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**1st SEMESTER EXAMINATION – BBA
NOV – DEC 2009**

**BUSINESS LANGUAGE
(HONOURS)**

BLNA3101

Saturday, December 05, 2009

09:30 am to 11:30 am

Time allowed: 2 hours

Full Marks: 50

Instructions:

- Use fountain pen or ball-point pen of blue or black ink.
- Answer in own words as far as practicable.
- Do not write anything on the Question paper other than Roll No.

Answer **Question Nos. 1 and 4** and **ANY THREE** from the rest

1. Read the passage and answer the following questions:

First AOL and Time Warner announced their intention to combine. Then came Time Warner/ EMI and Tribune/ Times Mirror. Even more significant, however, has been the speculation that these mergers have caused. If these transactions are consummated, a large number of additional media mergers are expected. There is even the possibility of a nightmare scenario – a wave of media mergers so large that within a decade most of our information will be supplied by perhaps six of these huge conglomerates and a fringe of much smaller firms.

It's time to ask two critical questions. Is this kind of media oligopoly what we, as a society, want? And if not, can the antitrust laws effectively prevent the threatened merger wave? The answer to the first question is clear. We do not want a media oligopoly. The answer to the second question, however, is far less certain. We should distrust a media oligopoly because it would give under control to a small number of individuals. This need not manifest itself in a price rise for the daily newspaper or AOL's monthly fee. Rather, it could consist of a change in editorial viewpoints, a shift in the relative prominence of links to certain websites or a decision not to cover certain topics, because they are not "newsworthy". These problems could exist without any improper intent on the part of the media barons. Even if they try to be fair and objective, they will necessarily bring their own worldview to the job. And, with time, some of these conglomerates may be controlled by people who are not fair or objective.

At first it might appear that the antitrust laws can be of little help in grappling with the issues presented by large media mergers. The anti-mergers laws are commonly understood as protecting price competition, and a relatively small number of firms – to greatly oversimplify – let's say, at most half a dozen are normally thought to be enough to keep a market price competitive. In industry after industry firms merge until there is only a handful left, and antitrust enforcers are normally unable to do anything to prevent this. (In former years mergers were governed by an "incipiency" standard that prevented mergers and merger waves well before they would have led to very large or likely anticompetitive problems.) Even if a handful of firms are enough to insure effective competition in most industries, would six conglomerate media firms be sufficient for the diversity of viewpoints necessary to democracy? Would we be reassured if they could somehow guarantee that they would sell their magazines and internet advertisements at competitive prices?

I am hopeful that the antitrust laws, if correctly and vigorously interpreted, are adaptable enough to meet this challenge. This is because antitrust is not exclusively about price. It is essentially about choice – about giving consumers a competitive range of options in the marketplace, so that they can make their own, effective selection from the market's offerings. Consumers should be able to make their choices along any dimension important to them- including price, variety and editorial viewpoint.

Communications media compete in part by offering independent editorial viewpoints and an independent gate-keeper function. Six media firms cannot effectively respond to the demand for choice or diversity competition by extending their product lines, because new media products will inevitably bear, to some degree, the perspective of their corporate parent. For these reasons competition in terms of editorial viewpoint or gate-keeping can be guaranteed only by insuring that a media market contains a significantly larger number of firms than is required for price competition in other more conventional markets.

It is unclear, however, whether this interpretation of the antitrust laws will be applied by the enforcement agencies and the courts. What is needed, therefore, is a much more careful look at the challenges that will be raised by future media mergers.

This could best be accomplished if Congress created a Temporary committee to study Media Mergers and Media Convergence. This committee could include members of Congress, the heads of the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the Justice Department's antitrust division, CEOs of media companies, and representatives of consumer groups. The committee would identify problems that may be caused by large media mergers and by media convergence. If the committee concludes that existing antitrust laws are inadequate, it should recommend to congress that new anti-merger legislation be enacted.

This may be the only way to prevent the nightmare scenario of a media oligopoly.

- (a) What do you understand by the terms 'media mergers' and 'media oligopoly'? How different is 'media merger' from 'media merger wave'? (1+1+1= 3)
- (b) According to the passage, what could be the significant outcome of media oligopoly? (3)
- (c) What is the opinion of the author on the current antitrust laws? (3)
- (d) Supply a suitable title to the passage. (1)

2. Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title: (8+2=10)

Some societies have experimented with eliminating the middleman. Prices can certainly be controlled better if the government acts as the middleman, because, after all goods have to be lifted and transported to the other parts of the country. But governments are not usually very efficient or quick in these matters. Nor are they economical – a lot of file-and-paperwork involving a lot of people adds up to a lot of indirect expense. Although in theory it ought to be possible to reduce prices by eliminating the middleman, in practice it seems to be an essential evil.

Business can be left to find its own level in accordance with the so-called 'laws' of supply and demand. By and large, Pakistan is what is called a 'seller's' market because essential goods are usually in short supply or are inclined to fall below the needs of an overgrowing population. Market manipulation in such a situation is easy and unfortunately fairly common. Goods usually disappear at about the time they are needed most, leading to price spirals and malpractices. Price control under such circumstances becomes a little unrealistic unless a huge department can be set up with vigilance terms and inspectors empowered to raid shops and warehouses. The efforts to control a seller's market are so great and the costs so high that in fact not a great deal of control can be exercised. An alternative method is to encourage the growth of buyer's market in which the customer has a choice between many competing products. Competition automatically forces good quality and low prices on the goods. This is at present only possible in the high production areas of the world. But competition leads to malpractices of a different kind. Survival for a business often depends upon the destruction of competing business and big companies have a natural advantage over smaller ones. An obsessive drive to 'sell' is generated in such a system. Huge sums are spent on advertising, the costs of which are transferred to the buyer. People are tricked and badgered into buying things they do not really need.

3. (a) Expand **any one** of the following ideas: (5)

- (i) People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
- (ii) Truth has a good face but bad clothes.
- (iii) He that measures not himself is measured.
- (iv) Pride goes before a fall.

(b) Choose the correct synonym for each of the following words/ expressions given below: (5)

- (i) enunciate
 - (a) Commence
 - (b) articulate
 - (c) educate
 - (d) dictate

- (ii) Demographic
 - (a) Related to the study of the democracy
 - (b) Related to the study of demons
 - (c) Related to the study of the population
 - (d) Related to the study of the communication

- (iii) panacea
 - (a) a remedy for all diseases
 - (b) a fashionable display of things
 - (c) beauty pageant
 - (d) a pandemic

- (iv) Veracity
 - (a) variation
 - (b) audacity
 - (c) capacity
 - (d) truth

- (v) Unequivocal
 - (a) careless
 - (b) unmistakable
 - (c) variable
 - (d) incomparable

4. Write an essay on **any one** of the following topics: (10)
- (a) The recent hike in prices of commodities of daily use and its effect on the middle and lower classes.
 - (b) The latest boom in the real estate market
 - (c) The nuclear powers of the world and India's role in it

5. (a) Use **any five** of the following idioms in sentences of your own: (5)
- (i) have one's cake and eat it too
 - (ii) between the devil and the deep blue sea
 - (iii) put the cart before the horse
 - (iv) let the cat out of the bag
 - (v) sail in the same boat
 - (vi) turn a deaf ear
 - (vii) bring to book
 - (viii) take to one's heels
 - (ix) pocket an insult
 - (x) by fits and starts

- (b) Fill in the blanks with correct tenses of the verbs given within brackets: (5)
- (i) Even if you----- (hurry), you would not catch the train.
 - (ii) He----- always------(to be) faithful to me.
 - (iii) The telegraph wires------(cut) by the thieves.
 - (iv) It is the right time for the shop------(close).
 - (v) We must reach in time or we------(fine)
 - (vi) The son arrived after his mother------(die)
 - (vii) Yesterday Mr. Anthony ------(go) out of town.
 - (viii) I told him that we ------(inform) them of our intention a year ago.
 - (ix) He------(work) in this office since October.
 - (x) I showed the teacher what I------(write)

6. (a) Rewrite the following sentences according to the directions given within brackets without changing the meaning of the sentences. (5)
- (i) She said, “ If you cannot face the music, I will have to.” (change the mode of narration)
 - (ii) His unexpected victory surprised everybody in the school. (End with ‘surprise’)
 - (iii) Sheila returned one week ago. (Begin with ‘It has...’)
 - (iv) As soon as the teacher entered the classroom, the students stood up. (Begin with ‘No sooner...’)
 - (v) His father is too honest to accept a bribe. (Remove ‘too’)
- (b) Frame meaningful sentences with both words of each pair: (**any five** pairs) (5)
- (i) appraise: apprise
 - (ii) apposite: opposite
 - (iii) persecute: prosecute
 - (iv) compliment: complement
 - (v) canvas: canvass
 - (vi) conquer: concur
 - (vii) proceed: precede
 - (viii) ardour: order
 - (ix) allusion: illusion
 - (x) difference: deference
7. (a) Change the following sentences into more acceptable business language: (5)
- (i) I want to use your umbrella.
 - (ii) What did you gain by doing this?
 - (iii) Of what help can I be to you?
 - (iv) Pass me the water jug.
 - (v) Drop in at my house for dinner tonight.
- (b) Complete the conversation using your own information. (5)
- Eliza: I think I’m going to change my job.
 Peter: But why.....
 Eliza: There’s no scope for.....
 Peter: I see. In any case, I think you should stick around for a couple of months more.
 After all, you joined only a few months back.
 Eliza:.....
 Peter:.....Each to his own taste.
