

**An Overview Of The Indonesian Television Deregulations**

**By**

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**AN OVERVIEW  
OF THE INDONESIAN TELEVISION  
DEREGULATIONS**

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## I

### **GUIDELINES OF THE INDONESIAN TELEVISION BROADCASTING**

Mass media in Indonesia, according to the 1988 state political guidelines, has four major goals, which are to heighten the spirit of nationalism, to increase the unity of the nation, to strengthen the cultural value of the nation, and to stimulate the citizen participation in the development.

The most important among these goals is to strengthen the unity of the nation. One nation, and one language that are, Indonesia, were fortified by the National Youth Pledge in 1928. In August 17, 1945, Indonesia proclaimed her independence. The struggle of independence began in 1908. The indigenous newspaper and radio played an active role in the struggle of the nation's independence. Since then, the Indonesian news papers were also the instruments of the political party.

The Indonesian political movement is also closely related to the development of Indonesia's broadcasting system. Television broadcasting first started in 1962 when the Asian Games were held in Jakarta.

From the onset, Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) was a government monopoly, subordinate to the director-general of radio, television, and film, in the Ministry of Information. The policies of television are laid down by the Ministry of Information, while daily operations are handled by the director of television and by

the station managers. As an arm of the government, TVRI is entrusted with communicating government policies and programs to the public.

After the launching of the Indonesia "Palapa Domestic Satellite," in 1976, TVRI established a national network capable of broadcasting from one of 20 television stations that are spread among the islands. In 1984, a total of 101.40 millions people watch the television programs. To spread information evenly to rural areas, in 1984, 54.000 public sets were placed in the villages so as to reach the TVRI telecasts (Deppen, 1983).

The People Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR) has declared that the Indonesian broadcasting has the duty to arouse the spirit of devotion to the people's struggle, to arouse people's participation in development and to strengthen the sense of responsibility and national discipline (Deppen, 1978).

One goal of the Indonesian broadcast policy was to limit the inflow of the foreign film, movie, music and video and to preserve the national culture. Hence the television broadcasting has the function to educate, to inform the national development.

According to the Indonesian government, Indonesian development communication creates a sense of involvement to spread the realization that the future comes from present efforts. So, TVRI is devoted to broadcast the Indonesian development news. To fulfill the government mission in spreading the development news, TVRI then, presented the development news as government activities in building infrastructures. The national news, then, mostly shows

high ranking officials both on the local and on the national levels. The national news is preoccupied with broadcasting on daily activities such as opening ceremonies, various meetings, visiting regions, accept foreign visitors, making political speeches and so forth. TVRI's staff members such as reporters, editors and producers have to adopt the broadcasting policies as directed by the Ministry of Information.

In 1990, the Minister of Information released a decree NO: 111 emphasizing again that the function of the Indonesian television broadcasting is to develop the nation, to socialize the government's philosophy "Panca Sila," in every part of the Indonesian life, to preserve the national culture and to stimulate the national development. Thus, private television stations which started in 1989 are also have the same duty as TVRI is.

reach of most of the viewers. It was felt that by introducing the modern living in all its luxuries may cause a dangerous clash in the community (TVRI, 1982).

To better utilize television broadcasts for the orderly use of development programs and to avoid any unpleasantness that might affect the spirit of development, broadcasting of commercial advertisement was stopped after April 1, 1981 (TVRI, 1984). Subsequently TVRI's revenue has had to depend heavily on the monthly household television fees. This monthly fee is not considered to be a tax, since it is not supported by the parliamentary decree. It is estimated that TVRI collects household fees totalling to 140 billion's rupiahs per month which is about 70 million US dollars.

At present, TVRI broadcasts eight hours a day, ei. from Monday to Saturday and fifteen hours on Sundays and holidays. TVRI has built regional stations in Bandung (West Java), Yogyakarta and a mobile TV station in Semarang (Central Java), Surabaya (East Java), Denpasar (Bali), Kupang, a mobile TV station (Eastern part of Indonesia), Manado (North Sulawesi), Ujung Pandang (South Sulawesi), Ambon TV station in the island of Ambon, Balikpapan and Banjarmasin in the island of Kalimantan, Jayapura, a mobile TV station in the island of Irian Jaya. In the island of Sumatra, the regional TV station is built in Medan and Aceh (northern part), Palembang (southern part).

The Indonesian domestic satellite "Palapa," enabled TVRI to establish a TV national network. Seventy percents of the program

are prepared and broadcasted from Jakarta TV station. Regional stations are required to relay them. TVRI's programs are planned by the Directorate General of Radio, TV and Film of the Ministry of Information. The programs are consisted of News and Sports (32.14%), Film and Music (34.45%), Entertainment (10.08%), Drama (4.40%), Education and Religion (13.33%), Others (5.6%). There are 6000 TVRI employees, one fourth is working in the transmission stations and they are all government's employees, under the management of the Ministry of Information.

The Minister of Information Decree NO: 111/1994, article NO: 5, stated that the only institution which has the right to broadcast television program is TVRI. Article NO: 6 stated that TVRI can appoint a private company to run a commercial television broadcasting under a contract that lasts for 20 years. TVRI supervises and control the private commercial station. Since TVRI has no advertisement, so the private commercial TV station has to give 10 to 20% of his advertisement income to TVRI.

Article 25 mentioned that the private TV stations are not allowed to have their own news, but instead, they have to relay TVRI's news and special report on government's activities. Article 30 stated that in an international television organization or forum, TVRI is the only institution as a representative Indonesian television broadcasting.

Article 36 stipulated that only TVRI has the right to collect monthly TV viewing fee from the public.

### III

## SYSTEM CHANGE

The television deregulation in Indonesia approaches the broadcasting as an industry, which before it was merely seen as a political tool of the government in uniting the nation. The deregulation is based on the Information Minister's decree NO: 111/Kep/Menpen/1990. Decree NO: 111/1990 was revised again with decree NO: 84A/KEP/MENPEN/1992. Based on this decree, article NO: 7 stated that the Indonesian television broadcasting system is divided into:

1. Government station, TVRI.
2. General Private Television Station ( Stasiun Penyiaran Televisi Umum or SPTSU).
3. Educational Private Television Station.
4. Thematic Private Television Station on Economic Development.

Except for TVRI, the rest of the stations are commercial and can broadcast nationwide by using Palapa satellite, but not the terrestrial transmitter.

TVRI has given television broadcasting licenses to:

1. RCTI (general station), 2. TPI (educational station), 3. SCTV (general station), 4. Anteve (general station), 5. Indosiar Visual Mandiri (thematic station: economic and development information program). The licenses are valid for twenty years.

According to the government, the reasons for the deregulation are:

1. That there will be an alternative for viewers especially in the cities. It is expected that this private station is not firmly controlled by the government.
2. The invasion of the video cassette containing foreign programs. In 1990, there are two and a half million's VCR can rent cassette from video rental house. There is a tendency of television close circuit distributed in certain public housing complex. Tia Adhitama (1984) in her thesis found that subscribers pay US\$ 10.00 per month. The members of CCTV in one public housing can be forty households. Programs sometimes are illegally distributed.
3. In the eastern part of north Sumatra, ie. Riau islands, west Kalimantan, and east Kalimantan people can watch RTM 1, and 2, TV3 and SBC, which have better programs than TVRI. People in Batam and Riau island prefer to watch SBC. In 1990, TV3 built a 20-KW transmitter in Bukit Tawao, and close to that place TVRI's transmitter are only 200 watts. Thus, TVRI lost its audience to TV3.
4. There are 600.000 satellite discs in Indonesia. By using this satellite disc, the owners can watch TV3, RTM 1 and 2, TV Thailand, the Philippine TV station, GMA CH 7, and CNN. Those foreign TV stations rent Palapa B2P transponders while TVRI is using Palapa B2R satellite.

Satellite disc with a diameter between 9 and 28 feet can receive program such as:

Satellite	Program	Year of Operation
Stationair I & II	CNN	1990
Intelsat V-F8	CNN	1990
	Worldnet	
Intelsat V-F5	Worldnet	1990
Asiasat I	Star TV	1990
	BBC News	
Aussat I, II, III	ABC	1990
China III	RRC	1992
Insat IIA, IIB, IIC	India	1993
NTT (Japan)	Open	1994
Aussat IB, IIB, IIIB	ABC	1992-1997

(Source: Ishadi, 1994)

These conditions have made the Indonesian government to give broadcasting license to private companies.

## IV

### THE INDONESIAN TELEVISION PROGRAMS

Since the emergence of the private television stations, each station broadcast at least 18 hours a day. Indosiar Visual Mandiri is planning to be on air this coming August.

The deregulation of the television system in Indonesia is very much likely motivated by the high technology globalization and the growth of the Indonesian economy. In 1993, television advertising was Rp. 1,179 billions (around 550 millions US dollars) with only two stations broadcast during day and night time (RCTI and SCTV), while TPI for daytime. Anteve station has been on air 18 hours a day with very few advertisements. Anteve has still to face coverage problem because of lack of transmitters building in the whole region. By next year, all the five commercial TV stations have to compete in getting advertisement.

The five television private stations are all planning to broadcast nation-wide as how TVRI does. The private television Stations use satellite and transmitter to cover all cities and the peripheries. Large number of viewers are very important to attract the advertisers.

Private television programs are dominated by foreign products, ranging from soap operas, action movies, sit-coms, music and games. Thus, not only urban people are watching American programs, but also rural people.

To show how the foreign programming, especially TV movies dominate the private television stations, I will take one sample program from June 23, 1994:

**RCTI**

05.30 Moslem pray  
 06.00 Morning News  
 (the news item is dominated by foreign news produced by CNN)  
 08.00 Tiny Toon Adventure (imported)  
 08.30 Rupert series  
 09.00 Don Quixote  
 10.00 The Odd Couple  
 10.30 Nurses  
 11.00 The Lucy Show  
 11.30 Golden Girls  
 12.00 Afternoon News  
 12.30 Win Lose Or Draw  
 13.00 Film (imported)  
 14.00 FS Super Force  
 16.00 World Cup 94  
 18.00 Local drama  
 18.30 Evening News  
 19.00 TVRI News (relayed)  
 19.30 Local drama: Van Danoe Wiryo  
 20.00 Dark Justice  
 21.00 TVRI: World News  
 21.30 Teledrama  
 22.30 Night Court  
 23.00 Soccer World Cup  
 23.30 RCTI: Latest News  
 00.00 FS Another World  
 01.00 TVRI Latest News

**ANTEVE**

06.00 Morning News  
 06.30 Prime Bodies  
 07.00 Body Moves  
 07.30 World News And Information Features  
 08.30 Documentary Features  
 09.30 Card Sharks  
 10.00 Classic Concentration  
 10.30 World Cuisine  
 11.00 Film The Hiding, Attic  
 13.00 Sport Thursday  
 15.00 FS A Touch of Blue In The Stars  
 15.30 Film High Mountain Rangers  
 16.30 Mode  
 17.00 Anteve News  
 18.00 Wheel or Fortune  
 18.30 Family Feud  
 19.00 TVRI News (relayed)  
 19.30 Intermezzo  
 20.00 FS See Wolf of London  
 21.00 TVRI: World News  
 21.30 FS Counter Strike  
 22.30 Local Program  
 23.30 FS Frazier  
 24.00 Anteve: Nightly News  
 00.00 TVRI Latest News

**TVRI**

14.30 Soccer World Cup 94  
 USA vs Columbia  
 15.00 News in Brief  
 15.05 Soccer World Cup 94  
 16.00 News in Brief  
 16.05 World Cup  
 16.30 Children's Program  
 17.00 Berita TVRI  
 17.30 Learning Arabic

**TPI**

05.00 Moslem Pray  
 06.00 World Cup 94  
 Brazil & Rusia  
 08.15 Morning News  
 08.30 Local Program  
 09.30 Local Comedy  
 10.00 Film: Local  
 12.00 Religious Program  
 12.30 Film: Local

18.00 News in Brief	13.00 Documentary
18.05 Local Features	16.00 Sports
18.15 Rural Program	17.00 Astronomes
18.25 Al'Quran Reading	17.30 local Teledrama
18.35 Religous Program: Moslem	18.00 Moslem Program
19.00 TVRI News	18.30 Local Program
19.30 Local Drama	19.00 TVRI News
20.00 News in Brief	19.30 Local drama
20.05 FS Combat	20.00 Local drama
21.00 TVRI: World News	21.00 TVRI: World News
21.25 World Cup Journal	21.30 Local Drama
22.00 Latest News	23.45 FS Test Tube Mother
23.10 Local Film	00.10 TVRI: Latest News

*TVRI Channel 2*

16.00 FS Cartoon  
17.00 Science (imported)  
17.30 City Agenda(local)  
  
18.00 FS Wild Cat  
19.00 TVRI: News  
19.30 English News Services  
20.00 FS: Thrasin (local)

*SCTV*

05.00 Moslem Pray	19.30 Local Teledrama
05.30 RCTI Late News	Buku Harian
06.00 RCTI: Morning News	20.30 Local Program :
06.15 Soccer World Cup 94	Projeck JECT P
USA vs Columbia	21.00 TVRI : World News
08.30 FS Voyager to The Bottom	21.30 Kamis Futurists
of The Sea	23.00 RCTI : Nightly News
09.30 Focus Feminism (local)	00.00 TVRI : Latest News
10.00 Lady of The Rose	
11.00 FS Krista (imported)	
12.00 RCTI: Daytime News	
12.30 Supermarket	
13.00 FS shops Till You Drop	
13.30 Hill Street Blues	
14.30 Highway To Heaven	
15.30 Happy Days	
16.00 Moslem Religion	
16.30 HC Anderson	
17.00 Simponi	
17.30 FS Hunter	
18.30 RCTI News	
19.00 TVRI News	

Source : Media Indonesia, June 23, 1994.

## V

### TELEVISION LOCAL PROGRAM

Local investors seem not facing any problem in importing the television high technology equipment. But, once the equipment is installed, then, programming may have problem. Local programs have always been identified as a critical factor. Indonesian television face problems recruiting talented and experienced people to produce quality programs, be it news or other entertainment programs such as teledrama, games and comedy. The local industry has not been in the market.

For the time being, television stations, have to buy imported program be it news or other entertainment program, especially from the United States, which is the world's largest producer of television product ranging from popular to classic series programming (see table 1 and 2). TVRI, RCTI, SCTV, TPI and Anteve are competing with each other in buying the United States products, even though every television station is required by the government to broadcast indigenous program.

TVRI as the pioneer of the Indonesian TV station, has made no real effort to set up a television production industry to compete with the United States products. The orientation of TVRI as the government's medium for campaigning development policy in non-entertaining formats stunted the creation of the scriptwriter. More specifically TVRI has yet to recognized program production as an

industry. In contrast, private television stations prefer to buy imported programs that are cheaper than producing or buying local produced programs.

**TABLE I**  
**TELEVISION MOVIES BROADCAST IN THREE TELEVISION STATIONS**  
**NOVEMBER 1992**

STATION	DURATION / HOURS				NUMBER OF PROGRAMS			
	FOREIGN	%	LOCAL	%	FOREIGN	%	LOCAL	%
TVRI	138	79	36	21	188	84	35	16
RCTI	271	92	23	8	307	94	21	6
TPI	64	68	30	32	90	71	37	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>14</b>

**TABLE II**  
**TELEVISION MOVIES BROADCAST IN THREE TELEVISION STATIONS**  
**JUNE - AUGUST 1993**

STATION	DURATION / HOURS				NUMBER OF PROGRAMS			
	FOREIGN	%	LOCAL	%	FOREIGN	%	LOCAL	%
TVRI	223	73	82	27	247	71	100	29
RCTI	724	87	104	13	796	86	124	14
TPI	219	60	145	40	301	62	186	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.162</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.344</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>23</b>

RETRO-ACTIVE Surveys - SOURCE KOMPAS

The implications of the privatization of television broadcasting in Indonesia have omitted to promote and support the production of local programs and the potential of a large and prosperous industry.

The role of TVRI as the government mouthpiece transmitting the message of development, affected the creativity of talented broadcasters. According to Ali Shahab, an independent TV producer (Seminar: Indonesian TV Toward the Year 2000, Jakarta, 15 Dec. '92), television scripts are censored by the government. Government officials for example are not supposed to be perceived as suspicious characters in a television story.

The restrictions make a story dull and do not portray the Indonesian reality. This is one of the reasons, why television commercial stations turn to American programs. One episode of an American program may only cost US \$ 2,500. - to US \$ 15.000. Additionally the catalogue of American programs is extensive and readily available for every market and its particular tastes.

Private television managers argue that aside from this reasonable price of American programs, their quality is far superior in comparison with local programs. Therefore the crucial question has to be asked, is the possibility that local programs could compete, regardless of limited budgets and the limited talented pool.

In the United States, as the cost of producing television movies continues to rise (Auletta, 1991) television stations tend

to broadcast more news, special reports, talk shows and games.

In Indonesia, how can local television news and talk shows attract viewers? Todung Mulya Lubis, an Indonesian leading lawyer and Arief Rahman, a pedagogue (Vista, Oct. 1, '93) stated that they felt Indonesian news and talk shows are dull. Todung complains that most Indonesian television hosts cannot perform professionally. He remembered an experience with one of the commercial television stations, where he was reminded not to disagree on certain issues discussed during a talk show program. Todung's experience exemplifies how politics control the content of local programs.

Thus, Indonesian broadcasters have to be extremely cautious during the creative process so as to satisfy the political system, at the same time as meeting the expectations of television viewers and audiences.

Alan Casty (1986) said promoted news or talk show programs has to appeal to viewers audience needs and interests. There should be feed back from viewers, so that broadcasters may learn about their audience. Casty described the "unwritten" contract between the broadcaster and sender, and the viewer as receiver. In informational communication, the sender is to be a good reporter and the audience is to bring to the experience a reality-seeking and reality-testing need. However, according to Casty instead of expecting simple, clear, members of the entertainment audience are pleased with a certain level of artistic ambiguity and a host of latent meaning.

Another serious problem is the poor quality of human resources

in broadcasting. Ali Shahab (Vista, Oct.1, 1993) said that there are many production houses that are managed neither by people who have no experience nor skills in television production-making or movie. This problem is also prevalent throughout the private television stations. The concept of "learning by doing," is far too expensive and certainly risky to be applied in the industry of broadcasting. Viewers may opt to select another program simply by using their remote control push button.

True competition between the private television stations will stimulate the growth of local production. One strategy is to consistently air quality local programs. There are local issues and topics ad infinitum that can be addressed in a variety of talk show formats and series formats. Television series that are appealing to viewer. Naturally, these formats must be produced by professional broadcaster.

If in the near future, Indonesian commercial television can make news an attractive program for commercial advertisers, then news presentation has to be defined. News stories will require interest, proximity, importance, size, novelty and timeliness. Only in some buyer's market there is interest of news item major significantly. In such a system, according to Julian Harris (1981), the wishes of the viewer are paramount and may shop around for the news that they want as they will not be forced to accept what a publisher or broadcaster provides.

## VI

### CONCLUSION

Indonesia has progressively participated the television globalization and utilized the high telecommunication technology. But, in term of programming, there are still too many things to be done. When we talk about programs, we also have to talk about creativity. Only in a democratic society, creativity could grow and be flourished.

Television broadcasting Law should be defined by a committee whose members consist of government officials, private broadcasters and other general public representatives.

It also should determine whether the existing policy of making TVRI as the only institution to have the right of TV broadcasting, considering that those private TV stations as sub-contractors are still valid compared to the rapid growth of the globalization of technology that has impact on local viewers in Indonesia. There are about 600.000 discs in Indonesia that can receive more than 10 foreign TV channels.

Who control TVRI's program in order to meet the need of entertainment but also carry the persuasive mission of education, especially for the rural people.

The government has to take initiatives to include representatives of every segment of the society in designing the Indonesian Broadcasting Policy that fulfills the need of the rural and the urban people, and on the other side meets the standard of

the global competition.

Private TV stations should have the right to produce their own news and the special report of TVRI's program should not be a must for private TV station to relay. In this way TVRI will be matured to compete in the arena of broadcasting.

There will be a tough competition between private stations in grabbing advertisement. In the last two years, the gross expenditures of TV advertising in Indonesia is Rp. 1,179 billions. As Alan MacDonald from BBC (1993) said that only those who realizes the seriousness of TV broadcast and approach the business with professionalism in content and production will survive in the competition.

How can the private television foster the local programming into an industry in order to balance the domination of the foreign products ? If I mention about local TV program as an industry it means job opportunities are opened for the local people rather than contributing the money to Hollywood. What I urge here is to balance the flow of the Hollywood product.

Kaarle Nordenstreng and Tapio Varis (1974) had conducted research for 50 countries and found that Hollywood products dominated the international market. On the other hand, Hamid Mowlana (1986) assumed that the impact of TV program is specially on women, children and population of the least industrialized nations. Television according to Mowlana is the most powerful medium and exposure assures impact.

There is an urgent need to deregulate the existing

broadcasting system. Steward Brand (1987) said that deregulation does encourage invention, at least until the next monopolies set in. Thereafter, another deregulation is needed to keep the market place working while new technology accumulates for the next round invention, leading to deregulation and then, leading again to another invention. Thus, the government's policy should be planned to encourage television as an industry that renders benefit to the Indonesian society on the whole.

The Indonesian television regulations and law should be designed by the Parliament to avoid conflict. One example of this conflict is the Government's Decree NO 20/1994 of the Foreign Investment. This decree stated, that foreign investors can own 95% of the investment shares in the mass media industry, while in the Press Act NO: 21/1982, foreign investment is not allowed in Indonesia. There are many rules in the Minister of Information Decree NO: 111/90 that are not followed by TVRI and also by the private TV stations.

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