

# **Breaking News & Ethics: An Analysis in PEMRA Code Perspective**

**MS Thesis**



**Research Scholar**

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**168-SS/MSMC/S13**

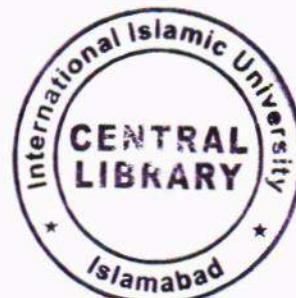
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**International Islamic University, Islamabad**



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ethical aspects

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**Thesis has been submitted as fulfillment of the requirements for the MS  
degree in Media and Communication to the Department of Media &  
Communication Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences,  
International Islamic University, Islamabad**

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**March 2016**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**International Islamic University Islamabad**  
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**Department of Media and Communication Studies**

Date: 01-06-2016

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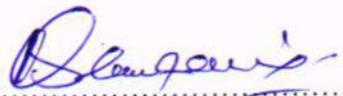
It is certified that we have read this thesis entitled "Breaking News and Ethics: An Analysis in PEMRA Codes Perspective" submitted by Muhammad Saeed. It is our judgement that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the International Islamic University Islamabad for the award of MS Degree in Media and Communication Studies.

**Committee**

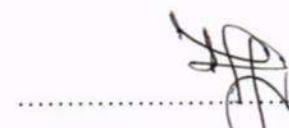
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Dedicated to my

*Respected Parents,*

*Brother & Sisters*

*With love and gratitude*

*May Almighty Allah live them long and happy*

*They fed me when I was hungry, gave me strength when weak,  
Protected me when in danger, taught me to walk on my feet,  
Nursed me when hurt, encouraged when dejected  
And helped me to live honorably this world;*



## Certification

This is certified that the contents and form of the research report entitled "**Breaking News & Ethics: An Analysis in PEMRA Code Perspective**" by Muhammad Saeed has been found satisfactory and fulfills the requirement of the degree.

Supervisor

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**Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal**

Dated: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ /2016

2016

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## Abstract

*Breaking news is a phenomenon followed by the universal visual media as well as it is a very common practice in Pakistani Television and heavily in use. Every News channel tries to telecast its first hand information for its viewers. Since this information is very brief and telecasts on urgent basis and sometimes do not fulfill the news values criteria and along with that Inter-media competition affected the broadcasting mode of TV journalism. TV broadcasting output information in the shape of news is influenced by advanced technologies and competitive patterns heavily. Aim of this study was to highlight and cover the gap between current news media's Ethics practicing in Pakistan and PEMRA's Code of Ethics. Husserl's phenomenological approach used to describe this phenomenon. According to him, meaning lies in an individual's experience and when we collect experiences of all participants, it can interpret a situation. The primary data collected in the shape of in-depth interviews from eight participants and secondary data from the prior available research on this topic. It was found that there is number of loopholes in Code of Conduct and working style of regulatory body and media. Current breaking news practice in Pakistan is not synchronized with the Code of Ethics of PEMRA and furthermore, current PEMRA Code of Ethics and conduct is not fully implementable in current media practice in Pakistan. The results of this study suggest that PEMRA and Channels are in developmental phase along with its viewers and over time and with more training and a change in the collective ethos, TV, media journalists will eventually transition to a point where breaking news will be curtailed to some degree and the system will develop a better check and balance.*

**Key words:** Media, Breaking news, Code of Conduct, PEMRA

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All praises to Almighty ***Allah***, The most Merciful, Kind and Beneficent. He is the only one God who helps us in every field of life. All respect and appreciation goes to our Holly Prophet ***Muhammad*** (PBUH), who is the forever guidance and knowledge for all the mankind.

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I am also very thankful to PEMRA for access to interview and provided data. It is also great worth of the contribution of media experts and media executives whose give me time and record their experience and share information about their organizations. Without their positive response it may not possible to complete this research study.

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**Muhammad Saeed Yousafzai**



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## **Chapter-01**

### **Introduction**

In 2002 the Government of Pakistan decided to promote and regulate electronic media through issuing licenses and monitoring. For this purpose a department established under the federal ministry of information named PEMRA. After the establishment of PEMRA in 2002, 91 licenses were awarded<sup>1</sup> to different individuals/groups till 2014 in which 89 channels are in operational status<sup>2</sup>. In these 89 channels about 25 channels broadcasting news<sup>3</sup>.

The inter-media competition is on high level due to the rapid growth of information, availability of fast information sharing systems and commercialization. This inter-media competition affected the broadcasting mode of TV journalism. This competition provided new ways to present news on screen. Breaking News presentation format is also one of the most frequently using styles on screen in today TV broadcasting. Normally, a channel broadcasts its exclusive information in ticker format and after a moment it comes to breaking style on Screen. Breaking news is such format and style, which covered emerging and up-and-coming news stories live<sup>4</sup>. Today's TV screen is more dynamic than ever.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/pub-rep/PEMRA\\_REPORT\\_2014/index.html](http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/pub-rep/PEMRA_REPORT_2014/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/stv/list\\_of\\_licences\\_issued\\_stv.pdf](http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/stv/list_of_licences_issued_stv.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://tribune.com.pk/story/543009/start-killing-off-the-channels/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://research.allacademic.com/index.php?click\\_key=2#search\\_top](http://research.allacademic.com/index.php?click_key=2#search_top)

According to Collins English Dictionary “News of events that have taken place very recently or are in the process of taking place is referred to breaking news<sup>5</sup>” News rooms gathering and receiving information from various sources like Bureaus, News wires, OSRs, research desk, Social Media Desk, Monitoring Desk.

Every broadcasting organization has a setup to monitor the other news channel’s screens closely. Mostly 5 to 10 top channels are monitored at one time. Today TV broadcasting competition is increasing day by day among the news organizations, which creates lot of pressure on TV journalists than ever in context of news gathering quickly. TV journalists try to consult those sources which are close in proximity, accessible and easily available (Fontenot, Maria. & Wigley, Shelley, 2012).

But many times these traditional sources are not available, neither for getting information nor for confirmation. For this purpose, news editor rely on alternative sources in which the most common practice is to monitor the screens of other channels and broadcast these information on their own screen and many time as their own information. Such type of broadcasting activity laid a debate on the Credibility of such information.

In this situation, it is become difficult for audience to cross check its credibility with other news channels. It creates self conceived perception about the credibility of that breaking news. Due to Inter-Media competition, rapid and abundant flow of information along with large scale of advancements in technology, the filtration of news is becoming a challengeable task for editors that are affecting the credibility of news. It gets more

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/breaking-news>

complex shape when the event occurred in remote areas or at night time, where News organization sources usually become limited.

### **1.2 Background of the research:**

The growth of private channels with extraordinary rate opened the market to a wide, diverse range of opinions, actors and interests. While this boom has been generally seen as a positive indicator towards the freedom of expression in Pakistan, the pace with which it has happened has also led to certain challenges. Main among these challenges is the new technologies in broadcasting media and saturated industry to ensure ethical standards in broadcasting content.

According to “Report on Ethical Dimensions of Media Content in Pakistan<sup>6</sup>” published by Pakistan Press Foundation in 2015 that:

*“Consumers complain about falling standards, often blaming the media for creating ‘hype’ over small issues”.*

According to research on the topic “What draws attention to breaking news?” Andrea Miller draws a result from her research study that constantly hyping irrelevant “breaking news” is a question mark on the future of TV. She termed it “cry wolf” try to gain attention of the audience.

Along with this she found that TV is trying to make an issue more significant than it is in actuality.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pakistanpressfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Final-book.pdf>

She further added that:

*"The visual clutter and hyperkinetic pace of modern TV news make it harder for breaking news story to grab viewer's attention".*

In this regard from 2010-14, PEMRA has issued 565 show cause notices along with 50 warnings to TV channels for False, unauthentic reporting, depiction of blood, gore, severely injured people, mutilated dead bodies and much more that specified by PEMRA code of conduct<sup>7</sup>. According to PEMRA record, in 2014-15 the number of notices in one year is about 74 issued by PEMRA to channels on contempt of broadcasting content against armed forces. Same as from 2012-14, about 70 notices were issued in contempt of excessive foreign content and 2012-2015, about 29 notices in contempt of content against honorable judiciary. There are also 27 notices were issued in 2012-14, due to contempt of content against Political dignities/Democracy<sup>8</sup>. In January and February 2016, more than two and half dozen notices issued to channels and PEMRA take action in the shape of fine or suspension of license<sup>9</sup>. According to PEMRA, all the actions are taken according to the rules that are described Code of conducts.

The situation became worst in Pakistani electronic media when News broadcasted as breaking news on GEO TV<sup>10</sup> about the attack on a famous journalist and anchor person

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.pakistanpressfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Final-book.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Data was provided by PEMRA and details are included in "Results and Findings" chapter of the research

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.pemra.gov.pk/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k633V0AdUeY>

Hamid Mir which associated with “Jang Group of Media”. According to DAWN newspaper on its 19<sup>th</sup> April issue<sup>11</sup>:

*“Unknown gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on Hamid Mir in Karachi on Saturday, injuring the senior reporter and television anchorperson. The incident took place on Sharae Faisal near Natha Khan Area when the gunmen opened fire on his vehicle around 5:30pm”*

For this incident<sup>12</sup>, the GEO News represented ISI as responsible on reference to Hamid Mir's brother.

Later than broadcasting these allegations<sup>13</sup> live on Geo News, the ISPR denied<sup>14</sup> any concern in this attack and demanded for independent investigation regarding this attack<sup>15</sup>. Pakistan's army demanded the closure of the television channel<sup>16</sup>. The application was submitted to the media regulator under Sections 33 and 36 of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 after approval from the Defense Minister. After that GEO Management has admitted their inaccuracy to broadcasting such allegations not in favor of Pakistan Army and Pakistani and World's top spy intelligence Agency ISI (Inter Services Intelligence). Then the final decision made by PEMRA is that to suspend<sup>17</sup> the GEO's license for 15 days till 20 June of 2014.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1100972>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.unewstv.com/tarimgs/isi-involved-in-attack-on-hamid-mir-pre-attack-satatement-of-hamid-mir-revealed.jpg>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1100972>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1100972>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/27/geo-tv-isi-spy-agency-pakistan-military>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/23/pakistan-army-demands-tv-station-closure-assassination>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1110979/pemra-suspends-geo-news-license-for-15-days>

### **1.3 PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority):**

In March, 2002 the Government of Pakistan decided to promote and regulate electronic media through issuing licenses and monitoring. For this purpose a department established under the federal ministry of information named PEMRA. According to its official website, PEMRA is abbreviated from Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority. PEMRA was established by an ordinance i.e. Ordinance 2002. After the establishment of PEMRA in 2002, 91 licenses were awarded<sup>18</sup> to different individuals/groups till 2014 in which 89 channels are in operational status<sup>19</sup>. In these 89 channels about 25 channels broadcasting news<sup>20</sup>.

#### **1.3.1 PEMRA Mandate:**

According to PEMRA, it is mandated for four objectives as mentioned on the official website of the organization as under<sup>21</sup>:

*"Improve the standards of information, education and entertainment;  
Enlarge the choice available to the people of Pakistan in the media for news, current affairs, religious knowledge, art, culture, science, technology, economic development, social sector concerns, music, sports, drama and other subjects of public and national interest ;  
Facilitate the devolution of responsibility and power to the grass roots by improving the access of the people to mass media at the local and community level;  
Ensure accountability, transparency and good governance by optimization the free flow of information"*

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/pub-rep/PEMRA\\_REPORT\\_2014/index.html](http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/pub-rep/PEMRA_REPORT_2014/index.html)

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/stv/list\\_of\\_licences\\_issued\\_stv.pdf](http://www.pemra.gov.pk/pemra/images/docs/stv/list_of_licences_issued_stv.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <http://tribune.com.pk/story/543009/start-killing-off-the-channels/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.pemra.gov.pk/>

### **1.3.2 PEMRA Functions:**

PMERA has the following four functions<sup>22</sup> for all the target audience in country or out of country:

- 1- Facilitations
- 2- Regulations
- 3- Operations
- 4- Distributions services

### **1.3.3 PEMRA Code of Conduct and Rules:**

As the result of an ordinance which is called PEMRA Ordinance 2002<sup>23</sup>, PEMRA was established in March 2002. In December 2009, new rules been adopted by PEMRA. These rules are known as PPEMRA rules 2009<sup>24</sup>. On 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015 new code of conduct issued, which amended the rules 2009. The notice was issued as per direction of SCOP (Supreme Court of Pakistan). The 2015 code of conduct came into its operational status after long consultations between media stake holders, media experts, governmental officials and PEMRA authorities.

According to a poll survey in August, 2015 which was done by DAWN newspaper through its e.paper, a close ended question<sup>25</sup> was asked in the form of YES or NO from readers that:

*"Do you think that new electronic media code of conduct will improve the experience of television viewing in Pakistan?"*

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.pemra.gov.pk/>

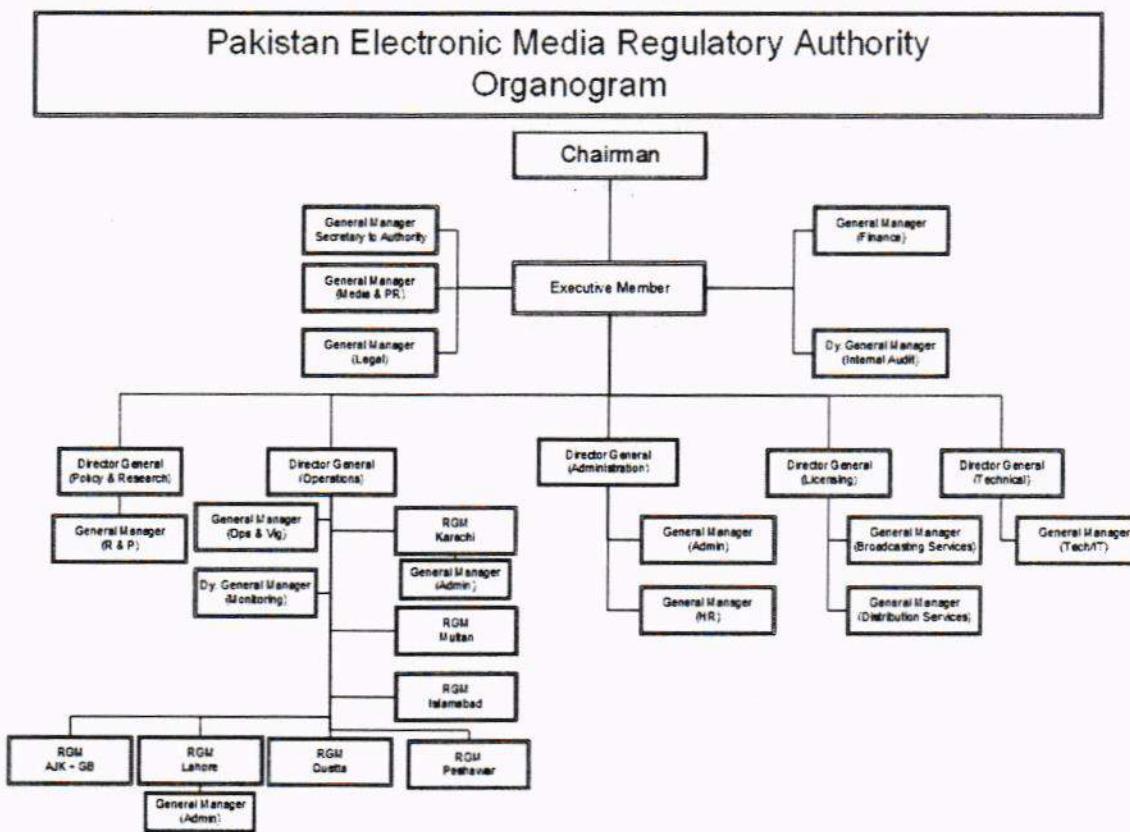
<sup>23</sup> [http://58.65.182.183/pemra/?page\\_id=49](http://58.65.182.183/pemra/?page_id=49)

<sup>24</sup> [http://58.65.182.183/pemra/?page\\_id=53](http://58.65.182.183/pemra/?page_id=53)

<sup>25</sup> [www.dawn.com/news/1203017/nuclear-mainstream](http://www.dawn.com/news/1203017/nuclear-mainstream)

According to the results<sup>26</sup>, 51.25% of the respondents vote polled to YES and 48.75% in favor of NO. The number of the respondent was 5,463. It is relatively a mixed result but more than 50% agree with question and considering that the new code of conduct 2015 will effect positively on viewership.

#### 1.3.4 Organizational Structure:



\*Block Diagram<sup>27</sup>

\* PEMRA is headed by chairman who is appointed by the Premier of Pakistan<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> See Annexure-2

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.pemra.gov.pk/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://themedialandscapepepma.blogspot.com/2011/05/role-of-pemra-in-pakistan-media.html>

### **1.3.5 Working Mechanism:**

PEMRA is receiving feedback about the broadcasting content through:

1. Monitoring channels on 24/7 basis
2. Complaint mechanism

For this purpose, councils of complaints are working in capital along with all provincials' capitals and other places in country. PEMRA mechanism is based on "complaint driven". PEMRA take a decision whether it is right or wrong on the basis of the complaint and channel statement.

According to PEMRA Code of Conduct 2015<sup>29</sup>, the authority is dealing with all type of "content" that are being on-aired.

### **1.4 Problem Statement:**

Breaking news is extensively in practice in Pakistani broadcasting media to break a story. Breaking news is a fast broadcasting format for news, in which on every step it is supposed that the originators of that breaking news have the ethical approach to follow the code of ethics set by PEMRA and it has the mandate to ensure this code of ethics should be follow in broadcasting content. An originator has two responsibilities: to broadcast breaking news and follow the code of ethics set by PEMRA. On other side PEMRA is responsible to implement their settled code of ethics. But as I mentioned in the research background earlier that from 2010-14, PEMRA has issued 565 show cause notices along with 50 warnings to TV channels for False, unauthentic reporting, depiction of blood, gore, severely injured people, mutilated dead bodies and much more that specified by

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<sup>29</sup> See annexure 01

PEMRA code of conduct<sup>30</sup> and even a news channel (GEO) suspend<sup>31</sup> the GEO's license for 15 days. This activity shows that there is a gap between the followers (originators of the breaking news) and the implementation body (PEMRA). This gap is affecting the quality of broadcasting content, which is ultimately a think point for the credible information. This gap further indicates the implementation level of the code of ethics and raises a question why media practitioner and the implementation body are not on the same page to improve the standards of information.

After a careful study, it is observed even the word "Breaking News" have no definition in the PEMRA code of conduct/rules/regulations. Only Media commission characterized the breaking news as 6<sup>th</sup> category of normal news<sup>32</sup>.

### **1.5 Objectives:**

The study aims to

- Highlight and cover the gap between current news media's Ethics practicing in Pakistan and PEMRA's Code of Ethics.

### **1.6 Significance of the study:**

Breaking News is a very common practice in Pakistani Electronic media and heavily in use. Every News channel tries to telecast its first hand information for its viewers. Since this information is very brief and telecasts on urgent basis and sometimes

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.pakistanpressfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Final-book.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.dawn.com/news/1110979/pemra-suspends-geo-news-license-for-15-days>

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user\\_files/File/MediaCommissionReportFinal.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user_files/File/MediaCommissionReportFinal.pdf)

do not fulfill the news values criteria along with seeming resemblance in breaking news content between news channels.

Since every organization or stake holder is in developmental phase and there is number of loopholes in Code of Conduct and working style of the media and monitoring body. Since code of conduct only deals content of news not production, but breaking news is influencing viewers not only with content but also its production style. It is also helpful to revisit the code of conduct of PEMRA and try to cover the problems and issues either facing by media or PEMRA.

This study highlights the gap between functional media and PEMRA's Code of ethics and furthermore, this study will also help to re-design the breaking news style/format in the light of PEMRA's code of ethics.

The researcher constructed recommendations in the light of the interviews of Media Practitioners, PEMRA authorities, Media Experts and secondary data from literature available. These recommendations are valuable for both stake holders i.e. Channels and PEMRA.

## Chapter-02

### Literature Review

Breaking News is a very common practice in Pakistani Electronic media and heavily in use. Every News channel tries to telecast its first hand information for its viewers. Since this information is very brief and telecasts on urgent basis and sometimes do not fulfill the news values criteria along with seeming resemblance in breaking news content between news channels. “Report and Recommendations of the Media Commission<sup>33</sup>” which was published in 2014, on its page 17, normal content of news media is divided into 13 categories. 6<sup>th</sup> number category is referred to Announcements about “breaking news”.

Ingram (2014) stated that “The future of media is not about breaking news scoops; it's about credibility and trust<sup>34</sup>” According to Craig (2009) many studies are conducted to test various dimensions of breaking news. He further added in his research paper that time is always a considerable factor which creates pressure on editors and reporters. Along with time he examined the source availability and concluded that large media organizations have more sources than those who small in size. It also creates pressure on editors and reporters in processing first hand information received.

Nord and Lars (2009) further studied the modern technologies used in media and argue that these new technologies have great influence on news processing. They further added that new technology is not a challenge for the media, but it is playing a supportive

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<sup>33</sup> [http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user\\_files/File/MediaCommissionReportFinal.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/web/user_files/File/MediaCommissionReportFinal.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <http://gigaom.com/2014/05/07/the-future-of-media-isnt-about-breaking-news-scoops-its-about-credibility-and-trust/>

role in the development of new media and creating more opportunities for news productions.

Colors have very significant roles in media production. Graphics are used extensively to present the content with more appealing mode to viewers on television screen. Red color is used in graphics of breaking news production. Elliot & Maier did research on Psychological Effects of Color in year 2007 and said that “Red” color affects the viewer’s mood and emotions:

*“Colors in the red area of the color spectrum are known as warm colors and include red, orange and yellow. These warm colors evoke emotions ranging from feelings of warmth and comfort to feelings of anger and hostility”*

Television is an audio and visual medium of broadcasting. In this connection audio has also significant role. Audio, as music in background in horror format is in use in breaking news. The background music affects the emotional response of the audience. Ana Tajadura-Jiménez with her colleagues in 2009 studied the relevance of sound with emotional response and said that:

*“Approaching unpleasant sound sources evoke more intense emotional responses in listeners”*

The reason identified by Flanagin and Metzger (2008) that due to new technology the cost of news production become low.

Today TV broadcasting competition is increasing day by day among the news organizations, which creates lot of pressure on TV journalists than ever in context of news

gathering quickly. TV journalists try to consult those sources which are close in proximity, accessible and easily available (Fontenot, Maria. & Wigley, Shelley, 2012).

Along with this point Nord and Lars (2009) argue that the exclusiveness of first hand information increased. Nord and Loss synthesized the studies of Hamilton (2004) and Preston (2009) and made an inference that commercialization and inter media competition becoming influenced factors on news processing to increase its viewership. Another factor that is examined by Nord and Lars (2009) is the continuous production of news. They pointed out it in the studies of Bennett (2004), Brighton and Foy (2007). Due to this factor editors have very less time to evaluate news stories as well as reporters feels pressure from the newsroom to provide first hand information.

Nord and Lars (2009) further added that news is, it may be like a surprise for the audience. At this point Nord and Lars are pointing to the new trend in presentation of first hand information in the shape of exclusive news. Nord and Lars (2009) founded on the study of Schulz (1976) Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) that newsworthiness is based on news selection. It means if a news story meets with this criteria, it will become a big news story automatically.

This rapid selection process of news led an issue of credibility. According to Schweiger (1998) credibility becomes important when a lot of information is available at the time of the selection process. Abdulla et al (2002) finds out that credibility has great influence on the success of both i.e. journalists and commercial success of organizations.

The growth of private channels with extraordinary rate opened the market to a wide, diverse range of opinions, actors and interests. While this boom has been generally seen as a positive indicator towards the freedom of expression in Pakistan, the pace with which it has happened has also led to certain challenges. Main among these challenges is the new technologies in broadcasting media and saturated industry to ensure ethical standards in broadcasting content.

According to “Report on Ethical Dimensions of Media Content in Pakistan<sup>35</sup>,” published by Pakistan Press Foundation in 2015 that:

*“Consumers complain about falling standards, often blaming the media for creating ‘hype’ over small issues”.*

According to research on the topic “What draws attention to breaking news?” Andrea Miller draws a result from her research study that constantly hyping irrelevant “breaking news” is a question mark on the future of TV. She termed it “cry wolf” try to gain attention of the audience.

Along with this she found that TV is trying to make an issue more significant than it is in actuality.

She further added that:

*“The visual clutter and hyperkinetic pace of modern TV news make it harder for breaking news story to grab viewer’s attention”.*

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.pakistanpressfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Final-book.pdf>

Sabigan (2007) defines credibility as: "Believability, trust, perceived reliability" But Pew Research Center conducted a research in 2012 and find out that for the second time believability ratings in a decade shows declines for many major news channels<sup>36</sup>.

## **2.2 Theoretical Perspective:**

Breaking News appears on TV screens after special treatment. Technology and human involvement is the crucial part of this process and both have strong influence on this process. Channel policy is playing as a main gatekeeper element along with others factors, i.e. Editors, more competitive environment, owner direct/indirect involvement, technology enhancement/advancement etc. and the most important is rules and regulations settled by a state's law for broadcasting. The law tries to protect the social norms, traditions and rights of the people. Broadcasting media is bound to follow the law. In this connection the Social responsibility theory explains the situation clearly. This social responsibility theory was used by third world and most of the developing countries in the mid 20th century. In United States in 1949, the social responsibility theory of press is associated with "the Commission of the Freedom of Press". In the book "Four theories of Press" (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm) it's been stated that "pure libertarianism is antiquated, outdated and obsolete." That covered way for replacement of Libertarian theory with the Social responsibility theory.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.people-press.org/2012/08/16/further-decline-in-credibility-ratings-for-most-news-organizations/>

### **2.2.1 Social Responsibility Theory:**

Social theory has the tendency to allow anti censorship environment to free media but along with this it will also encourage by the theory that media content should be should be discussed through public panels. If the obligations come over from the discussion related to public interference or from professional self regulations either both or each and media should accept these. The social responsibility theory is fabricated between two theories i.e. libertarian and authoritarian theories. Libertarian theory gives full freedom to media but on the other side authoritarian theory gives authority in one hand. The media ownership here is in private hands or private. The social responsibility theory is spread over from objective reporting to interpretative reporting in which news consists on facts and investigation.

But according to commission of freedom press<sup>37</sup> that:

*"No longer giving facts truthfully rather than give a necessary analyses or interpretative report on facts with clear explanations".*

Social responsibility theory is helped to media to create professionalism through high level accuracy, information and as well as truth. The commission set some tasks for media that based on social responsibility as:

1. Design code of conduct for media
2. Develop the standards and values of journalism
3. Protection of the interests and safety of journalist and journalism

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<sup>37</sup> <http://communicationtheory.org/social-responsibility-theory/>

4. Criticize, condemn and make some punishment/penalty for violating the code of conduct

**The social responsibility theory allows**

1. Consumer actions, Community opinion and professional ethics
2. Serious invasion of essential social interests and accepted private rights
3. For better public service it is consider that Private ownership in media may give, unless to provide better media service the government has to take over to assure the public
4. Media should be kept in mind of social responsibility and if they do not, then other organization/s or government will do.
5. The Media may work autonomously but the certain or something is controlled by the other public organization and government.

**2.3 Hypothesis:**

$H_0$ : Current breaking news practice in Pakistan is not synchronized with the Code of Ethics of PEMRA.

$H_1$ : Current PEMRA Code of Ethics is not fully implementable in current media practice in Pakistan.

## **Chapter-03**

### **Methodology**

Husserl's phenomenological approach used to describe this phenomenon, because in Husserl's approach lived experiences of the participants are taken in account to describe any phenomenon. According to him, meaning lies in an individual's experience and when we collect experiences of all participants, it can interpret a situation (Moustakas, 1994). Here the experience of participants regarding breaking news and Code of ethics by PEMRA taken into account. This phenomenological approach used before in a research paper titled as "Understanding Breaking News from Viewer's Perspective: A Phenomenological Approach" published in Academic Research International<sup>38</sup> Vol. 5 (4) on July 2014.

Three Semi structure questionnaires designed and In-depth interview conducted and participants were interviewed by assuring their privacy. Their interviews were then verbatim transcribed. Essential statements from participants' interviews taken into account as their specific experiences and researcher's perceptions bracketed out to avoid biases. These statements were then joined to form themes and clusters to identify and extract meaning. The interviewers randomly selected from Electronic media practitioner, media experts and PEMRA's officials. For this purpose they interviewed for four news channels to analyze the level of credibility, Breaking news style/format and Code of ethics settled by PEMRA.

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<sup>38</sup> [www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.5\(4\)/2014\(5.4-31\).pdf](http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.5(4)/2014(5.4-31).pdf)

### **Researcher in brief:**

I am working with a news channel and in close contact with news room and broadcasting operations of the channels. I designed semi structured questionnaires for in depth interviews to avoid my personal influence.

#### **3.1.1 Data Collection:**

Primary data along with secondary data has been used for research work. The primary data collected in the shape of indepth interviews and secondary data from the prior available research on this topic. Number of participants was eight. They share their response in the light of their professional and day to day experience in detailed. The average duration of the interview from each participant was about 45 mints. Beside the direct interview, some channel executives were approached through their e-mails. Questionnaire for their detailed answers was sent. The reason of this approach was their respective channels headquarters are in Karachi and Lahore. ARY, GEO based in Karachi while EXPRESS, NEO, DUNYA based in Lahore. ARY respond positively and sent back the detailed answers while others response were negative. 7 out of eight participants were interviewed directly at their respective organizations.

#### **3.1.2 Confidential status of participants:**

Participants were informed about the nature and purpose of this research and their privacy was also assured. They briefed about the whole process. The whole discussion was recorded in audio format. All of them are on very responsible position in their

respective organizations; upon their request they assured, their personal information will be kept secret and anonymous.

### **3.2 Population of the Study:**

Media executives (Controller news, Director News), Media Experts and PEMRA Authorities (Operational and Legal Wing)

### **3.3 Sample Frame and Size:**

Due to the limitations of time and resources, total eight (n=08) persons were interviewed. The composition was as under:

1. Media practitioner, 03 (ARY, Capital TV and ROSE TV)
2. Media experts, 03
3. PEMRA's officials, 02

### **3.4 Attributes of the study:**

#### **1) Level of credibility**

According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary<sup>39</sup>

"The quality of being believed or accepted as true, real, or honest"

#### **2) Breaking news style/format**

Breaking news style referred to structural representation on TV screen. According to Dictionary.com<sup>40</sup>

"News that is happening and being reported or revealed at this moment"

#### **3) Code of ethics**

According to Collins online dictionary<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/credibility>

<sup>40</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/breaking+news>

“An agreement on ethical standards for a profession or business”

### **3.5 Variables:**

1. Rationality of code of ethics and news breaking
2. Media Group Policy
3. PEMRA Code of ethics

### **3.6 Conceptualization of the Variables:**

#### **1. Rationality of code of ethics and news breaking**

Rationality is referred by the Merriam Webster Dictionary<sup>42</sup> as

*“The quality or state of being agreeable to reason”*

Breaking news is an important part of news in media broadcasting which bridge the lattice information and audience. In this process gate keeping may be limited or sometime minimized its role, but it may affect the credibility of the news presents in the format of breaking news and furthermore breaking news format itself the name of “something important” for public or audience. Since the association of breaking news and its public or audience is co-related therefore some limitations or standard operation of procedures are designed for broadcasting media. In Pakistan, these limitations or standard operation procedures termed as “Code of Ethics” by Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to improve the quality of broadcasting information<sup>43</sup>. PEMRA has mandate to implement these “code of ethics” to regulate the broadcasting media content. In

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/code-of-ethics>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rationality>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.pemra.gov.pk/>

this regard “Code of Ethics and News Breaking is directly related to each other and thus both has equal importance in broadcasting.

## **2. Media Group Policy**

Policy is referred by the Merriam Webster Dictionary as

*“A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions<sup>44</sup>”*

Every media outlets have designed their own standards, operating procedures termed as “policy” as per their interest/s. This policy is reflecting in broadcasting content.

## **3. PEMRA Code of ethics**

An agreement on ethical standards is designed by PEMRA to regulate broadcast content/s. it is mandatory for every broadcasting media to broadcast the content or designed content as per Code of Ethics by PEMRA. These code of ethics displayed on PEMRA web page for general awareness and media practitioners.

### **3.7 Operationalizaton of the Variables:**

In Pakistani broadcasting media it is an emerging trend and shaped it as “Organization Policy” to broadcast first hand information as soon as possible and sometime ignores the basic check list (Code of Ethics, news values etc) to attract the audience and develop an image in the mind of audience to in touch for lattice information/s with that specific media outlet. Since the extensive use of breaking news

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy>

style have an aggressive format of news production, therefore it require more and special attention and treatment which only possible if a person have complete awareness about the consequences of that information to shaped it as breaking news. For this purpose to avoid any complexity, code of ethics is the best guard. PEMRA has a mandate to implement these “code of ethics” to regulate the broadcasting media content. It is supposed that this code of ethics will streamline the content of breaking news as mentioned in the Constitution of Pakistan. According to the article 19<sup>th</sup> of “The Constitution of Pakistan<sup>45</sup>:

Freedom of speech:

*“Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, [commission off] or incitement to an offence”*

### **3.8 Limitations:**

Due to the limitations of time and resources, the research study is limited to in-depth interviews in which three channels ARY, Capital TV and ROSE TV were discussed.

This study has its limitation with respect to sample frame, time frame and analytical tool. Therefore, this study provides an insight for future directions. This study suggests that strong analytical tools should be used in further research and a large sample size should be used to conduct research in this regard.

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<sup>45</sup> <http://mediacommissionreview.org/article-19-19-a-of-the-constitution-of-pakistan/#.Vkd6XLcrLIU>

## **Chapter-04**

### **Results and Findings**

According to the methodology, eight participants were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and necessary descriptions were formed in the shape of clusters.

Clusters are divided into three categories: Media Practitioners, PEMRA authorities and Media Experts. The research was completed with extensive description of findings.

#### **4.1 Media Practitioners response:**

Media Practitioners are referred to channels' executives i.e. Controller news, Director News, Shift In charge. Media Practitioners questioned about: responsibilities, news arrangement/management, definition of breaking news, channels' competition status, PEMRA code of conduct, time frame of breaking news in a hour, availability of judgment of news as breaking news, precautionary measures for a breaking news, influence of channels' on each other, homogeneity of screens and its reasons, in-house training for workers, channel policy, commercial interests, the ethical status of breaking news, dependency of channels on breaking news and is any alternate available of breaking news format and how to improve breaking news style/format. These points were raised in a questionnaire (*see Annexure-3 on page 91 for detail*).

In the light of that questionnaire, the following responses were came out and characterized carefully in the light of mentioned points to form clusters.

#### **4.1.1 News Arrangement/ Management:**

1. Viewers are important for a news channel
2. Try to convey the news and comply with professional obligations
3. Try to give more informative news to viewers
4. Rundown is managing in the light of viewers' likeness to get high TRP's
5. Viewers had the taste of entertainment and they want entertainment in news

#### **Finding-1:**

Audience likeness for content is the main centric point in the arrangement of news content to attract the viewers.

#### **4.1.2 Breaking news definition:**

1. A Major news development that has not been relayed yet
2. Such news, which impacts the masses is breaking news
3. Big news is breaking news
4. Any news that breaks daily routine
5. Every important news is breaking news
6. Breaking news is an issue of the moment

#### **Finding-2:**

Breaking news is a major important development of the moment and has impact on the masses that has not been relayed yet.

#### **4.1.3 Channels' Competition Status:**

1. Pakistani media is very conscious about competition
2. Without any delay of time, the news is break before to do others
3. Try to give more informative news to viewers
4. The electronic media industry is in a transitional phase of development
5. Electronic media and viewers are at transitional phase of development
6. With the passage of time viewers will mature
7. Matured viewer feedback is matured

#### **Finding-3:**

Channels are in competition along with developmental phase not only channels, but its audience also.

#### **4.1.4 PEMRA Code of Conduct:**

1. PEMRA is more political/governmental body
2. Political/governmental interference is there in PEMRA
3. Media professional input through PBA included in the Code of Conduct
4. Beurocracy try to get control over media matters for own interest
5. Some non-consulted elements are made part of the Code of Conduct
6. Usually communicated the new rules
7. Every country has their own code of conduct for the media, according to their own system which suit them
8. There is no regulation that restricts channels from carrying breaking news
9. To define breaking news is the mandate of news channel not of PEMRA
10. The actual problem is associated with content
11. Definition of the content in the code of conduct is appropriate
12. Improvement in content will lead the other things to the right path
13. PEMRA code of conduct has no section which deals, breaking news directly

#### **Finding-4:**

The media professionals criticized the PEMRA. One criticism raised about the status of the body and said that PEMRA is government/political body. Though we are in contact on the organizational level through PBA but due to some bureaucratic approach of the PEMRA, it seems PEMRA try to hold control on Channels. Along with criticism, they declare the code of conduct related to content positively. Further, they highlight that, code of conduct do not deal breaking news as whole but only its content.

#### **4.1.5 Time frame for breaking news in an hour:**

1. Breaking news per hour is not set
2. Nowadays, every news channel starts its main bulletin with breaking news
3. Every news channel broadcasting at least its first ten stories as breaking
4. Breaking news per hour is not specified, but normally 3 to 5/ hour and in news bulletin 5 to 6/ hour
5. Start a news bulletin with breaking news
6. After 10 minutes one breaking news
7. Periodically, breaking news help to grab the viewer's attention

#### **Finding-5:**

There is no settled time frame or frequency of breaking news per hour, but one thing is clear from the statements that after some time every channel tries to break news with some intervals of time throughout the hour. Due to this technique audience are busy in one channel screen for a long time.

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#### **4.1.6 Tools to judge the news as breaking news:**

1. There are no tools to look this news is breaking or otherwise
2. Channel executives Decides whether this news is breaking or otherwise
3. First hand news lands, is categorizing
4. If it falls in the breaking news category, it declared breaking news
5. There is no tool available to judge the news, whether it is breaking news or otherwise
6. Incharge of newsroom judge the news according to his experience
7. There is no such tools available for a newsroom to decide which story is a breaking news
8. There should be a criteria through which a news can judge whether it is a breaking news or not

#### **Finding-6:**

As a whole there are no specific tools available or designed except the experience and wish of the authority to declare news as breaking news.

#### **4.1.7 Precautionary measures in breaking news:**

1. Try to convey the news and comply with professional obligations
2. National interest
3. Public interest
4. Not to create chaos in masses
5. National institutions
6. Bilateral relations
7. Foreign policy
8. The objectivity of the news should not be affected
9. The landed news verified and then decides to broadcast

#### **Finding-7:**

A positive approach of the channels was observed towards the state matters. Channels try to avoid the breaking news, which against or not in favor of the state, its national institutions, people, law, relations with world, state interests.

#### **4.1.8 Influence of news channels on each other's:**

1. There is pressure of competition
2. Channels influenced each other in the broadcasting breaking news
3. Breaking news of one channel is taking seriously in others channel
4. Channels copy past breaking news of each other
5. The monitoring desk is the secondary source of news
6. Monitoring desk is an important role
7. Breaking news broadcasting is not dependent on monitoring desk

#### **Finding-8:**

Channels' broadcasting is effecting due the competition and breaking news is considered the first and immediate step to win. On one side channels deny the dependency on monitoring of other channels, but at the same time accept the copy past trend of the content of breaking news from the other channels' screen.

#### **4.1.9 Homogeneity of screens:**

1. In case of press releases, which shares simultaneously with all media and then it may appear at the same time on all TV channels
2. To some extent copycat approach is in exercise
3. The newsroom has more resources than a reporter, therefore some necessary information share with reporter before beeper
4. To some extent, reporters are briefed about the news from the newsroom
5. Reporters can refuse the beeper if he does not satisfy

#### **Finding-9:**

The statements show that homogeneity of screens during the breaking is due to the same news wire and in some extent copycat approach in the context of the copy of the breaking news text. The other important finding is, reporters are working with very short resources.

#### **4.1.10 Training programs from inside the news channels:**

1. There are closed meetings with the top management
2. Periodical training programs are not available
3. Day to day experience, try to share with the newsroom
4. Training programs should be conducted after every six months
5. In today broadcasting, training programs have much significance

#### **Finding-10:**

The statements show that channel has no policy for proper training of their workers.

#### **4.1.11 Channel Policy:**

1. Channels have their own editorial policy
2. Organization policy is flexible for owners
3. It is editorial policy to broadcast more breaking news
4. Channel code of ethics is based on PEMRA Code of Conduct

#### **Finding-11:**

Channel policy related to editorial based on PEMRA code of ethics, but the owner of channel can interfere in the broadcasting operation. The other important finding is, “increasing number of breaking news” is part of the policy of the channel.

#### **4.1.12 Commercial interests:**

1. Viewers are important for a news channel
2. Electronic media moving with society taste
3. To get best TRP's, to some extent spicy content is included
4. Commercial interests of Media owner's
5. Those news channels who broadcast every news as breaking news has high TRP's
6. Every channel has to follow the same trend of breaking news to gain high TRP's
7. TRP's is the base of gaining advertisements
8. Those channels are not in rating who follow the definition of breaking news
9. Advertisement is allocated to channel on the basis of rating
10. Breaking news is the need of the time for every TV channel
11. Breaking news attracts the viewer's attention
12. Full screen graphics catch more attention of viewers
13. Breaking news is using like a hook to increase viewership ratio
14. One trend is following by every TV channel, to keep red their screens for maximum time

#### **Finding-12:**

Commercialization and inter media competition becoming influenced factors on news processing to increase its viewership to gain high TRP's and get more advertisements.

#### **4.1.13 The Ethical Status of Breaking News:**

1. Breaking news practice is not fulfilling the ethical values of journalism to some extent
2. The gap between breaking news broadcasting and ethical values will settle down by the passage of time
3. Current trends of breaking news is portraying professionals like non-professionals
4. Electronic media is dependent on print media professionals
5. Insufficient experience of electronic media workers
6. It's a wrong practice to broadcast every news as breaking news
7. Extensive breaking news practice negatively affected the mood and sense of viewership
8. The negative effect of breaking news is, viewers are ignoring other normal news stories
9. Breaking news creates hype
10. Breaking news is decreasing objectivity in news

#### **Finding-13:**

Breaking news violates ethical values of journalism to some extent. TV medium is relatively new than print media, therefore it is dependent on print media professionals, which are not capable fully to functional the channel and thus make important aspects of broadcasting. Media professionals accept that excessive use of breaking news negatively affecting the sense of news of viewers and along with that it creates hype that decreasing the objectivity of the news. In other words, now days channels' focus is subjectivity than objectivity in news content.

#### **4.1.14 Dependency of channels on breaking news:**

1. Increasing use of breaking news is due to lack of resources
2. Breaking news style is considered the easiest way to deliver a news without any delay and use of extra resources
3. Strong visual content is directly related to strong and high tech resources
4. Insufficient resources caused to depend on full screen graphics and file footage use in breaking news
5. Breaking news has no limitation of time
6. Same breaking news can be spread over time from a minute to hours
7. It is impossible to have a reporter on every location

#### **Finding-14:**

The above statements are a strong proof that channels resources are very limited. Thus, this factor is encouraging channels towards breaking news. The Breaking news is considered a best and low cost solution which successfully covering news wheel, keep in competition.

#### **4.1.15 Alternate of breaking news:**

1. Breaking News can be conveyed in other forms
2. Alternative of breaking news is rich content
3. The news package / report may be the alternative of breaking news
4. Rich content is referring to exclusive visual, verified and unbiased news
5. Research based news has objectivity
6. Breaking news should be categorized
7. Every category has their own specified color scheme of graphics
8. In today's age, TV is a more visual medium than listening

#### **Finding-15:**

The researched based and verified content which consist exclusive visuals can be alternative of The breaking news. Another suggestion came from media professionals is to design categories for breaking news along with specific color.

## **4.2 PEMRA Authorities' response:**

PEMRA authorities are referred to working with operational and legal wing of PEMRA.

Operational wing deal the monitoring department, complaint department etc and legal wing deal all legal matters related code of conduct, law etc. Two responsible persons were interviewed in detail in the light of a semi structured questionnaire (*See Annexure-4 on Page 92 for detail questionnaire*). Questionnaire was based on points i.e. PEMRA working mechanism, code of conduct implementation, address to issues and problems in mushroom growth of television channels, hurdles in implementation, flaws in code of conduct and procedures, response of channels and steps taken against channels by PEMRA in case of violation.

In light of these points the respondents were interviewed in detail and convert it into clusters as follow:

1. PEMRA is monitoring about 50 channels 24/7 hours through the monitoring system
2. On daily basis, all the reports share with DG operations
3. DG operation evaluates the reports and then PEMRA take action according to that reports
4. General public record their complaints at the Complaints call center
5. PEMRA mechanism is based on “complaint driven”
6. PEMRA take a decision whether it is right or wrong on the basis of the complaint and channel statement

7. PEMRA has no cross check mechanism to insure the credibility of breaking news
8. PEMRA only deal with content
9. PEMRA code of conduct has no special section about breaking news to deal it directly
10. There is no bifurcate law in the code of conduct about breaking news, its duration etc.
11. PEMRA cannot restrict a channel (inclusion of beeper, copycat etc)
12. PEMRA accept that breaking news is an important segment of news to get rating
13. PEMRA cannot do to restrict news channel from breaking news race
14. The prime responsibility of PEMRA is to check on the content
15. Some sections of code of conduct are still debatable
16. Channels are using some sections of code of conduct with name of "Public Interest"
17. Every channel has its editorial board who designed and implement their own code of conduct
18. The editorial board is supposed a "self regulatory body" of the news channel
19. If a channel move towards "self regulatory system" then situation of media will become better
20. It is a sad fact that licenses do not encourage the editorial board
21. Delay system installed by some news channels and most are moving towards it
22. The delay system mechanism may helpful for self regulation

23. In the past, channels violated the rules related to Delay System
24. PEMRA is looking very seriously the issue of Delay System Mechanism
25. PEMRA issued a number of notices and warnings to all channels to install Delay system
26. There are still loopholes in PEMRA code of conduct
27. There is still room for improvement in PEMRA laws and code of conduct
28. PEMRA authorities are facing some hurdles in code of conduct
29. The main hurdles are definitions of some subjective terms i.e. obscenity etc.
30. Supreme Court of Pakistan is also seeking to define the subjective terms included in PEMRA code of conduct
31. PEMRA will be able to implement the codes better after defining the subjective terms
32. PEMRA will properly regulate the media and stakeholders will adhere also properly
33. PEMRA is in a revolution process and with the passage of time much improvement will be observed
34. PEMRA ordinance mandate is to "Facilitate and develop private media"

**Finding-16:**

It is clear from the statements of PEMRA authorities that they are working and facing: insufficient support to regulate the media on operational side as well as on legislation side.

On the operational side, technically it is not possible to monitor more than 90 channels operating in Pakistan at the same time with having facility of only 50 channels to monitor.

Another important finding, PEMRA regulatory mechanism is based on Complaints more than a monitoring by self.

PEMRA accept they have no cross check mechanism for content, the only complaints are providing the base for further actions.

On the legislative side, current code of conduct is still debatable in terms of many subjective terms. The code of conduct is deal content, but some ambiguities are still there. Another finding that code of conduct cannot deal breaking news as whole, but only the content of the breaking news like the normal news.

#### 4.3.1 PEMRA Actions against Channels\*:

For the Period	Objectionable content against	Nature of notice	total	
10-10-2014 to 05-11-2015	Armed Forces	Reminder	16	74
		Show Cause	56	
	Hate speech of Iltaf Hussain/Armed Forces	Directive/Advice(all channels)	02	
15-06-2012 to 28-12-2015	Judiciary	Show Cause	23	29
		Advice	03	
		Explanation	02	
		Warning (all channels)	01	
05-08-2012 to 28-12-2015	Political dignities/Democracy	Show Cause	06	27
		Advice	10	
		Explanation	01	
		Warning	03	
		Notice	07	
14-06-2012 to 30-10-2014	Excessive Foreign Content	Show Cause	38	70
		Advice	15	
		Explanation	02	
		Warning	01	
		Notice	06	
		Fine imposed	08	

\*data provided by PEMRA

#### Finding-17:

Table shows that in 2012 to 2014 PEMRA focused on foreign content and took actions against it but in later years specially 2014-15 the focused of PEMRA seemed on Armed Forces and to some extent Judiciary. The reason may be the action plan against terrorism.

#### **4.4 Media Experts' response:**

PEMRA experts are referred to those persons who have the wide experience of media matters. In these experts two persons are opinion makers and one is a media consultant, which worked with more than eight channels and establishes them. Media experts were questioned about: news arrangement/management, definition of breaking news, channels' competition status, PEMRA code of conduct, time frame of breaking news in a hour, availability of judgment of news as breaking news, precautionary measures for a breaking news, influence of channels' on each other, homogeneity of screens and its reasons, in-house training for workers, channel policy, commercial interests, the ethical status of breaking news, dependency of channels on breaking news and is any alternate available of breaking news format and how to improve breaking news style/format. These points were raised in a questionnaire (*see Annexure-5 on page 95 for detail*).

In the light of that questionnaire, the following responses were came out and characterized carefully in the light of mentioned points to form clusters.

#### **4.4.1 Content management:**

1. Arrangement/management of news content with a particular way has great importance
2. Content management is very important in news broadcasting
3. The resourceful media organizations are very conscious about the arrangement / management of news content
4. “Politics” is the criteria for news management/arrangement in Pakistan
5. Viewer’s likeness is prioritizing the news content
6. Traditionally, Pakistani people discuss the politics
7. Criteria that set for content management should be analyzed
8. News content and management should be independent
9. Breaking news gives only first hand available information not full news

#### **Finding-18:**

Viewer’s likeness is priority in news content management/ arrangement. Politics is the main point of the people discussion. Therefore, most content of the channels politicized in nature.

#### **4.4.2 Breaking news definition:**

1. Breaking news is the unfolding of an event
2. Those news, which has a large impact factor on the masses or society are breaking news
3. Live or exclusive visual/s of the event are the essential element of breaking news
4. Every news is not breaking news
5. The breaking news is that news about which, no one has prior knowledge before it happened
6. The most important news is a breaking news
7. The news, which related to the masses and effect spectrum in broader range, is breaking news
8. The news, which has “timeliness”, is breaking news
9. Breaking news should have all the ingredients of news (news values)
10. Breaking news on statements are not breaking news unless to evaluate the importance of that statement
11. Breaking news is still undefined properly, which acceptable to all in Pakistan

#### **Finding-19:**

Breaking is the most important news of an unfolding of an event with large impact factor on the masses or society with live or exclusive visuals of the event and about the happening of that event no one has the prior knowledge.

#### **4.4.3 Electronic media competition status:**

1. Today electronic media are in tough competition status for high TRP's
2. Electronic media are about the unconscious status towards the screen presentation, but only for high TRP's
3. Excessive use of breaking news is a cheap practice to sell out the news
4. It is not necessary to consider breaking news as instant source for news broadcasting
5. Copycat content is decreasing the level of competition among news channels
6. Broadcasting of channels is like "dog race"
7. Every channel is trying to create a perception in the minds of viewers, that it has all and every news story
8. Every news channel wants to highlight its screen
9. Channel/editorial policy, executives creates pressure on Newsroom for specific news as to broadcast as breaking news
10. Up to 99% breaking news may be fake in sense to broadcast as breaking news, they may be just news
11. To some extent it is practicing to brief a reporter for a beeper
12. News channel tries constantly to take a beeper on breaking news, the reporter is relevant or not
13. Reporters are free to give beeper on the briefing by the newsroom or avoid it
14. The audience is maturing with the passage of time

**Finding-20:**

The Channels' competition aim is to get high TRP's. For this purpose they are trying to use breaking news in excessive form to keep highlighting their screens and audience take notice of it. Due to this factor, the newsroom is facing a constant pressure from channel authorities. This situation created a new form of competition which called dog race. A new trend in this competition is in practice which is called copycat. Another practice that is exercising with limited portion by the newsroom is to brief the reporter, but it depends on reporter. Such form of competition is negatively affecting the content of the channels. The media experts further added that about 99% breaking news are fake (fake means not false, but actually that news are not breaking because the said number of news not fulfilling the criteria of breaking news. They are just normal news, but presented as breaking news). The media experts show a positive response that audience are maturing with the passage of time, it means the situation of competition will be better in future.

#### **4.4.4 PEMRA Code of Conduct:**

1. Still, a gap exists between media houses and PEMRA
2. To some extent PEMRA code of conduct is following but some spicy content also considered necessary to be broadcast
3. PEMRA code of conduct has the capability to restrict the race of breaking news
4. “Following practice” is providing a justification for a channel over a notice by regulating body
5. Sense of responsibility is much better than past in the media
6. Still code of ethics in some extent has ambiguity i.e. obscenity, Islamic values, public interest etc.
7. Delay mechanism installation is the primary requirement for licensees to on-air channel, still implementation required
8. Copyright laws for visuals and content can reduce the copycat trends
9. PEMRA has lack of media professionals
10. There is a communication gap exist between media houses and regulatory body
11. PEMRA Code of Conduct is dealing indirectly the breaking news
12. For breaking news, there are no criteria available so far
13. Previous breaking news of a channel can helpful for viewers to analyze the originality, authenticity, and credibility through their common knowledge to know about facts and false broadcasting by that news channel
14. Viewers and monitoring body have ignored normally to analyze the previous breaking news with lattice available information

15. The PEMRA monitoring mechanism is not fulfilling the requirements of regulating the media
16. Monitoring is one step forward specialized field
17. The monitoring and decision maker has the practical experience and background of the professional journalism
18. PEMRA code of conduct is not implementable fully due to unawareness, personal interests, ignorance, corruption, undefined terms etc.
19. To bridge the code of ethics and broadcasting media it is necessary to overcome on unawareness, personal interests, ignorance, corruption, undefined terms etc.

**Finding-21:**

Media experts showed a positive response that the PEMRA Code of conduct is capable to control the situation of broadcasting, but still a gap existing between PEMRA and channels. The important aspects that were highlighted negatively are: the implementation of the laws, ambiguities in laws and terms that used in code of conduct are not clear or not well define, PEMRA officials have no professional journalistic background. Unawareness, personal interests, corruption, ignorance lack of professionals that have background of journalism is the main hurdles facing by both sides i.e. PEMRA and Channels.

#### **4.4.5 Time frame for breaking news in an hour:**

1. It is an un-ethical to declare breaking news on hourly basis
2. A channel will be considered a top channel, if it has more breaking news, this theory should be discouraged
3. Number of breaking news per hour broadcast is not an appropriate approach
4. Some news channel is broadcasting breaking news ten times in an hour to grab the viewer's attention
5. Duration of breaking news should be based on the spectrum of effects and its background

#### **Finding-22:**

Experts opposed to make a time period or frequency for breaking news on hourly basis and suggest that its duration should be based on the spectrum of effects and the event background.

#### **4.4.6 Tools to judge the news as breaking news:**

1. Tools are available
2. Professional editor is capable to judge the news for breaking news
3. Media professionals should have the full control over broadcasting operations
4. Television is a visual medium
5. For breaking news some certain parameters are available
6. Avoid breaking news, if live or exclusive visuals are not available
7. Avoid television screen to use as radio or telephone medium
8. Breaking news consists on more live visuals along with some text
9. Breaking news on statements are not breaking news unless to evaluate the importance of that statement
10. Media professionals have the ability to judge the news for breaking news
11. There are no specific tools available, to decide this news is a breaking news
12. Statements, notifications, press releases should not be broadcast as breaking news

#### **Finding-23:**

Experts have mixed opinion came on the question of “availability of tools to decide, the news is breaking news or not. All the experts almost are at the same page that no specified tools, but ordinary tools are may be professional journalistic experience, availability of live or exclusive visuals.

The other important that was highlighted by experts, said this practice should be discouraged, that the channels are exercising in breaking news context, is the broadcasting of statements, notifications and press releases as breaking news.

#### **4.4.7 Precautionary measures:**

1. The breaking news should be verified and factual within the available law premises
2. State policy
3. Public interests
4. Individual rights of privacy
5. Foreign policy
6. Constitution of the State

#### **Finding-24:**

Experts set precautionary parameters for broadcasting of breaking news, even the news fulfilling the all the requirements and criteria of breaking news, but if it is considered, it will be violating the constitution, state policy, foreign policy, public interest and individual rights of privacy, then the breaking news should not broadcast.

#### **4.4.8 Influence of news channels on each other's:**

1. Channels are influencing each other
2. Due to limited resources channels are dependent on each other
3. The Less resources channel is more dependent than other
4. Due to limited resources a channel is dependent on copy paste of the other's screens
5. The resourceful channel should be very careful in breaking news because others following him
6. The content of the breaking news should be verified and investigated
7. Viewers are interested in original content in the long term
8. Electronic media are following each other screens
9. Reducing the monitoring practice can reduce the following practice in channels
10. Reducing the monitoring practice can lead towards own strong content

#### **Finding-25:**

Experts endorsed that channels are influenced by each other. On one side, they are in competition, but actually dependent on each other due to their limited resources. Due to this reason small channels are following without any verification and investigation of the news of those channels which has sufficient resources.

According to experts, the monitoring trend should be discourage and only verified and investigated news stuff can lead to a strong content, thus the audience will ultimately moved towards original content.

#### **4.4.9 Homogeneity of screens:**

1. Copycat content is creating homogeneity screens
2. Homogeneity of screens is limiting the choice of viewers
3. It is impossible, that a channel has every news
4. Due to statements based breaking news, screens turned over into homogeneity status
5. In Pakistani media major portion of news channels is carrying out their broadcasting operation with very minimum resources

#### **Finding-26:**

Experts support the observation about the homogeneity of screens in the context of text and presentation of an event. Experts described four possible reasons of homogeneity of screens: fewer resources, copycat approach, difficulties to complete news wheel and news wires.

Another finding is that homogeneity of screens caused to limit the choice of the viewers.

#### **4.4.10 Training programs for channels' workers:**

1. There is no training programs are available in a media organization
2. Trainings are most important part of today broadcasting
3. Technology and trends in broadcasting are changing very quickly
4. Highly professional and skilled persons can handle the fast track changes in electronic media
5. Almost every channel pre-launching training provide to workers

#### **Finding-27:**

Experts showed negative responses that channels providing proper training to their workers in the light of new technologies and trends, which are merging with electronic media.

#### **4.4.11 Commercial interests:**

1. Breaking news is using only to attract the viewer's attention
2. Sometimes ordinary news broadcast as breaking news
3. Owners' decisions are based on their own and personal interests
4. Commercialization is affecting the decisions of media professionals
5. Self projection of a channel is advertisement of self
6. News should be free from advertisement factor
7. Self projection in breaking news is a question mark on the credibility of that news
8. Channels are deliberately trying to self project in breaking news for the purpose that
9. Channels are trying that viewers should watch them only than others' channels

#### **Finding-28:**

According to experts, the commercial interest of the channel's owners is at priority base. To get more business, advertisements are the necessary part of TV broadcasting. Experts further added that the breaking news format of broadcasting is the best solution to grab the attention of the viewers and get high TRP's.

#### **4.4.12 Channel policy:**

1. Inclusion of spicy content is part of channel policy
2. The editorial policy is dependent on channel policy
3. Owner's interference is increasing in editorial policy and day to day broadcasting operations
4. Professional journalists are losing their control over content in the newsroom
5. Channel/editorial policy, executives creates pressure on Newsroom for specific news as to broadcast as breaking news

#### **Finding-29:**

The editorial policy is dependent on channel policy that designed by owners according to their interest and also tries control the editorial policy. Due to this factor professional journalist or broadcasters have the minimum control in the newsroom.

#### **4.4.13 The Ethical status of breaking news:**

1. Self projection of a news channel is unethical
2. Breaking news with a claim that “we are the first one who delivering the breaking news” is totally unethical
3. Media and journalist’s duty are shaping up the public opinion, not to re-enforce
4. Some journalist is broadcasting planed breaking news from their pocket stories
5. Today media are exercising breaking news like wholesale item
6. Excessive use of breaking news is a cheap practice to sell out the news
7. Reporter’s inclusion for beeper without any reason is un-ethical
8. Most of breaking news is based on political statements
9. Pakistani electronic media fall in the “followers” category
10. Pakistani electronic media never try to play the role of a leader
11. Breaking news is exercising in Pakistan without any parameters
12. Today's breaking news trend is exercising due to lack of resources, training and professional decision makers

#### **Finding-30:**

There are no settled parameters for breaking news neither in PEMRA code of conduct nor the editorial policy of channels. Statement based breaking news are exercising in Pakistan due to lack of resources, proper training and professional decision makers.

#### **4.4.14 Alternate of breaking news:**

1. There is no alternative of breaking news in all over the world
2. GFx and VFx are the compulsory elements for breaking news
3. Strong and research based content with wide angles of informative news is the alternate of breaking news

#### **Finding-31:**

According to experts, there is no alternate of breaking news format. The actual format of breaking news consists on GFx, VFx along with strong and research based content which fulfill the essence of breaking news.

## **Chapter05**

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Discussion:**

Breaking News is a very common practice in Pakistani Electronic media and heavily in use. Every News channel tries to telecast its first hand information for its viewers. Since this information is very brief and telecasts on urgent basis and sometimes do not fulfill the news values criteria along with seeming resemblance in breaking news content between news channels.

According to the hypothesis of the research, current breaking news practice in Pakistan is not synchronized with the Code of Ethics of PEMRA and furthermore, current PEMRA Code of Ethics and conduct is not fully implementable in current media practice in Pakistan.

According to the results and findings, content of the television is arranged according to the mode and likeness of the viewers. Such type of arranged content is helpful to grab the attention of the viewers (Finding-1). This approach is in practice due to Commercialization and inter media competition which are becoming influenced factors on news processing to increase its viewership to gain high TRP's and get more advertisements (Finding-12). For the commercial interest every channel try to break news with some intervals of time throughout the hour to keep busy the audience for a long time (Finding-5). Competition for commercial interest is one aspect but Most of the Pakistani channels are working with very minimum resources, whether it is on the production side or at the reporting side. These factors are also encouraging channels towards breaking

news. The Breaking news is considered a best and low cost solution which successfully covering news wheel and keep in competition (Finding-14). The media experts suggest that duration of breaking news should be based on the spectrum of effects and the event background (Finding-22).

But on the other side, Channels' broadcasting is effecting due the competition and breaking news is considered the first and immediate step to win the race, which can highlight the screen (Statement 8 from 4.4.3). According to media experts, the newsroom is facing a constant pressure from channel authorities (Finding-20). Furthermore, small channels are following without any verification and investigation of the news of those channels which has sufficient resources (Finding-25). According to media experts, such form of competition is negatively affecting the content of the channels. This situation created a new form of competition which called dog race. The media experts further added that about 99% breaking news fake (Fake in a sense that they are not true breaking news according to definition or criteria), (Findings-20). On one side channels deny the dependency on monitoring of other channels, but at the same time accept the copy past trend of the content of breaking news from the other channels' screen (Finding-8). Channels denied the copycat trend, but accept it to some extent (Finding-9). Due to copycat practice the content lead to plagiarism which against the Rule-5(7) of PEMRA code of conduct.

Regular training is an important segment in quality enhancement but channels' executives accept that channel has no policy for proper training of their workers (Finding-10). This is the continued violation of PEMRA code of conduct [Rule-8(13) and 20(2)].

In modern and competitive environment of broadcasting, it is necessary to have specialized worker in their respective fields. TV medium is relatively new than print media, therefore it is dependent on print media professionals, which are not capable fully to functioned with the channel and thus they ignore important aspects of broadcasting. Basically they are trained in a environment in which for a news number of hours are available but in TV broadcasting you have no margin to delay it. In this context, breaking news violates ethical values of journalism to some extent. Media professionals accept that excessive use of breaking news negatively affecting the sense of news of viewers and along with that it creates hype that decreasing the objectivity of the news. In other words, now days channels' focus is on subjectivity than objectivity in news content(Finding-13) which is against the Rule-4(2) and 4(7)(b) of PEMRA code of conduct. A positive approach of the channels was observed towards the state matters. Channels try to avoid the breaking news, which against or not in favor of the state, its national institutions, people, law, relations with world, state interests (Finding-7). It is positive approach of channels. It was observed by media experts also (Finding-24).

The media professionals criticized the PEMRA. One criticism was raised about the status of the body and said that PEMRA is government/political body (Finding-17). Further they add, though we are in contact on the organizational level through PBA but due to some bureaucratic approach of the PEMRA, it seems PEMRA try to hold control on Channels. Along with criticism, they declare the code of conduct related to content positively. Further, they highlight that, code of conduct do not deal breaking news as whole but only its content (Finding-4). PEMRA also accepted that code of conduct only deals content (Finding-16).

According to PEMRA code of conduct Rule-5, effective editorial control should be ensured in live broadcasting but according to media executives, Channel policy related to editorial based on PEMRA code of ethics, but the owner of channel interfere in the broadcasting operation. This interference of owners described by media experts as the editorial policy is dependent on channel policy that designed by owners according to their interest and also tries control the editorial policy. The other important finding is “increasing number of breaking news” is part of the policy of the channel (Finding-11). Due to this factor professional journalist or broadcasters have the minimum control in the newsroom (Finding-29).

Media experts showed a positive response that the PEMRA Code of conduct is capable to control the situation of broadcasting, but still a gap existing between PEMRA and channels. The important aspects that were highlighted negatively are: the implementation of the laws, ambiguities in laws and terms that used in code of conduct are not clear or not well define, PEMRA officials have no professional journalistic background. PEMRA also showed positive response and admit that there is some loopholes are still exists in new code of conduct of PEMRA, due to which the authorities are facing some difficulties in implementation (Finding-16). Unawareness, personal interests, corruption, ignorance lack of professionals that have background of journalism is the main hurdles facing by both sides i.e. PEMRA and Channels said by media experts(Finding-21). Media experts further added that Delay mechanism installation is the primary requirement for licensees to on-air channel, still implementation required (Statement-7 from 4.4.4). PEMRA is looking now this issue very seriously (Statements-23, 24, 25 from 4.2).

On the operational side, technically it is not possible to monitor more than 90 channels operating in Pakistan at the same time with having facility of only 50 channels to monitor.

Another important finding, PEMRA regulatory mechanism is based on Complaints more than a monitoring by self. PEMRA accept they have no cross check mechanism for content, the only complaints are providing the base for further actions.

On the legislative side PEMRA accept that, current code of conduct is still debatable in terms of many subjective terms i.e. Rule-2(j), 3(a), 3(g), 9(3), and 21. The code of conduct is deal content, but some ambiguities are still there. Furthermore, code of conduct cannot deal breaking news as whole, but only the content of the breaking news like the normal news (Finding-16). According to PEMRA these loopholes are using by channels with different patterns like public interest. Public interest, obscenity like terms are still debatable.

The finding related to statement about the homogeneity, experts described four possible reasons of homogeneity of screens: less resources, copycat approach, difficulties to complete news wheel and news wires (Finding-26). Channels respond that homogeneity of screens during the breaking is due to the same news wire and in some extent copycat approach in the context of the copy of the breaking news text (Finding-9). But media experts, said that the broadcasting of statements, notifications and press releases as breaking news should be discourage(Finding-23). Homogeneity of screens caused to limit the choice of the viewers (Finding-26). Such actions which limited the choice of the viewers is against the PEMRA mandate.

There are no settled parameters for breaking news neither in PEMRA code of conduct, nor the editorial policy of channels. Statement based breaking news are exercising in Pakistan due to lack of resources, proper training and professional decision makers (Finding-30).

On a question about the alternate of breaking news channels and media experts have mixed response. Both agreed that the breaking news should consist on live visuals along with strong and research based content which fulfill the essence of breaking news (Finding-15, 31)

Channels are in competition along with developmental phase not only channels, but its audience also (Finding-3). The media experts show a positive response that audience is maturing with the passage of time, it means the situation of competition will be better in future (Finding-20).

## **5.2 Conclusion:**

Breaking news is a phenomenon followed by the universal visual media and is not something unique to our part of the world. This research work is concluding with that, both side either PEMRA or Channels are in developmental phase along with its viewers and the all the three participants are agreed that there is number of loopholes in Code of Conduct and working style. According to experts code of conduct is fully capable to regulate breaking news and PEMRA authorities also showed a positive response but also pointed out that due to some legal hurdles, code of conduct is not fully implementable. These hurdles are due to the ambiguous terms in code of conduct and still debatable. These parts of the code are using as safeguard instead of as regulatory law by channels.

However, over time and with more training and a change in the collective ethos, TV, media journalists will eventually transition to a point where breaking news will be curtailed to some degree and the system will develop a better check and balance.

### **5.3 Recommendations:**

1. An independent department should be established which monitor the news channels
2. The said department issue a report on a yearly or after six months which describes the number of breaking news broadcasted by a channel and total number of breaking news.
3. This department also analyzes the originality, authenticity, and credibility of the breaking news to provide statistical data that how many breaking news are fake of a news channel
4. News content and management should be independent
5. Media should work to adopt self regulation and followed it strictly with responsible manners
6. Criteria that set for content management should be analyzed
7. Media professionals should the full control over broadcasting operations
8. Breaking news on statements are not breaking news unless to evaluate the importance of that statement
9. Copycat content should be discourage because it is decreasing the level of competition among news channels and a barrier for strong content development

10. PEMRA code of ethics in some extent has ambiguity i.e. obscenity, Islamic values, public interest etc. such terms should be define as per by law and collective social morals in detail
11. Copyright laws should be revised for visuals and content and through proper implementation it can reduce the copycat trends along with healthy competition and as result many new angles viewers can be seen in content of channels
12. PEMRA should take steps forward to hire media professionals
13. The PEMRA monitoring mechanism should be high-tech because monitoring is one step forward specialized field
14. Avoid breaking news, if live or exclusive visuals are not available
15. The resourceful channel should be very careful in content because others channels are following him
16. Channels should try to convey the news and comply with professional obligations
17. The objectivity of the news should not be affected in race of broadcasting
18. Political/governmental interference in PEMRA operations should strictly discourage as per law and rules
19. All channels should develop a common knowledge about breaking news
20. Channels should work on content. Improvement in content will lead the other things to the right path
21. Channels have their independent editorial policy designed by professional Journalists
22. Electronic media should reduce its dependency on print media professionals.

23. PEMRA take decision on the basis of the complaint and verify it through compliancy statement with channel statement. In this case a common man though registered his/her complaint but further process is not as simple as stated in PEMRA rules. Therefore, PEMRA should take action on the complaint by self without involving the compliancy. PEMRA should strengthen its monitoring and digital archive. Visuals of the broadcasted content is supposed best evidence to cross check the complaint and take action on it.
24. Delay system is consider, one of the most important filter point of the broadcasting content and according to PEMRA code of conduct installation of delay system is a basic requirement for a channel to get license. PEMRA should insure that delay system in operational form before a channel start its broadcasting.
25. PEMRA should implement all rules of code of conduct on equal basis not on to prioritize a one rule and other less.
26. PEMRA should adopt one equal policy for all (media, public, government organizations, armed forces, judiciary etc.).

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## Annexure-1

TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE OF PAKISTAN

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, BROADCASTING AND NATIONAL  
HERITAGE

\*\*\*\*\*

Islamabad, the 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.

### NOTIFICATION

S.R.O. No. 1(2)/2012-PEMRA-COC.- In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section – 39 of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act – 2007, the Federal Government, in pursuance of its earlier Notification No. 1(2)/2012-PEMRA-COC dated 9<sup>th</sup> May – 2014, is pleased to notify Electronic Media Code of Conduct – 2015 that shall replace the existing Code of Conduct for Media Broadcasters and Cable TV Operators (Schedule – A) of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Rules – 2009.

**“Schedule-A**  
[See Rule - 2(1)(f) and 15(1)]

### ELECTRONIC MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT - 2015

**1. Short title and commencement :-** (1) This Code may be called the Electronic Media (Programmes and Advertisements) Code of Conduct, 2015.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

**2. Definitions:-** (1) Unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,-

- (a) aspersion means “spread false and harmful charges against someone; attack the reputation of a person with harmful allegations”. However, a fair comment does not mean aspersion.
- (b) “content” includes programmes and advertisements;

- (c) "conflict zone" means the area where law enforcement agencies or armed forces are employed for operation to maintain writ of the state;
- (d) "current affairs programme" means a programme that contains explanation and analysis of current events and issues;
- (e) "footage" includes material telecasted by a broadcaster;
- (f) "foreign content" means a content that is produced under direct or indirect creative control of foreigners, foreign companies or foreign broadcasters;
- (g) "foreigner" shall have the same meanings as assigned to it under the Foreigners Act, 1946 (XXXI of 1946) or any other law for the time being in force;
- (h) "indecent" shall have the same meanings as assigned to it in the Indecent Advertisements Prohibition Act, 1963 (XII of 1963) or any other law for the time being in force;
- (i) "Ordinance" means Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XIII of 2002);
- (j) "propaganda" means dissemination of any doctrine, rumour or selective information to promote one sided views on any controversial issue, except in public interest, and of public importance.
- (k) "proscribed organization" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (XXVII of 1997) or any other law for the time being in force;
- (l) "sectarian" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (XXVII of 1997) or any other law for the time being in force;
- (m) "smoking" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health

Ordinance, 2002 (LXXIV of 2002) or any other law for the time being in force;

- (n) "terrorism" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 or any other law for the time being in force; and
- (o) "terrorist" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

(2) Words and expressions used but not defined herein shall, unless the context otherwise requires, have the same meanings assigned to them in the Ordinance, the rules and regulations made thereunder.

**3. Fundamental principles:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

- (1) No content is aired which-
  - (a) is against the Islamic values, ideology of Pakistan or founding fathers of the nation including Quaid-e-Azam and Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal;
  - (b) incites or condones dislodgement of democratic setup against the command of the constitution of Pakistan, provided that discussions on improvement of democracy shall constitute a fair comment.
  - (c) includes a call to arms against the Federation of Pakistan or anything against the integrity, security and defense of Pakistan;
  - (d) passes derogatory remarks about any religion, sect, community or uses visuals or words contemptuous of religious sects and ethnic groups or which promote communal and sectarian attitude or disharmony;
  - (e) contains anything indecent, obscene or pornographic.
  - (f) contains abusive comment that incites hatred and contempt against any individual or group of persons, on the basis of race, caste, nationality, ethnic or linguistic origin, color, religion, sect, gender, age, mental or physical disability;

- (g) is in violation of copyrights or other related property rights as protected under any law for the time being in force;
- (h) is likely to incite, aid, abet, glamorize or justify violence, commission of any crime, terror or leads to serious public disorder;
- (i) is known to be false; or there exist sufficient reasons to believe that the same may be false beyond a reasonable doubt;
- (j) contains aspersions against the judiciary or armed forces of Pakistan;
- (k) amounts to intimidation, blackmail or false incrimination of any person;
- (l) is defamatory as defined in the law for the time being in force; or
- (m) depicts behaviour such as smoking, alcohol consumption, narcotics and drug abuse as glamorous or desirable:

Provided that where showing of smoking, alcohol consumption, narcotics and drug use is necessary for dramatic or educational purposes, a clear warning as to injurious effects of the same shall also be shown simultaneously.

(2) Without prejudice to any other restrictions in this regard, while reporting the proceedings of the Parliament or a Provincial Assembly, such portion of the proceedings as the Chairman of Senate, the Speaker of National Assembly or, as the case may be, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly may have ordered to be expunged, shall not be broadcast or distributed and every effort shall be made to release a fair account of the proceedings.

(3) Statements of proscribed organizations or their representatives or members shall not be aired unless such statement is an admission which maybe in the larger public interest for exposing ideology, abuse of religion or barbarianism provided always that such broadcast does not in any way

aid, abet, glorify or give excuse to their means and ways in any shape or form.

(4) Private behavior, information, correspondence and conversation should not be brought into public domain unless there is a public interest that outweighs the protection of privacy.

**4. News and current affairs programmes:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) News, current affairs or documentary programmes shall present information in an accurate and fair manner.

(2) Any political or analytical programme, whether in the form of a talk show or otherwise, shall be conducted in an objective manner ensuring representation of the concerned parties and the guests shall be treated with due respect.

(3) Programmes on sub-judice matters may be aired in informative manner and shall be handled objectively:

Provided that no content shall be aired, which tends to prejudice the determination by a court, tribunal or any other judicial or quasi-judicial forum.

(4) News shall be clearly distinguished from commentary, opinion and analysis.

(5) Unnecessary details and footages of gory scenes including bloodshed and dead bodies shall not be aired.

(6) Content based on extracts of court proceedings, police records and other sources shall be fair and correct.

(7) In talk shows or other similar programmes, the licensee and its employees shall ensure that :-

(a) information being provided is not false, distorted, or misleading and relevant facts are not suppressed for commercial, institutional or other special interests;

- (b) the programme is conducted in an objective and unbiased manner;
- (c) programme does not debase or demean a person or group of persons;
- (d) does not intrude into private life, grief or distress of individuals unless such individual is a public figure and such intrusion is justified in the public interest.

(8) Any personal interest of a reporter or presenter which may call into question due impartiality of the programme shall be disclosed prior to airing of the programme through an appropriate disclaimer.

(9) News or any other programme shall not be aired in a manner that is likely to jeopardize any ongoing inquiry, investigation or trial.

(10) **Editorial oversight:** The licensee shall ensure that its representatives, hosts and producers of the programme shall discuss and review the contents of the programme prior to programme going on air / being recorded, and ensure that its contents conform to, in letter and spirit, this Code of Conduct.

**5. Programming mix and live coverage:-** No licensee shall broadcast any live programme unless there is an effective delaying mechanism put in place in order to ensure effective monitoring and editorial control in conformity with this Code.

**6. Conflict of interest:-** The Licensee shall ensure that all those responsible for content development do not take prior advantage of information gained in the course of their professional duties for private gain, including but not limited to programs relating to stock market and financial matters.

**7. Plagiarism:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) Its functionaries, particularly those who are responsible for content design do not indulge in plagiarism and where content is borrowed from another source, appropriate credit shall be given to such source.

(2) In all programmes where facts and figures are referred to, the source thereof should be quoted for the purpose of credibility of

programmes. In case of no known source, appropriate clarification shall be made by the hosts.

**8. Coverage of incidents of accidents, violence and crime:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

- (1) Coverage of incidents of accidents, violence and crime shall not incite, glamorize or in any way promote violence or anti-social behavior and such coverage does not prejudice the success of an ongoing security operation.
- (2) Appropriate warning shall be given upfront for content which may be potentially disturbing or upsetting so as to enable viewers to make an informed choice.
- (3) Scenes with violence or suffering such as close-up shots of persons brutally tortured or killed shall not be shown.
- (4) reporting of incidents of crime, accident, natural disaster or violence does not create hurdles in dispensation of the duties of the law enforcement agencies, rescue agencies, hospitals and doctors, etc.
- (5) Extreme caution shall be exercised in handling themes, plots or scenes that depict sex offence and violence, including rape and other sexual assaults.
- (6) Identity of any victim of rape, sexual abuse, terrorism or kidnapping or such victim's family shall not be revealed without prior permission of the victim or victim's guardian where victim is a minor.
- (7) During any ongoing rescue or security operation, identity and number of victims or other important information shall not be revealed unless the same is warranted by the rescue or security agency incharge of the operation.
- (8) there is no live coverage of any ongoing security operation by the law enforcement agencies and licensee shall air only such information as may be warranted by the security agency incharge of the operation.

(9) Licensee shall not air head money or bounty other than announced by the competent authority.

(10) Licensee shall ensure that coverage of the activities in conflict zone are carried out in accordance with the guidelines issued by the concerned law enforcement agencies.

(11) Licensee shall not air speculative or biased reporting that may compromise any security operation.

(12) Licensee shall ensure that any of its reporter, camera man or other crew does not enter the area where security operation is being carried out without prior permission of the security agency incharge of the operation.

(13) Licensee shall provide necessary protection gear and training to its reporters, cameramen and other crew deployed for coverage of any crime incident or conflict zone.

**9. Re-enactment:-** (1) Dramatic re-enactment shall ensure same rigors as required for a factual programme reporting crime.

(2) Re-enactment of any sex crime shall not be allowed.

(3) Standards in respect of entertainment programmes, relating to obscenity and gory scenes shall apply to such re-enactment also.

**10. Religious tolerance and harmony:-** Licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) the programmes aired by it do not contain any derogatory statement or visual which is likely to lead to bias, hatred or disharmony with reference to any religion, sect, community or ethnic group.

(2) beliefs and practices of any faith are described accurately when discussed and interfaith harmony is promoted at all times.

(3) no programme or comment is aired which incites or condones acts of violence and encourages violation of law in the name of religion, sect, community or ethnic group or any other pretext.

**11. Privacy and personal data protection:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) Door stepping for factual programmes does not take place unless a request for an interview has been refused and door stepping is warranted by identifiable public interest.

*Explanation:-* Door stepping means the filming or recording of an interview or attempted interview with someone or announcing that a call is being filmed or recorded for broadcast purposes without any prior warning.

(2) no interviews are conducted or attempted to be conducted without consent of the interviewee, save in public interest.

**12. Protection of children:-** (1) Programmes and advertisements meant for children shall not-

(a) be presented in a manner which may be disturbing or distressing to children or which may in any way adversely affect their general well being;

(b) be frightening or contain violence; or

(c) be deceptive or misleading or against commonly accepted social values;

(2) The licensee shall include appropriate warning through a disclaimer before airing any content that may not be suitable for children.

(3) Due care must be taken over the physical and emotional welfare and the dignity of persons under eighteen years of age who take part or are otherwise involved in programmes. This is irrespective of any consent given by the participant or by a parent, guardian or other person over the age of eighteen years in loco parentis.

**13. Language:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) Content shall maintain proper standards of language.

(2) Abusive or vulgar language shall be prohibited.

(3) If an abuse takes place that contains language or gesture that is considered apology worthy by the licensee and its representative, the representative must ask the guest to apologize immediately after the offense has taken place.

**14. Advertisements:-** It would be responsibility of the Licensee that :-

(1) Advertisements shall be in conformity with the laws for the time being in force.

(2) Advertisements intended for children shall not directly ask the children to buy the product.

(3) Advertisements shall not promote obscenity, violence or other activities harmful to human health or property.

(4) Advertisements of any alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs or narcotics shall not be aired.

(5) Any health related advertisement shall not be aired without prior permission of the Federal Government or Provincial Government, as the case may be, as required under the relevant applicable laws and the advertisement so aired after obtaining necessary permission shall strictly comply with the terms and conditions of the permission.

(6) Advertisements of lotteries, gambling or betting as prohibited under Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) or any other law for the time being in force shall not be aired.

(7) A licensee shall not advertise or promote black magic, quackery or superstition.

(8) Exploitation of religious or nationalistic sentiments and use of religious or national symbols and anthem purely for the purposes of promotion of a product or any quality in such product shall be prohibited.

(9) Advertisements shall be readily recognizable as such and kept separate from programmes.

(10) Advertisements in the form of subtitles, logos or sliding texts shall not exceed a maximum of one tenth of the whole screen.

(11) Advertisements relating to telemarketing, teleshopping or other offers to make phone calls shall conspicuously identify the applicable charges inclusive of all taxes.

**15. Responsibility for advertising:-** (1) Licensee shall be held liable for airing of illegal or prohibited advertisements.

(2) A sponsor, advertiser or other authority shall not influence the content of a programme in such a way as to impair the responsibility and editorial independence of the broadcaster.

**16. Programmes and advertisements to comply with the local laws:-** Licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) Programmes and advertisements comply with the laws for the time being in force.

(2) Where prior permission for airing of any advertisement or programme is required to be obtained under any law, such advertisement or programme shall not be aired unless requisite prior permission has been obtained.

**17. Monitoring committee:-** Licensee shall comply with this Code and appoint an in-house monitoring committee under intimation to the PEMRA to ensure compliance of the Code.

**18. Errors and corrigendum:-** Where any false news or information is aired, the licensee shall acknowledge and correct it on the same medium without any delay in the same manner and magnitude as that of the false news or information was aired. The corrigendum shall be aired at appropriate time.

**19. Facts and opinion:-** The licensee shall ensure that :-

(1) If during a talk show or news show a guest makes or asserts an opinion that is presented as a fact, on a serious issue, the channel and or its

representative must intervene and protect the audience by clarifying this is an opinion and not a fact.

(2) If the host / moderator is giving his or her own opinion, he or she must also clarify that this is a personal opinion and not a fact.

**20. Responsibility for compliance and training of employees:-** (1) It shall remain the sole responsibility of the Licensee to ensure that the content aired by it complies with the Code.

(2) Licensee shall arrange for regular training of its employees that may be helpful in performing their duties better.

**21. Public interest:-** A programme may be considered in the public interest if it:

(i) exposes or detects crime;

(ii) exposes significant anti-social behavior;

(iii) exposes corruption or injustice;

(iv) protects people's health and safety;

(v) prevents people from being misled by any statement or an individual or organization; or

(vi) discloses information that assists people to better comprehend or make decisions on matters of public importance.

**22. Airing of any allegations etc:-** (1) Licensee shall not air any allegation against any person or organization unless the licensee has credible information justifying such allegation and a fair opportunity to defend such allegation has been provided to the person or organization against whom allegation is being levelled.

(2) Where a serious allegation has been made by a guest and the accused is not available despite reasonable effort, the licensee shall adhere to the principle of innocent unless proven guilty, and the channel's representatives will, to the best of their ability, represent the accused point of view and defense.

(3) Licensee shall ensure that reasonable opportunity of defense and reply is provided to any person or organization against any allegation leveled against such person or organization.

(4) With regard to serious accusations, the licensee shall not allow any deceptive or misleading mode or manner to portray any material as evidence of wrongdoing or that which is otherwise not evidence at all.

**23. Hate speech:-** (1) Licensee shall ensure that hate speech by any of its employees or any guest in a programme is not aired.

(2) The licensee shall not relay allegations that fall within the spectrum of hate speech, including calling someone anti-Pakistan, traitor, or anti-Islam.

(3) Where hate speech is resorted to by any guest, the channel and its representative must stop the participant and remind him and the audience that no one has the authority to declare any other citizen as a Kafir or enemy of Pakistan, Islam or any other religion.

*Explanation:-* Hate speech includes any expression that may incite violence, hatred or discrimination on the basis of religion, ethnicity, colour, race, gender, origin, caste, mental or physical disability.

**24. Standards of behavior:-** (1) This Code presents the standards to be complied with by all the licensees and it shall always be the sole responsibility of the licensee to ensure the content aired by it is in compliance with the Code of Conduct.

(2) This Code represents an affirmative declaration of understanding and compliance with basic values and objectives that licensees, including its employees and officials shall adhere to, and these shall be observed in letter and spirit.

-Sd-

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Manager,  
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Distribution :-

1. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Affairs, PM Office, Islamabad.
2. Registrar, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad.
3. Acting Chairman, PEMRA, Islamabad.
4. Principal Information Officer, PID, Islamabad.
5. Chairman, Pakistan Broadcasters Associations, Karachi.
6. Secretary to Prime Minister, PM Office, Islamabad.
7. Secretary to President, President Secretariat, Islamabad.
8. General Secretary, All Pakistan Newspapers Society, Karachi.
9. Secretary, Cabinet Division, Islamabad.
10. Secretary, Establishment Division, Islamabad.
11. Secretary, Law & Justice Division, Islamabad.
12. Additional Secretary, MOIBNH, Islamabad.
13. Chairman, Press Council of Pakistan, Islamabad.
14. All Provincial Chief Secretaries (Punjab, KPK, Sindh, Baluchistan, G.B & AJK)
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21. DG, Directorate of Electronic Media & Publications, Islamabad.
22. DSO, MOIBNH, Islamabad.
23. DMO, MOIBNH, Islamabad.

*Syed Khizar Ali Shah*  
(Syed Khizar Ali Shah)  
Deputy Director (PBC)

## Annexure-2

www.dawn.com/news/1203017/nuclear-mainstream

LATEST PAKISTAN TODAY'S PAPER OPINION WORKBLOGS MULTIMEDIA

**POLL**

Do you think the new electronic media code of conduct will improve the experience of television viewing in Pakistan?

Yes  
 No

**Vote**

**VIEW RESULTS**

**POLL**

Thank you for voting!

Yes 51.25% (2,800 votes)

No 48.75% (2,663 votes)

Total Votes: 5,463

**Return To Poll**

## **Annexure-3**

### **Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire for News Chanel Executives:**

#### ***Introductory Question***

Tell me a little about your background.

- What are your professional duties according to your designation?

#### ***Main Questions***

- 1) While arranging/managing content to broadcast on TV, how much you expect to give exposure to audience?
- 2) In today TV broadcasting, breaking news consistently appears on TV screens, how you would like to define “Breaking News”?
- 3) In TV broadcasting do you think that Breaking News style is more instant source to deliver news to audience?
- 4) The current format of the breaking news that is practicing in Pakistani news channels is fulfilling the ethical values of journalism drawn by PEMRA for broadcasters?
- 5) Being an executive, what is your expectation from news room to broadcast breaking news in an hour?

- 6) How your newsrooms decide about the story that it should be broadcast as breaking news? Is there any tool/s that your news room exercising?
- 7) When your news room is going to broadcast news as breaking or broadcasting, what is the most important thing in your mind or precautionary measures?
- 8) How much breaking news of one channel influence (forced) the other channel to broadcast that story as breaking news immediately?
- 9) In broadcasting breaking news, can we ignore the role of monitoring desk? If not, then how much it influence on breaking news?
- 10) When a channel broadcasting breaking news we often observed that at the same time on other channel the same breaking news appear on screen along reporter for beeper, but insider claimed that inclusion of reporter for beeper in breaking news to claim that they are the primary source or first handler of that breaking news? If yes or to some extent, then why?
- 11) Have you keep update yourself about the Code of Ethics that are designed and implemented for broadcasting media?
- 12) Is there any code of ethics that deal breaking news directly or indirectly?
- 13) Is there any trainings program are available for your newsroom/production staff to give awareness about the code of ethics?
- 14) Do you think that breaking news is an effective style of news broadcasting?
- 15) What other format would you like to suggest as alternative of breaking news?

## **Annexure-4**

### **Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire for PEMRA authorities:**

#### ***Introductory Question***

Tell me a little about your background and work.

- It will be worth, If you share the role of PEMRA in news broadcasting's standards and code of ethics development?

#### ***Main Questions***

- 1) While arranging/managing content to broadcast on TV, how much you expect that it gives/ing exposure to audience?
- 2) In today TV broadcasting, breaking news consistently appears on TV screens, how you would like to define "Breaking News" as per PEMRA guidelines?
- 3) Is PEMRA code of conduct defines the term "Breaking News"?
- 4) The ethical values of journalism that drawn by PEMRA for broadcasters is sufficient to deal the breaking news that is practicing in Pakistani news channels?
- 5) Is there any specific law that allocates the frequency of breaking news per hour for news channel?
- 6) Are their specified guidelines available in Code of ethics, how to decide about the story that it should be broadcast as breaking news? Is there any tool/s?

- 7) What PEMRA code of ethics suggests when news room is going to broadcast news as breaking or broadcasting, what is the most important thing that it should be in mind or precautionary measures?
- 8) Is there any mechanism available at PEMRA to ensure/cross check the authenticity of breaking news?
- 9) Delay mechanism is described in PEMRA code of conduct to improve the standards of broadcasting and authenticity of news but When a channel broadcasting breaking news we often observed that at the same time on other channel the same breaking news appear on screen along reporter for beeper, but insider claimed that inclusion of reporter for beeper in breaking news to claim that they are the primary source or first handler of that breaking news. Two questions are raised:
  - a) "Copy of screen content" led "homogeneity of screens which against the PEMRA's mandate "to enlarge choice of audience".
  - b) Inclusion of reporter and claim for first handler source.
- 10) Which rules and regulations of PEMRA deal such situation and what steps PEMRA can take? It will be worth to share statistics.
- 11) Is PEMRA monitoring mechanism fulfilling the requirements for implementation of the Code of Ethics that are designed for broadcasting media? If yes then why gap between code of ethics and broadcasters observed?
- 12) Is code of ethics exercising by PEMRA deal breaking news directly?
- 13) Trainings programs have very significant role in quality control, as media regulating authority is PEMRA; conduct/ing any trainings program for

newsroom/production staff to give awareness about the code of ethics? How PEMRA try to build a close relationship with media organizations?

14) For implementation, existing of concerned law is important and code of ethics without implementation is only a piece of paper. Do you feel or observed gap between law existence and implementation of code of ethics?

## **Annexure-5**

### **Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire for Media Experts:**

#### ***Introductory Question***

Tell me a little about your background.

#### ***Main Questions***

- 1) While arranging/managing content to broadcast on TV, how much you expect that it gives/ing exposure to audience?
- 2) In today TV broadcasting, breaking news consistently appears on TV screens, how you would like to define “Breaking News”?
- 3) In TV broadcasting do you think that Breaking News style is more instant source to deliver news to audience?
- 4) The current format of the breaking news that is practicing in Pakistani news channels is fulfilling the ethical values of journalism drawn by PEMRA for broadcasters?
- 5) Being a media expert, what is your expectation from news channel to broadcast breaking news in an hour?
- 6) What you suggest for newsroom how to decide about the story that it should be broadcast as breaking news? Is there any tool/s?

- 7) When news room is going to broadcast news as breaking or broadcasting, what is the most important thing that it should be in mind or precautionary measures?
- 8) Is there any connection you observed or you think that breaking news of one channel influence (forced) the other channel to broadcast that story as breaking news immediately?
- 9) Monitoring desk is considering an important segment of newsroom. In broadcasting breaking news how much it influence on breaking news?
- 10) When a channel broadcasting breaking news we often observed that at the same time on other channel the same breaking news appear on screen along reporter for beeper, but insider claimed that inclusion of reporter for beeper in breaking news to claim that they are the primary source or first handler of that breaking news. Two questions are raised:
  - a) "Copy of screen content" led "homogeneity of screens which against the PEMRA's mandate "to enlarge choice of audience".
  - b) Inclusion of reporter and claim for first handler source.
- 11) Is PEMRA monitoring mechanism fulfilling the requirements for implementation of the Code of Ethics that are designed for broadcasting media? If not then how to bridge code of ethics and broadcasters?
- 12) Is code of ethics exercising by PEMRA deal breaking news directly or indirectly?

- 13) As media expert; are there any trainings programs you observed that available for newsroom/production staff to give awareness about the code of ethics?
- 14) For implementation, existing of concerned law is important and code of ethics without implementation is only a piece of paper. Do you feel or observed gap between law existence and implementation of code of ethics?
- 15) What other format would you like to suggest as alternative of breaking news?