

# Broadcasting in India

Kshitij Sharma and DJ Pratham have all been associated with AIR's Yuva vani.

There is also the news on the phone service which is operated by AIR since 1998. At New Delhi is in operation in Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Indore Patna and Bangalore. The English and Hindi hourly news bulletins can be heard live on <http://www.newsonair.com>. There is also news on the MP3 format which can be directly played from the site. Text of the English and Hindi bulletins can be read from <http://www.Newsonair.com/BulletinsInd.html>. The AIR news bulletins are available in 9 regional languages.

Truly, AIR is the India's public service broadcaster serving all sections of the society and the commercial broadcasters serve the business interests of the persons or owners concerned. There is a need for both commercial broadcasters as well as public service broadcasters doing their duty to serve the vast country like India which has more than 1 billion population at the present time.

## Commercial broadcasters

Although commercial interests may dominate the private broadcasters, it is still an alternative available in news and information in the sense that private broadcasters can fill in with different perspectives when the public broadcaster is compelled to give one-sided view. Also, there is no harm in perspectives provided by private broadcasters as

these will go along with the perspective provided by the government run or funded public service broadcaster.

In sum, broadcasting has been a fruitful activity enriching the citizens of India and perform the basic functions of providing education, information and entertainment to all across the country. The news services of these broadcasters keep the nation and those who live in far off and far flung areas informed. Thus, a good service has been provided by the broadcasters to the citizens. On important days and festivals, these broadcasters provide round the clock service keeping the nation tuned to these. Thus, there is an all round service performed by these broadcasters.

## What is to be done for the future

We would need to examine both the private broadcasters and the government funded publicly owned All India Radio to reform further. Mainly it is found out that the public service broadcasters' programs are found to be wanting more entertainment and should make listeners more interested in listening to these programme. There is a need to reform the private broadcasting to such an extent that it can provide more news and takes more interest in the public welfare.

More quality educational programs should be broadcast in the commercial sector and more entertainment to be provided by the

government funded AIR. This will help in solving who has to do what. This will to an extent set right the situation as far as listeners are concerned. The government of India has to constitute a committee to examine the broadcasting scenario and suggest suitable remedies to the growing broadcasting needs of the country.

There is a need to look at the broadcasting systems of the advanced countries in Europe and more particularly in Scandinavian countries and compare our broadcasting with them. In these countries, there is a more co-operative form of ownership exists which would provide more non-commercial programs and such a thing has to be emulated as well. This will improve our public service broadcasting as well as providing room for improvement in the private radio sector.

Finally, the government need to regulate the public service as well as private broadcasters so that these are free from doing any kind of harm to the public interest. It is hoped that the broadcasting scenario will improve further in India in fulfilling the needs of the citizens of the country.

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# Changing Scenario in

The broadcasting scenario has changed in India with the arrival of private FMs and the promise to revolutionize the entire broadcasting market in the Asian continent.

## Revolution in radio broadcasts

Since broadcasting has been opened up to private broadcasters about 6-7 years ago, the private FMs have thrived. Suriyan FM and many other FMs like 93.1 and others have ushered in an entertainment revolution. The monopoly of All India Radio has been broken and AIR has also come up with some FM stations. The situation has changed some years ago and it has ushered in an private FM stations. Also some community radio stations and college FM stations like Anna FM, MOP FM and Loyola FMs have come up in big numbers. All these promise to bring out a broadcasting revolution in the country.

India experimented with FM broadcasts in the mid nineties in five places including the four metros of Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkatta and Delhi, plus the tourist destination of Goa. These were followed by stations in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Lucknow. The channels in these cities pay license fee and initially news was not permitted in FMs but it must have been added later as these channels inform locally the news and the weather broadcast as well as the traffic situation. The earlier players include the Times of India, Hindustan Times, Mid –Day and BBC, but new players have emerged in the FM

scenario.

FM Radio stations in Bangalore include Big FM, Radio Indigo, Radio Mirchi and Fever FM. Chennai stations include Hello FM (106.4) Suryan FM Big FM, Radio City FM, Radio Mirchi FM and Radio-1 FM. These have been started receiving advertisements and have changed the advertising scenario. Traditionally radio accounts for 7-8% of advertiser expenditures around the world. In India it is less than 2% at present.

The privatization of broadcasting is a good thing which has to be welcomed by all and it provides alternative to the already available government operated AIR. The privatization has given room for multiple voices in broadcasting and this provides solution to the monopoly and monotony of the public service broadcaster. It provides scope for filling up a number of things like reaching to the needs of the listeners and catering to their needs as effectively as possible.

## AIR – the public broadcaster

AIR officially known as Akashvani has pioneered broadcasting right from the British days. The person responsible for the name of All India Radio is none other than Lionel Fieldon who was responsible for starting broadcasting in India. AIR today is the division of Prasar Bharathi an autonomous corporation of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India. The AIR used to be part of the government until recently when it

was decided to give autonomy to free it from government control. The Doordarshan is the TV wing of Prasar Bharathi which was also owned by the Ministry but again to free it from government control, it was made autonomous.

Being one of the largest networks in the world, AIR's headquarters is located at Akash Vani Bhawan New Delhi. It has many different services each catering to different region and languages of India. The well known Vividh Bharathi program broadcasts commercial oriented film songs and dramas and this Vividh Bharathi had celebrated its golden jubilee on 3rd October 2007. This offers film, music, comedy shows and dramas etc to all the listeners. The Vividh Bharathi service operates on different MW band frequencies for every one of the city. All these stations broadcast live programmes in languages of the region like Bangla, English and Hindi.

There is an External Services Division of AIR which broadcasts in 27 languages to countries outside of India by both high powered short wave and medium wave. In addition to this, there is the General Overseas Service which broadcasts in English for 8 and quarter hours every day.

There is a Yuva Vani service meant to cater to youth of the country with encouraging participation in the programs. It is broadcast at 1017 kHz which corresponds to 294.9 meter. Many popular broadcasters like Roshan Abbas, VJ Gaurav Kapoor Emcee