

# NEED TO DEVELOP MEDIA ORIENTED EDUCATION CULTURE IN PAKISTAN

By

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Today, the world is too much advanced. During the past century, our globe has particularly witnessed tumultuous changes in the whole domain of human activity marked with highly accelerated speed of modernization. Any nation wishing to keep pace with the contemporary world, has to introduce improved modes to disseminate learning with greater degree of communicative efficiency both at basic and higher levels of education. And only a forward looking and pragmatic approach and attitude in education sector would ensure our honorable existence in the world.

Now much of the content of education, new and multi-dimensional, obviously needs to be instilled through such means as are adequate, effective and within the reach of a wider circle of learners. It is generally observed that traditional disciplines and subjects can be inculcated through modern and innovative media with equally desirable efficacy. The help of audio-visual aid also brings ease and convenience in teaching-learning process as compared to unilateral lecture method from which only those can best benefit having greater power of retention. It may be a digression, but the analysts ascertain the potential of this media from absorbing influence of audio cassettes and video films on domestic socio-cultural trends particularly on youth.

Despite such significance of electronic media, the quantum of its use for education purpose in Pakistan is least encouraging. What is the most desirable then? Educationists and media experts are required to join hands to explore the possibilities of using radio and

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television to increase both the quality and quantity of education through non-formal system as well as formal system of education. We need to expedite the process through involving all responsible organizations and ensuring active participation of all groups of learners.

Radio broadcast came with the inception of the motherland, but then there was no concept of education through the electronic media. Now various programmes of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation are in the category of education, but these can be termed as programmes of general interest and not for specific objectives.

Similarly, Pakistan Television has been working for three decades and has improved with the passage of time with regard to quality and variety of programmes. It also offers three defined groups of programmes enumerated as *Education, Information and Entertainment*, but all these programmes are produced and telecast for common viewers and are not for specific purpose. The statistics showing radio and TV signals coverage of land area and population percentage is given in the table:

Radio (through PBC Network)	Area 75%	Population 95%
Television (through PTV Network)	47%	87%
Television (through ETV or PTV-2)	76%	95%
PTV & ETV coverage (through Dish Antenna)	100%	100%

These figures make it candidly clear that this single means of education can encompass the largest number of students in urban areas, and in far-flung rural localities well. The production cost approximately calculated as Rs.0.1m for one television programme for periodic use should be the most economic when utilized to teach a particular lesson to all students of a particular stage. This manifests relevance and advantage of media in raising literacy rate and education. But we have yet to develop a media-oriented education culture in the country. However, the recent development i.e. installa-

tion of Educational Television (PTV-2) with one production centre at Islamabad and 16 re-broadcast centres across the country has provided a ray of hope that in the near future this potential wing will yield phenomenal results.

The task is still challenging as the fault also lies at the receiving end. People still hardly believe that education is possible through radio and television programmes. The reasons are numerous. First, we have no experience in this venture. Then, there lies much difficulty in incorporating academic lessons and aesthetics together in a programme. The programmes containing contents which serve certain specific objective simultaneously having fascinating and absorptive quality for general viewers, have not been abundantly produced and put on network telecast. Again, the students of elementary and tertiary classes do not have enough awareness for this possibility, neither they have been provided with such facilities.

The situation can be improved by starting a morning transmission of educational programmes and telecast schedule be sent to all educational institutions of the country with a binding directive to provide and ensure viewing facility to the students. Schools and colleges of remote areas deserve special attention and should be provided audio and video equipment units. Similarly, cassettes of these programmes have to be made available in markets for those interested to possess them for their own use. The emphasis on supplementing and enriching curricula of professional and formal systems is very vital as the number of beneficiaries would rapidly increase, which in turn will demand more production of educational software.

The bulk and range of contribution in education rendered by the Allama Iqbal Open University, the pioneer institution in *distance learning system* in Asia is quite enormous. Its imitation in neighbouring countries like India and Sri Lanka has obviously opened to new vista for the masses keen to avail a second chance to get their knowledge and skill improved and updated. It has been the very nature and potential inherent in the system which facilitated academicians to form and offer syllabuses at the basic level of formal and technical education, and

simultaneously at tertiary level in a reasonable variety of disciplines, and this fact is reflected by the numbers of students and courses which figure in millions and hundreds respectively. Yet, launching of such a big quantum of courses together with adequately supported and supplemented media aid made a cause to prove the phenomenon of *distance learning system* a successful experience.

Regrettably, we find no private sector or any notable NGO interested in education through electronic media. Now some of the media experts are successfully engaged in private production of entertainment programmes. Similar practice is worth imitating in the educational sector. And if private sector is given incentive it is likely to come out with useful results. These experts may also derive inspiration out of commitment to their soil and may begin to contribute substantially in giving impetus to this vital national pursuit.

The importance of the role of media in education can be gauged by comparing its function in promotion of education in European as well as American continents where literacy rate often touches cent per cent target and quality of education is more than satisfactory. The help of this advanced wing which can properly cater for their extraordinary needs is taken in both formal sectors. However, the big difference between their educational infrastructure and prevailing conditions in Pakistan or other Asian and African countries cause a real difference in quality and technique in production of educational material. But, areas of fruitful collaboration can be found where there is identification of contents particularly science subjects and some recently developed disciplines e.g. genetic engineering and studies in supercomputers, etc. The countries of subcontinent including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India, etc can profitably cooperate because social-cum-economic status of these countries present similar problems to their educationists. And collective efforts in using this innovative mode of spreading education would invest greater potential and momentum in their endeavour to eradicate illiteracy and to develop learning in these countries.

Again, in the domestic scenario, the *National Education Policy* (1992) envisages application of media as an instrument for the purpose, but its needs to be implemented. After such meticulous paperwork at Federal level, the great necessity is to implement the plan so as to speedily gain our national objectives in education.