



#PERSPECTIVE

# RADIO'S LAST STAND

## Can FM survive in a digital world?

Not even six or seven years ago, whether it was a lazy weekend afternoon, a late-night drive, or an early-morning commute, FM radio kept us company.

The witty banter of RJs or the hottest new songs, all of it came together to form an audio backdrop to our lives. Radio stations connected people across the country and created shared experiences.

However, like many traditional media, FM radio has struggled to maintain its once-strong relevance in the face of rapid digitalisation, changing listener habits, and the rise of online streaming platforms.

### Where did things go wrong?

The decline in FM radio's popularity

can be traced to several factors. As Md Faqrul Haque Shawon, Head of Program Management at Radio Today FM 89.6, explains, "Firstly, the rapid advancement of digitalisation has impacted the decline of radio's popularity. Today, most of the content — music or news — that was once exclusively available on radio is now easily accessible online."

Essentially, FM radio has been overtaken by digital media's convenience and personalisation. Instead of tuning in to live broadcasts, listeners — especially the younger generation — prefer on-demand streaming services where they can curate their own playlists and access news whenever they want.

Shawon also highlights another major issue: the failure of many radio programs

to evolve with societal and audience demands. "People have become much more tech-savvy and discerning, and radio programs that fail to keep up with these changes struggle to retain their popularity. If content fails to resonate with the audience's evolving interests, it significantly drops in listener engagement," he notes.

Truly, radio jockeys (RJ) once were celebrities in their own right, trusted as friends and influencers long before social media took that role. However, the rise of streaming services, podcasts, and personalised media consumption gradually eclipsed traditional radio's prominence, leading to reduced listenership and financial struggles for many stations.

