AWKUM grants 17 Overseas PhD Scholarships

Voice Report:
CAMPUS: The Scholarship Selection Committee of AWKUM has approved the names of 17 candidates for overseas PhD scholarships in its 37th meeting held at Main Campus on November 04, 2013. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali. Other members of the meeting were Prof. Dr. Zahoor-ul-Haq, Dean Faculty of Arts, Dr. Saeed Islam, Registrar, Director HRD, Dr. Amir Zaman, Treasurer, Mr. Fazal Malik, Deputy Treasurer, Mr. Arif ul-Rehman, Director F&D, Mr. Sayyid Sohail and Assistant Director HRD, Mr. Faizul Hakim Khan. After detailed discussion and consideration, the Scholarship Selection Committee approved the names of 17 candidates for Overseas PhD Scholarship. The Scholarship Selection Committee also approved the names of 18 faculty members of AWKUM for the award of Indigenous Scholarships at AWKUM, University of Peshawar, IM Sciences, University of Malakand, International Islamic University, Islamabad and Nasir College University, Peshawar. Out of the 18 scholarships awarded, 6 are for PhD, 8 for MPhil and 4 for MS. Hence, the total number of Indigenous PhD scholarships awarded becomes 41. It is worth mentioning that the number of existing PhD faculty at AWKUM is 111 out of which 43 are foreign qualified and 68 have completed their degrees from Pakistan.

AWKUM & Kentucky University to work on joint ventures

By M. Zahoor Khan

CAMPUS: A four day workshop of five public sector universities of the KP and Kentucky University America was held in Islamabad, in which new avenues for collaboration and joint ventures were sought in various academic disciplines especially in the field business administration. Five universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including University of Peshawar, University of Buner, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan participated in the workshop. Faculty members of these five universities were trained by a delegation that included experts of Kentucky University namely Nancy Johnson, Associate Professor of Management Sciences and Executive Director of International affairs for the Gatton College of Business and economics, Gary Gaffe, Assistant Provost for international partnership for University of Kentucky, Kahlil Kerr, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Centre for the enhancement of the Learning and Teaching and Jeanette Coulai, Independent Evaluation Consultant. Prof. Dr. Zahoor, Dean Faculty of Arts, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Syaifu Feroz, lecturer, Department of Management Sciences, Nasir Shafeeq, lecturer, Irshad, lecturer and Youas Amen, lecturer, Department of Management Sciences participated in the training. The group discussed the course contents of MBA program. Prof. Dr. Zahoor delivered a lecture on "Learning Outcomes." in the concluding session. He also presented shields and gifts to the members of the delegation. The faculty members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universities also visited KAM’s poultry and met G.M for Altech in Pakistan. All these products are provided by Kentucky University America.

AWKUM Produces its First

By Romanullah, a PhD scholar of Department of Mathematics Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan successfully defended his PhD thesis on October 22, 2013 at the Main Campus. In this regard, a gathering was arranged in the main auditorium of AWKUM. It is worth mentioning here that Mr. Romanullah, who completed his PhD thesis under the supervision of Mr. Saeed Islam, is the first PhD scholar of AWKUM.

Support The AWKUM Museum In Making Its Collections By Donating A Gift

Voice report:
The Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan has established a Museum within the premises of Main Campus of AWKUM representing archaeological and ethnological profile of KP. As a matter of fact, this province remain part of world famous civilization i.e. Indus valley civilization and Gandhara civilization, the remnants of which can be found even today everywhere in this part of the region. The people of Pakhtunkhwa are requested in the name of their honor and generosity to contribute to this academic cause and donate the culture materials, antiquities, sculpture, books, ethnological material etc., lying in their custody un-displayed publicly at homes, hujras, shops, markets or offices elsewhere. These donated items will be displayed in the said Museum with their names and identity and will be preserved scientifically for future generations. These materials will help the national scholars and researchers for conducting authentic research in the relevant fields. In addition, it will attract the international scholars and researchers, giving global publicity to the cultural heritage of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Importance to mention that till date a total of 131 objects consisting of bowls, plates, coins, furniture, books, weapons, musical instruments, pithers, jars, boxes and dresses have been donated to us by mostly the staff and students of this University while a few of them by general public. Allusive items are displayed with proper acknowledgement. Mr. Abdur-Rehman, Curator of this museum highly appreciated all efforts made for the success of this museum and paid sincere thanks to all of the contributors and is hoping for more donations.

AWKUM signs MoU with Foreign universities and organizations

By Abdul Basit MA 3rd JMC

CAMPUS: Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Kyungpook National University, South Korea, University of Camerino, Italy and Tiyap Erdgum University, Turkey. These would help promote long term cooperation among the signatories in the form of exchange programs, joint scientific research, exchange of papers and publications, exchange of information concerning academic administrative practices, traineeship, students and faculty visits, cultural exchange programs and other areas of mutual interest. Beside universities, AWKUM has also signed a MoU with a German organization Hans Seidel Foundation (DHSI) regarding cooperation in environment sector.
AWKUM: A Dream That is Coming True

Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan that was once a dream of the people of this region is making progress by leaps and bounds with the blessings of Almighty God. Needless to mention that the Honorable Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Ishan Ali and his team are working hard to make this institution a great seat of learning. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the pace of which university is moving will be regarded as a miracle in history of higher education of this country. In a short span of time, i.e. four years, the university has given birth to two new universities i.e. University of Swabi and Bacha Khan University Charsadda and has reached five districts of the province including the beautiful valley of Chitral. Few days back the university has produced its first set of PhD scholars, a historical achievement that can rarely be found in the history of universities in the country. In order to bring quality and expertise to this great seat of learning, every year the university goes into collaboration with an international university or donor organization. In the last quarter alone the university has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Kyungpook National University, South Korea, University of Camerino, Italy and University of Dorgan University, Turkey which would help promote long term cooperation among the signatories in the form of exchange programs, joint scientific research, exchange of papers and publications, exchange of information concerning academic administrative practices, traineeship, students and faculty visits, cultural exchange programs and other areas of mutual interest.

In order to achieve the target of quality education, and to provide quality plus affordable education at their doorstep to the people of Mardan and adjacent districts, various departments of university have launched M.Phil and PhD programs. Similarly the university has granted seventeen postgraduate scholarships to bring international standards to the institution. The establishment of Pharmacy department at the Main campus is another addition to the educational excellence provided by the alma mater. Department of Journalism & Mass Communication that celebrated its first foundation day in September was also a center of a large number of students’ attention during the last semester admission. AWKUM team under the visionary leadership of Professor Dr. Ishan Ali seems determined to achieve further milestones and in coming few years, miracles are expected to happen. Insha Allah

The Language Barrier

Special Report

Education, the curriculum and the medium of teaching have all been a concern. Prominent newspapers reports over the last fifty years. The vast majority disagrees unbound and unacted upon and our primary education system is in many ways as dysfunctional – or non-existent – as it was half a century ago. There has been much debate about the language our children should be taught in – with Urdu currently the primary language and those children who stay beyond primary getting an indifferent education in English and Urdu. Currently, the government, parents and others have moved towards all education being in English; a move that is unlikely to be popular or even possible given the parochial state of our teacher cohort. A report released on Thursday by the British Council on the subject of language and teaching makes starting reading, because it strongly advocates the teaching of English at the primary level, and that children are more likely to attend school and stay at school longer if they are taught in their first language – the language they learned to speak from infancy.

Teaching a child in the language it speaks at home brings parents closer to the education process and allows them a voice in their child's education that is impossible if the language the child is taught is in 'foreign' – be it English, Urdu or any other. Children learn to read more quickly and easily in their mother-tongue because there are no bar-

ners to comprehension, and in our deeply divided society, all communities can feel equally respected if their children are edu-
cated in their native language. The report further states that children are likely to be more proficient in learning English later in their school careers as a foreign or second (third or fourth) language. A mere five per cent of people in Pakistan have access to education in their first language, and the seven major languages spoken here are the first languages for 85 percent of the school population. Instruction at the primary level in multiple languages is going to be logistically difficult, it is impossible. Research globally has shown that the adoption of multiple languages in primary education strengthens the loyalty of ethnic minorities to the state. Given the ethnic tensions that exist and the violence that has a tendency to erupt into violence, a remedy that may lower them in the long term is worth of consideration.

This is one report that deserves better than being consigned to the dustbin of ignorance. Courtesy: The News International

Quran and Human Embryology

Wagah Ahmed Sharif

Human beings have always been intrigued by question such as where they came from and how they developed before birth. We know from the earliest records that primitive peoples realized that the birth of a baby was the result of sexual union or intercourse. However, for many centuries, the idea of human prenatal development was based on superstition and mysticism. Aristotle wrote the first embryology book in the fourth century BC. In it, he cited some observations on comparative embryology, especially on the general progress of the developing chick. Since Aristotle had summed up the prevailing theories in his age relating to the creation of the embryo, controversy continued among the supporters of the theory of the full dwarf embryo existing in man's sperm and those of the theory of the full dwarf embryo created out of the woman's menstrual blood (coagula-
tion). Most of them believed that man was reduced into that sperm drop, and they drew a figure in which they imagined the embryo as a full creature in the sperm drop, which then grew up in the womb as a small mouse (Moore and Persaud, 1998). None of both groups could realize that man's sperm and woman’s ovum participate in the creation of the embryo, as supported by the Italian scientist “Scalzianni” in the year of 1659 (Palamara, 1861). In 1783, Van Beneden was able to confirm this statement, and thus the idea of the dwarf embryo had been discarded (amoeba, 1865). During the years 1882 and 1909, Altstra proved that chromosomes when divided carry the different genetic charac-
teristics (Bachet, 1964). For the year 1912, J.B.S. Haldane was able to determine the role of genes, existing in certain parts of chromosomes, in heredity (Morgan and Hunt, 1923). Therefore, it is clear that mankind did not realize that the embryo is created out of man’s sperm mingled with woman’s ovum except late 18th century. and only to be confirmed at the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, the Holy Quran and the Prophetic speeches have confirmed in a very accurate scientific manner the creation of man from a mingled fluid drop (nurah amal), as coined by the Quran, which says “Verily we have created man from a drop of mingled fluid drop (nurah amal) in order to try him, so we gave him the gifts, of hearing and sight.” (The Holy Quran, 76:2). Before proceeding in describing the embryonic stages as narrated in the Quran, it is important to define the following Arabic words that are used in the Quran: Nurfah: a drop of sperm, sperm. Amal: is something that clings, leech-like structure, blood clot. Nurfah: piece of flesh, bead-like segmental masses exist. We chewed gum with teeth marks. In this research, the embryological developments as indicated in the Quranic verses will be discussed, whilst shedding light on the fixed scientific facts in each stage of development. There are four different stages of formation of the human embryo in mother's womb as described in the Holy Quran: (1) We have created man out of an extraction of claythe origin of semen. Then we turn it into semen and settle it in a firm receptacle. Then we turn semen into a clot (hasaq) literally, something hanging, mother of the womb) which we then transmute into a lump (mutlah). Then we create bones which we clothe with flesh. Then, we transmute it into a new mode of enrolment, blessed be the Adam, the best of creators” (The Holy Quran, 2:114). These verses of the Quran clearly mentioned that at the first stage, man was formed from components contained in clay (subtilum min tini). Most interpreters of the Qur’an understand the creation of man out of ‘an extraction of clay’ as referring specifically to Adam (s.a.) (Al Qurtubi in; al-Tabarî, 1954; Al-Baghâdi, 1989). Other Muslim scholars entertain the possibility that Allah is not merely referring to man's body that consists of various chemical substances, such as iron, phospohorus, calcium and so on. Al-Baghâdi noted (1989) that ‘an extraction of clay’ is a second stage of man's creation, as mentioned in surah al-mumin in high Quran, is the devel-

opment of the diminutive quantity of mud. In this verse, the Qur’an does not directly men-
tion that the formation of a child comes from the semen of both the male and the female. However, verses narrated in Surah Al-Masarah (21:90) says: “Verily, we have created man from a drop of mingled liquid (nurah amal)”. The mentioned human creation in the Holy Quran is one of many other medical mysteries. Having reviewed previous detailed statements of Quranic verses and scientific analysis of the embryonic stages, it is evident these Quranic verses give an accurate description of the main stages the embryo encounters during creation and formation until delivery. It is noticed that these changes coincide with the remarks of modern embryology, and truly express the external phenomena of changes that result from these conditions. The Quranic descriptions contain expressions comprehensible to people of different back-
grounds, whereas it has the current explanations in embryology used for the description of these stages do not identify the distinguished characteristics of the embryo in each stage, as numerical data is used without reference to any description. This proves the wonderful miraculous nature of the Quran, which cannot be revealed except out of the comprehensive knowledge of the omniscient. Al Qur'an tells us about the creation of a child in a mother’s womb and its chronological evolution to full life. The parents only play an instrumental role in this creative process. During this process, especially when the child is shaped after 120 days, Islam regards the fetus, in this condition, as a human being, so that the fetus should be granted a share and the right of inheritance, which will be forced upon the child’s de-

livery. Allah be praised to be Allah, the cherisher of the worlds.

The writer is lecturer in Zoology at Abdul Wali Khan University, Buner Campus

MailBox

If you want to share any article or writing, you can contact us:
awkumvoice@gmail.com
Glimpses !!!!!!!!!!

MoU with University of Camerino Italy

Honorable VC while giving trophy to Department of Chemistry winner team of Sports Gala

Group photo of students and faculty members of Vice Chancellor on International Tourism Day celebrated by Tourism department AWKUM

Vice Chancellors of various universities in the inter-university workshop in Islamabad

Dr. Roman Ullah first ever PhD student from AWKUM

Work in progress at Garden Campus, AWKUM

Professor Dr. Mansan Ali VC AWKUM signing a MoU with HST, a German organisation

Winner team receiving trophy from Itkhar Mishwani MPA arranged by Express News

Participants of the inter-university workshop while making different strategies

Sixth Board of Study Department of Islamic Studies

**Notice**

All the Students, Faculty Members and Staff of AWKUM are invited to Contribute their articles, letters, news and Photographs to AWKUM Voice

**Notice Box**

**Awards and Achievements**

- **Mr. Arif Ali**
- **Dr. Mumtaz Khan**
- **Mr. Ahsan Ahmad**
- **Mr. Irfan M. Arif**
- **Ms. Sajda Ahmad**
- **Ms. Hira Ali**
- **Ms. Rida Ali**
- **Ms. Shireen Ali**
Member National Assembly, Miss Naema Kishwar, Visited AWKUM

Member National Assembly, Miss Naema Kishwar, visited Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan on November 26th, 2013. Talking to the media personnel at the Main Campus of AWKUM, the honorable MNA reiterated that Abdul Wali Khan University, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Inas Ali, has grown from an infant to a baby in a short span of less than five years. The phenomenal growth and success of AWKUM are an example for all the growing educational institutions of the country. On the occasion, Miss Naema Kishwar visited the Museum and student hostels situated at the Main Campus. She also visited the University College for Women. Prof. Dr. Inas Ali gave a detailed briefing to the honorable MNA regarding the development projects. He added that the University has established 9 campuses out of which two 7,000. Miss Naema Kishwar applauding the facilities and standard of education at the University College for Women remarked that Prof. Dr. Inas Ali is an exemplary leader and academician and his achievements and accomplishments would be written in golden words.

Pakistan sees eight-fold increase in HIV cases in 11 years

www.Dawn.com
ISLAMABAD, Nov 30: Pakistan has seen an eight-fold increase in HIV cases between 2001 and 2012, a UN report on the eve of the World AIDS Day.

The report, “HIV in Asia and the Pacific: Getting to Zero,” released by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, says that emerging epidemics are becoming evident in 12 countries in Asia and the Pacific region, where an estimated 4.9 million were living with HIV in 2012. The 12 countries account for more than 90 per cent of people living with HIV and of new HIV infections in the region. The countries are Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. According to the report, Pakistan introduced the “thrid gender” category for identity documents and Nepal recognized “third gender” in the national census. The report points out that inadequate coverage of key populations at higher risk of HIV infection and geographical areas with higher HIV burden mean that most countries in the region are not progressing fast enough to reach global targets on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

While significant progress has been seen in some countries — with some reducing new HIV infections by over 50 per cent since 2001 — impact appears to be stalling with overall number of new HIV infections across the region remaining largely unchanged in the past five years.

Total estimated HIV spending in the region in 2012 was $2.2 billion, up 5 per cent from 2011. Yet, the AIDS response in the region remains under-funded. To achieve the 2015 annual investment target in low- and middle-income countries in Asia and the Pacific, UNAIDS estimates that about $8.1 billion must be mobilized. According to the report, new HIV infections in the region remain concentrated among key populations — people who buy and sell sex, people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, and transgender people. The fastest growing epidemics in the region are among men who have sex with men. These epidemics are typically concentrated in major cities.

The report calls for a rapid increase of voluntary confidential community-based HIV testing and counselling for populations at risk.

One-day Seminar on “Planning for internships and future prospect within Tourism and Hospitality Industry”

The Department of Tourism and Hospitality, AWKUM has arranged a one-day Seminar on “Planning for internship and future prospect within Tourism and Hospitality Industry” on Tuesday May 28, 2013 in the conference hall of the said department. The seminar focused on to identify areas of internship and to explain the procedure for getting an internship opportunity in organization of national and international reputation. Also to highlight future prospects in tourism and hospitality industries. The Seminar was started with a welcome address from Mr. Abid (Faculty member) followed with recitation of a few verses from the holy Quran by Asif Jan (Student). Mr. Sajjad (Faculty member) delivered an extensive lecture on how and where to get internship opportunities. He also identified various potential fields in tourism and hospitality sectors for internship training. Mr. Abid explained the formal format for writing the internship report. The student also shared their personal experiences. Mr. Tanig (Student) of this department shared his recent fieldwork experience with Youth Impact organization at Islamabad and Mr. Shahid (Student) briefed the participants about his practical work and experience during his stay at FC hotel Peshawar. The seminar was ended with question/answer session followed by concluding remarks from Dr. Zia, Chairman of the department.

Over all an immense motivation, dedication and encouragement were delivered among the students for their positive and bright future. The scope of student’s internship opportunities and other potential areas of their interest were discussed and it is hoped that the internship and research work of these students will not serve as precursor contribution in the field of tourism and hospitality sector in the province but will also open new areas for future research and development in the relevant industries of the country.

First Board of Study of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication has conducted its first Board of Study meeting. The meeting was chaired by Dean Faculty of Art Professor Dr. Zain Ul Abidin, Prof. Dr. Jahanzaib, Chairman Department of Political Science, Mr. Musarrat Ali, Ex-president Mardan Press Club, Muhammad Arif Communication Specialist world Peace, Farhad Saif, Incharge, Mr. Sana Shah, Mr. Zia Ullah, Mr. Syed Fahar Iqan and Deputy Director Academic Mr. Tanig Mehmood.

In the meeting courses for BFA 4 years and MA two years have been approved. In this occasion Prof. Dr. Ziaulhaq has said that the courses are as according to modern trends in academics.

M. Abid Grabed 1st Position in IPC

The UN Photo Contest under the slogan “Peace through Photography” organized by Photo Imaging & Marketing Association, sponsored by Fotoline Publication at Karachi, Pakistan and supported by the International Photography Council, announced a Call for selection of photographs around the globe on 31st August, 2013, in which hundreds of renowned and professional photographers around the globe participated. From Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Mr. Abid Mehmood, photographer, participated in the contest.

On the occasion, Vice Chancellor AWKUM, Prof. Dr. Inas Ali felicitated Mr. Abid Mehmood for such an outstanding achievement. Prof. Dr. Inas Ali reiterated that AWKUM is full of talented and skillful professionals and whenever an opportunity has been granted, AWKUM faculty and staff have utilized it to the maximum. He further said that in life it is necessary to be an achiever as every one feels proud on achievers.
INTERVIEW: DR. SAEEED ISLAM
By: Zia Ul Hamad & Syed Faheem Imam

Dr. Saeeed Islam is Registrar & Chairman Department of Mathematics at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. He did his Ph.D in Applied Mathematics/Fluid Mechanics from Haron Institute of Technology, Sherwan Graduate School, China. Before joining AWKUM as Associate Professor in February 2012, he served COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad as Assistant Professor from 2008 to 2012 and as Lecturer from 2002 to 2008. A gold medalist from Quaid-e-Azam University, Dr. Saeeed Islam holds the honor of supervising the first ever Ph.D. produced by Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Awkum Voice team is thankful to him for giving us some time from his busy schedule for an interview.

Awkum Voice: Sir, Would you please tell us where do you come from and where did you get your formal education from?
Registrar: First I would like to extend my gras bedside to Awkum Voice for providing me with opportunity to talk to my students. My ancestors migrated from District Dir, some 40 years ago and settled at Shakhot, Malakdang Agency. I was born in Khusal Garh village of Malakand Agency on December 16, 1975. I received my Primary Education from Government Primary School Badagain and did my Matric from Government High School Khusal Garh. I got my B.Sc from Government Post Graduate College Mardan and M.Sc Mathematics from Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad.

Awkum Voice: Where did you get Ph.D from and from what area of research are you interested in?
Registrar: I got my Ph.D from Harbon Institute of Technology, Sherwan Graduate School, China in Applied Mathematics, i.e. Fluid Mechanics. The research areas and paradigms I am interested in are Modeling of Newtonian and Non-Newtonian fluids, Computational Fluid Dynamics and Bio Fluid Mechanics.

Awkum Voice: What was the main motivation behind the decision of joining Awkum?
Registrar: On the day I got my Ph.D in China, I also fell from a very poor family. I still remember that there were more than 20 patches in the clothes of my grandmother. I have preserved that dress in my home and every day before coming to university, give it a glance. This reminds me of who I am and therefore gives me further motivation to achieve the common goal between me and university administration.

Awkum Voice: What are the future plans of Registrar office for the well-being of university?
Registrar: Well, I must say that Registrar office is part of the team and needless to mention, an integral part that can make a big difference. As far as my office future plans are concerned, we are planning to bring all kind of academic scholarships to university. Although we are doing a lot in this regard and every third student of university is availing either one or the other scholarship, but there are still avenues that needs to be explored. We have brought international scholarships to university along with HEC and other indigenous donors to facilitate our students and faculty and the university administration especially the Honorable Vice Chancellor is signing MoUs with different world class universities.

Awkum Voice: ‘BAWAR’ Staged at Awkum

By: Imran Yousuf MA 3rd Semester

CAMPUS: KADAM PA KADAM Peace Caravan Project and Abdul Wali Khan University (AWKUM) organized a stage drama ‘BAWAR’ at Main Campus of Abdul Wali Khan University.

The theme of the drama was peace, woman education and social harmony. A large number of students and faculty members attended the event.

Chairman Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Mr. Farhad Saif Lecturers: Mr. Syed Faheem Imam, Madam Sana and Zia Ulhassan were also present on the occasion.

The drama was written by the renowned writer Noor ul Rashed Nawaz and directed by Faheem Khan. Renowned artists Izaz Shirjeleh, Abdul Guirim zarówno, Naaimi Mulkani, Sangeen and Zahida Tanka played different roles in the drama.

Program Coordinator Aqeel Ahmad Khan presented gifts to the staff members and paid gratitude for allowing KADAM PA KADAM peace Caravan Project the opportunity to convey its message of peace and education to the students. At the end, Chairman Farhad Saif thanked the drama team and pledged future coordination with the organization.

Examination Center Shifted to Riffat Mahal Campus

By: Awkum Voice

CAMPUS: Examination Center of Abdul Wali Khan University has been shifted to Riffat Mahal Campus. According to a Press release issued by the university administration, transport service will be provided at regular intervals from Main Campus to facilitate the students.
The Case for Citizens' Media

Faiz Ullah Jan

Democracy and the media go hand in hand. Democracy cannot flourish without a free and pluralist media and the latter cannot grow and progress in a dictatorial or authoritarian environment. The diversity of ideas is necessary for democracy, just as dictatorship and autocracy strive for uniformity of opinion. In authoritarian regimes, dissenting voices are silenced in the name of 'national interest' and 'national cohesion.' These are loaded terms and open to many definitions; but they always come in handy for dictators in times of crisis. Authoritarian governments are not the only threat to a free and pluralist media; a free market economy and conglomerates, too, have emerged as major threats to the freedom of the press. In many cases, advertisers, who have become the economic lifeline of the media, not only determine what news is to be published but also what qualifies as news. They don't put direct pressure on the media to publish news in their favor; instead, they use their economic clout to stop the publication of a certain piece of news. Adverts compete with news for the audience's attention, and at the end of the day, readers get too many adverts and very little news, reminding one of what a Pakistani editor said, "we don't charge for what we publish, we charge for what we don't publish." As a result, journalism in Pakistan has developed the tendency of self-censorship. Since the dark days of Gen Zia-ul-Haq, the Pakistan press has been facing a plethora of enemies apart from the government and state agencies. Political parties and religious groups started targeting newspapers and individual journalists not being in line with their views. Karschi, hub of the newspaper industry, has been the worst hit. Time and again militant and other pressure groups have stopped the publication of newspapers that have taken a stand on a certain issue, with the government looking the other way. Journalists have been physically harmed for their writings. Sadly, certain newspaper managers have entered into deals with such groups instead of standing by the victimised journalists who have felt more threatened than a consequence and have preferred not to take on the demons. Another outrageous act of the myopic rule of Zia-ul-Haq was the passage of the publication of newspapers. Journalism, which until then was the forte of intellectual voices, was hijacked by the zealots of religious parties, themselves more of avatars than newsmen. This further reinforced self-censorship—but this time not out of fear for one's life, rather to serve a narrow ideology. Any news story going against the ideology of the parent party of the journalist is "killed."

On the subject of conglomerates: these companies run private ministries of information that generate their own news and control others. Media conglomerates, an outcome of the free-market economy, encroach on the marketplaces of ideas. Many newspapers have become publishing houses churning out more than one newspaper in more than one language. Every publishing house has a cable TV service as well. With large publishing houses operating like notorius corporations, the same media house through its various organs then presents the news in a way that does not allow for references of others or newsworthy information. Conglomeration is nibbling away at the audience's choices and resulting in the uniformity of opinion. When diversity of opinion gives way to a uniform worldview, democratic discourse comes to an end. Democracy diminishes of diversity of opinion leads to dictatorship where a single individual or institution, instead of leading, drives society to embrace the yoke of slavery in the name of democracy and national interest. In such a situation the culprit is not the dictator but the corporate media. The media gives news in fragments that makes it difficult for the audience to connect the dots, it becomes difficult for the common people to follow the development of a particular issue or topic. This situation promotes apathy and cynicism at the expense of political participation. Common people become mere spectators in a democracy which otherwise should be a participatory business. No situation is more congenial for hooligan democracy than this. The media becomes one of the power structures, along with the bourgeoisie and the army that take the common people for a ride in the name of inculcating real democracy. Thus hooligan democracy and a free media are sacrificed at the altar of the free-market economy which is the linchpin of capitalism. In the West, especially in the U.S., a similar situation exists which is owned by the community through donations, is trying to counter the monopoly of the mainstream corporate media and project the other 'view.' In the case of Pakistan, the alternative media is no panacea. Not content with the mainstream media, state-run PTV is an alternative 'media' has emerged. But, unfortunately, this media espouses a narrow and distorted worldview. For instance, the press run by religious and sectarian organisations is practically the only alternative media, but it too pursues a agenda that shuns the free press.

This downside of the media can be balanced by the emergence of the citizens' media which is run by the community instead of a corporation, a family enterprise or a religious/secular organisation. In citizens' media, the common people are part of journalistic activity. This instills in them a sense of belonging. A citizens' media does not compete for circulation or for corporate adverts. Its interest lies in the interest of the community which is the true owner of the media. The mainstream press has a larger agenda where smaller communities and their problems find little space. No time is more opportune than now for the emergence of a citizens' media. The corporate media can be countered by a network of online media with no commercial interests and with strong roots in the people. The voice of any community should not get lost in the din of the corporate culture. The writer teaches Journalism at University of Peshawar and is PhD, fellow of American School of Journalism, Washington.

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication celebrates 1st Foundation Day

By: Khalid Khan

CAMPUS: A day-long seminar was arranged by the Department of Political Science, Abdul Wali Khan University where speakers delivered lectures on qualitative and quantitative research methods. Dr. Sohail Akbar who holds his Ph.D. from Manchester University, United Kingdom was the resource person on this occasion. In his lecture he told the participant to make best use of technology especially software like SPSS and ENVIRO.

In another seminar organized by the host department, Dr. Sarfraz Ali who is Associate Professor at University of Peshawar, delivered a lecture on Migration and its impact on social change. A question answer session was held at the occasion where the students responded to the queries of the participants. Dr. Jehanzeb Kheli, Chairman Department of Political Science & Dean Faculty of Arts thanked the guests while making his concluding remarks at the end.

Bravo researchers! AWKUM is proud of you

Voice Report: Dr. Hamid Hassan, Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry. Dr. Atmar Ul Hassan, Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition, Dr. Raham Umer, Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Mr. Akhmalilah, Lecturer, Department of Mathematics have published research papers, while Dr. Arvah Hassan, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany presented his research paper at Orlando, Florida, USA. The AWKUM Voice congratulates these scholars and wishes them all the best.

Distinction of JMC Student

By: Mubahir Achi

CAMPUS: Bakht Muhammad, student of Journalism and Mass Communication, Abdul Wali Khan University received 4th position in all Pakistan inter-university photography contest organized by Sarhad University, Peshawar. A photograph of Bakht Muhammad, got 4th position and was awarded with a consolation prize. The chairman of JMC, Farhad Solo and faculty members congratulated Bakht Muhammad on his achievement and wish him success in future also.