Radio Jockey Talk: Views and Opinions of Engineering Students from Kolhapur District Tripti Karekatti & Irshad Wadgaonkar

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Abstract

The paper explores the preferences, views and opinions of engineering stream students in Kolhapur District regarding FM radio programmes and Radio Jockey talk. It is especially interested in finding the extent to which the engineering students are aware of the power wielded by the RJs, the peculiarities of their talk and the way social and political issues are handled/avoided by RJs in their talk. Reponses of one hundred and fifty engineering students from Kolhapur district were noted using Google forms. The questionnaire had ten multiple choice questions, four open ended questions and twenty two three-point Likert items. The analysis reveals the likes, dislikes of the listeners regarding FM channels and RJs. It also uncovers the sway RJs have on their audience and how mixing of different languages, use of dialectal words, expressions and tone contribute to this. The paper also seeks to understand the extent to which these listeners are aware of social issues and inequalities, of various kind of biases and prejudices evident in RJ talk.

Key Words: Radio Jockey talk, FM, code switching and mixing, social awareness

1.0 Introduction:

Private FM channels and Radio Jockey programmes broadcasted on them are very popular today, especially among the youth. Youth is seen to be attracted to the way the Radio Jockey (RJs) talk and also to the topics they talk on. However, we know very little about what the young people exactly like about these programmes, the extent to which they are influenced by the RJs and how conscious they are of this influence on them. It is necessary to understand how youth look at the FM programmes, the RJs and their language. Such studies are especially lacking in India even if available to some extent outside India, such as, Lont (1988), Basu (2009), Ahmed & Tinny (2011). There are a few like Subbaiah R. (1993), Niveditha, V. (2014) but almost none which focus on the youth and college students. The present

research paper aims to study the preferences, views and opinions of engineering stream students in Kolhapur District about RJs and their programmes, the features of RJ talk and the socio-political content of these The study is especially programmes. interested in finding the extent to which the engineering students are aware of the way social. and political issues are handled/avoided by RJs in their talk. The focus is mainly on the private FM channels Kolhapur district, but at comparisons emerge with the programmes and announcers on Akashwani/ Prasarbharati channels.

1.1 Research Methodology:

1.1.1 Data Collection:

The survey was conducted using Google forms. This questionnaire has two sections. Section I includes ten multiple choice questions and four open ended questions. Section II has twenty two three-point Likert

items. The respondent is given a statement and asked whether he/she agrees/disagrees /is not able to say anything firmly about the statement.

1.1.2 Subjects:

Students from the selected Engineering Colleges from Kolhapur District were asked to take the questionnaire. Reponses of one hundred and fifty students (respondents) were sought for the study. Equal number of respondents on the parameters of sex, age, and place of residence (rural or urban population) couldn't be ensured because of lower response rates, especially from the female students. The researchers believe that age and sex may not have huge impact on results. However, as rural/urban difference may have a greater impact, attempts were made to have them in as similar proportions as possible. The split-up of these 150 respondents on these parameters is as shown below:

Sex:

BCA.	
A) Male:	64% (96)
B) Female:	36% (54)
Place of Residence:	
A) Urban:	56.1%
B) Rural:	43.9%
Age:	
A. Below 18 :	13.3%
B. 18 to 22:	76.2%
C. 23 and above:	10.5%

1.2 Responses to the Questionnaire:

1.2.1 Questionnaire – Section I

This section comprised fifteen questions. This section revealed the following information.

1. Frequency of tuning in to Radio: A high proportion of the students (47.3%) said that

they rarely listened to the radio. A quarter of the students (25.3%) listened for about 1 to 2 hours daily while another significant proportion of students (19.3%) listened for less than an hour daily. A few (8.1%) reported varying hours of listening like 5-10 minutes daily, 2 to 3 hours daily, every 2 to 3 days, once a week, etc.

- 2. Half of the respondents (51.7%) listened to the radio when they were home. A considerable number of the respondents (34%) listened to the radio while travelling. A few (6%) listened while jogging or exercising. Surprisingly, 4.6% of the respondents said that they listened to radio while at college and 3% reported some other place such as at the hostel, whenever and wherever they get time, etc.
- 3. A huge proportion of the respondents (73%) said that they listened to the FM radio in the background while reading or doing some other work. The rest (27%) said they liked to listen to the FM radio by paying exclusive attention to the programmes.
- 4. Regarding the most favourite FM Channel, Radio City and Mirchi channels emerged as close competitors for the first place Radio City was chosen by 30.9% of the respondents and Mirchi by 30.2%. Tomato FM was preferred by 18.1 of these Engineering students, Big FM by 8%, and Akashwani FM (Prasarbharati) by 9.4%. A small part of the respondents 3.4% gave answers such as they like all the channels or most of them.
- 5. When the students were asked why they listened to their favourite FM Channels, a maximum number (44.6%) said it was for new/hit songs and music. Some (21.5%) said they tuned in for the coverage on local

events/ issues. A few tuned in to their favourite channel as they liked the way the RJs talk (15.5%) and few for the humour and jokes on those channels (10.8%). A small number (4%) said they listen to FM radio to pass time and 3.6% respondents specified some other reasons like they tune in for Bhaktisangeet, old songs etc.

- 6. Regarding the way RJs talk, 35.4 % of the respondents said that they very much liked the way they talk. A greater number, 45.6% of the respondents, said they like *some* features of their speech while 7.4% of the respondents said they did not notice anything different/ special about RJs talk. Some (4%) found RJ talk unexciting and 3.4% said they don't like the way they talk. Some (4.2 %) gave some other responses such as I never listen to the RJ; I don't have much time to listen carefully; I don't give that much importance to RJ speech; Songs are more important than the RJ talk.
- 7. A big proportion of the respondents (67.6%) reported that they use some of the features of the RJ speech in their talk and 15.2% said that they don't let their talk influence them. 10.3% respondents think that the way the RJ talk can influence no one. In all 4.7% of the respondents felt the way RJs talk has a bad influence on the language and thinking of their listeners and 2.2 % of the respondents had some other thoughts on the issue such as I don't notice any impact; RJs' influence is negligible; I have not given it a thought, etc.
- 8. Regarding their guess on rise/decrease in the popularity of FM radio and RJs in near future, some 55.1% felt their popularity is on the rise while 22.4% felt that FM channels and RJs need to change to survive overall changes in society and digital media

- and technology. Some (17.7%) felt that the FM channels and RJs will retain their current popularity and 4% felt they will lose the current popularity.
- 9. Only 33.1% of the respondents reported that they follow their favourite RJs on social media while the majority (66.5%) didn't follow the RJs on social media.
- 10. When asked their preference regarding Radio Jockeys on private FM channel and Radio Announcers on state-owned Prasarbharati/Akashwani FM channels, a whopping 80.1% chose Radio Jockeys and only 19.9% chose Akashwani Announcers.
- 11. The question on favourite RJ / announcer was answered by only 90 respondents. RJ Rochie and RJ Sumit (each with 24%) emerged as the most popular RJs with these respondents. 12 % of the respondents selected comedians like RJ Baburav (Tomato FM), RJ Naved (Mirchi FM), Rahul (Mirchi FM) as RJs. RJ Sharad, RJ Manish, RJ Rasika, RJ Sneha, RJ Prajakta, RJ Sangram and others put together accounted for 34% of the respondent's choice while a small number (6%) preferred Radio Announcers on stateowned Prasarbharati/Akashwani FMchannels.
- 12. When the respondents were asked the reason they liked a particular RJ, 38.3% said it was for their style of speaking, 25.5% said it was for the information and entertainment in their speech, 15.1% said it was for humour in the programme and 10.7% said it was for the voice of the RJ and 10.4% gave some other reasons such as the RJ gives good advice, and I can't tell the exact reasons, etc.

13. When the respondents were asked the changes, if any, they would like to have in these programmes, a huge number (46.1%) said they wanted no change. About 25.3% wanted to have less advertisements and more entertainment in the programme. Some (14.4%) wanted the programmes to have more social concerns and news and 14.2% wanted some other assorted changes such as avoiding repetition of topics, inclusion of educational topics, have greater variety in songs, old songs, etc.

14. On the question regarding changes, if any, they wanted in the speech of the RJs, 66.4% expected no change at all, 14.7% wanted the RJs to change their style, 5.8% wanted the RJs to avoid unnecessary talk

and topics, 2.9% didn't want the RJs to mix languages in their speech and 10.2% wanted some other changes like reducing the speed of talking by the RJ; should motivate the listeners; should be considerate towards the common person; should increase effectiveness; RJ should avoid pomposity; can't tell exactly, etc.

1.2.2 Questionnaire -Section II

In the second section, three-point Likert scale was used. The respondents were given 22 statements and were asked if they agreed with the statement or disagreed with it or were not sure.

The responses are given in the following table:

Table 1
Responses to the Section II of the Questionnaire

Sr. No.	Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Can't tell for sure (%)
1	RJs main job is only to entertain the listeners	58.1	25.5	16.3
2	RJs often avoid talking about controversial issues and events happening around	30.7	50.7	18.5
3	RJs try to give equal importance to the views and aspiration of both the rural and the urban listeners in their program	84.3	9.9	5.6
4	RJs give priority to some specific perspective, views while choosing music, programmes and discussion	64.4	22.3	12.2
5	RJs have power to draw attention to social issues and to influence people	83.5	7.1	9.2
6	RJs don't try to influence the views of the listeners	23	61.1	15.8
7	RJs often emphasize the problems of the upper strata of the society, the urban perspective and neglect that of others	35.5	43.7	20.7
8	RJs often talk a lot about unnecessary and insignificant things	35.8	48.5	15.6
9	A hidden socio-political bias is felt in the RJ speech and programmes	44.6	33.33	21.9
10	RJs often make genuine appeal to raise social awareness	84.2	9	6.7
11	There is as much coverage and discussion on social, cultural, political issues on RJs programs as in the newspapers, TV and social media	72.7	15.9	11.3

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12	When I listen to the Radio, I pay close attention to	54.8	22.5	22.5
	everything the RJ says			
13	I don't think FM Radio channels are effective media for	26.5	59.3	13.6
	discussion of issues and problems of our society			
14	The way the RJs talk is good and worth imitating	76.9	11.5	11.5
15	RJ use of language has mainly youth as the target	72.8	14.7	12.4
	listeners			
16	RJs use too much English when speaking in Marathi	39.2	43	17.6
17	I don't like the way RJs mix different language like	27.9	62	10
	Hindi, Marathi, English when talking			
18	I like when RJs speak in local tone and use local words	79.2	11.5	10
	and expressions			
19	RJ speech has bad influence on Marathi language	20.9	64.3	14.7
20	There is similarity in the language and perspective of	40.6	31.2	28.1
	private FM RJs and Akashwani/Prasarbharati			
	announcers			
21	I feel RJ speech has more artificiality in it than natural	47.6	36.7	15.6
	flow			
22	RJ talk is often useless to me	24	64.3	11.6

1.3 Analysis and Discussion regarding the awareness of the engineering students:

1.3.1 The main responsibility of the RJs, and Private FM channels as a social platform:

For this, let us consider statement 1, 5 and 13 from section II and question 13 from section I.

As we have seen, 58.1% of the respondents agree that RJs main job is only to entertain the listeners (II: 1)*. At the same time 83.5% respondents agree that RJs have the power to draw attention to social issues and influence the people (II:5) and 59.8% think that Radio Channels are effective media for discussion of issues and problems of our society (II:13). One the other hand, only 14.4 % respondents want that RJs should

II. Socio-Political biases and Class biases

Some 50.7% respondents disagree with the statement that RJs often avoid talking about controversial issues and events of the time (II: 2). At the same time 44.6% respondents agree that a hidden socio-political bias is evident in the RJ speech and programs (II:9). These two responses stand in direct contradiction to each other and this indicates their lack of sufficient understanding of socio-political issues and biases.

include topics of social concern, when asked what changes they would like to see in RJs programmes (I:13) From these four answers it is evident that respondents students have contradictory views about this. Respondents do think private FM channels and RJs conducting programs on it are capable of addressing socio-cultural problems and issues, but they seem to be satisfied with RJs' job of just entertaining them through their programmes.

^{*} All the questions henceforth will be referred to in the following manner: (Section number: Question number). For example, Question 1 from Section II is (II.1)

About 84.3 % respondents agree that RJs try to give equal importance to the views and opinions of both the rural and urban listeners in their programmes (II: 3). At the same time, 64.4% respondents also agree that RJs give priority to some specific perspectives, views and likes while choosing music, and issues for programmes and discussion (II:4). Some 35% respondents agree that RJs often emphasise the problems and perspectives of the upper sections of the society and of the urban population and neglect the problems/ perspectives of others. About 43.7% disagree with this (II: 7). The respondent students give contradictory answers at different places which reveals the confusion in their minds and lack of capacity for independent contemplation.

III. Preferences and coverage of sociopolitical cultural issues:

About 59.8% of the respondents agree that private FM channels are effective media for discussing issues and problems of our society (13:II) and 72.7% students agree that there is as much coverage and discussion on social, cultural, political issues on RJs programs as in the newspapers, TV and social media. However, when we factually look at the contents of the FM programmes, this view does not hold good. It seems respondents perhaps pay less attention to the content of the programme and are drawn more to the music, entertainment and language and style of the RJ speech. This claim is corroborated by the fact that 73% of the respondents like to listen to the FM radio in the background while they read/work/do some other work (I: 3) This claim is further corroborated by the responses respondents to the questions 12 and 13 from the section I where a favourite RJ is preferred for his/her style of speaking rather than the content he/she produces

IV. RJs' capacity to exert social influence:

If we take into consideration questions 5, 6, 8 and 10 from section II, it is quite clear that most of the respondents agree that RJs have the capacity to exert social influence. As many as 83.5% of our engineering students feel that RJs have the power to draw attention to social issues and to influence people (II:5). About 61.1% respondent don't agree with the statement that RJs don't try to influence the views of listeners (II:6). Similarly, 84.2% of the respondents agree that RJs often make genuine appeal to raise social awareness (II:10).

Further when it comes to map out the exact impact that the RJs have on youth, let's consider the responses to II:12 and I:3. More than half, to be exact, 54.8% of the respondents agree that when they listen to the radio, they pay close attention to everything the RJ says (II:12). On the contrary, many of the respondents (73%) have earlier said that they listened to the FM radio in the background while reading or doing some other work. Again, 64.3 % respondents disagree with the statement that RJ talk is of little use (II:22). These three responses only reflect the confusion in their minds as well as the lack of proper reflection on the questions being asked.

V. Linguistic features and style in RJ talk:

From the responses to statements II:14 and II:22 it is evident that these students like the way RJs talk on their programmes. As many as 76.9 % respondents agree that the way RJs talk is good and worth imitating (II: 14). Responses to I:6, I:7 and I:14 also reveal

that these students like the style of RJ talk. In addition, 67.6% students said that they use some of the features of RJ talk in their speech (II: 6) and 66.4% of respondents claimed they are quite happy with the style and don't wish to see any change in RJ speech (II: 14).

VI. Mixing of languages in RJ talk:

When asked if they feel RJs use too much English in their speech, 39.2% of the respondents agreed and 43% disagreed (II:16). Furthermore, of 62% respondents disagreed with the statement - I don't like the way RJs mix different languages like Hindi, English and Marathi (II:17). We have already seen that 64.3% of the respondents disagree with the statement that they find RJ talk often useless to them (II:22). All the three responses indicate that these students like the way languages are mixed by the RJs in their talk.

VII. Influence of code mixing on Marathi Language:

Responses to II: 16 and II: 19 show that they see RJs mixing English and Hindi in their speech. As many as 64.3% respondents don't think that it has bad influence on Marathi language (II:19).

VIII. Artificiality in RJ talk:

About 47.6% of the respondents opined that RJ talk feels considerably artificial and lacks natural flow (II: 21). However, 76.9% of the respondents find the talk good and worth imitating (II:14). It is evident that most respondents think the speech style of an RJ is worth imitating even if it may sound artificial.

IV. Use of local tone, regional/dialectal words and expressions:

As many as 72.8% of the respondents agree that the way language is used by RJs reveals mainly youth as the target listeners (II: 15). And even more number of respondents – 79.2 % them – said that they like it when RJs speak in local tone or use local expressions and words (II: 18). This is substantiated also by the responses to I:11. Through these responses, RJ Sumit emerged as the most popular RJ amongst the respondents. It must be mentioned here that RJ Sumit doesn't have a radio show broadcast in Kolhapur district. His show **'Salaam** City' is broadcasted from Aurangabad on MY FM channel. Yet he is very much popular with the youth in Kolhapur. The respondents listen to him using other sources. He reaches the youth through social media, through his short tik tok videos on WhatsApp and Facebook, which are posted and reposted by the youth. He is famous for his use of typical Kolhapuri local tone, words and expressions. Though the location and the medium have changed, the use of local tone and expressions in his speech keeps him connected to the listeners in Kolhapur.

V. Comparison of RJs on Private FM Channels with the Radio Announcers on Akashwani/ Prasarbharati channels:

Only 9% of total respondents chose Akashwani as their favourite FM channel (I: 4) and only 19.5% students said they prefer to listen to Akashwani Announcers than to FM RJs. (I:10). This goes to show that very few students listen to Akashwani in the first place. This is also substantiated by responses to I: 11 where only 6% students named Akashwani Announcers as their Favorite RJs/ announcers.

In their response to I:20, 40.6% of the students said there is similarity in the language and perspective of FM RJs and announcers on Akashwani/ Prasarbharti channels while only 31.2% of the respondents disagreed with this. These responses indicate that the respondents have a very vague idea of Akashwani announcers, their style of speech and content of their programmes. This is because these engineering students do not listen to the programmes of announcers on Akashwani/ Prasarbharti channels.

1.4 Conclusion:

This survey of Engineering stream students in Kolhapur district showed that the frequency of listening to FM radio is less. Most of them listen to the radio when at home or while commuting. A vast majority of them are passive listeners. Private FM channels are more liked by them than the state owned Akashwani channels. Radio City and Mirchi FM are the most popular channels in this group of students. Music, latest movie songs are the biggest attractors, followed by coverage of local events, news and issues. RJ speech style came at the third place in this list closely followed by humour and jokes. A few of these listeners found RJ speech unexciting, unremarkable. Almost half of the respondents said they liked some particular features in the talk of their favourite RJ's talk. More than half of them saw the popularity of FM programmes and RJs on the rise. Very few of these listeners followed the RJs on social media. RJ Rochie and RJ Sumit were found to be most popular with these listeners and the reasons given were the RJ's style and entertainment quotient of the programme in that order. About a half of the respondents were happy with the programmes and RJ talk and didn't want to see any change in both.

Half of the respondents opined that the main task of the RJ is to entertain the listeners. This opinion coincided with their choice of the favourite channel and RJ. Most of these respondents didn't perceive any bias on the part of the RJs regarding listeners from urban and rural locations but they did feel that certain perspective is prioritised by the RJs. They also felt a hidden socio-political bias in the RJ speech and programmes. A huge majority of these respondents were aware of the power RJs have to draw attention to certain issues and many opined that this power was used by the RJs effectively.

Regarding the language used by the RJs, most of the respondents found it worth imitating. They also reported that the youth is the target audience of these programmes and so is language used in a particular way. Most of them are happy with the way different languages are mixed in the RJ talk. A greater number likes the way local words, expressions and tone are used by the RJs. Very few of the respondents saw RJ talk as a bad influence on Marathi language.

When the opinions and views expressed by the respondents regarding the social and political issues covered in the programmes were studied in relation to the contents of the actual programmes, a few insights were obtained regarding the respondents. It was fond that the respondents seem short of proper awareness regarding socio-political issues and social inequalities. It also reveals the inability of looking through appearances and to understand the complexities of the situation in its totality. They are not able to see through the class biases and prejudices

of the RJs and are easily influenced by the projected reality which is but skin deep.

The study reveals the opinions and views of engineering stream students from Kolhapur district. It may not represent the views and opinions of students from other streams in Kolhapur district. It also can't reveal

anything about the views and opinions of students from other areas of Maharashtra and India. Given the sample size, it is difficult to make broad generalisations. Further research on students from other streams as well as from other districts is needed before we can develop a broader picture and deeper insights.

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Annexure: **Questionnaire for Engineering Students Section I** 1. How often do you listen to FM radio? \Box less than an hour daily \Box 1-2 hours daily \Box 2-3 hours daily Rarely ☐ Other: 2. Where are you most likely to listen to FM radio? ☐ At home ☐ At the work place/college ☐ In the bus/car/train while travelling ☐ While exercising/jogging/walking/on the go ☐ Other: 3. Which statement is more appropriate about you? ☐ I like to listen to the FM Radio in the background while I read/work// do some other work ☐ I like to listen to the FM Radio by paying exclusive attention to the programmes on it 4. Which is your favourite FM channel? ☐ Tomato ☐ Mirchi ☐ Radio City □ Big FM ☐ Akashwani ☐ Other: 5. Why do you listen to your favourite FM channel? ☐ For new/hit songs and music ☐ For humour and jokes ☐ To listen to local events/issues ☐ I like the way RJs talk \Box For time pass □ Other: _____ 6. What do you feel about the RJ speech? ☐ I like some features of their speech ☐ I don' like the way they talk ☐ It is unexciting ☐ I very much like the way they talk ☐ I have not noticed anything different or special in their speech

□ Other:

7.	Wha	at do you feel about the ability of RJs to influence the listeners?
		I use some of the features of their talk in my speech
		I don't let their talk influence me
		The way they talk has a bad influence on the language and thinking of the listeners
		The way they talk can influence no one.
		Other:
8. '	Wha	at's your guess about the popularity of FM radio and RJs?
		Their popularity is on the rise
		They need to change to survive the changes
		They will retain the current popularity
		They will lose the current popularity
		Other:
9.]		low RJs on social media. Yes No
10.	Wl	nom would you like to listen more?
		Radio Jockey
		Aakashwani announcer
11.	Wl	nich is/are your favourite programme/s on FM?
12.	Wl	no is/are your favourite Radio Jockey/s (RJ)? Why?
13.	Wl	nat changes will you like to see in FM programmes?
14.	Wl	nat changes will you like to see in FM RJs' speech?

Section II

Instructions: Some statements are given below. Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with these statements or state if you are not sure. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Your personal feeling is all that matters.

Sr. No	Statement	Agree	Disagree	Can't tell for sure
1	RJ's main job is only to entertain the listeners			
2	RJs often avoid talking about controversial issues and			
	events happening around			
3	RJs try to give equal importance to the views and aspiration			
	of both the rural and the urban listeners in their program			
4	RJs give priority to some specific perspective, views while			
	choosing music, programmes and discussion			
5	RJs have power to draw attention to social issues and to			
	influence people			
6	RJs don't try to influence the views of the listeners			
7	RJs often emphasize the problems of the upper strata of the			
	society, the urban perspective and neglect that of others			
8	RJs often talk a lot about unnecessary and insignificant			
	things			
9	A hidden socio-political bias is felt in the RJ speech and			
	programmes			
10	RJs often make genuine appeal to raise social awareness			
11	There is as much coverage and discussion on social,			
	cultural, political issues on RJs programs as in the			
	newspapers, TV and social media			
12	When I listen to the Radio, I pay close attention to			
	everything the RJ says			
13	I don't think FM Radio channels are effective media for			
	discussion of issues and problems of our society			
14	The way the RJs talk is good and worth imitating			
15	RJ use of language has mainly youth as the target listeners			
16	RJs use too much English when speaking in Marathi			
17	I don't like the way RJs mix different language like Hindi,			
	Marathi, English when talking			
18	I like when RJs speak in local tone and use local words and			
	expressions			
19	RJ speech has bad influence on Marathi language			
20	There is similarity in the language and perspective of			
	private FM RJs and Akashwani/Prasarbharti announcers			
21	I feel RJ speech has more artificiality in it than natural flow			
22	RJ talk is often useless to me			