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Media And Values

By

Abdul Ghani Saeed
MEDIA AND VALUES

Paper Presented by
Abdul Ghani Saeed
Director
Executive Development Centre
Karachi, Pakistan

at
WORKSHOP ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA
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INTRODUCTION

This paper has been written in response to an invitation from Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, Singapore, for presentation at the Workshop on Media Education in South Asia.

1. Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to discuss the influence of media and new communications technology on value-formation and lifestyle-adoption, with particular reference to Pakistan.

2. Scope
The paper covers all those media which are popularly known as the mass media, whether or not they have a mass appeal in Pakistan at present. It includes local and foreign newspapers, magazines, radio, television, audio/videocassettes, motion pictures and books. It examines the impact of mass media on children, women, rural population, urban elite and professionals.

3. Limitation
The major limitation to a study of mass media in Pakistan is the fact that most of the so-called mass media do not reach more than 10% of our masses. For a population of more than 100 million, the combined circulation of 2,000 odd periodicals, in eight different languages is a little over three million; the television set count is less than two million; and the number of cinema houses is not more than 500. The number of books published each year is estimated at 3,000 (including new titles), while data on audio/ videocassettes is not available.

Somewhat more promising, as compared to dismally low reach of
other media is radio. Seventeen radio stations of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation broadcast their programmes in more than 25 different languages and dialects for listeners at home and abroad. Though the total number of radio licenses issued in the country does not exceed two million, the Audience Research Wing of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation claims a listenership of over 75 million. According to an independent estimate of the Media and Audience Research Service of Business Research Bureau, an affiliate of Gallup International, in Pakistan, about 25% of the male adults are regular radio listeners, while another 15% are exposed to radio programmes occasionally.

While the reach of radio is relatively higher, its impact as compared to that of newspapers and television, is lower. This is borne out by studies of buying behaviour, advertising effectiveness and voting behaviour conducted during the last fifteen years.

Another limitation is the paucity of published data. Many of the basic facts about media, circulation, frequency, reach; audience profile, reading, listening, viewing habits; media impact and audience response are either not available in the published form or are obsolete. The number of media and audience research studies undertaken in Pakistan so far also leaves much to be desired.

Yet another limitation in this case was the availability of time and resources for collection, sifting, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data from primary and secondary sources of information. Nevertheless, a humble effort was made to collect as much information as one could within a limited period of time, through literature survey, content analysis and personal interviews. Methods of data collection are discussed in the next section.

4. Methodology

Ideally, a study of this nature and significance should start with a survey of literature on mass communication's, published in
different parts of the world. It should be followed by content analysis of printed material, radio and television programmes, audio and videocassettes, and motion pictures. 

With the insight gained through literature survey and content analysis, questionnaires and observationnaires should be designed for primary data collection. Controlled experiments should also be set up to study the impact of media on children and less educated persons. The outline of a research design proposed for a more comprehensive study on this subject is presented in Appendix A.

In this case, literature survey and content analysis were done on a limited scale. Personal/telephonic interviews were conducted with a small number of well-informed individuals, professionals and communication experts in media organisations, advertising agencies, business and social research organisations and educational institutions. Their names are gratefully acknowledged in this document.

Findings of this study and conclusions/recommendations drawn from it are given in Chapters Three through Eight. Chapter Two gives an overview of our value system.

5. Definitions
The two basic terms, media and values, are defined in this section, while the other key terms used in this presentation and their definitions are given in Appendix B.

**Media**: means/agencies/intermediaries between the senders and receivers of mass communications.

**Values**: a set of beliefs/actions/principles/prescriptive norms, which are deemed good/proper/desirable by a given set of people; ideas about what is worthwhile; central principles of a culture that provide a standard for the evaluation of rules of conduct.
Chapter Two

OUR VALUE SYSTEM

Pakistan, which came into existence in 1947, inherited a valuesystem from the British rulers, which served as the main source of inspiration for the bureaucrats who managed the affairs of the newborn state. They controlled radio, the only electronic medium of mass communication at that time, and regulated access to, and contents of other mass media through import restrictions, censor boards, press advice system, defamation laws, press and publication laws, Registration of Books Act, Official Secrets Act, Foreign Relations Act, Security of Pakistan Act, Safety Act, Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, Prevention of Anti-National Activities Act and Telegraphic Act, and by demanding deposits from printing presses, and withholding, suspending or cancelling declarations for publication of newspapers and periodic publications. However, all these regulatory manipulations did not bother the vast majority of masses who lived in blissful ignorance of whatever was being communicated through, or withheld from mass media.

On the other hand, large majority of Pakistanis have had a rich heritage of distinctly different social, cultural and moral values acquired and infused through centuries of interaction with scholars, philosophers, poets, thinkers, sufis and religious leaders, either directly or through elders in their families, tribes, clans, clergy, teachers, panchayats, jirgas and other institutions.

The system is now an amalgam of basic, pure and simple values taught 1400 years ago by the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) and the ones acquired through interaction with others.

\(^1\)Most of these laws were also inherited from British rulers.
religious cultures and nationalities. Among these, Indian, British and American influences have been more pronounced. This has led to value consensus as well as value conflict. There is no disagreement on values like justice, fairness, honesty, hardwork, merit and discipline. On the other hand, values like freedom, equality, loyalty, nationalism, patriotism and pluralism have been perceived and propagated differently by different groups. Questions have also been raised about the role of traditional values in the modern world. This has given rise to situations of anomie and value neutrality to cope with guilt-complex. While many planners, policy makers and managers in government, business, education and social work, have tried to satisfy their conscience by resorting to value neutrality, it is encouraging to find that a large number of Pakistani writers insist on preserving values and building organisations around moral premises.

Today, an average Pakistani expects, and many demand that our media should adhere to and promote our moral, social and cultural values. It is also not uncommon for some of the media to be blamed for most of the evils in our society. A lot has been said and published against, as well as in defence of mass media in Pakistan. The next six chapters of this paper deal with the role of media in Pakistan.

Reference numbers 1 through 22 at the end of this paper represent only a small sample of the books written by Pakistani authors on various subjects during the last 35 years in English language. Many more books and articles written in other languages and material disseminated through other media have been excluded for the sake of brevity.
Chapter Three

TELEVISION

Background Information

According to an official publication of Pakistan Television Corporation, "television was introduced in Pakistan to promote an enlightened awareness of the world as well as to foster a consciousness of Pakistan's own heritage, the social and economic growth of the country and to provide inspiration and guidance for progress and prosperity. Television was considered necessary also for bringing about a genuine revolution in the social and cultural life of the masses, apart from its role as an instrument and most effective medium of education, entertainment and information." [23]

"Pakistan opted for television as a mass information and entertainment medium over a quarter of a century ago, in 1964, which was much ahead of its neighbours, including India. This early start has given television in Pakistan a strong headway in terms of expertise, talent, quality and technical competitiveness." [24] Twenty-one programmes of Pakistan Television (PTV have so far won 23 international awards from Australia, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Iran, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia, USA and USSR. [25] In the mid-seventies, PTV was rated in a United Nations' survey as the second-best in Asia.

Five centres and 32 transmitting stations of PTV cover more than one-third of the country inhabited by more than 85 percent of the population. Transmission time averages eight hours a day. About one-sixth of the total time is used for transmitting imported programmes in English language; most of the programmes are in Urdu and some in regional languages.

1 The reach is much less (about ten percent) because of the limited number of television sets.
TV Code

Soon after the introduction of television in Pakistan, a TV code was published by Pakistan Television Corporation. It said, "Pakistan Television endeavours to project to Pakistani homes, programmes aligned to the best traditions with which we, as a nation, are identified. These include the social, aesthetic and moral values to which we subscribe. It is necessary that programmes shown on television should conform to good sense and good taste."

Revised editions of TV code further explained the values cherished by PTV in the following words:

"... being a country created on the basis of Islamic ideology, the principles governing the code cannot but be in line with our religious traditions, national aspiration and hopes."

"... because of its greater intimacy within the home, (television) gives rise to problems which do not necessarily occur in other media."

"... keeping up the moral tone of television."

"... to promote positive values and eliminate negative ones..."

"... not to ... exclude our cultural heritage as well as the advancements, from time to time, in our society."

"... PTV is governed ... by universal rules of reason and good sense followed by other TV networks ..."

"... it only betrays a certain lack of talent to exploit the weaker side of human nature."

"The (TV) viewer ... is deeply sensitive to any design to exploit the baser side of his nature."

"Obscenity pays no real dividend and vulgarity degrades the name with which it is associated."

"... certain curbs ... have to be imposed on the exercise of freedom of expression in the interest of the majority of television viewers..."

"... television has a primary obligation (to its viewers)."

"... programmes conceived and presented with due regard to decency gain better results than those that aim at cheap effects."
Values in TV Advertising

The code of advertising standards and practices enacted by Pakistan Television lays down the following guidelines for advertisers:

1. All TV advertising should be decent, clean, honest and truthful.
2. It should conform to the law of the land and traditions of our people.
3. Faces and figures shown in the TV commercials, should be those of respectable men and women with whom the viewers could identify themselves.
4. An advertisement must be clearly distinguishable as such and recognizably separate from the programmes.
5. Advertisements must lay due stress on simplicity in dress, manners and living habits.
6. Scientific terms, statistics, quotations from technical literature should be used with a proper sense of responsibility to the viewer.
7. Advertisers and their agencies must be prepared to substantiate any descriptions, claims or illustrations through documentary evidence/authentic proof.
8. Visual and verbal presentation of prices must be accurate.
9. Comparative advertising should be fair and factual. The basis for comparison should be the same and should be stated in the ad.
10. Testimonials must be genuine and supported by evidence.
11. The word 'guarantee' should be used with caution and sparingly, only in relation to some specific description or quality.
12. Particular care should be taken in case of advertising aimed at, or involving children.

Prohibitions

In addition to advising advertisers on what they should do, the TV Code lists down more than a hundred 'don'ts.' These include subliminal advertising, unreasonable fear appeals, making obscene
gestures, assuming shameless postures or making unrefined remarks, distortion of historical facts, suggesting or implying that any part of any programme has been supplied or suggested by any advertiser, lowering the morals of the viewers, assuming the form of news or documentation, fanning racial, sectarian, parochial, linguistic, regional or class hatred, offending public feelings, violating the sanctity of home and institution of marriage, being excessively noisy or strident, featuring female models for products or services which have no relevance to women, overemphasizing the female model in ads of products exclusively meant for the fair sex, stealing strains of music, quoting from the Holy Quran, Hadith, saints or other great religious leaders for commercial gain, personification of saints or other great religious leaders, making false promises, imitation, denigration, provocation, nudity, promiscuity, undermining, ridiculing, disparaging or attacking any religion, sect, caste, creed, country or people, hurting national sentiment, promoting breach of law, impairing the country's foreign relations, disrespect to places of religious significance, promoting or supporting sedition, anarchy or violence, glorifying vices, crimes, black-marketing, smuggling, bribery, corruption or any other social evil, and bringing into contempt the police and the armed forces.

Advertisements of alchoholic beverages, betting, women's undergarments and sanitary napkins, money-lenders(except duly constituted banks), matrimonial agencies, correspondence clubs, fortune-tellers, undertakers, unlicensed employment services, private detectives and students' guidebooks and guess papers purporting to induce students to bypass the prescribed textbooks are totally banned. [24]
Perceptions:

Because of all these do's and don'ts in the TV Code, implemented fairly rigorously by PTV, some of the viewers and most of the advertisers are unhappy with PTV. On the other hand, in spite of following the TV Code, many TV viewers are disenchanted with PTV. The orthodox among them accuse PTV of being too liberal, while the liberal viewers blame PTV for being too conservative. This reminds us of the famous couplet from Momin:

"Zahide Tung Nazar Ne Mujhe Kafir Jana,
Aur Kafir Yeh Samjhta Hai Musalman Hoon Mein"
(The narrow-minded pious (believer) accuses me of being infidel, while the infidel believes I am a believer.)

Among those who are critical of the role of television in Pakistan is also a former Chairman of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and former Chairman and Managing Director of Pakistan Television Corporation. According to him, Pakistan Television is "making no impact on the values of culture and society." [27]. Off and on, Pakistani newspapers and magazines carry news, readers' views, articles and editorials reflecting dissatisfaction with the role of television as a medium of education and information.

In a recently published article, a former Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting has accused PTV of "spreading outright falsehoods and perpetrating disinformation." He claims that "electronic media journalists have turned into demoralized denizens, mutely dealing in the exaggerations (and) distortions they are directed to manage..." [28].

The Deputy Chief Executive of a leading Pakistani publishing house, responsible for publishing four leading periodicals, says that our electronic media have done nothing for us.
PTV has not made any commendable contribution to the development of our society, particularly for children and students. He also feels that our television is not geared to the needs of the large majority of our population living in rural areas. Regarding the influence of television on our values and lifestyle, he feels that overemphasis on imported television programmes has caused dislocation of our values. [29]

A leading female advertising executive and free-lance writer is of the opinion that state-owned and controlled television has become a propaganda machine for the government. She maintains that our television suffers from lack of credibility. On the question of media and values, she says that television is used for imposing a certain set of values from above. According to her, the impact of such value system is negligible. An interesting comment made by this educated, career-oriented, female professional is that economic necessity, which is bringing more and more women into the workforce, has defeated attempts to instil the "value" of housekeeping. On the other hand, she adds, our electronic media have made no effort to propagate higher values, such as respect for human rights and tolerance of religious and political beliefs. She also blames TV for promoting extravagance, not only through commercial advertising, but also by projecting ostentatious living in its regular programmes. [30]

Content-analysis of 157 advertisements shown on PTV on March 11, 1991, shows less time (9%) devoted to value orientation as compared to modernization (16%) and prosperity (36%). Reality and fantasy were found in equal proportions.

Content-analysis of the readers' views published in one month's issues of a single newspaper indicates three complaints against PTV's double standards. [31,32,33]

On the other side of the fence are intellectuals, though fewer in number, who commend the efforts made by PTV in the face of odds, constraints, pressures and limitations. They argue that PTV
has done an excellent job of covering national events, general elections, political summits and sporting events. In the field of sports, it has efficiently managed long transmissions with high quality of production. PTV is also given credit for raising awareness about national issues, and environmental concerns and international affairs.

Those who speak high of PTV also admit that PTV has not done a good job of keeping the citizens properly informed about their local concerns and national issues, but they condone PTV's partisan attitude, biased reporting, and other lapses in view of its limited resources and total dependence on government. To remain in government's good books, those who manage PTV have to compromise certain values.

Television and Children

Perhaps the most important argument against television is its impact on children. Parents and teachers complain of losing their grip on the children because of the counteracting force of television programmes. They also feel that children are learning things that their parents would not want them to learn before a certain age/stage in their lifecycle. The amount of time children spend watching television is also a source of concern for many. There have not been many studies on the effect of television on Pakistani children to judge whether parents and teachers cannot do a good job of inculcating our traditional values among the new generation because of the counteracting influence of television, or has television been able to create a major impact because parents and teachers have not done a good job of socializing the children.

A doctoral dissertation on the influence of television on children in Karachi, written by a professor of mass communication at Karachi University [34] reveals that children who secure top positions in
their schools are generally heavy TV viewers (watching television for more than three hours a day). It also reveals that there are more heavy viewers among children belonging to high income families, as compared to those in the middle or low income groups. Children in the high income families, watching more TV are also more active in outdoor activities. Yet another important finding of this research is that children watching television daily for three hours or more indicate a slightly stronger inclination to gang up against an enemy and to use firearms. Whether there is a chain of cause-and-effect relationships among high income, heavy TV viewing, higher scholastic achievements, more outdoor activities and greater tendency for violence, or are these variables coincidental, requires a more intensive research design, more extensive data collection and more in-depth analysis. If a causal relationship is found, we still have to find the degree of correlation, and the influence of intervening variables and extraneous factors. An amusing conclusion about the impact of television on children was drawn by three American experts in the following words:

"For some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful. For other children under same conditions, or for the same children under other conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children under most conditions television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial." [35]

In an earlier study published by Oxford University Press, it was claimed that television did not adversely affect the normal children. [36]

Although no empirical data are at present available in Pakistan to support or refute the above conclusions drawn by Western experts, yet keeping in mind the vast differences between the two cultures, one can reasonably argue against the hypothesis that television, particularly the imported programmes, would have no adverse effect on Pakistani children. An average British or American child is
already exposed and accustomed to most of the things shown on the British or American television. On the other hand, for an average Pakistani child, who has no choice but to watch most of his favourite programmes like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Pink Panther, Knight Rider, Babra Papa, Fun House, Thunder Cat, Action Force, Sesame Street, Woody the Woodpecker, Popye the Sailor, and Denis the Menace, in a foreign language and an alien cultural milieu, it becomes a case of resocialization, often leading to dislocation of his reference group, resulting in retreatism and xenocentrism. Bookstalls and toy stores in urban Pakistan selling imported comics and Ninja turtles provide ample proof of this phenomenon.

Pakistani children have so far not been exposed much to violence on television, and hence the problems of juvenile delinquency are not so serious in this country, but once such programmes sneak into Pakistani homes, one wonders how far the moral values inculcated by the Pakistani parents, teachers, religious leaders and society at large will be able to defend these children against the onslaught.

Television and Education

One redeeming feature of television in Pakistan is the role it could play in educating a large illiterate population (About two-thirds of the population cannot read or write). For them the only quick and effective method of learning is through audio-visual media. There is a wide variety of evidence available from many developing countries testifying to the usefulness of the various mass media like newspapers, radio, and television as adjuncts to the formal educational system of particular countries. The mass media have proved themselves to be useful catalysts for the educational process in developing countries which do not have enough teachers or the educational infrastructure to reach the vast majority of their rural populations — and this is a major characteristic of all developing

There are no locally produced cartoons or programmes for children in English language. Children's programmes in Urdu are telecast for less than fifteen minutes per day while an average child viewer watches television for more than two hours a day.
countries — and have performed the task of education especially in the field of adult education and vocational training."

However, the unfortunate fact of the matter is that PTV devotes less than two percent of its total transmission time to "educational television" [24]. It is hoped that whenever the proposal for PTV-2, the second channel of Pakistan Television becomes a reality [38] more educational television will be available. Till such time, those who pay for the large number of commercials telecast before, during, and after each entertainment programme, will continue to call the shots, directly or indirectly.

Alternatives to PTV

Pakistan Television, which enjoyed monopoly for 25 years is now facing tough competition from Shalimar Television Network (STN), prerecorded videocassettes and satellite television.

STN: In 1989, Government of Pakistan set up Peoples' Television Network (PTN) as an alternate channel for those viewers who wanted a change after having watched PTV as the only option for 25 long years. Now redesignated as Shalimar Television Network (STN), it offers Cable News Network (CNN) and other foreign television programmes through communication satellites as well as some of its own productions and canned programmes round the clock. Initially, it was felt that PTN (now STN) was more liberal than PTV. Later, the government made it obligatory for all advertisers on this channel to follow the code of advertising standards and practices enacted by PTV. During the last two-and-a-half years the new channel has succeeded in carrying out its share of viewership as well as advertising revenue by going off the beaten track and exploring new ways of doing business. The prime consideration in this case is commercial rather than education or propagation of values. Content of a PTN and PTV play telecast on the same day (December 27, 1991) indicates greater share of time
portraying arrogance, extravagance and violence in case of PTN. ¹

VCR: By 1989, 40% of television viewers in Pakistan had access to videocassette recorders. ² The number of VCRs in the country was estimated at 244,000 [39]. Today there are thousands of videoshops in urban areas, renting out videocassettes at five to fifteen rupees per day. To know what sort of values are infused through these uncensored cassettes requires an elaborate research design for content analysis of the cassettes and indepth interviewing of the viewers.

Satellite Television: With abundant supplies of dish antenna, in the local market, consumers are the kings calling the shots with the help of a handy electronic gadget. Some dish antennae are now available for as little as Rs.10,000 (less than the price of a colour TV or a VCR). At present viewers in Pakistan have access to BBC-WSTV, MTV, Prime Sports and other programmes through the Star TV. Soon they may also gain access to an Indian channel through Star TV. If it happens, it will create intense competition for PTV, STN and the proposed PTV-2. It will also add to the worries of those who wish to safeguard Pakistanis against 'cultural invasions'. Although our government and concerned pressure groups will do their best to minimize, if not totally block, exposure to uncensored programmes and advertisements beamed from all nooks and corners of the world, yet this globalisation of television is bound to result in globalisation of social, cultural and civic values.

¹Findings of a social science research project, manned by communicative experts under the guidance of Dr. Ijaz Gilani, Chairman, Gallup Pakistan.

²Data based on a nationwide survey conducted by Media and Audience Research Service of Business Research Bureau.
In mass communication, radio plays a vital role in a developing country with low income, low literacy and non-availability of electricity in many parts of the country. It has been the major medium of mass communication in Pakistan for many years. Now it is losing ground to TV. Despite the fact that the number of radio stations have gone up to seventeen, broadcasting from six in the morning till midnight, in ten local languages and dialects, besides English and Arabic, the number of radio listeners is declining. According to regular nationwide surveys conducted by the Media and Audience Research Service of Business Research Bureau; the number of radio listeners in Pakistan has declined from 70% of the population in 1979 [40] to 40% of the population in 1989. In urban areas the listenership is further down to 30%. This includes about 17% regular listeners and 13% occasional listeners. The income generated through radio license fee and radio advertising has also declined, resulting in a substantial increase in government subsidy - from 47% in 1969-70 to 81% in 1988-89 [39].

A major reason for this decline in popularity of radio is the introduction of television. State-ownership of radio is also responsible for its declining popularity. It is not uncommon to find the educated urban elite as well as the uneducated villagers turning to BBC Urdu service to get the 'other side' of the story, and to listen to the opposition's point of view.

With the increasing success of privatisation policy, which in the words of our Prime Minister, is attracting serious attention and arousing deep interest among our Asian neighbours also [41], it is

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1 Based on published (MARS Reports), working papers of media workshops, and unpublished data provided to the writer by Business Research Bureau, Karachi.
hoped that gradually the electronic media in Pakistan would also be
deregulated, if not privatised. This will also bring into focus the
question of value dissemination from a variety of sources using
this powerful medium. At present the question is not so important
because the state-controlled broadcasting corporation is extremely
careful in disseminating only those values on which there is a
national consensus. Content analysis of the last six months'
issues of the two leading English language daily newspapers in
Pakistan reveal not a single complaint against radio programmes
from either the readers or the editorial staff.
Chapter Five

NEWSPAPERS

Circulation and readership of newspapers in Pakistan is quite low, but their impact is significant. People not only read but also 'listen' to newspapers for information and inspiration. An educated person reading out a newspaper to several attentive listeners is a common sight. While the level of education is low, the level of political awareness is quite high. This is revealed through Political Weather Reports published regularly by Gallup Pakistan. Among male adults, who usually assume the role of opinion leaders and change agents, almost 25% are regular readers of newspapers, while another 25% read/‘listen' to newspapers occasionally [24]. During national events and crises, the readership goes up further.²

Newspapers in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent have fought against injustice, repression and victimisation since the days of British rulers. "The fact that the newspapers in the subcontinent had to function as the spearhead of the freedom movement, left its indelible mark on the profession as a whole and on the format of the Press..." [42]

When people of the subcontinent, with support from the Press, succeeded in getting out of the chains of foreign domination, to use Zamir Niazi's phraseology [43,44], the Press was put into chains and under siege by their own successive governments and power groups. It is sad that the political leaders and parties in power paid lip service to freedom of expression and importance of a free Press and lost no opportunity to muzzle the voice of dissent.

While some journalists "refused to submit and acquiesce to deceit, ¹

¹The combined circulation of 271 dailies, published in four languages is 1.5 million, which is one-half of the circulation of a single (Bombay) edition of Times of India, and one-sixth of the circulation of a single Japanese daily Yomiuri.

dishonesty, degradation, double standards, hypocrisy and unethical values, (others) allowed themselves to be pushed into a state of paralysis, cynicism, acquiescence (and) degradation." [ ]. In recent years, some Pakistani newspapers have become more courageous and more conscious of their social and moral responsibilities. These papers have assumed the role of crusaders against discrimination, social injustice, violation of human rights and excesses committed by bureaucrats and law enforcement agencies.

Referring to a recent incident in which the Pakistani Press exposed certain excesses committed against innocent citizens by law enforcement agencies, a senior free lancer writes: "Widely villified and mistrusted, the Press in Pakistan seems to have come of age ... Speculative reports ... have been, by and large, replaced by investigative reports ..." However, she also complains of many leading newspapers failing to report the incidents fully and effectively. [4]

A senior professor of mass communication, in response to this author's request for views on 'media and values,' said the newspapers play up sex, violence and crime to increase their sales. Provocative photographs of female filmstars are also published with purely commercial motives, ignoring all norms of decency. According to him, the situation is so bad that a Karachi daily, which refrains from such practices, claims to publish the only weekend magazine section for decent families.¹

¹Prof. Zakariyya Sajid, former Chairman, Department of Mass Communication, University of Karachi.
Chapter Six

MAGAZINES

For a literate population of less than forty million, we have more than two thousand local magazines, published in Urdu, English, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Arabic, Gujarati, Punjabi and Saraiki. These include quarterlies, monthlies, fortnightlies, weeklies and biweeklies with a total circulation of about two million. [24]. In addition, about forty thousand copies of the leading foreign magazines like Readers' Digest, Time, Newsweek, Economist, Far Eastern Economic Review, Business Week and a few other magazines are also imported regularly. [46]

The recent trend is more towards special-interest periodicals in Urdu like Ismat, Banat, Jauhar-e-Niswan, Tehzib-e-Niswan, Zebunnisa and Hoor for women and Phool, Khilona, Taleem-o-Tarbiyat and Naunehal for children. Of these, Ismat, Binat and Jauhar-e-Niswan were launched by Allama Rashidul Khairi with a missionary zeal for propagating the values deemed most appropriate for women. Some magazines were dedicated to the cause of propagating religious values and others to healthcare.

Subsequently magazines devoted to filmstars were introduced. Today, we have many more varieties of special interest magazines in Urdu and English. The areas covered by these magazines are: economy, fashion, radio, television, politics, youth, adventure, detective stories, show business and sports. Within sports magazines, there are at least two magazines specialising in cricket. In addition to special interest magazines there are several professional journals in the area of banking, defence, marketing, economics, management, public administration, medicine, agriculture, textiles and computers.

While some of these publications follow an explicit policy of upholding, preserving and propagating the existing cultural norms and moral values of the Pakistan society, others by implication defy them and at times make overt attempts at bringing a change in our outlook.
In case of newspapers, which are purchased primarily for their news coverage, editorial policy and literary value, and are shared by different members of a family, the readers strongly protest against violations of values that are dear to them. In case of magazines the readers have a choice of not reading a particular magazine without losing much, or restricting its readership to certain members of the family. Hence most of the magazine readers are indifferent about the value contents.

One thing common among some magazines and almost all newspapers is the double standard of morality. On one page of the publication there may be a decree from a religious scholar against watching movies and television and on the next page there will be a large ad from a movie house and a photograph from the latest TV play or stage show. A recent example can be cited from a film magazine which starts with a quotation from the Holy Quran, and in its leading article, criticises Pakistan Televisision for showing imported movies which include scenes of drinking. It says that in a Muslim country, founded on the principle of Islam, media are not permitted to hurt the religious sentiments of the people or to violate the sanctity of Islam. As one goes through the rest of the magazine, it is filled with photographs of Pakistani women and comments about Pakistanis which violate the teachings of the Holy Quran and hurt the religious sentiments of a Pakistani Muslim much more than watching a non-Pakistani, non-Muslim consuming alcohol. [47]

The publishers may satisfy their conscience by assuring themselves that they are doing an even-handed job of being fair to the two diametrically opposite schools of thought, but an approach like this creates anomie, rendering it difficult for the layman to distinguish between the right and the wrong. Many people read newspapers and magazines not only for information, but also for inspiration and guidance.
Chapter Seven

BOOKS

Historical Perspective

The first book was probably 'written' four thousand years ago on a clay tablet in Babylonia. Three thousand years later, the first book was printed in China. Five hundred years later the art of printing spread rapidly in Europe when more than 30,000 different books were published within the first fifty years. [48]. Today, books have assumed the status of an important medium of communication. In one language alone, books like Baby and Child Care, Better Homes and Gardens Cook Book, Guinness Book of World Records, The Prophet, Future Shock and In Search of Excellence, beside many books of fiction, dictionaries and children's books have created records by selling anywhere between five million to twenty-five million copies each.

Indo-Pakistan Scene

In the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, the first book in Urdu was published during early seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, books of poetry became popular media of imparting values. Writings of Mir Anis, Mohammad Husain Azad, Altaf Husain Hali, Shibli Noman, Abdul Haleem Sharar and Akber Allahabadi projected the values cherished by the Muslims of the subcontinent. Among the prose-writers, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Shibli Noman, Abdul Haleem Sharar and Molvi Nazir Ahmed pioneered the task of transmitting moral values through books in Urdu. During late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Allama Iqbal, Rashidul Khairi and Abul Kalam Azad carried the mission further. Since partition of the subcontinent in 1947, books written by Syed Abul Ala Moudoodi have significantly changed the value system and lifestyle of a large number of young men and women.
Several other writers have also tried to bring about revolutionary changes but have not had much success.

Among regional languages, Sindhi is the most ancient and the most developed language. Included in the rich treasure of Sindhi prose and poetry are the translations of the Holy Quran, books on the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam, history, religion, politics, culture and literary works. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (1689-1752) is read and quoted with love and reverence, not only in Sindh, but in other parts of the world also. The full collection of his poetry, Shah Jo Risalo, studded with jewels of moral themes was first published from Germany in 1884. During the last one hundred years it has been reprinted many times in Sindh, and translated in Urdu and English. Shah Jo Risalo propagates love, truth and peace for the mankind, in a language that is equally intelligible to the educated and the uneducated. It stresses an unshakable love for the motherland, struggle in pursuit of truth, sacrifice and universal brotherhood. [39]

Poetical compositions of Sachal Sarmast (1737-1827) in Sindhi as well as Saraiki, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and Arabic, are also thematic and highly popular. Writings of Shamsul Ulema Mirza Qalich Beg (1853-1929) are also replete with moral values. Zeenat, the first Sindhi novel by Mirza Qalich Beg also has a mission - female education. Kishinchand Tirathdas Khatri Bewas (1885-1947) preached modernity and progressiveness. Hyder Bux Jatoi (1900-79), through his poetry, launched a movement for the uplift of the cultivator. He wrote several poems on social, political and economic themes. The list of Sindhi writers who have made significant impact on the value system of their readers during the current century is quite long and merits a separate study [39].
Chapter Eight

CINEMA

Current Status

Cinema which was once a popular low-priced entertainment in Pakistan is losing its popularity. The number of cinema houses has declined to about 500 for a population of more than a hundred million. The proportion of regular cine-goers (those who go to a cinema house at least once a month) among male adults, is less than ten percent. Among females and children it would be even lower. Among men of 35 years and above, the proportion of regular cine-goers is less than five percent.\(^1\) About eighty movies (less than one per million population) are produced locally each year in four different languages (Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi and Pushto). The average number of imported films in English language is 77 per annum. [24]

Values

The Central Board of Films Censors, set up by the government implements a strict code of ethics to curb immorality, obscenity and crime. Motion pictures disparaging religion, bringing into contempt the national ideology, maligning the country, its traditions or heroes, distorting facts, or fanning racial, sectarian, parochial, linguistic or class hatred are not given clearance for exhibition in cinema houses. Motion Pictures Ordinance 1979 provides strong punitive measures to curb obscenity, vulgarity and violence. On the other hand, awards are given every year for excellence in film production. [39]

In the words of a critic, our film-makers are obsessed with violence and sex, but sex has not, as yet, become a central theme in our films. Referring to the films released during 1989,

\(^1\) Based on data collected through nationwide surveys by Media and Audience Research Service of Business Research Bureau, Karachi
he says: "Sex and violence claimed an equal share of the nervous system of our film-makers with the script refusing to sort out which is which. Most of the films produced during the year were intensely personal, often portraying the state of mind of the producers, riddled with the hallmarks of disgust and disease." [39]

Pushto films in particular have been the target of severe criticism for blatant use of sex, violating social norms of the Pushto speaking people. Protest letters have been written by Pushto speaking citizens to the President of Pakistan for timely intervention. It is believed that the government is appointing an exclusive censor board for Pushto films. Opinion leaders among Pathans have launched a crusade against obscenity in Pushto films. They are asking those connected with the Pushto film industry to take an oath publicly to refrain from exploiting sex in cinema for their personal gains. [49]

On the other hand there have also been several feature films projecting higher social and moral values like selflessness, patriotism, respect for parents, teachers and elders and regard for the handicapped and the less fortunate fellow-citizens. Recently some Pakistani film-producers and script writers reviewed the problem of constant increase in the country's population and considered ways and means of discharging their social responsibility in this direction. [50]
CONCLUSIONS

For many years, the influence of media and communications technology on value-formation and lifestyle-adopt has been the focus of attention for psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, educationists, journalists, religious scholars, management specialists, marketing experts and communication technologists.

Among the laypersons, some parents pass the buck on to the media (particularly television) for spoiling their children; there are others who abdicate their responsibility to educate, socialise and prepare their children for future responsibilities, because mass media are there to do the job. When parents are too busy to give time to their children, they give them television, only to find later in life that the values and lifestyles of their children are not the same as the ones they inherited from their parents, cherished all their lives, but failed to pass on to the next generation.

Scientific studies of the impact of media on our values and lifestyle reveal that media, do have a profound influence. "Most research evidence supports the hypothesis that mass media can create new opinions more easily than they can change existing ones." [48]. Thus, the existing set of values implanted by parents and teachers in early childhood, helps in protecting oneself from the adverse effects of media, through selectivity in exposure/avoidance, perception, assimilation, acceptance and retention. The influence of intervening and extraneous variables, like personal experiences and environmental factors, should not be underestimated either.

Talking of the "collapse of the values of the past," Toffler [51] says: "Value turnover is now faster than ever before in history."
While in the past a man growing up in a society could expect that its public value system would remain largely unchanged in his lifetime, no such assumption is warranted today, except perhaps in the most isolated of pre-technological communities. While acknowledging the impact of mass media on values and lifestyle, he draws attention to the role of other important influences like religion, family, school, business, and peer groups. Studies reported by Engel, et al. indicate decreasing influence of family and religion, and increasing influence of school, peer group and extended institutions like media, on value-formation and lifestyle adoption.

In Pakistan, very few formal studies have been conducted, and fewer reported on the impact of mass media. However, some marketing and advertising research studies do reveal that media in general and media advertising in particular have influenced our value system.

Some Pakistanis are alarmed at this state of affairs; others are critical of the role of mass media. There are some who take a more dispassionate view of the whole situation. They plead for accepting the fact that mass media have come to stay, and to influence our future generations. They insist that we cannot, and should not try to close our eyes, or for that matter our receiving stations, to communication satellites having no respect for any political, geographic or ideological boundaries. According to them, we cannot beat them, but we should not join them either. Instead we should strengthen the role of religion, family and the local media of communication, to counterbalance their adverse effects on our value system and lifestyle.

Managing Director of Pakistan Television Corporation is reported to have said: "In the name of progress and enlightenment, a new offensive is being mounted, an offensive which aims at vanquishing our ideologies, our culture, our traditions and our values."
The Chancellor of Hamdard University, a Pakistani scholar of international repute, believes that means of mass communication have proved their immense potential to influence social values and lifestyles. The satellite revolution of the eighties has further enhanced the role of media as a weapon of change. A believer in cultural relativism, he prefers to talk of 'cultural influence' rather than 'cultural invasion.' He holds the opinion that because of the recent developments in communication technology, our people are now well-informed. He emphasizes the need for an educational and social system to channelize this awareness and direct it towards national development. He is also cognizant of the negative influence of mass media. Dazed with the luxurious life-style presented by the media, he says, the masses have entered into a mad race for material acquisitions by hook or by crook. This has tattered to pieces the moral fabric of the society. He is also critical of violence-ridden movies. According to him this is a major factor behind increased violence and lawlessness in the society. [55]

A former Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting believes that media, to a large extent, do promote good values. He is appreciative of the role played by Pakistani media, particularly Press, during the long spells of dictatorship in Pakistan. [56]

Deputy Chief Executive of Pakistan Herald Publications, publishers of Dawn, Herald and Star, says that were it not for print media, Pakistan would have met the same fate as USSR. During dictatorial regimes in Pakistan, print media served as vents to relieve suffocation. Electronic media have a greater potential but have so far failed to deliver the goods because of state control. He is proud of the fact that the Pakistani print media have put up a valiant war against curbs on freedom of expression, have introduced the young urban readers to the country's (mainly rural) cultural heritage, have
fought for a better environment, civil liberties and women's rights, and against terrorism, suppression and other social evils. He admits that the record of the Pakistani Press is a mixed one. He agrees that lapses like covering up (instead of giving coverage to) the torture cells set up by militant groups in Karachi and Hyderabad for three long years cannot be condoned. [29]

The General Manager of Pakistan Television, Karachi Centre, agrees that PTV is under tight control of the federal government, which affects its creativity. Nevertheless, he insists, that by and large PTV has done a good job of providing information, education and entertainment. He is proud of the role played by PTV in infusing positive values1 and self-confidence among children. Today, he says, our children are more well-informed as compared to the previous generation. Disagreeing with the allegation that television keeps children indoor, and discourage healthy outdoor activities, he says that the sports programmes shown on television encourage children to go out into the field as spectators, if not as players. Responding to the criticism that television is guilty of showing what it should not, and not showing what it should, he says that television only projects what happens around us. However, he believes that television should not project all of our social evils because it may do more harm than good. He admits that the system of feedback from the audience is faulty, but insists that comparing efficiency of the media in the thirld world with those in the developed countries is unfair. [57]

Another viewpoint is that the use of television and radio for distance learning has met with failure not only in Pakistan but also in many other developing countries. [58]

1 Elaborating further, Mr. Intizamul Haque, Marketing Executive, PTV has listed: respect for law, respect for elders, manners, etiquette, courage, cleanliness and concern for environment.
Editor of The News International warns against underestimating the potential of the modern media of communication. He cites examples of nations losing wars and heads of states stepping down because of the transparency provided by the media. Advancement in communication technology have further strengthened the role of media. Iranian revolution is a good example of the power of an audiocassette. A recent example cited from Pakistan is that of a political party keeping in touch with the masses through the Press with the help of cellular phones and telephotocopiers (fax machines) despite the fact that the entire leadership of the party has gone underground. [59]

Editor of the daily Kavish says that mass media constitute the 'third force.' In the face of wanton aggression it is this force which brings the aggressors to book. [60]

An important group interested in keeping an eye on the media is that of advertisers. In Pakistan, this group provides an annual revenue of nearly two billion rupees to the media in the form of advertising expenditure. A representative of this group says that media should take up investigative journalism and present balanced and unbiased picture. He expects media to promote positive values, respect for life and environmental activism, and to avoid oversimplifications, distortions and sensationalising industrial conflicts. He suggests close cooperation between media and industry to achieve these objectives. [61]

It is satisfying to note advertising professionals themselves criticising the misuse of media by advertisers for unethical purposes. [62,63]

So much about problems of the past and premises for the present! The future changes are even more challenging. According to a brief prepared by Ogilvy & Mather, Singapore, on "The Rapidly Changing
Asian Media Scene" (January 1992), media structures in Asia are
going to change dramatically. Deregulation, expansion of land
television and growth of satellite television will lead to greater
commercialization of television and consolidation of media owner­
ship. According to another publication of the same organisation,
significant changes in 1990s will be technology driven. Radio will
make a comeback in the FM format [64]. Several futuristic writers
[51, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70] have predicted the following changes vis-a-vis:
media and communications:

- The world will witness an unprecedented explosion of
  information and revolution in the methods of obtaining,
  recording, storing, retrieving, sifting and disseminating
  information.

- Computers will dominate not only offices, factories and
  other institutions, but also our houses and personal lives.

- Giants and supergiant corporations will own and control
  media.

- The companies and countries capable of producing the new
  superautomated technologies will have an edge over others.

- The power of mind shall prevail over the power of money
  or muscles.

The future impact of media on values and lifestyles is likely to be
so intense that it merits a series of serious studies by social
scientists.
Based on what has been presented in the preceding nine chapters, the following recommendations are submitted for consideration of this august forum. Attention is particularly drawn to the last recommendation (Media Research) and outline of the research design presented in Appendix A.

1. **Universal Code of Ethics**

   A universal code of ethics applicable to all media all over the world should be developed and implemented on the lines of other universal charters. This code should spell out the basic values on which there is no disagreement because of differences in cultures, religious, nationalities, or regional interest.

2. **Regional Code of Ethics**

   An Asian code of ethics applicable to all media in Asia should be developed and implemented, incorporating the universal code of ethics, and enlarging its scope to safeguard Asian culture, Asian interests and Asian values.

3. **National Code of Ethics**

   Each country should be encouraged and helped to develop and implement its own comprehensive code of ethics for all media in such a manner that it does not violate the universal and regional codes of ethics, but places due emphasis on preserving the promoting its own heritage and interest.

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1 The author is grateful to Mr. Moazzam Ali Qadri, Executive Director, Business Research Bureau, Karachi, and Mr. S.M. Owais, Managing Director, Adtrak, for their valuable contributions to the formulation of these recommendations.
4. Networking
A network of educationists, journalists, technologists, social scientists, advertisers, advertising specialists and other interest groups should be formed to develop the code of ethics and to serve as a watchdog in its proper implementation.

5. Forecasting
A mechanism for reliable forecasting of future developments affecting media and their audiences in Asia should be developed. It should foresee and forwarn about the short-term as well as the long-term changes.

6. Remodelling Religious Education
The ultimate defence against the cannonade of commercial interests eroding moral values is religious education. It should be remodeled to satisfy the inquisitive, the questioning, and the agnostic, among the new generations.

7. Style of Communication
Efforts should be made to improve not only the media and the mechanism, but also the style of communication to bring it in line with the mind, and to meet the challenge posed by explosion of information and revolution of rising expectations.

8. Information Exchange
A clearing house of media information should be set up to help exchange crucial data about various media in different parts of Asia.

9. Media Education and Training
Asian educational and training institutions should be encouraged and equipped to impart media education as part of their curricula and specialized training to those working for, or dealing with, media of mass communication.
10. Media Research

While the scope of media research is quite vast, this recommendation pertains only to the influence of media on values and lifestyles of Asians living in Asia. For this purpose, outline of the proposed research design is presented in Appendix A.
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OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN

I. Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

A. To study the influence of media on values and lifestyles of Asians living in Asia.

B. To suggest measures for enhancing the positive effects of mass media.

C. To suggest ways and means of minimizing the undesirable consequences of exposure to mass media.

II. Scope

The study would cover all mass media, including print media (books, magazines, newspapers), electronic media (radio and television), cinema, sound recordings, and outdoor media (used mainly for advertising) in selected Asian countries.

III. Research Methodology

A. Literature Survey: A comprehensive bibliography of the literature on "media and values" shall be prepared to benefit from the work already done by different individuals and organisations.

B. Content-Analysis: Content-analyses of selected newspapers, magazines, journals, books, movies, prerecorded audio-and videocassettes, radio programmes, television programmes, and advertisements shall be undertaken to study their underlying themes, covert cues and overt messages. Particular attention shall be paid to words, phrases and situations symbolizing sex, conducing crimes or vindicating violence.

C. Controlled Experiments: Representative sample of the audience of each medium in each country shall be split into control groups and experimental groups to study the effect of selective exposure to different types of messages received through each medium. Children, less vocal adults and illiterate audiences of various media would be particularly covered by these experiments.

D. Ex-Post Facto Analysis: Interviews of educated, vocal and co-operative respondents would help in doing an ex-post facto analysis of the past effects of media on values and lifestyles.

E. Longitudinal Studies: Panels of children and young adults may be selected in each country to study the future impact of media on their values and lifestyles. This will serve as early warning system and will help in recommending remedial measures before it is too late.

All of the above studies shall be transnational and cross-cultural in character. These shall cover the issues of cognition, cognitive dissonance, value conflicts, anomie, alienation, cultural lag, acculturation, reference groups, ethnocentrism and xenocentrism.
Research design shall be improved, approved and controlled by a centralized body like Asian Mass Communication Information and Research Centre (AMIC), while the responsibility for carrying out the task shall be delegated to local representatives in each country. Results shall be compiled by the central body to produce a comparative study of various countries in the region.
APPENDIX B
DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Acculturation : a minority group internalizing the norms, values and behavioral patterns of the majority

Alienation : feeling of estrangement, helplessness and meaninglessness

Anomie : situation in which norms are absent, unclear or confusing

Cognition : mental process of knowing

Cognitive dissonance : mental discomfort associates with holding mutually exclusive perceptions, ideas, values

Cultural lag : the gap between a change in technology and a corresponding change in values, norms and social relationship

Cultural relativism : objective attempt to understand each culture in terms of its own values, norms and standards

Ethnocentric : one who believes that his culture represents the only true and good way, and hence judges other cultures by these standards

Pluralism : distribution of power among a number of groups

Propaganda : dissemination of information favourable to actions taken by authorities

Real culture : the actual behavior of a group

Reference group : a group that exhibits a strong influence on one's values, whether or not one actually belongs to that group

Retreatism : rejection of socially approved means

Subliminal advertising : the use of a stimulus below the threshold of sensation to influence the viewer at an unconscious level

Value conflict : disagreement between groups regarding values

Value consensus : agreement regarding values

Value neutrality : exclusion of personal judgment

Xenocentric : one who prefers foreign ideas, products or cultures over his own