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Semester: Autumn 2026

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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Public Relations (968) • Level: MSc/BS

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1–4)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 40/50

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and write the assignment in their own words. Copying this guide word for word is not recommended.

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Question 1: Important Functions of Public Relations (20 Marks)

Discuss the important functions of PR with adequate examples.

Introduction

Public relations is a planned and sustained management function through which an organisation establishes and maintains mutual understanding, goodwill and cooperation with the various publics on which its survival and success depend. The British Institute of Public Relations defines it as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. This definition makes one point clear: PR is not a single activity such as issuing a press release; it is a continuous set of functions that begins with listening and research and ends with evaluation. An organisation that performs

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these functions well knows what its publics think, explains its policies honestly, corrects misunderstandings before they become crises and earns the trust that advertising money alone cannot buy.

In a country like Pakistan, where rumours travel faster than official statements and where institutions frequently face a trust deficit, the functions of PR have become indispensable. A hospital, a university, a police department, a textile mill and a government ministry all depend on public acceptance. The following discussion explains the major functions of public relations — management and advisory, research, communication, publicity and media relations, community relations, crisis management, image building and evaluation — with suitable examples from Pakistani and international practice.

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1. The Management and Advisory Function

The highest function of PR is advisory: it counsels top management on how policies and decisions will affect the public, and it carries public opinion back to the decision-makers. In this sense the PR practitioner is the conscience and the ears of the organisation. Before a university raises its fee, before a factory changes its shift timings or before a ministry announces a new tax, the PR department should warn management about likely reactions and suggest how the decision can be framed, timed and explained.

For example, when the Government of Pakistan announces an increase in petroleum prices, the reaction of transporters, traders and the general public depends heavily on how the decision is explained — whether the international market compulsion is communicated in advance or the news simply appears at midnight. Organisations that treat PR merely as a press-release section

lose this advisory benefit and repeatedly face avoidable protests. The two-way character of good PR means that feedback gathered by the PR office should actually change policies, not merely decorate them.

2. Research and Listening

No PR programme can succeed without research. The practitioner must know who the publics are, what they know, what they misunderstand and what they expect. Research functions include opinion surveys, media content analysis, focus group discussion, complaint analysis and social listening. Listening is equally important on a daily basis: letters to the editor, callers to helplines, comments on official social media pages and reports of field staff are all data about the organisation's standing.

A practical example is the polio eradication programme in Pakistan. For years, refusals were treated simply as ignorance, but research revealed specific fears — religious misconceptions, doubts about the vaccine's safety and resentment against visiting teams. Communication was then redesigned around those findings, using local religious scholars, lady health workers and community elders. The lesson is general: a message built on research persuades, while a message built on guesswork merely circulates.

3. Communication and Information

The most visible function of PR is communication: preparing and disseminating accurate information through press releases, press conferences, briefings, brochures, websites, newsletters and social media. The aim is to create an informed public. The information must be truthful, timely and written in the language and style of the audience; a technical notification

that the common citizen cannot understand has failed as communication even if it is factually correct.

Allama Iqbal Open University itself performs this function when it announces admission schedules, examination dates and results through newspapers, its website and SMS alerts for thousands of distance learners who never visit a campus. Similarly, during floods the National Disaster Management Authority and provincial authorities issue situation reports and safety instructions. In each case the PR function converts the organisation's internal decisions and data into public knowledge on which people can act.

4. Publicity and Media Relations

Publicity is unpaid, editorially independent coverage in the media, and securing it fairly is a central PR function. Because journalists are gatekeepers, the practitioner maintains working relations with them: supplying verified facts, arranging interviews and facility visits, responding quickly to queries and never attempting to buy or pressure editorial space. Publicity carries credibility that advertising lacks, because the audience knows the media outlet was not paid to publish it.

When the Higher Education Commission or a Pakistani university announces a research achievement, a scholarship scheme or an international ranking, the resulting newspaper and television coverage is publicity generated by PR work. The practitioner's skill lies in recognising what is genuinely newsworthy — novelty, human interest, public benefit — and presenting it in a form busy newsrooms can use, while accepting that the final decision to publish always rests with the editor.

5. Community Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility

An organisation does not operate in a vacuum; it draws workers, water, roads and security from a surrounding community and returns noise, traffic and waste. Community relations is the function of keeping this exchange harmonious: consulting local people before expansion, supporting schools and clinics, observing religious and cultural sensitivities and handling grievances face to face. Corporate social responsibility programmes — free medical camps, scholarships for local students, tree plantation, clean drinking water — are the practical expression of this function.

Industrial units around Karachi, Faisalabad and Multan that maintain regular contact with neighbouring communities generally face fewer blockades and labour troubles than those that appear only when a dispute erupts. A sugar mill or cement factory that funds a dispensary and employs local youth builds a reserve of goodwill which protects it in difficult times. Community relations therefore converts neighbours from potential opponents into stakeholders in the organisation's success.

6. Crisis Management

Every organisation eventually faces a crisis — an accident, a product defect, a scandal, a natural disaster or a viral allegation. The PR function in a crisis is to protect life first, then credibility: acknowledge the problem quickly, state verified facts, express genuine concern, announce corrective action and keep communicating until the matter closes. Silence and denial are the two most damaging responses, because the information vacuum is immediately filled by rumour.

Pakistan International Airlines, food companies facing contamination rumours and hospitals facing negligence allegations have all learned that the first few hours decide public judgment. A prepared organisation has a crisis manual, a designated spokesperson and pre-approved holding statements. Crisis PR is therefore not improvisation; it is the disciplined execution of preparations made in calm times, and it depends entirely on the credibility the organisation accumulated through its other functions.

7. Image Building, Internal Relations and Evaluation

Image building is the long-term function of shaping how publics perceive the organisation's identity — its logo, behaviour, service quality and values — so that perception rests on consistent performance. Closely connected is internal PR: employees are the first public, and house journals, briefings, recognition schemes and open-door grievance channels keep them informed and motivated, because an dissatisfied employee is the most believable source of bad publicity. Government PR, lobbying and public affairs — presenting an organisation's case to legislators and regulators honestly — is a further specialised function.

Finally, PR evaluates itself. The practitioner measures outputs (coverage achieved), outtakes (what audiences understood) and outcomes (changes in attitude or behaviour), and reports them to management. Evaluation closes the loop and converts PR from a cost into an investment with demonstrable returns. An annual awareness survey that shows public recognition of a health message rising from thirty to sixty percent is evidence no amount of press clippings can replace.

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Conclusion

To conclude, the functions of public relations together form a complete cycle of organisational communication: advising management, researching publics, informing them truthfully, earning publicity through media relations, living responsibly in the community, defending credibility in crisis, building image and internal unity, and evaluating results. No single function can substitute for the others — publicity without research misfires, and image building without honest performance collapses at the first crisis. Organisations in Pakistan that perform these functions professionally enjoy durable goodwill, while those that reduce PR to protocol and press notes discover its value only when trust has already been lost.

Table 1: Principal functions of public relations at a glance

Function	What it involves	Illustrative example
Advisory / management	Counselling top management on public impact of policies	Warning a university management about reaction to a fee increase before announcing it
Research	Surveys, media analysis, feedback and social listening	Polio programme research identifying specific local fears behind refusals
Communication	Releases, conferences, publications, websites, social media	AIOU admission and result announcements for distance learners
Publicity / media relations	Earning fair editorial coverage; serving journalists' needs	Coverage of a university research achievement or scholarship scheme
Community relations / CSR	Consultation, grievance handling, community support	Factory funding a dispensary and employing local youth
Crisis management	Fast, honest response protecting life and credibility	Airline or hospital response in the first hours after an incident
Image and internal relations	Identity building; informing and motivating employees	House journal, staff briefings, recognition schemes
Evaluation	Measuring outputs, understanding and behaviour	Awareness survey before and after a health campaign

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Question 2: Duties and Professional Traits of a Public Relations Practitioner (20 Marks)

Explain duties and professional traits of a public relations practitioner.

Introduction

The public relations practitioner is the bridge between an organisation and its publics. Whether he or she works inside a department as a public relations officer or outside as a consultant in an agency, the job combines writing, research, planning, counselling and representation. Because the practitioner speaks in the organisation's name, a mistake in fact or judgment damages not a byline but an institution. The duties of the practitioner are therefore defined both by tasks — what must actually be done each day — and by professional traits — the personal qualities without which those tasks cannot be performed credibly.

In Pakistan the title is used loosely for protocol officers, press attachés and publicity agents, but professional PR is a specialised occupation requiring training in mass communication, knowledge of media systems and strict adherence to a code of ethics. This answer first sets out the principal duties of the practitioner and then examines the traits — integrity, communication skill, judgment, knowledge, calmness and loyalty balanced by independence — that distinguish the professional from the mere publicist.

Duties: Research, Planning and Counselling

The practitioner's first duty is to know: to study the organisation's policies, identify its internal and external publics, monitor opinion through surveys, media analysis and feedback channels,

and keep management informed of trends that may affect it. On the basis of this knowledge he helps formulate communication policy and counsels management before decisions are announced, pointing out their likely public impact and suggesting modifications or timing that will make them acceptable.

Planning follows research. The practitioner prepares annual and campaign plans with clear objectives, defined audiences, selected media, budgets and timetables, and he coordinates the work of writers, designers, photographers and printers who produce the material. A practitioner who only reacts to events is doing publicity, not public relations; the professional duty is to anticipate issues — a fee increase next semester, a factory expansion, a new tax — and prepare communication before the issue becomes a controversy.

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Duties: Writing, Media Relations and Representation

Writing is the practitioner's daily craft. Press releases, speeches for executives, brochures, annual reports, scripts, social media posts, rejoinders and backgrounders all pass through his hands, and each must be accurate, clear and suited to its medium and audience. Alongside writing stands media relations: maintaining an updated knowledge of newspapers, channels and digital platforms, knowing their deadlines and requirements, arranging press conferences and interviews, and answering journalists' queries promptly and truthfully.

The practitioner also represents the organisation in person — receiving delegations, conducting visitors, speaking at seminars, organising exhibitions, open days and ceremonies, and acting as spokesperson in a crisis. In government service in Pakistan, information officers additionally brief the press on cabinet decisions and development projects; in the private sector, the same

officer may handle investor, dealer and customer relations. In every setting the duty is identical: to be the organisation's informed, accessible and truthful point of contact.

Duties: Internal Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation

A frequently neglected duty is internal communication. The practitioner keeps employees informed through notice boards, house journals, intranet and briefings, conveys staff grievances upward, and helps management explain change — new technology, restructuring, safety rules — to those it affects. An organisation whose own staff learn its news from television has failed in this duty, and its external PR will suffer because employees speak to outsiders every day.

Monitoring and evaluation complete the cycle. The practitioner watches coverage and public response, maintains a clipping and feedback record, corrects factual errors through rejoinders, measures campaign results against objectives and reports honestly to management, including failures. He must also keep records, photographs and archives that document the organisation's activities. These duties are unglamorous but decisive: without monitoring, the organisation does not know it is being misreported; without evaluation, it does not know whether its PR money achieved anything at all.

Professional Trait 1: Integrity and Ethical Sense

Integrity is the practitioner's capital. He deals in credibility, and a single proved lie destroys his usefulness permanently, because journalists and publics will never again accept his word at face value. The professional therefore verifies facts before releasing them, refuses to plant false stories against competitors, never bribes journalists or officials, discloses on whose behalf he

speaks, and observes the codes of bodies such as the International Public Relations Association and the Public Relations Society of America.

Integrity also has a courage dimension: the practitioner must tell his own management the truth it may not wish to hear — that a policy is indefensible, that an apology is due, that a promised date cannot be met. The hired flatterer who approves everything is not practising PR but sycophancy, and in the long run harms the employer he pretends to serve. In the Pakistani setting, where pressure for favours and planted news is common, this trait separates the professional from the fixer.

Professional Trait 2: Communication Ability and Knowledge

The practitioner must be an exceptional communicator: fluent in the languages of his publics — in Pakistan typically Urdu and English, and often a regional language — skilled in writing for print, broadcast and digital media, confident in public speaking and capable of listening with genuine attention. Communication ability includes translation in the deeper sense: converting the technical language of engineers, doctors, economists and lawyers into words the common reader understands without distortion.

Equally necessary is broad knowledge. The practitioner should understand his organisation's work, the country's political and economic system, media laws and ethics, psychology and sociology of audiences, and the working of each medium he uses. He reads newspapers daily, keeps abreast of current affairs and studies rival organisations. A PRO for a health department who knows nothing of epidemiology, or for a bank who cannot read a balance sheet, will be exposed in the first serious press conference.

Professional Trait 3: Judgment, Calmness, Tact and Organisational Ability

Sound judgment tells the practitioner what is news, what should be said now, what should wait and what should never be said at all. News sense, timing and proportion are largely matters of judgment matured by experience. Calmness under pressure is its companion trait: crises produce panic in organisations, and the practitioner who loses his temper with a journalist or panics before a camera multiplies the damage. The professional stays courteous, thinks before speaking and treats even hostile questions as opportunities to place facts on record.

Tact and sociability are equally essential. The practitioner meets people of every class and temper — ministers and villagers, editors and union leaders — and must win cooperation without servility. He needs strong organisational ability to run events, campaigns and publications on schedule, physical stamina for long and irregular hours, and creative imagination to present routine information freshly. Finally, he requires balanced loyalty: complete commitment to his organisation's legitimate interests, combined with enough independence to refuse an unethical instruction and, if necessary, resign rather than deceive the public.

Conclusion

In sum, the duties of the public relations practitioner cover the whole communication life of an organisation: researching publics, counselling management, planning programmes, writing and producing material, handling media, representing the organisation, communicating internally and evaluating results. These duties can only be discharged by a person of integrity, linguistic and media skill, wide knowledge, mature judgment, calm temperament and tact. PR is

therefore properly a profession, not a posting of convenience. Institutions in Pakistan that appoint trained practitioners and grant them access to decision-making obtain honest counsel and durable goodwill; those that appoint unqualified favourites obtain neither.

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Question 3: Political Public Relations and Propaganda Techniques (20 Marks)

Write a detailed note on political PR, explaining how propaganda techniques are deployed by political parties to achieve their objectives.

Introduction

Political public relations is the application of PR principles to politics: the planned communication by which political parties, leaders and governments build an image, present policies, mobilise supporters and win and retain power. In a democracy, votes are the decisive resource, and votes follow perceptions. A party may possess the better manifesto, yet lose to a rival that communicates more skilfully. Political PR therefore manages the leader's image, the party's symbols and narrative, relations with media, election campaigns and, once in office, the government's continuing explanation of its performance.

Political PR overlaps with propaganda, and the two must be distinguished. Public relations, at its professional best, is two-way, truthful and concerned with long-term goodwill; propaganda is one-way communication designed to manipulate attitudes and behaviour in the propagandist's interest, often by emotional, selective or deceptive means. In practice political parties use both. This answer examines the field of political PR and then explains the classic propaganda techniques — name calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking and bandwagon, among others — showing how parties deploy them to achieve identifiable objectives.

The Scope and Instruments of Political PR

Political PR begins with research: constituency surveys, focus groups and data analysis that reveal what voters fear, hope and resent. On this foundation the party builds its positioning — the simple, repeatable identity it wants voters to recall, such as the party of the poor, of national dignity, of clean government or of development. Professional consultants design logos, colours, slogans, anthems and the leader's wardrobe and body language, because in the television and smartphone age the visual message often travels further than the speech.

Its instruments include rallies and processions, press conferences, talk-show appearances, advertising, posters and wall chalking in older practice, and today above all social media teams that run official pages, trend hashtags, circulate short video clips and answer opponents within minutes. In government, political PR continues through information ministries, spokespersons and development advertising. Its objectives are constant: to keep the leader visible and favourably defined, to set the agenda of public debate, to demoralise opponents, to convert sympathisers into voters and voters into committed workers, and after victory, to sustain consent for policies that impose short-term costs.

Propaganda Techniques 1: Name Calling and Glittering Generalities

Name calling attaches a bad label to an opponent so that the audience condemns him without examining evidence: corrupt, traitor, puppet, thief, enemy of the people, agent of foreign powers. Pakistani politics is rich in such labels, hurled in rallies and talk shows precisely because a memorable insult displaces argument. The technique works on the principle of guilt by label;

once a rival is fixed in the public mind as dishonest, every subsequent allegation against him is believed automatically and his denials are ignored.

Glittering generalities is the opposite device applied to oneself: virtuous but vague words — change, revolution, justice, prosperity, accountability, new Pakistan, real freedom — which everyone supports because no one has defined them. The slogan promises a radiant future while committing the party to nothing measurable. Both techniques are usually combined in a single campaign: we are the glittering future; they are the named and shamed past. The voter's emotions are fully engaged while his reason is given almost nothing to examine.

Propaganda Techniques 2: Transfer, Testimonial and Plain Folks

Transfer borrows the prestige of a respected symbol — religion, the flag, the armed forces, the founder of the nation, a revered historical figure — and attaches it to the party or leader. Posters that place a candidate beside the Quaid-e-Azam, speeches saturated with religious vocabulary, and ceremonies at national monuments all seek to transfer the audience's existing reverence to a political claimant who has not earned it by performance.

Testimonial uses a respected or famous person to endorse the candidate: a cricketer, film star, scholar or retired official appears on stage or in an advertisement and declares his support, and fans transfer their affection to the party. Plain folks is the reverse performance: the wealthy leader eats at a roadside dhaba, travels without protocol for the cameras, speaks in colloquial language and presents himself as one of the ordinary people, so that voters judge him by identification rather than by record. All three techniques substitute association for argument —

who stands with the leader, and what he resembles, replace what he has done and proposes to do.

Propaganda Techniques 3: Card Stacking, Bandwagon and Repetition

Card stacking is the selective use of facts: the party publicises only evidence in its favour and suppresses, distorts or buries the rest. A government advertises kilometres of road built but not the inflation rate; an opposition party quotes the price of petrol but not of the international market that caused it. Statistics are chosen, cropped and timed. Because each individual item may be technically true, card stacking is the most respectable-looking and therefore the most effective of techniques in educated debate.

The bandwagon technique creates the impression that everyone is joining the winning side: massive rallies are staged and photographed from flattering angles, defections from other parties are announced daily, sponsored surveys predict victory, and the slogan becomes that resistance is pointless because the wave cannot be stopped. Human beings prefer to be with winners, so undecided voters drift to the apparently ascendant party. Repetition underlies all of this: a charge or slogan repeated across rallies, talk shows and social media until familiarity is mistaken for truth. The modern addition is the organised social media troll and bot network, which manufactures repetition and the bandwagon illusion at industrial scale, trends fabricated hashtags and floods opponents' accounts with abuse.

Objectives Served and the Democratic Problem

Each technique serves the party's concrete objectives. Name calling destroys the opponent's credibility so his arguments need not be answered. Glittering generalities unite a coalition of

voters who would disagree on details. Transfer and testimonial borrow trust the party has not yet built. Plain folks dissolves the class distance between elite leaders and poor voters. Card stacking controls the criteria by which performance is judged. Bandwagon converts opinion into momentum at election time. Together they aim at the single objective of power: maximum votes at minimum accountability for specifics.

The democratic problem is obvious. Propaganda treats citizens as targets to be engineered rather than judges to be convinced, and its heavy use degrades public discourse, deepens polarisation and makes post-election governance harder, because expectations raised by glittering promises cannot be fulfilled. The remedy lies partly in law and media literacy, but chiefly in the voter's own discipline: asking for evidence, comparing complete records and noticing which technique is being used on him. A student of PR should be able to name these devices precisely because naming them is the first step in resisting them.

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Conclusion

To conclude, political PR is a permanent and legitimate activity — parties must explain themselves and mobilise support — but it constantly tempts its practitioners toward propaganda, the one-way manipulation of opinion through name calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking, bandwagon and endless repetition. Pakistani parties deploy the full repertoire, now amplified by professional consultants and social media machinery. Understanding these techniques serves two purposes for the student: it reveals how political consent is manufactured in practice, and it marks the ethical boundary that

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professional public relations, committed to truth and two-way communication, must not cross even in politics.

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Question 4: Public Relations and Development at the Macro and Micro Levels (20 Marks)

Discuss the role of public relations for the macro and micro level of development within a society.

Introduction

Development means more than growth in income; it is the improvement of a society's health, education, infrastructure, institutions and quality of life, and it cannot be achieved by investment alone. Roads are encroached upon, vaccines refused, taxes evaded, family planning resisted and schools boycotted when people do not understand, trust or accept the programmes designed for them. Development therefore has a communication problem at its core, and public relations — the discipline of building understanding and participation between institutions and publics — is one of its essential instruments.

Analysts distinguish the macro level, where PR supports national policies, sector-wide programmes and the country's image, from the micro level, where it works in a village, a factory, a school or a neighbourhood to change specific behaviours. The two levels are connected: national campaigns succeed only when micro-level communication converts policy into daily practice, and local projects survive only when macro-level policy and publicity sustain them. This answer discusses both levels and their interdependence, with examples drawn mainly from Pakistan.

The Macro Level: Policy Support and National Campaigns

At the macro level, government PR explains national plans and laws so that citizens can cooperate with them: the budget, census, taxation drives, energy conservation, anti-smuggling and export promotion all depend on public understanding. A census, for instance, is a statistical exercise that fails if households hide members from enumerators; PR prepares the population to cooperate. Similarly, tax collection improves when communication presents payment not as extortion but as the citizen's share in schools and hospitals, backed by visible fairness.

Macro PR also runs nationwide behaviour-change campaigns in health and population: polio immunisation, mother and child health, iodised salt, anti-dengue precautions, road safety and literacy drives. Through mass media, these campaigns create a climate of awareness within which local workers operate. A further macro function is nation building: promoting national cohesion, respect for institutions and a shared identity in a diverse federation, and projecting the country's image abroad to attract tourism, trade and investment — the work done for Pakistan by its missions, information ministry and campaigns presenting the country's culture and landscapes to the world.

The Macro Level: Feedback, Legitimacy and Crisis of the State

Two-way PR at the macro level carries society's voice upward. Grievance cells, public hearings, talk shows, opinion surveys and complaint portals tell planners where a programme is failing — a water scheme captured by local influentials, a hospital without medicines, a subsidy not reaching the poor. Without this feedback channel, plans are drawn in Islamabad and provincial

capitals against imaginary conditions, and failure is discovered only in unrest. PR thus gives development administration its corrective mechanism.

Macro PR also underwrites the legitimacy on which all development depends. Programmes imposed on a suspicious population are sabotaged or abandoned at the next change of government, while programmes the public understands and owns survive political transitions. In national emergencies — floods, earthquakes, epidemics — state PR coordinates information, appeals for relief and counters rumour, as Pakistan witnessed in the flood emergencies when coordinated communication moved donations, volunteers and supplies at national scale. In short, at the macro level PR converts state power into public cooperation, without which plans remain paper.

The Micro Level: Community and Institutional Development

At the micro level, PR works face to face. A health department's communication staff in one district organises mosque announcements, school sessions and lady health worker visits so that mothers of that district actually bring children for immunisation. An agricultural extension officer uses farmer meetings, field days and demonstration plots to persuade cultivators to adopt a new seed or conserve water. A factory's PR and personnel function settles workers' grievances, runs safety and literacy programmes and keeps the surrounding village informed, turning potential conflict into local employment goodwill. A school or university maintains relations with parents and its neighbourhood so that enrolment rises and the institution is protected as a community asset.

Micro-level PR also has a protective function for development assets themselves. A water supply scheme, a basic health unit or a girls' school that the community regards as its own is guarded, maintained and reported upon by that community, while an identical facility regarded as an outsider's property is neglected, encroached upon and stripped. Extension workers across Pakistan have long observed that the villages which sustain projects are not necessarily the richest but the best consulted: where people were informed before work began, contributed labour or land voluntarily and saw their elders honoured in the process, the project acquired local owners. This is public relations in its oldest and most practical form — respect communicated before resources are spent.

The micro level is where development is finally decided, because behaviour changes one household at a time. The micro practitioner speaks the local language and idiom, knows the elders, teachers and religious leaders whose endorsement opens doors, and can adapt the national message to local conditions — for example, scheduling a vaccination camp around harvest work or a women's literacy class around domestic routines. Micro PR also builds local leadership: organising village committees, water user associations and parent-teacher councils gives development projects owners who maintain them after the funding agency departs.

Interdependence of the Two Levels and Limitations

Neither level works alone. Macro campaigns create awareness and social approval — a television message that immunisation is safe and a national duty — but only micro communication answers the individual mother's specific fear and brings her child to the centre. Conversely, successful micro projects supply the success stories, photographs and evidence that

macro publicity uses to scale a programme nationally. The polio programme illustrates the complete circuit: national media campaigns, provincial coordination, district communication officers, and finally a vaccinator and a trusted local voice at the doorstep.

PR's contribution also has limits that honesty requires noting. Communication cannot substitute for performance: no campaign can persuade people that a hospital is good when it has no doctor, or that water is clean when it visibly is not. Where macro PR degenerates into publicity for rulers rather than information for citizens, it destroys the credibility on which development communication depends. And micro work is labour-intensive and slow, tempting agencies to spend on visible media instead. Development PR succeeds only when it remains two-way, truthful and joined to real delivery on the ground.

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Conclusion

To conclude, public relations serves development at the macro level by explaining policy, mounting national campaigns, carrying feedback to planners, building legitimacy and projecting the country's image, and at the micro level by converting messages into behaviour within communities and institutions through trusted local communication. Development fails most often not for lack of money or technique but for lack of participation, and participation is precisely what professional PR creates. A society that invests in honest, two-way development communication multiplies the value of every rupee it spends on the development itself.

Table 1: PR for development — macro and micro levels compared

Aspect	Macro level	Micro level
Arena	Nation, province, whole sector	District, village, institution, neighbourhood

Main actors	Information ministries, national media, programme headquarters	Field officers, local elders, teachers, health workers
Typical tasks	Policy explanation, national campaigns, image abroad, feedback systems	Doorstep persuasion, local meetings, committees, grievance handling
Media used	TV, radio, national press, national social media	Interpersonal contact, mosque and school announcements, local events
Example	National polio and census campaigns	A district team persuading one mohalla's mothers to immunise children

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Question 5: Short Notes — PR as an Industry in Pakistan; Advertising and Publicity (20 Marks)

Write short notes on the following: (1) PR as an industry in Pakistan; (2) Advertising and Publicity.

Introduction

This question requires two short notes. The first examines public relations as an industry in Pakistan — its origins in government information departments, its growth in the corporate and agency sectors, its present structure and its professional weaknesses. The second explains advertising and publicity, the two communication activities most often confused with public relations, and clarifies how each differs from PR and from the other in cost, control and credibility. Both notes matter for the student because the Pakistani practitioner works daily at the boundary between these activities, and employers frequently expect one officer to perform all three.

Note 1: PR as an Industry in Pakistan — Origins and Structure

Public relations in Pakistan began as a government activity. At independence the state needed to inform a largely illiterate population and to project a new country, and it built information machinery — the Press Information Department, provincial information departments, Radio Pakistan's publicity apparatus and information officers attached to ministries, districts and public corporations. For decades 'PR' in Pakistan effectively meant this government information

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service plus the protocol and liaison work of public sector organisations such as railways, airlines, banks and development authorities.

The private industry grew later, driven by multinational companies, banks, telecom operators and large local groups that needed professional communication, and by advertising agencies that opened PR divisions or affiliated with international PR networks. Today the industry has three segments: in-house departments of corporations, government and NGOs; independent PR consultancies and agency PR arms concentrated in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad; and freelance consultants and digital communication firms. Services offered include media relations, corporate communication, event management, crisis handling, government relations, corporate social responsibility programmes and, increasingly, social media and influencer management, which is now the fastest growing part of the business.

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Note 1 (continued): Present Condition and Problems of the Industry

The industry's growth is real but uneven. Demand has expanded because competitive markets, twenty-four-hour news channels and social media have made reputation a boardroom concern; a single viral incident can destroy a brand, so companies retain PR help before trouble comes. Universities, including Allama Iqbal Open University, now teach PR as a distinct subject, and trained graduates are slowly replacing the untrained liaison appointees of the past. Multinational clients in particular insist on strategy, measurement and written reporting, which has raised professional standards in the agencies serving them.

Yet serious weaknesses persist. Many organisations still treat the PRO as a protocol officer for receiving guests and booking hotels, and appoint him after decisions are taken, denying PR its

advisory role. No strong, unified professional association enforces standards or accreditation, fees in much of the market are low, and the boundary with paid media manipulation — the culture of favours and planted stories — damages the industry's credibility. Evaluation is rare; success is still measured in column centimetres rather than changed attitudes. The industry's future depends on correcting these faults: trained staff, ethical codes actually observed, digital competence and research-based practice. The direction of growth, especially in digital and crisis work, is nevertheless unmistakably upward.

Note 2: Advertising — Meaning and Features

Advertising is paid, non-personal communication through mass media by an identified sponsor, designed to inform and persuade a target audience to buy a product, use a service or accept an idea. Every element of the definition matters. It is paid: the advertiser buys space in newspapers and magazines or time on television, radio and digital platforms, and because he pays, he controls the content, size, timing and repetition of the message exactly. It is non-personal: the message reaches the audience through media, not through a salesman face to face. And the sponsor is identified, so the audience knows who is speaking and can discount the message accordingly.

Advertising's strengths are control, reach and repetition: a bank launching a new account or a telecom company announcing a package can place an identical, carefully crafted message before millions within a day and repeat it until it registers. Its weakness is credibility: everyone knows the sponsor paid to praise himself, so claims are received with scepticism, and costs are high, especially on television. In Pakistan advertising is a large, organised industry of agencies,

media buying houses and production firms, regulated in broadcast content and subject to taxation and codes regarding decency and health claims. Within an organisation's total communication, advertising belongs to marketing: its horizon is sales and market share, and it is judged by commercial results.

Note 2 (continued): Publicity — Meaning, and How It Differs

Publicity is the dissemination of information about an organisation, product or person through the media without payment for space or time. When a newspaper reports a university's convocation, a channel covers a company's flood relief work or a magazine profiles a new author, that coverage is publicity. It is generated by PR activity — press releases, conferences, events and newsworthy performance — but the decision to publish, the length, the placement and the tone all belong to the editor, not to the organisation. Publicity is therefore the opposite of advertising on control: what is gained in credibility is surrendered in command of the message.

The credibility advantage is publicity's great value. Because an independent medium chose to carry the item, audiences treat it as news rather than salesmanship, and third-party endorsement persuades where self-praise fails. Publicity can also be negative — a scandal, accident or court case receives coverage the organisation would pay anything to avoid — which advertising, being controlled, never suffers in the same way. The three activities thus form a clear set: public relations is the overall management function concerned with understanding and goodwill among all publics; advertising is the paid, controlled tool usually serving marketing; publicity is the unpaid, uncontrolled media coverage that good PR earns and bad

performance endangers. A competent practitioner uses advertising when control and timing are essential, cultivates publicity for credible visibility, and subordinates both to the long-term relationships that are PR's real product.

Conclusion

In conclusion, PR as an industry in Pakistan has travelled from government information offices to a diversified field of in-house departments, consultancies and digital firms, growing in demand and skill while still struggling for professional status, ethical discipline and proper status within management. Advertising and publicity, its two neighbouring activities, are distinguished by payment and control: advertising is bought and therefore controlled but discounted by audiences, while publicity is earned and therefore credible but uncontrolled and sometimes hostile. Knowing exactly which activity one is performing — and what it can and cannot achieve — is the beginning of professional competence in this field.

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