



## **RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS & CONSUMER BEHAVIOR- A PERCEPTUAL STUDY OF RURAL CONSUMERS**

**Dr. Nirmala K.D**

Associate Professor, Business Administration,  
Government First Grade College, Virajpet, Kodagu District, Karnataka State, India  
Email: [nirmala123.msn@gmail.com](mailto:nirmala123.msn@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*Promotion of products and services are inevitable in this competitive world. Many innovative media for promotion have emerged supplementing the traditional media. The rural regions offer numerous challenges when it comes to promoting or advertising products and services due to factors such as the demography and accessibility issues of the rural consumers. Rural consumers are today educated and well learned and have access to technology and digital media. But radio is still a popular means of information and entertainment in the rural areas. Hence the rural consumers have a lot of exposure to radio. So this study on perceptions of rural consumers on the effectiveness of radio advertising especially on purchase decisions and consumer behavior was conducted in Kodagu District of Karnataka.*

**Key words:** Radio Advertisement, rural consumer, consumer behavior, purchase decisions

### **INTRODUCTION**

To purchase or not to purchase a product is a complex decision making process than the act of actually purchasing one. The decision is influenced by one major factor that is advertising. Today many different types of media exist, radio being one of them.

In the wake of advances in technology and the evolving of online and digital tools, one would wonder if promotion through traditional media platforms such as radio would have an impact on consumers purchase intentions. Radio advertising is one of the oldest forms of mass communication. It is a most popular medium for marketing communication because of its wide reach, affordability, portability and strong local presence. Despite the rapid growth of television and digital platforms including social media, radio is still an enduring medium. In rural areas of late there is an increasing access to newer forms of media.

In rural pockets of our country, where literacy rates may be lower and internet penetration is still developing, radio serves as an important and popular medium for information, entertainment and advertising. The affordability factor and its ability to connect with audiences in local languages, at convenient times, and through engaging content like songs, jingles and talk shows and its portability makes it a powerful tool for marketing communication. Rural markets have huge untapped potential for various products and services and hence those businesses aiming to tap into rural markets, radio offers a cost-effective and trusted platform to influence purchase intentions of the rural populace.

Radio advertising involves the promotion of products or services through audio messages broadcast to listeners. These messages can range from brief spots and jingles to sponsored programs and announcements.

Understanding the effectiveness of radio advertising in shaping the buying behavior of rural customers is essential for designing successful marketing strategies. This study aims to explore how radio advertisements affect rural consumers, what factors contribute to their effectiveness, and how advertisers can better utilize this medium to engage a diverse and widespread audience.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Though there have been rapid developments in the field of advertising with the growth of digital media, radio continues to be an important medium especially in rural areas. It is an affordable and accessible medium. Hence it is important to understand the extent to which radio advertising influences the purchasing decisions of rural consumers. This study aims to understand the influence of radio advertising on the rural consumer behavior, focusing on their perception, responsiveness, and buying patterns.

## Need for the Study

The rural populace forms a major portion of India's consumer base. When it is a fact that urban consumers are influenced by advertisements on digital media, radio forms a popular medium for rural consumers though television and digital media too are penetrating the rural regions due to its low cost and availability in local languages. Radio plays a crucial role in disseminating information related to products, services, government schemes, and social messages. The study is relevant as it helps to identify the effectiveness of radio as an advertising medium in rural and semi-rural areas and to provide insights into rural consumer buying behavior and decision-making patterns. This perceptual study was conducted in Kodagu, a small coffee growing district of Karnataka where around 85% of its populace reside in rural areas or villages. (2011 census). Also radio is a popular means of information and entertainment in the rural pockets of Kodagu. Hence it was considered apt to conduct this study as the rural market is large and quite a significant one.

## Review of Literature

Arens, Schaefer and Weigol (2009) note that radio advertising is a one-on-one and a mobile medium that people tend to listen to alone, while Belch and Belch (2012) suggest that radio advertising can assist SMEs to generate more consumer interest, more sales and increased profits.

A study by Rajagopal (2010) noted that rural consumers trust radio and the messages broadcast through it in local language. He found that radio advertising can influence brand awareness and purchase intentions because the content is culturally relevant and repeated. In a study on the impact of radio advertisements on buying behaviour of urban consumers by the same author in 2011, he concluded that radio commercials which are more entertaining while disseminating message are more attractive and promotional messages on sales of products have quick response to the supermarkets and department stores. Balakrishna and Somasundaram (2012) studied the influence of media on consumption patterns in rural Tamil Nadu and found that radio was considered a reliable source of information for agriculture, health, and consumer products. They concluded that radio ads enhanced product recall.

Dasgupta and Sinha (2014) found that radio advertising had a moderate but positive impact on rural consumer purchasing behaviour. They suggested that emotional appeal, repetition, and simplicity in messaging played a major role in influencing rural audiences.

Verma (2018) examined the effectiveness of radio advertising from the viewpoint of rural consumers across several Indian states. The study revealed that radio is a cost-effective and influential medium for raising product awareness in rural areas. However, its direct influence on purchase decisions was found to be limited unless accompanied by additional reinforcements like in-store promotions, local influencers, or experiential marketing. The study recommended that advertisers should focus on local language usage, consistent message delivery, and integration with other marketing channels to enhance overall impact.

Mishra & Kumar (2019) identified the challenges faced by traditional media marketing in rural Bihar. Through a comprehensive survey of advertisers, media professionals, and rural consumers, the authors identified key challenges such as limited audience measurement metrics, ad clutter, and infrastructure constraints.

Chattopadhyay and Basu (2020) explored the role of radio in influencing consumer behaviour in rural India, particularly in areas with limited access to digital or print media. They concluded that radio remains a credible and powerful medium in rural communication due to its linguistic adaptability, wide reach, and cultural relevance. The authors found that radio is especially effective in building awareness and interest among rural listeners but has less direct impact on final purchase decisions unless supported by word-of-mouth or community validation.

Mukesh Kumar & Nagma Shadab (2024) in a study on the opportunities and challenges of Traditional Media Marketing in Rural Bihar emphasized on the role of traditional media marketing in driving socio-economic development and consumer behaviour in rural Bihar. The study found that retaining listener attention by traditional media was a big challenge and radio ads were less effective in persuading rural consumers. Hence the need for addressing issues of consumer engagement to maximize the impact of radio advertising campaigns

## Objectives of the study

- To understand the listening routine of the rural consumers to radio.
- To evaluate the reach of radio advertising to rural consumers
- To examine the influence of radio advertising on the purchase decisions of rural consumers.
- To understand the influence of promotional advertisements on the radio to the overall consumer behavior in the rural market.

## Methodology

The present study was confined to the rural and semi-rural populace in Kodagu district of Karnataka. A sample of 200 rural and semi-rural consumers formed a part of the convenient sample. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the sample to elicit the required data. Hypotheses testing were done using Chi Square.

**Hypotheses:**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Radio advertisements do not have a significant impact on the purchase decisions of rural consumers

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Radio Advertisements does not a significant impact on consumer behavior in the rural market

**Limitations of the Study**

The small sample size might not be substantive enough to represent the whole population.

The study relies on primary data which could be biased.

The objectivity is limited to the extent of the respondents' honest opinions.

**Results & Findings**

Table 1: **Demographic Profile of the respondents (N=200)**

	Attribute	Number	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	109	54.5
	Female	91	45.5
<b>Age</b>	<20 years	32	16
	20-30 years	57	28.5
	30-50 years	62	31
	50-65 years	33	16.5
	>65 years	16	8
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	51	25.5
	Self employed	28	14
	Government sector	18	9
	Private sector	28	14
	Farmer /planter	64	32
	Unemployed	11	5.5
<b>Education</b>	SSLC	26	13
	PUC	27	13.5
	Graduate	114	57
	Post graduate	29	14.5
	Other	4	2
<b>Residence</b>	Rural	164	82
	Semi-Rural	36	18

In the sample of 200 respondents, 82% were rural residents and 18% from semi-rural regions. 54.5% were male respondents, 59.5 % of the respondents were between 20 to 50 years, 8% were above 65 years of age and 16% below 20 years. 32% of the sample was farmers/ coffee planters, 23% were employed (government & private sector) and 25.5% were students. 57% of the respondents were graduates.

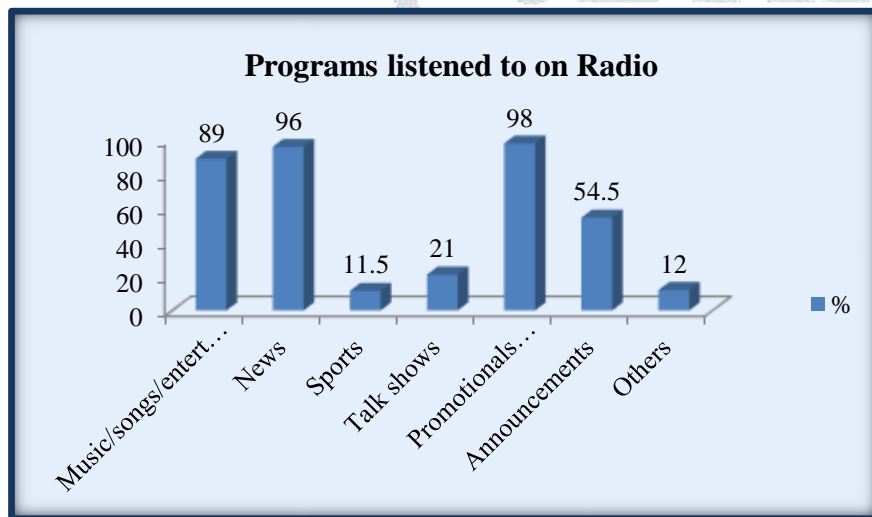
Table 2: **Radio Listening Time**

Preferred Radio Listening Time	Number	%
Morning	129	64.5
Afternoon	18	9
Evening	8	4
Night	45	22.5
Total	200	100

From the above table it can be observed that most of the respondents (64.5%) preferred to listen to radio in the morning hours, 22.5% preferred to listen in the evening. Television is usually preferred in the evening.

**Table 3: Programs listened to on Radio**

Radio programs listened to	Number	%
Music/songs/entertainment	178	89
News	192	96
Sports	23	11.5
Talk shows	42	21
Promotional Advertisement	196	98
Announcements	109	54.5
Others	24	12



From the above table it can be observed that 98% of the respondents listen to advertisements on the radio. Advertisements are sandwiched between entertainment, sports and talk shows on radio and hence people are exposed to advertisements when they listen to their favorite programs. Hence radio is a very viable option for advertisers especially for the rural belt.

**Table 4: Attitude/ Opinion/ Behavior towards Advertisements on Radio**

	Attribute	Number	%
Frequency of listening to radio advertisements	Quite often	145	72.5
	Sometimes	51	25.5
	Rarely	4	2
	Not at all	0	0
Type of advertisement listened to	Clothing	192	96
	Jewelry ads	185	92.5
	Electronic goods	182	91
	Food & Beverage	102	51
	Home Appliances	141	70.5
	Personal Care	32	16
	Hotels and resorts	124	62
	Bookstore or stationary ad	198	99
	Educational institution ads	182	91



	Supermarket ads	24	12
	Furniture	173	86.5
	Others	24	12
Tendency to switch stations during radio ads	Yes	5	2.5
	No	192	96
	Sometimes	3	1.5
Purchase decisions influenced by radio advertisements	Yes all the time	26	13
	Yes most of the time	67	33.5
	Yes but only sometimes	102	51
	Never at all	5	2.5
Effectiveness of radio as an advertising medium	YES	117	58.5
	NO	31	16
	Not Sure	52	26
Respondents opinions on drawbacks of radio	Radio has only audio effect	112	56
	Less number of stations	64	32
	Transmission issues in remote places	34	17
	People are more connected to social media than radio	86	43
	Radio does not appeal to youth	34	17
	Advertisement on radio do not have memorable effect	56	28
Requirement for Radio advertisements	For all products and services	32	16
	Only for certain products and services	141	70.5
	Only for service	12	6
	For announcements	15	7.5
	Radio can be a standalone medium for advertisement	4	2
	Radio should be considered with other media such as newspaper, social media for effective advertisement	195	97.5
	No opinion	1	0.5
Radio advertisements generate emotions & drive consumer needs	Yes	42	21
	No	101	50.5
	Not sure	57	28.5
Factors in Radio advertisements which are appealing	Informative Content	139	69.5
	Jingles	163	81.5
	Limited Time Offers	102	51
	Discounts	86	43
	Celebrity Endorsements	47	23.5
	Others	10	5
Do radio advertisements influence perception of a brand	Strongly Agree	18	9
	Agree	72	36
	Neutral	61	30.5
	Disagree	43	21.5
	Strongly Disagree	6	3

From the above table it is observed that 72.5% of the respondents listen to advertisements very frequently on radio. Clothing, personal care products, jewelry, stationary goods, food and beverages, furniture, educational institutions, hospitality sector advertisements are some of the most listened to ones on radio by most of the respondents. Unlike television advertisements, people in the sample do not switch channels when advertisements appear on the radio. 51% of the sample opined that radio advertisements sometimes influence their purchase behavior whereas 33.5% of the sample opined that most of the time their purchase decisions are influenced by radio advertisements. 58.5% of the sample feels that radio advertisements influence consumer behavior whereas 26% are not very sure. Regarding the drawbacks of radio as a medium of conveying advertisements, most of the respondents opined that having only audio effect is the drawback, also the preference of social media by people of all age groups due to the proliferation of internet even to the rural areas has made radio less relevant for advertisements, another reason is that advertisement on radio do not have a memorable effect. 70.5 % of the sample felt that radio is a promotional medium only for certain products & services and not for all unlike television. 97.5% of the respondents opined that radio should be considered with other media such as newspaper, social media for effective advertisement and it cannot be a standalone medium for advertisements. 50.5% are of the opinion that radio advertisements do not generate emotions & drive consumer needs as against 21% who felt the opposite. 81.5% found jingles of the advertisements very appealing, 69.5% found the informative content appealing as they are crisp and short, 51% look for limited offers of supermarkets or products & services as they are timely advertisements on radio, celebrity advertisements are not very appealing as only 23% are in favor, this may be due to the radio having only audio effect. An interesting observation with regard to radio being able to influence brand perception, 45% agree and 55% either do not agree or have no opinion. Hence unlike television and other media, radio probably does not have a deep impact of brand perception.

## Results from Hypothesis Testing

### Hypothesis1:

H<sub>0</sub>: Radio advertisements do not have a significant impact on the purchase decisions of rural consumers.

H<sub>A</sub>: The purchase decisions of rural consumers are influenced by promotional ads on radio

**Table 5: Results of Hypothesis1 testing**

Purchase Decision	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)
Yes all the time	26	50
Yes most of the time	67	50
Yes but only sometimes	102	50
Never at all	5	50

$$\chi^2=111.88$$

Critical value from Chi-square table for 3 degree of freedom at 5% level = 7.815

Hence we reject the null hypothesis. There is a statistically significant difference in how people respond to the influence of radio advertisements on purchase decisions.

Hence purchase decisions of rural consumers are influenced by promotional advertisements on radio.

### Hypothesis 2:

H<sub>0</sub>: Radio Advertisements does not influence consumer behavior in the rural market

H<sub>A</sub>: Radio Advertisements influence consumer behavior in the rural market

Response	Observed (O)	Expected Frequency (E)
Yes	71	66.67
No	32	66.67
Not Sure	97	66.67

$$\chi^2=32.11$$

Critical value from Chi-square table for 2 degree of freedom at 5% level = 5.991

Hence we reject the null hypothesis as there is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of responses.

This suggests that radio advertising does influence consumer behavior in the rural market.

### Conclusion:

Advertisement is a component of the promotional mix which is one of the Ps of Marketing Mix. It creates awareness and hence influences consumer buying behavior. Hence organizations are spending a lot of money on advertisements. This requires organizations to understand the value of advertising on different media. Since advertisements are targeted at consumers, it is imperative to understand how consumers behave on the basis of advertisements. Different media have different response patterns and hence the study of the impact of each media becomes important. This study was undertaken to understand the impact of radio advertisements on the purchase behavior of rural consumers in Kodagu district of Karnataka. The respondents in the survey who were rural and semi-rural respondents often listen to radio for news, entertainment and promotional information. Morning and evening times were the most preferred listening times. Though television and social media thanks to internet proliferation in the rural areas influence consumer behavior, radio is still a popular medium of entertainment and information. The radio airs a variety of promotional advertisements ranging from products such as food and beverage, furniture, clothes to services such as educational institutions, hospitality sector etc. The study found that radio advertisements significantly influences purchase decisions and consumer behavior in the rural market.

### References:

- Chattopadhyay, S., & Basu, R. (2020), "Radio as a Tool of Rural Communication: A Study on its Effectiveness in Influencing Consumer Behaviour", *Journal of Media and Social Development*, 8(2),
- Mukesh Kumar & Nagma Shadab, (2024) "The Impact of Traditional Media Marketing in Rural Bihar: Opportunities and Challenges", *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol 5(4).
- Peter Phiri and Mohammad Hossain (2022), "Impacts of Radio advertising influencing consumers intentions to purchase", Student thesis, Master degree, Faculty Of Education and Business Studies Department of Business and Economic Studies, University of Gavle.
- Priya & Kalairajan, (2016), 'A study on Radio Advertisements & its Impact on Rural customers', *EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review*, Vol - 4, Issue- 12, December 2016
- Rajagopal (2011), "Impact of Radio Advertisements on buying behaviour of urban commuters", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 39(7),
- Riddhi Kapoor, (2021), "Role of Radio in Advertising and Marketing", *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, Volume 6, Issue 8, August – 2021
- Verma, A. (2018). "Effectiveness of Radio Advertising in Rural Markets: A Consumer Perspective" *Journal of Rural and Agricultural Marketing*, 6(1), 35–42.