
UNIT 15 ORGANISATION OF A RADIO STATION

Structure

- 15.0 Introduction
- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Organisational Setup
 - 15.2.1 Types of Organisations
 - 15.2.2 Principles of an Organisational Setup
- 15.3 Organisational Structure of All India Radio
- 15.4 Types of Radio Stations
 - 15.4.1 National Channel
 - 15.4.2 Regional Station
 - 15.4.3 Sub-regional Station
 - 15.4.4 Local Station
 - 15.4.5 Other Stations/Offices
- 15.5 Private Radio Stations
- 15.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.7 Glossary
- 15.8 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

15.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous blocks you have been familiarized with the broadcasting scene in India today with special reference to its role as a medium of mass communication. In this unit, we shall discuss the structure of the broadcasting network in India, the types of radio stations we have in our country, and their organisational set-up, which is designed to achieve the policy objectives of broadcasting. We shall also look at the philosophy behind different organisational structures and how All India Radio (AIR) has carved out a federal system of broadcasting for serving various segments of audience. This unit will bring home the point that a broadcasting station is more than a production company. The wide range of its activities include consultations with a wide spectrum of the audience, programme planning, production, editing, presentation and transmission of programmes, research, beside a lot of other activities.

15.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to;

- describe the objectives, policy and organisational structure of a radio station;
- discuss the general principles and structural pattern of a radio organisation;
- list the different types of radio stations in India today;
- analyse the characteristics of different types of radio stations; and
- describe the evolution of private radio stations in India.

15.2 ORGANISATIONAL SETUP

The organisational structures of institutions are designed in accordance with their objectives and functions. This holds true of radio networks/stations as well. There are several broadcasting networks in the world, some are public service broadcasting organisations, and others are commercial networks. Besides, there are individual radio stations, mostly of a commercial nature. The policy objectives of radio networks/radio stations differ widely depending on the policy of those who own/control them. The organisational structure of a broadcasting organisation also varies widely in relation to the size of the network, its policy objectives and capital investments.

15.2.1 Types of Organisational Setup

Traditionally, there are three types of organisations, these are:

- Line organisation;
- Line and staff organisation; and
- Functional organisation.

In a **Line Organisation**, the line of authority is direct with no advisory or auxiliary activities attached. This form is simple and clear-cut, suitable for small firms.

In a **Line and Staff Organisation**, there is a provision for 'staff position' to discharge a variety of auxiliary and advisory functions. For example, in a sales organisation, the sale is the primary activity while accounting, legal, public relations, etc., are auxiliary activities.

A **Functional Organisation** consists of a number of branches or divisions each of which has specialists accountable to their senior counterparts in their central office or headquarters. A multi-disciplinary organisation such as a broadcasting network with a large number of radio stations, generally adopts the functional type of organisation.

15.2.2 Principles of an Organisational Setup

For smooth functioning of the organisation, certain universal principles are generally followed by management. Some of these are:

- Unity of command;
- Span of control;
- Exception principle; and
- Scalar principle.

The **Unity of command** principle means that no member of an organisation should report to more than one superior. According to the **Span of control** principle, there must be an optimum limit to the maximum number one can supervise. The **Exception principle** emphasises the need for delegation of not only functions, but authority down the line while the **Scalar principle** deals with hierarchy in each set-up.

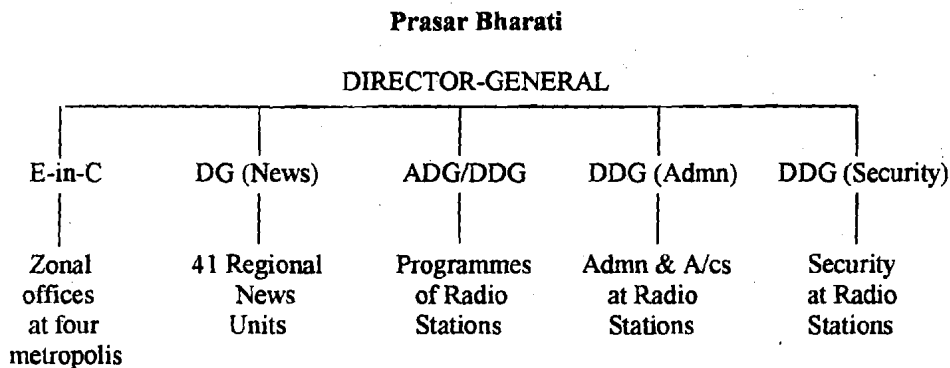
15.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ALL INDIA RADIO

The type of organisation and the principles of management adopted by a broadcasting station will depend on its size, range of operations and ownership. In our country, radio broadcasting had been the responsibility of All India Radio funded by the government. A number of radio stations in the private sector are coming up. A number of educational channels operated by IGNOU known as Gyan Vani have come up and more are to be commissioned. The NGO sector may also set up community broadcasting stations as and when Government regulations permit. Their organisational pattern would be different depending on their size, financial outlay and activities to be undertaken. In this unit, we shall discuss the organisational structure of All India Radio.

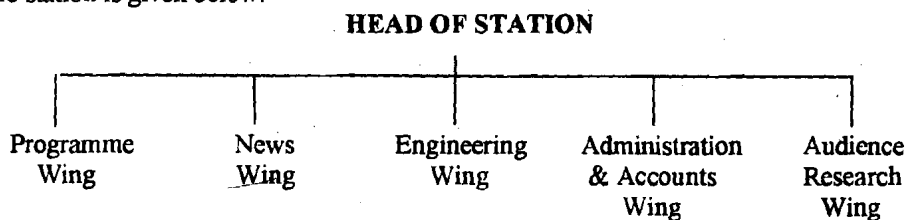
All India Radio (AIR) is one of the major public service broadcasting organisations in the world, and perhaps the largest in Asia. It has a network comprising 209 broadcasting centres with a staff component of over 30,000 employees and an annual expenditure of over Rs. 450 crores in the year 2000. Its home service, averaging 2300 hours of output everyday, includes national, regional, sub-regional and local service in 26 languages and 146 dialects, beside light entertainment commercial service. Its external service in 16 foreign and 10 Indian languages is beamed to 84 countries around the globe for a daily duration of over 70 hours.

The headquarters of the network located in New Delhi is headed by a Director-General. The Director-General is assisted by an Engineer-in Chief, a Director-General (News), Additional/Deputy Director-General for Programme, Administration and Security, a Director of Monitoring Service and a Director for Audience Research. The Director General is answerable to the Parsar Bharati Board of Management.

The Director-General provides the professional leadership. He controls and supervises the activities of various divisions. The heads of programme and engineering divisions are, in turn, assisted by regional/zonal heads and a chief engineer in-charge of civil construction. The heads of programme regions are located in Mumbai, Calcutta and Guwahati, while the zonal chief engineers are headquartered at the four metropolises. There are 41 Regional News Units attached to the various radio stations and they receive professional guidance from the Director-General. A Deputy Director General carries out the inspection of radio offices. The chart given below explains the hierarchical arrangement:



Each radio station, except the smaller ones, has Programme, News, Engineering, Administration, Accounts, Audience Research and Security Units. The head of the station reports to the Director-General directly or through regional/zonal heads. S/he coordinates the various units to ensure that the communication objectives of the organisation are achieved through the station's programming and other activities. The typical organisation chart of a radio station is given below:



Check Your Progress: 1

Fill in the blanks:

- 1) AIR network comprises of broadcasting centres.
- 2) The Director General of AIR is answerable to the
- 3) The heads of programme regions are located in, and
- 4) carries out the inspection of radio stations.
- 5) The organisational structure of a radio station depends upon and

15.4 TYPES OF RADIO STATIONS

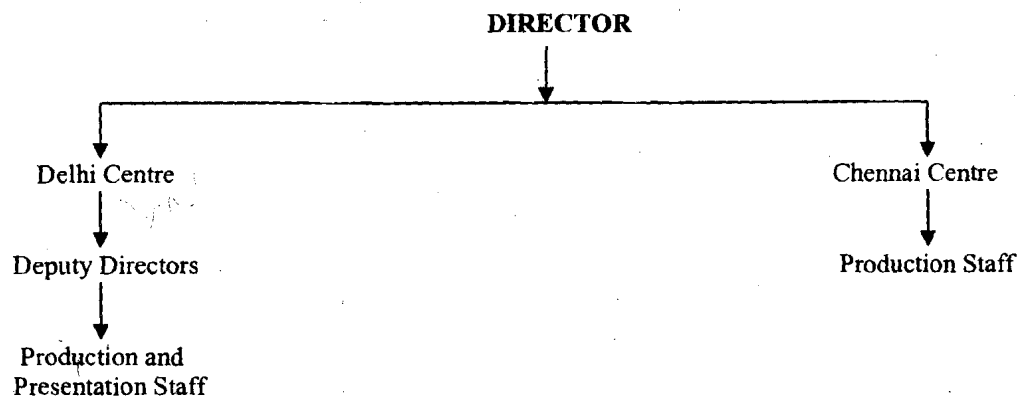
AIR has a three-tier system of broadcasting comprising national, regional, sub-regional and local stations.

- National Channel
- Regional station
- Sub-regional station
- Local station
- Other stations/offices

15.4.1 National Channel

The National Channel transmits programmes of national relevance. It is an alternative channel to the listeners who have access to the regional /sub-regional and Vividh Bharati Service. The languages of the spoken-word broadcast of the National Channel are Hindi and English.

The National Channel features Hindustani and Carnatic music, light and folk music from different regions of the country, Western music, plays, dramatised presentation of short stories translated into Hindi from different Indian languages, documentaries, financial reviews, sports magazines and programmes in Urdu. The national service is available to substantial segments of the people in different regions. It begins every day at 1855 hours in the evening and continues up to 0610 hours. The production of programmes is undertaken at Delhi and Chennai, and supplemented by the recordings received from stations in different regions of the country. Its organisational structure is indicated below:



15.4.2 Regional Station

The organisational setup of a regional radio station which is located at the capital of a state or Union Territory is more or less on the pattern detailed in the typical set-up of a radio station indicated in 1.3.

The head of a regional station is Station Director who is the controller of the station and is responsible for its final output. Public relations is directly under the Station Director. S/he keeps liaison with state government functionaries, eminent writers, thinkers, scientists, technologists, musicians, artistes and others. S/he also presides over the Programme Advisory Committees and Consultative Panels attached to the stations. We have already discussed these Advisory committees and panels in the previous block.

A Station Director of a radio station in a state capital has the added responsibility of organising and coordinating the programmes of state level relevance and importance. S/he also inspects other stations in the state.

Programme Wing

Each station is equipped with facilities for programme production and presentation. The Programme Wing is divided into a number of production units such as; the Talks Unit, Women and Children's Programmes Unit, the Farm and Home Unit (for producing rural programme), Youth Programmes Wing, the Education Programme Unit, Science Programme Unit, Music Units (for classical, light and folk music programmes) Outdoor Broadcasting (field based) programme, Morning Information Programme and Senior Citizen Programme Units. In some stations, there are Western Music and Industrial Workers Programme Units also. All the stations have a Programme Coordination Unit and Public Relations Unit.

The programmes are produced by Programme Executives/Programme Officers/Farm Radio Officers who are deployed at the station according to the language and other special requirements. The programme producers are assisted by reporters, script writers and production assistants. Instrumentalists and music composers assist in the production of music programmes. The work of the programme executives is supervised by assistant station directors/deputy director in accordance with the Scalar Principle. The Station Director coordinates all the activities in accordance with the principle of Line of Control.

The presentation of programmes is generally made by announcers and broadcast of programmes in accordance with a pre-determined schedule is ensured by a cadre of officers referred to as Transmission Executives. We shall discuss in detail in the next unit as to how a station's programme schedule is drawn up and the process through which an abstract idea gets translated into a programme.

The head of the engineering wing is a Station Engineer/Superintending Engineer. S/he controls and coordinates all the technical activities of the stations. S/he is assisted by Assistant Station Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Senior Engineering Assistant, Engineering Assistants and Technicians. They handle all programme origination and transmission, including relays from Delhi or other stations. They are responsible for maintenance and operation of the technical facilities created at the station.

News Wing

The News Wing is headed by a Joint Director or News Editor and is assisted by sub-editors and news reporters. For news reporting and news gathering there are staff correspondents, supported by a number of part-time correspondents or stringers. The news editing is done by the editorial staff, while translation and reading of news is done by translators and news readers respectively. The news wing also produces district newsletters and one or two newsreels in a week.

Administration and Accounting Wing

This is headed by an Administrative Officer assisted by a head clerk, accountant and a number of assistants.

Audience Research Wing

An Audience Research Officer, supported by field investigators conduct feedback studies which help the station to formulate their programme-fare. The Audience Research Wing also conducts formative research studies to provide the programmers with a profile of the audience, their tastes and preferences.

15.4.3 Sub-Regional Station

These are located at various cities/towns. To illustrate, in Uttar Pradesh, sub-regional stations are located in Allahabad, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Rampur, Najibabad, Agra and Mathura. These stations broadcast programmes not only in Hindi, the regional language, but also in the dialects of the area. They cater to the distinct cultural and agricultural needs of the listeners of the area. In some stations located in the states, such as Assam or West Bengal, the principal language of broadcast of the sub-regional station is different from the principal language of the state. For example, Silchar in Assam broadcasts programmes primarily in Bengali, while Kurseong in West Bengal broadcasts programmes mostly in Nepali. This is directly related to the communication imperatives of the areas served by the station.

The organisational setup of a sub-regional station is similar to that of a regional station. In some of the stations, there is no provision for Regional News Unit or Audience Research Unit. There are Advisory Committees and Consultative Panels attached to these stations.

15.4.4 Local Station

The local radio stations form an important tier in the system of broadcasting. There are community broadcast stations whose approach to broadcasting is different from the national or regional radio. The station has to play the dual role of providing support to extension agencies in the development of their areas and serving as a mouthpiece of the community. It is a low-cost, low-budget station with minimum production facilities used exclusively for enrichment and education.

15.4.5 Other Stations/Offices

In addition to those discussed above, there are other offices and stations in AIR.

Commercial Broadcast Stations: These with a small complement of staff look after the commercial broadcasts which comprise Vividh Bharati programmes, programmes in the local languages and commercial advertisements. They are located in the regional/sub-regional/local stations.

North Eastern Service: The North Eastern Service is located in Shillong. It is an integrated service catering to the communication needs of the listeners living in the North Eastern region. The broadcasts from individual stations in the North East of India are mostly in the tribal dialects due to the absence of a common *lingua franca* of the region. The spoken-word broadcasts are in English and Hindi. The music broadcast features are folk and tribal songs of the entire region, collected from different stations of AIR in the North East.

Commercial Sales Unit: The Commercial Sales Unit (CSU) is the Wing which keeps liaison with the advertisers and advertising agencies. The advertisements (or commercials) are cleared by this unit located in Mumbai. Marketing units have also been set up to promote sale of airtime.

Vividh Baharti Service: Vividh Bharati programmes form the bulk of commercial broadcasting services of AIR. They are produced at a separate production unit functioning in Mumbai. The programmes are taped and copies sent to the commercial broadcasting centres.

External Services Division: The external broadcasts of the country are organised by the External Services Division of AIR located at Delhi. It is an independent office with its own production and managerial staff.

News Service Division: The national news bulletins and news-based programmes are produced by the News Service Division with headquarter located at Delhi. It is an independent office with large number of editors and correspondents.

In addition, there are separate offices for high power transmitting stations and civil construction works.

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) What are the distinguishing features of the organisational set up of AIR?

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2) Explain the role of a Regional, Sub-Regional and Local radio station.

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15.5 PRIVATE RADIO STATIONS

In 1967, the Committee on Broadcasting and Information headed by eminent broadcaster A.K. Chanda recommended separate corporations for radio and television. The Union Government decided in 1969 against converting AIR into a corporation. However, radio and television were separated and on April 1, 1976 and Doordarshan came into existence as a Department of the Government.

The structure of broadcasting was again reviewed by a **Working Group on Autonomy for Akashvani and Doordarshan** in August 1977. This group headed by B.G. Verghese recommended in May 1978 the creation of a National Broadcast Trust to be named **Akash Bharati** to look after radio and television. The then Union Government did not consider it necessary for the setting up of a trust under the name Akash Bharati. However, it brought a bill for creating a Public Sector Corporation under the title **Prasar Bharati**. The bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Under a modified version of the Bill, the **Prasar Bharati** became an Act in 1990 and the Act was notified for implementation with effect from September 15, 1997. As a result, All India Radio and Doordarshan are functioning as units of the autonomous corporation **Prasar Bharati**.

In the case of the Union of India vs. the Cricket Association of Bengal, the Supreme Court in its judgement of February 9, 1995, held that the airwaves are a public property and a monopoly over broadcasting whether by Government or anybody else (public monopoly could be an exception) is inconsistent with the free speech right of the citizens and directed the government to take immediate steps to establish an independent autonomous public authority, representatives of all sections and interests of society to control and regulate the use of airwaves.

Regarding private broadcasting, the apex court in its judgement observed:

"The question of whether to permit private broadcasting or not is a matter of policy for Parliament to decide. If it decides to permit it, it is for Parliament to decide, subject to what conditions and restrictions should it be permitted Private broadcasting, even if allowed, should not be left to market forces, in the interest of ensuring that a wide variety of voices enjoy access to it. ...the electronic media are the most powerful media, both because of their audio-visual impact, and their widest reach covering the section of the society where the print media do not reach. The right to use airwaves and the context of the programmes, therefore, needs regulation for balancing it and as well as to prevent monopoly of information and views relayed which is a potential danger flowing from the concentration of the right to broadcast/tecast in the hands either of a central agency or of a few private affluent broadcasters"

It was expected that the government would bring in legislation for setting up a broadcast authority with enabling provisions to license and regulate private radio stations. But the government chose to use the administrative powers vested with it and worked out a scheme to make way for the setting up of radio stations by private parties. It identified 40 towns and cities for setting up 108 channels. Some cities would have as many as 11 private channels, while places like Agra, Cuttack, Trivandrum, Nagpur etc would have only one. The allotment of licenses to operate channels was made on the basis of highest bids from the eligible applicants. Only companies registered in India under the Companies Act 1956, were eligible to apply. The scheme includes some clauses for disqualifying religious bodies, political bodies and advertising agencies from getting the license. There are also clauses to prevent the same company getting more than one license at the same town/city. The Government might identify more places and channels for opening up private radio stations. It is worthwhile to note that some of those who got the licenses surrendered them because of financial non-viability.

Organising a private radio station involves setting up of a studio, transmitter and generation of software. This would require a substantial investment, entrepreneur-ship and manpower and this will depend on the hours of broadcast and type of programming. The station has to depend on advertisement revenue for its day-to-day expenditure, profits and provision for depreciation, etc.

Experience of running private radio stations elsewhere in the world reveals that they have to be compact organisations with minimum staff, avoiding the expense of a large paraphernalia of divisions and departments with huge staff manning them. The management could ill afford all this. The station has to be managed with a small contingent of multi-skilled staff numbering 10 or 15 persons or even less. The software has to be drawn from pre-recorded cassettes/CD's and the like. To hook the listeners, in a competitive environment, they may have to organise interactive programmes, chat shows, prize schemes etc. The situation would be different if a corporate body gets licenses to operate a number of radio stations at many centres. These could be 'functional' type of organisations. In community radio stations the organisation would be distinctively different depending on the informational resources.

The government has granted licenses to IGNOU to operate educational channels known as Gyan Vani. These radio stations are managed by a three member team headed by a station manager.

The proliferation of radio channels throws up a lot of challenges as well as opportunities. The presence of a number of private stations would encourage a healthy competition among them and in such a situation, the listening public eventually would be the beneficiaries.

Check Your Progress: 3

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

- 1) What according to you is the justification for an autonomous body like Prasar Bharati?
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- 2) What scope do you foresee for private radio stations in India?
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- 3) State two reasons how the organisational set-up of a private radio station is different from a public service broadcaster like the AIR.
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15.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have seen that the organisational structures of institutions are designed in accordance with their objectives and functions. This holds true of radio networks/stations as well. There are three types of organisations. These are: Line organisation; Line and staff organisation; and Functional organisation.

The type of organisation and the principles of management adopted by a broadcasting station depends on its size, range of operations and ownership. We found that AIR is a functional organisation consisting of a number of branches or divisions each of which has specialists accountable to their senior counterparts in their central office or headquarters.

While tracing the organisational structure of AIR, we examined the basic principles governing the various types of broadcast organisations. We noticed that AIR has a three-tier system of broadcasting comprising national, regional and local stations and several distinct services.

We also discussed the evolution and organisation of private radio stations. The proliferation of radio channels would throw a great deal of challenge as well as opportunities for the listening public as well as media professionals.

15.7 GLOSSARY

- Broadcasting** : It is an organised system of communication of programmes using radio waves. The process includes preparing the message or programme, its delivery through transmitters and its reception through radio receivers.
- Commercial Broadcasting** : Broadcast of programmes which includes commercial messages paid for by the advertisers.

Home Service	:	The broadcast services for listeners within the country, India.
External Services	:	The broadcast for listeners abroad.
Regional Service	:	The broadcast service provided by the Radio Station at the capital of a state generally serving a large area and including programmes and news of relevance to the entire state.
Sub-Regional Service	:	The broadcast service provided by stations located at centres other than the State capital generally serving homogenous areas.
Vividh Bharati	:	A light entertainment service of AIR. The commercial broadcast stations use the Vividh Bharati programme.
National Service	:	A service which provides programmes of national relevance and significance.

15.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

- 1) 209
- 2) Prasar Bharati Board of Management
- 3) Mumbai, Kolkata and Guwahati
- 4) Deputy Director General
- 5) Size, range of operation and ownership.

Check Your Progress: 2

- 1) All India Radio is a multi-disciplinary organisation with a large number of radio stations spread throughout the country. AIR adopts the functional type of organisational structure, with a large number of divisions such as Programme, News, Engineering, Administration, each headed by a specialist at the headquarters. The Administrative Division at the headquarter performs the staff or auxiliary functions. The same set up is replicated at stations. The organisation is headed by a Director General who is an ex-officio member of the Board of Management of Prasar Bharati. AIR functions as a unit of Prasar Bharati.
- 2) Every state, for broadcasting purposes, constitutes a region. The regional station originates certain quantum of programmes and news bulletin covering the entire region or state and these are relayed by the sub-regional stations. Each sub-regional station covers 4 or 5 districts depending on the power of its transmitters. It originates programming using the talent resident in its area. The local radio station is a small station which originates 3 or 4 hours of programmes and this set-up is being developed as a community radio station. The budget and staff component of these stations are in direct relation to their programme output. The regional station has the added responsibility of obtaining the programme activities of other stations in the state.

Check Your Progress: 3

- 1) Broadcasting is expected to provide an objective, balanced and impartial service to the public. If it is under the control of the Government there is scope for its misuse by the party in power. Therefore the responsibilities of running a public service broadcasting network must be entrusted to an independent autonomous public authority with a board of management consisting of eminent men and women.

**Organisational Structure,
Planning and Research**

- 2) The government has initiated allotment of licenses to private parties (corporate bodies) for operating radio stations. According to this, there would be a number of private radio channels in several cities and towns. The presence of a number of private stations would encourage healthy competition among them and the listening audience would eventually be the beneficiaries.
- 3) The volume of programme activities and the financial outlay envisaged will be the major factors in determining the organisational set up of a private radio station.