

# The broadcasting strategy in Pakistan

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WE LEARN almost every thing through some medium of mass communication, radio, TV, film, newspapers, magazines and books. The classroom, the pulpit and person-to-person contacts have lessened in importance as means of effecting either social stability or social change.

Instantaneously learning, men react with equal clarity. Wars, riots, change of governmental policies — these are other actions of great importance which stem from the impact of news transmitted by the mass media. Our environment, for better or worse, is mass media oriented. Radio and television news and programmes are monitored by almost every one.

The communication is the art of transmitting information, ideas and attitude from one person to another. The mass media is supposed to fulfil the objectives of information, education and entertainment. In practice the mass media has to meet many more objectives. On wider perspective they may be bracketed with one of the above elements. Otherwise their scope is quite vast. Motivational drives, publicity and propaganda and some of such elements. There are no two opinions on the fact that in

Pakistan as elsewhere in the region no medium of communication has such a universal reach as the broadcast of words and sound.

Radio Pakistan covers almost whole of the country's population. Thanks to the transistor technology, every worker in the farms and in the factories keeps radio by his side. Neither the printed words nor the coloured televised pictures in Pakistan reach as many people as the sound of the radio.

Since long radio is also being used in this country for the improvement of agricultural production and the standard of living of the farming community. Many efforts have been made to uplift the agricultural production. Whereas no serious effort has been made to determine the role of communication. Radio Pakistan on its own with a little collaboration from other concerned agencies has been engaged in beaming up agricultural promotional programmes. Generally it assumed that many agricultural and development projects sponsored by multilateral, bilateral, government and non-governmental agencies proved to be unsuccessful in the past due to the absence of an appropriate communication strategy. Most of the projects are usually planned by specialists such as agronomists or economists

who are not trained in the art of social communication. Radio otherwise enjoys many advantages over the print media and the television. It could be programmed in local languages as it has been done, it does not need literacy to understand. It is also portable. Local radio stations have easy access to the indigenous population to effectively carry the message. Radio is the only medium which could effectively reach the rural masses with utmost speed. Through farm news and other programmes a broadcaster is able to deliver timely information to the farmers quickly, easily and at very low cost.

Despite limited resources Radio Pakistan has been doing its best to bring about farm mechanisation, increasing per acre yield, popularising new seed varieties and other measures to boost agricultural production and in raising the quality of life of the farming community. The use of the mass media for educational programmes is not a panacea for all the ills and deficiencies of education and the economy, but it does seem clear that if properly used, radio can enable us to achieve the aims better with greater economy and serve a wider constituency. The value of this medium as an educational tool totally depends on the quality of the material and the skill

with which these tools are used. A set of guidelines is needed for designing media based educational programmes. A systematic multi-media approach needs the marriage of both knowledge and the media specialists who should be fully aware of the intricacies of a communication strategy to reach the people of the nation with their programme.

Radio Pakistan did a good job in the field of education for masses through special audience programmes. The percentage of literacy being low, the nation is face with a tremendous task of educating the teeming millions a task so essential for the economic development and social reconstruction.

SCHOOL broadcasts on a regular basis were started in Jan 1953 from radio Pakistan, Karachi, following a report submitted by the UNESCO educational broadcast expert team. Later on this category of programmes were extended to other stations. However from April 1975 this vital broadcast was discontinued until the schools were equipped with receiving sets and a new suitable time of scheduled broadcast was agreed upon. Once stopped, the school broadcast however could not be resumed and over 21 years have since passed.

Likewise Radio Pakistan has been broadcasting programme for college and university students, women and the children regularly. A number of religious programmes are also part of the regular schedule to explain and promote Islamic values. Beginning from scratch half a century ago, the news wing of radio Pakistan was one of the largest news networks in the region broadcasting on the hour and at times every half an hour a news bulletin in different languages to keep informed the people both at home and abroad about the latest developments.

Given proper attention and due financial resources radio can be better used for many more objectives in addition to what stated above. For instance, these could include adult education, family planning and the setting up of rural or agro-based industries in the country.

It is imperative to exploit the power of the medium for an effective change of attitude of the masses and for introducing social innovation, to influence values, moral attitude, thoughts and actions of the society. What is needed to meet this objective is a little more attention, better finance at last but not the least, provision modern management replace the obsolete and rotten system