



ROLE OF FM RADIO IN THE PROMOTION OF CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC)

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Abstract

Radio is considering a powerful tool of communication, knowledge and information among various mass media in development countries like Pakistan. Which easily reached to the remotest areas to the lowest production costs it has been a popular medium? The study was conducted to determine the how the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa used the local FM radios to promote the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. To achieve objectives of the research, this research adopted qualitative methodology with thematic analysis approach to analysis the content “SILK ROUTE” program which broadcasted from Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar four months (12th August 2017 to 09th December 2017). These programs are also transmitted on other associated regional FM stations covering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial (included Newly Merged Tribal Districts). Finding of the study indicates that the program one-hour program covered different topics, focused on Pakistan-China relationship general and different aspects of CPEC project in particular. Which includes, News, Press release, media coverage, Press Review and General Updates regarding CPEC Project, it's also broadcast the expect interviews regarding scholarships, education, and life in China. Audience also asked the questions to reduce the misinformation through SMS, Live call and Facebook official Page. All the content of the program creates awareness and educate. This study also argues that KP government plays a significant role for spreading, airing and broadcasting the factual news.

Keywords

FM Radio, China, Pakistan, CPEC, Agenda setting, Misinformation



1. Introduction

Radio is a dominant media for communication and information in Pakistan, especially in rural areas because of excessive load shedding and lack of Television signals. It is also popular in urban areas due to airing latest songs and music (Ullah & Khan, 2017). A number of FM radio station working for their own objectives like education, information and entertainment. There more than 100 illegal FM radio stations were working in this region. Government also established some FM radio station to encounter the negative propaganda broadcasted form illegal FMs. It's due to fill the gaps which were created after the closing the illegal FM radio stations in tribal belt of Pakistan (FRC, 2019).

The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also established FM Radio (Pakhtunkhwa Radio) 92.2 in August 2009. The prime objective of the Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.2 is to spread the messages of the provincial government and their policies. It's started a program which is focused on emerging ties of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with China. The aim of this program is to educate the public regarding CPEC a game changer project for Pakistan (Ullah, 2018).

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a framework of regional connectivity. It has a regional impact in general and local impact in particular with respect to changing lifestyle of the communities closely connected to the corridor (Shapiee & Idrees, 2017). The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a key role not only in term of making the project a successful but will also carrying the maximum impacts of the CPEC. The impact areas range

from socio-economic benefit to socio-political as well as cultural and change in lifestyle for the communities (Ghafoor, Hussain, & Saeed, 2020). Besides enhancement of geographical linkages having improved road, rail and air transportation system with frequent and free exchanges of growth the CPEC has a people to people contact dynamics as well, enhancing understanding through academic, cultural, regional knowledge and culture activities (Ahmad & Mi, 2017).

With the objective of economic growth and development the CPEC offers a great hope for a stable and peaceful region. The objectives of CPEC cannot be rationalized without active participation and mobilization of the local communities (Tahir, Safwan, Abid Usman, & Adnan, 2020).

From the last sixty years, Pak-China friendship has stood the test of times. Pakistan is no stranger to Chinese work ethics and value system; the latter has already built dams, defense and energy-related projects in Pakistan. But the Chinese education system, language, cultural mores may impinge upon Pakistani culture. The Chinese language is already getting attention of the working class and youth but a greater understanding on community level is much needed, so that the local people play positive and progressive role in regional development (McCartney, 2020). With a focus on people-to-people dynamics and change in lifestyle scenarios there is a dire need for greater mobilization of communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The communities directly or indirectly connected to the CPEC perspective needs to be mobilized for the change and

helping them to understand the Chinese culture and lifestyle (Hao, Shah, Nawaz, Nawaz, & Noman, 2020).

1.1. Peshawar

Its strategic importance is further supported by the popular saying, that those who hold the Khyber and Peshawar also hold in their hands the key to India. Peshawar, since times immemorial has been the linkage of trade, culture. Civilization and human intercourse between Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

Peshawar is the provincial Capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as the largest city of the Province and main center for local administration from day first. Therefore, the city district enjoys incredible historic, economic, military and political importance. Newly Merged Tribal Districts (Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)) adjoining Peshawar from three sides, where Mohmand District lies to its North, Frontier Regions (Semi-Tribal regions) of Kohat and Bannu to its South, Khyber District to its West and two settled districts of Charsadda and Nowshera are located in its North and North-East respectively, whereas the Afghan border is approximately 40 Km to the West. Predominant language of the area is Pashtu followed by Hindko and the national language Urdu. (Subhan 2003-04)

1.2. Pakhtunkhwa Radio, FM 92.2

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government for the first time in the history of the province has established Pakhtunkhwa Radio (FM Radio 92.2) at the Directorate of Information Peshawar in August 2009. The prime objective

of the Pakhtunkhwa Radio is that the message of the Provincial Government reaches to the people at every nook and corner of the province.

1.2.1. Purpose. The Radio educates, inform and entertain the people and also provide information to the public on all matters/issues affecting their lives. Quality programs on religion, culture, current affairs, general knowledge, sports education and light entertainment are also the main objective of the radio. The radio also plays its role to counter the media campaign of anti-province as well as anti-state elements.

1.2.2 Coverage Area. According to the PEMRA, FM Radio can air its programs at a radius of 50 kilometers. But as per information gathered by this office and through feedback via telephones, mobile calls, SMS and emails during the programs being on air, their programs are listened almost in all the districts of the province, due to their powerful transmitter 02 KWs and height of antenna erected on third floor top of the department more and more people of the province is benefitted from it.

The Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar is broadcasting programs from 7.00 am to 12.00 pm (mid night) as per appended programs list (17 hours transmission).

1.3. Significant of the study

FM Radio is a very powerful tool of communication in KP because of low literacy rate and unavailability of electricity. The transmission of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar covers a major area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakhtunkhwa radio is a provincial government

owed radio and it reflects provincial government's Policy. This paper is designed to investigate the role of FM Radio (Pakhtunkhwa Radio) in providing information, news and updates reading new development in CPEC Project and encounter misinformation regarding the Pakistan china relationship.

1.4. Objectives of Study

2. To find out what are the major themes in the programmes broadcasted for Pakhtunkhwa Radio regarding the CPEC Project.
3. To analysis the information shared by Pakhtunkhwa radio to promoting Pakistan china relationship.

1.5. Research Questions

2. What are the major themes in the programmes broadcasted for Pakhtunkhwa Radio regarding the CPEC Project?
3. What extent Radio programs create public awareness and encounter Negative propaganda about CPEC Project?

2. Literature Review

Radio is still considered as a dynamic communication medium in many developing countries. Even with advancement of technology in communication, radio is still an available mass medium which is affordable, accessible to a large number of audiences mostly in rural areas (Fao, 2010).

Radio can play an essential role in achieving universal primary education. It's impact and efficiency in health, agriculture and other development issues in the developing countries like, Guatemala, Botswana, South Africa,

Zambia, Thailand, South Korea, Uganda, India, Sri Lanka, Mali, Mexico and Philippines (Koirala, 2017; Marcus, 2020; Ullah, 2018).

Radio is widely used to facilitate formal and informal learning in many countries like, India, Zambia, Ghana, Canada and Australia. Radio programs have been focused on health worker, farmers, youngster, teachers, school children and many other learners' groups. Radio has demonstrated to be a source that is cost-efficient and academically effective (Pant, 2014; Ullah & Khan, 2017).

Radio is one of the cheapest sources of education and information in underdevelopment countries where people cannot afford to purchase daily newspapers (UNFPA, 2002). The content produced for radio is also cheap to produce and cheap to broadcast (Madamombe, 2005). Educational programme production cost for radio is one tenth of the costs of producing Television programme, which is having less exposure and more expensive to access (O'Shea & Richmond, 2008).

Radio is most common medium of information in the developing countries. It is so attractive that in Latin American states, Africa and Asia there is powerful radio waves which broadcast information, music, news, education and talk show in their local language for listener.(Myers, 2007). The accepted response of radio listeners was the provision of local news and information. (Forde, *et al*, 2001).

The FM radio is not only used for entertainment and commercial purpose but it also provides information on different social issues like, education, health, environment,

safety and emergencies, natural resource protection like, weather, crops and livestock production, etc. (K.Venkatalakshmi & R.Chandraleka, 2013).

United Nations organization of Food and agriculture (FAO) 2010 has been encouraging radio for development in the last few decades. It is providing support in all aspects of radio management and set-up to different member countries. Rural Radio Project on one hand support capacity building, community mobilization and on other hand benefit for the project.

According to INTERNEWS Network 2007, radio has a very vital role to disseminate information in natural disaster and emergency situation. Like earthquake in Northern Pakistan in 2006, many radio stations started working for association, reporting aftermath, guidance regarding the emergency situation in affected areas (Ullah & Khan, 2017).

Production of News and current affairs programmes is important part of the community broadcasting. It helps to keep the community informed regarding what happened around them (Forde et al., 2001).

In agriculture communication radio is consider notable medium for communication and sources of information in development countries like Canada. In Canada agriculture based programme is prime consideration of radio broadcasting for about half a century (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010).

3. Theoretical Framework

The researcher used the agenda setting theory, as a theoretical framework to cast light on the role of radio in setting the agenda for

development communication, (information regarding Government Policy, projects and CPEC) and creating awareness among the audience in the Northern west of the Pakistan. The theory developed by Walter Lippmann, in the 1920's. as defined in is the process whereby the mass media determine what we think and worry about. a journalist first observed this function Lippmann then pointed out that the media dominates over the creation of pictures in our head, he believed that the public reacts not to actual events but to the pictures in our head.

The theory has a basic principle that the media may not be effective in determining what audience think, but it has an influence the audience think about, and how audience think about them. However, in the past decades, scholars have applied the concept of agenda setting effects in diverse fields such as education, family health healthcare, politics, communication studies, Human right and civil rights.

Radio is one of the cheaper mediums which is access by almost every person. In Pakistan especially Northern west of the Pakistan are the places where there is no proper network, Internet and any other medium through which they get reliable information. A traditional agenda-setting methodology was used to understand radio station's capability to educate the people regarding CPEC Project through repeated airplay. Media share news and information to create awareness and encounter the fake news/ misinformation among the audiences.

4. Methodology

This was a qualitative study with thematic analysis. In order to address this study's research questions, a content analysis was done radio programmes broadcasted from Pakhtunkhwa Radio in a located in the Peshawar. The researcher analysis talk shows "SILK ROUTE" which Broadcasted form Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar on every Saturday 5:00 to 6:00 PM. of four months (12 August 2017 to 09 December 2017). The talk shows lasted for approximately 60 minutes each and provided information about the benefits involved. This data was then heard and analyzed based on how informative and useful it was for the listeners to solve their queries

regarding CPEC Project. The recorded programmes were listening several times to obtain the objectives. Major themes were identified during the analysis of the Data.

5. Finding

Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar weekly broadcast a sixty minutes program with a particular focus on emerging ties of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with China, amid CPEC perspective.

Details below

Duration: 60 Minutes

Time and Day of Broadcast: 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM /Saturday

Presenters: Two presenters

Guest/Experts: At least one guest or expert

S No.	Major themes	Duration
1.	Introduction to CPEC	05 Minutes
2.	Press and media Review,	05 Minutes
3.	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor - KP Focused	10 Minutes
4.	Life in China	10 Minutes
5.	Expert Opinion/Chinese Language Course	15 Minutes
6.	Audience Experiences of China	10 Minutes
7.	Conclusion of the Program	05 Minutes

The contents of the program show that "SILK ROUTE" broadcasting form Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Radio on each Saturday from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, which cover major area of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. The 60 Minutes duration of the program divided in 7 different Segments, included Introduction, Press or Media Review, CPEC-KP Focused, Life in China, Expert Opinion/Chinese Language Course, Audience Experiences of China and Conclusion. Frist Theme/Segment of the program is Introduction. Which have 05

Minutes Introduction of the topic and program of the week? The program topics are mainly focused around activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with respect to CPEC in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and China Economic Cooperation in particular. The topics are selected based on latest developments in the field of cooperation between the KP and China governments as well as between China and Pakistan Federal Governments.

Second Theme/Segment of the program is Press Review and General Updates regarding China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor in the week. The segment is focused on Press and media reports regarding activities around CPEC and sharing of weekly progress on CPEC initiatives in Pakistan in general and KP in particular. Also highlighting the possible opportunities for the people of KP.

News and information included, PM visit to China, China Government statements regarding Pakistan, update regarding the projects going in Pakistan, motorway, and different economic zones being developed in Pakistan. Different exchange programs between Pakistan and China Universities in education and research sectors. Development at international level with respect to CPEC also makes an important part of the press review and analysis section.

Third Theme/Segment of the program is covered the detailed discussion and information on a particular project of the KP government in CPEC areas. Projection of the KP government activities with respect to China. The activities in the province related to CPEC and China will be highlighted for the audience.

The projects exclusively discussed and covered during this part of the program include, Information Technology, Housing, Roads, Transport, Energy and Power, Oil and Gas, Industries, Mines and Minerals, Archeology, sports and culture and governance.

Fourth Theme/Segment of the program is focus on the Life in China. The objective of this segment is to make the audience familiarize of the China lifestyle and opportunities in China. In this segment students and peoples interviewed who visited china for education and business. They share the experiences of

China, its cultural diversity, the Chinese approach to development, and Chinese traits and way of life experiences.

Fifth Theme/Segment of the program is Expert Opinion/Chinese Language Course. A recorded or live session with an academic expert on China focusing on topic of the day. If possible, there will be a dedicated segment on Chinese language course for the audience. The guest participating in the program also shares key words and expressions from the Chinese language and culture. The same is repeated in the program many times for the general audience to learn.

Sixth Theme/Segment of the program is Audience Experiences of China. Encouraging audiences to share their experiences of China, this segment will try to have direct interaction with audience who has stories to tell for a wider understanding of the Pak-China relationship and opportunities. More focused on the collection of the audience comments on different aspects of the CPEC and related changes the segment incorporates direct calls and text messages from different audiences.

Seventh and last Theme/Segment of the program is Conclusion. Summary of the program and highlights of the next program. The key messages and learning outcomes of the programs are cumulatively presented at the concluding session of the program helping the audience have a greater understanding of the different changing perspectives around CPEC and KP China close ties.

This radio program is design to maximizing the benefits of the CPEC for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and strengthening knowledge

base of the citizens about China and related dynamics amid CPEC perspective and also mobilizing communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for greater positive participation in CPEC activities. It is helping the local people to Connect and understand to the emerging opportunities in CPEC and also Projecting Government of KP's efforts with respect to CPEC and economic cooperation between China and KP Name of the Pregame: SILK ROUTE

6. Discussion

Radio is still a most efficient source of news and information in the Pakhtunkhwa beside the television, newspaper and internet. Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa used different sources of communication to connect the General public. FM radio is one of them. Pakhtunkhwa radio broadcasted one hour program "SILK ROUTE" focused on Pakistan-china relationship in general and CPEC Project particular. So Major themes of the transmission included news general information and updates regarding the CPEC Project. The transmission included, Introduction to CPEC, Press and media Review, CPEC activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Life and education in China, Expert Opinion, Chinese Language Course, Audience Experiences of China and Conclusion. The radio also used different tool for Audience Engagement. The feedback of the audience helps the broadcaster to design and redesign the programme structure. Audience asking different questions through calls, messages and social media pages, to clear mind regarding the CPEC Project and reduce the misconception regarding the project.

6.1. Theoretical Implication

In this study Agenda theory is implemented. Radio KP was working on agenda of government to encounter the fake news, give reliable information about Pak-china relationship and CPEC Project, give government stance, policies and stand. Many of the rumors and misinformation is published and shared on social media that's why government take stance that they use the maximum medium to tackle this issue and problem.

6.2. Practical Implication

FM radio has an important role to provide news and information regarding local, national and international Issues. FM radio can play a good role to encounter the negative propagandas regarding developmental projects like CPEC. The Program on radio can also help the student to know about China and its connections with Pakistan. It also helps the businessmen to know and understand the culture of the China. The radio program about CPEC also helps the audiences to know about the impact of this project. It also explains each and every sector of the project and tells them that how these projects can change their lives.

6.3. Limitation of the study

Due to shortage of time and resources, the study only limited to one radio station. It will be better if researcher access analysis to the data of all radio stations in the public and private stations in our country.

6.4. Recommendations

FM radio is powerful tool for information and through radio we can easily reach to our targeted audience. The government should focus on FM radios for the promotion of

developmental projects. They must produce and broadcast different programs in different languages to make to inform and educate the people. They can easily convey their message through FM radios and can also counter the negative narratives about huge budget projects like CPEC.

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