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MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE FOR BROADCASTERS

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, established under PBC Act 1972, was assigned to broadcast public service programmes in economic, agricultural, social, political, religious and cultural fields in all radio formats. Other objectives are:

- To provide broadcasting in the fields of information, education and entertainment through programmes which maintain a proper balance in their subject matter and a general standard of quality and morality.

- To broadcast programmes to promote Islamic ideology, national unity and principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice.

- To reflect the urges and aspiration of the people of Pakistan.

- To present news of events in as factual, accurate and impartial manner as possible.

- To carry out instructions of the Federal Government with regard to general pattern of policies in respect of programmes.

- To broadcast programmes in the External Services to foreign countries with a view to promote friendship and project Pakistan's viewpoint on International issues in true perspective.

- To broadcast programmes in the World Service for Pakistanis living abroad.
Radio Pakistan broadcast its programmes in 21 languages and dialects from 24 stations spread over the country. The duration of Home Service broadcasts is over 325 hours daily, whereas for overseas Pakistanis, 10 hours daily in World Service and 9 hours programmes in External Services in 14 languages. PBC has a battery of 27 medium wave transmitters with a total radiating power of 2611 KW, 13 short-wave transmitters with a radiating power of 1131 KW and 4 FM transmitters of 12 KW. Its transmission in satellite Asia Sat-2 started from July 1995. This has not only made our transmission quality excellent but also our programmes are now being received in 36 countries abroad.

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation was assigned public service role considering that the frequency spectrum was a public good and as such should be controlled in public interest, and that commercialism could not achieve the objective of public service. As a matter of fact, in countries like Pakistan which have large land-mass with variety of relief features, scattered population and low-literacy percentage and inadequate transport and communication systems, radio remains the most powerful medium which reaches places which are not connected with national grid. It still has enormous potentials from political, social and cultural points of view. Equipped with a receiver, citizens have access to instantaneous information, and to cultural products which they otherwise would have been unable to receive. So broadcasting in our part of world is still being perceived as an instrument of social and cultural development and a series of non-economic objectives like promoting national identity, moral values, democratic objectives, ideas and refining taste in music and plays.

However, in view of Pakistan’s lingering economic crisis, PBC’s programme activities and development projects have suffered due to financial constraints. In the environment dominated by the market concept, PBC is expected to increase its revenues from commercial programmes and advertisements. There is constant cut-back in the annual budget.
However, the presumption that communications and information technologies are also factors of economic growth has yet to be proved. Indeed Broadcasting is an easy way of attracting consumer interest but the business so earned is not enough to finance the broadcasting infrastructure, particularly when a lot of financial sources are needed to bridge technological gap. Pakistan has hardly managed FM broadcasting on mono transmitters and mostly depends on AM broadcasting which generally suffer from fading and noise. New media technologies, on the other hand, offer a vast expanded channel capacity, extended transmission reach which enable the projection of programmes and advertisement from foreign sources into domestic market. With technological advances such as digital compression, it is a matter of days that multi-channels will be utilised to offer all sorts of services to consumers. Pakistan will have a leeway to make up as channels are extended more and more beyond national frontiers and “World Space” of the USA becomes operative for Africa and Asia. Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is an expensive but qualitative service which has far greater access compared to short-wave and medium-wave broadcasting.

PBC is in the clutches of contradicting expectations to do better than the private channels in embodying the public service idea without being provided the necessary technical and financial support. It is expected to be productive, efficient and capable of generating its own income and be able to attract consumers. It is also expected to differ from the private channel in its programming. So it is expected to be similar to and different from the private broadcasting at the same time. This means competing harder for an audience for qualified staff, for financial resources and even for winning over the political authorities to its cause. Plunged into a context of competition PBC has limited strategic choices:

- It should stick to the policy of providing on educational, social and culture oriented audio service in disregard of marketing trends OR,

- Face up to the competitors by imitating their models especially as regards programming, but without the means necessary to achieve superior quality.
Our preference would be that broadcasting should not be dominated by the search for profit, but by the priorities of professional broadcasters and audiences. This would give management and broadcasters some scope for creative programming and make the programme schedule flexible enough for cultural and social purpose. The problems of PBC emanate from the fact that when the frequencies were scarce, they are treated as part of the public domain and used to promote public interest. Now that cable and satellite techniques are gaining precedence, the concept of public service broadcasting seems to be giving way to private enterprise. Thus financial crisis in developing countries like Pakistan is likely to harm the cause of public service broadcasting. However, remaining within its resources PBC has undertaken the following:—

**FM STEREO SERVICE**

Presently, most of the FM service provided by Radio Pakistan is mono. In order to meet the challenges of modern trends in the Radio Broadcasting, a battery of Stereo FM transmitters will be provided at different suitable places throughout the country. This will enable the listeners, to listen to their stereo-phonic music programmes with bright and clear quality.

Besides this scheme, we are also actively considering to acquired Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB). It is an altogether different mode of broadcasting which will provide Compact Disc and excellent sound quality free from noise, fading and distortion.

**BROADCASTING THROUGH SATELLITES:**

Many countries of the World are using Satellites for Audio, Video Broadcasting, Data & Telecommunication through Satellites. PBC is also studying seriously the feasibility of acquiring transponders in various Communication Satellites, already in orbit, for the broadcasting of its local and external services.
The ever changing technologies employed in broadcasting constantly pose new challenges to the organisations of developing countries and their media managers have to ensure smooth shift from one technology to other. This involves necessary training for the staff and restructuring of the organisation. Competitiveness, however hard at the international level, is the key to survival of national organisations like Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation which we are determined to be.