Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

Communication is understood as the successful transmission and reception of meaningful messages. It is a basic instinct of man and a social, economic, political and cultural need. Communication has developed through speech, writing, art and music. When such communication is sent from one particular place to the people at large through instruments such as press, journals, films, air signals and television, it is referred as mass media communication. This has always meant communicating with a large number of people simultaneously sharing with them empathetically information, ideas, experiences and entertainment through a network of communication media. Today, internet and computer network are also added to the list of mass media instruments.

In India, the term mass media communication is called Jan Sanchar. It means communicating with large number of people. Unlike Western countries, mass media in India is viewed from the point of view of its social relevance and the national socio-economic activities. Jawaharlal Nehru referred mass media as "people in participating dialogue". Mahatma Gandhi described mass media as "talking together". Today, the impact of mass media in general and Radio and Television in particular on Indian people is profound.

Statement of the Problem under Study

The researcher has chosen the "Prasar Bharati" (Broadcasting Corporation of India) for his study as it consists of two important mass
media instruments namely, Radio and Television. The researcher has chosen only these two mass media instruments for his study because of non-availability of time and paucity of funds.

After 50 years of independence, no political initiative has fundamentally altered the administrative and legal infrastructure created under colonial rule, that governs India’s electronic media namely the All India Radio and Doordarshan. They functioned as departments under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A government controlled mass media may project only the governmental view of information and entertainment. Therefore there were persistent demands that the electronic media should be free from government control and they must have autonomy in their functioning. The parliament passed an Act, after more than twenty years of debates and discussions, to give autonomy to the electronic media in 1990. But unfortunately, the Act was not notified. In 1997, the Indian government decided to notify this Act and Prasar Bharati, the autonomous Broadcasting Council of India, came into existence on November 23, 1997.

A Board consisting of a chairman, an executive member and a number of part-time, full-time, ex-officio and elected members was constituted to manage the affairs of Prasar Bharati. The following are the main functions entrusted with Prasar Bharati.

- To organise and conduct public service Broadcasting.
- To ensure a balanced development of Radio and Television broadcasting.
• To establish a system of gathering news for Radio and Television.

• To conduct or commission programmes, audience research, market or technical services.

• To purchase or otherwise acquire programmes and rights or privileges in respect of sports or other events, films, serials, etc.

In addition to these functions, the following programme objectives of Prasar Bharati are also pinpointed.

• Upholding the unity and integrity of the country and the values enshrined in the constitution.

• Safeguarding the citizens' right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively on all matters of public interest.

• Presenting a fair and balanced flow of information, including contrasting views, without advocating any opinion or ideology.

• Paying special attention to education and spread of literacy as also to the fields of agriculture, rural development, environment, health, family welfare, science and technology.

• Providing adequate coverage to the diverse cultures and languages of the various regions.

• Providing adequate coverage to sports and games.
- Protecting the interests of children, providing appropriate programmes for youth and creating a national consciousness in regard to the status and problems for women.

- Promoting social justice, advancing the welfare of weaker sections of the society, safeguarding the rights of the working classes, fulfilling the special needs of the minorities and tribal communities and protecting the interests of the blind, the aged, the handicapped and other vulnerable sections of the population.¹

All India Radio

The idea of a regular Broadcasting Service in India took shape for the first time in 1926, in the form of an agreement entered into between the Government of India and a private company called the Indian Broadcasting Company Ltd. The company started its operation from two stations (Bombay and Calcutta). In 1930, the then British Indian Government took control over the transmitters and placed it under the management of Department of Industries and Labour. In 1936, it was changed to "All India Radio" (AIR) and transferred to the Department of Communication. Finally, in 1946, the All India Radio, which was again transferred to the newly created Department of Information & Broadcasting, came to be known as 'Akashwani' from 1957. When India attained independence in 1947, All India Radio had a network of six stations and complement of 18

¹ [http://www.ddindia.com/bk1/65.html](http://www.ddindia.com/bk1/65.html)
transmitters. The coverage was 2.5% area and just 11% of the population. Rapid expansion of the network took place during the post-independence period. The major objectives of All India Radio has been to inform, educate and entertain the masses. Since independence All India Radio has grown tremendously with 214 Broadcasting centres with 145 medium frequency, 55 high frequency (SW) and 103 Frequency Modulation (FM) transmitters. The area coverage is 90%, serving 97.3% of the people in the largest democracy of the world. All India Radio covers 24 languages and 146 dialects in home service and in external services it covers 24 languages.²

Doordarshan

Television in India was started on 15th September, 1959 under the over-all control of All India Radio and programmes telecasted only in Delhi within the radius of 40 KM around Delhi. Television was part of All India Radio till 1976. Later in April 1976 it was bifurcated into two separate media and the new one it was named as "Doordarshan" and it is now situated at Mandi House, New Delhi. A major breakthrough in the history of Doordarshan happened in 1981-82, wherein the microwave links were established between Madras, Bombay, Jalandhar and Bangalore. In the same year Doordarshan hired the services of INSAT-I and multi-channel Television was started in 1984.

The National Television Service in India through Doordarshan is one of the largest territorial networks in the world. There are 1042 terrestrial

transmitters covering 88% of the Indian population. It established a three-tier primary programme service-national, regional and local.

The Doordarshan provided educational programmes ranging from basic health education to higher education programmes to the University Students. Since 1961 educational Television programmes for school children are telecasted from the regional centres in different languages covering both formal and informal education. For metropolitan population in 1984, DD2, Metro, entertainment channels were opened in 56 cities.

As per the social objectives enshrined in the Indian Constitution the Doordarshan has been serving the following social objectives :

- To act as a catalyst for social change.
- To promote national integration.
- To stimulate a scientific temper in the minds of the people.
- To disseminate the message of family planning as a means of population control and family welfare.
- To provide essential information and knowledge in order to stimulate greater agricultural production.
- To promote and help preserve environmental and ecological balance.

Refer http://www/ddindia.net/bkl/3.html.
• To highlight the need for social welfare measures, including welfare of women, children and the less privileged.
• To promote interest in games and sports.
• To create values of appraisal of art and cultural heritage.  

The Prasar Bharati Act, 1990 aimed at granting autonomy to All India Radio and Doordarshan. But never once, after the Bill became the law of the land, did autonomy really become a reality. There is no evidence of any concerted efforts to strengthen the process of autonomy, but there is plenty of it to the contrary. Therefore the present study aims to analysing the following aspects:

(a) Is autonomy to All India Radio and Doordarshan a farce?

(b) To what extend the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has extended autonomy to All India Radio and Doordarshan through Prasar Bharati Act of 1990.

(c) Is complete autonomy to All India Radio and Doordarshan workable for the realisation of socio-political objectives enshrined in the Constitution of India under Art 19 1(a)?

(d) How best can autonomy serve the commercial interest of All India Radio and Doordarshan?

4 http://www.ddindia.com/bkl/14.html
Aims and Objectives of the Study

Having thus identified the problem on hand, it is now left to mention the major aims and objectives of the present study.

The major aim of this study is to analyse the role of All India Radio and Doordarshan in disseminating information to the public. The objectives of this study are:

1. To study the growth and evolution of All India Radio and Doordarshan.
2. To identify the social, political, educational, cultural and economic objectives of All India Radio and Doordarshan.
3. To examine the degree of autonomy enjoyed by All India Radio and Doordarshan and their accountability.
4. To evaluate the performance of All India Radio and Doordarshan.

Review of Literature

The available literature for this study contextualises, substantiates and warrants a more detailed and in-depth study of Prasar Bharati. Information is gathered from written documents, reports, articles and facts and figures from government acts, journals and reviews. The research is further supported by personal interview of the All India Radio and Doordarshan staff and observation of working environment.
The study of Prasar Bharati is in its embryonic stage. Most research studies carried out in this field pertain to the organisation and management of All India Radio and Doordarshan. The study of Prasar Bharati's role in the field of mass communication has not been dealt with very intensively. And as such, it is an arduous task to review the literature in this field.

A critical study of present day media was presented by K.M. Shrivastava. He focussed his attention on general media issues. Some of the issues that he dealt with have relevance for developing countries like India. In 13 chapters he studied media in relation to terrorism, war, news, enterprises, citizens, broadcasting, autonomy, education, rural development, religion, multi-linguism, election, environment and wages. Victoria L. Farmer's essay has warned that "India in the last five years has been invaded by TV channels from all over the world". He depicted the western hegemonies in communication hardware and news gathering capabilities are well documented. He presented both the arguments of the cultural nationalists and the secularists against the issues of autonomy and control of the All India Radio and Doordarshan.

"This is All India Radio" is a handbook designed to analyse an indepth study of the growth and development of broadcasting by

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V.L. Baruah. It covers various aspects of Indian broadcasting system including the organisational structure, administration, engineering, personnel divisions and a detailed account of the programme services encompassing home, commercial and overseas broadcasts and the various development activities in progress. It also aims at tracing out the history of broadcasting and projects a comprehensive picture of All India Radio and its various activities. Denis McQuail, an authority on mass communication theory offered a comprehensive analysis of the assessment of mass media performance in all aspects - economic, social, aesthetic and moral. For this growing field of interest he developed a framework and agenda applicable to broadcast and print media across national boundaries. Interestingly, he outlines why the performance of mass media has become a central concern in contemporary societies.

P.N. Malhan provides a quick look at the Indian scenario in the field of mass communication and tele-communications and their functioning, development, programmes and professionalism and also seeks to promote a dialogue on various issues related to the role and strategies of communication. It analyses the defects and deficiencies of future mass communication system and some structural changes. It also stressed filling the existing gaps in the communication infrastructure and to eliminate all

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7 Baruah, U.L., "This is All India Radio, Government of India, New Delhi, 1983, pp.201.
9 P.N. Malhan, Communication Media - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Publication Division, New Delhi, 1985, pp.220.
constraints on media whether they be imposed by the government, private ownership or vested interests.

Joel Bara and Veena Dixit in their edited book "Mass Media in India", focus mainly on "Media Organisation". This book gives an exhaustive list of references, facts and figures, on miscellaneous aspects of mass media.

P.C. Chatterji describes the structure and organisation of All India Radio and Doordarshan. He illustrates how procedural and political impediments have not only retarded their independent functioning, but also stood in the way of professionalism. He discusses in detail the reports of the first committee that inquired into the state of broadcasting in India and two working groups set up by the Janata and Congress - (I) governments respectively. This book tackles some major questions and issues that have not been dealt before.

Patrick Barwise and Andrew took a fresh look of television from audience perspective. It draws on twenty years of research about the audience in the US and Britain. They systematically analysed the various ways in which the television is formed and organised around the world.


G.S.Bhargava\textsuperscript{13} analysed the electronic media in a multi-dimensional aspect. He made a strong plea for autonomy for All India Radio and Doordarshan. There are nine contributors in this edited volume who have dealt with different aspects of the mass media.

The book 'Educational Broadcasting' - Radio and Television in Education by Mohanty\textsuperscript{14} deals with various aspects of educational broadcasting in twenty chapters. These chapters have been divided into five categories according to five aspects - Historical perspective, Planning, Production, Utilization and Evaluation & Research. This work is the modest but pioneering effort in the field. The author has only discussed the Educational Programmes in Broadcasting.

The work 'Autonomy for the Electronic Media - A National Debate on the Prasar Bharati Bill', edited by T.K.Thomas\textsuperscript{15} is a collection of thoughts presented at the one day conference organised at Delhi on January 30, 1990 on "Autonomy for Akashvani & Doordarshan". It seeks to present the opinions of a large number of people belonging to different walks of life and who have been passionately and persistently advocating freedom from Government control of this media. It concludes that the public interest in


\textsuperscript{15} T.K. Thomas (Ed), Autonomy for the Electronic Media - A National Debate on the Prasar Bharathi Bill, Konark Publisher (P) Ltd., Delhi, 1990.
the autonomy issue has been growing at a terrific phase with the change in government.

The book ‘India’s Communication Revolution - From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts’, by Arvind Singhal & Everett Rogers\textsuperscript{16} discusses India’s communication revolution, the public broadcasting revolution, the private television revolution, raising technologies, the telecommunication revolution, the computer and internet revolution and the lessons learned about informatisation. The book ‘Broadcasting Reform in India’, edited by Monroe E. Price and Stefaan G. Verhulst\textsuperscript{17}, narrates the history of Indian broadcasting reform. The authors have described the various bills and laws relating to the broadcasting reform in India.

Despite the availability of literature on mass media communication in India there exists a gap in analysing the issue of autonomy for All India Radio and Doordarshan. Besides, the changing role of electronic media needs a special study which may contribute something new to the existing knowledge in the field.

**Research Methodology**

The methodology adopted is descriptive and analytical based on empirical data. In addition, the historical or explanatory method of scanning


through the material in the archives is not ignored. In keeping with the objectives of the study, the primary data for the study are generated through responses received from the personnel belonging to All India Radio and Doordarshan. Published and unpublished documents, periodicals and reports of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Acts and Parliamentary proceedings serve as resource materials. Non-official sources, however, have not been neglected. Statistical tools have also been employed to measure the efficiency and performance of All India Radio and Doordarshan.

Chapterisation

The thesis is designed to contain six chapters. The introductory chapter brings out the need, scope and importance of the study. In addition, this chapter spells out the aim and objectives of the study. It also includes a review of literature on mass media and description of the over-all research design including the methodology used for the study.

The second chapter traces the growth and development of the electronic media in India such as All India Radio and Doordarshan.

The third chapter identifies the social, political, cultural and educational objectives of All India Radio and Doordarshan.

The fourth chapter examines the degree of autonomy enjoyed by All India Radio and Doordarshan and their accountability to the public, government and parliament.
The fifth chapter analyses the performance and effectiveness of All India Radio and Doordarshan in the light of various programmes and funding schemes over the years.

The concluding chapter is devoted in making a summary of findings and suggestions for strengthening the autonomy of All India Radio and Doordarshan and improving their performance. Further, the chapter explores the future potential area of research in mass media with particular reference to All India Radio and Doordarshan.