Chapter-2

HISTORY OF RADIO IN INDIA
Shillong, broadcasts in 864 KHz, 4970 KHz, 7315 KHz and 103.6 MHz. The Radio Oolala (Positiv Radio Pvt. Ltd.), Shillong, broadcasts in 91.9 MHz, the Red FM, Shillong in 93.5 MHz and Gyan Vani, Shillong in 105.4 MHz. The AIR Tura located at Tura broadcasts in 1233 KHz and AIR William Nagar in 1602 KHz frequencies. The main regional languages used in Meghalaya are Garo and Khasi, but Meghalaya radio stations also broadcast in Hindi, English and other languages.

Manipur has radio stations at Imphal, Churachadpur and Ukhrul. The AIR Imphal station broadcasts in 882 KHz, 4775 KHz, 7335 KHz and FM in 103.5 MHz frequencies. The main regional language used in Manipur is Manipuri (Meiteilon) but Manipur radio stations also broadcast in Hindi, English and other languages.

2.7 Radio in Manipur: AIR Imphal

All India Radio Imphal station is the main station in Manipur while narrowcasting transmitters (HPTs) are also located at Churachandpur and Ukhrul. Located at Palace Compound, Imphal, the station has a studio cum office block measuring about 953 sq. m. on a spacious area of 3.4 acres of land. The Type III Studio of the station is one of the busiest AIR recording studios in the northeast. Recent innovative change in the station has been the installation of equipments for computer-based recording, editing, storing and broadcasting of the programmes.

All India Radio Imphal mainly broadcast programmes in Manipuri which is the main regional language of the state. However, out of the 29 tribal dialects in Manipur the station broadcast programmes in 18 minor dialects and 6 major dialects including Hmar, Paite, Kabui, Thadou, Mao and Tangkhul dialects while the programme duration is decided on the basis of their respective population. Besides, programmes are also broadcast in Hindi and English.
All India Radio, Imphal began broadcasting on 15th August 1963 using a low power P-50 MW transmitter from a studio having limited facility with one playback and two multipurpose studios. At that time the studio, the transmitter and the administrative office were located at different places in Imphal. While the studio was near Raj Bhavan, the transmitter was located at the D.M. College campus and the administrative office was near the 1st Manipur Rifles. After some time the transmitter was upgraded to 1 KW MW enabling it to cover the entire town area of Imphal and some portion of the valley.

In 1964, the Regional News Unit (RNU), Imphal began functioning with R. Constantine, a Keralite as the first news editor of the RNU. Initially, a 15-minute news bulletin was broadcast daily at 7.30 p.m. Later, owing to increasing public demand another 5-minute news bulletin at 7.30 a.m. was sanctioned. Though the broadcasting technologies then were not much advanced, the pioneer Manipuri broadcasters strived hard to capture the imagination of the audience by employing innovations in content, format, style and technique of broadcasting and enabled AIR Imphal to dominate the media scene in Manipur as far as reach and coverage is concerned. However, pressure for excellence was ever-increasing and on 2nd October 1971, a 50 KW medium wave transmitter was installed at Mayang Imphal about 22 km from Imphal. The same was commissioned in October 1972. After over two decades, one shortwave transmitter of 50 KW was installed on 7th November 1994 at Mayang Imphal which was commissioned in February 1996. The commissioning of the existing Type III Studio consisting of Drama Studio, Music Studio, Talk Studio, Playback Studio and Dubbing Room on 2nd October 1980 enhanced the studio facility. Provision for downloading through Radio Network Terminal has been made at studio site enabling the station to receive better signal from other stations and produce better quality relay programme. Two FM transmitters of 100 watts installed at the Control Room are being used in linking the studio and the high power transmitter (HPT). As
the enhanced transmitting power of the 50 KW MW could not cover the entire state, one 50 KW SW transmitter was commissioned on 20th February 1996 thereby increasing the coverage area that includes not only the entire Manipur but also the neighbouring states as well as some neighbouring countries. After the installation of a 10 KW FM transmitter in June 2002, the FM service of the station was launched on 1st February 2003 for two hours daily on a trial basis broadcasting Manipuri film songs, radio plays and other forms of Manipuri songs. On popular public demand, the duration was extended to five hours from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on 1st June 2003.

Today, AIR Imphal is one of the most powerful stations in the north eastern region with one 300 KW medium wave transmitter, one 50 KW short wave transmitter and one 10 KW FM transmitter. The station has two channels- Primary Channel (Sangai Channel) with coverage area of 100 km. and FM Channel (Kangla Channel) with coverage area of 30 km while the broadcasting frequencies are 4775 KHz, 103.5 MHz, 882 KHz and 7150 KHz. Except for some hilly areas in Tamenglong district and Moreh in Chandel district, AIR Imphal almost covered the entire state and an estimated population of 24,86,000 during 2003-04. (AIR, RPL 2003-04). The station broadcasts on an average 421 hour programmes in a month. Out of which 18 percent are relayed programmes which include classical music, light music, news in Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Spot light etc.

During its three transmissions in a day the station broadcasts various programmes including news, current affairs, music, special audience programmes, sports and tribal dialects. Music programmes of the station comprise classical, folk, devotional, films, western and tribal music while talk, discussion and interview encompass various opinions on various issues. Special audience programmes include programmes for women, children, youth and senior citizens. A number of new formats have been introduced to both news and programmes. Analysis of the local newspaper headlines in the morning news bulletin for ten minutes was introduced from 5th March 2003

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while the new formats introduced to programme side in 2002 include Live Phone-in programme, Halo Manipur, Science Magazine, new formats of Shumang Leela and Yuva Vani, Phone-in programme in rural programme etc. Mid-Day News at 12 noon was launched on 21st June 2008. Earlier, with the completion of automation of the RNU, the service of news-on phone (NOP) was introduced. The state-of-the-art equipments in the station enable listeners even in the remotest area of the state to receive the AIR Imphal programmes. This gives AIR Imphal an edge over the newspapers and television in terms of coverage in the state.

Some popular programmes of the station include Khunganggi Thouram- a programme on rural development, Anganggi Thouram- a popular children programme, Matamgi Wapham- a current affairs programme, Morning bulletin in Manipuri and Evening bulletin in Manipuri. Besides the Manipuri bulletins, the AIR Imphal also broadcasts news in dialects like Hmar, Paite, Kabui, Thadou, Mao and Tangkhul. Broadcast of Kabui, The duration for Tangkhul and Thadou is 30 minutes each and for Hmar, Paite, Mao and Kabui it is 20 minutes each. Request Programmes of Kabui, Mao, Thadou and Tangkhul were started in 1972 while children's, youth’s and women’s programmes were introduced in the 4 dialects in 1975. Employment News was also introduced in the same year.

AIR Imphal has bagged many awards for its commendable service. It received the prestigious Akashvani Annual Award for technical excellence in 1986, 1990 and 1996. B.B.Sharma, Deputy Director (News), got the Bold and Courageous Reporting Award in 2006 as a correspondent while under his able leadership the RNU Imphal was conferred the Best Regional News Unit Award in the same year. AIR Imphal has been playing a key role in informing, educating and entertaining the people of Manipur. As an agent for development, the station has been catering to the information needs of the people in the rural areas where facilities for information, education and communication are limited.