

Chapter 28

INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

Background

The activities of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry cover three sectors viz., Broadcasting (DD and AIR), Information and Films and the functions of each complement the other. Each of these sectors operates through specialized media units. It caters to the needs of information, education and entertainment of all sections of the society through mass communication media like Radio, Television, Films, Publication, Advertisement and traditional modes like Dance and Drama. The I&B sector keeps people informed about the role of Government in social services, developmental schemes and encourage people's participation.

2. The broadcasting and information dissemination scenario in the country has witnessed dramatic changes in 1990s. Besides fast advances in Information, Telecommunication and Media technology, the decade of '90s is marked by an unprecedented reach, competition and convergence of technologies. The position of Doordarshan as a monopoly broadcaster has been eroded with the emergence of more than 30 private telecast channels that are now available in the country through cable networks. This has resulted in some shift in viewership to private channels which offer glossy programmes and treat viewers to glamour and consumerism. Pioneering family serials made by Doordarshan have almost been forgotten as the viewer is now presented with an over-choice of film based programmes and soap serials. Even hardcore news presentation by private channels has attracted a large viewership affecting Doordarshan. However, DD still continues to command the largest share of audience as compared to individual private channels. The objectives of the Ninth Plan were formulated taking into account the changing scenario yet the responsibilities of the public broadcaster, whose job is to 'inform, educate and entertain', continued to be reflected in the thrust areas and the strategy adopted for the sector. The following sector-specific thrust areas and strategies were adopted for the Ninth Plan:

3. For AIR, the thrust areas are augmentation of the programme content, enhancement of technical features and quality of broadcast, wider choice of programme channels, renewal of old and obsolete equipment and addition of new facilities at radio stations enabling better programming and transmission.

4. Similarly, the thrust areas identified for Doordarshan are: upgradation and modernisation particularly in the field of news gathering, up-linking and post- production work to improve signal quality, expansion of network to areas like North-East, J & K and some tribal / hill / border areas where private broadcasters may not easily venture, and introduction of digital terrestrial transmitters at major kendras and expansion of digital satellite channels and digital studio production.

5. Some of the sub-sectors of Information sector -- PIB (Press Information Bureau), DAVP, (Directorate of Advertisement & Visual Publicity), Publication Division, Directorate of Field Publicity and Song and Drama Division – are to have a greater thrust and take on

activities such as technological upgradation of communication equipment, increasing coverage and modernisation of programme designing. These activities have received priority in the Ninth Plan.

6. The broad strategies adopted for various media units under Film sector seek to augment and modernize equipment base and create infrastructure facilities and provide for scientific preservation of films of great value, production, distribution and exhibition of meaningful films, organization of film festivals, encouragement of film society movement and assistance in production and exhibition of films for children.

Financial Outlays and Physical Targets

7. The Ninth Plan lays special emphasis not only on consolidation of existing facilities and infrastructure of broadcasting sector through modernisation and replacement of hardware and improving software content but also on making both AIR and Doordarshan more competitive. A target of adding 28 broadcasting centers, 10 community Radio Centres, 65 transmitters and 3 studios is envisaged for AIR during the Ninth Plan. The target for Doordarshan is 26 studios, 80 High-powered Transmitters and 422 Low / very low-powered Transmitters. An outlay of Rs 2,567.05 crore -- consisting of a budgetary support of Rs 449.55 crores and an IEBR (internal and extra budgetary resource) of Rs 2,117.50 crore – is earmarked in the Plan for the Broadcasting sector. The Broadcasting sector takes more than 90% share in the total Plan outlay while outlays of Rs 93.30 crore and Rs 182.70 crore go to Information and Film sectors respectively. Sector-wise approved outlay and Actual expenditure for first two years of the Plan can be seen at Annexure-I & Annexure-II.

Achievements :

8. During first two years of the Ninth Plan the performance of the Broadcasting sector remained below expectations both in terms of fund utilization and achieving physical Targets. The IEBR performance of both AIR and Doordarshan were below targets; so was the implementation of Plan schemes. The utilisation of Plan funds in the Information & Broadcasting sector was 78.1%, 64.9% and 98.4% (estimated) in 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 respectively. In terms of physical targets, AIR could set up 42% of targeted number of Broadcasting centers, 38% of Community Radio Centres and 88% of transmitters. Doordarshan set up 50% of targeted number studios, 40% of HPT and 95% of LPT/VLPTs (Annex-III). Frequent revision of plan priorities, delays in acquisition of land, inadequate manpower and law and order problem in some of the violence prone areas of J & K and North-East have been cited as the reasons for the shortfall in physical and financial targets. Concerted efforts are needed to overcome these problems so that there is no further slippage.

9. The I & B Ministry has stated that a perspective plan is being drawn up for the broadcasting sector to meet the challenges of competition from new and converging technologies in the field of broadcasting communication and information technologies.

New Measures

- Indian satellite channels allowed to uplink from India through VSNL;
- Fully Indian-owned companies allowed to set up 108 private FM Radio Stations in 40 cities on licence fee basis;
- Approval of Rs 430 crore special package for substantial upgradation of AIR/DD services in J&K State;
- Industry status accorded to the Film Industry;
- Unfreezing of the newspaper titles registered under the Publication and Registration of Books Act;
- Doordarshan is likely to introduce digital transmitters shortly, one each at Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai and it is planning simultaneous telecasting of both analogue and digital mode for some more time before complete switch-over to digital transmitters.

10. It is noteworthy that during the decade both DD and AIR have made substantial progress in terms of geographical and population coverage. In case of DD, signals emanating from over 1000 terrestrial transmitters can reach 88% of the population and has emerged as one of the largest terrestrial network in the world with 362 million viewers. It has established a 3-tier primary programme service – National, Regional and Local. DD network has expanded its telecasting hours and added a number of new channels like Sports, 24-hour news and current affairs and education channel in the recent past. AIR has emerged as one of the largest media organisations in the world with 195 broadcasting centres covering 97% of the population spread over 90% of the geographical area. It provides news, music, spoken word and other programmes in 24 languages and 146 dialects. AIR is also available on the Internet.

Critical Areas and Issues :

11. In a fast changing scenario, the mid-term appraisal provides an opportunity to reassess strategies and make mid-course corrections. In the context of the emerging scenario, the following issues have emerged.

Broadcasting Sector

12. The two mammoth broadcasting organizations namely the All India Radio and Doordarshan have been brought under a new autonomous body corporate, namely Prasar Bharati. It is estimated that the Prasar Bharati incurs an expenditure of Rs 1,400 crore –Rs 1,600 crore annually on its Plan and Non-Plan heads. The Eighth and Ninth Plan budgetary support has been pegged at 20%-25% and the rest of the outlay has to come through IEBR. Due to a variety of reasons, the DD viewership and commercial revenue have shown a declining trend making for an annual yield about Rs 400 crore –Rs 430 crore. The widening gap between required outlay and actual IEBR component may pose serious financial problem in implementation of Plan projects. Serious efforts are needed to improve the revenues of Prasar Bharati.

13. The role of the AIR and DD as public service broadcasters makes extra demands on their financial and human resources which are not encountered by private channels. While there should be greater stress on marketing and on better performance of IEBR, the funding for special requirements which involve activities like expansion of terrestrial coverage to border areas and strategic locations should be provided through budgetary support. This should taper off in a phased manner, linked to a well thought out action plan with milestones.

14. One of the reasons cited for low utilization of funds and physical performance is delay in approving schemes and changes effected in plan priorities. This again points to the need for preparing a road map and greater delegation of power to Prasar Bharati. It is also felt that instead of injecting small amounts of money over a spread of 5 years for various projects, selective schemes should be funded fully to avoid time and cost overruns.

15. Ministry of I & B is proposing to enact a Broadcasting law and amend the Cable Act of 1995. In this context, it may be mentioned that DOT is planning an overhaul of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1883, and there is likely to be overlap among the three proposed sets of laws. High level committees are at work in this area.

16. Improving the broadcasting services in the North-Eastern Region needs special emphasis and the Ministry should set up a task force in this regard. The region has special problems of terrain and reach.

Information Sector

17. The various media units in the Information sector have continued with strengthening and modernisation efforts in their fields of activities. Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) has planned to open new field publicity units and purchase of Films / Cassettes/video projectors. It has also planned computerization of regional offices. Targets for the first year of the Ninth Plan were realized while 1998-99 saw an under-performance. There are 268 Field Publicity Units which are engaged in basic publicity coverage in rural areas. The Publications Division in first two years of the Ninth Plan achieved the targets set for upgradation of Desk Top Publishing and other modernisation activities. As a part of its principal activity of keeping the media informed about various activities and achievements, the PIB issued 25948 and 26137 press releases during first two years of the Plan. With regard to DAVP the Directorate achieved the physical targets set for 1997-98 and 1998-99.

18. Media units in the Information sector have played important role. Many of these units were started during the First Plan in a scenario of low media development in the country. Since then the production standards and reach of media in the private sector in the case of books, publications, advertisement and films have reached international levels. The role and relevance of many of the official media units need to be re-examined in the context of changes that have taken place. The Ministry has reportedly asked the National Productivity Council to carry out a study for restructuring DAVP. Similar exercises should be undertaken for other media units as well.

Film Sector :

19. India is the largest producer of films in the world. Almost the entire feature film production is in the hands of the private sector which, enormous as it is in size, is unorganized in the matter of financing and marketing. Government's role in respect of films has been largely one of censorship or certification for public viewing, giving awards and for facilitating raw stocks. The Films Division functions as a public sector agency producing documentary films and newsreels, a role which was important in the past. With the emergence of television as a highly powerful household medium, the importance of documentary films made by the Films Division seems to have gradually declined. However, the Ministry has stated that the Supreme Court has upheld mandatory screening of newsreels and documentaries of Film Division and it is expected that regular screening will be restored.

20. The Ministry- appointed Shyam Benegal Committee (1997) recommended that the Film Division be turned into an autonomous society but the proposal has not been accepted by the Government. There is some duplication of work between the Film Division and Doordarshan on making documentaries, although on different hardware. There is need to have a fresh look at the functions and configuration of the Films Division. Also, the work of organizing Film Festivals and National Film Awards can be entrusted to a professional organization like NFDC which is already in the business of Film financing, creates a good cinema movement in the country and also handles the import and export of feature films.

Miscellaneous

21. It has been observed that a number of spill-over schemes from Eighth Plan have been taken into the Ninth Plan period. This implies inordinate delay in the completion of projects resulting in cost and time-overruns.

22. Considerable amount of fund has been found unutilized during first two years of the Ninth Plan. The Ministry has cited the declining commercial earnings of Prasar Bharati as the main reason for this. However, all efforts should be made by the Ministry to ensure timely implementation of schemes and optimal utilisation of plan resources.

23. The Plan document mentions that two major issues facing the Information and Broadcasting sector in the Ninth Plan are the use of Airwaves and the status of the Prasar Bharati. Actions is required on the part of the Ministry to clear the prevailing uncertainty on these two vital issues. In the absence of a clear cut and stable status, Prasar Bharati may not be in a position to deliver its best.

24. The Ministry needs to take special care for speedy implementation of its J & K package. Alongside, similar packages should be worked out for North-East and Hill / Tribal areas. The Ministry should also lay down guidelines to ensure that allocated funds are fully utilized by the different media units.

25. The FM Broadcasting sector has been opened up to private operators. Similar initiative should be taken by the Prasar Bharati to examine the feasibility of opening up Doordarshan

by leasing out terrestrial equipment facility to the private operators so that rural viewers have a better choice of channels.

26. Prasar Bharati should also make effort to digitalise the archival materials of Doordarshan and AIR.

ANNEXURE-I

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Financial Details for the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) And Annual Plan (1997-98, 1998-99 And 1999-2000)

(Rs. in Crore)

Sl. No.	Media Unit	9 th Plan Outlay (1997- 2002)	Approved Outlay (1997-98)	Actuals (1997- 98)	Approved Outlay (1998- 99)	Expenditure upto March 99	Approved Outlay 1999- 2000
I INFORMATION SECTOR							
1	DBS	93.30	19.00	12.51	18.52	14.20	17.50
2	IEBR	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.03	0.50	1.76
3	TOTAL	93.30	19.00	12.51	19.55	14.70	19.26
II FILMS SECTOR							
1	DBS	137.20	33.80	28.99	34.28	21.97	30.50
2	IEBR	45.50	8.20	8.23	8.70	4.71	6.10
3	TOTAL	182.70	42.00	37.22	42.98	26.68	36.60
TOTAL(I&II)							
1	DBS	230.50	52.80	41.50	52.80	36.17	48.00
2	IEBR	45.50	8.20	8.23	9.73	5.21	7.86
TOTAL		276.00	61.00	49.73	62.53	41.38	55.86
III BROADCASTING SECTOR							
1	PB (AIR)	805.40	143.20	88.24	150.00	81.25	122.00
	IEBR	544.40	95.00	63.73	101.80	73.86	76.80
2	PB (DD)	1761.65	415.60	346.39	449.40	308.09	391.52
	IEBR	1573.10	389.00	328.26	422.80	272.28	339.72
	TOTAL	2567.05	558.80	434.63	599.40	389.34	513.52
	DBS	449.55	74.80	42.64	74.80	43.20	97.00
	IEBR	2117.50	484.00	391.99	524.60	346.14	416.52
GRAND TOTAL (I&B)							
1	DBS	680.05	127.60	84.15	127.60	79.37	145.00
2	IEBR	2163.00	492.20	400.21	534.33	351.35	424.38
3	TOTAL	2843.05	619.80	484.36	661.93	430.72	569.38

Source: Media Units

DBS Direct Budgetary Support

IEBR Internal and Extra Budgetary Resources

THE NINTH PLAN OUTLAY FOR THE INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTRY

The progress of Outlay and Expenditure (1997-2002)

(Rs.in Crore)

Schemes	9th Plan outlay	1997-98			1998-99			1999-2000			1997-2000			2000-02	
		Actual Exp.			Actual Exp.			Actual Exp.			Actual Exp.			Balance	
		outlay	const.	current	outlay	const.	current	outlay	const.	current	outlay	const.	current	const.	current
Broadcasting Sector															
(a) AIR	805.40	143.20	83.53	88.24	150.00	70.72	81.25	122.00	102.00	122.00	415.20	256.26	290.03	549.15	515.37
(b) Doordarshan	1761.65	415.60	327.90	346.39	449.40	273.33	308.09	391.52	327.37	391.52	1256.52	928.60	1046.31	833.06	715.34
I Total	2567.05	558.80	411.43	434.63	599.40	344.05	389.34	513.52	429.37	513.52	1671.72	1184.86	1336.34	1382.21	1230.71
II Information sector	93.30	19.00	11.84	12.51	19.55	13.08	14.70	19.26	16.10	19.26	57.81	41.02	46.47	52.28	46.83
III Films sector	182.70	42.00	35.23	37.22	42.98	23.64	26.68	36.60	30.60	36.60	121.58	89.47	100.50	93.23	82.20
Grand Total	2843.05	619.80	458.50	484.36	661.93	380.77	430.72	569.38	476.07	569.38	1851.11	1315.35	1483.31	1527.72	1359.74
%age to 9th Plan outlay	100.00	21.80	16.13	17.04	23.28	13.39	15.11	20.03	16.75	20.03	64.94	46.27	52.17	53.73	47.83
Plan															
Broadcasting		21.77	16.03	16.93	23.35	13.40	15.12	20.00	16.73	20.00	65.12	46.16	52.06	53.84	47.94
Information		20.36	12.69	13.41	20.95	14.02	15.76	20.64	17.26	20.64	61.96	43.96	49.80	56.03	50.19
Films		22.99	19.28	20.37	23.52	12.94	14.60		16.75	20.03	63.93	48.97	55.01	51.03	44.99

ANNEXURE-III

**Physical Targets/Achievements of Broadcasting Sector during
1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000**

Broadcasting	Item	Ninth Plan Target	Annual Plan 1997-98		Annual Plan 1998-99		Annual Plan 1999-2000 Projected Target
			<u>T</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>A</u>	
A. AIR	1. Broadcasting Centres	28	7	4	5	1	7
	2. Community Radio Centres	10	10	2	3	3	5
	3. Transmitters	65	9	8	7	6	30
	4. Studio	3	2	-	-	-	4
B. Doordarshan	1. Studio	26*	13	4	13	9	4
	2. HPT	80*	11	6	9	2	22
	3. LPT/VLPT	422*	123	112	94	94	90

*including 23, 14 and 229 continuing schemes from the 8th Plan.

T- Target

A-Achievement