

Pakistan broadcasting corporation

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By

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PAKISTAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

At the time of independence in 1947, Radio Pakistan had two stations of 5 kw each in the areas that now constitute Pakistan. It now has 16 stations with transmitter power ranging from 250 watts to 1000 kw. More stations are in the offing. In December 1972, Radio Pakistan was converted under an Act of Parliament from a government department into an autonomous corporation. The radio network now covers about 95% of the population and 92% of the area of the country. Total programme hours come to about 270 a day. About half the time is devoted to entertainment including music, dramas, features, playlets, humorous skits etc, and the remaining half is consumed by spoken-word items of all categories - news and current affairs and other information programmes, religions, cultural and literary programmes, rural and agricultural broadcasts and special audience programmes. A total of about 5,500 persons are employed in PBC. Its main sources of income are licence fee, commercial broadcasting and government subsidy.

Audience research in Radio Pakistan has been there from the very beginning though it had a chequered history, gaining due importance at times and almost disappearing for some time. The existing set-up came into being towards the end of 1979 when it was re-established after the lapse of a few years with reasonable staff at the Headquarters and one contact person at major stations. Fund availability for audience research has not been much of a problem.

During the last six years, since its reorganisation nearly 57 audience research studies have been made. It is expected that with the passage of time and gain in experience, the quantity and quality of surveys will improve in the coming years. Almost all the studies were local or regional in nature. They covered a variety of subjects and programmes such as music, plays, news, and current affairs, disc jockey programmes, religious broadcasts,

programmes for special audiences like industrial labour, youth, rural folks, farmers, children, women and students; and radio listening pattern in certain cities and regions. Surveys conducted on nation-wide basis related to programmes on current affairs and religion and those meant for the rural population, farmers and the youth. The survey on youth programmes coincided with the International Youth Year. A nation-wide survey on programmes for women is in hand. Field work is just to begin. Another such survey on the listening pattern in the country is at the planning stage.

Multi-stage sampling technique is used for the selection of urban enumeration blocks and villages and the systematic sampling method for the selection of household/respondent. Data is collected by interviewing the sample audience at their doorsteps. On a few occasions the group discussion and panel methods have also been employed.

A new dimension added to audience research in PBC is the growth or need survey done before starting a new station or a service. Three such surveys have been completed which provided very useful and vital information for programme planning for the new station or service to meet the needs, aspirations and expectations of the people of the target area.

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