for the study was 150 respondents, with half the sample in each city (75 respondents in each city). The sample was then divided by age groups to study variations in FM radio listening



patterns in the 18–25, 26–40, 41–60, and 60+ age groups. This division enabled a comprehensive understanding of generation behavior and preference towards FM radio use.

### **3.4. Research Area**

The study was carried out in two largest city capitals, Delhi and Kolkata, in India. The cities were used to represent the heterogeneity of urban life with a diverse demographic profile. The locations were used because of their cultural importance and diversity of FM radio content available, which would ensure that results indicate a wide range of FM radio listening patterns.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

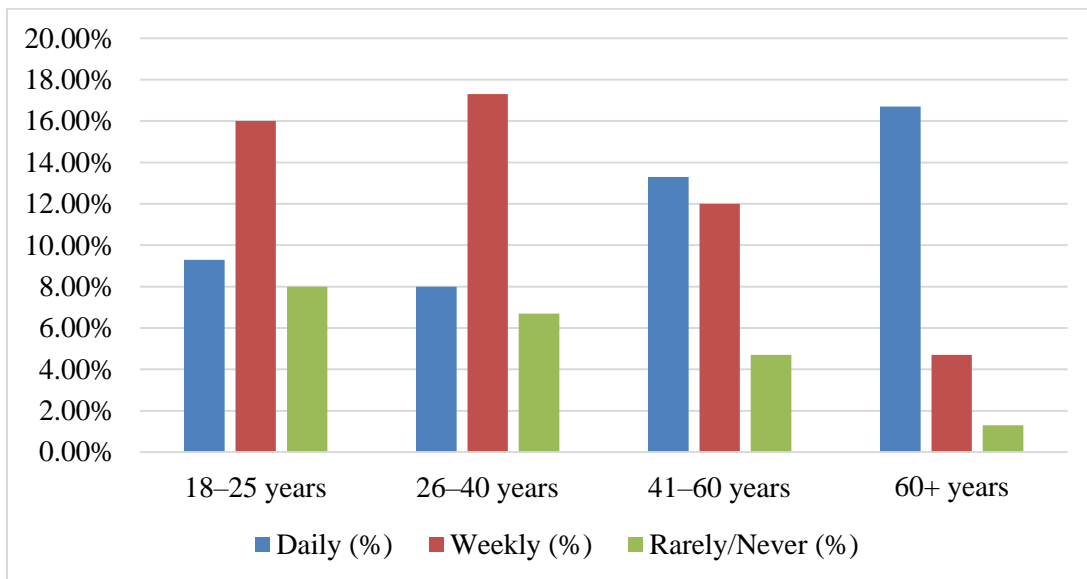
Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed to report the distribution of FM radio listening behavior, perceptions of education value, and types of information used by respondents. For instance, percentages of daily, weekly, and rarely/never listeners by age group, and the distribution of educational content ratings across FM channels, were computed. The data were also subjected to analysis in order to determine trends and patterns in the kind of information retrieved, with comparisons made between the two cities. The findings were tabulated and graphically presented in bar or pie charts in order to allow for easy and effective interpretation of the results. Statistical software or spreadsheet packages were employed in the analysis to allow for accuracy and reliability of the findings.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Table 1 provides information on FM radio listening behavior by age group, divided into four groups: 18–25, 26–40, 41–60, and 60+ years. For each age group, the number and percentage of people who listen daily, weekly, or rarely/never are given. The 60+ age group contains the largest percentage of daily listeners (16.7%), and the 26–40 group has the largest percentage of weekly listeners (17.3%). The 18–25 and 26–40 segments also have the highest proportions of rare or no listening. Overall, 47.3% listen to FM radio every day, 50.0% every week, and 20.7% rarely or never. Figure 1 probably illustrates these data trends as a bar or column chart for easier comparison.

**Table 1:** FM Radio Listening Frequency by Age Group

Age Group	Daily Listeners (n)	Daily (%)	Weekly Listeners (n)	Weekly (%)	Rarely/Never (n)	Rarely/Never (%)
18–25 years	14	9.3%	24	16.0%	12	8.0%
26–40 years	12	8.0%	26	17.3%	10	6.7%
41–60 years	20	13.3%	18	12.0%	7	4.7%
60+ years	25	16.7%	7	4.7%	2	1.3%
Total	71	47.3%	75	50.0%	31	20.7%



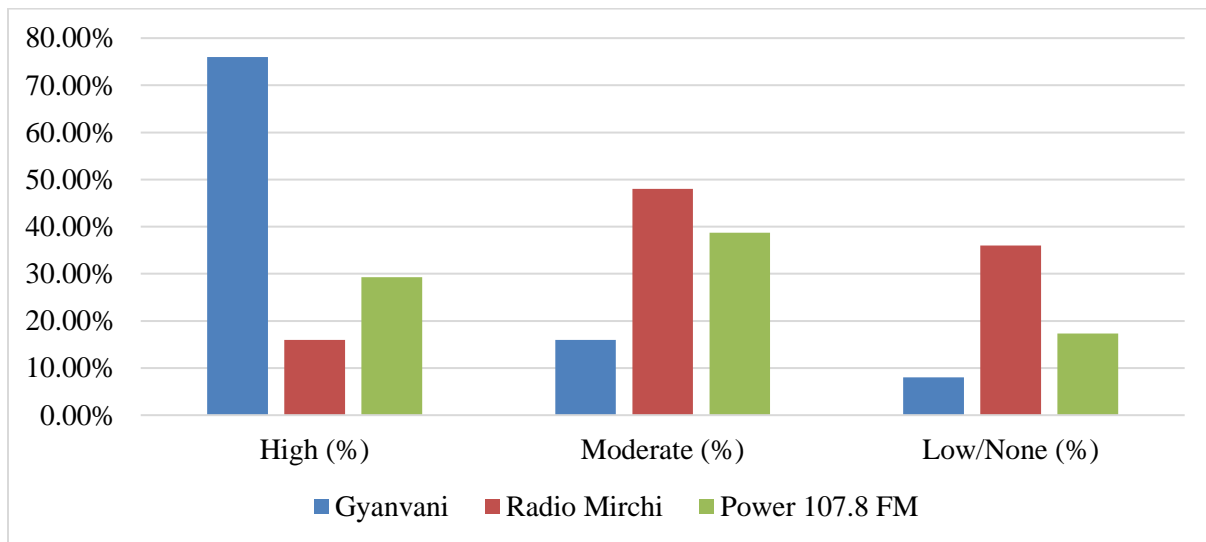
**Figure 1:** Graphical Representation of FM Radio Listening Frequency by Age Group

The statistics reflect a generational change in FM radio listening behavior. Older persons (41 years and older) are more likely to listen to FM radio every day, indicating sustained preference for traditional media among this age group. Conversely, younger people (18–40 years) are less involved with FM radio, with significant shares either listening only weekly or not at all, most probably because of the emergence of digital and on-demand audio services. This is a sign of shifting media consumption habits, where younger audiences prefer internet-based options over traditional broadcast methods.

Table 2 shows respondents' perceptions of the educational value of three chosen FM channels—Gyanvani, Radio Mirchi, and Power 107.8 FM. For each of the channels, the number and percentage of respondents who gave the channel high, moderate, or low/no educational value is presented. Gyanvani is highly rated by most (76.0%), with 8.0% of respondents giving it low or no value. Conversely, Radio Mirchi is seen as having low education value by 36.0% of the sample and only highly rated by 16.0%. Power 107.8 FM exists somewhere in between, as 29.3% say that it is high and 38.7% rate it as moderate. Figure 2 probably illustrates these images in the form of a bar or pie chart per channel so that the researcher can easily compare.

**Table 2:** Perceived Educational Value of Selected FM Channels

FM Channel	High Value (n)	High (%)	Moderate (n)	Moderate (%)	Low/None (n)	Low/None (%)
Gyanvani	57	76.0%	12	16.0%	6	8.0%
Radio Mirchi	12	16.0%	36	48.0%	27	36.0%
Power 107.8 FM	22	29.3%	29	38.7%	13	17.3%



**Figure 2:** Graphical Representation of Perceived Educational Value of Selected FM Channels

The data suggest that Gyanvani is widely recognized for its educational content, indicating its success in fulfilling an academic or informative purpose. This aligns with Gyanvani's focus on

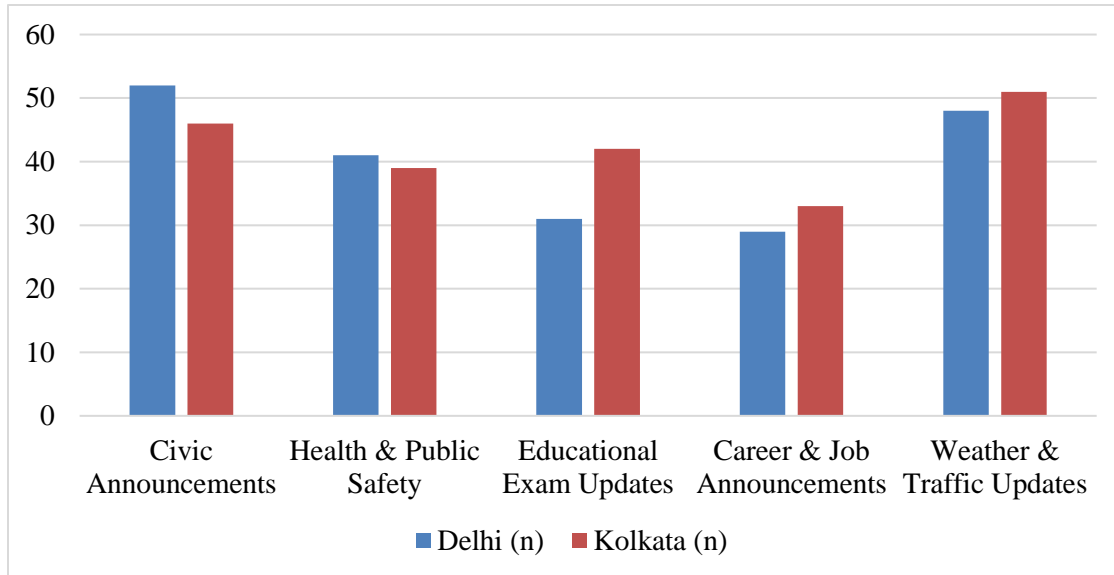


educational programming. In contrast, Radio Mirchi, known for entertainment and music, is largely not viewed as educational, explaining its high percentage of low/no educational value responses. Power 107.8 FM is given a more even assessment, indicating that it provides a combination of educational and entertainment programming. These findings emphasize the impact of content type on audience perception of educational value and point to Gyanvani's niche strength in educational broadcasting.

Table 3 offers the kinds of information obtained from FM radio by the respondents in two cities—Delhi and Kolkata. The types are Civic Announcements, Health & Public Safety, Educational Exam Updates, Career & Job Announcements, and Weather & Traffic Updates. Weather & Traffic Updates are the most frequently accessed kind overall (99 respondents), followed by Civic Announcements (98). Health & Public Safety news is reached by 80 respondents, with Educational Exam News and Career & Job Announcements reached by 73 and 62 respondents, respectively. Figure 3 would presumably show this distribution in terms of bar charts to contrast replies across the two cities and aggregate figures.

**Table 3:** Type of Information Accessed Through FM Radio

Information Type	Delhi (n)	Kolkata (n)	Total (n)
Civic Announcements	52	46	98
Health & Public Safety	41	39	80
Educational Exam Updates	31	42	73
Career & Job Announcements	29	33	62
Weather & Traffic Updates	48	51	99



**Figure 3:** Graphical Representation of Type of Information Accessed Through FM Radio

The statistics show that FM radio remains an important source of functional and up-to-date information, particularly for civic and logistical information. The elevated usage of Weather & Traffic Updates and Civic Announcements points towards the use of FM to get real-time, location-based notifications. The moderately greater number of Educational Exam Updates viewed in Kolkata could be based on regional programming focus or higher academic interest. Career and employment notices have the least penetration, perhaps reflecting scarcity of content or a move towards web-based employment portals. Otherwise, FM radio is still an important medium for delivering public information that matters in cities.

## 5. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, it can be inferred that FM radio is still an important medium for fulfilling the educational and information needs of urban India, particularly in urban areas such as Delhi and Kolkata. The statistics indicate that although digital media is gaining popularity, FM radio still commands a significant urban listenership, with 47.3% of the respondents listening on a daily basis and 50% listening on a weekly basis. Older age groups, especially those older than 60, have the highest level of daily use, showing a strong tendency towards traditional media, perhaps because of its familiarity, accessibility, and immediacy of information. In contrast, younger age groups



(18–40 years) show more irregular patterns of listening, probably because they have more experience of and exposure to digital options. However, the high weekly listenership across all age groups indicates that FM radio still has a lot of value. Stations such as Gyanvani are particularly known for their educational input, providing programs on health, education, career counseling, and civic issues. The research emphasizes that FM radio not only amuses but also informs and educates, proving to be relevant as a reliable source of knowledge and information in the fast-changing and diverse context of urban India.

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