
UNIT 1 RADIO AND ITS POTENTIAL : AN INTRODUCTION

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1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After a study of this unit, you will be able to :

- define the nature and characteristics of radio as a medium of mass **communication**;
- state the basics of radio programming for entertainment, instruction and public utility announcements;
- explain the rudiments of production techniques of radio programmes;
- describe the fundamental technique of scripting for radio; and
- state the limitations of radio as a medium of mass communication.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of this unit is to **familiarise** the student with the nature and **characteristics** of radio as a mass medium. Another is to briefly outline the basics of **radio** programming for entertainment, information, **instruction** and education of listeners, for advertisement of goods and services and for announcement of various public utility measures. It also discusses the rudiments of techniques for producing programmes and gives some guidance for effective writing for radio. The unit briefly lists the typical demands on a writer, or a speaker on the radio, and explains, particularly, the art of script-writing for broadcast. Radio as a medium has also its limitations, at which the unit also briefly glances. Read the unit to get an idea of **Radio's** potential. In the following unit (unit 2), we **will** elaborate upon the types of programmes.

Wireless telegraphy, the precursor of today's radio, was invented by a very young **Italian** electrical engineer, **Giuglielmo Marchese Marconi (1874-1937)** in 1895—the **same** year as Rontgen discovered the X-ray—and was patented by him on 02 June **the** following year. This eventually led to the discovery of the basic principle of radio **communication**.

Radio **came** to India in August 1921, and the first broadcast, a special programme of

music for Sir George Lloyd, the then Governor of Bombay province, was made from the P & T Bombay, and was listened to by him at Pune at a distance of about 175 kilometers. Two years after, from November 1923, programmes came to be broadcast from Calcutta when the Radio Club of Bengal started them from a dingy lane, called Garstin Place, near Dalhousie Square, on a small Marco transmitter.

After a tardy development, radio stations came to beset up by a commercial concern called Indian Broadcasting Company with stations at Bombay and Calcutta; it came into being on 13th September, 1926, as a result of an agreement with the Government. On 23rd July, 1927, the Bombay Station of the Company started to function, marking the beginning of organised broadcasting in India. On 26th August the same year, came the Calcutta Station; by the end of the year, Broadcasting Receiver Licenses (BRL) had gone up to 3594. Two years later, on 01 March, 1930, the Company went into liquidation and a month later, on 01 April, 1930, the Government of India took over broadcasting and designated it as Indian State Broadcasting Service.

It passed through many vicissitudes for the next six years and on 08 June 1936, it was re-designated as All India Radio, or briefly, AIR, with Mr. A.S. Bokhari as the first Station Director of Delhi as well as Deputy Controller of Broadcasting. Earlier an Englishman, Lionel Fielding, had taken over as India's first Controller of Broadcasting on 30th August, 1935, and Mr. Bokhari was the first Indian to become the Deputy Controller.

A revolution in radio broadcast occurred with the invention of transistor by three American scientists in 1948. Mass production of transistorised sets by the mid-fifties took radio to almost every household in a few years. The abolition of the licence fee in respect of single and two-band transistor sets in August 1980, gave it a further boost. With the colour transmission and expansion of TV network during and after the Ninth Asian Games in New Delhi, in November-December 1982, radio did suffer a setback but is gradually regaining its lost clientele by judicious re-planning of programmes.

However, much still remains to be done, not only to make radio withstand the competition from the TV but to help it grow further as a potent and parallel mass medium. For instance, BBC Radio has become strong and vibrant inspite of its extremely popular television medium. The electoral promise of the National Front Government at the Centre to convert All India Radio and Doordarshan into a Corporation, as and when it comes about, will be a milestone in the history of radio broadcast in India, because a perestroika of this huge organisation and its ethos is likely to revolutionise the programme planning of All India Radio.

Exercise 1

Write your answers in the space provided and check with the aids to answers given in 1.9.

- i) Which organisation pioneered broadcasting in India? How long did it carry on broadcasting and from which places?

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- ii) Which events caused revolution in broadcasting in India?

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iii) Has radio broadcasting any competitor in India?

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1.2 RADIO AS A MEDIUM OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Mass communication, surfacing as an American concept in the early sixties in the **writings** of **Wilbur Schramm** and other media experts, has, in three decades since, **revolutionised** impersonal **communication** and its technology. Before the term **became** popular, **there** were, of course, various modes of mass **communication**—public lectures **and** demonstrations, cinema, radio and TV—but an intensive research **into** the social and **psychological** dynamics of communication gave precision and a **new** lease of life to mass communication techniques.

Of the various modes of mass **communication**, radio is still the most immediate and widespread in India. Take for **example**, a major train accident. If it has occurred after **0100** hrs, at night, it will be known to readers of newspapers the morning after next, that is, 2 days later or after about 30 hours. Even on Doordarshan the accident will **feature** in the morning news about seven hours later. But it would go in an external news bulletin of AIR within an hour, if an agency report on the accident lands in the **General** News Room in New **Delhi** instantly. In about five hours, the news gets across the country through its first home news at **0600 hrs** (Hindi) and **0605 hrs** (English). **When** hourly home news bulletins **will** be introduced after midnight—hopefully, in a short while—such news will get across even faster, albeit to a small number of Listeners who would keep awake. Thus, as a medium of mass communication, radio is still the fastest in India and has the most widespread reach.

Another characteristic **feature** of radio as a medium of mass communication is its ubiquity. Receiving sets, owned and **used by** people in India, now number 900 lakhs as against **185** lakhs **TV sets**; in the peak hours, from **1800** to 2000 hrs, over **50** lakh **people** are listening to one or the other broadcast from All India Radio, from Delhi or from a regional station.

As a medium of mass communication, radio has also many unique features — some to its advantage, some not. It is an audio medium and with the invention of **stereophonic** recording and Frequency Modulation (FM), it brings sound waves to listeners in utmost perfection. Newer technology and circuitry have also improved **radio-listening** to a great extent in recent years. This has particularly rendered music broadcast **by** AIR extremely popular and made All **India** Radio the greatest propagator of **all** forms of music in the country. The next area of broadcast, to benefit from **this** feature, is news and news-based programmes. Although **visuals** on **TV** have **added** a new and attractive dimension to newscast — because seeing is believing — **news** over radio has more immediately, bulletins **being** more frequent than on TV.

As TV does not reach the blind (except its sound component), radio does not reach the **deaf**; **there** lies their complementarity too. In a crowded **room**, where others are **not interested in** a radio programme, a listener **can** tune to **it through** a headphone; **this is not possible** for a TV programme. **For**, while you can listen to this sound through **headphone**, you can't switch off the screen pictures. Another unique **feature** of radio is its mobility. Modern-day transistors are small and portable; they can be **carried everywhere** — to a factory or a field, and even to the toilet as one shaves, or does one's morning chores. **Besides**, **radio** is **inexpensive** and is within the reach of almost all people. It is easy to operate and **can be** switched on at any place even outside home. We see transistors on a pedlar's pushcart or on the footpath where the vegetable vendors and cobblers stack up their wares **for sale**. It can be slung on a bicycle handle or carried while **walking** one's way to and from the office.

Some changes are, however, taking place in the use of radio as a mass medium,

mainly because of the spread of TV and the greater maneuverability of the transistorised sets. Declamatory and formal broadcasts are going out of fashion; radio is becoming more pervasive and personal. The difference between TV-viewing and radio-listening in India is that while a TV programme is normally viewed by a number of persons at a time (in one place) radio, because of its relatively lesser price and easier portability and availability, can be listened to by hundreds of single individuals at different places. Community radio-listening has become a matter of the past. In this changed ethos, broadcasting techniques are shifting emphasis from mass communication to personal communication, as if it is treating every listener separately. The 'You' in radio programme is no longer the plurality but the single person who at the moment may have tuned in. The change is already well-established in foreign radio stations but is gradually coming to All India Radio and would stay when it fully arrives.

Exercise 2

Why is Radio still the most immediate and widespread mode of mass communication in India? (Check with aids to answers 1.9)

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13 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RADIO MEDIUM

Before discussing the characteristics of radio as a medium, let us begin with an understanding of its hardware technology. The passage of alternating current through a conductor causes a loss of energy because of electro-magnetic radiation. This radiation or radio wave as it is called, travelling with the speed of light, (01,86,000 miles i.e. 29,36,000 kms per second in air) induces in any conductor placed in its path, an alternate current similar to that which originally flowed in the transmitting aerial. This current is amplified and received through an appropriate receiver.

The characteristics of radio as a medium flow from this hardware technology as much as from its software socio-economic status. For example, radio is distinct from TV in India in being more widespread; more people and homes own radio receivers than TV sets. Radio is less glamorous and rivetting than TV because of its being cheaper and therefore, having less of so-called status value. It is so also because of its exclusively audio technology; whereas TV brings a variety of visuals and in costly sets in colour. Radio has gone stereophonic on its frequency modulation (FM) band although this elitist technology is available only on expensive sets and for a very short duration. There are various gadgetry in TV sets like remote control and picture-in-picture etc., which are technologically out of place in radio.

Exercise 3

Describe the relative advantages and disadvantages of Radio vie-a-vis TV. Write your answer in the space provided and check with aids to answers given in 1.9.

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So much for the contrasting characteristics of radio and TV. Radio's inherent characteristics also distinguish it from other mass media like newspapers, periodicals, **magazines**, i.e. the print media on the one hand and from the audio-visual media, like cinema and video, on the other.

1.3.1 Radio and the Print Media

The pleasures from radio-listening like TV-viewing are more passing in nature than reading newspapers, periodicals and books. One can keep a clipping or a photocopy of newspaper or magazine article for re-reading, or further use. Although one can tape a news commentary over AIR, hardly anybody does that. There are people, of course, who record a lot of classical music broadcast over radio and TV on cassettes and **video** tapes; newspapers do not lend themselves to be taped unless one reads them out. The educative and informative aspects of radio and TV are thus weaker and less abiding than those of the print media but because of their auditory and visual and audio-visual dimension they possibly leave a deeper, even if passing, impact.

1.3.2 Radio Metre Bands

Some other characteristics of radio issue from another aspect of its technology. For example, medium-wave broadcasts are better received than short-wave in less expensive sets. In a mountainous terrain, medium-wave transmission is obstructed by hills and valleys. On a cloudy day or night, the quality of transmission is affected by **lightning** and clouds; the FM broadcasts are better at night.

1.3.3 Radio software

Software characteristics of radio derive from the social, cultural and even **geographical** situations and influence programme planning. For instance, while Calcutta station of AIR carries a heavy chunk of Rabindra Sangeet, **Lucknow broadcasts** more thumris, khayals, **ghazals** and other forms of Hindustani classical **music**. Radio drama differs widely in content to cater to the cultural and social ethos of each region, and uses the region's **language** and dialects. There are more of news and news-based programmes from Delhi than from regional stations, because AIR Delhi station is in the national capital. It is surprising but true that radio stations in many South-East Asian countries and island-countries like Fiji, **Sri Lanka** and **Maldives** broadcast a lot of Hindi and Tamil film-songs, because not only do they cater to Indian settlers and migrants in these countries, but radio tuning gets a new lease of popularity through these songs which are enjoyed by many. This is no cultural **invasion**, because it is the result of a spontaneous wholesome **response** of a large **number** of people to these film (music, songs) broadcasts from these countries.

1.4 SUBSTANCE OF RADIO-PROGRAMMING

Radio-programming is essentially based on auditory values of the content of the **programme**. Howsoever good a news commentary may be, it can be spoiled by bad reading on the mike. Ravi Shankar's finesse on sitar may not get across if recording or transmission is faulty. With this basic condition in mind, let us briefly glance at **radio-programming** for providing entertainment, information, instruction or **education** and at the basics of commercial broadcast and public utility announcements.

1.4.1 Entertainment

It is not easy to separate entertainment from information or education. For example, film-songs which ostensibly entertain, also educate a deep and careful listener about the trends and **socio-economic** milieu through the words of the song. While programming entertainment broadcasts, certain things are kept in mind. The first is the quality of entertainment which in a mass unrestrictable listening, should be of **good** taste and not smack of communal, casteist, chauvinist or any other kinds of **bias**. In a free society like ours, which is often prone to communal, ethnic and **secessionist** violence, entertainment matter for radio broadcast has to be carefully chosen. The matter can be of mass appeal, like film-songs over Vividh Bharati, or of restricted, even **elitist/specific** interest like Hindustani Classical, or Western Classical music, or high-level informative programmes like 'Spotlight' and 'Current Affairs'.

produced by the News Services Division.

1.4.2 Information

The major information broadcasts from every radio station are the news-based programmes which are very popular in developing countries. Strictly speaking, "what makes information" varies from person to person. To a News Executive of AIR, for example, much of the newscast from AIR is no information, because he is steeped in it; while news from the BBC may be very informative to him. A midday women's programme may be **very** informative to rural women, but to a socialite, urban woman, it may sound elementary.

News-programming will be discussed in detail in Unit 1 of Block 2, but suffice it to say here that the **infrastructure** for news-gathering, editing, compiling and reading is elaborate and expensive in every radio organisation. Programmes of information broadcasts have to **keep** their content clear and direct, free of all emotional or editorial comment. The information should be authentic, verifiable and given in a manner that does not lead to a social or law-and-order turmoil. For example, the immediate announcement of the death-toll in a communal clash or a police-action in a partisan or provocative tone, in a sensitive situation, can aggravate it further.

1.4.3 Commercials

Commercial **advertising** was started on AIR on 01 November, 1967, to boost the revenues of the **organisation**, by promoting goods and services in the private sector. As listeners generally resent commercial motives behind entertaining, **informative** and educative programmes, a separate **channel** in **twentynine** AIR stations presents commercial advertisements interspersed with lilting and light **film-songs** to keep listeners glued to the channel. Planning of commercial advertising over radio calls for mature auditory imagination and grasp of the essentials of advertising—like an attractive slogan, an arresting sound or anecdote and subtlety in bringing in the product and its merits. It is different from advertising in print and audio-visual media, like TV, video and cinema, for the absence of visuals needs to be more than made up by striking use of slogans and sound-effects.

1.4.4 Instruction/Education

A thin margin **distinguishes** instruction from education. Instruction is a more immediate input than education and affects the surface of the mind, while education goes a little deeper **and** is a never-ending process. Radio offers both instruction and education to its **listeners** through a **variety** of spoken-word-programmes. Both are more than information and less than wisdom or elevation. A **listening farmer** can be instructed, for example, about how to handle a new agricultural tool, but he needs to be educated about pest control. Wisdom about mechanization of agriculture grows slowly after years of introspection and analysis. The virtues of natural farming can be absorbed in an **elevated** state of mind which is the final and the deepest state among the five processes, namely information, instruction, education, wisdom and elevation.

Radio programming **about** instruction and education has to be predominantly verbal, although sound-effects can be employed imaginatively. An instructional **programme** about repairing a motor engine, for instance, can be illustrated by various sounds of the engine in a **healthy** and sick state. These programmes need to be utterly **objective** and repeated over a period of time to drive home a complex lesson; they have also to be simple in structure.

1.4.5 Public Service Announcement

Public Service or utility announcements are increasing over radio as the society becomes more complex and listeners crave for various kinds of information. Vacancies in **government** offices and notices of mass recruitment have become popular over radio, **as** these somewhat contribute to easing the unemployment situation. Railway **and** airlines flight-timings about departure and arrivals over the radio relieve the anxiety of passengers, friends and relatives. These are of informational value and have no **value** beyond the moment. The names of **casualties** in train and air accidents, when announced over radio, serve an immediate social purpose. Programming **public** service announcements presupposes authentic source,

factual and correct **information** as well as unemotional and prompt delivery.

Similarly public service campaigns on social issues such as family welfare, health care, **hygiene**, dowry, **immunisation** etc, broadcast over radio have great utility value. Through the use of apt slogans, jingles, dramaticules, appropriate dialogues, these social-issues can be highlighted and **thus** provoke social awareness among a large **majority** of listeners.

Exercise 4

i) Is there any need to carefully choose even **entertainment-matter** for broadcast in present-day India? (Check with aids to answers 1.9)

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ii) How are commercial broadcasts over AIR different **from** entertainment programmes? Give examples.

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iii) What is the **difference-between** instruction and **education** in respect of radio programmes? Exemplify.

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iv) What purpose is **served** by Public **Service** Announcements over a radio system?

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1.5 PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Production techniques have evolved a great deal since radio was invented by **Marconi**. These depend on **both** hardware and software components. For example.

producing a programme on FM stereo is different from producing one on the AM band. The FM stereo **programmers** have to decide a broadcast which can lend itself to stereophonic values **as**, for example, music with elaborate percussion or string instruments whose finesse can be captured in stereophonic sound.

The basic production **technique** for radio is tape-recording of the programme in ideal sound-proof conditions. In the early days of radio, live programmes were the order of the day; these days, almost everything except news is pre-recorded. This is an improvement, because it eliminates the defects and hazards of live broadcasts. The equipments used for **recording** a radio programme include a good microphone and a recording machine with facilities for dubbing, editing and re-recording. Music-recording, particularly of an orchestra, needs a number of microphones placed near major components of the music, while a straight news commentary needs only one mike. A 'Current **Affairs**' programme in which **3-4 persons** take part, needs **2-3** mikes placed in such a manner that they give uniform sound levels.

Production techniques are not learnt in a day; one needs to have a good ear and quick reflexes to edit or dub a programme. Surface editing eliminates undesirable sounds, such as stammer, **sneezes**, coughs and **choking** of voice. A deeper editing cuts out repetitions, arranges **the** ideas in order and brings back and forth the matter that needs to be in sequence, especially in a feature. Discussion programmes improve vastly by imaginative editing. Dubbing adds extra sound-effects, or brings disparate sounds together. Before producing and recording a programme, seating of participants in the **studio** needs to be carefully planned so that sound-levels become uniform and clear, **particularly** while recording a discussion programme or an orchestra.

Production calls for **more** care and efficiency in outdoor programmes than inside a studio. The recording of a football match, for example, is more challenging than recording a solo music programme in a studio. Spot interviews of eye-witnesses in a crowd call for skill and **presence of** mind. In outdoor recordings, it is difficult to **keep** out extraneous sounds. A cock may **suddenly** crow when a classical musician demonstrates a raga or a sonata and mar the entire programme. By re-recording and **taking** advance care, **such** hazards of outdoor recording can be reduced to a great extent, if not kept out **altogether**. Handling and erasing of magnetic tapes can be **learnt** only by **demonstration** and experience. Sudden defects in recording or dubbing equipment need to be promptly attended to with the help of the servicing and maintenance staff.

Modern production techniques have replaced human ingenuity and judgement to a great extent. In **advanced** radio stations, production is wholly computerised. Adjustment to sound-levels and frequency is done by the computer automatically. And yet human **judgement** and ingenuity are still important inputs and an experienced and imaginative producer can do wonders with old, antiquated equipment. **Orson Welles**, the legendary Hollywood film-maker, once produced a radio programme on inter-stellar journey which brought Americans out onto the streets to see the 'Alien' because it was so convincingly done that the reality **sense** of listeners vanished for a moment.

1.6 WRITING FOR RADIO

Writing for radio is **very** different from **writing** for any other medium, particularly the print medium. Many **good** writers of books and newspaper articles have fared badly when called upon to **write** for, or speak on the radio. On the contrary, many **good** writers or speakers on radio have done equally well in the print medium; George **Orwell**, Dylan **Thomas**, Rudyard **Kipling** are well known **examples**.

1.6.1 Broadcasting Demands on the Writer

The difference between a writer for radio and one for the print medium lies in **the** recognition and **understanding** of the sound-values of letters, **words** and sentences. A Dickensian sentence! may read extraordinarily well in print but if it is too long or full of multisyllable words, or is of a complex syntax, it **will** fall **flat on the radio**

listeners. It required Charles **Dickens'** **special** talent to read them equally well.

The style and content of a script for the radio are dictated, to a large extent, by the **potential** listeners. For example, a writer of a talk for housewives, say on **cooking** or bringing up children, for midday listening, has to be extremely simple and yet has to present the subject in a chatty and interesting way to keep the listeners off their siesta. If **he/she** does it like an article in the **Encyclopaedia Britannica**, listeners will naturally switch off, or change to another programme. Although good writing for radio is learnt **by** years of patient practice and by development of what T.S. Eliot called, the '**auditory** imagination', some simple rules-do's and **don't's—can** perhaps be laid **down**. These are :

- a) Think on the subject and digest the material in **all** its aspects before putting it **down** in writing.
- b) Imagine your potential listeners to be sitting next to you in real life and write as you would speak to them **as** if they were listening to you in actual life.
- c) Avoid **difficult** words; if you have to present complex ideas, explain them in the simplest terms before repeating them.
- d) Maintain a rigid time-frame and adjust your writing to the slot given to you.
- e) Adjust your writing to the mood of the day, the time and the season. For example, if you are doing a talk on sports in the peak evening hours, make it interesting, conversational and jovial to appeal to the widest section of listeners.

Sometimes the writer for radio is also required to read his or **her** own script over the microphone; it is always better that way. A **writer** knows the nuances of his ideas and sentence-patterns; a professional reader may not always be able to grasp them.

If you have to read your own **script** consider the limitations of your voice, modulation **and** pronunciation so that the script is otherwise enriched to **compensate** for **these**. For example **some** people stammer on a particular word or a group of words; these **words** can be cleverly avoided. **The** aim is to make an impression on your listeners in a short while and let your ideas **sink** into their minds. To achieve this, a writer has to avoid angry, **partisan and** biased remarks, avoid speaking in either a highbrow or a lowbrow **manner**, and avoid giving an impression of condescending to the listeners **as** if he is obliging them with **his** erudition or authority.

At the **same** time, a writer for radio should make **his** or her message forceful and **not** be wishy-washy or mincing. **Subhash Chandra Bose's** or **Hitler's** addresses to their **troops** over radio would have had little effect on the soldiers if they were not inspiring and **forceful**. A talker on a **social or** an **economic** topic needs to substantiate his **talk** with facts and **figures; use** them with imagination and force to make the talk **objective**.

Subjectivity is, to a large extent, **the** essence of creative writings —of poetry, novel and **drama—after** all; all creative writers reflect their own personality—but it mars a talk on **the social, economic** or political topic of the day. Because what **the** listeners are **interested** to **know** are not your views on these topics only only **an analysis** of the situation that you **wish** to get across.

Writing for radio **should** preferably be typed, or neatly hand-written, so that neither **you** nor the reader fumbles in-the-studio. For adjusting to the time-slot, the talk **can** be rehearsed at home before recording it at the radio station. Although spellings are **not** very important in radio-writing, one should be careful, because sometimes good **broadcasts** are sent out for publication.

Below are given two passages, exemplifying **good** and bad writing for the radio.

16.2 Good and Bad Writing

Here is **an** example of **good writing** for radio.

"Dust thou art, to dust **returnest**" says the Bible. Scientifically, it is however, more appropriate to say, "Man is water and to water he returns", because **according** to Charles Darwin, man evolved from simple, unicellular **forms**, floating on water, called PROTOZOA; two-thirds of his body is watery substance. When after death, he is either buried or cremated, the mortal remains merge with water in the soil; in some communities the lifeless body is

still surrendered to a flowing **river**. **While** he a alive, he cannot Live without water for long; water in fact is an alias of life. Curiously, as in the human body, water comprises two-thirds of the earth's surface **also**, to be precise, 72 per cent; and in chemical analysis, **blood** plasma in human or animal body has the same saline content as sea-water; it is almost captured sea-water. Water is not only the medium of food for plants and trees, it is also a staple food for man and animals.

Bad Writing

The recognition that no amount of investment in power, irrigation, transport and **communication** will improve the well-being of our people if they remain unlettered, led to the formal launching of National Adult Education Programme in **1978**. The programme aimed at combining literacy, functionality and awareness. **Rural** functional literacy projects and State adult education programmes **were taken** up with the active involvement of voluntary agencies to achieve the objectives of this societal responsibility. Parallel efforts were **on** to achieve rapid universalisation of primary education so as to check the rapid additions to the ranks of adult illiterates.

In the first example, **sentences** are divided into short statements marked by semicolons. The reader pauses at these divisions indicated by the punctuation marks. The vocabulary is **simple** and easily comprehensible. In the second example, the sentences are long; **there** is an imitating use of the passive voice in the first and third sentences; words like "unlettered", "functionality" make the script difficult to Listen to and comprehend simultaneously.

Exercise 5

How is writing for **radio** different from writing for a newspaper? What are the **points** to be borne in mind while writing a script on a current topic for radio broadcast? (Check with aids to **answers** 1.9)

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1.6.3 Radio Scripting—An Art of the Imagination

We have seen how **writing** a script for radio broadcast calls for qualities different from those required for **writing** for the print medium; some of these have been discussed in the preceding **sub-section**(1.6.1). A radio script **can** be of various kinds—a radio play, an illustrative **talk** punctuated with sound-effects, a straight **talk** on an educational, **cultural**, social or economic topic. These variety **of** scripts demand from the writer very **different** kinds **of** treatment **and approach**. A script for a radio play is perhaps **the** most **difficult** to write and **inexperienced** playwrights can prove failures. A playwright for the stage **finds** himself constricted **while** writing a play for the radio; there is no Stage for the viewers to see; no **dramatis** personae are seen; no **action** or spectacular scene **can** be conveyed in physical terms. In fact, apart **from** the voices of the **personae** there are only **sound-effects** to compensate **the** absence of visual **communication**. Music **can** play a great part, as it **does on** stage. The playwright for the radio has to imagine his play in only one dimension — that of **sound—and has** to make listeners **oblivious** to the absence of visuals. A good play helps the Listeners to imagine the **scene**, The listeners of a radio play accept the limitation of **lack of** visuals but if their **expectations** from the play are not fulfilled by **compensatory** sound effects, the script **does** not succeed. Similarly, scripts for **talks**, commentaries and illustrative **narrations** have to be auditorily sound, that is, fit for listening within a rigid time-frame. **Imagination** comes into play in devising a proper structure—a striking beginning, a patient elaboration of the idea **contained** in the script and a

convincing conclusion.

An illustrative talk needs a highly imaginative approach. A talk, for example, on the evolution of Beethoven's music needs a lot of research and homework. The introduction should be such that it can arrest the attention of even a lay listener who has merely heard the name of the great 18th century German composer but has not heard any of his music. Dovetailing commentary with the illustration requires considerable imaginative depth and skill. To satisfy both a lay listener and a **knowledgeable** listener calls for balance, authenticity, accuracy of details and last, **but** not least, great sensitivity. If the programmer or the talker is not interested in Beethoven's music or has neither heard much nor appreciated his music, he can hardly make the illustrative talk interesting to the listeners. Radio scripting thus calls **for** research, imagination and skills to fill the void of visuals and letting the listeners **not** miss them.

Exercise 6

What are the techniques involved in producing a radio play?
(**Check** with aids to answers 1.9)

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How would you plan an illustrative talk on your favourite music for All India Radio?
Discuss your answer with fellow students and your counsellor.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF RADIO MEDIUM

Limitations of the radio medium are not so much inherent as flowing from its comparison with other mass media. For example, before the invention of television, listeners of radio never missed the absence of visuals. The limitations of the radio, flowing from its very nature, have been accentuated in the public mind after the spread of the TV.

Some other limitations were, however, there before the invention and spread of the TV. For example, radio programmes are auditory and unless a listener has recorded them, they cannot be re-played for renewed entertainment or deeper education. Even information given on radio can be missed or misunderstood, if it is not repeated. A listener can miss an important (to him) information if he is engaged elsewhere but if it comes out in a newspaper, he **can** collect a copy and have access to it. Whatever be the role of radio — entertainment, information or education — it is often transitory if the listener is not too attentive or receptive. Although a good talk or a musical programme on the radio can **Bake** a lasting impact on a receptive listener, the limitation remains, because it cannot be replayed unless the station chooses to re-broadcast it after some time. Many radio stations do re-broadcast many of their popular programmes. Calcutta station has been broadcasting, over the years, an extremely popular musical programme called **Mahishashur Mardini** on the morning of **Mahalaya** ushering in the five-day worship of goddess Durga in autumn; it **never** tales on the Bengalees. When another **version** was produced and broadcast during **the** Emergency (1975-77) there was uproar among the public and the station had to broadcast the earlier version, some days later. Ordinarily, however, when a good programme is missed, or is not heard to satisfaction, **it cannot be retrieved**. Newspapers, video and TV have an edge over radio in these respects only—in **repeatability** and visual appeal. Although these are limitations for the radio, the medium also compensates its clientele in many other ways.

To sum up, radio has ample potential as a mass medium and much of this has been harnessed in more **than** half a century of its existence in our country. Its widespread occurrence in urban **and** rural India, and its unabated **popularity** in rural and backward areas, where newspapers and television have not yet reached, are **still** enormous. At a small **cost** and smaller recurring expense, a whole family **can** be entertained, informed and educated in such ample measure as no other mass medium can give at such a price.

Radio's potential reaches not only the economically backward or **poorer** people; it is still prized by many sections of the urban and rural intelligentsia, precisely **because** it does not **distract** through visuals. Television has earned the nickname, 'Idiot-Box' in the West; radio has **not** earned any. There are certain **kinds** of programmes where visuals are not only unnecessary but actually irritating and **disgusting, e.g., in classical** music programmes, both vocal and instrumental, or vocal music concerts in which the emphasis is on the 'words and not on the singer, and similarly, in serious talks and **discussions** where the emphasis is on the content more than on the speaker. Radio still thrives on the psychological principle that when only one sense is engaged the message goes deeper than when more than one is involved. Seeing is believing but hearing only has **its** own sensory compensation in inducing greater absorption than does the visual or audio-visual media.

1.9 AIDS TO ANSWERS

Exercise 1

- i) Indian **Broadcasting** Company. It functioned **from** 1927-30 from Bombay and Calcutta.
- ii) Transistor **revolution**, and abolition of license fee in respect of **single** and two-band **transistors** in 1980.
- iii) Yes, radio has a **strong** competitor in television.

Exercise 2

The hourly news bulletins on Radio make Radio the fastest mass medium in India with the most widespread reach. Radio's ubiquity and mobility are other **factors** in its favour. As an audio medium, with the invention of the stereophonic recording and FM broadcasts, the sound waves reach the audience in utmost perfection.

Radio is inexpensive to own and radio programmes comparatively inexpensive to produce and broadcast.

Exercise 3

Radio	TV
Inexpensive to own	Expensive to own
Mobility (transportability)	Not possible to move it wherever one moves
Longer hours of broadcast	Shorter hours of broadcast
Fidelity to sound reproduction	Not so perfect in its audio function
Lack of visuals	Visuals add to its value
No use for new gadgets like remote control etc.	Makes use of new gadgetry and so technologically progressive

Exercise 4

- i) Yes—where there is mass, unrestrictable listening entertainment programmes should be of good **taste**, without any communal, **casteist** or chauvinist bias.
- ii) Commercials are geared to advertising of their products by different commercial **organisations. Hence** the focus is not always on excluding entertainment programmes. Often advertisement jingles and slogans intrude into the entertainment programme.
- iii) Instruction is of an **immediate** impact while education is a never-ending process.

Instruction on a radio **programme** thus has the immediate range of vision for its field while education is of a far reaching and wider **range** of vision. **Radio** can instruct the audience about the **use** of contraceptives but when it comes to discussing the merits of a family planning programme, its value is educative.

iv) Refer to 1.4.5.

Exercise 5

While writing for Radio, one must have an understanding of the sound value of **letters**, words and sentences. Carefully the sentence structure is to be framed avoiding long sentences, multisyllable words, unfamiliar directions. The rigid time frame of a **radio** broadcast calls for precise and comprehensive scripting.

Exercise 6

Sound-effects, music interludes, background music, careful dialogues that will reveal **the** location, personality of the characters and conflict of the play are **some** of the techniques involved **in** a radioplay production.

1.10 KEY WORDS

Adaptation : Making a literary work—a play, novel or a poem—suitable for **another** medium like radio, TV or film

Angle : A specific **approach/bias**

Audio : Relating to hearing only, as opposed to both hearing and seeing together (VIDEO). A system for hearing through **wireless/radio**

Bulletin : Official statement; in radio context, of news

Channel : Band of frequency on which **radio/TV** programme is put out on the air

Chunk : (Colloquial) A specific period of time at which a **radio/TV** programme goes on the air

Cue : A signal for the successive programme on **radio/TV**

Despatch : A news-based coverage sent by telegram, telex, fax or on **phone**

Documentary : A film or a radio programme, based on actuality

Dubbing : Replacing, or adding to, the sound-track of a **film** or a magnetic tape

Editing : Preparing a recorded tape (in respect of **radio/TV**), by putting together parts in a suitable sequence, by erasing or rearranging

Flash : An important news, received and put out briefly, when a news bulletin is **going** on the air

F.M. Band : **A noise-free—often** stereophonic—frequency channel in modern radio **station**; F.M. meaning 'Frequency Modulation'

Gharana : Style of rendering Indian classical music, named after, and originating in a particular place where it has been cultivated by eminent experts

Hardware : Mechanical equipment necessary for broadcasts like studio, transmitter, microphone, **machinery**, etc: Opposite of 'Software'

Headlines : Highlights in a news bulletin; AIR describes them as 'main points'

Input : What is put in, or supplied, for a programme; data **required/put** in for a decision

Listener : 'One who listens to a radio programme'

Live Broadcast : Broadcast which is not pre-recorded, made **from** the venue of the **event/site** itself, e.g. Sports Relay

Medium/Media : Through which communication is made with the masses, e.g. newspaper, radio, TV—the last two are called 'electronic media'

Megawatt/Kilowatt (Station) : A radio station's area of broadcast measured through the power of its transmitter

Microphone : Instrument for changing and enlarging sound waves into **electrical** current

- OB** : Outdoor **Broadcast**, usually through a vehicle-mounted transmitter/wireless, to the nearest Radio **Station**
- Output** : Power, Energy, etc. produced; information produced from a Computer, opposite of 'Input'
- POP** : **Colloquial** abbreviation for 'popular', e.g. pop music, meaning light **Western** songs
- Prasar Bharati** : The proposed Public Corporation under which AIR and Doordarshan are to be brought, as a result of a Parliamentary Act, passed in 1990, to give these two media more autonomy and to free them from Government Control, redeeming a promise to the electorate made by the National Front and the **Congress (I) party**
- Radio** : **Transmission** of sound on **electro-magnetic** waves without a **connecting** wire, invented by G. Marconi, an Italian **electrical** engineer in 1895
- Red** : Bringing forth some **information**, already broadcast in an **earlier** news bulletin, to give **more depth** and **clarity** to a related **news** item
- Script** : A written matter for broadcast
- Serial** : A long play or film, broadcast in episodes
- Slot** : (Colloq.) Right or suitable place in a **broadcast programme**; the fixed time taken by such a programme
- Slug** : Brief heading **given** to a news item for **quick sorting/ready** reference
- Software** : The content of a broadcast apart from its **mechanical components/aids**; Opposite of 'hardware'
- Sound Effect** : **Various sounds** that **accompany**, or are added to, a broadcast matter, as sound of storm or **river** in a radio play
- Stereo** : Abbreviation of 'Stereophonic', meaning a **recording/broadcast** involving two separately placed loud-speakers, giving **the effect of** naturally distributed sound
- Takes** : Separate clips of an agency coverage in the context of radio
- Transistor** : Small **electronic** semi-conductor device **used** in radio sets instead of thermionic valves. The advantages of a transistor over a valve are that it is less **bulky**, it requires no heater **current**, and that the voltage at the **collector** need only be a few volts
- Transmitter** : An **apparatus**, usually **vertical**, for sending sound-waves from a radio station
- Technology** : Systematic application of know-how to practical tasks in industry
- Video** : Relating to (**recording** for) broadcast of photographic images, as opposed to AUDIO
- Voice-Over** : Voice added to a tape, to illustrate an image or a sound **on** a broadcast medium

1.1 ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR BLOCK 1

Title	Author	Publisher	Year of available edition
<i>This is All India Radio</i>	U.L. Baruah	Publications Division, New Delhi	1983
<i>Broadcasting in India</i>	G.C. Awasthy	Allied Publishers, New Delhi	1965
<i>The Universal Eye</i>	Timothy Green	Stein & Day, New York	1972
<i>Radio Power</i>	Julian Hale	Paul Elik, London	1975