

FM RADIO BROADCASTING IN PAKISTAN



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Introduction

Pakistan Press Foundation has been working for capacity building of journalists and media organizations for last 24 years. It is also striving for professional training of journalists, enhancing journalistic standards, encouraging women to join media, and safeguarding press freedom.

Pakistan Press Foundation holds training programs and workshops on problems facing Pakistani media not only in cities but also in rural areas. Besides helping journalists in their professional capacity building, it is also trying to raise their awareness regarding social, political and human rights related matters.

Pakistan Press Foundation is trying to raise social and political consensus against gagging of press and harassment of journalists and their organizations in Pakistan. It is also playing its role in research and documentation of Pakistani media. It releases weekly newsletter consisted of important news related to media in English and Urdu. It also publishes reports and books on various topics.

PPF Vicky Zeitlin Media Library and Training Center is an important media research and reference center in Karachi. It regularly arranges training workshops and seminars.

Pakistan Press Foundation also publishes books for the guidance of journalists and media organizations. This book (A review of FM Radio in Pakistan) is also published under this program. The contents of this book are based on the discussions and debates in various consultation conferences, workshops and seminars on the development of FM radio in Pakistan, participated by station managers of FM radios, broadcasters and journalists.

Pakistan Press Foundation is indebted to Nasir Aijaz Editor Pakistan Press International (PPI), Muqtida Mansoor Editorial and Training Coordinator Pakistan Press Foundation, Musawir Shahid Senior Network Coordinator PPF, Ms Naseem Shaikh and Naved Akram Abbasi liaison

officers PPF, Anis Mansoori News Controller FM-103, Abid Siddique of FM-105 and other friends and colleagues, who extended help in getting this book published.

This book is published by Muazzam Ali Research and Publication Center of Pakistan Press Foundation. Muazzam Ali was the founder of Pakistan Press International (PPI) and first secretary general of Pakistan Press Foundation. He played an important role in the struggle for press freedom in Pakistan.

We hope this book would be beneficial for people and organizations related to radio, besides journalists.

Owais Aslam Ali
Secretary General
Pakistan Press Foundation

Preface

Provision of correct and reliable information is a must for running any democracy. In order to get their problems solved in a better way and to strengthen fragile democratic process, as well, it is necessary for the Pakistani people to understand the political, social and economic problems of their country.

In Pakistan more than 40percent population lives beneath the poverty line. More than two-third of this poor population lives in rural areas. The majority of rural poor belong to agriculture and they lack access to potable water, healthcare, education and other basic social services. Another problem is the dismal human rights related conditions facing the Pakistani women, who brave unequal treatment in most parts of the country. The literacy rate in rural women and girls is alarmingly low. Moreover, Pakistani women enjoy limited economic empowerment and lesser access to social services.

In this gloomy social background, Pakistani media witnessed a major change and transformation in last decade, making Pakistani media highly active and vibrant and casting deep impacts on the Pakistani society. A long struggle of Pakistani media, and a rapid revolution in information technology made this change possible, limiting the state control on media to a large extent. After the year 1988 Pakistan witnessed dramatic changes in the laws regarding registration of newspapers and periodicals and licensing of radio and TV channels. The private TV channels gave a new radical direction to the electronic media in Pakistan. Presently, more than 70 TV channels are vying for Pakistani TV viewers. The expanding network of cable TV has provided millions of Pakistani viewers an access to a lot of local and international channels.

The private TV channels ended the monopoly of Pakistani state over media spanning over many decades, and strengthened the concept of public opinion. An open and candid debate on these channels on all the topics from e national politics to economy to social and cultural issues on one hand helped in strengthening the civil society and

democratic process, and on the other provided people access to information, paving way for accountability of bureaucracy and other sectors of society. In some programs of private TV stations, even those issues were discussed that were considered taboo in the Pakistani society.

The private radio stations have been working in Pakistani since 2002. Presently more than 100 FM radio stations are working in various parts of the country. The majority of these FM radios are known for their music programs. Though many of these channels are financially self-sufficient due to local advertisement income, but they are not broadcasting news programs due to lack of professional capacity. Media, especially radio could play a vital role in highlighting and tackling the issues of poverty, illiteracy and human rights of vulnerable sections of society like women and minority.

To get access to poor population of rural areas radio is the best choice. Compared to newspapers and TV channels that publish or broadcast their programs from federal or provincial capitals, majority of FM radio stations are based in rural areas.

In Pakistan the television and print media do not properly cover the local issues, because they generally prepare same material and spread it in the whole country. Their targeted audience is urban intelligentsia.

On the other hand, radio organizations in Pakistan are smaller as compared to newspapers and television channels. They also present their programs at local level and their targeted audience is the poor rural population. This is why the radio could prove more effective medium in reaching out to the poor population living in rural areas, and providing them such information which could help them in improving their living standard. For example, in annual budget there are many policy steps which could directly affect the rural poor, like Income Support Program and Youth Development Scheme in Pakistan. FM radios could highlight such policy matters which could support and benefit the poor rural population.

Private FM radios introduced during the October 2005 earthquake in the affected areas played a praiseworthy role in informing people about the governmental and non-governmental programs and projects.

Development of radio in Pakistan

After the creation of Pakistan, the staff of All India Radio was offered option to stay in India or migrate to Pakistan. Many experienced broadcasters of All India Radio opted to migrate to Pakistan, when they set up a radio service, called Radio Pakistan. In the beginning Radio Pakistan was limited to a few cities, but later the government set up radio stations in various cities and towns to provide people with information and entertainment. In those days radio was considered at the cheapest medium of home-based entertainment.

In the decade of 1970s the government of Pakistan made Radio Pakistan a corporation and further extended its network. Presently, Radio Pakistan has its own reporters and stringers in many areas, besides it subscribes news from various news agencies.

In the beginning all programs of Radio Pakistan used to broadcast on medium waves, but later, it further extended its reach by going to short waves. Later, the Radio Pakistan programs on FM waves, besides permission to private sector to set up radio stations ensured the easy access of people belonging to every walk of life to radio.

Radio Pakistan has played an important role in providing new to masses in standard simple language. It has got the distinction in proper use of language in their programs, and it has maintained a very high standard of innovation and quality in its news department. It has ensured use of proper pronunciation and delivery of words in Urdu and other languages. That is why the language used by Radio Pakistan is considered standard and benchmark.

From the creation of Pakistan up to 1960s, when television was introduced in the country, radio was the only source of access to information and entertainment. In the decade of 1970s Radio Pakistan used to broadcast dramas of international standard. In this way the Radio Pakistan made different programs for various sections of society and provided them standard information and entertainment.

In rural and urban areas of Pakistan many people don't have an access to newspapers and television, while in rural areas 65percent

population could not take benefit from both of them due to illiteracy. For these people the only way for access to information is radio. In most of the areas in Pakistan the only means of access to information is the state-run Radio Pakistan, which avoids giving coverage to opposition and highlighting its point of view, and hence promotes a one-sided and biased way of thinking.

Till the year 2002, the government enjoyed a complete monopoly on radio broadcasting, the most effective media having a reach to 95percent of population in the country with low literacy rate. In 1973, under the Pakistan Broadcasting Act (1973) the Radio Pakistan was converted into corporation, which still is bound to follow the instructions of federal government in its announcements and news regarding the state policy.

FM radio broadcasting in Pakistan

In the beginning of 21st century, realizing the changes taking place at global level, the government of Pakistan decided to give permission to electronic media (radio and television) in private sector. Earlier, in 1990s a private television company was allowed to show entertainment programs. After the year 2002, when the government allowed setting up radio and TV channels in private sector this new sector expanded, rapidly. Presently, FM radio stations are working in big and small towns of the whole country and areas along highways. Majority of them present entertainment programs, while some radio stations also broadcast news. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) till now has issued more than 200 FM radio licenses, and majority of these radio stations are working.

The FM radio is an important source of contact with people. It not only keeps them aware of happenings around them but also provide them entertainment. As the scope of FM radio is limited, it could effectively highlight the local issues, diverting the attention of administration towards solving them. Hence, FM radio also plays the role of a bridge between people and administration.

In the beginning of 21st century, when the government of Pakistan allowed FM radio and TV transmission in private sector, it also set up

the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) through an ordinance, to issue the licenses to private TV and radios and keep an eye on their performance.

This authority before issuing a license checks many things including financial sustainability of the applicant, availability of technology, share of Pakistanis in ownership rights, past record and credibility, chances of technical advancement and introducing new technologies, the ability of applicant to compete in market, and ability to provide service to people.

The opening of FM radio in private sector increased the demand for training staff. However, these radio stations are not getting proper university graduates having expertise in various broadcasting-related fields, as the curriculum of many universities is outdated and obsolete. It is a dire need that the curriculum being taught in educational institutions, especially universities, should be streamlined as per real market needs and practical training should be included with theoretical learning, so that the radio stations may not face problems in hiring trained professional staff.

Moreover, there is no professional academy in Pakistan for training broadcasters and other staff needed in radio stations, and recruitment of training staff is still a big issue for private radio stations. Pakistan Press Foundation and other media organizations are holding training workshop in various town form the training and capacity building of people working in various departments of radio.

Another major issue is the selection of broadcasters. The broadcasters presenting programs at FM radio are called RJs or DJs. Only good voice quality is considered benchmark in the selection, while their command on language, pronunciation, and general knowledge especially knowledge on history, geography of their area, as well as, their social, political and ethical issues is not generally not stressed.

In Pakistan, after recruitment a DJ or RJ is asked to sit before the mike without any basic training. It is also observed that these DJs and RJs do not take into account the policy of their radio, as well as, needs and requirement of people in their area. A good DJ or RJ should

know the psychology of people, knowledge of the culture, traditions and language of their respective areas. It is true that trained presenters are not available in small towns, but their organizations could overcome this weakness for arranging training of their staff.

Another problem facing the private radio stations is lack of resources. The government gives them no concession in license fee or import of radio equipment. That is why the majority of radio stations instead of serious and informative programs depend on music and entertainment programs, because they can get sponsorship for these programs easily. The standard of literary, religious and social programs is not improving because the radio stations could not find sponsors for them.

In order to achieve the high standards of broadcasting one should try best to benefit the latest technologies. One of the emerging technologies in the world is 'Digital Broadcast (DOB)'. In this technology radio is delivered using terrestrial spectrum in digitalized form. It offers the potential for more and higher quality services. In Pakistan it has not yet been introduced.

Advertisement revenue is the major issue for radio stations working in villages and small towns. As advertisement agencies are based in big cities, easy access to them for radio stations of villages and small towns is rather difficult. Some such radio stations have appointment their agents and representatives in big cities for getting advertisements. Some rural radios have developed links with other radio stations in big cities to rebroadcast their programs to get some share from their revenue. However, the majority of radio stations in rural areas face difficulties in getting advertisements.

Role of FM radio in sustainable development:

The FM radio could play an important role in sustainable development, due to its ability to mobilize the society and give information to people about their development problems and their solution. It encourages people and communities to participate in social projects, and hence spurring the overall development process. Due to this important factor it is the responsibility of managements of FM radios to devise their programs in such a way so as to focus on problems facing the society and their possible solution.

Hiring the services of senior journalists and experienced broadcasters helps in ensuring a positive reporting. The radio stations should find such capable people who run radio in proper way.

Campus Radios:

For practical training of students studying in the mass communication departments of universities the Pemra has given them permission to run campus radios. Presently, campus radios are working in many varsities of the country. These radio stations do not broadcast news and current affairs programs, though such programs help in raising awareness of listeners. Similarly, the subjects that could be debated in classroom should be broadcast from campus radios. The Pemra and university administrations should think about this and introduce needed changes in their policies.

Community Radio:

A radio station working for providing information to a particular community, highlighting their issues and paving way for their solution is called community radio. These radios work on participatory basis and not for making profit.

Communities want to know about each other. They have social and cultural relations. They are interested to know what other people are thinking. In some communities and localities there is majority of illiterate people who could not read newspapers. FM radio is considered the most cost effective source for providing information to them.

The basic difference between a private and community FM radio is that the private radio works for making profit, while the community radio is devoted to highlight the problems of a particular community, raise political and social awareness in them, and prepare them to work for solution to their problems. The programs of private FM radio stations are for the interests of all sections of society, while the community radio focuses solely on a particular community.

To improve access of people at grassroots to mass media in order to empowering them and spurring devolution of power is amongst the objectives of Pemra and its rules allows setting up of community radio

stations, but the policies of Government of Pakistan and Pemra do not encourage community radios. This is why the government has give licenses only companies and mass communication departments of varsities to set up FM radios.

Some people think that allowing community radio stations would fan racist, linguistic and communal hatred in the country. They give example of illegal FM radios set up in some tribal areas of the NWFP province, which have promoted religious extremism and militancy to such an extent that the government has still failed to contain them. In this way, presently, Pakistan is the only country in South Asia where licenses to community radio are not issued in a proper manner.

Radio is a wireless technology, which is easily available everywhere on cheap prices, and any political, social and religious group could use it for their objectives. That is why people involved in illegal activities are also fully benefiting from this facility. Due to the problems faced in getting radio licenses and responsibilities resulting thereof, such groups prefer running illegal radio stations. According to an estimate, more than 100 illegal FM radios were being run by various religious and sectarian elements in the tribal areas of the NWFP province as well as in other parts of the country. For example, in the adjacent area of Omerkot (Sindh), four illegal radio stations are operating while in Ghotki (Sindh), there are five illegal radio stations. These illegal radio stations not only pose threats to peace, social stability and sectarian harmony, but also create problems for the licensed radio stations.

The fears of the government regarding issuing licenses to community radios not founded on logic and reasoning, as the tendency of growing extremism could be reduced by issuing licenses to various communities living in the country, because these communities could challenge the extremist ideologies of militants through their balanced programs.

An alternate solution to this issue is to give licenses to responsible institutions like press clubs to run the community radios to raise awareness amongst local communities. These radios would also help masses to convey their thoughts to the government organizations through the professional capabilities of journalists.

There are many institutions in the country which have got the needed human resources and professional capability to establish and run community radios in short span of time.

It is necessary to have a serious debate on various aspects of the community radio, so that a proper policy could be devised which help in coping with real challenges and pave way for a rapid development of community radio in the country.

It is possible to set up studios of community radios in press clubs, so that they could make news and currant affair programs for the area, and in later phase these studios could be converted in radio stations of news and current affairs after getting permission from Pemra. A debate on effectiveness and transparency of the state policies on community radio could play an important role in awareness of masses. The government should not only change its hard-line policy regarding the community radio, but also provide technical help and training facilities to help establishing community radios in whole country.

A conference of FM Radio Development, held at Rawalakot town of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on August 9-10, 2008 has already passed a declaration in this regard. (The declaration is included in Appendix-B).

Presently, no radio in Pakistan qualifies the definition of community radio; however, there are bright chances for this sector in the country. The community radio could prove beneficial only when it has a direct access to people. Every individual has the right to talk on the problems faced by him at the community radio, and any restrain in this regard affects the very concept of community radio.

To meet the expenses of community radio, some of its airtime could be sold. Moreover, assistance could be sought from civil society organizations. A study of various models of community radios could help in improving its performance.

A forum of community radio should be set up in Pakistan to raise awareness about the problems faced by various communities, and to move towards a broad-based solution to these problems through exchange of information. (Reference: Murree Declaration passed by the five-day

workshop in Murree on May14-18, 2006. See appendix-A).

Social impact of radio:

The popularity of radio increased after the introduction of FM radio. This is because the FM radio provides information to people having no access to newspapers or television. Moreover, radio set is cheap and anyone could buy it easily. It is also available on internet. This is why today people belonging to different age groups and different social background listen to radio. People enjoy listening radio while traveling, peasants listen to it while ploughing their fields, and workers listen to it in their factories and shops.

During the hours of electricity load shedding when other sources of entertainment could not be availed people listen to radio on their cell phones.

FM radio is an important source of creating awareness amongst the Pakistani masses, especially those living in rural areas.

People listen to FM radio for various reasons. Commuters use it for getting latest news, stock exchange situation, weather forecast, traffic situation and current events and happenings in the town.

The radio programs in regional languages have helped in reducing distances from people living in various parts of the country. The FM radio is also helping in raising awareness about social evils like honor-killing, extremism, feudal culture, domestic violence on women, and lawlessness.

FM radio also plays a role in timely rescue of affectees of highway accidents by providing timely information about them. It plays same role in timely shifting of people from areas hit by natural calamities. It also provides valuable information about any weather change to fishermen in open sea. Some FM radios present interviews of teachers and schoolchildren, motivating other children to get education.

Role of radio in coping with natural calamities:

In case of any natural calamity radio provides timely information

about the affected areas. It assists rescuers by providing them assessment of damage, besides local situation and access roads. It also provides people information about coping with related issues, and trains them about how to avoid communicable diseases. It also helps in their recovery from shock through entertainment programs.

The private radio stations set up in the October 2005 earthquake ravaged areas of Azad Kashmir and NWFP province provided these services, besides broadcasting the lists of missing people to help uniting the separated families.

Programming:

Preparation of programs:

Programming means compiling and arranging the matter to be broadcasted by radio. This helps people in selecting their favorite programs, and radio stations in prioritizing their programs. Radio programs and their timings are set up in view of choice and liking of the listeners. A good and vibrant radio station always introduces changes in their programs and in their schedule in the light of feedback of its listeners.

Language - Vocabulary - Accent:

It is a fact that language holds a vital position in communication. Without complete hold on language, broadcast loses its significance and the purpose of communication dies. As for most of the listeners everything they listen is only words, hence, words are undoubtedly very important. It is easy to say that language should be simple and easy but it is not easy to attain it without vocabulary. Proficiency in language has no shortcut means. It can only be achieved by developing reading habit. Best way to increase the vocabulary is the use of dictionary and thesaurus. These are also helpful to improve the pronunciation as it contains the words with proper nuances. To master the skill of using short sentences, reading poetry is the best remedy.

Aim of broadcasting is to win listener's heart. That is why the language spoken on radio is very important and people belonging to all sections of society listen to it and also affected by it. It is necessary that the

language used by radio must be simple and comprehensible. Use of slang should be avoided at all costs. Such words and sentences which could hurt the feeling of people belonging to a particular ethnic, sectarian, political or religious group should also be avoided.

Many people complain that some radio stations use English words, unnecessarily, which annoy them. Programs purely in Urdu or regional languages enhance interest of people.

When preparing programs for radio, it requires knowing what the listeners want to hear, and which program is popular in people of which class or age group. The public feedback is generally known through live calls, SMSs, letters and marketing data. Keeping in mind the public feedback programs could be divided into various categories, like programs for youth and women, religious programs, health programs and social awareness programs. Other topics could be agriculture, weather, market rates and timings of rails and flights, etc.

Entertainment programs:

The most popular programs of FM radio are entertainment programs. These programs include live shows, music, and programs of women, youth and children. The entertainment programs are made considering the interest of all circles of listeners. Every group has their own set of interest. For example, elder people like listening to Ghazals and literary programs in night. Most of the shows on radio stations are entertainment shows.

The most difficult entertainment show to handle is a comedy show and such shows must be broadcasted in recording forms. The most common and interesting entertaining show is Q & A (question & answer) show. This is most effective show to bring on new caller. But such kind of shows involves great deal of research. Similarly fascinating story based shows of the area also hits the mark. Adding poetry and jokes to the script makes it more strong and interesting. Element of curiosity also plays a vital role in a successful show. Because all the expressions on the radio are delivered through voice, therefore in order to achieve best result presenter should avoid long conversation. Similarly the gaps between conversations should also be as less as

possible. Presenter's style must also be natural so that one must not feel that broadcaster is reading a script.

The environment of studio is also very important. In Pakistan owner do not pay much attention to it. If the studio is good, has proper lights, lively and neat, broadcaster's performance will be much better. Similarly broadcaster's attitude and proper dressing also affects the show.

Live issues are the effective way of contact with the listeners. One type of live shows is the programs recorded outside the studio, like road shows. People take great interest in these programs and they generate a lot of live calls. While dealing with live calls the RJ always try to make the conversation with caller interesting, so that the listeners enjoy it. However, this conversation should not be bizarre. It is the responsibility of RJ to keep the program focused on its subject. Callers make the live programs interesting and vibrant, but there should be certain time allocations for live calls.

Youth programs:

Young people often seek information and entertainment from radio programs. The radio station providing them information along with quality entertainment gets popularity amongst this group of listeners. On FM radios, the programs for youth are most sought after, because they provide to youth what they want to listen. You can often see young people listening to radio programs through earphone of their cell phones.

Women programs:

Though women are the largest group of FM radio listeners, as most of the callers are female, but their issues get less attention in radio programs. Especially, very few programs are presented on their healthcare issues. It is the accepted fact that if radio loses its women listeners it would not survive.

Children programs:

The number of call received from children shows that children also keenly listen to FM radios. However, the FM radios except a few programs about storytelling don't present specialized programs for children to help in their mental growth.

Religious programs:

In Pakistan radio offers stereotype religious programs limited to the recitation from Holy Quran, Hamd-o-Naat and relaying of prayer calls. Sometimes, a religious scholar is invited for sermon on special religious days.

It is necessary that producers of religious programs should have a fair knowledge on religion. The religious programs should be balanced. It should be tried not to hurt feelings of any sect or school of thought. The religion does not mean only Islam. People belonging to other religions and faiths like Hinduism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism also listen to the radio and their feelings should be kept in mind in religious programs on radio.

Health programs:

In Pakistan FM radio stations do not give much importance to health programs. Though a lot of informative programs could be done on this subject which could also get wide popularity amongst the listeners. Presently, the situation of peoples' awareness to health in rural areas is not satisfactory. Health programs could be sponsored by hospitals, clinics etc.

Literary programs:

Literature is a vast subject and there are many people who listen to literary programs and want comprehensive debate on literary subjects. However, the literary programs on Pakistani FM radios are limited recordings of poetry-reading sessions and interviews of poets.

Programs on miscellaneous topics:

People are also interested in knowing commodity rates, weather forecast, highway accidents, forex exchange rates, blockade of roads due to political rallies and timings of trains and flights. Talk show programs are also one of the importance radio programs. People listen to them with interest because they raise social and political awareness. All radio stations try to add these topics in their broadcasting.

Selection of topic:

Radio enjoys a wider range of listeners. From illiterate farmers to university professors listen to radio, so it is necessary to have diversity in their topics. When radio highlights problems of various section of society it gives them representation, which further enhances its popularity. To present quality programs it is necessary that have a good homework and gather correct knowledge about the subject. It is necessary to from various categories of radio programs.

Expectation of listeners:

The network of FM radio is extended from cities to villages. As the state-run media don't give much importance to public issues, the popularity of private FM radio and expectations of listeners attached to it have also risen. People expect that radio convey their problems to the related government departments for their solution.

In order to provide certainty and predictability to the broadcasting industry and to listeners about expected standards, the rules must be set out in writing and applied accordingly.

The radio started with live broadcasting to convey information to the listeners as soon as possible. Even better if this information is in language they understand. People also take interest in happening of their area, besides cultural activities and music. In Pakistan there is no trend of research on radio programs.

There are many mechanisms to collect about public feedback to assess the popularity of radio programs. Generally market surveys, calls and

SMSs of listeners during live programs determine the popularity of a particular program. It also shows the popularity of the rival radio station. Although survey facility is available in Pakistan but unfortunately radio stations do not benefit from it.

There is a general perception that many listeners call to radio just to hear their voice, and these call could not determine the popularity of that program. If a proper survey is conducting to know the reach of FM radio and about the social background, professions and mindset of people living in this area, it could greatly help in making policies for radio programs. For example, the majority of listeners of FM radio with reach to rural areas are farmers and other people belonging to agriculture-related professions. These radios should present more programs for these people. The programs presented in local and regional languages are behind the success of radio, as these programs are liked by masses.

Presently, the FM radio stations are working in the length and breadth of the country, proving information and entertainment to people. As the FM radio sector has witnessed a mushroom growth in last few years, there is a wide scope to improve their professional skills and standard of their programs. The deficiencies in contents, flow and balancing of programs could be removed to further improve them. Keeping in mind the highly competitive atmosphere, serious efforts are needed to improve the standard of FM radio programs.

Program policy:

When planning a radio program it should be determined how much time allocated to it and what would be its utility. For radio programs some accepted rules would be formed, so that to avoid problems related to their broadcasting. It should be kept in mind which linguistic group dominates a particular area and what are there interests. For example, giving more time allocation to Seraiki programs in Seraiki-speaking areas would help in attracting more number of listeners.

The RJs and DJs could prove good researchers, as majority of listeners keeps in touch with them in some way. Considering their suggestions, while making programs could greatly help in improving the standard of programs. Moreover presenters should be given shows of their own interest.

It these things are kept in mind while formulating programs, a balanced radio programming policy could be made.

Broadcasting news on radio:

The preparation and broadcasting of good news bulletins on radio enhances awareness of the listeners. It also helps in strengthening in growth of democratic institutions. In Pakistan also radio programs of news and current affairs have achieved positive results. FM radios help in conveying local issues to the concerned departments in shape of news and comments. An easy access to information and commenting on state policies give confidence to people, and the radio provides both opportunities.

Presently, FM radio stations are working on big and small towns, and highways but many radio stations avoid broadcasting news due to strict and tough policies of Pemra. In fact, in the beginning Pemra had not allowed the private sector radio stations to present news and current affairs programs, but now after the Pemra has relaxed its rules, some FM radio stations have began news and current affairs programs. However, the FM radios presenting news programs face shortage of trained and experienced staff, having a keen news sense and command on technical aspects of news. Moreover, the listeners want immediate information about major happenings; while the FM radios due to lack of proper staff fail to provide them correct and timely news.

Because the sphere of FM radio is limited to particulars areas, the news they broadcast are local in nature. For example, in Dheerkot, Azad Kashmir, landslide is a big new, but in the desert area of Thar news about rains is more important. In Karachi, the radio news should be diverse to cater needs of people belonging to different walks of life. The office goers want to know about riots or traffic jams in their area so that they could adopt alternate routes. The people driving their own cars like national and international news so that they could keep them updated on what is happening in the world. The announcements of exam results are also listened by a large number of listeners. If the producers include details and some background research, the importance of their news could be further enhanced.

There should be a code of conduct for the people belonging to news. Radio stations adopt a voluntarily code of conduct that they would not broadcast any material, which does not suit the social and cultural values. Similarly, a code of conduct is needed to make news and current affairs programs balanced and unbiased. It is necessary that reports should be authentic and confirm and choice of words careful. To check and confirm the information and not to release unconfirmed reports also include the code of conduct. Adopting a code of conduct, voluntarily, helps in credibility of news and uphold of press freedom.

Reporting for radio is not much different from the reporting for print media. In print media, words are used relatively liberally, but on radio careful and concise selection of words in necessary. However, there is no big difference between a radio and print media reporter. A good reporter should be educated, broadminded, balanced, sophisticated and well aware about social and political situation of area. He or she should have knowledge and training regarding the journalistic norms, good commands on language and expression, and keen observation. He or she should be honest, fair and just, having the courage to present facts, and a strong character. In this era news has become a story.

For radio reporters it is a must that their reports should be narrated in their own voice. This gives their news similarity to the television news.

For radio reporting, it is necessary that a reporter goes in his/her beat along with sound recorder. The use of sound recorder is in the interest of both the reporter and interviewee. The sound recording not only minimizes the chances of mistakes in reporting, but the interviewee is also satisfied that radio would broadcast only what he has said. However, along with sound recording, the reporter should also take notes so that to mark important points.

A reporter during taking interviews should adopt a friendly behavior, as in this way he can get a lot of information. If the reporter talks about the past performances and achievements of the person to whom he is talking with, it gives the latter courage and he talks with confidence and give more details. Hence, the reporter gets the required information.

The radio report should be objective, concise and comprehensive in simple daily use language and smaller sentences.

A reporter should know about the subjects of interest of radio listeners. He or she should be an observer, not a critic. To ensure the objectivity and neutrality of news, a reporter should not be an office-bearer or active member of any political party. A reporter should also stay away from the power game to ensure his impartiality.

For covering press conference, radio reporters should do prior work. They should know the agenda of press conference and deviation of opinion of speakers in past if any. They should carefully listen to the press conference and amend and add the list of their question, if necessary.

The information being provided in the news should be correct, so that the listeners get proper message. In this regard heavy responsibility rests on the news editor. He should have a good command on writing, besides use of technical terms, so that a report or news could be edited in a better way.

For radio news the most difficult part is news gathering. The FM radios have either to appoint there own reporters in all major cities and towns, where there broadcastings are being heard, or subscribe some news agency. Now-a-days Internet is also an important source of news collection. Sometimes, citizens also inform the radio stations about major event and incidents via telephone. This is known as 'citizen reporting' and they are considered as 'reporters'. Moreover, local press clubs, newspapers, police sources, TV channels, local administration, affected people, eyewitnesses, press releases, press conferences, announcements and press note of various government departments are also good sources of news gathering. However, it is necessary that the news should be authentic and verified from independent sources.

Generally the rule of 5 W+ 1H (What, When, Who, Where, Why and How) is used while writing news. The news is normally written in 'inverted pyramid', which means while writing the article important aspects of 'who, when, where, what and how' are addressed in the

first paragraph. As the article continues, the less important details are presented. The news should be clear, correct, concise and unbiased. It should contain complete details, covering various aspects of the subject. The selection of headlines is also very important. It is the responsibility of journalists and media organizations to avoid angling in reporting and present both sides of the picture to make the reports balanced and neutral.

Radio news features contain news and comments on them from various stakeholders. The topics of these features should be of public interests and thoroughly discussed from various aspects. The features on new and unique topics also help in changing mindset of the listeners.

Radio documentary has its own importance, because they are liked by the listeners. A documentary is a complete document on a particular issue. Radio producers should collect all figures and facts on the subject through research when preparing documentaries.

Interview on the radio is also very important as listeners get to know more of that respective public figure. Interview means 'inside view'. Significance of taking interview is that during questioning such things or issues are brought up which could be news. In order to plan an interview intensive research is needed. Interviewers must have complete knowledge of interviewee's life and background. At least 15 questions should be prepared in advance. It is also important to note that interviewer must avoid unguarded questions. If the answer is too long, interviewer has a right to interrupt and cut it short. All the questions and answers should have interconnectivity as well.

It is observed that press clubs and media organizations raise a strong voice when a journalist faces an atrocity; however, if the victim is radio journalist generally no one cares. It is a dire need that people belonging to radio should form their own association of forum, which has closer links with journalist association and other professional bodies, so that to muster support in case of any emergency.

Presenting news on radio is of great importance. No matter how important or good is the news, if it is not presented well, it will lose its significance. Key to good presentation of news on radio is voice

clarity, accurate pronunciation and fluency. News reader should also have good hold on stresses and poses.

Networking:

Mutual relation amongst FM radio stations:

For improving radio policy and programming it is necessary that there should be mutual coordination and contacts amongst the FM radio stations. With the help of this networking programs could be improved with sharing research and experiences. It also helps in devising joint strategy on the new projects. Moreover, this networking and contacts also help in training of staff. During any emergency situation, these relations help in mustering support. The FM radio stations also share and exchange information regarding foreign fellowships and scholarships.

For this purpose, a directory of FM broadcasters could also prove very helpful.

With help of networking various radio stations could be in touch with each other. They could exchange thoughts on making policies on safeguarding their mutual interests and solve common problems. Similarly, a strong network should also be formed amongst FM radios and campus radios for sharing of information.

In the beginning due to harsh policies of Pemra, FM radios stations didn't present news and current affairs programs, and they had not formed contacts with local journalists. Now, when the Pemra has relaxed its policies, some radio stations have started presenting news and current affairs programs. However, due to lack of required professional capabilities they are facing problems in presenting quality news bulletins. Some FM radio stations are just reproducing news of television channels and newspapers. If the FM radio stations could utilize the professional services of local journalists, they could improve the standard of their news and current affairs programs. Local press clubs could also greatly help FM radio stations in improving the standard of their news and current affairs programs.

Appendix-A

Murree Declaration:

Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) in collaboration with International Broadcasting Bureau of Voice of America (VOA) organized a five-day workshop at Shangrila Hotel, Murree from May 14 to May 18, 2006, which was attended by local and foreign FM broadcasters and university representatives. The workshop participants approved the following declaration:

1. A community radio forum should be established in Pakistan.
2. Pemra should review and amend its rules and policies to help in development of community radio in Pakistan.
3. Pemra should allow the community radios to present news and current affairs programs.
4. Strategy should be formed for booting freedom of expression, ensuring security and safety of people related to mass media, and further straightening of media organizations.
5. Network should be formed between participants of workshop.
6. Universities should set up training academies for broadcasters of all communities in their mass communication/ journalism departments.
7. The radio stations set up in the earthquake affected areas should be allowed to continue their broadcasting, and they should also be given status of community radios.
8. A network of campus radios should be established in Pakistani universities.
9. Pakistan Press Foundation should be requested to continue its training workshops for the capacity building of community broadcasters.
10. The government should ensure peoples' access to information at every level.

A six-member committee comprised Mr. Razi Rizvi of Voice of America Urdu Service, Mr. Owais Aslam Ali Secretary General Pakistan Press Foundation, Mr. Sajjad Paracha of Mass Communication Department University of Bahawalpur, Ms. Shazia Gul of Mass Communication Department University of Peshawar, Mr. Aijaz Ahmed of Mass

Communication Department University of Balochistan Quetta, and Mr. Muhammad Rafiq Bhatti, Deputy Controller Radio Pakistan Muzaffarabad drafted the declaration.

Appendix-B

Rawalakot Declaration:

Pakistan Press Foundation in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) organized a workshop on Development of FM Radio in Pakistan at the Himalaya International Hotel Rawalakot, Azad Kashmir on August 9-10, 2008, which was attended by the station managers and broadcasters of 23 FM radio stations of Pakistan. They approved following declaration:

1. The government should make laws to ensure access of FM radio information at every level.
2. A guarantee should be provided for the present structure for promoting freedom of expression and safety and security of media organizations and people related to them.
3. Pemra should review its rules and policies and introduce reforms in them for further development of FM radio.
4. As community radio plays a pivotal role in sustainable development, the Pemra should issue licenses to community radios.
5. All FM radio stations should form their network. A separate joint forum for FM radio organizations and professionals should also be set up.
6. Pakistan Press Foundation or some other institution should set up a training academy for FM radio broadcasters. The proposed academy should compile curriculum for technical staff of broadcasting stations and people belonging to their other departments. This curriculum should be updated time to time to meet new challenges.
7. The owners of FM radio stations should provide job security to their staff and follow the related laws.
8. There should be a voluntarily accepted code of conduct for all FM radio stations.

This declaration as drafted by a three-member committee comprising Mr. Nasir Aijaz, Bureau Chief Pakistan Press International (PPI) Karachi, Syed Salman Al-Moazam of Sunrise FM, and Mr. Afsar Awan, Director News FM-107 Karachi.

The participants of the conference, unanimously, approved the declaration.

NOTES