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By

Nihal Ahmad

**PAKISTAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION
ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF PBC**

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Radio Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947, with only two stations having a total radiating power of 15 kw covering about 4.6% of area and 7.3 percent of population. It was incorporated as a statutory body under an Act of Parliament on December 20, 1972 under the name Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation to ensure effective operation and growth of broadcasting as a function-oriented public service. The objective was to ensure general improvement in the quality of programmes, better utilization of talent and speedy implementation of projects for broadcasting development. Under the Act the functions of PBC briefly are:

- I. To provide broadcasting services within and outside Pakistan through programmes which are balanced and of high standard of quality and morality;
- II. To promote Islamic ideology, national unity and principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice as enunciated by Islam; discourage parochial, racial, tribal, sectarian, linguistic and provincial prejudices, and reflect the urges and aspirations of the people of Pakistan;
- III. To broadcast programmes in the Home and External Services as directed by the Federal Government from time and time;
- IV. To bring to public awareness the whole range of

significant activity and to present news or events in as factual, accurate and impartial a manner as possible;

- V. To carry out instructions of the Federal Government with regard to general pattern or policies in respect of programmes.
- VI. To hold the existing, and to construct or acquire and establish or instal additional stations and apparatus;
- VII. To compile, prepare, print, publish, issue, circulate and distribute, with or without charge, papers, magazines, periodicals, books, circulars which are conducive to the efficient functioning of the Corporation;
- VIII. To collect news and information in any part of the world in any manner that may be deemed fit.

In the discharge of its functions the Corporation is guided on questions of policy by the instructions, if any, given to it from time to time by the Federal Government which is the sole judge as to whether a question is a question of policy.

The affairs of PBC are managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the Chairman and not more than seven other Directors including the Director General, who is the chief Executive. At the moment there are five Directors.

It is mandatory for all Directors except the Finance Director to have experience in the field of broadcasting and public information media. Each Director has overall

responsibility in his respective field in accordance with the instructions of the Director General and policies and regulations framed by the Board of Directors.

The Board has full powers in regard to:

- I. preparation of the annual revenue budget of the Corporation and approval of that budget and expenditure not included in its annual budget for capital and development expenditure;
- II. formulation and implementation of all programmes and policies, and
- III. making of plans for technical development within the country and for promotion of Corporation's interests abroad.

PBC at present has five wings each headed by a full-time Director. Each Director is assisted by Controllers, Deputy Controllers, Programme Managers/ Engineering Managers/ Administrative Managers/ Accounts Managers/ News Editors and other lower staff which total about five and a half thousand.

These wings are:

- I. Programmes
- II. News, Current Affairs and Monitoring
- III. Engineering
- IV. Administration
- V. Finance, Accounts and Sales.

Broad responsibilities of each Director are:

- A) Programme: Planning, production, contents and presentation of

all services as well as of programmes produced by the Central Productions - a small Unit for production of quality programmes and maintaining National Sound Archives, the biggest treasure in the medium of sound.

- B) News: Collection, editing and presentation of news broadcasts in all services; planning, production, content and presentation of current affairs, news bulletins and monitoring.
- C) Engineering: Project planning, installation, operation and maintenance of technical plants and equipment, construction and maintenance of buildings, procurement of technical equipment and spaces.
- D) Administration: Recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, discipline, accommodation, medical, transport, telephones, overseas liaison, security, legal matters, management information.
- E) Finance: Procurement, supervision and operation of finances, control of development expenditure, maintenance of accounts, preparation of budget estimates, audit, BR licence fee, sale of advertisement time.

With its twenty Stations spread all over the country. Airing 270 hours programmes in the Home Services daily in twenty languages/ dialects on two dozen medium wave transmitters with

radiating power ranging from 250 watts to 1000 kw, PBC reaches almost every hook and corner of the country as it covers about 75% of the area and 95% of the population. The World Service in Urdu and English for 10 hours a day is directed towards Pakistanis living abroad. The External Services in 15 languages are broadcast for 20 hours a day to project Pakistan's policies and achievements.

The new broadcast strategy which was first introduced on first of January, 1987 and which remained suspended during the last two years, has been reintroduced from January 1, 1991. This one-to-one system of communication involves division of transmission into one-hour segments which are planned, produced and presented by a Producer with the help of a compere. Under the system news is broadcast every hour on the hour, programmes are life-related and result-oriented with emphasis on current affairs. It brings the people and different Government departments/ agencies nearer and helps in solving local problems of the people.

PROBLEMS

Personnel management in PBC to an appreciable degree is handled by the Director of Administration with assistance from his staff. All important cases of personnel management are ultimately referred to the Director General, as he is the chief executive. The cases are normally routed through the Director concerned. Another aspect of the problem is that officials avoid taking decisions, with the result that almost all decisions are taken at the apex.

Induction in professional cadres is only at the initial stage (as Producer, Sub-Editor, Broadcast Engineer) and there is no provision for direct recruitment at higher levels. While the present policy safeguards the interests of the existing staff, lack rather total absence of any possibility of competition at later stages tends to dampen the creative spirit of the employees. Sometimes need arises for engaging a really bright and more qualified and experienced person. This becomes almost impossible as the person concerned justifiably is not willing to accept a lower job and remuneration. It is for consideration if it would be better and in the interest of service if a certain percentage is fixed for recruitment at higher levels.

Promotion is normally on the basis of seniority-cum-fitness being determined through performance evaluation. In effect this policy means that once a person has been inducted into service he can rise virtually to the highest post on his turn. It is felt that not all persons can be good supervisors and managers. Some other criterion be evolved for selection (not promotion) to managerial cadres. One such formula can be seniority and fitness and merit - the three being given say equal importance and merit being determined by making employees undergoing training and qualifying tests.

The growth in PBC in different wings has not been according to any formula, particularly after becoming a Corporation. The increase in the number of staff in professional cadres specially the programme and news, has not been commensurate with the

increase in the number of services and stations while in other cadres the increase has been out of all proportions. This has contributed to another problem, though may not be directly in the field of training.

Formal training at the PBA is imparted to new entrants in Programme, News and Engineering Wings. Attempts are made to organize refresher and promotional training at different levels. Quite a number of such courses are postponed or dropped altogether as the Stations find it difficult to spare their staff members for the purpose due to shortage of staff. This applies particularly to Programme and News staff.

The need to computerise personnel records is keenly felt. Other Wings also need this facility e.g. for collection, compilation and rapid retrieval of material available at different Stations for broadcast purposes. Some steps have already been initiated in this direction. It is expected that it may not take long before the personnel data of the employees is computerised.

PBC is also seized of other management problems like decentralization of financial and administrative powers, determination of yardsticks for sanctioning personnel for various kinds of work, appraisal of employee's performance etc. PBC would like to share the experience of other broadcasting organizations in tackling such problems.

