
UNIT 2 TYPES OF PROGRAMMES :

A SUMMARY

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2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A study of this unit will help you to :

- describe the different programmes broadcast on **AIR;**
- state characteristics of each of these programmes such as News, **Current Affairs, Talks**, Educational broadcast etc.; and
- relate the use of radio in the fields of sports **and** entertainment.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall give you a summary of the types of programmes that are aired on any radio station, with particular reference to All India Radio. This unit, along with the previous unit on Radio and its Potential (Unit 1) is intended to **familiarise you** with the different programmes broadcast by All India Radio. These two units are seminal to an understanding of the functioning of Radio, before you begin to learn the art of scripting radio programmes.

2.2 RADIO PROGRAMMES

Radio, being a mass medium, reaches millions of listeners in a variety of ways. A **major** chunk comprises news bulletins in **English**, Nepali and **18** Indian Languages **as well** as in a number of tribal dialects. From New **Delhi** two to three bulletins are **produced** everyday in Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Gojri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, **Kashmiri**, Malayalam, **Marathi**, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, **Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu**, and Urdu and broadcast by the regional stations.

Of the news-based programmes, the most well-known and widely listened to are the Talks in English and Hindi, broadcast from **Delhi** and relayed by many regional stations of AIR. These are produced and presented by the News Services Division in New **Delhi**. Regional News Units in State and Union **Territory** capitals also broadcast a number of such programmes.

In addition, almost each station **broadcasts** features and documentaries, interwoven with profuse **sound-effects** and interviews. In between programmes, and **also** on fixed chunks, a number of public **service announcements** are carried—like job vacancies in the government and the public sector, **arrivals** and departures of flights and trains, weather forecasts for farmers, fishermen and mountaineers. **On** many foreign radio stations, traffic situation in big cities in peak hours is broadcast for **guidance** of drivers who have car radios. Radio also gives out a lot of entertainment programmes from each station, tuned to **the** culture of regions.

Of these, the **most** popular are vocal and instrumental music, the plays, the sports relays and the commentaries. Direct relays **on** Radio Reports of special events, **like** the Prime Minister's Independence Day broadcast from the Red Fort, or **his** visit to an important country, **are** also eagerly listened to. Serials have **come** over to radio from the TV in which adaptation of popular educational broadcasts are meant for students of various **classes** in the schools, **colleges** and universities. There are also entertainment and educative programmes for children and exclusive programmes for the youth; a separate **channel** for the latter, Yuva Vani, was introduced in **1969**, in Delhi station and extended to other stations gradually. Radio is also **used** for supporting formal education in schools and colleges as well **as** for open learning. **Another field** where **radio** can play a significant part is **breaking** the literacy barrier, particularly in achieving adult literacy.

2.2.1 Current AIR Programmes—National

Radio programmes **have** become varied and complex with the passing of years (since the first broadcast from Bombay in August **1921**), in response to public demand, development of technology and competition with TV. The **first** experimental radio **programme** in India, as we have seen in Unit-1 of this Block, was a special programme of music, **broadcast** by the 'Times of India' in collaboration with the Posts and Telegraphs **Department** from its Bombay office for Governor Sir **George** Lloyd who listened to it at **Pune**.

Initially, music **dominated** the radio programmes of 1937-38; they averaged about 74 per cent of **transmission**. Even now, **as** much **as** 36% of their total time is devoted to music by one hundred and two **AIR** stations as on 15 September, 1990. These programmes cover a **wide** variety of vocal and instrumental **music—classical** (both Indian and Western), **folk**, light, devotional, **film** and **songs** of individual composers, like those of **Rabindranath Tagore** and Kazi **Nazrul** Islam in West Bengal, **Surdas** and **Kabir** in Hindi and a host of outstanding lyricists in nearly every part of the country. Both **kinds** of **Indian classical** music—Hindustani and **Carnatic—account** for a major part of air timing of radio stations both in north and south India, besides the National **Programme** of Music which is broadcast from New Delhi and relayed by all stations every **Saturday night**.

Next to music, news **occupies** the bulk of the total broadcasting **time** with about 145 bulletins including the external ones **from** the News Services Division in New Delhi, and 127 bulletins from 41 AIR stations elsewhere in the country, **everyday**. Of these, the External Services Division of **AIR** in Delhi broadcasts **news** bulletins to various regions abroad in English as well as in 6 Indian and 15 foreign languages. Seven other external bulletins are broadcast from Calcutta (4), Madras (2) and Bombay (1) stations in Bengali, **Tamil** and Gujarati respectively.

Popular among other programmes are radio plays **in** almost every Indian language and some of the tribal dialects from every AIR station **twice** or thrice a week. The spread of TV has **not much dimmed** the **enormous** listening of these audio plays. Talks and discussion, news-based and of other kinds, also have a large share in the programmes **broadcast** by every station. Besides, there are programmes for children, news and other **programmes** for the youth through an exclusive channel called **Yuva Vani** which started from Delhi on 21 July, **1969** and has since been **introduced** gradually in 72 AIR stations. Besides, there **are** programmes for specific groups, like farmers (Radio Rural **Forums** and Agricultural programmes), educational programmes for school, college and university students **as** well as for teachers, **like** the Teacher Training **course** which started from **Trivandrum** in November 1975, Open University **lessons** for Delhi and **Madurai** Universities, Correspondence courses, specific **nonformal** education **programmes** for the illiterates **and** the

neo-literates, for women and children, for the Armed Forces, for industrial workers, for tribals and many other categories of people. AIR also broadcasts special programmes on **religion**, rituals, festivals and various anniversaries.

2.2.2 Current AIR Programmes—External Services

A lesser known aspect of All India Radio is its External Services controlled by a separate division. They were pioneered by a **Pushtu** Service introduced on 01 October, 1939, i.e. within a month of the outbreak of the **Second** World War; it was followed by a Service in Afgan-Persian (**Dari**) in December same year, and by Persian and Arabic about two years later in 1942. By year end South East Asian and Far Eastern Services came when **Japan** entered the war. These used to be called "Political Warfare" broadcasts to put across the British version of the great war. Soon followed services in English, Tamil, Hindi and Gujarati, for Indian settlers abroad speaking these languages. Overseas services in Chinese, Japanese and some other foreign languages were organised and financed by the British Ministry of information.

At present AIR broadcasts 22 external services—in Arabic, Baluchi, Bengali, Chinese, Dari, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Bhasa **Indonesia**, **Nepali**, Persian, Punjabi, **Pushto**, **Sindhi**, Swahili, Russian, Tamil, Thai, Tibetan and Urdu. In addition, it broadcasts eleven General Overseas Services (GOS) in English beamed to East and South East Asia, North-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Indian Ocean islands, United Kingdom and West Europe, West Asia, East Africa and North West Africa. During the mid-eighties, the External Services Division used to broadcast 400 hours a week, the maximum (9 hrs 45 mts) being in English in the GOS, specially beamed to **Europe**, West Asia, East Africa, North-East Asia, East and South Asia, Australia and New Zealand, round-the-clock, at the most convenient hours for listeners abroad.

Beginning in 1951, the overseas service in English expanded by leaps and bounds from 45 minutes a day to 325 minutes in 14 broadcasts. The service was reorganised on 01 April, 1966. A major component of external broadcasts are 67 news bulletins in 22 languages. The master copies are prepared by the News Services Division in English which are then translated and read by Newsreaders in these languages.

Exercise 1

Name the main types of Programmes broadcast by AIR.

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(Check with Aids to answers 2.8)

6.3 RADIO IN THE SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC

Radio, as we have stated, is a mass medium with a wide reach and powerful impact. As an inexpensive and instantaneous communication medium, radio has an advantage of overcoming our country's formidable physical, cultural and literacy barriers. All India Radio has devised programmes which would satisfy the needs and urges of a democratic and developing nation and provide an effective communication support to the tasks of national reconstruction. In the service of the public, AIR broadcasts News, Current Affairs & Talks, Documentaries & Interviews and Public Service Announcements. In the following sub-sections we will discuss these aforementioned programmes to help you recognise Radio's varied programmes in the service of the public.

2.3.1 Radio News

In 1930, the Indian Broadcasting Company, which pioneered regular broadcasts in

India, introduced two evening news bulletins each from **Calcutta** and Bombay Stations — one in English and the other in Bengali and **Marathi** respectively. These were prepared from news summaries from the local offices of the *Rueters*. This arrangement continued even after the government took over broadcasting from the private company from 10 April, 1930.

A Centralised News Service was started in Delhi station and the first news bulletin went from Delhi on 01 **January, 1936**; it began to be relayed by Peshawar Station from 01 April the following year and from Lahore and **Lucknow** thereafter. The first News Editor was Mr. H.G. Franks and in May 1936 he was succeeded by an Indian, Mr. G.S. Naronha. Regular news service of AIR **took** time to develop. A Central News Organisation came into being on 01 April, 1937; soon, two morning bulletins were introduced, one in English and the other in **Hindustani**. With the outbreak of the Second World War, **AIR's news** set-up got a shot in the arm; within one month, the number of bulletins went up from 9 to 27.

Bulletins came to be added to Delhi Station in response to public as well as political demands and because of various exigencies. At the time of Independence, AIR used to broadcast 74 bulletins (43 home and 31 external). On 15 August, 1990, that is 43 years later, the number of news bulletins broadcast in the home service from the Delhi Station was 78 which comprised English (**17**), Nepali and 18 Indian languages. The number of **bulletins** in English, regional languages and 42 tribal dialects from State and Union Territory capitals, including Delhi, is at present 133. There is a proposal to introduce hourly bulletins from 12 midnight to 6 a.m. in the morning for industrial workers and other categories who have to keep awake, being on the night shift.

AIR's news organisation is the biggest of its kind in a democratic **country**. News bulletins, Talks and Current Affairs programmes are **organised** and produced by the News Services Division with its headquarters in New Delhi with a sanctioned manpower of 263 IIS Officers of various grades and 564 other staff. News flows to a spacious room, called **the** General News Room (GNR) with a wide telecom network. There are **PTI** and **UNI teleprinters**; telephones and telegrams flow from correspondents in 70 **towns** and cities in India and 12 abroad. **AIR's** own regular correspondents are posted in Dubai (for coverage of the Middle East), Singapore (for South-East Asia), Harare (for South African countries), Islamabad, Colombo, Dhaka and Kathmandu. It has now **part-time** correspondents at Port Louis (Mauritius), Warsaw, Brussels, Geneva and Bonn.

A Radio news bulletin, extending at the most to 15 minutes (2100 hrs English bulletin from Delhi), is a **compressed** capsule of home and foreign news, generally not staler than a few hours. From 6 in the morning to 12 midnight, news bulletins go on the air hourly, alternatively in English and Hindi, and half hourly when General Election results are announced.

News, as it flows from **its** own correspondents, or through **PTI/UNI** teleprinters, is rendered into broadcast language as per norms and guidelines and is circulated to various sections who edit and compile them for their bulletins. The editors and compilers are quite free to select, edit and compile their own **bulletins**. The three major English bulletins (**0810, 1400** and 2100 hrs) are supervised by senior officers of the rank of Joint Director; the Director restricts himself to clearing and advising about the headlines only and inclusion or exclusion of sensitive news items.

2.3.2 Current Affairs and Talks

Current Affairs and Talks produced by the News Services Division these days are extensions of news **bulletins**. They have an interesting history. The weekly 30-minute Current Affairs **programme**, which now goes on on Sunday night from 2130 **hrs** from Delhi 'B', relayed by a **few** Stations and repeated on the same frequency on Monday morning at **0705 hrs**, was started in 1966 with a different title, '**Debate**'. The English talks programme produced by the News Services Division, which goes on Delhi 'B' every night from 2116 hrs for 14 minutes, is called 'spotlight'. It was started during the Chinese aggression in September-October 1962 under a propaganda slot, 'INDIA AND THE DRAGON'. This changed to 'FOCUS', and, then from 17 July, **1966**, the programme was merged with another, called 'TOPIC FOR THE DAY' and redesignated as 'IN **THE NEWS**'. It came to be called 'SPOTLIGHT': from

21 February, 1967. There is also a 30-minute Current Affairs programme: in Hindi from Delhi-A, called **Charcha Ka Vishay Hai** (The Topic for Discussion) and ten-minute talks in Hindi and Urdu, called **Samayiki** and **Tabsara** respectively, broadcast every night.

The 'Current Affairs' and **CHARCHA KA VISHAY HAI** are programmes of discussions by three to four (rarely five) experts on a current and often controversial topic, of which one, generally a journalist, is a moderator. The topic is selected by the Director of the News Services Division 3-4 days before broadcast, and the discussion is recorded in an AIR studio a day or two earlier. Both have a very wide and intelligent listening; the standard is often quite high and commended by newspapers. Although considerable freedom exists about the selection of the topic, normally India's external relations and prevailing domestic situation are kept in mind so that the discussion does not have an adverse effect on them. For example, in a communally charged situation, a discussion on communal violence can inflame passions; hence the topic is best avoided or treated with utmost caution.

The talks are normally straight scripts, written by experts on the subject, either journalists or academicians, and read generally by them, if they so desire, or by AIR's own News Readers. All shades of opinions, which may not necessarily be pro-establishment, find place, but the language is adapted to radio style, keeping in view the auditory values. The News Services Division maintains a panel of talkers and participants and does not consider unsolicited scripts for talks or offers of participation in 'Current Affairs' programmes. The English talks have a wide listening among the intelligentsia, particularly among the students, preparing for various competitive examinations, who find them often very useful. Normally, two scripts are accommodated in the 14-minute 'Spotlight' programme but if the subject warrants, the entire slot can be given to one script, or to an important interview.

The News Services Division also puts out a number of commentary programmes from Delhi and other regional Stations. These include summaries of editorial comments in the daily press, newsletters from States and districts, commentaries in Urdu, **Dogri**, Kashmiri and Arunachal pegged to the news in these languages. An interesting bulletin from Delhi and many regional Stations comprises human interest news which are generally carved out of major news bulletins. The 'Vichitra **Sambad**' ('Strange News') from Calcutta — the Bengali equivalent of the 'Human Interest, Bulletin' from New Delhi — has a wide listening. Newsreel, carrying highlights of the **day/week**, based on interviews, voiced despatches and field reporting with sound-effects, is the liveliest of all news programmes. From Delhi seven newsreel programmes are broadcast every week — three each in English and Hindi and one for Sports. Regional Stations also broadcast newsreel in respective regional languages two to three times a week.

Exercise 2

What is the difference between a Current Affairs and a Talks Programme?

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(Check with Aids to Answers 2.8)

2.3.3 Documentary/Interviews

Radio **documentary** is, unfortunately, not a very known genre of programme; it is often confused with **radio feature**. As the name suggests, radio documentary is an **audio** programme based on documents, as a documentary film is with an added visual component. Documentary here does not necessarily mean 'based on documents' — although a radio or film documentary can be produced on documents only, like, say, on **Gandhiji's** letters, or Rabindranath **Tagore's Swadeshi** correspondence.

Radio documentary has a good informative potential. For example, a conscientious producer could interview the women of **Rajasthan** in the vicinity of the village where Mrs. Roop Kanwat committed **Sati** on 4 September, 1987, and find out what **really** impels married women of the State to take to such incredible self-immolation after the death of their husbands; it could be far more educative than a frenzied propaganda against this **social** evil.

Radio documentary is different from a radio feature in that while a document has to be strictly confined to the reality — actual documents, actual sound-effects, actual interviews etc., a radio feature has more scope for imagination to make it interesting, like padding it with music or attractive sound-effects, enactment of an episode or scene. This makes radio documentary somewhat dull and drab listening in **comparison** with radio feature; truth is hardly as interesting as fiction.

Radio Interviews are like photos in a newspaper. The *raison d'être* of a photo is: "Seeing is believing" that of a radio interview is; 'to hear of the war from ~~the horse's~~ mouth'. Reporting, howsoever truthful and accurate, can be distorted by the ideas of a speaker, or the nature of an event; the report's subjectivity inevitably **colours** what the speaker says, or really means, or what the event is really about. The word of mouth also snowballs in interested persons; meanings enlarge, or are distorted. This is wholly eliminated in a radio interview **unless** it is edited and censored, as often happens in regard to interviews of politicians. Otherwise, a radio interview gives an authentic vision of an idea or an event and is more convincing to listeners than other programmes. It is **also delightful** to hear the voice of a person whose image has been imprinted on listeners' minds through the print medium. For example, a young star **born** after Mrs. **Gandhi's** death, will be thrilled to hear her recorded voice for the first time if he adores her by reading about her.

2.3.4 Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements are not really programmes on the radio; they are generally fillers in **between**. They are in the category of announcements in the interest of public service and most of them are of such a nature that they will serve no purpose if **carried** by newspapers **the** next day. For example, train and flight arrivals and departures, their timings and status which are these days broadcast by AIR at fixed intervals, as a teletext does, serve a very crucial but short-lived need of passengers and their relatives etc. There is another category these days — job vacancies in the government and the **public** sector, the missing persons according to the police, health and hygiene **advice/instructions**, reservations status in trains and flights — which have a little longer relevance. The announcements regarding radio programmes and sports commentaries, although **they** serve the public, are not really public service announcements; they are just programme announcements.

2.4 RADIO AND ENTERTAINMENT

In the beginning, radio entertainment was generally in the form of music which took the lion's share of broadcast time for many years. Its informative and educative roles increased gradually. Entertainment by radio assumed varied forms; of these, radio play became one of the **most** popular. It began in Calcutta Station as a weekly programme on Saturdays from 10 January, **1928**, usually of two to three-hours duration with a number of intervals, as on stage. In Bombay, they came from July, 1930 and very soon became a strong genre under **the** influence of the **Parsi** theatre. In **Delhi** and Lahore Stations, a band of good radio playwrights emerged under the encouragement of two legendary Station Directors — A.S. **Bokhari** and **Rashid** Ahmed.

2.4.1 Radio Play

Radio plays became **popular** in regions where a rich tradition of theatre and **folk** plays existed as in **Bengal** and **Maharashtra**; in other regions, it was slow to develop. It is yet to make much headway in tribal regions where folk **forms** are still so dominant that the Western or the Indian form of stage drama cannot take root. For **example**, even in West Bengal, **where** the stage tradition is many centuries old, **the** folk plays, or Jatras, on radio, have a much **larger** listening in rural areas than the sophisticated

radio plays, the adaptations of Shakespeare, Moliere and Ibsen — or original plays written by many eminent Bengali playwrights, dead and alive.

Radio plays have, of course, suffered in listening after the spread of the television. But poorer people who cannot afford a TV set, or go out to see a play on the stage, either for not having one nearby, or for cost of tickets and journey etc., still enjoy radio plays. Some plays are very well-produced, often with stage and screen celebrities enacting. **Classics** have a wide listening; even when repeated, they do not stale. There are prestigious Akashvani awards for radio plays given by Director General of All India Radio every year since 1974 for which AIR Stations compete. The production of radio plays has also improved with years with updating of sound technology and building up of varied sound-effects in AIR Stations. Being short, normally up to one hour or so, they also do not tie a listener to a receiving set for long periods of time and when broadcast during midday or late evening, they serve to keep off sleep enjoyably and with no regrets.

Exercise 3

Arrange the necessary ingredients of a radio play in order of their importance : good sound-effects, a good story, good costumes, good acting, good recording, good filler music in between episodes, outdoor recording of outdoor scenes, good looks of the **dramatis personae** and an imaginative producer.

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 (Check with Aids to Answer 2.8)

2.4.2 Sports and Special Events

Like radio plays, probably much more, sports relays have a huge listening in **every** country. It is curious that people who fear a ball coming at them in a football field are glued to sports programmes on TV or radio; it gives them a kind of vicarious thrill: "What I cannot do, I enjoy seeing and hearing others do".

Relays of popular sports came a little late in India's broadcasting history because of the tardy development of outside broadcast, or, in radio terminology, OB recording. But when it came, it became instantly popular. Even after the spread of the TV, sports relays, particularly of football and cricket, by AIR, continue to have an undiminished listening, because eyes are not strained and one can carry a portable set anywhere one likes, thereby making it possible to do other work while listening to the relay, waiting for a goal to be scored, a wicket to fall, or a match to go in favour of one's country or region.

Relays or Radio Reports of special events also interest a large **number** of listeners. For example, the relay and report of the Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi from 26 to 27 January every year have an eager listening all over the countryside where many people miss it on television. There is a **proposal** for direct relay of Parliamentary proceedings; when it comes about, it will interest **politically** inclined listeners. The inaugural address by the President to the ninth **Lok Sabha** after the National Front Government took over in December, 1989 was broadcast live on AIR and TV; Madhya Pradesh Governor's address to the State Assembly budget session in 1990 was relayed by Bhopal Station, **pioneeringly**. Gradually, inhibitions may go and the entire proceedings of **Lok Sabha** Assemblies may be directly broadcast from Delhi and State capital stations. **Programmes** on Special Events include coverage of film festivals, religious ceremonies and important anniversaries, jubilees and ceremonial occasions.

Exercise 4

- i) How are sports relays on radio different from such relays on T V ?
- ii) Are relays and Radio Reports of special events really necessary?

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(Check with Aids to Answers 2.8)

2.4.3 Serials/Adaptation of Novels

In India, serials have come over to radio from the TV, but certainly are not yet as popular. On either medium, serials cannot be popular unless they are able to sustain the interest of viewers and listeners. An episode in a crime-and-detection serial must end at such a point in the story that the next serial is eagerly awaited. It may be difficult for lay listeners to recall the point where the earlier episode ended; therefore it may be necessary to **give** a brief recapitulation before going ahead with the next episode.

Serials are also **self-contained**, often better that way, like, for example, the **short** stories which **Satyajit Ray's** son, Sandip Ray, dealt with in his first TV series **called**, 'Satyajit Ray Presents'. This kind of serial does not have to pre-suppose the **same** captive listeners or viewers, because every serial is self-contained and complete. **Radio** serials on crime-and-detection attract more listening than other kinds, because the latter do not sustain **interest** much at the end of each episode by suspense or a new turn in the story, or the plot. Long novels **sometimes** need to be serialised in adapted dramatic form, or by good **reading**. When novels are adapted to plays, they no longer remain novels, like many **novels** of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Reading of a novel of fine prose like Rabindranath **Tagore's Seshar Kavita**, or of a hilarious story like Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* or Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* sustain interest, even when carried through a number of serials.

Exercise 5

List out a few novels that can lend themselves to Radio serials.

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(Check with Aids to Answer 2.8)

2.4.4 Music Programmes

From a predominant **status** in early years, music programmes over radio are still a **rave** category. In fact, no other programme benefits radio broadcast more than that of music; in no other, **visuals** are so unnecessary and, in fact, so distracting. A real connoisseur of music craves to listen only and let his mind be deluged by the strains of music, often closing his **eyes**, so that the sense of hearing becomes more receptive. This has kept music programmes over radio in the forefront since their inception. This fulfils radio's **greatest** cultural and entertainment role and AIR continues to be the largest patron of **India's** classical and other forms of music both vocal and instrumental.

Music programmes on **All India** Radio vary from station to station. In Indian classical music, there are the broad categories of Hindustani and Carnatic music of many gharanas, styles, ancestries and origins. These two main kinds of Indian classical music, though, by and large, of the same Vedic origin, have become mutually exclusive because of difference in styles of rendering and musical accompaniments. In 1982 there were over **27,000** Hindustani and 30,000 Carnatic musicians on AIR **Stations; their number is progressively increasing.**

Besides Indian classical music, AIR broadcasts Western classical and pop music programmes from Delhi and other metropolitan stations which have a somewhat restricted listening. Delhi's cosmopolitan population, particularly the diplomatic corps, are avid listeners of Western classical music broadcast from Delhi-B. In addition to these, AIR broadcasts recorded and live programmes of all other kinds of music—vocal and instrumental—light, modern, folk, semi-classical, tribal and most conspicuously, film songs.

The popularity of the last category is so immense that it was thought appropriate to intersperse commercial advertisements over Vividh Bharati's programmes of film songs. In fact, there is very little 'Vividh' (miscellaneous) in Vividh Bharati; it is so much a string of popular film songs, old and new, that it should be called 'Cinema-Bharati'. Western pop songs and songs of other countries, notably Africa, have also a huge listening in our big cities.

But it is AIR which has freed Indian classical music from the preserve of the princes and the rich and taken it to every home having a radio set. The liberation came when late B.V. Keskar was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. AIR also (regularly) holds music concerts, 'Sangeet Sammelans', in many cities and broadcasts them from many Stations AIR has set up special units in many stations for collection and preservation of folk music. The highlight of AIR's music programmes is the National Programme of Music broadcast from Delhi and relayed by all stations. It features both vocalists and instrumentalists, of both the classical categories, both renowned and emerging artists. Tuesday night concerts from North Indian stations and Friday night concerts from South Indian stations specially feature young emerging musicians.

2.5 RADIO AND EDUCATION

Radio is a convenient and useful medium for education. Education is, in terms of broadcasting, the intellectual horizon of the listeners.

2.5.1 Radio for Children

Radio took time to recognise children as its potential listeners. The first children's programme over AIR was primary class lessons in Tamil and was broadcast from Madras on 01 April, 1930. Regular programmes came from early sixties and ever since many other AIR stations have introduced programmes for children. Calcutta Station introduced a regular programme on Sundays, called 'Sishu Mahal', which became intensely popular under an able producer, called 'Indira Di'. For the juvenile and the adolescent a popular programme was introduced by Calcutta AIR, called **Galpa Dadur Asar** (Story-Telling by Grandpa). Similar programmes, under different names, have been introduced in many AIR Stations.

The children's programmes over AIR are very relaxed, easy, informal and innovative. In the early years, the producers had to bear with the sudden crying or **uncontrollable behaviour** of an erratic child. The incident of a child reciting a defamatory rhyme on the mike about a former Prime Minister in the children's programme of Patna Station last year is well-known. This has led to pre-recording and editing of children's programmes. Children are fond not only of music and tales of ghosts, adventure and mystery, they also avidly listen to educative and morale-boosting programmes like the tales from **Panchatantra** and Hitopadesh, testifying to the abiding appeal and classic status of India's ancient children's literature. Children's programme, on AIR are broadcast mostly on Sundays and holidays when they are in a mood to quietly sit before the **radio**. In Western countries, children hear nursery tales, rhymes and lullabies from radio to fall asleep because 'mummies' or grandmothers have no time or desire to sing them to sleep. Let us hope that children's programmes over radio and TV in India may not go that far as to wholly replace such tender and loving interpersonal communication between the mother and the child!

2.5.2 Radio for Youth

There was no separate radiochannel for the youth till 21 July, 1967 when 'Yuva Vani'

was started from Delhi 'Station at the instance of Smt. Indira Gandhi. Although the initial zest has dimmed over the years, the channel continues to purvey programmes specially planned and produced by and for the young people, like sports, light music and news. Gradually, **career** and employment angles have swamped the zestful aspects of these **programmes** but 'Yuva Vani' still appeals to a large segment of the literate and educated **youth**; there is not much **on AIR** for the illiterate working youth except sports and light music which cut across education and literacy. In metropolitan cities, Western 'pop' **music** on Yuva Vani has a good listening for which there is almost an unnatural craving in young people from affluent homes.

Besides 'Yuva Vani' there are a lot of programmes for young people in general channels too. In fact, no distinction can be made at the receiving end; **one** cannot prevent, for example, a young man of 25 years from listening to a talk on euthanasia, **i.e.** the right of very old and sick people to die instead of being a burden on others. Similarly, a person old in age only, can avidly listen to a football or cricket match relay.

Therefore, 'Radio and Youth' is a hazy area and what a young person really likes to listen to cannot be unmistakably decided by programme planners. Sports and light music continue to be favourites of young people everywhere and India is no exception. These days, pressures on educational and employment opportunities make young people tune to radio announcements about college admissions and job vacancies in the **government** and public sector as these give them some guidance. There is no harm if **radio**, through systematic lessons, prepares young people for careers and courses; pure entertainment can take a back seat for them for a while. Youth programmes are naturally devoting considerable broadcast time to this.

2.5.3 Radio for Open Learning

Open learning is a new **mode** in this **country** and still not much heard of; conceptually, it is of Western origin. **The** desire for such learning has led to the establishment of open universities. In our **country**, the first such universities are the Dr. B.R. **Ambedkar** Open University of **Andhra** Pradesh and Indira Gandhi National Open University. Open learning is **learning** without having to attend a school, a college or a university; it can be started at any **age**, and lessons **can** be taken within or without the four walls. One can also learn **through** cassettes, particularly a foreign language, by playing it back and forth, at one's **leisure**. Many home-bound and **aged** persons take lessons from open universities and become eligible for jobs; some people study to satisfy their urges, or just to pass **time** usefully.

All India Radio, Delhi, **started** 'University of the AIR Broadcasts' on September 07, **1966**, to **support** and **reinforce** the Correspondence Courses of **Delhi** University for BA degree. The lessons are of **20** minutes each, in Hindi and English, five times a week, on the **Yuva Vani Channel (Delhi-D)**, starting **from** 07.05 hrs.

This 'University of the AIR' has since been extended to Tamil Nadu where the correspondence courses of **Madurai** University are being given radio support with lessons recorded at AIR, **Tiruchi**, and copies sent to other stations in the State for simultaneous broadcast at 10.30 p.m. Likewise, the correspondence courses of **the Punjab** University are supported with broadcasts from **Jalandhar** station **daily** for 20 minutes, except **during** the **summer** holidays.

Broadcasts for **schools began** from Calcutta station in November 1937 **twice** a week for 30 minutes at the request of Calcutta University and State Department of Education. Regular **school** broadcasts began between October-December, 1938 from Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras. AIR Madras **launched** broadcasts for primary school children on five **days** a week at the request of Madras **Government**. In January, 1982, there were as many as one hundred and forty thousand sets in primary and secondary schools **all over** the country. Tamil Nadu alone had about 68,000 sets including 4200 sets provided by the UNICEF in Tiruchi district **followed** by Maharashtra (over 17 **thousand** sets).

Radio can aid open **learning** very effectively. Given a reasonably good time-slot at midday, the lessons can **be** spread over a period. The students can write about their **problems** and difficulties to the course director, who can then discuss and solve them. The weakness of such **lessons** on radio is that they are one-way; a **two-way traffic** can

be only by post or telephone; the latter requires a lot of money and **telecom** infrastructure. One advantage of such open learning through radio is that it percolates through the sense of hearing and, therefore, is more easily and instantly comprehended than through **cold** print. Designed to support the curriculum, these educational broadcasts reinforce and consolidate learning in class **rooms** by means of new techniques and approaches — and with the help of specialists whom average schools cannot afford. They also update and fill gaps in syllabus **and** bring contemporary developments in various fields of **knowledge**, seeking to close the gaps between the class room and the outside world.

2.5.4 Radio for Adult Literacy

Gandhiji described Radio as a 'miraculous power'. During his first and **only** visit to the Broadcasting House (on Parliament Street) in New **Delhi** (where Delhi station is located) on 12 November, 1947, he had remarked: “**This** is a miraculous power; I see **shakti** — the miraculous power of God”. **Nowhere** is this power more manifest than in radio's ability to reach the illiterate masses not only in informing and entertaining them but in educating them also, beginning with the **3Rs** — reading, writing and arithmetic — and taking them much higher. Although **radio has** not yet been tried enough for achieving literacy, the scope is unlimited.

If a transistor is given to each nonformal class in villages and the illiterate and the semi-literate men and women are motivated and induced to attend these classes, radio can achieve the miracle attributed to it by Gandhiji. Adults pick up faster what they hear than what they strenuously read. Ernakulam district in Kerala is the first to achieve complete literacy and the whole of Kerala is now fully literate. In this, radio has played a **great** role.

Five AIR Stations — at **Jaipur, Nagpur, Shimla, Srinagar**, and Tiruchi — are broadcasting nonformal educational **programmes** for younger people between 15 and 25 years of age. In the evening, **Tiruchi** Station broadcasts lessons for children of 6 to 14 years also. These programmes are meant for community listening at nonformal education centres which are run by Gram Panchayats.

2.6 AIR BROADCASTING : A PERSPECTIVE

Broadcasting in India is a mammoth task because of the vastness and diversity of the country. The first regular radio broadcast from Bombay went on the air on 23 September, 1927 from a 1.5 kilowatt medium-wave transmitter; today AIR has 102 stations broadcasting from 126 medium-wave, 33 short-wave and three FM transmitters with a total radiated power of 6575.50 KW. All India Radio now reaches over 80 per cent of the country's area and more than 90 per cent of its people; in near future the number of radio stations will go up to 200. Although it **caters** to a diversity of people of very different cultures, languages and religions, it also exerts an emotionally integrating influence through its National Programmes which started with weekly music broadcasts on 20 July, 1952. Gradually, other programmes were added — talks, **discussions** in English (weekly) from 29 April, 1953, Hindi talks (weekly) from August, **1963**, monthly plays from 26 July, 1956, monthly features **from** 15 March, 1956 and party political broadcasts on the eve of General Elections **from** June, 1977.

The real **break for** broadcasting in India came with World War **II**. The war also made it necessary for the government to expand the broadcasting organisation so as to meet **the** requirements of its war effort: Most of the News Services and the External **Services** originated during the war years. When India became free, the AIR network **had** only six stations — **Delhi**, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, **Lucknow** and Tiruchi — **with** a total complement of 18 transmitters, 6 of them medium-wave and the others short-wave. Listening on the medium-wave was confined to the urban areas in these cities. With the integration of princely states, AIR took over five broadcasting centres functioning in **those** areas. The total number of radio sets, at the time of Independence in 1947, was a mere **2,75,000**. Today **there** are at least nine crore receiving sets, mostly **transistorised**.

To produce such a huge number of programmes for so many hours, day after day,

requires huge manpower and infrastructure as well as some dedication on the part of the staff.

Three main aims of radio broadcast are entertainment, information and education but these are not mutually exclusive and cannot be demarcated. Listeners cannot also be divided into serious and light-hearted, or highbrow and lowbrow; an intelligent listener enjoys any kind of programme if it is well-produced and presented. There is no reason why an elitist listener of Western classical music will not like a programme of folk songs if the latter is presented with imagination and depth of understanding.

Many homes, almost **throughout** the day, remain tuned to **Vividh Bharati** for light film songs which is an unhealthy trend, just as youngsters remain glued to the silver screen of TV, whatever **be** the programme. Radio and TV tend to breed a vicarious pleasure and a passive culture; that is, listeners and viewers enjoy programmes on them to get pleasure **which** eludes them in actual life. Constant exposure to entertainment broadcasts saps their will to perform such programmes themselves and makes them passive. If one is always listening to music of all sorts, surfeit nips the bud of desire to sing or learn singing. This, of course, can happen only when a listener is not discriminating.

Radio, as we have seen in Unit-1, has suffered from unequal competition with the TV, and hence a re-adjustment and review of its programmes in the new media scenario have become **overdue**. Radio in India is still in an advantageous position, as there is no other broadcasting competitor to All India Radio; whereas in Western countries, private radio stations have **mushroomed**, giving **listeners** a wide choice of bands. This lack of **competition** can make AIR complacent and encourage it to rest on its oars. But to survive the competition from Doordarshan, programming for radio has to be, therefore, much more efficient and imaginative than hitherto.

In a seminar held in New Delhi on 28th January, 1989, on the 'Development of All India Radio', media experts re-defined the role of radio in a complex society as ours. They wanted radio to become a friend and companion and a medium for social reform 'by breaking **obscurantist** and ossified structures of thought' which are hindering progress. Prof. P.C. Joshi wanted AIR to refrain from creating a consumer society, as Doordarshan is encouraging through its commercial advertisements, and to resist pressures from the **Government** and from vested interests. Speakers wanted AIR to promote literacy and **scientific** temper, curb communal and casteist tendencies and be a forum for 'airing public grievances'. **Mrs.** Amita Malik wanted Radio to become an 'intimate companion', while Mrs. Prema Pandurangan urged AIR to strive to dispel the loneliness and lovelessness of man.

It is **interesting** to note ~~that~~ Bertolt Brecht, the well known **German** playwright, called for making radio 'two-sided'. He wrote in an article thus:

It is purely an apparatus for distribution, for mere sharing out, So here is a positive suggestion! change this apparatus over from distribution to communication. The radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him. On this principle the radio would step out of the supply business and organise its listeners as suppliers. Any attempt by the radio to give a truly public character to public occasions is a step in the right direction.

The decision by **the National Front** Government to grant autonomy to AIR and Doordarshan through **an** Act of Parliament is **as** historic as was the then Central Government's take over of **broadcasting** from India Broadcasting Company on **01** April, 1930. There would **not** have been perhaps any need to **formalise** grant of autonomy to these two media if **the successive** ruling parties since the internal Emergency of 1975, **had** not misused them, particularly the news bulletins and news-based programmes, to **gain** passing political advantages. **The** norms and guidelines in respect of news and news-based programmes, as framed by the pioneers and early masters of radio broadcasts in this country, were sufficient to give All India Radio real functional autonomy. However, because of a chorus of public opinion and **clamour** of political parties, the ethos of autonomy is gradually returning, particularly in respect of news **broadcasts**. One hopes, when AIR becomes legally **and**

institutionally autonomous, a new phase will begin in its 64 year **history**, of which for as long as 61 years it was under government control. Let us hope, this historic step would make All India Radio even a more universal purveyor of entertainment, information, education and wisdom, and bring it closer to the people not as an unequal competitor with Doordarshan but as a complementary medium, having its own unique characteristics.

2.7 SUMMING UP

In this unit, you learnt about :

- Different programmes currently broadcast by AIR;
- The role of radio in the dissemination of news and current affairs of public interest and importance;
- Radio's musical broadcasts and radio plays;
- Radio in the service of education at different levels; and
- A historical account and future prospects of AIR broadcasts.

2.8 AWS TO ANSWERS

Exercise 1

News bulletins (145), music **programmes**, commercial broadcasts, current affairs, newsreel programmes, plays and radio **features/documentaries** are the main types of programmes by AIR.

Exercise 2

Current affairs programmes, unlike Talks, are programmes of discussion among 3-4 experts on a current and **commercial** topic with a moderator to moderate the discussion. The English talks are accommodated in the spotlight programme and they are normally straight scripts written by experts on the subject and read by them or by AIR's own News Reader.

Exercise 3

Good story, good acting, an imaginative producer, good sound-effects, good filter music in between episodes and good recording.

Exercise 4

Relay on TV of sports events are brought visually and TV commentary is just a comment and therefore not descriptive. On Radio, the only means of bringing the sports event to the listening audience is by way of commentary which is both descriptive and enriched with comments.

Exercise 5

- a) *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens
- b) *The Man-Eater from Malgudi* by R.K. Narayan
- c) Short stories/Novellas by Rabindranath Tagore etc.