

## TYPES OF RADIO PROGRAMM

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### ABSTRACT

The new medium had grown rapidly through the 1930s, vastly increasing both the size of its audience and its profits. In those early days, it was customary for a corporation to sponsor an entire half-hour radio program, placing its commercials at the beginning and the end. This is in contrast to the pattern which developed late in the 20th century in both television and radio, where small slices of time were sold to many sponsors and no corporation claimed or wanted sponsorship of the entire show, except in rare cases. These later commercials also filled a much larger portion of the total program time than they had in the earlier days.

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Radio programmes may be classified into two broad groups:

- 1) Spoken word programmes, which include news bulletins, talks, discussions, interviews, educational programmes for schools and colleges, specific audience programmes directed at women, children, rural and urban listeners, drama, radio features and documentaries.
- 2) Music programmes which include disc jockey programmes, 'countdown' shows musical performances of all types and variety programmes called 'magazine' programmes. News Bulletins

News bulletins are put out by AIR almost every hour of the day in English and the various regional languages. The major bulletins are of 15 minutes' duration, while others are of only five minutes' duration. They present summaries of news stories in order of importance and interest-value. National and international happenings get pride of the place, while regional and local news is read out if time permits. Human interest stories and sports news generally round off the major bulletins. AIR's news bulletins are much too formal in language, structure and presentation, suitable for a lecture than a talk across the table which news reading really is. Newsreels, generally of 15 minutes 'duration, present 'spot' reports, comments, interviews, and extracts from speeches. A much more complex and expensive format than the news bulletin, it calls for skilled tape editing and well-written link narrations. Documentaries or Radio features. Documentaries or radio features are usually factual, informational in character and sometimes educational in intent. They bring together the techniques of talks and drama to tell the story of events, past or present or those likely to happen in the future. They may sketch the biography of a great leader, or merely offer an interpretation of the world around us, or teach us about peoples and cultures unfamiliar to use or even inquire into social, political, economic or cultural problems. Indeed, any subject of interest is grist to the mill of a feature writer. The words of a radio talk need to be kept simple and familiar, yet descriptive and powerful, and the sentences should short and without dependent clauses and awkward inversions. Care should be taken to keep close to the rhythm of ordinary speech when writing the talk, and also when

recording it. Radio talks have no definite structure. All that the listener expects from them is that they should be interesting and informative.

#### Music programmes

Music programmes enjoy much greater popularity than talk shows, as is evident from the popularity of Vividh Bharati programmes. We enjoy music for its rhythm, melodies and harmonies and above all for the relaxation it provides. Like any talk show, a music programme must have unity and form. Disc jockey (DJ) programmes of “pop’ or ‘disco’, therefore should not be mixed up with classical or light classical music. Variety is the keynote to any programme; the different items should be linked together with interesting comments, announcements and narration.

#### Movie trailers

Vividh Bharati’s movie trailers are sponsored programmes usually of 15-30 minutes’ duration. They are fast-paced, and packed with extracts of dialogues and songs from the film being advertised. The narrator links the elements with dramatic appeals and announcements. The names of stars, of the producer, director, playback singers and musicians figure prominently in the trailers.

#### Quizzes

Largely studio-based and inexpensive to produce, the quiz show is easily one of the most popular programmes for the family. It’s the sense of participation and involvement in the quiz questions that makes programme very enjoyable family fare. The uses of a narrator interspersed with voices of real people, actors and of appropriate background effects and music bring a documentary/feature to throbbing life. In Fielden’s words, ‘a feature programme is a method of employing all available methods and tricks of broadcasting to convey information or entertainment in a palatable form’.

#### Radio Plays

Radio drama is a story told through sound alone. The sound is of course that of dialogue and voices of people, background or mood effects, atmospheric effects and the like. Radio drama, like stage drama is based on conflict, uses characters and has a beginning, middle and an end. Movement and progress, generally to a crisis or climax, must be suggested in radio drama through sounds. The voices of characters must be sufficiently distinguishable, one from the other, lest the listener gets confused. They must sound natural, speak true to character and above all, be interesting. Radio listeners would be confused by the presence of more than three to four characters. In fact, the shorter the drama (the average duration is 30 to 60 minutes) the fewer should be the major characters. In the early years of Indian broadcasting, the radio play took on the characteristics of the theatre as it existed on the stage in a particular region. Radio plays were broadcast then for three hours at a time. In Bombay, Parsi, Gujarati and Urdu plays were frequently put on the air: in Madras, mythological plays proved very popular. It was Fielden who introduced the present norm of the 30-minute radio play on AIR. Radio talks are not public speeches; rather they are chats with a friend who does not see you, but is nevertheless close and attentive to you. Radio talks should give the impression to a listener that the speaker is addressing him or her alone in an informal manner. A radio station also broadcasts programmes of different types. The requirements of listeners of radio stations are not the same. To serve them, we need to know many facts about them. So we should know about the audience:

Radio formats decided on the basis of the needs of the audience.

- (a) The total population of the area.
- (b) Number of men and women — Sex ratio
- (c) Literate people/Illiterate people
- (d) The languages spoken in the area.
- (e) Schools/Colleges
- (f) Children going to school
- (g) Health facilities — availability of doctors, primary health centre, clinics, hospitals.
- (h) Any major diseases
- (i) Religions in the area-population wise
- (j) Power supply
- (k) Nearest radio stations/Television stations
- (l) Climate of the place
- (m) Main occupation of the people
- (n) Income per head/people below poverty line
- (o) Roads/transport facilities
- (p) Irrigation facilities
- (q) Number of people engaged in agriculture/other occupations.
- (r) Types of crops.

Announcements :

These are specifically written clear messages to inform. They can be of different types. These announcements have become informal and resemble ordinary conversation.

2. Radio talk :

The radio talk probably is the oldest format on radio. There has been a tradition in India and Britain to invite experts or prominent persons to speak for 10 or 15 minutes on a specific topic. These talks have to go through a process of being changed into radio's spoken word style. Over these long radio talks have become unpopular. Instead, today, shorter duration talks are broadcast. Of course, we can listen to these talks only on public service broadcasting stations.

3. Radio interviews:

In the media, be it the newspaper, magazine, radio or television, journalists use this technique of asking questions to get information. There can be different types of interviews in terms of their duration, content and purpose.

Radio discussions :-

In radio, is used this technique to let people have different points of view on matters of public concern. Radio discussions are produced when there are social or economic issues which may be controversial. So when different experts meet and discuss such issues, people understand various points of view. Generally, these discussions on radio are of longer duration-say 15 to 30 minutes. Two or three people who are known for their views and a well informed senior person or journalist who acts as a moderator take part and discuss a particular topic for about 30 minutes. The moderator conducts the discussion, introduces the topic and the participants and ensures that every one gets enough time to speak and all issues are discussed.

5. Radio documentaries/features:

If you see a film in a movie hall, it is generally a feature film, which is story based and not real. But there are also documentary films which are based on real people and issues. A lot of programmes you see on television are educational and public service documentaries. Radio also has this format. Unlike documentary films, radio documentaries have only sound – i.e. the human voice, music and sound effects. So a radio documentary is a programme based on real sounds and real people and their views and experiences. Radio documentaries are based on facts presented in an attractive manner or dramatically. Radio documentaries are radio's own creative format. The producer of a documentary needs to be very creative to use human voice, script, music and sound effects very effectively. Radio documentaries are also called radio features.

#### 6. Radio drama:

A Radio drama or a radio play is like theatre drama. The only difference is that while a stage play has actors, stage, sets, curtains, properties movement and live action, a radio play has only three components. They are the human voice, music and sound effects. Radio uses its greatest strength for producing radio plays and that is the power of imagination and suggestivity. For example, if you want to have a scene in a radio play we don't have all physical arrangements made. All that you have to do is to use a bright tune on the excited voices of people to create in a listeners' imagination, a wedding scene. The voice of the actors, music and sound effects can create any situation in a radio play.

#### 7. Running commentaries :

Running commentaries on radio can be on various sports events or on ceremonial occasions like the Republic Day Parade or events like festivals, melas, rath yatras, swearing in ceremony of ministers, last journey (funeral procession) of national leaders event. A commentator would give us all the details of the match such as the number of players, the score, position of the players in the field etc. So by listening to the running commentary, you get a feeling of being in the stadium and watching the match. The commentator needs good communication skills, a good voice and knowledge about what is going on. Today radio running commentaries especially of cricket and other sports can be heard on your mobile phones.

#### 8. Magazine programmes :

Radio also has magazine programmes like those in the print media. A radio magazine is broadcast at periodicity ( a particular time on a particular day of a week or a month). Similarly it has plenty of variety in contents. Some or many formats of radio are included in a radio magazine. These may be talks, discussions, interviews, reviews, music etc. Likewise, the duration of each programme or item in a magazine programme also vary. Another characteristic of a radio magazine is that it has a signature tune. A signature tune is an attractive piece of music which is specific to a programme. It can be like the masthead (title) of a magazine. A magazine programme also has a name and one or two presenters or anchor persons who link the whole programme. In the beginning, the titles of the day's programme will be given by the presenters after the signature tune. They also give continuity and link the whole magazine. Magazine programmes are generally broadcast for a special or specific audience.

#### 9. NEWS:

Among all the spoken word formats on radio, news is the most popular. News bulletins and news programmes are broadcast every hour by radio stations. In India, only All India Radio is

allowed to broadcast news. Duration of news bulletins vary from 5 minute to 30 minutes. The longer news bulletins have interviews, features, reviews and comments from experts.

In radio straight talk persists in some countries, though less so than in the heyday of the medium. Nevertheless, some successful lectures at much greater length have been scheduled occasionally on television and in some countries on radio. Straight talk of 10 minutes or more does not lend itself to exciting television production, unless it is accompanied by filmed illustrations to the point where it all but becomes a documentary.

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