

Nepali Local Radio: Current Landscape, Challenges and Opportunities

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Synopsis:

Sharecast Initiative Nepal's 4th edition of the Nepal Media Survey shows that the Nepali audience is catching up fast with global trends. Until a few years ago, Nepalis were forced to consume whatever the mainstream media disseminated. However, all this is changing. Today, Nepalis are increasingly in control of what media content they prefer. Media preference is now not only dependent on our socio-economic status, age, geographic location or education, but personal choice, context and content. There is now a proliferation of mobile devices, internet connectivity and choice of traditional and new media platforms. The key takeaway from 2019 survey is that the big "digital divide" between the "young urban male Bahun/Chhetri/Newar" group and the rest of the country affects media consumption.

This presentation will focus on radio listenership and changing patterns. Our survey shows that Nepali audience consider radio as the medium to access local news and information. This is clearly indicated in the overall findings of Nepal Media Survey 2019. Nepal's 700+ FM radio station's technical coverage is local except in the case of government owned Radio Nepal which has its regional broadcast in Medium Wave. A key finding from this survey indicates that 49% listen to radio on a regular basis. Those who don't listen to radio 55% say they don't do so because they don't have a radio set. Some indicators to validate our insights are presented here.

As to why radio listeners tune in to a specific radio station, majority (73%) said its because of their local news. The research tried to understand the preferred content of radio listeners. 70% tune into radio for local news whereas only 29% tune in for national and international news. 48% listen to local radio to listen to songs and music.

This presentation will focus on the changing media landscape and challenges for radio listenership.

About the Speaker:

Madhu Acharya, CEO and president of Sharecast Initiative Nepal, has over two decades of experience in radio program production, training and media management. Sharecast Initiative Nepal is a not for profit distributing company that focuses on audience data, digital media platforms and capacity building of local radio stations. He is the co-founder and current chairperson of Antenna Foundation Nepal.

In the past he has worked for Internews, BBC World Service Trust and Radio Sagarmatha. He is John S. Knight Fellow at Stanford University (2010-11) and has received numerous fellowships from Panos, RNTC, INK and IREX.