

Title of the submission : Public Service Broadcasting in India

Name(s) of the author(s) : Prof. Devesh Kishore

Affiliation(s) of the author(s): Head, Education, Research and Training Unit

Address(es) of the author(s): Electronic Media Production Centre,
Indira Gandhi National Open University
(IGNOU), Maidan Garhi, New Delhi - 110068

E-mail address(es) of the author(s), and : deveshkishore@hotmail.com

Abstract of paper :

The goal of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is to meet community needs which exists beyond traditional geographic and institutional boundaries. Today, Prasar Bharti through All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) networks provide maximum coverage of the population and one of the largest terrestrial networks in the world. In a country where the illiteracy rate is high, this medium has a great potentiality to inform, educate and entertain people. The immense social responsibility of the Prasar Bharti-AIR and DD is consonant with the potential of the network as it reaches vast masses of the people through out the country. Over the years, Doordarshan & All India Radio true to its role as a public broadcaster have been engaged in multifarious activities. In a time of radical change, we must keep the best of what we do and reinvent the rest. The future promises to be exciting and challenging for all. With the move into digital age, public broadcasting is in the forefront of using new technology to provide better service and programmes to an even wider and more diverse community. A national service planned, developed and operated by the Prasar Bharti presently touches the lives of millions each and everyday, providing the highest quality experience in cultural and performing arts, information and public affairs documentaries and educational programming.

Public Service Broadcasting in India

The Indian constitution has guaranteed freedom of speech and expression as fundamental rights of individuals. In the Article 19 (1) (a) of the Indian Constitution, it is stated : “ All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression”. Broadcasting is the most important mass communication channel through which the right to freedom of speech and expression i.e. to receive and impart information and disseminate ideas freely and without interference can be sustained. In a developing Country like India with it's high level of illiteracy, people living below poverty line and having problems in gaining access to information, the role of broadcasting is critical to the building of democratic ethos, developing economy, social value system and culture.

The goal of Public Service Broadcasting the world over is to make needed information available at doorsteps of everyone. It should be wide ranging in it's appeal, reliable, entertaining, instructive and informative serving only one master – it's public. It strives to engage all communities through thought provoking broadcast programmes and outreach projects. It channelises the information and ideas that improve communities socially, culturally and economically.

PUBLIC BRADCASTING SYSTEMS

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING (CPB) of USA

In USA the Public Broadcasting Act Sec. 396 Corporation for Public

*Prof. Devesh Kishore, Head, Education, Research and Training Unit, Electronic Media Production Centre, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi – 110068, Phone : 011-26868450, Residence 0120-2573937. E-mail : deveshkishore@hotmail.com

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Broadcasting (CPB) Congressional Declaration of Policy states that :

- (1) It is in public interest to encourage the growth and development of :
 - (A) Public radio and television broadcasting, including the use of such media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes.
 - (B) Non-broadcast telecommunication technologies for the delivery of public telecommunications services.
- (2) Expansion and development of public telecommunications and of diversity of its programming depend on freedom, imagination, and initiative on both local and national levels;
- (3) The encouragement and support of public telecommunications, while matters of importance for private and local development, are also of appropriate and important concern to the Federal Government;
- (4) It furthers the general welfare to encourage public telecommunication services which will be responsive to the interests of people both in particular localities and throughout the United States, which will constitute an expression of diversity and excellence, and which will constitute a source of alternative telecommunications services for all the citizens of the Nation;
- (5) The development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities;
- (6) It is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and support a national policy that will most effectively make public telecommunications services available to all citizens of the United States;
- (7) Public television and radio stations and public telecommunications services constitute valuable local community resources for utilizing

electronic media to address national concerns and solve local problems through community programs and outreach programmes ;

- (8) It is in the public interest for the Federal Government to ensure that all citizens of the United States have access to public telecommunications services through all appropriate available telecommunications distribution technologies; and
- (9) A private corporation should be created to facilitate the development of public telecommunications and to afford maximum protection from extraneous interference and control.

Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a non-profit institution engaged primarily in the production, acquisition, distribution or dissemination of educational and cultural television or radio programmes and it meets the needs of the public.

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC) OF UK

One of the first to recognise the role of Broadcasting to do more than entertainment was the first Director General, John Reith of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). As early as 1924 he wrote. “ I think it will be admitted by all that to have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose and pursuit of entertainment alone would have been a prostitution of its power and an insult to the character and intelligence of the people.”In its Royal Charter of 1936, the BBC’s role as educator is described like this : “In view of the widespread interest...and of the great value of the Service as a means of information, education and entertainment, we deem it desirable that the Service should continue to be developed and exploited to the best advantage and in the national interest.....”

Today BBC Education spans a wide range of activities – from programmes and resources for Schools and the Open University to campaigns like Web Wise, helping people to become confident web users. From Teletubbies and Tweenies to Back to the Floor, BBC Education aims to make learning fun, with high quality learning resources on television, radio and online. Education is one of the first areas to fully embrace the digital age, and will be developing interactive multimedia learning packages for the new platforms as they become available. With BBC Knowledge, the UK's first public service digital learning channel, BBC Education is dedicated to bringing the best of the new technologies to learning.

NIPPON HOSSO KOKKAI (NHK) OF JAPAN

In Japan, broadcasting began as a public operation by NHK and the “Social responsibilities” are defined in the broadcasting law. Based on this law, NHK and the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters (made up of 201 broadcasters as on Feb 1, 2001) Set up the “outline of Broadcasting Ethics” (September 19, 1996). The concept of “Self-regulation”, “ Social responsibilities” and “ public interest requirement of media” are as key concepts to achieve the harmony between “ freedom of speech and expression” and “ social order” under the liberal and democratic system. NHK states in the “ Basic Plans for Domestic programming in 2000” which appeared in “ NHK Business Report” as follows : “ We aim at Broadcasting that is trustworthy and approachable. We will always be aware of the audience, make full use of new media such as the Internet, and establish two way communication by absorbing many opinions, and reflecting them in the contents. In view of the new age of multiple media in the 21st century, we will endeavor to strengthen the basis of public broadcasting by enhancing the

connection with the audience.” Thus NHK in Japan is conscious of its public broadcasting responsibilities.

PRASAR BHARTI OF INDIA

Prasar Bharti (Broadcasting Corporation of India) was constituted by the Govt. of India to fulfil its commitment to free electronic media from its control. The Prasar Bharti Act 1990 was enacted by the Indian parliament and brought in force in 1997. It has been created as an autonomous body which is envisaged to be the Public Service Broadcaster of India. The main functions of the Prasar Bharti are :

1. To organise public service broadcasting services to inform, educate and entertain the public and to ensure a balanced development of broadcasting on radio and television,
2. Upholding the unity and integrity of the country and values enshrined in the constitution,
3. Paying special attention to the fields of education and spread of literacy, agriculture, rural development, environment, health and family welfare, science and technology,
4. Safeguarding the citizen’s right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively on all matters of public interest, national, international., and presenting a fair and balanced flow of information including contrasting views without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own.
5. Providing adequate broadcast coverage to cultures, languages, sports, special needs of youth, status and problems of women and children, weaker section of people, disadvantaged group of the society, minorities and tribal communities.

6. Providing R and D activities to ensure that Radio and TV broadcasting technology are constantly updated and expanding broadcasting facilities by establishing additional channels of transmission at various level.

Corporation has been advised to take steps as it thinks fit to ensure that broadcasting is conducted as a public service to provide and produce programmes; to establish a system for gathering of news for radio & TV and maintain a library of radio, TV and other materials.

The Central Govt. has retained the power to determine the maximum limit of broadcast time in respect of advertisement for the purpose of ensuring that adequate time is made available for the promotion of the objectives of public broadcasting Services.

Prasar Bharti will achieve the objective of Public Service Broadcasting through All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) which were earlier working as independent media units under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Min of I & B), Govt. of India.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BROADCASTING

Broadcasting in an organised way was started in India by the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) in 1927. It went into liquidation due to financial problems and was close down in March 1930. Government made an attempt to start in April 1930 as Indian Broadcasting Service and again it was closed down in 1931. In 1936 the name of “ All India Radio” (AIR) was adopted for Broadcasting Services. Since then it has been growing at fast speed.

All India Radio at present has 208 Radio Stations. A network of 332 transmitters (149 MW, 55 SW, 128 FM) provides radio coverage to a

population of 99 % (98.82) spread over 90 % (89.51 %) area of the country. All India Radio Broadcasting centres have been networked through satellite for the relay of national and regional programmes. It puts out 316 news bulletins with a total duration of 39 and half hours. It covers 100 countries in 26 languages with a programme output of about 71 hours. Thus information function is performed well. In case of entertainment around 40 % of the total broadcast on AIR comprises of music, which includes classical, light, folk, film and music belonging to various languages. In case of education a Central Education Planning Unit puts up Science Magazine namely “ Vigyan Bharthi”, HIV/AIDS programme in collaboration with BBC, a serial on Girl child “ Taru” and Phone-in-programmes of IGNOU . There are special educational programmes related to Farm and Home, Family Welfare, children and women.

The AIR network comprises of the national channel, regional stations, local radio station, Vividh Bharati centres, FM stereo service, External services and North East services. “GYAN VANI” devoted to education and development on a FM frequency allotted to IGNOU by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I & B), Government of India. Such 40 FM broadcast stations across the country will be established on decentralized model for education and development by IGNOU. Seven Gyan Vani FM stations all over India have already been commissioned at Allahabad, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Vishakapatnam, Mumbai, Bhopal and Lucknow. The network is slated to expand eventually to 40 locations all over the country. These stations are operating as media cooperatives with day to day programmes contributed by different educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and national level institutions like IGNOU, University Grants Commission (UGC), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Open Institute of Schooling

(NOIS) etc. Mandate of Gyan Vani is to carve out a distinct identity from the other radio channels through its distinct educational awareness out-reach mission and cooperative management philosophy. It will serve as an ideal mass media catering to the local educational, developmental and socio-cultural needs of the community. AIR upholds the democratic values enshrined in the Indian constitution. It promotes a fair and balanced flow of information of national, regional, local and international interest, including contrasting news without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own. The phenomenal growth achieved by AIR through seven decades has made it one of the largest media organization in the world. AIR reaches to all the corners of the country to serve the people.

Doordarshan (DD)

Doordarshan, the national television service of India is devoted to public service broadcasting (is one of the largest terrestrial networks in the world). Doordarshan is also one of the largest broadcasting organizations in the world in terms of the infrastructure of studio and transmitters, the variety of software and the vastness of the viewership. The experimental telecast started in Delhi in September 1959 with a small transmitter and a makeshift studio and a regular daily transmission started in 1965. Television was separated from Radio in 1976 and Doordarshan came into existence, from then onwards, there has been steady progress in Doordarshan. The flagship of Doordarshan – DD-I – operates through a network of 1308 terrestrial transmitters of varying power reaching over 90 percent of the population. Presently, Doordarshan operates 22 channels – the DD1, DD2, DD-news, DD-sports, 11 Regional languages satellite channels, five state networks, an International channel and Educational Channels namely Gyan Darshan1, 2 and 3. During the last few years, the broadcasting scenario in the country has immensely changed and

more so in the field of satellite television broadcasting. The Govt of India has taken vital decisions in the past few years for permitting to set up of uplinking hubs for satellite uplinking by private television broadcasters from the Indian soil allowing Indian Private Companies to set up FM Radio stations, amendments to the cable TV networks (Regulation), Act/Rules, introduction to Direct to Home (DTH) broadcasting, Digitisation of transmission, special package for Jammu and Kashmir, North-East and other border areas.

Gyan Darshan marks a major milestone in the field of Educational Television in India. This is the first full time an education channel of India. It is a joint venture of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Prasar Bharati and IGNOU. Gyan Darshan is envisaged as a public cooperative in which institutions such as the UGC/CEC, NCERT/CIET constitute the major stakeholders while many departments/organizations such as the Indian Institute of Technology, National Open School, National Literary Mission, Directorate of Adult Education, Technical Teachers' Training Institute, the Ministries of Environment, Health, the Indian Railways, Department of Science and Technology, etc. are active partners. It is an exclusive satellite channel which at present gives 24 hours continuous service. The curriculum based as well as career based programmes targeting various groups of learners are balanced with time slots for special programmes on art, culture, science and technology etc. The channel also offers a "window to the world" through programmes acquired from foreign sources. A unique feature of the channel is the high degrees of 'interactivity', which will enable learners of all categories to just 'phone-in' directly to the studios from their homes and seek clarifications from the experts on the toll free telephone no. 1-600-1-12345. Gyan Darshan has successfully completed the second year of its transmission. It was launched formally on 26th January, 2000 by the Hon'ble Minister for

Human Resource Development. Gyan Darshan now goes simulcast both on analogue and digital.

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING TRUST (PSBT)

Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT)with the Prasar Bharti Corporation, the national publicly funded broadcaster, provides Doordarshan public service documentary films. These are aired nationally through its primary terrestrial network. It is a non profit trust registered under the Sec. 12 A of the Income Tax Act in India. It was registered in 2000 and started work a year later. They aspire to international production standards and to create a set of best practices that are credible, transparent and empowering of creativity. Currently they are producing a series of documentary films on IDEAS THAT WORK to promote and inspire innovation, imagination and commitment in problem solving both at local and national levels in India. The Ford Foundation is currently supporting the PSBT. They are developing documentary film making, framing Modules, commissioning books and publications, sponsoring and funding education and research programmes, organising public lectures and seminars. Their mission is to create and sustain an independent, participatory, pluralistic and democratic space in the non-print-media, distanced from commercial imperatives and state/political manipulation. It set standards that the media might also aspire to cultivate :

- Values and good taste of community and citizenship
- In depth insights with accuracy and impartiality
- Reach out to marginalized audiences that do not interest advertisers
- Cultivate diversity
- Accountability
- Development support communication
- Entertainment

As a public service broadcaster, it promotes the interest and concerns of the entire nation, being mindful of the need for harmony and understanding within the country and ensuring that the programmes reflect the varied elements, which make up the composite culture of India. It produces and transmits various programmes designed to awaken, inform, enlighten, educate, entertain and enrich all section of the people. DD produces and transmits programmes relating to developmental activities including, extension work in agriculture, education, health and family welfare and science and technology. It serves the rural, illiterate and under privileged populations, keeping in mind the special needs and interest of the young, social and cultural minorities, the tribal populations and of those residing in border regions, backward or remote areas. It serves the rural population, minority communities, women, children, illiterate as well as the weaker and vulnerable section of the society. Chief Executive, Prasar Bharati Corporation Mr. K.S. Sarma has stated that “Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT) is an innovative effort by Prasar Bharati to enlarge the scope and space for public broadcasting in India by working with civil society groups and the not for profit sector. In the first phase we have together produced and broadcast independent documentary films that are socially responsible, artistic and representative of the diversity of our country and the genius of our people. In keeping with our commitment to bring to the Indian people, a public broadcasting culture of the highest standards, are delighted to collaborate with the PSBT in this ongoing project. I hope that this initiative, will continue to spur quality programmes and creative ideas, many of which have already found great success on the screen at home and at festivals abroad. I with this venture all success and look forward to a renaissance in public broadcasting and the documentary form in India”. According to Mr. Adoor Gopal Krishnan, Chairman PSBT “It is the realization of a bold and imaginative promise to the people of India. A

promise from the community of image makers to the public to create content that reflects the wealth of experiences, traditions and cultures that we are heir to. In keeping with the best traditions of documentary filmmaking, the PSBT will offer its audiences reflections on lived experience and the everyday rhythms of existence. It will offer to filmmakers the opportunity to create innovative, bold, formally sophisticated and committed films. I am grateful to the Prasar Bharti Corporation for joining hands with us to transform this vision of a vigorous documentary culture on a public service broadcasting platform into a reality. PSBT is a result of our common purpose”.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING SYSTEM (PSBS) IN INDIA

STRENGTHS

An critical overview of Public Services Broadcasting of in four democratic countries i.e. Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) of USA, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) of UK, Nippon Hossō Kokkai (NHK) of Japan and Prasar Bharti (Broadcasting Corporation of India) reveals that Prasar Bharti has the largest terrestrial network of All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD). AIR covers about 99 % and Doordarshan about 90 % percent of population of India. In India Prasar Bharti has a strong networking of transmitters, production facilities to meet the needs of the public in terms of varieties of the programme keeping in view the socio-economic values, culture and language milieu of the country.

Prasar Bharti in collaboration of Ministry of Human Resource development and educational organisations like IGNOU, NCERT, IIT, has TV channels fully devoted to education i.e. Gyan Darshan I, II and III. Gyan Darshan channels are digital and all the three channels are running. Gyan

Darshan-I programmes are a mix of all Gyan Drashan channels. Those viewers want a targeted niche channel then they may have to watch GD-II, III and so on. Three additional TV channels to go on air shortly, the immediate are being the Agriculture channel. An exclusive Channel for technical education “Eklavya” (GD-III)has been launched from January 26, 2003. Technology Channel is reaching every nook and corner of this vast country through INSAT 3C satellite. It covers about 3,50,000 engineering students enrolled in 1200 engineering colleges. The channel is designed to carry video courses in different disciplines of engineering and technology. Currently eight complete courses are being run in parallel. This is for the first time in the world that a full time channel has been devoted to technology. About 40 FM Radio Stations namely “Gyan Vani” fully devoted to meet educational, socio-cultural and language needs of the society are being setup. At present 1000 hours ready made package is being prepared which is a mix of pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education, environment, science, technology, health, social justice, women empowerment and so on.

Prasar Bharati is now focussing attention to increase interactivity and audience participation in programmes to make it fully public oriented.

WEAKNESSES :

1. Innovative formats of presentation and production are yet to be developed, created and used. Listeners and viewers have reported that the educational programmes lack effective and interesting presentation techniques. BBC and NHK have been using these techniques to make programmes more interesting and edutainment type.
2. Audience feedback is not being collected effectively, systematically and scientifically. Whatever is being collected is not being used by producers, policy makers and presenters.

3. Lack of creative use of graphics and animation.
4. Anchoring of programme are not lively and interesting enough to hold the attention span of listeners and viewers.

OPPORTUNITIES :

Broadcasting in India is currently undergoing a fundamental transformation and the media scene emerging today is of vital importance to change agents and educators. This change is evident in both its quantitative as well as its qualitative dimensions. An exponential increase in the range of programming available on radio and television has generated a large media industry. If we look at the prevailing scene of electronic media in India or at its shape likely to be, it is really astonishing. The convergence between entertainment advertising and marketing will sustain and shape mass media even more in the future.

In present era, the demand for learning out of school system, learning while doing the job and learning at their own space and timing is increasing day by day. Moreover limitation on availability of seats in educational institutions have compelled learners to adapt new mode of learning i.e. through electronic media. Prasar Bharti has an excellent opportunity to produce programme which meet these needs and more edutainment programmes have to be produced to attract audience.

New media are emerging and convergence of technologies is taking place at a fast speed. Due to convergence of technologies, viz electronics, computer, simputer, telecom and broadcasting, new media is found to proliferate. The emergence of this new media with interactive dimensions, voices, visuals and data communication will cause qualitative changes in the character and contents of conventional mass media. These opportunities will have to be utilized effectively by Prasar Bharati.

THREAT

As the media environment has changed public service broadcasting has to redefine itself to stay true to its mission of public service. Besides, the growth of multi-channel TV, interactive services and new multi-media technologies did not herald an end to quality broadcast and telecast. According to the ITV Chief Richard Eyre “ Public Service Broadcasting will soon be dead because it relies on regulations who will, in no time, no longer be able to do a comprehensive job, because the vast number of sources of broadcast information will be impossible to monitor”. Public Service Broadcasters should forget about chasing audience share and concentrate on quality programmes. This means that the public service broadcasters have to engage in a creatively ambitious, risk-taking, and very large-scale programme enterprises.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OF PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Some of the broad guiding principles of public service broadcasting according to the eminent scholars, thinkers and broadcasters of CPB, BBC, NHK and Prasar Bharati may be summed up as :

1. Editorial independence for public broadcasters should be guaranteed. This implies in day-to-day decision-making processes, especially relating to programme matters.
2. Public officials should refrain from interfering, even informally, in the operation of the public broadcaster. In particular, officials should never seek to influence the nature or content of broadcasts.
3. The accountability of public broadcasters to the public should be assured by a mechanisms, which do not compromise their

independence. Such mechanisms might report to legislators, a public complaints mechanism and/or regional advisory group.

4. Public broadcasters should benefit from stable, adequate funding, provided in such a manner as to safeguard independence.
5. Bodies, which exercise regulatory power over public broadcasters, such as the Board of Directors and broadcaster regulatory authorities, should be fully independent of the government. Such independence should be reflected in the manner of appointments, tenure provisions, conflict of interest rules and requirements of a professional or experimental nature for membership.
6. Public Service Broadcasters should promote diversity and the Government should promote the goal as far as possible.

These social responsibilities of Prasar Bharti - DD and AIR pose a challenging task, if all the objectives carried out successfully could lead to transformation of society through powerful social change.

Conclusion

The goal of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is to meet community needs which exists beyond traditional geographic and institutional boundaries. Today, Prasar Bharti through All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) networks provide maximum coverage of the population and one of the largest terrestrial networks in the world. In a country where the illiteracy rate is high, this medium has a great potentiality to inform, educate and entertain people. The immense social responsibility of the Prasar Bharti-AIR and DD is consonant with the potential of the network as it reaches vast masses of the people through out the country. Over the years, Doordarshan & All India Radio true to its role as a public broadcaster have been engaged in multifarious activities. In a time of radical change, we must keep the best of what we do and reinvent the rest. The future promises to be exciting and challenging for all. With the move into digital age, public broadcasting is in the forefront of using new technology to provide better service and programmes to an even wider and more diverse community. A national service planned, developed and operated by the Prasar Bharti presently touches the lives of millions each and everyday, providing the highest quality experience in cultural and performing arts, information and public affairs documentaries and educational programming.

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