Role of electronic media

Media

" Electronic Media" are thosecommunicationmediums which are based on electronic or electromechanical means of production and most often distinguished from print media. The primary electronic media sources familiar to the general public worldwide include radio, sound recordings, television, video recording and streaming internet content" . It denotes, " the main means of communicating with large number of people, especially television, radio, internet and satellite". The electronic media have four basic functions; to inform, entertain, educate and influence the public opinion.

The 20th century can be termed as the century of communication. The main mean of mass communication grew in succession as the century unfolded. Motion pictures arrived on scene in the first decade of this century. Regular radio broadcasts started in 1920s. Television entered the arena in 1940s, followed by cable television in 1950s, and satellite television in 1970s. Lastly the personal computer gave access to Internet in 1980s. It transformed the interconnected computer networks through World Wide Web by the 1990s. Types of electronic media

Radio. In Pakistan like other developing countries, radio is the major source of information and entertainment due to its reach to the far flung areas and being relatively economical. Broadcasts carry news, analyses, commentaries and advertisements. This medium, however, is losing attraction in the public. Television. TV due to its potentials to offer a greater variety than other elements of electronic media has become the strongest form of media to perform all four functions, i. e. information, education, influence and entertainment. Internet.

Internet is the latest addition into the elements of medium of electronic communication. It is swiftly bringing a historic shift in the dynamics and profile of the global information sector. The medium also provides instant access to the largest data bases and archives of information around the world. 1. 6 The media and the ground realities The most critical obligation of electronic media is to act as the custodian of the facts. There are certain realities and electronic media's mindset and peculiarities, which to some extent are universal.

The electronic media is a business, a billion dollar industry and thus its primary motive remains to earnmoneyand not harmonize the society. Due to intense competition in the field of electronic media industry, media has to be competitive; to be " Exclusive and First". The electronic media often looks for controversy, sensationalism and negative news to make headlines. In some cases the electronic media feels that it has the right to interpret what is good or bad for society using its own standards.

The electronic Media was primarily and popularly used by our previous regimes as tool of self propaganda, the quality of news poor, unreliable and un-imaginative presentation of events and stories, ultimately losing the confidence of general public. Introduction of Satellite TV, Cable and Private Channels and Dish widened the scope of awareness of people. The Government of Pakistan realized the sensitivity and potential of private electronic media which could not be avoided through State controlled TV only.

The governmental policies regarding electronic media took a different direction, to regulate this sector. 1. 7 Pakistan electronic media regulatory

authority The objective of PEMRA was to regulate the electronic media i. e. Radio and TV. This was necessitated by the decision to allow a large number of private TV and radio channels. The Ordinance also gives a Code of Conduct for media broadcasters/ cable TV operators. " This Regulatory Body was established under the PEMRA Ordinance 2002, having the followinggoalsin mind" i) Improve the standards of information, education and entertainment. i) Enlarge the choice available to the people of Pakistan in the media for news, current affairs, religious knowledge, art, culture, science, technology, economic development, social sector concerns, music, sports, drama and other subjects of public and national interest. iii) Facilitate the devolution ofresponsibilityand power to the grass roots by improving the access of the people to mass media at the local and community level. iv) Ensureaccountability, transparency and good governance by optimization of the free flow of information. . SECTION-2 FAULT LINES IN NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION . 1 What is National Integration? The concept of National Integration is subject to a wide range of interpretations. However, two definitions which catch the essential spirit of the concept include, " The creation of a National Political System which supersedes or incorporates all the regional sub-cultures" , and the creation of a " Common national consciousness, a common national consensus and a common national identity" . These two definitions appear adequate for working purposes as they underline both the political as well as the socio-cultural ingredients of the process of integration.

National cohesion refers to the bonds or " glue" that binds members of society, community or other groups together. The most obvious bonds are

ideological, ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural and historic. However, the homogeneity of a nation is no guarantee of successfully bonding together as a cohesive whole. " The extent of the threat posed to the integrity of a state by the multiplicity of languages, races, religions etc. , depends on a variety of factors but there are basically two requisites (conflict of ideology and economic decline) which must be present before a country may be deemed to be faced with a problem of national disunity.   The Pakistani society is in transition, and it faces challenges but still the national interest is to make Pakistan as a unity-in-diversity and there is an ever-growing need to develop a harmonious society. " The balance sheet of social changes in Pakistani society over the past half century has both cost and benefits. Pakistani society has split into class-cum-lifestyle segments. Its social institutions do not dovetail into each other; instead fissures of institutional lag run through them.

Its cohesiveness has given way to the fragmentation and the erosion of value and moral consensus". 2. 2 Fault Lines in National Cohesion and Integration in Pakistan Integration or cohesion is an ideal, " it is not a thing but a process. It is dynamism ruled by an inner necessity, being guided in a direction chosen by itself as a goal or rather a series of goals leading to a certain direction ". National integration and social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of its all members, minimize disparities and avoid polarization.

A cohesive society is mutually supportive community of free individuals, pursuing these common goals by democratic means. National integration and social cohesion is at risk in Pakistan because of many impeding factors,

which originate within the country or influenced by external reasons. It may also be a complex outcome of interaction between the country forces and stresses and influences of global scenario. The socio-political factors and socio-economic factors as listed below have contributed to cause fault lines in national cohesion and integration. 2. Socio-Political Factors Intolerance and near absence of civic responsibility, now manifested in our society is indeed the outcome of a hierarchical structure and social barriers, further and enforced by policy approaches in the 80s. Politicizing of religion and language is one major source of fractionalization. " Presently, the culture and society of Pakistan are in the grip of an unprecedented upheaval. In the post 9/11 world, the political, religious, and the social dynamics in Pakistan have been under major internal transformation and intense international scrutiny.

Ethnic and sectarianviolencewhich ravaged the country for the last two decades has sharply polarized the society. Various Islamic religious groups jostle violently for power. Religious faith, usually a matter of personal redemption, is flagrantly flaunted and a stunning lack of tolerance for difference increasingly defines Pakistani society. " Constitutional Crisis. The non-agreement and lack of consensus on various revisions and amendments in 1973 constitution remained a contentious issue among the federating units since long.

The delayed process of reconciliation and agreement, on this only document to govern the state is a serious threat to national cohesion and integration. Provincialism. Imbedded strides of sub national identities engraved into the fabric of the provinces pose an existential threat to national cohesion. This issue is even more pronounced in case of smaller provinces like Khyber

Pukhtunwa and Balochistan. Identity crisis prevailing with in the provinces is tarnishing the very physiology of democracy in essence and in dispensation at National level.

There are contradictions between national and provincial interests, particularly in matte relating to language, ethnicity, identity, and power. There are small Political groups and movements agitating for their rights, including Baloch issue. Nevertheless, such provincial or regional sentiments swirl within the national cultural pool. Sectarian Intolerance. The division of society on the basis of sects, tribes, colour and creed gives rise to intolerance towards other sects. The violence on sectarianism basis is on the rise. The religious intolerance and extremism, and over emphasis on religious dentities due to that Pakistani society is facing continuous challenge ofterrorismin the name of religion and belief. Political Process and Direction. The directionless political system rarely delivers to the satisfaction of voters. Various derivations of political process have no regard for national objectives and national interests and efforts for achievement of these goals for the country are hardly visible. The political system as a whole is driven by conflicting vested interests. The political parties lack democratic norms in their rank and file.

LeadershipStyle and Direction. The political leadership as a whole has failed to satisfy the masses. The trust deficit between the leadership and the people has widened, and is increasing with the passage of time. The social and political positions of so-called ruling elites are just a symbol of false pride without much regard for vision and justice. Non-State Actors. Unorganized political parties have increased the influence of non-state actors

in national politics, thereby vested interests are perpetuated, at the cost of national interests. Challenges to the Writ of the Government.

The manifestation of this divide is the challenge to the writ of the State in FATA and Malakand Division where state infrastructure of governance has been uprooted, the power elite has been eliminated (either by murder or forced migration) new and parallel structures have been created and the application of Constitution is challenged. " The so-called Islamic fundamentalists have always been influential in the largely poor, illiterate, and rural Pakistan society. These groups represent a variety of power centres based on an array of belief systems from within Islam.

Historically, none of these groups have had much success at the ballot box, but with a strong core of ' true believers' with blind faith and unflinching allegiance, they have often been able to display enough Street power to disrupt civil life. Since the war of independence in neighbouring Afghanistan in the 1980s, these religious groups have been encouraged and aided by the government of Pakistan and the US State Department. As a result they have ' flourished and proliferated under the exhilarating notion of jihad.

The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been porous for centuries because of the unusual terrain that facilitates traffic and a common tribal ethos that informs the lives of the bordering populace. With the rapid and fearsome Talibanization of Afghanistan and the Mullahisation of Pakistan, the borders for all practical and ideological purposes dissolved, and these processes played a vital role in the fluctuating social ethos of Pakistan. " War against Terrorism. The country is facing various challenges.

The multiple threats and constant pressures are very serious since post 9/11 due to Pakistan's commitment with West for fight against terrorism. This involvement is viewed as being done to oblige the West. The suicidal attacks and drone attacks are the result of this involvement. Feudalism / Tribalism. In Pakistan the feudal and tribal society where rights ofhuman beingare violated is a matter of concern, people are not free to express their desire to govern. In such circumstances the leadership style is power centred and feudal in character, this leadership enjoysrespectbecause of fear, and not because of trust. National and regional culture has, at various times, interwoven and competed with each other. In times when centralization is the ideological thrust, national themes and institutions are in the ascendancy, but when the pendulum swings toward decentralization, regional and ethnic societies and cultures reassert their autonomy. The political ideologies and movements that shift the balance between national and regional social and cultural systems are the markers of Pakistan's social change. " Role of Madrassa.

There is little control of government over madrassas in the country, these madras do pose a threat to the cohesion of the society in Pakistan, if not regulated adequately. . 2. 4. Socio – Economic Factors Socio – Economic disparities. Thepovertyand inflation has caused disparities in the society. The people living below the poverty line have increased in number. The unemployment and low income has caused economic imbalance in the society. The division of society and decline in socio-economic standards have adversely impacted the quality of life. Bad Governance. Undemocratic & non-participatory governance. . The perception of governance leading to good

governance is flouted; concepts of transparency and accountability are misleading in Pakistani experience.

The accountability is selective and by choice, its aim is not to reform the society of negative practices, but to benefit the fittest and powerful. The people have no faith in the system of governance and accountability. Violation ofHuman Rights. The human rights violation is on the increase, the weaker segments of the population even do not get the rights given in the constitution and the irony remains ignorance on their part of basic rights bestowed by the constitution. The perception of women as having a lower status at all levels is the principle barrier in the way ofgender equalityand is reinforced by customary practises and the laws of the land. Women education, health, labour force participation, mobility, decision making etc, all reflect the unique situation of women in Pakistan. " Personal Security Perception. The constant engagement of population in this war against terrorism has changed its perception of personal security. The people have doubts about the success of governmental policies. Loyaltytowards State /individualistic behaviour.

The notion of loyalty towards state is blurred, people's expectation of justice and fair play are shattered, and therefore, their loyalty towards State is also undermined. The individualism has replaced collectivism; the bigger societal group is vanished. The conflicts of values, beliefs, and other sociological imbalances has damaged the national fabric and has caused segmentation on the basis of caste and class Justice and Rule of law. The justice is uncertain; the rules of game are settled by abuse of power. The respect for justice is linked with status and position of the seeker.

The attitude towards Rule of Law is very negative, law breaking is considered as a pride for the powerful. Due to delayed justice people have lost hope in the system to get justice. Violence against Women and minorities " Many Analysts are in agreement that women's poor status as well as poverty is rooted in social and cultural organization of society". The rights of the women are abused, and such abuse is referred to the culture and customs and here- say, this victimization is devoid of any ideological, religious and legal and Constitutional basis.

The religious minorities are threatened and do face violence at their religious places, thereby show concern of threat and personal security. " Empowering women is a challenge, requires changes in the existing class and caste based structure and it needs a focused and active public delivery system to ensure that resources and opportunities earmarked for women reach them" Mistrust in Criminal Justice System. The people do not have trust in criminal justice system, and lack of trust generates uncertainty and confusion in the society. " In Pakistani society, the udiciary plays a pivotal role in articulating and enforcing rules of conduct for its citizens. The judiciary derives its legitimacy and power from the constitution. " .... ? SECTION-3 ROLE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN PAKISTAN 3. 1 Electronic media's impact on Pakistani society In Pakistan the electronic media is providing information at a very large scale. It is being recognized as contributing significantly in important national issues. It has a role in accountability process . The Ptv is pursuing an agenda of social responsibility there are two main challenges of sustainability of democracy and good governance face by the country.

In such a scenario, role of media is to facilitate the democracy. " The social impact of communication and media has seeped deep into social and cultural institutions, paradoxically reviving traditions as well as introducing new practices. Like other processes, communication and information media are bound up with other socio- economic forces, thus making them a strong current of social change. " The electronic media has created markets resulting in the employment of greater work force in gathering, processing and disseminating information.

The electronic media have a vital role to play in the present day world in Pakistan. The independent electronic media can demonstrate better performance to provide good quality information with its wider reach. " Private channels highlight causes of mis- governance and bring them to the attention of those who are responsible. They can raise public awareness about what the public itself should also do to ensure good governance whether it is correct payment of taxes and bills or issues such as tax avoidance. Such practices should be discouraged and the media has a duty to learn from other countries how this is being done.

Private sector media have an enormous educative and mobilizing role to play when it comes to what society do and certainly with respect to highlighting the social responsibility of the media and the citizens. " " How does Pakistani society hold together despite its ethnic divisions, segmented classes, and fragmented institutions? What are the processes that maintain its social cohesion? This two-part question raises a critical issue about some semblance of functional equilibrium of society. " The electronic media role ive new direction to social behaviour, " by changing the boundaries of social

situations, electronic media do not simply give us quicker or more thorough access to events and behaviours. They give us instead, new events and new behaviour. " Following are some of the roles, both Negative and positive being played by electronic media in Pakistan. 3. 2 Positive impact of electronic media The electronic media direct social change and values. The electronic media may be successful in stimulating the change in the tightly held ideas and rigid attitudes to bring desired change.

The media can give direction to social change, and positively guide the society towards the desired goals. The electronic media and Policy Dialogue. The electronic media can greatly facilitate this exercise and help the people and government to discuss the issues concerning society, to fulfil their desires and achieve their respective objectives. In Pakistan, the people frequently need to be taken into confidence for the initiation of new policies and initiatives. The objective discussion on political and policy issues media can generate support of people for policies of the government..

Social problems and media. The social problems of our society revolve around ignorance, traditionalism and backwardness. The Pakistani society is in transition, social and ethnic issues have become hard, it happens in many societies, but need to be averted in tolerance. It is an established fact that blaming circumstances, whether disorders or external factors, for what is happening for Pakistan is not going to do any good for Pakistan's survival as a dignified an honourable nation. The electronic media can partly address the challenge of societal transformation.

The effect of media on national issues. The electronic media has also been highlighting financial irregularities, corrupt practices and inefficiencies of the

government functionaries and negative fallouts on the society of the acts of the extremist elements to adopt an appropriate strategy for their eradication. " The media have a measurable effect on public affairs. In the matter of local, national, economic and social issues, they help to create an informed citizenry by clarifying the complex matters of public affairs which exist at the local and national levels.

The formation of public opinion towards the civic problems is generated. " As such the media give the public a better understanding of these issues with which it must deal and influence those who have to resolve these issues. Electronic media communication and information Identification of social problems has always been a difficult job as they fall into a grey area and consequently hard to be known. " Advances in communication and information dissemination, such as television, videos, Internet, and CDs, have increased the circulation of ideas, symbols, and images across national and regional borders.

People have access to new sources of news, facts, and entertainment. These media help rationalize, redirect, or impede changes that are underway through economic and social development. " 3. 3 Negative impact of electronic media Objectivity and Electronic Media. The objectivity of media is becoming increasingly questionable, the coverage of issues of national interest demand care and restraint. The media in Pakistan is devoid of objectivity, and just telecast such incidents that sometime are not factual. " The very nature of media is subjective and selective, and therefore suppressive.

The general electronic media content do cover non-event-centric aspects of life in Pakistan. There is an imbalanced fixation with events, incidents, accidents and statements. " In order to improve their ratings and enhance viewers ship, the tool of sensationalism is used. What is important is to think as to what is being done to own sensibilities and social and moral values. Causing Desperation amongst Nation. These days no news is good news on Pakistani media. Media has taken away the sense of hope from the masses and has made them over sensitive to their surroundings.

Commercialism and Electronic Media. In today's world, there is a cross commercialization of the electronic media. Commercially driven, ultra-powerful media primarily serves their sponsors rather than the public. Pakistani media is following the saying, ' We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art; we have no obligation to make a positive statement, to make money is our only objective. Electronic Media and Talk Shows Generally the talk shows do not meet basic tests of responsible journalism; fairness, objectivity, balance and differentiation between fact and speculation.

Honest discussion must be ruled by reason, not emotion alone. Most anchors try to impose their own perspective, instead of objectivity. " However, unfortunately, this role has moved from delineation to distortion. In essence, distortion is in-built into the very nature of media as it is unable to represent totality of given situation. Therefore, media managers in any ongoing situation in a society should strive to minimize that inherent tendency to distort. " Polarisation of the Society.

In some instances, the electronic media is accessed by a small segment of society; due to vested interests this group projects its identity disproportionately. The media coverage of such groups is likely to create a polarized society. Negative Projection of the Country. All events and happenings in Pakistan are not bad. On the contrary sometime nothing positive is discussed in the electronic media. The projection of crimes and anti- social elements all the time is eroding and diminishing the contours of our true identity across the globe. Pursuance of Foreign Agenda.

It is believed that some of Pakistani media has reportedly links with shady foreign characters, are being funded by different foreign elements and their anchors are on their pay rolls and thus are furthering their anti- state agendas. ======================= PREFACE Being participant of 92nd National Management Course at the National Management College of the National School of Public Policy, Lahore, I am assigned the topic of Individual Research Paper titled, " Growth and Development of Electronic Media in Pakistan: How it can Enhance National Cohesion and Integration? . The growth of electronic media over past few decades is very rapid in Pakistan. The media can impact public opinion in a significant manner. In Pakistan the national integration and cohesion, is indeed a serious issue, which needs to be analyzed. The media's extraordinary growth can impact this problem. The media is being considered as a fourth pillar of the state. . In this study a sincere effort has been made in a comprehensive but concise way to analyze the dimensions of " fault lines" in national cohesion and integration that occurred during the last over 60 years.

The role of electronic media to enhance the national cohesion and integration has been analyzed in this study. The same has been analyzed in historical, socio-political, socio-economic, governance and leadership context. From this analysis, a starting point, as I perceive can be made to think various aspects concerning national cohesion and integration. In the end the analysis is concluded and some recommendations have been made. . I am grateful and deeply indebted to professional guidance extended by Dr.

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