







सत्यमेव जयते

# REPORT OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON PRASAR BHARATI

Volume I



**PRASAR BHARATI**  
India's Public Service Broadcaster



<http://www.prasarbharaticommittee.in>





## EXPERT COMMITTEE ON PRASAR BHARATI

Shri Manish Tewari,  
Minister for Information & Broadcasting,  
Government of India.  
New Delhi,

DATE: 24 January, 2014

Dear Shri Tewari,

As you are aware, an Expert Committee was set up to review the functioning of Prasar Bharati, under the aegis of your Ministry on 28th January 2013. After 10 months of deliberations, we are now ready to submit our report on the steps that can be taken to transform our national asset into a truly world-class public broadcasting service, at par with the best in the world.

The Expert Committee was tasked with reviewing the institutional framework of Prasar Bharati, including its relationship with Government, its continuing role as a public broadcaster and measures needed to ensure technical up-gradation of the organisation. To this end, the Committee undertook extensive consultations and co-opted a wide range of domain experts by constituting 11 Expert Groups to focus on a variety of issues related to the public broadcaster. The final recommendations presented in this report are the outcome of these comprehensive deliberations.

Today, we have a unique window of opportunity to transform our broadcasting service (both All India Radio and Doordarshan) into a cutting-edge platform capable of delivering its commitment to public service in the best possible manner, while keeping pace with the competitive needs of the 21st Century. However, as our report suggests, this transformation will require a bold, clear vision, a focus on generational change, and new models and approaches in every aspect of the public service broadcaster's activities.

To revitalise Prasar Bharati, the Committee has submitted 26 recommendations in the critical areas of: Governance and Organisation; Funding; Human Resources; Content; Technology; Archiving; Social Media; and Global Outreach. The Committee is of the opinion that transformation of Prasar Bharati must be approached from three primary levels – the environment it functions in, its internal structure and resources, and a re-focus on its primary task – that of providing content of value to citizens of this nation.

The recommendations address issues of financial and administrative autonomy of Prasar Bharati to ensure that it is appropriately positioned to execute its role as a genuine public broadcaster; New models of funding to ensure autonomy with due financial accountability; Human Resource



management to ensure efficiency and adequate talent and skill infusion; Content creation and management to bring Prasar Bharati at par with global benchmarks; Technology interventions in the digital and cable TV operations; Archiving DD and AIR's rich content repository, with an eye on monetising; Creating social media platforms as well as a Global outreach. Collectively, implementation of these ideas will have a significant impact on the organisation and ensure that is poised to emerge among the best in the field.

As the Committee submits its report, we would like to thank you for your tremendous vision, support and encouragement in driving this timely effort and am hopeful that the Ministry will take the requisite steps to position our public broadcaster as one of the leading services in the country as well as globally.

Warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shri Sam Pitroda  
Chairman, Expert Committee  
Adviser to the PM on PIII

Shri J.S. Mathur  
Member, Expert Committee  
Addl. Secretary, MIB (GoI)

Shri Jawhar Sircar  
Convenor, Expert Committee  
CEO, Prasar Bharati & Former Secretary to GoI

Smt Asha Swarup  
Member, Expert Committee  
Former Secretary to GoI

Dr B.K. Gairola  
Member, Expert Committee  
Mission Director (e-Governance)

Shri Vikram Kaushik  
Member, Expert Committee  
Part-time Member, Prasar Bharati Board

Shri Shekhar Kapur  
Member, Expert Committee  
Member, National Innovation Council

Prof M.P. Gupta  
Member, Expert Committee  
Director of Mgt Studies IIT, Delhi



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## INTRODUCTION

An informed citizenry is the foundation of a more vibrant democracy, greater community empowerment, and ultimately, societal development. Communication platforms, hence, play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion as well as stirring public imagination, and are the most effective tools in creating a more inspired public space. Radio, Television and the now the Internet, with their reach and scope, are powerful tools of informing public opinion. However, with the burgeoning of multiple platforms for communication, the role of a Public Service Broadcaster acquires critical significance, especially in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic nation like India.

India's public service broadcaster Prasar Bharati, through its two wings All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) has historically played a vital role in helping shape our democracy and build the idea of India by binding together its people with the common thread of its broadcasts. With its 326 radio stations, AIR covers nearly 92% of the geographical area of India and reaches 99% of its population. DD on the other hand reaches 91% of the population over 79% of India's area.

India is changing, and the nation's 'media-scape' too has changed dramatically over the last couple of decades. From just a single broadcaster, to over 800 television channels and over 500 FM radio stations, the Indian Broadcast Sector has boomed and consumers are spoilt for choice. Concurrently, Doordarshan and All India Radio no longer enjoy the monopoly position they did, and have to now compete with private sector rivals who have proved to be leaner, meaner and more adaptive to the changing landscape of the industry. Further, the quantum leaps in technology and the tremendous growth in connectivity has allowed for greater inclusiveness and interactivity. These have combined to change the dynamics of media dissemination and consumption. Here again, the Public Broadcaster has not kept pace with these significant changes and has been slow to exploit the opportunities available.

Among the plethora of private channels and the multiple sources of information for citizens, a strong and independent public broadcaster has a crucial role to play. It has to take the lead in setting high-quality benchmarks for content which delivers messages of public interest, public education and spurs the collective public imagination. While the higher ideals of a public broadcaster must go beyond market forces, it must however balance delivery of high-quality content with achieving financial self-reliance to ensure due autonomy. In order to be able to do that, Prasar Bharati needs to be adequately empowered and enabled. It must be allowed to unlock its value, and unleash its creative forces so that it can rightfully play its role as India's Public Service Broadcaster.

It is in this context that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting constituted an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovations on January 28, 2013, to consider transformative changes that could lead Prasar Bharati into the future.

# EXPERT COMMITTEE ON PRASAR BHARATI

The Expert Committee, tasked with reviewing the institutional framework of Prasar Bharati, including its relationship with Government, its continuing role as a public broadcaster and measures needed to ensure technical up-gradation of the organisation, had the following members:



**Shri Sam Pitroda**

Advisor to the Prime Minister of India  
on Public Information Infrastructure & Innovation - Chairman



**Smt Asha Swarup, IAS (Retd)**

and former Secretary to the Govt. of India - Member



**Shri Shekhar Kapur**

Member of the National Innovation Council - Member



**Dr B.K. Gairola**

Mission Director (e-Governance) - Member



**Shri J.S Mathur**

Additional Secretary and nominated member  
On the Prasar Bharati Board - Member



**Prof M.P. Gupta**

IIT Delhi - Member



**Shri Vikram Kaushik**

Business Strategist & Brand Advisor and Part-time  
Member on the Prasar Bharati Board - Member



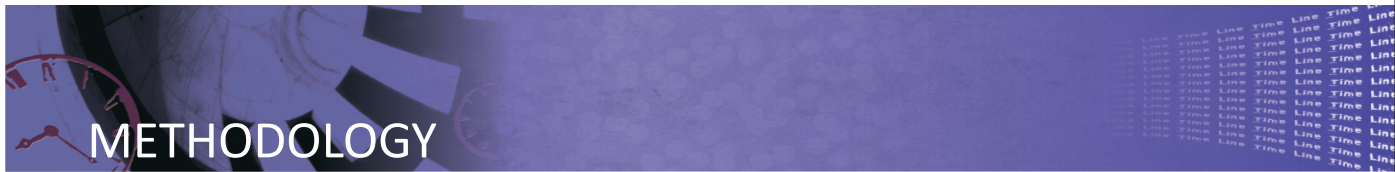
**Shri Jawhar Sircar**

CEO, Prasar Bharati - Member (Convenor)



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To suggest measures to sustain, strengthen and amplify Prasar Bharati's role as a Public Broadcaster with special reference to its relationship with the Government in the emerging context.
2. To review the status of implementation of the recommendations made by various committees that have undertaken a study of Prasar Bharati, namely the Sengupta Committee, the Bakshi Committee and the Narayana Murthy Committee and suggest a roadmap for enhancing the reach and potential of Prasar Bharati.
3. To suggest measures to digitise the archival material in the possession of Doordarshan and All India Radio including material from the era of the Independence and develop an enabling infrastructure, in the form of data digitalisation systems, data centres, and networks etc.
4. To suggest ways of using new media to deliver digital content - both in broadcast mode (DTH) and in demand based mode (free on social media like YouTube™ and on payment through IPTV).
5. To suggest a strategy for creating a network of domestic and overseas business partners for ensuring wider reach to a worldwide audience including creating an overseas exclusive service.
6. Any other statutory issue that the committee may like to consider.



In its first meeting held on 5th February, 2013, the Expert Committee on Prasar Bharati decided to constitute 11 Expert Groups to study specific areas pertaining to Prasar Bharati's functioning and come up with white papers suggesting a roadmap for reform. Details of the 11 Expert Groups and their respective Terms of Reference are placed at Volume II, Annexure 1.5. The Expert Committee also set up a Group of Advisors to give inputs and to assist it in achieving its objectives<sup>1</sup>. Details of the Panel of Advisors are placed at Volume II, Annexure 1.5. In order to provide research, coordination and logistic support to the Expert Committee and its Expert Groups, a seven member Secretariat was set up.

A dedicated website was created in order to facilitate a free and fruitful exchange of ideas between all members of the Expert Committee and the Expert Groups. The website not only proved to be an effective platform for interaction, but also developed into a repository of research that powered the sustained deliberations of the various Expert Groups. A key objective of the Expert Committee was to keep the consultative process open to the maximum extent possible and, make it inclusive by inviting public opinion and provoking public discussions and debate on the critical issues facing Prasar Bharati. The website served this process very well, and the Committee received some interesting insights and suggestions through this channel. In keeping with the open nature of functioning, a special effort was made to engage the public through popular social media and networking sites. An effort was also made to seek written public suggestions by post. Feedback was also solicited and obtained from Prasar Bharati's employees of various wings/cadres. A special interaction session was held with representatives of all recognised unions of Prasar Bharati with Shri Sam Pitroda. Suggestions and directions from the Standing Committee of Parliament on IT and the Prasar Bharati Board were duly incorporated into the body of thought.

The 11 Expert Groups met on several occasions, among themselves and with domain experts, as they deliberated on specific issues that had been referred to them. Valuable inputs were also received from the Group of Advisors. To integrate the various strands of thinking that had begun to emerge into cohesive and focussed thought and to gain a common understanding of the way forward, a day-long conclave of the Expert Committee, its 11 Expert Groups and the Groups of Advisors was held on April 5, 2013. The brainstorming session was chaired by Shri Sam Pitroda and addressed by the Hon'ble Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Manish Tewari and Chairperson Prasar Bharati, Smt. Mrinal Pande.

The Committee reviewed the reports and recommendations presented by the 11 Expert Groups, and developed its recommendations from assimilation and integration of the views that emerged from this extensive consultative process. The reports of the 11 Expert Groups are placed at Annexure 1.3.

The Committee is of the opinion that transformation of Prasar Bharati must be approached from three primary levels the environment it functions in, its internal structure and resources, and a re-focus on its primary task that of providing content of value to citizens of this nation. This report of the Expert Committee on Prasar Bharati outlines a roadmap for that transformation.

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<sup>1</sup>An indicative list of programming ideas recommended by the Panel of Advisors is placed at Volume II, Annexure 1.4

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION

1.1 Prasar Bharati's vision must be to become a genuine 'public broadcaster' as against a 'government broadcaster'. For this:

1.1.1 Constitute a Parliamentary Committee, as originally envisaged in the Prasar Bharati Act 1990, to ensure that Prasar Bharati discharges its duties in accordance with the provisions of the Act and Government defined duties.

1.1.2 Reorganize the Prasar Bharti Board to make it a professionally managed body and make it more effective in guiding the organisation.

1.1.3 Effect complete transfer of ownership and management of Assets and HR to Prasar Bharati to make the organisation administratively and financially autonomous of Government.

1.1.4 Set up a Regulatory Body to ensure public accountability of Prasar Bharati with respect to all content broadcast on its television and radio networks. The Regulatory Body should be a sub-committee of the Prasar Bharati Board.

1.2 In addition to the public broadcasting function, there is a distinct requirement for the State to broadcast messages and accomplishments of public interest which can be met by using existing Public and Private broadcaster infrastructure.

1.3 Amend the Prasar Bharati Act 1990 where necessary so as to impart genuine and effective autonomy to the organisation.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. FUNDING

2.1 Undertake a professional study to develop a funding mechanism for Prasar Bharati that addresses the need for autonomy with financial accountability. Such a funding model should include government funding, internal resource mobilisation and private investment.

2.2 Monetise all available archival and other assets of Prasar Bharati as soon as possible to enhance funding.

2.3 Augment funding of social messaging through cross-subsidising such content through entertainment-led programming and by co-opting industry through their CSR budgets.

<sup>2</sup> Specific Sections of the Prasar Bharati Act that would require amendments, keeping in view the recommendations made by this Committee, are placed as Annexure 1.2 in Vol. II of this Report.

### **3. HUMAN RESOURCE**

- 3.1 Enable Prasar Bharati with the power to frame rules and regulations for its employees without seeking prior approval of the Government.
- 3.2 Undertake a comprehensive manpower audit and HR planning exercise to map workforce requirements for the future in line with Prasar Bharati's mandate.
- 3.3 Supplement manpower audit with a re-deployment plan that addresses training, re-skilling and promotion of existing manpower through an institutionalised modern appraisal system.
- 3.4 Create an effective recruitment system to attract the best talent and allow the hiring of skilled professionals.
- 3.5 Encourage and initiate steps for absorption of Government employees as full-time employees of Prasar Bharati, after an appropriate screening process. The ones who remain in Government may be considered for absorption in other departments within the government as is done in other cases.

### **4. CONTENT**

- 4.1 Scale up allocation of funds for content generation to 50% of the total expenditure within a period of 5-7 years.
- 4.2 Review all existing channels and content of DD and AIR, based on their relevance, output and viability and phase out those where there is sub-optimal utilisation of resources.
- 4.3 Encourage outsourcing of content creation to external producers to attract high quality and diverse programming.
- 4.4 Create distinct brand identities for different TV and Radio channels, and define the content strategy for each.

### **5. TECHNOLOGY**

- 5.1 Expand the satellite and digital cable TV operations, to meet the obligation of public service broadcasting.
- 5.2 Digitalise the present AM radio system to a new digital radio transmission after due evaluation subject to cost and availability of DRM receivers. In the transition period, FM may be expanded as per demand.
- 5.3 Selectively digitalize terrestrial TV operations based on commercial viability.

Any further expansion of and investment in digital terrestrial telecast should be suitably evaluated after field reviews and assessment of developments in the telecom sector.

- 5.4 Involve the private sector to expand the broadcasting market with a view to effectively utilise the infrastructure being built by Prasar Bharati to enable faster growth in the receiver ecosystem.

## **6. ARCHIVING**

- 6.1 Set up state-of-the-art digital archives for consolidating and preserving DD and AIR's content: both existing as well as that being currently generated. Expand scope to make it the National Audio-Visual Archives so as to consolidate and support all other government initiatives.
- 6.2 Create dedicated, multi-platform channels for dissemination of Prasar Bharati's archival products: both open access and for monetisation.

## **7. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 7.1 Define and execute Social Media Strategy of Prasar Bharati.
- 7.2 Set up Prasar Bharati Connect (PBC) as the third arm of the public service broadcaster, independent of Doordarshan and All India Radio.
- 7.3 Mandate PBC to manage the various Social Media initiatives of all the wings of Prasar Bharati.

## **8. GLOBAL OUTREACH**

- 8.1 Create a world-class broadcasting service benchmarked with the best in the world using next-generation opportunities, technologies, business models and strategies. The platform should be designed for new media first and then extended to conventional TV.
- 8.2 Outline an effective content strategy for Prasar Bharati's global platforms (TV and Radio) focused on projecting the national view rather than the narrow official viewpoint.







# Recommendations of the Expert Committee

## GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION

Prasar Bharati was set up in 1997 “to function as a genuinely autonomous body, innovative, dynamic and flexible with a high degree of credibility.”<sup>3</sup> However the provisions of the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990 gave immense powers and authority to the Government to intervene in the internal functioning of the organisation. Thereby, Prasar Bharati continues to be, in many ways, a subordinate office of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Autonomy - financial, functional and operational - is at the core of making Prasar Bharati an independent public service broadcaster, which is neither perceived as the mouthpiece of the Government nor as beholden to market forces. While emphasising the independence that is so critical for the public service broadcaster, it is equally important to stress that accountability should balance this independence. Further, the desired structure should ensure that Prasar Bharati presents an objective and fair view of India and its people in all its activities.

By balancing autonomy with accountability, the new Prasar Bharati can be a significant exemplar and a model for public service broadcasting that can help power inclusive growth and development for modern India. Additionally, the restructuring of Prasar Bharati – in terms of the organisation, the quality of human resources and most importantly, through excellent execution based on a cohesive and clearly thought out strategy—will help it compete effectively with the growing presence and influence of privately owned media in India.

To endow the governance and organisational structure of Prasar Bharati with the right balance of Autonomy and Accountability, this Committee makes the following recommendations:

- 1.1 Prasar Bharati's vision must be to become a genuine 'public broadcaster' as against a 'government broadcaster'.

Prasar Bharati should be perceived as an unbiased, credible, autonomous, independent voice that makes Indians better citizens and enriches their lives with right information, quality entertainment and value education. Such an 'arm's length' independence from the Government/Ministry is essential for Prasar Bharati to provide a platform for informed debate and a space for alternative and dissenting points of view, spread knowledge and education, foster social change, catalyse development and above all acquire a cutting edge in programming.

To achieve this goal, this Committee recommends that the following steps be taken without any further delay:

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<sup>3</sup>Statement of Objects and Reasons of Prasar Bharati Act, 1990

- 1.1.1 Constitute a Parliamentary Committee, as originally envisaged in the Prasar Bharati Act 1990, to ensure that Prasar Bharati discharges its duties in accordance with the provisions of the Act and Government defined duties.

The Prasar Bharati Act 1990 envisaged the constitution of a Parliamentary Committee to oversee the performance of the public service broadcaster and ensure its adherence to the objectives set out in the Prasar Bharati Act. However the Committee was not constituted, and currently, the responsibility of Parliamentary oversight of Prasar Bharati is with the Standing Committee on IT, via the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Given the large and all pervasive nature of the communications industry as it has developed over the years, issues relating to Information Technology have tended to overshadow any considerations with regard to public service broadcasting. Thus, it is submitted that the Standing Committee on IT may not be able to provide the focus required for this vital area.

Given the challenge of autonomy for Prasar Bharati, it is necessary that a dedicated Parliamentary Committee play the role of mentor and guide. The Committee will not only guarantee the accountability of Prasar Bharati to the people of India, but also ensure that utilisation of funds allocated to Prasar Bharati is in line with the guidelines laid out in the Act.

- 1.1.2 Reorganize the Prasar Bharati Board to make it a professionally managed body and make it more effective in guiding the organisation.

The Prasar Bharati Board is a critical component in the governance structure of the organisation. It should be manned by professionally competent persons and consist of a Chairperson, a CEO and six Independent Directors chosen on the basis of their core competencies in the areas of broadcasting, media, finance, development, education, arts, sciences and technology. The Committee recommends that the membership of the Board must be credentials-based with only experienced, credible and eminent persons being selected. There should no longer be any full-time members of the Board, with the exception of the CEO. Further, apart from the CEO, no representatives or employees of Prasar Bharati should be included as members of the Board. It is also recommended that the tenure of the CEO and Chairperson be five years and that of the Independent Directors be three years.

- 1.1.3 Effect complete transfer of ownership and management of Assets and HR to Prasar Bharati to make the organisation administratively and financially autonomous of Government.

As per the Prasar Bharati Act, both assets and manpower were to be completely transferred to Prasar Bharati. However, this has not happened so far. In the absence of this, Prasar Bharati is not able to take decisions on how best to utilise assets and take care of its HR in terms of

deployment, promotion and management. It is important that the Government acts on the provisions of the Act and transfers the two to Prasar Bharati.

- 1.1.4 Set up a Regulatory Body to ensure public accountability of Prasar Bharati with respect to all content broadcast on its television and radio networks. The Regulatory Body should be a sub-committee of the Prasar Bharati Board.

There is a need to create a viable and effective public accountability framework, which will bring transparency in the functioning of the public service broadcaster. An efficient and transparent grievance redressal mechanism will provide a forum to the general public to take up their concerns regarding Prasar Bharati's content and objectivity, thus complementing the oversight by the Parliamentary Committee.

This Committee recommends that the regulatory body be a sub-committee of the Prasar Bharati Board consisting of 3 independent members who would be the final arbiter on any disputes with regard to unresolved complaints. Their engagement with the organisation will lend them insight into the functioning of the organisation and give them greater understanding of the issues they are faced with.

- 1.2 In addition to the public broadcasting function, there is a distinct requirement for the State to broadcast messages and accomplishments of public interest which can be met by using existing Public and Private broadcaster infrastructure.

The government of the day may have to communicate to the people its positive policy initiatives and actions, and therefore need channels of communication for the same. These channels of communication – via radio, television and the social media – should be distinct from those of the Public Sector Broadcaster. Therefore there should be a clear distinction between the identity of Prasar Bharati as a public service broadcaster, and the State Broadcasting set-up. To meet its communication needs the State Broadcasting set up should use the existing Public and Private broadcasters' infrastructure.

- 1.3 Amend the Prasar Bharati Act 1990 where necessary so as to impart genuine and effective autonomy to the organisation.

Barriers to genuine autonomy for Prasar Bharati can be traced to either non-implementation of specific sections of the Prasar Bharati Act 1990, or to provisions within the Act that negate the stated objects "to confer autonomy on Akashvani and Doordarshan thereby ensuring that they function in a fair, objective and creative manner".<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, for Prasar Bharati to function in an autonomous manner, and towards that, in order to implement the recommendations made by this Committee in this report, it is essential to amend specific sections of the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990. These amendments have been outlined in Annexure 3.1.

Prasar Bharati Secretariat has also made some observations in relation to some specific provisions of the Prasar Bharati Act, and their impact on specific points of operational autonomy of the organisation. The Secretariat has submitted the note for inclusion in this report, and it is placed Annexure 1.2.

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<sup>4</sup>Statement of Objects and Reasons of Prasar Bharati Act, 1990



Prasar Bharati is funded through Budgetary Grant and I&EBR (Internal and External Budgetary Resources). The Plan funds for Prasar Bharati are allocated by the Planning Commission and included in the Demand for Grants passed by the Parliament. The projects of Prasar Bharati for content creation and procurement of equipment are met from Plan funds. This amount is released by the Ministry in several instalments after furnishing of Utilization Certificates. The non-Plan funds that essentially cover the deficit in revenue expenditure (such as employee salaries) are provided by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting as grants-in-aid.

To function as an effective autonomous public service broadcaster, it is imperative that Prasar Bharati has adequate financial independence. True autonomy will not be possible if Prasar Bharati is entirely dependent on budgetary support. At the same time, as a public service broadcaster, Prasar Bharati fulfils a constitutional mandate and, therefore, support from public funds is well justified. However, to the extent possible, it should endeavour to become financially self-reliant in due course. In such circumstances, it becomes extremely critical to define an appropriate funding mechanism which balances the requirement of autonomy and at the same time enables it to fulfil its mandate.

There is a need to strive to increase the commercial revenue of Prasar Bharati through a number of steps, including better content and marketing. A strategy is also required to monetize the underutilised resources including archival material, real estate and technical facilities. Beyond the sources of funding, a complete modernization of the finance function through the implementation of a comprehensive and state-of-art financial management system is essential.

In order to achieve the above goals, this Committee recommends the implementation of the following steps:

- 1.1 Undertake a professional study to develop a funding mechanism for Prasar Bharati that addresses the need for autonomy with financial accountability. Such a funding model should include government funding, internal resource mobilisation and private investment.

Rather than being entirely dependent on budgetary support Prasar Bharati should endeavour in the longer term to become financially self-reliant. It must develop a business plan to increase commercial revenue through a comprehensive strategy to improve content and marketing, and leverage all resources such as archival material, real estate assets,

spectrum etc. While once Doordarshan and All India Radio held a sort of monopoly in the broadcasting sector in India, the media industry has since changed. What has emerged is an environment of competition and commercial dynamics. Key in the development of its resources is the need for quality content acquisition as well as investment for future growth.

A method of funding therefore needs to be found that is more autonomous – neither overly reliant on the annual budgetary cycle of the government nor entirely dependent on commercial sources. Only such a judicious mix of sources, government, commercial and autonomous, would create the funding environment whereby Prasar Bharati would be able to fulfil effectively its role as a public broadcaster, an organization that is autonomous and yet produces programmes and provides services as public good to serve the cause of democracy.

In order to develop such a model, a professional study must be carried out, which must be commissioned at the earliest.

Where funding from Government is concerned, this Committee is of the view that it should come by way of a grant-in-aid and it should be preferably provided in the form of a pool account of non-lapsable funds, as mentioned in the Prasar Bharati Act.

- 1.2 Monetise all available archival assets and other assets of Prasar Bharati as soon as possible to enhance funding.

Prasar Bharati operates one of the largest audio and audio-visual broadcasting networks in the world. The archives and libraries of All India Radio and Doordarshan constitute by far the richest repository of audio and audio-visual material in the country. This heritage material is priceless not merely in terms of social significance, historic value and cultural worth, but also as an asset base that has however not been tapped to its full potential. This Committee is of the view that revenue generated from the sale of Prasar Bharati's archival material can become a significant source of funding that will, inter alia, also help achieve the goal of attaining financial independence.

- 1.3 Augment funding of social messaging through cross-subsidising the messages through entertainment-led content and by co-opting industry through their CSR budgets.

While Prasar Bharati should aim for financial self-sustenance, Public Service Broadcasting is its *raison d'être*, and therefore, revenue and commercial considerations must not be the driver. However, the two need not necessarily be in conflict, and there are ways in which revenue can be raised without any compromise on basic objectives. In order to make the content acquisition and programme production process more self-sustainable, while retaining its public service broadcasting mandate, Prasar Bharati should aim to generate funds through commercialization of a part of its activities. It should also aim to deploy revenue generated by entertainment-led content into social messaging. Industry should be co-opted to fulfil its social objectives and support programming with greater social and developmental content, through their CSR budgets.

## HUMAN RESOURCE

Prasar Bharati is perhaps the largest public service broadcaster in the world in terms of services provided and staff strength. It oversees Doordarshan, broadcasting 21 television channels and AIR with a network of 376 broadcasting stations. The workforce at Prasar Bharati has expanded over the years to meet its increasing programming, transmission and logistical support needs. It currently has 31,621 full time employees and 7,269 casual employees. Yet, today it faces challenges on many fronts:

- Rapid and constantly evolving technology changes
- Competition from private sector
- Emergence of new delivery and engagement channels

PrasarBharati's two constituent units – Doordarshan and All India Radio – used to be home to great talent and retained the largest broadcasting infrastructure in the country. The failure to set in place proper systems and to transition from being a government department to an autonomous public institution with its own organisation, human resources and management policies has led to severe erosion of PrasarBharati's ability to be a cohesive broadcaster and to compete adequately with private channels, leave alone fulfil its mandate.

In order to re-energise the organisation and enhance its productivity, this Committee makes the following recommendations.

- 3.1 Enable Prasar Bharati with the power to frame rules and regulations for its employees without seeking prior approval of the Government.

A major reason for Prasar Bharati being created as a statutory body was to give autonomy to AIR and DD in order that they maintain an arm's length relationship from the Government of the day. Yet, Prasar Bharati continues to be dependent on the Government in a variety of ways. In order to provide Prasar Bharati greater flexibility in prescribing the conditions of service of its own employees and for it to be better able to attract the talent and to respond to changing market conditions, it is imperative that Prasar Bharati has the power to frame rules and regulations for its employees without seeking prior approval of the Central Government.

Thus, Section 32 and the proviso to Section 33(2) of the Prasar Bharati Act which makes it mandatory to get the prior approval of the Central Government to frame the rules and regulations regarding any matters, including the conditions of service of the officers and employees, and the methods of recruitment for selection of employees etc. need to be amended.

- 3.2 Undertake a comprehensive manpower audit and HR planning exercise to map workforce requirements for the future in line with Prasar Bharati's mandate.

There has been no systematic, independent and professional review of the norms, staffing and structure of the existing workforce and the requirements of Prasar Bharati for the medium and long term. Such planning cannot be done without clarity about the vision of Prasar Bharati for the next five to ten years, after factoring in the impact of the mix of technologies it opts for. It is recommended that a thorough manpower assessment and audit be conducted and an optimal organisational structure and clear job roles along with profiles be drawn up.

- 3.3 Supplement manpower audit with a re-deployment plan that addresses training, re-skilling and promotion of existing manpower through an institutionalised modern appraisal system.

The manpower audit recommended above should be followed by a redeployment plan and surplus resources should be given the option of re-locating and/or re-skilling. This is inevitable with the gradual obsolescence of the analog terrestrial broadcast system and the onset of digitisation. In addition, a suitable action plan including repatriation to Government should be developed, and jobs found redundant post review should be formally abolished.

- 3.4 Create an effective recruitment system to attract the best talent and allow the hiring of skilled professionals.

The Prasar Bharati Act 1990 provides for the creation of one or more Recruitment Boards. Such a mechanism needs to be constituted at the earliest as the absence of this body is one of the principal causes for virtually no recruitment having taken place since Prasar Bharati came into being in 1997. This body would be responsible for recruitment and promotion of all Prasar Bharati employees based on a professional appraisal system. A professional recruitment system will also allow Prasar Bharati to attract the best talent with specialised skills, and offer competitive remuneration packages to such talent.

- 3.5 Encourage and initiate steps for absorption of Government employees as full-time employees of the organisation, after an appropriate screening process. The ones who remain in Government may be considered for absorption in other departments within the Government, as is done in other cases.

After amendments were made to Section 11 of the Prasar Bharati Act in 2012, more than 90 per cent of the total 31,621 full time employees have been placed on 'deemed deputation' with Prasar Bharati. This amendment has put Prasar Bharati in a difficult position as it has no control on determining the pay structure or conditions of service of these employees. It cannot impose major penalties of compulsory retirement, removal or dismissal from service for these employees even in cases of serious irregularities as the central government continues to be their principal employer.





All staff on 'deemed deputation' should be encouraged to join Prasar Bharati as its full-time employees, or, if they so desire, revert back to Government. Once the content, role and technology of Prasar Bharati are refined, the organisation should re-skill the employees who have opted to be absorbed. Any extra manpower not required by Prasar Bharati may be redeployed by the Ministry of I&B to another function/department within the government.

3.6 Prasar Bharati should have the power to frame rules and regulations for its employees without seeking prior approval of the Government.

A major reason for Prasar Bharati being created as a statutory body was to give autonomy to AIR and DD for them to maintain an arm's length relationship from the Government of the day. Yet, Prasar Bharati continues to be dependent on the Government in a variety of ways. In order to provide Prasar Bharati greater flexibility in prescribing the conditions of service of its own employees and for it to be better able to attract the talent and to respond to changing market conditions, it is imperative that Prasar Bharati has the power to frame rules and regulations for its employees without seeking prior approval of the Central Government. Thus Section 32 and the proviso to Section 33(2) of the Act which makes it mandatory to get the prior approval of the Central Government to the rules and regulations regarding any matters including the conditions of service of the officers and employees and the methods of recruitment for selection of employees etc. need to be amended.

\*Employees of AIR and DD continue to be government servants till today, although they were to be transferred to Prasar Bharati. Amendment made in 2012 has provided that employees recruited up to 5th October, 2007 shall be government servants on deemed deputation with Prasar Bharati. The amendment further provides that Prasar Bharati shall have disciplinary powers over government servants, but such powers shall not include the power of removal, dismissal and compulsory retirement.



The quality of content is the single most important determinant of the success or failure of a broadcaster; and from it emanates the strategy for Marketing, Human Resources, Engineering, et al. Therefore, content must be acknowledged as the central or core function of Prasar Bharati, to the success of which all other activities must be geared.

The challenges relating to content at Prasar Bharati can be partly attributed to its lack of autonomy and the failure to attract and retain high quality talent. There are over 80 per cent vacancies in the programming function as a consequence of which more than 50 per cent of the production facilities lie underutilised. Problems relating to content can only be solved if the larger issues of autonomy, funding, quality of management and HR policy reform are dealt with on an urgent basis.

The deficiency in the quantity and quality of content affects both national and regional channels. To address these issues, the committee recommends the following:

- 4.1 Scale up allocation of funds for content generation to 50% of total expenditure within a period of 5-7 years.

Prasar Bharati invests less than 15% of its expenditure every year on content – other global public service broadcasters invest between 60-70% of their expenditure in content. This low level of investment in its primary function has severely impacted the quality and quantity of content put out by DD and AIR, which in turn has led to steady erosion of viewers/listeners. In order to regain its position as the premier broadcaster of the nation, a roadmap, backed by a sound business plan, needs to be drawn up to ensure that the share of content in total expenditure moves up progressively to 50% within a 5 to 7 year period.

- 4.2 Review all existing channels and content of DD and AIR, based on their relevance, output and viability and phase out those where there is sub-optimal utilisation of resources.

Managing a portfolio of channels across different regions, languages, formats, and delivery platforms creates complexities and complications in actual operations. A review of channels will help clear this complexity. A comprehensive review of existing channels will not only ensure a better utilisation of existing resources but also help in revamping and improving the content strategy to fit in with the larger vision and revised strategic objectives for the next five years.

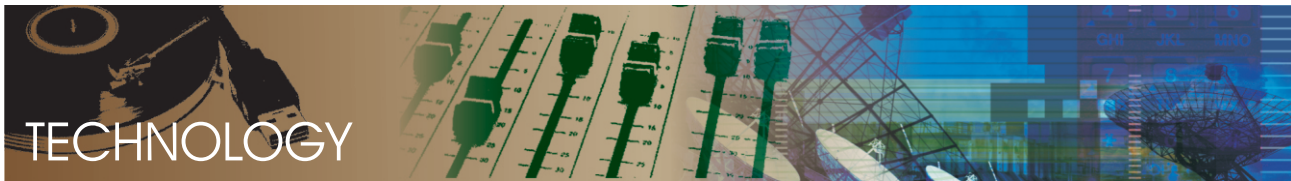
- 4.3 Encourage outsourcing of content creation to external producers to attract high quality and diverse programming.

Prasar Bharati should encourage industry participation for development of appropriate content as dictated by its mandate and professional assessment of public needs. Towards that, a transparent content proposal evaluation process with checks and controls needs to be introduced urgently in order to attract diverse and high-quality content creators and external experts. Prasar Bharati should primarily be a source of distribution for creativity, with outside creative entrepreneurs encouraged to bring in their own funding via brand sponsors/advertising.

- 4.4 Create distinct brand identities for different TV and Radio channels, and define the content strategy for each.

Prasar Bharati must work towards creating distinct mission statements and brand identities for each of its channels/stations so that they are completely audience-focused. The content strategy for different channels should be formed as per the mission statement of each channel, and they must be completely revamped to fit in with Prasar Bharati's larger vision and revised strategic objectives for the next five years.

Since the look and feel of DD channels seriously impacts competitiveness, the visual architecture of all Prasar Bharati platforms must be urgently redesigned.



There is a compelling need for Prasar Bharati to conduct a detailed review of its existing technologies and upgrade them to remain relevant to its audiences. Towards that goal, this Committee has evaluated various facets of technology within the organisation, as well as in the broadcast sector at large. These include technologies for content creation, storage, delivery, reception, standards, interoperability, etc. The Committee is also of the view that in the long run, convergence will lead to a common transmission platform servicing audio, video and text formats. Thus, the current set of audio and video transmission technologies being evaluated are intermediate and may service the industry's needs for 5-7 years only. A technology roadmap for Prasar Bharati must also take into account standards, interoperability, legacy assets, maintaining vendor-independence, and a way in which planning and procurement can respond promptly to technology changes in a dynamic fashion. And irrespective of the direction in which technology evolves for this sector, it is certain that choices made by Prasar Bharati in this front will need constant evaluation and updating.

In the existing set-up, Prasar Bharati faces the following challenges from a technology perspective:

- i. Technology choice
- ii. Integration/digitization of DTH, cable TV, and terrestrial TV platforms
- iii. Optimal technology resource utilization
- iv. Procurement

Taking note of the above, this Committee's recommendations for the technology roadmap of Prasar Bharati are as follows:

- 5.1 Expand the satellite and digital cable TV operations, to meet the obligation of public service broadcasting.

In the current landscape, 92 per cent of Indian TV households access television through Cable and Satellite systems (Cable and DTH). It is expected that after the completion of all DAS phases, DTH and Digital Cable technologies will stabilize and become the preponderant transmission and distribution platforms. This scenario presents a strong case for switching off analog terrestrial TV broadcasts within a short period of time, and adoption of DD Direct (DTH) as Doordarshan's primary mode of transmission. DD would also continue to transmit through private DTH and Cable and Satellite operators. This move from terrestrial to satellite transmission will result in considerable cost saving, even as it offers the possibility of a wider content variety as compared to the limited number of channels available through terrestrial broadcasts.

- 5.2 Digitalise the present AM radio system to a new digital radio transmission after due evaluation subject to cost and availability of DRM receivers. In the transition period, FM may be expanded as per demand.

For AIR, the Committee recommends a transition to DRM-MW from AM-MW for national and regional coverage. This will be advantageous to the audience in terms of quality of reception, will offer operational savings and financial viability of investment to Prasar Bharati, while also freeing up some amount of the important national resource of spectrum. However, given the simultaneous existence of multifarious devices and the rapid decline in traditional devices, the investment in DRM should be carefully evaluated and calibrated, based on availability of reception devices and their cost.

Given the popularity of FM, AIR may continue to increase the coverage of FM as per demand. Once the DRM eco-system has stabilized, AIR can consider migration of FM to DRM. AIR may continue with SW to meet its strategic international coverage needs.

- 5.3 Selectively digitalize terrestrial TV operations based on commercial viability. Any further expansion of and investment in digital terrestrial telecast should be suitably evaluated after field reviews and assessment of developments in the telecom sector.

While satellite and cable TV cater to an overwhelming share of the television watching universe in India, and Doordarshan's terrestrial service is watched by an increasingly small percentage of TV households, the public service broadcaster has an option to upgrade its existing terrestrial infrastructure from analog to digital i.e. to DVBT2/DVBT2 Lite. Digital terrestrial transmission technology has advantages over the current analog mode such as carriage of a higher number of channels, and better quality of transmission. It also brings added services which have potential in the future, for example: Hi-definition video on mobile. However, the adoption of this new technology will be a challenge given that terrestrial transmission caters to only 8% of the TV household population.

Digital terrestrial TV therefore has to be repositioned keeping in mind the new services, segment of users and the development of the receiver eco-system. Prasar Bharati must therefore examine viability of digital terrestrial transmission and selectively experiment on this technology especially for the mobile users. Any existing plans for digitalisation of the terrestrial transmission network must be assessed afresh based on feedback from field reviews.

- 5.4 Involve the private sector to expand the broadcasting market with a view to effectively utilise the infrastructure being built by Prasar Bharati to enable faster growth in the receiver ecosystem.

Receiver ecosystem for digital broadcasting is going to play a crucial role in early absorption of this technology. At present the receiver systems for digital transmission are not available for large public consumption at low cost. The present receiver system is based on FM/AM for audio and analog transmission for terrestrial video. In order to produce low cost devices, it is necessary that demand is built rapidly. This demand can be built only by bringing multiple players in service delivery. It is expected that with multiple private vendors participating in service delivery, competition will bring the cost down for these receiver systems.



## ARCHIVING

A vibrant archive is the cornerstone and a critical activity in any media organisation. However, despite the great cultural and educational value of Prasar Bharati's content for present and future generations, its preservation has not got the importance it deserves. As a result of this, and the fragile nature of the archival holdings and the vast quantity of perishable content, the rich heritage material available with Prasar Bharati, is at the risk of loss and eventual destruction if preservation measures are not taken up without any further delay.

The significance of creating a world class archive must to be recognised across the organisation, and given the criticality of the task, it should be approached and implemented in a mission mode with a clear vision and strategy, earmarked budgets, dedicated human resources, specific milestones/targets and within a definite time frame.

The committee hence makes the following recommendations:

- 6.1 Set up state-of-the-art digital archives for consolidating and preserving DD and AIR's content: both existing as well as that being currently generated. Expand scope to make it the National Audio-Visual Archives so as to consolidate and support all other government initiatives.

While DD and AIR are the largest repository of contents (audio and video forms), many departments and organisations have separately been creating audio and video themes in their respective fields. At times those materials are not available for easy public access and hence the public is deprived of valuable content created by public resources. It will be appropriate to create a National Audio Visual Archives to collect all such materials as a national asset for public viewing.

Prasar Bharati should create a professionally run and manned process for archiving library and new content. Creation of 'National Audio Visual Archives of India' should commence without delay under the leadership of a designated Project Director assisted by a qualified core team of professional archiving and marketing experts, with the active involvement of available in-house talent. There should be a standing National Archiving Advisory Committee, consisting of eminent persons from appropriate disciplines to advise the project team as well as to oversee and monitor the project, till it is completed.

6.2 Create dedicated, multi-platform channels for dissemination of PrasarBharati's archival products: both open access and for monetisation.

Prasar Bharati must make its existing digital-ready archives, and also those that will be added to its bank, accessible through traditional as well as new emerging formats and various online platforms. While revenue generated from sale of archival material can become a significant source of funds for Prasar Bharati, material that is historical in nature may be made available on non-commercial terms for specific uses, in line with public service broadcasting objectives. There should be a dedicated 'Archives Website' that will facilitate free access as well as optimum monetisation of archival material.



## SOCIAL MEDIA



The internet is seeping into the lives of the people of India rapidly, and social media being its subset, is among the fastest growing segments, with the highest growth coming through mobile phone access, especially from young India. Given the continuous growth in internet access and connections in addition to the spurt of new technologies such as the access to broadband services, internet radio and mobile applications, new media is indeed going to play a key role in the future development of the public service broadcaster.

This Committee feels that Prasar Bharati should be at the forefront of leveraging this media transformation in India. While social media is differentiated from traditional media in many ways, Prasar Bharati must explore the tremendous possibilities offered by new media and its integration with traditional media. Prasar Bharati should envision being a platform that would connect a billion minds: bring together different regions, cultures and languages and hold tremendous possibilities for cultural integration and nation-building.

Given the importance and relevance of new media in the present and future, this Committee recommends the following:

### 7.1 Define and execute a Social Media Strategy of Prasar Bharati.

Prasar Bharati must have a clear audience-focused strategy to embrace digital media and mobile platforms. The approach must link the services of the public service broadcaster to the emerging market served by multiple devices. This would require technological upgradation and modernisation of Prasar Bharati's infrastructure. Prasar Bharati's digital arm must use analytics and measurement tools to gauge and understand the usage patterns on various platforms. Prasar Bharati must launch, in due course of time, mobile apps to disseminate and popularise content via smartphones.

### 7.2 Set up Prasar Bharati Connect (PBC) as the third arm of the public service broadcaster, independent of Doordarshan and All India Radio.

PBC will be tasked with managing DD & AIR websites to make them more appealing, interactive, and engaging, and also integrate them with the existing social media channels. The digital platform would also be responsible for generating and disseminating new and engaging streams of content and information. While the content strategy should be an editorial call, new and innovative ideas on 'content and programming' could integrate traditional and new media, create new spaces for community engagement and informed interactions. This will also give Prasar Bharati the ability to crowd source content and creativity.

7.3 Mandate Prasar Bharati Connect to manage various social media initiatives of Prasar Bharati.

Prasar Bharati Connect will also have the responsibility of managing the various social media initiatives of Prasar Bharati. PBC will be an authentic, reliable, accessible, scalable and highly interactive platform bringing together Doordarshan and All India Radio.

A large amount of content is available with Doordarshan and All India Radio that do not reach a larger audience. A lot of old content can be brought back from various archives and shared with the new India through this platform.



## GLOBAL OUTREACH

The objective of Prasar Bharati's global outreach strategy should be to create a strong international presence, using all possible platforms and content. While educating, entertaining and informing the citizens of India is one of the roles of the public service broadcaster, it is also equally important to portray the story of emerging India and its vibrant democracy to the world: its cultural diplomacy and soft power and influence opinion about India. Uniquely Indian themes such as Yoga, Ayurveda or Bollywood are obvious areas but information about Indian business successes and the richness and diversity of the country need prominence. However, the rich culture, history and diversity of India do not get revealed through these common themes.

For this Prasar Bharati has to reach out globally and communicate what India has to offer and have the credibility to compete against well-established brands such as the BBC and CNN for which the committee makes the following recommendations:

- 8.1 Create a world-class broadcasting service benchmarked with the best in the world using next-generation opportunities, technologies, business models and strategies. The platform should be designed for new media first and then extended to conventional TV.

The positioning of Prasar Bharati's new global platform, its branding and the business model should be constructed in a manner that will enable it to compete effectively against international brands, both established and new. The platform should treat leading Public Service Broadcasters such as BBC, CNN and CCTV as competitors and benchmark them on quality and reach. The business strategy must include financial sustainability as a key objective. All revenue streams such as advertising, subscription (in due course) etc. should be pursued. Only 30 per cent of funding should come from Government and 70 per cent from private funding. The global platform should be launched in a phased manner in various online platforms and then extended to TV. Launching on the internet initially will also help in generating awareness.

- 8.2 Outline an effective content strategy for Prasar Bharati's global platforms (TV and Radio) focussed on projecting the national view rather than the narrow official viewpoint.

For Prasar Bharati's global platform to project a national view it is important that it showcases India's home cultures to global audiences. The story of the rising India needs to be put out there. The global

platform will leverage Bollywood, and provide a platform for new documentaries and new Indian cinema. It can also showcase issues covering the diaspora, democracy and nation building, technology, medicine and healthcare, from labour and mechanization to geographic stories not just from India but also from BRICS countries, and South Asia as the range available is rich and wide. Women's issues, education, and youth issues should be highlighted but given solution-based coverage.

By projecting a 'Brand Neutral/Global' identity, Prasar Bharati's new global platform will be the destination of choice for discerning and liberal viewers across the world. It will present a rich tapestry of content from news and views to stories featuring art, culture, business and issues of social significance. However, it will shed stereotypes and present the perspective of modern India on both domestic and international issues. News and views will be featured along with debates and discussions. But the tonality will be modern, contemporary, factual and non-partisan. The language will be English with subtitles for relevant markets.



