

BY MRS. HABEEB

Say it with a song

Pakistan may be remembered in History.....as the Nation which could sing at every occasion -- good or bad, happy or sad.

Whether the movies hero is wooing his sweetheart or the Govt. its masses -- whether we are boosting a lost morale or building up a false sense of security.. whether we are trying to sell a brand of Govt. or a new brand of safety pins.... we can resort to a song - anytime and everytime!

I wonder what has contributed to our staggering mass of song-writers, when there is hardly anyone who is able to project the same idea in a drama or play?

The Radio and T.V. are living examples of this. Except for the original Alif aur Noon series, which brought the question under scrutiny so clearly before the viewer (and so entertainingly) there has been nothing worth remembering since then.

The Platform.... was another exception, where actions and scenes spoke for themselves.

We seem to specialise in giving talks and lectures or resort to naghmas in the hope of projecting ideas. The latest on TV is about a hundred boys and girls singing for the and the poor boys only heard not seen. We also cannot and do not know how to discuss a point between three or four people.

We have never learnt to speak softly and never practise the courtesy of allowing each person who is participating in a discussion to voice his or her opinion.

If you have ever sat through such a discussion on T.V. or radio (the latest example -- announcement of Jashne Tameel awards) you have been shamed into tears.... the discussions turn into a quarrelsome free for all kind of affair. The compare can rarely manage to hush them... more often than not his efforts seems to add to the prevailing confusion.

If it was a discussion among the masses, one may for give such a thing, but when students and not only students but adults who are supposed to enlighten the ordinary masses resort to it, its most disheartening.

The very purpose of holding a discussion is lost. The viewer thinks he or she is going to learn some facts about the topic under discussion. The viewer would like to know what the learned guests think, what arguments they can put for or against the topic and what decision they come to. It is a rare occasion if at all, when the discussion comes to a fruitful end, or when the viewer hears a definite opinion. I wonder, is the topic left in mind-air after the camera's clicked off or does the discussion continue. I'd love to be there at the end of it all.

Or may be the camera should should come on, after the initial stage of quarreling, and arguing is over and it is time to wind up the discussion. So that instead of apologising for shortage of time and cutting off they have all the time to say what the outcome of the discussion was.

Our propaganda machine too seems to start working when all the harm is done.... We seem to forget the age old maxim that Prevention is better than Cure. We never do anything at the right time and then when its too late we spend the poor nation's money overdoing it.

I guess if a long playing record served propaganda's purpose we would have fared much better and kept our record straight as the Nation of songs.

In time of crisis our musical output seems to increase like magic, taranas and poetry by the dozens. The rest of the time, naghmas and boring discussing.

The cinema people cry off the mediocrity charges and blame the audience and the censors - and what excuse the T.V. a media for mass enlightenment?