

akash bharati

NATIONAL BROADCAST TRUST

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Report of the Working Group on Autonomy for
AKASHVANI & DOORDARSHAN



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NATIONAL BROADCAST TRUST

VOLUME I

**Report of the Working Group on Autonomy for
Akashvani & Doordarshan**

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February 1978

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Akash Bharati

Akash, the sky, is the medium.

Bharati in Sanskrit means “language”. Amarkosh, the Sanskrit thesaurus, mentions Bharati along with Brahmi, Bhasha, Gira, Vak, Vani and Saraswati as synonyms for language or speech.

Akash Bharati, therefore, suggests a limitless and eternal quest for the good and the happiness of the Indian people.

We envisage an autonomous national trust as the authority under which Akash-vani and Doordarshan should grow. This we are naming *Akash Bharati*—the National Broadcast Trust

INTRODUCTION

Towards "Full Autonomy"

0.1. India is among the earliest countries in the world to have adopted broadcasting. The first wireless signals by electro-magnetic Hertzian waves were transmitted and received by Marconi in 1895, working on principles developed over the preceding decades. Amateurs sprouted galore. Wireless telegraphy and the radio-telephone made rapid strides in maritime and other uses and received great impetus as a means of military communication and propaganda during World War I. It was however not until a few years after the War that the world properly entered the broadcast era. The first regular broadcasting station was opened in Pittsburgh in 1920 to be closely followed by transmissions by the Radio Corporation of America whose mainspring, David Sarnoff, said that "broadcasting represents a job of entertaining, informing and educating the nation". The British Broadcasting Company was established in 1922 under the general management of an engineer, John (Later Lord) Reith, soon to become the first Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation on its receiving the Royal Charter in 1927.

0.2. Television followed close on radio. A patent for the iconoscope camera was filed in 1923. This was further developed by RCA in 1932 which demonstrated television on 120 lines with an improved cathode ray tube receiver. The first high-definition public television service was initiated by the BBC in 1936, a service interrupted by World War II and not resumed until 1946. Regular television services commenced in the United States in 1941 but it was not until the 1950s that television began to burgeon internationally. There are today in the world some 25,000 television transmitters and just about 25,000 fixed radio transmitters.

0.3. Broadcasting came to India experimentally in 1923 with the establishment of a Radio Club first in Calcutta and subsequently in Bombay, Madras and elsewhere. However, it was not until 1927 that a regular broadcasting service was initiated by the Indian Broadcasting Company Limited, a private concern. The company went

into liquidation in 1930 but the Government took over its assets to continue broadcasting under the Indian State Broadcasting Service.

[0.4. The success of this experiment encouraged the Government to place broadcasting on a permanent footing in 1935 and a separate department was constituted under the Controller of Broadcasting. The I.S.B.S. was in June 1936 redesignated "All India Radio." Administrative control of broadcasting which was initially placed under the Department of Industries and Labour was transferred to the Department of Communications in 1937 and to the Department of Information and Broadcasting in 1941.

0.5. There were only nine radio stations in undivided India in 1947. Partition left six with Akashvani which has since grown greatly but has remained an "attached office" of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Nehru's View

0.6. No detailed thought seems to have been given to the structural requirements of a national broadcasting organisation. However, replying to a debate on external publicity in the Constituent Assembly on March 15, 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru said :

"My own view of the set-up for broadcasting is that we should approximate as far as possible to the British model, the BBC; that is to say, it would be better if we had a semi-autonomous corporation under the Government, of course with the policy controlled by the Government, otherwise being not conducted as a Government department but as a semi-autonomous corporation. Now, I do not think that is immediately feasible. I have merely mentioned this to the House. I think we should aim at that, even though we may have many difficulties. In fact, in most matters we should aim at the semi-autonomous corporation, the policy and other things being distantly controlled by the Government, but the Government or Government departments not interfering in their day-to-day activities. But that is not an immediate issue."

0.7. The matter was not pursued thereafter though appointment letters issued by Akashvani and Doordarshan stipulate :

"You will be liable to transfer at any time to service under Public Corporation, if formed, and that on such transfer you will be liable to conditions of service to be laid down for the employees of that Corporation".

The Chanda Committee

0.8. The growth of Akashvani in terms of geographical and linguistic coverage, new services and transmission hours soon made it a major broadcasting system. But

its internal organisation remained largely unchanged. The 1962 conflict with China revealed certain inadequacies with regard to reception in border areas and its informational role. The Government of India constituted a committee on Broadcasting and Information Media, popularly known as the Chanda Committee, in 1964. The Committee reviewed the operations of various media units under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and submitted a Report on Radio and Television in April 1966. The Committee found that "It is not possible in the Indian context for a creative medium like broadcasting to flourish under a regiment (sic) of departmental rules and regulations. It is only by an institutional change that AIR can be liberated from the present rigid financial and administrative procedures of Government". It accordingly recommended the constitution of a separate corporation (s) for Akashvani (and Doordarshan) with the freedom to evolve its own methods of recruitment, regulate scales of pay and conditions of service according to its needs and devise a financial and accounting system appropriate to its creative activity.

0.9 This recommendation was considered by the Cabinet in December, 1969 and the Lok Sabha was informed in April 1970 that "it was agreed that the present is not an opportune time to consider the conversion of the All India Radio into an autonomous corporation".

0.10. One major structural change recommended by the Chanda Committee was, however, accepted and implemented with effect from April 1, 1976. This was the separation of Television from Akashvani and the constitution of Doordarshan under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The Emergency Phase

0.11. The Emergency introduced a new phase in the history of Indian broadcasting. Censorship was imposed on all media. The adverse impact of this on broadcasting has been detailed in the White Paper on the Misuse of the Mass Media during the Internal Emergency presented to Parliament in August, 1977.

0.12. The then Prime Minister told a Conference of Akashvani Station Directors in September 1975 that she did not understand what the concept of "credibility" of radio implied since there was no doubt that Akashvani was and was going to remain a Government organ. The AIR Code which was finalised with the Cabinet's approval in 1967 and amended in March 1970 again with the Cabinet approval was, according to the White Paper, summarily scrapped in a meeting presided over by the MIB (Minister for Information and Broadcasting). In this it was stated that strict adherence to the existing code by Akashvani was not feasible in view of the changed circumstances. It was further decided by the Minister that if the Prime Minister approved the action,

it would not be necessary to go to the Cabinet. The Prime Minister noted on May 4, 1976 as follows: 'The guidelines given to the broadcasters are now obsolete. Hence the Code should lapse. But I do not think that it is necessary to formally inform Parliament'. It is noteworthy that earlier copies of the code had been placed before Parliament. Thus the matter did not go to the Cabinet or to Parliament as it should have".

0.13. It was in the background of these events that all the Opposition parties, practically without exception, made freedom of expression a major election plank when the country went to the polls to elect a new Lok Sabha in March 1977. The present ruling party in its election manifesto pledged itself to "genuine autonomy" for Akashvani and Doordarshan. This pledge was reaffirmed by the new Government soon after assuming office. And it is in pursuance of that declared policy that the present working Group on Autonomy for Akashvani and Doordarshan was constituted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting by a Gazette Notification dated August 17, 1977.

Our Terms of Reference

0.14. The resolution reads :

"In pursuance of Government's declared policy that All India Radio and Doordarshan should be freed from Government Control to ensure their functioning in a fair and objective manner, it has been decided to appoint a working Group to examine the functioning of All India Radio and Doordarshan and make recommendations regarding their future set-up. The Working Group is constituted as follows :—

(1) Shri B. G. Verghese	Chairman
(2) Shri V. G. Rajadhyaksha	Member
(3) Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah	Member
(4) Shri Chanchal Sarkar	Member
(5) Shri P. L. Deshpande	Member
(6) Shri Umashankar Joshi	Member
(7) Shri A. G. Noorani	Member
(8) Prof. J. D. Sethi	Member
(9) Shri P. J. Fernandes	Member
(10) Shri C. R. Subramanian	Member
(11) Dr. Ishwar Dass	Member-Secretary

2. The terms of reference of the Group will be :—

- (a) To examine the functional, financial and legal aspects of the proposal to give full autonomy to Akashvani and Doordarshan, consistent with accountability to Parliament, keeping in mind the different forms of autonomous organisations existing in other democratic countries in the matters of broadcasting ;
- (b) To suggest the form and the structure of the autonomous organisation(s) and their relationship with Government ;
- (c) To consider and make recommendations in respect of the absorption, fitment and replacement of the personnel of the two media in the event of grant of autonomous status ;
- (d) Formulate a plan of action for expeditious implementation of the proposal, if the recommendations of the Working Group are accepted by Government ;
- (e) To examine any other allied matters necessary to enable the Working Group to make its recommendations on the future set-up of the media.

3. The Working Group may consult experts in the media and any other persons that it may consider desirable to consult.

4. The Working Group will have its headquarters at New Delhi and meet as often as considered necessary; but it may visit such places in the country as considered necessary for proper and comprehensive study of the proposal.

5. The Working Group will evolve its own procedure.

6. The Working Group may submit its report as soon as possible but within a period of three months from its constitution.

7. x x x x x x .

0.15. An additional Member, Smt. Nayantara Sahgal was appointed to the Working Group on November 7, 1977.

Procedures, Meetings and Visits

0.16. The Working Group held their first meeting in New Delhi on August 31, 1977. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting was invited to the inaugural meeting and he briefly addressed the Group.

0.17. The first few meetings of the Working Group established the need for an extension of time in view of the importance and significance of the task assigned to it.

The appointment of the Working Group had clearly aroused wide interest and expectations both within Akashvani and Doordarshan and among the public at large, particularly in view of the role of the media during the Emergency. The Working Group decided to prepare and issue a comprehensive questionnaire, which is appended to this Report (Appendix U). It also decided to examine witnesses from a cross section of society in Delhi and elsewhere in the country in order to elicit all shades of opinion and to visit radio and television stations in different parts of the country so that Members might familiarise themselves with the operations of the broadcasting system and get to know its strengths and weaknesses. Since all this would take some time, the Committee sought and was kindly granted extension of time until February 28, 1978.

0.18. The Working Group held meetings at Delhi, Bombay, Pune, Madras, Bangalore and Calcutta while individual Members visited practically all the States and several Akashvani Stations and Doordarshan Kendras. Nearly 4, 200 questionnaires were sent out and 215 replies received apart from letters, statements, newspaper articles and other memoranda directly mailed to the Working Group. Details are given in Appendix V.

0.19. Members of the Working Group who happened to go abroad in the course of their substantive duties took the opportunity to learn something about the operation of foreign broadcasting systems. Shri Chanchal Sarkar visited the United States, Kenya and the U. K., Shri A. G. Noorani visited the Federal Republic of Germany, the U. K. and the offices of the European Broadcasting Union in Geneva. Dr. Ishwar Dass visited Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Dr. Malcolm S. A. Diseshiah visited Mexico, South Korea and Iran. Prof. J. D. Sethi visited a number of broadcasting organisations in the United States. And Shri B. G. Verghese visited the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. These visits, brief and even casual though they were in some cases, exposed Members to varied broadcasting structures abroad and to something of the ferment and debate evident everywhere regarding broadcasting systems and communication policy.

Acknowledgements

0.20. The Ministry of External Affairs also collected and collated varied responses regarding the External Services of Akashvani and foreign broadcasting structures for the benefit of the Working Group.

0.21. The Working Group is grateful to various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and the State Governments for their cooperation and for so helpfully providing the information and comments that were sought from them.

0.22. We were likewise given the fullest cooperation by the Directorate General of Akashvani and Doordarshan, and all their colleagues and staff at all levels in Delhi and elsewhere.

0.23. We were given prompt and generous assistance by a number of foreign missions, international agencies and foreign broadcasting organisations in the supply of information, books, statutes, reports and other material and in assisting Members in their tours abroad.

0.24. We were served by a very competent Secretariat and would like to place on record our appreciation for their dedicated services.

Unanimous Report

0.25. We found the task of the Working Group both challenging and stimulating as well as personally educative and rewarding. We were greatly instructed by the insights, views and experiences we gathered from those we met and by the written evidence presented to us. The friendship and understanding that quickly developed among Members of the Working Group lightened and speeded our task and enables us herewith to present this unanimous Report on an autonomous structure for Indian broadcasting.

CHAPTER 1

After Fifty Years

1.1. Akashvani is among the oldest and largest broadcasting systems in the world. But it has "just grown". It has one of the largest allocations of radio broadcast frequencies in the world. Indian television was started in 1959 but only developed regular transmissions, from Delhi in 1965. It is still in its infancy though, here again, with the completion of certain ongoing projects in a couple of years from now, Door-darshan's radius of terrestrial operation will cover a potential audience of approximately 100 million, no small figure.

1.2. Indian television like sound broadcasting virtually started by accident. The first radio systems in the country were organised by gifted amateurs and private companies. On their collapse the Government of India took over. More recently television commenced as a pilot experiment with donated equipment and developed its first regular transmissions and an expanded network through further donations.

1.3. In our view the first essential for the effective management of any institution or organisation is the establishment of a clear set of objectives consciously framed and understood and a plan of action for its fulfilment. We have sought to find such a set of objectives and such a strategy within Akashvani since its inception.

Search For Objectives

1.4. According to the All India Radio Manual, published first in March 1956 and revised in June 1972, "the main function of All India Radio is to plan and broadcast programmes to listeners all over the country". This somewhat obvious statement is hardly added to by the further information that "these programmes include a good deal of entertainment and an appropriate amount of informative and educative programmes and also news and discussions on topical matters in suitable measure."

1.5. Further, according to the Manual, music forms nearly 50 per cent of the total programmes from Akashvani stations which "exchange recordings in the interests of national integration and mutual understanding." Almost 200 news bulletins are broadcast daily in the Home and External Services while "talks, discussions, commentaries and interviews are regularly arranged to provide a forum for all shades of opinion on outstanding national and international issues." Other objectives which can be culled from the Manual include the production of features to focus attention on the many tasks facing the country", rural broadcasts to "provide education and national support to agricultural programmes", women's programmes to "impart information and instruction", programmes for industrial workers "taking-into account the growing awareness among the working class of their rights and privileges and their role in building up the country's economy." Programmes in tribal languages "are designed to encourage tribal culture" and Yuva Vani was inaugurated to give young men and women "opportunities to discuss their problems and express themselves."

1.6. This long recital of unexceptionable and humdrum detail does not suggest a journey along any clearly thought out route. It is more an ad hoc listing of programmes mounted without adequately trained staff, and with limited budget and other facilities, only the barest audience research and virtually no accountability, despite tight control.

1.7. Indeed the two most striking impressions gathered by Members of the Working Group during their tours and discussions were of unplanned growth of Akashvani and Doordarshan and of low morale and deep frustration among its staff at every level. Yet many fine programmes have been produced, for there is no dearth of broadcasting talent in these organisations or in the country. What equally impressed Members was the fact, brought home time and again, of how much had so often been accomplished with so little. It was well said that some of the television transmissions put on the air by Doordarshan constitute nothing less than a "daily miracle".

1.8. The sum total of the investment in Akashvani since Independence until the end of 1977 was of the order of no more than Rs. 80 crores spread over 84 stations and 155 transmitters broadcasting 1045 hours per day in 35 languages and 137 dialects to listeners at home and abroad.

Establishing A Presence

1.9. Immediately after Independence the first task before Akashvani was to establish a "national" presence. Accordingly a pilot scheme was launched to establish lowpower transmitters in every State and linguistic area.

1.10. During the early 1950s the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting sought to discourage film music over Akashvani. This drove many listeners to Radio Ceylon in the absence of other satisfactory light entertainment programmes until the Vividh Bharati service was started in 1957. Various writers and musicians of repute were brought into Akashvani as producers who were fitted into the "staff artist" cadre. But the system choked creativity. Short term contract artists demanded and were given permanent contracts. The foundations of a serious rift between the UPSC recruited permanent "programme staff" and the contractually appointed "staff artists" were laid. This continues to bedevil staff relations in all Stations of Akashvani and Doordarshan.

1.11. A new medium wave plan was launched between 1961 and 1966 to extend radio coverage. Twenty auxiliary transmitters of 20 KW each were established. These transmitters, without any related studio facilities were employed to relay programmes taped at various mother stations. The medium wave plan did nothing to reduce the lack of variety of programmes, since broadcasts from these auxiliary stations provided nothing more than canned programmes, for large areas with diverse audiences. These stations were unable to harness local talent to make local programmes for local needs. Akashvani is still trying to overcome this legacy because it was not granted sufficient funds even during the Fifth Plan to convert these auxiliary stations into programmes originating stations except in a few cases.

Urban Despite Extension

1.12. Rural broadcast programmes were started by the Agricultural Institute in Allahabad in 1935 but it was not until 1956 that a studied attempt was made by Akashvani to organise rural listening in Maharashtra. The 145 pilot rural radio forums served by Akashvani, Poona were adjudged a success and an expansion programme was planned. Unfortunately the effort was not sustained. More recently, however, farm broadcasting has received some impetus.

1.13. School broadcasting also made fitful progress. There are today about 50,000 radio schools of which over 29,000 are in Tamil Nadu and 5,600 in Maharashtra.

1.14. The inauguration of the commercial service in 1967 from 28 Vividh Bharati Stations further strengthened the urban film bias of Akashvani. Doordarshan too, despite the Government's justification of television in India as an aid to rural development, has shown a similar bias.

1.15. The Sino-Indian conflict in 1962 highlighted the border problem, with Radio Peking coming over loud and clear in sensitive areas where Akashvani was

inaudible. New stations were consequently established at Imphal, Kohima, Dibrugarh and Kurseong and current affairs programme, which had earlier been centralised and had gone into decline, were sought to be reinvigorated.

Coverage And Diffusion

1.16. With the completion of its Fifth Plan, Akashvani will have a theoretical primary medium wave coverage of 90 per cent of the population. But transmitter power is weak and effective coverage keeps shrinking with interference from upgraded foreign stations some of which dominate listening in parts of the country.

1.17. Despite the large radio network there were less than 17.5 million licensed sets in the country at the end of 1976, the latest figures available. Approximately, 80 per cent of these sets are in the urban areas, the bulk of them in Maharashtra, Delhi and certain other more developed States. The diffusion of radio sets is low in the north-central and eastern States. Community and organised group listening, which received encouragement through the radio rural forums suffered erosion with the "transistor revolution". Poor maintenance and faulty custodianship of sets contributed to the decline in the popularity of group and community listening which must be revised on a new basis if radio is to reach those that need it most. The *charcha mandals* and *mahila mandals* constitute a new beginning.

1.18. The educational, farm, health and other instructional broadcasts over Akashvani and Doordarshan suffer from weak interaction with the concerned Central and State Government Departments and educational authorities. The multi-media approach has not been exploited and extension broadcasts have received inadequate print support through publications and folders. Broadcasting has been ineffectively used, if at all, in promoting social justice and educating the under-privileged with regard to their rights. Indeed, even party political and electoral broadcasts were taboo until they were introduced in April 1977.

SITE and INSAT

1.19. The lack of an overall systems approach and a carefully thought out national communications policy is again evident in the INSAT programme. The Indian National Satellite, due to be operational in 1981, has a built-in television capability, the incremental investment cost of which (in the space segment, including the stand-by satellite) is of the order of Rs. 30-40 crores. Yet no decision has been taken thus far on the satellite related ground segment. The same technology-push rather than a strong communication pull was evident in the early history of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) which, if nothing else, opened the eyes of broadcasters to

the need for working closely with social scientists and for “formative research” by defining the needs of audiences and pre-testing programmes.

1.20. What we have set out here is no more than a brief and highly impressionistic account of the growth of Akashvani and Doordarshan which is more fully set out in Appendix A. We have largely noticed aspects relevant to an understanding of the problems that beset them today and that bear on our proposals for restructuring the broadcast media. Though we may be critical in evaluating the record, we are not unmindful of the achievements and successes of Akashvani and Doordarshan or of the notable contributions made by the many dedicated broadcasters, artists and engineers who have laboured to build these organisations against extraordinary odds—organisational, financial and political. If, however, we noted a sense of disappointment over the performance of Akashvani and Doordarshan, it is because they have failed to fulfil the very high hopes placed on them. Some of the problems that they face are not peculiar to the broadcast media but reflect the quality of other institutions in India generally. Nevertheless public expectations of broadcasting remain undimmed, and rightly so. Our criticism of the past should, therefore, be seen as intended to redeem the future.

CHAPTER 2

Communication Policy and Broadcasting

2.1. If the broadcast media in India have grown haphazardly it is because their role, as that of the media generally, has not been perceived as part of a well-defined national communications policy which embraces everything to do with articulation, including education and culture, and physical movement. Such a judgment may however be the gift of hindsight since "systems analysis" and more particularly "communications policy" are themselves fairly new concepts.

2.2. Communication is a basic instinct of man and a social, economic, political, and cultural need. Social, for the articulation of individual and community needs and aspirations; and for education. Political, in order to create an informed and enlightened public opinion which is the basis of a democratic society; to create awareness among individuals and within society; to mobilise people behind national policies and programmes; and to establish feedback loops. Economic, as a means of extension and technology transfer; as part of the modernisation and development process; and for providing market information as well as for marketing and advertising. And Cultural, as a means of individual and community expression, discovery and enrichment, and recreation.

Development of Communications

2.3. Communications has developed through speech, writing, art and music. The printing of books and the dissemination of opinions through pamphleteering brought on censorship and the struggle for freedom of the Press. A succession of inventions followed: the telegraph, telephone, wireless, cinema, television, colour, integrated circuits, transistors, micro-miniaturisation, the use of higher frequencies in the electro-magnetic spectrum, increasingly sophisticated transmission and switching systems, computers, satellites, data transmission, optical fibre. And on into the future.

2.4. This accelerating communications revolution has annihilated space and time and become multi-functional. It implies vast and subtle social, political and economic consequences and choices. Miniaturisation, cost reduction and the "democratisation" of the media are among its distinctive features.

2.5. Physical communications have simultaneously developed from foot, horse, carriage, steam, the internal combustion engine, aviation and the jet engine to space vehicles. But the modern tendency in advanced societies is increasingly to move information rather than goods or people. With computers, elaborate storage and retrieval systems linked to data banks, and data transmission, print is being converted into electronic messages in order to speed and simplify delivery.

2.6. India continues to live in many ages with tradition co-existing with the jet, satellite and computer. Facsimile transmission has been used for some years by a newspaper chain in South India and the P & T Department is developing a data transmission system.

New Information Era

2.7. Communications are a resource. They also constitute a network comprising every kind of media from inter-personal to electronic messages. The various media operate in concert and the object of communication policy is to optimise the package at any given time in relation to resources, needs and future aspirations.

2.8. The communications revolution has created a new information age where economic, political, and social systems are influenced by the speed and comprehensive nature of information gathering and analysis. Information is power.

2.9. In view of the immense power of those who hold and disseminate information, there has been an increasing demand for suitable controls and participation of access. The concept of freedom of the Press has grown to include "freedom of information", the "free flow of information", the "free and balanced flow of information" and the "right to communicate". We should like to point out however that no individual has an inherent right to speak through the broadcast media. It is ideas that must have access. As the U.S. Supreme Court observed in the Red Lion Case while affirming the validity of the Fairness Doctrine evolved by the Federal Communications Commission :

"It is the right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount. It is the right of the public to receive suitable access to social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences which is crucial here.

That right may not constitutionally be abridged either by Congress or by the FCC.”¹.

2.10. Illiteracy is a barrier to knowledge and communication. But communications are increasingly being recognised as a means of aiding conscientisation, education, literacy, extension and the transfer of technology.

2.11. Credibility and accuracy are vital for any communication system. Hence the need for objectivity, balance and accuracy. The Japanese film “Rashomon” well illustrated the point that truth is a complex phenomenon and cannot be seen except, if at all, through a totality of perspectives.

2.12. Communication is more than transmission of information. It includes understanding, comprehension and persuasion. Information is, therefore, more than publicity and propaganda.

2.13. In the Indian situation, the objective of communication policy must be to awaken the people, inform, mobilize and educate them to be democratic citizens since eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, ensure equity and equality of opportunity, safeguard national values, preserve both unity and diversity, and promote development and accepted national goals.

2.14 When we refer to “the people” we must realise that the majority of the people are young, poor, illiterate, and under-privileged. Half the people are women. The mass media must reach each and all of them.

2.15 Information and education systems can be formal as well as non-formal. One of the great roles of radio and television could be in furthering non-formal education and open learning. In India they also constitute a major development communications support. Further, they can give a new lease of life to the traditional media which continue to have an important role, both social and cultural.

2.16 There is a danger of confusing the medium for the message and of hardware-led software systems. It has been well said that the issue is not whether the cat is black or white, but whether it can catch mice. Communication systems must therefore be designed to fit national needs and circumstances and should not be imitative, since communications are also part of a larger culture and impose certain values.

2.17 With the rapid growth of communications technology and its increasing complexity and ramifications, there would appear to be need for conscious thought to

1. Red Lion Broadcasting Co. Vs. F.C.C., U.S. Supreme Court Reports 395 US 367 at page 389.

the evolution and review of a national communications policy both on the hardware and software side. Since choices and decisions here have considerable social and economic significance, the approach to broadcasting must necessarily be set in this larger perspective.

Democratising Communications

2.18 Thirty years after Independence, autonomy is sought to be conferred on Indian broadcasting. Such a self-denying ordinance in divesting control over so powerful a media by the political authority that has hitherto "owned" it and used it as its own is perhaps unique. The destruction of the credibility of these versatile media on account of political misuse during the Emergency apart, the growing departmentalisation, bureaucratisation and loss of creativity and the consequent inability to exploit the full potential inherent in them would justify a "transfer of power" on wider considerations as well.

2.19 By their very nature, radio and television are in the public domain and must serve the public interest. As mass media, radio and television must fit into a wider perception and perspective of a national communications policy or philosophy. Such a policy would be presumed to envisage a web of vertical and lateral communications designed to facilitate the transmission of informational, educational, and cultural messages not merely from government to people but from people to government, people to people, masses to decision-makers, rural to urban, the young to the rest, and so on at all levels and as a circular flow with switches for cross-cultural exchange. Dissenting opinions and minority voices must be heard to complete the true harmony of national debate and expression. The commitment to "open government", "a dialogue with the people", decentralisation, and democratic participation admit of nothing less. Today's heresy may be tomorrow's truth.

2.20 The messages must however be tailored to specific target audiences which must be effectively reached in a manner that optimises the overall cost-benefit. An educated and informed public can grow to have more and be more. This is the instructional role of broadcasting. It has an equally vital role in making available the information and varied analysis that is the foundation of public opinion which is translated into the sovereign will of the people through democratic debate and elections. The impartiality, accuracy and proficiency of radio and television in catering to the citizen's "right to know" are therefore of paramount importance. It has been well said that the broadcasting media do not serve a market or a single ideology in a free society but are themselves a marketplace of ideas.

2.21 The purpose of radio and television is to inform, educate, and entertain the people. As 'mass media' they must truly be media of and for the masses rather

than retain a predominantly class or urban-elitist bias, which is largely the case today, some "popular", instructional and rural programming notwithstanding.

Perspective for 2000 A.D.

2.22 Radio and television are already far and away the largest single vehicle of information and cultural expression in the country. There are today some 20 million radio receivers and 600,000 television sets. Doordarshan is still young; but even the diffusion of radio sets is very modest in relation to the population. With population rising to, say, 950 million, by 2000 AD and "an end to destitution" and fuller employment at least 80 to 90 per cent of all households should possess radios. Assuming a smaller family norm than today, with four to five persons per household, there could be 190 to 200 million households and 160-180 million radio sets. Likewise, about five to 10 per cent of all households may have television sets (the cost of which may tend to fall with improved technology and larger-scale production). Assuming two million community sets (villages, urban communities schools, hospitals and teleclubs), there may be 12 to 18 million television sets by the turn of the century. This however presupposes early national television coverage, which may itself be a matter of policy debate.

Mass and Minority Audiences

2.23 The mass media suggests a mass audience. Mass here implies a large aggregate; it does not necessarily suggest a monolithic or homogenous national audience. On the contrary, evidence around the world suggests a tendency towards area-specific and culturally diverse, small or minority audiences for many kinds of programmes.

2.24 In India, radio obviously has a major role to play as an instructional and information medium, especially among illiterates and semi-literates. It can be a companion to the aged and handicapped, the blind and those living or working in relatively isolated areas. It is immediate. Television, a far more expensive medium, has thus far been justified largely as an aid to development through instructional usage and community viewing. However, instructional broadcasting essentially presupposes specific small audiences in terms of age (school broadcasts), and agro-climatic and socio-cultural variables including language.

2.25 Decentralised and participative development from below suggests the need for decentralised messages through local radio and television. The very size and diversity of the country compels movement in this direction.

2.26 Radio and television as mass media in the traditional sense are *prima facie* integrating factors. No other media can command an instant audience of potentially

100 million even today as can Akasvani. Fifty per cent or more of that audience probably heard the March 1977 election results over radio.

2.27 Diversity and decentralisation are desirable and possible precisely because there is a countervailing integrative influence simultaneously at work. Hence the need for and the possibility of harmonising three tiers of broadcasting, namely, national and regional, which are already there, and local, which we hope will shortly come into its own.

Central Responsibility, National Trust

2.28 Broadcasting is a Central subject under List 1—Union List Entry 31 in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. So are telecommunications services and space facilities on which broadcasting leans. The radio and, with satellites, television are the only media which are instantly public and international. Broadcasting as the very name suggests is not a point-to-point communications system like a telephone or postal service. Again, broadcasts range over national borders and therefore impinge on international relations. Likewise, broadcast frequencies, being limited, are internationally allocated by the International Telecommunications Union. Allotted frequencies are therefore national assets or scarce natural resources which must be nationally regulated. For these good and sufficient reasons, broadcasting is a Central subject and must properly remain so.

2.29 Nevertheless, India is a plural society and a Union of States or federation. Central control over such powerful and expanding media has engendered political controversy in the past and could conceivably do so in the future. It also has cultural implications in so far as it influences language content, musical expression, and dramatic forms, especially with regard to folk music, dance and drama—skills and riches to be preserved, revived and given a new lease of life in newer formats.

2.30 With the thrust towards decentralisation in political and economic decision-making the local view must also find adequate outlet. In these circumstances, after 50 years of official tutelage, Central Government management of what are simultaneously national, regional, and local media is becoming less and less tenable. An autonomous broadcast organisation, nationally owned and responsible to Parliament and yet under the Centre legislatively and for purposes of its international relations through external broadcasts and frequency allocations, and P&T and Space support, appears logical and desirable.

2.31 Akashvani and Doordarshan combine in themselves the characteristics of marketplace, newspaper, university, national extension agency, and cultural academy.

As such, a unique institution must enjoy a unique autonomy. The broadcasting organisation could be a company like HMT or BHEL; a statutory corporation like LIC; or a Commission like the Atomic Energy, Space or Electronics Commissions. It could be a Board like the Railway and P&T Boards; or a registered society like the ICAR and CSIR. Or it could be like a university, governed by its own statute; or a constitutional entity like the UPSC or Election Commission. Broadcasting entails no manufacturing or trading function. Every actual and potential listener or viewer is a consumer and every citizen is a shareholder. There is no product that can be priced in the market; nor any raw materials other than ideas and creative talents. The services rendered are again difficult to quantify: awareness; knowledge; information; pleasure. There is no regulatory function to discharge in the main'.

2.32 Broadcasting is different. The broadcasting organisation is best seen as a National Trust, a non-profit making body, an essential public service licenced to operate under a Parliamentary Charter and accountable to Parliament.

CHAPTER 3

Seven Faces of Autonomy

3.1 Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary defines autonomy as "Power or right of self-government". The German philosopher Immanuel Kant conceived of autonomy as a doctrine of the human will carrying its guiding principle within itself. It might seem curious that one is looking at a 20th century dictionary and an 18th century philosopher to seek the meaning of autonomy, for this would appear to be a commonly understood idea in everyday usage and parlance. The fact is that nobody has a very clear notion of what the term means. We have seen over the course of the past few months when talking to distinguished witnesses from all walks of life that their ideas of autonomy vary quite sharply and there are several nuances hedging the purity of the ideal.

3.2 Any one who has had a bird's eye-view of a spectrum of autonomous companies operating in diverse fields from coal to bread, from steel-making to the running of hotels, from the production of machine tools to the operation of shipping lines will have found that even within the parameters of the Indian administrative and managerial environment, a variety of relationships has developed between autonomous organisations and Government.

3.3. Many of us might recall the rather terrifying childhood experience of attending a carnival and looking at oneself through a series of "laughing mirrors!" These mirrors were certainly not a laughing matter. One saw oneself distorted into various shapes and sizes; as a short, fat, pot-bellied caricature; then as an incredibly tall, lean and hungry person; then again as a monster with a triangular head and elephantine legs; and so on. Looking at these distortions, one indeed wondered what was the reality.

Substance, Not Form

3.4 We would enumerate seven propositions representing seven facets of autonomy:

- (a) Autonomy is not just a matter of structure or form. It is essentially a matter of substance. Whatever may be the external form or structure given to any institution, its real character and its relationship towards others will depend on factors which are beyond the pale of law and will reflect real life situations. In setting up autonomous bodies, which are outside the direct control of Government Departments, the Government of India has adopted a variety of legal and formal structures. They include Departmental undertaking of a commercial nature; companies registered under the Companies Act; Corporations and Commissions set up under Acts of Parliament; and societies registered under the Societies Act. The 120 public sector companies fall within these categories. The Railways, Posts and Telegraphs and Ordnance Factories are essentially commercial undertakings run departmentally, their employees being Government servants. Organisations like the STC, HMT and Indian Telephone Industries are registered as companies under the Indian Companies Act. The ONGC, LIC and the airlines companies are specifically set up under Acts of Parliament. Leaving aside the Departmental undertakings which are part and parcel of Government, there is in practice very little distinction between companies registered under the Companies Act and corporations and commissions set up under Parliamentary Statute. The degree of autonomy has not been solely dependent upon these formal structures but has derived from quite other factors. In both cases, Parliamentary control continues to be exercised. Parliament questions are put and Ministers are responsible. The Comptroller and Auditor-General has a say. Courts of law make pronouncements and autonomy is consequently circumscribed irrespective of the external form.

Monopoly Evokes Restraint

- (b) Autonomy is difficult to concede in monopolistic or oligopolistic situations but easier to accord in a competitive situation. Here, perhaps, lies the key. Amongst the public sector undertakings set up by the Government, there are some which operate in conditions of monopoly or semi-monopoly such as Coal India, Hindustan Aeronautics and Indian Airlines. On the other hand there is a large number of companies which do not have a protected or monopoly position and are exposed to competition: Modern Bread, the Ashoka Hotel, HMT. It is quite evident therefore, that where a monopoly situation exists the responsibilities of the State are enhanced since there is no other yardstick for measuring performance. Public authority has to set goals and evaluate performance. Pricing policies have to be agreed upon and marketing situations have to be controlled. The situation is very different in the case of

competitive companies. Here decision-making lies not with Government authorities but in the marketplace itself. The prices of Modern Bread are conditioned by its competitive position. Ashoka Hotel has to bear in mind the standards of service and charges levied by its competitors. It is, therefore, easier for managerial autonomy to be conceded in these competitive situations than in a monopoly situation. A classical example of this is seen in the case of the airlines. We have two airline companies, Indian Airlines and Air India. Indian Airlines hold the monopoly for operating the domestic air services. Air India on the other hand operates internationally in a fiercely competitive world. The control which the public authority exercises is very strong on Indian Airlines, demanding additional services, better quality of service and so on. This is not the case with Air India. Its conditions of working are determined not by the Government of India but by standards developed internationally. Air India cannot survive unless it is able to match its formidable international competitors.

We have to view the setting up of an autonomous broadcasting corporation in the light of the monopoly parameter. Let us look at this question from the point of view of the freedom of the Press. What in fact does freedom of the Press mean? It certainly does not mean that each individual paper is totally or uniformly objective. Indeed many newspapers have very pronounced political, economic and cultural slants. The essence of freedom of the Press lies in the existence of a competitive situation in the newspaper world. Since there is a large number of newspapers, each having a different policy and each expressing itself freely, the reader has a wide variety of choice and is thus able to draw his own conclusions despite the subjectivity of individual papers. Listeners of Akashvani and Doordarshan's viewers have no such range of choice. Since we do not conceive of a totally competitive broadcasting system and since we are thinking in terms of a largely monopolistic system, some restraint on autonomy is inevitable.

Not A Gift

- (c) Autonomy is not something that can be conferred; it must be earned. A very curious phenomenon is seen when examining autonomy in the public sector and in analysing reasons for the "interference" of Government in the affairs of certain companies. Why and how does such interference arise? Questions are asked in Parliament about heavy losses made by companies, about complaints of bad service, bad quality of goods, poor management,

unsatisfactory labour relations and so on. In short, it is precisely the companies which are badly managed that attract outside attention. On the other hand, in the case of companies which are profitable, which have earned a good public name, and provide good service at a reasonable price, very few questions are asked and there is little interference. It would seem therefore, that the degree of autonomy or the degree of interference is very much conditioned by the internal state of affairs in the autonomous body and by its own credibility. When we set up an autonomous broadcasting corporation, therefore, the extent to which it can protect its autonomy will largely depend on how well it is run, to what extent it satisfies its consumers, the excellence of its programmes and how objective and fair it is in news and current affairs programming. Its ability to remain autonomous and to prevent constant intervention by outside authorities will largely depend upon itself.

Culture of Independence

- (d) Autonomy is not merely a two-way relationship between one institution and another. The concept involves the management of the institution itself. There is a facile assumption that autonomy is some kind of declaration of independence from an outside body which may seek to intervene. Thus the autonomy of the broadcasting system is being viewed largely as autonomy *vis-a-vis* Government. We found during the course of evidence that there were other parameters of autonomy which were being claimed. Station Directors wanted to have greater autonomy *vis-a-vis* Akashvani headquarters. Individual producers and technicians demanded creative autonomy and a greater say in the formulation of policy. The concept of autonomy, therefore, must be comprehensive. It will involve a highly participative and decentralised style of management and the fostering of a culture of independence among individuals as well as units. Surely some of the independence and autonomy of Akashvani has been lost over the years because of internal tensions between engineers and programmers, between programme personnel and staff artists and so on, all of which have created a happy hunting ground for interference by others. Indeed, should this continue, autonomy could prove to be dangerous and counter-productive. We would therefore ring a stern warning bell in this regard.

Objective Measure, Accountability

- (e) Autonomy is not an absolute concept. It is inextricably tied to the related concept of accountability. Whenever one uses a word like autonomy, one

must ask at once, "autonomy from whom" and "autonomy for what." Presumably, autonomy is sought from the authority which creates the organisation, that is from Government itself. But the guarantee of such autonomy presupposes that there is an absolutely clear conception of what is required to be done in terms of an agreed set of objectives. Given such a set of objectives, autonomy can easily be conceded if it is coupled with the concept of accountability. Autonomy then takes on a real meaning precisely because it is not absolute, does not become arbitrary, and cannot be manipulated to suit the whims and fancies of individuals. Autonomy is needed for the attainment of predetermined objectives which can be evaluated by an external authority and made subject to a system of accountability.

It is necessary, therefore, that there be a well-defined set of objectives and that the evolution of a system of accountability be encouraged. While it is generally accepted that accountability must be to an authority like Parliament, there are many other interests in a democratic system which should not be ignored. True accountability would mean answerability to all these opinion makers and interests and we will therefore have to seek other forums than Parliament alone which might represent a cross-section of public life and the community.

Within the Plan Frame

- (f) Absolute autonomy is not conceivable in the context of national planning which we have accepted. This presupposes that the country is moving in a certain direction for the achievement of particular goals and objectives irrespective of party politics. Any institution within the country, however autonomous it may claim to be, must necessarily be part and parcel of the larger processes of national planning and development. Private sector companies cannot attain the kind of total autonomy which they may like to have. They are also influenced by national development plans. The educational system must necessarily also train the talents which the country requires for its development, in keeping with the ideal of academic freedom. It is therefore difficult to conceive of an autonomous broadcasting system which is totally divorced from national developmental goals. One would, of course, have to make a very delicate distinction between national development and national goals and party political goals which may be of a temporary character. This distinction would in practice require great imagination and skill.

The National Environment

- (g) The flavour and operation of autonomy are conditioned by the overall national environment. All men are creatures of circumstances and are conditioned by the environment in which they live. A broadcasting system would necessarily be influenced by the general ethos, culture and temperament of the people it serves. The Indian people have a sense of sturdy independence and if they manifest these attitudes, there would automatically be a congenial environment for an autonomous broadcasting system. But it is difficult to conceive of autonomy if it is to be an isolated oasis in a dreary desert of servitude and sycophantic responses.

3.5. We venture to present these seven faces of autonomy so that the establishment of an autonomous broadcasting system is not seen and judged in the abstract or from any single aspect alone, but with the full realisation of the social, economic, political and legal factors which must sustain what we have described earlier as the unique autonomy of a unique institution.

CHAPTER 4

Policy and Organisational Parameters

4.1. Before examining and choosing between the various alternative organisational structures for Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust, it is first necessary to take note of the very special characteristics of the audience that it will be called upon to serve. While the External Services of the NBT are important, the people of India must clearly be the primary focus of its activities.

4.2. The most outstanding characteristic of this audience is its tremendous heterogeneity. This heterogeneity is seen in the wide range of languages and dialects, religious beliefs and social customs, political ideologies, ethnic origins, levels of development and literacy, agro-climatic conditions, degrees of urbanisation and so on. No broadcasting organisation in the world has such a diversity of people to reach and interact with and the NBT must therefore recognise this condition.

Goals of the Organisation

4.3. A second prerequisite for evolving an organisational structure for the National Broadcast Trust (NBT) is a clear definition of the objectives of the Corporation and, where there are several, establishing priorities. Within the wider and overriding objective of promoting national integration and awareness, broadcasting is generally accepted as serving three major functions, namely, entertainment, information and instruction. At present, the first two appear to receive a preponderant share of Akashvani and Doordarshan's resources and attention and it is in the area of instruction and creating awareness that broadcasting has not so far made the kind of impact that was expected of it. Yet if broadcasting is to receive a high place in the nation's scale of priorities it can do so only if it is seen to be playing a vital and essential supportive role in the development goals of the nation. For the next two decades, among the most important of these goals must be rural development. Both in terms of its physical presence and programme content, therefore, the emphasis of broadcasting will have

to shift from its largely urban-elitist moorings to the rural and semi-urban areas and to the urban poor. The quality and proportion of its instructional content will likewise have to increase. Yet it must bridge the urban-rural divide and combine modernity with relevant tradition.

4.4. In examining various alternative proposals for organisational structures that have been recommended by the many witnesses and bodies whom the Working Group met or who have addressed us, we have kept in mind the goals of the Corporation which are spelt out in the next Chapter.

4.5. Given the profile of its audience and the goals it is set to achieve, the soundness of the organisation will be judged by its success in achieving not only its immediate objectives but also by its ability to respond to the growing and changing demands that will be made on it. Its structure will thus need to avoid excessive rigidity and permit growth in a manner that does not either cause undue strain or require drastic organisational change at frequent intervals.

4.6. Secondly, the organisational structure will be judged by the people who work for it. Their assessment will depend on whether it gives them the opportunity to work as part of a harmonious and dedicated team, to develop professionally, and to be judged impartially for recognition and reward. They will also require that their jobs are secured against malice, prejudice and nepotism on the part of their superiors, although they will accept that their security does not extend to protection against clear cases of gross malpractice, indiscipline, negligence, or incompetence.

Unique Institution

4.7. Any organisation which satisfies these two tests will have certain characteristics common to most public sector corporations. There are however, three features which make the NBT unique. Firstly, because of its enormous and immediate reach covering every part of the country and its ability thereby to influence public opinion, especially in a country where 70 per cent of the population is still illiterate, the NBT has to be highly sensitive to react swiftly to the needs and sentiments of the different components of its mass audience. At the same time, it will have steadfastly to withstand the day-to-day political and other pressures to which its power will expose it.

4.8. The second feature which makes the NBT unique is the need to combine very different groups of disciplines. These comprise creative artistic skills and functional skills which range from the relatively simple to the highly complex in such fields as engineering, electronics, cultural programming, extension, news gathering and editing, and the management of a nationwide complex. All these must be combined

to produce programmes which are tailored to meet the needs of a highly diverse audience.

4.9. Lastly, there are hardly any sections of the community with which it does not need to keep close contact if it is to do its job properly. These include every department of the Central and State Governments, right down to the village extension worker, Parliament, the State Assemblies and locally elected bodies including the village panchayat; schools, colleges and universities, the larger academic and scientific world; the Press; farmers, industry, and trade unions, musicians, writers and artists, etc. etc.

4.10. No other public corporation can thus bear comparison with the NBT in the sensitivity, magnitude and complexity of the task it will face, although there are many corporations which employ many times more people and capital or dispose of larger revenue.

One, Not Many

4.11. We have examined many proposals for restructuring the broadcasting agencies and some of the more feasible of these have been analysed and the major reasons for rejecting them stated before making our own recommendations.

4.12. Many of the suggestions for restructuring placed before us related to the need to avoid creating a massive monolith which it was feared would suffer from slow decision-making, insensitivity at senior levels of management to the public at large as well as to the problems of its employees, and lack of competition and cost consciousness. It would in short exhibit all the failings of an unwieldy monopoly. These suggestions, therefore, aimed at creating two or more small but autonomous corporations so as to overcome these defects.

4.13. One suggestion put to us was that instead of a single national broadcasting authority there should be autonomous State-level broadcasting corporations in the overall policy making of which the State Governments would have a major role. The advantage claimed for this was that in addition to a reduction in size, these corporations would cater to a less diverse mix of people and environments, would be more closely in touch with their audience and help foster a measure of competition. Further, since the main responsibility for developmental programmes relating to agriculture, education health and family welfare and other social services are in the State Government sector, this structure would suitably enmesh the two. Another somewhat similar suggestion was that there should be four or five separate and autonomous regional corporations

which would be a half-way house between a single national corporation and several State-level bodies.

4.14. The Working Group, while accepting the organisational and operational advantages that accompany a reduction in size and geographical spread, rejected these proposals primarily on the ground that they would seriously undermine a major objective of broadcasting, namely, to promote national integration. The propagation of a national approach to India's problems, creating in every citizen an interest in the affairs, achievements and culture of other regions and helping thus to develop a national consensus on issues which concern the country as a whole, is of such supreme importance that any structure which inhibits this cannot be accepted.

4.15. These suggestions would also render a coordinated approach to many technical matters that are much more complex, as for example, in the case of inter-regional or inter-State linkage. The break-up of the existing all-India cadres in Akashvani and Doordarshan will not only present formidable problems but would result in linguistic and cultural fragmentation. Financially, the income from licence fees and commercial revenues in the different regions and States would vary a great deal. The development of the broadcast system would be uneven, certain regions most in need of communications being least able to match up to the task without becoming almost wholly dependent on governmental grants, thus further eroding their autonomy.

4.16. Finally, the working Group are of the view that the autonomy of the broadcasting authority will in the ultimate analysis depend upon the stature and integrity of the Trustees and the men and women who constitute its Executive Board. It will be difficult enough to find people of the requisite calibre to constitute a single National Board. It will be well nigh impossible to find a sufficient number of suitable people if such Boards are to be constituted at the regional or State level. Furthermore, when the Central Government is relaxing its hold on the broadcasting system, it would appear *a fortiori odd* merely to "transfer power" to State Governments to conduct a local monopoly. The broadcast system is best regarded as a national asset and its structure and operation are better viewed functionally in terms of national, regional and local rather than administratively in terms of Centre, State, and zila parishad or municipal, though there is every reason to expect that it will work closely and harmoniously with the administration at all levels.

4.17. For these reasons, the Working Group are of the view that there should not be autonomous regional or even a federation of State Government corporations. Instead, a single National Broadcast Trust is proposed under which a highly decentralised structure is envisaged. There will be a large measure of power delegated to the regional and local level so that the organisation enjoys the advantages of quick decision-making,

sensitivity to local problems, familiarity with local customs and taste and closer link-ages with various local institutions, the State governments and district and block level authorities without sacrificing its ability to lay down and implement a uniform policy on national issues and provide the necessary coordination.

Engineering Warp & Programming Woof

4.18. A second group of suggestions related to the separation of the engineering cadres from the rest of the structure and their continuation as Government servants possibly under a separate State-owned broadcast engineering corporation or department. The analogy of the bifurcation of the Airport Authority or the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation from the Airlines was cited. In support of the proposal it was argued that there is very little in common in the functions performed by the engineers and the rest of the broadcasting staff and separation would not cause any problems of coordination even at the studio level where, it was conceded, close cooperation between the staff artists, programme producers and the engineers is absolutely essential. It was further argued that the cost of future expansion would then automatically be borne by the Central Government with respect to the hardware. If the television and radio licence fees and commercial revenues were to become the direct income of the broadcast organisation, its dependence on Government funds would thereby be greatly reduced and its autonomy reinforced.

4.19. The Working Group have carefully considered this proposal and cannot support it. If accountability for results at various levels is to be ensured, then an important principle of a sound organisational structure is to identify people who are responsible for results and vest them with the necessary authority. For instance, it would be clearly desirable for the engineers or technicians attached to a studio or a recording unit or O.B. van to be under the administrative control of the person in-charge of ensuring that programmes from this unit are produced on schedule. In the absence of an individual who can take decisions on the spot, particularly in the many grey areas where there is an overlap of various disciplines, there would be even more mutual bickering and delays than there is today. Likewise, to separate studio engineers and technicians from other engineers and technicians would also create career management problems for both. The Group also do not see any substance in the argument relating to financial autonomy. The possibility of Government bringing pressure to bear on the Corporation by withholding funds for expanding or maintaining transmitters and other hardware is not avoided by this proposal.

4.20. The engineers and production staff have to work as a closely knit team, representing as they do, the warp and woof of the medium and message that constitute a single fabric. To separate the two would be to diminish the efficiency and even the

creativity of the system. Production autonomy would also be undermined by external engineering control, and coordination would not get over the real hurdles that would be set up.

Radio and Television Under One Roof

4.21. A third set of suggestions related to the creation of two separate autonomous corporations for Akashvani and Doordarshan respectively. It was argued that because of the relatively low level of funds available for television as opposed to radio, Doordarshan would remain a "step child" in a composite corporation and consequently suffer neglect. It was said that the expertise and experience required for both the technical and non-technical aspects of television are quite different from that for radio and that the only way to ensure Doordarshan's unfettered development would be to entrust it to a totally separate corporation.

4.22. While recognising the fact that the skills and techniques required for broadcasting television programmes are not entirely the same as for radio, the Group felt that there are so many common services required that total separation would add greatly to costs and create its own problems. To begin with, any broad national communications policy that is evolved, of which broadcasting would obviously constitute an important part, must call for a multi-media approach. We feel that in the current Indian context, the two services are complementary and therefore require unified and coordinated direction. Secondly, while there is a degree of specialisation in regard to engineering skills for some aspects of television, the difference between radio and television is not so great as to make it difficult to continue the present practice of transferring engineering personnel from one to the other. In all areas other than the actual production of programmes, such as administration and personnel, accounts, reference and research, audience research, staff facilities such as housing, transport and welfare, and even news, there would have to be many common services.

4.23. The Working Group are therefore unable to support the proposal to create two separate corporations for Akashvani and Doordarshan. It is however accepted that there is need to recognise the distinctive identity, specialised skills and roles of radio and television within the ambit of any new integrated structure which is made responsible for the development of the two electronic media.

Guiding Principles

4.24. In formulating a structure for the proposed National Broadcast Trust, we have kept in mind the following guiding principles :

- (a) It should be able to resist all external pressures whether these be governmental, political, business or parochial, while at the same time being fully

sensitive, responsive and accountable not only to Parliament but to public opinion and all the many broadcast audiences and various authorities, institutions and interests which will be affected by its operations and should, therefore, have an opportunity to interact with it.

- (b) While Parliament will remain the ultimate safeguard against any possible abuse of the enormous power the NBT will exercise, it should have sufficient internal checks and controls to see that such Parliamentary intervention is rarely if ever required. At the same time, interference in the day-to-day operation of the NBT should be avoided.
- (c) Despite every safeguard, such might appear to be the power of the broadcast organisation that there would seem to be need for an independent body that would hear complaints from listeners and viewers, not with regard to programme quality or matters of taste, but in respect of distortion, misrepresentation and allegations of unfair programming which must be decided against certain objective norms. We therefore advocate the establishment of a Complaints Board outside Akashvani and Doordarshan but under the aegis of the National Broadcast Trust. Details of this are separately spelt out.
- (d) The organisational structure should enable the NBT to operate as a cohesive and well-integrated body which fulfils the overall policies and objectives laid down, but at the same time has a highly decentralised structure with the necessary degree of authority delegated down the line to speed up decision-making and foster accountability for results at all levels.
- (e) The structure should be able to adjust to the growth of the organisation not only geographically and in terms of manpower, but also in the complexity of the software and hardware it will need to master and absorb if it is to measure up to the formidable tasks that it will be called upon to perform.
- (f) The distinctive character of radio and television should be kept in mind so that each is able to develop without inhibiting the other. However, wherever possible, duplication of services which can be shared without loss of quality should be avoided so as to reduce costs. Likewise, the operations of the two media must be complementary in regard to one of the most important of their objectives, namely, as an input in the national development process through communications support. For this reason a degree of co-ordination in the orientation and operational use of these two media is necessary. In other areas, a degree of competition can be encouraged.
- (g) The structure should provide growth opportunities for all its employees through vertical and horizontal mobility.

- (h) Each employee throughout the NBT should have a clearly defined task and be given the requisite authority and support in financial, physical and human resources to be able to fulfil this task and be held accountable for results. Opportunities for "buck passing" should be reduced as far as possible. However, in view of the wide range of technical, creative, commercial and other disciplines which must be closely integrated, a structure which fosters team work is obviously desirable.
- (i) While we have rejected pleas for a totally competitive system, partly or wholly based on commercial broadcasting, we would advocate the need for regulated diversity and controlled competition through the encouragement of independent programme production agencies and by enfranchising universities and other approved educational institutions to undertake local broadcasts through low-power transmitters. It should be left to a Licensing Board under the NBT to determine which institutions other than Akashvani and Doordarshan should be given a broadcast franchise.
- (j) In matters of education and extension, the broadcast media will not make policy. They will only help carry the extension message of the government concerned to the people in the most effective way possible. This will require appropriate interfaces between the broadcast organisation and extension and educational authorities at all levels.

Likely Growth Pattern

4.25. Before outlining the organisational structure that we would recommend it is necessary to make certain assumptions regarding the long-term physical expansion of the system so that the organisation is able to adjust to and assimilate growth smoothly and in a planned manner. While the rate of growth of television may be influenced by the costs involved it is not only desirable but necessary that radio should develop as rapidly as possible in furtherance of the nation's developmental goals, especially in the rural areas where its coverage and reception require much greater attention. It is therefore assumed that every citizen should have a choice during prime listening time to tune into any one of three radio channels, local, regional or national. Likewise, it is assumed that television despite its undoubted potential may for some time have a relatively smaller coverage confined to a single channel on which either local or regional or national programmes will be telecast. The proposed structure consequently envisages that there will be established in the next 15 years some 400 to 600 radio transmitters depending upon the technology employed. The majority of them will be low-power local stations. The number of television stations, currently 14 in number, is assumed to grow more slowly. Distribution through the Indian National Satellite

or INSAT might however facilitate some expansion especially through direct reception in certain sparsely populated and remote regions.

4.26. In recommending any structure for a sensitive organisation like the NBT, it is necessary to keep in mind the financial parameters within which it must operate. This we discuss in subsequent Chapters.

4.27. We see the National Broadcast Trust not as a substitute for the present Ministry of Information and Broadcasting but as something qualitatively different. It will be for the Trustees to interpret the national broadcasting organisation to Parliament, the Government and the Public and these, its ultimate masters, to the broadcast organisations, namely, Akashvani and Doordarshan and such other franchise stations as might be licensed.

CHAPTER 5

The Legal Framework

5.1. The Working Group has been asked specifically :

- (a) to examine the functional, financial and legal aspects of the proposal to give full autonomy to Akashvani and Doordarshan, consistent with accountability to Parliament, keeping in mind the different forms of autonomous organisations existing in other democratic countries in the matter of broadcasting ; and
- (b) to suggest the form and the structure of the autonomous organisations and their relationship with Government.

5.2. The establishment of an autonomous broadcasting organisation in India must be viewed against the background of the history of broadcasting in this country, especially recent experience, and in the context of the environment in which it is proposed to be set up.

5.3. There has been widespread public dissatisfaction at the working of the existing institutions, Akashvani and Doordarshan. It is unnecessary for us to describe in any detail how their credibility was completely eroded during the Emergency for that has been fully brought out in the White Paper on Misuse of Mass Media during the Internal Emergency published by the Government of India in August, 1977.

5.4. We are of the opinion that all the national broadcasting services should be vested exclusively in an independent, impartial, and autonomous organisation established by law by Parliament to act as a trustee for the national interest. Only an organisation which meets these tests will command national acceptance which is indispensable for its success. It is important that the institution should be protected as much as any constitutional and legal safeguards can protect an institution from Government interference and pressures. It is no less important, however, that it should be

protected likewise from political or other pressures from other quarters as well. At the same time it is only realistic to recognise that pressures there will be from all interested quarters and that it will be the task of those who run the institution to resist them. Constitutional and legal safeguards can help them to resist pressures only up to a point. In the final analysis the broadcasting institution can be no stronger than the will and the desire of the people to support and sustain the democratic values on which it rests. It has been well observed that the "broadcasting system of a country must spring from its history, its political conventions and its institutions". In the Indian context this implies a public corporation endowed with a legal personality and created by an Act of Parliament. It will be one of the institutions of a democratic society functioning in accordance with the rule of law and based on the values which inform such a society.

5.5. Broadly speaking, there are two approaches that can be adopted for the creation of a broadcasting institution: one is to de-politicise its governance and the other is to allow political and other forces to be so represented on it that no single political party can obtain a position of complete dominance within it. A highly politicised broadcast system would be undesirable in our country where the universal demand is for an organisation which is autonomous in its internal working, independent of Government, and impartial in its approach.

5.6. Modern opinion regards autonomy of broadcasting organisations to be as essential as freedom of the Press. The Declaration on Mass Communication Media and Human Rights adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1970 laid down specifically that "neither individual enterprises nor financial groups should have the right to institute a monopoly in the fields of Press, radio or television nor should Government-controlled monopoly be permitted". It declared that "the independence of the Press and other mass media from control by the State should be established by law. Any infringement of this independence should be justiciable by Courts and not by executive authorities (Article 4). Another principle was that "the internal organisation of mass media should guarantee the freedom of expression of the responsible editors. Their editorial independence should be preserved" (Article 6).

5.7. An autonomous organisation of the kind we recommend can be set up under our legal system only by an Act of Parliament for, under the Constitution, Parliament has the exclusive power to legislate in respect of "wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communications." (Seventh Schedule, List I—Union List; Entry 31).

5.8. It is important to recognise, however, that any institution set up by an Act of Parliament can be dissolved by another Act or even an Ordinance repealing the earlier statute. An outstanding example of this was the dissolution of the Press Council of India in 1975 by an Ordinance repealing the Press Council Act, 1966. One can think

of measures which fall short of actual dissolution but which effectively impair the autonomy or independence of a broadcasting organisation.

5.9. There are very many forms of broadcasting corporations in the world. Some are seemingly independent but their organic statutes render them open to governmental interference in many ways. A certain broadcast statute has this provision: "In the exercise of its functions and powers under this Act, the Corporation shall comply with the general policy of the Government with respect to broadcasting and shall comply with any general or special directions given by the Minister pursuant to the policy of the Government in relation thereto." Thus, no matter how carefully contrived the administrative set-up of the Corporation may be a single statutory amendment on the lines of this section whether passed by a simple majority vote of both Houses of Parliament or enacted by an Ordinance can completely destroy its autonomy and independence. It is of the highest importance therefore that the autonomy of the corporation and its independence from governmental control should be entrenched in the Constitution itself and the idea of a trust woven into it. The underlying concept should be distinguished completely from that of other public corporations in the country.

Constitutional Safeguard

5.10. It is not necessary that the entire statute be incorporated in the Constitution in the form of a Schedule. It is necessary only that the fundamental principles of autonomy and independence of the national broadcast corporation should be written clearly into the Constitution and suitable provision made therein for the appointment of the members of such a Corporation. Once this is done, any law in derogation of the autonomy or the independence of the Corporation would be struck down by the Courts as invalid. Besides being a check, the constitutional provision would serve also to highlight the importance of the institution in the national life of the country. We would, however, like to state that it is not necessary that the establishment of the Corporation should await a constitutional amendment. The law establishing the Corporation can be enacted and the organisation brought into being to be followed subsequently by an amendment of the Constitution on the lines indicated herein.

5.11. We recommend a draft constitutional amendment in the following terms :

- 329A. (1) All broadcasting shall be organised and conducted exclusively by or under the authority of an autonomous and independent public corporation acting impartially as a Trustee in the public interest referred to in this Constitution as Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust.
- (2) The National Broadcast Trust shall consist of a Chairman and Trustees and the appointment of the Chairman and the other Trus-

tees shall be made by the President from out of a list of names put forward by a nominating panel duly constituted by law.

- (3) Subject to the provisions of clauses (1) and (2) and the other provisions of this Constitution, the constitution of the National Broadcast Trust shall be such as may be provided by Parliament by law.

5.12. We recommend that the statute made in pursuance of the Constitutional provisions indicated above should expressly declare the corporation to be 'a corporate citizen of the country'. In the absence of a statutory declaration, the National Broadcast Trust will not be entitled to exercise those fundamental rights, like the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression (Article 19), which are available to citizens alone (*vide* State Trading Corporation of India vs. C.T.O., AIR 1963 S. C. 1011 and Telco V. State of Bihar, AIR 1965 S.C. 40).

The Charter

5.13. A broadcasting corporation of the kind we recommend must be guided by certain specific objectives laid down in the statute by Parliament. Such a statement of objectives can well be regarded as the Charter of the Trust. We recommend the following statement of objectives, namely, the Trust shall :

- (a) Uphold the unity of the country and the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution.
- (b) Uphold the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution to freedom of speech and expression.
- (c) Safeguard the citizens' right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively of all matters of public interest, national or international.
- (d) Uphold the impartiality, integrity and autonomy of broadcasting in the country.
- (e) Provide a national broadcasting service, predominantly Indian in content and character.
- (f) Promote the interests and concerns of the entire nation, being mindful of the need for harmony and understanding within the country and ensuring that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the composite culture of India.
- (g) Produce and transmit varied programmes designed to awaken, inform, enlighten, educate, entertain and enrich all sections of the people, with due regard to the fact that the national broadcast audience consists of a whole series of publics.

- (h) Serve the rural, illiterate and underprivileged populations, keeping in mind the special needs and interests of the young, social and cultural minorities, the tribal populations, and of those residing in border regions, backward or remote areas.
- (i) Stimulate and inform the national consciousness in regard to the status and problems of women.
- (j) Promote social justice and combat exploitation, inequality, and such evils as untouchability and narrow parochial loyalties.
- (k) Uphold the secular ideal and promote a spirit of truth and inquiry in the country among all sections of the people.
- (l) Present a fair and balanced flow of information of national, regional, local and international interest, including contrasting views, without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own.
- (m) Help raise educational standards by supporting programmes of formal, non-formal and continuing education and open learning systems.
- (n) Promote the extension of new knowledge and practices as well as the transfer of technology as an aid to national development and social change.
- (o) Provide entertainment and recreation for all sections of the people and encourage all forms of cultural expression—traditional, classical, modern and international.
- (p) Take special steps to protect the interests of children, the blind, the aged and other vulnerable sections of the population.
- (q) Promote comprehension and national integration by broadcasting in a manner that facilitates communication in and among all the languages of India.
- (r) Seek to provide comprehensive broadcast coverage through the choice of appropriate technology and the best utilisation of the broadcast frequencies available, and to ensure high quality reception.

Government's Reserve Powers

5.14. It is important that the law establishing the Trust should spell out clearly the rights which properly belong to a democratic government in respect of the national broadcast services on the one hand and the relationship between the Trust and Parliament on the other. We wish, however, to sound a caveat against copying blindly as a model any of the broadcasting organisations of the democratic countries. Autonomous broadcasting corporations have grown in those countries over a long period and in an environment in which autonomy has come increasingly to be respected. In India, in

contrast, an autonomous institution is sought to be created against the background of the erosion of autonomous institutions and the credibility of radio and television. The Charter of the BBC and the broadcasting statutes of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Ireland confer considerable powers on the Ministers on the understanding that they will be very sparingly used as, indeed, they have been. Thus the Licence and Agreement of the BBC and Section 22(3) of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, 1973 (UK) or Section 77 of the Australian Act or Section 31 of the Irish statute enable the Minister, in effect, to require the Corporation to refrain at any specified time or at all times from sending any matter or any class of matter specified in the notice. The Corporation's sole remedy is to make public the receipt of such notice and thus to alert public opinion. Such a power of veto is incompatible with autonomy and would be completely inappropriate in our situation. A restricted power, however, can legitimately be given to the Government to require the Trust to refrain from broadcasting any matter which has a clear relation to national security, the preservation of public order and other matters of grave public importance. A power can also be conferred on the Government on the lines of Section 86 of the Australian Act which reads thus: "Broadcasts in cases of emergency—(1) In the case of any national, regional or local emergency any Corporation shall, if directed to do so by the Minister and in accordance with the directions, broadcast any announcement that he requires to be broadcast. (2) In broadcasting the announcement the corporation shall announce that such a requirement has been made." This provision is to be preferred to section 22(1) of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, (UK) which confers on any Minister of the Crown a power by a notice in writing to require the authority to broadcast at such times and from such stations any announcement that he deems fit. It is interesting to note that clause 13(3) of the Licence and Agreement of the BBC makes a distinction between broadcasting an announcement at the request of any Minister of the Government and broadcasting "any other matter" on a similar request. The latter is restricted to cases when, in the opinion of the Minister, "an emergency has arisen or continues".

Official Broadcasts

5.15. The President and the Prime Minister should have access to Akashvani and Doordarshan for national broadcasts. A similar right should extend to the Governors and Chief Ministers of States for State broadcasts over regional networks.

5.16. Central and State Governments should also be enabled to use the broadcast media for making emergency announcements such as flood and epidemic warnings whenever necessary.

5.17. The Central and State Governments should have reasonable access to the broadcast media to explain official policies. Such Ministerial broadcasts should be arranged in consultation with the appropriate authorities in Akashvani and Doordar-

shan. These "Government broadcasts" would be infrequent since an alert broadcasting organisation would normally seek out responsible Ministers and officials for interviews, discussions and live press conferences whenever occasion demands. To the extent that there are "Government broadcasts", however, the greatest care must be taken to distinguish these from party political broadcasts which are separately discussed.

5.18. As in the case of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha should also be accorded facilities for making national broadcasts. The number of these broadcasts and their modalities may be determined by agreement. We would recommend a similar procedure with regard to the recognised Leader of the Opposition, if any, in every State Legislature.

5.19. The allocation by the ITU of frequencies to the nations of the world entails international negotiation which is a Central responsibility. The allocated frequencies, being finite, must be regarded as a scarce natural resource whose allocation among different wireless users—of which the National Broadcast Trust is only one, the defence forces, police, and aviation and shipping authorities being others—must vest in some authority. The Central Government is under Entry 31 of List I in the Seventh Schedule the concerned government for purposes of Licensing, and it is the Wireless Adviser in the Ministry of Communications who grants licences and regulates frequencies under the Indian Telegraph Act.

5.20. However, the right to licence broadcasting should not or need not necessarily vest the Government with the right to regulate broadcasts. There is a difference between the fact of broadcasting (the licensing of transmitters) and the act of broadcasting (programming). Any confusion here is cleared by reference to the concept of a National Trust, the nation ("we, the people") being represented by Parliament of which the Government constitutes the executive branch. If the people are the ultimate sovereign in a parliamentary democracy then they are entitled to the fullest information and contrasting views and ideas so that they might decide for themselves and vote accordingly. A free and autonomous broadcasting system is thus part of the democratic dharma, accountable to the people through Parliament but not controlled by the Government.

5.21. Once the National Broadcast Trust comes into being, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should shed its direct responsibility for broadcasting and might thereafter appropriately be redesignated "Ministry of Information".

Accountability to Parliament

5.22. Having heard a wide range of opinion on the relationship between the broadcasting organisations and Parliament, we are of the view that the best compromise between the claims of autonomy and of accountability is to impose on the Trust

a duty to report to Parliament through its budget and an Annual Report together with the accounts and auditor's comments thereon. The Report should also incorporate the report of the Complaints Board and a review of the operation of the Licensing Board and Franchise Stations to all of which we make reference later. Members of Parliament have the inherent right to ask Questions. But it is expected that they will refrain from so doing on day-to-day issues.

5.23. The NBT should ascertain the views of the Central and State Governments in the siting of new stations or transmitters.

5.24. Financial accountability would be ensured through independent commercial audit. Though the outlays on broadcasting must be expected to grow substantially, they will always be modest in relation to the vast investments and expenditures in other public sector corporations or areas of public spending. The real audit of the broadcasting system lies in the programme audit to which it is subjected minute by minute, hour by hour and day by day by countless listeners and viewers whom it must satisfy in order to retain among its audience. In view of the unique characteristics of the broadcast system we would recommend that its accounts be commercially audited by any approved firm of auditors of standing, and not be subject to the jurisdiction of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. A precedent for this exists in the case of the Life Insurance Corporation which, despite being established under a Parliamentary statute in the public sector, remains outside the ambit of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. This is not to suggest any less rigorous standards of audit and accounting than that prescribed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General. It is only to seek a special dispensation. Broadcasting is different. It has been well described both as an industry and an art form. Even as a business its inventory is "ideas", a non-liquid asset which gives birth to programmes.

5.25. Ultimately autonomy is based not so much on law as on convention and tradition. Autonomy and the creative exercise of freedom are not just gifted; they have to be continuously nurtured.

5.26. In view of the unique character of broadcasting as a public service and the right of the people to freedom of speech and expression, we recommend that the "full autonomy" that the Government desires to bestow on the broadcast media should devolve from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust (NBT), headed by a Board of 12 Trustees. Akashvani and Doordarshan will be constituent units of the NBT under a Central Executive Board. The NBT will be the public trustee for radio and television broadcasting services in the country whether now or in the future, including related technologies such as wired broadcasting and cable television.

CHAPTER 6

The Board of Trustees

6.1. At the apex of Akash Bharati or the National Broadcast Trust we recommend a Board of Trustees or Nyasi Mandal consisting of 12 persons, but not to exceed 21 should there be need for inducting additional members. They shall be men and women of eminence in public life representing a fair cross-section of all parts of the country and various vocations and disciplines. They must clearly be persons of such integrity and independence and imbued with so keen an awareness of the immense power and potential of the media being entrusted to their care that they are able to resist subversive pressures from even the highest quarters while remaining sensitive to public opinion at all times. We envisage the Trustees (Nyasis) as guardians of the Charter given to the National Broadcast Trust by Statute.

6.2. The Working Group examined several alternatives regarding the nature and composition of the Board of Trustees before arriving at a consensus.

6.3. The first of these was the proposal to have an executive Board of full time Trustees each appointed on a functional basis so as to have the benefit of executive drive embedded in the highest echelon of the organisation and to ensure that the objectives set out in the Charter are effectively achieved. We are, however, not inclined towards this alternative on several considerations. The major one is the need to draw a distinction between those who have the primary responsibility for safeguarding the Charter of the NBT and those who are directly responsible for the day-to-day running of Akashvani and Doordarshan. If these two functions are combined then the buffer between these operational broadcasting units and the powerful external forces playing on them would be removed. It is also desirable that there should be a body that is capable of taking a more detached view of Akashvani and Doordarshan than can executive heads who are directly concerned with running them. Further, the Trustees should be

able to get an independent feedback on the performance of the organisation. Finally, we have proposed that broadcasting should not remain the exclusive right of Akashvani and Doordarshan and that approved educational institutions be licensed to run low-power local stations on a renewable franchise. However, a degree of impartiality and coordination is necessary to avoid technical and other complications in licensing and overseeing the franchise stations. This will be facilitated if the NBT is not vested with the day-to-day responsibility of running Akashvani and Doordarshan.

6.4. At the other end of the scale we considered the appointment of a wholly part time Board of Trustees which, with the possible exception of the Chairman, might at least be partially selected on a functional basis. The idea would be to ensure that expertise and experience in finance, engineering and technology, current affairs, education and extension, and in the world of culture are appropriately reflected at the highest level, it being clearly stipulated that these functional Trustees and indeed the Board as a whole would confine itself to major policy issues and perform the required trusteeship function *vis-a-vis* the public. In this situation, actual day-to-day operations would be left to an executive Board of Directors, themselves men and women of high professional standing. While it was accepted that such an arrangement would accord with sound canons of management as far as normal corporations are concerned, the Working Group were impressed with the argument that there is a special dimension to the NBT that cannot be entirely overlooked. This relates to the unique role being cast on this body by conceptualising broadcasting as a National Trust and the consequent need to provide dynamic new leadership at the very top in its main disciplines, especially during the delicate transitional period from the present Departmental status of Akashvani and Doordarshan to full autonomy.

6.5. The oft-quoted triad of Information, Education and Entertainment is at the heart of broadcasting. Between them, these three elements encompass all facets of programming. At the same time, broadcast engineering is vital to the quality of reception and system-expansion, while prudent financial management is critical even if total financial independence is not contemplated.

6.6. We looked at the possibility of having a Chairman and five other full time functional Trustees for Finance, Engineering, Current Affairs, Extension and Culture, the remaining six Trustees being part time. Examination of this led to the conclusion that it would not be feasible to have a two-tier Board of Trustees, partly executive and partly otherwise, and that any form of executive board would be undesirable for the reasons set out earlier. There would either be duality and conflict and a blurring of the lines of responsibility as between the Trustees and the Central Executive Board of

Directors or the latter would be clearly subservient professionally and functionally and therefore redundant.

6.7. Having determined therefore that any functional trustees should be without executive responsibilities and that the reserve powers of Superior Executive must be exercised if at all by the Board of Trustees as a whole, we went on to consider the appointment of the five proposed functional Trustees on a non-executive basis but as full time members. We concluded that while it was important that the Trustees should have high level technical and financial wisdom within their own ranks so as to be better able to appreciate and weigh policy issues relating to investments, technological choices and other management issues coming up for approval, Trustees of eminence in these disciplines need not serve full time as they would obviously not be concerned with day-to-day matters.

Three Full Time Functional Trustees

6.8. We then examined the case for retaining three full time Trustees for Current Affairs, Extension and Culture and, after the most careful deliberation, came round to the view that this would be justified on account of the widespread demand that autonomy for broadcasting must make a decisive and qualitative difference to the programmes. If we recommend that these three be full time Trustees it is in the belief that there is need of dynamic leadership to revitalise the broadcast organisation and launch it on a new phase of vigorous progress.

6.9. Extension and Education; Culture and Entertainment, and News and Current Affairs—these are what Broadcasting is about. They can change the quality of life in village India; make for fuller enjoyment of our cultural heritage; and invest our democracy with more popular and instant awareness.

6.10. We have suggested that each of these three vital aspects should be the special interest of an exceptionally able full time Trustee who would view it from every vantage—from headquarters, from local centres (through constant travel), and from the angle of technical as well as human needs.

6.11. It might yet be asked, why full time? Full time, because the task of exercising leadership-influence throughout a widespread organisation is demanding and ceaseless. It cannot be done with divided attention. It will be the function of these

three Trustees to be the antennae of their colleagues on the Board of Trustees and to help them make up their minds on priorities and policies.

6.12. This somewhat unorthodox way of energising the organisation will depend entirely on the calibre of the people who will fill the three offices. We see them as relatively younger people who have clearly demonstrated that they are destined for top leadership in their own fields. Though they are to deal with Extension, Culture, and Current Affairs they do not necessarily have to be from those disciplines. What is required of them is a certain quality of mind and a capacity for inspirational leadership. We do not see such persons readily "applying" for a "post". Usually they will have to be persuaded to take on a public service which is full of challenge. And talent of the order we contemplate must be adequately rewarded.

6.13. The Current Affairs, Cultural, and Extension Trustees will have no direct executive or administrative functions and will operate through the executive head of the broadcast organisation, namely, the Controller-General of Broadcasting who heads the Central Executive Board (CEB). Their task will be to keep in close touch with the policy and qualitative aspects rather than the administrative aspects of these functions throughout the organisation and provide the required stimulus.

Collective Responsibility

6.14. The Trustees, whatever their role, will not represent any group or interest in the organisation but the public interest in regard to accepted norms and values of good broadcasting as set out in the Charter. Again, all Trustees will be equal and will work as a collective entity through the Board of Trustees, no individual Trustee enjoying any pre-emptive or prescriptive right by virtue of full time or functional status. All communications from the Board of Trustees to the Central Executive Board of Directors will be routed through the Controller-General of Broadcasting (CGB) who will act as Secretary to the Board of Trustees so as to provide an organic link between these two tiers.

6.15. We therefore recommend the appointment of a Board of Trustees of 12 members consisting of a Chairman and three other full time members who will devote themselves to the fields of Current Affairs, Extension, and Culture respectively.

6.16. In addition to the Chairman and the three other full time Trustees we would recommend that at least one other should be highly experienced in the field of finance and management and at least another should be an eminent scientist or engineer familiar with the technology of broadcasting.

6.17. We assume and recommend that the Board will invariably consist of both men and women.

6.18. The Trustees, whether whole time or part time, should be kept fully informed of the activities of all operational organs constituted under the NBT. In them would vest the ultimate responsibility for supervision and control but they would normally and principally fulfil a trusteeship function in upholding and furthering the purposes of the organisation, execution being left to a Central Executive Board.

Board Procedures

6.19. Individual Trustees will normally deal with the Central Executive Board and other elements in the broadcast organisation through the CGB or Chief Executive. The Director of Audience Research shall however be required to submit all audience research reports simultaneously to the Board of Trustees as well as to the Central Executive Board. This will enable the Trustees to keep in touch with public responses to the various broadcast programmes, including their technical quality.

6.20. The Board of Trustees should meet not less than six times a year though we anticipate that more frequent meetings will be necessary. The quorum for such meetings should be one more than half the total number of Trustees. In all other matters the Trustees should determine their own procedures. We expect that they will not retire into an ivory tower but will visit stations, meet people and endeavour constantly to remain in touch with all sections of opinion in all parts of the country so that they are properly able to interpret the broadcast organisation to the public and the public to the broadcast organisation.

6.21. It would be desirable that the Board be periodically renewed through the infusion of fresh blood. This in our opinion is best achieved by providing that the Trustees be appointed for a term of six years, one-third of the members retiring every alternate year. However, we would recommend that the order of retirement among the initial 12 Trustees be settled by draw of lots with the proviso that the Chairman and the three full time functional Trustees shall have a six-year term.

6.22. One of the most important tasks of the Trustees will be to appoint the Controller-General of Broadcasting, the Directors and other senior personnel up to the level of Controller, that is members of the proposed Zonal Executive Boards. They would also name the members of the proposed Licensing Board. Another critical responsibility will be the preparation and submission of the budget and an annual report to Parliament including the working of the proposed franchise stations, together with the audited accounts of Akash Bharati. All major investment and policy decisions bearing on the expansion of the broadcast system, technological choices, the quality of service, major programme departures, and issues likely to affect the financial viability of the Trust, including wage and salary revisions, should be subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. In effect they would also conduct the highest public relations of Akash Bharati.

6.23. We devoted much thought to the procedures for nominating the Board of Trustees, and particularly the Chairman who cannot but be a man or woman of pre-eminent stature, ability and integrity. The choice of a person to head this immensely influential, sensitive and complex organisation would need almost a degree of national consensus. Since the traditions and tone of the new organisation will be moulded by the Trustees, their selection too will be of crucial importance. This will apply more especially to the choice of the first incumbents.

Nominating Panel

6.24. In view of the nature and sensitivity of these appointments we considered various selection procedures in a bid to find one that would combine impartiality with accountability to the people through Parliament. After great deliberation we recommend that the Trustees be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister from out of a list of names submitted by a nominating panel consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Lok Pal (an office that will soon come into being), and the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission. Each member of such a panel would be a distinguished national figure in his or her own right. But in order to assist them in their arduous responsibility, we recommend that they shall co-opt any two other persons of distinction from the world of science, culture and the arts. We would leave it to this panel to determine its own procedures and having selected the Chairman in the first instance to associate him or her in an advisory capacity with the selection of the other Trustees. Once the first Board of Trustees has been appointed, the incumbent or retiring Chairman would be available to advise the nominating panel.

6.25. It would establish a healthy convention were the Prime Minister to consult the Leader of the Opposition before submitting the list of names of the Chairman and Trustees to the President.

6.26. The logic of a list of names suggests the initial selection of a number larger than the number of vacancies to be filled. In the case of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the nominating panel might recommend two or at the most three names out of which one shall be forwarded to the President by the Prime Minister. However, with regard to all other vacancies, the nominating panel should be required to forward 50 per cent more names than there are vacancies to be filled. Should any functional Trustee not be selected, then the nominating panel might have to suggest an alternative name for that particular category. However, we imagine that such an eventuality will be extremely rare if it occurs at all.

6.27. We recommend that the Trustees should enjoy the status of Supreme Court Judges and should be subject to similar disqualifications and procedures for removal. The age bar, however, need not apply.

CHAPTER 7

Management And Programme Structure

I

7.1. The essence of broadcasting is the quality and content of programmes including the quality of reception. Everything else is an aid to better broadcasting. The real cutting-edge of the entire broadcast system therefore lies in the programme origination and transmission stations. These constitute the base on which the rest of the superstructure must be built. Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust, defines the larger framework of broadcasting in India within which Akashvani and Doordarshan will constitute the National Broadcast Organisation (NBO). The proposed franchise stations and independent programme production companies will be the other broadcast components.

7.2. The nature of the broadcast stations might vary, these being broadly classified either as metropolitan or regional or local stations. Though they might vary in size and in terms of the power radiated by their transmitters they will have an essentially similar programme function. This is the responsibility for production of what might be defined as national programmes (other than news), regional programmes and local programmes, a somewhat imprecise distinction since there will be some overlap and also some programme exchange. Programmes of quality will move upward from local to national audiences and there will be cross-cultural exchange particularly in the field of drama, music, dance and other forms of cultural expression.

Decentralisation and Participation

7.3. We would also envisage the "Station" as something more than a single studio-transmission complex, distant and seemingly exclusive or even inaccessible to the people it is intended to serve. Instead, we envisage, particularly at the local level, a small and relatively simply equipped "mother station" with a cluster of small recording units and programming facilities around it which will help bring broadcast-

ing to the people and the people to broadcasting, and not only through outdoor broadcasting vans. This consideration applies both to radio and television.

7.4. Programming should necessarily be decentralised and producers should enjoy a significant measure of programme autonomy. There would however be need for supervision and co-ordination at higher levels. Except for national news all other programmes will originate from individual stations, even if these programmes be for broadcast on national, regional, or local channels.

Central Facilities

7.5. There should be a single Central News Room for both Akashvani and Doordarshan in Delhi which will originate national news bulletins in various languages. News is immediate and the need for a uniform approach necessitates a focal point which must obviously be the national Capital in view of its overriding importance as a news centre. Similarly, regional news bulletins will be originated in each of the State Capitals on broadly similar considerations.

7.6. Akashvani would also need central facilities at headquarters for the production of External Service programmes as well as for its Monitoring Unit. This is an exclusively national function though certain external programmes or transmissions may be broadcast from any of the regional stations as a matter of convenience. Control however will have to be centralised.

Need for Zones

7.7. In terms of management, however, the structure would have to be somewhat different. There are today 84 Akashvani Stations and 155 radio transmitters as against six stations in 1947. There are also 13 Doordarshan Kendras and some additional television (programme) base production centres. The number of Stations and transmitters may be expected to grow quite rapidly and Akashvani's projected 14 year "ITU Plan" 1975-89, envisages the establishment of up to 780 transmitters (including the present number), 352 of these being proposed low-power stations serving as many districts.

7.8. Akashvani found it necessary to establish four engineering regions some years ago and even at the present level of growth has more recently advocated the need for four programme regions (with a somewhat different geographical configuration) of which two, namely the Western Region and the Eastern Region, have already been established. The Western Region, with its headquarters in Bombay, comprises 22

Stations and the Eastern Region, with headquarters in Calcutta, 18 Stations. In addition, each Station Director has responsibility for a certain broadcast "Zone" for purposes of travel and administrative rules.

Four-Tier Structure

7.9. It is assumed that an optimal operational management span should not entail supervision of more than 10 to 15 Stations. Since 500 to 600 operational radio stations are envisaged in the long term perspective, some 40 to 50 Zones would be required if a three tier structure is proposed. Co-ordinating so many Zones would present an extremely complex task for the Central Executive Board. Viewing the organisational structure against a 15 year time horizon, the Working Group therefore came to the conclusion that for purposes of management and co-ordination of the national broadcast organisation, there need to be four operational tiers: National, Zonal, Regional (in due course, if not immediately), and the Stations. This structure is necessary to ensure decentralised national coverage and yet maintain a degree of co-ordination of policy in respect of programmes, hardware, finance, personnel and public relations.

Five Zones

7.10. We accordingly recommend the creation of five zones, namely, Southern, Western, Central, Eastern and Northern. (See Annexure). The Southern Zone would consist of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh and Lakshadweep. The Western Zone would comprise Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa. The Central Zone would include Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The Eastern Zone would include West Bengal and the entire North East with its unique and special problems, Sikkim, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Finally, the Northern Zone would comprise Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, Chandigarh and Delhi. These Zones would be roughly of equal size with populations of around 120 million to 150 million except for the Eastern Zone which would have a population of 75 million. Each Zone would cover a number of States and Union Territories. We would recommend that the headquarters of these Zones be located outside the metropolitan centres or even major cities so as to avoid the big-city syndrome and enable them better to flavour the ethos of the small town and countryside that must primarily engage their attention. Places like Mysore or Coimbatore; Anand or Udaipur; Raipur or Ranchi; Shillong or Silchar; and Patiala or Pantnagar would appear more appropriate choices. These are University towns, focal points of development or cultural centres and reasonably well connected for facility of communication.

7.11. The proposed Zones already have up to 20 or more radio and television Stations and will expand further. For purposes of management, programme support

and co-ordination we recommend the grouping of 10 to 15 Stations in a Region as far as radio stations are concerned. We do not however envisage any intermediary level between the Zone and Doordarshan Kendras at present in view of the smaller numbers involved. The Regions are seen as a tier that would need to be added as the system grows. However, there may only be three tiers until the proposed organisation settles down.

Delegation Down The Line

7.12. The Working Group was alive to the danger of a top-heavy superstructure and a blurring of the line of responsibility with the creation of four tiers. We see the Central Executive Board as a policy planning and directing agency with overall functional responsibility for the performance of the organisation as a whole. However its direct operating responsibility will be limited to the Central News Room, the Monitoring Unit, the External Services Division, the Transcription Service for programme exchange, and major engineering works. The bulk of the operational management responsibility would largely vest with the Zonal Directors and their Executive Boards, the programming function being principally that of the Stations. The Regional tier is intended to be a fairly slim body whose principal role would be programme, technical, and management support as well as co-ordination, particularly with regard to the new generation of local Stations which would have a modest staff, depending to the extent possible on local talent and community participation. We would be averse to the Regional tier or even the Zonal tier developing large secretariats of their own.

7.13. The proposed structure presupposes considerable delegation of authority to the Zones and from them to the Regions and Stations in financial, personnel and technical matters subject to broad guidelines and checks formulated by the CEB, the Zones and ultimately the Regions.

7.14. Radio and Television will operate as separate streams below the Zonal apex, although even at the national level there will be two separate functional heads who will provide the specialised skills required for the proper development of these two different media.

The Central Executive Board

7.15. We recommend the constitution of a full time Central Executive Board headed by a Controller-General of Broadcasting or Karyakari Sanchalak. He will be the Chief Executive and responsible for implementing the policies and directives of the Board of Trustees. The other Directors or Sanchalaks on the CEB will each be responsible for Akashvani, Doordarshan, News and Current Affairs, Engineering, Finance, Personnel and Audience Research respectively. In addition to this team of eight there

will be five Zonal Directors who, while being members of the CEB, will essentially each head a Zonal Executive Board (ZEB).

7.16. The Directors of Akashvani, Doordarshan, News and Current Affairs, Engineering, Finance, Personnel and Audience Research will be the professional heads of their disciplines. It will be their job to ensure that the quality of the work done in the Zones is kept at as high a level as possible and they will be responsible for managing their respective cadres. Each of the Directors will be assisted by a variety of specialists.

7.17. The CEB will function as a collegium and will provide the Board of Trustees with information and advice, enabling it to formulate policies and take major decisions.

7.18. The CGB will obviously have to be an outstanding personality who combines a feeling for, if not actual experience of broadcasting with an acknowledged capacity for leadership in management and planning.

7.19. The Director of Akashvani and the Director of Doordarshan will be the two principal media heads with strong programme-management support in the fields of culture and extension. For all other inputs such as engineering, finance, personnel and audience research, they will have to depend on the Directors in charge of each of these departments.

7.20. The Director, News and Current Affairs will be responsible for this sensitive area of broadcasting. He will guide the Central News Room. This will function under a General Manager with an Editor Akashvani, an Editor Doordarshan, a Foreign Editor and an Editor Monitoring working under him.

Extension Role

7.21. The role of the extension media heads under the Directors of Akashvani and Doordarshan deserves special mention as it is they who will have to play a crucial role in making both television and radio an effective part of the national communications package. For this they will have to develop strategies for conjunctive use of both media together with other communication channels such as extension workers and educationists at all levels. This will require close consultation with the concerned Ministries at the Central and State levels, as well as all other development agencies including banks, panchayats, cooperatives and so on. While an important function of these specialists would be to organise national programmes, which they would do largely through the Zonal, Regional and sometimes even local Stations, their primary job would be to improve the orientation, quality, techniques and cost-effectiveness of extension in the Zones. Though extension policy will be laid down by the Central and State

Governments, programme control and presentation will rest with the National Broadcast Organisation.

Engineering Services

7.22. The Director of Engineering will be ultimately responsible below the Board of Trustees for all technical matters including choice of technology, standardisation of equipment, the development, maintenance, location and power of transmitters, the optimum use of frequencies, the preparation and implementation of projects, R & D, and technical training. He should be assisted by General Managers for R & D and major projects.

7.23. We examined the possibility of separating television engineering from radio engineering and putting each administratively under their respective media heads, but decided against it for a variety of reasons. Firstly, except in very specialised areas the technology and hardware of television and radio have much in common. In many areas, therefore, technical personnel are and should be interchangeable. Further, in the light of the assumption that radio is likely to grow faster than television separation of the two cadres could well lead to relative stagnation for the Doordarshan cadre. For the same reason, the Working Group recommend that even on the programme side, where the degree of media specialisation admittedly has to be higher, people should be able to move between television and radio so that the careers of versatile and talented broadcasters are not unduly inhibited.

Concept of "Administration"

7.24. The Working Group are of the view that the concepts of administration and administrative cadres as they now exist require to be drastically changed. Administration or management is an intrinsic part of any function. Chief engineers manage their deputies, who in turn manage their assistants and so on all the way down to the electricians. The same is true of programme production staff, finance people, and those in all other disciplines. These functional groups do not require anybody from outside to administer them. What they do need is professional guidance on such matters as promotional policies, rules regarding leave and transfers, allowances and disciplinary action. To provide such advice and not take on any executive role is the job of the Personnel Department. The only areas in which the Personnel Department will have a major executive role to perform are training and welfare (housing, medical benefits, etc.). The formulation, though not necessarily the development, of all the specialised inputs in training programmes at all levels is a vital task and one for which Akashvani and Doordarshan are at present poorly equipped.

Selection Procedures

7.25. Another important but non-executive role of the Personnel Department will be to develop sound policies for selection, training, evaluation and promotion, and career planning. The Working Group examined the advisability of having an in-house body in place of the UPSC on the model of the Railway Service Commission. It has been assumed that since the NBT will no longer be a Government or quasi-Government body, recruitment through the UPSC will not be necessary. Nor, considering the artistic and other specialised skills which are to be developed, would the UPSC be a suitable mechanism for this sort of selection.

7.26. The reason for preferring an in-house departmental type of selection system as opposed to an internal equivalent like the Railway Service Commission is that the Working Group is of the view that it tends to weaken the link between a man and the person he works for. However, adequate precautions have to be taken against any nepotism and bias creeping into the system. Therefore, while recommending an internal promotional system, the Group would urge that the following practices be adopted :

- (a) The inclusion in various selection boards of one eminent outsider from a standing panel constituted by the CEB with the approval of the Trustees as an independent external expert who shall take the chair and whose concurrence should be necessary.
- (b) Since most people work not only under their own administrative head but under other equally senior people with whom they may have functional links or under whom they work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, it should be made mandatory that the views of such people who have had a chance to come into contact with the assessee should find a place in the confidential record. This will enable a wider consensus to be developed on the potential of the candidates.
- (c) Clear job descriptions and time bound targets should be prescribed at least once a year against which performance can be measured so that the element of subjectivity is reduced.

7.27. The only exception to this recruitment procedure would be the selection of artists on contract. Here it is recommended that auditioning boards be set up at the Zonal level under the Zonal Director who should be assisted by producers and eminent artists and art critics in making selections and gradings. These boards may also be asked to evaluate programmes at all levels, particularly at the local level, so that really good local programmes can be re-broadcast on the regional or national channels. This would go a long way to stimulate talent and creativity.

7.28. As the broadcasting system expands and grows the possibility of setting up similar Regional auditioning boards may have to be considered.

Financial Management

7.29. The Finance Director has a vital role to play in sustaining financial autonomy and improving financial management. He would oversee finance and budgeting, accounts and cost control, sale of time for commercial broadcasts, project appraisal, and management services such as operational research and management information systems. He should establish suitable purchase procedures in which users such as engineers and programme producers will be represented. The Working Group believe that the financial function in Akashvani and Doordarshan is currently one of the weakest and there is a lamentable lack of cost consciousness and economic and financial analysis of programmes, projects and revenue expenditure in the organisation. Procedures are slow, cumbersome and inefficient. It will also be for the Finance Director to introduce into the whole fabric of the organisation appropriate systems of cost control, rewards for ingenuity and resourcefulness in reducing recurring and capital expenditure and to work out cost-benefit ratios while taking steps to eliminate time-consuming procedural delays. Use of adequate but inexpensive equipment and facilities, savings in overheads, use of external agencies for programmes and technical services whose costs may be lower, and better utilisation of studio time are among other areas where much can be done and in which inter-Zone, inter-Region and inter-Station competitiveness can be encouraged.

7.30. We recommend that internal audit be constituted as an autonomous department under an Internal Auditor with the rank of a General Manager reporting directly to the CGB. Copies of his reports should, however, simultaneously go to the Trustees. This will ensure a certain independence of the internal audit function which would enable the Trustees to keep a watch over the financial integrity of the National Broadcast Organisation.

Audience Research

7.31. Audience research is a critical function and another very neglected area in the present broadcasting system. It is for this reason that we recommend the appointment of a Director of Audience Research as a member of the CEB who would be responsible for organising all categories of audience research including programme ratings and market surveys for commercial broadcasting. His office will service both Akashvani and Doordarshan, as well as the proposed franchise stations. It will also survey the responses to productions by independent programme agencies outside the National Broadcast Organisation. Audience research is a highly skilled and professional

function involving social scientists, statisticians and other personnel. Audience research is also necessary for the External Services of Akashvani.

7.32. As stated earlier, the Director of Audience Research should be required to submit all reports to the Board of Trustees for information.

Legal Services

7.33. The CEB will need certain supporting services. We therefore recommend the appointment of three General Managers each in charge of Legal Services, Planning, and Information Services.

7.34. The functions of the Legal Services Department will be particularly important in so sensitive an organisation which by its very nature can affect the reputation and activities of individuals and institutions.

Corporate Planning

7.35. The primary function of the Planning Department will be to prepare and periodically update the corporate plan of the National Broadcast Organisation over short and long term time horizons—annual, five years, and 15 years. It will need to assess not only the long term options with regard to choice of size, technology and location of hardware e.g., transmitters, studios and interlinkages, but also the likely demand that will be placed on software and R&D, and related implications for long term manpower planning. Broadcast planning will have to cover domestic as well as external broadcasts. It will entail financial forecasts and should build in options for making the organisation increasingly self-reliant. In carrying out all these tasks the General Manager, Planning, will have to work closely with all the other departments. He should be able to present the CEB with a set of alternative short, medium and long-term plans from which it can choose.

Strong Information Wing

7.36. The very nature and sensitivity of its operations necessitate a strong information wing and feedback mechanism for the NBT. The traditional and limited concepts of public relations, meaning periodic press conferences, cocktail parties and newspaper advertisements will not do. The General Manager, Information Services and his colleagues have to be the eyes and ears of the Trustees and the CEB, gauging public opinion on various issues at all times, anticipating problems or criticism, and keeping in close touch with parliamentarians, the Central and State Governments, opinion leaders and others so that they can correct discreetly but effectively misapprehensions and misconceptions about the NBT and its services.

7.37. The General Manager, Information Services should also be responsible for normal public relations, news clippings, documentation and library services, and the archives of the national broadcast organisation. Publications, both programme journals as well as print material in support of the educational and extension broadcasts by Akashvani and Doordarshan would also be under his charge. The programme journals can be greatly improved and there is no reason why they should not earn revenue. It would be useful for the NBT to have one or more House journals for the benefit of its large and far-flung staff who have to be made to feel partners in a common enterprise and kept informed with regard to personnel changes, new developments and so on.

7.38. These three General Managers should have access to the CEB and be invited to Board meetings as and when necessary.

Policy Planning

7.39. The CEB should have no operational facilities whatsoever other than the Central News Room and the External Services of Akashvani, the latter being directly under the Director Akashvani. Both the Editor-in-Chief of the Central News Room and the head of the External Services Division should be of the rank of General Manager.

7.40. For the rest, the CEB should remain a small but highly professional and specialised group helping policy formulation, providing co-ordination and expert advice to the Zones, and generally giving the National Broadcast Organisation the stimulus required to raise its professional and social commitment and its artistic, technological, financial and other standards. For this purpose, the routine administrative work of the Board should be kept to the minimum.

7.41. A high degree of operational responsibility for programme production and transmission must be delegated to the five Zones. The Zones must be seen as management councils rather than as rigid programming or socio-cultural entities. The Working Group would emphasise that there must be the widest possible programme exchange and cultural, extension and technical interaction between the various Zones and Regions. Programatically the links between Maharashtra and West Bengal or Kerala and Kashmir should be as close as between their neighbours in each of their respective Zones. There must be no cultural or programme Balkanisation of the country. Unity is as important as diversity.

Zonal Executive Board

7.42. At each Zone we recommend the establishment of a Zonal Executive Board (ZEB) headed by the Zonal Director and comprising Zonal Controllers of Akashvani, Doordarshan, Engineering, Audience Research, Finance, Personnel and the Regional

Controllers. At this level again we urge collegiate responsibility. Programmes will be produced by the Stations. The principal broadcast station in each State will additionally have an attached newsroom responsible for co-ordinating news gathering and organising current affairs programmes for the regional channels. The Controllers of Akashvani and Doordarshan will perform a staff function in regard to the quality of programmes originating in their Zones.

7.43. We recommend the maximum possible delegation of power from the Zonal headquarters to the Region and Station so that the persons in charge have no alibis for poor work or non-performance. However, guidelines should be provided so that each Zone, Region or local Station does not go entirely its own way.

7.44. The Controller of Doordarshan will be administratively and functionally responsible for all television stations within his jurisdiction. As these are unlikely to exceed 10 to 15 per Zone in the time horizon envisaged, this is not an unreasonable span of control. In the case of radio however, as the number of stations in each Zone increases, it will be necessary to create more Regions.

Regional Controllers

7.45. The Regional Controller will be assisted by officers in charge of Cultural Programmes, Extension, Engineering, Finance and Personnel. His office should be kept small and perform a supportive role, especially with regard to the Local Stations.

The Local Station

7.46. The Local Station envisaged will be a small but self-contained unit. The bulk of the programmes should, however, be prepared by mobile programme technicians or Protechs travelling over the territory, recording in mobile vans or in small recording rooms serviced by portable equipment. These protechs could undertake simple maintenance and feedback functions where possible. The Local Stations should be under a Station Manager with no more than the minimal staff. This might consist of a Programme Officer, an Officer for Extension & Community Listening, a Technical Officer, and an Accounts-Personnel Officer. We recommend encouragement of local and community participation on a part time or even voluntary basis, the extent of these depending upon the availability of local talent and local programmers.

7.47. The Working Group expect that the Local Stations will play a catalytic role in reviving the community listening programme from its present moribund state in most parts of the country. The Station Manager should have not only the responsibility of running his Station but of organising listening or viewing groups within the range of his transmitters.

II

Checks and Balances

7.48. We have discussed the internal structure of the National Broadcast Organisation. This provides for decentralisation and delegation to permit the organisation to function creatively and effectively and to be responsive to its environment. However, if autonomy is to match with accountability there must be checks and balances. It is to this that we now turn.

7.49. Some of the checks and balances will be provided by the Trustees themselves and through such means as internal audit, audience research, and recruitment and auditioning procedures that associate specialists at the National, Zonal and Local levels chosen for their professional competence, stature and integrity. The enfranchisement of approved educational institutions to broadcast through the NBT's Licensing Board will be another check in so far as it introduces a measure of competition.

7.50. There should be functional Programme Advisory Committees at the National, Zonal, Regional and Station levels, membership being widely representative and subject to periodic renewal. These Committees should be carefully selected and their proceedings and recommendations taken seriously. This is more likely to be realised if they are serviced by a small secretariat.

Complaints Board

7.51. We also recommend the establishment of a Complaints Board or Nyaya Mandal, a quasi-judicial body of four persons selected by the Chief Justice of India. The Complaints Board will consist of a Chairman or Nyayadhyaksha appointed for a five-year term and three other Members each of whom will serve three years.

7.52. The Complaints Board will not hear staff grievances for which there must be other procedures, nor matters relating to bad taste or the quality of programmes. It will essentially deal with complaints from the public relating to charges of unjust or unfair treatment including unwarranted invasion of privacy and misrepresentation, provided these complaints are submitted within 30 days of the alleged offence. The detailed procedures may be prescribed by the NBT through suitable regulations. We are, however, of the view that these regulations should require that the Complaints Board will not entertain any complaint unless the complainant waives his right of recourse to the courts in respect of that complaint.

7.53. The Complaints Board shall screen petitions and shall not take cognizance of those that it regards as misdirected or frivolous. Admissible complaints will be

referred to the National Broadcast Organisation for explanation or comment. If no settlement is reached at this stage the Complaints Board shall adjudicate on the matter and give its findings, which it shall make public and available to the Press without delay. Akashvani or Doordarshan, as the case may be, should be obliged to provide programme time as the occasion demands to present the findings of the Complaints Board. These findings should also be published in the NBT's programme journals.

7.54. The Chairman of the Complaints Board should have the status and qualifications not less than that of a High Court Judge. Both the Chairman as well as Members of the Board should be removed only on the same grounds and in accordance with the same procedures as are applicable to High Court Judges.

New Broadcast Code

7.55. The AIR Code of 1970 which was superseded during the Emergency has now been restored. Several witnesses who appeared before the Working Group were of the view that the Code was too restrictive. We broadly concur with this view and recommend that the NBT should evolve a code more in keeping with the times.

7.56. The organisational structure we have suggested is simple and functional, with a high degree of delegation and decentralisation. It has a built-in system of accountability, both internal and external, and is capable of growth and adaptation. While the NBT will no doubt devise means of constant evaluation of its performance, there should be an overall review by a Broadcast Commission every seven years. It should however be possible for the NBT to introduce work-a-day modifications in the light of actual experience and unforeseen requirements through its own Rules of Business.

ANNEXURE

The New Zones

A. AKASHVANI

Zone
(a) Southern

States
Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

Tamil Nadu

Kerala

Pondicherry
Lakshadweep
Rajasthan

(b) Western

Gujarat

Maharashtra

Stations

1. Hyderabad
2. Vijyawada
3. Visakhapatnam
4. Cuddapah
5. Bangalore
6. Bhadravati
7. Dharwar
8. Gulbarga
9. Mangalore/Udipi
10. Mysore
11. Coimbatore
12. Madras
13. Tiruchirapalli
14. Tirunelveli
15. Alleppey
16. Kozhi Kode
17. Trichur
18. Trivandrum
19. Pondicherry
-
20. Jaipur
21. Jodhpur
22. Udaipur
23. Ajmer
24. Bikaner
25. Ahmedabad
26. Rajkot
27. Vadodara
28. Bhuj
29. Aurangabad
30. Nagpur
31. Parbhani
32. Pune
33. Ratnagiri

		34. Sangli
		35. Bombay
		36. Jalgaon
	Goa	37. Panaji
(c) Central	Bihar	38. Bhagalpur
		39. Patna
		40. Ranchi
		41. Darbhanga
	Orissa	42. Cuttack
		43. Jeypore
		44. Sambalpur
	Madhya Pradesh	45. Jagdalpur
		46. Raipur
		47. Rewa
		48. Chattarpur
		49. Bhopal
		50. Indore
		51. Ambikapur
		52. Gwalior
		53. Jabalpur
(d) Northern	Uttar Pradesh	54. Lucknow
		55. Kanpur
		56. Allahabad
		57. Gorakhpur
		58. Najibabad
		59. Mathura
		60. Rampur
		61. Varanasi
	Chandigarh	62. Chandigarh
	Delhi	63. Delhi
	Haryana	64. Rohtak
	Punjab	65. Jullundur
	Himachal Pradesh	66. Simla
	J & K	67. Jammu
		68. Srinagar
		69. Leh
(e) Eastern	West Bengal	70. Calcutta
		71. Kurseang
		72. Siliguri
	Sikkim	—
	Assam	73. Gauhati
		74. Silchar
		75. Dibrugarh
	Meghalaya	76. Shillong
	Nagaland	77. Kohima
	Manipur	78. Imphal

Tripura
Mizoram
Arunachal Pradesh

79. Agartala
80. Aizawl
81. Tawang
82. Tezu
83. Pasighat
84. Port Blair

Andaman &
Nicobar Islands

Zone	Akashvani Stations	Estimated Population (1976) (in millions)
Southern	19	150.2
Western	18	116.7
Central	16	133.4
Northern	16	136.6
Eastern	15	72.5
Total	84	609.4

B. Doordarshan (including centres under installation)

Zone

(a) Southern

(b) Western

(c) Central

(d) Northern

(e) Eastern

Doordarshan Kendras

1. Madras
2. Hyderabad
3. Gulbarga
1. Bombay-Pune
2. Ahmedabad-Pij
3. Jaipur
1. Sambalpur
2. Muzaffarpur
3. Raipur
1. Delhi—Mussoorie
2. Srinagar
3. Amritsar
4. Lucknow
5. Jullundur
6. Kanpur
1. Calcutta

CHAPTER 8

The Financial Dimension

8.1. A running theme throughout all discussions on the restructuring of the broadcasting system is whether an autonomous radio and television system can be financially self contained and commercially viable. There is a basic presumption behind this anxiety about financial viability, a presumption which needs to be examined a little more carefully. It is considered almost axiomatic that an institution cannot really be autonomous unless it enjoys financial independence. The converse of this proposition is the age old belief that he who pays the piper calls the tune.

8.2. It is possible to question this assumption. To begin with, in a system like ours which is based on national planning, every institution irrespective of its ownership or financial independence is caught in the web of national thinking and national policy. For instance, private companies which may not require any financial support from Government are subject to official control because of the overall system of industrial licensing, exchange controls, import-export restrictions, the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, the provisions of the Company Law, labour legislation, and so forth. The financial autonomy of these companies does not therefore give them immunity from State intervention where such intervention is a part of public policy.

8.3. On the other side of the coin, there is a number of institutions in the country which are by no means financially viable or independent of the Government from the point of view of resources. Yet these institutions have developed and are intended to develop autonomously and act as a counterweight to the arbitrary power of the State. The Supreme Court and the High Courts are not financially independent and depend entirely on funds voted by Parliament. Yet the judiciary is expected to maintain its independence. Among other institutions of this kind which are an intrinsic part of the constitutional structure are the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General and that of the Chief Election Commission. The Chief Vigilance Commissioner is also autonomous though he does not have a similar constitutional status. These institutions

have been created consciously and deliberately so as to provide checks and balances against the exercise of unbridled executive power. The fact that none of them have independent resources has not diminished their basic autonomy.

8.4. It is therefore entirely conceivable that an autonomous National Broadcast Trust can develop traditions of independence and autonomy, even though it may depend on grants or subsidies from the State. Indeed, voting of annual grants by Parliament could provide an in-built mechanism for debating and evaluating the performance of the organisation. This would ensure accountability to the people.

Present Financial Picture

8.5. Even so, a measure of financial autonomy would be of advantage and would allow for flexibility and organisational confidence. Let us therefore look at the existing and potential financial position of Akashvani and Doordarshan. Neither organisation maintains its accounts as companies do; so one cannot produce balance-sheets and profit and loss accounts in the commercial sense of these terms. The accounts of Akashvani and Doordarshan are based on the traditional Government pattern in terms of annual expenditures, both revenue and capital, though a proforma commercial account is prepared once a year. The Annexure gives a brief summary of the expenditure and income of Akashvani and Doordarshan over the past few years. These figures tend to reveal that the Government's revenue expenditure on them is not very much more than what it earns on running these two organisations.

8.6. In order to get a clearer picture of the finances of Akashvani and Doordarshan we should reformulate their income and expenditure in normal commercial terms. This would mean :

- (a) The annual operating expenditure must be clearly distinguished from capital investment.
- (b) Capital investment must be reflected in annual operating expenditure in the shape of interest and depreciation.
- (c) The transfers and suspense accounts involved in the governmental system should be eliminated.

Capital Assets

8.7. The capital investment in Akashvani and Doordarshan up to 1976-77 was of the order of Rs. 75 crores. This expenditure was incurred over a considerable period of years. The block assets as on April 1, 1977 amounted to Rs. 52 crores approxi-

mately, the balance of Rs. 23 crores representing depreciation up to date. The courses that could be adopted are :

- (1) To transfer these assets to the NBT as Government equity on which dividends could be paid to Government if profits are made.
- (2) To transfer these assets and treat the cost as a long term loan at a stipulated rate of interest, the option to repay the loan resting with the new institution. Payments of interest could be the last charge on profits.
- (3) To treat the cost of the assets transferred partly as equity and partly as loan on the pattern of the public sector.
- (4) To transfer the assets as a grant to the NBT under an Act of Parliament with profits, if any, being ploughed back for expansion of the broadcasting system.

If the assets were transferred as a 100 per cent loan from Government to the new institution, as in the second alternative, the rate of interest could be fixed at a modest figure of seven per cent keeping in mind Government's own borrowing rates. If commercial rates were to be taken for long term loans, the interest might have to be fixed at about 10 per cent. At seven per cent, the annual burden on the institution would be of the order of Rs. 3.64 crores, and at 10 per cent about Rs. 5.20 crores. This would have to be shown as an annual operating expenditure. The National Broadcast Trust would also have to provide for depreciation of the assets as part of its running expenses. The rates of depreciation would naturally vary according to the nature of the installation or equipment. On a rough computation, the amount to be provided for depreciation annually would be of the order of Rs. 5.20 crores, a figure that would go up with further expansion of the new institution.

8.8. Adding interest or depreciation to the annual operating expenses, which would include wages and salaries, consumable stores, rentals and so forth, the following picture emerges :

	<i>In crores</i>
1. Operating expenses in 1976-77	Rs. 36.18
2. Interest charges @ 7%	Rs. 3.64
3. Depreciation at 10%	Rs. 5.20
Total	<u>Rs. 45.02</u>

8.9. As against this, the income of Akashvani and Doordarshan in 1976-77 was :

	<i>In crores</i>
1. Net revenue from licence fees	Rs. 23.65
2. Revenue from commercial services	Rs. 8.00
	<u>Rs. 31.65</u>

Excise on Broadcast Receivers

8.10. However, this still remains an incomplete picture of the true earnings from the broadcasting system. It is to hear and view the programmes of Akashvani and Doordarshan that individuals acquire radio and television sets. While the licence fees for such sets are shown to the credit of the broadcasting system, the excise duties which Government collects on the production and sale of receivers is credited to the general revenues. The figures of excise duty collections for the past five years are as follows :—

	Revenue realisation from		Total
	TV sets	Radio sets	(Rs. in crores)
1972-73	0.73	5.07	5.80
1973-74	1.70	4.95	6.65
1974-75	3.56	6.44	10.00
1975-76	4.13	4.74	8.87
1976-77	4.53	5.40	9.93

There could be a case for treating the excise collected on radio and television sets as part of the income of the broadcasting system, Government being only a collection agency. It could even be argued that the broadcasting system should have a right to influence official policy in the fixation of these excise duties as they have a direct bearing on the production and sales of sets and consequently on the success and growth of the broadcasting system.

Balance Sheet

8.11. With these moderations, the following revised picture of income and expenditure emerges :

Year	Income	Expenditure			(Rs. in crores)	
		Rev. Exp.	Block Assets	Interest on block assets @ 7%	Depreciation on block assets @ 10%	Total Expenditure
1972-73	26.17	14.97	40.82	2.85	4.08	21.90
1973-74	28.40	14.92	34.34	2.40	3.43	20.75
1974-75	33.93	16.70	40.60	2.84	4.06	23.76
1975-76	38.11	22.06	46.90	3.20	4.69	30.03
1976-77	41.68	36.18	52.00	3.64	5.20	45.02
(Estimate)						
1977-78	45.36	40.83	60.20	4.21	6.02	51.06
(Estimate)						

Note : The capital expenditure has been excluded since depreciation at 10 per cent has been included in the expenditure figures. It will thus be seen that while the expenditure including depreciation and interest at seven per cent was less than the income, including the excise duty collected on radio/television sets, up to 1975-76, the position changed from 1976-77 onwards when the expenditure exceeded income by almost the amount of interest chargeable.

8.12. The prospects for additional income generation would appear to be bright. The commercialisation of some of the broadcasting services has been on a fairly restrictive basis and there has been considerable inhibition in this regard. Radio advertising for instance, is restricted to the Vividh Bharati Programmes. This is further discussed in Chapter 9, 'Commercial Broadcasting'.

8.13. The collection of licence fees on radio and television sets also requires to be looked into. There is evidently considerable leakage and it would be difficult to state categorically that the vast majority of owners of sets are in fact paying licence fees regularly. This is discussed in Chapter 10, "Broadcast Receiver Licences".

8.14. We are making certain recommendations regarding the rationalisation of the advertising tariff on Akashvani and Doordarshan's commercial services and an upward revision of licence fees on radio and television receiver sets. There is also scope for earnings on the sale of programme journals and advertisements therein, programme sales, the production and sale of discs and tapes and studio rentals.

Outright Transfer of Assets

8.15. After giving a great deal of thought to the various alternatives, we have come to the conclusion that it would be best to transfer the assets of Akashvani and Doordarshan as an outright grant to the National Broadcast Trust by an Act of Parliament. This alternative has the merit of being simple, certain and complete. It would spare the NBT paying either interest or dividends to the Government on highly depreciated assets, some of which, like a 10 KW transmitter in Bombay, being of 1938 vintage. Many of the transmitters and some of the other hardware either wholly dedicated or otherwise used for the External Services of Akashvani since Independence, can also be regarded as a legitimate charge on the Government for projecting the country's image abroad. We have discussed this aspect in the Chapter 14, "The External Services".

8.16. The question of issuing equity and paying dividends on profits would not then arise. We envisage the NBT as a unique national trust different from the ordinary run of manufacturing, trading, and service corporations or utilities. The idea of an equity holding does not fit in with the concept of a trust. Nor can there be any obligation to pay dividends on the income of what is intended to be a non-profit public service.

8.17. For the same reason, we would expect that the National Broadcast Trust will not be liable to corporate taxation. Its profits, if any, will be ploughed back for programme improvement and system expansion along lines approved by Parliament which will scrutinise its annual report and accounts.

Meeting the Revenue Deficit

8.18. We see the possibility of some difficulty in earmarking excise duties on broadcast receivers for the NBT as this kind of reservation would affect the principle of the Consolidated Fund to which all revenues are credited. One alternative might be to convert the excise into a dedicated surcharge or cess and for Government to collect this amount on behalf of the NBT. There is perhaps a precedent for such a dedicated cess in the case of the road tax which is made available for improvements in the road system.

8.19. We would however recommend that rather than levy any surcharge or cess, which may have larger tax implications, the Government should agree to meet the NBT's revenue deficit for a stipulated period. Historically, the revenue deficit over the past few years has in fact been roughly equivalent to the amount of excise collected on broadcast receiving sets.

8.20. The Government's commitment to bridge the revenue deficit may initially be limited to a period of five years after which the NBT should be expected to stand on its own feet or raise additional resources by charging for broadcast time made available by it to various users, including the Central and State Governments. We have attempted to forecast the approximate quantum of the deficit which is likely to be involved in the next five years and which, in our opinion, should be made good by the Government. Annexure I indicates a forecast of expenditure and income of Akashvani and Doordarshan based on the traditional budgetary system. Annexure II indicates a forecast of the budgetary deficit for the years 1978-79 to 1982-83 in commercial terms. It will be seen that the deficit will range from Rs. 11.59 crores in 1978-79 to Rs. 42.64 crores in 1982-83. In this computation, no provision has been made for depreciation. If an adequate provision for depreciation is made, the deficits will, in fact, range from Rs. 18.88 crores to Rs. 63.14 crores.

Financing Capital Expansion

8.21. There, however, still remains the problem of financing the further expansion of the broadcasting system. One option would be to adopt the simple expedient of taking further loans from the Government on reasonable interest rates. Another would be for the National Broadcast Trust to borrow in the open market by issuing long term bonds or debentures. We are inclined to support this latter proposition as this might help to bring about better financial discipline and more realistic investment decisions. However, the NBT is not primarily intended to earn profits, nor is it likely to do so in the immediate future in view of the substantial outlays that will be required for expanding and modernising the system and making good several obvious deficiencies to which we make reference. The floating or long term broadcast bonds must there-

fore for some years remain a limited option for raising relatively modest sums, mostly as bridging loans. We would recommend that the Trust be authorised to borrow from the market or even from the Government at low rates of interest against its capital assets.

Errata

<i>Page</i>	<i>Para</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
72	8.20	10	Rs. 11.59 crores	Rs. 10.87 crores
		10	Rs. 42.64 crores	Rs. 29.54 crores
		12	Rs. 18.88 crores	Rs. 18.16 crores
		13	Rs. 63.14 crores	Rs. 50.04 crores
	8.21	10	or	of

expect a broadcast Plan of the order of Rs. 130 crores of, may be, even Rs. 200 crores allowing for an accelerated development programme. This would imply a pro rata outlay of Rs. 40 crores per annum over the next five years. If, instead, the Government were notionally to create a National Broadcast Trust Fund of, say, Rs. 600 crores, which would be presumed to be invested in Government securities, the annual interest that Government would be liable to make over to the NBT would be of the order of Rs. 40 crores per annum, which would be no more than the Government's assumed annual commitment under the Sixth Plan.

8.24. The constitution of a National Broadcast Trust Fund would thus ensure a steady capital income at least of Rs. 40 crores per annum in perpetuity, this amount being shown in the NBT's annual budget which would in any case come before Parliament in the normal course together with its annual report and accounts. This would give the NBT a certain, but by no means absolute, measure of financial independence and would enable it to finance a core expansion programme without undue uncertainty. The Group, however, recognised that this proposal was indeed an unusual one and would introduce an entirely novel concept in the Government's financing and budgetary operations, although the principle of endowment funds is well known in the case of private trusts, charities, universities and other institutions. The proposal was therefore not pursued.

8.25. Since the creation of a NBT Fund postulates a willingness on the part of the Government and Parliament to maintain the broadcasting system in good order as a national service, the Working Group went on to consider an alternative on more orthodox lines. This is that the proposed NBT should, after it comes into being, prepare a long term plan for the expansion and renewal of the broadcasting system over a perspective of, say, 10-15 years, broken down into two or three five-year segments. It could then pose its five year plans for capital expenditure to the Planning Commission and Government and secure a commitment for budgetary support as a capital grant at reasonable rates of interest. Assurance of such a block grant would in the circumstances imply a commitment on the part of the Government to make available a certain amount to the NBT each year over a five year period, the detailed capital budget being determined and actually voted upon from year to year.

Non-Lapsable Fund

8.26. In either case, the Government should make over to the NBT, at its very inception two funds which it has already approved for broadcasting. The first of these is the Akashvani and Doordarshan (Commercial Revenue) Non-Lapsable Fund set up on April 1, 1975 in order to provide additional financial resources to Akashvani and Doordarshan from out of the net revenues derived by Government from the commercial services of the two broadcast organisations.

8.27. According to the rules for the utilisation of the commercial revenues of Akashvani and Doordarshan a lump sum provision equal to the estimated net revenue from these two organisations for the years 1975-76 and 1976-77 was to be transferred to a separate sub-head called "Transfer to Akashvani and Doordarshan Commercial Revenues Non-Lapsable Fund" through a supplementary Demand for Grants. In subsequent years, a provision equal to the estimated net revenue for the concerned years plus the differences between the estimated net revenue and the actual net revenue for the preceding years, if any, is to be transferred to the Fund through the annual Demands for Grants. In the event of the estimated net revenue for any year falling short of the actual revenue for the concerned year, an appropriate adjustment in the transfer of the Fund is to be made at the time of formulating the Demands for Grants in subsequent years.

8.28. The expenditure incurred or to be incurred from the Non-Lapsable Fund is to be appropriately exhibited in the annual Demands for Grants by means of a deduct entry. The amounts made available from this source are not to be taken into account while making budget and Plan allocations to Akashvani and Doordarshan.

8.29. The amounts drawn from this Fund are to be utilised for recurring and non-recurring expenditures on improvements of software and hardware facilities and for

experimental projects in Akashvani and Doordarshan. Expenditures above given ceilings are subject to approval by various higher authorities.

8.30. With the current credit outstanding and the estimated contribution to the Fund in 1978-79 by Akashvani and Doordarshan, there is likely to be a sum of Rs. 26.49 crores in the Non-Lapsable Fund. As against this, expenditure up to date and that estimated for 1978-79 in both Akashvani and Doordarshan is likely to be of the order of Rs. 2.90 crores thus leaving an estimated credit balance of about Rs. 23.59 crores in the Non-Lapsable Fund on April 1, 1979.

8.31. We would recommend that this entire amount be transferred to the National Broadcast Trust as an outright grant.

Replacement and Renewal

8.32. A second financial commitment recently made with regard to Akashvani and Doordarshan is a notional Replacement and Renewal "Fund" based on the report of an inter-ministerial group on the replacement and renewal of various categories of equipment used in Akashvani and Doordarshan which was subsequently approved by Government. The amount so approved for replacement and renewal over the period 1977-82 totals Rs. 9.80 crores for Akashvani and Rs. 2.25 crores for Doordarshan, making a grand total of Rs. 12.05 crores, of which a sum of Rs. 75 lakhs is to be expended in 1977-78 and Rs. 1.69 crores in 1978-79.

8.33. In view of the Government's commitment to such a notional Renewal and Replacement "Fund", we would recommend that it guarantee this amount in annual capital grants to the NBT.

Our Recommendations

8.34. In sum, we recommend the transfer to the NBT of all the existing assets of Akashvani and Doordarshan as an outright grant, against which the Trust may be entitled to borrow. The revenue income of the NBT will be made up of its augmented licence fees and commercial revenues, any revenue deficit in its budget being guaranteed by the Government for an initial period of at least five years, keeping in mind the excise contribution on radio and television receiver sets that the broadcast system has made and will continue to make on an expanding basis to the national exchequer. For its capital budget, the NBT should receive as an outright grant, the amount outstanding in the Non-Lapsable Fund as well as annual grants until 1982 of all the amounts already agreed to under the heading of Replacement and Renewal for Akashvani and Doordarshan. The NBT should prepare a long term capital budget, the first five year segment of which should be discussed with the Planning Commission and Government

on the basis of which the Government should be committed to a block grant made available in annually budgeted amounts in accordance with a phased programme.

8.35. We have discussed in Chapter 19 certain alternative proposals for the long term expansion of Akashvani and Doordarshan. The tentatively approved Akashvani 14-Year "ITU Plan" 1975-89 is estimated to cost Rs. 715 crores at current prices, while the projected INSAT plan for a hybrid satellite-cum-terrestrial approach to the expansion of television envisages an outlay of Rs. 371 crores by 1985. Investment of this magnitude, though large by the orders of magnitude of past outlays on the development of Akashvani and Doordarshan, are extremely modest in relation to the massive investments already made in single projects or corporations, let alone whole sectors of activity. Nevertheless, such investments must be anticipated and suitably provided for while setting up the NBT.

8.36. In Annexure I a forecast of capital requirements has been made on the basis of certain Sixth Plan projections made by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. We recommend that the NBT, once constituted may review this plan and seek higher allocations for the expansion of the broadcasting system as necessary.

8.37. We have not gone into the details of the financial management of Akashvani and Doordarshan. There are many aspects of organisation and finance which would bear scrutiny such as the adoption of salary scales, compensation terms, expenses on maintenance, and the utilisation of facilities. The NBT should make critical studies of all aspects of the financial management of Akashvani and Doordarshan so as to make the system cost-effective. A strong and capable Finance Director who is well conversant with modern management will, therefore, be a key appointment on the new Central Executive Board, apart from the financial wisdom that the Trustees must bring to bear on the future planning and operation of the national broadcast system.

ANNEXURE I

Forecast of Expenditure and Income of Akashvani and Doordarshan
from 1978-79 to 1982-83

(Rs. in crores)

EXPENDITURE

Year	Revenue	Capital	Total	Remarks
1978-79	48.97	10.31	59.28	(i) Figures of revenue expenditure for 1978-79 taken from Accepted Budget Estimates but excluding figures of recoveries and contributions to Non-lapsable Fund and Renewal & Replacement Fund. Those of 1979-80 onwards are on the basis of (i) 5 per cent increase on the Non-Plan expenditure for the previous year and (ii) Proposals for Rolling Plan. (ii) Figures of Capital expenditure are on the basis of accepted estimates for 1978-79 and Rolling Plan proposals. (iii) Interest and depreciation charges have not been included.
1979-80	54.69	26.05	80.74	
1980-81	63.37	39.21	102.58	
1981-82	71.68	52.08	123.76	
1982-83	78.64	59.57	138.21	

INCOME

Year	Net Revenue from licence	Gross revenue from commercial services	Revenue from other sources	Total Revenue	Remarks
1978-79	29.00	9.00	0.10	38.10	Increase in revenue from licence fee is estimated at Rs. 2.25 crores per year on the basis of average increase between 1972-73 and R.E. 77-78. Increase in revenue from commercial service has been taken at Rs. 0.50 crores per annum. No increase is taken into account in respect of revenue from other sources. The figures have been worked out accordingly.
1979-80	31.25	9.50	0.10	40.85	
1980-81	33.50	10.00	0.10	43.60	
1981-82	35.75	10.50	0.10	46.35	
1982-83	38.00	11.00	0.10	49.10	

ANNEXURE II

Forecast of Budgetary Deficit for the Year 1978-79 to 1982-83 (Rs. in crores)

Year	Rev. Exp.	Capital Investment	Receipts	Deficit (—)
1	2	3	4	5
1978-79	48.97	10.31	38.10	(—) 10.87
1979-80	54.69	26.05	40.85	(—) 13.84
1980-81	63.37	39.21	43.60	(—) 19.77
1981-82	71.68	52.08	46.35	(—) 25.33
1982-83	78.64	59.57	49.10	(—) 29.54

Note : This does not include depreciation charges. With depreciation at 10% on assets transferred and capital investments made from year to year annual deficits would be as follows :-

Year	Depreciation	Deficit (—)
1978-79	7.29	(—) 18.16
1979-80	9.16	(—) 23.00
1980-81	12.17	(—) 31.94
1981-82	16.16	(—) 41.49
1982-83	20.50	(—) 50.04

CHAPTER 9

Commercial Broadcasting

9.1. The history of commercial broadcasting in India goes back to the year 1927 when the Indian Broadcasting Company commenced operation. The Company financed itself through advertisements in the form of spots and sponsored programmes for about seven years. However, with the formation of All India Radio, this commercial revenue was given up as AIR held that broadcasting was primarily a social service, particularly in a developing country. This view prevailed after Independence too, until the Chanda Committee on Radio and Television in 1966 recommended the acceptance of advertisements on the proposed Vividh Bharati channel "for additional resources for expanding the network and improving the programmes". It was of the opinion that Akashvani's fears about deterioration in the quality of programmes were not well founded.

9.2. Accepting the recommendations of the Chanda Committee, the Government decided to introduce commercial advertisements on the Vividh Bharati medium wave channel on the Bombay-Pune-Nagpur beam from November 1, 1967. Encouraged by the initial success, Akashvani subsequently extended its commercial service to some other beams as well. The present network of commercial broadcasting centres consists of 28 stations, out of which 15 are main stations and the rest link stations.

<i>Main Stations</i>	<i>Link Stations</i>
(i) Bombay	— Pune—Nagpur
(ii) Calcutta	
(iii) Delhi	
(iv) Chandigarh	— Jullundur
(v) Kanpur	— Lucknow—Allahabad
(vi) Ahmedabad	— Rajkot

(vii) Hyderabad	— Vijayawada
(viii) Bangalore	— Dharwar
(ix) Madras	— Tiruchi
(x) Bhopal	— Indore
(xi) Patna	— Ranchi
(xii) Jaipur	— Jodhpur
(xiii) Trivandrum	— Calicut
(xvi) Srinagar	
(xv) Cuttack	

Aims and Codes

9.3. The aims and objectives of commercial broadcasting in India, the Working Group was informed,¹ can be broadly summarised as follows:

- (a) To provide a channel for additional revenue.
- (b) To help increase production, both agricultural and industrial, particularly of commodities meant for mass consumption.
- (c) To inform consumers of the availability of their requirements.
- (d) To encourage healthy competition amongst producers.

9.4. To ensure that the advertisements broadcast over the commercial service are in keeping with national policies, a Code for Commercial Broadcasting was introduced. It spells out the general rules of conduct in advertising, discusses the procedure for the enforcement of the Code, gives excerpts from the Code of Ethics issued by the Advertising Council of India and incorporates the Code of standards in relation to the advertisement of medicines and treatments. It also discusses standards of practice for radio advertising as well as for advertising agencies. Some of the salient features of the Code are:

- (a) Advertising should be so designed as to conform to the laws of the country and should not offend against morality, decency and the religious susceptibilities of the people.
- (b) No advertisement should be permitted:
 - (i) which derides any race, caste, colour, creed or nationality except for the specific purpose of effective dramatisation in combating prejudice;

¹ Note : The background and current status of commercial broadcasting narrated in this Chapter were furnished to the Working Group by Akashvani and Doordarshan.

- (ii) which is against any of the objectives, principles or provisions of the Constitution;
 - (iii) which tends to incite people to crime or to promote disorder, violence, or breach of law;
 - (iv) which presents criminality as desirable or furnishes details of crime or initiation thereof;
 - (v) which may adversely affect friendly relations with foreign States;
 - (vi) which exploits national emblems, the Constitution, or the person or personality of national leaders or State dignitaries;
 - (vii) on cigarettes and tobacco products; and
 - (viii) on gold and jewellery other than artificial jewellery.
- The text of the Code is to be found in Appendix J.

Sale of Time

9.5. Ten per cent of the total transmission time of the Vividh Bharati service, namely, 12 hours and 45 minutes on week days and 13 hours and 20 minutes on Sundays, is allotted to advertisements over Akashvani. To begin with, it was the responsibility of the Central Sales Unit, Bombay, to sell the entire saleable time. Later, with a view to accommodating the requirements of small local advertisers as well as items of topical interest, it was decided to allot 20 percent of the total saleable time to the Commercial Broadcasting Stations at Delhi, Madras and Calcutta. All other Station Directors (Commercial) can sell up to 10 per cent of their saleable time, except in Bombay where the entire saleable time is sold by the Central Sales Unit.

9.6. The entire saleable time is divided into three categories Super 'A', 'A' and 'C', category 'B' having been abolished in August 1973, when it was merged with 'A'. This categorisation is based on the popularity of the programmes, those which have an audience rating of 25 per cent and above being charged as Super 'A' or 50 per cent over the 'A' time rate.

9.7. The rate structure is related to the number of sets tuned into programmes in any particular service area, the strength of the transmitter, its area of coverage, the pressure of bookings in given time slots and so on. The rates for spots are the highest in Bombay-Pune-Nagpur, followed by Calcutta and Delhi. Rates for broadcast at all other stations are uniform. In respect of sponsored programmes, the rates are highest in Bombay followed by Delhi. The other stations have uniform rates. The rates were last revised in July 1975.

9.8. Concessions are only offered to bona fide small-scale industries, which get a 15 per cent, discount provided they come directly (and not through Agencies) and pay

in advance, and for advertisements on a single channel basis, when time is available except in Bombay and Madras. The rates charged are pre-revised rates i.e. those charged prior to July, 1975.

Spots and Sponsored Programmes

9.9. The commercials going on the air consist of spots and sponsored programmes. The spots are of 7-second, 15-second, 30-second and 60-second duration. The seven-second spot is popularly known as 'the time check', and is generally voiced by the announcer on duty. The 'time check' combines the announcement of the exact time with the broadcast of the commercial message. The other spots are spoken-word, musical jingles and the like. The majority of spots are of 15-second duration. All spots and sponsored programmes are screened before they are accepted for broadcast. For medicine spots, there is a separate screening committee. Due care is taken to ensure that the spots are qualitatively presentable and are in keeping with the Code for Commercial Broadcasting. Spots are inserted in between two songs or programmes at suitable punctuation points. No breaks are permitted. Each capsule contains a maximum of three spots, but no capsule may exceed 75 seconds.

9.10. Sponsored programmes were first introduced in May 1970. These are sponsored by advertisers and include skits, features, quiz programmes, musical items and sports tours. Most of the sponsored programmes are based on film music. Akashvani charges 30 per cent extra for programmes based purely or mainly on Indian film music. Audience research findings reveal that some of the sponsored programmes have proved very popular. They may not be directly related to the manufacture or service of the advertiser but are intended to secure goodwill and build up an institutional image of social purpose and excellence. The commercial service has started commercial sponsorship of important games and Cricket Test Matches played in India and abroad. It sold all the events in the Olympic series and running commentaries on the Test Matches played between India and New Zealand and between India and the MCC. The sponsored Test commentaries are the only commercials allowed on the primary channels of Akashvani, other than Vividh Bharati.

Procurement of Advertisements

9.11. Akashvani conducts its commercial business mainly through advertising agencies, of which 219 are at present on the rolls of the Commercial Broadcasting Service. These agencies have been categorised into three groups on the basis of how long they have been in the field as well as their financial soundness. Accredited (90) and recognised (84) agencies are allowed a commission of 15 per cent, whereas Canvassers (45) are given a commission of 6.25 per cent on the business they place with Akashvani. Accredited Agencies are also allowed a credit period for making their payments.

In their case, bills are issued to the Agencies 15 days in advance of the month in which the advertisement is booked for broadcast, and are payable before the close of the month following the month of the broadcast. Recognised Agencies and Canvassers pay their dues in advance. Advertisers are also free to approach Akashvani directly for the broadcast of their advertisements on advance payment. These are called Direct Advertisers. As an incentive, advertisers are paid a discount on a graded scale by Akashvani for billings above Rs. 50,000 per annum. This incentive is paid in the form of air time and not in cash. During 1975-76 approximately 74.18 per cent of the business was given by Accredited Agencies, 20.92 per cent by Recognised Agencies, 1.27 per cent by Canvassers and 3.63 per cent by Direct Advertisers.

9.12. Akashvani studios can be given on hire to advertisers and agencies for recording commercial advertisements on the basis of a schedule of charges.

9.13. A small audience research unit is attached to the Central Sales Unit of the Commercial Broadcasting Service at Bombay.

Growth of Revenues

9.14. Revenue from the Commercial Service increased from Rs.4.69 crores in 1972-73 to Rs.6.25 crores in 1975-76. This increase was in fact due to the rate hike in July 1975 and the commissioning of ten new CBS Centres.

9.15. During the years 1972 to 1975, there was a steady increase in revenue from the old centres. After the revision of rates, however, there has been a decline in revenue from Chandigarh-Jullundur, Bangalore-Dharwar, Ahmedabad-Rajkot and Kanpur-Lucknow-Allahabad. In terms of sale of time there has been a decline at all the centres after the introduction of the revised rate structure in 1975. Other factors listed by Central Sales Unit as being responsible for the decline in the sale of time include:

- (i) Insistence on price tagging in the commercials, which is not possible, when a whole range of products is advertised. The prices of some commodities keep fluctuating so that it is almost impossible for the advertiser or agency to mention a stable price in expensive recordings, which cannot be changed frequently. Advertisers are reluctant to invest in additional commercial time for spots, mainly because of the compulsion to include prices. Since retail prices are not mentioned in commercial spots on television and in newspaper advertisements, Akashvani compares adversely with them.
- (ii) The introduction of advertisements on Doordarshan from the beginning of 1976 eroded the revenues of Akashvani's Commercial Broadcasting Service.

(iii) Inadequacy of staff in the CSU and the Directorate with even the sanctioned strength not being provided.

(iv) Cumbersome and rigid rules for granting of status to Advertising Agencies.

Advertising Over Doordarshan

9.16. Doordarshan's commercial service was introduced with effect from January 1, 1976 over the Bombay—Pune, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Amritsar and Srinagar stations. Initially only static slides accompanied by audio track were permitted to be telecast and sponsored programmes were barred. However, the Government subsequently permitted commercials in movie format, including those with sponsored programmes, as well as slides-with-sound.

9.17. At present, advertising on Doordarshan is restricted to spots. Ever since spots were introduced in August 1976, there has been practically no sponsorship, except portions of Cricket Test Matches, a Lawn Tennis Match at Calcutta, and a solitary instance of a fashion parade in Delhi and Bombay.

9.18. The estimated quarterly gross income at present is about Rs. 50 lakhs as against a quarterly gross revenue of Rs. 10 lakhs at the start. There is, however, much scope for increasing revenue. The following propositions were put to the Working Group by Doordarshan :

- (i) The Commercial Service should be allowed to work on commercial lines with the necessary powers and independence.
- (ii) The present rate structure is not related to the number of television sets in the coverage area of a Doordarshan Kendra. The rate structure needs to be related to the number of viewers.
- (iii) With professional freedom and proper facilities, the quality and structure of the programmes can be made more attractive to advertisers without sacrificing their educational and social purpose.
- (iv) The service is not adequately staffed and does not have a proper sales promotion organisation.
- (v) There is no feedback machinery.
- (vi) There are inadequate studio and other facilities for advertisers to prepare and test advertisement spots and, more particularly, sponsored programmes. If this facility is provided, revenues can be substantially increased, especially through sponsored programmes.

9.19. Positive steps on these lines, we were told, would go a long way towards the sale of the entire permissible television commercial time (10 per cent of the total

transmission) which would bring in about Rs. 6 crores per annum. Revenue from this source would further increase with the expansion of the television service in the country.

Views of Advertisers

9.20. Commercial broadcasting has come to stay. The question now is principally one of developing organisational efficiency, rationalising the existing structure of rates and other terms and conditions and examining future prospects and possibilities.

9.21. It was suggested to us by a number of witnesses, including advertising representatives, and in some responses to our Questionnaire, that commercial broadcasting should be permitted on the primary channels of Akashvani in addition to the Vividh Bharati channel and that commercial time should be increased from 10 per cent of the transmissions to a higher level.

9.22. Even now, there is a tendency for advertisers to complain about the intrusion of rural programmes in the commercial service, whether of Akashvani or Doordarshan. This, however, is understandable because the bulk of the Akashvani commercial service is on 1 KW medium wave transmitters around urban centres. The only higher power commercial transmitters are at Bombay and Calcutta (20 KW), Delhi (10 KW) and Madras (2.5 KW). Only about 10 per cent of the country's population, largely urban, is covered by Vividh Bharati. Rural messages are, by and large, irrelevant to most of this audience. Again, over 80 per cent of the radio sets and may be 95 per cent of the television sets are in the cities.

9.23. The various advertising associations we met, uniformly suggested that the commercial services of Akashvani and Doordarshan should penetrate the rural areas and smaller urban markets. They accordingly suggested extension of the commercial service to stations that serve rural markets; strengthening commercial service transmitters so as to give them a larger rural reach and the establishment of commercial services in smaller urban centres. They were critical of the present "irrational" rate structure, which is uniform for all stations irrespective of the size and quality of the audience or the nature of the market. They also felt that the rates are unduly high and discriminatory with regard to certain products like pharmaceuticals, and unrealistic in so far as there is continuing insistence on mentioning the price of each product in every radio spot.

9.24. The percentage utilisation of Akashvani's commercial time is limited and actually declined in 1976-77 in many areas.

Percentage utilisation of spots on Commercial Radio

<i>Station</i>	<i>1975-76</i>	<i>1976-77</i>
Bombay	79	71
Delhi	89	94
Madras	69	59
Hyderabad	70	57
Bangalore	64	47
Kanpur	80	68
Chandigarh	71	55
Calcutta	87	70
Cuttack	13	16
Bhopal	30	34
Jaipur	27	32
Trivandrum	20	26
Ahmedabad	77	59
Patna	31	35
Srinagar	5	15

9.25. There was also criticism of the credit period allowed for settlement of dues by accredited advertising agencies (45 days).

9.26. One advertising association argued that radio and television time should be marketed commercially as a "product" rather than as a "commodity" without consideration for the needs of the consumer (the advertiser). To overcome this, they suggested regular meetings between Akashvani, the advertisers and the advertising agencies; market surveys; and prompt proof of broadcast.

9.27. Other suggestions made to the Working Group relate to a short-wave commercial transmission, especially for Bombay and Madras and acceptance of "package deals in the form of bulk contracts covering all Stations".

Inter-Media Comparisons

9.28. A leading advertising agency cited some interesting data to show that television has emerged as "a major advertising medium with considerable growth potential." This study suggests that the Sunday evening film programme over Doordarshan in Bombay commands some 800,000 viewers, which is more than the combined circulation of the four leading metropolitan newspapers in the country. However, the bulk of Doordarshan's advertising comes from Bombay and Delhi and is built around the

Sunday cinema programmes, which have an excessive clutter of spots. Ten top advertisers and six broad categories of goods account for nearly 50 per cent and 90 per cent of Doordarshan's commercials respectively. While market studies show that "live action" commercials have higher levels of recall than "slides-with sound", there is a distinct trend towards using slides as they can be produced at a fraction of the cost of live action commercials and are charged half rates. Inter-media comparisons indicate that the cost per thousand (CPM) for reaching all adults in households with over Rs. 500 per month incomes in Bombay-Pune is Rs. 1.77 for a 30 second radio spot for one week over the Bombay-Pune-Nagpur Vividh Bharati stations; Rs. 7.77 for a 30 second television commercial; Rs. 13.20 for a quarter page advertisement in Bombay's leading English language newspaper, and Rs. 21.60 for a 30 second black and white film strip in a top rate cinema. The study pointed to the conclusion that Doordarshan's commercial revenues could rise sharply, given cheaper television sets that would promote wider diffusion/rationalisation of the existing television commercial tariff and encouragement of sponsored programmes with editorial control fully vesting in Doordarshan.

The Consumer View Point

9.29. In contrast to the views advanced by the advertising associations, those representing consumer interests uttered a note of caution. They told us that the items currently advertised through commercial broadcasts were elitist and could over a period of time build up unfulfilled aspirations and false needs. The broadcast media were agents for social change and should not abandon their educational role. They did not oppose commercial broadcasting but felt that the present ratio of commercial time was probably about right and should not be exceeded. The advertising content should, however, be more educative rather than merely a "lure to buy". They said that consumer associations should be given adequate opportunity to educate the people on consumer rights. They also pleaded for representation of consumer bodies on any commercial broadcasting advisory council that might be set up.

Role of Advertising

9.30. The Working Group considered all these views and see no reason to frown on commercial broadcasting, provided this is within limits and subject to appropriate codes. The present reach of commercial broadcasting, even over radio, is limited to no more than 10 per cent of the country and has little penetration in the rural areas or the smaller towns and growth centres. The number of radio broadcasting receiving licences at the end of 1976 was approximately 17.3 million, whereas the commercial service of Akashvani is estimated to cover an area with no more than about 7.14 mil-

lion licensed sets. Both the radio and television systems are bound to grow and will increasingly enjoy a larger rural coverage, which will encourage the advertising of agricultural inputs and services as well as of other manufactures of interest to the rural masses.

9.31. Advertising is an essential part of the marketing function. It can be informative and educative and can sometimes stimulate competition, break local monopolies or attempts at price fixation, and help improve quality and service. Small producers and co-operatives may in particular find an ally in advertising to hold their own and build a corporate image or a brand. The success of the Amul Cooperative is an outstanding example.

Rate Rationalisation

9.32. There is a general consensus among the Commercial Sales Units of the broadcasting organisations and the advertising associations on the need to rationalise commercial rates and schedules, simplify and streamline procedures, and market time on a professional basis. We understand that an official rate rationalisation review is under way. However, we recommend that the National Broadcast Trust should undertake a comprehensive review of commercial broadcasting rates and procedures so as to place the marketing of broadcast time on a sound footing.

Legitimate Share of the Cake

9.33. Akashvani and Doordarshan's commercial broadcast revenues were of the order of Rs. 8 crores in 1976-77 as against an estimated national advertising budget spread over all media by the Government, public and private sectors of around Rs. 120—130 crores. On this basis it would seem that commercial broadcasting has been able to net only a little more than six per cent of the national advertising outlay, an unduly small figure. There is no reason why this proportion should not rise to between 15 and 20 per cent. The overall outlay on advertising is growing year by year and we would therefore envisage both a relative increase in commercial broadcasting receipts as well as an absolute increase in revenues from this source. The broadcasting system is likely to expand in coverage and the number of radio and television licences may be expected to grow with the expansion of the broadcasting system, improvement in the quality of programmes, and the easier availability of cheap and reliable broadcast receiving sets.

9.34. The Working Group is of the view that the NBT would do well to tap a legitimate and larger share of the overall national advertising budget for broadcasting. It could also examine the opening up of other channels which are already available to a limited extent for sponsored programmes. The advertising content must be closely

monitored and the drive for commercial must not be allowed to intrude on or distort programme values. We see considerable scope for the advertising of public services such as those pertaining to employment, family welfare, payment of taxes, transportation and the like. We see equal promise in sponsored broadcasts over both Akashvani and Doordarshan subject to appropriate codes and standards, editorial control vesting firmly in the broadcast organisation. Sponsorship could be a means of introducing competition, innovation, diversity and excellence in programming and would facilitate the employment of a wider pool of creative and technical talent outside Akashvani and Doordarshan. It would also enhance the financial viability of the NBT.

9.35. We would, however, recommend against any advertising over the proposed franchise stations, which universities and other educational institutions may be licensed to operate.

Professional Sales Unit

9.36. We would also recommend the development of an appropriately staffed and structured commercial sales unit under the Finance Director of the NBT. This professional cadre should extend to the Commercial Stations as well. The Commercial Sales Unit must be adequately supported with audience research, as it is on the number, nature and location of various audiences on the one hand and marketable products and services in any given coverage area on the other that, the growth of broadcast advertising will depend.

9.37. We suggest that the NBT call a meeting of the concerned associations and interests to review advertising codes and standards. Representatives of consumer associations should be associated with such a review and they should also be included in the commercial broadcast advisory panels that we recommend be set up.

CHAPTER 10

Broadcast Receiver Licences

10.1. Broadcast receiver licences constitute the major or even the primary source of income for many broadcast organisations. The BBC and NHK in Japan for instance are financed solely through their licence income. In the United States, the Soviet Union and China, however, there is no system of licencing broadcast receivers. Australia had a licensing system some years ago, when it was abolished on account of difficulties in collection. However, the consequent loss in revenue is understood to have financially embarrassed the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

10.2. In India, receiver licences have been issued since the inception of broadcasting. The licences are issued and the fees collected by the postal authorities, the revenue being credited to the national exchequer. The licence fee has been determined by the Government from time to time and was in, 1967, raised, to Rs.15 per radio receiver set and half that amount for sets priced at less than Rs. 150. The television receiver licence was Rs. 30 per set but was raised to Rs. 50 this year. Community sets, commercial sets, dealers' sets and demonstration sets are charged at differential rates, with concessional rates in certain cases for rural licences and lower fees for community users.

10.3. The number of broadcast licences in force has grown over the years. There were 276,000 radio licences in force in 1947, 7.55 million in 1967, and 17.34 million at the end of December, 1976. Television receiver licences in force have increased from a little over 44,000 in 1971 to just under 480,000 in 1976.

Postal Department's Commission

10.4. The postal authorities take a 15 per cent commission for collecting the broadcast licence fee. They find this inadequate in view of rising collection charges and the need to deploy more anti-piracy staff in view of evasion and non-renewal and would like the commission to be raised. The net revenue realised from radio and television licences, after paying the P & T its 15 per cent commission, was Rs. 17.39 crores

in 1971 and Rs. 24.98 crores in 1976. The P&T department maintains about 1350 licence inspectors and 69 wireless investigators and has an Assistant Director of Wireless in each of its 16 postal circles.

10.5. There were as many as 2.36 million non-renewal cases pending at the end of 1976 and a little over 366,000 cases of evasion were detected during that year.

Problem of Piracy

10.6. There are several problems regarding the collection of broadcast receiver licence fees, particularly with regard to cheap transistors produced by the small-scale and cottage or unorganised sector. Manufacturers in the organised sector market their products through registered dealers who are required by law to issue a broadcast licence with the first sale of a radio or television set. No such condition effectively applies to the unorganised sector.

10.7. Roughly three million radio sets are produced annually, the output being more or less equally divided between the organised and small-scale sector. The annual broadcast receiver licence figures, however, show an increase of no more than one million sets per annum, sometimes more, often less. Allowing for the retirement of 10 per cent of the licensed sets each year there would appear to be at least 1.5 million sets per annum to be accounted for judging by the production figures. There is obviously a good deal of piracy and consequent loss of revenue. In fact, a general amnesty announced during February-April 1977 is reported to have resulted in netting about Rs. 8 crores of revenue by way of renewal or issue of new licences, that is, nearly one-third of the total revenue estimated from broadcast licensing in 1976-77.

10.8. The radio manufacturers' associations are of the view that there could be as many or more unlicensed radio sets as there are licenced receivers. The fact that there was a drop of over 500,000 licences in Delhi alone in 1976 from about 1.15 millions sets the previous year to about 631,000 sets, would seem to bear witness to considerable leakage.

Procedural Difficulties

10.9. Dealers also complain of procedural difficulties in issuing licences and in making bulk sales to factories and other institutions that may be willing to purchase several hundreds of cheap sets at a time for presentation, prizes and as festival gifts to their staff and others without the production of authentic lists of names and addresses of the owners-to-be. They also point to the difficulty of retailing receiver sets produced by the organised sector in the rural areas in the absence of recognised dealers, who will take on the responsibility of issuing broadcast receiver licences. Were it not for this

restriction, they feel that the sale of radio sets would be enhanced. Procedural problems such as insistence on renewing the broadcast licence at the same post office where the set was initially licensed (now amended) often results in non-renewal, since the procedures for changing the licensing post office is cumbersome and beyond the understanding of simple villagers. They would therefore advocate either the abolition of the licence fee or a very considerable simplification of procedures, possibly with one-time licensing at the point of purchase, which would encourage small town and rural provision stores, petrol pumps, and others to retail transistor sets.

One-Time Licensing

10.10. There is need to encourage the diffusion of broadcast receiving sets particularly in the rural areas and more backward regions. This calls for more widespread marketing which is not going to materialise, unless licensing procedures are simplified. The leakage of revenue also poses a serious problem and one way to check this would again be to simplify licensing procedures and possibly to introduce one-time licensing for cheap sets costing under Rs. 150. Assuming a three year life for such sets, a one-time three-year concessional licence could be priced at, say, Rs. 10 or Rs. 12. We would not advocate abolition of broadcast licensing, nor do we feel that the Posts and Telegraphs Department should need a commission of more than 15 per cent to ensure rather more effective policing of piracy than at present.

10.11. It was suggested to us by some radio dealers that it should be possible for the Government to issue broadcast licence stamps in appropriate denominations, with the year of issue overprinted on it, which dealers and owners should be able to affix on the broadcast receiver licences at the point of sale or subsequently as a renewal fee. An experienced administrator has also suggested the printing of broadcast licensing stamps, which should be on general sale through radio dealers, banks, post offices and even book shops, which should get them at a small discount. The stamp paper should have the year of validity printed on it and the responsibility of filling in the full particulars of the set which it covers should be that of the owner of the set. Any one who has a set without a valid licence or renewal fee stamp should be liable to punishment as now, but all the clerical work and formalities at present undertaken by the Post Office as well as the stringent conditions contained in fine print on the back of the present licences can be eliminated.

10.12. We would recommend that the NBT consider this matter in consultation with the appropriate authorities so that the system of broadcast licensing is considerably simplified, streamlined and reorganised. The licensing system should neither inhibit the sale of sets nor deter annual renewal of licences where required nor encourage evasion.

Licence Fees

10.13. The present licensing fees for both radio and television sets is very low and was last revised more than a decade back in the case of the radio licence fee. The standard radio broadcast licence fee of Rs. 15 is no more than the cost of 75 inland letter forms and about a fifth of the annual subscription to any one of the more modestly priced daily newspapers at 20 paise per issue. The licence fee for television sets, though just revised upwards to Rs. 50, is also relatively modest. It is interesting to note that Pakistan charges a licence fee of Rs. 20 for a single radio set or Rs. 30 for more than one set, and as much as Rs. 150 for television sets.

10.14. In the circumstances, we recommend that the broadcast licence fees be revised upwards to Rs. 25 for radio sets and Rs. 75 for television sets. The present concessional fee of Rs. 7.50 for radios costing less than Rs. 150, as well as for community listening sets and for educational establishments, hostels and welfare institutions should be continued at the present rates. However, a one-time licence fee for single-band sets may be fixed at Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 and collected at the point of sale. The concessional radio broadcast licence fee of Rs. 7.50 should be extended to the blind even for the more expensive sets while the cheaper sets should not be liable to any licence fee for this category, though no-fee licences should be issued for purposes of statistical record and tabulation. The licence fee for additional sets in the non-concessional category should be one-third of the basic licence fee.

10.15. With the growth of the broadcasting system, the number of radio and television receivers in use should continue to rise steadily and even sharply. We would expect that the transistor radio will soon come to be regarded as an essential item in every household, whether in the towns or in the villages. We, therefore, envisage a rising curve of revenues from broadcast receiver licences, both radio and television, for many years to come. This will continue to provide the major source of revenue income for the NBT.

CHAPTER 11

Franchise Stations

11.1. We have explained earlier why we have rejected proposals for a completely competitive commercial broadcasting system in India at the present time. We had at the same time stated both the desirability and possibility of opening up the system to provide for certain amount of independent programme access, outside of Akashvani and Doordarshan in the interests of diversity and competition.

11.2. One of the means by which this could be done would be for the National Broadcast Trust to licence certain approved non-governmental institutions to set up local low-power stations. In the first instance we would recommend that such broadcast franchise be limited to educational institutions, whether these be universities and colleges, IITs, agricultural universities and research stations, medical colleges, or other approved institutions which have an educational, extension, or cultural orientation.

11.3. It is interesting to recall that one of the early experiments in broadcasting in India was by Professor M. V. Gopalaswamy of Mysore University who, in fact, coined the term, Akashvani, for his system. When on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Mysore University in 1976, the Vice-Chancellor sought the Government's approval to establish an educational television station on, he campus, he was informed by the then Minister for Information and Broadcasting that "this will go directly against our policy". The Vice-Chancellor was advised to limit his ambition to a closed circuit system. IIT, Kanpur, which operates a closed circuit television system as an aid to technological instruction and educational and cultural programming within the campus, similarly applied some 10 years ago to increase the power of its transmitter and broadcast instructional television programmes within a radius of 10-15 kms of the campus. This too was turned down so that Akashvani's monopoly should remain inviolate.

11.4. Certain medical colleges and other institutions used closed-circuit television systems as a teaching-aid. But even had they sought permission to broad-

cast beyond the confines of their campus, they too would presumably have received a negative reply.

Visva Bharati Studio

11.5. The position with regard to sound broadcasting is no different. The only notable exception, however, is Visva Bharati University where Akashvani established a small studio over 25 years ago. The Vice-Chancellor is the Chairman of the Visva Bharati Radio Committee of which some professors and others are members. An Akashvani engineer visits Visva Bharati periodically and two programmes are produced each month for broadcast over the Calcutta station of Akashvani. The first of these programmes largely revolves around Tagore and Visva Bharati and is produced by teachers and students of Shantiniketan. The second is produced by the faculty and students of Sriniketan (the rural extension of Visva Bharati). This has a certain agricultural and folk content and is produced with village participation. The programmes are planned and approved by the University's Radio Committee and are credited to Visva Bharati when broadcast. We were informed that the arrangement has worked satisfactorily and no problems have arisen. A witness from Visva Bharati however expressed the view that more time should be allocated for their programmes over the Calcutta station of Akashvani.

11.6. The Working Group understands that the agricultural universities at Pantnagar and Jabalpur and possibly certain other institutions have studios with simple recording and other facilities and would be in a position to make programmes. Many agricultural and educational institutions were closely involved with the SITE Programme in 1975-76 which has certainly developed a new interest in the broadcast media and communication systems for extension.

Poona University Proposal

11.7. A number of witnesses and others who replied to our Questionnaire, supported and welcomed the idea that universities should be permitted to operate low-power broadcast systems. Two specific proposals were placed before us which may be briefly described. The Vice-Chancellor of Poona University told us that the University was ready with a proposal which had been worked out in some detail to establish a low power university radio station which would provide independent access to its students, external students and faculty for a broad-based programme of non-formal and continuing education.

11.8. The scheme was further spelt out by the Head of the Physics Department who explained that the proposal was built around the acquisition some years ago of an excellent 900 watt transmitter, which was purchased off a ship in Bombay for a

paltry sum. The ship's transmitter was subsequently installed in the Department of Physics at Poona University and has been licensed to operate on six broadcast frequencies (only signals, not speech) for conducting various experiments. Poona University has a number of affiliated colleges spread over the districts of Pune, Ahmednagar, Nasik, Dhulia and Jalgaon which constitute a 340 km corridor. The UGC has given the University a Rs. 10 lakh grant to improve science teaching in colleges. The University has accordingly selected 25 colleges between Pune and Bhusaval for this programme. Given a broadcast facility, the University feels that it could take up such programmes far more effectively than by depending solely on surface transport contacts which are time consuming and expensive.

11.9. The Professor said that if the University had its own educational radio station it would be in a position to take up a variety of continuing education, part-time and vocational courses for adults and employed or unemployed youth, with a strong rural bias. It would be able to draw upon its mofussil colleges, polytechnics, mobile laboratories, and research faculties to develop a variety of open learning and distance learning systems, maintaining close liaison with appropriate national bodies on educational technology and encouraging the development of a national network of resource centres.

11.10. He outlined a large number of potential rural-oriented courses which could be offered under the open learning system. These would include courses for training accountants, adult educators, rural bankers, nurses, health visitors, educational administrators, librarians, health and social service managers, sports instructors, village and town planners, youth and community workers, and so on. Likewise, courses could be offered on environmental studies, bio-gas plant operation and waste control, veterinary science, house design, contract law, and soil chemistry. The University radio station would also be in a position to support the national adult literacy campaign.

11.11. The University proposes to build a six KW booster for its transmitter as well as two studios and antennae systems at a capital cost of Rs. 5 lakhs. The station (with an effective power of 6 KW) would have a range of 60 km, and further afield through skywave communication. The operational cost is estimated at about Rs. 1 lakh per annum.

11.12. The University would seek financial support from the Central and State Government, the UGC as well as the NCERT since it would also undertake school programmes. The Professor did not think that cost should be a problem in view of the fact that the University is installing a Rs. 75 lakh computer and has an annual budget of about Rs. 2 crores.

11.13. The Vice-Chancellor stated that the University radio station could be given a three year renewable licence and that it would take all mandatory Akashvani programmes. He also saw the possibility of operating the station and the instructional programmes in collaboration with other institutions including the Agricultural University at Rahuri.

Mysore University Application

11.14. A second proposal was outlined before us by Mysore University which applied to set up a 400 Watt television transmitter on the occasion of its 60th anniversary with the object of telecasting formal and non-formal, educational programmes for two hours every day.

11.15. Mysore University has sought to develop the open university concept by preparing cassettes which are available for replay at University study centres in Mangalore and Bangalore. An educational television broadcast licence was sought in 1976 as an experimental facility for adult, non-formal, and continuing education operated from out of the University's own funds.

11.16. Mysore University at present only reaches 10,000 to 15,000 students in a city of 550,000. It would use educational television to interact with those not formally on its rolls. The University applied to Akashvani some three years ago for access to the radio stations in Karnataka for broadcasting correspondence courses. It has not yet received a positive response.

Space Applications Centre

11.17. The Space Applications Centre at Ahmedabad has one fairly well equipped television studio (now a smaller second studio) which it built some years ago under an UNDP—ITU grant for software development, as part of a larger satellite systems study. This was a precursor to SITE in which SAC was an active participant producing 30 minute science programmes in English in a rented studio in Bombay and a daily half-hour extension programme in Gujarati from Ahmedabad.

11.18. The Ahmedabad studio was simultaneously linked to a 1 KW transmitter at Pij near Nadiad to radiate SITE Programmes to 350 electrified villages in Kaira district which is the home of the Amul Dairy.

11.19. At the conclusion of the SITE Programme SAC and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting signed a Memorandum of Understanding under which the Pij transmitter has been transferred from the Indian Space Research Organisation to Doordarshan while the television studio at SAC in Ahmedabad has been loaned to

Doordarshan which is now operating it as a regular Kendra under its own Station Director. However SAC continues to produce a daily half-hour extension programme. The second half hour consisting of news and current affairs and other programmes is the exclusive responsibility of Doordarshan. The Ahmedabad-Pij transmission has an additional 15 minute complement of Delhi programmes which are pre-recorded daily via the Symphonie Satellite and edited and re-broadcast with a Gujarati commentary. This arrangement will conclude on March 31, 1978 unless further extended.

11.20. It would be a pity, were the SAC television production facility to die. At the same time it is untenable for Doordarshan to continue to operate on borrowed facilities with a very small production complement of its own. It would seem necessary for Doordarshan to establish its own studio, preferably at Pij where a room in the transmitter building was treated with an eye to its possibly being converted into a studio at a later date.

11.21. SAC's involvement in television production has provided a valuable scientific interface which has stimulated live hardware development or adaptation to meet software needs. However, its primary interest is clearly in the field of space applications technology rather than television software production. The answer might lie for the television group at SAC to be spun off as an independent production facility or a franchise station under suitable auspices, the SAC studios being used during the transitional period. Decisions in this regard must however obviously lie with ISRO and other concerned institutions.

11.22. SAC has been able to interact with other educational and extension institutions, the most interesting example being the Amul Dairy at Anand whose veterinarians have been trained by SAC television personnel to become producers of animal husbandry programmes and to operate portable cameras. It was reported to us that the experiment has produced sufficiently positive results to encourage the National Dairy Development Board to consider equipping dairy personnel in other centres elsewhere in the country to take up similar animal husbandry extension programmes, if possible.

Desirability of Educational Stations

11.23. We have considered the enormous possibilities of using the broadcast media for education and extension, and are satisfied regarding the proven interest and competence of a number of institutions to operate such educational stations with a due sense of responsibility. We accordingly recommend that the National Broadcast Trust be authorised to grant a broadcast franchise, whether for radio or television, to approved educational institutions. Such a franchise recommendation by the National Broadcast

Trust should automatically be converted into a broadcast licence by the Ministry of Communications, the specific frequencies being allocated and coordinated by the Ministry's Wireless Adviser.

11.24. The franchise should be granted by a Licensing Board set up by the National Broadcast Trust at the national level. Since there are unlikely to be many franchise stations during the initial years we would suggest that the Licensing Board be manned by part-time Commissioners. The licences should be granted for three year periods at a time and could be renewed, if the Licensing Board is satisfied with regard to suitable performance and fulfilment, not merely of the broadcast code applicable to Akashvani and Doordarshan but also of the terms and conditions of the licence contract with particular reference to stipulated educational and extension obligations.

11.25. We would further recommend that the franchise stations should not be licensed to broadcast news bulletins. They should be bound to relay these, where facilities exist, from the Akashvani/Doordarshan network. The franchise stations may also be mandatorily required to relay certain other Akashvani/Doordarshan programmes. They should be placed under the general supervision of Akashvani and Doordarshan respectively though they would otherwise function as independent stations within their own sphere. They would however be monitored by the audience research agencies of the National Broadcast Trust and would be responsible to the Complaints Board as well as to the Trustees who would be empowered to issue written directives.

11.26. We see several advantages in developing a system of franchise stations on the lines indicated. These would not only bring variety and innovation to programming but would give a powerful stimulus to educational and extension broadcasting. They would enhance participation and access and involve young people in broadcasting as well as in the development of hardware and software systems and of communication policy. These broadcast stations could be used as internal teaching aids as, for example, by the departments of medicine and engineering, education, communication and journalism, and by the physics and electronics faculties. The cultural faculties of universities would also be able to use the broadcast facility to enhance the creative talents of the student community.

11.27. These low-power educational broadcast systems would be a valuable training ground for future broadcasters and broadcast engineers and provide an alternative source of employment for broadcasters outside the Akashvani/Doordarshan system. They would in addition offer an outlet to independent programme producers about whom we will have more to say in the next Chapter.

11.28. We would disallow commercial advertising over these educational stations but we envisage great possibilities in programme exchange both among franchise stations and between them and Akashvani and Doordarshan.

11.29. It should be for the proposed National Broadcast Trust to give more concrete shape to this broad concept of franchise stations for independent educational and extension broadcasts which we commend.

11.30. If universities and other educational institutions require financial support for these stations, they should seek funds from the national allocations for extension education.

CHAPTER 12

Independent Production Agencies

12.1. Akashvani and Doordarshan have so far only used private production units to a very limited extent. As far as Akashvani is concerned, it advertised for private production offers in July 1973 but, according to the Directorate-General, the response was poor and the matter was shelved. The advertisement read as follows: "All India Radio will accept taped programmes of features and plays, etc., prepared by independent outside programme producers for purpose of broadcast. Such programmes should be in English, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu. The maximum fee to be paid for such taped programmes for a duration of 20-30 minutes will be Rs. 1,000 and that for 10-15 minutes Rs. 500. Those desirous of availing themselves of this opportunity may apply to any of the Station Directors of All India Radio at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras".

12.2. It is not surprising that the response was disappointing. The terms seem uneconomical. In addition, there may have been lack of production studios and related facilities, cumbersome procedures, no certainty of acceptance of finished programmes, and uncertainty regarding continuity in the absence of which production teams were unlikely to be built up with the necessary facilities and equipment. However, the matter does not seem to have been pursued with any enthusiasm on either side.

Existing Production Agencies

12.3. As far as Doordarshan is concerned, certain independent production agencies are in fact currently making programmes. The Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad, was virtually an independent programme agency during SITE, making science and extension programmes.

12.4. Television News Features (TVNF) is a private company formed in Delhi in 1973 which has for the past couple of years been selling on contract one science film and

one development documentary per month to Doordarshan, each of 30 minutes. Conforming to international news agency practice, the TVNF programmes are prepared as silent, edited prints. Each station is also sent commentary, scripts and timing sheets in English to enable producers to put the programme on the air in the local language. Sound effects and a musical track are provided on a separate magnetic tape. TVNF has its own studio which some members of the Working Group visited.

12.5. A rough cost estimate for a television production facility supplied to us by TVNF is given in Appendix E.

12.6. The NCERT has also produced some programmes for Doordarshan, mostly during SITE. It has some facilities and a studio is under construction. If some of the NCERT films need finish, this is presumably because they are primarily produced with inadequate professional support in television production. This could be remedied.

12.7. We are informed that the State Education Departments have been encouraged to establish Educational Technology Centres with audio-visual facilities. These units could assist in the development of audio-visual educational programmes.

12.8. Production facilities and skills are, however, available elsewhere as with certain advertising firms, which make radio and film spots for Akashvani, Doordarshan, and the cinema. The film industry could also be an obvious candidate although its facilities are in 35 mm.

12.9. The Films Division produces documentaries in 35 mm from which it makes a certain number of 16 mm reduction prints, which are available to Doordarshan and mobile film units. In addition, some State Governments and Central Departments have or are in the process of developing limited 16 mm facilities.

12.10. Doordarshan does depend on a number of private cameramen for film and news coverage. This needs to be systemised. Cameramen must be able to make a career, which implies some continuity in contracting procedures and a certain stability in income.

Minimum Access Guarantee

12.11. The TV Programme Producers Guild of India set up in 1977 with headquarters in Madras has suggested that a State-owned (or monopoly) television service should set aside a certain percentage of time to be filled by television programme agencies, so long as their programmes conform to the objectives set for the broadcasting media. The TV Guild has in a resolution suggested that 50 per cent of Doordarshan's programmes be given over to independent television production agencies. It has further

resolved that these agencies "should be encouraged and assured subscription by the TV in the same manner as the news agencies are being encouraged by the Government."

12.12. A 50 per cent reservation would clearly be excessive. The principle of reservation or independent access has however been admitted in the working of the Government-owned Films Division and has been in operation for some years.

12.13. The Films Division at present makes roughly 100 documentaries per annum in black and white and colour, of which approximately 20 are contracted out to independent producers, whether for commercial or non-commercial distribution. The terms and conditions on the basis of which the Films Division awards contracts to outside producers is set out in "Policy Guidelines for Production of Documentary Films", which is reproduced in Appendix F.

12.14. The Films Division's 20 per cent "reservation" for private producers establishes a precedent. In addition, the franchise stations, and universities could produce independent programmes which should have access to the Akashvani and Doordarshan networks on their own merits.

12.15. Sponsored programmes by industrial houses or other private institutions would also be outside the reserved quota, even though these are produced for Akashvani or Doordarshan by private agencies.

Suggested Facilities

12.16. If private producers are to flourish, especially in television, then the following requirements would seem to merit consideration :

- (i) Some reasonable reservation that guarantees a minimum outlet in time and therefore, a certain assurance of income on the basis of which alone would it be realistic to make the necessary investments and staff commitments.
- (ii) The film and video tape produced by private companies should be approved by Akashvani/Doordarshan without unduly rigid procedures or cumbersome and dilatory payment procedures.
- (iii) A more liberal policy for the import of cameras, studio equipment, and 16 mm film should be followed in order to promote increased production by approved programme companies.
- (iv) Dubbing and sub-titling equipment should also be available in view of the multiple language situation and the need to cater for exports and international programme exchange.
- (v) Impediments in the right of access to news locales to television cameramen and other broadcast personnel should be removed and unimaginative or

avoidable security restrictions virtually amounting to censorship should be relaxed or ended. These would include filming at airports, access to plants and project sites, and so on.

- (vi) The TV Programme Producers Guild has suggested that foreign television film teams that want to produce documentaries and television features in India should be required to use a certain proportion of Indian television crew and facilities, a requirement that Indian television and film professionals apparently have to fulfil, when they work abroad. This suggestion may be given due consideration by Government.
- (vii) Some witnesses have suggested that the production of colour television film should be encouraged in order to facilitate international programme exchange.
- (viii) There would appear to be some dissatisfaction with the quality of indigenously manufactured raw stock. This may be looked into and improvement ensured.

Need For 16 mm Laboratories

12.17. Another major difficulty stems from the very limited availability of 16 mm laboratory facilities and related equipment. The Films Division has some 16 mm equipment and laboratories; but the capacity is limited and the equipment old. The Films Division works in 35 mm film which is reduced to 16 mm as and when required. It now plans to set up a 16 mm facility for rural programmes and other users like the Railways, including mobile film units with cameras, movieolas (for editing), and laboratories. The equipment will be imported. We were informed that such units are to be commissioned in Bombay and Delhi in a year and in Calcutta and Madras subsequently.

12.18. The Films Division has also proposed the establishment of a 16 mm black and white processing laboratory (subsequently colour too) in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi at a capital cost of Rs. 23 crores, spread over five years. Seventy per cent of the cost will be for monochrome and 30 per cent additionally for colour. The overall capacity will be sufficient to process 96 16 mm films per annum. These 16 mm laboratories will work in three shifts and would be able to accept outside work.

12.19. A Doordarshan Kendra Director expressed the view that given 16 mm laboratory facilities private advertisers, sponsors and film makers would more readily make spots, programmes and television feature films for Doordarshan or export. Now they have to make film in 35 mm and reduce it to 16 mm, which is very expensive. The availability of 16 mm laboratories would certainly provide an incentive to young producers and film makers from the Film and Television Institute of India and elsewhere to

set up independent units to make films and features, which they could sell to Doordarshan and to the franchise stations.

NBT Rental Facilities

12.20. Alternatively or additionally it should be possible for Akashvani and Doordarshan to rent out their studios and facilities to recognised groups on certain terms during idle hours/if any. Otherwise, we would recommend that the National Broadcast Trust might consider establishing both sound and television facilities in selected centres outside of Akashvani and Doordarshan which should be available on hire. The franchise stations would also be in a position to rent out their facilities to independent programme production agencies.

Mobility and Competition

12.21. We would recommend that private radio and television production agencies be encouraged and assisted to acquire or gain access to the necessary production facilities. This would draw in a wide pool of talent and promote variety, programme innovation, specialisation and excellence. It would also provide an element of competition to Akashvani and Doordarshan.

12.22. The existence of such independent companies operating in sound, film, and video would, alongwith the franchise stations and advertising companies, provide an alternative source of employment for all categories of broadcast personnel. We see great advantage in this, not least in the mobility it will provide in what has so far been a largely monopolistic situation and in the possibility of expanding programme exports and international programme exchange.

12.23. As in the case of the franchise stations, we recommend that the programmes produced by independent programme companies be subject to the same audience research, ratings and complaints procedures as Akashvani and Doordarshan.

CHAPTER 13

News And Current Affairs

13.1 Radio today reaches more listeners than newspapers, the number of radio sets—an estimated 20 million (including unlicensed receivers)—being more than double the combined circulation of all the daily newspapers published in the country.

13.2. The print media is relatively elitist and urban-oriented in so far as newspaper and journals are read by the literate population and, with the possible exception of Kerala, tend by and large to circulate within a given radius of the urban centre from where they are published or distributed.

13.3. Radio and television, on the other hand, are not handicapped by the literacy barrier and provide a means of instant communication to distant frontiers and remote regions. Indeed, the national news bulletins are a great unifying force, focussing as they do on events of national significance or international concern. The call-sign, “This is All India Radio, here is the news...”, binds all Indians together whatever their status or calling or wherever they might be.

13.4. The news bulletins of Akashvani are the primary source of news to a very large number of people especially in the hill and border areas, interior villages and other secluded regions. They can have a powerful integrating role and be a vital element, with the press and other media, in creating an alert and well-informed public opinion which is the foundation and hope of every democratic society. It is prompt access to accurate, objective and relevant information that makes the people fully sovereign and renders their elected representatives and all others in authority truly accountable. Suppression or distortion of the news is incompatible with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and expression as well as the citizen's right to know.

13.5 Akashvani's approach to news has tended to be guarded and paternalistic. This tendency unfortunately grew stronger over the years and Akashvani gradually

came to be regarded and used as the mouthpiece of the Government of the day. There were years of "commitment" until the broadcast media were openly seized and employed as official trumpets during the Emergency. The AIR Code was discarded as "obsolete" and allowed to lapse. The then Prime Minister addressed a Conference of Akashvani Station Directors on September 9, 1975 when she questioned the "fuss" over radio's credibility. "Quite honestly I do not know what it means. Who has credibility?" She asked adding: "I have said in public forums (that) it (AIR) is a Government organ. It is going to remain a Government organ. We are proud that it is a Government organ."

13.6 The then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, addressing the same Conference, declared that "any party which gets the majority runs the Government, and therefore, the policies of the party which runs the Government are bound to be reflected in the media that are controlled by the Government and nobody should bother with this fact and everybody's mind should be quite clear on this basic question". He went on to state that "...amongst the truth we pick and choose...". Further, "this is the most potent medium that the Government has at its command"; and "credibility does not consist in balancing facts."

13.7. The policy of news manipulation and censorship was totally destructive of the credibility of Akashvani and Doordarshan to the point where many listeners were pushed to tuning into foreign broadcasts in order to get information about their own country. There was a wave of revulsion against these crude methods and one of the issues on which the electorate voted in March 1977 was the restoration of the freedom of the Press and the broadcasting media.

13.8. Akashvani and Doordarshan must be committed to certain national values but ought not to have editorial opinions of their own. They must avoid any partisan or ideological slant and, instead, offer a balanced and objective presentation of all news of relevance to the domestic or external audiences they serve. They must take care to present contrasting viewpoints and analyses in a constant endeavour to examine events from every angle and perspective. Each event or development is subjectively seen and just as much as truth lies in the beholder's eye, it has been well said by Wilbur Schramm that "news exists in the minds of men" in so far as it is not necessarily the event itself but the larger perceptions seen around it after the event that make the "news". It is therefore of cardinal importance that the subjective truth as seen or experienced by a particular person, party or ideology should be filled out by different images of that same reality as seen or experienced by others so as, perhaps, to arrive as near the objective truth as possible.

13.9. The duty of the broadcast media therefore is to provide a forum for objective information and debate and to leave it to the listener or viewer to form his or her own

judgment by exposure to a marketplace of ideas. The German philosopher Karl Jaspers would see the media, including radio and television, as the battle ground of all truths, a third force between people and Government, but significant only if truly independent.

13.10. The principles of "fairness", "balance", "accuracy" and well-rounded "objectivity" apply not only to news but to all current affairs programmes including commentaries, discussions, news analyses, documentaries, newsreels and magazine features. Balance, however, does not imply a mechanical balancing of views in each programme, but rather an overall balance achieved over a series of programmes. This is what Akashvani and Doordarshan owe to their audience and this is what the Indian people must always expect of them.

13.11. We regret to note a continuing element of unsolicited caution in the news bulletins and this was brought to our notice by a number of witnesses. Akashvani and Doordarshan do not have to conform to any line and should not only be but seem to be genuinely independent, objective, balanced and fair.

News Bulletins

13.12. We have argued the case earlier for keeping Akashvani and Doordarshan under a single umbrella in the interests of coordination and common services. News and current affairs programmes are among the services where there is need for both complementarity and competition. It should be possible for both these organisations to share certain common facilities and for radio correspondents to double as television news cameramen and *vice versa* as in other countries. It would save on overheads without sacrificing quality particularly in the case of district correspondents, stringers, and foreign correspondents. It should again be possible to accept a degree of interchange of personnel and to share library, reference and research facilities. Radio and television might also find it useful to work together in the coverage of major or extraordinary events. For all these reasons a measure of coordination at the top would seem desirable.

13.13. At the same time, Akashvani and Doordarshan have their own requirements and newsmen must be free to exercise their own initiative and distinctive talents in the interests of diversity and healthy competition in many areas. If there are commonalities, there are also marked diversities in the two media. These must be allowed full play.

13.14. We have recommended the appointment of a Director of News and Current Affairs on the CEB. He will oversee this sensitive and live area of the NBT's service at all levels, national, regional and local. The Central News Room that we

recommend be established at headquarters will be one of the few programme-originating facilities directly under the CEB. This will ensure the necessary co-ordination between Akashvani and Doordarshan. The Central News Room will function under a General Manager, assisted by an Editor, Akashvani, an Editor, Doordarshan, a Foreign Editor, to supervise all foreign news which should be a specialisation on its own, and an Editor Monitoring Unit. The Central News Room will also feed the External Services with news bulletins. These Editors should all be outstanding radio and television journalists. The present coupling of Doordarshan's news services to the Akashvani news room is unsatisfactory and should be ended as early as possible.

Radio News

13.15. Akashvani at present broadcasts 242 news bulletins every day in 37 languages and 34 tribal dialects from Delhi and 34 regional news units of the News Services Division in the home and overseas services. It also carries a weekly news bulletin of human interest stories in Hindi and 12 other regional languages as well as a daily press round-up in English and Hindi. In addition, newsletters from different States are broadcast daily by the News Services Division in Delhi which also puts out a daily radio newsreel alternating in English and Hindi and a weekly sports round-up. The proceedings of both Houses of Parliament are separately reviewed daily and weekly during sessions. These broadcasts, like the daily Spotlight commentary on topical issues are, however, done by guest broadcasters, mostly newspaper journalists.

13.16. The general newsroom works round the clock in four main shifts under an editor-in-charge who selects and prepares what is known as "pool copy" which is then distributed among editors compiling the different Hindi, English, Indian language and External Service news bulletins. The pool copy is also made available to Doordarshan which has no independent source of agency copy.

13.17. The Central News Room at Akashvani, Delhi is insufficiently staffed and equipped for its onerous workload and must be strengthened, if the quality of service is to improve. It seems clearly inadequate to have the various Indian language bulletins and to some extent even the Hindi news bulletins serviced by mere translations of the predominantly English pool copy.

13.18. For its news source, Akashvani depends on Samachar and in addition employs 94 full-time and 217 poorly paid part-time correspondents. Of these, four full-time correspondents are posted abroad at Hongkong, Cairo, Teheran and Dacca, while there are eight stringers abroad at London, Moscow, Washington, Singapore, Brussels, Kathmandu, Nairobi and Berlin. The headquarters staff consists of a sanctioned strength of 15 correspondents, only three of them of senior status, and eight part time youth correspondents who feed the Yuva Vani programme. The headquarters staff has

to cover national as well as city news, Parliament, and the Courts in addition to undertaking special assignments within the country and abroad. Here again, the staff is obviously overstretched and individual members often lack the status and experience required to discharge the responsibilities they carry.

13.19. There are 219 Central Information Service posts in Akashvani and Door-darshan and 35 more in the making. The CIS cadre was constituted in 1960 and services the various divisions of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. These include the Press Information Bureau, the Publications Division, the Field Publicity Directorate, the Song and Drama Division, and the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, all of which are primarily oriented towards the print media and function as organs of Government publicity. The ethos of an autonomous National Broadcasting Trust must be entirely different, totally independent of the Government and not oriented to serve as an official loudspeaker. The link between the CIS and the News Services Division must therefore be severed. We have dealt with this problem and the option that should be given to the existing CIS staff in the Chapter "New Deal For Staff".

13.20. Another handicap that Akashvani must be rid of is the practice of relying upon persons trained and practising in the print media to function as radio journalists who must communicate through the spoken word. A major 15-minute Akashvani news bulletin may contain no more than 2500 words which would be the equivalent of a little more than two to three printed columns in a daily newspaper. Radio news must therefore be highly compressed and selective, with words and voice being employed to convey the mood and essential content of whatever is to be communicated.

13.21. Akashvani must train newsmen who can voice their despatches instead of writing them. It could use more "voice-over" clips in its newsreels and commentaries, a technique that does much to bring an authentic flavour of immediacy, intimacy and local colour to broadcasting.

13.22. The newsreaders themselves need to be involved more closely in the editing and preparation of news bulletins so that they do not appear to be performing a routine chore. They should be given the freedom to adapt the language without impairing the content of what is broadcast. They might be used more fully for interviews and even for news gathering so that they become integrated newsmen and do not merely remain news readers.

13.23. Akashvani certainly needs to expand its network of correspondents to cover every district and major news centre in the country. These correspondents, whether full-time or even part-time, should be suitably trained and equipped with portable electronic news-gathering devices including cassette tape recorders and portable videotape recorders which they should be able to operate. They must be mobile and able to get

at the news and get it back to the regional or central news rooms or news bulletins, news-reels, commentaries, and magazine programmes.

13.24. The organisation of a professional network of news correspondents (and cameramen) will reduce Akashvani and Doordarshan's dependence on Samachar. We were informed that as much as 63 per cent of the total output of the News Services Division at present comes from Akashvani's own correspondents and only the remainder is taken from Samachar and other sources. While this may be true in a technical sense there is little doubt that Akashvani at present relies heavily on handouts issued through the Press Information Bureau, the State Information Departments, and the public relations offices of political parties, business houses, foreign embassies and the rest. The partial rewriting or editing of these handouts can hardly be described as a suitable or sufficient news gathering operation.

13.25. Samachar is also primarily geared to serve the print media and is at present unable to provide spoken word copy to meet the hourly news deadlines of Akashvani.

13.26. On the other hand, the slow (dictation) speed news bulletins broadcast by Akashvani in Hindi and English from Delhi and in Urdu from Srinagar constitute a radio news service which is being used by a number of small and even medium newspapers, some of which also subscribe to Samachar.

13.27. A survey done for us by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Delhi, on the utilisation of the slow-speed bulletins indicated that as many as 79 dailies out of a total of 173 interviewed were using these bulletins, 24 of them being Samachar subscribers. These newspapers are drawn from all regions and all language groups. Interestingly, some small newspapers also maintain the regular news bulletins of Akashvani for news which they publish in their journals. It would seem that the slow speed bulletin is a service that the NBT could expand and enrich to assist the growth of community papers in remote areas.

13.28. The weakness of Akashvani's Central News Room and news gathering operation is reflected in the regions as well. Although there are advantages in compiling all national news bulletins, irrespective of language, in Delhi, there is equal need to strengthen the news rooms at the State capitals and other regional news centres of Akashvani. While there is a great deal of interest in the national news, there is no less interest in the regional news bulletins which, in some ways, come nearer the lives and daily interests of the people. Strong regional news rooms with a network of district and local correspondents would greatly strengthen the overall news coverage of Akashvani. There is no reason why State newsletters should be compiled in Delhi. This function could be decentralised with advantage. With the establishment of district or local radio stations, the need for local news gathering and community news will be-

come even more important. Local news is important not merely in itself, but as a means of strengthening the democratic foundations of the country and fostering an informed and vigilant public opinion at the grassroots, ever sensitive and responsive to events and developments at all levels.

13.29. The coverage of tribal, hill, and hitherto remote or neglected and backward areas must be a special responsibility of Akashvani and Doordarshan, if they are to serve the needs of the rural masses and articulate the aspirations of the underprivileged and forgotten.

13.30. Akashvani broadcasts bulletins in all the regional languages and major tribal dialects, as it must. There are however certain problems that arise in parts of the country such as the North East Region and Himachal, where there is a considerable fragmentation of the population in small linguistic groups, sometimes, numbering no more than a few thousands.

13.31. It is important politically and culturally to reach the people in their mother-tongue; but some difficulty arises in the case of tribal languages, which are not even the medium of instruction in schools and which do not possess a body of literature or anything more than the simplest vocabulary. In such cases, there are problems of conveying sophisticated and complex political and economic concepts and ideas such as those contained in the daily news bulletins in these relatively less developed languages. The fragmentation of a limited broadcast transmission into a number of different dialects denies any one listening group a continuous and satisfying broadcast service.

13.32. The development of local radio or of more transmitters may solve, or at any rate ease, the problem in certain areas. Elsewhere, it may be necessary to fashion special news bulletins in very simple formats to reach distinctive pockets, especially in the border regions which the country cannot afford to neglect. This poses a thorny and emotionally charged problem which should claim the early attention of the NBT.

13.33. The purpose of broadcasting is to communicate, and communication demands comprehension. The language used by Akashvani and Doordarshan should therefore be simple rather than "pure" or stilted, while yet ensuring the development of a standard *Rashtra bhasha* in Hindi and each of the principal regional languages. This would also be consistent with the requirements of Article 351 of the Constitution.

13.34. Apart from general news, Akashvani and Doordarshan must make a special effort to encourage development-news reportage and the coverage of special areas like sport, science, health, education, the arts, labour, farming and so on. This may require the recruitment of special talent and opportunities for specialisation and travel. These elements would greatly enliven and enrich the news services of both Akashvani and Doordarshan.

13.35. The live coverage of Indian and international sport, and not merely from the larger cities, could be of absorbing interest specially to the country's youth, and "provide a needed stimulus to sporting activities in smaller places as well as in the countryside, in educational institutions, and by amateurs. The ambit of the term "sport" could also be widened to include popular recreations and other unorganised games.

13.36. Akashvani's coverage of world news could also stand improvement. We have recommended the need immediately to set up a foreign desk under a senior Foreign Editor in the proposed Central News Office. This will facilitate appreciation of and specialisation in foreign news.

13.37. Akashvani does have four full-time and eight part-time foreign correspondents. Some of these are, again, drawn from the print media and can hardly service Akashvani. It should be Akashvani's policy to strengthen its Asian and Indian Ocean coverage so that this region, to begin with, becomes one in which it should be able to boast of prompt, complete and informed coverage, spreading outwards to other and more distant regions as and when possible.

13.38. Such a policy needs to be linked with Akashvani's external news broadcasts and the operations of its Monitoring Unit. Akashvani at present broadcasts bulletins in 24 languages in its External Services including some in Arabic, Burmese, Cantonese and Kuoyu (Chinese), Dari, French, Indonesian, Persian, Pushto, Baluchi, Russian, Sinhala, Swahili and Tibetan and, until very recently, in Thai. However, as we will discuss more fully in Chapter 14, "The External Services", many of these bulletins go out on weak transmitters and are not properly heard. Moreover, there is a dearth of trained Indian broadcasters in many of these languages as well as a lack of fluency in the contemporary spoken idiom.

13.39. On the other hand, the Monitoring Unit of the News Services Division monitors 184 broadcasts from 27 stations in 14 languages, six of these being foreign, over a total period of about 48 hours every day.

13.40. The Monitoring Unit is now in Simla but is likely to move to new premises in Delhi within a year. It is poorly staffed and equipped. Started as a branch of the military intelligence during the Second World War, the Monitoring Unit formed part of the Department of Counter-Propaganda until it was taken over by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in 1941. It was placed under the News Services Division only in 1962 and provides Akashvani with news flashes from world broadcasts over teleprinter and telex lines, as well as material for talks, commentaries, and other programmes in the Home and External Services. The monitoring service continues to feed the Ministries of External Affairs Defence, Home, Information and Broadcasting, and other Departments with daily trend reports as well as weekly analyses, country by country and

under subject headings and occasionally on special topics of interest to India as well. It has a good few "firsts" to its credit. Considering the grave handicaps it labours under, its performance has been very creditable. This is a most useful service which needs to be strengthened, expanded and placed on a sounder footing. Once again, this will require more and better trained and better paid personnel.

13.41. However, the immediate point of interest is the coincidence in the catchment areas of Akashvani's External Services and the Monitoring Unit and the correspondence in their operating languages. The monitors are proficient in the spoken language of the area, whether this be Persian, Burmese, or whatever. They are also naturally up to date with current developments in Iran and Burma or wherever as they daily monitor the news services of these countries. This, therefore, suggests a certain commonality as between the News Services Division, the External Services Division and the Monitoring Unit in terms of language and area specialisation.

13.42. We, therefore, recommend interchange of personnel among the foreign language cadres of these three services within Akashvani. The monitors, editors and analysts should be trained journalists who would develop a language and area expertise that would qualify them for posting as foreign correspondents in given target areas with which they would be thoroughly familiar as well as being fluent in the spoken languages. They could, on their return, be posted back either to the Monitoring Unit, where they could analyse the foreign broadcasts that are monitored, or to the External Services, where they could man area-desks with familiarity and confidence, or again to the Central News Office as foreign deskmen or as diplomatic correspondents, or as foreign news analysts and commentators in the domestic services of Akashvani and Doordarshan. They would command a degree of expertise that would be constantly kept up to date. This in turn would be reflected in the quality of service provided by the External Services Division—the Monitoring Unit, and the Central News Office in both its domestic and external wings.

13.43. The trend reports and weekly analyses as well as other special publications of the Monitoring Unit could be made available to the general public or to selected audiences as priced publications which would command a prestige value within the Government as well as in the academic, business, journalist and diplomatic community.

13.44. Reform on these lines would be greatly to the advantage of Akashvani and Doordarshan as also to the country at large and should be implemented without delay. Further comments on External news broadcasts are contained in the next Chapter on the External Services.

Current Affairs

13.45. The Current affairs programmes of Akashvani and Doordarshan should experiment with lively formats. The straight talk and stereotyped round-table discussion have their value but should not become the staple diet.

13.46. Once the broadcast media cease to be a Government mouthpiece and develop their own professional talents, they will discover ways and means of making these programmes more informative and varied.

13.47. There has been a tendency after the Emergency for Akashvani and Doordarshan to play safe and instinctively avoid expression of criticism of the administration. This is an unhealthy reflex and is indicative of a particular kind of mentality which has become ingrained over the years and the general lack of professionalism which Akashvani and Doordarshan must consciously seek to correct.

13.48. The whole concept of news and current affairs must change from being ministerial, governmental and political to being newsworthy, relevant and interesting. India's development story and the process of social change—or impediments to it—constitute news, big news, and news of infinite variety and human interest. The electronic journalist can make news by taking the microphone and the camera to the people. More civic affairs programmes would be interesting and instructive for urban audiences.

13.49. There must also be an end to the tendency to be “nice” and uncontroversial. It is inconceivable that controversy should be discouraged and that dissent should not be permitted on the air. The clash of contesting opinions and contrasting views will enliven programmes, enhances understanding and sharpen public vigilance as nothing else. Akashvani and Doordarshan should not shy away from controversy. They should project issues of social justice such as the status of agrarian reform, the condition of the landless, the plight of the urban slum dweller, civic corruption, and so on. If radio and television are to fulfil their watching, educational and development role these are issues they cannot avoid because these are directly linked to the larger questions of poverty and disparities.

13.50. Current affairs speakers and panelists need to be drawn from a wider area than Delhi or the other metropolitan cities and from disciplines, other than journalism, politics or the academic world. Anniversary features have become a shoddy ritual and a bore. They need to be selective, carefully planned, imaginatively presented and evaluative rather than adulatory. In all cases, guest broadcasters need to be gently advised on how to broadcast and to avoid certain mannerisms, long and complex sentences, mumbling, or too rapid speech. They would perhaps themselves welcome such hints or correction and it would make for better programmes.

13.51. The need for adequate reference and library facilities, news clippings and research assistance hardly needs restating. But these are lacking. This obvious deficiency must be made good as a matter of priority.

Current Affairs and News on Doordarshan

13.52. Many of the remarks we have made regarding current affairs and news programmes over Akashvani would apply equally to Doordarshan. There are, however, some basic differences.

13.53. The first amongst these is that television is a visual medium and it makes little sense merely to present a radio bulletin on a screen, which is what largely obtains at present. The difficulty of processing and moving film in the absence of suitable inter-connections or transportation links is far more acute for television than for radio. Doordarshan therefore has of necessity to plan for earlier deadlines than Akashvani with regard to visual material.

13.54. However, microwave and coaxial links are being planned between the four metropolitan cities and certain other centres, which will facilitate programme exchange, which is precluded at present, except by physically sending film or tape from one Kendra to another by air, rail or road. With the commissioning of the Indian National Satellite (INSAT) in 1981, Doordarshan will have a larger national networking facility.

13.55. As of now, Doordarshan has no newscasting network and is therefore unable to present a national news telecast. Each Kendra does its own news gathering and constructs its own news bulletin, incorporating in it such outstation matter as it is able to procure from other Kendras, correspondents and private news cameramen together with the Visnews material duplicated and sent out from Delhi. Visnews, an international news agency, is represented in India.

13.56. In view of these constraints and gross understaffing, Doordarshan produces its news and current affairs programme under severe limitations. Nonetheless, apart from being imbued with the kinds of news values we have suggested for Akashvani television, news can score over radio by presenting visual backgrounding material and depth analysis of various topical issues in a magazine format supported by a strong graphics sections. This would essentially mean that the television bulletin recounts the principal news in headlines with such visuals as might be available and then devotes the rest of the time to dealing with two or three selected topics at some length. It could also invite knowledgeable persons to meet in front of the camera or be interviewed by its own correspondents and commentators to provide background and analyses for some of the day's headlines.

13.57. Such a format would, however, require more than the 10 to 15 minute time slot allotted for news by the various Kendras. A half-hour chunk would be more appropriate.

13.58. In any event, the present staffing pattern is wholly inadequate and in many cases the personnel are untrained. Each Doordarshan Kendra must have a news room with a news editor and professional editing and reporting staff. The reliance on the Akashvani pool copy, now limited to the Delhi Kendra, must also end. It is, for instance, quite absurd to expect the Bombay Kendra to put out three 10-minute news bulletins, one each in Marathi, Hindi and English, without a regular news unit or a proper news editor and with a majority of casual staff employed on discontinuous monthly contracts.

13.59. Doordarshan at present only has a limited number of staff correspondents and cameramen and certain parts of the country remain totally unrepresented. There are about 200 freelance news cameramen in the country who are employed by Doordarshan from time to time. But only a handful of these are equipped with synchronous or audio-visual cameras.

13.60. Under the new news organisation, we have proposed it should be possible over a period of time for Doordarshan to have its own network of correspondents and stringers, some of these cameramen doubling as radio correspondents, handling portable, easy-to-use half-inch or three quarter-inch video tape recorders for speedy and convenient electronic news gathering. These "portapacks" are relatively inexpensive and should enable Doordarshan cameramen to visit farms, production centres and other places of work, learning, or recreation and portray some of the excitement and adventure of the processes of development and social change on the television screen.

13.61. The Films Division also has a network of cameramen and stringers. They are equipped with 35 mm equipment but could also be provided with 16 mm cameras or "portapacks" for television coverage. They are trained news cameramen and should find little difficulty in adapting their talents to television with some conversion training. This is an arrangement we would commend and is something that the National Broadcast Trust might appropriately take up with the Films Division.

13.62. The availability of a sufficient number of television and 16 mm film cameramen in the country suggests the possibility of the development of a television news agency. Such a body was indeed mooted some years ago and the idea, we are told, has once again been revived. Any step in this direction would be welcome and should be encouraged. However, assistance may need to be provided in facilitating import of "portapacks" and other electronic news gathering equipment, 16 mm cameras, raw stock, and so on.

13.63. We were informed that Doordarshan will soon be a member of an international news exchange system being developed by the Asian Broadcasting Union, with Teheran operating as the pool centre for receiving and distributing material received from ABU members in the South West and South Asian regions. Similar arrangements should be worked out with other broadcasting groups such as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and the European Broadcasting Union. Moves are also afoot to establish a television news pool among the non-aligned nations. This would enable Doordarshan not merely to disseminate news-clips and features abroad but also to portray to Indian viewers news and documentaries received from around the world in addition to the current Visnews service.

13.64. Doordarshan should be equipped with dubbing and sub-titling equipment to facilitate programme exchange within the country as well as abroad. Doordarshan cameramen, independent news cameramen, and any television news agency that might come into being should also be given facilities for acquiring colour equipment and raw stock to service the international market.

13.65. Doordarshan's current affairs programme can be a very powerful means of stimulating and monitoring social change because of the visual impact. Such programmes would also have enormous educative value.

13.66. Altogether, news and current affairs represents an area where an immediate and discernible change is possible and where the NBT can be seen to be different.

CHAPTER 14

The External Services

14.1. Akashvani's External Services ranks among the largest international broadcast services in their range and duration, being for example, considerably larger than the external broadcasts of Japan or France. The External Services Division of Akashvani broadcasts to 54 countries in 24 languages, 16 of them foreign and 8 Indian, over a period of about 52 hours every day.

14.2. The total transmitter power radiated by Akashvani in its External Services is as much as 3230 KW as against 2980 KW in its Home services. Two 200 KW shortwave transmitters at Bombay and Madras which are primarily intended to carry Vividh Bharati programmes are also employed to transmit the External Service to a limited extent, whereas the high power short-wave transmitters used in the External Services are also utilised for the domestic news services and other national programmes in the Home Service.

14.3. While it may be deceptive to compare the transmitter power radiated by Akashvani in its External and Home services, the figure does provide some index of the high importance attached to external broadcasts and the capital investment and hardware facilities dedicated to this purpose. All the more surprising therefore that the software or programme component of the External Services Division is so weak, with inadequate and ill-trained staff, very limited facilities for programme executives, indifferent linguistic competence in some cases, inadequate national control by Indian supervisors in certain services, a woeful lack of studio facilities, little reference material, marginal exposure to the target areas, little regular contact with the Ministries and Departments of Government concerned with the country's external relations in the diplomatic, commercial, economic, cultural and technological fields, and the meanest feedback. Add to this the fact that India's external broadcasts are only dimly heard in significant target areas and we have the picture of an ill-planned service, a wasteful use of resources,

a frustrated staff, and dissatisfied listeners, whether overseas Indians or foreigners, to whom these broadcasts are directed.

Defining the Target Area

14.4. An informal witness described the low to medium range power of individual transmitters from 7.5 KW to 250 KW in the short wave bands as "shocking". An External Affairs Ministry spokesman told us of the response to a questionnaire that had been circulated to Heads of Indian Missions abroad inquiring about the reception, timings, target audience, technical quality, frequency preferences, interference problems, language including idiom and intonation, in respect of Akashvani's External Service broadcasts. He said the replies presented a "depressing picture". The reception is poor, the signals are weak and uneven in quality and volume with the result that there is little sustained interest in these broadcasts. Where the broadcasts are heard clearly, the criticism often is that the idiom and expression are poor.

14.5. Radio journalists and critics who have surveyed Indian broadcast listening abroad reported the same impression. According to a radio critic¹, Akashvani has no more than an insignificant radio presence in West Asia and is virtually unheard over large parts of Europe and the Soviet Union. Akashvani does not advertise its programmes adequately and Radio Pakistan, Radio Peking and even Radio Ceylon are heard much more clearly. The language used is often in the classical rather than the contemporary mode. Some foreign listeners have stated that it would help them if they knew with whom in Akashvani they might correspond.

14.6. Although Akashvani has a few full-time and some part-time correspondents abroad, it is not known to what extent they have been able to represent Akashvani, if at all, and to further programme exchange.

14.7. Individual Indian diplomats have the same tale to tell. Akashvani cannot be heard and, when heard, is of indifferent quality.

14.8. The views we heard from the Minister for External Affairs were the same. He, like others, felt that while it would be ideal to cover the globe, Akashvani, given its limited resources, should concentrate on the country's neighbours, loosely defined as the Indian ocean community—Southeast Asia, Australia, the Gulf region, West Asia and the Eastern sea board of Africa and the North Asian heartland of China, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

1. India Watching : The Media Game—by Amita Malik Vikas Publications.

14.9. While Akashvani cannot obviously turn its back on the world, we would concur with the view that in the given circumstances, it would be far better to concentrate on a well defined neighbourhood, which is of primary interest to this country by any definition and seek in this target area to develop a service and a degree of expertise that bears the stamp of excellence. Whether for external news coverage through full time or part-time foreign correspondents or for the development of language skills, this should be adopted as the initial area of interest. Indeed, it should be the objective of Akashvani especially in its news services, to be rated for priority listening by anyone anxious to acquire quick, accurate and objective information and backgrounding about the Indian Ocean region and North Asia.

14.10. Within this ambit, particular attention needs to be paid to India's immediate neighbours is South Asia. Akashvani's Urdu programmes and, to a lesser extent, its Bengali programmes are widely heard in Pakistan and Bangladesh and are extremely popular, judging by the volume of mail and enquiries received. This is indicative of the kind of response that could be developed in other countries further afield with which India has strong cultural, historical, and commercial ties.

14.11. This does not mean that Akashvani should permanently restrict itself to a limited radius. It could expand outwards selectively, once it is well established in this priority zone in accordance with a phased programme commensurate with the country's needs and the resources available.

Cost of External Broadcasting

14.12. As in the BBC, Radio Australia and certain other broadcasting systems we would recommend that both the capital as well as the revenue budget for the External Services Division of Akashvani and a proportionate part of the capital and revenue budget of the Monitoring Unit should be borne by the Government of India. The reason is simple. These broadcasts are beamed to listeners outside the country and, for the most part, to foreign nationals who do not and cannot be expected financially to support Akashvani.

14.13. The expenditure incurred on the External Services of Akashvani in 1976-77 was Rs. 50.68 lakhs, including just over Rs.1 lakh on capital account. The corresponding estimate of expenditure on the Monitoring Unit was Rs. 17.47 lakhs, including a capital outlay of Rs. 3.33 lakhs.

14.14. Under its Fourth Plan proposals, Akashvani had made certain recommendations for setting up a number of dedicated transmitters of higher power for the External Services. A Rs. 340 lakhs plan is said to have been adopted for implementation

in two phases, the first phase being estimated to cost Rs. 240 lakhs. Two 250 KW short wave transmitters have since come on the air. They are located at Aligarh.

14.15. External broadcasts and the monitoring of selected foreign stations, are a matter of national interest and have a bearing on the country's foreign relations and security as well as its commercial and cultural relations. Knowledge of India, its economic potential and technological capability is closely related to the country's export drive and foreign economic policy. Likewise, Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin abroad would naturally wish to be posted with developments in India and keep alive their cultural contacts with the country. This being so, it would be for the proposed National Broadcast Trust in collaboration with the Government to determine the priorities for external broadcasting and the target area that should be covered.

Editorial Control and Credibility

14.16. At the same time we would categorically affirm that editorial control of both news and current affairs broadcasts as well as cultural programmes should vest in Akashvani and Doordarshan. There should certainly be close liaison between the broadcast organisation and the concerned Departments of Government, especially the Ministry of External Affairs and its territorial divisions. The editorial independence and credibility of Akashvani and Doordarshan's news and current affairs programmes must however remain inviolate, as a common news service cannot be half-controlled and half-free, since the same news organisation serves both the domestic as well as the foreign listener and viewer.

14.17. We were greatly encouraged to find that the Minister for External Affairs shares this view. He told us that autonomy must cover external broadcasts as much as internal broadcasting and that there could be "no half-way house". He stated that the proposed autonomous organisation should not have to follow the Government line in its External Services, though he did expect that it would "have a sense of proportion".

14.18. The credibility of the broadcast media constitutes not merely a cardinal organisational value but a prized national asset. And credibility cannot be divided with different standards applicable to the Home and External Services. However, the Government has every right to expect that the official view and official pronouncements will be projected abroad. At the same time, it would be legitimate and proper for Akashvani's External Services news and current affairs broadcasts to indicate the nature and source of dissenting views and to offer contrasting opinions on matters of controversy.

Need for Specialised Cadre

14.19. We have in Chapter 13, News and Current Affairs, recommended the interchange of personnel between the News Services Division, the Monitoring Unit and

the External Services Division of Akashvani. Apart from this we would suggest the need for a dedicated external broadcasting cadre, which could develop area and subject-matter specialisation in regard to foreign affairs, foreign economic relations, and cultural exchange.

14.20. The salary scales offered to language specialists in the Monitoring Unit, News Services Division, and External Services Division will have to be improved in order to attract these particular talents. As in the case of knowledge of Indian languages other than one's own mother-tongue, Hindi and English, we would recommend the payment of a language bounty for knowledge of and continuing proficiency in additional foreign languages.

14.21. At present some of the foreign broadcast units in the External Services Division are served by translators and foreign personnel. The employment of non-nationals is unobjectionable but there should in all cases be an Indian supervisor and head of unit so as to ensure adequate programme supervision and control consistent with national objectives. Such supervision is at present weak in some areas and lacking in others. This deficiency calls for immediate correction.

14.22. Akashvani and Doordarshan certainly have an external audience particularly in the cultural field. There is a great and growing interest in Indian music and films which needs to be imaginatively exploited. The programme exchange service of Akashvani and Doordarshan should be able to cater to the requirements of audiences that cannot be reached through direct broadcasts.

Audience Research

14.23. Audience Research is as important for external broadcasts as for internal broadcasting. At the moment, technical monitoring reports are received from various foreign broadcasting organisations. Programmes are, however, only fitfully monitored by Indian Missions abroad. Otherwise, the main channel for feedback is listeners' letters which number about 200,000 every year, the bulk of these relating to the Nepali, Pushto, Urdu, Persian, Punjabi, Burmese and the general overseas services. The external Urdu service also receives over 150,000 letters from Indian listeners who follow this programme. It would be desirable to undertake regular dedicated audience research so that there is a constant evaluation and feedback with regard to specific target areas and programmes. It is also necessary to have a picture of the audience profile. Akashvani and Doordarshan correspondents posted abroad could be of help in this process.

14.24. Some of the Akashvani's External Services such as Sinhala and Baluchi are on the air for no more than 30 minutes daily. The Chinese, Indonesian, Tibetan, Swahili

and Russian services are radiated for only one hour daily. The limited duration of these transmissions reflects the inadequacy of transmitters as well as of programme staff, twin deficiencies that run through the whole gamut of external broadcasting.

14.25. The Programme Exchange Unit (External Supply) makes available some 2,000 items to over 100 foreign broadcasting organisations every year. These include music programmes, features, plays, weekly press reviews, newsreels and other spoken word programmes. There is a quarterly programme supply arrangement with 24 countries with whom India has signed cultural agreements, namely Algeria, Afghanistan, the Federal Republic of Germany, Rumania, Bangladesh, Senegal, France, Poland, Egypt, Yemen, Mexico, Hungary, Turkey, Iran, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Mauritius, Iraq, Belgium, the German Democratic Republic and Mongolia. In addition, programmes are also sent on a quarterly basis to a number of Latin American countries.

14.26. The Programme Exchange Service suffers from lack of recording and dubbing equipment, studio facilities, tape and staff.

Programme Journals

14.27. The External Services programmes are printed and distributed abroad in a monthly journal, India Calling, published in English, and in quarterly folders in Arabic, Persian, Pushto, Burmese, Indonesian, Swahili, French, Chinese, Nepali and Tibetan. These are freely distributed to some 20,000 persons who are on the mailing list. They are also available at various Indian Missions abroad for free distribution. The quality and format of India Calling could be improved and it should be possible to carry some limited Indian advertising.

14.28. External broadcasting and programme exchange constitute an important and valuable service which, however, is only meaningful given an adequate delivery system and high quality. How precisely this might best be achieved, and the investment and programme priorities that should be set out, are matters for discussion between the proposed National Broadcast Trust and the Ministry of External Affairs and other concerned Departments in the Government.

CHAPTER 15

Extension And Distance Learning

15.1. One of the most powerful uses of broadcasting is as an educational and extension medium and an aid to development. All development effort involves an awareness of the possibility of change and motivating people to adopt new methods and improved technologies. The communications support role of broadcasting is of considerable importance in view of its extraordinary reach and immediacy at very low unit cost.

15.2. Akashvani and Doordarshan are avowedly dedicated to education and extension and the Government is no less committed to this objective. Nevertheless, their programme content and, more particularly, the investment in different sectors of programming would suggest that the education and extension function has remained the poor relative in Indian broadcasting. Out of a total Akashvani budget of Rs. 44.55 crores in 1976-77, the outlay on educational broadcasting under both revenue and capital heads was around Rs. 15 lakhs. The corresponding figures for health and family welfare extension was Rs. 16.6 lakhs, and that for agriculture just over Rs. 38 lakhs. Nevertheless there have been gains, more particularly in farm broadcasting, the most significant of which is undoubtedly the growing recognition of the vast potential that can be tapped.

15.3. Indian broadcasting is well poised to break into instructional or extension broadcasting in a significantly larger and more purposeful manner with the establishment of more regional and rural stations and plans to establish a whole network of low-power local radio stations dotting the districts. Extension broadcasting has to be highly location-specific since particular messages are to be delivered to defined target audiences at a given time and in a given sequence. One has only to consider the immense agroclimatic and socio-economic diversities within the country and even within states to appreciate the fact that educational and extension messages must be designed

for specific audiences in relation to crop, season, local circumstances, language, age-groups, stages of development and similar factors, whether singly or in combination. The large stations with auxiliary transmitters carrying regional programmes cover huge areas comprising five to ten districts and populations of five to 20 million. Time-sharing helps. But with limited transmission facilities and central programming, area-specificity can only be occasional and limited.

Enrichment and Support

15.4. Extension broadcasting has other critical parameters. It cannot substitute or supplant the teacher or extension worker. Radio and television are not teacher-substitutes but teaching aids, another blackboard or learning kit. They must therefore be conceived of as something to be used by teachers for teachers. The SITE evaluation also showed that television extension did not supplant the extension worker or even match the latter, whereas it did provide a useful supplement when used to reinforce his efforts. Broadcasting, therefore, can stimulate and enrich. Propagating anything more would only undermine its credibility.

15.5. Educational radio or television must be integrated into the curriculum and not be treated as optional enrichment. This obviously requires careful planning, time and syllabus synchronisation, and constant media-teacher consultation and co-operation. The teacher must not feel threatened or unwanted; but involved and respected.

15.6. Indian school and extension broadcasting have perhaps been more concerned with the production of programmes rather than with delivery of the message, relevant feedback and follow-up. The media must be coordinated with other communication personnel and implementing agencies or systems in the field. They cannot operate solo with any hope of success. This is because radio and television are one-way systems. Therefore, feedback channels are of vital importance if the media programmes and the field agencies are to gauge the acceptability, credibility and intelligibility of the message. A good feedback system also entails and encourages participation by the people. Communications is a support service for field staff, which is in face to face contact with target audiences at the grassroots.

15.7. The multi-media approach needs constant emphasis. Radio instruction and educational television must be appropriately backed up with print and other support, whether this be in the form of books, folders, fact sheets, charts, diagrams, flip charts, slides, pictures or other illustrations. Much of this material can be locally produced quite inexpensively with some imagination and modest facilities. Radio and television can also be conjunctively employed.

Radio Rural Forums

15.8. Extension and social education programmes make a greater impact when the listener or viewer is able to identify himself or herself with the persons or situations portrayed. This calls for local programming and intelligent transfer of experience that enables the audience to relate "foreign" programme content with their own condition. This could be done by a suitable introduction or post-script or through a commentary. Whatever the means, it is attention to simple details of this kind that makes a little stretch a long way. Programme exchange would also be greatly facilitated in a meaningful sense.

15.9. The underprivileged and unlettered or beginners of any kind respond to broadcast instruction better in groups than individually. Group or community listening or viewing creates a sense of larger identity and relevance, while group discussion becomes a powerful aid to understanding, retention of information, heightening of awareness, motivation and action.

15.10. Rural broadcasting was initiated from Allahabad as far back as 1935 and was made a regular component of programming in the 1950s. It is today acknowledged to be the most important source of new farm knowledge in the country and millions of farmers and fishermen tune into Akashvani bulletins to hear the meteorological forecasts on which their livelihood depends. Pest and epidemic warnings over radio have also become an accepted emergency service.

15.11. A major impetus to rural broadcasting came with the initiation in 1956 of the Radio Rural Forums (RRFs) in Maharashtra. Community sets were distributed in selected villages by the State Government, around which listening groups were formed to hear, discuss and respond to farm programmes broadcast from Akashvani, Pune. The programme met with a measure of success though procedural complexities were reported such as the requirement that RRFs must complete and return up to 11 proformas per month to evaluate various quantitative and qualitative aspects of listening. Emboldened, the programme was extended but without the same detailed care or support. Inevitably quality, suffered and stagnation set in. The incoming transistor revolution added to problems of community set maintenance and began to dictate a marked preference for individual listening. However some 22,500 RRFs were established, mostly in Maharashtra but also to some degree in Orissa and Tamilnadu. They continue in existence though RRFs sets in some States have reportedly vanished.

Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy

15.12. The multiplication of the intensive agricultural development programme in 1966 marked a new phase in the expansion of farm broadcasting. Farm and Home

Units of Akashvani were set up to support the IADP scheme. A Farmers Training and Functional Literacy programme was launched under the joint auspices of the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Information and Broadcasting, through the F & H Units set up in Akashvani Stations under a farm radio officer, supported by a farm radio reporter and a field assistant. The FROs are agricultural graduates and each unit had a special vehicle for a time, which made for mobility. The vehicle was later withdrawn and the field assistant's post has been abolished. The FTFL programme consists of 30 minutes of hard core farm information every evening, together with a short weather report and timely agricultural hints for about five minutes in the morning. The functional literacy classes are aimed at rural youth in the 15-25 age group through the establishment of centres with about 30 students each, the target being 100 such centres per district.

15.13. Like the RRF, the FTFL programme was conceived under an organised pattern of group listening, 10 to 20 (young) farmers constituting a *charcha mandal* or discussion group under a group leader. The formalities were simplified and with qualified organisers able to maintain sets, as many as 48,000 *charcha mandals* have been set up in approximately 146 districts. This has been an encouraging development in many areas though there are again reports of stagnation elsewhere. What is significant is the attempt to integrate farm broadcasting into a wider spectrum of farmers' training and functional literacy and the conviction that increased agricultural productivity and functional literacy must go hand in hand. The programme has involved the Agricultural Universities, research institutions, the national demonstration programmes, the *krishi vigyan kendras*, and operational research in varying degrees. The FTFL programme is not dependent on radio but supported by it.

15.14. A recent evaluation of the FTFL scheme by the Ministry of Education highlights a number of problems such as inadequate coverage of the rural poor, want of planning from below that might have avoided omissions, contradictions and overlapping, insufficient resources and incomplete utilisation, the functional literacy component having languished relatively to farmers training, and lack of coordination. The Report does however compliment Akashvani on having closed the gap between training and broadcasting. The Report concludes with a recommendation that the FTFL programme should be developed and expanded towards the ultimate objective of becoming a countrywide "Farmers' Open University" of which the principal features should be the equalisation of opportunity for the rural poor and that it should organise production-cum-learning as part of agricultural development with emphasis on participation rather than teacher-domination. The merger of the existing *charcha mandals* with the functional literacy classes is also recommended.

Farm Schools-on-the-Air

15.15. There are today 49 F & H Units in Akashvani and more are being established. Their open learning potential is well demonstrated by the reported success of the "Farm-School-on-the-Air" programme introduced from the Trichur and Vijayawada stations of Akashvani in 1973 and now extended to eight more stations. Selected topics such as paddy, coconut or rubber cultivation are announced for broadcast in collaboration with an extension drive by the Agricultural Departments and Farm Universities. Farmers are registered by Akashvani. They receive printed material from the Government in support of the farm radio lectures spread over 20 to 35 lessons. The Trichur farm-school programmes are simultaneously broadcast over the Trivandrum and Calicut Stations. The paddy enrolment in Trichur alone was of the order of 1050 and an audience research survey suggests that the response was highly favourable. Each lesson is taken by an expert assisted by extension staff who act as "students" and ask questions so that the lecture develops into a question and answer format which holds the attention of listeners and helps understanding. Listeners are also invited to send in their own questions on the lesson, which are answered in the next lecture. Radio quizzes at the end of the course serve the purpose of simple tests and information gained is measured by requesting farmers to send back their answer papers which are then evaluated.

15.16. Despite the uneven success of the FTFL programmes it does represent a major step forward and suggests immense possibilities for imaginative broadcast learning in association with various Departments of Government, Universities and other institutions. The proposed new local radio stations with their closeness to the people should have unrivalled opportunities to pioneer altogether new kinds of community programming for open learning with avid participation. This will call for training and resources and a strong interface with other institutions and authorities.

Extended Range and Involvement

15.17. The farm programmes must be presented in a manner that compels attention and sustains interest. Traditional folk-forms are most valuable in this regard. The language and style should be simple so as to promote comprehension. There should not be too heavy an information load in any one programme and impact points need to be repeated. Success stories of farmers can have a high educative and motivational value. Farm women are an important and distinct component of the audience and cannot be neglected. "Pashu Darshan" is in many areas as important as Krishi Darshan; so also horticulture, aquaculture and other newer forms of farming and subsidiary agricultural occupations including agricultural processing, rural crafts and industry. The supplies of credits and inputs must match the programme message in time and place so that the credibility of the media is sustained and motivation does not turn to frustration. Radio Krishi Sammelans could be organised both nationally

and regionally to coincide with important agricultural and cattle fairs and festivals. And as in other areas, Farm Broadcast Advisory Committees should be live bodies interacting with Akashvani and Doordarshan as much as with farm audiences. Many universities and colleges now have simple recording facilities or are in the process of establishing more elaborate studios in their departments of communication as at Pantnagar and Jabalpur. These facilities should be fully harnessed and involved in making programmes.

Non-Formal Systems

15.18. There are in the country today over 80 million farm families and no more than 15,000 village extension workers. This is indicative of the extension gap that needs to be filled through various means, including broadcasting so that the message of modern agriculture gets across. At the same time there are about 100 million students and some three million teachers in approximately 700,000 institutions providing formal education in all parts of the country from the primary to the university stage and operating a budget of around Rs. 2500 crores. These students and teachers could use a second blackboard which could well be provided by radio or cassette recorders, film projectors and television. There is even a larger number of potential learners outside schools including drop-outs, those who have never been to school for whatever reason, and *ad hoc* learners, both men and women. The country is now striving to extend, expand, and enrich non-formal systems of learning so as to reach these forgotten or neglected millions. The broadcast media is perhaps particularly well suited to cater to this non-formal sector because distance learning can be programmed for different age groups and needs and taken to homes, fields, factories and informal classrooms. It can help sharpen skills. Even educated employees in various offices like banks could benefit from non-formal vocational education.

15.19. At the present time 65 per cent of the Indian population is illiterate, this figure being more in the rural areas and higher in respect of women. The enrolment in the 15-25 age group is no more than about 10 per cent. Even in the 6-14 age group the 80 per cent enrolment figure can be misleading because as much as half the pupils are estimated to drop out after the first five classes and another 20 to 30 per cent after eight. What this means is that the majority of Indian children and almost the entire adult population is or has been outside school and needs to be covered by non-formal educational systems if the country is to achieve the desired social transformation.

15.20. The Education Ministry is proposing an educational target which entails the universalisation of elementary education up to the age of 14 and the education of at least half the 220 million illiterates in the 15-35 age group. Non-formal education, therefore, assumes special importance and the media has a particularly important role

to play in motivating these men and women to undergo functional educational courses that offer literacy and numeracy.

School Broadcasting

15.21. School broadcasting in India is not new, having commenced in 1939. The school programme service is now available from 35 stations of Akashvani whose programmes are relayed by another 20 auxilliary stations. These broadcasts are in 17 languages and covered a little over 50,000 schools at the end of December 1977, of which 29,000 are in Tamilnadu which has launched a special drive to give all primary schools access to school broadcasts. The medium of broadcast is the local language though most stations also offer English language teaching programmes. Approximately 200 school programmes are broadcast each week. These by and large follow the school curriculum and are intended as supplementary enrichment courses. The subjects covered include regional languages and English, the science, social studies and current affairs. School broadcasts were for many years addressed only to secondary students until primary school broadcasts were introduced in 1972.

15.22. The school broadcasts have encountered a number of problems. These include non-availability or poor maintenance of sets; the lack of synchronisation between broadcast timings and class timings; school shifts and the inability of radio stations to repeat the broadcasts; inadequate teacher preparation and support material; and the limited duration of school broadcasts in some cases. Radio and television are one way channels of communication and unless programmes are imaginatively contrived and led by motivated teachers, the interactive student-teacher process is lost. The Working Group was informed that an NCERT survey conducted in Delhi in 1972-73 showed that only 11 radio sets were being used in 500 schools in the city with school broadcasting facilities. Similar studies undertaken more recently in Jalgaon and Jaipur are reported to have revealed a somewhat similar situation. In some areas elementary school broadcasts have been started before sets have been placed in the schools. This would suggest a somewhat fragmented view of school broadcasting in the past and the critical importance in future of matching all inputs including programme need assessment studies, the provision of receiving sets and support material, the availability of batteries where necessary, and adequate maintenance. School broadcasts must be fully integrated into the syllabus. What is needed most is thorough coordination between producers and programming cells and a grooming of teacher communicators.

15.23. Two Tamilnadu headmasters whom we met felt that the rhythm and content of the school broadcasts did not fit in with the school curriculum and that there was need for a closer working relationship between the schools and Akashvani. Feedback at present is limited to only 10 per cent of the schools which they thought was

totally inadequate. They also expressed the view that teachers should be exposed to techniques of radio teaching as part of their B.Ed. training. They were, however, appreciative of the sex education programmes put out by Akashvani and Doordarshan for adolescent children.

Cassette Recorders and "radio-vision"

15.24. A number of schools in Tamilnadu, and to a lesser extent in West Bengal, Gujarat and some other States, have begun to acquire tape recorders. This enables them to tape school broadcasts and play them or repeat them as and when required. It also enables teachers to interrupt the broadcast lesson to explain difficult portions, and ask questions and stimulate discussion on specific points before proceeding further with the broadcast. The NCERT is also experimenting with simple "radio-vision" techniques such as the use of flash cards, illustrations, graphs and charts that can be used with particular school broadcasts and which can be prepared by teachers or others ahead of time. The use of cassettes and radio-vision would be a relatively inexpensive and effective means of stimulating the interactive process in which the teacher uses the radio as an aid—as a second blackboard—without being relegated into the background as a mere disinterested observer.

15.25. Akashvani has started building up a cassette service for schools by drawing on its archives which now house over 70,000 educational tapes. Seventy programmes have been made and put into circulation so far and more and varied tapes could be added to create what could become a valuable cassette tape library on which schools could draw as and when required.

Teacher Training

15.26. Educational broadcasts have been used more effectively for training teachers. Assam for instance has 40,000 primary school teachers, a third of whom are untrained, and 25,000 secondary school teachers. About 500 schools are equipped with radio sets. The State Education Department has established 23 basic training centres for primary teachers in groups of 150 each. These training centres have become the focus for a radio teacher training programme spread over a year and administered by an advisory committee. The broadcast lectures have been printed and circulated and are reported to be in wide demand. According to the State authorities, these teacher training courses with radio supplementation have been most useful and should be expanded.

15.27. Such also is the case with regard to correspondence education for teacher training in Maharashtra (Pune) and Kerala in collaboration with the respective State education departments. In Kerala, the stress is on the qualitative improvement of

teaching standards with the introduction of an enriched syllabus. The problem was to train 120,000 primary teachers, a task that could only be effectively attempted through a radio-cum-correspondence teacher training course, which was inaugurated for Standard VI teachers in November 1975 in a series of weekly programmes. This multi-media training programme entailed the advance circulation of printed notes on selected lessons to registered teachers who would then tune into the broadcast lessons and put questions to the radio teacher. Replies would be given in the subsequent broadcasts. Participant teachers were required to fill in response sheets affixed to each set of supportive printed material and to send these to the State Institute of Education, where they were evaluated and then returned to the teacher. Contact classes of three days each were also held at various key centres for conducting laboratory experiments and discussions on the radio classes. Finally, the result of the teacher responses and contact courses were graded and certificates issued by the State Government. The first course of physics, chemistry and biology was for Class 6 primary teachers attached to secondary schools. An Akashvani audience research survey indicated that almost all participants found the support material informative and said that the radio lessons were very useful and complemented the supportive material. The success of the first programme encouraged the authorities to repeat similar broadcast courses for primary mathematics teachers, Standard 7 science teachers and Standard 5 Malayalam teachers. As many as 8,500 teachers were registered in the three courses in 1977-78. More ambitious courses are reportedly planned for the next school year.

15.28. An equally successful teacher training course is reported from Gujarat. English was taught in Gujarat schools only from Class 8 until 1976 when the Government decided to introduce it from Class 6. The immediate problem that arose was the need to train English teachers for Classes 6 and 7 in about 11,000 schools throughout the State. The teacher training course was planned by the H.M.Patel Institute of English of Vallabh Vidyanagar University in Anand and the 'Teach English' series was introduced in weekly half-hour Saturday broadcasts over the Akashvani stations of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Rajkot and Bhuj from July 1977. In this case too, printed support material was sent out earlier through the State Institute of Education. The radio lessons, spread over a year, are reinforced by contact programmes every three months at various district headquarters. Representatives of both Akashvani and the State Institute of Education attend the meetings of the contact groups, each consisting of about 100 teachers per district. The 'Teach English' radio course is to be extended for Class 7 teachers in 1978, Class 8 teachers in 1979, Class 9 teachers in 1980 and Class 10 teachers in 1981.

15.29. Akashvani broadcasts science programmes from almost all stations and science cells have been set up at seven stations. The post of Chief Producer (Science

Broadcasts) at the Directorate-General has, however, not been filled for reasons of economy. We would lay special emphasis on the need to promote popular Science over Radio and Television.

15.30. The Functional Literacy component of the FTFL programme, in which the Department of Education is a major partner, has been the principal vehicle of non-formal education so far. Radio support has been provided from 1976 for youth learners in the 15-25 age-group from the Nagpur, Jaipur, Simla, Srinagar, and Tiruchi stations of Akashvani. Many of whom can never go to school or drop out. This is a programme that holds great promise and must still be regarded as being in the pilot stage.

Support to Correspondence Courses

15.31. Radio support is being made available to five universities out of 15 that offer correspondence courses. These are the universities of Delhi, Punjab, Punjabi (Patiala), Madurai and Kashmir and the lectures are being broadcast from Delhi, Jullundur, Madras, Tiruchi and Srinagar stations of Akashvani. These broadcasts are formal to the extent that their content is related to the prescribed syllabus. But they are non-formal in the sense that there is no structured group listening, it being left to individual students to tune into the broadcast lessons on their own sets. Akashvani Delhi, for instance, offers 300 radio lectures in 11 subjects or 27 to 30 lectures per subject over three years which works out to approximately nine broadcast lectures per paper per annum. The lecturers are paid no more than Rs. 50 per lesson by Akashvani. Of this perhaps 40 per cent goes in typing and transport. Not all the lectures are of high quality. Owing to shortage of tapes the lectures are not preserved and sometimes even the scripts are not maintained, with the result that the whole effort is repeated the following year at considerable cost. This would appear to be a huge waste of talent since it should be possible to engage lecturers at better fees and to build up a rich cassette library related to a standard curriculum for correspondence courses throughout the country and also to print and circulate the scripts, if necessary, as supplementary reading matter. The university broadcasts also go out on relatively weak transmitters which cover a radius of no more than 40-60 kms around Delhi and the other stations on account of pressure on transmitters and the shortage of frequencies. Each lecture is limited to 20 minutes and two lectures are broadcast daily over Akashvani Delhi between 7.05 a.m. and 7.45 a.m. Students complain that they do not receive adequate notice about forthcoming lectures and that the morning timings are unsuitable, particularly during winter. Many working students would prefer evening timings. The Committee was also told that there is insufficient faculty interaction and some danger of vested interests developing in naming particular talkers and topics. The fees paid to the lecturers are so low that they have little incentive to provide good scripts in

advance so that these might be professionally edited. Nor has any effort been made to have group discussions with students after particular lectures.

15.32. The enrolment in the Madurai correspondence course is 30,000. Delhi University has 14,000 registered correspondence students. In addition, these and other universities have a large number of external students.

15.33. The Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University has requested Akashvani for a weekly 30 minute broadcast lecture for some 5,000 external students in economics, English and science subjects and also to give radio support in other difficult subject areas. Unfortunately, Akashvani Ahmedabad has no transmission time available to fit in such a programme.

Need for Strong Interface

15.34. More than one witness suggested the need for a State School Broadcasting Council composed of the Directorates of Education, educationists, headmasters, and representatives of parent-teacher associations to help plan and promote school broadcasting. Only West Bengal appears to have set up such a council and it is for other States to determine whether they should follow suit. There is, however, a clear case for developing a far stronger interface between the education and extension authorities at all levels and the broadcasting system. With the establishment of local stations and more transmitters it should be possible to reserve more time for educational broadcasts for schools and universities and for non-formal learning and extension. If this opportunity is to be seized, then there must obviously be better organisation and closer coordination than exists at present. Some States have established Educational Technology Cells for experimenting in audio-visual education. Akashvani and Doordarshan should work closely with them.

15.35. The Draft Sixth Plan document for education for the first time contains reference to the possibilities of educational broadcasting as a means of advancing primary and adult education. This recognition obviously signifies a growing awareness that radio and television can be used for this purpose. The experiment of Tamilnadu also shows how important community participation can be in achieving school improvement and the spread of educational broadcasting. It is noteworthy that only 50,000 out of 500,000 schools in the country, many of them one-teacher schools, possess radio sets. There was a Fifth Plan proposal to equip each primary school in the country with a radio receiver at a cost of Rs. 200 per set but it was not pursued for lack of funds. It is, however, not sufficient to place radio sets in schools. They must be maintained and should be available in the evenings for non-formal educational courses and group listening. Quite obviously if educational broadcasting is to grow it must receive

more financial support than the Rs. 60 lakhs provided for it during the Fifth Plan. It is for the State Governments and educationists to determine the priority they wish to accord to educational and extension broadcasting and to allocate funds for this purpose from out of their budgets.

Health Extension

15.36. Health awareness and education is yet another area in which the broadcast media have a distinctive role to play. Akashvani has set up family planning units comprising an extension officer, a field reporter and an assistant editor (scripts) at 22 stations to motivate people to accept the small family norm. Fourteen other stations have a field reporter who covers family welfare programmes. On an average, between 2,500 and 4,000 items on family welfare are broadcast over Akashvani each month, but only 173 of these items during October 1977 were field based. All the family welfare cells attached to 36 radio stations are funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which is the only Department or institution in the country which pays Akashvani for broadcasting programmes of particular interest to itself. Not all the personnel are adequately trained and few can boast of any specialisation.

15.37. According to one expert witness who appeared before the Working Group, the health broadcasts need to be far more imaginatively planned and, in view of national diversity, must be location-specific if the message is to make an impact. He felt that the maximum emphasis should be devoted to educating the mother and saw immense possibilities in using radio to train and upgrade large cadres of non-professional health workers, some 90,000 of whom are currently under training in various parts of the country under the new rural health scheme. The organisation of radio support for these training programmes and for refresher courses would call for a wholly new infrastructure of trained broadcasters, course material, organised listening, supportive publications, and a stronger interface between the broadcast media and the health authorities and medical institutions. Twenty-five medical colleges are proposed to be associated with local health delivery, three primary health centres being attached to each of these. One witness suggested to the Working Group that each of these medical colleges might be encouraged to develop appropriate instructional health programmes conforming to an agreed all-India pattern for broadcast health education.

Family Welfare Motivation

15.38. The family welfare programme, as it is now known, has received an all round setback as a result of the coercive methods employed during the Emergency. The broadcast media, we were told, have a responsibility to restore confidence in the programme and to motivate couples to limit their families. They can also help create

a climate in which people feel free to discuss family welfare planning without inhibition, remove misconceptions, build social support for the programme, and influence social values in favour of the small family norm.

15.39. The motivational role of the media is evident from the vast family planning publicity campaign mounted in the late sixties to propagate the symbol of the "red triangle".

15.40. Since health precedes medicine, and good health, longevity and low infant mortality rates are powerful and natural factors inhibiting family size, health education over the broadcast media could be doubly important. Personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, healthy child rearing practices, elements of nutrition and general family education could be woven into other programmes instead of being singled out for concentrated delivery in health talks, which by themselves are unlikely to attract sustained interest.

Extension Services over Doordarshan

15.41. Doordarshan has also been providing a number of educational, farm, health and other extension broadcasts. This was initiated with the Delhi School television programme in 1961 and then followed up by the experimental pre-SITE Krishi Darshan programme in the Union Territory of Delhi. SITE, however, marked a major expansion not merely in the television system but in the instructional content of programmes pursuant to the thesis that television must essentially be justified in terms of its effectiveness as an input in development. Consequently the 24,000 SITE clusters in six States were selected particularly on grounds of social and economic backwardness and to measure what change instructional broadcasting might make.

15.42. Only Delhi and Bombay have a significant number of television receiver sets, Delhi possibly leading the list with 841 sets installed in schools and 16 lessons telecast per week in two shifts for secondary schools and shorter non-formal programmes for primary schools. The NCERT entered the field of school television research and programming with the SITE programme, which further triggered the establishment of Education Technology Cells in several States.

15.43. Television is a more powerful medium than radio and can convey more information because of the visual content, often made interesting through demonstration and dramatisation with the aid of animation, masks, puppetry, etc. But the programming needs to be sophisticated and integrated into the classroom with full teacher support by way of pre-viewing preparation and follow-up work. Otherwise, more so than radio, it might appear to threaten the teacher and diminish his or her status.

Again, like radio, education television must be used to do what the teacher cannot do or demonstrate, as for instance Science experiments in poorly equipped schools. It is no substitute for the teacher.

15.44. The subject supervisor, producer and presenter of school programmes should work as a single team. Because of the indifferent quality of some productions they cannot be repeated over the years. Better quality programmes would, however, mean saving money in the long run. Orientation courses should be given to classroom teacher-utilisers as has been done in Delhi. The Directorate of Education, Delhi has also evolved a syllabus and offered short training programmes for senior and junior teacher-educators of training colleges.

15.45. On the farms too, there is a danger of Krishi Darshan programmes tending to fall into a routine and losing their audience once the initial novelty wears off unless there is relevant and imaginative programming which must be area specific. Television and the SITE programme certainly introduced a new social factor in traditional Indian villages with men and women and members of all castes sitting together as a single composite audience. Television too has stimulated greater curiosity, interest and general knowledge in children who have possibly also gained in language development. Certain social habits such as evening meal times have also been influenced by the television programme schedule.

Site Evaluation

15.46. However, SITE suffered from some major handicaps, namely, the lack of area-specificity as well as of adequate supportive material or matching inputs. Maintenance was on the whole well done by ISRO though voltage fluctuations and power breakdowns caused problems in some areas while faulty custodianship of the community viewing sets created difficulties in certain other villages.

15.47. Teacher training programmes were perhaps the most successful outcome of SITE along with the social gain of equality of opportunity in access to information to disadvantaged and under-privileged groups, possibly for the first time.

15.48. SITE aroused great national and international interest and expectations and is still the subject of detailed evaluation. Some of the evaluation reports have been more favourable than others; but the critical comments cannot be ignored. These relate to organisational weaknesses; inadequate interlinkages and coordination between the authorities and institutions involved; and disappointing participation on the part of village level workers, extension officers, health assistants and other extension personnel at the village level. There is also reference to difficulties of time-sharing between different clusters, disparities between the local dialect and the language used on the

television programmes, inadequate programme identification with the local environment and culture on account of generalised and centralised programming, limited feedback and no statistically significant gain in knowledge in the hardcore areas of agriculture, health and family planning and education, partly on account of the lack of supporting material to back up the broadcast message. Evaluation has, however, established distinct gains in the training of teachers and extension workers through programmes directed towards cohesive literate groups.

15.49. These findings need to be carefully reviewed while considering any expansion of television especially on grounds of its extension potential. Television costs are far higher than radio although the half inch and three-quarter inch videotape recorder and "portapack" have introduced the possibility of low cost programming which the Space Applications Centre at Ahmedabad has begun to exploit.

Conscientization Programmes

15.50. Extension and instructional broadcasting is clearly not limited to the educational, farm and health sectors alone. A whole range of other areas could be covered. Akashvani is already addressing programmes to industrial workers, tribal populations and other specific target audiences including women. There are considerable possibilities for vocational education and for teaching and assisting India's five million blind. Some civic education programmes have been started such as "Nagar ki Baten" broadcast over Akashvani Bhopal. These could be emulated elsewhere with advantage.

15.51. There is little doubt that by opening up new worlds of knowledge and opportunity, broadcasting can be a powerful liberating force. It is in this sense and not in terms of formal instruction that radio and television are truly great teachers. Their power to awaken and conscientize is something that no developing nation can afford to ignore. Yet, the tragedy is that Akashvani and Doordarshan have with rare exceptions tended to avoid programmes that specifically focus on poverty, exploitation and social justice even if these are limited to educating the illiterate and oppressed about their legal and social rights. The broadcast media have by and large shied away from controversy and programmes which, because they challenge or threaten the status quo, might be regarded as likely to create social tension or even law and order problems. The broadcast media cannot be neutral; for to be neutral is to work in favour of the status quo and against social change. There is much social and economic legislation such as that concerning untouchability or agrarian relations which have long remained unimplemented. A Workshop on Television for the Oppressed held at the Space Applications Centre in July 1977 highlighted the fact that the effectiveness of the law depends on awareness of the law, a willingness to use it and the power to assert it. The media can conscientize the masses from stupor to feeling (awareness), to thinking (discussion),

and finally to action (extension and education). The technology of the mass media must, therefore, work for two-way communication to establish a dialogue with the people through decentralised and participatory programmes thereby improving horizontal communication between people and vertical communication between the masses and decision-makers.

15.52. The Workshop was a sequel to a number of social justice programmes produced by SAC in different experimental formats. SAC producers at Ahmedabad-Pij have tended to be quite venturesome in developing hardcore social purpose programmes. These include a series on untouchability, land disputes and resultant murders, dowry, gambling and drunkenness, precursors to a longer series that is now planned on the theme of "exploitation". The Srinagar station of Akashvani has also run over many years a highly imaginative and popular programme entitled "Zoona Dab" which discusses local grievances.

Towards Equality for Women

15.53. Half of Akashvani and Doordarshan's audience consists of women. This is, however, more a potential audience because there are certain parts of the country, such as Marathwada to cite only one example, where women do not have access to transistors which are either in the custody of the men or, being portable, are carried away to work by them. Women also constitute a relatively smaller element in television audiences partly on account of programme timings but partly also because of lingering social inhibitions. This problem has been partially overcome by organising listening clubs for women, some 4860 of these having been established in both rural and urban areas under the auspices of the Farm and Home Unit of Akashvani. The "Home" component of the F&H Unit is, however, rather weak and needs to be strengthened.

15.54. This apart, the entire approach to women's programming needs change. There should be no talking down to women nor any tendency to limit programmes literally to matters of household interest including nutrition and childcare. The very title "Home" tends to suggest restricted horizons. It should, on the contrary, be one of the objectives of broadcasting to change social attitudes, including attitudes towards women, sexual inequality being an important and obvious facet of social inequality generally. This would be better achieved if women's programmes do not need to be confined to any particular "women's hour" or even to feminine audiences. The message of equality, including sexual equality, and social change should permeate all programmes rather than just "women's programmes" and should certainly be addressed as much to men as to women. As in other aspects of programming, it is necessary not merely to inform but to involve women along with other social categories. Live interaction between the medium and the audience will ensure that the message really does go home.

Tribal Broadcasts

15.55. Programming for the country's 40 million tribal audiences is also a matter of the greatest importance particularly since these populations are by definition disadvantaged and located in remote and backward areas and speak many languages and dialects. Given a proper understanding of the social and cultural background of the tribal audience, there is a great deal that can be accomplished. Akashvani Jagdalpur for example, has been able to establish a remarkable rapport with its tribal listeners with their immensely rich culture, thanks largely to the dedication and zeal of a young programme executive who is as passionately devoted to the area and people as they are to him. However, tribal programming calls not merely for genuine sympathy, knowledge and sensitivity but for the provision of minimum facilities such as jeeps, special allowances for isolation and hardship, portable equipment and considerable delegation. Special staff need to be recruited for tribal stations and the proposed new generation of local stations should in fact have a specially selected cadre of young local people who know the language and have a deep feeling and respect for the tribal populations and their culture.

15.56. In the hill regions of North-East India as in some other areas, broadcasting faces a special problem—the many languages that the people speak. Manipur, for instance, has 29 principal languages or dialects, and Nagaland 18. Broadcasting is being done in several of these languages for periods of 30 or 40 minutes a day or less. But this is an unsatisfying situation because such a short exposure to broadcasting cannot change the life of people. Side by side there is a constant and indignant demand from others that they too should have broadcasts in their language or dialect. This has created an impossible situation because it is difficult even to multiply low-power transmitters beyond a point. Broadcasting via satellite and direct reception cannot solve the problem either. A possible answer might be the development of a mobile cassette library. Each village in a language area would get a community cassette tape recorder and a whole series of programmes in the language would be recorded on cassette tapes in Akashvani studios. The cassettes would then be sent to the villages by jeep or “jonga” and replaced after a suitable time. Someone in the village would have to be trained to operate the recorder, a simple enough operation, and it would be serviced by Akashvani. An added advantage would be that programmes could be repeated at will.

Should “Users” Buy Time ?

15.57. It was suggested to the Working Group by several witnesses that with the creation of an autonomous institution for broadcasting, the so called “user Departments” of the Central and State Governments should pay for educational, farm, health, and other extension or instructional broadcasts, which only the Central Health Ministry has

been doing until now on a somewhat *ad hoc* basis. A number of Chief Ministers and others to whom we put the proposition thought that this might be reasonable though some of them did remark that the State Governments were already severely constrained by lack of resources and would be unable to carry any further burden for instructional and extension broadcasts unless the Centre is willing to provide for this under Plan allocations or the Finance Commission were to include extension broadcast outlays in its scheme of financial devolution. There is a principle here which needs consideration in terms of future policy. For, the present, however, we have recommended in Chapter 8, "The Financial Dimension", that the revenue deficit of the NBT should be met by the Central Government for a period of at least five years. In the circumstances, there can be no question of the Trust simultaneously selling education and extension time to the Central and the State Governments. This, however, is a subject that would merit review at the end of the proposed five year period. Payments by departments of the Government that have educational programmes or extension messages to communicate would certainly result in more realistic cost benefit analyses and ensure the establishment of adequate organisational links, feedback loops and support services with matching inputs.

Building Interfaces

15.58. We recommend that the NBT should review with the Central and State Governments the kind of interface that exists or needs to be developed between the broadcast organisation and concerned departments or extension institutions. If such a review reveals a consensus in favour of national or regional broadcast education and extension councils, there should be no difficulty in setting up such bodies. However, since it is for the State Governments to set their own priorities, the initiative is best left to them.

Community Listening Schemes

15.59. We would meanwhile strongly recommend a fresh look at the need for community listening despite the ubiquitous radio transistor, especially among the weaker sections and in backward areas where there is a clear and present need for a densification of broadcast diffusion. Special schemes should be worked out for making available receiving sets at concessional prices to selected groups or approved individuals who take on the responsibility of organising group listening.

Print Support

15.60. Radio and television extension must be supported by other media, including print. We have suggested elsewhere that the General Manager Information, NBT, should be responsible for ensuring and coordinating adequate print support

for broadcast education and extension programmes. While the NBT's Information Department should be responsible for production of publications, their delivery and liaison with listening groups should be the responsibility of the broadcast extension staff at the Akashvani stations and Doordarshan Kendras. The task of print support is, however, a responsibility that governments and other institutions must share.

15.61. Radio and television must form part of multi-media systems and it should be the endeavour of the NBT to encourage and ensure the development of a systems approach that includes the use of radio-vision, cassette tape recorders film tape and video libraries. We recommend accordingly.

15.62. We also recommend the desirability of social purpose programming without fear of controversy and the recruitment of specially trained staff for specialised services such as those for women, tribal audiences and industrial workers. Programme formats need to be constantly renewed and reviewed so that they remain fresh and sustain interest.

15.63. There is no need to think of educational and extension programmes in a series of reserved time-slots such as farm programmes, women's programmes and non-formal educational programmes. Education and extension can be combined with entertainment and multiple messages can be delivered to a single audience or to mixed audiences without blunting their appeal.

Avoid Rural-Urban Dichotomy

15.64. We recommend that teachers and agricultural and health extension workers should be trained in the use of the media so that they come to regard radio and television as allies rather than rivals and are better able to use these media to enhance their own effectiveness.

15.65. Some witnesses strongly argued the case for a separate rural broadcast corporation or for separate educational or farm channels. While we readily endorse the need for more transmission time for instructional programmes of all kinds, we do not favour programme segregation on the lines suggested. Broadcast services are received best when they comprise composite programmes. The skills of entertainers, dramatists, showmen and presenters are required as much for educational and extension broadcasts as for any other. A judicious mixing of entertainment with instruction whether in the same programme or in succession is also desirable as it is entertainment that wins and keeps the largest audience.

15.66. Again, while emphasising the need for more rural broadcasting we would warn against exaggerating the dichotomy between rural and urban and, equally, between

tradition and modernity. The broadcast media should not be a party to driving a wedge between rural and urban India or creating the image of two societies when they are in reality closely interdependent and part of a single fabric. Likewise, not everything “modern” is desirable just as much as there is a good deal in tradition that is worth observing and infusing with new life and meaning. The broadcast media must avoid the danger of stereotypes.

CHAPTER 16

Broadcasting As Entertainment

16.1. Broadcasting is entertainment. Neither radio nor television has any function if it does not promote enjoyment. Entertainment is more than relaxation. It implies pleasure, laughter, the awakening of interest, and recreation. Although the purpose of broadcasting is traditionally summed up by the familiar triad of Information, Education and Entertainment, the entertainment component must be regarded as both a means of as well as an end of programming. Entertainment by its very nature is communicative, and if broadcasting does not communicate then it achieves nothing. People buy radio and television receivers primarily to be entertained and only secondarily to be informed. This is particularly true of developed societies, though the informational component in broadcast listening tends to rise as societies develop.

16.2 However, the quality of entertainment can vary a great deal. It should cater to different tastes and audiences but at the same time it should also strive to widen cultural horizons, improve taste and enrich listening and viewing. The broadcast media are everywhere major patrons of music and the arts. Akashvani is today certainly the primary patron of music. Nothing communicates or so powerfully introduces a sense of identification as does drama, and radio and television plays are increasingly becoming major outlets for literary and dramatic talent. Akashvani and Doordarshan are in a way the largest concert hall, stage and theatre in the country. They accordingly have a great responsibility as impresarios and patrons of all forms of cultural expression. Equally, they bring the culture of other lands to India and can make available Indian offerings to the world.

16.3. Planning and producing programmes for radio and television pose innumerable problems in view of the wide intellectual and cultural gulf between various groups in India. Nowhere is there any such concept as a standard broadcast production. But in India there is a herding together of such large numbers of human beings speaking so many languages and dialects and having so many different

references of life that programme planners cannot be blamed if they have the uneasy feeling of shooting arrows in the dark. It is impossible to conceive of "an average listener" or "an average viewer".

Creativity Not Administration

16.4. Broadcasting is an art form rather than a business or production line. But over the years the ethos of Indian broadcasting seems to have undergone change. Programmes tend to be administered, not created. This is a far cry from the 1940s when the celebrated singer Pankaj Mullick conducted radio music classes over Akashvani Calcutta which were widely followed. The early years of Independence found Broadcasting House increasingly filled with government servants rather than professionals. Dr. B.V. Keskar, then Minister of Information and Broadcasting, sought to make a new departure by inviting eminent men and women from the world of music, literature and drama to join Akashvani as producers. They did not receive a particularly warm welcome and began to leave one by one, while those who remained have not sufficiently found the creative outlet to which they aspired. Akashvani and Doordarshan are certainly not lacking in creative talent, but this has not found adequate expression and has not flowered on account of the routinised, hierarchical, procedure-oriented systems that have become part of the culture and tradition of Indian broadcasting. Those working in Akashvani and Doordarshan today know that they belong to an "attached office" of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, where the controlling levers have come increasingly to be located. A retired Station Director told the Working Group that he "joined Akashvani a fearless man, but retired a timid person", a sad though unfortunately not untypical commentary, especially because the history of art has shown that from time immemorial it is the non-conformist who has wrought change and made society move.

Individual Audiences

16.5. Unlike the cinema, the theatre or concert hall, broadcasting does not communicate with people in the mass but with masses individually or in small family groups. One does not unknowingly surrender one's individuality before the radio set as in a crowded theatre or cinema hall. Radio and television must therefore have individuals as their target audience, a factor that makes the listener or viewer more critical in accepting programmes, with the option to switch off, or turn the knob to another channel or station. The live reaction of a theatre or concert audience, flattering or otherwise, has vibrant meaning for any performer who is able to sense acceptance or rejection by the audience and can communicate or reciprocate a mood. Akashvani has been unable to provide this reciprocity and warmth to which artists respond, and its studios have sometimes tended to become mechanical printing presses of programmes.

16.6. One has only to take a quick look at the programme schedule of various stations of Akashvani to get the feeling that they are possibly translations of a single master copy that emanates from headquarters. For example, in the name of the National Drama Programme the identical play is broadcast over the whole Akashvani network in different languages, each of them a hurried translation mechanically put across. This is a false idea of national integration. Far better to send producers to different regions and enable them to explore such cultural themes as would enlighten and interest listeners and viewers in their own region. Akashvani has rarely encouraged, for example, a Calcutta producer of music to go to Simla and record Himachali folk music for Bengali listeners. Nor has a Tamil or Oriya drama producer been encouraged to go to Pune or Uttar Pradesh to discover new trends in the Marathi or Hindi theatre. Indeed, many Station Directors and other senior programme staff are today posted in regions where they are totally unfamiliar with the local language or culture. In the circumstances, they cannot be much more than office managers, the unknown listener coming last in the list of priorities. Akashvani has not been adequately mindful of the importance of programme presentation and its "motto" has been described by a critic as being "with no regrets and with no joy". The role of Akashvani as an entertainer able to provide its listeners with enjoyment has become very secondary.

16.7. For want of audience research facilities, programmes are often blissfully unaware of the results of their efforts. Special audience programmes for women, children and rural listeners have been mounted for years without any real knowledge or understanding of who or what constitutes the target audience. The result is non-participative broadcasting and what has been described as "anti-media" programming.

A New Working Culture

16.8. We have left over to Chapter 18, New Deal For Staff, the problems arising out of fragmented and divided cadres such as programmers and engineers, staff artists and programme executives, gazetted and non-gazetted, deputationists and others. Nor do we discuss here the inadequacies of training, studio facilities and equipment, libraries, reference material and research assistances, imprest money, transport, telephones, canteens, rest rooms, and so on. There can be crippling handicaps. Any expansion in Akashvani and Doordarshan, as contemplated, without a fundamental change in the operating culture will only result in the multiplication of the existing sorry conditions. Centralisation of programming and finance authority, the inability immediately to nourish and develop new ideas that come from creative artists who are impulsive by nature, the unwillingness or inability to experiment without dilatory sanctioning procedures or in the absence of administrative support and the failure to give recognition and credit when it is due, can only result in creating a whole class of non-involved, disappointed workers, which is inimical to lively broadcasting.

16.9. Apart from staff salaries, which are discussed elsewhere, the fees offered to guest artists and talkers is surprisingly small compared with payments in the Press or in advertising. Yet if people broadcast, it is not so much for the fees they get as for the publicity and goodwill they receive. The terms of royalty and copyright need to be reviewed. The system of "close bookings" and ceilings on the number of appearances or fees collected in a month or a year must also be ended if talent is to be encouraged and Akashvani and Doordarshan are to build their own radio and television personalities, a genre almost totally missing in contemporary Indian broadcasting. Again, the broadcast media must not be afraid of controversy or prefer to remain "sarkari" by choice, if not always by compulsion. It has been said that "broadcasting continues to entertain and stimulate by crossing frontiers". This is a basic principle that Akashvani and Doordarshan must continuously keep in mind. For the programmer and the broadcast organisation in their day-to-day work, the listener is both their purpose and their judge.

Station Clusters

16.10 It is perhaps not necessary for Stations to undertake every kind of programme. With newer stations being established in smaller towns and in the districts, programme makers will immediately be faced with the problem of talent. Groups of Stations might, therefore, do well to form clusters or "cultural janapadas", a concept that we have tried to outline, while discussing the regional tier in our proposed broadcast structure. Individual Stations should however be able to boast of a particular programme specialisation, which they should be in a position to "export" through a well organised system of programme exchange between Stations, Regions and Zones. At the same time, it would seem desirable, as part of Akashvani's expansion programme, to develop studio facilities at non-originating auxilliary stations and to experiment with setting up simple, decentralised recording booths and encourage participative community programmes. Even otherwise, Akashvani and Doordarshan should consider the entire country to be their studio and the people their artists.

Unity with Diversity

16.11. Akashvani and Doordarshan's programmes have to cater both to national unity and diversity. The absence of networking facilities for Doordarshan has militated against "unity", whereas limitations of transmitters or transmission time or single channel Stations have inhibited diversity over radio. The auxilliary stations still largely relay programmes from a "mother" Station. The regional stations also complain bitterly of the heavy load of mandatory programmes from Delhi, which they must carry for several hours every day, particularly during the peak evening listening hours. These

centralised programmes include news bulletins, national talks, drama and music programmes and other special broadcasts including "anniversary programmes" which have become a monotonous, uncritical, and hurriedly contrived routine with little or no listener appeal in most cases. With the proposed development of Akashvani's national channel and with the growth of local stations, it should be possible to conceive of all listeners having access to three channels—national, regional and local. However, programming of each channel would need to be suitably mixed and varied so that people who remain tuned to a single channel involuntarily have the opportunity of listening to varied and composite programmes.

Internal Autonomy

16.12. If autonomy is conferred on Akashvani and Doordarshan, programme autonomy must filter down from the headquarters to the Stations, where the programmes are actually made and where programmers and artists face their audience. Given a well-structured and unified cadre, it would be desirable to leave a great deal of programme initiative to producers and individual production teams and not merely to Station Managers, with supervision, co-ordination and support being available at each higher level. There should be scope for experimentation with regard to ideas, techniques and formats.

16.13. None of this will be possible unless there is a concurrent devolution of financial and budgetary powers alongside decentralisation of programming and administration. The NBT's budget would internally be divided into separate budgets for radio, television, External Services, technical services, audience research and so on. These should be further broken down in terms of Stations and sectors so that individual producers know that they can operate a certain budget and can plan accordingly, additional funds being provided from Station, Regional or Zonal reserves or by inter-sectoral transfers as and when necessary.

Planning, Production and Presentation

16.14 Actual production at Akashvani and Doordarshan Kendras should appropriately be divided under three main headings namely planning, production and presentation. The planning group should conceive and develop programme ideas and process and prepare programme schedules for up to six months or more at a time. These programme schedules would then be broken down into different categories such as children's programmes, music, and so on. It would then be the responsibility of production teams to create finished programmes, which go on the air, producers having freedom to select their own artists. The presentation of programmes is a broadcast art in itself, greatly neglected at present. Announcers and comperes selected with care can by their very style and verve invite wider listening and viewing.

Greater Delegation

16.15. The internal organisation of Akashvani and Doordarshan should undergo considerable change. Internal autonomy is only possible, given clear objectives and priorities and appropriate supervision at each higher level, which should be unobtrusive and a source of encouragement rather than of domination. While admitting the desirability of production autonomy, producers too must know they are part of a larger organisation and should not function in a manner that runs counter to its objectives and ethos. The concept of a "managing committee" virtually does not exist in Akashvani, though the Director-General does hold weekly programme planning and review meetings with programme staff. If financial and administrative powers have not been delegated from the Directorate-General to the existing programme regions and down to the Stations, it is because the Director-General himself enjoys only very limited powers. For instance, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has to approve the installation of permanent non-exchange telephone lines, the direct purchase of stores from public sector undertakings or agencies, sanction for air travel, and re-delegation by the Director-General of his powers to subordinate agencies within Akashvani. Hemmed in as it is, the Directorate cannot be innovative. Whereas the Director-General is shorn of essential powers that he requires, he has the rare discretion to permit bigamous marriages "by authority of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's letter No. 8/15/69-B(A), dated 4.10.1969"!

Low-Cost Production

16.16. The Working Group heard many complaints about lack of studios and equipment. This is true in some cases, particularly of Doordarshan, some of the Kendras being under extremely heavy pressure. However, we were also informed about inefficient utilisation of studios and did come across a tendency for programme staff to demand the most sophisticated equipment and elaborate facilities before venturing on programmes that can be done with simple equipment and low-cost budgets. The Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad has achieved a considerable measure of success in using and developing low-cost portable or mobile equipment and in programming outdoors and among the people instead of in studios with paid artists.

The Team-Mode

16.17. Unfortunate and long-standing rivalries between different programme cadres and between the technical and programme staff have also affected the quality of programmes. The Space Applications Centre has succeeded in evolving a very different operating culture (admittedly on better scales of pay) and has developed a team-mode of production in which a producer, technician, script-writer, and social scientist drawn from

an appropriate discipline (child psychology, anthropology, etc.) function as a single team, pre-testing its programme in the field with village casts before producing prototype programmes, which become precursors to regular series. We have elsewhere in this Report argued the case for combining simple programming and technical functions and for providing suitable training and orientation in this regard.

Base Production Centres

16.18. Not all Doordarshan Kendras have programme originating facilities. The Jaipur and Raipur Kendras telecast programmes produced at the Base Production Centre in Delhi. Likewise, the Hyderabad BPC caters to the Gulbarga Kendra and the Cuttack BPC will produce programmes for the Sambalpur Kendra. These BPCs are part of the SITE-continuity programme. However, the programmes they produce necessarily lack area-specificity and cannot be described as particularly successful. We would recommend independent programming facilities for these SITE-continuity Kendras, if their programmes are to be at all relevant and evoke real interest.

16.19. The Doordarshan Kendras are almost all terribly overloaded and understaffed and have to make do with discontinuous casual staff some of whom have virtually become permanent. These and other problems need looking into urgently.

Archival Role

16.20. The broadcast media put out a wide range of programmes. Akashvani has probably done more than any other single institution to develop a taste for classical music and to popularise some of the extraordinary variety and richness of folk forms in music, dance and drama. Television has captured the visual arts even more vividly.

16.21. Akashvani and Doordarshan are and should be to music and spoken word forms what the Handloom and Handicrafts Boards are to the arts and crafts in India. Every region and section of people has its own ballads, ditties, work songs, devotional music, seasonal songs, children's rhymes, and even street cries which need to be recorded and preserved before they are lost for ever. Many regions boast unique musical instruments which should again be recorded. Akashvani Stations should scour the countryside to tape all this music, note down the words, and build up a national archive of folk music which would be a treasure house for scholars and musicologists. This folk music could be made to grow again in new forms.

16.22. However, Akashvani and Doordarshan must have adequate facilities to maintain their archives which are of great cultural and historical value. Akashvani's archives for instance contain valuable recordings of Gandhiji, Nehru, Maulana Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhash Bose, Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, C.V. Raman and other emi-

nent contemporary figures. They also have tape recordings of outstanding events such as the transfer of power to India in 1947, the 2500th Anniversary of the Buddha, and the Asian Relations Conference of 1947. They have in addition recordings of important National Talks Programmes and of great musicians. The Archives Library is, however, housed in cramped premises. The air-conditioning is unsatisfactory and only functions between 6 A.M. and 11.00 P.M. which may have resulted in damage to some of the recorded material. The Archives are also poorly staffed and the material has consequently not been properly catalogued or cross-indexed.

16.23. Akashvani's classical music programmes would perhaps draw wider audiences and evoke greater interest and understanding were they to be introduced by the artists or others. Classical music is in some ways an acquired taste and there is still a very large audience waiting to be initiated into its beauty and depth.

16.24. While Akashvani broadcasts a whole range of music from the morning devotional programme (Vandana) to light, classical and folk music programmes during the course of the day, its principal music and entertainment channel is Vividh Bharati which was established in 1957 specifically to provide a light entertainment programme for popular listening. Many people and homes have become accustomed to background music while they work or attend to their daily chores, something in the nature of a "sound decor" as it has been labelled.

Film Bias

16.25. Doordarshan has much more limited transmissions than Akashvani but also includes a considerable chunk of entertainment in its schedules. The most popular of these are the Sunday cinema feature films and other film-based music programmes such as Chaya Geet and Chitrahari. The Working Group heard considerable criticism of Doordarshan for its dependence on the Indian cinema and its inability to do better than attract audiences by showing cinema films. The criticism is well taken and clearly suggests the need for new patterns of programming and television entertainment through television films specially scripted and produced for Doordarshan with its own television stars.

16.26. The same criticism might be levelled at Akashvani and there is surely a lesson in the fact that such celebrated personalities as Ravi Shankar came to Akashvani but did not stay.

Vividh Bharati

16.27. The Vividh Bharati channel constitutes the largest single chunk of entertainment programmes broadcast over Akashvani—12 hours and 45 minutes on weekdays with a half hour extra on Sundays and holidays. The programmes are linked to

the commercial service of Akashvani and are largely centrally produced in Bombay with limited chunks being added by certain regional stations, mostly consisting of local request programmes. The programme content is interesting.

16.28. The Vividh Bharati channel carries two news bulletins each of five minutes. Other spoken word announcements, talks, plays, short stories and poetry recitals account for ten per cent of the total transmission. The remaining 90 per cent consists of music. The musical content can be further broken down as follows: classical and light classical music 16 per cent, folk and regional music 10 per cent, and devotional and patriotic music four per cent, making up a total of 30 per cent of the transmission time. The remaining 60 per cent of the transmission time is devoted to film music. This high proportion of film music is revealing, if one recalls the fact that Vividh Bharati was inaugurated to draw listeners away from Radio Ceylon in 1957 following the ban on the broadcast of film music over Akashvani.

Meagre Fees

16.29. Visits to Akashvani stations and discussions with music producers further revealed a bundle of contradictions, which no one seems to have sought to unravel over the years. Under the staff artist system, stations recruit only a certain number of instrumentalists as accompanists, the main musical roles—vocal or instrumental—being filled by outside artists, who are auditioned and graded and perform on a contract basis. The contract fees, however, are extremely modest. “B” grade artists are paid Rs.50 to Rs.70 for 15 to 20 minute programmes; “B-High” artists are paid between Rs. 80 and Rs. 120; “A” grade artists receive between Rs. 125 and Rs. 190 for 90-minute programmes, while certain top grade musicians receive between Rs. 200 and Rs. 240. Sangeet Natak Akademi award winners are entitled to a fee of Rs. 250 for a 90 minute performance, which may be broken down into two or more chunks and broadcast at different times of the day. There is also a system of “close bookings” for musicians, dramatists and others as a result of which an artist cannot normally be booked more than once a month or receive more than Rs. 1500 in fees per annum. Likewise, the fees paid to a musician and his associates or to a drama or choral group for a single contract performance cannot exceed Rs. 500, while the royalty to a playwright or author should not exceed Rs. 6,000 per annum. Anything in excess of these ceilings requires clearance from headquarters. The result is that Akashvani is unable to draw or keep the best talent.

16.30. It was brought to our notice that Akashvani’s system of accounting and payment for repeat broadcasts is unsatisfactory. Artists are often not compensated even though their programmes may have been rebroadcast several times. This complaint needs looking into.

16.31. Akashvani has been unable to maintain many light music units for reasons of economy. For instance, the Ahmedabad light music unit was disbanded in 1952. The Commercial Sales Unit of Akashvani finds that all Super-A programmes—which attract higher rates for sale of commercial time—are film music programmes. Apart from being unable to compete for lack of in-house instrumentalists and orchestras, Akashvani's music units also suffer from limitations on the variety of instruments that may be used.

Musical Censorship

16.32. The Working Group discovered that Akashvani has a list of 31 musical instruments “permitted for use” in classical and light classical programmes in accordance with an order issued in May 1969. The object of the order would seem to be to maintain “the spirit and basic concepts of Indian music traditions” and only to permit instruments “which are capable of faithfully reproducing the fundamental characteristics of Indian music.” The list of “permitted instruments” is appended in Appendix R. It includes the established Indian instruments as well as the violin, clarinet, viola, Hawaiian guitar and electric guitar. But it excludes the piano, oboe, trumpet and other instruments not native to India, including the drum. Even the harmonium is only allowed for “A” and top-grade artists, not others.

16.33. Though Akashvani has practised musical censorship by means of “established procedures” over all these years, the very instruments that it has so sternly disallowed account for 60 per cent of its music programmes over Vividh Bharati. Film music is popular precisely because it is orchestrated and harmonised and employs the banned instruments that permit a wider range or variety of musical expression. Akashvani has leaned heavily on film music because it is “popular”, available at low royalty rates, and obviates the need for expense and creative effort within its own studios. This is a pity and has caused a good deal of frustration to music producers who until 1965 met annually in music seminars or workshops.

Promoting Orchestration

16.34. Akashvani did well to introduce the orchestral form with the Vadya Vrinda which was initially directed by Ravi Shankar and later by Pannalal Ghosh. It would appear that the Vadya Vrinda experiment has run out of ideas, though it deserves to be encouraged under the best musical direction.

16.35. Indian music is basically melodic, whereas orchestration essentially implies harmony. A number of instruments playing a melody or a series of simple chords does not necessarily constitute either harmony or orchestration. Akashvani needs to train its musicians in orchestration and harmony and expose them to Western and other

music from where these concepts derive so that they are then better able to develop Indian orchestration which, could have a great future and open up whole new vistas of Indian music. Adoption of the piano by itself might go some way towards promoting harmony. None of this is to suggest that Indian music, especially classical Indian music, should be abandoned, vulgarised or torn from its pristine moorings. The object is merely to open new doors, as, for example, the Chinese and Japanese have done while retaining their own musical traditions.

Choral Singing

16.36. Likewise, Indian choral music should be encouraged. Choral singing, again, implies harmony and is different from group singing. The potentialities of developing an Indian choral tradition are beginning to be explored and the success of the Akashvani choral group under M.B. Srinivasan in Madras is indicative of the promise that lies here. It is significant that Akashvani Madras has helped popularise choral singing and that Srinivasan himself is now being sought after by schools to train choral groups. Similar choral groups should be fostered at other Akashvani Stations, especially in the North Eastern region and in tribal areas which are innately musical and could sustain several such groups.

16.37. Whether for orchestration or for choral singing, Akashvani should be better endowed with musical instruments and training facilities. Orchestration and choral music are difficult to sustain by ear. They require notation, preferably staff notation, but at least the tonic sol-fa (sa, re, ga, ma). Akashvani has a role to play as music teacher and impresario. The new generation of Akashvani Stations should each be equipped with a reasonably sized auditorium where live shows and concerts can be held and broadcast with audience participation. This will bring the people nearer radio.

Better Light Entertainment

16.38. It is noteworthy that before Vividh Bharati was so named it, used to be called the "All India Variety Programme". This is what it has ceased to be, having become an essentially repetitive film-disc programme. Music producers at Akashvani Station suspect that some of the requests they receive for film songs are mailed to them by professionals operating as agents for certain film music directors and artists to produce their own music through radio.

16.39. Be this as it may, we would recommend that Akashvani under the new dispensation should review the format and content of Vividh Bharati so as to develop a genuine radio-originated light entertainment programme inclusive of film music, which could become a vehicle for much experimentation and innovation in terms of styles, formats, artists and so on.

Drama on the Air

16.40. Few things are more entertaining and compelling than drama if well scripted, acted and produced. This is an area where radio and television can give a tremendous impetus to Indian literature in all languages and to the dramatic arts, modern as well as folk, and bring about widespread cross-cultural exchange. New Assamese writing should, for instance, be known in Kerala and Rajasthan and *vice versa*. If this is to happen, then Akashvani and Doordarshan must pay playwrights, script-writers, drama groups and actors much more than they do at present. As of now, no one can make a professional living through broadcasting as a result of which they write or act for the broadcast media only on the side.

16.41. There is also much more scope for skits and humour in every form. Everybody enjoys a laugh.

Auditioning System

16.42. In order to make the best talent available to listeners and viewers, we commend the idea of encouraging talented and eminent individuals to write, produce and present radio and television programmes with the help of production and other facilities extended to them by Akashvani and Doordarshan. They would, however, have to be suitably remunerated. Such programmes could be encouraged in fields like documentaries, drama and popular science.

16.43. An aspiring artist enters broadcasting through an audition test. Most participants in radio and drama are drawn from among amateurs, as professionals are not attracted by the meagre scales offered. The auditioning of drama voices is however casual and is handled by small station committees. There is a mistaken feeling that acting in radio plays does not need any special training and that any one who can read, can act in them. Even professional artists do not feel that the needs of the broadcasting studio differ from the theatre. One still listens to dialogues rendered in a declamatory fashion as in the traditional orthodox theatre. This is also true of television plays on Doordarshan. The players are either very tense or display a totally unartistic ease in their performance. Selection, therefore, must be followed by proper training. Producers at present have to double as drama teachers. Entrants who are keen on undergoing a training course will be the ones who are likely to take broadcasting seriously. Payments will however have to be better.

16.44. The present system of auditioning music artists also needs change. There was a time when singers and instrumentalists were auditioned by music staff at the stations. In 1952, it was decided to audition and grade artists by a committee of musicians and musicologists. The Committee soon assumed the role of an examiner in

music and started asking questions of the artists instead of listening to them quietly and giving their verdict on the performance, which is all that matters in broadcasting. This system bred discontent and soon a two-tier arrangement was established. An aspirant for a music engagement would be screened by a local audition committee, those selected being subject to a further test by the Music Audition Board (MAB) in Delhi. The time between the first audition and the final result sometimes takes up to a year or even more. The necessity for the MAB is questionable. Moreover, it aims at uniformity in the interpretation of ragas, a dangerous obsession in the realm of art. A central audition board is unnecessary. Zonal boards should instead be established and given a set of norms. Music producers at stations should be involved in the matter of selection of artists as standards and tastes differ from region to region.

Classical Heritage

16.45. Sanskrit news bulletins were introduced twice daily some years ago with the object of encouraging knowledge of Sanskrit in the country. The available evidence does not suggest wide listening to these broadcasts. If Sanskrit is to be propagated, this would be far better done by introducing Sanskrit learning programmes and other Sanskrit programmes that portray its enormously rich cultural heritage. Imaginatively produced, such programmes are likely to find a wide and enthusiastic audience and open a window on India's classical past. The same would apply to Persian programmes, were these to be started.

Children and Youth

16.46. Youth constitutes the vast majority of India's population and this is an audience that broadcasting cannot ignore. Akashvani broadcasts programmes for tiny-tots and for children in the 6-14 age group. Doordarshan too has regular children's programme. Some of these programmes are built around listeners' clubs. We would feel that the children's programme merits the greatest attention and the very best production talent. This is where cultural tastes can be influenced and interests awakened in the world around. Some school learning could be imparted through song and music to which children quickly and joyously respond. Learning through music needs to be integrated more consciously into the school broadcasting programme, especially for younger children.

16.47. The Yuva Vani service was commissioned as a separate channel over Akashvani Delhi in 1969, since when similar reserved channels have been provided at Calcutta, Hyderabad, Jammu and Srinagar. Other stations of Akashvani broadcast Yuva Vani services on their main channel or, in rare cases, on the commercial channel. The object of the Yuva Vani service is to provide young people with a forum for self-expression

and to invite involvement and participation by offering a good deal of programming freedom. While these are laudable objectives, there is a distinct tendency for Yuva Vani programmes to cater predominantly to urban and student youth.

Sports Coverage

16.48. Sports evoke wide interest and not only among youth. The football series in Calcutta in which the Brazilian star, Pele, played evoked tremendous enthusiasm and resulted in the purchase of approximately 4,000 additional television sets in Calcutta as the matches were relayed by Doordarshan. The cricket commentaries over Akashvani likewise evoke enormous interest, while Indian viewers were able to watch the Montreal Olympics over Doordarshan. With the development of regional and local stations, it should be possible to devote more time to regional sporting events and traditional or novel sports and pastimes. Radio and television could also do much to promote yoga and physical fitness, through musical and drill programmes.

Programme Journals and Awards

16.49. Akashvani and Doordarshan could do with more and better programme journals. The success of Betar Jagat (Akashvani's programme journal published from Calcutta) indicates the possibility of achieving mass circulations. Given the right to print advertisements like any other journal they could at least break even, or possibly earn some modest revenue. The reprinting of broadcast talks and some information about broadcast personalities would further stimulate interest and enable listeners to have a permanent record of a talk they might have greatly enjoyed.

16.50. Akashvani could also produce discs and tapes of Great Masters, national concerts, and folk music on a commercial basis as do certain other broadcast organisations.

16.51. Programmers and innovative technical personnel should be eligible for annual awards under various sections. Provision for this exists in both Akashvani and Doordarshan, though these have not been widely publicised and are certainly unknown outside Akashvani and Doordarshan.

Political and Election Broadcasts

16.52. Political broadcasting was introduced over Akashvani for the first time in April 1977, when the Leader of the Opposition was given time on Akashvani to respond to a national broadcast by the Prime Minister. Radio and television have a role in rendering politicians accountable not merely by reporting the proceedings of legislatures and other elected bodies but by bringing political leaders to the microphone or in front

of the camera and by enabling trained newsmen, specialists and ordinary citizens to confront them with questions or their day-to-day problems. Such programmes, apart from formal party political broadcasts, can be greatly educative and can influence the decision-making process. It is in this very real sense that Akashvani and Doordarshan can enable listeners and viewers in India to share power democratically with their elected leaders.

16.53. Election broadcasts were also introduced for the first time during the elections to a number of State Assemblies in May-June 1977. The audience response was uniformly good and the election broadcasts evoked fairly wide listening and viewing. The Working Group was told by a number of witnesses that the system of election broadcasts should be formalised but that they should be limited to parliamentary and State Assembly elections. Witnesses also favoured party-political broadcasts but were of the view that these should be regulated. We would recommend that the regulation of election and party-political broadcasts be left to be determined by the political parties themselves in consultation with the Election Commission and the Speaker as and when necessary. Party-political and election broadcasts must however be subject to an approved broadcast code so that the level of debate is maintained and personal attacks are avoided.

Audience Research

16.54. No broadcast programming can be complete without satisfactory and extensive audience research. Facilities in this regard at present are totally inadequate. Akashvani and Doordarshan are serviced by Akashvani's audience research organisation which has 16 radio cells, three of them vacant at the end of 1977, and six television units (two of them vacant). Ordinary programme staff headed the Audience Research Unit until 1972, when a behavioural scientist was inducted to that office for the first time. Many Stations are totally uncovered by any audience research support. There is, for example, no Akashvani audience research cell in Bihar, while there is only one audience research officer in Gauhati for the entire North-East region. The Audience Research unit has a very limited staff and budget (Rs. 25 lakhs for 1977-78 plus another Rs. 50,000 for the Central Sales Unit for market surveys). It is, therefore, impossible to conduct any regular audience surveys or to operate on more than very small samples. Audience research is in any case not part of the policy making process in Akashvani and Doordarshan and is not involved in decision-making or programme formulation. The Audience Research Unit does not rank very high in the broadcasting hierarchy and is subject to cumbersome procedures. The attitude towards it is generally apathetic and Station Directors are defensive in responding to audience research reports whose findings are invariably "noted" but not necessarily implemented.

16.55. We have elsewhere in this Report recommended the establishment of a strong audience research division under a Director of Audience Research who will be a member of the Central Executive Board of the NBT. We have also recommended that all audience research reports should be made available simultaneously and directly to the Board of Trustees, since these reports will constitute one of the most important antenna of the broadcast organisation.

Programme Advisory Committees

16.56. It is equally important that Akashvani and Doordarshan should involve their listening and viewing public at all levels through programme advisory committees. Apart from National, Zonal and Regional programme advisory committees, there must be such a committee at each Station, which will consist of people who are knowledgeable and concerned and would be in a position to provide valuable ideas and feedback. In addition, there should be functional programme committees such as for music and drama, school broadcasts, children's broadcasts, and so on. These committees should be assisted by a small secretariat and their proceedings should be attended by responsible members of the broadcast organisation. Minutes should be maintained and copies of these should be made available to the higher organs of the broadcast organisation together with a statement of the action taken. These committees have either been dormant or ineffective in the past. They must be revived and invigorated in the future and periodically rotated so that no body of people acquires a vested interest.

16.57. It would be highly desirable for the NBT to strengthen existing links with the Asian Broadcasting Union, and to establish links with the European Broadcasting Union and similar bodies for purposes of programme exchange and professional contact.

16.58. The internal and international transcription services of Akashvani and Doordarshan must be suitably strengthened and equipped to foster and stimulate programme exchange. At the entrance to Broadcasting House are inscribed these words of Gandhiji:

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. Mine is not a religion of the prison-house."

These wise words spell out a philosophy of cultural exchange, which the NBT should strive to follow at home and abroad.

CHAPTER 17

The Training Function

17.1. An organisation is as good as the people who serve it. If Akashvani and Doordarshan have been handicapped by a number of constraints, the lack of trained cadres at many levels and the general neglect of training must be counted among the more important. This is true of the programme staff, especially in the absence of any significant training facilities in the Universities or elsewhere. But it also applies with equal emphasis to the technical cadres whose degrees and diplomas in science and engineering do not give them the operational insights required. The need for training has been stated at various times and committees have been set up to look into the matter, but without much result. Broadcasting is communication and it is essential that all broadcasters should know something about communication processes and policies relevant to Indian needs and circumstances besides an understanding of communications systems as a whole.

Radio Software Staff

17.2. In Akashvani training has been long and consistently neglected. A brief visit to the Programme Staff Training School in Delhi and a glimpse of its facilities showed just how inadequate they are and how this state of affairs must have impeded the evolution of gifted and competent people in the programme service. As for administrative training, it is for Akashvani a new concept and started only 18 months ago.

17.3. In any case staff training to all categories of Akashvani and Doordarshan employees is usually given long after recruitment so that bad habits and impressions are formed and hardened before they receive any formal structured instruction.

17.4. These courses too make no pretence to offering anything more than bare foundation training. The intake, especially for programme staff, is wholly inadequate while the content and quality of training suffers from a lack of professional training staff

and instructional aids. The two regional training programme institutes set up at Hyderabad and at Shillong more recently are no more than very hesitant steps even if in the right direction.

17.5. If foundation training has been inadequate, there has been little specialised training for several types of programme staff. Beginnings have been made with a tribal welfare programme in collaboration with Ranchi University and another programme in Udaipur in collaboration with the State Institute of Science, but hard core professional training is still far short of what is required.

No Training Reserve

17.6 One major cause of inadequate training is the absence in Akashvani and Doordarshan of a training reserve in the programme cadre which we recommend. There was a pause in recruitment for many years and posts or vacancies have often remained unfilled for long periods. When a new recruit joins, she or he is required immediately for regular duties and cannot be spared for training; when sent for training it is very inconvenient for the Station to do without its complement of staff and so the period of absence has to be short. It is difficult for Stations to spare staff even for refresher courses if and when conducted. The Staff Reorganisation Committee (1968-69), known as the Masani Committee, provided for a training reserve by reducing the number of persons engaged for certain jobs. The proposal, if accepted, does not appear to have been implemented effectively.

17.7. Akashvani's more recent basic training course of 13 weeks is one to which new recruits should be compulsorily sent. Programme planners, producers and presentation staff need an introduction to broadcasting, familiarisation with studios and equipment, and practice in making recordings, playing them back and mixing voice and recordings. Most programme staff in Akashvani have little or no training of this kind, depending, therefore, on engineers and assistants to accompany them on various assignments. They also need training in announcing, news reading and presentation and a thorough understanding of what the voice can do with a microphone. Training in producing talks and discussions would be greatly helped by listening to good and bad examples, followed by practical work in studios. After an initial course each recruit should be required to work for a couple of months at a time in each of the main programme sections before being assigned to a particular job.

Regional Centres

17.8. This training is best conducted at regional centres because of the language problem. Besides the three existing training schools at Delhi, Hyderabad and Shillong at least two others are needed so that there is one in each Zone. Each of

them should be fully equipped and competently staffed with instructors fluent in the requisite languages. Facilities at these academies should include audio-visual equipment, studios, good film tape and general reference libraries, as well as residential accommodation.

Refresher Courses

17.9. Opportunities for technical and programme staff to meet periodically in workshops and seminars would itself be of great value and it is a pity that such exchanges have been limited or even curtailed for reasons of economy. The training academies should offer a whole system of refresher courses for all staff at regular intervals in their career.

Broadcast Journalism

17.10. The news and current affairs staff should receive training in broadcast journalism. They should be able to 'voice' their despatches and crisply edit spoken-word material rather than depend on sources primarily intended for the print media. Television news-cameramen must be photo-journalists and not just either cameramen or journalists. They should be able to see the news through the lens of their cameras and be able to carry and use portable equipment in the manner that a print journalist or photographer uses a typewriter or still camera, the latter being able to develop and edit his own prints.

Cultural Orientation

17.11. For more senior staff, there should be a general course in communications and broadcasting systems. There should be facilities for language learning where these are not available at local Universities or other institutions, and orientation courses for engineering and programming personnel who are being posted to unfamiliar and sensitive areas such as North East India. The broadcasters must know and understand their audience whether these be rural, tribal, industrial, children or whatever. And each category must be appreciated in its own distinctive cultural and social environment.

17.12. New recruits and staff at important points in their career must understand the basic principles and ideals of public service and extension broadcasting. They should be kept up-to-date with technological developments and audience research reports and be in touch with new kinds of programmes.

Training Staff

17.13. A great deal of thought and attention has to be given to training staff. Some of Akashvani's best personnel should appropriately be dedicated to this task.

While experience is always an asset, younger people with new ideas and drive can impart an innovative touch to training and programming techniques. The training academics should not be starved of funds, and those coming for refresher courses should have facilities to do experimental programmes which might indeed rank among Akashvani's best.

Broadcast Staff College

17.14. There should also be a senior level Broadcast Staff College where selected personnel who show promise and are likely to move up into key decision-making positions or technical levels should be able to spend some time. The Staff College, manned by experts in the field, should enable fellows to improve their skills, widen their horizons, get to know more about the totality of broadcasting and the social policies it aims to fulfil. They should be encouraged to undertake various courses and programmes of study or to pursue research. Administrators, planners, managers, educators, academics, journalists and technical personnel from other organisations like ISRO, P&T, Industry and the IITs, should be invited to co-mingle with the broadcast fellows in seminars, lectures, research programmes and the like.

17.15. Graduation from the Staff College should equip both engineering and programme personnel to move to higher responsibilities in "staff" appointments if they show the necessary interest and aptitude. The demonstrated possibility of such upward movement would reinforce the reality of an open system.

Inter-disciplinary Teams

17.16. The presence at the Broadcast Staff College of both programme and technical cadres would go a long way to break down the barriers that at present unfortunately divide these two related cadres which are expected to function in concert at all levels. Broadcasting entails inter-disciplinary team-work and members of the staff cannot and should not regard themselves as belonging to watertight or rival categories. Indeed, at the lowest levels and at the local Stations we have recommended elsewhere the desirability of multipurpose "Protechs" or programme-technicians who should be trained to make simple programmes with their own technical and software inputs. Thus a programme executive should be in a position to handle recording and mixing equipment while the technician who maintains this equipment should equally be able to make and edit a simple programme. This is what many amateurs do even with somewhat more complicated equipment with remarkable success. A basic foundation course for both programme and technical cadres could help establish a new tradition and a wider competence than is evident or accepted at present.

The Pune Institute

17.17. What we have said about radio applies equally to television. Doordarshan's programme training facilities originally set up in Delhi in 1971, were moved to the Film and Television Training Institute (FTTI) in Pune in 1974. It is not necessary here to trace the history of this decision or its unhappy consequences. The fact is that the marriage of film and television training as currently organised simply has not worked. It has impaired training, strained both staff and student relations, and bred illwill all round. The FTTI has attempted to combine a basic diploma course in film with a specific in-service television training programme for Doordarshan. We would recommend that the FTTI be converted into a national institute for basic film and television training together with a technical component, awarding diplomas in both disciplines. The excellent television studios and prototype production facilities at the Institute would be an asset to such an institution. They could also be rented out to independent programme production companies, universities and others.

Separate Television School

17.18. Doordarshan should be suitably compensated for the transfer of these assets and assisted to establish a separate staff training school elsewhere, allowing for a certain transitional period during which the Pune facilities may continue to be used. The separation might appear painful in some ways but is likely to provide much relief. Doordarshan will be better off for a larger facility under its own control and tailored to its own needs for in-service training and refresher courses.

17.19. In fact, we would recommend that even for radio, the foundation courses should be taken over by Universities and other specialised institutions and that Akashvani should over a period of time only need to provide induction training and refresher courses at higher levels.

17.20. Doordarshan itself will in due course need more than one training establishment, especially as it will need to undertake advanced training and specialised courses.

Technical Personnel

17.21. The technical training facilities of both Akashvani and Doordarshan also require considerable strengthening and expansion. Technicians and engineers need induction training, an introduction to broadcasting, and training in maintenance. Refresher and advanced courses are no less important here as in the case of software personnel. Although the present Staff Training Institute (Technical) was started in

1947 its expansion has not been commensurate with the growing needs of the broadcast system. The STI(T) has been given the responsibility of conducting departmental exams, training foreign students and preparing training manuals in addition to its primary task. Its present resources are fully stretched and it must be suitably expanded or replicated if the growing technical requirements of Akashvani and Doordarshan are to be met. More accommodation will also be required. Investment in training will bring its own reward in terms of the quality and dependability of service and operational economics. As in the case of programme training, the best engineers should be assigned to the training schools and a posting here should be considered a distinction.

Bringing Radio and Television Together

17.22. The entire broadcast training system for technical and programme cadres calls for reorganisation and invites very early attention. In any scheme of reorganisation we would recommend bringing radio and television and software and hardware personnel together in certain foundation or induction courses, at certain higher levels, and at the Broadcast Staff College so that inter-disciplinary traditions of understanding and respect are established.

17.23. The Working Group heard evidence from the faculty of certain broadcast training institutions at diploma level in Bombay and Madras and hope that such institutions and others are enabled to grow. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication, certain farm universities, the Space Applications Centre, and NCERT have established or are in the process of developing training, production or experimental facilities which can be used for training specialised personnel.

Role of Universities

17.24. We would also recommend that the Government and the Universities support courses in communications and professional training at the diploma and degree levels in view of the contemplated expansion of the broadcast system. The franchise stations could in themselves generate a training input which could be linked to formal hardware and software instructional courses of which there is already some evidence. Akashvani and Doordarshan should assist this development by offering apprenticeship and short-duration in-service facilities for university or diploma trainees to work under operational conditions.

Management Cadres

17.25. The NBT will require trained administrators and managers as much as trained professional and technical staff at various levels. This training component too

must be strengthened. In this case, however, simple in-house facilities should be supplemented by relying on the many existing management institutes in the country some of which might be persuaded to run courses or seminars that take into account the special features of broadcasting management, personnel relations, sale of commercial time, audience research, and publications.

17.26. The training lag in Akashvani and Doordarshan is so great and the rate of expansion likely to be so rapid that we recommend the highest priority to training and refresher training facilities which should be established urgently and on a generous scale. Any effort made in this direction will be an investment in quality broadcasting.

CHAPTER 18

A New Deal For Staff

18.1. Akashvani and Doordarshan are large, sprawling organisations spread all over the country and employing a wide variety of technical, programme, journalist and other staff numbering about 19,800. There are at present approximately 15,800 personnel in Akashvani and 4,000 in Doordarshan. Taking the two together there are 4,950 technical personnel including 1,150 engineers and 3,800 technicians and engineering assistants in the non-gazetted cadres. There are 6,100 programme staff of whom 1,600 are in the permanent cadre while 4,500 are staff artists. There are 219 Central Information Service personnel and 4,800 administrative staff of whom 650 are borne on the strength of the I&B and other Ministries. There are also about 3,700 Group 'D' (Class IV) staff.

18.2. The quality of any organisation is ultimately determined by the people who serve it, possibly more so in broadcasting where the raw material consists of ideas, and the capital stock of a wide combination of creative skills in which the software and hardware elements are inextricably coupled. There is no dearth of talent in either Akashvani or Doordarshan, but those working in the two organisations are sadly divided and frustrated at every level and in all departments. The impression that Members of the Working Group gathered in visits to Akashvani Stations and Doordarshan Kendras and from the evidence tendered by various Staff Associations and other witnesses from within these organisations was that morale is depressingly low and rivalries sharp. One respected broadcaster described the infighting as "tribal warfare". There is little sense of pride, loyalty, belonging or job satisfaction.

Little Personnel Planning

18.3. The reason for this regrettable state of affairs must be traced in part to the absence of a Personnel Department or any personnel planning. There has been

inadequate training, insufficient job analysis, and little career planning and no well defined recruitment policy. The staff structure is fragmented into numerous cadres, some of them quite isolated. Promotional avenues are limited in certain cadres and almost non-existent in others. Specialisation has not been encouraged and, where it exists, results in stagnation or gets diluted with lateral promotions. The engineering and programme cadres look upon one another as rivals. Within the technical branch there is tension between the gazetted and non-gazetted staff which, however, is not as sharp as the line that divides the permanent programme personnel from the staff artists. There is little significance in the word "permanent" here because staff artists are also now permanent and, indeed, more so than programme staff since they continue until 60 years of age and not only up to 58 as is the case with the others who are permanent Government employees. Even some of the "casual" artists appear to be "permanent", having served intermittently for five to 10 years despite the unrealistic and widely evaded stipulation that they be given 14-day renewable contracts only.

18.4. For some 10 years, until 1974, there was no recruitment of programme and transmission executives as a result of which some 350 *ad hoc* and accelerated promotions were affected which continue to attract cynical and adverse comment. We were told that whereas the programme staff had to pass rigorous UPSC tests before selection, many staff artists had been brought into the organisation as a result of various influences and not necessarily on merit. On the other hand, the programme staff was described to us as being "mere administrators", many of whom are unfamiliar with production and lacking in professionalism. Altogether, security and status appear to have prevailed over service.

18.5. However, a number of witnesses told the Working Group that there should be only three cadres, namely, technical, programme (including news), and administrative. There was great stress on the need for a unified programme cadre that would do away with the artificial distinction between staff artists and other programme staff. It was also strongly urged that there must be parity between all categories, particularly between programme staff and engineers who feel that they have always been called upon to play second fiddle.

Service Conditions

18.6. A number of witnesses and Staff Associations called for fresh job evaluation and fitment of staff after due screening and weeding out of surplus personnel and "deadwood".

18.7. Yet another general complaint related to the low emoluments received by broadcast personnel in comparison with comparable services and cadres elsewhere.

The Working Group was told that Akashvani staff service conditions and prospects compare very unfavourably with those in the IAS and other Class I Services, not to speak of the Universities, especially under the revised UGC scales. Today a lecturer's scale is Rs. 700-1600 whereas that of a programme executive is Rs. 650-1200. The maximum pay of a staff artist as a chief producer goes up to Rs. 2,000, while the highest salary to which a musician can aspire is Rs. 1200. The Director-General's salary is Rs. 3,000. One of the factors that has produced a healthier working climate in the SAC Television Centre is the better ISRO scales and promotional ladders which were available to the staff during SITE, and which have been modified to a less favourable consolidated pay for the current SITE-continuity period.

18.8. The lower salary scales drawn by broadcasting personnel at all levels is also reflected in their general status. Station Directors and Station Engineers as well as their superiors at headquarters do not enjoy the same financial and administrative power or command the same position in Government circles or in society as their counterparts in other services or professions.

Parity among cadres

18.9. The engineering cadres argued the case for their being constituted into a separate broadcast engineering service under the Government and outside any autonomous broadcasting organisation. This step was clearly seen by them as perhaps the only sure means of asserting their independence and achieving the status and dignity which they feel they have been denied in Akashvani and Doordarshan. We have elsewhere in this Report stated why we think that such separation is both undesirable and unnecessary. However, we do recommend that there should be parity between all categories of staff in the NBT and that all programme staff including staff artists should be brought under a single unified cadre. It should be possible for a recruit to any one of three broad service categories, namely, technical, programme (including news), and administration to rise to senior staff positions such as that of Station Director, Regional Manager, Zonal Controller, or Director on the Central Executive Board of the proposed NBT. For the same reason we do not see much merit in the suggestion that posts of Station Directors—who are really Station Managers—and above be rotated between the existing three broad staff cadres in order to ensure fair shares for all. Positions of responsibility and leadership must be earned rather than mechanically shared. Provided there is equality of opportunity it will be the best person who gets to the top irrespective of his or her original cadre. There should be no room for any feeling of one service being favoured as against another in the matter of emoluments and avenues of promotion.

18.10. Since there is a larger number of transmitters than programme originating stations there is a preponderance of senior engineering staff as against senior programme staff, particularly in Akashvani. The practice of relating the rank of Station Engineer with the power of the transmitter of which he is in charge has resulted in the automatic upgrading of a number of engineering posts as the power of transmitters is upgraded. The criterion to be applied here needs to be reviewed in order to remove imbalance in the overall staff structure.

18.11. No structural framework can by itself guarantee achievement without a healthy interplay of the human element in it. In a service where those who produce programmes are in daily contact with the public, it is essential to create conditions in which they can give their best. This is possible only if the future organisation fosters a new culture in which creativity can have full play without the hindrances and constraints of rigid administrative control.

Guiding Principles

18.12. Details of the future staffing pattern are best dealt with by the NBT. However, in view of our terms of reference which, inter alia, require us to consider problems relating to the absorption, fitment and replacement of personnel we recommend the following principles as guidelines for action :

- (i) No employee taken over by the NBT should suffer in the matter of his or her existing emoluments and other benefits including terminal benefits. Existing employees should be permitted to opt for either their present terms and conditions of service or any new terms and conditions that may be prescribed.
- (ii) Recruitment procedures should have an in-built mechanism to inspire confidence in impartiality and fair play. They should also provide for infusion of fresh talent at appropriate levels in the organisation through lateral entry.
- (iii) Salary scales and fees should be reviewed so as to ensure that Akashvani and Doordarshan attract and retain the requisite talent which they are not always able to do today. Promotional avenues should also be enlarged for all services on an equitable basis in order to prevent stagnation and frustration.
- (iv) The NBT should plan to provide in-service and refresher training on the lines suggested in Chapter 17, 'The Training Function'. Much of the existing staff would be far more useful if given such courses, including training in house-keeping and simple administration.

- (v) In a creative organisation decisions should follow group discussion within a collegiate type of administration for planning and decision-making. In the present hierarchical system the views of some relevant interests tend to be overlooked, leading to defective decisions at times.
- (vi) Cordial relations and mutual understanding between management and staff can contribute greatly to the efficient performance and better image of a forward looking organisation. The NBT should have machinery to foster cordiality and understanding with and among all sections of its staff by periodic discussions in staff councils between the management and staff representatives, who should be encouraged to put forward ideas and suggestions.
- (vii) Consistent with the ethos of the NBT as a non-profit Trust and an essential service, we further recommend the establishment of a grievance machinery at various levels which should be automatically activated in case of any difference or dispute.
- (viii) The NBT should consider institutionalising a scheme of merit promotion for such of the staff as eminently deserve it. The nature of work at various stations warrants specialisation in regional languages. A special allowance should be paid to such of the staff as are or become proficient in any language other than the national language or their mother tongue provided that proficiency is maintained. This should apply equally to knowledge of foreign languages other than the languages for which a person is recruited.
- (ix) Staff welfare services and amenities should get due attention. Akashvani and Doordarshan need to do much more to make their staff mobile, to provide telephones for quick communication, to pay better travel and entertainment allowances, to provide rest rooms and canteens, and to enable members of the staff to be in touch with developments at home and abroad through access to journals, periodicals and books.
- (x) Members of the staff should be entitled to study leave in accordance with stipulated procedures if they wish to undertake approved study, research or training.
- (xi) We have stated the need for suitable job evaluation and classification. We would, however, urge that over-categorisation be avoided and that seniority and rank be determined by time scales with efficiency-bars rather than by a whole hierarchy of designations. We also believe that staff requirements in creative departments cannot be determined solely by time and motion studies.

- (xii) While employees of the NBT might retire at the age of 58-60 there is no particular age limit in the case of the performing arts or for creative talent. We would, however, suggest that all those who are retained in service after the normal age of retirement should be re-employed subject to medical fitness on short-term renewable contracts.

Towards Five Cadres

18.13. Doordarshan was separated from Akashvani a little under two years ago. The engineering and programme cadres are even now common to both organisations. The reintegration of Doordarshan and Akashvani personnel should, therefore, not pose any insuperable difficulties.

18.14. All regular employees of Akashvani and Doordarshan other than staff artists are, by their existing appointment letters, subject to transfer to an autonomous broadcasting organisation should one be set up. There is no bar, therefore, to the transfer of such regular Government employees to the NBT. Staff artists likewise are on terminable long term contracts with Akashvani and Doordarshan and technically need only be given six months' notice should they not wish to join the NBT.

18.15. There are at present three broad categories of staff belonging to various services working in Akashvani and Doordarshan. These are :

- (a) **Programme:** To this category belong officers and staff dealing with programme planning, presentation and production. There is a number of specialists within the programme cadre such as broadcast journalists, monitors, farm radio and other extension officers, educational programmers, etcetera.
- (b) **Technical:** This category includes broadcast engineers, civil, mechanical and electrical engineers working in the Civil Construction Wing, and studio technicians.
- (c) **Administration:** To this category belong the officers and staff working in the personnel and finance and accounts wings of the two media. Audience research personnel, archival and library staff, information personnel and others in isolated cadres such as caretakers, receptionists, and security personnel are also at present regarded as belonging to the administrative cadre although some like audience research staff are obviously highly specialised people.

18.16. Besides these broad categories, the media employ staff artists on contract for the production of programmes. They are grouped into five categories :

- (i) The production group comprising production assistants, assistant producers, producers, deputy chief producers and chief producers.
- (ii) Musicians and instrumentalists comprising conductors, composers, instrumentalists, drama voices, etcetera.
- (iii) The journalist group comprising script writers, sub-editors and translators.
- (iv) Announcers and news readers comprising news readers, comperes and news presenters.
- (v) A clerical group including general assistants, copyists and tape librarians.

18.17. The structure that we recommend envisages five separate cadres, namely, programme, engineering, finance, personnel and information/audience research. We would not, however, group the last three categories under the generic heading "administration". All the cadres that we have mentioned are "administrative cadres", each within its own function, and must be so regarded at all times.

Screening, Fitment, Integration

18.18. The standard government rules applicable to the programme staff, engineers and other Government employees in Akashvani and Doordarshan provide for the screening of personnel at the age of 50 and a second screening at the age of 55, retirement being at the age of 58. The NBT may have to rely upon these contractual agreements and service rules for weeding out or for integrating staff into a unified cadre in accordance with such appropriate fitment procedures as may be worked out.

18.19. We have considered the rationale of the staff artists system and feel that it has outlived whatever utility it may have had. The original objective of inducting creative talent on a short-term contract basis got bogged down in rules and regulations and finally resulted in little benefit to the listener. While appreciating the notable contributions made by individual staff artists, we feel the system calls for reform. For all practical purposes, staff artists are now government servants virtually enjoying the same benefits as the others. This cadre has come into conflict with the existing regular programme staff, sometimes due to avoidable friction and duplication. We, therefore, recommend that the present staff artists become regular employees of the NBT. Integration of programme staff should be left to special programme staff integration panels working to certain accepted norms. Experience, length of service and assessment of talent should be taken into consideration in fitting personnel of all programme services into a unified programme cadre for which detailed fitment procedures will have to be worked out. No one should be adversely affected by fitment. It may be necessary to accept some duality in salary scales for similar posts when integration of existing cadres is brought about. But all new recruits will be subject to whatever revised scales

are prescribed. Existing employees may also be permitted to opt for the same. Surplus staff is unlikely to be more than a temporary problem in view of the contemplated expansion of both Akashvani and Doordarshan and the need to fill existing vacancies.

CIS and Deputationists

18.20. Some programme, technical and administration posts are held by deputationists and persons borne on cadres outside Akashvani and Doordarshan. The Central Information Service personnel who man a number of posts in Akashvani and Doordarshan constitute one notable category.

18.21. We are informed that the CIS cadre has a strength of approximately 900 officers of whom 219 are currently serving against encadred posts in Akashvani. Of these 219 encadred posts, 114 are in the News Service Division, 99 in the regional news units, and six in the Monitoring Unit. These constitute a little under 42 per cent of all "news" or "journalist" staff employed by Akashvani at the present time. No Doordarshan posts are encadred in the CIS. In order to ensure that leadership in the news cadres of the NBT rests with the best talent that can be had, we recommend that all Grade I posts of and above the rank of News Editor be filled by open competition. All members of the CIS cadre, wherever employed, as well as staff artists and outsiders who fulfil the requisite qualifications will be eligible. For the rest, we recommend that all members of the CIS cadre—and not just those currently with Akashvani—be given the option to join the NBT.

18.22. CIS personnel who opt for service in NBT should be screened by a special selection panel and the existing "CIS quota" of 219 should be filled from among those selected. They should thereafter be regarded as permanent employees of the NBT and should sever their connections with the CIS. Their terms and conditions of service should not, however, be adversely affected by the change, though they should be subject to the same processes of fitment as recommended for other programme staff.

18.23. Similar selection and fitment procedures are recommended in respect of Akashvani and Doordarshan posts encadred in the Central Secretariat Service, the Central Secretariat Stenographers' Service and the Central Secretariat Clerical Service, all of them belonging to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's cadres. We are informed that posts in the Pay and Accounts Sections of Akashvani and Doordarshan, under the Departmental Accounting Organisation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, are similarly placed. We accordingly recommend similar selection and fitment procedures for filling in the posts in the Pay and Accounts Sections of the NBT. There are also deputationists who have been taken over on a tenure basis from other department and services. Posts held by the deputationists are not

large in number. But it is fair that they too should be given the same option as others and be subject to identical procedures.

Upward Mobility

18.24. With regard to non-gazetted engineering staff, the Working Group was informed that upward mobility was barred because of the requirement of an engineering degree which technical assistants do not possess, recruited as they are with diploma or simple graduate qualifications. While it is true that many of these technical assistants are quick to learn on the job and gain a good deal of experience as they go along, we were informed that they could not be promoted as engineers and to positions of higher responsibility unless they possess certain minimum basic theoretical knowledge relating to broadcast engineering. It was, therefore, suggested that the answer might lie in providing for departmental examinations which would include certain basic theoretical papers pertaining to broadcast engineering, due account being given to the experience and performance of the person concerned. We consider this to be a practical and fair solution and would recommend its adoption.

18.25. We recommend direct recruitment at the lower ranks with provision for suitable promotion quotas between different tiers to be filled on the basis of departmental selections and examinations. However, merit criteria should not be relaxed in the process of departmental promotion though we see no reason for an age bar at any stage for those within the organisation.

18.26. Recruitment may have to be at least at two (if not three) tiers, namely, local-zonal and zonal-national. The local-zonal level may, however, need be broken down into local-regional and regional-zonal, consistent with language and other requirements.

Qualifications and Interchangeability

18.27. We also recommend that promotional ladders should be created by means of interchangeability and training and by appropriate time scales with efficiency-bars. This will obviate frustration and stagnation. Those persons who prefer to specialise should be enabled to stay on in specialised "field" jobs rather than graduate to staff or managerial appointments. They should, however, be offered promotions *in situ* through suitable time scales.

18.28. We do not think it necessary for the NBT to insist on a graduate or any other degree, diploma or certificate for non-technical staff. Creativity is not necessarily the product of classrooms or higher education though these certainly are of advantage.

We would, however, recommend the provision of self-learning and training facilities within the NBT so that there are possibilities for career advancement.

18.29. We would also emphasise the desirability of promoting the concept of interchangeability among all categories of staff except where technical considerations apply. Engineers, programmers, scriptwriters and social scientists from the audience research cadre should be encouraged and enabled to function in composite teams. The interactive process so generated will, in our opinion, ensure better programmes. It will also stimulate the internal learning process and movement of trained personnel to positions of leadership where they have to supervise or manage different disciplines and cadres. Admission to the proposed NBT Staff College should be regarded a distinction and graduation should equip all members of the staff to move up to higher "staff" appointments such as those on the Zonal and Central Executive Boards. In fact, it should be a necessary requirement that a person should have gained a certain variety of experience in different appointments before he or she qualifies for a staff job. Similarly, junior staff jobs should be regarded as training grounds for senior staff appointments and the latter for selection to top management posts. For example, the demonstrated possibility of upward movement and of engineers becoming Station Directors or ranking members of the Zonal or Central directorates would reinforce the reality of an open system.

Lateral Entry

18.30. While we envisage employees rising from the ranks to the very top of the organisation, we also recommend lateral entry at higher levels so as to provide a necessary infusion of fresh blood and ideas to ensure the best possible talent for sensitive senior posts. It may well be that the initial selection of many of the upgraded positions in the Central Executive Board and even at the Zonal level may have to be filled by outsiders if persons of sufficient experience and leadership qualities are not available from within the ranks of Akashvani and Doordarshan especially in view of the not-so-distant retirement of several senior personnel.

18.31. We would, however, recommend that the posts of CGB, Directors, and General Managers be tenure posts of not more than five years. This should not preclude reappointment.

Selection and Evaluation

18.32. Recruitment, promotion and auditioning, as indicated elsewhere, will be on the basis of selection by internal boards chaired by eminent outsiders who will have been empanelled earlier. It is the people inside the organisation, particularly

the administrative superiors and professional heads who are best able to judge the merits of a candidate. However, in order to ensure a sense of impartiality and fairness it would be desirable to associate one or more outsiders so that personal preferences and prejudices, if any, do not prevail.

18.33. For the same reason we recommend that confidential reports of members of the staff should be written by their immediate administrative superiors as well as by their professional heads of department. This will ensure a certain balance and reflect more accurately the record of the persons concerned. In the case of very senior personnel, it may be desirable that evaluation is made by a group rather than by individual superiors in the hierarchy.

18.34. All these many tasks of career planning, setting up of selection boards, training, staff relations, welfare and so on will be the responsibility of the personnel department headed by the Director of Personnel. We regard this as a critical function and central to the promotion of efficiency, harmony and dynamism. The personnel department should also be able to undertake talent scouting. At the same time, departmental cadre management should continue to be influenced by departmental and professional heads who should share responsibility in making personnel decisions.

Appointment Letter

18.35. We would propose that all employees of the NBT irrespective of the discipline to which they belong should be given an appointment letter which should be in the nature of a contract terminable with one, three or six months notice on either side depending upon the level of the appointment or post held. Entirely new recruits should be initially taken on one or two years probation. While all personnel might normally expect to continue in service throughout their career, they must know that they are constantly being evaluated and that at the higher levels it is not sufficient that they be competent or even good but that the NBT must feel that they represent the best talent available. In other words they may have to yield place to superior talent that comes in through lateral entry. Security of personnel is important. But it can also result in easy going habits or staleness. Several witnesses pointed to the fact that at present the programme employees of Akashvani and Doordarshan cannot easily find alternative employment in the open market since broadcasting is a monopoly. While this is partly true, our recommendations do provide for Franchise Stations, independent programme production agencies, and greater opportunity for sponsored programmes produced by outsiders, all of which will go to create an alternative and competitive employment market in broadcasting. We believe this to be an extremely healthy development and accordingly see no reason to enshrine security of service as an absolute value.

18.36. However, the NBT should offer provident fund and gratuity schemes which are comparable to those offered by other corporations and by Government.

Unified Staff Association

18.37. Some observations regarding management and staff relations have been made earlier in this Chapter. At present, there are a large number of Staff Associations representing various categories of employees working in Akashvani and Doordarshan. This is a weakness and can only result in avoidable rivalries or in one group being played off against another. A forum for cordial discussion between the staff and the management is not only desirable but also essential in a forward looking organisation. However, the NBT should encourage the formation of a single staff association with distinctive wings to represent the service interests of all employees so as to promote an effective dialogue with the management. Such a single staff association will lend strength to the interests of the employees and the NBT will have only one representative association to deal with in all matters of staff interest.

Protect Existing Benefits

18.38. It is essential for the smooth functioning of the NBT that such of the present employees as are taken over by it are afforded protection in respect of their existing benefits such as emoluments, housing, medical facilities, pension and gratuity, leave travel, and educational benefits. Considering the financial commitments which will devolve on the NBT, it may not be possible for the Trust immediately to invest in a big way on staff housing. The existing employees (including staff artists) should, however, continue to be entitled to the allotment of pool accommodation from the Government for a transitional period. Nor should the NBT be required to pay the Government market rent for this accommodation.

18.39. Until the NBT has framed its own rules and regulations governing its service conditions, the present fundamental rules, supplementary rules, leave rules, pension and gratuity rules, provident fund rules and travel concessions applicable to Akashvani and Doordarshan should continue to apply to the employees of the NBT.

18.40. A contented staff that works as a team and finds adequate outlet for creativity, idealism and new concepts is one of the reasons for autonomy and must on any account be regarded as the greatest asset of any broadcast organisation.

CHAPTER 19

Engineering And Technology

19.1. In determining the future of the NBT, it is necessary to take into account the present hardware problems of Akashvani and Doordarshan and future technical prospects and options. The hardware, comprising various transmitters, studios and associated facilities provide the outlet for the media. The medium has to be powerful and flexible enough to convey the message to all parts of India and provide easy access for local participation. The total cost of all hardware at present installed may amount to about Rs. 75 crores. The expansion plans of Akashvani and Doordarshan currently on the anvil envisage an investment of the order of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 crores (excluding satellite broadcasting) depending upon the options exercised.

19.2. It is, therefore, necessary that in determining the structure and objectives of the new autonomous organisation, the present status of the hardware and the future engineering options are properly understood.

Present Akashvani Network :

19.3. Akashvani has a large medium wave network consisting of 124 transmitters with powers varying from 1 KW to 100 KW. The transmitting facilities are as follow :

<i>Power</i>	<i>Number</i>
1 KW & less	40
1 to 10 KW	27
20 KW	30
50 KW	12
100 KW	13
1000 KW	2

These transmitters are served by 74 studio centres located at State capitals and places of cultural importance. It has been estimated that the medium wave services will be available during day time to just under 90 per cent of the country's population by March 1978.

19.4. In addition to the first grade service provided on medium wave, there is a network of 15 short wave transmitters which provide a second grade service covering all regions except Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan Sikkim, Tripura and certain Union Territories.

19.5. Akashvani started an FM service from Madras in July 1977 broadcasting on a 3 KW transmitter which feeds an antenna system mounted on the 175 meter high Doordarshan tower, which gives it an effective radiated power of 15 KW. This provides a high quality interference-free service within the line-of-sight. A similar service is proposed to be introduced in Bombay and Calcutta by the end of 1978 and thereafter in Delhi. FM is currently also being used by Akashvani for studio-transmitter links in 13 centres.

The Pattern of Broadcast

19.6. Akashvani provides a general composite programme meeting the needs of special audiences on a time-shared basis on 81 medium wave transmitters and 15 regional short wave transmitters. In addition to this general channel, a second channel provides an alternative light programme, the Vividh Bharati, on 29 medium wave and two high power short wave transmitters. 28 of these 29 medium wave transmitters carry commercial advertisements. In major cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, with large linguistic minority populations, additional programme channels have been provided. There are eight such centres with additional channels.

19.7. Normally the studio centres and transmitters are located in the same town and constitute a radio station. In some cases additional transmitters located in other parts of the State are used to extend the coverage to a larger area. These auxiliary centres are linked to the studio centres by telephone lines. Where telephone lines are not available, the programmes are pre-recorded on tape and sent to the transmitting centres for playback.

Networking Facilities

19.8. While the bulk of the programme fed from a studio centre is produced or presented from the studios of that centre, programmes of national importance as well as news are produced at the Delhi studios. Such national networking is also adopted for programmes of common interest such as sports events taking place at other cities.

19.9. Akashvani uses a mixture of short wave transmitters and telephone lines for such network operations. 16 short wave transmitters of powers varying from 7.5 KW to 100 KW are used with aerials which provide "all-India coverage". Some of these short wave transmitters are shared with the External Services and are used with beam aerials designed to cover specific targets. In addition, eight high quality and 28 speech quality telephone circuits are in use. Since the news bulletins have to be transmitted over a limited number of transmitters, permitting up to three independent bulletins at a time, they are radiated on a time-shared basis, resulting in less than optimum timings in some cases.

External Services

19.10. The External Services of Akashvani are broadcast from 13 short wave transmitters and three medium wave transmitters. The short wave transmitters are located at Delhi, Aligarh, Bombay and Madras. The medium wave transmitters are situated at Rajkot, Calcutta and Jullunder. Programmes for the External Services are largely produced in the Delhi studios. While the short wave transmitters are used for broadcasts to both near and distant centres, the medium wave transmitters are meant only for nearer targets.

Maintenance and Obsolescence

19.11. Akashvani has been growing over the past four decades by the addition of equipment from time to time. But there has hardly been any replacement or renewal of equipment which has served its life. A 10 KW transmitter installed in 1938 is still in service in Bombay. Out of 157 transmitters in Akashvani all except 57 are more than 10 years old. A similar situation exists in regard to studio equipment. Except in the last few years, equipment has also been procured from various sources. The maintenance of services has therefore had to contend with a wide variety of equipment whose average age is very high.

19.12. Paucity of funds has created other difficulties. Forced to choose between the development of new centres or the replacement and addition of equipment to existing stations, maintenance and operational needs have always been the casualty. At the same time, however, the magnitude of operations has tended to grow because of compulsions. The existing facilities have in consequence been extended beyond their capacity.

19.13. Akashvani has assessed the replacement cost of its obsolete equipment at Rs. 20 crores. The Government has set up a Committee to review this and its re-

commendations are awaited. The items to be replaced include transmitters, Rs. 17.61 crores; audio equipment, Rs. 5 lakhs; recording equipment, Rs. 2.07 crores; and power supply, air-conditioning and miscellaneous studio equipment. The transmitters to be replaced include short wave transmitters, a 10 KW medium wave transmitter at Gauhati, and a 5 KW medium wave transmitter in Panaji.

19.14. If the prospects of the internal services are bleak, the prospects of the External Services are no better. Except for the two short wave transmitters at Aligarh, the other transmitters have served their useful life and are also not adequately rated. If the External Services have to function, they have to be practically built from scratch as the necessary hardware does not exist.

19.15. The growth of communication networks on coaxial cables and microwaves has been so rapid elsewhere in the world that the requirements of network operations have been adequately met. In India, however, the availability of communication circuits has been low. Even when microwave and coaxial systems have become available, the quality and reliability of the circuits that Akashvani is able to obtain from P&T is far from satisfactory. There are far too many interruptions and far too much interference on the programme lines possibly because the growth of communication circuits has not been able to meet all the demands made on it. Akashvani has accordingly been forced to live with short wave links.

Growing Interference

19.16. The interference position in the medium wave spectrum has grown from bad to worse from year to year so that there is a possibility of total failure of the network so laboriously built over the past four decades. The service area of several transmitters such as Delhi-B, Delhi-C, Bombay, Rajkot, Siliguri, Alleppey, Gauhati, Coimbatore, Calcutta, Dibrugarh and Madras have shrunk considerably. The main reason for this situation has been the uncoordinated increase in transmitter power by other countries in the neighbourhood. The situation has become so acute that the existing network which is expected to provide a primary day time service to nearly 90 per cent of the country's population will hardly be able to cover 17 per cent of the country and 34 per cent of the population by 1989 because of the interference that is likely to be manifest during the next decade or so as other nations implement their International Telecommunications Union (ITU) frequency allocation plans by 1989.

The ITU Plan

19.17. The technical facilities of Akashvani have to cater to three distinct programme needs—local, regional, and national. This calls for the setting up of studios, transmitters and networking arrangements. While the needs of regional and national

programmes are being met in some measure at present, local programmes, the importance of which has been stressed elsewhere in this Report, have been largely neglected.

19.18. To meet these requirements, India projected and obtained a large allocation of medium wave frequencies from the International Frequency Regulation Board (IFRB) of ITU in November 1975. The frequency plans come into effect on November 23, 1978 and will remain valid for 11 years thereafter, that is, until November 1989.

19.19. The ITU allocation will permit Akashvani to set up 352 low-power transmitters of up to 1 KW each, all of these sharing three reserved frequencies and 428 medium and high power transmitters consisting of :

- (a) One transmitter of 2 MW
- (b) 5 transmitters of 1 MW each
- (c) 177 transmitters of 300 KW each
- (d) 15 transmitters of 200 KW each
- (e) One transmitter of 150 KW
- (f) 15 transmitters of 100 KW each
- (g) 2 transmitters of 50 KW
- (h) 211 transmitters of 20 KW
- (i) One transmitter of 10 KW

Of these 780 transmitters, 280 have been co-ordinated exclusively for day time operation, and the remaining 500 for day and night transmitters. However, some of the higher-power transmitters among these will also have to operate at lower power levels at night.

The low-power allocations are intended for local broadcasting while the medium and high-power transmitters could be used for general regional services. The super-power transmitters have been proposed for a national channel which will radiate national programmes thus relieving the regional transmitters of the present demands being made on their prime time.

19.20. However, it has transpired that though the day coverage will be 100 per cent for more than two programme channels, because of the higher level of interference that would come about as a result of the ITU allotting a large number of new high power transmitters to neighbouring countries as well, there will be a shrinkage in the night time population coverage of Akashvani's transmitters from the present figure of just under 90 per cent to 50 per cent (as estimated by Akashvani) even if all the medium wave transmitters for which ITU allocations have been received are commissioned.

It is, therefore, essential to examine what options exist to meet prime time broadcast requirements after dusk.

Prime Time Gap

19.21. The regional services are authorised 422 high power transmitters, 192 of these with power of 200 KW and above. Of these again, 142 are allowed for day and night time operation while the remainder may be operated only by day. Despite the installation of these transmitters at an estimated outlay of Rs. 512 crores only 50 per cent of the population will be covered on medium wave at night leaving the rest of the population without a primary grade service since it must be assumed that other countries will also implement the ITU plan.

19.22. This problem of a large uncovered population during prime listening hours after dark in spite of massive investments and a 20-fold increase in the radiated power of Akashvani suggests the urgent need to examine other solutions before any final decisions are taken.

FM Option for Regional Channel

19.23. VHF (very high frequency) or FM transmissions are restricted to the line of sight and hence problems of re-use of frequencies are simpler and can be handled at a national level. The VHF band of 87 to 108 MHz has approximately 100 channels (the adjacent channels being spaced 200 KHz apart) out of which 30 have been reserved exclusively for broadcasting under the Indian frequency allocation plan. This, however, is a purely internal arrangement and could be reviewed if necessary. With antennae on reasonably high towers or on natural elevations it is possible to obtain a coverage up to a distance of 80 kms from transmitters of medium power. This is not substantially different from the primary coverage that can be had on high power medium wave transmitters taking into account interference limitations.

19.24. Unlike medium waves the VHF provides an interference-free solution of a permanent nature not subject to erosion by the action of other countries. Hence orderly growth is possible. A major attraction of VHF is that two or three such transmitters can share the same aerial system. The supporting tower of the aerial is one of the principal elements in the cost of a VHF installation while the cost of transmitters is comparatively small—about Rs. 4-5 lakhs for a medium power VHF transmitter. Hence, additional channels can be added with comparatively small investments at the same location, once a basic VHF network is set up. It is thus possible to provide facilities for a national channel as well as for regional programmes economically by employing VHF. Provision of a VHF—FM regional service to cover the country

would require about 150 stations estimated to cost approximately R. 56 crores taking into account the existing facilities.

Audience Oriented Programmes

19.25 In fact, if VHF is adopted for both the national and regional channels, the distinction between the two need not be maintained. The channels can be audience-oriented rather than source-oriented. It would also be possible to ensure a rational distribution of programmes between the local, regional and national channels depending on the type of programme and local interest. There is the possibility of an exclusively national channel not being sufficiently patronised while a more balanced programme has greater appeal. The presence of a large number of transmitters would permit decentralisation of programme production enabling independent programming with local participation and greater attention to the special needs of each of the region. This would entail setting up studios which could however be relatively simple facilities.

19.26. FM will also eliminate a longstanding technical problem with AM. In AM two standards are being followed in practice, one for transmission and another for reception. In transmission, the channels are spaced 9 KHz apart and stations are located such that the full audio spectrum required for reproduction of music can be had. However, because of the likely interference, many receivers are very selective and can accept less than half the transmitted audio range, resulting in poor quality.

19.27. Since television operates on the VHF band, FM radio and television transmitters can be co-sited thus resulting in significant economies. Akashvani's FM transmitter in Madras is in fact mounted on the local Doordarshan mast.

Problems in Switching to FM

19.28. However, two arguments can be advanced against changing over to VHF. First, more than 17 million receivers are in use at present in India. A changeover to FM would mean that the existing receivers cannot be used for FM reception and a new AM/FM receiver would be necessary. However, this may not be as serious a problem as appears at first sight. The AM receivers in use are mainly concentrated in the cities where the transmitters are also located. Thus, even if the coverage of the existing medium wave transmitters shrink, the bulk of the existing receivers can continue to be used if the medium wave transmitters are kept going for some time as will be the case. They can also receive short wave programmes as at least 70 per cent of the radio receivers have a short wave band. When the existing receivers complete their life, their replacement would enable a smooth change over to an AM-FM system as in other countries. There would however be a residual problem with AM sets in rural areas.

19.29. The second point is that VHF receivers are costlier than medium wave receivers and the manufacture of AM receivers is well established. The price difference between standard AM receivers and AM/FM receivers is likely to be of the order of 20 to 30 per cent and low cost AM-FM sets may become available at about Rs. 165. The production of the television receiver has familiarised Indian manufacturers with FM technology. Further, with the availability of integrated circuits, the manufacture of FM receivers will be made simpler though it may be necessary for manufacturers to equip themselves with new test equipment.

National Channel

19.30. There are three technical alternatives for providing the national channel—medium waves, long waves and VHF. The use of medium waves for the national channel appears attractive at first sight as with the use of just four low/medium frequency transmitters, the country can be covered relieving prime time from all the regional stations for other uses. The four super-power transmitter installations will cost about Rs. 40 crores. Existing medium wave receivers available with the public can continue to be used. This is an added attraction.

19.31. The coverage from the super-power transmitters during day time will be limited as they will have a range of only about 100-300 kms. They will provide only a second grade skywave service over most of country at night. The investment on these transmitters will, therefore, be sub-optimal. Further, if the super-power transmitters are delinked from the national network they can only serve four local or regional programmes, whereas with the VHF option delinking will provide a large number of transmitters for local or regional use.

Synchronous Transmission

19.32. It has been alternatively proposed that a number of medium wave transmitters of 200 to 300 KW could be operated synchronously. This will make a day time service available over a larger area than that possible with the super-power transmitters. About 100 transmitters with a power rating of 200 KW at a cost of approximately Rs. 167 crores would be needed for national primary coverage. However, if only night time coverage or a second grade service is acceptable, this number could come down to about 10 or 15. But for synchronous operation, the transmitters will have to carry the same programme. Further, synchronous operation calls for a higher order of stability of transmitter frequencies and hence involves some network complexity.

Use of Long Wave

19.33. The use of low frequency has been advocated as LF has a larger ground-wave coverage. It has been stated that one LF transmitter with a power rating of 500 KW

at a cost of Rs. 4.7 crores would be able to provide a service over a range of 430 kms while four LF transmitters at a total cost of Rs. 22.8 crores would provide national coverage during both day and night. However, LF has not been authorised by ITU for countries in the Asian-Pacific region. It may therefore require considerable effort to get the ITU to allocate these frequencies. Existing medium wave receiving sets would need to be replaced by MF/LF sets. Such a step may be warranted if the adoption of the new band would permit continuous growth. This will however not be so as the LF band has very few channels and cannot be used for meeting other requirements.

19.34. The use of VHF for the national channel can also be considered and has a number of advantages. As the day and night time coverage is identical, national programmes need not be restricted only to night hours. The transmitters could also be used for other services such as school broadcasts. A network of about 150 VHF transmitters would be needed for providing virtually nationwide coverage. The cost of this service would be only an incremental one to the regional FM service and could be placed at approximately Rs. 18 crores. FM networking arrangements will involve use of INSAT.

Local Broadcasting

19.35. The 352 low-power medium wave authorisations can be used for the local broadcasting service, the idea being to locate these local stations at district headquarters. The new service would, however, involve setting up studios in places where broadcast stations do not exist and some augmentation of studio facilities at other centres. The cost of the new service may be around Rs. 150-160 crores. The three frequencies authorised for these stations (1485 KHz, 1584 KHz and 1602 KHz) are at the high end of the medium wave band where the range of transmission is rather low. An average figure would be 25 kms. Thus the transmitters will be able to provide a local broadcasting service for only about 25-30 per cent of the country by area.

19.36. Local broadcasting can however also be provided by adding a low power VHF transmitter to the 150 regional stations and adding some studio facilities. An additional 200 new centres would be needed for covering practically all districts. The cost of the service would be about Rs. 11 crores at the existing centres and Rs. 82 crores for the new centres, totalling Rs. 93 crores.

Networking Requirements

19.37. A large broadcast organisation like Akashvani needs networking arrangements to share programmes and give it flexibility in operation. The facility is required irrespective of the system of transmission used, medium wave or VHF. Akashvani's pattern of programming calls for two types of network, a national network into

which any studio centre in the country can feed a programme, and regional networks—one for each language or State. The national network would also have to provide for the new services from Delhi. The programmes radiated from the transmitters would be made up by local productions and contributions from the regional and national networks. On this basis, about 20 regional networks and three to four national networks may be required. The availability of a larger number of links than at present would also enable Akashvani to schedule the news bulletins optimally.

19.38. The networking arrangement now in use depend on terrestrial links leased from the P&T and short wave radio operated by Akashvani. They are not very satisfactory as the programmes are marred by many interruptions and interference. With the availability of the Indian National Satellite (INSAT) in 1981, it should be possible to improve the quality and strengthen networking arrangements. Akashvani has also proposed the use of the space segment capability of INSAT for interconnection of radio stations according to the INSAT Plan (February 1977).

The INSAT Alternative

19.39. INSAT is designed to have two television transponders which will provide a near countrywide coverage on the 'S' Band (2.5 GHz). In addition, there will be 12 transponders in the 4 GHz Band for communication transponders are of low power and would need big earth stations calling for large investments for their reception. On the other hand, the two television transponders are of higher power and could be received with simple equipment involving nominal investment. There is provision for injecting some additional carriers in these transponders, which could be used for broadcasting. However, the limitation of the total power of the transponders will prohibit their being used for meeting all the requirements for Akashvani networking in addition to carrying television programmes.

19.40. It is also possible to set apart one of the two transponders for sound, reserving the other transponder for television. If this is accepted in terms of national media priorities, it would be possible to provide about 25 independent programme lines for networking national as well as regional programmes. A simple augmented receiver will be able to provide the reception facilities needed at the transmitting or studio centres. The earth stations for the uplinks could be shared with television and communication users thus minimising the investment requirements. As earth stations are in any case going to be operated by the P&T at 36 important cities, many of the studios would be able to feed their programmes into the regional or national network through them. In some areas a microwave or VHF link may be required from the studio to the earth station, though in most cases the VHF broadcast transmitters could themselves be used as the terrestrial link.

19.41. The cost of networking will be made up of the cost of the up-link of the satellite, the satellite operations, and the receiving segment of Akashvani studio transmitters. The cost for the use of the earth stations satellite by Akashvani for its network operation should be on a proportionate basis. The rental payable to the P&T and the Department of Space will be a charge to the NBT's revenue account. The receiving stations would cost about Rs. 1.5 lakhs each and would represent a capital investment.

Domestic Short Wave Coverage

19.42. Akashvani now has a network of short wave transmitters which provide a second grade service over large parts of the country. These transmitters fulfil a programme void felt by linguistic minorities in various parts of the country. With the increasing mobility of the population, such linguistic minorities will tend to grow. A broadcast service for such minority populations is desirable. At major centres it may be possible to provide special transmitters which provide a programme for all linguistic minority communities on a time-shared basis. However, there will still be isolated minority groups distributed all over the country. A short wave radio service is the most economic means of catering to this population.

19.43. The regional transmitters which are available with Akashvani have done more than two decades of service. It would be necessary to replace them by new transmitters and increase their power where necessary to provide an acceptable quality of short wave listening all over the country. It will also be necessary to make alterations in the existing aerial systems.

Cost of ITU and FM Plans

19.44. Implementation of the ITU medium wave plan providing four channels would call for an investment of the order of Rs. 71 crores as follows :

Cost of Medium Wave Plan

	Power KW	Number of transmitters	Cost
1	2	3	4
National Channel	2000	1	(Rs. in crores) 40
	1000	3	
Regional General Channel	300	177	512
	200	15	
	150	1	

1	2	3	4
	100	15	512
	50	2	
	20	211	
	10	1	
Local Broadcasting	1	352	163
TOTAL :			715

19.45. Introduction of VHF on the lines suggested will make available three alternative programmes to listeners at an investment of the order of Rs. 157 crores, as below :

Cast of VHF Plan

	Power KW	Number of transmitters	Unit cost (Rs. in lakhs)	Total cost (Rs. in crores)
1. Regional Channel				
(a) Using 60 of 80 existing MW stations. antenna/facilities.	10	60	12	7.2
(b) Additional 20 new transmitting stations at existing MW stations with new powers.	10	20	32	6.4
(c) Additional 70 stations with studio centres.	10	70	60	42.0
Total for Regional Channel :				55.6
Say—Rs. 56 crores				
2. National Channel				
Additional transmitters and studio facilities	10	150	12	18.0
3. Local Channel				
(a) Additional transmitters & studio facilities	1	150	7	10.5
(b) Additional district transmitters at new locations and studio centres.	1	200	41	82.0
Total for district transmitters :				93.0
Grand Total :				Rs. 167.0 crores

19.46. The VHF network will be economical in respect of both capital investment and recurring charges. On power supply alone, there will be a saving of Rs. 3.5 crores annually. The service will not be subject to erosion by action of external agencies and will be of high quality.

19.47. If one of the television transponders in INSAT is used for providing high quality networking arrangements for Akashvani this will increase the cost of the stations by about Rs. 1.5 lakhs.

The External Services

19.48. Any external service has to operate in what is prime listening time in the target area and for a reasonable duration if it has to make any impact. With the severe overcrowding that exists in the short wave bands, it is imperative to use adequate power to overcome the interference encountered on a number of frequencies. Taking into account these demands and the constraints imposed by the use of short waves, a committee appointed to review the working of Akashvani's External Services recommended the augmentation of the facilities by setting up :

- (1) 10 high power short wave transmitters (250 to 500 KW) to replace the existing 100/50 KW short wave transmitters.
- (2) Six short wave transmitters (250 to 500 KW) and one high power medium wave transmitter for extending the duration of the existing services and adding a few new services.

19.49. These recommendations are not too ambitious considering the resources deployed by some neighbouring countries. The cost, estimated at about Rs. 35 crores, is legitimately chargeable to the External Affairs Ministry.

The Doordarshan Network

19.50. The Doordarshan network consists of eight television centres with studio facilities and a transmitter at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Srinagar, Ahmedabad-Pij, Lucknow and Hyderabad. Amritsar has a transmitter but the programmes are produced at Delhi. There are relay stations at Pune and Mussoorie, which rebroadcast the programmes telecast from Bombay and Delhi respectively.

19.51. In addition, new centres have been set up at Jaipur, Raipur and Gulburga as part of SITE-continuity with programme production facilities at Delhi, Hyderabad and Cuttack. Muzaffarpur and Sambalpur too should soon be on the air under the SITE-continuity scheme. A new programme station is under construction at Jullundur and an additional transmitter is planned to be set up at Kanpur. By the end of April

1978, the television network is expected to serve a population of nearly 100 million in an area of some 1,89,000 square kms providing a coverage to 16.5 per cent of the population.

Satellite and Terrestrial Options

19.52. Diffusion of television programmes is possible either by employing VHF/UHF terrestrial-based transmitters or through satellite. The transponders in the satellite receive programmes on one frequency from an earth station and re-transmit them on another frequency to selected target areas.

19.53. When ground-based transmitters are used, coverage depends on the height of the tower. Because of practical limitations governing the height of the mast coverage is normally restricted to a radius of about 100 kms. Thus about 150 transmitters would be required to provide television coverage for the entire country geographically.

19.54. As synchronous satellites are "stationed" above the earth at a height of about 36,000 kms, the transponders can serve a very large area. Direct reception is possible on special receivers in addition to programme links for network operation over a large number of television transmitters. Such special D.R. receivers would cost anywhere between Rs. 9,000 and Rs. 15,000.

19.55. The Indian National Satellite (INSAT) is expected to be operational by 1981. It will provide coverage over the whole country except the southern tip and parts of Jammu & Kashmir and North East India. It is designed to have two television transponders operating in the 'S' Band with a capability of two visual and six audio channels.

19.56. The choice whether to use terrestrial transmitters or employ direct satellite broadcasting has to be decided on the basis of costs and flexibility of operation. A terrestrial transmitter is estimated to cost approximately Rs. 1.2 crores without studio facilities. The cost of 1350 direct reception satellite receivers at Rs. 9,000 each will amount to Rs. 1.2 crores. A 10 KW transmitter can serve an area of about 30,000 square kms with an average population of 5.5 million. Assuming that one in a hundred families will be able to afford a television set, the number of sets that are likely to be brought into use will be about 11,000. This will entail an investment of about Rs. 3.3 crores in the sets or a total system investment of approximately Rs. 4.5 crores for one terrestrial transmitter installation. With direct satellite broadcasting, the same coverage of 11,000 receivers will cost about Rs. 9.90 crores over and above the satellite segment cost. Apart from the obvious difference in costs, flexibility in operating the terrestrial station would be greater.

19.57. There are, however, areas in the country where population density is low and where the deployment of sets may also be very meagre. In this case, the satellite

could be utilised for direct broadcasting. It has been calculated that the break-even point may rise when the population density falls below 33 per square km.

19.58. The transponders in the satellite could serve the purpose of linking terrestrial transmitters whenever a national programme has to be carried. At other times the terrestrial transmitter could cater to local needs and broadcasts could be tailored to the language and requirements of the region.

19.59. A total of 138 additional terrestrial transmitters would be needed for national coverage and the investment may be of the order of Rs. 166 crores. If Akashvani adopts the VHF option, there could be an overall saving of about Rs. 34 crores as the antenna masts could be common.

19.60. Studio facilities are now available at eight Doordarshan centres. In order to cater to all regions and languages, at least 12 more studios would have to be set up. The cost of these studios would be about Rs. 30 crores. These studios will have to be set up irrespective of whether the terrestrial or satellite (DR) mode of transmission is adopted.

19.61. A total investment of about Rs. 166 crores on a terrestrial system will enable the country to have television broadcasting on an all-India basis, the national programmes being linked through satellite when required.

Need for Expert Review

19.62. The Working Group was not called upon to study these proposals and is not in position to make any comment on them. Our own views on the kind of priorities that should govern future extension of Akashvani and Doordarshan are set out in the next Chapter. What we do however recommend is that the technological options relating to Akashvani's ITU Plan, the VHF alternative, and the possibilities of introducing low-frequency transmissions (the case for which will have to be argued and won at the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) of the ITU in 1979) should be carefully considered by a high level team of experts that the National Broadcast Trust should constitute as early as possible. These technological choices involve not merely questions of investment cost and quality of reception but also patterns of programming. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that a realistic and objective cost-benefit study be made before any irrevocable decisions are taken with all their long term implications.

Broadcast Research

19.63. Broadcast technology is a specialised field which draws and depends on a number of areas—electronics, electrical and illumination engineering, acoustics, optics,

etc. The fact that broadcasting, unlike other communications systems, is concerned with communication from one to many gives it a special character. The rapid development of electronics, often spurred and sustained by consumer demand, has made broadcasting one of the fast growing technologies. Most leading broadcast organisations such as the BBC and NHK have strong R&D groups. There is thus no need to argue the case for a strong R&D unit within the NBT.

19.64. This fact was recognised even four decades ago and a Research Department was set up in Akashvani as early as 1937. The Department was strengthened and reorganised in 1948 to promote work on studios, acoustics, propagation, and high frequency problems. A separate Planning & Development Unit was set up as part of Akashvani Headquarters to look after the planning of the broadcast network. Since then Akashvani has seen manifold growth and Doordarshan has come into being without any corresponding strengthening of the Research Department which caters to both radio and television. A number of proposals have been made from time to time to reorganise its functioning. Though the need has been conceded and plans have been considered by the Technical Advisory Committee of Akashvani and Doordarshan, nothing tangible has resulted.

Present Position

19.65. The Research Department has been constituted as a separate subordinate office of Akashvani and housed in its own buildings. It has a strength of 32 engineers with supporting staff and is headed by a relatively junior officer. The non-Plan budget for the year 1977-78 is Rs. 24 lakhs. This is supplemented by substantial funds from the Science and Technology plan.

19.66. The R&D group is charged with a large volume of routine operational work such as the planning of frequency schedules for the internal and external short wave services; monitoring of transmissions, and conference and committee work for national and international purposes. Thus only a small residual staff is available for producing really significant research work. Yet the Department has been able to make some well recognised contributions.

19.67. Research and Development normally go together with research providing a technical base for development by undertaking system studies and investigations, assessment of present performance, evolution of standards of operation, and by pioneering and evaluating new technologies and related equipment in close association with industry. The emphasis should be on those areas of work which cannot be carried out

effectively elsewhere. Thus for example, development of hardware should have lower priority than other specialised problems.

19.68. However, as planning and development are not closely coordinated with research activities in Akashvani the Research Department has not generally provided the sort of support that might legitimately have been expected of it. It has on the contrary been relatively isolated from the mainstream.

Reorganisation of R & D

19.69. It is, therefore, necessary to reorganise the activities of the Research Department and redefine its role in relation to the development and operational wings in order to enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively. Too close an association with the day-to-day functioning of the organisation might inhibit forward thinking while too little connection with the other wings can promote an academic detachment.

19.70. The Research Department should be headed by a very senior engineer who can assist in long term planning and assurance of quality service by reporting to the top management. Its strength will have to be increased considerably, necessary facilities added and activities expanded and rearranged in specialist groups concerned with studio acoustics, television, studio and transmission technologies, recording and reproduction, spectrum utilisation, and so on. One of the problems faced by R&D departments of large national organisations is one relating to personnel deployment. If they are staffed from the regular cadres, frequent transfers for general administrative reasons as well as when promotions are due, disrupt their functioning. R&D staff need nurturing. This cannot be done unless flexibility in staffing patterns and norms are accepted for R&D personnel who should be enabled to grow in their jobs where necessary.

19.71. It may be desirable to consider funding broadcast research on a regular basis. One possibility would be to set apart for R&D a definite percentage, say three per cent of the gross annual revenue expenditure on technical operations. This is what many other industrial enterprises do.

Manufacture of Broadcast Equipment

19.72. Akashvani was procuring capital electronic equipment for its network from abroad till about the last decade. Since then transmitters and studio equipment for both sound and television have been manufactured at Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore. The value of equipment and spares procured from BEL has varied from year to year from about Rs. 2 crores to about Rs. 5 crores. In addition, transmitting tubes to an average value of Rs. 40-45 lakhs are procured by Akashvani from BEL. There has been no discernible trend in the value of procurement as variations in procurement perhaps depend upon Plan provisions and authorisations.

19.73. However, if the proposed broadcast expansion plans materialise, the total investment on electronic equipment under this head could be placed at about Rs. 165 crores for the television VHF-sound Plan or at Rs. 305 crores for the television/ITU Plan for sound. If it is assumed that the expansion programme is implemented in about 10 years, the annual requirement of equipment would be Rs. 16 crores or Rs. 30 crores respectively. Assuming a 15 year life for equipment, there will be a demand of Rs. 12.20 crores worth of production per year even after the initial construction phase is over. Thus the requirement of broadcast equipment would continue at a level of about Rs. 15 crores, apart from needs of further expansion. This is a significant turnover which could justify the setting up of a separate manufacturing unit for broadcast equipment. BEL could be asked to set up a separate unit or, in the alternative, the Government could establish a separate Broadcast Electronics Corporation in the public sector. A factory for this purpose would require a capital investment of between Rs. 12 crores and Rs. 15 crores and would take a minimum of three to four years to be operational.

19.74. We have considered some of the major engineering options open to the NBT over the next 10 to 15 years. At the same time there are a number of technological developments which may become operationally feasible and commercially viable within the same time span and which would be of relevance to India.

19.75. The first among these is the possibility of slow-scan television, a technique whereby slides, charts and diagrams using narrow bandwidths can be broadcast for television reception over radio transmitters. The low cost instructional uses of such "electronic blackboards" could be many. The second relates to another mode of bandwidth reduction to exploit what are known as the horizontal and vertical blanking intervals in ordinary television transmission to transmit simultaneously a second low-resolution picture for information. Here again potential cost savings could be realised. Yet another possibility lies in using tethered balloons for aerial transmission in certain circumstances. Low-power mobile transmitters with collapsible antennae have already been used experimentally in the country. Likewise, radio receivers operated on satellite-quality reject solar cells may become a viable prospect in un-electrified villages and to operate low-cost rural programme production centres.

19.76. We would expect that engineering and programme personnel in the NBT will keep themselves abreast of these and other developments which have a bearing on future system expansion, programme patterns and related costs. Research and development in these areas should be pursued with vigour and should if necessary be funded by the NBT. Such ideas are not to be dismissed as romantic and need to be tested if the NBT is going to be able to evolve not merely low-cost but least-cost solutions. The problems of Indian broadcasting have to be tackled and solved in India. Some experiments in this regard reported from within the country are listed in Appendix G.

CHAPTER 20

Future Expansion

20.1. We have reviewed the present status of broadcasting in India and suggested a new and autonomous structure in the form of Akash Bharati, the proposed National Broadcast Trust. We have also outlined the technical options and technological possibilities and referred to some of the extension proposals being mooted. How should the system grow?

Priority to Radio

20.2. The Working Group is of the view that while television is a powerful and effective medium, there is no doubt that India should give first priority to the development and densification of radio for at least the next 10 to 15 years. Radio is far cheaper and the availability of cheap transistors has made it ubiquitous. The country however, has a long way to go before it can even begin to think that it has substantially exploited the potential of radio.

20.3. The question about the choice of technology before Akashvani has been discussed at some length in Chapter 19, "Engineering and Technology." We would suggest that the National Broadcast Trust should constitute an expert body as early as possible to make a total systems study together with related costs and submit its recommendations to the Trustees for firm decisions.

20.4. Whatever the choice or mix of technology we strongly recommend that Akashvani must develop a determined rural-extension thrust which is best done through the rapid development of low-power local stations or Gram Vikas Vanis. Such stations are relatively inexpensive and would not be subject to the same financial constraints as apply to larger stations with their heavier investments. The greater degree of community participation and consequent programme authenticity in these local stations would be another major gain. We anticipate, therefore, not merely a new category of stations and programmes but a new culture of broadcasting as well.

20.5. We also recommend that in the siting of the proposed new local stations, preference should be given to backward districts including drought prone and tribal and hill areas, subject to the availability of the minimum infrastructure such as roads and a dependable power supply. The State Governments should be consulted.

Group Listening and Densification

20.6. If radio and television are to be taken to the most disadvantaged sections and the least developed parts of the country then it is quite clear that community listening and viewing must be revived in town and country in a new form alongside the establishment of organised group listening and viewing on the basis of some of the better-run charcha mandals.

20.7. It will be necessary to develop more satisfactory maintenance organisations than are available at present if such experiments for organised radio densification through community and group listening are to be sustained. The NBT should undertake to organise special maintenance services in tribal and backward areas and in approved radio densification clusters. It should combine this wherever possible with the purchase and sale of approved quality sets. Manufacturers should also be encouraged to set up joint after-sales service and maintenance units for rural clients. The Central and State Governments should suitably assist these efforts.

20.8. The broadcast receiver licensing system will also need to be appropriately simplified and the State Governments should consider bearing the cost of licence fees in certain areas and in approved radio densification clusters for a period of years.

20.9. It should also be possible to encourage industrial houses, charities, universities and other institutions and voluntary agencies to provide radio receivers for community or group listening in selected areas so as to form radio listening clusters linked to a "mother station" which could then be requested to develop special education, extension and other programmes on the SITE model.

20.10. Consideration should be given to making available radio and television sets on hire-purchase through bank loans at concessional rates of interest in specified backward regions and for specified social and economic groups. These concessions may if necessary be linked to the condition that organised listening or viewing groups will be formed.

Town Broadcasting

20.11. In certain areas wired broadcasting may be feasible. This has not succeeded in some urban areas where it was earlier tried, but would appear to have proved

reasonably successful in Arunachal where "town broadcasting" systems have been installed in each of the district headquarters for relaying the news and other radio programmes as well as for making local announcements in the manner of a public address system. This may well suit other tribal regions with a host of little linguistic and cultural minorities. The economics will of course need to be worked out.

20.12. We would accord priority to radio. The cost of an hour's programming on television is roughly eight to ten times that with regard to radio. Again, whereas a cheap transistor is available for Rs. 150 a television receiver costs around Rs. 2500. The capital costs on television are also higher. With all this there is no questioning the power and influence of television. The existing network and on-going schemes will provide television coverage to an area with a potential audience of 100 million. The densification of television viewing within this area would seem to be an obvious priority.

Gram Vikas Doordarshan

20.13. At the same time there is a case for starting the equivalent of the proposed local radio stations (Gram Vikas Vanis) in the form of local Doordarshan Kendras or Door Vikas Kendras using low-power transmitters. The half-inch video technology was a fallout of SITE which the Ahmedabad-Pij Television Centre has exploited to great advantage. It is low-cost, outdoor and community oriented, and participative. It has de-mystified television, and what it lacks in technical quality is more than made up by its inexpensiveness and portability and the authenticity it offers for local production with villagers acting and even scripting their own roles. Development of the digital time base corrector has made half-inch video transmission possible while the successful transfer of this technology to Amul veterinarians at Anand shows the possibility of communities and institutions making their own programmes with Gram Vikas Doordarshans providing facilities for assembly and editing, and technical support. Such Kendras would have to be sited in relation to selected target audiences in backward areas or in areas which face special problems or are undergoing a process of rapid change on account of, say, the implementation of agrarian reforms, the introduction of irrigation, or the development of industry. It is in such places that the growing-pains and tensions of change can be ameliorated through appropriate motivation and social education.

20.14. Such low-cost television technology would seem particularly appropriate for rural areas. If the cost-effectiveness of such facilities is demonstrated by some pilot projects which the NBT itself can undertake then the case for relatively more rapid expansion of this mode of television would be established. A proposal for low-cost programme production and transmission facilities prepared by the Space Applications Centre is given in Appendix H.

20.15. The commissioning of INSAT in 1981 will facilitate national networking of Doordarshan programmes. This will be an important facility and should help improve programmes. It would also relieve individual Doordarshan Kendras of certain day-to-day programming pressures, thereby enabling them to deploy their resources more effectively.

Direct Reception from INSAT

20.16. While it is for the Government and the NBT to decide on how the INSAT facility should be used for expansion of television coverage, the Working Group is inclined to recommend the use of INSAT in the first instance primarily for establishing direct reception in North East India, Sikkim and the Hill areas of UP, Himachal and J&K, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. The justification for the more expensive direct reception in the North East Region and North Western Hills lies in their geo-political isolation. The undulating terrain and dispersed habitations there also render terrestrial television a highly expensive proposition. Further, the North East region is exposed to powerful foreign broadcasts while certain parts of it fall within the ambit of Bangladesh Television.

20.17. However, no Government decision on the ground segment of INSAT has yet been taken. It is already very late. This indecision could prove costly. The technical parameters in INSAT are so complex and finely adjusted that software and hardware must work together closely. There is a danger of hardware-led software policies which can be expensive and counter-productive in the long run. At the same time, hardware development offers software choices of which the programmers must be fully aware. SITE was a hardware-led decision right from the start and was an example of good hardware performance and software lags owing to uncertain objectives and a delayed programming start, though it did build up a unique body of software experience previously unknown to Akashvani-Doordarshan. Let not this happen again. Edward Plowman, the well known communications expert has wisely counselled that policy should always be put before technology; What before How.

Colour Television

20.18. The case for colour television was argued by some witnesses. They pointed out that black and white television is becoming obsolete in the advanced nations and that a number of developing countries including China, Pakistan and, now, Bangladesh have gone in for colour. The contrary view is that colour is at least three times more expensive than black and white in terms of programming and twice as expensive in terms of cost of sets.

20.19. However the immediate task before Doordarshan is to consolidate its operations. The Working Group see the need for appropriate R.&D. and experimentation

in colour systems so that Doordarshan engineers and programmers remain abreast of the state of the art. Colour programming incidentally holds out promise of international programme exchange. The Indian film industry and the Films Division are also already operating in colour. In the circumstances we recommend that the import of production equipment in colour be facilitated. The NBT might also in due course consider starting restricted and experimental colour broadcasts from any one metropolitan centre as a pilot project.

20.20. In stressing the need for a rural bias in the programming of Akashvani and Doordarshan we are not ignoring the needs of the country's urban listeners and viewers who constitute a very substantial and important public. We would, however, recommend that urban programming must show due concern for the needs of the urban underprivileged who also need to be provided with community and group listening and viewing facilities.

Multi-Media Drive

20.21. We would also urge the NBT to undertake research and experimentation in multi-media operations and in the conjunctive use of radio and television. There would seem to be promise in radio-vision (the use of pictures, charts and slides with radio), cassette tape recorders used with educational radio, and slow-scan television.

Cost Reduction

20.22. There is need for reducing the cost of television and radio sets including FM radio transistors, if radio and television densification are to move ahead rapidly. The bulk manufacture of components and parts on a larger scale than at present would help bring down costs. Thereafter, small assemblers of radio and television receivers should be encouraged to form marketing cooperatives or consortia and sell standardised equipment under common brand names. This would seem to be the only way of lowering the present high marketing overheads of small producers, ensuring quality and standardisation, and providing for better after-sales service. The organisation of the unorganised sector in this fashion may also help reduce the leakage in licence fees through evasion and piracy.

20.23. It is not possible or necessary to forecast the many developments that may take place over the next decade. The working of the new system and the country's own development and advancement will pose a number of questions and suggest mid-course corrections and new priorities. It will be for the Broadcast Review Commission to take stock of these developments and make appropriate recommendations.

20.24. The critical task of the National Broadcast Trust will be to build the people who will work the systems that we have described or that may be devised. The conventions and traditions that develop will mark out Akash Bharati as a genuinely autonomous body which is innovative, dynamic, flexible, democratic, and responsive to its opportunities and to the people of India whom it is designed to entertain, inform and educate.

CHAPTER 21

Transitional Provisions

21.1. The terms of reference given to the Working Group require us to formulate a plan of action for the expeditious implementation of our recommendations. It is to this that we address ourselves in this Chapter.

21.2. We understand that the Government intends to publish this Report as soon as possible and make it available for wide dissemination. This we thoroughly approve. We see our Report as providing a basis for informed discussion not merely with regard to the specific recommendations that we have made but also in respect of what broadcasting ought to be. With this end in view we have collated some supplementary material in the appendices to this Report.

21.3. The national debate on this Report should be a prelude to the adoption of an Akash Bharati Bill, 1978 by Parliament. We append a draft Bill as an aid to legislation. It provides for a simple statute merely establishing the National Broadcast Trust, and setting out its objectives, scope, powers and basic structure. We recommend that operational details be left to the National Broadcast Trust through its rule-making powers. We would hope that the Bill will be approved by the Cabinet in time to be formally introduced during the current session of Parliament so that it can be taken up for consideration during the monsoon session and enacted by September or October.

21.4. As an earnest of its decision to confer full autonomy on Akashvani and Doordarshan, we recommend that the Government may direct these two agencies to follow the Charter spelt out in Chapter 5 "The Legal Framework". This will introduce a change in the character and outlook of these two broadcast organisations and inform them with the spirit of our recommendations. A Central News Room on the lines we have recommended should be established as early as possible as it is in the area of news and current affairs that an immediate impact can be made.

21.5. We would recommend that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

immediately set up a Broadcast Autonomy Cell to process this Report and prepare working papers for preparatory action and Cabinet decision.

21.6. Rationalisation of the staff structure and unification of cadres in accordance with our recommendations in Chapter 18, "New Deal for Staff", will call for detailed work. This task is best entrusted to an expert body of consultants such as an Indian Institute of Management. The Government should give this assignment on contract accordingly so that the report of the appointed consultancy organisation or group is available to the NBT as soon as it is constituted.

21.7. As soon as the Akash Bharati Bill receives the President's assent, Akashvani and Doordarshan should be accorded a Special Transitional Status and serviced by the Broadcast Autonomy Cell.

21.8. The Akash Bharati Act should come into force with effect from January 1, 1979. If necessary, certain transitional sections of the Act might well come into operation as soon as the Bill receives the President's assent.

21.9. During the transitional period from, say, October, 15, 1978 Akashvani and Doordarshan should be placed under an Officer-on-Special-Duty, to head a Transitional Board of Management. Considerable staff work will be required to :

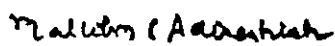
- (a) transfer Akashvani and Doordarshan's assets and liabilities to the NBT and to work out the details of financial separation from Government ; and
- (b) work out procedures whereby certain cadres like the CIS and administrative staff on deputation to Akashvani and Doordarshan will be enabled to exercise an option regarding whether to join the proposed National Broadcast Trust or return to their parent services.

21.10. Assuming that the Akash Bharati Bill receives the President's assent by October, it should be possible for the Government to set in motion by November the procedures for the Nominating Panel to select the Chairman and other Trustees. If the Board of Trustees is constituted by December, Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust, can formally come into being on January 1, 1979.

21.11. The Transitional Management Board should have by then prepared an independent budget for the NBT for 1979-80 in consultation with the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Finance and the Planning Commission. This should incorporate such of the recommendations as we have made in Chapter 8, The Financial Dimension, which have been accepted by the Government or are applicable at this point of time. The Trustees should formally approve this budget and forward it to the Government.

21.12. With effect from January 1, 1979, Akashvani and Doordarshan will cease to be "attached offices" of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which in turn might appropriately be renamed "The Ministry of Information".

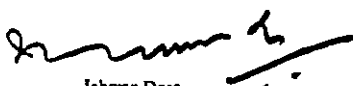
21.13. The conferring of "full autonomy" on a sensitive organ of information, public opinion and cultural expression like broadcasting is a unique act of self-abnegation on the part of a government and there is no doubt that the "transfer of power" to a national broadcast trust will be a complex and delicate process. To grant autonomy is perhaps simple enough. Freedom, however, must be both respected and exercised. Much will depend on the Trustees and the men and women who make up the NBT. They it is who will establish the traditions and conventions that give autonomy and freedom true meaning. The new organisation must be given opportunity to settle down and develop its own style so as to be able to realise the motto of Indian broadcasting : "Bahu Jana Hitaya; Bahu Jana Sukhaya"—For the good of the people; for the happiness of the people.



Malcolm S. Adisesiah



V.G. Rajadhyaksha



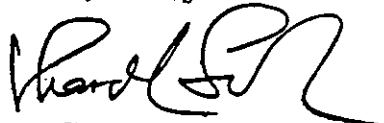
Ishwar Dass
(Member Secretary)



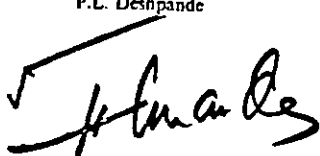
Nayantara Sahgal



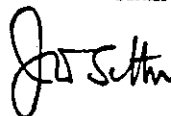
P.L. Deshpande



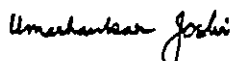
Chanchal Sarkar



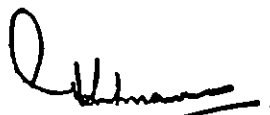
P.J. Fernandes



J.D. Sethi



Umashankar Joshi



C.R. Subramanian



A.G. Noorani



B.G. Verghese
(Chairman)

New Delhi
February 24, 1978

Akash Bharati Bill, 1978

(as introduced in the Lok Sabha)

A

Bill

to provide for the establishment of a National Broadcast Trust called Akash Bharati as an autonomous and independent public service to conduct, organise, regulate, license and develop all forms of broadcasting in India and for all matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Twentyninth year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

Short title and Extent

1. (1) This Act may be called the Akash Bharati Act, 1978.
- (2) It extends to the whole of India.
- (3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette. appoint.

Definitions

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—
 - (a) “appointed date” means the date appointed under Section 3 ;
 - (b) “Board” means the Board of Trustees ;

- (c) "Broadcast" means and includes sound broadcasts as well as television transmitted for public reception by Hertzian waves and shall also include similar transmission by wire, cable, or other artificial means ;
- (d) "Chairman" means the Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
- (e) "Complaints Board" means the body set up by the Trust under section 25 to hear complaints ;
- (f) "Controller-General of Broadcasting" means the Chief Executive of the National Broadcast Trust appointed under section 12 ;
- (g) "Director" means a member of the Central Executive Board ;
- (h) "Franchise" means broadcast franchise granted by the Licensing Board under section 27 to any Station/Kendra, other than one operated by the Trust;
- (i) "Kendra" means any telecasting centre with studios and/or transmitter;
- (j) "Licensing Board" means the body constituted under section 26 by the Trust to grant franchise to Stations or Kendras other than those operated by the Trust;
- (k) "Nominating Committee" shall mean the Committee set up under section 7 to recommend names to the President on the advice of the Prime Minister for appointment as Chairman and Trustees ;
- (l) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules or regulations made under this Act ;
- (m) "region" means any constituent area within a Zone ;
- (n) "Station" means any broadcasting station including studios and/or transmitters ;
- (o) "Trust" means the National Broadcast Trust called Akash Bharati, established under section 3 ;
- (p) "Trustee" means any member of the Board of Trustees.

CHAPTER II

Incorporation of the Trust

3. (1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette appoint, there shall be established a National Broadcast Trust to be known as Akash Bharati.

(2) The Trust shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal having power to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to contract, and shall be capable of suing and being sued in its corporate name.

(3) The Trust shall be a citizen of India and shall be a non-profit organisation and an essential service.

(4) The headquarters of Akash Bharati shall be at Delhi.

Objects, Functions and Powers of the Trust

4. (1) The Trust shall be the trustee of the national interest for radio and television and shall uphold the collective right of the Indian people to freedom of speech, expression and communication through the broadcast media.

(2) The Trust shall—

- (a) conduct and organise public broadcasting services and shall develop, extend and improve these services in the public interest;
- (b) advise the Central Government in respect of all matters relating to broadcasting ; and
- (c) perform such functions,, exercise such powers and discharge such duties in relation to broadcasting as are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act.

(3) The Trust shall have such powers, rights and authority as may be necessary, conducive or expedient to the discharge of its functions ;

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-sections (1), (2) and (3), the Trust may, for the purposes of this Act—

- (a) establish, instal, erect, alter, reconstruct, operate, repair and maintain broadcasting studios, transmitters, relay stations and microwave and such other facilities as may be requisite or appropriate.
- (b) grant a broadcast franchise licence to any Station/Kendra through its Licensing Board in the manner laid down in this Act.

Charter of the Trust

5. In performing its functions the Trust shall—

- (a) uphold the unity of the country and the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution ;

- (b) uphold the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution ;
- (c) safeguard the citizens' right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively of all matters of public interest, national or international ;
- (d) uphold the impartiality, integrity and autonomy of broadcasting in the country ;
- (e) provide a national broadcasting service predominantly Indian in content and character ;
- (f) promote the interests and concerns of the entire nation, being mindful of the need for harmony and understanding within the country and ensuring that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the composite culture of India ;
- (g) produce and transmit varied programmes designed to awaken, inform, enlighten, educate, entertain and enrich all sections of the people, with due regard to the fact that the national broadcast audience consists of a whole series of publics ;
- (h) serve the rural, illiterate and under-privileged populations, keeping in mind the special needs and interests of the young, social and cultural minorities, the tribal populations, and of those residing in border regions and backward or remote areas ;
- (i) stimulate and inform the national consciousness in regard to the status and problems of women ;
- (j) promote social justice and combat exploitation, inequality, and such evils as untouchability and narrow parochial loyalties ;
- (k) uphold the secular ideal and promote a spirit of truth and inquiry in the country among all sections of the people ;
- (l) present a fair and balanced flow of information of national, regional, local and international interest, including contrasting views, without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own ;
- (m) help raise educational standards by supporting programmes of formal, non-formal and continuing education and open learning systems ;
- (n) promote the extension of new knowledge and practices as well as the transfer of technology as an aid to national development and social change ;

- (o) provide entertainment and recreation for all sections of the people and encourage all forms of cultural expression—traditional, classical, modern and international ;
- (p) take special steps to protect the interests of children, the blind, the aged and other vulnerable sections of the population ;
- (q) promote comprehension and national integration by broadcasting in a manner that facilitates communication in and among all the languages of India ; and
- (r) seek to provide comprehensive broadcast coverage through the choice of appropriate technology and the best utilisation of the broadcast frequencies available, and to ensure high quality reception.

Composition of the Trust, manner of selection and tenure

6. (1) The Trust shall ordinarily consist of 12 and in no case more than 21 Trustees, in multiples of three, being men and women of eminence and national stature, one-third of whom shall retire every two years.

(2) One of these shall be appointed as Chairman. Of the others :

- (a) three shall be full-time Trustees who will devote themselves to the fields of news and current affairs, education and extension, and culture and entertainment, respectively ; and
- (b) not less than eight others shall be part-time Trustees of whom one shall be selected for eminence in the field of broadcast technology and science, and the other for eminence in the field of finance and management.

Appointment of Trustees

7. (1) The Chairman and the other Trustees shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister from out of a list of names forwarded by a Nominating Committee consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Lok Pal, and the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission, who shall co-opt any two other persons of distinction from the world of science, culture and the arts for this purpose and shall consult such persons or associations as it thinks fit.

(2) The Chairman, whether newly appointed in the first instance or incumbent or retiring, shall be associated with the Nominating Committee in proposing the names of other Trustees.

(3) The Nominating Panel shall submit 50 per cent more names than there are vacancies to be filled except in the case of the Chairman when two or at the most three names shall be proposed;

Provided that in the event of any functional Trustee not being selected, the Nominating Committee shall suggest an alternative name for that particular category of Trustee.

(4) The order of retirement among the Trustees 'initially appointed shall be settled by draw of lots with the proviso that the Chairman and the three full time functional Trustees shall have a six-year term.

Term of Office of Trustees

8. (1) Subject to the provisions of section 6, a person appointed as a Trustee shall hold office for a term of six years from the date on which he enters upon his office.

Provided that—

(a) a Trustee may by writing under his hand addressed to the President, resign his office;

(b) a Trustee may be removed from office in the manner provided in section 9.

(2) The Chairman and full time Trustees shall be paid a salary which is equal to the salary of a Judge of the Supreme Court and the other Trustees shall receive such allowances or fees for attending the meetings of the Trust and for their other duties as may be prescribed.

(3) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (2), the conditions of service, including the perquisites, of members shall be such as may be prescribed.

Removal of Trustees

9. A Trustee shall only be removed from office in like manner and on like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Meetings of Board of Trustees

10. The Board of Trustees shall regulate its own procedure and shall meet either at the headquarters or elsewhere as it deems convenient :

Provided that :

(a) there shall be not less than six meetings every year and an interval of not more than 90 days between meetings;

- (b) the quorum for a meeting shall be not less than half the total number of Trustees plus one ;
- (c) the Chairman shall preside at all meetings except that in his absence the most senior Trustee present or any other member so selected shall take the Chair;
- (d) the Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote in the case of a tie.

Central Executive Board

11. There shall be a Central Executive Board consisting of the Controller-General of Broadcasting and 12 other Directors each responsible for Akashvani, Doordarshan, Engineering, Finance, Personnel, News and Current Affairs, Audience Research and each of the Zones.

Officers of the Trust

12. The Trust shall appoint the Controller-General of Broadcasting, the Directors, General Managers and Zonal Controllers and such other officers as it may deem fit.

Controller-General of Broadcasting

13. The Controller-General of Broadcasting shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and shall be the ex-officio Secretary of the Board of Trustees, and shall communicate and transmit the decisions of the Trust to the Central Executive Board.

Term of office of officers of the Trust

14. (1) The Controller-General of Broadcasting and the Directors shall, subject to the provisions of sub-section (2) hold office for a period of five years and may at the termination of that period be reappointed for such further period as the Board of Trustees may determine.

(2) The Controller-General of Broadcasting and the Directors

(a) shall retire from office on reaching the age of...years;

(b) may at any time be removed from office by the Board of Trustees.

Transfer of assets

15. (1) With effect from the appointed date, all property movable or immovable which immediately prior to the appointed date are held by or on behalf of the Government of India in respect of or relating to the attached offices of Akashvani and Doordarshan shall be transferred to, vest in and be held by the Trust.

(2) All debts, liabilities, obligations and contracts of the Government of India in respect of or relating to Akashvani and Doordarshan outstanding or subsisting at the appointed date shall with effect from the appointed date be deemed to be the debts, liabilities, obligations and contracts of the Trust.

(3) The amounts outstanding at the credit of the Non-Lapsable Fund and the Renewal and Reserve Fund as on the appointed date or such other date as might be prescribed shall vest in the Trust from the said date.

Financial Provisions

16 (1) The capital of the Trust shall consist of

- (a) the assets including land, buildings, installations and equipment transferred to it in accordance with the provisions of this Act; and
- (b) the amounts outstanding at the credit of the Non-Lapsable Fund and the Renewal and Reserve Fund as on April 1, 1979 or such other date as might be prescribed, which shall be made over to the Trust as an outright grant.

Income of the Trust

17 (1) The following income shall accrue to the Trust :—

- (a) The proceeds of the broadcast receiver licence fees, reduced by the Posts & Telegraphs Department's collection charges;
- (b) Revenues from commercial broadcasting;
- (c) Revenues from sponsored programmes;
- (d) Receipts from sale of journals and advertisements therein;
- (e) Receipts from the production and sale of discs, tapes and films;
- (f) Receipts from the hire of studios, equipment and other facilities;
- (g) Technical fees for services rendered by the Trust; and
- (h) Receipts from any other source.

(2) The annual capital budget of the Trust shall be provided by the Central Government, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, as a grant on the basis of an agreed long-term plan for the development of the national broadcasting system.

(3) The revenue expenditure of the Trust shall be met from the revenues and receipts listed in sub-section (1) with the proviso that the revenue deficit will be made

good by the Central Government for a period of not less than five years from the first full financial year after the Trust is established.

Trust Fund

18(1) The Trust shall have its own Fund; and all such sums as may, from time to time, be paid to it by the Central Government and all grants and advances made to it by any other authority or person and all receipts and income of the Trust shall be credited to the Fund and all payments by the Trust shall be made therefrom.

(2) All monies belonging to the Fund shall be deposited in such banks or invested in such manner as may be decided by the Trust.

(3) The Trust may spend such sums as it thinks fit for performing its functions under this Act and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of the Fund of the Trust.

Audit

19(1) The accounts of the Trust shall be audited by auditors duly qualified to act as auditors of companies under the law for the time being in force relating to companies, who shall be appointed by the Trust with the previous approval of the Central Government and shall receive such remuneration from the Trust as may be prescribed.

(2) Every auditor shall in the performance of his duties have at all reasonable times access to the books, accounts and other documents of the Trust.

(3) The auditors shall submit their report to the Trust which shall duly transmit such report to the Central Government, which shall cause copies thereof to be laid before each House of Parliament in the manner laid down in section 21.

Income-Tax

20. The Trust shall not be subject to income-tax and shall use any surpluses in furtherance of its objectives.

Annual Report and Budget

21. The Trust shall once in every year at least, prepare a General Report of its operations during the preceding financial year including the operations of the Licensing Board and the Report of the Complaints Board and attach to the said General Report an account or accounts of the income and expenditure of the Trust and the Balance Sheet which account or accounts and Balance Sheet shall be duly certified by the auditors of the Trust as aforesaid.

Power to borrow

22. The Trust shall have power to borrow or raise or secure the payment of money in such manner as the Trust shall think fit and, in particular, by mortgage or charge on all or any part of the property or rights of the Trust, or by the issue of debentures or debenture stock charged upon all or any of the Trust's property or rights (both present and future), and to purchase redeem or pay off any such securities. Provided that the aggregate amount of the money so borrowed, raised and secured for the purpose of obtaining temporary banking accommodation or facilities and at any one time outstanding shall not exceed Rs....., and that the aggregate amount of the money so charged, raised and secured for the purpose of defraying capital expenditure (including moneys so borrowed, raised and secured for that purpose) and at any one time outstanding shall not exceed such sum up to the maximum of Rs.

Reserve

23 (1) In the event of the Trust exercising (otherwise than for the purpose of obtaining temporary banking accommodation and facilities) the power hereinbefore contained of borrowing or raising money upon the security of or otherwise charging all or any part of its property or rights to which such power extends, it shall set aside out of its revenue such sums as will be sufficient to provide for the repayment of the amount so borrowed or raised within such period in each instance as the Trust may determine.

(2) The Trust shall make proper provision for meeting depreciation of or for renewing any property of the Trust.

(3) The Trust may set aside as a reserve or carry over out of its revenue such sums as it may deem expedient, and may invest, deal with and apply such sums in such manner as it may think conducive to its objects.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Government Broadcasts

24 (1) The Government of India may by order in writing require the Trust to refrain from broadcasting any matter relating to national security, preservation of public order or any other matter of grave public importance.

Provided that the Trust may announce that such an order has been made by the Government of India.

(2) In the case of any national, regional or local emergency the Trust shall if so directed by the Government and in accordance with its directions broadcast any announcement that it requires to be broadcast.

Provided that in broadcasting the announcement the Trust shall announce that such a direction has been made by the Government of India.

(3) The President and the Prime Minister shall have access to Akashvani and Doordarshan for making national broadcasts.

(4) Governors and Chief Ministers of States shall have access to the Stations/Kendras within the State for broadcasts on matters of State importance.

CHAPTER V

COMPLAINTS BOARD

Complaints Board

25 (1) There shall be established by the Trust a Complaints Board to hear complaints by any member of the public or an organisation in respect of charges of unjust or unfair treatment including unwarranted invasion of privacy and misrepresentation.

(2) The Complaints Board shall consist of a Chairman and two other members, appointed by the Chief Justice of India from among men and women of high public standing for a five-year term and for a three year term each respectively.

(3) The Chairman and members of the Complaints Board shall receive such salaries and allowances as may be prescribed.

(4) Any complaints alleging any of the matters mentioned in sub-section (1) shall be made within 30 days of the broadcast.

(5) The complaint shall contain a concise statement of the material/facts constituting the cause of action.

(6) No complaint shall be entertained unless the complainant has in his complaint expressly waived all rights to sue the Trust in a Court of Law on the cause of action.

(7) The Complaints Board shall in the first instance refer the complaint to the Central Executive Board for its comments. On receipt of the aforesaid comments the Complaints Board may conduct a hearing of the said complaint and shall make and publish its adjudication promptly.

Licensing Board

26. (1) The Trust shall constitute a Licensing Board consisting of a Chairman and two other members to grant franchise to Stations/Kendras other than those operated by the Trust.

(2) The Chairman and the other members of the Licensing Board shall each be appointed by the Trust for a term of five years and shall serve part time.

(3) The Chairman and the other members of the Licensing Board shall receive such allowances as may be prescribed.

(4) A vacancy in the office of the Chairman and the other members of the Licensing Board shall be filled by the Trust for the unexpired portion of the term of the member who has vacated office.

Functions of Licensing Board

27. (1) The Licensing Board shall consider applications from Universities and other educational institutions for franchise to establish low-power radio or television transmitters and related studio facilities.

(2) The applicants shall define the objectives for which the broadcast franchise is being sought and must satisfy the Licensing Board of their financial and technical competence in that regard.

(3) No franchise shall be granted unless the applicant complies with the following conditions :

- (a) that the franchise station shall be committed to education and extension broadcasts;
- (b) that the franchise station shall not broadcast news bulletins of its own and shall relay from Akashvani or Doordarshan Stations news bulletins or newscasts as the case may be, if it is technically feasible;
- (c) that the franchise station shall not sell time or undertake any form of commercial broadcasting; and
- d) such other conditions as may be prescribed by the Trust.

(4) Franchise shall be granted for a period of three years, subject to renewal on the satisfaction of the Licensing Board as to the fulfilment by the Station of the conditions laid down in this Act and such other conditions as may be prescribed.

(5) All franchise stations shall be subject to inspection by approved officers of the National Broadcast Trust and shall be subject also to the jurisdiction of the Complaints Board.

(6) The Audience Research organisation of the Trust shall evaluate programmes conducted by franchise stations.

(7) The Licensing Board may at any time revoke the franchise if in its opinion the applicant is guilty of violation of any of the conditions laid down in this Act or prescribed thereunder.

Provided that the applicant shall be afforded opportunity to show cause before revocation of the franchise.

Reservation of Transmission Time

28. The Trust shall have power to reserve a certain proportion of transmission time for programmes by independent production companies other than commercially sponsored programmes of Akashvani and Doordarshan.

Copyright

29. The Trust shall be entitled to the copyright in respect of any literary, musical or artistic work produced by it.

Review Commission

30. The Central Government shall appoint a commission to review the working of the Trust seven years after the appointed date and at every seven yearly interval thereafter.

Committees

31. The Trust may constitute such Committees at the National, Regional and Local levels as it may deem expedient.

Licence to Broadcast

32. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Rules made thereunder, the Central Government shall grant licence to the National Broadcast Trust for all public broadcasting and radio and television stations of the Trust as well as the franchise stations.

Provided that the Central Government shall allocate, approve and coordinate the broadcast frequencies licenced to each of the stations as aforesaid.

Power to make Regulations

33. (1) The Trust may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make Regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, to provide for all matters for which provision is expedient for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power such Regulations may provide for :

- (a) the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the procedure thereat and all matters connected therewith;
- (b) the establishment of the Zones and definition of their territorial limits;
- (c) the powers and functions which may be delegated to the Zonal Executive Board and the business to be transacted in each Zone;
- (d) the constitution of Regions as and when necessary and all matters related thereto;
- (e) the method of recruitment and auditioning of employees of the Trust, and artists engaged by it and the terms and conditions of service or engagement of such employees or artists;
- (f) the maintenance of separate funds and accounts at each of the Zonal and Regional Offices;
- (g) the constitution of Staff Councils;
- (h) the procedures of the Complaints Board, the Licensing Board and the Committees; and
- (i) The Constitution of the Audience Research organisation.

Power to remove difficulties

34. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty;

Provided that no such order shall be made under this section after the expiry of two years from the commencement of this Act.

Transitional Provisions

35. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may,

at any time before the appointed date take such measures or pass such orders as may be expedient or necessary in order to establish the Trust.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Act, at any time after the appointed date, the Trust may take such measures and pass such orders and make such regulations as may be necessary in order to implement the provisions of this Act.

(3) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of sub-clause (2), the Trust shall—

- (a) screen all existing employees of Akashvani and Doordarshan with a view to constituting unified cadres;
- (b) give Government employees belonging to Central Government or Ministerial Cadres or deputationists the right to opt for permanent service with the Trust or to return to their parent cadres or departments;
- (c) frame rules and constitute Committees to estimate and arrange for the transfer of assets and liabilities.

Protection of action taken in good faith

36. No suit or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Trust or any Trustee thereof or any person acting under the direction of the Trust in respect of anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act.

Trustees, etc., to be Public Servants

37. Every Trustee and every officer or other employee appointed by the Trust shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of Section 21 of the Indian Penal Code.

Savings

38. The provisions of the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933 and the Rules made thereunder shall not apply to any wireless telegraphy apparatus, as defined in the said Act which is owned or possessed by the Trust or any person who has been granted a franchise by the Trust in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Experimental broadcasting in India commenced in 1923 and organised broadcasting some four years later though it was not until 1930 that the forerunner of Akashvani, the Indian State Broadcasting Service, was constituted. The broadcasting network has seen considerable expansion over the past 50 years, there now being 84 Akashvani Stations and 13 Doordarshan Kendras.

After Independence it was agreed in principle that Akashvani should not permanently remain a Department of Government but should ultimately be constituted into an autonomous Corporation. However, the departmental status continued unchanged despite a positive recommendation to this effect by the Chanda Committee on Broadcasting and Information Media in 1966. When television services were separated from Akashvani in 1976, Doordarshan too was established as a Department of Government.

The control exercised over radio, television and other media under conditions of censorship in the recent past completely eroded the credibility of Akashvani and Doordarshan. Departmental control is also not conducive to a creative organisation which must be conceived of very differently if the object of broadcasting, namely, to inform, educate and entertain the people is to be realised in all its fullness, emphasising both the unity and diversity of the country.

The Akash Bharati Bill is being introduced by the Government consistent with its mandate to uphold the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution, which extends to broadcasting as well. The Bill aims to establish an autonomous and independent National Broadcast Trust to restore credibility and creativity to radio and television through a reorganised structure that will also ensure decentralisation, participation, and a rural thrust.

It is proposed to bring Akashvani and Doordarshan together within Akash Bharati and to provide for independent production companies and low-power franchise stations as part of a system of local broadcasting which should be promoted.

The objectives of Akash Bharati are set out in the Bill in section 5 which may be regarded as its Charter. The Bill also seeks to establish a Licensing Board and a Complaints Board to adjudicate on public complaints regarding unfairness, misrepresentation and invasion of privacy.

The appointment of the Trustees is to be made by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister from out a list submitted by a Nominating Committee in accordance with the procedure prescribed in this Bill.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

This Bill seeks to establish a National Broadcast Trust called Akash Bharati. The main object is to safeguard the independence and autonomy of broadcasting in India and to ensure the planned development of both broadcasting coverage and reception.

2. The Bill contains a provision for the transfer of various assets by the Government to the Trust, which will constitute a Fund to which all its income and receipts will be credited.

3.....

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Section of the Bill empowers the Board of Trustees of Akash Bharati to make Regulations relating to meetings of the Trustees, the constitution of Regions, the setting up of Franchise Stations, recruitment, screening or auditioning and other related matters.

The matters in respect of which Regulations may be made are generally matters of procedure and administrative detail and it is difficult to provide for all situations in the Bill itself. The delegation of legislative power is, therefore, of a normal character.

Major Reommendations

Preface

1. We envisage an autonomous national trust as the authority under which Akashvani and Doordarshan should grow. This we are naming Akash Bharati—the National Broadcast Trust.

Chapter 2—Communication Policy and Broadcasting

2. By their very nature, radio and television are in the public domain and must serve the public interest. As mass media, radio and television must fit into a wider perception and perspective of a national communications policy or philosophy. (2.19)

3. An autonomous broadcast organisation, nationally owned and responsible to Parliament and yet under the Centre legislatively and for purposes of international relations through external broadcasts and frequency allocations, and P&T and Space support, appears logical and desirable. (2.30)

Chapter 4—Policy and Organisational Parameters

4. Both in terms of its physical presence and programme content, the emphasis of broadcasting will have to shift from its largely urban-elitist moorings to the rural and semi-urban areas and to the urban poor. The quality and proportion of its instructional content will likewise have to increase. The NBT must bridge the urban-rural divide and combine modernity with relevant tradition. (4.3)

5. The NBT has to be highly sensitive to react swiftly to the needs and sentiments of the different components of its mass audience. At the same time it will have steadfastly to withstand the day-to-day political and other pressures to which its power will expose it. (4.7)

6. The Working Group are of the view that there should not be autonomous regional corporations or even a federation of State Government corporations. Instead, a single National Broadcast Trust is proposed under which a highly decentralised structure is envisaged. There will be a large measure of power delegated to the regional and

local level so that the organisation enjoys the advantages of quick decision-making, sensitivity to local problems, familiarity with local customs and taste, and close linkages with various governments and institutions. (4.17)

7. The engineers and programme staff have to work as a closely knit team, representing as they do both medium and message. To separate the two would be to diminish the efficiency and even the creativity of the system. Production autonomy would also be undermined by external engineering control. (4.20)

8. The Working Group are unable to support the proposal to create two separate corporations for Akashvani and Doordarshan. However there is need to recognise the distinctive identity of radio and television within the ambit of a new integrated structure. (4.23)

Chapter 5—The Legal Framework

9. We are of the opinion that all the national broadcasting services should be vested exclusively in an independent, impartial, and autonomous organisation established by law by Parliament to act as a trustee for the national interest. (5.4)

10. The autonomy of the corporation and its independence from government control should be entrenched in the Constitution itself and the idea of a trust woven into it. (5.9)

11. It is not necessary that the establishment of the Corporation should await a constitutional amendment. The law establishing the Corporation can be enacted and the organisation brought into being to be followed subsequently by an amendment of the Constitution. (5.10)

12. We recommend a draft constitutional amendment in the following terms :

329A (1) All broadcasting shall be organised and conducted exclusively by or under the authority of an autonomous and independent public corporation acting impartially as a Trustee in the public interest, referred to in this Constitution as Akash Bharati, the National Broadcast Trust.

(2) The National Broadcast Trust shall consist of a Chairman and Trustees and the appointment of the Chairman and the other Trustees shall be made by the President from out of a list of names put forward by a nominating panel duly constituted by law.

- (3) Subject to the provisions of Clauses (1) and (2) and the other provisions of this Constitution, the constitution of the National Broadcast Trust shall be such as may be provided by Parliament by law. (5.11)

13. The statute made in pursuance of the constitutional provisions indicated above should expressly declare the corporation to be "a corporate citizen of the country". In the absence of a statutory declaration, the National Broadcast Trust will not be entitled to exercise those fundamental rights like the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, Article 19 (1)(a), which are available to citizens alone. (5.12)

14. We recommend that certain specific objectives be laid down in the statute by Parliament which may be regarded as the Charter of the National Broadcast Trust.

The Trust shall :

- (a) Uphold the unity of the country and the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution.
- (b) Uphold the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution to freedom of speech and expression.
- (c) Safeguard the citizens' right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively on all matters of public interest, national or international.
- (d) Uphold the impartiality, integrity and autonomy of broadcasting in the country.
- (e) Provide a national broadcasting service predominantly Indian in content and character.
- (f) Promote the interests and concerns of the entire nation, being mindful of the need for harmony and understanding within the country and ensuring that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the composite culture of India.
- (g) Produce and transmit varied programmes designed to awaken, inform, enlighten, educate, entertain and enrich all sections of the people, with due regard to the fact that the national broadcast audience consists of a whole series of publics.
- (h) Serve the rural, illiterate and underprivileged populations, keeping in mind the special needs and interests of the young, social and cultural minorities, the tribal populations, and those residing in border regions and backward or remote areas.

- (i) Stimulate and inform the national consciousness in regard to the status and problems of women.
- (j) Promote social justice and combat exploitation, inequality, and such evils as untouchability and narrow parochial loyalties.
- (k) Uphold the secular ideal and promote a spirit of truth and inquiry in the country among all sections of the people.
- (l) Present a fair and balanced flow of information of national, regional, local, and international interest, including contrasting views, without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own.
- (m) Help raise educational standards by supporting programmes or formal, non-formal and continuing education and open learning systems.
- (n) Promote the extension of new knowledge and practices as well as the transfer of technology as an aid to national development and social change.
- (o) Provide entertainment and recreation for all sections of the people and encourage all forms of cultural expression—traditional, classical, modern and international.
- (p) Take special steps to protect the interests of children, the blind, the aged and other vulnerable sections of the population.
- (q) Promote comprehension and national integration by broadcasting in a manner that facilitates communication in and among all the languages of India.
- (r) Seek to provide comprehensive broadcast coverage through the choice of appropriate technology and the best utilisation of the broadcast frequencies available, and to ensure high quality reception. (5.13)

15. A restricted power can legitimately be given to the Government to require the Trust to refrain from broadcasting any matter which has a clear relation to national security, the preservation of public order, and other matters of grave public importance. A power can also be conferred on the Government to require broadcasts in cases of emergency. In broadcasting such announcements the corporation shall announce that such a requirement has been made. (5.14)

16. The President and the Prime Minister should have access to Akashvani and Doordarshan for national broadcasts. A similar right should extend to the Governors and Chief Ministers of States for State broadcasts over regional networks. (5.15)

17. The Central and State Governments should have reasonable access to the broadcast media to explain official policies. Such Ministerial broadcasts should be arranged in consultation with the appropriate authorities in Akashvani and Doordarshan. (5.17)

18. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha should also be accorded facilities for making national broadcasts. We would recommend a similar procedure with regard to the recognised Leader of the Opposition, if any, in every State Legislature. (5.18)

19. Once the National Broadcast Trust comes into being, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should shed its direct responsibility for broadcasting and might thereafter appropriately be redesignated "Ministry of Information". (5.21)

20. In regard to the relationship between the broadcasting organisations and Parliament, the best compromise between the claims of autonomy and of accountability is to impose on the Trust a duty to report to Parliament through its budget and an annual report together with its accounts and auditor's comments thereon. The Report should also incorporate the report of the Complaints Board and a review of the operations of the Licensing Board and the franchise stations. Members of Parliament have an interest right to ask questions. But it is expected that they will refrain from so doing on day-to-day issues. (5.22)

21. The NBT should ascertain the views of the Central and State Governments in the siting of new stations or transmitters. (5.23)

22. Financial accountability would be ensured through independent commercial audit. In view of the unique characteristics of the broadcast system we recommend that its accounts be commercially audited by any approved firm of auditors of standing, and not be subject to the jurisdiction of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India. (5.24)

23. The NBT will be the public trustee for radio and television broadcasting services in the country whether now or in the future, including related technologies such as wired broadcasting and cable television. (5.27)

Chapter 6—The Board of Trustees

24. At the apex of Akash Bharati or the National Broadcast Trust we recommend a Board of Trustees or Nyasi Mandal consisting of 12 persons, but not to exceed 21 should there be need for inducting additional members. The Trustees (Nyasis) will be guardians of the Charter given to the National Broadcast Trust by Statute. (6.1)

25. The Controller-General of Broadcasting (CGB) heading the Central Executive Board will be ex-officio Secretary to the Board of Trustees so as to provide an organic link between these two tiers. (6.14,19)

26. We recommend the appointment of a Board of Trustees of 12 members consisting of a Chairman and three other full time members who will devote themselves to the fields of Current Affairs, Extension, and Culture respectively. They will operate through the CGB. (6.15)

27. In addition to the Chairman and the three other full time Trustees we recommend that of the eight other part time Trustees at least one other should be highly experienced in the field of finance and management and another should be an eminent scientist or engineer familiar with the technology of broadcasting. (6.16)

28. We assume and recommend that the Board will invariably consist of both men and women. (6.17)

29. The Board of Trustees would have the ultimate responsibility for supervision and control, but it should normally and principally fulfil a trusteeship function in upholding and furthering the purposes of the organisation, execution being left to a Central Executive Board and other agencies under the Trust. (6.18)

30. The Director of Audience Research will be required to submit all audience research reports simultaneously to the Board of Trustees as well as to the Central Executive Board. (6.20)

31. The Trustees shall be appointed for a term of six years, one third of the members retiring every alternate year. The order of retirement among the initial 12 Trustees should be settled by draw of lots with the proviso that the Chairman and the three full time functional Trustees shall be deemed to have a six-year term. (6.21)

32. One of the most important tasks of the Trustees will be to appoint the Controller-General of Broadcasting, the Directors and other senior personnel up to the level of Controllers, that is, members of the proposed Zonal Executive Boards. They would also name the members of the proposed Licensing Board. Another critical responsibility will be the preparation and submission of the budget and an annual report to Parliament including the working of the proposed franchise stations, together with the audited accounts of Akash Bharati. All major investment and policy decisions bearing on the expansion of the broadcast system, technological choices, the quality of service, major programme departures, and issues likely to affect the financial viability of the Trust, including wage and salary revisions, should be subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. (6.22)

33. The Trustees should be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister from out of a list of names forwarded to him by a nominating panel consisting of the Chief Justice of India, the Lok Pal (an office that will soon come into being) and the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission. In order to assist them in their arduous responsibility we recommend that the nomination panel should shall co-opt any two other persons of distinction from the world of science, culture and the arts. We would leave it to this panel to determine its own procedures and having selected the Chairman in the first instance to associate him or her in an advisory capacity with the selection of the other Trustees. (6.24)

34. It would establish a healthy convention were the Prime Minister to consult the Leader of the Opposition before submitting the list of names of the Chairman and Trustees to the President. (6.25)

35. In the case of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees the nominating panel might recommend two or at the most three names out of which one shall be forwarded to the President by the Prime Minister. However, with regard to all other vacancies, the nominating panel should be required to forward 50 per cent more names than there are vacancies to be filled. Should any functional Trustee not be selected, then the nominating panel might have to suggest an alternative name for that particular category. (6.26)

36. We recommend that the Trustees should enjoy the status of Supreme Court Judges and should be subject to similar disqualifications and procedures for removal. The age bar, however, need not apply. (6.27)

Chapter 7—Management and Programme Structure

37. Programming should necessarily be decentralised and producers should enjoy a significant measure of programme autonomy. There will, however, be need for supervision and coordination at higher levels. (7.4)

38. For purposes of management and coordination of the national broadcast organisation, there need to be four operational tiers: National, Zonal, Regional, and the Stations. (7.9)

39. We recommend the constitution of five Zones, namely, Southern, Western, Central, Eastern and Northern. (7.10 & Annexure 1)

40. The Regions are seen as a tier that would need to be added as the Akashvani network grows. (7.11)

41. The Central Executive Board will be a policy planning and directing agency with its operating responsibility limited to the Central News Room, the Monitoring

Unit, the External Services Division, and the Transcription Service for programme exchange. Operational management will largely vest with the Zonal Executive Boards, the programming function being principally that of the Stations. (7.4, 5,6,12)

42. Radio and television will operate as separate streams below the Zonal apex although even at the national level there will be two separate functional heads who will provide the specialised skills required for the proper development of these two different media. (7.14)

43. A Central Executive Board consisting of the Controller-General of Broadcasting (CGB) and 12 other Directors will be responsible for implementing the policies and directives of the Board of Trustees. The Directors will each be responsible for Akashvani, Doordarshan, Current Affairs, Engineering, Finance, Personnel, and Audience Research respectively. In addition, there will be five Zonal Directors who would each head a Zonal Executive Board. (7.15)

44. The Directors of Akashvani and Doordarshan will be the principal media heads. For other inputs such as engineering, finance, personnel, and audience research they will have to depend on the Directors in charge of each of these departments. Extension policy will not be made by the national broadcast organisation, but editorial control will rest with it. (7.19, 21)

45. The Director, News and Current Affairs will guide the Central News Room headed by a General Manager coordinating the work of the Editor Akashvani, the Editor Doordarshan, the Foreign Editor, and the Editor Monitoring Unit. (7.20)

46. Technical personnel in Akashvani and Doordarshan should be interchangeable. For the same reason, even on the programme side, where the degree of media specialisation admittedly has to be higher, people should be able to move between television and radio so that the careers of versatile and talented broadcasters are not unduly inhibited. (7.23)

47. We recommend the inclusion in various selection boards of one eminent outsider from out of a standing panel as an independent external expert who shall take the chair and whose concurrence should be necessary. (7.24)

48. Auditioning boards should be set up at the Zonal level under the Zonal Director who should be assisted by producers and eminent artists and art critics in making selections and gradings. (7.27)

49. Internal audit should be constituted as an autonomous department under a Chief Internal Auditor reporting to the CGB. (7.30)

50. The office of the Director of Audience Research will service both Akashvani and Doordarshan, as well as the proposed franchise stations. All audience research reports should be submitted to the Board of Trustees for information. (7.31,32)

51. We recommend the appointment of three General Managers each in charge of Legal Services, Planning and Information Services. (7.33)

52. At each Zone we recommend the establishment of a Zonal Executive Board (ZEB) headed by the Zonal Director. (7.42)

53. The Regional Controller's office should be kept small and perform a supportive and coordinating role, especially with regard to Local Stations. (7.45)

54. The Local Stations should be headed by a Station Manager who should have no more than essential staff assisted by local and community participation. (7.46)

55. The Station Manager should be responsible for organising listening or viewing groups within the range of his transmitters. (7.47)

56. There should be functional Advisory Committee at various levels, each serviced by a small secretariat. (7.50)

57. We recommend the establishment of a Complaints Board or Nyaya Mandal, a quasi-judicial body of four persons selected by the Chief Justice of India. (7.51)

58. It will deal with complaints from the public relating to charges of unjust or unfair treatment including unwarranted invasion of privacy and misrepresentation provided the right of recourse to the Courts is waived. The findings should be published by the NBT in its programme journals and broadcast in special programmes. (7.52, 53)

59. The NBT should evolve a suitable broadcast Code in place of the AIR Code 1970 which is too restrictive (7.55)

60. There should be a Broadcast Review Commission every seven years (7.56)

Chapter 8—The Financial Dimension

61. It would be best to transfer the existing assets of Akashvani and Doordarshan valued at about Rs. 75 crores as an outright grant to the National Broadcast Trust by an Act of Parliament. (8.15)

62. The National Broadcast Trust will not be liable to corporate taxation. Its profits, if any, will be ploughed back for programme improvement and system expansion along lines approved by Parliament which will scrutinise its annual report and accounts. (8.17)

63. The Government should initially bridge the NBT's revenue deficit for a period of five years after which it should be expected to stand on its own feet or raise additional resources by charging for broadcast time made available by it to various users, including the Central and State Governments. (8.20)

64. We recommend that the Trust be authorised to borrow from the market or even from the Government at low rates of interest against its capital assets. (8.21)

65. For its capital budget, the NBT should receive as an outright grant the amount outstanding in the Non-Lapsable Fund as well as annual grants until 1982 of all the amounts already agreed to under the heading of Replacement and Renewal for Akashvani and Doordarshan. The NBT should prepare a long term capital budget, the first five year segment of which should be discussed with the Planning Commission and Government on the basis of which the Government should be committed to a block grant made available in annually budgeted amounts in accordance with a phased programme.

(8.26, 31, 33, 34)

Chapter 9—Commercial Broadcasting

66. We recommend that the National Broadcast Trust should undertake a comprehensive review of commercial broadcasting rates and procedures so as to place the marketing of broadcast time on a sound footing. (9.32)

67. Commercial broadcasting has been able to tap only a little more than six per cent of the national advertising outlay, an unduly small figure. There is no reason why this proportion should not rise to between 15 and 20 per cent. (9.33)

68. The NBT could examine the opening up to commercial broadcasting of other channels which are already available to a limited extent for sponsored programmes. The advertising content must be closely monitored and the drive for commercials must not be allowed to intrude on or distort programme values. (9.34)

69. We recommend against any advertising over the proposed franchise stations which universities and other educational institutions may be licensed to operate. (9.35)

70. We recommend the development of an appropriately staffed and structured commercial sales unit under the Finance Director of the NBT. This professional cadre should extend to the Commercial Stations as well. The Commercial Sales Unit must be adequately supported with audience research. (9.36)

71. We suggest that the NBT call a meeting of the concerned associations and interests to review the advertising codes and standards. Representatives of consumer

associations should be associated with such a review and they should also be included in the commercial broadcast advisory panels that we recommend be set up. (9.37)

Chapter 10—Broadcast Receiver Licences

72. The NBT should discuss the possible issue of broadcast receiver licence stamps with the appropriate authorities as an alternative to the present system. Broadcast receiver licensing should neither inhibit the sale of sets nor deter the annual renewal of licences where required or encourage evasion. (10.11,12)

73. Broadcast receiver licence fees should be revised upwards to Rs. 25 for radio sets and Rs. 75 for television sets. The present concessional fee of Rs. 7.50 for radios costing less than Rs. 150, as well as for community listening sets and for educational establishments, hostels and welfare institutions should be continued at the present rates. However, a one-time licence fee for single-band sets may be fixed at Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 and collected at the point of sale with special concessions for the blind. The licence fee for additional sets in the non-concessional category should be one-third of the basic licence fee. (10.14)

Chapter 11—Franchise Stations

74. The National Broadcast Trust should be authorised to grant broadcast franchise whether for radio or television to approved educational institutions. Such a franchise recommendation by the National Broadcast Trust should automatically be converted into a broadcast licence by the Ministry of Communications, the specific frequencies being allocated and coordinated by the Ministry's Wireless Adviser. (11.23)

75. The franchise should be granted by an NBT Licensing Board manned by part-time Commissioners. The licences should be granted for three year periods at a time and should be renewed on satisfaction of performance. The Franchise Stations should not broadcast news bulletins but should relay these from the Akashvani/Doordarshan network. They should be placed under the general supervision of the NBT and should be answerable to the Complaints Board as well as to the Trustees who would be empowered to issue written directives. (11.24,25)

76. We would disallow commercial advertising over these educational stations but we envisage great possibilities in programme exchange both among Franchise Stations and between them and Akashvani and Doordarshan. (11.28)

Chapter 12—Independent Production Agencies

77. We recommend that independent radio and television programme production agencies be encouraged and assisted to acquire or gain access to the necessary production facilities. This will draw in a wide pool of talent and promote variety, program-

me innovation, specialisation and excellence. It will also provide an element of competition to Akashvani and Doordarshan. (12.21)

78. The principle of 20 per cent "reservation" for independent programme access has been evident in the working of the Government-owned Films Division for some years and establishes a precedent which should be extended to the NBT. In addition, the Franchise Stations, universities, and others could produce independent programmes which should have access to the Akashvani and Doordarshan networks on their own merits. (12.12,14)

79. Sponsored programmes by industrial houses or other private institutions should be outside the "reserved" quota even though these are produced for Akashvani or Doordarshan by private agencies. (12.15)

80. The availability of 16 mm laboratory facilities would provide an incentive to young producers and film makers to set up independent units to make films and features which they could sell to Doordarshan and to the Franchise Stations. (12.19)

81. It should be possible for Akashvani and Doordarshan to rent out their studios and facilities to recognised independent production groups on certain terms during idle hours if any. The National Broadcast Trust might also consider establishing both sound and television facilities in selected centres outside of Akashvani and Doordarshan which should be available on hire. (12.20)

82. The existence of independent programme production companies operating in sound, film, and video alongside the Franchise Stations and advertising companies would provide an alternative source of employment for all categories of broadcast personnel. We see great advantage in this, not least in the mobility it will provide in what has so far been a largely monopolistic situation and in the possibility of expanding programme exports and international programme exchange. (12.22)

Chapter 13—News and Current Affairs

83. Akashvani and Doordarshan must be committed to certain national values but ought not to have editorial opinions of their own. They must avoid any partisan or ideological slant and, instead, offer a balanced and objective presentation of all news of relevance to the Indian or external audiences they serve. They must take care to present contrasting viewpoints and analyses in a constant endeavour to examine events from every angle and perspective. (13.8)

84. The principles of "fairness", "balance", "accuracy" and well-rounded "objectivity" apply not only to the news but to all current affairs programmes. Balance however does not imply a mechanical balancing of views in each programme, but rather an overall balance achieved over a series of programmes. (13.10,11)

85. The Central News Room must be strengthened if the quality of service is to improve. It is clearly inadequate to have the various Indian language bulletins and to some extent even the Hindi news bulletins serviced by mere translations of the predominantly English pool copy. (13.17)

86. The cadre link between the CIS and the News Services Division must be severed on the lines we have suggested and Akashvani must train newsmen who can voice their despatches instead of writing them. (13.19, 21)

87. The slow (dictation) speed news bulletins is a service that could be expanded and enriched to assist the growth of community papers in remote areas. (13.26,27)

88. The news rooms at the State capitals and other regional news centres of Akashvani should be strengthened. (13.28)

89. Intensive coverage of tribal, hill, and hitherto remote or neglected and backward areas must be a special responsibility of Akashvani and Doordarshan if they are to serve the needs of the rural masses and articulate the aspirations of the underprivileged and forgotten. (13.29)

90. Special news bulletins in simple formats should be fashioned to reach distinctive pockets, especially in the border regions. (13.32)

91. Akashvani and Doordarshan must make a special effort to encourage development news reportage and the coverage of special areas like sport, science, health, education, the arts, labour, farming, and so on. (13.34)

92. A foreign desk should immediately be set up under a senior Foreign Editor in the proposed Central News Room. (13.36)

93. It should be Akashvani's policy to strengthen its Asian and Indian Ocean coverage so that this region, to begin with, becomes one in which it should be able to boast of prompt, complete and informed coverage, spreading outwards to other and more distant regions as and when possible. (13.37)

94. The Monitoring Unit should be strengthened, expanded and placed on a sounder footing. (13.40)

95. We recommend interchange of personnel among the foreign language cadres of the News Services Division, the Monitoring Unit and the External Services of Akashvani. (13.42)

96. The trend reports and weekly analyses as well as other special publications of the Monitoring Unit could be made available as priced publications. (13.43)

97. Akashvani and Doordarshan should not shy away from controversy. They should project issues of social justice. (13.49)

98. Current affairs speakers and panelists need to be drawn from a wider area than Delhi or the other metropolitan cities and from disciplines other than journalism, politics or the academic world. (13.50)

99. Anniversary features need to be selective, carefully planned, imaginatively presented and evaluative rather than adulatory. (13.50)

100. The lack of reference and library facilities, news clippings and research assistance should be made good as a matter of priority. (13.51)

101. Each Doordarshan Kendra must have a news room with a news editor and professional editing and reporting staff. (13.53)

102. Doordarshan should have its own network of correspondents and stringers, some of these cameramen doubling as radio correspondents, handling portable video-tape recorders for speedy and convenient electronic news gathering. (13.60)

103. Any step towards the development of a television news agency would be welcome and should be encouraged. (13.62)

104. Doordarshan should be equipped with dubbing and sub-titling equipment to facilitate programme exchange within the country as well as abroad. (13.64)

Chapter 14—The External Service

105. Given its limited resources Akashvani should concentrate on the country's neighbours loosely defined as the Indian Ocean community and North Asia. (14.8, 9)

106. We recommend that both the capital and revenue budget for the External Services Division of Akashvani and a proportionate part of the capital and revenue budget of the Monitoring Unit should be borne by the Government of India. (14.12)

107. A common news service cannot be half-controlled and half-free since the same news organisation serves both the domestic as well as the foreign listener (and viewer). Autonomy must therefore cover external broadcasts as much as internal broadcasting and there can be "no half-way house". (14.16,17)

108. We suggest the need for an external broadcasting cadre which can develop area and subject-matter specialisation in regard to foreign affairs, foreign economic relations, and cultural exchange. (14.19)

109. The salary scales offered to language specialists in the Monitoring Unit, News Services Division, and External Services Division will have to be improved in order to attract these particular talents. As in the case of knowledge of Indian languages other than one's own mother-tongue, Hindi and English, we would recommend the payment of a language bounty for knowledge of and continuing proficiency in additional foreign languages. (14.20)

110. Audience Research is as important for external broadcasts as for internal broadcasting. (14.23)

111. The quality and format of India Calling could be improved and it should be possible with better editing and content to carry some limited Indian advertising. (14.27)

Chapter 15—Extension and Distance Learning

112. Indian school and extension broadcasting should pay more attention to delivery of the message, relevant feedback and follow up. They must be coordinated with other communication personnel and implementing agencies or systems in the field. (15.6)

113. The multi-media approach needs constant emphasis. Radio instruction and educational television must be appropriately backed up with print and other support. (15.7)

114. The proposed new local radio stations with their closeness to the people should pioneer new kinds of community programming for open learning. This will call for training and resources and a strong interface with other institutions and authorities. (15.16,17)

115. The broadcast media should cater to the non-formal sector because learning can be programmed for different age groups and needs and taken to homes, fields, factories and informal classrooms. (15.17, 18)

116. Akashvani should draw on its archives to create a valuable cassette tape library on which schools and universities could draw as and when required. (15.24,31,33)

117. We would lay special emphasis on the need to promote popular science over radio and television. (15.28)

118. A strong interface between the education and extension authorities at all levels and the broadcasting system should be developed. (15.34)

119. Since health precedes medicine, and good health, longevity and low infant mortality rates are powerful and natural factors inhibiting family size, the broadcast media should play a more important role in health education. (15.39, 40)

120. School television programming must be integrated into the classroom with full teacher support. The subject supervisor, producer and presenter of school programmes should work as a single team. (15.41-44)

121. The entire approach to women's programming needs change. There should be no talking down to women or any tendency to limit programmes literally to matters of household interest including nutrition and childcare. The very title "Home" tends to suggest restricted horizons. The message of equality, including sexual equality, and social change should permeate all programmes rather than just "women's programmes" and should certainly be addressed as much to men as to women. (15.54)

122. Tribal programming calls not merely for genuine sympathy, knowledge and sensitivity but for the provision of minimum facilities such as jeeps, special allowances for isolation and hardship, portable equipment and considerable delegation. Special staff need to be recruited for tribal stations and the proposed new generation of local stations should have a specially selected cadre of young local people who know the language and have a deep feeling and respect for the tribal populations and their culture. (15.55)

123. In the hill regions of North East India as in some other areas broadcasting faces a special problem—the many languages that the people speak. A possible answer might be the development of a mobile cassette library. Each village in a language area would get a community cassette tape recorder and a whole series of tapes recorded in Akashvani studios. The cassettes would be circulated by jeep and replaced after a suitable time. (15.56)

124. The NBT may after some years consider selling time to Departments of the Government that have educational programmes or extension messages to communicate. This would result in more realistic cost-benefit analyses and ensure the establishment of adequate organisational links, feedback loops, and support services with matching inputs. (15.57)

125. The NBT should review with the Central and State Governments the kind of interface that exists or needs to be developed between the broadcast organisation and concerned Departments or extension institutions. (15.58)

126. We recommend a fresh look at the need for community listening despite the ubiquitous radio transistor, especially among the weaker sections and in backward

areas where there is a clear and present need for a densification of broadcast diffusion. Special schemes should be worked out for making available receiving sets at concessional prices to selected groups or approved individuals who take on the responsibility of organising group listening. (15.59)

127. Radio and television extension must be supported by other media, including print. The task of print support should, however, be a responsibility that Governments and other institutions must share with the NBT. (15.60)

128. Radio and television must form part of multi-media systems and it should be the endeavour of the NBT to encourage and ensure the development of a systems approach that includes the use of radio-vision, cassette tape recorders, and film, tape, and video libraries. (15.61)

129. We recommend that teachers and agricultural and health extension workers should be trained in the use of the media so that they come to regard radio and television as allies rather than rivals and are able better to use these media to enhance their own effectiveness. (15.64)

Chapter 16—Broadcasting as Entertainment

130. Radio and television have individuals as their target audience, a factor that makes the listener or viewer more critical in accepting programmes, with the option to switch off or turn the knob to another channel or station. (16.5)

131. The terms of royalty and copyright need to be reviewed. The system of “close bookings” and ceilings on the number of appearances or fees collected in a month or a year must also be removed if talent has to be encouraged and Akashvani and Doordarshan are to build their own radio and television personalities. (16.9,29)

132. With newer stations being established in smaller towns and in the districts, programme makers will immediately be faced with the problem of talent. Groups of Stations might therefore do well to form clusters or “cultural Janapadas”. Individual Stations should however be able to boast of a particular programme specialisation which they should be in a position to “export” through a well organised system of programme exchange between Stations, Regions and Zones. (16.10)

133. With the development of Akashvani all listeners will have access to three channels,—national, regional and local. Programming in each channel will need to be suitably mixed and varied. (16.11)

134. A great deal of programme initiative must be left to producers and individual production teams and not merely to Station Managers. There should be scope for experimentation with regard to ideas, techniques, and formats. (16.12)

135. There must be a concurrent devolution of financial and budgetary powers alongside a decentralisation of programming and administration. (16.13)

136. Actual production at Akashvani and Doordarshan Kendras should appropriately be classified under three main headings namely planning, production and presentation. (16.14)

137. It should be possible to develop a team mode of production in which a producer, technician, script-writer and social scientist function as a single team, pre-testing programmes in the field before producing prototype programmes which become precursors to a regular series. (16.17)

138. We recommend independent programming facilities for the SITE-continuity Kendras at Jaipur, Raipur, Gulbarga and elsewhere if their programmes are to be at all relevant and evoke interest. (16.18)

139. Akashvani and Doordarshan must have adequate facilities to maintain their archives which are of great cultural and historical value. (16.22)

140. Akashvani needs to train its musicians in orchestration and harmony and expose them to Western and other music from which these concepts derive so that they are then better able to develop Indian orchestration and choral singing which could have a great future and open up whole new vistas for Indian music. (16.35, 36)

141. The new generation of Akashvani stations should each be equipped with a reasonably sized auditorium where live shows and concerts can be held and broadcast with audience participation. (16.37)

142. Akashvani should review the format and content of Vividh Bharati so as to develop a genuine radio-originated light entertainment programme, inclusive of film music, which could become a vehicle for much experimentation and innovation in terms of styles, formats and artists. (16.39)

143. We commend the idea of encouraging talented and eminent individuals to write, produce and present radio and television programmes with the help of production and other facilities extended to them by Akashvani and Doordarshan. (16.42)

144. The present system of auditioning music artists needs change. A central audition board is unnecessary. Zonal boards should instead be established and given a set of norms. Music producers at Stations should be involved in the matter of selection of artists as standards and tastes differ from region to region. (16.44)

145. Children's programmes merit the greatest attention and the very best production talent. This is where cultural tastes can be influenced and interests awakened in the world around. Some school learning could also be imparted through song and music to which children quickly and joyously respond. (16.46)

146. The tendency for Yuva Vani programmes to cater predominantly to urban and student youth should be corrected. (16.47)

147. With the development of regional and local stations it should be possible to devote more time to regional sporting events and traditional or novel sports and pastimes. Radio and television could do much to promote physical fitness. (16.48)

148. Akashvani and Doordarshan could do with more and better programme journals. Given the right to print advertisements like any other journal they could earn some modest revenue. (16.49)

149. Akashvani could produce discs and tapes of Great Masters, national concerts, and folk music on a commercial basis. (16.50)

150. Party political and election broadcasts must be subject to an approved code. (16.53)

151. We recommend the establishment of a strong audience research division. (16.54)

152. Akashvani and Doordarshan should involve its listening and viewing public at all levels through functional programme advisory committees. (16.56)

153. The NBT should strengthen existing links with the Asian Broadcasting Union and establish links with the European Broadcasting Union and similar bodies for purposes of programme exchange and professional contact. (16.57)

154. The internal and international transcription service of Akashvani and Doordarshan must be suitably strengthened and equipped to foster and stimulate programme exchange. (16.58)

Chapter 17—The Training Function

155. All broadcasters should know something about communication processes and policies relevant to Indian needs and circumstances, besides an understanding of communications systems as a whole. (17.1)

156. A training reserve is required in all cadres of Akashvani and Doordarshan. (17.6)

157. Besides the three existing training schools at Delhi, Hyderabad and Shillong, at least two others are needed so that there is one in each zone. (17.8)

158. There should be a whole system of refresher courses in training academies to which all staff are brought at regular intervals in their career. (17.9)

159. The news and current affairs staff should receive training in broadcast journalism. (17.10)

160. There should be facilities for language learning and orientation courses for engineering and programming personnel who are posted to unfamiliar and sensitive areas such as North East India. (17.11)

161. There should be a Broadcast Staff College where selected personnel who show promise and are likely to move up into senior decision-making programme or technical levels should be able to spend some time. (17.14)

162. Graduation from the Staff College should equip both engineering and programmes personnel to move to higher responsibilities in "staff" appointments if they show the necessary interest and aptitude. (17.15)

163. A basic foundation course for both programme and technical cadres could help establish a new tradition and a wider competence than is evident or accepted at present. (17.16)

164. We recommend that the FTTI be converted into a national institute for film and television training awarding diplomas in both disciplines, with a technical component as well. Doordarshan should be suitably compensated and assisted to establish a separate staff training school elsewhere. (17.17,18)

165. For radio too the foundation courses should be taken over by Universities and other specialised institutions and the NBT should over a period of time only need to provide induction training and refresher courses at higher levels. (17.19)

166. The technical training facilities of both Akashvani and Doordarshan require considerable strengthening and expansion. The resources of the present Staff Training Institute (Technical) are fully stretched and it must be suitably expanded or replicated. As in the case of programme training, the best engineers should be assigned to the training schools and a posting here should be considered a distinction. (17.21)

167. The NBT should offer apprenticeship and short duration in-service facilities for university or diploma trainees to work under operational conditions. (17.24)

168. The NBT's requirements of trained administrators and managers can be met by simple in-house facilities supplemented by the existing management institutes. (17.25)

Chapter 18—A New Deal for Staff

169. We recommend that there should be parity between all categories of staff in the NBT and that all programme staff including staff artists should be brought under a single unified cadre. It should be possible for a recruit to any one of three broad service categories, namely technical, programme (including news) and "administration" to rise to senior staff positions at the top. (18.9)

170. Salary scales and fees should be reviewed so as to ensure that Akashvani and Doordarshan attract and retain the requisite talent which they are not always able to do today. Promotional avenues should also be enlarged for all services on an equitable basis in order to prevent stagnation and frustration. (18.12(iii))

171. The NBT should have machinery to foster cordiality and understanding with and among all sections of its staff by periodic discussions in staff councils between the management and staff representatives who should be encouraged to put forward ideas and suggestions. (18.12(vi))

172. Consistent with the ethos of the NBT as a non-profit Trust and an essential service, we recommend the establishment of a grievance machinery at various levels which should be automatically activated in the case of any difference or dispute. (18.12(vii))

173. Staff welfare services and amenities should get due attention. (18.12(ix))

174. Staff should be entitled to study leave in accordance with stipulated procedures if they wish to undertake approved study, research or training. (18.12(x))

175. Over-categorisation should be avoided and seniority and rank should be determined by time scales with efficiency-bars rather than by a whole hierarchy of designations. (18.12(xi))

176. All those who are retained in service after the normal age of retirement should be re-employed subject to medical fitness on short-term renewable contracts. (18.12(xii))

177. We recommend that the present staff artists become regular employees of the NBT. Integration of programme staff should be left to special programme staff integration panels working to certain accepted norms. Experience, length of service and assesment of talent should be taken into consideration in fitting personnel of all programme services into a unified programme cadre. (18.19)

178. We recommend that all Grade I posts of and above the rank of News Editor in the News Services Division, Regional News Units, Monitoring Unit etc., be filled by open competition. All members of the CIS cadre, wherever employed, as well as staff artists and outsiders who fulfil the requisite qualification will be eligible. For the rest, we recommend that all members of the CIS cadre—and not just those currently with Akashvani—be given the option to join the NBT. (18.21)

179. CIS personnel who opt for service in the NBT should be screened by a special selection panel and the existing “CIS quota” of 219 in Akashvani and Doordarshan should be filled from among those selected. They should thereafter be regarded as permanent employees of the NBT and should sever their connections with the CIS. (18.22)

180. Similar selection and fitment procedures are recommended in respect of Akashvani and Doordarshan posts encadred in the Central Secretariat Service, the Central Secretariat Stenographer’s Service, and the Central Secretariat Clerical Service, all belonging to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry’s cadres. Similar fitment and selection procedures should be followed for filling in the posts in the Pay and Accounts Sections of the NBT. Deputationists should also be given the option as others and be subjected to identical procedures. (18.23)

181. Non-gazetted engineering staff should be eligible for promotion to gazetted positions of higher responsibility provided they pass an appropriate departmental examination which should include certain basic theoretical papers pertaining to broadcast engineering, due account being given to the experience and performance of the person concerned. (18.24)

182. We recommend direct recruitment at the lower ranks with provision for suitable promotion quotas between different tiers which should be filled on the basis of departmental selections and examinations. However merit criteria should not be relaxed in the process of departmental promotion though we see no reason to impose any age bar at any stage within the organisation. (18.25)

183. Those persons who prefer to specialise should be enabled to stay on in specialised jobs rather than graduate to staff or managerial appointments. They should however be offered promotions in situ through suitable time scales. We do not think it necessary for the NBT to insist on graduate or any other degree, diploma or certificate for non-technical staff. We would, however, recommend the provision of self-learning and training facilities within the NBT so that there are possibilities for career advancement. (18.27,28)

184. It should be a necessary requirement that a person should have gained a certain variety of experience in different appointments before he or she qualifies for a staff job. Similarly, junior staff jobs should be regarded as training grounds for senior staff appointments and the latter for selection to top management posts. (18.29)

185. We recommend lateral entry at higher levels so as to provide a necessary infusion of fresh blood and ideas to ensure the best possible talent for sensitive senior posts. (18.30)

186. The posts of Controller-General of Broadcasting, Directors, and General Managers should be tenure posts of not more than five years. This should not preclude reappointment. (18.31)

187. Confidential reports of members of the staff should be written by their immediate administrative superiors as well as by their professional heads of department. This will ensure a certain balance and reflect more accurately the record of the persons concerned. In the case of very senior personnel, it may be desirable that evaluation is made by a group rather than by individuals who are in the hierarchy. (18.33)

188. All employees of the NBT irrespective of the discipline to which they belong should be given an appointment letter which should be in the nature of a contract terminable with one, three, or six months notice on either side depending upon the level of the appointment or post held. Entirely new recruits should be initially taken on one or two years probation. (18.35)

189. The NBT should encourage the formation of a single staff association with distinctive wings to represent the service interests of all employees so as to promote an effective dialogue with the management. (18.37)

190. Existing employees as are taken over by the NBT should be afforded protection in respect of their present benefits such as emoluments, housing, medical facilities, pension and gratuity, leave travel, and educational benefits. Existing employees (including staff artists) should continue to be entitled to the allotment of pool accommodation from the Government for a transitional period. (18.12(i), 38)

Chapter 19—Engineering and Technological Aspects

191. We recommend that the technological options relating to Akashvani's "ITU Plan", the VHF alternative, and the possibilities of introducing low-frequency transmissions should be carefully considered by a high level team of experts that the NBT should constitute as early as possible. These technological choices involve not merely questions of investment cost and quality of reception but also patterns of programming. Therefore a realistic and objective cost-benefit study should be made before any irrevocable decisions are taken with all their long term implications. (19.62)

192. The emphasis on Research in the NBT should be on those areas of work which cannot be carried out effectively elsewhere. The development of hardware should have lower priority than other specialised problems. (19.63-68)

193. The Research Department should be headed by a very senior engineer who can assist in long term planning and assurance of quality service by reporting to the top management. Its strength will have to be increased considerably, necessary facilities added, and activities expanded and rearranged in specialist groups. (19.70)

194. It may be desirable to set apart for R&D a definite percentage of, say, three per cent of the gross annual revenue expenditure on technical operations. (19.71)

195. The volume of plant and equipment required for NBT's expansion justify the setting up of a separate manufacturing unit for broadcast equipment. BEL could be asked to set up a separate unit or, in the alternative, the Government could establish a Broadcast Electronics Corporation in the public sector. (19.73)

196. A number of technological developments such as slow-scan television, bandwidth reduction, etc., suggest the need for R&D in these areas and, if necessary, their funding by the NBT. (19.74, 75)

Chapter 20—Future Expansion

197. While we acknowledge that television is a powerful and effective medium, India should give first priority to the development and densification of radio for at least the next 10 to 15 years. (20.2)

198. Whatever the choice or mix of technology we would strongly recommend that Akashvani must develop a determined rural-extension thrust which is best done through the rapid development of low-power local stations. (20.4)

199. In the siting of the proposed new local stations, preference should be given to backward districts including drought prone and tribal and hill areas, subject to the availability of the minimum infrastructure, accessibility and a dependable power supply. The State Governments should be consulted. (20.5)

200. The NBT should undertake to organise special maintenance services in tribal and backward areas and in approved radio densification clusters. It should combine this wherever possible with the purchase and sale of approved quality sets. Manufacturers should also be encouraged to set up joint after-sales service and maintenance units for rural clients. The Central and State Governments should suitably assist these efforts. (20.7)

201. The State Governments should consider bearing the cost of licence fees in certain areas and in approved radio densification clusters. (20.8)

202. Radio listening clusters linked to a "mother station" could develop special educational, extension and other programmes on the SITE model. Hire purchase of sets with concessional bank loans should be encouraged. (20.9,10)

203. In certain areas, wired broadcasting may be feasible as in Arunachal where "town broadcasting" systems have been installed in each of the district headquarters. (20.11)

204. The existing Doordarshan network and on-going schemes will provide television coverage to an area with a potential audience of 100 million. The densification of television viewing within this area would seem to be an obvious priority. (20.12)

205. Low-cost television technology as experimentally tried out by the Space Applications Centre would seem particularly appropriate for rural areas. If the cost-effectiveness of such facilities is demonstrated by some pilot projects which the NBT

itself can undertake then the case for a relatively more rapid expansion of this mode of television would be established. (20.14)

206. The commissioning of INSAT in 1981 will facilitate national networking of Doordarshan programmes. Otherwise we recommend the use of INSAT in the first instance primarily for establishing direct reception in North East India, Sikkim and the Hill areas of UP, Himachal and J&K, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep because the undulating terrain and dispersed habitations there render terrestrial television a highly expensive proposition. (20.15,16)

207. Urban programming must show due concern for the needs of the large class of urban underprivileged who, like rural listeners and viewers, need to be provided with community and group listening and viewing facilities. (20.20)

208. The NBT should undertake research and experimentation in multi-media operations and in the conjunctive use of radio and television. There is promise in radio-vision, cassette tape recorders used with educational radio, and slow-scan television. (20.21)

209. There is need for reducing the cost of television and radio sets, including FM radio transistors, if radio and television densification are to move ahead rapidly. Small assemblers of radio and television receivers should be encouraged to form marketing cooperatives or consortia and sell standardised equipment under common brand names. (20.22)

Chapter 21—Transitional Provisions

210. We hope that the Akash Bharati Bill will be approved by the Cabinet in time to be formally introduced during the current session of Parliament so that it can be taken up for consideration during the monsoon session and enacted by September or October. (21.3)

211. As an earnest of its decision to confer full autonomy on Akashvani and Doordarshan, we recommend that the Government may direct them to follow the Charter spelt out in Chapter 5, The Legal Framework. This will immediately introduce a change in the character and outlook of these two broadcast organisations and inform them with the spirit of our recommendations. A Central News Room on the lines we have recommended should be established as early as possible as it is in the area of news and current affairs that an immediate impact can be made. (21.4)

212. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should immediately set up a Broadcast Autonomy Cell to process this Report and prepare working papers for preparatory action and Cabinet decision. (21.5)

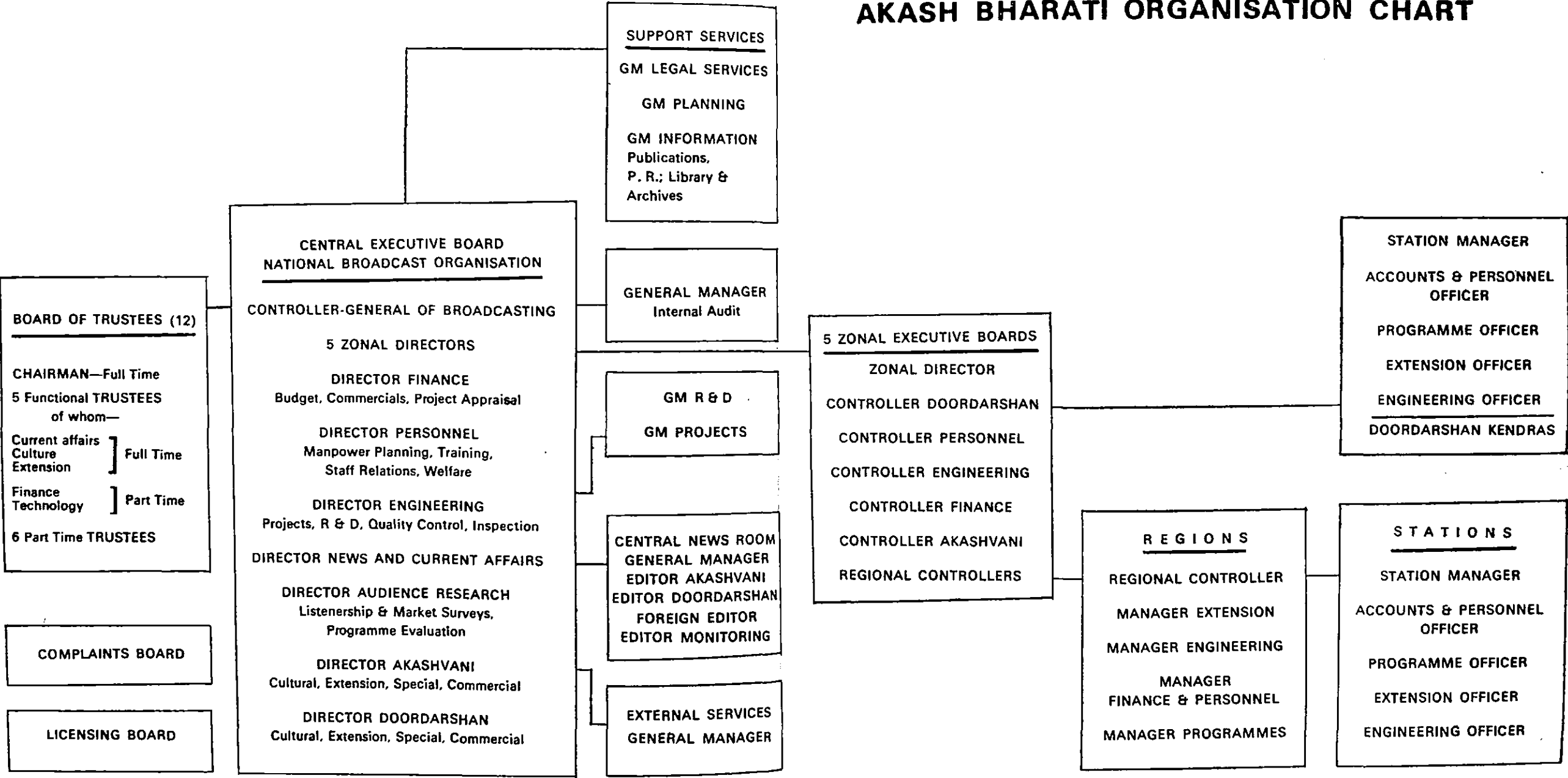
213. Rationalisation of the staff structure and unification of cadres in accordance with our recommendations will call for detailed work. This task should be entrusted to an expert body of consultants such as an Indian Institute of Management so that its report is available to the NBT as soon as it comes into being. (21.6)

214. As soon as the Akash Bharati Bill receives the President's assent, Akashvani and Doordarshan should be accorded a special Transitional Status and serviced by the Broadcast Autonomy Cell (21.7)

215. The Akash Bharati Act should come into force with effect from January 1, 1979 and certain transitional sections even earlier, if necessary. From, say, October 15, 1978 onwards Akashvani and Doordarshan should be placed under an Officer-on-Special-Duty heading a Transitional Board of Management to undertake the staff work relating to transfer of assets and liabilities to the NBT and to work out procedures whereby the CIS cadre and other staff on deputation will be enabled to exercise an option regarding whether to go over to the proposed NBT or return to their parent services. (21.8, 9)

216. The Transitional Management Board should prepare an independent budget for the NBT for 1979-80 which the Trustees should formally approve and forward to Government. (21.11)

AKASH BHARATI ORGANISATION CHART



Volume II

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Published by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, Printed at
The Caxton Press (P) Ltd., New Delhi. Cover Design by DAVP.