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<th>Country report: Pakistan</th>
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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Zafar Khan Niazi</td>
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Country Report: Pakistan

By

Zafar Khan Niazi
COUNTRY REPORT

1) Name of the SEMINAR:

AMIC SEMINAR ON BROADCAST MANAGEMENT 2000

2) Name of Participant:

ZAFAR KHAN NIAZI

3) Name of Organisation

PAKISTAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

4) ORGANISATION CHART

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CHAIRMAN
SECRETARY INFORMATION & BROADCASTING

DIRECTOR GENERAL
PAKISTAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

DIRECTOR PROGRM
DIRECTOR NEWS
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
DIRECTOR ADMIN
DIRECTOR FINANCE

CONTROLLER PROGRM

DEPUTY CONTROLLER PROGRM (Working in the capacity of Station Director)

PROGRAM MANAGER
SENIOR PRODUCER
PRODUCER
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Pakistan is a developing country and if it miraculously solves some of its very acute problems, presently seen on socio-economic horizon i.e. 3.3% Birth rate, 2.5 Million drug addicts, 26% Literacy Rate, speedy unplanned urbanisation raising big cities to bigger slums, unclean water, etc. It is feared, the year 2000 will see it still a developing country unless all the resources are fully utilized, the pace of progress is doubled and the active participation of its population is made sure. A supply of Electric Power to only 35% of its population and the lowest Literacy Rate, de-limiting the sphere of influence of TV and Print Media leave us with no choice but Radio which being low cost medium is available to every citizen. Radio Pakistan enjoys monopoly in radio broadcast covering hundred percent area but oddly enough it lacks the patronage of state policy makers. Television is their first love and the old new medium Radio is treated as an old respected lady getting some good poor amount of subsidy to pull on. But it is living and by the passage of time it has assumed a very positive role to fulfill its responsibilities. Radio Pakistan has already won in the past a Medal of success for the Green Revolution i.e. Agricultural Boost in the Sixties while the farmers were informally trained new methods of harvesting through Radio Broadcast.

The same is being done even now.

Education, Information and Entertainment have been the main objectives of Radio Pakistan ever since. Allow me to say that unseemingly and unknowingly it has assumed an active role of social worker and reformer. Long distance formal education of Open University and informal education of the Current topics and the related information has made Radio in Pakistan a valuable instrument loved by the Commoners especially living in the remote areas where it is the only source of instant information.

Being public service it is funded through Licence Fee but funding is a weak point of Radio Pakistan. It earned Rs. 21 million only as R.B. Licence in 1989-90 while the actual expenditure was 412.370 million. The Revenue picture is still gloomy. At present it has one million licence holders while Electricity power suppliers have seven million connection holders on their credit.
Funding is the main concern which may affect, even shape the future broadcasting. PBC is to take some good measures in this respect. As already related, at present PBC is enjoying monopoly in Radio broadcast in Pakistan. It earned Rs. 50,358 million in 1989-90 for its air time with no competitor in sight. But the scene may change at any moment. Competitors may pop-in at any moment. Wind in this direction is already blowing. PTV has already suffered a blow as it has seen a tough competitor from Private Sector. In Funding, PTV is losing its ground as well as programme quality. TV viewers are switching over to NTM.

Public Radio in Pakistan may face some competitors from Private Sector but healthy competition may add to Radio Pakistan's reputation as it has a large Army of Broadcasters to face the situation.

De-Massification and Private ownership of Electronic Mass Media is an old Topic in Western Free World. However 'There are two conflicting orientations about this issue. Some of the experts say that listeners are best protected by Public Radio while the second orientation is that private sector serves the listeners better'. Radio Pakistan is itself opening a new chapter in this respect. Bids are being invited from private parties for the existing FM Transmitters with a view that 'every form of broadcasting - Public or Private ------ Carries with it the social and cultural responsibilities'. This may invite some thrilling broadcasting but may also result in some fat slice off its bread.

The year 2000 is no longer away. As Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock puts "The future or the 21st Century is already on us". Through social evidences and reasoning the Futurists are apt to say that "Series of Jolts and Jars and smashes in social life of humanity are likely to occur in future and while it once happened that the new media would enhance the power of government, their effect recently has been the opposite, breaking the state monopolies of Information". (Paul Kennedy in Preparing for 21st Century).

This reverse effect may result in the least dependence of governments on Media, consequently, the least funding spoons to media. For its survival, the public broadcast has to manage itself more carefully and find some new venue for revenue. PBC is conscious of its huge structure and heavy expenditure and is trying its best to contain itself within its own limits.
A brief record of previous five years shows it is struggling to a fair success. The record is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income in Rs.(million)</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>Rs.348.759</td>
<td>379.266</td>
<td>-30.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>Rs.358.908</td>
<td>412.370</td>
<td>-53.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>Rs.414.677</td>
<td>433.261</td>
<td>-18.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>Rs.509.943</td>
<td>508.407</td>
<td>+1.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>Rs.495.500</td>
<td>514.077</td>
<td>-18.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>Rs.515.700</td>
<td>515.700</td>
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I fear much emphasis is laid on funding but it was inevitable as fund position in future may prove so forceful that it may even change the future rather the fate of PBC. It may even shape the public organisation to a private company. Fund manoeuvring precedes the concern for the good quality reception and the content of its programmes. As long as the question of using advanced technology is concerned, Digital Audio Broadcast or some other advanced form of broadcast may be introduced only on experimental basis and only on a very small scale. By 2000 the complete Replacement of the present conventional equipment seems unlikely, as upto now, even FM Service is catered only in three main cities. We have not enough number of FM Sets at receiving end. Presently MW & SW Transmitters are working upto the mark. Broadcast Experts are of the opinion that "there seems to be a measure consensus that the future of MW Broadcasting will continue to the year 2000 and until more efficient use of available FM Frequency spectrum is found, with the same low cost receivers as the MW one. The problem of transmission quality will of course push broadcasters to substitute FM Transmission when economic Circumstances allow. Particularly where spoken word Stations are concerned MW is expected to continue to occupy an important Place" (Radio 2000, By George Wedall and Philip Crookes).

As far as the content of the programmes of PBC is concerned, it is catering for the wishes and needs of the listeners according to their occupation and pre-occupation. Some of our programmes are even shaped and reformed under the listeners' advice. Islamabad Station received 68,727 letters and 5000 phonecalls from listeners during the year 1992. Increasing phone calls from listeners, especially for free speech programmes is another proof of Radio Pakistan's successful programming.
Keeping in view the diverse interests of different groups of audience, at least two channel service is available to the listeners. Sixty percent of the population can select at least out of four stations in the vicinity. By the year 2000, the introduction of extra FM channels will extend the listeners’ choice.

The attractive feature, rather actual strength of our programmes lies in utilizing our local and regional languages, cultures, folk traditions and folk music which in-toto constitute our harmonious national culture. It is to our satisfaction that no ethnic or cultural group is ignored in our broadcast. Religious programme disseminating Islamic ideology of national network has the strongest appeal to the listeners and it is an encouraging fact that it is most popular chunk among all the sects of Muslims. Radio Pakistan is doing its best for the solidarity and the national cohesion of Pakistan and no private Radio in future can in this respect equal Radio Pakistan. While recruiting all the regions are adjusted proportionally. Once, almost every creative person – Poet, Playwright, Storywriter, Musician – happened to be on the pay roll of Radio Pakistan. During the last decade, most of them remained in touch with broadcast only on casual contract basis. In this producer-oriented organisation, inclusion of creative people at producer level will be more rewarding as "The success of Media depends on the quality of the creative people they use". (Radio 2000).

For the purpose we have Pakistan Broadcasting Academy actively engaged in imparting basic training to new entrants in PBC and arranging higher level refresher courses in all branches of broadcasting. Broadcasters from Pakistan also stand a fair chance of visiting abroad for advance training. Overall ours is a conventional organisation but has a potential of adapting to the need of hour and that is entirely due to high professional standard PBC acquired during the past experience of half a century. It is an interesting fact that as a whole, we are not future-oriented, rather we are past-oriented. We have only one Ph.D. in futuristics, Dr. Ikram Azam, in Pakistan. Futuristics as a discipline has never been introduced in any of our universities.
So it is not an easy task to predict anything safely. However, having some evidences from my present job and my honourable seniors and gathering the reasoning of some of the eminent Futurists, I am confident to infer that:

i. 74% illiteracy rate and 65% of no-power supply makes the Radio our first choice if 100% communication is required. Sooner or later, the people in power are to realise it. So Broadcasting stands a favourable chance of becoming a required Medium in future.

ii. Till now, Radio Pakistan enjoys monopoly in broadcasting. Keeping in view the over all De-Massification of Media, one can easily say, it may surrender its monopoly allowing the private parties to enter the arena. Private Radio Stations may be welcomed among our community where privatisation is being looked as the need of the hour.

iii. If the people in power do not allow separate private Radio Stations at least some private business is likely to be encouraged under the same roof of Radio Pakistan. In this respect, first step has already been taken. PBC has invited bids from private sector for its FM service in major three cities. In this way both the Public Radio i.e. Radio Pakistan and Private Sector can look forward to the year 2000 with confidence. with only one condition i.e. - "The Audience better educated than ever will require better quality in Radio as in anything else" and I am confident to say at least Radio Pakistan would not disappoint its listeners who take it for a social counsellor, considerate friend and an untiring entertainer, not for a music or Chatter Box.