



# Lecture- 36



### **Strategic interventions (2017 onwards)**

In May 2020, Doordarshan and All India Radio began broadcasting[16] weather reports on Mirpur, Muzaffarabad and Gilgit in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in their prime time news bulletins. Pakistan had rejected this move by India, terming it as a "legally void" action to change the status of the region.

As laid down in the Prasar Bharati Act, Prasar Bharati had to develop its own news dissemination arm, which was not acted upon till 2019 when Prasar Bharati launched its digital arm Prasar Bharati News Services (PBNS). In the beginning, PBNS focused on creating a presence on and disseminating content through social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. During pandemic, PBNS Telegram channel was set up to distribute text, videos, audio and photographs instantly and share accurate information to newsrooms, free-of-cost. Media reports suggest that this news service, which is free to use for now, is likely to be made a subscription-based service going forward. The public broadcaster is readying an internal IT platform to aggregate all content generated by Prasar Bharati resource persons across India, along with wire services that the public broadcaster subscribes to.

### **Reforms in public broadcasting in India (2017 onwards)**

Obsolete technologies are being replaced with new technologies. Starting from 2017, more than 1200 old technology[18] Analog Transmitters have been phased out and 23 Digital Transmitters have been installed at 19 locations across the country.

**E-Office operation has been implemented across all offices all over the country** – Started in 2019 to make the office operations efficient, faster and paperless; all 577 Prasar Bharati network offices across the country adopted it by mid-2021. This has drastically reduced average time taken to clear files from seven days to 24 hours. This has also saved organisation's expenditure on paper by 45% between August 2019 and June 2021.

On the revenue and expenditure front, 150 crore per annum has been the average operating surplus between 2017 and 2021, thanks to 120% growth in FreeDish revenue, 200% growth in

Digital, reduction in DD – AIR public ad spend by 70%, and other expenditure rationalization initiatives like 60% decrease in expenditure on obsolete modes of broadcasting.

### **Global outreach since 2017**

In pursuance of its vision to expand the global reach of DD India channel, to put forth India's perspective on various international developments on global platforms and to showcase India's culture and values to the world, India's public broadcaster Prasar Bharati has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with 'Yupp TV', an over-the-top (OTT) platform, which is a gateway for television viewers across the globe. With this, DD India is now available on the OTT platform of Yupp TV in USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. DD India, Prasar Bharati's international channel, is India's window to the world. The channel through its various programmes offers international viewers India's perspective on all domestic and global developments. Available in more than 190 countries, DD India also acts as a bridge between India and Indian Diaspora spread across the world.

Prasar Bharati has collaborated with public broadcasters of more than 30 countries including Australia,[22] Germany, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Korea, Bangladesh and Nepal in the field of media and broadcasting. Through this, Doordarshan channels have been made available for viewing in many of these countries. Prasar Bharati engages in co-production, joint broadcasting and exchange of programmes across multiple genres. These agreements also facilitate exchange of professionals for training purposes.

Doordarshan is hosting the international finals of Robocon 2022 in August.[23] The Robot competition, which is organised by Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and hosted by different member countries every year, will be held in New Delhi in 2022. Prasar Bharati has created a page on its website for more information related to DD Robocon 2022. You can visit the page here -<https://newsonair.com/robocon2022/>

Doordarshan and All India Radio channels are available in more than 190 countries across the world. Doordarshan's English News channel DD India has reach to 190+ countries through

Satellite, OTT platforms like Yupp TV & Korean platform MyK and Prasar Bharati's NewsOnAir App.

More than 240 streams of All India Radio are available on NewsOnAir App which has reach to more than 190 countries.[25] Some of these All India Radio streams like Vividh Bharati, AIR Punjabi and AIR News 24\*7 are quite popular in various parts of the world from Europe to Africa and West Asia to North America, including countries like UK, France, Ireland, Kenya, US, Canada, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

On 21 March 2022, Prasar Bharati signed an MoU with Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia's public service broadcaster to boost co-operation in the field of broadcasting. This has expanded the reach of DD News, DD India and multiple language services of DD News amongst the Indian diaspora in Australia.

In February 2020, major American and European TV News Networks carried DD India's coverage of the then US President Donald Trump's India visit.

In December 2020, Prasar Bharati achieved another global milestone in broadcasting with the election of CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), one of the largest broadcasting associations in the world.

### **Manpower audit implementation since 2017**

In 2017, three years after Sam Pitroda-led expert committee on Prasar Bharati had recommended a comprehensive manpower audit of Doordarshan and All India Radio, media reports alleged that not only minimal action was taken on the Sam Pitroda Committee report of February 2014 to revitalise Prasar Bharati, but also the Department of Expenditure had expressed its inability to undertake the work of manpower audit despite assurances in reply to several questions in the Parliament.

In November 2018, through tweets, Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati said, “The 151st Board Meeting of Prasar Bharati held earlier in the week was one of the most productive

meetings on the wide range of issues on which decisions were taken. An important and long pending decision was on the manpower audit recommended by Sam Pitroda Committee. Happy to share that we are finally kicking off the manpower audit of Prasar Bharati, encompassing Doordarshan and Akashvani AIR, over the next many months. We will be assisted by EY India in this project which will lay out the future blueprint for India's public service broadcaster."

In February 2021, findings were completed by Ernst and Young, which suggested alterations. The findings show that nearly half the organisation's 25,000 employees are employed in the engineering division, whereas the corresponding strength for BBC is at a little over 10%. The content team at Prasar Bharti constitutes less than 20% of the workforce, while BBC's content team accounts for 70%. Manpower costs account for over 60% of Prasar Bharati's expenses, and just around 30% of BBC's.

### **Transformations and Initiatives (2017 onwards)**

Over last five years, Prasar Bharati's TV (DD) and Radio (AIR) network has undergone major transformations in the field of technology, content and broadcasting. The number of IT-based portals and Apps for ease of doing business (external) stood at nil in 2017. In 2021, it stands at five. IT-based portals (internal) now stand at two, while in 2017 it was nil.

### **IT-enabled operations –**

100% implementation of e-Office at 577 offices across Prasar Bharati network. This has drastically reduced average time taken to clear files. While in 2017 it was 7 days; in 2021, it is anything between 2 and 24 hours. This has also saved organisation's expenditure on paper by 45% between August 2019 and June 2021.

To bring transparency, Talent Acquisition and content acquisition processes have been made online.

Inclusive Coverage – Sign Language commentary for special events, including big sporting events and Mann Ki Baat.

Radio – TV Integration – Visual Radio initiatives like visual versions of Mann Ki Baat,[36] Rangoli and TV Visual Commentary on YouTube.

International brand of Doordarshan – Expressions of Interest for blue print to make an international brand of Doordarshan being reviewed.

Cloud Based Media Operations to be implemented for Broadcasting and Archival Media[38]

5G Broadcast technology pilot underway with IIT Kanpur

DD India – Doordarshan's International channel DD India is available in 37 countries. It is now also available on Hotstar and iTV platforms in United States.

NewsOnAir App – The App has more than two million downloads and is available in more than 150 countries. It offers more than 270 radio and TV live-streams.

DD FreeDish – DD Free Dish is the largest DTH operator in the country with reach to more than 43 Million Households in 2022. This figure stood at just 22 Million in 2017. The platform has 167 TV channels, including 50+ dedicated Educational channels and 48 Radio channels. In 2020–21, it generated revenue of more than Rs 700 Crore. This was an impressive jump from Rs 250 Crore in 2017.

Prasar Bharati News Services – PBNS has established itself as the digital news wing of Prasar Bharati through its Telegram Channel and Twitter handle. Its Twitter handle has 100K+ followers and Telegram channel has 15K+ subscribers. PBNS has created a digital news gathering platform called NDMS which is being used by all stringers and part time Correspondents of DD and AIR across India.

Going Green – All India Radio has shifted its entire fleet to Electric vehicles[44] for all its transportation needs. Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati flagged off a fleet of 26

Electric Vehicles at Akashvani Bhawan in New Delhi on 2 December 2021. The charging network for the Electric Vehicles has been laid by the Civil Construction Wing of Prasar Bharati.

### **Transformation of Doordarshan (2017 onwards)**

The footprint of Doordarshan has increased between 2017 and 2021. In 2017, the number of satellite channels stood at 23 as opposed to 36 in 2021.

**Old Technology Analogue Transmitters phased out** – Rolling out broadcasting reforms at Doordarshan since 2017, Prasar Bharati has swiftly phased out obsolete broadcasting technologies like Analog Terrestrial TV Transmitters (ATT), paving way for paradigm shift to emerging technologies and new content opportunities. Analog Terrestrial TV was an obsolete technology and phaseout of the same was in both public interest and national interest as it makes valuable spectrum available for new and emerging technologies such as 5G apart from reducing wasteful expenditure on power. With the exception of around 50 analog terrestrial TV transmitters in strategic locations, Prasar Bharati phased out the rest of the obsolete analog transmitters by 31 March 2022.