

## Uses and Needs Gratification of FM Radio Broadcast in Native Pashto Language: A Case Study of Youth from Mardan

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### ABSTRACT

This research study aims at finding FM radio uses and needs gratification among the youth of Mardan. The objective of the study was to find out the different kind of needs, for example, communication, information, entertainment, education, company, etc., that youth gratify from FM Radio. A sample of two hundred students from Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan and two colleges i.e., The Fazl-i-haq College Mardan and Government Post Graduate College, Mardan, were selected for the study. This research is based on quantitative method, which is theoretically grounded in the uses and gratification approach. Data was collected from the respondents through survey method, using a predesigned questionnaire. The results show that most of the respondents are listening to FM radio for entertainment and also as a source of information. The area of study is important because of the growing inclusion of FM Radio in our lives. The study has implications in paving way for the establishment and making the contents of the community radio station (FM Radio).

**KEY WORDS:** Needs Gratification, FM Radio, Mardan Youth

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### INTRODUCTION

Radio is the most effective and easily accessible medium of information even in the era of modern technology. The advancement in telecommunication extended new opportunities of information seeking and entertainment and has given a new life to radio. In spite of television and many channels on cable, radio is still a popular means of communication among youth. About 68% of the population of Pakistan is youth who are considered as less than 30 years of age. The youth in Pakistan is using FM radio more than any other members of the society (Planning Commission, 2011). The definition of youth is different from country to country; however, the UN has a general definition of youth as those persons who are between 15 and 24 years. According to the UN statistics youth in Pakistan is about 63% which is 103 million of the total population. The literacy rate of the youth in Pakistan is estimated as 53% (UNDP, 2013).

Radio in Pakistan is most easily accessible medium of entertainment and information to the people of both rural and urban areas. It can be tuned easily during studying, driving, working, cooking and simply, anywhere in daily life (Radio Pakistan, 2010). Before the introduction of television, radio was the only source of entertainment and information in Pakistan. After independence, Radio Pakistan was established from All India Radio in 1947 and was providing its services to few cities. It was the cheapest and easily accessible source of information and entertainment at that time. According to the Pakistan Press Foundation the only source of news and information was the Radio Pakistan until 1960s till television was introduced (Friedrich, 2009).

The government of Pakistan in 1970 made Radio Pakistan as corporation and further extended its transmission. Later FM broadcast penetrated rapidly in Pakistan. FM Radio in Pakistan began in the late 1990s. The Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) established the first FM at Karachi in April as a musical channel. The FM was also started from Islamabad and Lahore. Looking into the great response from the audience, the PBC took serious steps for setting up more FM Stations (Radio Pakistan, 2010). First FM Radio was launched by Radio Pakistan in 1994 with the name of FM Gold whose frequency was FM101. After the establishment of PEMRA in 2002, the private FM Radio stations were launched as licenses were issued to them. The PEMRA granted 138 licenses out of which 114 were for commercial and 24 were for non-commercial or academic purpose (PEMRA, 2007). The major purpose of the establishment was to improve the standard of information, education and entertainment. It was established to enlarge the choices available to the people of Pakistan (PEMRA, 2007).

FM radio stations were allowed in all provinces for which the airwaves were privatized. In the Tribal area no FM radio was allowed, the outcome was that a lot of illegal FM radio were established where the non-state actors took advantage (Naqvi, 2011). According to a survey, conducted by a private organization and is available on radio Pakistan

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website, there has been an obvious increase in the listeners of FM radio in Pakistan. It stated that more than 61% of people in Pakistan tune to FM channel for music because they say that new songs are aired on it. Moreover, the survey has stated that the FM radio channels are more tuned at homes and workplace (Radio Pakistan, 2010). The good quality of sound and the reliable signal has put it in leading position. The most important feature of FM radio is that it broadcast programs in local dialect and language which attracts the local community (Radio Pakistan, 2010). According to the report published by International Media Support, the dominant media in Pakistan is the radio, especially, in rural area where there is no or little availability of television signals. The radio also gained popularity in urban areas as well because of the latest songs and different music on air on it. The FM radio has gained the potential of attracting youth to its music and other entertainment programs (International Media Support, 2009)

According to PEMRA there are about 12 private FM stations in the whole province of KPK. Three FM Channels are working in FATA with the names FM Razmak, FM Meranshah and FM Radio Khyber. FM Channels in KPK include FM 101 Peshawar, FM 94 Swabi, FM 107 Peshawar, FM 104.6 DI Khan, FM 98.6 Mansehra, FM 93 Charsadda (Dilbar Radio), FM 88 Srai Norang (Lakki Marwat), FM 97 Chitral, FM 104 Peshawar (Buraq Radio), FM 105 Mardan (Buraq Radio), FM Power 99 Abbot Abad and FM 101 Peshawar. Besides these private FM channels three license are given to the public sector universities including University of Peshawar FM 107, Kohat University of Science and Technology FM 98.2 and Gomal University DI Khan FM 104.6. In Mardan there are two FM radio Stations: Radio Pakhtunkhwa (FM 92.6) and Radio Buraq (FM 104 Mardan).

The importance of FM Radio, of course is that it entertains listeners by on airing music and other radio programs. In addition, radio news and dramas are also used to stimulate emotions and to update the knowledge of listeners about the latest developments in different spheres of life. Through radio, business and production companies may also advertise their products and services. Radio is an integral part of people lives, especially in rural areas. For many of us it serves as our wake-up call in the morning and our companion during driving. We use radio while we work or play. Radio is our portable friend (Dominick, 1974).

The area of study is important because of the growing inclusion of FM Radio in our lives. FM Radio has had an unambiguous impact on the lives of its listeners, especially, concerning youth. With such a large audience, one must wonder what FM Radio's appeal is? The study will guide the FM Radio owners, advertiser, radio Rjs, society members and researchers to evaluate the needs of the youth. Based on uses and gratifications research, these studies expect that demographic and social situation variables influence a person's motives for listening to FM Radio.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the different kinds of needs that youth gratify from FM Radio.
2. To explore the relationship between FM Radio uses and needs gratification.
3. To find out that to what extent FM Radio is as a source of information or as a tool of entertainment.
4. To suggest suitable measures to better satisfy the needs of listeners of FM radios.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is theoretically grounded in the uses and gratification approach. This perspective, as explicated by Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch (1974), has historically taken a need-fulfillment approach. Essentially, uses and gratifications researchers believe that people have certain needs that they wish to gratify. People may fulfill these needs by the use of various communication channels, mass and interpersonal. This perspective assumes that audience members are both active and goal oriented when deciding on what form and type of mass media programming they will use. In addition, this perspective takes the position that all channels of communication compete with both one another and other sources of need fulfillment. If specific channels of communication fail to meet audience needs adequately, then viewers will actively seek alternative options (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

The uses and gratification theory is based on how people use the media and satisfy their needs while exposing to media contents. The uses and gratification theory focuses on the consumers who are active and goal oriented. The theory helps in finding that how and why people are exposed to a particular media outlet or contents (Staples, 1998). Every medium for mass communication provides a progressive approach at the initial stage. All media of mass communication have tried its best to gratify the need of different age group and social groups (Ruggiero, 2000). Different media are performing various functions. Certain features of the media are satisfying the needs of the consumers more than other medium because of the different contents of the mediums. This theory is a tool to understand that how consumers use the media and also to know that why they consume certain media only.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The production of news and current affairs is arguably one of the more demanding and time consuming areas of community broadcasting. It is an area where community broadcasters can best encourage active and informed local citizens particularly in terms of access to, and the production of public information. This is particularly pertinent to discussion and fear surrounding the potentially detrimental effects of the globalization of communication industries (Forde & Foxwell, 2001).

The transmitter of the FM radio may not reach for long area but it can be reached to a specific geographic area and population of concern. It on air those issues which are central to them like farming, health issues and education. The FM radio provides new opportunities for more sustainable development. It helps in improving the lives of poor and deprived communities by using communication (Madamombe, 2005). The young generation can also get useful knowledge, advices and a lot of encouragement from FM radio which brings a positive change in them.

According to Myers (2007) radio in developing countries is the most widespread medium which disseminate music, news, education and discussion to the local people in their local language. Radio is helpful in saving the lives of the poor people, provide information about the disaster and give voice to deprived masses of a country. Most of the small FM station provide music to the people which has a direct impact on the culture of the youth and secondly they on-air the programs relating to the music. When the small and new FM channels grow up it on-air issues relating to health and education. In most of the poor countries and societies, people do not afford to buy newspapers daily so the FM radio is one of the cheapest sources of information for them (UNFPA, 2002). All the organizations in the world consider radio as the major source for the dissemination of information and entertainment to the masses (Ababa, 2008). Venkatalakshmi & Chandraleka, (2013) also opine that FM radio is not only used for commercial purpose but it also provides information on social issues like environment, health, education and safety etc. In fact the FM radio channels are the voice of the communities at a distance from each other (Forde, Foxwell, & Meadows, 2001). Research found that the radio fulfills the empty lives of the people. The people who call the radio are cut off from the society and are living lonely. The talk shows provide the listeners a chance to interact in the society (Staples, 1998). Listening to radio in America is a leisure activity (Katz Media Group, 2008). According to Bentley (2002) the most important factor for the youth is entertainment and then information on any media outlet. FM radio channels are playing an important role in spreading civic education. The other most important aspect of the FM channels is that with a low cost, it can reach to the masses (Prah, 2004). FM radio is an essential and can play a very important role in rural development. In rural areas the most effective medium is the radio which can disseminate information regarding health and agriculture. It can also help in providing instant information to the people locally (Azarian, 2012). Keeping in view its importance, Cheatham (2012) insists that the budget of the FM stations should be increased to combat the new trends in news and entertainment.

Seemi Naghmana Tahir (2010) in her research argued that in Pakistan after the emergence of FM radio stations had undergone obvious change in the social sector. It has brought in the country a great change and revolution. Before this radio was considered as a neglected medium but it had gained a great momentum after the emergence of the FM radio. For people of Pakistan, particularly in the areas where there are no other sources of entertainment, there is a keen interest in the FM radio. Therefore, the FM channels must be proliferated so that to fulfill the needs of the people. According to a research article, PEMRA has only allotted the license to FM radio only for entertainment purpose. It is because that the FM Radio has the supreme quality of sound and can acquire the most population (Naqvi & Baloch, 2011).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is proceeding from a quantitative survey analysis of the youth of Mardan city and thus data was collected through questionnaire. Proportionate sampling method of sampling technique was used to collect the data. The relationship is measured by using correlation statistical test.

The universe of the study is one university i.e., Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan and two colleges i.e., The Fazl-i-Haq College Mardan and Government Post Graduate College Mardan. The population of this study is limited to the students of the above mentioned university and colleges. The research is limited to the city of Mardan. Two hundred and twenty students from the above mentioned university and two colleges were taken as a sample. In this study proportionate sample was used to draw the sample. 45.45% of participants were taken Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, 27.27% from The Fazl-i- haq College Mardan and 27.27% from Government Post Graduate College Mardan.

Appropriate statistical tools and techniques by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programs were applied.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Data analysis includes analysis and interpretation of the data collected through field work. The main purpose of this research is to find out the uses and need gratification of the youth of Mardan. The goal of the data analysis is to get meaningful inferences and to generalize the results. Each question asked from the respondents is discussed separately as the following.

### **Source of suggestion for the respondents to listen to FM radio**

The youth has more interaction with friends than other social groups. More than 45% of the respondents came to know about the FM channels from their friends. About 23% of the respondents were suggested by their family members to listen to the particular FM radio while 30% learned from their classmates. The result of the study showed that the youth has great interaction with their friends; therefore, mostly FM channels were suggested to the respondents by their friends.

### **Respondents' choice of the FM channel**

The research has explored a very important aspect of the listener i.e., their choices regarding FM channels. It is important to know which channels are more listened by the youth or which FM Radio channel gratifies their needs more. It was found that 60% of the respondents listen to the Radio Pukhtunkhwa and about 40% listen to Radio Buraq, both of which are located in Mardan.

### **Type of programs listened by the respondents**

The most important question is to know about the type of the programs the respondents prefer on FM radio channels. The youth gratify their needs of entertainment, information and education from these channels. Most of the youth in Mardan listen to the FM channels for entertainments. The results show that 58.6 % of the respondents listen to FM radio for entertainment, 20 % for education and 21.4 % listen to FM channels for information.

### **Time spent of the respondent on FM radio**

The results indicate that about 68% of the respondents listen to FM channel from 1 - 2 hours daily and 32. 3% listen to the FM channels for 3hour to 4 hours. This shows that on the average, the youth spend 1 to 2 hours daily on FM radio.

### **Preferred languages of the respondents on FM radio**

Another important factor that increases or decreases the listenership of the radio is the language medium in which a radio broadcasts its programs. Majority of youth were of the opinion that the language for FM radio should be Pashto. As they listen songs and other entertainment programs, which could be enjoyed only if they are presented in the mother tongue of the listeners. 58.5 % of the respondents opted for Pashto while 35.5% opined about the inclusion of Urdu language as well.

### **Tune up of the FM radio by the respondent on daily basis**

This is very important to know that how many times the respondents tune FM channels. It shows their level of satisfaction and attraction for the FM Radio. The results indicate that about 34% of the respondents are tuning the FM channels once in a day while 42.3% of them tune it two times a day. 18.6% of the respondents tune three times a day and only 0.5 % of them tune to FM channels four times a day.

### **Listening FM radio after each tuning**

It is also important to know the amount of time the respondent stays on each FM Channels after each tune. About 44 % of the respondents tune radio for one hour after each time and 30.5 % listen to radio for 2 hours. Only 2.3 % enjoy FM radio for 4 long hours and just 0.9 and 0.5 % of the respondents listen to FM for 5 and 7 hours respectively on daily basis.

### **The clarity and reason of interruption of the FM radio transmission**

Mardan city has two radio stations and both are easily accessible. The results show that FM signals reach to almost all the people without any distortion. Only 9% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion that the transmission reaches them without any barrier. About 61 % of the respondents strongly agree and about 28 % agree to the idea that transmission reaches to them without any barrier. In the next question the respondents were asked about the reason a signal is dropped or interrupted. The respondents' response was almost the same i.e., they

don't know the reason behind the interruption in the transmission. They don't know the reason according to them it happens several times whenever they tune into FM radio channels. The next important question deals with clarity that has a very positive response. The respondents opted for strongly agree and agree categories which shows that the FM channels sounds are clearer and appealing than the AM (Amplitude Modulus) and SW (short waves). That is perhaps one of the reasons that the FM has always attracted a lot of audience because of its easy accessibility and clarity of sound. The quality of sound matters because it is the audio that reaches the audience during production of the programs. It shows that very little interruption occurs to the FM signals. On the clarity about 50 % of the respondents voted in favor of strongly agree category and 40 % opted for agree category. Only 3.6% and 3 % strongly disagreed and agreed respectively on the clear sound. It is clear from the results that the transmission of FM radio channels reaches to the audience without any barriers.

### **Information regarding political and social issues on FM radio**

The basic function of mass media is to inform. The radio being a medium for the said function is performing its duty in full swing. The question asked regarding the information on the FM radio channels got the appreciation for informing the youth and thus gratifying their quest for information. FM radio channel as a community channel keeps a specific community or group of people informed about the important issues in the surrounding as well as on the international horizon. The information function is another reason behind the popularity of FM channels. The question regarding informing the youth about current political activities in their locality got a positive response from the respondents. About 28 % responded to strongly agreed category while 45 % to the agreed category. 11 % of the respondents were undecided while 10.5% and 5.5 % of the respondents opted for disagreed and strongly disagreed options respectively. The question about disseminating information regarding the social issues got the same type of response. About 32% and 45 % of the respondents opted for strongly agree and agree categories respectively. This means that FM channels are informing the youth about the current social and political issues in their localities in a better way. Only 12.7% and 3.7% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively, while 6.8 % remained undecided. The FM channels are also playing a pivotal role in creating awareness among the youth. The results indicate that about 39.9 % and 40 % of the respondents strongly agree and agree to the idea that FM channels create social awareness in the youth, while a meager number 7.7 % disagree and 5.9 % strongly disagree with the above mentioned statement. In nutshell, we can conclude from the above findings that FM channels are quite helpful in promoting social and political awareness among youth.

### **Health programs on FM radio channels**

Health is one of the most important issues on the part of the audience. Almost all FM channels give due coverage to the issues pertaining to health. The presenters invite the doctors and local health experts to the studio who give appropriate information and respond to the questions of the patients in programs related to health. These programs not only help in eradicating some of the common diseases but also contribute to the popularity of FM channels among the common masses. Findings indicate that more than 77.8 % of the respondents were satisfied with the health programs on the FM radio channels. However, about 20 % of the respondents were not satisfied as they opted for the disagree option. To the question regarding tips on FM Channels keeps me healthy, about 80 % of the respondents responded in positive. Only 9.5 % of the respondents disagree with the notion. To another important question that whether the listeners were making live calls to FM channels to get on spot tips for their health, about 76 % of the respondents responded in positive. This activity not only involves the audience in the communication process but also helps in popular participation in the form of feedback which is a pre-requisite for the effective mode of communication. It was also interesting to know that about 20 % of the listeners never bothered to make a call to the radio.

### **Youth programs on FM radio channels**

Since this research is focused on youth, it is important to know what exactly the youth wants to listen and what kind of change FM channels can bring. Similarly what do the young audience expect from these channels. The FM channels on-air such kind of program that are helpful in creating the leadership qualities among the youth. To put it another way, if the youth likes FM channels then it should create some qualities in them as well. It was found out in the research that because the youth listened to it regularly and that FM channels were very much popular among youth, so it has a lot of impact on their lives and lifestyle. FM channels can effectively change the lives of the youth. About 75 % of the students were of the opinion that it can create leadership qualities in youth, while just 17 % of the respondents disagree with the statement. In another question regarding the impact of FM channels on youth, it was found out that these channels makes the youth responsible. About 75 % agreed to the statement. The last question of this category was about the participation of the youth by making a live call to the programs broadcasted on FM channels. This trend has made the youth active listeners and they give their valuable feedback to the presenters and

RJs for the improvement of their concerned programs. More than 41 % of the respondents were strongly agree that they were making live calls during the live shows and 34.1 % agreed to this. While only 15.9% and 1.4 % were disagree and strong disagree respectively to the statement of making live calls.

### **Entertainment programs on the FM radio channels**

Entertainment is amongst the basic function of the mass media. In Pakistan, the FM channels can be described as medium of entertainment. Most of the FM radio channels have the motto of infotainment i.e., information and entertainment, but it is commonly observed that these FM channels rely more on entertainment than information. As prescribed by the PEMRA that the licenses were given only for the entertainment purpose to FM radio channels, that is why the most of the respondents opted for entertainment. 39.5 % of the respondents were strongly agree and 46.4 % were agree with the broadcast of entertainment programs for the youth on the FM channels. The disagree and the strongly disagree categories were very low i.e., just .5 % and 6.5% respectively. In entertainment, the basic programs category is the music on FM channels which has largely attracted the youth. Question asked about music related to entertainment got the same response. About 50 % and 35 % of the respondents were strongly agree and agree to the idea and thus satisfied themselves with the music on FM radio channels, while just 5.5% and 5.9% of the respondents were disagree and strongly disagree and the rest, i.e., 4.5 % of the respondents were undecided.

The most important and popular function of FM radio channels are the live calls to it. The youth and almost all the segment of the society like to call to FM channels and thus demand for their desired song. It is now a very common practice that the listeners are calling for not only their desired songs but also to share their views as well. 32.7% and 45.5 % of the respondents were strongly agree and agree respectively to listen to songs on demand. 7.7 % and 4.5 % of the respondents were disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

There are short plays (dramas) on-aired on FM channels about on certain social issues in the entertainment programs. Drama can play a vital role in informing the public through entertainment on FM radio channels. 31.4% and 39.5 % of the respondents were of the opinion that they listen to dramas on the FM channels. The percentages of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed to the question of entertainment is a bit low than the other question, which indicates that the respondents are less interested in the dramas on FM channels.

### **Education programs on the FM radio channels**

Education is among the basic functions of the media which it provides to the masses. FM radio also performs this function to the masses by providing some of the education programs. These programs help in promoting education and the listeners take keen interest in it. Three questions were asked from the respondents related to the education. All the three questions got the same response and were agreed by the respondents which show that people are taking keen interest in education programs on FM radio channels. The first quest that was asked from the respondents was that FM channels are helping them in getting education. To which 40 % and 47.7 % of the respondents were strongly agree and agree. Only 4.1% and 4.1% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In the other question related to education which was that the listeners listens to education programs, got a little different response as were in the first question in education. According to the second question, 32.3% and 43.3 % of the respondents were strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they listen to educational programs on FM radio channels. To this question only 9.5 % and 5.5 % of the respondents were disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

There are certain programs which are not to educate the people but to inform them about the issues related to the education. These program help in solving the academic issues. The question asked about that the FM is helpful in solving their problems; most of the respondents were strongly agree and agree which were 40.5% and 38.6 % respectively. Only 6.8% and 2.3 % of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

### **Sports programs on the FM radio channels**

Sport is the most important category in the entertainment. There are certain live shows and commentaries on the sports events on FM radio channels. The FM radio channels are also providing news to their listeners as well which has attracted most of the youth. In some programs they discuss issues and problems relating to the sports. Three main questions were asked about the sport in which first question was to know about the regular listeners of the sport news. The first question indicates that 42.3 % and 26.4 % of the respondents were regular listeners of the sport news as they opted for strongly agree and agree respectively.

A question regarding cricket commentaries on FM channels, the listeners showed keen interest in it. To this question, 30.9 % and 54.1 % of the respondents were strongly agree and agree respectively which means that they listen to cricket commentary on FM radio channels. Only 7.3% and 3.1 % of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to it. The local sport news is an important ingredient of the FM channels programs

and is being greatly acknowledged by the respondents. As the FM radio channels are considered as the communities channels which disseminate these sports news to the specific region that is why local news related to sports are youth's best desire which the FM channels are fulfilling.

### **Distribution of the respondents by extents of satisfaction about performance of FM radio transmission**

The respondents were asked to show their level of satisfaction from the overall performance of FM channels. The results indicate that about 78.5 % of the respondents were satisfied with the contents of FM channels while only 20.5 % were not satisfied with it. Thus we can say, that youth is satisfied from the overall contents and performance of FM channels and thus FM channels could be called the media run by the youth, for the youth and most of its contents revolve around the youth.

### **Conclusion**

The listeners listen to the FM radio Channels for entertainment purpose more and less for other purposes, like education and information. FM channels are playing a very key role in entertaining the youth and also to a great extent fulfilling their desired needs. FM Channels are rapidly gaining popularity and such channels have adopted modern style of entertainment and information provision. These channels have made it possible for the youth to actively participate in the media through live calls, and real time entertainment. They are highlighting as well as addressing the issues at local level. Entertainment is the basic constituent among the contents on FM radio channels. In Pakistan FM channels are only allowed for entertainment by PEMRA. Mardan, which is the focus area of the research, has two radio stations i.e., Radio Pakhtunkhwa and Radio Buraq. The study found that Radio Pakhtunkhwa is satisfying needs of the youth more than the Radio Buraq. In brief the respondents are satisfied about the content and information provided by FM Radio channels. In this way the FM radio channels are playing a key role in informing as well as entertaining the masses.

Furthermore, these FM radios can be used for propagating agendas. It can also be used to discuss the community issue which could be addressed very rapidly. The FM radio channels can play a vital role in disseminating information relating to health and agriculture so the issues related to these fields may be discussed frequently. It is necessary for the FM Radio Channels to further improve the direct participation of the listeners as it is popular only because of the listeners' direct participation. There is a dire need to record the listeners' data and formulate listeners clubs in order to get frequent feedback. Finally, an education-entertainment approach can be adopted by the FM radio channels in order to cater the needs of youth in a balance way.

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