

STATE OF CONTROLLED MEDIA IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN TELEVISION

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Abstract

Media has crossed all boundaries in the age of satellite and digital telecast. With the rise of social media it has become impossible for even the most closed political systems to foster a particular direction to national discourse. However, there are countries using state-controlled electronic media to provide their version of information to their target audiences. Pakistan is one of them. Assessing the policy of Pakistan Television (PTV) and analysing the parameters of government control over dissemination of information is the focus of the paper. It also discusses how PTV manages to hold its central position amid a large number of private channels telecasting bold discussions on controversial subjects. In this regard, an important realisation is that there is a need of compromise between controlled media and people's freedom of speech and information. It is concluded that Parliament's oversight is imperative for ensuring a more public control with special focus on diversity and pluralism.

Keywords: *Controlled Media, Globalization, Pakistan Television, Freedom of Speech, Diversity*

Introduction

Mass Media in today's world plays a significant role in reinforcing globalization, facilitating multiple flows of information and cultural exchanges among countries across the world. It is doing so through international television programs, film, music, news telecast and advanced information technologies. Since 1990's, the national media systems in many countries have become global, extending their outreach

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beyond the national level and conquering the audience worldwide.¹

Almost all public and scholarly debates on globalization agreed upon the influence of media in bringing social, cultural and political change in a globalized world. Larger numbers of cultural and sociological analysis on globalization argue that the internet, social media, information technology, mobile phones, and satellite televisions among others are the major driving forces underlying the processes of globalization. No doubt, the world has become a global village owing to these instruments responsible for 'Information Revolution.' The real function of media is to serve as a watchdog. It is responsible to watch out for citizen's interests and to play a part in keeping the government responsive to the peoples' demands.²

The recent research trends on media regulation acknowledged that most of the states which liberated media due to globalization are facing challenges posed by giant media conglomerates and media monopoly. In this context, the state is losing its control over multiple modern means of communication and spread of information. It has become difficult to isolate people in even the most repressive environments. Sharing of information through social media played an important role in organisation of protests and dawn of the Arab Spring in Egypt, Tunisia, and many other Middle Eastern countries despite strong dictatorial regimes and strict censorship of state-controlled media.

In majority of the academic studies in Pakistan, media policy regulation and role of state controlled channels in the era of globalization are not the subjects of rigorous discussion. However, a number of studies have analysed the role of media forms and usage of advanced means of communication besides reforms and regulations. For instance, Nizamani (2010) elaborates that mass media has restructured the power-sharing segment of the society by imposing their thoughts and opinions to the public, but indirectly they are providing the ideologies of the ruling class to the public.³ Kamel (2002) is of the view that successive governments in Pakistan have implemented several administrative and socio-economic mechanisms for creating a synchronization between the public and the private sector interests in order to ensure a healthy public sphere.⁴

¹ Carolina Matos, "Globalization and the Mass Media," *Encyclopaedia of Globalization* (Oxford: Wiley- Blackwell, 2012), 01.

² Stig Hjarvard, "A Mediated World: The Globalization of Society and the Role of Media," *Media in a Globalized Society* (Denmark: Narayana Press, 2003), 16.

³ N. Nizamani, "VIEW: Heading towards Revolt or Disaster," *Baloch Society of North America* (BSO-NA), (2010), <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/anchorperson-an-emerging-phenomenon-in-the-electronic-media-2165-7912.1000131.php?aid=9911>.

⁴ Abdul Razzaq Kemal, "Regulatory Framework in Pakistan," *The Pakistan Development Review* 41, no.4 (2002), 319-332.

However, studies lack research on how state-controlled channels keep a balance between state-devised policy and requirements of globalised media forms.

Since Pakistan is among the few states that have witnessed media liberalisation as a compulsion due to globalization, therefore, the government tries to not only retain but also enhance its control over state-run media houses and channels i.e. PTV by policy making, regulating and monitoring through Ministry of Information. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and Pakistan Television (PTV) as state-owned entities are formulating and implementing governmental regulatory reforms. This study intends to investigate questions regarding the policy of PTV, how much control and influence does the government exercise, what are the strategies used to capture audience's attention and how does this entity still hold the status of having the largest viewership in this era of globalisation. The study also circumvents around state control mechanism of PTV and issues concerning the viability of a state-controlled media in an open system, where a large number of independent private media channels are also operating.

Using the available archival material and theoretical works on globalization and media, this study focuses on media control in a globalized world. Being a qualitative study, the research entails a content analysis of some of the selected PTV current affairs programs. The news telecast includes objective presentation of facts without any analysis, but the current affairs programs provide an in-depth analysis of the national and international news and are therefore preferred by viewers. By giving historical background and taking interpretations from variety of analysts/actors on the issues in question, these programs help to develop the understanding of common viewers in turn making-up the public opinion.

To research PTV's policy in depth, four pertinent samples are studied that lay bare its policy towards some vital issues. These selected programmes cover almost the entire transmission spectrum from evening to night and are subsequently analysed to draw results. In the sample the first program is 'Evening Time', telecasted from 18.00 - 18.30 hours once a week. It has segments on different issues with a small break. This program is telecasted live from Multan Studios of PTV News. The second program is in Urdu, titled '*Such To Yeh Ha*' (it means "Truth is This") telecasted at 20:00 hours and lasts for 45 minutes. Third program is the famous PTV *Khabernama* (News). It is aired live on all PTV channels from 21:00 to 21:30 hours, and is re-telecasted at PTV News at about 23:00 hours. The fourth and the last program is Capital View. It lasts from 23:10 to 24:00 hours. It is scheduled twice a week.

Globalization and Media

Contemporary literature peeps into multi-faceted phenomenon of globalisation and its relation to media. In this regard, Terry Flew sees globalisation as a multi-dimensional ideology covering all aspects of human activity; be it economy, politics or culture.⁵ Albrow & King (1990) extend the study by saying that all the ways and processes which assimilate the people across the world in one society, are commonly named as globalization.⁶ That society would be the global society. Nonetheless, all these theories of globalizations highlight its homogeneous character. However, how far the globalization creates heterogenization or homogenization is still a debate.

The impact of globalization on local culture depends on nature and kind of a particular society and its responsiveness. It also depends on education, the means of communication, history, religion and the regime type. Sapru (2002) contends that the political system of a state functions within a world system and state boundaries just cannot restrict external influences. He further argues that the world has converted itself into a single social system due to increasing economic interdependence.

This, however, is a more optimistic depiction.⁷ Etzioni (1968) notes that some political scientists undermine multinational controls and bonds as far as societal interests are concerned. They assert that the nation-state is a unit of social analysis. They further take the nationalistic moral community as a community of values. Media being a powerful influencer on communicative discourses in society, provides the logic of discussing its role under cultural globalisation. Giddens is of the view that electronic media promotes social and cultural interactions and understandings by eradicating physical boundaries.⁸

Media plays a leading role in social change. In fact, social change and media are interdependent and influence one another in multiple ways. On one hand, the political system of a country determines the ways in which media is managed, and the media by representing public preferences might in the long-run have a role in influencing the nature of

⁵ Terry Flew, *Understanding Global Media* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁶ Martin Albrow, and Elizabeth King, eds., *The Globalization, Knowledge and Society: Reading from International Sociology* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 17.

⁷ R. K. Sapru, *Development Administration*, 2nd edition (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2002).

⁸ M. Albrow, and E. King, eds., *The Globalization, Knowledge and Society*.

political system that a nation or a society seeks.⁹

Etzioni argues that the state-controlled media controls the information and disseminates it to promote a particular political culture. He further theorizes that controlled media can minimize the impacts of globalization on the political culture of a country, if not ruling it out completely. This pace of change is checked by the controlled means of communication in a society. Modern forms of media, especially electronic media provides its viewers with a remarkable range of programmes starting from the ones covering political affairs to evolving issues of social relevance in the form of live coverage and discussions

Historically, many societies were unaware of their surrounding developments due to the absence of modern media. Many updates on incidents involving human rights violations, rapid political developments and terrorism could not disseminate across the world. The present day media is dynamic and alert in providing information within few seconds to viewers, helping shape their opinions and preferences. This is how they help communicate public voices to the ruling elite by providing them updated information.¹⁰

The stark reality today is that many governments control media in the name of national interests, media ethics and code of conduct. Media regulatory authorities are working in many countries to control private media. In the past, print media was controlled through news print quota, censorship and allocation of government advertisements to media houses. Now-a-days, private electronic media faces government controls through regulatory authorities that continuously monitor programs and have powers to issue licenses for new media houses.

The services are blocked and sometimes suspended for unlimited periods if some particular media houses are found telecasting anti-government or propagandist content. Intimidation, damage to property, arrests and even assaults are common against the sources and channels that disseminate propaganda, hatred and division through their channels. The control of media might come in the name of national interests, morality, ethics or others, but it cannot eradicate the impact of

⁹ Joseph Man Chan, "Media Democracy and Globalization: A Comparative Perspective," *Media Development* 1, WACC, (2002), <http://www.wacc.org.uk/publications/md/md2002-1/chan.html>.

¹⁰ N. M. Mahsud, I. A. Chaudhry, S. Amin, and M. S. Khan, "Television Channels Current Affairs Programs and Students Gratification: A Case of University of Sargodha," *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2013); Atif Umair, Salman Amin, Adnan Rasheed, "Effect of Private Television Channels' Current Affairs Program on Students: A Case of University of Sargodha," *Academic Research International*, no.5 (September 2014).

globalization because people switch to alternative sources in this age of media and information explosion.¹¹

Media Revolution and Communication – Historical Evolution

Marshall McLuhan first coined the term “Global Village” in 1960. In his view, the advancements in science and technology have shrunk the world into a village where people all around the world are close to one another and increasingly share their sorrows and joys. Majority of the studies by frenzied globalists claim that increased globalization has reduced the power of state. In other words, globalization has made it difficult for the state to have control over its national broadcasting space¹². One of the major examples is the ‘Tiananmen Square Demonstrations’ in China in 1989. These demonstrations, against the government were aided by increased flow of information in an age of globalized media and rapid technological advancements operating beyond its territorial boundaries.¹³

Policymaking and its regulation of communications has emerged as a big challenge to transitional societies that are experiencing increased growth of electronic media. Governments all over the world do play important role in formulating and implementing broadcast and media policies.¹⁴ Throughout the world, especially in democratic societies, regulation of media industry has generated a heated debate as the ruling class ensures that all means of communication serve their stakes.¹⁵

In majority of the developing countries especially in Asia, the government has a strong control on media exercised through different protocols and regulations.¹⁶ In the democratic states of Asia, modern

¹¹ Amitai Etzioni, *The Active Society: The Theory of Societal and Political Processes* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 607.

¹² Dumsani Mayo, “From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Change without Change? Broadcasting Policy Reform and Political Control,” in H. Melber (ed.), *Media, Public Discourse and Political Contestation in Zimbabwe* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika institutet, 2004), 12-28.

¹³ Ibid., 12-28.

¹⁴ R. Jensen, “First amendment Potluck,” *Communication Law and Policy* 4 no.3 (1998):563588, <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/52339/1/673080374.pdf>.

¹⁵ R.W. Mc Chesney, “The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, emerging Dilemmas,” New York, Monthly Review Press, 2008, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49109567_The_Political_Economy_of_Media_Enduring_Issues_Emerging_Dilemmas_RW_McChesney.

¹⁶ Djankov, Simeon, McLiesh, Caralee, Nenova, Tatiana, Shleifer, Andrei, “Who Owns the Media?” *Journal of Law and Economics* (2003): 46, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.591.578&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

media forms are trying best to work for the betterment of public despite the fact that state's strong media regulations create multiple obstacles in their way.

Mosco (2008) ranked Political Economy of Mass Communication as one of the most important theory to study regulation and communication of media as it discussed in detail several aspects related to consumption, production and distribution of resources of communication.¹⁷ Machesney (2008) says it is helpful to study "the role of media in societies and examine how market structures, policies and subsidies, and organizational structures shape and determine the nature of media system and media content."¹⁸ Rasul (2004) argues that as all the regulatory bodies operating in a country are founded by the government, so the corporate media is the largest beneficiary of the regulations set for communication due to its greatest political influence, economic ability and promotional expertise.

McChesney (2008) elaborates his view by saying that the regulatory decisions made by the governments have a strong and direct control on competition, exclusion and inclusion of market actors, pricing and strategies of the media organizations etc. It shows that the bureaucratic powers have the tendency to control the media systems of the world.¹⁹ Therefore, political economy of communication is the most relevant theory to study the concentration of media ownership and media regulation by authorities.²⁰ This theory is also relevant to globalization.

The State-Press Relationship in Pakistan

The world has witnessed a media boom and Pakistan is no exception. There are little restrictions on international media in the country with only one exception of Indian news channels - which being overwhelmingly biased towards displaying anti-Pakistan content - have been blocked on the verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The government, off and on, does impose restrictions on internet sites keeping in view the depiction of immoral content there. The government was enjoying monopoly over the media until 1980s and captivated Pakistani audience largely. However, after the emergence of Information and Communication (ICT) technologies, varied political shifts and global ideologies started to influence the political system in Pakistan. In other

¹⁷ Vincent Mosco, "Current Trends in the Political Economy of Communication," *Global Media Journal*, no.1 Canadian Edition, (2008), 45-63.

¹⁸ R.W. McChesney, "The Political Economy of Media".

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Azmat Rasul, Role of Radio in Development: The Case of Pakistan, *Journal of Mass Communication* 11, no. 2(2004), 54-67.

words, the global media started catching up with the country's television systems.²¹

Pakistan Television has remained the only government channel for many decades. It maintained monopoly over information since its inception in 1964 until the year 2002, when the government of General Musharraf decided to liberalize electronic media in his quest for enlightened moderation. However, PTV continued to work as the official channel of every government in power. It has been engaged in justifying government policies, at the same time highlighting the role and activities of government officials ranging from the office of the president to the ministers.

Objectives of PTV News

The principal objective of PTV News is to instruct, enlighten and enrich the knowledge and information of the masses for the promotion of national integration. The other objectives include taking special care of family oriented content, and avoid obscenity and vulgarity. To take special care for not using any form of derogatory language in programs and for designing of themes that avoid discrimination regarding any race, profession or creed. Most importantly, news presentation roots in fairness, reality and truth in light of the code of ethics. The general trend noticed in the case of PTV is that every ruling party along with its allies has used this media platform to propagate its achievements and defame the opposition parties and their sympathizers. Consequently, the policy of PTV has kept on changing with every new government. Starting from the liberal policies of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Islamization of Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, media liberalization of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to enlightened moderation of Gen. Musharraf, all were the beads of the same string, showing the use of national media for propagation of each successive government.

Telecast Policy of PTV

The main function of electronic media in any country is to inform, educate and entertain the masses. It also works to bring current affairs and international relations developments from across the world to its audience at home. PTV achieves these milestones by broadcasting current affairs shows, religious and entertainment programmes and historical and cultural talk shows as well. PTV works under the motto of maintaining discipline and uniting all segments of society. It aims at transmitting family oriented programs with a special focus on the requirements of common

²¹ Farooq Sulehria, "DD and PTV as Victims of Media Globalization," *Asian Journal of Communication* (2016), 05, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310838505_DD_and_PTV_as_victims_of_media_globalisation.

people while highlighting social and health issues on priority basis. The channel's advertisements and commercials cater to the needs of societal set-ups and fully represent and advocate government's national and international aspirations.

PTVs Broadcasting Trends

In 2002, the military government of Gen. Musharraf decided to open new media houses that consequently ended the PTV's unchallenged monopoly over information. Ironically, the motivation for this opening up of media was not to liberalise the society, rather the move was motivated by security concerns and strategic need to counter anti-Pakistan campaign of India. In fact, Gen. Musharraf and his senior colleagues concluded after the Kargil conflict²² between India and Pakistan in 1999, that, it was the inability of the Pakistani electronic media that it did not match the highly active Indian satellite channels, and PTV along with its tributary channels lost the propaganda war to Indian media. This situation led to embarrassment for the Pakistani government at the international level, ultimately creating gap between the then Army Chief and the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif subsequently resulting in the overturn of the democratic government and the imposition of martial law in 1999.

Soon after the coup, Gen. Musharraf decided to liberalize the Pakistani media by opening up of new channels, both for entertainment and information. Electronic media grew in Pakistan both qualitatively and quantitatively owing to Musharraf's liberal policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Media grew considerably both in terms of numbers of daily newspapers and magazines but also, the electronic media channels witnessed drastic rise that also contributed to liberalising PTV from the government control.

The number of private channels increased to 50 in 2008 that presented a stark contrast to 2 to 3 state-owned TV channels in 1999. Undoubtedly, the Musharraf government allowed media far more freedom of expression than any preceding Pakistani government, either military or civil. The state owned PTV News also enjoyed monopoly during that golden period of media history in Pakistan. Despite liberalization, certain areas of state were out of bounds for open discussion in media like the role

²² It was a limited and undeclared war in the Kargil district of Indian Occupied Kashmir, between India and Pakistan. The conflict started somewhere in April and concluded in July 1999. It was not on international border between the two states but along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir, a disputed territory.

security forces and their operations in conflict-ridden areas, like those in Federally Administered Areas (FATA) of Pakistan and Balochistan.²³

In order to get favourable coverage by media, successive governments used policy broadcast licenses, advertising quota and newspaper declarations.²⁴ To institutionalize this control over electronic media, in June 2007, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Ordinance was promulgated by the then government, to control and regulate private media channels. This ordinance empowered PEMRA to seal any property suspected of illegal transmission and the powers to suspend or cancel the license of any private channel on account of such activity. The government tried to use PEMRA to provide proper check over media organizations, however, this body failed to achieve its goals.²⁵ On the other hand, some media organizations started blackmailing the government and regulatory authority over such weak and inefficient regulatory mechanism. Despite all these, the government ensured that media-related policies were devised keeping in view the complex political and social systems of Pakistan.²⁶

This reality represented the fact that media's autonomy was not protected by law and was rather dependent on government's mood and choices. The Musharraf government curtailed the freedom of press and electronic media by using different constitutional and legal powers.²⁷ According to the report of Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), government began harassing media companies including the attacks on media channels, legal suits, financial damages and physical torture to journalists. CPJ also reported that on March 16, 2007, police raided the offices of Jang group in Islamabad, used tear gas and baton charged the staff just to punish Geo TV for rigorous coverage of Lawyers' Movement, which had started as a street movement to protest the then chief justice's ouster.²⁸

In 2008, the Pakistan media regained freedom of expression. However, the government continued to accuse private news channels of

²³ Marco Mezzera, and Safder Sial, "Media and Governance in Pakistan: A Controversial yet Essential Relationship," *Initiative for Peacebuilding* (Brussels, 2010), <http://gsdrc.org/document-library/media-and-governance-in-pakistan-a-controversial-yet-essential-relationship/>.

²⁴ Umar Cheema, *Challenges to the Freedom of Press in Pakistan* (Lahore: Punjab University Press, 2010).

²⁵ S. Naseer, Regulation of Electronic Media and Democracy in Pakistan, *Journal of Political Studies* 17, no. 2 (2010). 27-45.

²⁶ R. Q. Khan, "Development of Electronic Media in Pakistan," *The Post*, June 30, 2008.

²⁷ *Dawn*, March 10, 2007.

²⁸ "Attacks on the Press in 2007: Pakistan," *CPJ*, February 5, 2008, <https://cpj.org/2008/02/attacks-on-the-press-2007-pakistan.php>.

sensationalism and conservative and militaristic tendencies. The Private channels were accused of following a covert agenda campaign aiming at toppling the elected government of the then PPPP and were also blamed for being supportive of Taliban. However, media's this orientation on domestic radicalism totally changed when Taliban despicably took over seven districts of the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA).²⁹ Consequently, they challenged the writ of the government in district Swat in April 2009.³⁰

The PTV's monopoly over the airwaves was challenged for the first time in 1989 when Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government took its first step towards liberalization of the electronic media. The Shalimar Television Network (STN) received license in 1989, which was a public-sector corporation. It began its broadcast in the capital city of Islamabad and Karachi, the country's biggest city.³¹ The private sector in Pakistan had 84 fully functional channels in 2014 including thirty-five news channels and fifteen entertainment ones with four for education and one for health and agriculture each. In addition, twenty-eight foreign channels opened for providing entertainment and news to Pakistani viewers while the PTV network started eight additional channels. In this expansion period, other private channels downgraded PTV as being sub-ordinate to them in terms of popularity and ratings. However, as being a terrestrial channel, PTV holds audience in places where cable television networks are not available. Yet, PTV is still facing fierce competition with contemporary private foreign and local channels.³²

Categorization Scheme

The content of current affairs programs follows the name of program, date, timings, duration, program summary, themes discussed, objectivity and fairness, adoption of ethics and language and respect to rights etc. This scheme of investigation provides a clear picture of what

²⁹ Taliban were the freedom fighters who paid strong resistance to Soviet Union in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1986 and compelled them to liberate Afghanistan. After the evacuation of external forces internal fighting in Afghanistan among the local War Lords continued. Taliban are the most potent faction in present day's Afghanistan and are giving strong resistance to NATO forces. They are having their close collaboration with their sympathizers in border areas of Pakistan called (FATA) and Provincially Administrative Areas (PATA).

³⁰ "Pakistani Army Claims Taliban's Elimination in Swat Valley Imminent," *Guardian*, May 22, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/22/pakistan-army-swat-valley-taliban>.

³¹ A. O. Ali, & S. A. Gunaratne, "Pakistan," in S. A. Gunaratne (ed.), *Handbook of the Media in Asia* (London: Sage, 2000), 151-181.

³² Farooq Sulehria, "DD and PTV as Victims of Media Globalization."

elements must be part of a channel's policy and that how these channels then manage to positively project these policies. The issues discussed here are similar as these are related to political activities taking place during the given time. Apart from political matters at national level, there were some other issues discussed pertaining to common man's problems in Pakistan.

Analysis of the Programs' Content

In order to get information as to which extent PTV is following its policy, the previous studies on PTV give ample chance to examine its working that also involves content analysis of its programs. According to the PTV policy, its programs' content focuses on themes like morality, national and civic responsibilities and protection of rights of people and anti-crime acts. Thus, the anchor-persons of these programs work to promote fair and objective ideas as envisioned by the policy through their shows and discussions. However, these objectives are well-represented in the policy framework of the government of the time. It is observed during the content analysis of selected programs that PTV is instrumental in promoting and praising those occupying high offices in government, no matter if public money funds such programs. PTV has been a mouthpiece for the ruling party or parties since its inception. It has always been used to promote, praise, and eulogize those in power at the expense of public money and taxes. Following is the analysis of some of the PTV programs:

Evening Time

This programme is on-aired from Multan Centre of PTV News. The program format includes discussions of an anchor-person with two to three guests-speakers or analysts with expertise in the issue at hand. After giving an introductory note to the topic there is a discussion with the guests keeping in view the program objectives. The most-discussed topics include arguments on strategies adopted by the government to control disaster situations, education standards in Pakistan, conflicts between India and Pakistan, terrorist operations by Pakistan Army etc. Of all the programs that were analysed, a common and identical trend is the easy-going and smooth discussion between the anchor-person and the guests. That is an important focus of PTV Policy.

Another focus of the policy is to bring under spotlight the issues of daily life of people without using any derogatory or unethical language. Another striking trend is that discussions bring forth only the efforts of the government in that particular area. Views representing the other side of the fence i.e., the opposition's viewpoint does not get enough focus or mention. Mostly discussions are prone to favour government viewpoints.

Such To Yeh Ha

Discussions always remain the part of any current affairs program or any talk show. Such programs always follow debates, negotiations, arguments to reach at a conclusion and to sort out some hidden realities about the issues at hand. This is the main reason behind telecasting current affairs program. Such To Yeh Ha ('This is the truth') is such kind of a program. The format is to raise and introduce the top story of that day, discussed by an anchor-person with some guests on the panel whose number depends on the topic under discussion. This program is different from the other selected ones in that it invites guests from both ruling and opposing parties. The atmosphere of the program remains neutral and there is a minimal usage of critical remarks among the anchor-person and the guests. Focus on divergent or opposite views remains minimal while government's stance on the particular issue is supreme. In one way or the other, respect for freedom of expression is not the general norm. Anchors guide the discussion to 'right direction' if it is turned against government.

Khabernama

News or *Khabernama*, an Urdu word for news bulletin, is one of the most important features of PTV. Breaking news are an important feature of news programs these days. When any incident occurs in any part of the country or the world, news channels telecast it immediately within seconds as 'Exclusive or Breaking News'. The news is telecasted at the peak hours of transmission with an objective of having maximum viewership. However, all news highlight the positive aspects of governmental policies/actions while reporting on any issue, whether national, international, and local sports. Neutrality factor upholds minimal criticism but tilt is visible in government's favour.

Capital View

'Capital View' is on-aired at the last hour of the night transmission. This program lasts for forty- five minutes and comprises discussions of two anchor-persons. The program first presents an overview of the top stories of the day generating discussion and debating the role of different political parties for the issues under discussion. This program analyses almost every issue concerning life, ranging from political issues to every day needs of a common person. Roles played by different segments of society are also brought under discussion. Some sarcastic words are also used but there is no derogatory language with special care for promotion of national unity and integrity.

Discussion and Findings

Television these days has become an important social requirement for every segment of society as it provides information on current

incidents taking place around the world within seconds. People have become addicted to relying on this source of information at all times.³³ As we know that role of media in any society is to inform and educate masses, this demands presentation of true picture while remaining unbiased, which is a responsibility as people demand objectivity alongside reality.

The current affairs programs play a multi-dimensional role to inform and educate the masses and in generating public opinion and that largely depends upon the presentation style of anchors and their way of dealing with issues.³⁴ TV programs greatly influence students in their studies. It is analysed that the level of interest in TV programs is directly proportional to the impact on personal aspirations.³⁵ Most of the anchors in the PTV Current Affairs programs have Islamic leanings. They are comfortable in leading a national debate in the light of religious and social norms of society. A common observation suggests that anchors at private channels try to create controversies on issues in order to have better ratings for their programs.³⁶

Traditions of having government channels is not unique to Pakistan. India and Turkey also share this tradition with many other nations. In majority of cases, public sector media is always under strict control of the government while private sector media is under the control of the globalized market in which it is operating. Succeeding governments in Pakistan have adopted various administrative and socioeconomic policies, to maintain a healthy society. Among several other reasons given by government for introducing new regulatory mechanisms in country, some factors are failure of market or consideration of justice.³⁷ PTV is a corporation in public sector and from the time of its inception, the Government of Pakistan is fully in control of this organization and holds all of its shares. The policy of PTV is a clear-cut manifestation of the government's needs and requirements. The format of the content shown at PTV News simply toes the lines drawn by the regulatory laws and codes of ethics formulated for media organizations and PTV is no exception.

³³ Interview with Muhammad Zubair, News Castre, PTV News (Islamabad, December 30, 2012).

³⁴ Abdul Rehman Madni, Shahzad & MudassirAbdullah, Mudassir, "Exposure to Current Affairs Programs and viewers perception regarding role of programs & Anchors presentational style: A Case Study of Sargodha City," *The Sindh University Journal of Education* 41 (2012):1-22.

³⁵ M. R. Aleena, "Level of Interest in T.V Programmes Channel and it's Impact on Personale Aspiration of Youth," (B. A. Hons, un-published thesis, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies: University of the Punjab, 2006).

³⁶ Sushant Sareen, "Floods: Pakistan Bracing the Fallout. Vivekananda International Foundation," (2010), http://webworld.unesco.org/download/fed/iraq/english/media_elections_en.pdf.

³⁷ Kemal, "Regulatory framework in Pakistan."

Pakistan Television being the state run television has become a part of every middle class family in Pakistan and over the last 50 years its broadcast coverage has been extending gradually and continuously in all spheres. At present PTV has access to more than 80 percent of the population. This trend is a clear-cut manifestation of its acceptance by all segments of society. The reason behind its success and increased viewership is the fact that the channel has always tried to motivate public by broadcasting meaningful programmes wrapped with entertaining stuff. It promotes local heritage, national integration and unity.

With regard to the current affairs programs, it is not wrong to say that they are mirror to societal change and dynamics. It is because of the interactive and participatory nature of the current affairs programs that one finds a clear difference between viewership of current affairs programs and news broadcasts or programs.³⁸ The Current Affairs programs of PTV raise issues according to the expectations, needs and demands of its viewers on general and specific issues prevailing in society. Current affairs programs are the most viewed programs of any news channel and same is the case with PTV.³⁹

The analysis of current affairs programs clearly showed that even in this advanced and globalised world, Government TV channels still work under complete supervision of authorities. Practice of neutrality is a rare phenomenon in presentation of contents. These are the very facts that have contributed to the increased viewership of PTV across the country.

Conclusion

The present study concluded that the media systems in today's world are going beyond the boundaries of a state and have stimulated globalization as a contributing factor to eradicate the power of countries to regulate and control media and use it for cultural and educational purposes. Globalization has changed the nature of the strong relationship that existed previously between the media and the state. The state even in this global village continues to matter a lot because it is playing a big role in shaping media policy and national television systems in countries like Pakistan.⁴⁰

In developing countries like Pakistan, regulation of electronic media becomes more complex due to the liberalization of the media. The globalized media and modern means of communication pose major

³⁸ Interview with Farhan Doger, Senior Producer, PTV world for current Affairs Program (Islamabad, January 15 2016).

³⁹ Sixty percent of the students of six public universities of Islamabad replied in a field survey that PTV current affair programs are balanced and give good analysis.

⁴⁰ Matos, "Globalization and the Mass Media."

challenges to the state in terms of regulation. They require new forms of policies and decisions that cater to citizens' interests'.⁴¹

Several regulatory authorities working in the country should be accountable to the Parliament and the government's controlling authority must not meddle in their affairs. However, there remains a close relationship between media and the government. Liberating media from the clutches of a government must not create problems and complications.

PTV has maintained more than 80 percent of its viewership over a period while private channels are popular only in cities and towns. Moreover, it enjoys all the government resources and is not dependent on external sources for finances. It maintained its credibility in the age of globalization by providing high quality discussion shows and credible analysis by world's renowned scholars and academicians. Its adjustability with changing demands of modernity alongside usage of latest techniques makes it a worthy competitor to the private sector in this globalised world.

The Pakistan Television as a state- controlled channel, no longer rules the county's television market, but remains a dominant player in an extensive network of channels and still has a bigger audience. In the face of enormous technological advances and greater competition, PTV has survived and struggled to deliver its duties. Its primary responsibility of safeguarding the cultural identity of Pakistan, and its role in providing space for a diverse range of ethnic, linguistic and religious views can never be underestimated.

Media policy of any country largely depends on media monopolization in which one organization owns diverse forms of outlets like television, radio, newspaper and social media. All these forms operate under one umbrella in majority of the countries. In case of Pakistan, laws devised by PEMRA and Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) should be clearly implemented and amended according to the need of the hour and needs of the society. There is a need for diversity in content of on-aired programmes. Having uni-focused discussions with minimal level of bias will lead to diversity in contents of the programs. Media policy is to be implemented in a way that it leads to positive and constructive criticism of the government of the day. This approach is likely to enhance the credibility and stature of PTV in the present challenging times.

⁴¹ Azmat Rasul and Stephen D. McDowell, "Regulation and Media Monopoly: A Case Study of Broadcast Regulation in Pakistan," *8th International Telecommunications Society (ITS) Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Convergence in the Digital Age* (Taiwan, 26 - 28 June 2011).

