
UNIT 2 GROWTH OF BROADCASTING

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall look at the historical growth and development of broadcasting in India. The growth of broadcasting in India is closely linked to the growth of All India Radio. In the first instance, we shall examine how broadcasting began and developed over the years. We shall look at the various bodies and committees which examined the working of broadcasting in India and the nature of their recommendations. We shall also analyse the importance of an autonomous status for radio and television and the present state of broadcasting in India.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you would be able to:

- discuss the beginnings of broadcasting in general, and in India in particular;
- identify the stages of the growth and development of broadcasting in India;
- analyse the recommendations of various committees; and
- examine the present state of broadcasting in India.

2.2 THE BEGINNINGS OF BROADCASTING

The word 'broadcast' as known today means 'disseminating audible matter from a wireless transmitter'. But, prior to 1921, the word was used in reference to its original meaning to 'scattering seeds over a wide surface'.

2.2.1 Invention of Radio

A look at the beginning of radio reveals that a series of inventions led to the invention of radio. In 1860, **James Maxwell**, a Scottish physicist predicted the existence of electromagnetic waves or what we now call 'radio waves'. In 1886, German physicist **Heinrich Rodolph Hertz** experimentally demonstrated the production and detection of radio waves. **Guglielmo Marconi**, an Italian inventor repeated Hertz experiments and proved the feasibility of radio communication. He sent and received the first wireless signals in Italy in 1895. Further inventions of tubes by **John Fleming** an Englishman and **Lee de Forest** an American were significant steps in the development of radio.

There are conflicting claims for the first broadcast of speech sounds over the air. Some say the first broadcast of speech sounds to be that of **Reginald A. Fessenden** in 1906 from Massachusetts which was heard by radio-equipped ships. Another claim dates back to 1892 wherein 'Hello Rainey' was spoken by Natan B. Stubblefield to a test partner near Murray, Kentucky. It is said that in 1915 the first successful attempts at transmitting music and speech over a transmitter was probably undertaken by an American Company when it sent its programmes across 4,000 miles from Arlington (a U.S. naval station) to the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

During the First World War in 1917, a weekly programme of recorded music was broadcast for the troops by Captain H-de-A-Donisthrope and his wife. At the end of the war in 1920, the Marconi station at Chemsford was set up. It began to broadcast two daily programmes of thirty minutes duration each. These programmes were heard as far as a thousand miles away by ships sailing on the sea. Another famous broadcast was the Daily Mail concert which was heard in many countries in Europe. In 1922, a Marconi station, named 2LO, came into existence. This later became the famous London station, around which the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) network grew. In May 1922, the Post Master General of UK announced that regular broadcasting would be permitted in the country and in November 1922, the BBC was formed.

2.2.1 Beginnings In India

In India, in November 1923, a Radio Club was set up at Calcutta, followed by one each at Bombay and Madras in June 1924. These clubs used transmitters provided by the Marconi Company. Radio broadcasts in those days were for two-and-a-half hours. In 1926, the Government of India granted a private concern the Indian Broadcasting Company license to establish broadcasting stations in India. However, in October 1927, the Madras Club folded up due to financial problems. In the same year, Bombay and Calcutta Radio Clubs started the Indian Broadcasting Company-the first commercial broadcasting venture in India. These stations were equipped with 1.5 kw medium-wave transmitters having a range of 30 miles. Regular broadcasting in India started on 23 July 1927 at Bombay and on 26 August 1927 at Calcutta with two privately owned transmitters. All India Radio came into existence in 1936 and came to be known as Akashvani from 1957. The growth of broadcasting in India can be traced in different stages.

2.2.3 The First Phase

Radio broadcasts started in India in November 1923 when the Indian Broadcasting Company was formed. It was the first commercial broadcasting venture in India. In the beginning, the company had a capital of only one and a half million rupees. Out of which, approximately four hundred and fifty thousand was spent on setting up its two stations at Calcutta and Bombay. The company's major source of revenue was the radio license fee fixed by the government at Rs. 10 per radio set per annum. The company had to collect the fee annually from those who possessed a receiving set. However, the company's earnings proved to be less than its expenditure.

According to **P.C. Chatterji**, former Director General of All India Radio, initially, there were not more than a thousand radio sets in India which by the end of 1929, increased to 7,775. But the number of licenses fell in 1930 making it difficult for the company to carry on its business. The company applied for a loan, but the application was turned down by the government and as a result the company was forced into liquidation in June 1930.

Broadcasting in those days was service for the British ruling class and officers of the Government of India. The programmes of the Indian Broadcasting Company catered to the small European community and the westernised Indians. There was little or no effort to reach out to the vast majority of the Indian people. The programmes started at 7 in the morning long after the rest of Indians were already up and gone out for their day's work and closed down as the Englishmen and the officers went out for the office. The service started again as they returned home for lunch and ended in the afternoon with an occasional brief session again around the afternoon tea for the English women. At dusk, the evening programmes started.

Lionel Fielden, the Father of Indian Broadcasting, in his Report to the Government submitted in 1939 gave reasons for the failure of the Indian Broadcasting Company. He contended that in India apart from Calcutta and Bombay, there was apathy towards the art forms such as music and theatre, and at any rate, channels for bringing them before the public did not exist.

After the liquidation of the Indian Broadcasting Company, several representations were made to the government seeking the revival of broadcasting in India. The leaders of the political parties in the Central Assembly urged the Minister of Labour and Industry to re-start the service. On 24 February 1930, the Standing Committee of the Government approved the proposals to acquire and run broadcasting stations. On April 1, 1930 broadcasting came under the direct control of the Department of Labour and Industries. Now, it was called the **Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS)**, and an Advisory Committee was set up to advise on the management and expansion of the service. The assets and liabilities of the company were taken up by the Indian State Broadcasting Service and the collection of annual license fee became the responsibility of the Posts and Telegraph Department. This arrangement continued till 1985 when the license fee was finally abolished.

Broadcasting in India was hailed by the leaders of the country. Jawaharlal Nehru while inaugurating the educational programme in 1934, wrote in the visitor's book at the Bombay Radio station; "Forward Radio!" A week later, Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India, expressed her feelings in these words: "To harness the ether for the service of those who dwell upon the earth is one of the loveliest services that modern age can render to humanity. So - Upward, Radio." Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore composed the following poem entitled, "Akashvani", in 1938 on the inauguration of the Calcutta short-wave transmission:

*"Hark to Akashvani up-surging
From here below,
The earth is bathed in Heaven's glory,
Its purple glow,
Across the blue expanse is firmly planted
The altar of the Muse
The lyre unheard of Light is throbbing,
With human hues.
From earth, to heaven, distance conquered,
In waves of Light
Flows the music of man's divining
Fancy's flight,
To East and West speech careers,
Swift as the Sun,
The mind of man reaches Heaven's confines
Its freedom won."*

2.2.4 The Second Phase: Birth of All India Radio

Between 1930 and 1935, a great deal of uncertainty prevailed on Indian broadcasting. In the depression of the thirties, speakers and script-writers were lowly paid leading to a decline in professionalism. Moreover, censorship also loomed large on the horizon. The real leaders of the country fighting for the cause of democracy and freedom in the land were kept away from the government controlled Indian State Broadcasting Service despite their great enthusiasm for it and were shunned from broadcasting activity. Even the name of Mahatma Gandhi was a sin to mention. Such repressive measures increased and intensified the Government control over Radio. According to **H.R. Luthra**, left to itself, Indian Broadcasting would have died in early 1930s, but it was for the pressure of public opinion, the trade and the lay radio enthusiasts which gave a new lease of life to radio. It also helped to set apart money for its planned development on a regular basis.

To supplement the earning of the Indian State Broadcasting Service, the Indian Tariff (Wireless Broadcasting) Act was amended in 1932 leading to a sharp increase in the duty on the wireless receiving set. The possession of a radio set without a license was made an offence. With the increase in the duty on receiving sets, the financial position improved and provided money for the expansion of broadcasting in India. Yet another important step in this direction was the appointment of Lionel Fielden, an expert from the BBC, as Controller of Broadcasting in August 1935. Thereafter, the development of broadcasting in India became a well-planned activity.

The name Indian State Broadcasting Service was changed to All India Radio (AIR), In June 1935. This development has been described by Fielden in his autobiography, **The Natural Bent** (1960), in these words:

"I had never liked the title ISBS (Indian State Broadcasting Service) which to me seemed not only unwieldy, but also tainted with officialdom. After a good deal of cogitation-which may seem ridiculous now, I had concluded that All India Radio would give me only protection from clauses which I most feared in the 1935 Act, but would also have the suitable initials, AIR. I worked out a monogram which placed these letters over the map of India, and it is now about the only thing which remains of me in India. But, when I mooted this point, I found that there was immense opposition in the secretariat to any such change. They wanted ISBS and they thought it fine. I realized that I must employ a little unnatural tact. I cornered Lord Linlithgow after a Viceregal banquet, and said plaintively that I was in great difficulty and needed his advice. (He usually responded well to such an opening). I said I was sure that he agreed with me that ISBS was a clumsy title. After a slight pause, he nodded his long head wisely. Yes, it was rather a mouthful. I said that perhaps it was a pity to use the word broadcasting at all, since all Indians had to say 'broadcasting' - 'broad' was for them an unpronounceable word. But I could not, I said, think of another title: could he help me? 'Indian state', I said was a term which as he knew well, hardly fitted into the 1935 Act. It should be something general. He rose beautifully to the bait, "All India?" I expressed my astonishment and admiration. The very thing. But surely not "Broadcasting"? After some thought he suggested "radio"? Splendid, I said, and what beautiful initials: (AIR) The viceroy concluded that he had invented it and there was no more trouble. His pet name must be adopted. Thus, "All India Radio" was born.

On the New Year's Day in 1936, the Central Radio Station at Delhi was inaugurated. Fielden took the help of H.L. Kirke and Mr. C.W. Goyder also from the BBC in the expansion of Radio. It was not possible to cover a country as large as India by a medium wave network alone, and hence, it was decided to provide a basic short-wave service for the entire country at important centres. Once, more finances were available, these services were extended to other places.

In 1937, AIR was transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Industries to the Department of Communications. In 1941, it was again transferred to the department of Information and Broadcasting, which after Independence in 1947, became a separate ministry by itself. By 1939, in addition to the existing medium wave transmitters, short wave transmitters had also been installed at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. New stations with medium wave transmitters were opened at Lucknow and Tiruchirapalli. By now, the constitutional position of Broadcasting had been defined by the Government of India Act of 1935. The princely states of Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Aurangabad and Trivandrum set up radio stations in their territories under the provision of section 129 of the Act.

Check Your Progress: 1

- Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What was the main reason for the failure of broadcasting in India in the initial years?

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2) List some of the developments which took place around the year 1936.

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2.3 THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND EXPANSION OF AIR

World War II provided a great impetus to the development and expansion of radio all over the world. In the U.S., the Voice of America (VoA) was started during this period. In the U.K., BBC's External Service emerged as the world's largest established major overseas network. Overseas broadcasting had been discussed as far back as 1927 at the colonial conference and a short-wave transmitter set up at Chelmsford in Britain on a experimental basis. By 1932, the Empire Service had come into existence. Broadcasts of important events such as the Coronation, the Test Matches, the Derby, the Wimbledon were also instrumental in establishing BBC as a major world network.

By the time the Second World War broke out in 1939, India had a well-organised broadcasting service with six major stations apart from the ones operating in the states ruled by the Indian Princes. The network served more than one lakh radio license holders across the land.

During the war, radio emerged as a powerful medium of communication and a useful and effective means of propaganda. This led to a further increase in the number of transmitters and transmission hours, more variety of programmes, expansion of news services and monitoring of important foreign broadcasts. The government exercised a direct control on broadcasting. As war correspondents were sent to the battle fronts for news coverage and broadcasts were begun to foreign countries, the external service of All India Radio was launched.

2.3.1 External Services

AIR began its broadcasts to foreign audiences in Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab countries in 1939 to counter German propaganda on Radio. As the German broadcasts constituted a threat to the British interests in the region, AIR launched its own External Broadcasts first in Pushtu for Afghanistan on October 1, 1939, followed by the Persian and Arabic programmes. These broadcasts were under the supervision of an officer of the Military Intelligence. When Japan joined the war in 1941, the service had to be extended to the regions of South and South East Asia. Thus began AIR's Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Malay and the Indo-Chinese languages broadcasts. To meet the requirements of the Indians residing in those areas, programmes in Tamil and Hindi were also broadcast.

Controlled by the British Ministry of Information, many of these broadcasts were aptly called, 'Political Warfare' broadcasts. Famous writers such as Nirad C. Chaudhuri were recruited to write these commentaries. When the war ended, AIR took over the responsibility of these broadcasts. Today, AIR's external broadcasts put out in 26 languages, including 16 Foreign and 10 Indian languages. Now called the External Services Division (ESD), the Urdu Service and the English Service are the most important ones being on air daily. Prominent among the other languages are Chinese, Indonesian, Burmese, Pushtu and Persian.

Earlier, the core of the programmes in AIR's external broadcasts comprised a news bulletin, a commentary and music, which were the responsibility of AIR's News Services, the Central News Organisation (CNO). Later, this was re-designated as the office of the Director of News and External Services.

2.3.2 Central News Organisation

AIR's first radio news bulletin was broadcast in 1936. With the establishment of the Central News Organisation (CNO) in 1937, broadcast of daily news bulletins in English at 1800 hours and in Hindustani at 1805 were begun. Initially, the CNO did not have its own arrangements for news collection, even editing of the news bulletins was not done at AIR and a news summary was obtained from Reuters at reduced rates. As the need arose, AIR's news gathering activities began to grow. Events like the Simla Conference in June 1945 called by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, to discuss proposals for self-rule with Indian leaders led to the development of AIR's own Reporting Unit. At the end of the Second World War, AIR's first batch of foreign correspondents was appointed in China, Indonesia and Japan.

Another significant development in the history of broadcasting in India was the setting up of private stations in 1935 in Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and in Allahabad in the then United Provinces. These stations started India's first rural broadcasts. This is what Fielden wrote about the rural listener: "the villager tended to regard the radio with suspicion, as a possible means of taxation or instrument of propaganda... apart from this, the limited range of his interest made him an excessively difficult listener to please." (Fielden's First Report)

Lionel Fielden left India in 1940 to help in the war effort in England. On the eve of Fielden's departure from India in 1939, there were more than 100 community village sets working in the country. Produced by the Research Department of All India Radio one such set along with its batteries and time switch used to cost around Rs. 300/-.

Fielden was succeeded by Professor A.S. Bokhari who remained the head of All India Radio for six crucial years. In 1943, the designation, Controller of Broadcasting, was changed to Director General. Thus, Professor Bokhari who was the first Indian to head AIR, also became the first Indian to hold the designation of Director General of All India Radio. Bokhari provided an able administration and a brilliant leadership to AIR during the sensitive war period. He also established a zest for inquiry and standards of artistic excellence and efficiency for which AIR came to be known in its early days. Fielden and Bokhari used to write to the heads of prestigious colleges and vice-chancellors asking them for names of talented young people who after completing their education were on the look out for promising jobs. During those days, career in broadcasting was well paid and a programme assistant in AIR earned at least several times more than a college lecturer.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe the role of radio during World War II.

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2) When did the foreign broadcast of AIR begin and with what effect?

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2.4 EXPANSION SINCE INDEPENDENCE

At the time of partition, there were a total of nine stations in the country. There were six radio stations in India located at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Tiruchirapalli and Lucknow covering 2.5 percent area and 11 percent population. The remaining three were in Pakistan at Peshwar, Lahore and Dacca. According to an estimate, the total number of radio sets was approximately 2,75,000. Sardar Vallabhai Patel was the first Minister of Information and Broadcasting in Independent India.



Pt. Nehru's speech on the occasion of Independence Day being broadcast

Broadcasting in the country was developed on the policy guideline "*Bahujana Hitaya, Bahujana Sukhaya.*" The development plans during the last five decades were designed to help radio to accomplish the objectives of purveying to the vast audiences aesthetically the best of sound-information and education, music and drama. During the First Plan, the National Programme for Music and Talks was introduced leading to a revival of Indian classical music.

It had been neglected ever since its patrons, the ruling princes of the various Indian states, had ceased to exist as rulers and were not able to provide patronage to the classical musicians of the courts. In 1952, AIR set up the National Orchestra or Vadya Vrinda. Pandit Ravi Shankar was its first conductor. This orchestra gave a new dimension to Indian traditional music. Efforts were made to establish at least one radio station in each state to develop broadcasting.

2.4.1 Vividh Bharati

During the fifties, under the influence of Dr. B.V. Keskar, the next Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, AIR stopped broadcasting popular film songs on the ground that they were vulgar and catered to cheap tastes. But, the immense popularity of film songs led to a drop in AIR's audience, as the public at large turned to Radio Ceylon which started broadcasting Indian film songs to reach out to a larger audience. To counter the effect of Radio Ceylon, AIR launched a new service in 1957 known as Vividh Bharati, a programme mostly consisting of film songs. Soon it became immensely popular. This led to a shift from Radio Ceylon. However, this also marked an increase on the element of entertainment as radio was increasingly looked upon as a medium of entertainment.

In 1959, the World Administrative Radio Conference was held in Geneva. As a result of this, steps were taken to utilize the medium wave frequencies allotted to India. Thus, Vividh Bharati programmes were made available on medium wave service which was extended to areas not having access to it. This led to an increase in production and use of low cost medium wave radio sets.

2.4.2 Radio Rural Forums

Another event of importance in 1957 was the launching of Radio Rural Forums. The idea originated in Canada in the 1930's. The UNESCO had extensively used it the world over. In India with the assistance of UNESCO, an experiment in Radio Rural Forums was conducted in 1956 at the Poona station (now called Pune) to establish two way communication between the farming community on the one hand, and the broadcasters and programme producers on the other. As a result of the experiment, it was decided to set up such forums at all stations. But after 1964, these forums lost their popularity due to a number of factors. The scheme was withdrawn by 1970s. Once the transistor became available at cheap rates, people preferred to sit at home and listen rather than attend the Radio Forum at the community centre in a group.

2.4.3 Transistor Revolution

During the 1960's, radio became extremely popular among the masses. The prime reason for this popularity was the advent of cheap transistor sets which flooded the markets in a variety of ranges. The mobility coupled with the low cost were instrumental for the popularity of transistors which became a status symbol in the rural area. According to **David Page** and **William Crawley**, the transistor radio facilitated the beginning of a genuine mass media in South Asia and set the pattern of future media technologies.



People listening to transistor in rural areas

2.4.4 Arrival of Television

On September 15, 1959, an experimental television service was started in Delhi with programmes being telecast for one hour twice a week. In the beginning 21 television sets were installed in rural areas around Delhi. Later on, UNESCO provided approximately fifty sets which were also installed in the rural areas. During 1960-61, a UNESCO-aided project to assess the effectiveness of social education telecasts on groups of viewers was launched. This led to an agreement between AIR and the Ford Foundation to conduct an experiment in school teaching through TV. For this, 250 television sets were installed in higher secondary schools in Delhi.

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was the first experiment with satellite technology in India. The primary objective of SITE was to demonstrate how satellite technology can be used, particularly for rural development. It was conducted in 1975 in collaboration with NASA for a period of one year covering 2,330 villages in six states: Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan. Television sets were installed for direct reception and programmes were telecast in five different languages for women, children, illiterate and semi-literate adults.

In addition to SITE, several other experiments were also made in utilizing media for development. Education and information were the initial objectives of experimental television in India. During the 1982 Asian Games held in New Delhi, colour television was introduced. The Indian satellite, INSAT was launched in 1983 to expand the access to television signals. The popularity of television overshadowed radio broadcasting during the following period.

2.4.5 Appointment of Chanda Committee

When Mrs. Indira Gandhi joined the Union Cabinet for the first time in 1964 as Minister of Information and Broadcasting she set up an Inquiry Committee to give All India Radio a breath of fresh air. The Committee came to be known as the Chanda Committee as it was headed by A.K. Chanda, a former Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. The report was submitted in 1966. The three recommendations were: convert AIR into a corporation run by a Board of Governors like the BBC; separate television from radio and commercialize Vividh Bharati channel so that there is increase in the revenue of All India Radio. It was also suggested that the revenue earned should be utilized for improving the quality of AIR's programmes. Only the last recommendation was accepted by the Government at that time leading to the beginning of commercial broadcasting in India on November 1, 1967. Later, TV (Doordarshan) was separated from AIR in 1976.

2.4.6 Recommendations of Other Committees

In 1977, the Janata Party was swept to power displacing Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party government. Since the Janata Party in its poll manifesto had promised to give autonomy to AIR and Doordarshan on assuming office, it set up a Working Group in August 1977 under the chairmanship of **George Verghese**, a noted journalist, to work out the proposals for giving full autonomy to AIR and Doordarshan. The working group submitted its report entitled **Akash Bharati** in two volumes in February 1978. However, rejecting the group's recommendations for full autonomy, the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, L.K. Advani, piloted a bill in Parliament which was called the Prasar Bharati. This was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 1989, but, because of the sudden dissolution of the then Lok Sabha, the bill lapsed. Finally in 1990, the Prasar Bharati Bill with several amendments was passed by Parliament. However the successive Governments decided not to finalise the Act. It took another 7 years for the implementation of the Prasar Bharati Act.

Between 1978 and 1997, a number of committees examined the working of Radio and Television in the country. Just as there were complaints of misuse of the media during the emergency there were complaints of the politicisation of the media during the post emergency era. When Mrs. Gandhi came back to power after the fall of the Janata Government, the Government constituted a committee under the chairmanship of eminent journalist and diplomat **G. Parthasarathi**. This committee which had equally eminent members drew for the first time specific policy guidelines for the electronic media. It presented exhaustive guidelines for the news producers and also defined the approach to external broadcasting. The government accepted the recommendation of the committee.

The other committee was headed by P.C. Joshi for studying the software of Doordarshan. The committee recommended changes in the organisational setup of radio and television. The government then was not ready for altering the structure and the recommendations were not acted upon. The third committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Deodhar had an uneventful tenure.

A Parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of Ram Vilas Paswan made a number of recommendations particularly in the area of policy but before a decision could be taken on the structure of the media, Jaipal Reddy, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in 1997 notified the Prasar Bharati Act. Today AIR and Doordarshan are functioning under the autonomous corporation of Prasar Bharati.

2.5 GROWTH OF RADIO IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

The last two decades commencing from 1980, witnessed a phenomenal growth of radio broadcasting in India. The network had only 86 radio station in 1981 and it has more than doubled in a short span of 20 years. At present broadcasting reaches out to 98.84 percent of the population spread over about 90 percent of the area through 209 broadcasting centres and 335 transmitters. Out of these 131 are FM transmitters and the remaining medium wave (149) and short wave (55). The total number of radio sets available in the country is 12.5 crores out of which 7.1 have the FM facility. According to an estimate, there are 11.7 crores radio households in India and the number of average actual listeners is 30.4 crores. The broadcasts are in 24 languages and 146 dialects and the network of programme originating stations has crossed the 200 mark (AIR, 2002).

Radio broadcasting began and identified itself as a regional service. In 1980 AIR decided to bring the national and local concepts in broadcasting. A national channel of AIR, planned under the VI Five Year Plan, was commissioned in 1987. A local radio network was also conceived in 1980 and the first local radio station was commissioned on October 30, 1984 at Nagarcoil in Tamil Nadu. In 1995, the government decided to go in for tiny radio stations for community development and these have been planned in the North East and Lakshdweep Islands.

The North Eastern states do not have a common lingua franca. The broadcasts of each station are in a number of dialects. Realising the need for a service for providing programmes of relevance and importance to the entire region AIR introduced the North Eastern service from Shillong in 1988. The programmes are in simple Hindi and English.

The Very High Frequency (VHF), FM band had earlier remained un-exploited in India. A beginning was made in 1977 to start an FM channel from Chennai. The channel did not get the funding for originating programmes. FM is considered more suitable for Music programmes and as such it was opened as a Music channel.

FM channels were set up in other Metros but without provision for funding. They were carrying programmes already available on other channels. It was only in 1993 an effort was made to make FM channel a separate channel originating programmes for 24 hours a day. Encouraged by the success of FM channel and inspired by the desire to earn, a few time slots of the FM channel were auctioned and private producers began to broadcast. The policy relating to these FM slots was that there would be no preview of the programmes and the slots would not deal with news and current affairs programmes. The programmes of private FM licenses were presented in a very interesting way by disc jockeys. Apart from opening FM channels, AIR decided in 1993 to switch over to VHF /FM mode of transmission in respect of its new stations. The policy was extended to Vividh Bharati wherever the transmitters were due for replacement.

The development of communication satellites in the early 80s gave a fillip to radio broadcasting. AIR began making use of the satellite for networking. So far it depended on its shortwave transmission through which the radio stations in the network relayed programmes from Delhi or the regional capital. This dependence on short wave for relay of programmes was over with the satellites being made use of for national and regional broadcasting. The development in technology has improved radio transmission and the country is poised for digital broadcasting in a big way.

**Radio Broadcasting:
An Introduction**

- 2) AIR began its broadcasts to foreign audiences in Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab countries in 1939 to counter German propaganda on Radio. When Japan joined the war in 1941, the service was extended to the regions of South and South East Asia in Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Malay and the Indo-Chinese language broadcasts. These broadcasts were mainly in the nature of 'Political Warfare'.

Check Your Progress: 3

- 1) The major recommendations of the Chanda Committee were to convert AIR into a corporation run by a Board of Governors like the BBC; separate television from radio and commercialize the Vividh Bharati channel to increase the revenues of All India Radio. Only the last recommendation was accepted by the Government at that time leading to the beginning of commercial broadcasting in India on November 1, 1967. Doordarshan was separated from AIR much later in 1976.
- 2) During the last two decades the radio network in India grew phenomenally. In addition to the regional service, national and local concepts in broadcasting also came into existence. Opening up of FM channels, switching over to the VHF/FM mode of transmission in respect of its new stations and the development of communication satellites in the early 80s gave further fillip to radio broadcasting.