

The current broadcasting situation in Indonesia

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THE CURRENT BROADCASTING SITUATION IN INDONESIA

INTRODUCTION :

Indonesia, an archipelago country, consists of about 17.000 island and comprises of more than 256 ethnic groups.

Majority of Indonesian people, who are mostly farmers, live in rural areas (80%) and only about 20% live in the cities.

It is then a great responsibility for the Department of Information to disseminate information equitably to people. The task to motivate Indonesian people is carried out through various media either traditional media or modern media.

Radio and Television are reliable electronic media chosen by the Department of Information assisting in motivating and encouraging the people to participate in the nation-building and national development.

Radio and Television are audio-visual media which are able to reach people who live even in the very remote area. With the introduction of the "Palapa" Communication Satellite in 1976, coverage of the electronic media, both radio and television, has been greatly enhanced. This means, that through radio and television all part of Indonesia can be reached as long as the receiving equipment are available.

THE RADIO BROADCASTING NETWORK :

The radio broadcasting system in Indonesia consists of RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia), a state or government owned national network and hundreds of private radio stations spread out all over Indonesia.

The RRI network includes one National station located in Jakarta and 52 local stations situated in all provinces in Indonesia. As a national network, RRI National Station Jakarta operates in various propagation systems, namely SW, MW and FM.

In addition to this, broadcast from Jakarta, RRI has also international programs using shortwave (SW) band in ten foreign languages.

Presently, RRI has owned 567 transmitters covering almost 100% of the Indonesian population.

As a state owned institution, RRI plays an important role as a government agent such as to disseminate the development information and government messages to all Indonesian people.

THE EXISTING TELEVISION BROADCASTING NETWORK :

There are six Television networks in Indonesia, one is government/state owned network and the other are private networks, namely RCTI, SCTV, TPI, ANTEVE and IVM. Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) is the only state owned network which carries the government mission. Like RRI, ~~its~~ main task is also to assist the Indonesian government to disseminate government messages and development information to all Indonesian people through its programs. At present, TVRI has 402 Transmitter Stations, located in all over Indonesia covering 81, 3 % of the population and 42 % of the areas. Its national network consists of one central station, 13 regional broadcast stations and 10 regional production stations.

Other private networks also broadcast nation wide, however, their transmitters are still very few and the coverage areas are still very limited. These private stations have also the commitment to assist the government to build the nation.

Due to the nature of their business as well as limitation of coverage, the roles they are playing are less important compare to TVRI in carrying out the task to disseminate development information.

OTHER AVAILABLE SERVICES :

In addition to RRI, Private Radio stations, TVRI and other five private TV networks there are some pay TV companies emerge in the country.

Seven licences have been granted to private companies running pay TV business using satellite and cable technology.

The geography of Indonesia that is able to be covered by a lot of satellites has given advantages for viewers to receive more TV channels.

Pointing the parabolic dish from east to west horizon will enable viewers to receive almost 100 TV channels.

Some of the channels are scrambled and can be watched by subscribing to a now available cable company in the country offering about 40 channels to the viewers. However, the areas covered by cable TV are still limited there is also a Pay TV Company offering services via satellite using a decoder. The subscribers for this pay TV is increasing everyday.

In conclusion, the TV operator has significantly increased in Indonesia which in turn has brought "threats" as well as "challenges" to the state owned broadcasting stations.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS, PROBLEMS AND RESPONSES

There are some major changes in the philosophy of broadcasting where there is a shift from "broadcasting" to "narrow casting" and finally to "point casting". Now the future trend will be the tailor made programs which can be requested individually.

The tremendous development of digital technology has introduced the new multimedia and interactive radio and television broadcasting.

The advancement of technology has also enabled the convergence of computer, communication and broadcasting.

This has given us a lot of advantages, benefits, and life enrichments. On the other hands, the convergence has left "difficult homeworks" for regulators. There will be almost no border between broadcasting business and telecommunication business unless there is a clear line drawn by the government to distinguish among operator, network provider and content provider where there is no country in the world has succeeded. The ownership will then be an important issue to consider. There is a trend to run not only one type of business as network provider or content provider but also two business at once for optimising all the available resources.

A part from the nature of business, digital technology has forced broadcasters to migrate from analog world to digital.

This will certainly bring some problems to overcome, namely, human resources, financial resources, and many technological considerations for replacing the present equipment.

The rapid growth in the broadcasting industry has opened up a lot of opportunities for professionals in the related fields. It has been felt difficult to retain a highly skilled people in the company due to the competition in the market.

It is also not easy to recruit professionals in broadcasting since broadcasting needs specific knowledge and skill. In order to overcome this personnel problems, training will be important for the management to provide.

There are now hundreds of programs available in the market including canned foreign programs. The problems are that the majority of the programs is not suitable for the Indonesian people according to our culture not to mention the violence, pornography etc found in the programs.

Private TV stations tend to be permissive than the state owned TV network. This is because the chosen programs are based on what people wants or the audience rating. Unlike the private stations, the state owned stations maintain the balance between what people wants and what people needs.

However, it is foreseen that in the future the trends of the TV programs will be permissive.

This means that state owned TV stations have to compete to win the audience while they are still playing a role to promote the Indonesian culture and keep the nation identity. The possible approach is then to build a community broadcasting.

Financial resources is an important problem arise nowadays, especially in the condition of monetary crisis. State owned broadcasting institution mainly depend on the government budget since there is no commercial allowed. Private Radio-TV Stations have also problems in financial resources since the commercials decreased sharply due to the crisis.

The solution taken to respond to this problem is to be efficient in every expenses. Efficiency, somehow, has the price of reducing the quantity, sometimes quality of the programs. Sometimes in certain conditions, programs re-run should be allowed.

THE BROADCASTING ACTS :

Indonesia has recently published its broadcasting act, registered as Act No. 24/1997. The acts regulates radio and television broadcasting covering the issues of ownership, coverage area, program contents, commercials and others related to broadcasting. According to the acts, the broadcasting is carried out in one National Broadcasting System where radio and TV broadcasting, Pay TV, TV satellite broadcasting, cable TV, multimedia and other new broadcasting services are included as the sub systems.

The broadcasting acts has also anticipated the future changes in broadcasting due to the rapid development in technology. Multimedia is one of the important issues regulated in the acts.

The implementation of the acts will certainly bring some challenge and problems to cope with. Obviously, there will be some changes in the organization structure, resources and mechanism, not to mention the human resource preparation to face the future technology in media.
