Different Types of Radio Programme Formats

The radio programme format refers to the overall content broadcasted over a radio station. These formats are designed to reach a defined listening population based on such demographic criteria such as age, gender, ethnicity, background etc. All radio formats have three ingredients-spoken word, music and sound effects. Apart from news bulletins, the various types of radio programmes include magazines, features, talk, discussion, interviews, voice over and Radio Bridge.

* News Magazine

You would have read a magazine in print medium. They are usually published weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, quarterly, annually or fromtime to time. Some magazines cater to general readers while others are meant for a specific audience. Some magazines focus on youth, women, children, health, education, science, technology, literature, culture or films. These magazines contain cover story, features, interview/s, health tips, cooking recipes, movie reviews, among others. While Radio magazine is similar to print magazine, the former is in audio form. Some of the features of radio magazines are listed here:

 Radio magazines are broadcast weekly or on a specific date in a month.

 A Radio magazine has plenty of variety in its contents. It contains interviews, music, reviews, discussion and discussions.

 The duration of each segment in a Radio magazine is not fixed.

 Like the masthead of a newspaper, every Radio magazine has a signature tune in the beginning.

 A unique name is chosen for the Radio magazine.

 Announcers and producers keep track of the chronology of episodes of a program and broadcast them accordingly.

 Radio magazines cater to a certain kind of listeners.

 At the start of the program, the announcer mentions the kind of listenership it seeks to serve.

* News Feature

The feature is an in-depth news story which gives more details of events. It deals more with facts rather than opinion and is usually not perishable. Feature writing needs focusing, understanding, thinking and care. It contains more information, more explanation, interpretation details, and analysis. Features tend to be based on the profile

Of people who make the news; they explain events more; they give analyses of what is happening in the world, nation or community; they teach the audience how to do a particular thing; they suggest better ways live and they examine trends and entertain readers.

But the making and manner of presentation in various mass media is different.

The writing and printing style of print media is one of a kind. It consists of excellent writing, corresponding photographs, pictures on the topic and graphics, which makes for a wholesome read. Similarly, good visuals support the script of a good TV feature. In some cases, the video is shot first and a script is prepared later. But a radio feature is very unlike the ones used in these media. The salient features of a feature on Radio are given here:

* + - 1. A wireless feature is meant only for listeners.
      2. The interest of listeners is kept in mind while creating an audio feature.
      3. Proper conceptualization and corresponding script form the crux of a Radio feature.
      4. The script of an audio feature is presented in an attractive manner.
      5. Radio features are based on real people and use actual sounds.
      6. A Radio producer uses voice-over, music and sound effects appropriately to create a feature.
      7. The language which suits the subject most is chosen.
* Radio Talk

Talk is the oldest and a traditional format used in a Radio program. In this type of programme, you have mostly only one person dwelling on a subject matter. Or it may have one or more experts called in to deliver a talk on one or more topics.

* The duration of a Radio talk is between usually ten to fifteen minutes.
* Voice modulation is of essence in a Radio talk as listeners visualize the tone and gravity of the topic by listening only to the voice/s.
* The popularity of Radio talks has diminished in recent times. In today’s times, the duration of Radio talks has become shorter.
* Radio talks are considered as a program in public service broadcasting on All India Radio.
* The presenter begins the talk after which guests deliver their talks.
* Discussion

In a familyor an organization, the solution to a problemis found after sitting and discussing the issue together. Similarly, the help of mass media is sought to discuss and solve issues arising in a society. Hence, a powerful and personal medium like Radio has a crucial role to play in solving problems of the public. Discussions on important matters are broadcast on Radio to arrive at solutions, which can be implemented to redress grievances.

This programme entails inviting different personalities from different sociopolitical background to the studio to discuss in detail a topic of community or national urgency. The discussion programme has a moderator who pilots the programme.

Issues affecting the public are discussed on Radio.

* If society is faced with an economic, political or social problem, such a program is broadcast.
* A specific topic is chosen for a discussion.
* A senior journalist usually moderates Radio discussions.
* The moderator mentions the name of the topic, gives a brief insight to the issue and introduces the panel of experts to the listeners.
* Several experts on the subject participate in the discussion and propose solutions.
* The duration of Radio discussions are from fifteen to thirty minutes.
* The presence of one or more influential personalities, who give their opinion on the topic, attracts listeners.
* If all experts are given equal opportunity and time to put forth their views, the content of the program becomes interesting.
* It is the primary job of the moderator to ensure that the panelists stick to the topic and do not deviate from it.
* Interview

Like other mass media, Radio programming includes interviews. This involves a chat or a discussion/conversationbetween the presenter and a guest who maybe an important personality in government, in civil society, industry, entertainment or a professional in a particular field of endeavour. A question and answer session are the nature of the interview programme.

Some of the salient features of Interviews are discussed here:

* Interviews are a compete program in themselves.
* Its duration may be from ten to thirty minutes or may stretch up to an hour.
* The duration of an interview depends on the topic and answers given by the interviewee.
* Most interviews are of people or personalities.
* Personalities from socialwork, politics, literature, music, sports, science, culture and entertainment are interviewed.
* Radio interviews can be used in different ways such as in news or documentaries.
* If the program is entirely interview based, listeners hear both the questions and answers.
* To reach a wider set of listeners, listeners get a chance to connect with the personality being interviewed through phone-ins.
* Public views on current topics such as Railway Budget, Financial Budget, demonetization, etc may be treated as interviews.
* The opinion of experts on issues concerning the public can be treated as interviews.
* You have to enhance your general knowledge, presence of mind and presentation style to be able to take good Radio interviews.
* Before commencing the interview, experts must be briefed about the topic and its facets. This will make the experts speak uniformly and keep them focused on the subject.
* Several experts can be interviewed at the same time. Effective moderating ability of the presenter will make the program interesting and hard to miss.
* Sound Byte
* The small portion of a lengthy audio clip which is useful for broadcasting on Radio is called a sound byte.
* The necessary portion which makes a sound byte is the most important part of a person’s speech.
* It is lavishly used in news stories.
* Reporters usually decide which portion of a speech or recording will be used as a sound byte. They are used in a similar way to quotes in a newspaper story.
* The use of sound byte gained immense popularity in the United States in the 1970s.
* If sound byte/s is/are added to a news story, it arouses the listener’s interest.
* Sound byte is used to bring uniformity in a story.
* According to some social scientists, sound bytes are a short summary of a recorded speech.
* Voice Despatch
* Voice despatches are used for Radio broadcast.
* Reporters and Stringers (contractual or part-time reporters) send voice despatches from the location of news events to the Radio station.
* In the early days, voice despatches were recorded at locations and the corresponding tapes were sent to the stations.
* In today’s times, they are used in live programs such as Lord Jagannath’s Car festival, cricket and football matches, etc.
* Along with changing times and revolutions in technological inventions, voice desptaches are sent through mobile, voice call, voice MMS (Multi-media Messaging System), Internet messaging platforms like WhatsApp, e-mail,etc.
* Like PTCs (Piece to Cameras) in television news, voice despatches make programs and news broadcast attractive.
  + 1. Radio Bridge
* Eponymously, Radio bridge acts as a connector.
* Radio bridge facilitates connection of one program to different stations across the country at a time.
* Radio bridge is used for a specific event or program.
* Radio bridge becomes functional using a satellite or internet.
* Radio bridge mainly facilitates exchange of ideas.
* Listeners as well as subject matter specialists can connect with the whole nation.

Reference- Odisha State Open University. <http://egyanagar.osou.ac.in/prog-slm-mjmc.html>