CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF BROADCASTING IN CUDDAPAH STATION

We have seen above that since 1983, the Cuddapah station became fullfledged and had independent transmission thrice a day. Originally it was only a relaying station. No doubt some of the programmes which were continued were being transmitted even earlier. But mostly they pertained to the regions from where those transmissions were originally broadcast. But now greater emphasis is given to the Cuddapah region itself and so the relays are more connected with the people of the region and they project the socio-economic problems of the region. Naturally, this gained greater popularity and could outstretch its hands to the interior places of the region, have contacts with them, talk to them about the problems and pressures and through its broadcasts make them known to others by offering solutions to the problems.
Besides News, which were common to all the stations and were relayed from Hyderabad, there were other spheres which drew the attention of the broadcasters and emitted to the people at large. They include besides music, folk-lore, film music, light programmes on women welfare, agriculture, youth welfare, talks and discussions as also dramas and skits. The main purpose of these broadcasts were to educate the people more so the villagers and to see that their living standards and life style change for the better. It was to understand this that we interviewed both the officials and the people at large with regard to broadcasting under several heads and elicited answers from them. Though, in a large number of cases, there was unanimity in the answers given, the Governmental and private attitudes differed with regard to the projection of problems. There were also variations in the answers that we received. Hereunder we examine the viewpoint of the officials with regard to the questions that we asked about the broadcasts.
To facilitate the proper relay of such programmes in an organised manner the Station Director would prepare the schedule of programmes for each quarter of the AIR and get the approval of the Director General, AIR, New Delhi. It is on the basis of such schedules for each of the items that broadcasts were arranged. Some such schedules are shown in the Appendix. It will be seen from these Appendices [Nos. VII, VIII, IX, X etc.] that these programmes were wide in scope and included different aspects of life. Talks and discussions were also arranged likewise. The talks were on contemporary topics and on personalities of the past whose contributions to the nation as a whole and to the region in particular were significant and noteworthy. Even events of the past formed the subject-matter of such talks if relevant. For the last few years, greater emphasis is laid upon emotional and national integration to put down the disruptive tendencies, like terrorism and communalism. AIR is one such media which is trying hard to put down such tendencies. For this purpose talks by eminent leaders, social workers and such others
who can help bind together the people are arranged. Of course, music also finds a place in such broadcasts.

Great caution is taken by the AIR in reporting important matters. One aspect of AIR reporting, which has even today become a subject matter of debate among the legislatures and the public at large is the fact that proper coverage has not been given to the opposition parties in highlighting their activities. The AIR is accused of bias towards the ruling party and of suppression of important news to be made known to the public. The officials argue that they are subject to certain rules and procedures in reporting the events involving the Government. Further, the Ministers and representatives of the ruling party are given disproportionate time in News bulletins.

Very surprisingly, most important News items were suppressed or delayed by the AIR. Two daring incidents may be noted as examples. On the 27th of May, 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister had a massive heart attack at 6 A.M. and he was in the jaws of death. He finally passed away at
2.55 P.M. that day, but the AIR only broadcasts the news of his death. But his sufferings of the morning were not referred to. Likewise, when Indira Gandhi passed away 20 years later at 9.30 A.M., on the 30th October, 1984, the news had spread all over the country only through the BBC and it was only around 6 P.M., that the AIR informed the people of her death. Even Rajiv Gandhi had to tune into the BBC to find out what had happened to his mother.

As a case of wrong information we could cite the announcement of the death of Jayaprakash Narayan. The then Prime Minister, Sri Morarji Desai, announced it in the Lok Sabha on 22nd March 1978. The House was adjourned. But to the dismay of everybody Jayaprakash Narayan was quite alive; he had not died at all. Even today such lapses on the part of the AIR have not diminished. They say that the official rules and procedures are against them. But they do not realise that instead of going through the official channels, they themselves could have operated through their agents which could have avoided some of the lapses. National broadcasts, like talks, discussions and music are relayed occasionally
over all the stations of AIR. Talks by National leaders like the Prime Minister and President of India do not come under the purview of the regional station, quite obviously. We shall now note the attitudes of the programme executives and other officials of AIR, Cuddapah with regard to several types of broadcast made by them.

YUVAVANI

Yuvavani naturally means the voice of youth. In its Annual Report to the Ministry, called as 'Budget Brief' for the year 1974-75, it has been said: "Yuvavani caters to the age group 15 to 30 years. This is a spectrum of several sub groups 15 to 17, 18 to 20, 21 to 24 and 25 to 29 years. Yuvavani caters to all these groups through their involvement and participation in the programme." This title is given to the programmes as it is meant for the youth.

Yuvavani programmes may be described as programmes for the youth, by the youth and for the youth. In total 45 per cent of Indian population is made up of the youth. So, there is no meaning in neglecting the needs and aspirations of such a big cross section of the
population. Inaugurating this programme on 21st July, 1969, the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi said:

"Young people everywhere have a feeling of unrest. They have a feeling that something is wanting. They do not know what it is. But they are groping for it. I welcome this groping. Sometimes it takes strange direction, strange form which we, who are older, do not understand. But that does not give us the right to reject these forms because out of such groping in earlier ages we have become, or the world has become, what it is today. Radio can influence the young people and give them the feeling that they are not a 'problem' but participants in the country's decisions."

We formulated about 10 questions with regard to this programme and they were placed before the
Programme Executive in-charge of this feature. He was Sri N. Malleswara Rao. We asked him whether the AIR Centre at Cuddapah was broadcasting programmes which were helpful to the youth. This programme was connected with several aspects, covering not only the region but also the nation. The programmes were meant for the youth without any distinctions as such between the youth living in the villages and in the towns, the rural and the urban. It covered the unemployed, the students, the literate and illiterate. It tried to spread their knowledge of science and general knowledge as such besides giving them programmes for their pleasure. These programmes, broadcast from AIR, were a necessity. The cost of Radio sets were quite within the reach of such people and the programmes were formulated in such a way that they were helpful from time to time.

This programme was commenced from Cuddapah in 1983. To the question whether there were differences in character between such broadcasts made earlier and those that are being broadcast now, the official said that there were some slight differences though they were not of great
consequence. Earlier the programmes were limited only for a short duration of 30 minutes and broadcast only twice a week, but now these programmes are broadcast on all days on the week in the evenings between 5.20 to 5.50 P.M. On Saturdays, it is between 8.30 A.M. to 9.00 A.M. It is the Compere, an Assistant to the Programme Executive that now presents the programme.

The next question asked was about the response, reaction of the people specially the youth with these programmes. The official reply was that there was quite a good response from the people, specially with regard to certain programmes. One such was the anti-liquor campaign. The programmes were associated with the campaign against drinking and the dangerous consequences of such drinking in every walk of life. It was received by the people as a whole quite enthusiastically. Many of the listeners wrote letters to the Director, AIR, about such programmes, assorted ones of which were relayed back to the listeners. This in itself indicates the interest inculcated among the people, specially the youngsters. How far this resulted
in the reduction in the number of people consuming liquor is altogether a different question, which has to be probed into by other agencies. But this much is true; the people specially in the village areas, now knew the horrible consequences of drinking, not only upon one's health but also upon one's financial position, one's own family and life.

Other topics which, under the youth programmes, created interest among the listeners were good literary programmes like big and small stories specially to get acquainted with the works of Sri Sarat Chandra, Madhurantakam Raja Ram, Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Viswanatha Reddy etc. The programmes give importance also to questions raised by the youth through correspondence - questions relating to youth problems. These questions were consequential to the programmes the youth listened to with reference to science, scientific knowledge, opportunities for jobs and the problems connected with one's own life-style and structure in the changing social pattern. These questions, subjectwise, were broadcast over the AIR on specified problem with suitable replies. Interestingly, the AIR, Cuddapah station
is said to receive more than 400 letters every month with regard to this programme.

The next question was about the influence of the Television on the Radio and about the programmes broadcast listened to by the people in toto. To this the answer was that the influence of the Television was not much noticeable and was negligible, specially in the rural areas where the villagers purchased transistors worth about Rs.150/- which could be carried anywhere and broadcasts could be tuned into and heard even when they were working in the fields. The Televisions were more visual and would tie the viewer down to the seat, while the Radio, being purely audio, could be heard even while one was on duty.

The programmes like Harikatha, Burrakatha and other folk music including film music, skits and dramas could be easily heard over the radio. These programmes stirred the imagination of the listeners, gave them pleasure and created in them, quite often, a sense of involvement, as if they were themselves a part of such programmes. The officials of AIR Cuddapah claimed that even from
distant places like Baroda and Uttar Pradesh, they received letters in appreciation of the programmes broadcast. The Cuddapah Station of AIR is rendering yeoman service to the public by broadcasting news, features, etc., with regard to the opportunities of employment for the youth, both male and female. They give details about the civil services and broadcast interviews of such of those selected candidates, who have passed in the competitive examinations. The interviews were mostly about the way they prepared for such examinations, the important books that they read which gave them guidance, the time they spent for preparation and the like. This would help the listeners to prepare themselves for such examinations in the way in which the successful candidates got themselves prepared. The AIR also gives details about the available job vacancies, the syllabus of Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission, Railway Service Commission examinations etc. and broadcast talks with regard to developments of personality, rural environments, General knowledge features, thought provoking ideas in programmes under the title "Meeru Alochinchaara".
The AIR staff often go to the people, drag common men into dialogue and create a public platform for those people to give expression, and their own thoughts which, at least to some extent, help one to understand themselves however meagre the feelings of the people at large be. In fact, there are occasions provided to the AIR staff to act as the mediators in resolving small conflicts between the people and the public servants. The official of the Cuddapah station narrated an incident as an example. Some poor people dug up mud from barren Government lands obviously for purposes of construction, etc., in an area of 10 acres of land. The Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) of Nandyal objected to it, leading to some sort of strife between the officials and the persons involved in such act. These were poor and almost entirely depended upon such activities for their livelihood. The AIR having come to know of it, brought the parties together and saw to it that the official finally promised non-interference in such activities which was considered as a sort of social right.
These types of programmes are broadcast on the 4th Saturday of every month at 7.30 P.M. There is also scope for young writers and poets to broadcast their stories, poems, etc. Occasionally, on Mondays another interesting programme entitled 'Chepukondi Chudham' is broadcast. Herein some problems of interest are posed before an audience to bring forth a correct answer; if no such answer was forthcoming the programme officer himself would furnish the answer. These are appeared over one or two weeks. The questions are sent by the listeners themselves. This is almost equivalent to the Quiz programme. Of late, greater importance is given to national and emotional integration, establishment of peace and security, religious equality and the like concerning which talks are arranged and discussions are held. There are also talks and scripts highlighting such social evils like dowry, child marriage, etc.

Thus, the Programme-Executive in-charge of Yuvavani claimed that the programmes connected with the youth and broadcast through AIR, Cuddapah, are superior to those broadcast from other stations of All India Radio.
One lacunae of this programme should be discussed. AIR, Cuddapah pays honorarium to the artists at reasonable rates, grading them on their performance. But, unfortunately, barring musicians, other young artists living beyond 50 kms are not invited since there is no provision for paying them the travelling allowance, etc. In fact, even for those who live within the radius of 5 kms, no expenses are paid. This prevents the young artists from participation. However, the scripts from them are accepted and they are broadcast. This is one reason why the AIR staff concerned go to those places for recording, etc.

**MAHILA BHARATI**

The second important item is 'Mahila Bharati' meaning the 'Women of India'. This programme is titled as Rangavalli in Hyderabad and Vanithavani in Vijayawada. We record below what Smt. Sailaja Murthy told about these programmes for women broadcast from Cuddapah. She is the Programme Executive for this section at Cuddapah.

The Mahila Bharati programme was commenced at Cuddapah in 1988. These programmes were almost
similar to the Rangavalli and Vanithavani programmes. Basically there are very few differences. The programmes from Hyderabad are on Sundays, Vijayawada on Tuesdays and Cuddapah on Thursdays and Saturdays. The programmes from Hyderabad and Vijayawada are relayed by Cuddapah. The programmes broadcast from Hyderabad are entirely urban-oriented; but it is not so with regard to Cuddapah and Vijayawada where emphasis is laid upon the rural women also. On Saturdays the programme from Cuddapah is related to the household women, the students and the educated. Those broadcast on Sundays covers everybody, the young and the old, the household and the unmarried and women of different levels and status. The subjects dealt with may outwardly look similar but they are different in their approach and dealing.

The women in the modern days is facing problems which were unseen and or unaware in the past. The women in the past had problems in the house, but the present day women faces the problems of a different kind and problems of a different nature. The so-called feminism took root in the sixties, when there was economic depression
in Europe, as a consequence of which, women also had to seek jobs. Thereafter such a problem became common in the USA and slowly spread to India also. Consequently, there was great pressure on the routine of women folk, who had to face problems in the houses and also outside with great tension. Despite the fact that in a majority of cases the men did co-operate with the women and helped them, yet there were several personal problems which could not be resolved by men. The broadcast meant for women often dealt with such problems. Greater emphasis was laid on health care. A healthy woman at home would keep the family in a pleasant mood.

Family planning which is now-a-days referred to as family welfare is one topic about which the AIR arranges talks, discussions and skits also.

The Programme Executive concurs with Sri Malleswara Rao who says that Radio programmes inspite of Television, have good response from the people. The folk busy as they are, find less time to watch the Television. The rural women, after hard labour on the fields, find no time to watch the Television. Since fast food is not easily available in villages, they have to cook
for the evening, take care of the children and attend to their needs. Further, the timing of the programmes over the Television are not suitable to them as the Radio. The afternoon transmissions are available only over the Radio and not the Television for them. Over the Radio there is a scope for science programmes, dramas, etc. to broadcast for the complete satisfaction, to encourage curiosity of the villagers. Costwise the Radios are cheaper and are easily portable from place to place, a reason why the popularity of the Radio has not decreased to the extent anticipated. Smt. Sailaja Murthy struck a personal note here when she said that the Women's programmes could be better directed by women rather than men, for they are more familiar with the problems of women.

In urban areas there are women clubs, societies and so on, the members of which could be involved in the broadcasting features of women. But the Ladies Club in Cuddapah has the wives of the Collector, the S.P., the D.S.P. and other high officials as the members of the club. It is unfortunate that they rarely come down their level
and mingle with the common women-folk. There is not much variety in programmes but they are highly useful and informative for the women. The information itself is available through organisations like DRDA, the commercial banks, social organisations. Interestingly, we note the fact that the women are educated about self-dependent professions like soap-making, candle-making, mat-weaving, etc. which would enable them to earn Rs.600 - 700 per month. The broadcast meant for such problems are self-educative and are of great help to women folk to set up home industries. The AIR provides them necessary information about the DRDA, the co-operative society and banking institutions, etc., which enable them to seek light from unknown corners for their own development.

A very sensitive question was posed as to what action the AIR would take when it comes to know incidents of early marriage, dowry system and even crimes like rape of women. The reply received was quite honest and factual. The officials at the AIR do come across such cases and they go to the spots for further probe. But
the response they receive from the affected in most cases is rather dumb. It is because the people are afraid that by identifying themselves they would themselves be subjected to victimisation and thus they loose from both the ends. Hence, such cases are reported to AIR very rarely. We could as well say that they are not reported at all and if reported mostly under strict anonymity.

Incidentally, for the first time the women united themselves to start an anti-liquor campaign at 'Dubagunta' and this campaign caught the attention of the whole state. The AIR took this up as a subject of broadcast and gave it a good deal of importance explaining the horrors, resultant upon the health of the drunkards; loss of their properties, family quarrels, etc. The officials feel that such programmes are of great value and help to the womenfold. The Programme Executive says that she is quite satisfied about these programmes and it is generally felt that the women of Rayalaseema are quite satisfied about these broadcasts which are informative, educative and value-based.
FARM PROGRAMMES

The next section for which we sought the information from AIR officials was concerned with agricultural broadcast. This is in fact quite a vast field including agricultural operation of consumables and commercial crops, vegetables, fruits, the upkeep of animals like the cows and buffaloes, poultry farming, sericulture and seasonal regional crops. Our country is essentially agriculture-based, so it is the rural folk that form the backbone of the society. It is essential that if the yields were to be bountiful proper care must be taken of the land, the mother earth, which is the soul object of care. Be it fertile or drought-prone the cultivator cultivates the land for raising as much yield as possible. For this purpose he requires the assistance of several people working in several departments of the Government like those of agriculture, sericulture, animal husbandry, veterinary, engineering, chemical, fertilisers, etc.

No doubt the Government has come forward, in principle, to assist the agriculturist in all
these fields. But it is the AIR that is the most useful and powerful agent through which the agriculturist could be reached to educate them. We contacted Mr. V.V. Subbanna, the Farm Radio Officer of Cuddapah station to educate us in detail about the broadcast connected with agriculture. The programme commenced on the 1st November, 1974. The programmes from the Cuddapah station starts at 6.35 A.M. with information about the agriculturists regarding the climate, possibility of rain and thunder and the like, so that he could take proper precautionary measures. The regular broadcast is in the evenings from 6.25 to 6.50 P.M. There are items connected with the rural areas. These are general in nature. Between 7.15 to 7.45 P.M. agricultural items are broadcast. These are more educative in the sense that the farmer is taught as to how he should protect his plants of different vegetables and fruits from insects and other diseases that are associated with the plants. Detailed information is given about the care that the farmer has to take to prevent such diseases. They are also instructed about the type of fertilizers they should use and also their proportion. They are
also taught about taking care of poultry and other animals. The experts from different departments are invited to give talks about the diseases, their nature, steps to be taken to eradicate such diseases and so on. Mr. Subbanna felt sorry that there was not much official co-operation forthcoming from other departments. He was quite vocal about the co-operation that he receives from the Animal Husbandry departments of Cuddapah and Nellore districts, whereas he significantly emphasised about the co-operation which was not forthcoming from other departments. Yet the members of staff of this section would themselves do the field work, speak to the officials concerned and by persuasion make them come out with some useful details which are helpful for the agriculturist at large. He was of the opinion that these were brought to the notice of the higher officials concerned. Fisheries is the one department from which the AIR, Cuddapah does not get any co-operation. He was proud of the fact that there was a good response from the agriculturists about these items broadcast although they did not satisfy the AIR officials themselves. This is perhaps due to some lack of
co-ordination among different departments. Agriculture as an operation, is multifaced and several people have to be consulted for advice, since one cannot be omniscient about agriculture. What the agriculturists do is to depend mostly upon their personal experience. Sometimes hereditary knowledge also is made use of in the treatment of plants and animals. It is here that AIR, Cuddapah appears to have stumbled unsympathetically.

FARM BROADCAST AND HOURS

The time slot allotted for rural broadcasting, Farm broadcast and talks about training about agriculture, banking facilities, cultural programmes which are interesting, all together is 45 to 95 minutes, in Cuddapah whereas in Vijayawada the time schedule is 55 to 95 and 50 to 149 minutes in Visakhapatnam. In these later stations there are 3 transmissions in the morning, afternoon and the evening, whereas in Cuddapah there are only two. This would show that Cuddapah station is not placed on par with other stations of A.P., with regard to some of these programmes. Naturally, the programmes have to be restricted to a shorter period, making it practically not
easy for all the connected departments in agricultural broadcast respond to the demands of the station at Cuddapah.

We now come to the programmes connected with music. Several varieties were already discussed above, classical, film and folk music. With regard to classical music, broadcasting of Hindustani music from Cuddapah is rather rare, since it is Carnatic music that is more popular in this region. Hindustani music receives patronage from the Hyderabad station. The demand for film music, is, of course, universal more so from among the youth. In fact there is the system of the listeners sending their requests to broadcast certain selected film music. Interestingly it is not merely the film music but the broadcasting of the name of the person who makes the request that attracts the youth to send in more and more requests.

FOLK MUSIC

Sri Araveti Sreenivasulu is in-charge of folk music programme at Cuddapah. The Folk music came to be broadcast from Cuddapah from 1982.
According to him there is a good response from the listeners. The earlier years were devoted for the collection of folk music. A search was also made for fresh talented persons and it was limited to the artists from Rayalaseema. Now, however, the artists are introduced only after they passed the audition test. The aim of broadcast is of course pleasure in listening to folk music. But there is a lot of scientific work behind the scene in collecting such music, recording them and securing them properly in the station. This aspect of security in the form of setting up of a library of cassettes of folk music is more problematic. This art has a tendency to decay if broadcast is not useful for the listeners but only creates a sense of pleasure, particularly with the rural folk who are associated with the folk music all the way. We could see the women folk singing songs which are associated with their household activities. Such music is heard in the village during festivals, an art which of late is being forgotten more so with the impact of film music. The impact of the Television over Radio can be traced to some extent only in the urban
areas, as no impact could be seen in the rural areas wherein the morning the rural folk listen to such folk music. Now-a-days, the AIR is introducing some freshness in folk music in order to underline the importance of secularism.

Although as on today the radio is subser- vient to the Government - the party in power - which directs the Radio and also the Television with regard to broadcasting he feels that it would be better if it becomes an independent media. He further feels that the AIR, Cuddapah is doing its best to serve the public with their clear mind.

It may be stated that the AIR takes some pains also to broadcast classical music which is more scientific and seasonal in the sense that there are specified ragas to be sung in specified times. Such lingers in the minds of listeners for a longer period than the film music which is heard and forgotten. There are some films, the music of which is enchanting and remains for sometime in the mind of the listener, who chooses it again and again probably because it has classical tinge, the impact of the classical music in the minds of the people is more effective and stimulates the finer emotions of the listeners.
The folk music is closely associated with the activities of the folk people, men and women alike, the rhythm being associated with the type of activities they are involved in, more to make their physical work easier and pleasanter. It is not the literature that matters but the rhythm. These are taken care of in the folk music.