

# **Licensed to Learn: A Case of TV and Radio Channels in Pakistani Universities**

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## **Abstract**

Physical infrastructure for education is harder to lay out in Pakistan but PEMRA is doing well to issue licences to universities to set up TVs and radios to promote education. Pakistan is the second country after United Kingdom that established an Open University in 1974, which started its radio in 80s and Television in 90s for its distant learning system spread across the country. HEC is running a TV channel to update its member universities on latest developments. It serves as a bridge between national and international students, and education and research bodies. This paper has shed light on the programs broadcast by Pakistani universities and higher educational institutes and role of PEMRA in this job by issuing licences to establish campus radio and Television channels for supplementing and uplifting quality of the formal education in the country. The findings of the study show that 81% transmission of FM radio stations have been meant for entertainment purposes while only 19% has aimed for educational purposes. Television production houses in these universities produced or arranged 17 sessions for TV trainings. The results show that these campus radio and TV Production Houses have not fulfilled their specified role to boost higher education and community awareness through their transmission.

**Key Words:** *Campus radios, TV channels, higher education, formal education, PEMRA Licensing*

## **1. Introduction**

Pakistan has less than 50% literacy rate. It is lagging behind many others as the world is going to be digitalized fast and thick. McLuhan defines medium as “any extension of ourselves or our senses.” Classically, he suggests that a hammer extends our arm and that the wheel extends our legs and feet. Each medium enables us to do more than our bodies could do on their own. The medium of language extends our thoughts from our mind out to others” (Misha, 2017).

By studying the conversations and practices of mediating technologies, one can gain more insight into the ways in which users take up technological mediations.

It also enhances the understanding of how to develop creative ways of appropriating these mediations and integrating them in existing practices and interpretive frameworks; and how users see themselves in relation to the mediating technologies and to the phenomena they are perceiving or studying (Verbeek, 2016).

Radio and television mediums have been utilized widely as efficient educational tools after the First World War in 1920s and the Second World War in 1950s, respectively. Though during and after WW-II radio has been extensively used as a propaganda machine against rival countries especially USA, UK, Germany, Japan and France etc; however, after a huge destruction in this war the world soon acknowledged the positive usage of radio and television for human development.

Generally, there are three approaches to the use of radio and TV mediums in education: Direct class teaching, in which broadcast programming as a substitution for teachers on a provisional basis. The structure of ICT has been used in educational institutes in three ways: a) direct class teaching method that includes *Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)* and televised lessons. b) college/university broadcasting method, where broadcasting provides complementary teaching and learning support. c) General teaching broadcasting method which provides informal opportunities for learning. The idea of community development through development support communication in the mid of twentieth century has been a successful story through mass media especially radio. Radio has played a pivotal and marvellous role in uplifting education, community development, global harmony, socialization of the nations.

It is quite a common phenomenon under discussion in today's digitized and sophisticated technological world to understand man and machines and it's outcomes-good or worse. It is quite right to say that there is no area of human's life that left untouched by information and technology. In this digitized globe, radio has been using as a medium of educating people in number of ways like health, education, community development, children, adults, women empowerment, gender rights, gender discrimination, human rights, politics, entertainment, etc. Among all sophisticated communication technologies radio is still a very powerful and cheapest medium of information and education that has been used successfully by developed and underdeveloped nations since its invention in start of twentieth century. This paper is focused to tap the relationship between education and technology for ultimate goal to assess the role of

radio and television broadcast for education and community development and to improve the teaching environment in higher educational institutes of Pakistan in the light of PEMRA's initiatives.

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), a Pakistani distance learning University is the oldest University in Asia that was established in 1974. AIOU is considered the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest University of higher learning. The University broadcast radio, television and video recordings as a teaching aid to its students (Wikipedia, 2019). Apart from AIOU, Virtual University of Pakistan is the second public University which operates as distance learning system through radio, television and internet technologies.

“Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) is an independent and constitutionally established federal institution responsible for regulating and issuing channel licenses for establishment of the mass media culture, print and electronic media established in 2002. The establishment of PEMRA was initiated in 2000, during President Musharraf's term; through the formation of the Regulatory Authority for Media Broadcast Organisations, (Wikipedia, 2019).

PEMRA has issued more than 380 licences to establish FM radio stations across the country for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Out of these 40 FM radio stations are working in different colleges, universities, research institutes, Administrative bodies, and motorway and district police and counter terrorism division for non-commercial purposes. There are 4 television stations are also established in different campuses of virtual University in the country. FM radio transmission of University of Central Punjab is 24/7 round the clock that is creating awareness of social and educational issues for students and educational development.

## **2. Literature Review**

Yousef (2014) cited Rashid (1999, p222) that,

“Television and radio are the electronic magic carpets that transport millions of persons each day to far away places. They are the twentieth century creation of the technological revolution that has been transforming much of the world for almost two centuries and their impact on our social political and cultural life has been profound.”

Across Pakistan there are around 40 universities have been able to establish their own radio stations and one University have been established their own television stations which are being used for supplementing teaching and guidance, community awareness, social upbringing and learning processes. All it has become reality in 2002 when PEMRA a government regulatory body for electronic media has relaxed its policy to set-up private cable TV channels and FM radio stations in the country. In the start, media conglomerates, owners of media houses and business community took a large number of licenses to open Cable Television and FM radio channels for business purposes. However, according to the data available on PEMRA website there are 40 FM radio stations are working as campus radio in different educational and administrative units across the country including municipal administration, universities, colleges, motorway police, military and chamber of commerce.

PEMRA has issued licenses to open FM Radio stations, Cable TV network, and Satellite TV Channels. According to the current rules, FM broadcast licenses are granted to parties that execute to open FM broadcasting stations in at least one rural or remote city along with the mainstream city of their choice. This step of the PEMRA has been appreciated by general public through this the neglected and far-flung areas of the country can bring into the mainstream network.

All Pakistan level, there are approximately 340 FM radio channels are being broadcast their programs. Radio Awaz is considered to be the Largest FM Radio operations in Pakistan. The coverage of these 17, FM radio stations across the Country. Out of 17 FM stations, 15 stations performing only in Punjab province of Pakistan. There are 4 FM radio channels those are covering international audiences. Virtual University of Pakistan became the first University totally based on Information and Communication Technologies. With the establishment of PEMRA in 2002 the Government as its primary objectives was to promote distance learning in digitized information and communication technologies. The University is renowned for its online study material and lectures broadcasting regardless of their students' physical appearance. After Allama Iqbal Open University, Virtual University is the second University that is based on informal way of teaching.

Major objectives of PEMRA for licensing to set-up FM radio and Television stations to support and uplift formal and informal education in the following three ways:

- To improve the quality of higher education by producing radio and TV programs in major global and local languages for all the colleges, universities and research and administrative units of the country.
- To strengthen and promoting the teaching of global languages including English, Arabic, Chinese, and all local languages through the advancement of an improved strategy known as interactive radio instruction (IRI).
- To improve the excellence of high school education and reduce the regional deprivation by broadcasting radio and TV programs secondary school subjects.
- To increase access to high school education by producing a distance learning programs for out-of-school youth and adults.
- To improve the educational qualifications and upgrading skills of teachers by introducing new distance learning programs for school teachers.

### **2.1. Modern Tools in Teaching**

There is a need of integrating digitized forms of (ICT) in education that can achieve the educational targets of the ‘information age’. To achieve this efficiently, educationists and planners, think tanks, principals, teachers, researchers and technology specialists be required to make many decisions in the fields of technical training, financial support, and infrastructure requirements.

- Multi-channel mode of learning
- Educational radio
- Educational television
- Web-based mode of instruction
- Technologically Advance Libraries
- Practical participation in science and technology
- Use of the media for Education and Training
- Technologies framed for teacher preparation
- Technologies for data management and policy for strategic planning

- Technologies for educationist management

Interactive Radio Instructor (IRI) broadcasting method is meant for lecturing in classrooms environment on a daily basis. The radio is also being used to deliver lessons on different topics and normally intended for specific levels. Structured programmes are designed for particular levels that provide regular assistance to instructors for betterment to improve the quality of instruction and improve learning. Further IRI also help in expanding access to education through its ready-made lessons to far-flung areas where limited resources and teachers are available. A number of studies proved these projects have left a constructive impact on both formal and non-formal education. Further, it is a cost-effective way of providing educational material at a larger scale.

According to FCC (2013)

“There are about 15,330 U.S. radio stations; new numbers show 30,367 total licensed broadcast outlets (AM/FM/TV) in the United States. That includes 4728 AM stations, 6613 commercial FM stations and 3989 educational/non-profit FM stations”.

All over the world radio FM and AM are being used as an instructor in every field of life. For instance, in today’s developed world, traffic is controlled, guided and instructed through FM radios and weather forecasting is transmitted round the clock for travellers and general public. Flight schedules, politics, entertainment, business and tourists facilitation is possible through a tiny device. With a population of 250 million, USA has more than 15000 radio stations. All the developed and fast developing countries are taking benefits of radio especially in education both in formal or informal system. Ethiopia is a large but an under-developed country in the horn of Africa. Thomas (2000) stated that:

“In 1965, a year after the introduction of television in the country, television became the first technology for broadcasting educational programs using the facilities of the Ministry of Information. This year Educational Media Agency (EMA) is taking an innovative step to help meet the increasing demands for transmitting time as well as to provide high-quality audio sound in the schools. It has teamed up with World Space, which has recently launched the AfriSat satellite that broadcasts digital programs from space. AfriSat covers the African continent

using three transmitting beams, each of which has the capability of carrying 60 audio channels simultaneously”.

## **2.2. Objectives of Study**

Following were the objectives of study:-

1. To assess the availability of Television and Radio programmes in Pakistani colleges and universities
2. To assess the use of Television and Radio programmes as an additional teaching support for students.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The study was descriptive i.e. content type. Therefore, data was extracted from the colleges/universities websites about the programs broadcast. The population was the colleges, universities and research institutes running across the country in formal way of learning those are using radios and television for education. The sample comprised of one educational institute from each four provinces including AJK (Azad Jammu & Kashmir). The study period was one month from March 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. The broadcast programs were analyzed in the light of type, quantity, quality and access parameters. The study has also analysed the overall procedures and regulations of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority to initiate and run the broadcast business. The data was analyzed and tabulated. Analysis was made on the quantity and quality treatment by applying percentage and mean score. Conclusions and recommendations were also made on the basis of critical analysis of data.

## **4. Findings and Analysis**

Results show that only 5.5% of these FM radio broadcast were meant for education purposes as they have given 106 hours to the issues of community and University news from total coverage of 1928 hour transmission in the whole month of study. It is obvious from Table above that 1822 hours (94.5%) transmission is meant for entertainment purposes. Beside the FM broadcast the universities have been able to present 39 training sessions and workshops for anchoring, script writing, producing, camera skills, documentaries etc. in their production houses during this period. However, three among 10 sampled universities did not arranged programs training for Television production. UCP in this list produced 11 programs and remained at top while Riphah International University remained at second with 7 programs in this category during the period.

Among all the understudied universities of the country public and private, the University of Central Punjab (UCP) is the only University that is being broadcasted radio programs for its listeners round the clock. It has been broadcast (7%) programs for its community awareness through its studio and on field presentations live and recording in different social and community issues. The prominent issues were women education, hostel life, weather updates, price hikes, and role of digital libraries, sports culture, child and labour rights, and rescue services in Lahore, parking and congestion issues in cities. 20% of its radio broadcast went for University news. It has also focused on government legislations and its procedures about rights and responsibilities of the citizens. The programs were also related to features, documentaries, interviews, debates and talk shows for creating awareness on different social, cultural and educational issues in the society.

*Table 1. Programs Broadcast by FM Radios during March 2018*

University	Number of programs	Community Awareness Programs	Duration in Hours	Entertainment / others Programs	Duration in Hours	University Programs	Duration in Hours	Total Duration in Hours
Gomal Uni	198	21	6	116	70	61	4	80
UCP	571	41	10	415	290	115	11	311
UoP	354	22	6	255	145	77	3	154
UoK	576	37	11	398	153	141	10	174
LCWU	592	6	1	570	214	16	2	217
AJKU	255	7	1	230	211	18	2	214
ZABIST	349	8	1	316	213	25	2	216
Riphah Uni	461	17	1	411	170	33	3	174
UAF	344	12	1	277	190	55	5	213
FJWU	510	27	3	417	166	66	6	175
Total	4210 100 %	198 (5%)	58 (3%)	3405 (81%)	1822 (94%)	607 (14%)	48 (3%)	1928 100%



Moreover, UCP has its multi-purposes state of the art On Campus Production House where students while getting educated at production house could be able to build up the basic concepts of production and presentations for Television and silver screen. This training centre is helping them in begin their careers as producers, directors, anchors, reporters, editors, camera man etc. During the study period of one month, the University production house produced 13 training sessions for students in different categories like, reporting, anchoring, script writing, producing, directing, with HD Cameras, Video Switcher, Professional Audio Mixer and iMac Editing Machine with a state of the art Master Control Room.

Karachi University has able to presented 576 programs at FM radio while 4 sessions and training programs produced in its production House. This University remained at number one being at top by covering 141 programs for their student's news on different topics. On the footprints of other sampled universities, the University of Karachi did broadcast a huge (398) portion of programs during the period of one month. The University produced 37 programs on community awareness on different topics.

Lahore College for Women University broadcast 592 programs in which 22 programs were meant for educational purposes while 570 programs presented in the category of entertainment. It is evident that 96% FM Radio was designed on the entertainment. The University has been arranged 3 practical work workshops on its production house by giving training to their students for anchoring, and producing the Television programs.

Azad Jammu & Kashmir University (AJKU) has been broadcast 90% of their transmission of FM Radio for entertainment while only 10% broadcasts were meant for educational purposes. The University has not produced any sessions for training at its TV productions. Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science of Technology (ZABIST) has been produced 89.5% entertainment programs while the University has focused by 10.5% on community and University news. Riphah International University is able to aired 89% their FM coverage on entertainment and only 11% is meant for education. The University could not arrange any program for its students seeking television training. University of Agricultural Faisalabad has broadcast 79% its coverage of campus radio to entertainment while 21% went for community and student education during the period of one month.

Fatima Jinnah Women University has its both FM radio and a Television production house. The FM radio stations have been able to broadcast 18% transmission for educational purposes while a significant portion of 82% was about entertainment purposes. Gomal University has produced some interesting facts by giving 41% its FM Radio coverage to education while 59% coverage was meant for entertainment purposes.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) extending its role considerably in distance learning through FM radio and Television and is looking for new paradigm shift in which sophisticated technology can help to support its goals. It has laid down for exciting opportunities in the field of education. The table above indicates that only 19% broadcasting on these understudied universities went for educational purposes while 81% coverage was meant for entertainment. It is obvious from the result that these FM radio channels could not focus education significantly and remained beyond its goals.

Since the potential and strength of educational radio has been difficult to establish on this issue of community awareness and student life in campus. However, radio in a broad sense we find plenty of evidence about change produced by radio in developed as well as in the developing countries. It is very important for campus radios and Television to identify the primary target audiences in order to select suitable creative styles and on-air arrangements which are best suited to the overall campaign.

On the basis of outcomes of the study following recommendations are proposed:

1. Universities should maintain some balance between entertainment and educational programs since these FM radios have sole responsibility to broadcast its transmission extensively on the improvement.
2. Maximum topics of the subjects of higher level may be covered through radio.
3. Radio sets should also be provided in study centres or in class rooms as an additional teaching aid.
4. Short and long term training sessions may be arranged for script writing, programme production for the teachers and instructors of all the universities.
5. The universities should also utilize their production houses for proper training of the students for the business of television programming.

6. Higher Education Commission Pakistan and the educationist and the think tanks are very important to sit down and explore a cohesive move.
7. The universities should start and produce regular stuff for their Television production houses that will help in promoting knowledge and awareness culture in the country.
8. Constant watch of PEMRA is a very important to stop any violation and beyond its mandate.
9. Research and numerical cell findings of the Universities can be used to reshape the scripts.

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