

## **RURALIZATION OF TV AUDIENCE IN PAKISTAN**

**Rural Audience Overtake the Urban. Less than  
One in Four TV Viewers Live in Top 10 Cities**

Gallup Pakistan releases initial data on its **Media Survey 2008-2009**

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## **Television Audience Measurement (TAM) faces a New Challenge. Urban based Audience Measurement can be highly misleading**

Gallup Pakistan has just released the findings from a large scale nation-wide rural and urban Media Survey. It is also called the Gallup Pakistan National Establishment Survey. The survey which was carried out in all four provinces shows that TV audience in Pakistan have been dramatically ruralized in the last one decade. The rural audience now significantly outnumber the urban audience in the country. Of an estimated 86 million TV viewers of Age 10 years and above, more than 52 million live in the villages of Pakistan and only 34 million are spread out in the 470 cities and towns across the country. In fact only 18 million or less than one in five live in top 10 cities. These figures are corroborated by several replicated surveys conducted by Gallup Pakistan and other survey organizations during 2008-09.

The new finding presents a challenge for Television Audience Measurement as well as all communicators in the country. TV audience profile and viewing habits which are restricted to measuring them in the top cities can mislead media managers. If media managers make decisions based on flawed data they are likely to misallocate and waste scarce media budgets. In these recessionary times, that would be bad news for an industry which is the worst hit by the global financial crisis.

Our knowledge about “Ruralization of TV audience” brings us to the basics. There is no alternative to seeking media habits from samples of over 86 million TV viewers. They may be the “ordinary Pakistanis” but their meagre household budgets add up and make rural Pakistan an attractive target market. We must constantly measure their viewing habits and not restrict our measurements to just a few cities, whose audience are prominent but not the real target market for advertisers advertising mass products. Indeed for what is most advertised on televisions, that is Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) the rural market in money value is much larger than the top cities.

What is true for advertisers is equally true for all communicators. If the vast majority of TV audience, 52 million out of 86 million, live in rural areas, communicators should take that into account in the choice of subjects and the manner of delivering their message.

Finally on the Satellite Television. The satellite television is still to make its deep penetration in rural areas. But even then, out of approximately 38 million satellite tv viewers in Pakistan, only 15 million live in the top 10 cities, the remaining 23 million are located either in small cities and towns (11 million) or villages (12 million) of Pakistan.

The bottom-line is that rural Pakistan is waking up. It is getting connected to the mainstream through roads, electricity, telecom, more purchasing power and television. All modern facilities are getting ruralized because majority of Pakistanis live in its 45000 villages. Whether it is advertisers or communicators this reality must not be overlooked.