

Iranian radios in Digital Age: Progress from Technological Management to Cultural Management

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Abstract—The nature and essence of technology and the regulations and systems derived from it should be acknowledged properly. We should neither speak completely against them, nor accept it and totally get absorbed in them. One should come to a logical and multilateral interaction on the basis of timely understanding and correct recognition of values, beliefs and cultural ideology of oneself, and with deliberation on how to preserve its essence, employ and localize the technology.

The Digital Age can be known as apparent evidence on the correctness of such statement. Threats and chances resulted from being present in such era, which are swiftly interchangeable and replaceable with each other, sometimes like an inevitable destiny appear in front of institutions, organizations, media and cultural programmers and programme producers and do not give them any opportunity for deliberation and forethought. One should be aware and not summarize numerous and various facets of Digital Age only in its technological attractive qualities and not diminish it to the word 'Technology'. The attachments and cogitative and cultural infrastructure ruling on the quality of performance, activity and role of technology in the society should be studied and criticized, whilst otherwise the glory, development and flourishing of developing countries will be an unachievable dream like last eras, but under the cover of a new form of colonization by some countries which are developed and possessors of technology.

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio (Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran), by comprising almost sixty public, special, specialized, provincial, and metropolitan radio stations, tries to achieve a meritorious passage and transition for effective presence in Digital Age, by designing strategies and appropriate executive approaches. A passage and transition which is based on realization of the motto "recognition and superiority" and on the basis of three factors: being observed, effectiveness and becoming reference of the radio in the society. It is not merely following the goal of technological management as a superficial, and in general, hardware based transition and change in the fields of production, sending and receiving the stations and radio programmers, but it thinks of a proceeding and effective presence in this era on the basis of cultural management which is desirous of making recognition and constancy of superiority on the basis of appropriate perception of itself and its milieu.

The present article, is an effort for familiarization with such strategies and approaches; strategies and approaches which are design, modified and launched on six bases, to direct and guide 'The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio' in healthy proceeding from the transition period and the effective presence in Digital Age. The six bases are as follows: recognition of damaging and vulnerable points of the radio's organizational activity; understanding of the private and specialized functions of the radio; utilization, employment, and localization of the digital radios' capacity in traditional radios; appropriate upgrading of the quality of the form and content of programme making in the radio; paying attention to public opinions and the needs of the audience by producing ground for their meaningful cooperation in the processes of programming and radio programme production; and filling in the digital gap in order to strengthening the infrastructures.

Index Terms—Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Radio (Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran), Superiority, Recognition, Technological management, Cultural management.

1 INTRODUCTION

A world which "change" is the keyword to its perception, should only be perceived by "change". In media organizations, change and transition are inseparable adherents from the process of management; adherents which if we observe carefully, they appear in the area of planning, which is of the most fundamental responsibilities of management in administration of organizations, especially media organizations. Planning, is selecting a method from the performance systems of the organization for the future and looking ahead. Managers and senior administrators, by the means of multilateral observation and supervision on the internal and external environment of their organization, are always in quest of desirable opportunities, to find a reasonable and logical method, in order to benefit effectively from chances, by defining goals, considering and accepting theses about

present and future milieu, finding and assessment of various methods of performance and electing a way for following up the work.

Planning does not happen in a void; on the contrary, it requires a comprehensive and multilateral view to the internal and external environment of the organization and consideration of threats and chances and weak and strength points as necessities of proceeding in operational and real, and not abstract and subjective environment; a movement, which can bestow effectiveness and efficiency as two fundamental indicators in establishment and formation of the concept of productivity, for the organization and its operators, by the means of understanding the nature, direction and orientation of change and transformation, and timely recognition of assets.

Inquiring an appropriate and correct question in the beginning of the way is a good guarantee for a more appropriate and correct answer at the end. A necessity that overlooking or ignoring it, will lead to incorrect and inappropriate answers in understanding the change and transition and wrong and more inappropriate orientations in

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the rest of the way, and at the end, what it puts forward as the result of programming, will have no similarity with what it really should be. The history of nearly the last two hundred years of appearance and existence of press and other media organizations in developing countries like Iran is full of manifestation of such deficiencies and vulnerabilities. The history of media and press in such countries is mostly the history of "answer" and "response", and not history of "question" and "query".

Taking a brief look and reviewing the two centuries historical movement of the press and mass media indicates that always two "answer" and "response" have been present for managers, policy makers and planners and always without paying attention to asking questions by them, have been applied and utilized; the two answer and response which have come to developing countries such as Iran, from the origin of such press and media in west, and by being utilized constantly by governors and intellectuals of right wing, left wing and moderates, are rooted and founded in the process of policy makings and planning, without asking questions on their quality and circumstances, and without examining and criticizing their importance, necessity and efficiency:

The **first** answer and response, looks at press and media as merely a tool, technique and method that if being used completely, will lead to appropriate answering to communicational and informational needs of the society, especially in the economic, political and cultural fields. Such an answer looks at press and media only from the technical perspective or bureaucracy and puts its existence on this presumption that in developing countries, we can learn press and media like medicine and engineering from Europe and USA. The result of such learning can be summarized in a thoughtless competition in blind imitation; an outcome that by ignoring the local talents and capacities and overlooking the inharmonious consequences with national culture, will lead to scattering or disperse instead of integrity and unity in society.

The **Second** answer and response, looks at press and media as of an ideology or school. Printed material and media in the light of such a look will appear as a sign of western democracy school, European liberalism and American liberality that are in basic contradiction with society's cultural grounds. Rejecting and ignoring such achievements alongside with overlooking its potentialities in the process of glorifying and growth of society are of consequences that this look puts in front of the society (Mowlana, 2003:4-5).

It seems neither the **first** extravagance view nor the **second** view which is with dissipation cannot be of any benefit for today and tomorrow of media organizations in developing countries such as Iran. Managers, policy makers and media planners need to ask correct and appropriate question for continuing the way and having effective presence in future world; a world which is being pre-defined by different characteristics, with the help of increasing and innovated progresses in the field of communicational and

informational technologies. If we cannot find our right and appropriate state and role in this arena, then more cost than before has to be borne by media system of developing countries and although they have many talents and cultural potential, it stops them from appearing and having effective presence in competition fields and in these fields confines them to the ground.

One should quest for correct questions in order to receive more correct answers. We can ask the question this way:

What is the relation between change and transformation in mass media and traditional communications in society, and how can we mix communicational and informational technologies with local culture?

In the field of action and working of mass media like radio and in an era like Digital Age can such a question be rephrased as?

What is the relation between change and transformation in Digital Age radios and traditional communications in society, and how can we mix communicational and informational technologies of Digital Age with local culture?

It would be necessary to remind the issue that the meaning of traditional communications has encountered differences in interpretation in light of electronic and digital transitions of current era. "Despite the fact that until several decades ago, radio and television were counted as new and modern media in contrast with traditional media that had a history of several centuries, nowadays in light of electronic and digital transitions happened in field of media, those young and hopeful media are known as old and traditional media. In other words, even though until now, hundreds of centuries were required to bring about a wonderful historical variety to change the traditional media with new media, nowadays in light of such electronic and digital transitions, only a few decades would be enough until new and fresh media change to traditional media" (Khojasteh 1387:3-4).

In encountering the electronic and digital media they will either be obliged to reconstruct themselves and continue life in the media world, or in case of incompatibility with new circumstances, in the most optimistic state, are forced to be changed to a marginal and subsidiary media.

All our effort in this article is put on answering the question mentioned in the context as far as we can. Although a multilateral answer to such a question requires a more extended chance and time, here we try to achieve the necessary things to answer this question on the basis of the triangle **Culture, Technology, Media** and here **Radio**, and at the end state and remind some applicable suggestive strategies in this field. But before we start, it seems necessary to remind some points:

1. Media organization are much more than other similar service providers and industrial organization challenging with the importance and necessity of timely recognition of a phenomenon called Audience. Audience as a choosing and active human should be considered more than before and for this very reason, humanities as a methodological and disciplined study about such human should more than ever be seen as a supporter of media policy making and planning.

2. "Today's technology in west modifies and engineers its yesterday's technology with the help of humanities but we, the developing countries, sometimes only take copies from yesterday's technology of west" (Afrough, 2009:7).

3. "There are many differences between culture of development and cultural development. In the first one, like the way that we have passed from yesterday to today, culture is dependent of expansion and the miniature form of it, Technology, but in the latter with another view, expansion is dependent on culture and advances and other forms of technology and development are being used and employed and localized in the framework of culture, values and believes originated from that" (UNESCO, 1995B).

4. Because the elite and thinkers of developing countries, have either attacked or faced the west directly, as they have not studied their assets and the assets of west correctly. It is possible that in a field they condemn west politics or in another field, attack it or sometimes claw it harshly. But it should be known that west is a total unity and more than these extremist behaviors requires active interaction and encounter from developing countries" (Afrough, 2009:7).

5. Sometimes the media organizations in developing countries become victims of decision makings of managers, policy makers and planners who are unfamiliar with culture. The pure quantitative look in goals and methods and inattention to the quality are of damages of these sorts of decision making. Media need "Quality" for survival, stability and endurance; a quality originated from right utilization of Humanities and paying attention to cultural continuum and the consequences of ignoring or overlooking that in the fields of decision making, planning, and media programme productions. With reminding these five points, now is the time to speak a little about the quality of relationship between Culture and Technology.

2 CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY; FROM CONFRONTATION TO INTERACTION

Culture is of the terms that many have spoken or written about it a lot. Culture can be defined and explained from different points of view:

- Value and knowledge;
- Technology, mysticism, science and art;
- Value, thought and norms.

As thinkers and scholars, by considering such points of view, have announced the application of more than five hundred meanings for culture and have pointed out some similar points between the definition groups:

1. Culture includes all aspects and dimensions of a human's individual, social, and material and spiritual life.

2. Culture of each people or nation belongs to those people or nation which in its kind is unique and exclusive.

3. Culture is an earned and acquired phenomenon and is transferable.

4. Culture is engaged with consistency, integration and social unity in the society.

5. Culture is a dynamic and transitional phenomenon (The basics of cultural development, 2001).

Like culture, technology is a term that is being used a lot in university and out of university discussions and studies. In the thought and idea of thinkers and connoisseurs of developing countries, both in the past and now, technology is considered equal to the term development. Although there are many differences between these two: development is kind of social engineering, which is defined by the goal of simultaneous securing of material welfare and spiritual peace of human in the society and explained considering the human, social and environmental circumstances, but in a fundamental view, technology is the application of knowledge in solving the scientific problems. Technology is the accumulated form of experiences, skills and applied sciences that by the means of that, humans gain the domination over their milieu and engage with solving the issues and problems resulted from their interaction with the milieu. The state and role of technology in each society, is an instrumental state and role; an instrument which never can be known as an end or goal for society. Although it should be admitted that "technology is the only scene that in the eyes of not-developed countries, is astonishing, such lowering understanding from development is mixed with the idea of uniqueness of technology in the hand of the western civilization and has caused the developing countries being hindered from appropriate deliberation in technological relations with development and culture and understanding of talents and apparent and concealed assets" (UNESCO, 1994).

Of course the paradigms of colonial systems also have a remarkable place and role in formation of such an understanding. "The confrontation of the colonial system and colonies has stimulated the senses of colonized people with the wish to achieve the products of western civilization; to such extent that they have transformed and absorbed that as a consumer of a good, without thinking and deliberation in cultural and thought continuums and infrastructures leading to formation of this product. Now that technology is not a neutral and unbiased instrument in the field of culture" (UNESCO, 1992).

Technology takes part in formation of the values of the society and is the reflection of its original society, its creative talents also, the especial nature and essence of the social and cultural environment of its creation. There is a severe opposition between values and cultural and local traditions from one side and values and invasive cultural paradigms of west that happen under the light of technology transmission. Also, sometimes bring about such consequences in the society and country that goals and targets of constant development that are based on

simultaneous consideration of social, economic, cultural and environmental circumstances of the country, are brought to the verge of destruction and even will not be successful in realization of the goal and target of development and the goal of development culture.

Before the victory of Islamic Revolution, Iran had been a small but expressive example of inefficiency of this view. The victory of Islamic Revolution showed that the collection of development planning and policy makings that with minimalist thoughts and only with the mere goal of transferring and absorbing the technology from west with no attention to the cultural fundamentals of their presence and application in the society, are lost from the beginning for the following reasons : (So, 1990)

- **First:** they only try to illustrate an ideal image from the west contemporary society;

- **Second:** they only try to render a definition from local values and believes on the basis of concentration on its static and negative aspects;

- **Third:** they are constantly trying to implicate such belief that development means western modernization and western modernization means relief and getting rid of values, believes and the local cultural ideology.

The victory of Islamic Revolution (1979) and settlement of Islamic Republic of Iran by passing from the heavy waves of crisis, threats and sanctions after establishment, with refutation of the three aforementioned points proved that in the bipolar of tradition and modernity, tradition with the condition of the up-to-date, appropriate, different and innovative look of the society's thought leaders can be creative, manifestative and responsible to personal and social needs of people in our era, and in this way, illustrate its evolutionary characteristics. Characteristics which with passing three decades from the time of establishment still thinks of more expanded appearance in regional and international fields and goes ahead. The fifth development plan of Islamic Republic of Iran (2010-2015) with a pathological look towards the last four five-year plans in the years after the end of the imposed war, looks forward to achieving an appropriate interaction between technology and culture in the process of development of Iranian Society; an interaction on the basis of culture that the technology transmission in that ground happens with knowledge of technology thought, deliberation in the philosophies of efficiency and its field of application and encountering with its new phenomena, the advantages and disadvantages be assessed in a scientific and multilateral analysis criteria in order to alongside with timely understanding of evolutions in the milieu and the knowledge from internal properties, a constant process of employment, absorption and localization of technology in the ground of culture gets formed.

A phenomenon, that a historical and in-depth look at Maya, Aztec, Africa, and Iranian and Islamic civilizations has a sign of the probability of its realization alongside with establishing a dynamic, balanced and equilibrated relationship, between original civilizations with natural environment and the circumstances of location and time.

It should be bear in mind that the thought of development is the foreground of the exact existence of

development, and the culture of technology is the pioneer of efficiency of technology in the society. The developing countries should get out of historical oblivion. Today, more than any other time, we need to be inspired by historical identity, in order to realize the growth in the real path of development. Of course we should not take such inspiration, as historical stillness. We should be in search and quest of social and cultural relations that have lead to pride of our society and country in specific times. We should work out and update the effective indicators in a dynamic form in order to render them today. We should take practical steps in finding the ways for realization of such an idea in order to realize our desired evolution in the quality and balanced growth of all necessary and essential elements. The dynamic, and not static culture, can answer temporal necessities and the needs of the era, by absorption of the new ideas and technologies and engineering and management of them in the framework of basic facts. "The external factor is only one dimension and aspect of necessities and requirements. Deliberation in the needs of the society, noticing the historical identity and values and goals that the society has defined and explained for itself, all form the other dimensions and aspects of these necessities. Each should be recognized correctly and by giving appropriate weigh, should categorize the future problems and difficulties and render solutions for them. The real interaction of culture and technology forms on this very basis and expands. .

3 THE MEDIA (RADIO), CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY; FROM CONVERGENCE TO DIVERGENCE

Media as "technologic phenomena" are both derived from culture and effective on culture. The wonderful and magnificent advancements of communicational and informational technologies in our era, which are going to prolong the movement of creation of human history from Agricultural Revolution to Digital Revolution and Age in thought and expression of many intellectuals and philosophers, and put the congestion of time and acceleration of history before the eyes, providing that being studied and analyzed correctly on the basis of knowledge of time, capacity and audiences, can provide a good answer to our outset question.

What is the relation of the evolution and change in Digital Age radios, with traditional relationships in the society and how can we mix the communicational and informational technologies of digital age with local culture?

Answering to this question without an understanding based on convergence between media and in here, radio, culture and technology is impossible. Yes! We live in Digital Age, but living in this age does not mean denying the past and divergence with the relations and traditional of media. Digital Age not only does not lead to such consequences, but also puts in front of policy makers and programmers a ground for use and benefiting from fresh capacities. One should plan the map of way, on the ground of culture and with the knowledge of temporal necessities and the needs of Digital Age, far ahead of the first technological thought, era of structural change of media

and the social and cultural consequences; a change which renders itself to the society with four characteristics:

- Development;
- Segregation;
- Hegemony; and
- Cultural pluralism; (Mowlana, 2003)

The access of large sections of the society to the media with segregation of public audience and formation of the concept of target and special audience which are selective and active, requires media that in the close competition resulted from development, look for their own playing ground. By this means they can produce recognition and superiority in their function and efficiency and in the age that many voices can be heard and cultural isolation reduces constantly and knowledge as assets for living in this society has increasing necessity in survival, constant and effective stableness, reach what they desire more. Radio can be pioneer in this path, with consideration of all four indicators. Radio as the main voice of social and cultural differences with competition making characteristics of speed in informing and ease of access and spontaneous flexibility in programming and planning can fill-in the intact, untouched, and blank houses, start competition with other media. The Digital Age can be another chance for reborn of radio. Radio as the main background voice of activities in everyday life of audience in the society, is an appropriate ground for appearance of multimedia in society and media world. By the use of side facilities on the ground of modern technology: like cable, satellite, cell-phone and other new phenomena, becomes day after day more complete and predominant and adds new audience on its group of audience with preserving the current audience. This is so that it can be said that: radio is constantly advancing towards predominance and dominance on the sharply contested media competition by making currents and becoming reference in various fields and amongst other media, being observed in the society and by target audience, and an appropriate effectiveness with such place and role amongst them.

Various public, private, specialized, provincial and metropolitan radios of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio are looking for locating themselves in such positions by perception and knowledge of and laying appropriate role in such field. Planners and programme producers of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio are highly aware that glorious history cannot be known as a guarantee for a peaceful future. The quality and circumstances of relationship between culture and technology should be constantly before eyes to provide the insight for a confident movement in the field of media.

4 CONCLUSION AND SOME STRATEGIES

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio, having almost sixty public, private, specialized, provincial and metropolitan radio stations should think of an active encounter with Digital Age, which it does. The insight of planners and programme producers of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting – Radio is dependent on the fact that they constantly question about time, capacity and

their audience by having an in-depth review of the past and deliberation with pathology about the process of movement and activity, and in this way, do not ignore the cultural continuum and its engineering and management in the field of producing and delivering message. Media, culture and technology alongside each other will lead to the effectiveness and efficiency desired by policy makers and planners. Radio as an accompanying media with its special characteristics can have many winning cards in this field; only if we cast another look at the following choices and options, and in this way consider the necessities of time and era: (Khojasteh, 2008:7-8)

1. The pathology of problem making and vulnerable points; that can appear in three fields of design and arrangement of broadcasting tables (conductors) of various radios with the goal of flexibility in establishment and continuing of effective relationship with audience; appropriate advertising of various radios for being observed in the society; and marketing of message for more correct communication of concealed meaning in the message to the target audience and establishment and expansion of the sphere of social and planned changes.

2. Understanding of particular and special applications; that can include the attention to the notifying, educational and entertaining applications of radio in the society and appeared and concealed capacities as an endeavor for filling in the blank houses of the competition table with other media.

3. Application, employment and localization of potentialities of digital media in traditional radio; which can appear in increasing use of virtual space and its grounds and fields in society and for audience.

4. Elevating the quality of programming and programme makings in radio programmes and stations by taking advantage of providing background educational and research supports for planners and programme producers.

5. Increasing attention to public opinions of the society and target audience and being observed more and more in the process of social decision makings.

6. Constant interaction with other countries which have same orientation in the framework of the regional and international radio and media unions in the direction of forming a consistent media arrangement against invasion of the western media and securing the necessary infrastructures for filling-in the digital gap, with a culture based look. Radio in Digital Age can still be recognized as a pioneer media, if knows well about itself, the era and its audience. How good it would be to look at our surroundings from the window of our rich culture and in this way, know the cultural management **in** and **on** our media as the basis fact. Technology is a base for reaching the desired things. Lest, like the past, we target the means and be pioneer in such ignorance and unawareness. Tomorrow's world is formed by pathological look at the past and hopeful look to the future. We should criticize the past fairly to make the future ours. We look forward to that day with hope!

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