

PRINT MEDIA NEEDS IMMEDIATE RELIEF

The Nation
2-9-95

THE PRICES OF
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INTERNATIONAL
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The government should provide immediate relief to the print media which is faced with serious crisis. Any delay may prove disastrous for the print media as well as the advertising business. Newspapers and magazines not only serve the readers but also give credence to the government. As media is the fourth pillar of democracy, intervention at this critical juncture would be another milestone of the government. These views were expressed by S.H. Hashmi, Managing Director, Orient/McCann and Orient Advertising (Pvt) Limited, in an exclusive interview with *The Nation*.

He showed great concern over the deteriorating state of print media and the advertising business. Print media is affected because of four reasons. Firstly, the prices of newsprint in the international market have soared sky-high making the cost of production higher. Secondly the government duty on news print has been devastating. Thirdly, the government has diverted most of its funds of advertising to electronic media and finally the unrest in Karachi and other macro-economic instability prevailing in the country have marred the scope of print media. Though it is true that price escalation of the newsprint in the international market is out of our control. But the other three things can be monitored and controlled. A tax relief and more funds for the print media are the immediate solution. On long term basis, the other need to be resolved.

Mr Hashmi describing the state of advertising industry has said that during the last year, the overall business particularly the advertisements appearing in newspapers and magazines has slumped. Approximately, it has gone down by 30 per cent he asserted.

Mr Hashmi said that in view of new investment prospects both local and

foreign, the international advertising agencies are keen to come and work in joint venture. Most of the local and foreign firms would participate in print media advertising. In case, the government did not come for immediate rescue, the scope of further expansion would be minimised. "As you know, the investment, business, advertising and the newspapers and magazines are complimentary and each one of them is inevitable for growth. 'We have to take this step into consideration, seriously'," said Mr Hashmi.

Mr Hashmi is known for his advertising acumen for the last three decades and many experts regard him as a pioneer and champion of advertising industry in Pakistan. Presently he is the Managing Director, Orient/McCann and Orient Advertising (Pvt) Limited.

Mr Hashmi talking about his entry into the business said that he came in this business incidentally. His elder brother S.M. Hashmi had started the

advertising company in early 60s. After two years, he joined insurance company and asked him to look after the advertising company. At that time, we were carrying a loan of Rs 2 to 2.5 lakh and it was his duty to earn that much to clear the dues. We had taken an office from Haroon's in New Chali, now Old Karachi. Our gross income was Rs 200 to Rs 300 per month at that time. Luckily, we got the first client of Commander Stove at Landhi. But the turning point came in my life when I met Fakhruddin Valika, a businessman of that time. The luck changed when I bought his Opal car at Rs 4,500 on instalment. This mobility changed the fate of our business. Apart from what we got from Mr Valika, I would like to mention one incidence that in

1965. President Ayub Khan had asked funds for war. Mr Valika declared Rs 10 lakh. You can imagine the worth of that money now. I may tell this because Valika was a man of belief in Pakistan solidarity. 'I am also a strong believer of Pakistan philosophy. Two Nations Theory advocated by Quaid-i-Azam was the only option for the Muslims of India. Mr Hashmi belongs to a well-known literary family. His father (late) Maulana Abdul Quddus Hashmi was

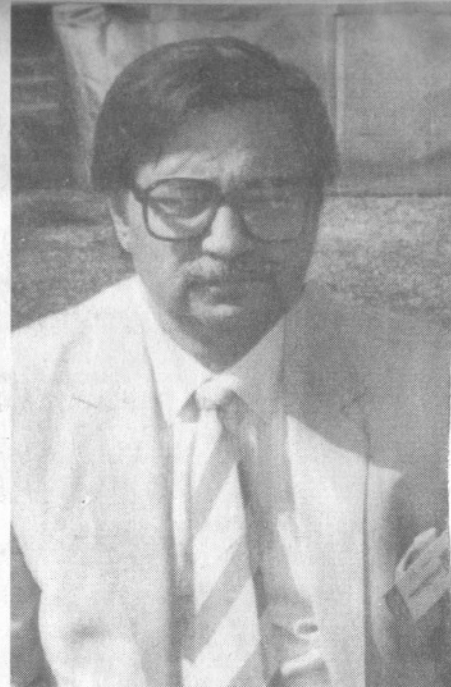
a scholar of the Muslim world. *Ittehad* daily, *Albalagh* weekly and *Gulnar* for children were the magazines which he edited and published. He was the author of scores of books and Pakistan's representatives in Rabita Al-Alam Al-Islami besides being a Tehrik-e-Pakistan gold medallist.

Mr Hashmi heads Pakistan's biggest advertising agency, Orient/McCann Advertising Limited. The winner of best performance Award for 13 consecutive years (1981-93), presented by the All Pakistan Newspapers Society; five gold medals for winning this award for 13 years in a row and two special shields, "in recognition of meritorious service of Orient Advertising Ltd" rendered to print media and winning best performance award for 12 consecutive years. Orient has won the PTV Award for producing best commercial jingle, the PPA best excellence awards for best single media (first and second prizes), the graduate television award the APNS award for the copy-writing and designing.

Mr Hashmi has received awards from President General Ziaul Haq, Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari.

Mr Hashmi has received the international recognition. Biographical sketch covering life and achievements included in fifth addition of international directory of distinguished leadership (USA) is his single credit.

He has participated in about dozens congress and conferences on advertising of international repute. Mr Hashmi



S.H. Hashmi...shows concern at deteriorating state of print media

has also participated as a leader of Pakistan delegation in host of conferences. Currently apart from advertising his attention is focussed on education. He is busy on establishing a college of business management. With 35 years in profession, Mr Hashmi had a rich career. He held the office of Chairman of Pakistan Advertising Association for four years. As man of varied experience, a son of scholar and strong believer of Nazaria-e-Pakistan has own philosophy of viewing things. He was of the view that the print media will die if no immediate action is taken and it would be harmful for the country as a whole.