BROADCASTING IN INDIA

by

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To

RAVI & ICHIE

PREFACE

THIS WORK is not intended as a reference book or a mere record of the development of broadcasting in the country. It is a personal testament—a testimony of my own experience and an assessment of the working of AIR. I was on the programme staff of All India Radio for over fifteen years—not too short a period to get to know and understand something about the subject of my study.

Having joined AIR in the year 1945 with high hopes, I left in the year 1960 in deep despair. This is, however, not the place to recall the circumstances which led to my resignation from a department which otherwise offered so much in the way of artistic and intellectual satisfaction.

Ever since I left AIR, I have been struggling to give shape to this piece of writing; and but for this effort the years I spent there would have been a regrettable waste. The completion of this book has been for me a kind of catharsis.

I must make it clear at the outset that I consider my analysis and treatment of Indian broadcasting as only the first words on the subject. The book makes no claim to have established any eternal varieties about broadcasting, in India. If some people are encouraged or enraged, by this book, to put their thoughts on record I shall have done my bit to stimulate thinking on a sorely neglected subject.

It is a striking fact that even though Indian broadcasting is nearly 37 years old there is not a single book on the subject. Though the comparison may be odious, there are a number of first rate books on the B.B.C., which is not a very much older institution. In addition to the considerable body of provocative literature on broadcasting in Great Britain, there are the authoritative reports of the Commissions of Inquiry which are appointed every ten years before the renewal of the BBC's charter.

It is interesting to note that a large number of books on British Broadcasting were written by former employees of the BBC, outstanding among them being Lord Reith's fascinating autobiography *Into the Wind* and Eckerseley's *The Power Behind the Microphone*. Lord Simon's *The B.B.C. from Within*, would also fall in

this category, since he was the Chairman of the BBC's Board of Governors. These people wrote from personal knowledge of the inner working of the BBC. But they also had access to a great deal of documentary material on which they based their conclusions. There is, however, another class of books on the BBC; studies conducted by sociologists, economists and historians. The latest work in this category is a three-volume history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom by Prof. Asa Briggs. The first volume entitled *The Birth of Broadcasting* appeared recently. These publications display a very wide range and they could not have been written but for the willing cooperation which the BBC authorities extended to the authors.

On the other hand, we in India have not lived up to our responsibilities to the nation. It is a pity that none of the former Directors General of All India Radio thought it worth his while to write about broadcasting and its significance to the millions of the subcontinent. Moreover, when someone undertook to redeem the situation no cooperation was available. When I sought permission for the use of AIR's library—the possibility of having access to official records was unthinkable—I received a characteristically worded bureaucratic reply: *the library was not meant for use by outsiders*. What colossal ignorance of the functions of a public institution like ALL INDIA RADIO! My thoughts naturally turned to Asa Briggs and the BBC; to the BBC giving him access to all documents; to Lord Reith placing at Brigg's disposal his personal diaries; no guarantees asked for and none expected. If the AIR authorities had lent me the least bit of cooperation, I might have provided greater documentation under some of the chapters. Nevertheless I have endeavoured to collect on my own as many authentic facts and figures as I possibly could. Incidentally although the AIR authorities refused the use of their library, the BBC displayed the highest courtesy by airmailing at their cost books and photostat copies of material I had asked for, through their representative in Delhi—Mr. C. P. Albany. What a contrast in the approach and thinking of the two broadcasting organisations!

In brief this book is a critical narrative of the development of AIR, its programmes, its policies, its ambitions and its failures since 1946. I have thought it better to refer frequently by name to those who have been responsible for the enunciation of AIR's poli-

cies and their execution because I am convinced that this method of enquiry is the right one, even if it gives the appearance of personal bias. As Asa Briggs says, "Broadcasting cannot be dealt with anonymously! Whatever may be true of the history of government departments, the history of the BBC, by the very nature of the tasks with which the BBC is concerned, is a history not only of an organisation but of individuals".

It remains for me to thank Mr. B. N. Bhaskar, Managing Director, Ishwar Industries Ltd, New Delhi for a number of facilities which made this work possible in the scheduled time.

G. C. AWASTHY

P.O. Ishwarnagar
New Delhi

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CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OF BROADCASTING IN INDIA

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

When the Second World War broke out, broadcasting was in its teens. In the absence of peaceful conditions, one thought, it might want still more time to grow and develop. But, surprisingly enough, the tragedy of war itself demonstrated beyond any shadow of doubt the immense possibilities of broadcasting as an important medium of mass contact. For speed in communication, for imparting to millions scattered over the globe a sense of participation, for keeping alive a glimmer of hope in the hearts of underground patriots, radio proved to be the only effective means. The Second World War proved all this, and yet hardly a decade earlier, broadcasting in many parts of the world, including India, faced the danger of being snuffed out of existence.

The first radio programme in England was broadcast successfully by the Marconi Company on 23rd February, 1920, from a transmitter at Chelmsford, and a regular service came into operation in November 1922. The British Broadcasting Company was set up in 1922 as a commercial enterprise. J. C. W. Reith became its General Manager. The private company was transformed into a Public Corporation on January 1, 1927, with Reith as its first Director-General. J. C. W. Reith, a man of commanding personality and tremendous efficiency, had grasped, as it were, by sheer intuition, the significance of the new medium of wireless broadcasting. His contribution lies not only in building up an efficient, strong and independent public service in Great Britain, but also in doing his best to persuade the governments of various other countries to take broadcasting seriously.

Asa Briggs tells us that Reith wanted to establish close broadcasting links with India and had a discussion to that effect with Col. Simpson of the Marconi Company, as early as November 1923. Reith wrote in his diary on November 27, 1923, "I should

like to organise Indian broadcasting from here."[1] The attitude in India, on the other hand, can be guaged from a short paragraph entitled "Nothing doing in India" in Lord Reith's memoirs *Into the Wind*:

> A great opportunity had been lost in India. In 1924, I had tried to get the India Office to take the potentialities of broadcasting seriously; next year wrote to the Viceroy—without effect; in 1926 a commercial company was started. On its chairman and others concerned, I tried to impress the heavy public service obligations. They asked me to nominate a chief executive, but without official support or interest it was not surprising that little progress was made. Later on Lord Willingdon did his utmost to put the thing on a proper basis as will be told in due course; it was too late. If broadcasting had been taken seriously in 1924, subsequent events in India might have been very different.[2]

For our knowledge of the history and development of broadcasting during the first twelve years after its inception in 1927, we are chiefly indebted to the Report submitted on 3rd June, 1939, by Lionel Fielden, Controller of Broadcasting, to the Secretary, Department of Communications, Government of India. As this was the first report of its kind, Fielden had taken the opportunity of including a historical survey of the development of broadcasting in India.[3] But for this, some of the facts might have been lost to us for ever.

The beginning of broadcasting in India can be traced to the year 1926, when a private concern under the name of the Indian Broadcasting Company Limited, entered into an agreement with the Government of India, by which it undertook to set up two stations, at Bombay and Calcutta. The Bombay Station was inau-

[1] *The Birth of Broadcasting*, Asa Briggs; published by Oxford University Press, London (1961), p. 323.

[2] *Into the Wind* by J. C. W. Reith, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London (1949), p. 113.

[3] *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India* (upto March 31, 1939) published by the Manager of Publications, Delhi.

gurated on 23rd July, 1927, and the Calcutta Station on 26th August the same year, with 1.5 Kw medium-wave transmitters. The programmes could be heard only within a radius of thirty miles of the two stations. There were at that time a little under 1,000 radio licences in force. July 23, 1927, can, therefore, be taken as the beginning of regular broadcasting in India.

Strictly speaking, broadcasting in India had started much before 1927 and was conducted by amateur radio clubs. The first of such clubs was the Madras Presidency Radio Club which was formed on May 16, 1924, and started a broadcasting service two and a half months later on July 31. Financial difficulties forced the club to close down in October, 1927. The Corporation of Madras to whom the club bequeathed the transmitter proved enterprising. It started a regular service from 1st April, 1930, putting out music daily for two hours from 5-30 P.M. to 7-30 P.M., one Monday in a month being exclusively reserved for western music. Stories and lessons in music were broadcast for school students from 4 P.M. to 4-30 P.M. on week days. On Sundays and holidays, gramophone records were played from 10 to 11 A.M. Quite a laudable attempt, by any standards, on the part of non-professionals! This service continued till June 16, 1938, when the Madras Station of All India Radio came up with a 10 Kw short-wave transmitter and a 0.25 Kw medium-wave transmitter.

Amateur clubs continued their activities even after 'regular' broadcasting started. This was permitted presumably because, in the initial years, broadcasting was still in an experimental stage and the coverage of the few existing transmitters left vast areas in the country unserved. In fact, the authority charged with the responsibility of developing regular broadcasting in the country was not hostile to the amateur clubs in areas it was not in a position to serve with its own stations.

One such club set up by the "Young Men's Christian Association" began broadcasting in Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1928. The Punjab Text Book Committee gave this station an annual grant of Rs. 1,500 to meet running expenses, the balance coming from the Punjab Government. This amateur activity continued in Lahore till 1st September, 1937. All India Radio inaugurated its 5 Kw medium-wave station in Lahore on December 16, 1937. In Peshawar (now in Pakistan) also broadcasting had started in

1935 with the help of the Marconi Company who offered the Government of the North West Frontier Province the loan of a transmitter and a few community sets on the condition that if the experiment proved successful the Government would purchase the entire equipment. The Government of N.W.F.P. handed over the station to the Government of India on 1st April, 1937. Allahabad could also boast of an experimental service in the thirties. The Principal of the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad, obtained a licence in 1935 and the Institute put out programmes daily for one hour. These broadcasts continued till February 1, 1949, when the Allahabad station of All India Radio was commissioned. An amateur station at Dehra Dun came into existence through the enterprising spirit of the Superintendent of the Doon and the public which raised money by voluntary subscriptions. The broadcasts started on 6th April, 1936, but had to be abandoned on 10th May, 1938, due to paucity of funds.

The importance of amateur clubs in the history of broadcasting in India lies in the fact that they served as precursors of regular radio stations at a time when the Government, for a variety of reasons, was unable to make up its mind whether or not to take to broadcasting as a regular public utility service. The financial position of these clubs was, however, never happy and only the setting up of radio stations on a regular basis saved them from further financial drain. It may also be mentioned that some individuals had taken out licences to work their own amateur receiving centres and transmitters in those early days.

Simultaneously, some kind of activity was also noticeable in a few princely States of India. The Mysore State set up a broadcasting station on September 10, 1935, which was styled as *Akashvani*. This name was subsequently taken over by the entire network of broadcasting in India and has replaced "All India Radio" except in broadcasts in English and the External Services. His Highness the Gaekward of Baroda laid the foundation of the Baroda Broadcasting Station in 1939. At that time two stations were under construction at Hyderabad and Aurangabad under the control of the Government of His Exalted Highness the Nizam. Also, in the same year, the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, decided to set up a 5 Kw medium-wave transmitter at Trivandrum. At the time of India's independence

in 1947, five radio stations located within the princely Indian States at Mysore, Baroda, Trivandrum, Hyderabad and Aurangabad were in operation. The Hyderabad and Aurangabad Stations of the Nizam became a nuisance to the people and the Government of India when the British Government relinquished power in August 1947, and just before the final merger of the State of Hyderabad with the Union of India. After the Police Action the two stations came under the administrative control of the Government of India.

Let us come back to the history of regular broadcasting in India. The Indian Broadcasting Company, formed in 1926 started with a paid-up capital of only Rs. 6,00,000 out of which it spent Rs. 4,25,000 on the installation of two stations at Bombay and Calcutta. No wonder the company soon fell on evil days. Its monthly expenditure was about Rs. 33,000. Its income consisted of 80 per cent of the ten rupee licence fee charged by the Government from radio owners and 10 per cent of the invoiced value of imports of wireless receiving apparatus. It was clear from the licence figures which stood at 7,719 at the end of the year 1930 that the company would not be able to meet its expenses. For some time, it made frantic efforts to survive. It reduced its recurring monthly expenditure and mortgaged its assets to take a loan from the Indian Radio Telegraph Company. It also applied for a grant from the Government of India which was turned down. The result was that the Company went into liquidation on 1st March, 1930. The prospect for broadcasting was dismal indeed.

The reasons why the Company failed are not far to seek. It was set up with inadequate finances. In fact, radio licences decreased from 7,775 in 1929 to 7,719 in 1930. An average radio set was costly and collection of licence fees by no means easy. Another reason given in Lionel Fielden's Report is reproduced below:

> It may perhaps be said—although this did not apply as acutely in Bombay and Calcutta as in other parts of India—that Indian conditions and traditions were by no means as favourable to the rapid growth of broadcasting as those of the West. In the West, broadcasting was a convenient channel for an already established tradition of concerts, theatres, lectures and

news; whereas in India, public interest in all these activities was apathetic and severely limited.

The above observations are not entirely correct. In fact, it is misleading to say that Indian conditions or traditions were not favourable to the rapid growth of broadcasting in the country. India was never lacking in the traditions of dance, drama, music, fairs, festivals and village gatherings. But one wonders if these traditions were ever appropriately exploited by the Indian Broadcasting Company. A plausible explanation for the failure is that the Company lacked financial and manpower resources to exploit the conditions favourable to its growth.

In any case the Indian Broadcasting Company had gone into liquidation on 1st March, 1930. For one month the Liquidator ran the show. Due to strong pressure from the public, political parties and the trade, the Government decided to run broadcasting for some time as an experimental measure. The service was put under the control of the Department of Industries and Labour with effect from 1st April, 1930, and it was designated the Indian State Broadcasting Service. At this time the country was passing through a state of financial stringency and after a time the Government felt it was unable to cope with the responsibility of running a service like broadcasting. It, therefore, declared its decision to close down the service. A press communique to that effect was issued on 9th October, 1931. This was the second time in five years that broadcasting in India faced extinction.

BROADCASTING COMES TO STAY

The decision of the Government of India to close down the service caused widespread agitation. Persons in the trade were hard hit. The Government once again bowed to the pressure of public opinion and decided to carry on the service for some more years. To augment its income, the Government increased by 50 per cent the import duty on wireless valves, gramophone valves, bulbs and radio sets.

There was a turn of the tide in 1932. The expenditure on broadcasting was reduced and the income from customs doubled. Government earned profits in 1933 and 1934. The reason was

that in December 1932, the British Broadcasting Corporation started an Empire Service which gave a great fillip to the sale of radio sets among Europeans in India. The number of radio sets in operation went up to 16,000 at the end of 1934, an increase of 8,000 in two years. By 1934 the Government of India had come to the conclusion that it could undertake extension and development plans for broadcasting. P. G. Edmunds was appointed the first Controller of Broadcasting in 1934. It was decided to set up a Station at Delhi. The Government also made up its mind to request the B.B.C. to loan the services of an experienced official, which led to far reaching consequences. In the South the Government of Madras had secured early in 1934 the services of Mr. Bulow for preparing a plan for the development of broadcasting in the State. In the extreme north, in the North West Frontier Province, the Marconi Company had loaned a transmitter and some community sets to promote rural broadcasting.

Other important things were happening. Reith's *Into the Wind* gives the inside story of these happenings. Reith had talked to Lord Willingdon about broadcasting in India and subsequently put his views down in a memorandum. The utter disinterest in broadcasting at the highest level in the Government of India was clear in Lord Willingdon's confession narrated in Reith's memoirs: "He admitted that he had not taken much interest in broadcasting, it had never ever been mentioned so far as he could remember, in the Executive Council." Reith made an immediate impact on Lord Willingdon and the latter while addressing the Legislature in August, 1934, "had a good deal to say about the possibilities of broadcasting." Reith also tried to persuade the India Office and addressed a meeting convened by the Secretary of State. But there was another sinister move afoot. Political pressure was being exerted on the Department of Labour and Industries to make broadcasting a provincial subject. Reith did a signal service to Indian broadcasting by fighting against this move:

> I urged that, since broadcasting was quite new, it might surely in the new statute be reserved for the Central Government or even for the Viceroy. Eventually they thought this might be possible. In the following March the Secretary of State moved an amendment to the India Bill to have broadcasting reserved

for control at the centre; the decision, he said, had been made after consultation with the Government of India, the provincial Governments and the B.B.C. Though the provinces were to have considerable latitude in programmes, broadcasting was to be a federal subject; policy would be controlled from the centre, with the Viceroy holding the balance.

On September 7, 1934, Lord Willingdon wrote to Reith for the services of an expert on a five-year contract detailing the difficulties under which he would have to work and adding "I hope you can let us have your nearest approach to such a superman." But the Indian High Commissioner thought differently. As Reith tells us, "it was not a superman they wanted; only someone to run the new station at Delhi and to supervise the existing ones at Bombay and Calcutta."[4] It was too much to expect the Government of India or the Indian High Commissioner to think of a superman: they were quite pre-occupied with red tape!

In August 1935, Lionel Fielden of the B.B.C. arrived in India to take up his none-too-easy assignment as Controller of Broadcasting. His appointment marks the beginning of the co-ordinated development of broadcasting in India and several of the present day traditions can be traced to the genius of Fielden. For drawing up a detailed development plan Fielden felt the necessity of technical advice and in January 1936, succeeded in procuring from the B.B.C. the *ex-gratia* services of H. L. Kirke, the Head of the Research Department of the B.B.C. Kirke toured various parts of the country and drew up a plan in which the emphasis was on the setting up of medium-wave transmitters. Kirke returned to England after five months, and was followed by C. W. Goyder of the B.B.C. who came in August, 1936, as Chief Engineer. Goyder "did not fully agree with the scheme proposed by Mr. Kirke and was of the opinion that if medium-wave transmitters only were used, it would not be possible to cover more than a small percentage of the total area of India with the funds available." It was, therefore, he thought, "essential first to provide a basic short-wave service in order to give at least a second grade service to the whole of India and then to supplement this service

[4] *Into the Wind*, by J. C. W. Reith, published by Hodder & Stoughton. London (1949) pp. 205-207.

with a first grade medium-wave service at important centres, any future funds which might become available being devoted to the extension of this medium-wave service area."[5]

The development that followed was on the lines of Goyder. Delhi Station went on the air on New Year's Day 1936. The same year, on June 8, the Indian State Broadcasting Service was re-designated "All India Radio". The Peshawar Station was taken over from the Provincial Government in April, 1937, and towards the end of the year, the Lahore Station was inaugurated. During the year 1938, two stations were started, Lucknow and Madras, followed by two more in 1939, at Trichinopoly[6] and Dacca, making a total of nine. The service range of Delhi, Bombay and, Calcutta Stations was increased by installing short-wave transmitters. This was the pace of development till the dawn of Independence in 1947.

During the years 1936 and 1939, the Installation and Research Departments were created; programme quality was steadily improved; broadcasts directed to special audiences in rural areas, schools and colleges were introduced; advisory committees were set up; and the beginnings of News and External Services were made. The utility of the medium began to be recognised, and was reflected in the rise in the number of radio sets from 38,000 to 74,000. During the Second World War expansion of broadcasting was at a stand still, in so far as the opening of new stations and improvements of studio facilities were concerned. But the outbreak of the war highlighted the importance of radio as a powerful weapon for the dissemination of news and information and as the only effective medium for propaganda beyond the national frontiers. The news services and external broadcasts were expanded considerably and established on an organised footing.

As already stated the Indian State Broadcasting Service was re-designated "All India Radio" on June 8, 1936. The credit for this name goes to Lionel Fielden. In his autobiography, *The Natural Bent*, he refers to this "apparently simple" change. The Secretariat was opposed to any such proposal. Lionel Fielden decided to get the approval and blessing of the then Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, without which he was shrewd enough to realise, he

[5] "Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India" (1940) p. 13.
[6] Now called Tiruchirapalli.

would not succeed. Here is the story in Lionel Fielden's own words:

> I cornered Lord Linlithgow after a Viceregal banquet, and said plaintively that I was in a great difficulty and needed his advice. (He usually responded well to such an opening). I said I was sure that he agreed with me that ISBS was a clumsy title. After a slight pause, he nodded his long head wisely. Yes, it was rather a mouthful. I said that perhaps it was a pity to use the word broadcasting at all, since all Indians had to say 'broadcasting'—broad was for them an unpronounceable word. But I could not, I said, think of another title; could he help me? 'Indian State', I said was a term which, as he well knew, hardly fitted into the 1935 Act. It should be something general. He rose beautifully to the bait. 'All India'? I expressed my astonishment and admiration. The very thing. But surely not 'Broadcasting'? After some thought he suggested 'Radio'? Splendid, I said—and what beautiful initials' The Viceroy concluded that he had invented it, and there was no more trouble. His pet name must be adopted. Thus All India Radio was born.[7]

POST INDEPENDENCE AND PRE-PLAN PERIOD

Development since 1947 falls into four distinct periods:

(*a*) Post-Independence and Pre-Plan Period (August, 1947, to 31st March, 1951).[8]
(*b*) The First Five Year Plan (1st April, 1951 to 31st March, 1956).
(*c*) The Second Five Year Plan (1st April, 1956 to 31st March, 1961).
(*d*) The Third Five Year Plan (1st April, 1961 to 31st March, 1966).

In 1947, there were in all 14 Radio Stations: 9 controlled by

[7] *The Natural Bent,* Lionel Fielden (1960) published by Andre Deutsch Limited (London) p. 193.

[8] The development in this period has been discussed in the author's article "Gaps in A.I.R. Home Service" which appeared in the Radio Times of India, April 1951.

A.I.R. and 5 by princely States. A.I.R. had a well organised news service, extensive service for external broadcasts, Installation and Research Departments and an effective system of inter-station liaison for the relay of programmes and exchange of recordings. On account of the partition of the country 3 Stations (Lahore, Peshawar and Dacca) fell into the territorial jurisdiction of Pakistan. The stations within India were:

All India Radio:	Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Lucknow and Tiruchirapalli.
Radios in Princely States:	Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Aurangabad and Trivandrum.

In fact a plan, called the BASIC PLAN, for expansion of broadcasting in India had been formulated as early as the close of 1944. Certain administrative details, reorganisation of certain offices and the importance of providing external broadcasts necessitated modification of the plan in 1945. Besides zonal programmes from Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and extensive urban and rural services for the whole of the country, the plan envisaged urban programmes in 19 major languages and rural programmes in 125 languages and dialects. New factors cropped up leading to revision of the plan in 1947.

The Government of India in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, under the able stewardship of the Late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel embarked upon the scheme of setting up of stations in the country. It was proposed first, to set up 'pilot' stations to serve the needs of the various linguistic zones, and then, to instal high-power transmitters at the regional and zonal stations.

The conditions created in the Punjab due to the division of the country necessitated the immediate opening of a radio station at Jullundur which eventually came up on November 1, 1947. Towards the end of the same year a critical situation arose in Kashmir when the State was attacked from across the Pakistan frontiers. A radio station was set up by the State in Jammu on 1st December, 1947. Later, on 1st July, 1948, a short-wave radio station started functioning at Srinagar. The year 1948 was

marked by considerable extension of broadcasting facilities in various cultural zones of the country. Stations came up in quick succession:

PATNA	— 26th January
CUTTACK	— 28th January
AMRITSAR	— 16th February
SHILLONG	— 1st July
GAUHATI	— 1st July
NAGPUR	— 16th July
VIJAYAWADA	— 1st December
BARODA	— Passed into the hands of A.I.R. on 16th December.

Amritsar had a small transmitter with a studio linked with the Jullundur station to improve its reception in border areas. Shillong and Gauhati functioned as one station from the very inception: programmes put out by one were relayed by the other and *vice versa*. This enabled the programmes to be heard in a much wider area than would have been otherwise possible.

It was in 1948 that the Portuguese set up a radio station at Panjim in Goa. Strictly speaking, in terms of international law, it was a foreign station administered by a foreign government. Obviously the Portuguese had installed it for the purpose of propaganda. After India's independence from the British rule, the position of the Portuguese Government was extremely uneasy. However, people in India always regarded this station on the Indian soil as their own. It commanded listening in and around Maharashtra, mostly on account of two reasons—Goans outside Goa listened to it and the general listener turned to it for film music which was put out on a very liberal scale.

Allahabad started broadcasting on 1st February, 1949, followed by Ahmedabad on 16th April. In 1950, Dharwar and Kozhikode stations came on the air on 8th January and 14th May respectively. The four radio stations belonging to the princely States —Hyderabad, Aurangabad, Mysore and Trivandrum, were taken over by A.I.R. on 1st April, 1950.

The first phase of development, that is the setting up of 'pilot' stations was completed by 1950 and A.I.R. had made consider-

able progress. From 6 (excluding 5 stations in princely states) in 1947 to 21 stations in 1950 was no mean achievement. In fact the first phase of opening 'pilot' stations was accomplished in less than the period contemplated. By 1950, A.I.R.'s Home Service could cater to listeners in all regional languages. But the target of transmitting urban and rural broadcasts in 125 languages and dialects was still far off. Some of the cultural zones were still not being served by A.I.R. Moreover, rapid administrative changes were taking place and the country's map was in the process of being redrawn. Therefore requirements of the new areas were to be constantly kept in view. For example, Rajasthan, Saurashtra (now a part of Gujarat) Madhya Bharat (since merged with Madhya Pradesh) and Himachal Pradesh were still without their own radio stations. Similarly an important cultural region like Maharashtra was crying out for a station at Poona, and so were Manipur, Tripura and Mahakaushal. A radio station for Andaman and Nicobar islands was too early to be thought of by the Broadcasting Ministry in 1950.

THE FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN

The First Five Year Plan of the country covers the period from 1st April, 1951 to 31st March, 1956. Dr. B. V. Keskar became the Minister for Information and Broadcasting in 1952 and remained at the helm of affairs for ten years. He had an effective hand in shaping the policies during the period of the first two Five Year Plans and in formulating the schemes for the Third Plan.

When the Planning Commission issued the People's Edition of the First Five Year Plan in January 1953, broadcasting was nowhere mentioned in it. One had to refer to the appendix giving statistical tables under the head "Transport and Communications" to find out that Rs. 3.52 crores had been provided for the development of broadcasting in the country. Obviously broadcasting did not enjoy the importance it urgently deserved.

A plan of development was, however, drawn up for the installation of high power transmitters at some of the existing stations in order to extend coverage and to provide additional listening facilities; for the opening of new stations to increase the existing

service range of AIR's net-work; for providing the stations with studios of their own in place of rented premises; for improvement in the quality of the programmes and the 'rationalisation' of stations so as to get the best out of the limited resources. The plan originally estimated to cost Rs. 3.52 crores, was later raised to Rs. 4 crores in view of the need to set up additional stations in areas hitherto unserved.

Under this plan the work of installing 50 kW medium-wave transmitters was completed at Calcutta (8th Jan. 1951), Bombay (20th March, 1951), Ahmedabad (6th June, 1954), Jullundur (29th August, 1954) and Lucknow (13th April, 1955). The strength of many other stations was increased by replacing weaker transmitters with more powerful ones. A 10 kW medium-wave transmitter came on the air on 12th February, 1953 at Nagpur. Gauhati received a 10 kW medium-wave transmitter on 10th May, 1953.

New stations were also opened in various other cultural regions of the country. The Poona station came on the air on 2nd October, 1953 with a 1 kW medium-wave transmitter, which was replaced with a 5 kW transmitter on 13th March, 1955. However, when the Poona station came up, the one at Aurangabad was closed down. The Srinagar and Jammu Stations were integrated with All India Radio on April 13 and December 16, 1954 respectively. Broadcasting travelled to Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat and Himachal Pradesh in 1955 when radio stations were opened in Rajkot (4th January), Jaipur (9th April), Indore (22nd May) and Simla (16th June). The Bangalore station went on the air with a 50 kW medium-wave transmitter on 2nd November, 1955. Jaipur was linked with Ajmer on 11th December, 1955, when a new 20 kW medium-wave transmitter went on the air.

This was the position in March 1956 when the First Five Year Plan ended. On the completion of the First Plan, A.I.R. was in a position to serve one-third of the area in the country and about half its population, though not always with a first rate service. The area covered was about six lakh square miles, and the population which received a fair service was about twenty two crores. It is thus apparent that even after the completion of the plan, India had a long way to go.

Though the First Five Year Plan saw many significant developments the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Dr. B. V. Keskar was personally responsible for certain decisions of dubious merit. The Shillong station which had done excellent work in scouting talent among the tribes of Assam, particularly among the Khasi and Jaintia tribes, was closed down soon after the installation of a 10 kW medium-wave transmitter at Gauhati. Only the studios were retained at Shillong connected by telephone lines with Gauhati. When the Ahmedabad station came up, that at Baroda was closed down and only the studios were retained. With the installation of the high power transmitter at Jullundur in 1954, the Amritsar station and studios were both shut down. On 2nd November, 1955, when the Bangalore Station was inaugurated with a 50 Kilowatt medium-wave transmitter, the Mysore station ceased functioning. There was considerable agitation among the local people for the closing down of these stations was resented by the listeners, as much as by the general public, the press and the State Governments. But the Minister for Information and Broadcasting ignored popular sentiment. For example, the Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Bishnuram Medhi, was entirely hostile to the idea of closing down the Shillong station. In fact, Mr. Medhi's speech, which was scheduled to be delivered at the inauguration of the 10 Kilowatt medium-wave transmitter at Gauhati contained a clear reference to the need for the Shillong station. The speech was printed in advance by the Director of Information and Publicity, Government of Assam. The relevant extract is given below:

> I am glad to learn that the Tribal Programmes broadcast from the Shillong Centre have been well received so far by the tribal people and the people of the plains areas where the reception is good. I trust, the Shillong station will continue to conduct these programmes more effectively and will try to increase the power of the transmitter in due course, so that the tribal arts and culture as reflected in their distinctive music and talks etc., which have been so popular may be heard in the rest of Assam and thus help the people of the hills to have full scope in contributing their share towards the evolution of an integrated Assamese Culture and make it rich in variety suited to the

genius of the people inhabiting the Hills and Plains.

However, Dr. Keskar persuaded the Chief Minister of Assam to drop the above reference as he had made up his mind to close the Shillong station. The Chief Minister agreed with considerable reluctance and white slips were hurriedly pasted over the above quoted extract before circulation to the guests present at the inaugural function.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting failed to realise the needs of Assam, or, for that matter, the needs of various other areas and refused to profit by sound advice. Some of the stations which Dr. Keskar had closed down are scheduled to start functioning again under the Third Five Year Plan. It is a pity that programme organisers will have to start all over again.

THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN

Outlining the development programme of broadcasting in the country during the Second Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission observed:

> The expansion which had taken place during the First Plan ensures that each language has been provided with at least one transmitting station and that fairly effective coverage is available to almost all the regions. The aim during the Second Plan is to extend the services now available for all the languages to as wide an area as it is at present possible to reach. For areas in which terrain conditions are difficult short-wave transmitters are to be established. To meet the growing demands of national programmes and for ensuring countrywide listening of national broadcasts, a 100 kW short-wave transmitter as well as a 100 kW medium-wave transmitter will be set up at Delhi and 50 kW medium-wave transmitters will be provided at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. External Services will also be expanded.[9]

The Second Five Year Plan helped to bring broadcasting nearer to the people by increasing the strength of the existing weak trans-

[9] *Second Five Year Plan—A draft Outline*, published by the Planning Commission, Government of India (1956) p. 149.

mitters. Consequent upon the reorganisation of the states, a radio station was opened on 31st October, 1956 at Bhopal which became the capital of the new State of Madhya Pradesh.

Four 20 kilowatt medium-wave transmitters were set up in 1959. Two replaced the old transmitters at Patna (2nd December) and Vijayawada (9th December). The one installed at Delhi on 1st June, 1956, provided greater coverage for the programmes on the second channel from Delhi and the other at Trichur (4th Dec., 1956) extended the coverage of Trivandrum and Kozhikode stations.

On 22nd March, 1957, a 100 kilowatt short-wave transmitter went into operation at Bombay followed by another at Madras. In addition to external broadcasts these transmitters are employed to put out "Vividh Bharati," AIR's light programme service for listeners throughout the country. Other additions in 1957 are listed below:

Chandigarh	(Auxiliary Studio)	9th April
Gauhati	(10 kW medium-wave)	3rd May
Ranchi	(Short-wave)	27th July

The transmitters at Gauhati and Ranchi are utilised largely for programmes addressed to the tribal people in these areas. Gauhati puts out programmes directed to 29 tribes. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands had had to wait 12 years after independence for a service specially designed for them which eventually materialised on 15th August, 1959.

September 15, 1959, will remain a very important date in the history of broadcasting because on that day an experimental Television Service was inaugurated in Delhi by the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. 1960 saw the installation of a 100 kilowatt medium-wave transmitter at Delhi. "Urdu Majlis" was started on 22nd February, 1960. This is a programme in Urdu which can be heard anywhere in the country.

We are almost at the end of the tale. The record of development is laudable inasmuch as it is marked by consistent endeavour to reach the listener in every part of the country. A.I.R. by this

time had a network of 28 transmitting stations and 3 centres equipped with studios only. The zonal distribution is as follows:

North Zone:	Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad, Patna, Ranchi, Jullundur, Jaipur, Simla, Indore, Bhopal, Jammu & Srinagar (still styled on the air as Radio Kashmir), Chandigarh (studio only).
West Zone:	Bombay, Nagpur, Poona, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Baroda (studio only).
South Zone:	Madras, Tiruchi, Trivandrum, Kozhikode, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Bangalore, Dharwar.
East Zone:	Calcutta, Cuttack, Gauhati, Shillong (studio only).

We may bring this section to a close with a reference to the taking over of the Goa Radio. As stated earlier, the Portuguese had put it up in 1948. The extremely difficult conditions of law and order forced the Government of India to move into Goa. After centuries of foreign rule Goa, Daman and Diu rejoined the motherland. In the wake of this upheaval the Goa Radio stopped functioning on the 18th Dec., 1961, at eight in the morning. After a gap of twenty three days, the Goa Radio restarted broadcasting under All India Radio on the 9th Jan., 1962[10] The power of its transmitter is 5 kilowatt and with its incorporation in the network of A.I.R., the total number of transmitters for Home Services increased to 61.

THE THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN

A two kilowatt short-wave radio station at Kurseong went on the air on 2nd June, 1962. Kurseong symbolised the coming into ac-

[10] This information was received from the Assistant Station Director, Goa Radio (*vide* his letter No. Goa 9(2)/62-PII/5990 dated 7th January, 1962).

tion of the Third Five Year Plan for broadcasting.[11] The Planning Commission has stated that "with a view to making the internal coverage more effective provision is being made in the Third Five Year Plan to expand the medium-wave broadcast service and to strengthen the arrangements for pre-recording of programmes. The Third Plan also includes provision for further improvement of the external broadcast services".[12]

The details were disclosed for the first time in 1960 by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Dr. B. V. Keskar, at a press conference. The Third Plan of A.I.R. had been designed to double the number of transmitters in operation: no less than fifty-seven being added to sixty,[13] the number at the time of the formulation of the plan.[14] Arrangements had been made with Japanese manufacturers for the supply of the transmitters and the purchases were to be effected through the Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore. The total cost was likely to be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 3.39 crores. The foreign exchange required for the purchase of these transmitters and other equipment was to be made available through Credit Agreements entered into with various countries.

All these transmitters were meant to carry Home Service programmes nearer to listener's. Only two of these transmitters were short-wave, 2 kilowatt at Kurseong and 20 kilowatt at Trivandrum. These short-wave transmitters were being provided since the topographical peculiarities of the two areas are not conducive to medium-wave listening. Of the fifty-five medium-wave transmitters, twenty-three of one kilowatt each were to carry Vividh Bharati programmes. The remaining 34 transmitters, ranging from 100 kilowatt to 1 kilowatt were meant for further expanding the Home Services. Dr. B. V. Keskar, in announcing these developments observed that "these are not to be new *radio stations* but

[11] Some of the material appearing in this Section is taken from the author's article entitled "Broadcasting in the Third Five Year Plan" in the *Radio Times of India* September, 1962.

[12] THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN A draft outline; published by Planning Commission, Government of India (1960) p. 253.

[13] Goa joined the network on 9th January, 1962, making the total strength of transmitters 61.

[14] Actual addition proposed was of 51 transmitters as 6 transmitters were meant for replacing the existing ones of lesser strength.

rebroadcast and relay transmitters. In other words, except at Imphal, Port Blair and Kurseong (Darjeeling/Sikkim area), no new studios for originating programmes are being constructed. These transmitters will only relay or broadcast previously recorded programmes from the principal stations. They will be in the nature of satellite transmitters attached to the principal station in the particular region".

Dr. Keskar explained the object of the Plan—the Medium-Wave Plan as it is called—as follows:

(*a*) To enable those areas and population groups to have programmes on medium-wave channels, which are not at present within listening range of medium-wave programmes;

(*b*) To encourage the production and use of low-cost radio sets, a single band medium-wave set being cheaper to produce than an all-wave set;

(*c*) To provide an alternative light programme on medium-wave (Vividh Bharati); and,

(*d*) To cover any other areas at present not satisfactorily served by A.I.R.

With reference to these objectives Dr. B. V. Keskar provided some useful information in his Press Conference, which may be summarised below:

(*i*) The present medium-wave transmitters cover only 37 per cent of the total area and 55 per cent of the total population of the country. With the installation of these medium-wave transmitters the total area effectively covered would increase to 61 per cent and the population which would be able to listen to medium-wave programmes would increase to 74 per cent.

(*ii*) Vividh Bharati light programmes are mostly available on short-wave and hence an average purchaser of a radio set is left with no option except to buy all-wave set. Under the Third Plan, Vividh Bharati programmes would be available on medium-wave from the existing 28 stations and from few other urban centres where transmitters would be set up. This would lead to the encouragement of low-cost single band medium-wave radio sets.

(*iii*) With the relay of the Vividh Bharati programmes on these transmitters, listeners throughout the length and breadth of the country who are hitherto catered only by the stations of their regions, will have in a larger measure an alternate light programme service.

The breakdown of the new transmitters as planned is given below:

(*a*) *New Stations.*

Transmitters with arrangements for originating independent programmes were to be installed at Kurseong (2 kW short-wave); Port Blair (1 kW medium-wave) and Imphal (1 kW medium-wave).

(*b*) *New Transmitters for extension of coverage of existing primary medium-wave service.* These were planned to be set up as indicated below:

(*i*) *One transmitter of* 100 *kW.*
Delhi.

(*ii*) *Two transmitters of* 50 *kW.*
Jabalpore and Ajmer (replacing existing 20 kW).

(*iii*) *Thirteen transmitters of* 20 *kW.*
Cuddapah, Jorhat, Raipur, Sangli, Prabhani, Gulbarga, Bhadravathi, Sambalpur, Jeypore and Siliguri, Hyderabad (replacing existing 5 kW); Rajkot (replacing existing 1 kW) and Poona (replacing existing 5 kW).

(*iv*) *Eight transmitters of* 10 *kW.*
Visakhapatnam, Bhagalpur, Bikaner, Agartala, Varanasi, Rampur, Kozkhikode (replacing existing 1 kW) and Dharwar (replacing existing 1 kW).

(*v*) *Four transmitters of* 5 *kW.*
Ranchi, Gwalior, Tirunelveli and Udaipur.

(*vi*) *Two transmitters of* 1 *kW.*
Shillong and Bhopal.

(*c*) *One short-wave transmitter.*
Trivandrum (20 kW).

(In fact the plan envisaged only two short-wave transmitters). 2 kW short-wave transmitter at Kurseong has already

been mentioned at (*a*) among new stations.

(*d*) *Twenty three transmitters for relay of Vividh Bharati (AIR's Light Programmes).*

All these transmitters would be of one kW medium-wave and would be set up at: Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Gauhati, Patna, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Rajkot, Baroda, Trivandrum, Coimbatore, Kozhikode, Indore, Bhopal, Poona, Nagpur, Dharwar, Cuttack, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Ajmer and Allahabad.

An examination of this scheme raises certain queries in one's mind. There is for instance the question of the location of these thirty-two relay or satellite centres. At his press conference, Dr. Keskar had stated that "the location of the transmitters has been determined purely on technical considerations which include the extent of coverage, terrain, topography, frequency and power allocation and other technical facilities. Location is also governed by registration of location with I.T.U. at Geneva."

This seems to be a case of taking shelter behind technicality which the man in the street is not expected to question or perhaps not expected to understand. Let us take the case of Uttar Pradesh. The 100 kW transmitter shown against Delhi is actually to be located at Agra. Thus in this state the details of the number of transmitters work out as: Agra 100 kW; Varanasi 10 kW.; Rampur 10 kW., in addition to existing transmitters at Lucknow 50 kW. medium-wave and 10 kW short-wave; Allahabad 1 kW medium-wave, making a total of 5 medium-wave transmitters (including one 100 kW) and one short-wave. On the other hand, the Punjab had been completely left out of the plan in so far as satellite stations are concerned. The people of this area were to be served by only one 50 kW transmitter, the existing transmitter at Jullundur. The licence figures of the Punjab are almost at par with those of U.P. Orissa, which has only about 20 thousand licence holders (the lowest of any state in India) is to have two satellite centres at Sambalpur and Jeypore each with transmitters of 20 kW strength. Maharashtra is to have two satellites at Sangli and Prabhani, the present 5 kW trans-

mitter at Poona being replaced by one of 20 kW. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are two other states where facilities will be enhanced by the establishment of 3 satellite centres each.

In short, the principle on which the location of satellite centres has been based is far from rational.

Dr. Keskar emphasised that these new centres are not full-fledged radio stations and that they are intended either to relay programmes from the principal station of the region or to broadcast programmes previously recorded at the principal stations. The scheme perhaps is that news and topical programmes will be relayed from the principal stations. Other programmes will be recorded in advance and the recordings will be put out from the satellite stations. The idea of satellite centres where no programmes will be originated appears to be pointless. Let us take the example of Raipur in Madhya Pradesh in the Bastar region where a 20 kW transmitter is to be set up. The principal station, Bhopal, is 600 miles distant. If Raipur is not used to originate programmes for the *Adivasis* of Bastar or to reflect their talent, the purpose of locating a 20 kW transmitter at Raipur is largely without meaning. Another example is provided by the satellite station at Agartala to be attached to Calcutta. At present Calcutta broadcasts a daily fifteen minute programme in Tripuri. Virtually the only line of communication with Agartala is the air link which becomes hazardous in the monsoon period. Tripuri talent that is available in Calcutta is infinitesimal. Inevitably the Tripuri programmes from Calcutta, based on old and noisy items, is a service only in name. Is the Agartala station intended merely to relay this 15 minutes programme from Calcutta? A third example is found in the case of Jeypore in the heart of Dandakaranya. A major problem faced by the Government of India and West Bengal has been to persuade the East Bengal refugees to rehabilitate themselves in this region. But according to A.I.R.'s scheme Jeypore will only relay or rebroadcast Oriya programmes from the Cuttack station!

The policy behind the relay or rebroadcast centres may be suitable for a population that is socially and culturally homogeneous but not for a country like ours seething with diversity. Moreover, for A.I.R. to launch a scheme of this kind is a retrograde step when we consider that in the past it had prided itself on fostering

regional talent and helping people to discover the best in our own art and culture.

Even satellite stations should be endowed with a personality of their own. The opportunity arising from the setting up of these stations should be exploited to project the life and culture of the people of these backward areas, and to help the process of national integration by educating them on the responsibilities of running a democracy. Here is an opportunity which must not be thrown away. There is no justification for satellite stations to stay as mere relaying centres. They have a useful contribution of their own to make, which they can only do if certain programmes are originated by them—particularly such programmes which they alone can originate—instead of enslaving them to the principal stations from where, at present, they are required to relay all sorts of programmes.

One of the major problems which programme planners have had to face in recent years has been the drain on broadcast time with commitments expanding continuously, particularly commitments connected with governmental activities, with the result that listeners with different tastes find no time left to them. Of the existing stations, only seven are provided with two channels. The remaining stations have single channels, that is, excluding the Vividh Bharati channel. Thus when National Programmes are broadcast, there is virtually nothing else for the listener to turn to, if these do not suit his taste. Moreover, every station has to relay at least three news bulletins in the morning and evening transmissions. Finally there are the special audience programmes, especially rural programmes which monopolise an important hour in a station's transmission. What is urgently needed is alternative listening during these periods. In the present scheme of relaying stations, A.I.R. will be aggravating this problem of lack of variety instead of utilizing these centres to provide a solution.

A word also must be said about the idea of pre-recorded programmes on which the entire scheme rests. It would appear that Dr. Keskar, on a hurried tour of the Soviet Union and Europe picked up the impression that broadcasting and tape recording are synonymous. On returning from his tour, all the stations were instructed to replace "live" programmes with tape recorded programmes. The fact, however, is that in the last eight years A.I.R.

has been unable to make much headway in this direction; except in the case of Vividh Bharati which, in any case, broadcasts for approximately eleven hours a day and has recordings from all stations to feed on. Broadcasting organisations in totalitarian states might find pre-recording suitable for one type of programme, and commercial stations with their "disc jockies" may find it profitable for another. But the fact remains that tape recording is not a substitute for the 'live' broadcast.

Execution of the Plan

A.I.R. must be given credit for the efficient execution of the plan. Transmitters came up in quick succession and the installation staff had to go to all kinds of odd places (transmitters are usually set up miles away from cities and towns) at short notices. There were, however, a number of modifications which had to be effected in the plan as a result of the Chinese invasion on October 20, 1962. Implementation had to be speeded up particularly to meet the requirements of the border region.

An independent station at Kohima, the Capital of Nagaland, was set up on 4th January, 1963 though this was not originally envisaged in the plan. The Port Blair station began functioning on 2nd June, 1963 (1 kilowatt medium-wave). There was to be at first only a recording studio (set up on 25th January, 1963) at Imphal and a station was to come up only towards the end of the Third Plan. But with the dictates of emergency, a station was installed at Imphal on a priority basis on 15th August, 1963. Again, to serve a border region, 20 kW short-wave transmitter originally allocated for Trivandrum was installed at Kurseong. With a view to enlarging the service area of the Gauhati Station, the 20 kW medium-wave transmitter meant for Jorhat was installed at Gauhati. An additional 20 kW medium-wave transmitter went into operation at Srinagar. And it is precisely to meet the requirements of the border areas that a 100 kW medium-wave transmitter is proposed to be set up at Simla. This should effectively serve the entire middle sector of the Himalayan border.

A.I.R. went about actively setting up transmitters which would increase the area covered by it to a large extent. These satellite stations (now happily called auxiliary stations) mainly relay pro-

grammes emanating from the principal station of the region, though they sometimes put out pre-recorded items also. Varanasi, the first of the auxiliary stations, came into operation on 28th October, 1962.

Transmitters meant to relay the Vividh Bharati programmes have been coming up one after another, but the pace calls for acceleration if all the 23 transmitters are to be installed within the plan period, that is, before 31st March, 1966. There seems to have been some revision of places originally earmarked for the installation of transmitters for relay of the Vividh Bharati programmes. Transmitters have been set up at places like Kanpur for which no provision had been made in the original plan, as outlined earlier in the chapter.

The progress of the Third Plan in so far as it relates to the setting up of new stations and transmitters is concerned is summarised below:

(*a*) *New Stations*:

1. Kurseong (on 2.6.62 with a 2 kW Short-wave transmitter replaced by a 20 kW sw transmitter)
2. Kohima (on 4.1.63 with 1 kW mw).
3. Port Blair (on 2.6.63 with 1 kW mw).
4. Imphal (on 15.8.63 with 1 kW mw).

(*b*) *New transmitters for extension of coverage of existing primary medium-wave services*:

1. Bhopal	(1 kW Mw on 2.10.62)
2. Ranchi	(5 kW Mw on 28.10.62)
3. Varanasi	(10 kW Mw on 28.10.62)
4. Rajkot	(20 kW Mw on 28.10.62)
5. Gauhati	(20 kW Mw on 6. 2.63)
6. Bikaner	(10 kW Mw on 28. 4.63)
7. Srinagar	(20 kW Mw on 1. 5.63)
8. Sambalpur	(20 kW Mw on 26. 5.63)
9. Cuddapah	(20 kW Mw on 17. 6.63)
10. Siliguri	(20 kW Mw on 7. 7.63)
11. Visakhapatnam	(10 kW Mw on 4. 8.63)

12.	Raipur	(20 kW Mw on 2.10.63)
13.	Sangli	(20 kW Mw on 6.10.63)
14.	Tirunelveli	(5 kW Mw on 1.12.63)
15.	Gwalior	(5 kW Mw on 15. 8.64)

(*c*) *Transmitters for the relay of Vividh Bharati* (*A.I.R.'s light programmes*):

One kW medium-wave transmitters were opened at the following centres to relay the Vividh Bharati Programmes:

1.	Bangalore	(17. 8.62)
2.	Indore	(17. 8.62)
3.	Cuttack	(17. 8.62)
4.	Jaipur	(17. 8.62)
5.	Vijayawada	(17. 8.62)
6.	Calcutta	(17. 8.62)
7.	Rajkot	(28.10.62)
8.	Hyderabad	(14. 3.63)
9.	Nagpur	(31. 3.63)
10.	Tiruchirapalli	(31. 3.63)
11.	Kanpur	(15. 9.63)
12.	Lucknow	(2.10.63)
13.	Patna	(2.10.63)
14.	Poona	(28. 3.64)

NOTE: Vividh Bharati Programmes started on 3rd October, 1957 on two powerful short-wave transmitters at Bombay and Madras. Part of these were relayed on Delhi 'C' and some other stations for short intervals. Now Delhi 'C' relays Vividh Bharati entirely except between 1945 and 2015 hours when it carries Urdu Majlis.

Though well executed, the development schemes of A.I.R. are, however, neither adequate nor realistic. Except for the half-hearted measures taken to bring the border areas within the ineffectual range of A.I.R., the schemes as implemented to date are largely weighed in favour of light entertainment of doubtful quality. The fact that light entertainment is popular fare with listeners in urban

areas is no justification for providing Vividh Bharati with a battery of satellite stations only to extend its reach. Time will prove that this has been done without proper discrimination, and what is more significant at the cost of the regional stations. The point not to be lost sight of is that the urban population is not the whole but a fraction of India's peoples. One must, therefore, ask where exactly in the purview of the development schemes of A.I.R. do the needs of the vast rural population living in developing areas of our country, figure? In any scheme of development of broadcasting in India, the rural population must needs receive the highest consideration and the tribal population the next highest. At least this is the order of priorities in all the Five Year Plans. It is, however, interesting to find that the development of broadcasting does not even distantly reflect this order of priorities. It will be evident that little serious thought has been given by A.I.R. to the basic questions of development. As has been seen A.I.R.'s development has not been integrated with the priority given to agriculture and the tribal peoples in the country's Five Year Plans. In the same way the development of broadcasting has been carried out in complete isolation from the political thinking of the government on international affairs. This accounts for the almost total neglect of A.I.R.'s External Services in the First Three Plans, a neglect for which the country has had to pay dearly since the Chinese invasion. All this has resulted from the fact that planning and development have been considered as purely engineering matters in A.I.R. Shortly after independence a Deputy Director General for Planning and Development was appointed. The post was filled by one of the senior Station Directors of A.I.R., Mr. S. Gopalan. But this post was held in abeyance in the Keskar regime and the Planning and Development Unit of the Directorate-General was placed under a Deputy Chief Engineer and is manned by a vast array of technical officers. Much time is spent in putting up transmitters, building and equipping studios (all on standardized pattern without reference to specialized programme requirements) but no thought is given to the programmes which are to be broadcast from these centres. The entire machinery is upside down.

A Director of Programmes (Development) was appointed in 1963 but it remains to be seen how far he will succeed in putting

first things first. The signs are not propitious. If the Director of Programmes (Development) is treated as a mere adjunct to the Planning and Development Unit set up at the Directorate-General, little purpose will be served.

It is perhaps necessary to indicate the basis on which a programme oriented Planning and Development Unit would function and the sort of problems it would attempt to solve. The head of such a unit would be fully aware of the political, socio-economic and cultural objectives which the country was pursuing during a particular plan period. Consultation and co-ordination at a high level with the Planning Commission would be necessary at this stage. Once the objectives are clearly known the development plans for broadcasting could be formulated. Let us suppose, for instance, that these objectives included the use of broadcasting as a medium of mass contact and education in Nagaland. A programme oriented development unit would conduct a thorough survey of Nagaland, the dialects spoken in the region, the cultural background of the people, the available and potential talent in music and other fields and, most important, of the living habits and problems of the people. Only on the basis of such knowledge could a realistic programme pattern be devised. And in terms of the programme pattern the unit would seek to provide technical facilities, transmitter (one or two), receiving centre, recording equipment and so on. At present the transmitters, studios etc., go up and the programme pattern is devised a month or two before the technical facilities are ready for use. There is a standard programme pattern which is prepared in Delhi by persons who know next to nothing about the area which the station is to serve.

There is little doubt that in any scheme of programmes for Nagaland news broadcasts and commentaries would be given top priority. A strong, self-contained news unit with a monitoring cell, commentators and translators would be provided. In the existing set up, however, a Regional News Unit is treated as a luxury and only a rudimentary provision has been made at the Kohima station. Thinking which is programme oriented would appreciate that setting up a station in a border area is a very different proposition from setting up a station in a place like Varanasi. One cannot expect in such a region to find a large number of educated people like teachers, journalists, amateur actors and the like, who

can be used for broadcasting either on casual contracts or on a regular basis. Promising young persons knowing tribal dialects must be recruited, trained and given prospects. This problem of recruiting and training programme personnel has been totally neglected in A.I.R. While it is specially acute at stations in the border areas and in the External Services, it also exists in other departments and will adversely effect A.I.R.'s usefulness if it is not boldly tackled here and now.

No scheme for the expansion of broadcasting in the border areas can be complete which does not provide for the following additional points. First, the distribution of community listening sets. Normally, A.I.R. does not concern itself with private listening sets. It provides a service and it is assumed that the public will obtain their own radio sets. Community listening sets are the responsibility of the state governments, though there is a central subsidy scheme which is utilized by most of them. This arrangement may work in the country generally, but in the border areas broadcasting is unlikely to become a reality if A.I.R. works on these assumptions. Secondly, border stations must have their own transport on a scale entirely different from that provided in areas where there is a developed transport system. Thirdly, staff quarters must be provided on a generous scale since private accommodation does not exist.

What has been given here is a bare outline of the sort of thinking which is necessary if the future planning and development of A.I.R. is to be done in a purposeful manner. Vague ideas can result only in confusion of the ether which it is the business of this book to expose.

Before this chapter is closed the over-all position of transmitters and receiving centres may be summarised below to give the reader an idea of A.I.R.'s present network.

OVERALL POSITION OF AIR TRANSMITTERS[15]

(*a*) Total Number of AIR transmitters ..... : 93 (excluding Television transmitter)

[15] The information was received from the Deputy Chief Engineer, All India Radio, *Vide* his letter No. 22/11/EI/64 dated 1st May, 1964.

(*b*) No. of M.W. Transmitters employed for Home Services (other than Vividh Bharati) .....:	47	
(*c*) No. of S.W. Transmitters employed for Home Services (other than Vividh Bharati, News and National Programmes) ....:	14	
(*d*) Vividh Bharati Transmitters (MW) .....:	17	
(*e*) Vividh Bharati SW Transmitters (shared to a limited extent with External Services) .....:	2	
(*f*) Transmitters for External Services, News and National Programmes (these transmitters are generally shared between these services) .....:	13	(excluding two Vividh Bharati SW. transmitters which are also used to a limited extent for External Services)
(*g*) Total Number of receiving Centres .....:	42	

CHAPTER II

PROGRAMMES AND PROGRAMME POLICIES

MUSIC

In the early days of wireless broadcasting musicians and music lovers reacted violently to the broadcast of music programmes. They called it an "abominable contrivance." Their reaction is understandable. The technical equipment was still in its experimental stage and judged from present standard microphones were primitive and acoustic treatment of studios poor. In fact the entire process of transmission from the artist behind the microphone to the listener sitting before a receiver was in the state of evolution. It is not, therefore, difficult to imagine that in those days transmission must have been accompanied by considerable distortion. The annoyance and anger of musicians is not surprising. What is surprising is that in most countries this hostility persisted for long. Even after six years of broadcasting in Britain, for example, Sir Thomas Beecham, writing in November, 1928 in the *Musical Times,* was very vehement in his denunciation:

> Ever since the beginning of the present century there has been committed against the unfortunate art of music every imaginable sin. But all previous crimes and stupidities pale before this latest attack on its fair name, the broadcasting of it by means of wireless. . . . The performance of music through this or any other kindred contrivance cannot be other than a ludicrous caricature. . . . If the wireless authorities are permitted to carry on their devilish work, in ten years' time the concert halls will be deserted.[1]

But things changed. Technical and engineering improvement made wireless transmission an ideal medium for music program-

[1] *The B.B.C. From Within,* Lord Simon, published by Victor Gollanz Ltd., London (1953) p. 103.

mes. What goes into the microphone in the studio comes out of the receiver with astonishing fidelity and faithfulness.

More than fifty per cent of the broadcast time of any broadcasting organisation is devoted to music programmes. This is equally true of All India Radio.

During 1960, A.I.R.'s total programme output was 1,08,256 hours and 14 minutes (excluding Vividh Bharati Programmes which occupied 7,123 hours). Music output was for 50,981 hours 28 minutes, i.e. 47.06 per cent of the total broadcast time in General Programmes. In 1961, A.I.R.'s total broadcast time was 1,17,265 hours out of which 7,931 hours was taken up by Vividh Bharati leaving a balance of 1,09,334 hours. Total music time during 1961 (including 2,107 hours of Western Music) came to 51,184 hours which works out to 46.7 per cent of the total. The programmes for special audiences, like children, women, rural dwellers, industrial workers, tribal people, armed forces, etc., amounted to 21.47 per cent of the total programmes, comprising various items approximately half of which are music. Thus the total music output of A.I.R.'s programmes of 1961 would be anywhere between 55 to 60 per cent.

Western music programmes occupied about two thousand hours out of about fifty-one thousand hours of music (4 per cent). The balance of about forty-nine thousand hours of Indian Music was spread over classical music vocal and instrumental (52 per cent), folk (3 per cent), light (26 per cent), devotional, mostly light (12 per cent) and film (7 per cent). It is clear from the above that the output of classical music is more than that of light music from A.I.R. Stations.[2] If, however, Vividh Bharati Programmes are taken into consideration, the proportion of light music will register an increase over classical music.[3]

Indian Tradition of Music

Indian broadcasting is fortunate to have at its disposal a long and glorious tradition of music. Some of the Indian musical instruments, like the *Saraswati Veena,* are thousands of years old

[2] *India* 1962, published by Publications Division, Govt. of India, p. 139.

[3] Breakdown of Vividh Bharati items is not given in *India* 1962, but its programmes mostly consist of light music and light spokenword.

and are associated with traditional gods and godesses and epic heroes. Music in fact was deeply intertwined with the daily life of the people because it was an integral part of religious practices, social ceremonies and temple worship. With the spoken language of the people differing with every few miles there are hundreds of dialects in India. Whatever political problems these languages and dialects may have created in recent years, they have immensely contributed to the richness and variety of Indian folk traditions. A.I.R.'s output is spread over 150 languages and dialects, both rural and tribal.

In spite of the ancient origin and a long and glorious tradition culminating in varied and many-sided development during the middle ages, the music of India had become somewhat decadent in the eighteenth century and its progress continued to be retarded till the close of the nineteenth century.[4] The puritanical Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb did not like musicians and painters. They were not only thrown out of the court, but also driven out of the capital. Many died of hardship and privation, but quite a few managed to find shelter in some of the states of Central India, where they found new patrons among the princes, who provided them with both means and encouragement, for the cultivation of music. Thus, the art was saved from extinction. But there was, however, no real development of music in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. The musicians living isolated lives in distant states, deprived of mutual contacts, developed local and stylistic differences coupled with a rigidity of outlook. And this led to the growth of various *gharanas,* the schools of music, in northern India, with their own stylistic peculiarities and interpretation of ragas. Despite these differences in the manner of exposition and in the use and disuse of certain notes in ragas and raginis, the basic musical norms were commonly adhered to and the structural unity of the art was not allowed to be impaired. The plight of light music was no better. It was in danger of passing into the hands of professional singers of doubtful merit.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were a turning

[4] For a detailed study of various aspects of Indian Music the reader may refer to Works like *Music of India* by S. Bandyopadhyaya; *Northern Indian Music* by Alain Danielou or the classical treatises of scholars mentioned in this chapter.

point in the history of our arts and literature. It was an age of great social and political ferment, which marked the beginning of a renaissance in this country. The birth of the national movement and the consequent growth of resurgent nationalism led to an awakening of interest in our past and the glorification of our ancient culture became a driving force with many an artist and scholar. Their faith in Indian culture, though somewhat reactionary in the beginning, soon transformed itself into something deep and genuine which ultimately led to an intense revival of art and literature.

In the field of music the tasks before pioneers like Maharaja Surendra Mohan Tagore, Pandit Vishnu Digambar and Pandit Vishnu Narain Bhatkhand were primarily those of resuscitation of musical theory based on scientific research and examination of the standard works of the past. The pioneers also tried to discover or rediscover musical norms so as to bring a new unity in the theory; and above all to fight the stigma attached to the art and those who practised it. Schools and colleges were established throughout India for the teaching of music. This process of social acceptance of music was further accelerated by the opening of music departments in a number of Indian Universities.

The resuscitation of music with all its rich traditions was also hastened by the genius of our poet-composers like Tagore, D. L. Roy, Atual Prasad Sen, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Dilip Kumar Roy, and the dynamic spiritual energy radiated into the life of the nation by that sage of Dakshineswar, Swami Rama Krishna Parmahansa. His mysticism strengthened the cause of true creativeness. His synoptic spiritual outlook was a great liberating force for art which enabled artists not only to breathe freely but also create art forms boldly. In the field of music it meant that experiments could be made and that for this purpose foreign and folk elements were not altogether irrelevant. In Bengal, particularly, this combination of the classical tradition with the heritage of folk music and the new world of western music led to the growth of Rabindra Sangeet, which can be more aptly described as literary music.[5]

[5] cf. Articles by D. P. Mukherji & Dr. A. Bake in the Sahitya Akademi's Centenary Volume—Rabindranath Tagore 1861-1961. Incidentally, Dr. Bake does not think western music influenced Tagore much except

In other parts of the country, however, no such experiments were made and the teaching and propagation of music was in the hands of notable Ustads and regular institutions which specialized in the teaching of strictly traditional music. In U.P., Bihar and Punjab, the middle classes did not allow music to enter their homes for a long time. Sociological factors had relegated the art, more or less completely, to the dancing-girls and their Ustads. Some of these Ustads were outstanding musicians and zealous guardians of the art, who would not freely reveal the secrets of their art to new aspirants.

The growth and development of music in the North and South India was on similar lines till the 10th century A.D. when the process of differentiation started. This process itself lasted four hundred years before crystallising into two distinct systems. It is not correct to say that the Muslim invasion created a split in what had till then been a homogeneous culture and artistic tradition. The unity of Indian culture has been mainly the unity of its spiritual outlook which was the outcome as much of belief in common religious scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads and the great epics as of the language in which they were written. Sanskrit was the language of both religion and literature and this assured the unity of Indian culture. As Sanskrit progressively ceased to be the spoken language, various regional languages grew up all over the country. These regional languages bred seeds of separation and regionalism. The Muslim invasion is not responsible for North India to drift away from the main current of Indian culture. It only perhaps accelerated the process and tendencies which had already become manifest.

The next four hundred years from the 14th to 18th centuries witnessed the systematization and codification of Hindustani and Karnatak music at the hands of theorists and scholars. The books of Sarangadeva, Someswara, Ahobola, Pundarika Vittala, Bhava Bhatta and Muhammad Reza on Hindustani music and that of Ramamatya, Somanath, Venkatamakhin and Tulajali on Karnatak music are the principal authoritative works written during this period. In spite of certain basic similarities in the Hindustani and Karnatak systems of music, regarding the number of notes to the

in one point. Tagore's music, like western music, is wholly written down and to introduce even a twill where it is not written is to distort the music.

scale, the method of classification of ragas and the use and disuse of certain notes in a raga, there are other fundamental differences both technical and linguistic, in the two schools of music. For example, the foundation scale of Hindustani music is the Bilawal scale while that of the Karnatak system is known as the Kanakangi scale. There are differences in the technique of rendering alap. Hindustani music allows considerable artistic variation and raga mixtures which are not permissible in Karnatak music. Besides, there are many other finer differences which need not be dilated upon here. What is more important is that there are very few musical forms, like Bhajans, Harikatha and Kirtan which are common. The more important varieties of musical forms are, however, peculiar to each school. In Hindustani music, we have the Dhrupad, Dhammar, Khayal, Tappa, Thumri, Ghazal and Dadra which are quite distinct from the musical forms of Karnatak music like Pada, Prabandha, Varna, Kriti, Gita, Alankara and Dvipada. There are linguistic differences also. Most of the compositions in Hindustani music are in Braj Bhasha though Ghazals and Tappas are generally in Urdu and Punjabi. The language of composition in Karnatak music is mostly Sanskrit, Telugu or Tamil.

According to the researches of Bhatkhande into the nomenclature of ragas, there are only 25 ragas of the North which have their counterpart in Karnatak music though they are known by different names in the South. But about 200 ragas are sung in North India, the great majority of which are unknown to the musicians of the South. The reverse is also true, a very large number of ragas of Karnatak music are not known to the musicians of the North.

Problems of Broadcast Music

Broadly, this was the state of music when broadcasting came to India. Fielden's Report on Broadcasting mentions the following main trends in Indian music, which created problems in the beginning:

(*a*) A rigid interpretation of the rules of classical music by schools which hold that Indian music has reached perfection

and that no departure from tradition should be permitted;

(*b*) The combination of light and classical Indian music and the encouragement of amateur singers in order that Indian music may, on the one hand, meet the changing tastes of the people without fundamentally altering its character and, on the other, be redeemed from the distaste associated with its present exponents;

(*c*) A definite breaking away from present standards combined with the adoption of notation and harmony.[6]

These were important problems and till the coming of independence, A.I.R. had neither the capacity nor the financial resources to do much to tackle them. What is surprising is that we have not touched the fringe of the problem even now.

In the early days of broadcasting the main problem was to keep the programmes going. Programme Assistants and even Station Directors were always on the alert for news of artists who could be brought to the microphone. Through personal initiative and enthusiasm the leading musicians of the country were brought into the orbit of A.I.R.'s programmes.

Apart from the very top rung of professional musicians, talented young artists were also encouraged and engaged to perform on All India Radio. Auditions, as a matter of course, were arranged by the Programme Assistant in charge of music and generally heard by at least one other senior officer such as the Assistant Station Director or Station Director. One doubts if there is a notable artist today who had not been discovered by A.I.R. before the much vaunted Audition System came into operation. The fees of the musicians and the duration for which they broadcast were a matter of direct negotiation between the station and the individual artist concerned. A few musicians received fees in excess of Rs. 150, which is the maximum paid to any artist today. Many others of note were paid something in the neighbourhood of Rs. 100. A list of artist was prepared annually at each station, indicating the fee and grading of approved artists and this was circulated among the stations. Some sort of uniformity of standard was maintained in this way. Artists of one zone were occasionally booked for broadcast by other stations.

[6] *Report on Broadcasting in India*, pp. 21-24.

The music programmes of a radio station are an index of the musical talent available in its territorial jurisdiction. Solo vocal and instrumental recitals by distinguished artists are not *produced* as such. A.I.R. acts only as a platform. It is only in the field of light music, orchestral items and musical plays that A.I.R. may be given credit for production. Till 1947, the nature of programmes broadcast from the different stations of A.I.R. had a largely democratic basis. The likes and dislikes of the listeners in each area were taken into consideration in determining the final shape of programmes originating from each station. Such a policy, while it produced programmes which were widely popular without being cheap, was also responsible for limiting the quantity of such programmes as were not acceptable to the tastes of the large majority in a particular area to reasonable proportions. For a broadcasting service which was still struggling to find its proper place in the hearts of the people such a programme policy proved sound and paid dividends in the form of increasing listeners.

First Policy Directive

It must, however, be stated that there was no consciously stated "policy" in regard to music and the need for systematization and standardization became evident by the fifties when A.I.R. recovered from the effects of partition and was expanding its network. The first "policy" directive from the top, however, came during the time of Sardar Patel in the form of an order which stated that persons whose private life was a public scandal should not be allowed to broadcast. This was evidently an attack on the dancing and singing girls and their more notorious sisters and professional musicians, and was, in effect, an expression of the puritan streak in governmental thinking. The order itself was poorly worded for in fact there was no public scandal as such attached to the private lives of these artists. It was their public life which was not considered respectable. Be that as it may, the adverse effects of this order were temporary for the "baijis" soon acquired respectability and returned to broadcast as "devis" or under some other name.

Music Programmes and Policies

It was with the assumption of office by Dr. Keskar as Minister of Information and Broadcasting in 1952 that a conscious music policy came into existence. Dr. Keskar was fortunate in being at the helm of affairs for ten years and thus able not only to put his policies into practice but also to see the results. These ten years were therefore very important from the point of view of development. After attaining independence in 1947, the country had politically stabilised itself and was preparing to embark upon its Five Year Plans for economic prosperity and progress in all walks of national life. In the field of broadcast music A.I.R.'s activities and achievements during these ten years can be summarised as follows:

(*a*) New audition system
(*b*) Popularising classical Music
(*c*) National Programme of Music
(*d*) National Orchestra
(*e*) Annual Radio Sangeet Sammelan and Meeting of Musicologists for discussion of various problems of music
(*f*) Production of light music and processing of records by the Transcription Service

It is an impressive balance sheet and needs to be examined carefully with a view to assessing the credit and debit sides.

New Audition System

The first major step was the setting up of two Audition Boards for North and South Indian Music. The need for systematizing the gradings and fees of artists and for associating non-officials with the assessment of merit is accepted on all hands. What was objectionable, however, was the manner in which the whole thing was done and the failure to profit from the experience of other broadcasting organizations. To begin with, the impression was given that artists had been approved for broadcast on the whims and fancies of the Programme Assistants who knew nothing about music and, therefore, what was required was a thorough clean up

of the mess. The Audition Board was itself described as the Jury and the Northern Panel was placed under the chairmanship of Pandit S. N. Ratanjankar. It was not surprising that there was an outcry against the "jury system," particularly serious at centres like Bombay and Calcutta. The jury insisted on every performing musician appearing in person and, apart from listening to the artist, the jury often questioned them on points of theory. Differences between the *gharanas* and various schools of Indian Music are well-known and accepted throughout the country and these add no doubt to the richness of the classical tradition. The "jury system," however, led to the impression among artists that a set of persons were out to foist the views of one *gharana* on all the others.

Another tactless move (for this is the least that could be said about it) was raising the fee of Pt. S. N. Ratanjankar, the Chairman of the jury, to the maximum and his inclusion in the National Programme shortly thereafter. It can be plausibly argued that Pt. Ratanjankar deserved both these honours, but they came psychologically at the wrong moment. All this created a storm of protest throughout the country. At many stations, Artists' Associations were formed to fight the new system. While musicians at the smaller centres were forced to appear or were debarred from broadcasting, the initial auditions could not be carried out either in Calcutta or Bombay. After prolonged negotiations in 1953-54 a large number of artists at Calcutta were "exempted" from appearing in person before the jury. On the recommendations of the Station Director they were fitted into the new grades in such a way that their existing fees remained untouched.

The major points of criticism made against the "jury system" have now been accepted and incorporated in the revised rules. The description of the Board, as the Music Jury, was substituted by the title, the Music Audition Board. Provision was made for exempting well-known artists from appearing before the Board. The Audition Boards are now required to assess the quality of a performance as a piece of listening and are prohibited from putting questions to the artist. Roll numbers have been introduced and members of the Board do not see the artist. And finally, a member of the staff is present at each audition as an observer. The work of the Audition Board, particularly in North India, has not

perhaps always been above board or above reproach. In spite of the introduction of roll numbers and the precaution that the examiners and the candidates do not come into direct contact in the studios, anonymity of candidates has not always been maintained. There have been cases where candidates came to know the result of their tests immediately after their completion, and A.I.R.'s communication of the result was a mere formality. It is also alleged that in certain cases where the relations of important persons were involved, A.I.R. authorities themselves have not been punctilious in observing the principle of anonymity of auditions.

One difficulty inherent in any form of centralization, a hobby horse of the Keskar regime, is the long delays which become inevitable. It soon became evident that the Music Audition Board was quite unequal to the task of dealing with the large number of artists awaiting audition throughout the country. As the Boards failed to meet sufficiently often, it was not unusual for a candidate to have to wait for two or three years before he or she qualified for broadcast. To meet this difficulty a system of preliminary weeding out was introduced.

The revised audition system may be outlined below:

At each station a Local Audition Committee was constituted consisting of Music Producers at the Station and outside musicians.

The Local Audition Committee could finally approve or reject all candidates seeking approval for broadcasts of light music. In the case of classical music (including light classical music) the LAC would finally reject a candidate if it thought he was not fit to broadcast. On the other hand if the LAC considered a candidate having merit, it would certify him as fit for appearing, before the Music Audition Board (MAB).

Those who fall into the latter category are recorded at their respective stations and the tapes are heard by the Audition Board in Delhi. On the basis of this recording the artist is either rejected or approved and assigned to a particular grade. There is nothing wrong with this system as such. In fact all systems can be circumvented if men charged to work them do not display a high sense

of integrity. There have been cases where artistes have applied for being upgraded and succeeded in their attempts by short circuiting procedure. In 1962, the Government constituted an Audition Board for screening light music artists also. It is too early to assess its working.

Whether this device has succeeded in reducing delays remains doubtful. At the bigger centres the Local Audition Committees cannot keep pace with the ever-increasing applications which pour in from all and sundry. Members of the Committees are non-officials with their own preoccupations and the remuneration of two rupees for each candidate auditioned (recently introduced), is hardly an incentive to give several hours a week, listening to candidates most of whom have not the ghost of a chance of qualifying. Even as it is the candidates approved by Local Committees and who eventually qualify before the Central Board is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent.

A question that may well be asked is whether the introduction of the audition system in its present form has improved the standard of music broadcasts. No simple answer is possible. But it is interesting to learn that the department itself is worried about the large number of indifferent artists who are broadcasting and who take up the major part of time on the air. In 1958, the Director-General issued orders stopping the broadcast of all artists graded as "C" class. In answering questions in the Lok Sabha, Dr. Keskar told the House that qualifying in the audition test did not give any artist the right to broadcast. The action had been taken to improve the quality of broadcasts. In 1961, the Directorate-General decided that even 'B' class artists should not normally be engaged for solo performances. That these are steps in the right direction no one will deny. It constitutes, nevertheless, a devastating indictment of that very system of auditions for which tall claims had been made by the Minister. Whether it will now become necessary in a few years to apply the axe to the next class of artists remains to be seen. It would appear, however, that improvement cannot be hoped for unless it is realized that the time for amateur broadcasting is nearing its end.

Popularising Classical Music

In 1952-53 the slogan "Popularising Classical Music" went round and mechanically every station went out of its way and beyond its artistic resources to do what it thought would popularise classical music. And why not? Stations were asked to report periodically on their activity in this direction. As a result, they hastily increased to the maximum extent, their broadcasts of classical music irrespective of regional predilections. The easiest thing for most stations was to inflate recorded classical music in the afternoon transmissions, much to the damage of their popularity. These transmissions were hitherto used for news relays, programmes for women, schools etc. and largely for light recorded music. Some of the light recorded music was also replaced by classical music in the evening transmissions. This did not stop here. The stations were also asked to broadcast classical music of regions other than their own. That meant putting out South Indian music from stations in North India, and vice versa. A large number of stations introduced "music lessons." The easiest course for the stations was to relay the weekly National Programme of Music from Delhi on Saturdays from 21.30 to 23.00 hours. All this and much more was not in the best interests of programmes and their popularity, but no body seemed to bother about it so long as these activities were in obedience to the slogan "Popularising Classical Music." Particularly when we know that most of the stations were, and still are, one-channel centres, what these overdoses of classical music have meant to the majority of listeners not much interested in classical music is not difficult to imagine. In any case any quantitative increase is not always the best method of popularising an art form. One wrong led to other wrongs. Perhaps to ensure foolproof popularisation of classical music the percentage of film music was considerably reduced. The poorly conceived policy of popularisation of classical music had a disastrous effect on the bulk of listeners who, day after day, and out of utter disgust fell back upon Radio Ceylon for their recreation.

National Programme of Music

This programme remains in many ways the most ambitious pro-

gramme launched by A.I.R. and, what is more important for us, is the best example of the policies which A.I.R. has been pursuing for the last fifteen years. As such, it needs to be discussed at some length.

In 1950, a half-hour programme entitled "Music of India" was started from Delhi and was relayed by all stations of All India Radio; Karnatak music formed a conspicious part of this programme. Subsequently on 20th July, 1952, A.I.R. launched its weekly programme of "National Music." This programme is broadcast every Saturday from Delhi for 90 minutes and is relayed by all other stations. In this programme distinguished artists, vocalists as well as instrumentalists of both Hindustani and Karnatak music representing different schools and *gharanas* have participated. Later on a place was also found in it for programmes of regional music, like the music of the Punjab, Maharashtra, Kashmir etc.

But what is the idea behind this programme? What does it aim at? What does A.I.R. mean by National Music? Unfortunately, A.I.R. has never clarified these points and most of the programme officials are as confused about the programme of national music after twelve years of its broadcast as they were when it was inaugurated. Very few know that the phrase "National Music" was first used by V. N. Bhatkhande in his presidential address to the All India Music Conference held in Baroda in 1916:

"And if it please Providence to so dispense that there is a fusion between the two systems of the North and the South, then there will be a National Music for the whole country and the last of our ambitions will be reached for then the great nation will sing one song."

Since then many more voices have been heard that have espousing the cause of "National Music." Scholars like S. R. Kuppuswami, Editor of *Karnataka Sangeetham* and S. N. Ratanjankar, Principal, Marris College of Music, Lucknow, are some of its strong votaries. Undoubtedly this programme has enabled listeners to listen to some of the best Hindustani and Karnatak music. The performances of these artists were not unlike their many previous performances from the zonal stations, but the significance of the National Programme lay in the fact, that it provided a venue for the artists of Northern and Southern India to come to a common platform and that their audience was no longer confined to their

respective regions, but covered the whole country. All India Radio also took pains to introduce individual artists to the listener's mentioning their *gharanas,* distinguishing traits and stylistic peculiarities. Occasional attempts were also made by All India Radio to explain to listeners the texture of ragas in Hindustani and Karnatak music which have exactly similar notes or whose notes nearly approximate to each other.

In the beginning there was evidence of careful selection of artists and ragas and in the wording of the announcements intended to highlight the special qualities of each performance. But as time passed the novelty of the Saturday concert wore off. It became evident that some serious thinking was necessary on the part of the planners if the National Programme was not to peter out into another routine item. It is well-known that for this programme the choice of the artists could not be finalised without the approval of the Minister. Even a minor change in the date on which a particular artist was to appear had to be referred to him.[7] The future of any programme lies in its being rescued from the personal domain of any one person. Unless the normal procedures of programme planning are applied to it there can be no hope of improvement. In the first place certain definite criteria must be laid down for the selection of artists for this programme. Having done this all artists who qualify must be carefully considered; at any rate selection must not depend on the option of a single individual whose listening can only be casual and sporadic. The programme must be arranged in such a way as to bring out the special qualities of the artist. And finally new patterns must be evolved.

At present National Programmes fall into three categories: prerecorded programmes, classical concerts featuring one or two classical artists and programmes of regional music presented before invited audience in which the visual element is perhaps as important as the aural. Pre-recording is only a means of saving money and does not constitute a separate category. Surely this is not the only basis on which programmes can be thought of. Comparative studies, and programmes based on musical themes are the obvious answer.

As a concert of high class music, the National Programmes

[7] This was a rigid procedure during Dr. Keskar's regime.

have been a great success and have been appreciated by listeners all over the country. But all the same this venture of All India Radio made largely in response to the demands of the protagonists of "National Music" has not brought the two schools of Indian music nearer each other; nor has it in any way advanced the cause of the gradual evolution of a unified system of classical music in India. In fact it has not even succeeded in removing the minor differences that still exist in the individual systems. For example Rag Gauri is sung in different ways by musicians of different *gharanas* in Northern India. There are also differences of opinion with regard to *Vadis* and *Samvadis* of Ragas among them. There are some Hindustani musicians who sing Desi Todi employing both the *Dhaiwats*, while others use only *Dhaiwat Sudh*. With regard to Kausi Kanhra also, there are two different modes of singing prevalent in the North. Some musicians combine Malkaus and Kanhra to produce Kausi Kanhra, while others form this raga by a combination of Malkaus and Bageshri. The votaries of "National Music" would do well to give attention to such variations in Hindustani Music as exist at present and devote their energies to reduce it to a unified system before attempting the bigger problem of evolving a common system of music for the whole of India.

Thus the National Programme of All India Radio has kept up the present *status quo* in the field of Indian music. Its sponsors and planners not only accepted the two broad divisions of Indian music into the Hindustani and Karnatak schools but also allowed a free hand to the musicians of the two schools to sing in their own individual styles, thereby encouraging the very bipartisan tendencies in Indian music which they perhaps intended to counteract.

The National Programme is not based on any conscious and well thought out plan to bring the two schools of Indian Music nearer each other, nor does it represent the first step in the direction of the evolution of a unified system of music, which could be aptly termed "National." The "National Programme" as envisaged and broadcast at present can be called national only in two respects. It is national, in the first place, in a purely territorial sense, in so far as the artists participating in it come from all parts of the country and have a nation-wide listening audience. And

secondly it is national in as much as it is representative of the two major schools of Indian Music.

National Orchestra

Indian music is perhaps the best example of a melodic system. The liberty to make free improvisations has been fully exploited by musicians. Orchestration and harmony are problems which run counter to Indian traditions of melody. A.I.R.'s National Orchestra, therefore, has an uphill task and it will need time and imagination to break new ground which will not damage the fundamental character of Indian Music. Orchestral programmes from All India Radio are not new as is sometimes made out. In fact such programmes were being broadcast more or less regularly from various radio stations a decade prior to the formation of the National Orchestra. It is true the quality was uneven. An orchestral composition normally meant an ensemble of a number of instruments playing in unison. Attempts were also made at some stations to use notation. For example at the Lahore Station under the direction of Jeewan Lal Mattoo, useful work was done during 1945 and 1947. Similarly D. Amel has a lot of good work to his credit carried out at the Bombay Station. It must be admitted that these were pioneering efforts and were limited in their scope due to financial resources. Nevertheless the seeds had been sown for more comprehensive work in this field in time to come.

The initial steps towards the setting up of an A.I.R. Orchestra go back to the year 1949. The Karnatak Wing was created in 1951. The A.I.R. Vadya Vrind, however, came into existence in 1952 with 27 instruments. And this was played from notation. Its Hindustani and Karnatak Sections were under Ravi Shankar and T. K. Jayarama Iyer. After Ravi Shankar left A.I.R., Pannalal Ghosh, the well-known flutist took over but unfortunately his career was cut short by sudden death. The setting up of the National Orchestra was a step in the right direction and was welcomed by everyone in the country. But this admirable step was marred by simultaneous instructions that all stations, except Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and of course Delhi from where the National Orchestra was to be broadcast, were ordered to stop putting out orchestral programmes. Hitherto, each station had put

out a few orchestral programmes and such experiments occasionally led to some interesting results. In any case, each station has on its staff a large number of instrumentalists and to put a complete ban on orchestral programmes is only to stifle artistic activity. In fact the National Orchestra could have acted as a sort of model which the orchestral units at various stations could look upto. As it is the National Orchestra has not succeeded in making any noticeable impact on musicians at various stations. It must, however, be admitted that a few good compositions have been presented by the National Orchestra. It is a happy thing to note that the National Orchestra has gone round the country presenting programmes before appreciative audiences.

Radio Sangeet Sammelan

A word now may be said about the Sangeet Sammelan which has become an annual affair. It was first broadcast on 23rd October, 1954. It can be aptly called the Annual Music Meet. There is nothing particularly significant about the programmes that are broadcast during the Sammelan. It is a Music Conference like any other. For a whole week special sessions of music programmes, running to 3 hours or more are put out daily. On sundays and intervening holidays, additional three hour sessions are arranged. Sometime prior to holding this Conference, A.I.R. conducts music competitions for the younger age group at all the stations. The finalists are judged at Delhi and Madras for awards in Hindustani and Karnatak music respectively. One session in the Sangeet Sammelan is exclusively presented by the prize winners in the music competitions.

There are so many music conferences every year in various cities of India where for days together marathon sessions of music are held and thousands attend, but what useful purpose does A.I.R. seek to serve by giving a glut of classical music during a particular period? Do these overdoses make classical music popular? Can even the genuinely interested listeners find so much time to tune in? And what is the fate of those whose first love is not classical music? Characteristically enough, the authorities have avoided any research on the listening commanded by the Sangeet Sammelan or for that matter by any other important programme.

Inaugurating the 1959 Radio Sangeet Sammelan (October 24), the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad observed "it has given considerable encouragement not only to masters of the art but also to young rising musicians. As a result of these annual competitions, the Karnatak and the Hindustani styles of music have tended to come closer and there has been appreciable increase in the number of those who are able to understand and enjoy music of both types." While discussing the National Programme of Music this aspect has been discussed in detail. So far as the music competitions are concerned they cannot do anything to bring the two systems of music closer. At best they can throw up a few amateurs who have taken to music. But broadcasting cannot travel far with amateurs.

This occasion is also utilized to invite musicologists to discuss various aspects and problems of Hindustani and Karnatak music. Papers on important subjects are read by scholars and useful points for discussion emerge. There can be nothing wrong in holding these discussions but how far efforts are being directed towards improving A.I.R.'s programmes or reorienting them in the light of these discussions is not known. Nor have these discussions been sufficiently publicised by A.I.R.

Production of Light Music

In the field of light music A.I.R.'s activities can be briefly summed up as follows:

(*a*) On-the-spot recording of folk music,
(*b*) the tirade against film music, and
(*c*) the setting up of light music units.

A.I.R. has been recording folk music since its inception. This was done inside the studios by inviting reputed folk parties or in the villages at the time of local fairs. This on-the-spot recording activity was obviously limited because of a number of reasons. The tape recorder was not available at most stations till 1953. Disc recording in the interior of the countryside was a complicated affair and, apart from anything else, it involved carrying cumbersome equipment which took considerable time to be set

up. The absence of electric power near about often came in the way of making recordings in natural surroundings. The illiterate artists had to be persuaded, sometimes with great difficulty, to move to a convenient place a few miles away.

The tape recorder has been a boon. Now every station has an Outside Broadcast Van and during recent years A.I.R. has done considerable recording of folk music. The setting up of the Transcription Service has not only helped to process some typical music pieces but also to make them available to the stations.

We shall now proceed to discuss at some length A.I.R.'s attitude towards film music and its attempts to create a special brand of light music of its own.

In 1952, Dr. Keskar described film music as cheap and vulgar and almost banned it from A.I.R. Officially it was always stated that there was no ban on film music in A.I.R.; circumstances, however, led towards it. Anyway broadcast of film music was drastically reduced. Things did not stop there. A.I.R. proclaimed that it would itself produce good quality light music to replace film music. The lyrics composed for A.I.R.'s light music would be of a high literary and moral quality and these would be set to tunes based on ragas or folk songs and would avoid the influence of Western jazz so prevalent in film music. A.I.R. had, however, no resources for the production of light music. The stations were hastily ordered to set up light music production units, and to somehow fill the gap. Incidentally, this was the time when Radio Ceylon was becoming popular and A.I.R. had just initiated a campaign to raise licences from 6.5 lakhs to 1 million within some two years. The incongruity of these antithetical lines of thinking did not, however, appear to trouble the authorities. The result was that A.I.R. offended the film producers many of whom refused to permit A.I.R. to broadcast their music. A.I.R. lost a large number of listeners to Radio Ceylon and the target of 1 million licences was not reached even after twice the number of years originally set.

In the case of light music it has been the same story—initial truculence and the long march back to the old position. The tangle with film producers took several years to settle. It was stated that there was no wholesale condemnation of film music and that A.I.R. merely reserved the right to select what particular film songs it proposed to broadcast. The public was given the impression that

the film producers were really to blame in so far as they had not renewed their agreement with A.I.R. To cut the long story short, fresh agreements were signed with the film producers and popular "request programmes" which had been abandoned came again on the air. Screening committees were set up at Bombay for Hindi film songs, and at other stations for songs in regional languages before they are broadcast. The characteristic delays of screening followed. The Committees started by trying to screen old songs, many of which had been forgotten and were hardly in circulation. A new song had little chance of being broadcast while it was still popular. However, enlightenment came in due course, and film songs came to be broadcast fairly soon after their release.

Had the Minister troubled to acquaint himself with existing procedure, the enactment of this tragedy could have been avoided. A system of screening film and other recorded songs had been followed in A.I.R. for a considerable period. Such records were listened to at the stations at the time of their release and a periodical statement was sent by each station to all others informing them of particular songs which were "not approved" due to the unsuitability of its tune or text. All that was needed was a systematization of the existing procedure.

Let us meanwhile go back to see what was happening to the special light music which A.I.R. had set about to create. The initial difficulty lay in finding producers and composers of light music under whom these units were to function. The professed light music producers in the film world stood already condemned. A.I.R. therefore, turned mainly to two classes of persons: Classical musicians, who were prepared to try out this new assignment, and lyric writers. It is interesting that persons like D. T. Joshi, the well-known Sitar player and pupil of Inayat Khan, V. G. Jog the violinist then a teacher at the Marris College, Lucknow, Jnan Prakash Ghosh of Calcutta joined A.I.R.'s newly opened light music Units. Among literary men may be mentioned Bhagwati Charan Verma in Delhi.

A nucleus of half a dozen staff artists was provided and the light music units were asked to go ahead. Each Unit was expected to produce two songs a week. Certain other instructions of a general nature were also given. The texts of song were to be carefully selected to ensure literary and moral purity, accompaniment was

to be kept to the minimum so as to avoid the "orchestral" effect of film songs and Western jazz, and tunes were to be based on ragas and folk songs. But no production with any pretence of any artistic excellence can be done as easily and quickly to order as the authorities supposed. Lyrics of "literary" merit were recalcitrant to the demands of *laya* and *tala*. The demand of two new compositions a week proved too exacting for the producers, composers and other staff artists with a turn for this sort of thing. The rate of remuneration did not attract the top notchers of light music who were used to the rates of payment in filmdom; and those available did not, in the opinion of the producers, have voices which could sustain interest without considerable "orchestral" accompaniment. What happened at any rate was that light Music Units started making use of outside talent. In Bombay particularly the Unit turned to the film world and the less successful music directors and composers found ready acceptance in A.I.R. The result was that every thing that A.I.R. had sought to avoid came back in the form of diluted replicas of what the films gave. Doubtless nothing particularly vulgar is turned out by A.I.R.'s light Music Units, but on the other hand neither has it succeeded in producing any hit tunes of its own, and the popularity of the "cheapest" of film music continues to thrive. A.I.R.'s failure to produce light music with a distinctive stamp of its own is now admitted by the authorities. Further it has even been conceded that in the film world itself, gifted producers have been able to cut across existing values. This admission comes now almost ten years after the Minister had sought to teach film producers a lesson!

And thereby hangs a tale to which the Vividh Bharati (All India Radio's Light Programme) owes its birth. Vividh Bharati programmes are not wholly music programmes. They cover a wide range—music, humorous plays, skits, tit-bits and such other odds and ends—with the sole purpose of providing light entertainment on a separate channel. But the core of the programmes is light music and the marrow of light music in any case, in India, is film music.

No wonder all the efforts by A.I.R. to popularise classical music and to produce a special brand of light music to replace film music contributed only to the increasing popularity of Radio Ceylon. A listeners' research conducted in order to assess the popularity of

A.I.R. broadcasts revealed that nine out of ten houses in every street were found invariably to be tuned to Ceylon, and the receiver in the tenth house, was either out of order or out of commission. These findings were unpleasant enough to get the authorities thinking. Frantic efforts were made at the diplomatic level to stop Radio Ceylon from undoing the Good Samaritan work A.I.R. was supposed to be doing. When the Government of Ceylon refused to be dictated to, it was announced in Parliament on one glorious morning, that Radio Ceylon was popular only with teenagers, or with people whose tastes were at best adolescent. This was a significant statement, for while it admitted the increasing unpopularity of A.I.R., *vis-à-vis* Radio Ceylon, it blamed, not its own policy but the tastes of certain sections of the population. Instead of the obvious conclusion a very wrong one had been drawn; administrative reasoning in a democracy could not have been more dishonest. However, the matter did not end there. In fact, it could not. While, for reasons of ego and prestige, the policies of A.I.R. remained unchanged on paper, by way of concession to the tastes of those sections of the population who were addicted to the cheap attractions of Radio Ceylon, it was decided to set up a new service known as the All India Variety Programme, that is, Vividh Bharati. With two high power transmitters, one at Bombay and the other at Madras, set apart for the purpose, and with the emphasis laid mainly on light music and variety programmes, Vividh Bharati came on the air, with all the noise and fanfare which generally characterise official ventures, in the year 1957.

It will be seen, therefore, that the misconceived policy of forcing classical music on listeners created a situation which led to the popularity of Radio Ceylon, and which in turn necessitated the creation of Vividh Bharati. If the stations had been allowed to adhere to their original programme pattern and if the encouragement of classical music had been planned on a more rational basis, and not at the cost of light programmes, listeners would not have been weaned away from A.I.R. However, Vividh Bharati, born quite accidentally, has come to stay and is welcome as an alternative channel for lighter listening. Meanwhile, it has to be recorded that it took, Dr. Keskar's regime ten years to find its way back home—ten years in which money, effort and the interests of listeners went down the drain.

SPOKEN WORD: SOME CHARACTERISTICS

While music takes up the major part of the time of A.I.R. or, for that matter, of any other broadcasting organisation, it is the spoken word which is peculiar to the radio as a medium. Or, to put it differently, if broadcasting has to establish its status as an art form in its own right, it has to do so in relation to the spoken word.

The spoken word was in ancient times the supreme vehicle of projecting thought. All knowledge and wisdom flowed from teachers to the taught and from parents to the children by way of the spoken word. After the art of writing had been discovered there came into existence historical records, treatises on various subjects, scriptures based on moral and social laws and epics; and as time advanced, scholars all over the world reduced their thoughts, experiences and new interpretations to writing. But the field was limited and confined to scholars. Communication in general was through the spoken word.

About five hundred years ago, the invention of printing caused a complete metamorphosis in the field of communication and widened the horizons of knowledge and education. "The Printing press sealed the doom of the Middle Ages, and settled the fate of those early broadcasters—troubadours, minstrels, trouveres, minnesingers, bards and professional story-tellers who traded in the spoken word. The rising tide of printer's ink overwhelmed them."[8]

However, in the context of broadcasting—the most modern mode of communication of thought brought about by the radio —our concern is primarily, if not exclusively, with the spoken word. The very subtle distinction between the spoken word and the written has to be clearly defined and understood by the programme man, if radio programmes are to make a real impact on the listening millions. Without this, broadcasting from any institution will be a futile process—a mere avalanche of sound and fury signifying nothing. While making a comparative study of the spoken and written word, Dr. Narayana Menon has observed:

The writer is in no position to control the rhythms or shapes

[8] *The Broadcast Word*, A. Lloyd James, published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. (London) 1935.

that his words assume in the minds of his readers. The result is that we have developed a number of tricks and dodges, pointers and controls to take the place of pauses and inflections and emphasis. They include commas and semi-colons, fullstops, question marks, exclamation marks, paragraphs, italics, and even more arbitrary directives such as "on the other hand," "in fact," "we should be clear that," "it is very important to point out" etc. All these are quite legitimate devices and carefully used, they can give us a prose style that is unambiguous, even clear and effective, but few of us could read it aloud. It would be, in short, language addressed to the eye, not to the ear. Such a language has no place in broadcasting.

As far as broadcasting is concerned, Dr. Narayana Menon stresses that "we have to create a language which is as near the language of speech as possible ... the sound of words should be the operative factor in this language, not the shape. The voice can persuade, condemn, doubt, hesitate, approve, question, assert. It can bring rhythm and life to speech and fully exploit such tricks as alliteration and onomatopoeia." To the broadcaster, this is vital knowledge that the written word is addressed to the eye and the spoken word to ear.[9]

Let us move a step further. Granted that while writing for the radio a competent person has adequately marshalled his material, is there any guarantee that his effort will ensure a successful broadcast? Unfortunately, no. As A. Lloyd James says, "an excellent manuscript may be ruined when put to speech, because the speaker has failed to realise the abysmal gulf that separates the written from the spoken word ... what after all, is reading, but breathing, into the dead bones that lie about the printed page, the breath of life, making them live or rather making them come into life just as if they were being born, at that instant, out of the reader's mind".[10]

The act of reading aloud, speaking the written word or enacting the dialogues of a play raises a number of problems which an

[9] "The spoken Word" an article by Dr. Narayana Menon, published in the Radio Times of India (August, 1950).

[10] "The Broadcast Word" by A. Lloyd James, published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. London, (1935), p. 11.

artist must contend with. His pronunciation, style, mannerism, intonation, and his education (or lack of it), in fact his whole personality, must come into play while interpreting the written word. Only accomplished artists can impart the right sound to the written word.

However, a radio artist has an additional handicap. He is not face to face with his audience as he is while speaking from a pulpit or as in the theatre. It is not even like the cinema or television. Wherever the audience sees the performers directly, it makes a whole lot of difference in the technique. In radio, the artist and his audience are nowhere near each other. In the physical sense they are non-existent to each other. The basic fact about radio art—and this is the overriding fact—is that it is entirely an *aural* art with a complete absence of visual components. This is at once the weakness and the strength of *radio* as an art form!

The nature of radio as a medium has been discussed at some length by Donald McWhinnie. *Listening* alone is a very difficult job. We are used to *seeing* and *listening* simultaneously. "Listening has become almost incidental for most of us and it seems "we have abjured the use of ears, simply because the experience, if any, transmitted through them to the mind has proved inadequate or the effect demanded too exacting." But imagine a piece of conversation going on in a dark room. "The words acquire a compulsion of meaning they did not have before, they develop a richness of texture through being isolated, and you focus your sensibility and imagination on them as you rarely do in daylight." In fact radio as a medium makes the heaviest demand on the listeners' imagination. If the scene of a play is laid in a pitch dark night or for that matter in a moon-lit night, every listener will form a mental picture of these settings in the light of his own experience. To quote Donald McWhinnie: "He must make the experience his own, relate it in his head to his own terms of reference."[11]

The nature of the medium, therefore, so far as the spoken word is concerned, raises a number of problems for a professional broadcaster or a producer. On the air we only listen to something, what we hear is fleeting, changing from moment to moment and we hear it once and only once. If a programme is to make an impact it

[11] *The Art of Radio*, Donald McWhinnie, published by Faber and Faber (London) pp. 22-25.

must attract attention right from the start. What is being said must be immediately intelligible and the main points must be such as to stand out in one's memory so as to provide food for later thought. A programme must not be so long as to fatigue the listener and therefore cease to hold his active attention. How all this is achieved is mostly a matter of technique, and it is this which a radio producer must master. For example, he should be able to assist the talker or the writer to make his script suitable for broadcast. He should do this with all the tact at his command, unobstrusively. A radio script, no matter how well it is written, is but the bare bones of a programme. What counts is how well it is put across. Between the script and its broadcast lies the whole technique of production and the success or otherwise of the producer. In a talk, production brings out the whole personality of the man, giving you an idea worth pondering over or experiences that deserve sharing. In a commentary or a feature, production brings out words which paint pictures of what you are unable to see for yourself. And in a radio play, it is the entire scene which voice and sound seek to recreate for listeners. In fact it is not merely technique; it is a whole lot of 'live' knowledge behind the technique and of course imagination with a Capital I. The ideal producer therefore is so many things in one. As A. S. Bokhari the first Director-General of A.I.R. once said "Programme sense is common-sense." Without common-sense and imagination, however, knowledge or technique will not help any producer!

The spoken word has a wide canvas. It includes programmes each calling for special attention and treatment which may roughly be grouped as follows:

1. Talks and Discussions
2. Plays and features
3. Programmes for special audiences
4. News and Topical broadcasts
5. External Broadcasts
6. National Programmes

The above classification is partly based on considerations of broadcast techniques and characteristics and partly with a view to promoting coherent and connected thinking on some of the more

commonly discussed programmes of A.I.R. The programmes mentioned in the six groups do not represent distinct types as such. A topical broadcast may be in the form of a talk or a feature but all talks and features are not topical. Similarly national programmes do not themselves constitute a separate type though I have classified them separately because of the importance A.I.R. bestows on them.

Here, however, we shall content ourselves with attempting to answer only one question. How far has All India Radio developed the spoken word as an art form and made writers and talkers conscious of its uniqueness?

The potentialities of radio as an art form began to be realised in India with the assumption of office by Lionel Fielden as the Controller of A.I.R., in 1935. Loaned by the B.B.C., essentially a programme man and not an administrator, Fielden was sent to shoulder almost a "super-human" job. At least in programme matters he very nearly did that. His Report on Broadcasting for the period ending 31st March, 1939, is a proof of the gigantic effort that was being made to develop the art of broadcasting on the right lines, to make it popular with people without surrendering its strong points and above all to create more and more (if I may use the words) "radio-literature," that is, scripts written specially for radio.

A. S. Bokhari took over from Fielden in 1940 and remained at the helm of affairs till the eve of Indian independence. In Fielden's words "he was one of the wittiest men I have ever known, a brilliant conversationalist with a wide culture." Whatever other failings he may have had, he was an artist to the core. He holds a lasting place in Urdu literature as one of the pioneers of humorous writings. Keenly interested in literary programmes, a good broadcaster himself, he did not compromise on one thing; and that was, the requirements of radio technique.[12] Programme Assistants who used to produce various types of programmes received his

12 While Director-General, he produced programmes once in a while. This production was not a matter of giving instructions from his office and then checking over the final rehearsal. He did every bit of the work of an ordinary producer and was thoroughly critical of the results. No Director-General since, or Deputy Director-General, with the exception of Dr. Narayana Menon, has anything of a like grasp of production.

very strong support among literary circles. When "top" literary men questioned the literary capabilities of some of the Programme Assistants, he would say vigorously, a little pompously, "Give my programme boys good scripts and they would produce excellent programmes. They are there to produce programmes and not write literature."

After A. S. Bokhari, there has not been any other Director-General who understood the medium, its characteristics, its aesthetic and technical possibilities, and how best it could be put to the service of the people. There have been administrators who thought that what they thought was good for broadcasting. But things began to move, in a right or wrong direction, when Dr. B. V. Keskar took over as Minister of Information and Broadcasting in 1952. Talk of radio technique and the claims of the existing staff to any form of expertise was dismissed by him as so much nonsense. The function of the radio men was to find good artists and literary men and to put them before the microphone—and they would do the rest! There should be no "interference" with talkers and artists! In this policy of undermining the programme expert there were many factors which greatly aided the Minister. Firstly, there was the appointment of J. C. Mathur as Director-General in 1955 who continued to hold this charge for over six years. Apart from being an Indian Civil Service officer, J. C. Mathur had the added advantage of being styled a Hindi playwright. He was sure in his mind that there was nothing special about radio writing and production. Untrammelled by experience or the least shadow of a doubt about the finality of his own opinions, he set about putting his theories into practice with considerable, if not commendable, zest. The year 1956 will never be forgotten by the Staff of All India Radio. It was the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha. Long and complicated instructions poured out from the pen of the Director-General. Talks (described by him as "discourses") discussions, features, operas and plays were broadcast by the hundred. The ability of the listeners to absorb such programmes never disturbed his mind nor even the ability of the stations to produce them. The object behind the avalanche of putting across these fanciful programmes conceived in fine frenzy was, nevertheless, achieved. It put an end to all ideas of "production."

The policy of disregarding the uniqueness of radio found ex-

pression in numerous ways. The stations were asked to stage plays before invited audiences and to broadcast them. This was like photographing a stage play and imagining that the resulting monstrosity was cinema. As an alternative, it was suggested that arrangements should be made to record stage plays produced by professional or amateur groups for public performance and subsequently to broadcast the tape recordings or at least edited versions of them. The National Programme of Plays even included a dance performance and a shadow play in which the listener was expected to be satisfied with the background music and a running commentary on what the audience was viewing. These programmes may seem ridiculous today but for those who worked in A.I.R. it was no laughing matter. True, some of these programmes in their more *naked* forms have been withdrawn but the mental, if not the practical, distrust of radio expertise continues. The road to recovery is proverbially slow; certainly nothing substantial will be achieved so long as the present policies continue.

Discussing some of these issues in the weekly column, *Radio Forum,* in the *Hindustan Times,* Tara, observed:

> Why is it that even after a quarter of a century of existence broadcasting as an art has not received its due recognition even from those who have been entrusted with the shaping of its destiny in this country? Why, looking at A.I.R.'s glittering galaxy of poets, novelists, dramatists and others does one look in vain for a name that has primarily, or even secondarily, become well-known through and because of, marked success as a broadcaster? Why is there no evidence of a discerning selection of, say, talkers? Why is there so much of hesitation in asserting that the essential qualification for a broadcaster is a flair for broadcasting?

According to Tara, A.I.R. is "riddled with ridiculous rules and regulations." There is no "individual initiative" or "any desire to seek real broadcasting talent." After bemoaning "the refusal to recognise broadcasting as a specialised form of activity," the writer emphasised that the giving up of the "casual attitude towards broadcasting, which has been the outstanding feature of A.I.R.,

is now overdue."[13]

The other factor which helped to undermine radio as a special medium was the appointment of literary men, artists and others as producers at the stations and as Chief and Deputy Chief Producers at the Directorate-General. It was a mistake to think that once the artist is placed before the microphone everything else followed. Nevertheless, even if it were not so, it would be a most unreal conclusion that if literary men and musicians are appointed in A.I.R. they will be able to bring the best talent to the radio. But it is obvious that even in the case of classical music, to achieve good presentation, expert knowledge of radio technique, is necessary. At any rate, the last eight or ten years have amply shown that musicians or literary men are not necessarily better equipped to cope with artists and writers and to get the best out of them. For this purpose sympathy, understanding and tact are far more imporant; natural artistic rivalry is definitely a hindrance. However, it is only relevant to point out that these persons came into A.I.R. at a fairly advanced age. Some of them had established reputations in the literary field. They were hardly inclined to appreciate that they had any thing to learn about radio technique and that, too, from the much maligned permanent staff who were openly declared "nobodies." Little did the authorities realise that the nature of the medium being what it is, the need for enrolling first rank creative writers and musicians on the staff was an unnecessary hindrance. At best the first rank artists and musicians provide the raw material. It is for the programme men to put this material to the best possible use. Wholesale recruitment of creative writers and musicians to handle production which was all along being done by experienced and trained programme men created a confusion and crisis of broadcasting values and misapplication of techniques. It is on this score that A.I.R. has been criticised as a graveyard of talent.[14]

Moreover, production, which means the fittest arrangement and the most effective projection of the best in other people's work, requires qualities which are not often to be found in creative ar-

[13] *Hindustan Times*: dated August 12, 1962.

[14] Mr. Hem Barua, the Praja Socialist Member of the Parliament, used this phrase in his speech on the budget demands of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting on 28th May, 1962.

tists themselves. The most important of these is the subordination of one's own ego to the sympathetic understanding and appreciation of another man's work. One may create without being disciplined, but one cannot produce programmes of uniformly high quality if one is erratic."[15]

[15] The standing proof of the hollowness of Dr. Keskar's claim that the appointment of literary men on the staff of A.I.R. would help to bring the best available talent to stations, is provided by the Allahabad Station. On its staff is the renowned Hindi poet, Sumitranandan Pant, the first to be appointed as Chief Producer in A.I.R. and subsequently the first person to be designated as Sahitya Salahkar (part-time adviser) with the privilege of not attending the office. Allahabad Station is notorious for group rivalries and factions among writers. This situation has continued for over a decade. While some would say this situation exists because of Sumitranandan Pant's position in A.I.R., it is nevertheless a fact that it is there despite him.

TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS

"The most important department, the most difficult to manage successfully, and the most difficult to describe simply is the Talks Department, which has to deal with immense variety of subjects in a variety of ways".[16] Lord Simon wrote this in the context of B.B.C. Nevertheless it is true of A.I.R. in many ways.

Talking comes natural to everyone and everyone talks about everything. That's not difficult and perhaps that is the one thing that keeps us going. But if one is asked to say something definite about something specific one finds oneself in a quandary. You are not then to talk "about" but to talk "on" something. That is not an easy task. Compactness, brevity and exactitude are the prerequisites of a radio script. A talker is allotted only a limited time, say 10 or 15 minutes (sometimes even 5) and he has to say all that he wants to during this period. Within this time-limit the talker has no scope for beating about the bush. He must have a direct approach to his subject and grip the listeners' attention with a lucid and gripping exposition of the subject.

While writing the script of a radio talk, care has to be bestowed upon the language employed in the exposition of one's ideas on a particular theme. Apart from the fact that ornate, heavily studded and flowery language is in any case looked upon with disfavour these days, by connoisseurs and the public alike, its use would stand in the way of a good broadcast. A radio talk is different from an article in a newspaper or a journal. It is to be read by the talker and listened to by tens of thousands of people. An unnecessary use of high-flown language tends to make the sentences complex and long and often a number of sentences would sound "meaningless" to a listener because he fails to establish a relevant co-relationship between the various clauses and sub-clauses of a sentence. Simplicity of style and approach are the two factors that matter to a really good talker.

That is not all. After a talk has been written it has to be broadcast by the writer. And there is the rub. Some very good writers have proved to be very bad broadcasters. A person, howsoever capable and competent he may be in his own sphere, will seldom

[16] *The B.B.C. From Within*, Lord Simon of Wythenenshawe, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London (1953) p. 115.

succeed on the air if he lacks certain essential qualities. One might well ask, "What makes a good talker?" No one can answer this question with any measure of definiteness. The voice that sounds good to one may appear bad, even indifferent, to another. There are people who like a deep resonant voice. There are others who prefer it soft. Thus there can be no universal standard about good talkers and bad talkers. But one need not on that account despair. Actual experience shows that, whereas there may be two opinions about a good talker, about a bad talker there is invariably one.

Talking on the radio is different from public speaking. There may be lakhs of listeners to a talk but the talker cannot forget that they are divided into thousands of tiny "groups," and in many cases the group may consist of only one individual. On the radio, therefore, talking really means talking to oneself. A successful radio talker talks in the way one talks to a man across the tea-table. A radio talker must not imitate a platform speaker or a professor in his classroom.[17]

A discussion is in many ways an extension of a talk. A discussion should be as natural, lively and vigorous as possible. It should not be allowed to become digressive, long drawn-out, enmeshed in minor irrelevancies, as often happens in a drawing-room discussion. A radio discussion should have the freshness, sincerity and candour of a drawing-room discussion but not its laxity. A well-produced discussion can be a rewarding listening. The participants are in a more natural frame of mind, discussing as they are amongst themselves, a subject of their liking, quite oblivious of the fact that they are being listened to by others. But we should not imagine that a discussion implies the bringing together of a few persons and throwing a subject amidst them. Very few men possess the gift to discuss in a sensible manner for an appreciable length of time and to "sustain a lively connected passage of public thinking on the spur of the moment." It calls for a considerable forethought and effort to produce a really lively discussion.

In 1961, talks and discussions took up only 5.51 per cent of the total output of A.I.R. For twentyfive years since the inception of broadcasting in India, 15 minutes was the normal duration of a

[17] Article entitled "Talking on Talks" by G. C. Awasthy in the *Radio Times of India*, July 1955, p. 26.

talk. In course of time this duration was found to be too long. Now a talk does not normally exceed 10 minutes. Perhaps this is just the right duration. But in any case, the duration of a talk has in itself no bearing on its unpopularity as a radio programme. Generally, stations broadcast a talk or two a day, though some broadcast more in order, perhaps, to keep the listener away. But the stations have to take a number of compulsory relays from Delhi; items such as "Matters of Moment"; "the National Programmes of Talks"; "Today in Parliament" and so on. Thus there are days in a week when originated and relayed talks and discussions add up to four and even five.

With the days fixed, the total number of talks required in a quarter of the year are calculated and the quarterly Talks Schedule of a station is drawn up, and sent to the Headquarters for scrutiny. In the old days, the career of many a programme man was made or marred by the kind of Schedule he had drawn up. Today, a poor Talks Schedule goes through without raising an eye-brow. To the Headquarters, a Station's calibre is known by the quality of its Talks Schedule. To the listener, a station's intellectual worth is known by the quality of its broadcast talks. Judged from any standpoint, a station's Talks Schedule is a highly responsible assignment.

A Talks Schedule is a six to ten page document, listing about twelve to fifteen series of talks on a variety of subjects which, in the opinion of those who have planned them, would be of interest to listeners in different walks of life. Every Schedule contains one or two series of discussions. It is customary to divide the schedule into three or four sections such as the utility talks, the political talks, the general talks, and the "individual" talks. Under each section a fairly wide range of subjects is selected for treatment. Subjects are naturally varied from quarter to quarter. Except for "individual" talks on isolated subjects, usually a subject or a particular angle on a subject is reduced to the framework of a series of five or six talks. Each such series has an attractive, catchy main title governing the sub-titles of the talks under it. Against each talk, the name of the proposed talker is given. The scope of each series and the talks or discussions under each series are suitably explained in brief notes. These notes are passed on to talkers for

guidance.

After receipt of the approval of the Headquarters, the Talks Schedule is immediately processed; that is to say, each series of talks and discussions is assigned a day and a suitable frequency. thus spreading the schedule over the entire quarter.

This is more or less a routine matter. The next important stage in the implementation of the Schedule is to contact the talkers, and after the engagement of suitable talkers, to get each talk written strictly within the scope of the series and in accordance with the requirements of the medium. Further, if one wants the brilliant idea that gave birth to a series of talks to consummate in the form of a delightful broadcast, one might produce the talk. Otherwise, one rests with the execution of routine. The production of a talk involves the vetting of the script, if necessary, and rehearsals of the talker, which is a *must* in any broadcasting organisation. But as conditions in All India Radio are, the vetting of talks by important people is dreaded lest they be annoyed which they invariably are. Rehearsals are often found neither necessary, nor convenient. In short talks are not *produced*: they are merely put across. Unfortunately, the words of Lionel Gamlin[18] that "it calls for just as much artistry to produce an effective broadcast talk as it does to produce ITMA, or a full dress version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* carry no conviction either with the expert at the studio end or with the layman at the receiving end.

According to A.I.R.'s Handbook for Junior Programme Staff, "Some people have the impression that every talk must be a literary production, whatever the subject. Some talkers' therefore attempt to give a literary turn to their talk even if they are talking about how to sow potatoes, or how to prevent malaria, or how an aeroplane works. The main object of such talks is to give some information clearly and *in an interesting manner*". That is one point of view; the other is that of Lionel Gamlin. According to him, "if broadcasting is communication for pleasure, it is not enough for the broadcaster to communicate; he must also persuade." But need persuasion or, for that matter, expression, be clothed always in literary language? True, information or instruc-

18 *You're on the Air*, Lionel Gamlin, published by Chapman & Hall Ltd., London (1947) p. 16.

tion is one of the functions of broadcasting, but that is a point which need not be rubbed in time and again. A defect from which most A.I.R. talks suffer is the exclusive concern with content to the utter neglect of the manner and style of putting it across. S. N. Chile in his contribution entitled "The Spoken Word" to the symposium *Aspects of Broadcasting in India,* published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, observes:

> Another factor which has partly determined the character of spoken word broadcasts is A.I.R.'s concern with the content; what is said is more important than how it is said. This is to some extent inevitable in a country in which the national broadcasting organisation is run by the State, and the stress is on educating the listener. The expert who often packs his talk with facts is preferred to one who is mainly interested in amusing the listener and holding his attention. What is it then that we wish to achieve in a talk? First, of course, that it should be listened to with pleasure; and secondly, that it should stimulate interest in the subject. But the first is not merely the means to an end; it may be, but it would be an end in itself. A talk must have the qualities of an interesting conversation; not necessarily the slang, the repetitiveness and the inconclusiveness of a conversation but the approximation to spoken speech and its intimacy and ease.[19]

Like the manner of expression in writing the manner of speech in a radio talk is of equal importance. And here I quote from Lloyd James. A knowledge of the "rhythm and intonation of the language in which the talk is written is very essential for an effective manner of speech."[20] The written word is one thing and the spoken word another. Therefore the talkers' first lesson must be the realisation of this difference and all that it implies.

Sometime in the early fifties a listener Research Survey conducted in Delhi showed that talks commanded approximately 4 per

[19] *Aspects of Broadcasting in India,* published by Publications Division, Delhi (1950), p. 13.

[20] *The Broadcast Word,* A. Lloyd James, published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. London, (1935), p. 18.

cent listening. Perhaps this is about the smallest audience for any programme put out by All India Radio. Let us then enquire as to how it is that A.I.R.'s talks make such poor programmes.

An important reason is A.I.R.'s fear of discussing controversial issues. On the innumerable issues which arise from time to time and which arouse lively interest in the public mind, A.I.R. remains silent, or at best presents a statement of the official line through the voice of a Minister or a high ranking official. Such broadcasts have no interest for the listener, for, whatever the Government line, the presentation in such cases generally follows a dull and unimaginative pattern. One is quite sure that if A.I.R. had, at the appropriate time, arranged talks or discussions on, for example, the MIG negotiations, or on our attitude towards China, or on the shortage of foreign exchange, etc., listening would have shot up enormously. Again people would have been most interested to hear the views of the leaders of political parties themselves on the Chief Election Commissioner's proposal for pre-election broadcasts. A.I.R. could have made capital out of these occasions and become a real national institution by discussing live public issues.

Unfortunately, this fear of controversy does not confine itself to political or economic issues effecting Government. A.I.R. carries its fear of controversy into almost every sphere of thought, whether it be a social matter, art or religion. Taya Zinkin tells us in her book *Caste in India* that she was forbidden to use the word caste in a talk broadcast from the Bombay Station on the ground that the Government of India had abolished caste. Cases of this kind occur every day in the stations of A.I.R.; one rarely hears about them because talkers' know that they would cease to be booked if they created a public controversy or criticized the radio. How often is it that we are attracted by an interesting subject and then find the actual broadcast disappointing because the speaker failed to get to grips with the real issues. Allied with this fear of controversy is A.I.R.'s fear of persons who are not in favour with the Government both at the Centre and in the States. The constant fear is that a talker might say something that displeases the Government, and for that reason it is better to play safe. It would be worth enquiring how many persons such as Rajaji, Acharya Kripalani and other top political leaders, have been invited to broadcast in the last five years or so. A.I.R. will tell you that

qualified persons, irrespective of political affiliations, are invited to broadcast; but, in fact, only those that the bureaucrats think "safe" are actually booked. Unless A.I.R. has the courage to discuss current and controversial issues in a free and open manner, there is little future for its talks and discussion programmes.

This "play safe" policy of A.I.R. talks is reflected in the importance which is attached to the vetting of scripts—a hang-over from wartime when "censorship of broadcast matter" was of concern. There is a list of "dos" and "don'ts" on what should or should not go into a programme. This list includes avoidance of publicity, direct or indirect, for living personalities, political parties and private concerns, and criticizing foreign Governments with whom India has diplomatic relations. These "don'ts" are perhaps unobjectionable if interpreted in a broad sense. But in a Government office instructions are taken literally and lead to results which are downright stupid. For instance A.I.R. does not broadcast film reviews because this would lead to publicity to film producers; and the Minister, Dr. Keskar, was in any case not happy with them. For several years, in reviewing books A.I.R. did not mention the prices of the books it reviewed and mention of the publisher was one of the primary "don'ts". Fortunately, good sense prevailed, since the rule, if followed to its logical conclusion, would have meant that A.I.R. should review books without mentioning their authors and titles. The A.I.R. officials get very worried every time the President or the Prime Minister performs the opening ceremony of some new industrial undertaking in the private sector. As part of the Plan publicity it is necessary, but alas! how to get round mentioning the name of the undertaking—perhaps the name can be mentioned only once in an inconspicuous manner! One dare not answer Chinese propaganda in like terms because India has "friendly," that is, diplomatic relations with the country. One of the grounds for the transfer of the Station Director from a certain station was that he had suggested to a Minister that his honourable self should tone down a saccharine passage devoted to eulogising the Chief Minister of the State. Unhappily the poor official had learned the rules of A.I.R. a little too well!

One major trouble about A.I.R. talks is that they are not "produced." A subject is chosen and a speaker is booked. When the script is received, the script is vetted to see that none of the "don'ts"

have crept in. Thereafter, the talker reads it out over the microphone and collects the cheque. The fact, however, is that the "production" of a talk should begin at a very early state: right from the selection of a subject and a potentially good speaker. One must first of all find a subject which will be attractive, that is, live, which will interest the public. To do this the talks producer must keep his eyes and ears open, he must be himself mentally alert and aware. Having thought of a possible subject he must equip himself so that when he goes to meet a talker he can draw him out and put before the expert, what it is in the subject that would interest the man in the street. During this meeting he must gauge whether the expert will make a good talker, whether he has humour and imagination to deal with his subject in the sort of language that would interest the lay listener. Most of what can be done about producing a good talk has to be done at this stage. After the script is written comes the rehearsal—to which the B.B.C. gives several hours—whereas in A.I.R. rehearsals are either non-existent, or too ritualistic and brief to be of any use.

What has been so far said about the talks producer shows clearly that he should be a person with a good general education, lively mind, full of tact and able to draw out others. He must also have the inclination and leisure to specialize in particular subjects. No one person is or can become competent to deal with all subjects from astronomy to the tribes of Assam. The fact is that persons of the right intellectual calibre are not attracted by the salaries and prospects offered by A.I.R. Moreover, in A.I.R. itself no opportunities for specialization are afforded. So, in A.I.R. the talks man becomes a hack worker, a sort of poor quality journalist, capable of picking up only what is obvious, dead and dull.

If you compare the issues of the *Indian Listener* separated by a span of ten years you will see from any station that a few old and established names are being repeated. These persons have been tried out before, they are safe and reliable. The subjects they talk about are of no topical interest. The talk broadcast today could as well have been broadcast ten years before and vice-versa. This is so because the Talks Executive or Producer does not have the requisite qualities. Such a person can command no respect among the talkers he goes to contact and they are hardly likely to act on his suggestions especially for the pittance that the talker usually

gets.

This brings me to another important reason for the poor quality of talks. The basic fee of Rs. 25 came into existence twenty-five years ago and it still continues to be the yardstick in terms of which the fees of talkers are fixed. A few talkers, including all members of the Parliament get Rs. 50. For National Programme talks there is a special fee of Rs. 100. For these fees A.I.R. acquires complete copyright in the script and buys also the voice of the talker. There is no royalty for publication in A.I.R. journals or for rebroadcast of a tape recording! The fall in the real value of the rupee, the enormous expansion of journalism and the opportunities it offers for writing and earning handsome rates of payment are so obvious that they hardly need mention. Nevertheless, A.I.R. has not been moved to raise its rates of payment to talkers even after the lapse of 25 years. The argument generally used is that paying more will not make talkers any better. This argument is, however, quite invalid.

In the first instance, if the fee for a talk is attractive, better talkers would be willing to broadcast oftener than now. A person well paid would certainly try to give better results. He will rewrite a script if necessary and be available for rehearsal—neither of which he is prepared to do for the present fee. Professional writers, outstanding journalists and a lot of other people who take writing seriously, will find writing and broadcasting attractive. At present such people cannot spare the time for A.I.R. But increased expenditure on talkers' fees would pay rich dividends in the shape of listener worthiness of "talks" programmes.

An ideal broadcast talk, at least in our country, is a rare phenomenon. Talks schedules are drawn up, quarter after quarter and almost thirty to forty talks are broadcast everyday from different stations of A.I.R., but almost ninety per cent of them die unheard, and not a tear is shed in the high fidelity world of sound. That it is so indeed a matter for regret; more, of course, for those who plan and produce such programmes, than for those who just have no patience to listen to them. And those who enjoy them or accept them for what they are worth are, in fact, so few that one cannot escape looking upon broadcast talks as a fairly unpopular category of programme. Whether they owe their unpopularity to the man at the Studio end who makes a poor job of his responsibili-

ties, or to the listener at the receiving end who refuses to develop a taste for talks, is a point which is best left to A.I.R. to think about. What distresses one is that a reputation of this kind for any radio programme is bad in itself. In such moments of distress, one can only look forward along with Lionel Gamlin "to the day when Science provides these broadcasters with an illuminated panel in the studio, upon which the twinkling lights representing the listeners to their broadcasts fade one by one as the talk grows drearier and drearier."[21]

PLAYS AND FEATURES

It is proposed to discuss plays and features together because a feature programme is essentially and basically a "dramatic item." For the sake of convenience, we shall first deal with the well-established and accepted characteristics of a radio play and then discuss various aspects of a feature programme, which are neither well-defined nor uniformly accepted either by producers of these programmes or their critics. Along with this we shall discuss A.I.R.'s work in this field.

*The Radio Play**

The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the "film-play" and, later, of the radio play. The growth and bifurcation of this art form into two channels was the direct result of stupendous scientific developments. The film helped writers and producers considerably to try new subjects and to experiment with new forms of presentation but people had to "assemble" together to witness a stage or a film play. The radio obviated that necessity. And in that the radio play has an advantage. It carries art to the homes of listener's Writing in 1934, Lance Sieveking observed: "It is more than likely, this present decade will be the only decade in the history of the human race which will know the radio play,

[21] *You're on the Air*, Lionel Gamlin, published by Chapman and Hall Ltd. (1947), p. 16.

* Some of the material used in this section is taken from the article "The Radio-Play" by G. C. Awasthy, published in the *Radio Times of India*, issue July 16, 1962, p. 10.

that strange curiosity which appeals to the ear alone, just as the three preceding decades may be the only ones to know of the silent film."[22] The facts, however, have been to the contrary. Instead of fading out of existence, the radio play has developed significantly as an art form in almost all countries of the world. This is not without reason.

A radio play is a "play addressed to the ear not the eye, enhanced with effects or incidental noises to add as much realism as the producer thinks fit; and there are different schools of thought as to how many of these effects it is legitimate to use, what the functions of the narrator are, what is the place in all this of musical interludes, and so forth."[23] Though these words were written more than 23 years ago, they hold good even now. For the producer of the radio play, continues to be faced with all sorts of problems.

It is but natural that the techniques of the three art-forms—the stage-play, the film-play and the radio-play should be different. An aspiring writer of radio plays must therefore, grasp the potentialities and limitations of the medium of broadcasting. Here the artists can only be heard, and not both seen and heard. This makes the task of the radio producer considerably more difficult than that of stage and film producers. He has to marshall all the aids to presentation that he has at his disposal to project the play successfully over the air to listeners who are widely scattered and listen in small groups.

James Whipple, Instructor, Radio Classes in the University of Chicago, and producer of hundreds of radio programmes, has listed in his book *How to write for Radio* the different aids which lie at the disposal of the motion picture scenarists, playrights and radio drama artists. The motion picture scenarist, depends upon sound effects, music, facial expression, gestures, costumes, scenery, lighting effects and stage properties. Moreover actors have physical eccentricities which help characterisation and heighten dramatic effect. There can be a large cast without confusing the audience. Similarly, silent actions of actors (betraying nervousness, etc), natural scenery and locale, unlimited changes in sets, trick-photo-

[22] *The Stuff of Radio*, Lance Sieveking, published by Cassell (1934), p. 28.

[23] *B.B.C.*, Paul Bloomfield, published by Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, W.C. 2, (1941), p. 142.

graphy, colour photography and the close-up all help the motion picture scenarist. A writer of a stage play has only 12 aids and the poor radio writer and producer has only three—dialogue, sound effects and music! We may add one more, Silence, which can also be used with telling effect. This will illustrate the magnitude of the task that he faces.

The essence of a radio play is the same as that of the earliest folk-tale told by a granny to the baby in her lap. To be effective, a story must be simple. Since the radio play is heard amidst one's family members with possible distraction from visitors, the producer cannot expect from listeners the concentrated attention which is given by an audience sitting in a hall seeing and hearing a stage performance or a film. The audience in a theatre or for that matter in a cinema hall is mentally tuned to receive the piece. As Donald McWhinnie says, going to the theatre is something of an occasion; people go there to share in a communal experience. This phenomenon may be a little less in the case of cinema, non-the-less it is there. The radio play on the other hand has directly to appeal to the listeners' imagination. The audience of the radio play has simply to be held by its interest. A play with a complicated plot and a big cast has fair chances of being a flop. If it does succeed there must be other predominant factors. The first five minutes in a radio play are very crucial. If the piece does not take hold of the listener from the start there is nothing to prevent him from switching off. Even if the first battle is won, the producer cannot afford to loosen the grip. The listener's attention must be held to the end by the sheer intrinsic merits of the drama.

It needs to be emphasised that the success of a radio writer will largely be in proportion to his capacity to write good dialogue. Not only must the dialogue be clear and easily understandable but also capable of being effectively spoken. Innumerable passages of literary brilliance may be a source of delight to be read in a novel but if they are bodily lifted from the text and put into a radio script, may be quite impossible to be rendered over the mike by an artist. Quite apart from limitations of time, a radio script must be a compact and well-knit piece, and there is no scope for unnecessary sentences which do not either push the story forward or help in characterisation. The dialogue must at the same time delineate character, define the locale and carry the story along.

A radio play normally cannot get away with a big cast. Too many voices will strain the listener. The most effective way of putting dialogue across the microphone is by voice-contrast. In fact, voice-contrast is basic to a radio play. It helps the listener to distinguish between the various characters without too much trouble. The smaller the cast the easier it would be for the producer to make voice-contrast effective. The number of women characters should in any case be kept to the very minimum. One woman sounds like another. The voice range being limited, it becomes at times difficult to distinguish between even two or three women talking to one another.

A good many successful stage-plays have been effectively rendered on the radio. This does not mean that it is easy to adapt for the radio. In fact, most adaptations have been of indifferent quality. To omit long narrative passages and descriptions of objects and persons, to reduce the length of scenes and to cut down here and add a word there does not make an adaptation. To take dialogues from a book and transfer them into the jacket of a radio play is to signal the death-knell of the work. Val Gielgud, Head of Drama in the B.B.C. for more than two decades has rightly observed in his book, *The Right way to Radio Playwriting* that adaptation "means the proper telling of the story in terms of a medium different from that in which it was originally conceived. It does mean preserving at all costs the spirit of the story and the motivating purpose of the original author in telling it." A writer needs to go deep into the spirit of a work before he can confidently adapt it for a new medium. Val Gielgud mentions a unique case of adaptation which is of great interest. Halt Marvell adapted Mackenzie's novel, *Carnival*. When the adaptation was completed, Mackenzie could not tell what part of the dialogue was his own and what had been added by Marvell. "This was indeed a wedding of two minds brought about largely by the extreme and almost burning enthusiasm for the original work which had flamed in Mr. Marvell's breast for a number of years."[24]

It would be useful to consider here the importance of sound effects. There are natural sounds we are mostly familiar with and directly available to us. Other sounds are specially created, ingeni-

[24] *The Right-Way To Radio Playwriting*, Val Gielgud, published by Andrew George Elliot, Kingswood, Surrey (1948), pp. 53-58.

ously contrived and recorded for later use, including creation of special music and musical effects. Without belittling the utility and necessity of this aid to presentation it can safely be said that hitherto the true significance of sound effects has not been fully grasped. There are writers who attach too exaggerated an importance to these while others too little. Luckily that period has passed when plays were written just to display certain types of sound effects. It is, however, true that unless sound effects are something like the "stage properties," absolutely necessary for effective presentation, they can be dispensed with. As a rule, the use of sound effects should be kept to the minimum. For one thing, a large number of objects produce similar or more or less similar sounds, and too many sounds in a radio script not only spoil the overall effect but are positively distracting. It would not be a compliment to a writer or a producer if a listener's attention has been more absorbed in the sound effects than in the script.

In the beginning of radio history, music was generally used (and is still being used, though with less vehemence and more understanding) to connote changeover from one scene to another. In such cases music is nothing more than what the curtain is in the theatre. This is none too happy a use of music. Music, like sound effects, has been associated with the radio play since its origin. In spite of long usage there is still no settled opinion on its place in a dramatic work. One thing, however, is certain: unless a script is conceived in terms both of speech and music, it would be better to do without music.

In short, dialogue, sound effects, and music are the tools of the producer of a radio play. The raw materials of this medium, as Donald McWhinnie calls them, are: Word, Sound (which includes music and natural sounds as well as specially contrived music and sounds) and silence.

Having considered in theory what the characteristics of a radio play are, let us see how they have been developed in A.I.R. In the early years of broadcasting the radio play took on the characteristics of the theatre as it existed on the stage in any particular region. In Calcutta, the Bengali theatre was a marathon affair in which an average production on the stage lasted at least half the night. Radio plays were broadcast by the station for three hours at a time. At Bombay the Parsi, Gujarati and Urdu theatre were put

on the air; and in Madras, the mythological play held sway. On this scene arrived Lionel Fielden, and within a few years came the Second World War to assist him to cut down radio theatre to the size of its requirements. Plays were, therefore, broadcast for a duration of 30 minutes generally and attention was beginning to be paid to such essentials as the use of a smaller number of distinct and recognizable voices, dialogues as distinct from speeches, sound perspective and so on. The stations employed a nucleus of drama staff artists from which the main voices, effectsmen and occasionally producers were drawn, and the production was handled largely by the regular staff, Programme Assistants and others. A body of writers who understood the requirements of radio, some of whom had direct experience of radio as members of the staff, such as Krishna Chandra, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Rafi Peer, Adi Marzban and C. C. Mehta was beginning to emerge. The stations held occasional drama weeks in which good plays, including those obtained from other languages, were performed. The effects utilized were generally obtained from the B.B.C. and producers showed a certain preference for western music for bridging scenes, indicating passage of time and for emotional colouring.

Dr. Keskar was indifferent to drama. While the word of radio music was being made topsy-turvy by him, radio drama went on its usual course untouched though somewhat reduced in status due to meagre funds. When J. C. Mathur became the Director-General things changed. J. C. Mathur was not only a playwright in Hindi, he had a practical interest in theatre. With characteristic zeal and self-assurance he went ahead devising plans and putting them into practice.

Within a few months of his assuming charge the National Programme of Plays came into operation in July 1956. A play from a particular language was selected for broadcast. It was translated from the original language into English and this master-copy in English was circulated to the stations. At the station the play underwent a second translation, into the regional language of the area, before being put on the air. Thus every month a play was selected and translated into the regional languages for broadcast over the entire network. The only change that has occurred since then, is that the master-copy is now prepared in Hindi. For this purpose, persons who know Hindi and the regional language of

the station, have been appointed as staff artists. At least in theory, this procedure for the broadcast of the National Programme of Plays, has served to give people an idea of the theatre in the various regional languages.

It was J. C. Mathur's belief that there was no such thing as a radio play as distinct from the stage play. This was reflected in his choice of plays for the first set of the National Programmes. He cast his net among the nineteenth century stage plays. He issued instructions to the stations to stage plays before invited audiences and to relay these over the air. In certain places where a professional or semi-professional theatre existed (as in Calcutta and Bombay) the stations were asked to relay their public performances. Programme staff were placed in a most embarrassing situation in having to comply with these unrealistic and quixotic orders. How, for instance, the expenses on make-up, costume and sets for which no provision exists in A.I.R. were met, one does not know. Subterfuges had to be employed which went sourly against the professional and ethical grain of the staff.

Acting on the assumption that there is no difference between stage and radio drama, the A.I.R. stations proceeded to employ as Drama Producers persons drawn from the stage who had no knowledge or experience of radio production. The Director-General could well expect from such persons the required support for his view, which he could not get from those who had been professionally interested in radio production work. The claims of those who had been producing radio play for the better part of their lives and had built up reputations as drama producers such as S.S.S. Thakur in Delhi and Birendra Kumar Bhadra in Calcutta, to mention only two, were ignored in the original selections. The newly appointed producers from outside A.I.R. were people of advanced age well past the stage of learning anything. Their interest in A.I.R. was that it provided them with a means of extending their contacts with the stage or film world. Inevitably "production" suffered and is now almost non-existent in radio plays.

What, it may be asked, has happened to the drama artist? The fact is that he has been almost completely ignored. A move was indeed made at a formalized system of auditions on the model obtaining for music, but fortunately it broke down. The drama auditions, therefore, continue to be conducted at the stations as before

by the regular staff. But, partly for this reason also, nothing was done during the Keskar-Mathur regime to grade the drama artists and to fix appropriate fees. In recent years, some sort of grading has been attempted on the recommendation of Station Directors. The highest grade of "top class" is reserved for a handful of film and stage professionals in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Their fees range between Rs. 75 and Rs. 100. 'A' grade artists are entitled to fees which lie between Rs. 50 and Rs. 70 and the others go down to a dead average of Rs. 25.

Radio drama today continues its existence in a completely maribund condition. Most often the scripts are received too late for proper production. The duration of the National Programme of plays come down from 90 to 60 minutes, and occasionally plays of a shorter duration are broadcast. But the problems of producing broadcast—worthy plays that have come out of the hands of two translators remain untackled. The condition of the routine plays from various stations is still worse. When the producer gets the script there is very little time for a serious attempt at production and he is further hampered by the acute shortage of studios which has now become chronic in A.I.R. The plays go on the air with little or no rehearsals and certainly without any attempt at interpretation and characterization. Sound perspective is a forgotten technique. What we get is lines artificially read before the microphone. When a prestige programme such as the National Programme sets a low standard what indeed is one to expect of the general run of radio plays!

A word would not be out of place regarding the writers of radio plays. Not only in India but elsewhere, it is difficult to get plays specially written for radio. For one thing, the payment is low. A radio production cannot make the same impression which successful stage plays do. There is not much scope for the publication of radio plays. Besides, poor fees do not attract well-known writers. Nevertheless it has been possible to get a few writers interested in the broadcasting medium. In Britain, for example, Louis Macniece, Dylan Thomas, Sackville West and Dorothy L. Sayers are among the best known playwrights who have contributed to radio, while in the United States, Corwin and Macbish come at once to mind. If one turns to India there is hardly a writer to name. Money may be a factor but it is not the only one. If a writer cannot make

money he does want the facilities to experiment and make a name for himself. Alas no such opportunities are provided in A.I.R. P.L. Deshpande while he was the Deputy Chief Producer for Drama, could have been expected to make a contribution both as a writer and a producer. But he was given no freedom to work in the studios and eventually he resigned in disgust. And, of course, nothing extraordinary can be expected of those who have taken over from him.

The Radio Feature

What do we mean when we say that a "feature programme" is on the air? What sort of a fare do we expect? Obviously, not a talk or discussion, or play or poem; nor a running commentary, nor even an out of the way spot recording. We look forward to listening to a feature and nothing more or less. But then what is a feature programme, or, what is a radio feature? When someone talks of the radio play, he means a play for the ear and not the eye but he would never care to define what a play is. Again when someone speaks of a radio talk he is not much bothered about what is meant by a "talk"; he is mainly concerned about the qualities which go to the making of a successful radio talk. Why? The simple answer is that long before radio came into existence the "play" was known—the stageless play, the stage play, the silent film and the film. Again everyone knows what "talking" means—talking on the radio is an extension of talking in one's home, office, or for that matter, on the platform. But we did not have any experience of the radio feature before the birth of the radio. The radio feature, in that sense, is the most typical of radio's creative activities. But the question, what is a radio feature, still remains unanswered. In spite of the fact that feature programmes have become extremely popular and are presented in ever-increasing number by all broadcasting organisations, it is indeed surprising that no precise definition is forthcoming.

Broadcastng started in India in 1927, but in Lionel Fielden's Report covering the progress of Indian broadcasting for the period upto 31st March, 1939, there are only 8 lines devoted to these programmes. Fielden made three points:

(*i*) The feature programme had been greatly developed in the West;

(*ii*) It was too early in India to attempt these programmes on a grand scale; and

(*iii*) Technical facilities for such programmes were largely lacking.

It is not surprising, therefore, that feature programmes were classified in the report under the heading "miscellaneous" along with programmes like outside broadcasts, poetry, religious and rural programmes. However, Fielden tried to give us a definition of these programmes in a footnote on page 19:

> It may be desirable to attempt a description of "feature programmes" although this is by no means easy. Feature programmes are used a great deal by all broadcasting organizations. It may be said that a feature programme is a method of employing all the available methods and tricks of broadcasting to convey information or entertainment in a palatable form. Feature programmes may range from a description of some process of manufacture interspersed with sound effects, conversations with workers, and so forth to an arrangement of poetry and music compiled so as to present and develop an idea.[25]

The above attempt to define a radio feature fails in giving any idea regarding its nature, scope and chief characteristics. It tends to describe a feature as a *method,* whereby we use "all the available methods and tricks of broadcasting." This definition leaves a lot of unspecified territory. A method is merely a technique to do things in an orderly manner. But the method or manner of doing a thing is not equivalent to the thing itself. In fact, the above definition can apply to anything put on the radio.

Ten years later in a brilliant introduction to his book *B.B.C. Features,* Laurence Gilliam dealt with some important aspects of the radio feature and till date this remains the most outstanding exposition of the characteristics of this category of programmes. According to him, as these programmes "fitted no known formula,

[25] *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India* (upto the period 31st March, 1939); published by Manager of Publications, Delhi (1940) p. 19.

and for that reason stood out from the run of programmes stemming from existing forms, they were grouped under generic title of feature programmes." By and large, these programmes "came to signify wide range of programme items, usually factual and documentary, presented by a variety of techniques, but mostly making use of dramatisation and edited actuality." Laurence Gilliam goes on to say: "The significance of the feature programme is, then, that it is the form of statement that broadcasting has evolved for itself, as distinct from those other forms which it has borrowed or adapted from other arts or methods of publication. It is pure radio, a new instrument for the creative writer and producers."

Highlighting the difference between a talk and a feature programme, Laurence Gilliam observed:

> Radio feature programmes have always been under the compulsion to make the listener feel as well as think, to entertain as well as to inform. For the majority of people, a dramatised statement is more powerful and more effective than a spoken statement. Therein lies the main difference between the feature programme and the broadcast talk. In its simplest form, the feature programme aims at combining the authenticity of the talk with the dramatic force of a play, but unlike the play, whose business it is to create dramatic illusion for its own sake, the business of the feature is to convince the listener of the truth of what it is saying, even though it is saying it in dramatic form.[26]

Let us see the position in A.I.R. For about three decades the planners of programmes in A.I.R. have billed items in their programme journals as "features" if they could not be billed under any other established category. The following types of programme have been described as features by A.I.R.

(*i*) Recordings of songs on one theme (love, separation from the beloved, rains, patriotism, etc.) with a linking commentary by the announcer.

(*ii*) Some sort of a story based on studio recordings and/or commercial gramophone records.

(*iii*) A biographical sketch of a notable personality interspersed with recorded excerpts from his speeches.

[26] *B.B.C. Features*, edited by Laurence Gilliam; published by Evans (1950).

(*iv*) A programme based on spot recordings made at an interesting place, say, a zoo or an aerodrome or for that matter on the bank of a river on the occasion of an eclipse.

(*v*) A programme based on recordings at a new factory, say, inauguration of the production of penicillin, a new steel plant being commissioned and so on.

(*vi*) A programme based on careful study and historical research, interviews with scholars and collection of data (as far as possible by means of actuality recordings).

Shortly after J. C. Mathur launched the National Programme of Plays he also started a similar programme of features in August 1956. The need to publicize various aspects of the Five Year Plans provided an impetus to this programme and has tended to set up a model of what a certain kind of radio feature has come to mean. No doubt we still have "musical features" and literary or biographical features. But when something is billed as a feature in the National Programme it means a documentary programme, like the documentary film designed to "educate" the listening public about some aspect of our lives. The "education" motif is very direct in such cases. Facts and figures are cited by officials about fallow land brought under the plough or whatever the feature is about, and a narrator links these interviews and sound effects together. For monotony in presentation and dullness A.I.R.'s programmes of features certainly take the cake.

But let me hasten to add that there have been a few honourable exceptions. Melville de Mellow[26α] has not only proved to be A.I.R.'s outstanding News Reader and commentator, but also as the author of documentary features. His features have a style of their own. He gives you a look at reality as it appears to a very particular pair of eyes with every important element thrown into dramatic relief. His productions show his fastidiousness as an editor and radio craftsman. My chief criticism of de Mellow's features is their wordiness, and my fear is that he is becoming typical. Whether he breaks new ground in presentation remains to be seen. His elevation to the post of the Chief Producer of Features is a sign of promise.

[26α] While the book was in the press news was received of the award of the Italia Prize for features to Melville de Mellow for his programme "*Lali and the Lions of Gir.*"

The question arises as to why A.I.R.'s features need be so poor and what is necessary to improve their quality? Before there can be any improvement some wrong ideas which dominate the minds of programme planners have to be dispelled. To begin with it has to be appreciated that a feature is not some magical formula which ensures successful propaganda or publicity to a particular subject. In the old days whenever the question of publicity came up, the formula was, "let us have a talk on it." But now the new formula is "let us have a feature." The assumption being that different voices, sound effects and interviews lend colour to a programme and make it more interesting. All this is of course far from true.

While, having a number of voices might help to remove monotony, they can also tend to create confusion. A variety of factors, including the subject-matter, scope and duration have to be taken into consideration. Certain subjects lend themselves to one sort of treatment and others to one entirely different. What happens in A.I.R. is that a subject for treatment in feature form is decided upon such as Wild Life or Panchayati Raj or Small Scale Industries. This decision itself is prompted by external considerations. Since the Wild Life Week has to be observed each year, the question arises: why not have a feature on the subject. If the Community Development Ministry is pressing for some publicity, the ready answer is to put out a "feature." The date and time and duration are fixed and some connected member of the staff is allotted the task of writing and producing the feature. It is at this final stage that the problem of finding material for the feature is faced by the A.I.R. producers. But here again the writer-producer rarely gets a chance of collecting his material through actually visiting the places that figure in the programme. He reads up whatever literature he can lay hands on and consults knowledgeable persons in government or outside. He then writes to the stations to interview persons or record sound effects on the spot.

It is evident that A.I.R.'s procedure puts the cart before the horse. No doubt A.I.R. can set to work on a project, such as, game sanctuaries, but not until the major part of the material has been collected can any one be sure of what sort of programme, if any, can be made out of it. In A.I.R., however, the commitment is made in advance, and though the producer may know that

only an apology for a feature can be produced judging from the recordings he has been able to collect, he has to go through with it.

The limitation of not being able to collect his material himself is a major obstacle in the way of the feature producer in A.I.R. It appears that during the Tagore Centenary in 1961, J. C. Mathur gave currency to the idea that the writer-producer (this could be one person or a team of two working in close collaboration) need not collect his own material. What was described as "the basic material" could be provided by an expert and this, it was supposed, could be put into the "feature" form by a person with radio experience. This "basic material" usually took the form of a longish, dry-as-dust essay, which the radio expert then chopped up into parts to be spoken by different voices! Though not many features could be written exactly on this pattern, the ghosts of this idea has not been laid. It accounts for the fact (though reasons of economy might also come in) that the writer-producer personally collects only a small fraction of his material himself. Those who have had any experience of feature writing and producing know that self-collection of material is the very life-blood of the whole activity. What holds the importance is the time and effort that could or should be spent on trying to obtain a recording on location, interviewing people, etc. These are a few of the questions which only one man, the writer-producer, can answer. And then there are the all-important impressions which one gets while collecting the material which help one give form to the feature, and grit and glamour to the writing. First-hand impressions cannot be replaced; and in their absence, no documentary can ring true.

A fundamental difficulty which a broadcasting organization faces in the presentation of a documentary feature is in finding the talent for writing and producing them. Some script-writers can of course be found from the staff. Production is a technical job which must be attended to by the staff members. But, to a considerable extent, outside talent from among journalists, university professors and others has to be found for the writing of scripts. Since radio feature writing is a technical job, training and experience are necessary. Outsiders who show promise must be encouraged and enthused to devote their time to such work. Obviously, therefore, A.I.R.

must make it financially worthwhile for them to do so. Such opportunities must be repeated so that with experience each previous achievement is improved upon. Unfortunately, A.I.R. has shown no imagination whatever in tackling this problem. Its rates of payment have remained poor, and the opportunities few and far between. Moreover, there is no expert guidance which an experienced writer-producer on the staff could unobstrusively give to a novice.

Indian documentary films have made a mark at international festivals. But A.I.R.'s attempts to win the coveted Italia Prize organised annually by Radio Italia has remained without success, though another Asian country, Japan, has won this honour on several occasions. Unless A.I.R. gives serious attention to the production of radio features, it will not be able to reach the standard attained by other broadcasting organizations the world over.

PROGRAMME FOR SPECIFIC AUDIENCES

The specific audiences for which practically every station of A.I.R. broadcasts special programmes are: women, children, school-going and university students, listeners in rural areas. Some stations put out programmes for tribal areas, industrial workers, *tea shop audiences*. The Delhi, Srinagar, Jammu & Gauhati stations broadcast special programmes for troops also. Unlike the general audience which consists mainly of urban listeners, with complex and varied tastes, specific audiences have their own group characteristics which are believed to be well-defined. Be it for women, children, villagers, or listeners in tribal areas, a programme man should normally know what type of programme he is required to plan and present. This is the advantage in planning for specific audiences, for there is little divergence between the interests of the individuals who form the group. In fact the more unsophisticated the audience, the more obvious and uniform are the objectives. And when one is sure of one's objectives, planning becomes simpler. On the other hand, unlike any of the specific audiences, the tastes of the general audience show no easily identifiable trend. Highly sophisticated, fastidious and unique, the so-called city man has a taste for practically everything ranging

from the sublime to the ridiculous. The inevitable result is that any broad target that the programme planner may set himself would not meet the requirements of many individuals. To plan and present radio programmes for an audience whose back-ground and tastes vary considerably is indeed a difficult and thankless job. From the point of view of programme planning, specific audiences are not only easy to entertain but also easy to instruct, provided, of course, that the programme man handling such audiences knows the art of making "instruction entertaining, and entertainment instructive."

To begin with let me describe some of the common characteristics of the programmes for specific audiences broadcast from A.I.R.

As mentioned earlier, every station of A.I.R. broadcasts special programmes of varying duration directed exclusively to listeners belonging to one type of audience or the other. The frequency of such programmes ranges from one per week to one a day, depending on the size of audience, listening facilities, talent available and other factors. Similarly the duration of these programmes varies from 15 to 90 minutes. It sometimes happens that both the duration and the frequency of a programme for a specific audience are determined more by factors like the service area of the transmitter, or the insufficiency of funds, or the dearth of available time on transmitter, rather than by the needs and requirements of the audience itself. Let us hope that as A.I.R. develops these limitations will be overcome.

In several ways the programmes for specific audiences follow a common pattern. For example, all programmes for specific audiences are composite in form, in the sense that they consist of a variety of items like news, talks, dialogues, music, plays, features, etc. What holds these items together is the compere who may take the form of one or more stock characters. It is the compere who introduces and links together individual items in a programme, lending thereby a semblance of oneness or unity to what would otherwise be a string of stray and unrelated items.

While composite programmes of shorter duration are generally presented by one or two comperes, programmes of a longer duration are invariably conducted by stock characters instead of comperes.

The compere and the stock character have one principal function to perform: that is to carry meaning to the specific listener. In other respects, however, they differ. For example, the stock character is more round, more fully evolved, and more human than the compere. The compere is like a flat character with a single purpose. At best the compere has the studied charm and pleasantness of a professional salesman, a quality which is quite capable of looking or sounding too good to be natural. The stock character on the other hand is a character drawn from the specific audience for whom he conducts the programme, and whom he truly represents in all his human qualities. He is, therefore, a family member of the very audience he addresses. He carries a name or a nick-name, that is all too familiar to his listeners. Through his manner, idiom, and approach to things, the stock character acquires a personality and begins to live in the minds of his listeners as one of them. The compere, on the other hand, stays—an outsider.

The number of stock characters in a composite programme may vary depending on the duration and frequency of the programme in which they figure. For example, it would be quite in keeping with the requirements of planning to have three to four stock characters in a daily programme of 60 minutes duration. Five would be one too many. In any case, whatever the number of stock characters in a programme the important point is that the stock characters should have each a distinct personality. Overlapping on any single point will inevitably lead to confusion and thereby defeat the purpose which the stock characters are intended to serve. For that reason, alone, if for nothing else, the lesser the number of stock characters the better.

It goes without saying that the introduction of stock characters in specific audiences programmes has tremendous potentialities, particularly for programmes which have an educational or propagandist purpose. But, whether the programme men in A.I.R. handling these programmes are conscious of these advantages, and exploit them to the full one is not sure.

While it is not possible to discuss in detail, all the programmes for specific audiences broadcast by A.I.R. one would like to concentrate on a few of the important programmes and to deal with the rest in passing. For, so far as programmes for specific audien-

ces are concerned, what is basically true of one type of programme would be equally true of the others.

School Broadcasts

School broadcasts constitute the earliest attempt on the part of A.I.R. to address a specific audience. In January, 1929, Bombay Station started putting out items of special interest to school children. The Corporation of Madras started a broadcast service in April, 1930, which included music lessons and stories on school days from 4 P.M. to 4-30. P.M. The Corporation also provided fourteen of its schools with radio sets. This was eight years before A.I.R. took over the Madras Station. Similar programmes were introduced by A.I.R. Calcutta, in 1932. However, regular broadcasting of a thirty-minute programme for school children twice every week was begun at Calcutta, in November 1937.

It was about this time that A.I.R. gave serious thought to these broadcasts—then commonly referred to as educational broadcasts—and even addressed some of the well-known educationists of the country on the subject. The overall impression gained by A.I.R. authorities was that the utility of school broadcasts was no longer a moot point. Instead it called for immediate action.

The decision was taken to introduce these programmes from October, 1938 from all the stations. The programme schedules were to be prepared in consultation with the local educational authorities. But financial stringency delayed the introduction of these programmes at Peshawar, Lahore and Lucknow by about 7 to 8 years.

Considerable progress has been made in this field since independence in 1947. Now nearly all principal regional stations originate these programmes and most of the smaller stations relay them from the principal stations of the zone. Now 21 stations originate school broadcasts. These are mainly addressed to students of higher secondary classes. There is a Consultative Panel at each station chiefly for the purpose of giving advice on planning these programmes. These panels generally consist of educationists, teachers from listening schools, senior officers of the department of education, representatives of teachers' associations and training colleges.

In the early stages of the introduction of these programmes there were misgivings in certain quarters regarding their aim and scope. It was feared that perhaps these programmes would replace the teachers though the purpose of these broadcasts was only to supplement the work of the teachers. Their twin objects were to discuss those topics which normally were not covered in the school curriculum with a view to "widening the mental horizon of students" or "to discuss those subjects which cannot be adequately dealt with in an average institution."[27]

Every station originating school broadcasts prepares very elaborate and sometimes well got up pamphlets and brochures which are sent in advance to listening schools. Some of the stories, skits, plays, travel talks, quiz programmes, and magazine programmes in which contributions from students are invited, are quite good. But the final impression of one who listens regularly to these programmes for some length of time, will be that they suffer from unimaginative handling. Except perhaps for Madras and Bombay, the standard of school broadcasts is generally poor. The majority of programmes serve no useful purpose. They are neither educational nor entertaining, and what is perhaps surprising is that everybody, even the school authorities, seem to be satisfied with things as they are. There is no authentic data on the subject. No explanation is, therefore, possible for this sorry state of affairs. However, it may be pointed out that in the absence of listening facilities in the schools, the programme staff have no reason to take these programmes seriously. Provided the schedules look good on paper so as to satisfy the authorities at the Directorate-General nothing else would seem to matter to the planners.

When more than 25 years ago A.I.R. decided to undertake these broadcasts, the authorities felt that they did not have to wait for the schools to make listening arrangements. They decided to go ahead with these broadcasts and thought that this in itself would act as an incentive for the schools to provide the facilities. This expectation was belied. The following figures from two surveys conducted in 1954-55, might throw some light on the subject.[28]

[27] *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India* (upto the 31st March, 1939) published by the Manager of Publications, Delhi (1940).

[28] *School Broadcasting in India*, Narendra Kumar, published by Nai Shiksha Prakashan, Jaipur (1958), p. 19.

Out of 323 schools in Delhi State only 92—57 urban and 35 rural schools—had listening facilities. Out of 57 urban schools, only 13 were equipped for public address system and 44 schools had only one radio set. More disappointing still, there was regular listening only in 7 schools! A postal survey conducted in the Bombay State revealed that out of 800 schools only 402 were registered for listening. A questionnaire sent to 125 schools elicited replies from only 40. Regular listening was estimated only at 5 per cent!

School broadcasts are at present largely a waste except in some states. A.I.R. Madras is credited with the successful execution of school broadcasts. They must be grateful to the Education Department of the State and the headmasters and the teachers who have extended co-operation in a large measure. In other States—excepting Maharashtra and one or two others—there is a general apathy towards these programmes. This can be judged from the fact (I am quoting from surveys mentioned earlier) that even in a well-developed State like Maharashtra 80 per cent of the schools have no provision in their time-table for listening to these broadcasts, 68 per cent of the teachers do not prepare the classes before the broadcasts, and 73 per cent have no time allotted for follow-up activities. Leela Patranavis writing on the basis of her American experience has observed, "In order to achieve the maximum benefit from an educational broadcast, there should be follow-up studies in relation to the specific outcome and objective of the programme. The teacher, in co-operation with the children, should observe the following procedure:

(*a*) Arrange a class discussion on the problems suggested by the particular radio programme;
(*b*) Check up books read by the students pertaining to the problem discussed;
(*c*) Explore devices to enable children to test their own progress, and
(*d*) Conduct necessary experiments after broadcast.[29]

These procedures would serve no purpose if facilities at the listening end are not adequate. And lastly, what purpose can the

[29] *The Assam Tribune*, issue dated July 1, 1951.

listening and follow-up facilities serve if the quality of broadcast programmes is poor?

There must be a loud-speaker in each class room so that the students can give the same attention to the broadcast as to their teacher. The broadcast lesson must be placed on the time-table and must be part of the curriculum. The teacher must prepare the student for the broadcast and must also clear up doubts during the follow-up session. It is only when this is done in the school that A.I.R.'s school broadcasts will cease to be the waste of time and effort that they are now.

Imagine a situation in which all the recognised schools of Delhi have listening facilities and the broadcast lessons figure on the time-table and are compulsory listening. What if the schools programmes are poor—not as good, for instance, as a lesson on Geography which an average school could arrange for itself? Surely the head-masters and others will come down on A.I.R. like a ton of bricks! Or, perhaps, under pressure of criticism and competition A.I.R. might think of improving its school broadcast programmes. Perhaps experts would then be brought to the microphone, the whole paraphernalia of production techniques would be switched on to present programmes which would tickle the imagination of youngsters. Perhaps, A.I.R. might seek to provide for the schools what they themselves are unable to do and only then perhaps could broadcasting become a reality in Indian education.

Programmes for Children

We have seen in the foregoing section that regular school broadcasts were started from Madras, Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay towards the end of 1938. These broadcasts were designed for middle and high school students and now cater generally to students of higher secondary schools. But long before these, the Madras station had started a regular service on 1st April, 1930 run by the Corporation of Madras, used to put out programmes in Tamil for students of primary classes. These can be rightly called the earliest children's programmes.

As time went on children's programmes were started at all stations and put out on Sunday mornings. They proved so "popu-

lar" that after independence, when station after station was opened in various parts of the country, a children's programme at each station was taken for granted.

These programmes were (and in most cases are) conducted by stock characters generally called Bhayya (brother) and Didi (sister) along with 2 or 3 children who actively participate in helping the comperes. These young participants represent the listeners to whom the programmes are addressed. Their lively participation in the programme, their natural and honest responses to various situations, the smart and innocent interruptions which sometimes create for the senior stock characters awkward moments to wriggle out of, and above all the sheer spirited compering by the child comperes at some of the stations, make these programmes a really enjoyable aesthetic experience. Children have a propensity to react in the most natural and unihibited manner to various situations. They will shout with mirth on the victory of the hero over the villain; stoutly protest if the wicked character of the fairy tale is not given the punishment that meets with their sense of justice; and their sighs and sobs at a tragic situation will make any programme fascinating listening. These programmes are, indeed, for the children by the children.

There are programme men who are extremely fond of these programmes and who will always prefer to plan and produce children's programme rather than any other. It is difficult to make such comparisons and there can be no rational basis for comparing programmes of different types conceived and planned for different purposes and different audiences. However, it may be conceded that the quality of the children's programmes broadcast from most of the stations do give an indication of the working of sensitive and sincere minds behind them. In any case, A.I.R. thinks these programmes as being extremely "popular" on their own merit. There is very little doubt about the artistic merit of the various items put out in these programmes but one is not sure of their "popularity" with listeners. We shall discuss this point shortly.

We may now state here two developments which had considerable impact on these programmes. In the Station Directors' Conference held in February 1950, an important decision was taken according to which instead of one, two programmes were to be broadcast for two age groups of children—one for tiny tots, and

the other for older children. The most surprising thing about the decision, however, was that the age groups were not defined and the stations were left to do this classification as best as they could. Perhaps no psychologist was at hand to be consulted!

Undaunted by such theoretical (!) considerations of age groups, which in other countries are regarded as matters of paramount importance, stations went ahead vigorously and started broadcasting two programmes a week. But there could not be two Sundays in a week. So, one programme, generally the one meant for older children, had to be put out in the evening on a week day. Children found it difficult to turn up in the studios after being the whole day at the schools. As the audience started thinning out the producers felt disconcerted. At some stations these programmes began to be recorded on Sundays for being put out in the middle of the week.

But a major blow fell on the producers of the children's programmes in 1959 when the Department decided that these programmes were "for children" and need not be presented "by children." This was a change of a fundamental nature. The producers, conditioned as they were, could never recover from this shock and the programmes were never again the same from the point of view of the staff who were used to large audiences in the studios.

Let it be clearly understood that the presence of children and their lively interest in the programme within the studio is in no way an indication of the "popularity" of the programme with young listeners sitting in their homes. A.I.R. has never cared to conduct any research on such issues. How many children listen to these programmes at home? Do they benefit from them? Do they even follow what is being conveyed to them? There are people inside A.I.R. who think that programmes for children below the age of 8 years should be discontinued.[30] In any case these programmes

[30]In April 1952, the External Services Division of A.I.R. brought out a cyclostyled journal entitled *Radio Calling* for the use of A.I.R. Staff, in which two senior members of the staff, P. C. Chatterji, now Director, Emergency Broadcasts, and Ramesh Chander, now Director, Television, contributed articles touching various aspects of children programmes. Mr. Ramesh Chander in his article dealt with the problems of getting suitable scripts written for these programmes and gave clear indication of his love for these programmes. On the other hand Mr. Chatterji held the view that these programmes are of no use as they are broad-

are for children. Whether they need not be presented by children is a minor problem. What is more important is that young children must be made to listen to these programmes in the company of an adult who should guide them on points needing elaboration or clarification. What is desirable is that these programmes are dovetailed with school broadcasts. Why must school broadcasts be confined only to senior classes? In the B.B.C., there are five categories of school broadcasts addressed to children of varying ages, such as Primary I (5 to 7 years), Primary II (7 to 11 years), Secondary I (11 to 13 years), Secondary II (12 to 15 years), and Secondary III (over 15 years).

The programmes for children which are not listened to with the guidance of an adult are a waste.

Programmes for Women

The broadcast programmes specially addressed to women started sometime around 1940. In the *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India* covering the period upto the 31st March, 1939, submitted to the Government of India by Lionel Fielden, there is no mention of broadcasts for women. Now every station puts out at least one programme of thirty minutes duration every week. Some stations even have two such programmes in a week.

But is a separate programme for women necessary? It has been argued that women can equally enjoy talks, plays, features, music and, in fact, any programme that is put out for the general listener. With increasing education, their interest in literature, arts, science and other subjects should be similar to that of men. Why then special broadcasts for women? This argument is superficial. In spite of many common interests, women do have areas of interest exclusively their own. The interests of men and women are not in every way identical. Broadcasts specially addressed to women are required just as special magazines and journals for women are required.

It is not the need for these broadcasts but their quality that

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casted to children who are not properly prepared in advance for the broadcasts nor is any senior person present to explain them to the child whenever he or she needs such help. I refrain from quoting from these articles as the journal was for the use of staff only.

merits discussion. Women are important members of our society, enjoying equal rights with men, and their responsibilities too are co-extensive. In the larger context of social welfare and national development, women have an even more significant role to play, a role which no radio programme intended for the benefit of women can afford to lose sight of. But if you tune in to any station of A.I.R. particularly to any North Indian station, for the "Women's Hour" you will get the inevitable impression that the interests of women at least in this part of the country are limited to cooking, knitting, sewing and the like. There is a little advice on how to be a good wife, a good mother, a good daughter-in-law, or a good neighbour, or hints on how to improve one's looks by changing hair style, a few ineffectual songs, sickly and sentimental, and ineffective talks or features on subjects of allied interest go to provide the thought content of the programmes for women. The planners and producers of women's programmes seem to know no other approach to the subject, with the result that day after day they succeed in producing empty, superficial stuff too stale for entertainment, and too mechanical for instruction. One misses the satisfaction of finding in the women's programmes, stark realities and problems that affect our daily life being seriously discussed. Such an approach helps to create interest in affairs of common concern. And only such an approach can help the cause of national development. If a radio programme cannot excite interest in matters other than one's own immediate problems it would be better not to have a programme at all. Thus, the age old pattern of two women conversing with each other in a lifeless way, and in the course of the conversation introducing a song, a talk, a feature, and then again a song, to be followed by a recipe and a page from "beauty unlimited" has now outlived its utility. It is likely that the first programme for women which went on the A.I.R. more than two decades ago, followed the same pattern as it does today —a pattern which can only be dubbed as escapist in nature and out of tune with reality.

One important reason why women's programmes lack character is that the planners of these programmes do not know who constitute their audience. In the case of women's programmes the audience is heterogeneous. The wives of a large percentage of people belonging to the upper class of society who have radio sets in

their homes are uneducated, and in many cases, illiterate. On the other hand, in the middle and lower middle class homes, the house wives are educated but have no facilities for listening, and even if they have their interests and tastes differ from their sisters in the upper stratum. With the march of time and with the spread of education and knowledge this difficulty will solve itself. When the B.B.C. started giving these programmes in the afternoon (between 2 P.M. and 3 P.M.) on all week days it replaced music which was heard by about one million listeners. But the audience for the women's programmes immediately shot up to two and a half million listeners. To quote Lord Simon: "The listening figure is perhaps as high as it is, partly because nothing is ever said about education. It may be called "hidden" education. Mrs. Stocks, a member of the Beveridge Committee, regards "Women's Hour" as the most effective piece of mass education in the whole of the B.B.C. output."

A.I.R. can draw a lesson from this though what is true of audiences in Britain may not be true of audiences in India. The programmes must be good, realistic and attractive—the less pedantic and didactic the better. Most programme men in A.I.R. worry themselves to death about what is to be said, at the cost of how it is to be said. Consequently presentation suffers and ultimately listeners dwindle.

Rural Broadcasts

In the context of India's undeveloped economy, large scale illiteracy, poverty and backwardness the importance of rural broadcasting cannot be over-emphasised. When we realise that 80 per cent of India's population lives in six lakh villages the magnitude and significance of the problem become clear.

Broadcasting for rural areas has a special significance for India. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, had this in mind when, on the 23rd July, 1927, inaugurating the first regular radio station of the Indian Broadcasting Company at Bombay he said, "India offers special opportunities for the development of broadcasting. Its distances and wide spaces alone make it a promising field. In India's remote villages there are many who, after the day's work is done, find time hung heavily enough upon their hands." It may also be

mentioned that, since Lord Irwin spoke these words, our ideas about the nature and scope of broadcasting as a powerful medium of mass contact have considerably changed. Radio is no longer considered a "jester" or an "amuser" in hours of leisure when time hangs heavily upon one but as an instrument with considerable power and potentialities for education. But before we discuss these points, we may take a hurried look at the activities of A.I.R. in rural broadcasting.

Rural broadcasts in India were started at Peshawar in 1935. The Marconi Company had given a transmitter to the Government of the North West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan) to initiate broadcasting activities on an experimental basis. Fourteen sets were installed in villages in the district of Peshawar and fifteen in the border areas. Colonel Hardinge of the Marconi Company had designed a set with a loud-speaker having a very large output "in order that villagers might be able to listen in their houses."

A reference must be made here to the experimental station started in 1935 by the Principal of the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad, which broadcast an hour's programme every day for rural listeners. This station had a strength of 100 watts only and could be heard just in the neighbourhood of the transmitter. However, it shows that the value of rural broadcasting began to be felt in enlightened quarters.

In the same year, the Punjab Government allocated funds for starting rural broadcasting from Delhi Station (which actually went on the air on 1st January, 1936) and installed sets in villages near Delhi falling within the territorial jurisdiction of the province of the Punjab. The sets were placed at distances ranging from 18 to 60 miles from Delhi. In 1936, the Government of Bengal followed and set up receivers in 15 villages in the Midnapore area. These sets were collected after 8 months for being stored in one place during the rainy season! Later on, these sets were installed in villages nearer to Midnapore so that they could be more effectively supervised. Still later the location of these sets was changed so that a few other villages could listen to the broadcasts. The Lahore Station of A.I.R. started functioning in March 1938, and all the sets installed in the villages around Delhi were transferred to the villages round about Lahore. A fairly well thought out scheme of rural broadcasts was inaugurated from the Delhi Sta-

tion on the 16th October, 1938 covering the entire province of Delhi. The Bombay Government installed 16 receiving sets in two districts: 7 in Thana and 9 in Colaba. Regular rural broadcasts started from the Madras Station in 1938 and the Government of Madras set up community sets in 16 districts spread over 62 villages. By 1939 the scheme for rural broadcasting from the Lucknow Station had been finalised.

From these early experiments in rural broadcasting at various stations some useful lessons were learnt. It was realised that a loud-speaker with a large output would not make the villagers listen to the programmes in their homes. If they had to listen to broadcasts they had to come out to a central place. A.I.R. came to the conclusion: "Villagers never listen in their houses: either they come to the loud-speaker or they do not listen." This was in any case a conclusion of no utility or significance. Listening near the set is quite different from listening from a distant loud-speaker. They had no experience of listening from a set in the home and even now after 20 years of rural broadcasting a villager is no nearer to this experience.

The maintenance of receivers separated from one another by great distances was not practicable. For example, to look into a minor fault in one of the receivers installed by the Punjab Government around Delhi sometimes involved a journey of more than a hundred miles. It was soon evident that in the absence of electric power it would be necessary to locate receivers not very distant from each other and in such a manner that in a given area all the sets could be served from one charging unit. In fact, the common practice was to install mains operated sets in semi-urban areas where electric power was available, and battery sets in rural areas. A large number of the sets would remain idle because of lack of proper supervision by mechanics. Moreover, it was desirable to install the sets in villages which were comparatively near the transmitter to ensure good reception of programmes round the year.

These early experiences were extremely useful and were taken into consideration while planning a scheme for rural broadcasting in the Delhi Province. This scheme was inaugurated at the Delhi Station on the 16th October, 1938 by E. M. Jenkins, Chief Commissioner of Delhi. Under this scheme, 120 receiving sets were to be installed in the Delhi Province. The villages were divided

into 5 zones. Each zone was to have a charging unit under the supervision of a Technical Supervisor. No receiver was to be more than 6 to 8 miles away from the charging unit. This scheme proved a success. The province of Delhi was a small one directly under the Central Government. The A.I.R. Headquarters could keep in touch with the working and progress of the scheme. The Research Department of A.I.R. must be given credit for making constant experiments for developing a cheap set suitable for community listening. A review in 1947 showed that the scheme was in operation in 111 villages and 1,11,400 people had access to the receivers. The average daily attendance was estimated to be 6,000.

From the perusal of the foregoing review, it is obvious that the progress of rural broadcasting from 1935 to 1948 could not be expected to be spectacular. For one thing, the number of radio stations was very small. Rural broadcasting started in 1935 at Peshawar which was then not under A.I.R. By 1936 there were only 3 stations of A.I.R.: Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi. A.I.R. took over Peshawar and started the Lahore station in 1937. Lucknow started functioning in 1938 and in the same year the Madras station was taken over by A.I.R. There were two additions to A.I.R. in 1939: Tiruchirapalli and Dacca, making a total of 9. From 1939 to 1947 there were no additions. There were five stations in the Indian States which may be left out of reckoning for the purpose of the present discussion. The transmitter at Allahabad (or rather at Naini) run by the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad was experimental in nature and lacked the strength to serve any appreciable area. This was too poor a network to make any impact in rural areas coupled with the fact that sets were costly, listening conditions unfavourable, finances stringent, electric power largely absent, the limited number of radio stations and the transmitters inadequate in strength.

In 1939 the total number of community sets was estimated at about 100. Figures for 1940 and 1941 are not available. The total number of sets in operation from the years 1942 to 1948 are given on p. 102.

The decline in the year 1948 was due to the partition of the country into two independent states of India and Pakistan. It may also be noted that this number of community sets also includes the

1942	1,050
1943	1,262
1944	1,544
1945	2,029
1946	1,890
1947	2,039
1948	1,761

sets installed in urban areas.

It is easily understood that in the absence of electric power in rural areas it is almost a herculean task to reach the rural masses in the interior of the countryside. But, till 1947 the small number of radio stations (9 in all) that constituted A.I.R.'s network, also stood in the way of the growth of rural listening. Rural listeners had to be addressed in the languages and dialects of their respective areas. And by 1947 the majority of regions had no radio station serving them.

After India attained freedom prompt steps were taken by the Government to install small 'pilot' stations in various regions as it had neither the time nor the financial resources to set up big stations straight away. Due to the partition of the country we were left with only six stations in 1947 (excluding 5 in Indian States) but by 1950 the number of stations in A.I.R.'s network had reached 21.

During the period of the First Five Year Plan (1st April, 1951 to 31st March, 1956) the strength of many existing stations was increased by the installation of high power transmitters besides the opening of 5 new stations. At the end of the plan, A.I.R. had 26 radio stations and could serve only one-third of the area in the country. During the Second Five Year Plan (1st April, 1956 to 31st March, 1961) the main aim of the Planning Commission was to extend the existing services in all languages to as wide an area as it was possible to reach by setting up high powered transmitters. However, 2 new stations were opened at Bhopal and Ranchi, and at the end of the Second Five Year Plan A.I.R. had a network of 28 radio stations. The main aim of the Third Five Year Plan is to expand the medium-wave services by installing a number of transmitters which will relay programmes from principal

stations in various zones. This will enable A.I.R. to transmit to areas which are now outside its listening range.

With the opening of new radio stations and the introduction of rural programmes there was a marked increase in the number of community sets as is evident from the following figures:

Year	*Number of Community Sets*
1949	2,566
1950	3,362
1951	5,000
1952	6,613
1953	7,112
1954	9,192
1955	13,274
1956	21,751
1957	29,100
1958	36,251
1959	49,230
1960	49,590

From these figures, it is evident that the increase in community sets till 1954 was slow. Opening of new stations in itself could not lead to a very great increase in the number of community sets in the absence of any well-thought out plan. It was in 1954 that the Government of India decided to help the State governments in the installation of community listening sets by giving subsidies to the extent of 50 per cent of their expenditure. This enabled various state governments to formulate their plans and to undertake large scale installation of community sets. However, the progress has not been as expected. The Planning Commission envisaged the setting up of community sets in villages with a population of more than 1,000 persons and it was expected that 72,000 sets would be installed during the period of the Second Five Year Plan, i.e. between the 1st April, 1956 to 31st March, 1961. And the Third Five Year Plan envisaged that this programme would be carried forward. But the performance in this regard has been poor and the target does not seem to be realisable even by the end of the Third Five Year Plan. Only about 30,000 sets were

actually installed during the First Plan period, as is apparent from the fact that 49,590 community sets were licenced through the country for the period ending 31st December, 1960 whereas there were 13,274 sets for the period ending 31st December, 1955.

A.I.R. has so far had no proper plan on a nation-wide scale for organised listening, nor has it any machinery to keep liaison with listeners to assess the impact of these broadcasts and to study the listeners' reactions and response. There are Rural Programme Advisory Committees at stations which consist of representatives from agriculture and other allied departments of the States which help in the planning of programme schedules, the ultimate responsibility for the broadcasts being that of A.I.R. The programmes generally consist of talks, dialogues and discussions on agricultural topics, and other utility subjects; interviews with experts from various departments; plays, mostly on mythological and social themes; skits and folk music. Folk music provides the basic sustenance to these programmes. At most of the stations these programmes have proved very popular with the listeners (including those in urban areas) because of their natural, almost naive presentation, coupled with the fact that the broadcasts are in the robust, rustic spoken languages and dialects of each region. It is a pity that the listening which has grown over the years is nevertheless very limited for a variety of reasons discussed already.

In 1949, the Government of India decided to make use of these programmes to boost up their "Grow more Food" campaign, A.I.R. decided to set up Radio Farm Forums at seven stations and they were duly inaugurated on the 19th September, 1949. The basic idea behind these forums was that listeners should meet at these forums once a week, and discuss the broadcasts under a local leader in the presence of an A.I.R. official who would elucidate the points arising from these deliberations.

After the initial enthusiasm, the forums ceased to function. In fact, in most cases they ceased to exist. There were a number of reasons for the failure of these forums. For one thing, the scheme was ill-planned. It was too ambitious and A.I.R. lacked the financial resources and manpower to carry it out. There was no co-ordination between A.I.R. and the various departments of the State governments, nor between A.I.R. and the adult education agencies in the country. The success of the scheme was dependent on

post broadcast discussions under intelligent leadership, and this was the most neglected aspect in execution. Some of the subjects dealt with, had no bearing on the daily life of the rural liisteners and failed to reach home. And above all A.I.R. did not establish a proper machinery to convey listeners' reactions to the planners of these programmes.[31]

It may be mentioned here that the inspiration behind these forums was the Canadian experience in this field. In Canada the National Farm Radio Forum is a joint venture of three national bodies: the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Association for Adult Education. The responsibility for the broadcasts is that of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the other two bodies provide money for the maintenance of national offices which look after study groups throughout the country. The local forums are maintained by the farmers themselves who meet in organized listener groups to discuss the broadcasts. The representatives of local forums are on the provincial committees, the representatives of the provincial committees are on the National Committee. These three national bodies constitute the National Board which formulates national policies and on this board also are the representatives of the forums. There is a very elaborate system for planning broadcasts, supplying material for study in advance of the broadcasts, post broadcasting discussions and reporting the findings of the discussions to provincial committees who, after proper co-ordination and editing of the findings at the provincial level, transmit them to the national committee. It may be noted that in Canada there is a very high rate of literacy; farmers can benefit from printed material, the general standard of living is high, most families own radio sets and the people, by and large, have at their disposal modern agricultural education, tools and machinery.[32]

A reference must be made here to the experimental project of Radio Adult Education carried out at the Poona Station of A.I.R. between February, 19 and April 26, 1956. This project was financed by UNESCO, conducted by A.I.R. and evaluated by the Tata

[31] *Adult Education Through Radio*, Narendra Kumar, published by Nai Shiksha Prakashan, Jaipur (1959), p. 23.

[32] *Canada's Farm Radio Forum*, John Nicol, Albert A. Shea and G. J. P. Simmins, Editor: R. Alex Sim, published by UNESCO, Paris (1954).

Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. Paul Neurath who was the head of the team of investigators submitted an excellent report on this project.[33] By December, 1955, preliminary discussions among the representatives of the UNESCO, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the State Government had been completed and effective steps were being taken for the actual operation of the project. N. L. Chawla, the Head of the Poona Station, was engaged in co-ordinating the various activities pertaining to the project. P. L. Deshpande and Venkatesh Madgulkar[34] were drawing up details of the 20 special programmes and getting scripts commissioned. D. D. Jadhev, the Chief Organiser of the forums, was busy organizing forums in the selected villages with the assistance of the five District Organizers. All these officers were loaned to A.I.R. by the State Government and it was mostly due to their yeoman service that forums were formed in time to listen to the special broadcasts.

For this project 150 villages were selected in 5 Marathi speaking districts around Poona where listening-cum-discussion groups consisting of 20 people of each village were organized. As far as possible the membership of these forums was drawn from literate persons interested in village uplift work. A.I.R. Poona broadcast two half-hour programmes every week on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 6-30 P.M. Every forum had a "leader" who acted as the Chairman of post-broadcast discussions and there was a "convenor" who functioned as the Secretary of the forum and was responsible for the upkeep of all records, receipt of all material from the Poona Station and submission of reports and decisions of the forums emerging out of the discussions on broadcasts. Apart from written information received from all these forums, investigations were made in 20 villages where forums had been set up. For comparative study, it was an excellent idea of the evaluators to carry investigations at 20 non-forum villages.

For the programme of evaluation Dr. A. M. Lorenzo and Dr. Paul Neurath of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay,

[33] *Radio Farm Forums in India*, Paul Neurath, published by The Manager of Publications, Delhi (1960).

[34] In an otherwise brilliant and comprehensive report, Paul Neurath unfortunately fails to mention the contribution of Venkatesh Madgulkar to the planning of these special programmes.

worked out complete plans, questionnaires, forms to be filled in by the interviewers and the procedures for collecting data. Later on, when Dr. Lorenzo left the Tata Institute, Dr. Paul Neurath completed the work and submitted the report. In brief, the evaluation was concerned with the following objectives:

(*a*) "to find out whether Radio Farm Forums could be used as an agent for transmission of knowledge."
(*b*) "to find out whether group discussion was an efficient method for that purpose."
(*c*) How far Radio Farm Forum could be "a new institution in the life of the villages."
(*d*) "What was the reaction of the forum members to Radio Farm Forum as a whole?"
(*e*) "to assess the reaction of the forum members to the individual broadcasts."

For this evaluation elaborate arrangements were made. The survey was done in three stages (*a*) Pre-broadcast from February 1 to 19, (*b*) Observation during broadcasts from February 19 to April 28, and (*c*) Post-broadcast from May to early June, 1956, This was necessary with a view to assessing how far these broadcasts made a difference in the knowledge of the villagers, determining their reactions to the forums, and examining other comparative values. For this purpose the Tata Institute pressed into service a large number of its staff and ultimately did an excellent job. Any one interested in adult education would do well to go through this report with care and attention.

Some of the main conclusions arrived at by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, after a thorough and comprehensive survey were:

(*a*) "The forum groups show a very impressive gain in knowledge."
(*b*) "The group method of discussion proved extremely useful." The group method of discussion brought with it a learning process both in meeting and discussing things together and in decision making. It brings out "knowledge that is present in a latent form in the villagers."

(*c*) "Radio Farm Forum has become or can become an important institution in village life" in two respects: (1) "as a decision making body" and (2) "as a tool towards a wider spread and better founded village democracy."

(*d*) The forum members strongly felt "that Radio Farm Forum is a most valuable addition to village life and that it should be made permanent feature."

(*e*) "The vast majority of the members in a good majority of the villages approved most of the programmes."

The report also made important recommendations regarding organizational matters pertaining to the forums, selection of members, leaders and convenors and various aspects of the programme among which the following need special notice:

(*a*) The time of broadcasts, 6-30 P.M., was too early.

(*b*) Two broadcasts followed by group discussion every week is too much. One broadcast a week would meet with the wishes of most forum members.

(*c*) The problems of placement of loud-speakers and placement of radio sets need to be studied in detail.

In 1959, it was decided that the Radio Rural Forum scheme should be incorporated in the rural programmes of A.I.R. and extended throughout the country. J. C. Mathur pursued it with vigour and enthusiasm. The State governments were persuaded to extend their co-operation. The general outline of the scheme was as follows. The state governments were to set up rural forums at selected villages, each forum comprising 15 to 20 members. The forum would have a Secretary who would keep in touch with A.I.R. and would be paid Rs. 5 per month to defray postal and stationery charges. The State governments would also appoint a Chief Organizer who would have his office in the A.I.R. Station to assist in the planning of forum programmes and to maintain liaison with the government departments. The Station would set apart half an hour of its rural programme every week for the forum programme. The first 20 minutes would be devoted to the presentation of a discussion of some important problem and the remaining ten minutes to answering the questions raised by the forums.

A training course was organized at Poona and most of the State governments sent representatives to attend it—many of whom were those who were expected to be appointed as Chief Organizers. Subsequently, the Station also organized a seminar for the instruction of Block Development and Social Education Officers. The scheme was launched with the usual fanfare of speeches on the 17th December, 1959, when there were 800 forums in operation. In 1960, the figure stood at 900. By 1961-62, the number of forums rose to 2,000 and by 1962-63 to 4,000. In the beginning of 1964 A.I.R. claimed that there were 7,500 forums in existence. And yet, the target set for the end of the Third Five Year Plan period is 25,000 forums! How A.I.R. proposes to achieve this target and what its requirements in terms of organization and personnel will be, remains a matter of conjucture.

A.I.R. is quite proud of its Radio Rural Forum Scheme. In any case this was pioneering work in an important field but A.I.R. should avoid the pitfall of resting on it oars like most pioneers after their initial success. This is what B. P. Bhatt, the present Director General of A.I.R., has to say about this scheme:

> I have seen the immense interest shown in our Radio Rural Forum Scheme at the Asian Broadcasters' Conference held in Japan and Malaya and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference held in Canada. . . . UNESCO in its Bangkok and Paris meetings has recommended the scheme for adoption by all developing countries. It is gratifying that F.A.O. has also taken note of our work in this field.[35]

It may be said at this stage that all the States have, with more or less enthusiasm, joined the scheme. Madras and Assam which had kept out for almost two years ultimately came in. Jammu & Kashmir were considered outside the orbit of this scheme, though the reasons for this are not clear. On paper, too, full-time Chief Organizers have been appointed in nearly all the States. The basic question, however, is to know how the scheme is actually work-

[35] *Broadcasting in India*, article by B. P. Bhatt, Director-General, A.I.R. published in the *Times of India*, issue dated February 2, 1964, based on his speech delivered at the F.A.O. Far East Farm Broadcasting Seminar in New Delhi.

ing. What are the lessons to be learnt from the experience of the last few years? What is the impact that the rural forum is making and what can be done to consolidate the benefits gained out of this experiment in mass education. It is here that A.I.R. has again failed woefully. In 1961 when the second anniversary of the Radio Rural Forums was approaching, it was considered that surveys should be undertaken to assess the working of the forums. A.I.R.'s Listeners' Research Department being non-existent except in name, this idea was conveyed to the State governments for implementation. There is, however, no evidence to show that the State governments have undertaken these surveys. So far, no findings have been made public. At any rate, a scheme such as the Radio Rural Forums cannot be a living reality unless constant contact is maintained between the radio stations and its forums. As the number of forums increases and initial enthusiasm wanes the problem of maintaining that contact becomes more and more acute. And the fact is that the stations are not being equipped to maintain that contact, nor is the importance of this contact being impressed upon them. In fact, even the Directorate-General is not adequately equipped in this respect. It would be a pity indeed if A.I.R.'s forums were allowed to languish and become another load of dead wood as school broadcasting has become. If A.I.R. cannot deliver the goods why should not one of the many Social Service Institutes in the country come forward to provide an objective assessment of the working of this scheme. This would be an important contribution to maintaining the vitality of A.I.R.'s Radio Rural Forums.

VIVIDH BHARATI: A.I.R.'S LIGHT PROGRAMME SERVICE

On the third of October, 1957, All India Radio inaugurated an all-India Variety Programme which is now known as Vividh Bharati. This programme, which was described by the then Director-General, J. C. Mathur as one of the most important new ventures of A.I.R. was intended to provide an alternate light programme service for listeners throughout the country. The programme was radiated simultaneously from two 100 kW short-wave transmitters at Madras and Bombay. The entire programme was tape recorded in advance and covered a duration of 5 hours on week days, with an additional 2½ hours thrown in on Sundays

and principal festivals. All the stations in the service were asked to record during broadcast from their scheduled programmes, good light music programmes or, wherever possible, to pre-record selected items from the scheduled programmes, with an additional copy for Vividh Bharati, a regular quota of recordings to be supplied by each station to Vividh Bharati. While music was supplied by all stations, light spoken word programmes were provided chiefly by the stations in the Hindi region. For, the language of Vividh Bharati is Hindi only. All this material was then sifted by a group of Programme Executives and Producers at Bombay, where the Vividh Bharati Unit was originally located. From this mass of material, the best was culled and, edited into complete programmes three weeks in advance of its simultaneous broadcast from Madras and Bombay.

Within a year of the inauguration, it was felt that Vividh Bharati could be run better from Delhi and the office was shifted to the capital. Vividh Bharati, the Programme Exchange Unit and the Transcription Service the distinct, unrelated units were clubbed together in 1958 to form the office of the Director of Transcription and programme Exchange Services.

There is no doubt that the Vividh Bharati service made an immediate impact on listeners throughout the country. The basic demands of the listening public were twofold. Firstly that the duration of the programme should be increased so that Vividh Bharati could provide a full parallel service to the Home Regional Services; secondly, that Vividh Bharati should be available to listeners on the medium-wave in all parts of the country. A.I.R. has certainly made big efforts to meet these demands. Having started with an output of 5 hours on week days, and 7¼ hours on Sundays and principal festivals, the service has since October 2, 1963, been available for 11¼ hours on week days, 11¾ hours on Saturdays and 12½ hours on Sundays. This expansion took place in eight intermediate stages when an increase of an hour or so was effected in the programmes on week days and on Sundays and holidays.

The Vividh Bharati service was originally broadcast on two 100 kW short-wave transmitters located at Bombay and Madras. While these transmitters were expected to cover the country more or less satisfactorily, the reception in practice was not good in several parts of the country. Moreover, reception suffered from

the usual disturbances associated with short-wave listening. Being available only on short-wave it necessitated the possession of short-wave receivers which were beyond the pocket of the middle and lower income groups. Wayside tea stalls and *pan* and cigarette shops found short-wave sets outside their means and it was at such places that Vividh Bharati was most popular. The availability of Vividh Bharati on medium-wave was, therefore, essential. It will be recalled that this is indeed one of the principal aims of A.I.R.'s medium-wave plan, and no less than 23 low powered transmitters were planned to be set up for this purpose. At present some 17 stations including Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Vijayawada, Cuttack, Indore, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Patna, Tiruchi, Rajkot, Nagpur, Kanpur and Poona are broadcasting the Vividh Bharati programme. Some twelve of these stations receive the complete programmes recorded on tape, while the others put it out as a relay from neighbouring transmitters.

Let us now glance briefly at the composition of the Vividh Bharati service. It will be seen that over 60 per cent of the programme is based on gramophone records of film songs. There are no less than 3 daily request programme with the usual paraphernalia of names and messages. There are seven non-request film song programmes per week, not to mention song stories and the broadcast of film tracks on alternate Sundays.

The other varieties of music included in the programme are non-film commercial light music; light music produced by A.I.R. and Karnatak music, the bulk of which again is film songs. A.I.R.'s light music presents an interesting study. This includes devotional music, patriotic songs and choruses, light folk music and an omnibus variety which is described as regional music. There is a fifteen minute daily programme of light instrumental music presented under the caption *Jhankar*.

The spoken word content of Vividh Bharati comprises a daily feature of fifteen minutes known as *Hawa Mahal*; interviews and pen portraits, *Chitrashala;* replies to listeners' letters, and a weekly family serial known as *Apna Ghar*. Since the emergency, Vividh Bharati has been relaying the two main Hindi news bulletins broadcast at 8-15 A.M. and 8-15 P.M. daily.

Having outlined the main features of Vividh Bharati, there arises the question of assessing it in terms of its impact on listeners and

its merits as a worthwhile service. It can be said without fear of contradiction that Vividh Bharati made an immediate impact on the listening public and succeeded in winning back for A.I.R. a number of listeners who had defected to Radio Ceylon. Through Vividh Bharati, A.I.R. has found an instrument for countering the menace of commercial broadcasting. While Radio Pakistan has evidently had to submit to the demand for a commercial service, such a contingency has been avoided in India; and Vividh Bharati has served as the safety valve. The fact that this safety valve is built into the structure of A.I.R. and is run by A.I.R. means that the organization should be able to control it. This implies that A.I.R. should be able to use it not only as a means for providing variety and entertainment but also as a means for improving public taste. To what extent has A.I.R. been able to use Vividh Bharati for such a purpose? How would Vividh Bharati compare, for instance, with the B.B.C.'s Light Programme, as a piece of broadcasting?

Shortly after he assumed office, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Keskar condemned film music as cheap and vulgar. The broadcast of film songs and request programmes was banned and contracts with film producers were terminated. A grandiose scheme for producing in A.I.R. high quality light music A.I.R. was publicized. The disastrous results of this policy have already been referred to in an earlier chapter. Listeners were being driven to Radio Ceylon. But Dr. Keskar and the officials in A.I.R. and the Ministry refused to face facts. When the Delhi station started conducting a listener research survey, the initial returns were found to be so damaging to A.I.R. that the whole survey was called off. After this the facts could no longer be ignored. Vividh Bharati is a standing admission of the ignominious failure of the Keskar regime's music policy in A.I.R. After having declared his intention of pushing film music out of A.I.R. Dr. Keskar has had to permit its broadcast to the extent of over 60 per cent in Vividh Bharati and to sponsor a scheme ensuring that this same film music is picked up on cheap medium-wave receivers. If ever there was a nemesis it was here.

In comparison with film music, A.I.R.'s own light music occupies a very small part of Vividh Bharati's time schedule. Moreover, this music too is based on the pattern of film songs. We find

the same artists who have made their names as playback singers. We come across the same type of jazzy orchestra, churning up syncopated rhythms which have no affinities with anything Indian, and the same crooning voices and words dripping with sentimentality associated with film music. Vividh Bharati has demonstrated the popularity of Indian film music, as well as the failure of A.I.R. to produce an alternative.

Vividh Bharati, we have stated, filled an important void in A.I.R.'s programme schedules. Response from listeners was immediate and definite. But interestingly enough A.I.R. has been publicizing its mail bag of 3 lakh letters per annum for several years as will be illustrated by the following quotations:

1. A.I.R. made the following claim on the occasion of Vividh Bharati's fourth anniversary on October 3, 1961, "If listeners' letters are any indication of the success of a programme then it might safely be stated that listeners have taken kindly to Vividh Bharati which tries to provide entertainment with Capital E . . . on an average three lakh letters are received by Vividh Bharati every year."[36]
2. The claim in 1963 was: "Vividh Bharati has had over eleven lakh letters from the listeners so far. On an average three lakh letters are received by Vividh Bharati every year."[37]
3. In 1964, the Director-General reiterated this claim: "Vividh Bharati is extremely popular both in India and neighbouring countries and on an average we get three lakh letters a year, a considerable number of them being from South East Asia and Africa."[38]

No body need dispute that A.I.R. received 3 lakh letters every year for Vividh Bharati programmes. The question is, why not more? One would have thought that the expansion of programmes by one hundred per cent within six years of the inception of Vividh Bharati and radiation from 17 medium-wave transmitters

[36] *Akashvani* (English) issue dated October 1, 1961.

[37] *Akashvani* (English) issue dated January 27, 1963.

[38] Article entitled "Broadcasting in India", by B. P. Bhatt published in the *Times of India*, issue dated February 2, 1964.

should have led to a sizeable increase in the mail bag. Obviously there has been no such increase; otherwise, A.I.R. would have been only to prompt to publicize it. This leads one to suspect that Vividh Bharati has not been progressing as it should. Reliable sources indicate that the high water mark of 3 lakh letters reached several years ago has been difficult to maintain. In fact it is claimed that there has been a decline in the popularity of the programmes. The reasons for this loss of popular appeal are not far to seek. The programme is built up entirely on the pattern of commercial services. But the administrative set up continues to be unresponsive to listeners' demands and tied up in the usual machinery of government red tape. New film hits take time to get past the audition committees and for one reason or another are not on the air as soon as they are released.

One respect in which Vividh Bharati has not proved a success is in the development of variety or light spoken word programmes. Apart from replies to listeners' letters, which is hardly a programme, a bare twenty minutes of the entire day's transmission is taken up with spoken word programmes. One of these items is generally an interview with a celebrity, usually drawn from the film world. Thus there remains only *Hawa Mahal* as a contribution to light spoken word entertainment.

Two principal difficulties faced by Vividh Bharati are the direct outcome of the cumbersome procedure followed in the preparation of the programme. Vividh Bharati is essentially a library service based on material already put out by stations in their regional services. All that Vividh Bharati does is to select, edit and make available the best light programmes to audiences wider than those that heard the original broadcasts. Vividh Bharati does not produce its own programmes with its own staff designed to serve its special purpose. Here in lies the basic weakness of Vividh Bharati. A.I.R.'s stations are geared to producing middle-of-the-way programmes. The schedules are tight, studios and equipment are inadequate, technical personnel are very scarce and those on duty are generally in a bad temper! In these circumstances the main object of the programme men is to get the job done without worrying too much about quality. The inevitable result is that the general run of programmes is at best indifferent. Moreover, while A.I.R. has bothered a little about classical music, it has done little

for light music, though light music production is decidedly a more elaborate, more time-consuming and more expensive affair. A.I.R.'s light music, therefore, compares unfavourably with film and commercial light music, a comparison which is made obvious through the composition of Vividh Bharati transmissions. Unless a production unit with adequate resources is set up to cater for the special requirements of Vividh Bharati, nothing much can be expected. The hours of transmission may go up and the medium-wave, relay centres increase in number, but the listener's mail will not grow. And in proportion to the number of licences, this means that A.I.R. continues to fight a losing battle with Radio Ceylon.

Vividh Bharati programmes, as has been explained, are tape recorded three weeks in advance of the date of broadcast. The material on which they are based is in fact several months out of date. A.I.R.'s light entertainment programme, therefore, is completely devoid of topical interest. Now it is true no doubt that where music is concerned topicality counts for little, though the emergency proved that this is not always true. There was a sizeable time lag before Vividh Bharati caught up with the new mood of the country. It was long after the cease fire that patriotic songs and Lata Mangeshkar's famous song, *"Ae Mere Vatan Ke Logo, zara aankh men Bhar lo pani"* were heard on Vividh Bharati. The emergency apart, one type of appeal which is completely absent from Vividh Bharati is that of topicality. If a new sports record has been set up, a new mountain climbed, it cannot come to Vividh Bharati in any form till weeks later. This reveals the narrow conception of light entertainment which A.I.R. has accepted as the goal of Vividh Bharati—sentimental music and stale jokes! This conception is borrowed wholesale from commercial services and is basically unworthy of a public service broadcasting organisation. If A.I.R. is not to suffer from a split personality it must re-think on the fundamentals of Vividh Bharati: Why is it that there is no topical spokenword item in this service? Why do we never have a sports commentary or an adventure story? Do such programmes not provide wholesome light entertainment?

NEWS SERVICES AND TOPICAL BROADCASTS

The News Services of All India Radio came into existence in

1937 as the Central News Organization. Prior to this news bulletins were broadcast from a few stations but the work was not organized on a professional basis. Stories are current of programme staff or announcers going into the studios and reading out news items from the newspapers!

In 1930, Bombay and Calcutta Stations started obtaining news summaries from Reuters for broadcast. This extremely unsatisfactory procedure continued till 1935. Fielden, on his arrival in India, took up the question of the organization of news services on more systematic lines. A News Editor was appointed hurriedly as the Delhi Station was about to come up, which eventually started functioning on 1st January, 1936.

Fielden had two schemes in view. According to one, the news bulletins were to be "de-centralised": each station putting out its own bulletins for its regional audience. The other scheme visualised the setting up of a centralised organ putting out bulletins to be relayed by all stations. Obviously, the correct choice was made. The problems of relaying news bulletins proved quite irksome when other stations came up. For quite some time Lahore, Peshawar and Lucknow received these bulletins on telephone lines for transmission. The authorities also toyed for a while with the idea of linking the stations with special telephone lines but it was given up in view of the huge expense involved.

Till 1935, Calcutta broadcast every evening one bulletin in English and one in Bengali; and Bombay, one in English and one in Hindustani. At the commencement of the Delhi Station the same practice of two bulletins in the evening was followed. It is interesting to note that when attempts were made in 1936 to introduce additional bulletins in the early part of the evening there was considerable opposition and the bulletins were dropped. A similar fate befell the bulletins attempted at lunch time. However, in April 1937, morning bulletins in English and Hindustani were introduced. Charles Barns, who took over control of news broadcasts in 1937, felt "that there could be no real grounds for supposing that India differed so violently from other countries, that news bulletins at various times of the day would not be appreciated."[39]

Since 1940, however, the Central News Organization expanded

[39] *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India*, published by the Manager of Publications, Delhi (1940) pp. 28-29.

rapidly as a result of the impact of the war. Apart from news bulletins in English and the main Indian languages, All India Radio started broadcasting to foreign countries especially those under occupation by the Axis Powers. These broadcasts were directed to different groups of listeners. In the first place, to Indians in overseas countries and secondly to the nationals of those countries. From these external propaganda broadcasts, known during the war as political warfare, the External Services of A.I.R. developed The Central News Organization changed its name shortly after the war and came to be known as the News and External Services Division and functioned under one Director. This situation changed in 1949 when news and External Services were separated into two services each under its own Director. The News Services Division nevertheless prepares all the news bulletins put out in the External Service Programmes; the distinction between external programmes directed to Indians Overseas and to the nationals of those countries continues to this day.

A.I.R. now broadcasts news bulletins in all the important languages of the country. They are prepared centrally, and broadcast on high power transmitters from Delhi and are relayed by the stations as part of their own programmes. Four bulletins each are put out in English and Hindi. The two main English bulletins at 0800 and 2100 hours are relayed by all stations. Since the Chinese invasion A.I.R. has been putting out two five-minute bulletins at 0640 and 2230 hours which are relayed by most stations. However, the 1330 hours bulletin is relayed by Panjim. Hindi bulletins (at 0815, 1340, 1805 and 2015 hours) are compulsorily relayed by the Hindi Stations i.e., Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad, Patna, Ranchi, Jullundur, Jaipur, Simla, Indore and Bhopal. Among the zonal stations, Bombay, is the only one which relays all the Hindi bulletins on Channel 'B'. Calcutta transmits only two bulletins, i.e. at 0815 and 2015 hours. Non-Hindi stations are required to relay at least one of the 4 bulletins. Under this rule Madras Station relays Hindi news on 'A' channel at 1340 hours though in view of the fact that Hindi is to ultimately become the federal language, one would expect the Madras station which is the principal station in the south, to relay one of the two major bulletins i.e., either at 0815 hours or at 2015 hours. It is interesting to note that Port Blair relays all the Hindi and English bulletins. The

news bulletins put out in the various regional languages are compulsory relays for the stations concerned. The position with regard to these is summarised below:

Language	*No. of bulletins*	*Stations relaying bulletins*
Assamese	3	Gauhati
Bengali	3	Calcutta (Kurseong relays one bulletin)
Dogri	2	Jammu
Gorkhali	1	Delhi 'B'
Gujarati	3	Bombay 'A', Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot 'A'
Kannada	3	Bangalore, Dharwar
Kashmiri	2	Srinagar
Malayalam	3	Trivandrum, Kozhikode
Marathi	3	Bombay 'B', Nagpur, Poona (Panjim relays only 0830 & 2000 hours bulletins)
Nepali	1	Kurseong
Oriya	3	Cuttack
Punjabi	3	Jullundur (Delhi 'B' radiates only 0830 & 1945 hours bulletins)
Portuguese	1	Panjim
Tamil	3	Madras 'A', Tiruchi
Telugu	3	Madras 'B', Hyderabad 'A' Vijayawada
Urdu	3	Srinagar relays all the bulletins. Delhi 'A', Lucknow, Allahabad & Jammu relay only at 0850 and 2115 hours. Hyderabad 'A' relays two bulletins at 1410 & 2115 hours

(Kohima Station puts out its own news bulletins in Nagamese.)

In addition to the above, A.I.R. also broadcasts one bulletin a day in Hindi and Gorkhali in the programme for the Armed Forces from Delhi as well as news commentaries in Kashmiri, Urdu and Bengali.

The problem for "local news" has confronted A.I.R. for a very long time. The central news bulletins can only deal with important news items of national interest. Even though some time was given to the more important regional news in the respective language bulletins, a large number of items invariably get crowded out due to lack of time. Discussing this problem, a few years after independence, M. L. Chawla, the late Director of News, who took over from Charles Barns observed:

> The appetite of the regional listener for the news of his areas is intelligible. As much of it as is available and as can be accommodated in the Indian language broadcasts is included in the scripts. It is sometimes argued that if news bulletins were prepared by the regional stations all news-worthy local items would get into them. This is a plea for decentralisation of the news services. Decentralisation would be a costly proposition. Besides, even if funds could be found to set up expert News Divisions with all the paraphernalia of editors, monitors and other essential Personnel at each station for the drafting of bulletins, full and prompt local coverage of news on anything like a first class regional newspaper scale would be impossible until All India Radio had a network of reliable and competent correspondents not only at State Centres but also in the District.[40]

All India Radio, however, effected a compromise. The present all-India set-up of the relay of news bulletins from Delhi was retained but the introduction of regional news bulletins from the stations made for partial decentralisation. The process started in 1953 when the News Services Division made a beginning with the setting up of a Regional News Unit at the Lucknow Station. This Regional News Unit was designed to prepare a daily ten-

[40] "Aspects of Broadcasting in India: A Symposium", published by Publications Division, Delhi, 1950, contribution entitled "News Broadcasting Through the Years" by M. L. Chawla, (p. 24).

minute bulletin of regional, as distinct from national and international news. Regional news bulletins are now broadcast as indicated below:

Lucknow	Hindi (Relayed by Allahabad)
Bhopal	Hindi (Relayed by Indore)
Patna	Hindi (Relayed by Ranchi)
Jaipur	Hindi
Jullundur	Hindi & Punjabi
Gauhati	Assamese
Kohima	Assamese and in six Naga dialects
Calcutta	Bengali (Relayed by Kurseong)
Ahmedabad Baroda	Gujarati (Relayed by Rajkot)
Bangalore	Kannada (Relayed by Dharwar)
Srinagar Jammu	Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu and Pushto
Bombay	Marathi (Relayed by Poona)
Trivandrum	Malayalam (Relayed by Kozhikode)
Cuttack	Oriya
Madras	Tamil (Relayed by Tiruchi)
Hyderabad	Telugu (Relayed by Vijayawada)

The sources of news utilized by A.I.R. are the Press Trust of India, A.I.R. correspondents in some state capitals, and a monitoring unit in Delhi. A scheme has recently been introduced for the appointment of part-time correspondents in the districts to feed the regional news centres.

The news room works round the clock. News bulletins are prepared on the basis of what is known as the Pool System which came into operation in 1949. Messages from the three sources mentioned earlier are received at the Pool Desk. These are sorted out by the Senior Editor on duty and stories are assigned to the team of editors working under him. These editors prepare a copy of all stories which might possibly be used in the bulletins. Policy clarification, verification and other like questions are the responsibility of the Pool Desk.

The work of preparing scripts for particular news bulletins rests with a different set of editors. For instance, one editor is responsible for the 8 A.M. bulletin and another for the morning "language" bulletins. Editors on individual bulletins work on the basis of the Pool Copy and for them it is a matter of paste and scissors. The language bulletin has two parts, one deals with items of common interest, while the other consists of items of regional interest. The script goes to the "Language Units" who are responsible for translation.

There has been some criticism of the Pool System as wasteful. After the Pool Copy has been prepared there is precious little left for the bulletin editor to do. Also, the question arises as to how the Pool Editors who prepare a sort of omnibus copy of news items can possibly judge news values except in a very rudimentary manner. A news bulletin is essentially a feat of compression which can be effective only if the needs of the target area are kept prominently in mind, and if everything else is ruthlessly cut out. As against this the Pool Copy must inevitably be characterless and colourless since it is not designed for any particular bulletin and no precise wordage is ever kept in mind.

More perhaps than any other section of A.I.R. the news services have been under the fire of public criticism. This is not because A.I.R.'s news service is any less efficient than the others, but because news bulletins command the highest listening. And selection of news cannot but be controversial and the rival political parties have always something to gain or lose. The two main criticisms have been: lack of imagination in dealing with news values, which is tied up with the red tape of administrative machinery and the heavy doses of government and party propaganda which bulks large in news bulletins.

"Scandals" of the former variety have cropped up from time to time. In 1952, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji died in an army hospital in Kashmir. The news sent by A.I.R.'s own correspondent at Srinagar was available in A.I.R.'s News Room at 5.30 A.M. on the 25th June. What could be more authentic? But the news had to wait seven hours and twenty-minutes for "policy clearance" before a very brief report was put out in the Bengali bulletin at 12.50 in the afternoon. Even the proceedings pertaining to Dr. Mukherji's death in Parliament were not broadcast, obviously be-

cause A.I.R. had not been able to get the news of his death verified from authentic sources! In February 1960, PTI put out a report that Mr. Chou En Lai then at Rangoon accepted an invitation to come to Delhi for discussions. A Viscount of the President was being sent to Rangoon. This news was wholly suppressed by A.I.R. These and other instances were forcefully cited by Waqnis in his column "Speaking Generally" in the *Statesman* and he was voicing the feelings of many of his readers when he commented:

> Why over the last years, have the activities of All India Radio, of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and of the Minister and officials of that Ministry been given more and more time in news bulletins? Why in reporting the daily proceedings in Parliament, is there an attempt, when describing a debate, to list the name of every member who took part rather than to summarize the course of the debate more fully? Why, in recent years, has the element of propaganda, distinct from objectivity on which A.I.R. once prided itself, imperceptibly but surely established itself in news broadcast? The questions add up to a sad falling off from the standards A.I.R. had set for itself.[41]

So long as Government control of A.I.R. continues to be as rigid as it is, such unimaginative handling of news is inevitable. In these cases the news services are not so much to blame. But what about the type of "unimaginativeness" which is not forced from above but is rather generated from within, in an organization which does not go out to collect news but waits to receive it in the form of "handouts" from Government sources. When the Central Government servants launched a strike in 1960 there was little doubt that the sympathies of the people were with the Government rather than the strikers. In reporting the disruption of services, and the consequent rise in cost of food and other hardships to the common man, the newspapers gave cogent and interesting stories of how the common man (who had no share in the quarrel) was affected and inconvenienced. Indirectly, these

[41] *The Statesman*, dated April 26, 1960. See also *Times of India*, Editorial captioned "Disturbing" in the issue of 9th May, 1960.

reports were excellent pro-government propaganda. A.I.R. correspondents, however, were busy collecting official figures of attendance in Government offices and trying to make out that essential services were "normal" though later we learnt that by "normal" they meant "in accordance with the austerity schedule." There was a wave of protest throughout the country against the false reporting of A.I.R. Calcutta newspapers in particular published photographs of intending passengers locked out of Howrah Station. The captions declared that the people had gone to the station on the basis of A.I.R. reports which said that train services were normal. A great opportunity lost.

Take another instance. Immediately after the release of Sheikh Abdullah from the prison after long confinement, Kashmir and the whole country passed through a very tense period. Inder Malhotra writing from Srinagar reported the failure of communication between Srinagar and New Delhi. Sheikh Abdullah seemed "utterly oblivious to the intensely adverse reaction to his speeches" in India, whereas New Delhi suffered from lack of adequate information and awareness of the impact he was making on the people of Kashmir by reiterating his determination to secure the right of self-determination for them. Due to bad weather newspapers did not reach Srinagar for a couple of days after Sheikh Abdullah's release and commenting in this context Inder Malhotra said:

"The news-hungry people had, therefore, no way of finding out what the Sheikh had said because, for reasons best known to itself, All India Radio decided virtually to black out the Sheikh's speeches. The result was that the people most interested in Sheikh Abdullah's speeches and statements had to rely on the heavily slanted but elaborate versions of Radio Pakistan."[42]

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting, in 1960, while replying to questions in the Parliament tried to argue that A.I.R. judges all news items on their merits.[43] Figures have been produced to show that major developments concerning opposition parties have received fair attention. It is largely correct that A.I.R. does not suppress important news relating to the opposition parties. This would be its death knell. But what does happen is the insidious infiltration into bulletins of unimportant items pertaining to Gov-

[42] *The Statesman*, dated April 24, 1964.

[43] In Rajya Sabha on 15th February, 1960.

ernment and the ruling party. The country is no doubt interested in most of the things the Prime Minister says (even in his casual remarks) and in his movements. But must we also be regaled (and three times in a day) with what for instance was said by Dr. Keskar, the then Minister of Information and Broadcasting? According to the newspapers this Minister did not, and many others do not, make news.

A.I.R. made elaborate arrangements for the coverage of election results and spent no less than 35½ hours in the broadcast of bulletins and announced over 3,500 results. During the five days between the 25th February and the 1st March in the elections in 1962.[44] The News Services Division needs to be congratulated on this achievement. But on the larger issue of educating the electorate by arranging broadcasts by leaders of political parties, A.I.R. seems to have shown a consistent lack of enterprise over the past ten years. On 30th August, 1951, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, R. R. Diwakar told Parliament that due to the variety of languages, lack of definition of political parties and other difficulties it was not "administratively possible" for A.I.R. to arrange for party broadcasts before the elections. This question again came up at the time of the second general elections in 1957. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting continued to be cautious. On the 19th February, 1956, Dr. Keskar made an offer to the political parties. The four all-India parties—the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialists, the Communists and Jana Sangha—were to be permitted to prepare their election manifestos which would be read out over the microphone by A.I.R. announcers.

The argument used on this occasion was that if election broadcasts were arranged on the British Model based on the actual strength of parties in Parliament, the Indian National Congress would get a very high proportion of time on A.I.R. in comparison with the other political parties and there would be complaints of favouritism for the party in power. It was contended that the offer made to the four all-India parties was therefore a generous one. However, as might have been expected the three opposition parties rejected it. Basically this was of not much utility as the manifestos of the political parties were in any case announced in A.I.R.'s news bulletins.

[44] Replies to question in Lok Sabha on 7-5-62 & 24-5-62.

For the 1962 elections initiative for arranging party political broadcasts was taken by the Chief Election Commissioner. The Chief Election Commissioner worked out an elaborate formula based on the actual strength of the political parties in Parliament and the number of candidates each party proposed to put in the field. The Chief Election Commissioner recognized six all-India parties which included the four parties mentioned earlier and the Swatantra and Socialist parties. These parties were to be given access to broadcast on the National Look-up. Three hundred minutes spread over some three weeks preceding the elections were to be set aside for these broadcasts, and the total time of each party was to be divided into units of 15 minutes and 10 minutes. There was to be no censorship, but the Chief Election Commissioner appealed to political parties to agree to a code of conduct to be strictly adhered to.[45] Party broadcasts in the States were to follow a similar pattern.

The Chief Election Commissioner announced that these proposals had been drawn up in consultation with the political parties and it was therefore expected that the broadcasts would take place. The proposals were hailed by the press though it was pointed out that the scales were heavily weighted in favour of the ruling party. What looked like a certainty, however, ultimately fell through as some parties raised objections to the Chief Election Commissioner's original formula. A new basis was suggested *viz.*, each recognized party should have one fifteen-minute broadcast, and that the Indian National Congress be given one additional broadcast "by way of reply." On 1st February, 1962 the Election Commission announced in a press note that its proposal to provide broadcast facilities to the main political parties "was being abandoned for lack of agreement among them as to the basis for dividing the available radio time." The press note continued "while the Praja Socialist and Swantantra parties have accepted this scheme without reservation, no reply has so far been received from the Socialist party. The Communist party is not agreeable to the Congress being given additional opportunity to reply; alternatively, as the next largest party in the Lok Sabha, it claims that it should also be given a similar opportunity. The Jan Sangha party

[45] *The Statesman* issue dated 19-11-1961.

proposes that the opposition parties also should be allowed two broadcasts each, the Congress party being given the opportunity to begin and conclude the series."

Thus another big opportunity to bring A.I.R. to the people was lost. From the point of view of radio, two points appear significant. Firstly, the scheme for political broadcasts before the elections was being taken up as an isolated issue. After these particular party broadcasts, A.I.R. would lapse into its old rut of keeping away from political controversy. It was perhaps not surprising that the political parties should have found the Chief Election Commissioner's formula unsatisfactory. One important and persistent criticism has been that right round the year A.I.R. is used as a vehicle for Congress propaganda in the shape of broadcasts by Ministers. The sop of a single broadcast in five years as against two for the ruling party on this occasion, was hardly likely to satisfy the opposition parties. Had the election broadcast scheme been part of a larger plan to give the political parties time on A.I.R. round the year, they might well have viewed it differently.

When the pre-election broadcast scheme fell through, a number of newspapers, including the *Statesman,* criticized A.I.R. in their Editorial columns. The fact, however, was that A.I.R. deserved neither praise nor blame for the whole affair. The various formulae had been drawn up by the Chief Election Commissioner. A.I.R. was consulted only indirectly through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This reflected the unimportant position of A.I.R. in the Government machine. Perhaps in a different set-up where A.I.R. could have had same authority of its own, the conclusion would have been very different. Had the pre-election broadcasts been part of a general scheme for political broadcasts, had A.I.R. been given the chance to meet the political leaders and explain the procedure in other countries and, most important of all, had A.I.R. been given a chance to impress on the leaders the role of broadcasting can play in political education. . . . But, alas! in the present set-up all this is beyond the bounds of possibility.

If the criticism is gaining ground that the News Services Division is projecting more and more only one point of view, there is a justifiable basis for it. In recent years, the News Services Division has taken upon itself the responsibility for reviews and news com-

mentaries which were formerly broadcast by individuals representing different shades of opinion. The stations used to broadcast weekly reviews of current affairs by journalists and other competent people. Provided they did not directly criticise the Government, they were free to express their views.

Some time towards the end of the fifties these reviews ceased. The News Services Division then took to preparing an official script which is broadcast on Sundays under the caption "Matters of Moment" and is relayed by all stations. A Hindi version of this reaches the stations some two or three days later and translations of it are broadcast in the regional languages though they by then, "as dead as mutton". Similarly a five-minute review of the proceeding in the Parliament is broadcast when it is in session. This also is now an "official" broadcast. Since the emergency, these official commentaries have been considerably extended.

The old theory, based on the B.B.C. tradition was that A.I.R. had no editorial policy. It provided a means for the expression of personal views. The assumption of an "official" editorial policy by the News Services Division of A.I.R. is therefore an important matter which should be taken note of by people who uphold democratic freedom.

A new feature introduced by the News Services Division is the Radio Newsreel. Two in English and two in Hindi are broadcast from Delhi every week, and bear an all-India character. The Regional News Units are responsible for a weekly newsreel each in the respective languages. Special editions of Radio newsreel are put on the air to cover topical events such as the visits of foreign dignatories and so on. The newsreel programmes are broadcast at a peak listening hour, 8.30 P.M. and are brimfull of possibilities. The present tendency to fill up the newsreel with reports of official happenings, however, needs to be avoided. The newsreel also has a tendency to confine itself to interviews with people either recorded in the studios or on the spot. While "on-the-spot" interviews have their place in lending local colour, A.I.R. does not seem to have exploited what has recently come to be described as "Reportage." This is essentially a technique of painting word pictures of a scene as witnessed, and may enhance the interest of newsreels if A.I.R. correspondents were encouraged to try their hand at this technique.

A word may be said about running commentaries, especially on sports. A.I.R. has been serving a very useful function in arranging running commentaries on public events such as the arrival of important State guests like Queen Elizabeth II, Premier Khruschev, President Eisenhower and others. The running commentary on the Republic Day Parade and the Red Fort Ceremony on Independence Day are annual affairs, and command considerable listening throughout the country. Commentaries have also been arranged on the passing away of national leaders. These commentaries are the business of the News Services Division. A few first rate commentators in English, Melville De Mellow being easily the most outstanding, have been built up but commentators in Hindi have yet a long way to go. The position in regional languages is woeful. The solution lies in providing opportunities to a fairly large number of commentators in various languages if a talent is to develop in this field.

For sports commentaries, commentators from outside are engaged by A.I.R. By far the most important game from this point of view is cricket, and the Test commentaries have been so popular that they have become something of a distraction for school and college students. Indeed, teachers have been worried about non-attendance during the Test matches, and in some institutions severe penalties have been enforced for such absence. This aspect of the matter might require thought by A.I.R. authorities.

As a result of the great popularity of the Test commentaries, and the prestige which has come to be attached to them, a considerable element of "politics" has come into the selection of commentators. Some years ago an unfortunate incident occurred which deprived A.I.R. of the services of Talyarkhan, admittedly one of the best sports commentators in the country. What is surprising is that it has not been possible to end this deadlock between A.I.R. and Talyarkhan though a decade has passed. However, the country has a competent group of commentators in Pearson Surita, V. M. Chakrapani, D. R. Puri, Berry Sarbardhikarry and Ananda Rao. Considerable controversy has developed over the past few years around the figure of Vizzy. Public reactions as revealed in letters appearing in the press shows that Vizzy's tendency to let his mind wander over his past experience instead of reporting on the game he is witnessing has annoyed many a listener. Undoubt-

edly some of his digressions, particularly when they came at apt moments, are interesting and constitute the main cause of his popularity. But as a commentator's prime function is to describe the game being played and not to reminiscence with wild abandon. The basis of selection for commentators has been raised in the Parliament on a number of occasions. While the then Minister, Dr. Keskar, admitted that a committee of officials had listened to recordings of a number of commentators, he denied that there had been any "grading" of the commentators. This is indeed disingenuous. Why, it may be asked was it necessary for a committee of officials to be set up to listen to recordings of commentators, if it was not for the purpose of assessing their quality? Why indulge in this waste of effort and time? It does not take much insight to guess that the findings of the committee were not to Dr. Keskar's taste and he had, therefore, chosen to ignore them. However, Vizzy continues to be popular with Dr. Keskar's successors and is still A.I.R.'s chief cricket commentator.

A.I.R.'s Hindi Policy

In this context a word needs to be said about the language policy of A.I.R. While this is not wholly connected with news, it is in relation to news bulletins that the chief issues have arisen. The main controversies have centered round Hindi, the steps taken by A.I.R. to propagate Hindi as the national language and the acceptability of the Hindi used in the news bulletins.

In order to propagate Hindi, stations in the non-Hindi speaking areas introduced from Sunday, December 18, 1949 a programme of Hindi lessons on five days of the week. The first reference to these lessons is in a note appearing in the Indian Listener for the week commencing Sunday, December 25, 1949. It says that the lessons commenced the previous week. These lessons were broadcast in the morning transmissions for a duration of approximately twenty-minutes. A series of lessons were devised and each station presented the lesson through the medium of the regional language. After a few years A.I.R. came to the conclusion that these programmes were not a success since they laid too much stress on grammar and for the purpose of radio it would be better to adopt the direct method. The programmes were then revised and pre-

sented in the form of conversations, between teachers and students. These lessons continued till the emergency when they were conveniently done away with to make room for other programmes which were considered more necessary. Characteristic of the manner in which programme policies are enforced in A.I.R. no serious attempt was made to propagate the national language in a form acceptable to listener's. A thoroughly unimaginative syllabus was drawn up and presented in out-moded ways which ran counter to educational theory and practice. At no stage was a listener survey conducted to ascertain the extent of listening or the reactions and comments of the general public. The experience of the B.B.C. in teaching English by Radio was ready to hand but was never made use of by the A.I.R. authorities. The discontinuance of the Hindi lessons programme did away with a lot of dead lumber but it also meant that an important opportunity was lost through unimaginative handling.

While the Hindi lessons might have proved as a minor irritant to a few listener's, the Hindi used in the news bulletins has been a major issue almost since the emergence of A.I.R. In the early days these were known as Hindustani news bulletins. While the majority of Indian language programmes at the northern stations were in Urdu, a specified percentage of spoken-word programmes was laid down for Hindi. The lions share went to Urdu and this was a major ground for complaint by Hindi writers and others, especially in the Uttar Pradesh. However, in distinction from these programmes the language of the news bulletins was described as neither Hindi nor Urdu but as Hindustani. In practice, however, the language of the news bulletins leaned heavily on the side of Urdu. It is important to notice that in principle it was recognised that the language requirements of news bulletins were distinctive. Linguistic purity might be all right in cultural and academic programmes but was out of place in news bulletins which catered to a mass audience.

The word 'Hindustani' was dropped towards the end of 1949. In fact *News in Hindi,* instead of *News in Hindustani,* were filled in the Indian listener for the first time with effect from Sunday, November 27, 1949. Although the Indian listener used to have short editorial comments at that time, the change from Hindustani to Hindi as the language of news bulletins was not commented

upon or publicised anywhere. It seems A.I.R.'s Hindi language policy was dealt with in a semi-secret manner. The character of the language also changed and highly sanskritized expressions came to be used. It was argued that even if the people could not follow the language of the Hindi news bulletins they would learn it by constant listening. This was the line taken by Dr. Keskar who had been assumed office. It was during this period that the Prime Minister complained that he could not understand the language in which his Hindi speeches were reported in A.I.R.'s news bulletins! Meanwhile steps had been taken to broadcast separate news bulletins in Urdu. Urdu first figured as a language of news bulletins in the Indian listener for the week commencing Sunday, December 18, 1949. There were then two Urdu news bulletins a day at 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Relay of the Urdu bulletins did not appear in the programmes of Delhi or any other station. In April 1950 Urdu bulletins were shown for the first time as being relayed by Hyderabad station.

Although himself a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, P. M. Lad, who became Secretary to Government in the I & B. Ministry in 1954 was clear-sighted enough to see the folly of this line of approach. He realised that the function of A.I.R.'s news bulletins was to convey information to the masses. A.I.R. was not an esoteric cultural society for the propagation of purity in language. From his time, therefore, began the movement for reform of the language of A.I.R.'s Hindi news bulletins. The Hindi writers and scholars whom Dr. Keskar had given lucrative appointments in A.I.R. as advisers and producers were strongly entrenched and made every effort to hold back this movement. Unfortunately Lad passed away and there was no one to pursue this policy with vigour. Nevertheless, with occasional proddings from the Prime Minister, it continued to gain momentum.

Shortly after Dr. Gopala Reddi assumed charge as Minister of Information and Broadcasting, following the defeat of Dr. Keskar in the 1962 elections, he took up the question of the language policy of A.I.R.'s Hindi news bulletins. Dr. Reddi's contention was that the language used in Hindi news bulletins was not understood by the vast majority of listeners' in the Hindi speaking region. He contended that Urdu words in current coinage should not be excluded from the bulletins and should be preferred to

esoteric words of Sanskrit origin. The simplification of language should not be confined to Hindi news alone. The same principles should be employed in presenting news in Urdu. In effect, this policy meant that Hindi and Urdu should be brought closer together. From the point of view of radio, this was perfectly sound.

Dr. Reddi summoned A.I.R.'s Producers and Assistant Producers of Spoken Word Programmes in Hindi and Urdu to a seminar at Broadcasting House in June, 1962. He expounded his ideas and there were subsequent discussions on how "simplification" was to be achieved in practice. Following the seminar, a definite experiment was made to model the Hindi and Urdu news bulletins on the lines advocated by him. In particular, an experiment was tried out in which identical texts were used for the Hindi and Urdu news bulletins at 1.40 and 1.50 P.M. The news items included were not all common to the two news bulletins, but where this was so, the language used was identical. Dr. Reddi told the Rajya Sabha on August 13, 1962, in reply to a question, that the experimental bulletins had been introduced with effect from the 1st July.

While the discussions at the Spoken Word Producers Seminar, and the subsequent decisions, were not officially reported, at that time the whole story leaked out into the press. The Hindi fanatics in A.I.R., appointed during the Keskar regime, no doubt saw to this. Members of Parliament from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar rallied round the slogan of "Hindi in danger."

The controversy which had been sparked off by Reddi's reply to the debate on the budget demands of A.I.R. on the 28th May, 1962, gained momentum in the months to follow. When Parliament met for its monsoon session the storm broke. Dr. Reddi was criticized for his attempts to Urduize Hindi and for trying to reverse the Hindi policy pursued by A.I.R. over the past decade. The argument was also put forward that if the language used in the bulletins was Sanskritized, people throughout the country could understand it since the regional languages shared with Hindi a common base. Dr. Reddi made a spirited defence. The Prime Minister rallied in support. He had disclosed at a press conference at the end of June that when Dr. Reddi assumed charge as Minister for Information and Broadcasting, he had suggested that he might look into the question of the language used in A.I.R.'s

Hindi news bulletins. He went on to say that he had not entirely approved of the Hindi policy pursued by Dr. Keskar.

Certain people who had an important voice in A.I.R.'s affairs fell out with Dr. Reddi over the Hindi language issue. Among them were the poet Dinkar and Mama Warerkar, whose membership of the Central Programme Advisory Committee was not renewed. It looked as if there might be some sort of an agitation against A.I.R.'s policy.

The Indian Express of the 26th June, reported that the Delhi Pradeshik Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was collecting one lakh signatures on a petition to the Prime Minister to protest against the change in the Hindi policy of A.I.R. under the "pretext" of simplification of Hindi broadcasts. A few days earlier, on the 23rd June, three well-known Hindi writers, two of whom had been producers in A.I.R., Bhagwati Charan Verma, Amrit Lal Nagar and Yashpal had issued a statement in Lucknow in which they appealed to Hindi writers to "prepare to sever their links with A.I.R. to uphold the dignity of Hindi."

At the same time efforts at reconciliation were also being made. *The Hindustan Times* of the 6th August, said that the Congress Parliamentary Party had adopted a resolution orally proposed by Mr. Nehru, that so far as possible the Hindi used by A.I.R. should be simple but "nothing should be done to militate against the genius of Hindi." Immediately after, an eleven member committee of Members of Parliament was formed. It was subsequently reported in the Indian Express of the 18th September, that as a result of a preliminary scrutiny, "much of the apprehension initially entertained by Hindi enthusiasts about A.I.R.'s Hindi news bulletins had been allayed." The Hindi Committee of M.Ps. appears to have gone into liquidation and a high-powered committee of scholars and experts came into existence under the chairmanship of Mr. Sri Prakasa, who had then recently retired from the governorship of Bombay.

It was at this stage that the Chinese invasion occurred. All controversial issues were put into cold storage. There followed the abortive VOA deal and the replacement of Dr. Gopala Reddi by Mr. Satya Narain Sinha as Minister for Information and Broadcasting. With Mr. Sinha at the helm of affairs, acutely susceptible to the powerful Bihar lobby in parliament, A.I.R. is undergoing

another metamorphosis in its language policy. Meanwhile, the basic issue continues to be shirked, namely: is the language used in A.I.R.'s Hindi news bulletins understood by the vast majority of the people for whom they are intended? Dr. Reddi's brief tenure as Minister will be remembered in A.I.R., because he had the courage to face this problem, and attempted to solve it on lines which were basically sound and in keeping with the requirements of broadcasting.

A.I.R. News Staff

One point about A.I.R. news personnel which deserves notice is the coming into existence in 1963 of the Indian Information Service. Prior to this the editorial staff of A.I.R. comprising the Director, News Services Division, Deputy Director, Chief News Editor, News Editors, Assistant News Editors, Sub-editors and reporting staff of various categories formed a single cadre. Persons recruited for the News Services Division served in A.I.R. alone, and could seek preferment only within this limited field. Their job was news casting. Sometime ago, it was decided to form a single cadre of the Indian Information Service and A.I.R. news staff, information staff of the Press Information Bureau, and staff of the Publications Division and the Directorate of Field Publicity were all included in it. This has no doubt opened up several avenues of promotion to A.I.R. news staff but it has adversely affected the working of the News Services Division. News casting, writing commentaries and despatches for broadcast and editing news reels are specialized jobs. Unless the staff of the News Services Division are experts in the radio medium the effectiveness of these categories of programmes will deteriorate. Such expertise cannot be built up if persons are editing news bulletins today and functioning as public relations officers tomorrow. A smart officer in the Indian Information Service will have his eye on the next opening higher up, and inevitably he will not care to specialize in radio. There is no doubt that the establishment of the IIS has adversely effected the efficiency of news broadcasts. Ways and means of giving A.I.R. news staff a chance to specialize, and also to aspire to higher appointments in broadcasting have to be devised.

EXTERNAL BROADCASTS

The External Services of A.I.R. need to be considered separately from A.I.R.'s Home Services. The requirements of this wing of A.I.R. are entirely different from those of the home service stations. The External Services are primarily a link between India and the countries to which the various language broadcasts are directed. They attempt on the one hand to project the image of India, the culture of its people, their progress in various fields and on the other, to publicise the Government's view in relation to international affairs. How far the External Services of All India Radio are discharging their functions and with what success will be examined in this chapter. To understand properly the function of the External Services it will be necessary to study at some length the origin of these broadcasts and their growth and development over a quarter of a century.

External broadcasts of All India Radio can be said to have been started on October 1, 1939, when broadcasts in Pushto were for the first time addressed to listeners in Afghanistan. These broadcasts were introduced by the Central News Organisation which shortly after the outbreak of World War II came to be styled as the News and External Services Division of All India Radio under one Director. It was only in 1949 that news and External Services were separated when the External Services Division came under a separate Director of its own.

The history of external broadcasts of A.I.R. illustrates the almost direct and immediate impact of war and peace on foreign broadcasts. World War II started in September, 1939. A.I.R.'s Pushto (Afghan-Persian) broadcasts, as stated earlier, went on the air in October, 1939. Shortly after, broadcasts in other foreign languages were started. Japan entered World War II in December, 1941, and brought India dangerously close to the theatre of war. Broadcasts directed towards the Far East were immediately organized on a large scale. As some of the Indian languages were understood by a vast number of people in the Far East, broadcasts were put out in many Indian, in addition to foreign languages. The expenditure on broadcasts in foreign languages was met by the British Government. Though technically A.I.R. had control over these broadcasts, the Far Eastern Bureau of the British For-

eign Office had an effective say in all matters of propaganda—these broadcasts were in fact styled as "Political Warfare." By 1945, A.I.R.'s external programmes had grown to 74 daily broadcasts spread over 22 languages.

General Eisenhower, with his headquarters at Reims, along with the representatives of other allied powers, received Germany's unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945. However, the War with Japan continued for a few months more. On 14th August, the allied terms of surrender were accepted by the Japanese Cabinet. The end of World War II immediately affected the importance of external broadcasts radiated from India from the British point of view. The Far Eastern Bureau of the British Foreign Office handed back to All India Radio the effective control over external broadcasts. The rapid expansion which had taken place during the war was reversed with equal rapidity. From 74 daily broadcasts, the number was reduced to 31 by the end of March, 1947. The period of two years from 14th August, 1945 (when World War II ended) to 15th August, 1947 (when India became independent) was marked as far as external broadcasts are concerned by uncertainty and lack of a clear-cut policy. When the National Government came into power, it immediately became known to all at home and abroad that free India would in future follow an independent line of approach to every problem in all international matters. Enmity towards none and friendship for all being India's avowed policy, A.I.R.'s external broadcasts soon began to speak in mild and subdued accents of international peace, goodwill, amity, co-existence and *Panchsheel*. External broadcasts were steadily developed and India's voice came to be heard in various countries. In fact, people in many countries, from the Fiji island in the east to the West Indies began increasingly to hear the voice of A.I.R.

In the Silver Jubilee handout issued by A.I.R. in 1961, it was stated that A.I.R. put out external broadcasts in 18 languages for 23 hours per day. In a check-up later with the Department this information was found to be wrong, inasmuch as A.I.R. was then broadcasting only in 17 languages. A.I.R. started a 15-minute Sinhalese Service on 10th December, 1962 which was given up soon after. Why it was started and why it was given up has never been revealed. With the discontinuance of the programme in Portuguese on 1st October, 1963 A.I.R.'s external broadcasts were

confined to only 16 languages[46] in 1963. With the inauguration of a service in Thai on 1st June, 1964 the External Services Division now puts out programmes in 17 languages. Broadly these broadcasts fall into two categories.

(*a*) Programmes for Indians abroad, and
(*b*) Programmes for nationals of foreign countries.

Broadcasts in the first category are put out in Hindi, Gujarati, Konkani and Tamil and are mainly heard in South-East Asia, East Africa, Central Africa, Aden and Mauritius. These are "directed to the four million odd Indians abroad, the object being to entertain them and to keep them in touch with events and developments in the country." The broadcasts in the second category are in 13 languages—Arabic, Burmese, Cantonese, English, French, Indonesian, Kyoyu, Nepali, Persian, Pushtu, Swahili and Tibetan and Thai.

Details of A.I.R.'s external broadcasts are briefly indicated below:

1. *East Asia Services*
   Languages used: Burmese, Cantonese, Kyoyu, Nepali, Tibetan and English.

2. *Southeast Asia Services*
   Languages used: English, Hindi, Tamil, Indonesian, French and Thai.

3. *Australia and New zealand Services*
   Languages used: English.

4. *West Asia Services*
   Languages used: Arabic, Persian, French and Pushto.

5. *African Services*
   Languages used: Swahili, Hindi, Gujarati, Konkani, English.

[46] This information was received from the Director, External Services Division *vide* letter No. ESD-1(15) 64-LR dated 31st January, 1964.

6. *European Services*
Languages used: English and French.

All India Radio does not address any programmes to Latin American countries due to technical difficulties. Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Sham Nath, Deputy Minister for Information and Broadcasting, said that it was impossible to direct transmissions from Delhi which could be heard clearly in Latin America. Such broadcasts would have to be relayed from transmitters in intervening countries and it was not possible to make the required arrangements without giving reciprocal facilities to the countries concerned.[47]

Before we proceed further we must answer some pertinent questions: Why external programmes at all? Why this huge expenditure? What is the purpose? Who listens? Do external broadcasts really influence public opinion abroad? Let us answer the last question first. External broadcasts addressed by one country to another can never compete successfully with local broadcasts. With the huge development of broadcasting in almost all countries, foreign broadcasts are like a drop in an ocean. Hence, there is no possibility of foreign broadcasts ever directly influencing the mind of the people who are being fed day in and day out with a particular point of view by local agencies. Take, for example, Pakistan. In view of the dispute over Kashmir the prevailing temper of the people in West Pakistan is such that whatever A.I.R. may say, and say truthfully, will not cut any ice. Made to believe a certain point of view by the Pakistan press and radio, they turn a deaf ear to what the Indian press and radio have to say and treat it as pure misrepresentation. The same may not be true of listeners in East Pakistan. The governor of East Pakistan criticising the Radio Pakistan authorities complained that listeners in East Pakistan were tuning in Calcutta in preference to Dacca. The causes for listening to foreign broadcasts can be many and sometime lie below the surface. One of the causes may be dissatisfaction with the existing political set up in one's own country. Let us take another example of foreign broadcasts which were extremely effective. There was considerable clandestine listening to broadcasts of the German Radio during the World War II, and people in

[47] Lok Sabha proceedings on 22nd July, 1962.

India tended to take as true the word of the German Radio as against the B.B.C. This was because the Indian people struggling for their own independence were hostile to the British, and the initial German successes enhanced the prestige of their propaganda.

It would be folly to imagine that by broadcasting for an hour or so everyday, we can hope to influence local opinion substantially. But by being a source of information to minority groups, external broadcasts may have some bearing on public opinion in the long run. In the world of today, we do not expect quick results in such matters when public opinion is subjected to hundreds of influences and radio is only one among them. Foreign broadcasts may not work wonders but they sometimes prove extremely useful and may be the only medium of contact. The effort is essential. This question has been admirably answered by the Director of External Service Division, Mehra Masani, when she says:

> Does the extent of listening justify the effort? Even if we presume that many more people listen to us than the number that writes to us, our audience, on any day, would consist of a few thousand people. Looked at in this way it appears to be of a negligible size as compared with the audience we have for our home programmes. But is the day to day size of an overseas audience of much significance? What we want is that people all over the world should get used to listening to A.I.R. from the Indian point of view. It would be impossible for them to do so if they were not aware of A.I.R. and they could only be made aware of A.I.R. if we were on the air regularly day after day. The fact that an individual listener may not listen to us more than two or three times a year does not matter at all if at critical moments he knows where to turn for the authentic voice of India. And this is exactly what people have started doing in many countries.[48]

Besides broadcasting programmes to target areas the External Service Division of A.I.R. had done some good work in other directions as well. It has established contacts with many radio or-

[48] Contribution entitled, "A.I.R.'s External Services" to the symposium "Aspects of Broadcasting in India" published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi (1951).

ganizations in the world and entered into a big programme of exchange of recordings. This has helped foreigners to understand Indian art and culture. Recordings of orchestral and folk music have been very well received abroad. In return we have also received recordings from other organizations. Our embassies in foreign countries have helped the External Services Division by rendering advice on how the programmes were being received in those countries. On the basis of this advice, changes have been effected in the programmes, the language used, the timings of broadcasts and even in the wavelengths of transmitters. The External Services Division has conducted a number of surveys among listeners in Asia and in some Arabic countries to enquire into listening habits and programme interests. This has enabled them to reorganize their programmes. The External Services Division now claims to receive about 30,000 letters a year from all parts of the world. Since 1947, listening to our external programmes has been steadily on the increase.

A.I.R. also publishes a number of monthly programme journals which are distributed free of charge to listeners in foreign countries. The journals are: India Calling (English), Idhaat-ul-Hind (Arabic); Sada-i-Hind (Persian); Ponghubung (Indonesian); Lay Daiga Athan (Burmese); Yintudze Sheng (Chinese); Gya-gar-Gi-Dra-Tan (Tibetan) and D-Hind Awaz (Pushtu).

From this broad picture of the development and present working of the External Services, three important questions emerge. First, to which countries should we direct our broadcasts? Secondly, what should be the content of the programmes? Thirdly, what are the requirements of personnel who are going to man the services and present programmes in the various languages?

It will be seen from the foregoing account that the services in foreign languages are mainly directed to South East Asia and to West Asia including certain parts of Africa. There is, in addition, the European Service directed to Western Europe. During the past seven or eight years, there has been no significant expansion of foreign services, programmes in Swahili, Tibetan, Nepali and Thai being the only additions. The transmitters available for External Services broadcasts are three, one 100 kW short-wave transmitter and two 20 kW transmitters at Delhi. In addition there is one 100 kW transmitter at Madras which is used for the

Tamil service to South East Asia, and one 100 kW transmitter at Bombay for the programmes in Gujarati and Konkani.

In order to ensure reasonable reception in the target areas, at least two transmitters if not more have to be used simultaneously to radiate a single service. Due to shortage of transmitters, the External Service is frequently forced to make a choice between two evils either to broadcast on only one transmitter at a favourable listening time because the other transmitters are engaged, or to have adequate transmitters at an unsuitable time. The already difficult situation has of late been further complicated. Competition with foreign broadcasting organizations has become more intense at the favourable listening hours and our broadcasts have, therefore, suffered from interference from other stations. Then again, some of the transmitters normally used for the External Services have been directed to Home Service broadcasts thus impairing the reception quality of the overseas broadcasts. This has occasionally happened when sports commentaries are relayed in the morning and afternoon, and also when a National Programme or Sangeet Sammelan is continued beyond 11 P.M.

Du to these limitations, A.I.R.'s external broadcasts have not been entirely satisfactory. Waqnis in his column "Speaking Generally" in the Statesman[49] subjected the External Services to detailed analysis and scathing criticism. He said, "it is extremely doubtful whether A.I.R.'s Arabic broadcasts are heard in Cairo. Not only is the beam faint but interference from other stations is, I understand, more than probable. Certainly the broadcasts do not reach other important Arabic-speaking countries like Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Libya. . . . To right the balance I should add that, although briefly (for 90 minutes) A.I.R. is heard in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, faintly in Syria and something less than faintly in Iraq."

Waqnis goes on, "However spotty, there is at least an attempt to cover the Arab world and Iran, but what about the rest of east, resurgent Africa, the areas recently freed from French, British and Belgian colonialism and still struggling against the Portuguese? What about the Congo, Upper Volta and Gambia, Gabon, the Cameroons, Guinea and Senegal? What about Angola and Mozambique? A blank. Is there any English Language Service directed to

[49] *The Statesman*, issue dated December 30, 1961.

South Africa, Ghana or Nigeria? No. To Indo-China, a vital area of interest for India, A.I.R. broadcasts only a ten-minute news bulletin in French every day. There is no broadcasting in Malay, Simhalese or Japanese."

The fact is that quite apart from starting services to countries such as Russia and the two Germanys, even where it is more important that India's voice should be heard, little has been done to consolidate existing services or rationalize broadcasts to our immediate neighbours. Proposals for expansion found no place in A.I.R.'s Second Five Year Plan and nothing concrete has yet emerged in the Third. It is believed that even a small country such as Egypt spends five times as much as India on her external broadcasts..

We might now consider briefly the pattern of programmes that are put out in the External Services and here I am drawing my information from an article by A.I.R.'s Listener Research Officer.[50] Programmes are generally of 30 to 90 minutes duration containing music (Indian as well as of the area to which a programme is directed), readings from scriptures, sermons, political commentaries, talks, eye-witness accounts, radio reports, features, documentaries, news reels and news bulletins. Out of nearly 23-hours of foreign broadcasts daily, news bulletins in 17 languages take up more than 5-hours. For some areas special programmes of interest to women, children and rural folk are also put out. The Listener Research Officer further tells us that by far the most popular items are orchestral and folk music. Arabic, Persian, Burmese and Indonesian music in the respective services commands vast listening. The news bulletins come next in importance to music and in some of the less developed areas, the newspapers look upto A.I.R. for the latest news. The reaction to spoken word items differs from region to region. Listeners in the west are interested in India's civilization, philosophy and literature whereas people in Asia and Africa like to hear about India's Second Five Year Plan, community projects, the position of women, labour legislation and current affairs. Listeners in Burma and Tibet evince great interest in programmes on Buddhism.

What indeed is the image of India which we want to present

50 Article entitled "Two decades of Overseas Broadcasting," S. M. Mozumdar, published in the *Radio Times of India*, February, 1960.

abroad? The selection of subjects and treatment of various issues does betray at times the lack of a clear-cut answer to this question. A few years back, topics like the "caste system" and "unemployment" were discussed. What is the purpose of telling foreigners the importance of caste system except to impress upon their mind how caste-ridden we are? And what justification can there be to talk of unemployment in this country to foreigners? Some time back a talk on the importance and utility of tractors was put out in the Tibetan Services! When in the wake of communal disturbances there was an all India Conference on National Integration in which leaders of all shades of opinion participated to discuss ways and means to counter tendencies promoting communalism, linguism and separatism in the country, the proceedings were broadcast in detail in the External Services giving the foreign listener the impression that India was almost going to pieces or that the country was on the threshold of a civil war.

We have to be constantly in the process of "active thinking." For years together, for example, there were no broadcasts on Kashmir and then suddenly we woke up when the Kashmir question was taken up for discussion at the UN, and started broadcasting five talks in a week. One more illustration would suffice to prove the lack of proper thinking on the part of planners. For almost 10 days, the External Services broadcasts did not say a word about the theft of the sacred relic in Srinagar. While Radio Pakistan in its services to the Muslim countries in West Asia came out with cock and bull stories day after day, A.I.R. behaved as if nothing had happened. Then finally when A.I.R. did come out with the facts of the unfortunate incident, India's image as a secular state had already been damaged.

The main drawback in the External Services news, commentaries and talks appears to be the lack of specialization in territorial thinking. The basic programme material is prepared in English for the South East Asia Service and is then translated and adapted for use in various services.[51] Sometimes, this basic material, especially news and commentaries, prepared in the earlier part of the evening for the South East Asia broadcasts is out of date for the West Asia and Africa services, which go out late at night or in

[51] Waqnis refers to this and other weaknesses on the programme and organizational aspects of the External Services in his article cited earlier.

the early hours of the following morning. In the fifteen years since Independence, only one officer of the External Services has visited any of the target areas and even that was a flying visit to a few countries in South East Asia. There are no A.I.R. correspondents in these regions who might send news despatches or briefing on political and economic cross-currents for the benefit of those who plan programmes here. In short, the External Services are completely in the dark about the special interests and political and social requirements of those for whom they are expected to cater. Neither slogan-mongering, nor silence over vital matters can take the place of careful political and economic analysis.

When we come to features and documentaries, the short-comings appear to be of a different character.

Below is an extract from a characteristic comment:[52]

> The External Services seem to have proliferated lately.... In the last three weeks I counted at least nine features that promised interesting listening. These ranged from oil exploration to family planning, and from the National Atlas organization to bronze casting in India. There were tales that were becomingly retold, a shikar story, a talk on the anatomy of discrimination, cricketing reminiscences and, understandably, a discussion of why nonalignment is the only reasonable policy for underdeveloped countries ... we wondered why retold tales are usually told only to western Europe, and why the oil exploration and the National Atlas went to China. Only nonalignment was offered without discrimination, to all who would listen. It seems cruel to have excluded Europe from that jovial tinkle of bells in the feature on bronze casting. We may also tentatively, and occasionally, offer one of our native ancient tales in that sophisticated direction. This is a time of genuflection to the primitive, and there is much vociferous mating of the simple and the sophisticated. There may be broadcasting advantage in that. Oddly enough, the features are also inclined to be the weakest aspect of the External Services.... Once again programme planning is let down by programme execution. Listening to a number of these features I could not escape an impression of immaturity in their designing and voicing. It seems that the

[52] *The Statesman*, issue dated September 16, 1962.

> External Services are being used as a training-ground for too many youthful voices, some of them with an audible down on their lips. I have nothing against youth, but it must not be allowed to turn arch.

This raises us to the vital question of personnel. It would be of interest to analyse the present set up as it is. The External Services are manned partly by non-transferable staff which is common to all stations of A.I.R. The original intention was to utilize "A.I.R. Staff" for administrative purposes, and foreign language knowing staff for running the services. As long as India was part of the British empire, the language experts from foreign countries were also citizens of some country or the other within that empire, and their loyalty to the service was more or less the same as that of the Indian staff. Moreover, the staff, whether Indian or non-Indian, was under British supervision. Independence removed this ultimate supervision from the hands of the British. This naturally brought about a certain change in internal equations. Now, India is employing foreign citizens from independent countries. An added strain of confusion in this picture rises from the fact that many of the pre-independent foreign employees of A.I.R. continue to serve after India gained independence. It would no doubt seem very harsh suddenly to doubt the loyalty or integrity of staff which had served during the British period very well. But it stands to reason that an Arab from British Egypt would have a different set of loyalties from the same Arab today who comes from an independent country.

This delicate problem which was not faced squarely at the appropriate time led A.I.R. to muddle through a series of policy changes which even today have no clear definition and are in the nature of an uneasy compromise. In this period of transition the administrative staff, except for those at the very top, were supposed to be able to do the "territorial thinking" for the various language services and to plan programmes for them. Later the thinking and the planning was handed over to the language supervisors some of whom had by this time been replaced by Indians. The question of Indianization of language units was discussed in the Lok Sabha on May 6, 1963 when the Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting disclosed that 28 foreign nationals were

working in these units.[53] The largest number, six, were employed in the Burmese Unit and the second largest, 5, in the Chinese Unit. Replying to Mr. Kamath who had referred to the arrest of a number of the Chinese Unit for anti-Indian activities and espionage, the Deputy Minister said that there was some trouble in regard to a few announcers in the Chinese unit, one of whom was arrested and an enquiry made. He further said that all possible steps were being taken to employ suitable Indians in the language units of A.I.R., but to broadcasting needs it was very necessary to have persons with correct accent and pronunciation. When Mr. Kamath dubbed this as a reflection on Indian personnel, the Prime Minister intervened to say that it was very difficult to produce the manner of speaking in a foreign tongue of the foreigner by Indians. "It becomes a matter of laughing-stock for the listener at the other end if his language is distorted in pronunciation, accent, etc." He went on to add that the most important aspect of a foreign language broadcast was that the listener's should "hear it, understand it and appreciate it."

There is nothing wrong in the employment of foreigners as far as presentation of broadcasts are concerned, but what must be ensured is that what goes on the air is what is intended to, and not what a particular announcer manages to put across. For this purpose those who are in charge of planning and administration of the units should be Indians and they should know the foreign language concerned. This is not difficult to achieve and that this has not been achieved so far is a reflection on A.I.R.

We may now refer in passing to another aspect of external broadcasts. In some of the areas External Services should have been increased so that the listening to A.I.R. is not submerged with the development of local national radio systems. This has been considered a standard practice with all well-developed radio systems in the world. The other case in which services should have been expanded is where for political reasons India wanted to be heard. Here even if initial listening was limited the cost and the effort would have been eminently justified.

It is heartening to note that India's independent political entity is now reflected in the office of the Deputy Director (Political). The creation of this office means that, whatever else may be said

[53] As on 28th April, 1963.

about the External Services, it is now closely linked with the Ministry of External Affair's Publicity Department. Close liaison between the Ministry of External Affairs' and A.I.R.'s External Services thinking has to be maintained. This no doubt is a step in the right direction, but it requires greater consideration than it appears to have received. There are various aspects which require clear and comprehensive thought. For example, it is necessary to know how far the language supervisors with, presumably, extensive and intimate knowledge of their territories can and do contribute to the planning and orientation of programmes.

The future of the External Services, to my mind, lies in greater and greater specialization in territorial thinking. Just as the Ministry of External Affairs has various territorial divisions, so also A.I.R.'s language units should gradually be converted into semi-independent units each with its own definite and positive approach to its particular territory. In other words, the system of central feeding of the units with political and non-political material should ultimately give way to each unit getting all its material directly, or the material from the common pool being intensively processed to suit the requirements of each unit.

With these factors in view, it seems that the External Services of A.I.R. which hold a position of unique importance to the country as a whole, need to be strengthened with adequate finance so that they can:

(*a*) employ, if necessary, highly paid specialists to provide necessary regional thinking;

(*b*) to expand its present services and to introduce new ones in Russian, Japanese, German, Spanish and the Indo-Chinese languages;

(*c*) to send out its staff periodically to the various parts of the world to strengthen old and establish new contacts and, what is more important, to assess the changes in these regions;

(*d*) to create adequate and efficient machinery to conduct listener research on a comprehensive scale; and

(*e*) to organise a system whereby the Indian staff could be continuously trained in foreign languages.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The National Programme of Music was the first to be started in 1952 in the series of National Programmes. We have discussed this programme in detail in the section on Music.[54] Here we shall discuss the other programmes in this series. It is proposed to devote a chapter exclusively to National Programmes because A.I.R. treats them as prestige programmes. Quite apart from what A.I.R. thinks about them, this special attention on our part is justified because A.I.R. spends much time, money and talent in their planning and execution. The resources of all stations are utilised in booking talkers' considered to be authorities in their particular fields, engaging the most competent producers, employing the best voices, reserving special studio facilities and paying special fees to all concerned. These prestige programmes are supposed to set standards in planning and presentation, and may be looked upon as models by programme staff. We can expect to get a good idea of programme policies and production techniques by examining these programmes.

As already stated, the National Programme of Music was inaugurated in 1952. The National Programme of Talks commenced on 29th April, 1953. It took almost three years for A.I.R. to decide that there could be a National Programme of Plays and a National Programme of Features, which eventually went on the air in July and August, 1956. To these were added National Programmes of Classics and Contemporary Literature in 1959 and 1960 respectively. The latter two have been held in abeyance since the outbreak of the emergency in October 1962.

The air underlying these National Programmes is to acquaint listener's with the literature of different parts of the country, to focus attention on national issues, and to present a picture of the development of the country as a whole. These objectives are indeed commendable, and no sane person would have anything to say against them. But the point is how far these objectives are being achieved and whether the talks, plays, classics and items of contemporary literature are successful programmes in the languages in which they are broadcast? The authorities have studiously avoided any audience surveys in respect of these ambitious and

[54] Please see the section in chapter II.

costly programmes, so that no data is available for an objective assessment. The general opinion among programme producers would however suggest that they have proved a miserable failure.

The National Programme of Talks

The National Programme of Talks has mainly confined itself to theoretical and academic subjects. It has woefully failed to evoke interest in listener's. I do not mean for a moment to say that purely theoretical and academic subjects have no place in broadcasting, but the point I wish to make is that talks put out in the National Programme from Delhi relayed by all stations are supposed to be heard throughout the country. A broadcast can make a wide appeal to listener's if it attempts to discuss live issues, problems uppermost in people's minds or subjects of controversy currently being discussed by the people at large.

In the choice of subjects the National Programme of Talks has flogged dead horses. Starting with a series on "The challenge to Democracy" in which persons of such diverse shades of opinion as Acharya Kripalani, V. K. Krishna Menon and Jaya Prakash Narain participated, the programme drifted on to presenting in a pedestrian manner, histories of the Indian Literatures and banalities such as "The lessons of History." The types of subjects included in this programme are illustrated by the following titles: Indian Languages—a symphony; The Contribution of the South to the History of India; The Socialist Pattern; Builders of Tomorrow (this dealt with youth problems); The Wheel of Dhamma; The State of Indian Sport; Recovery of Faith; A Close-up on Films; Tradition and Modernity. Education bulks large in the national talks so far broadcast, but then it has become the fashion in our country to talk a lot on education, while doing nothing to arrest the chaos which has crept into it.

The future of the National Programme of Talks lies in its becoming a forum for the discussion of live issues. Let me give illustrations. The Life Insurance Corporation affair was of tremendous interest to the country as a whole for months on end. Not a word was said by A.I.R. about the issues involved. I am not suggesting that A.I.R. should have arranged programmes on the Mundhra case, but I do say that A.I.R. should have discussed such topics

as the status of Public Corporations and their relationships to Government. These were the crux of the problem. Separatism and lingualism have been growing during the past five years, but A.I.R. planners have preferred not to discuss them. The mid-term appraisal of the Third Five Year Plan, and various other admissions of failure by the Planning Commission itself have raised innumerable questions in the public mind, but from A.I.R. one has received only the pontifical utterances of Ministers and their spokesmen according to whom all is well. When A.I.R. did plan a series of discussions on the plan entitled, "New Directions of the Plan," in May, 1962, the issues dealt with were of no interest to the man in the street, and had no connection with his daily problems which the development plans are meant to solve. It was as usual, on a very lofty plane: "leadership in villages," "Community Assets," "The Levelling Process," and so on.

This unfortunate trend has continued through the emergency. No doubt there have been some useful talks on the demarcation of the border, the pattern of life in communist China and so on. But whenever A.I.R. came close to discussing an issue, it has done so with a closed mind or at a time when the issue has ceased to be relevant. In February, 1963, the caption "Democracy Faces the Challenge," for a series of talks sounded promising. But as one might have expected, it all petered out in dull governmental pronouncements. Six out of nine speakers were drawn from the ranks of the government, a minister, members of the Planning Commission, senior officials, and one was shortly to become the Chief Minister of a State. Of the two others, Mrs. Indira Gandhi could hardly be expected to speak except in the voice of the government. In the ultimate analysis, eight out of the nine speakers voiced the sentiments of the government; and only one, the Rector of the Bombay University, spoke as an independent. Another example of this policy of avoiding live issues is provided by a recent series entitled "Aggression and International Law," broadcast in February, 1964. The first talk by a congressman, who is a well-known jurist, discussed China's unilateral abrogation of treaties. Eighteen months after the Chinese aggression, every one was tired of "Chinese perfidy" which was the theme of this talk. The second talk by a professor from Madras University discussed China's treatment of Indian prisoners of war. A year earlier, there was a

countrywide distress on what the Chinese had been doing to the Indian POWS, but for some unknown reason A.I.R. had kept silent on the subject. As the radio critics in the newspapers, correctly pointed out, no one was interested in the question when A.I.R. chose to break its silence.

Apart from its failure to discuss live issues, the appeal of the National Programme of talks is severely restricted by A.I.R.'s choice of speakers. Ministers, Members of the Planning Commission, officials, elder statesmen and educationists, these seem to be the favourites, almost in that order of priority. If one looks for a common denominator one could probably find it in the age of the speakers, nearly everyone is older than sixty. There is great deal of understandable respect for age, but age has its effects on both the substance and presentation of the talks. The veterans will inevitably counsel conservatism. That is all right. But let there be some voices on the other side too, not only for a change but for a balanced picture. From the point of view of production, old men with established reputations present a more difficult problem. Such persons have a set manner of writing and speaking, and it is extremely difficult for a programme man to handle them. Suggestions that the length of a sentence might be shortened and qualifying clauses reduced are peremptorily brushed aside. The speaker is also likely to be annoyed, if it is politely pointed out that the radio talk is neither a lecture nor a political harangue. Occasionally, there is a good speaker, but then he "produces" the talk himself and there is no credit to A.I.R. One reason why the national talks have made a poor impression is the almost insuperable problem of trying to "produce" the sort of people who are booked for them. An important man sends his script at the last minute and has no time for a rehearsal. He has neither time nor patience, and least of all the humility to consider that what he has said could be put in a form more easily acceptable to the listener. A.I.R. can take it or leave it. A.I.R. takes it as it is.

Originally the national programme of talks was broadcast at 8.30 P.M., but for several years now the time has been 9.30 P.M. The talks are relayed by all stations of A.I.R., but to improve quality of reception, copies of recordings are sent to zonal and a few other stations. One question which arises is the advisability of a national hook-up of talks of a somewhat highbrow nature at a

fairly late hour. Consider listeners in Imphal, Kurseong, Simla Srinagar or even in Sambalpur. We wonder what a listener in these regions would make of a series such as the "Two Paths," which was designed to compare cultures and values of India and China. While a sophisticated programme such as this should be available for listeners every where in the country, it is doubtful whether this necessitates a relay by all stations, especially by such as those mentioned above.

The planning of the national programme of talks is done at the Directorate-General, though suggestions are invited from the stations from time to time. The "production," if any, is left to the stations where the talks are recorded. There is a special fee of one hundred rupees for these talks, but this is hardly an attraction considering the sort of people who are booked for it.

Patel Lectures

In dealing with the national programme of talks it would be appropriate to say a word about the Patel Lectures, instituted in 1955 in memory of the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Modelled on the Reith Lectures of the B.B.C., these lectures are delivered before an invited audience in Delhi in December each year. There are usually three lectures, each of an hour's duration. The lectures are recorded and are subsequently broadcast in half-hour instalments in the National Programme. According to A.I.R., "these lectures are designed to contribute to the existing knowledge on a given subject and to promote an awareness of contemporary problems."

The first lecture on "The Good Administrator" was given by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari. Since then, the other speakers have been Dr. K. S. Krishnan (The New Era of Science), Dr. Zakir Hussain (Educational Reconstruction in India), Prof. G. B. S. Haldane (The Unity and Diversity of Life), Dr. Tara Chand (The State and Society in the Later Middle Ages), Dr. Verrier Etwin (A Philosophy of Love), Mr. K. P. S. Menon (The Resurgence of India) and Mr. Morarji Desai (The Unity of India). In 1959, the lectures fell through due to an unfortunate controversy with Dr. S. N. Bose, National Professor, who had accepted the assignment. Dr. Bose got the impression that his script would be liable to cen-

sorship by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and consequently declined the offer and released to the press his correspondence with the then Secretary, Mr. R. K. Ramadyhani.

How far the Patel Lectures have served the purpose for which they were founded it is difficult to say. But with the exception of the series by Dr. Elwin and Mr. K. P. S. Menon, when the A.I.R. Auditorium was packed to capacity, the lectures have failed to rouse popular enthusiasm.[55] This may be due to a variety of factors. Audiences are obviously attracted by good speakers and subjects that catch their fancy; they are not prepared to give up their evening listening to persons merely because they happen to be eminent. The two successful series satisfied these requirements.

The decision to appoint a lecturer should be taken at least 6 months in advance to enable the person to give sufficient time and thought to his subject.

The B.B.C. makes its choice a year in advance and remunerates its lecturer on the assumption that he will consider the Reith lectures as a major commitment for the year. In A.I.R., the payment is rupees two thousand (excluding expenses), which compares unfavourably with the payment for similar lectureships in the country. But while the remuneration may not be important, the notice given to the speaker certainly is. In the case of the Patel Lectures the notice is generally less than 4 months.

The decision to appoint the Patel Lecturer is now almost wholly that of the Ministry. How far is this correct? But one thing is certain. If the present trend continues one can expect future Patel Lecturers to be drawn from the ranks of Ministers, Members of the Planning Commission and such others. The choice in 1963 augurs ill for the future.

The National Programme of Plays

The difficulties of A.I.R. in the handling of the National Pro-

[55] It is widely reported in Broadcasting House that for every series of lectures other than those by Messrs. Elwin and Menon, programme, administrative and ministerial personnel have been required to attend the lectures to form a respectable sized audience. There has been considerable resentment amongst members of the staff since they are expressly excluded from the Auditorium whenever A.I.R. arranges music concerts.

gramme of Plays are manifold. At least there is no dearth of distinguished talkers' on any subject in English. There is, however, a dearth of writers who can provide good scripts of radio plays. Nor has any planned attempt been made in this direction. Unfortunately, in India, producers of radio plays have not shed their stage mentality. In fact the malady lies with the senior officers of the department who are mainly responsible for formulating policies. When required to select a play for a special occasion their first thoughts run to some classic of Kalidasa, some dance drama of Tagore or a long novel of Munshi Prem Chand. Not that adaptations and translations have no place in broadcasting, but that the difficulty involved in making adaptations in terms of the radio medium is most formidable. Often, passages after passages are lifted bodily from the original text and linked with a commentary. To do this is to show complete ignorance of the requirements of the medium. In India, authors who cannot write a page of good dialogue make the fatal mistake of starting to write for the radio by adapting works designed for other media. In the case of programmes of plays, classics, operas, etc., the question of translation presents a formidable hurdle. Unlike talks, these Programmes are prepared on what may be described as the master-script pattern. The procedure may be explained in the words of J. C. Mathur, then Director-General, A.I.R.:

> When in 1956 All India Radio introduced the National Programme of Drama, the problem of circulating scripts among the stations had to be solved. It was out of the question, to broadcast the National Programme of Drama in English or in Hindi only. The master-script had to be adapted into various languages. In the beginning it was decided to prepare the master-script in English. It was soon found that for creative writing such as drama, an English master-script would not be suitable. .... It was therefore decided in 1956 to prepare the master-scripts in Hindi by translating the original work. This translation was then sent to the other stations. At each of the stations were engaged persons who could render this script from Hindi into their respective languages. ... It was decided to send along with the Hindi master-script a Devnagari script of the original piece of writing. Thus, the person at the receiving end would

have with him the original writing in Devnagari script and the Hindi adaptation of the original writing as a kind of master-script.[56]

This was what J. C. Mathur said in his contribution to the Symposium on "The Art of Translation," published in the *Cultural Forum*. But this is more easily said than done. There are a number of problems involved in the translation of creative writing. We might examine what other writers and scholars had to say on this subject in the symposium mentioned above. "All said and done," declares Khushwant Singh, "every translation project boils down to just these two questions—'Is it translatable'? Have we got the right man to do it?" And a little further on—"a person with a mastery over two languages is very rare, a person who knows the language into which a work has to be translated should always be preferred to one who is an expert on the original." "In India we tried to reverse the process and got poor results". C. B. Rao believes that the most essential factor for good translation is "genuineness of the would-be translators' urge to reclothe an admired piece of writing in a garb of his own making." S. H. Vatsayayan explores deeper issues. "It should be clear to any one who has attempted genuine translation that these questions are not just hair-splitting exercises, nor attempts to beg the issue in metaphysical speculation. Indeed, one cannot even begin to appreciate translation as an art without facing these questions squarely." And these questions, as Vatsayayan sees them, are "To express the *thoughts* or *meaning* in a different language," or "to change *thoughts* from one language into another; but do any two words have completely identical meanings? And what is 'meaning' in the context of, say, a poem?" And so, in short, the problem is not to translate *words* but to find expression for a *thought* in a language other than that in which it was originally conceived.

The practical problems which A.I.R. has to face in the light of these scruples can best be imagined. The master-script of a play of 60-minutes duration running into as many foolscap sheets rarely reaches the stations a month in advance of the date of broadcasts!

[56] *Cultural Forum*, June, 61, Vol. III No. IV; published by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs.

While there are persons in the Western Zone who can translate from Hindi into Marathi and Gujarati, there is evidently an acute scarcity of persons in the South and the eastern parts of the country who can translate from Hindi into their own languages.

From among the possible translators one is forced to exclude immediately the better equipped and the more scrupulous. Such persons are not attracted by A.I.R.'s rates of remuneration, and are definitely not prepared to lend their names to the shoddy type of work which becomes inevitable in the short time available. Leaving aside translators, it has even become difficult for the stations to persuade the better actors and actresses to agree to take part in a National Programme Play.

National Programme of Features

The advent of portable tape recorders has given a great fillip to the production of radio features or documentaries. The accepted official line in A.I.R. is that talks make for poor listening and should be replaced by features. May be there is some truth in this. What seems to be insufficiently appreciated is the time, effort and team-work involved in the production of a good feature. An illustration would make the point clear. For the production of 4 feature programmes on Gandhiji, the B.B.C. engaged Francis Watson as script-writer for a period of two years and placed an experienced producer at his disposal. Francis Watson tells us that their attempt was to build up a "speaking likeness" through personal memories. Francis Watson goes on to add "Radio has its own way with truth. The microphone has an uncanny power of detecting self-consciousness and artifice, and the good broadcaster is very often simply a genuine and unaffected person talking about what is real to him." Francis Watson and Maurice Brown spent considerable time in England, and over three months in India, recording interviews with a large number of persons. Here are the statistics as given by Maurice Brown: "hours recorded, twenty-seven; length of tape, over fifteen and a half miles; words recorded, some one hundred and ninety-five thousand."[57] The work of editing was a masterpiece of precision and team-work.

[57] *Talking of Gandhiji*, Francis Watson and Maurice Brown; published by Orient Longman, Calcutta (1957).

Every now and then Programme Executives and producers attend courses of instruction at the A.I.R. Staff Training School in Delhi where learned lectures by senior Station Directors are arranged, excellent B.B.C. features supplied by their Transcription Service are played back and production problems discussed threadbare. The reaction on the participants is always one of ever-increasing frustration and cynicism. The yawning chasm between theory and practice stares them in the face because it is beyond their resources to unite the two.

Good features aside, even workmanlike programmes will never be produced at the rate A.I.R. is producing them, and that, too, within the severe limitations of money, personnel and technical equipment. A.I.R. has got to learn that bad features command as little (if not less) listening than bad talks and they are far more expensive. Despite J. C. Mathur's passion for committees (the Planning Commission has expressed itself in favour of individual responsibility as against committees even for administrative work) a feature cannot be produced when the producer is saddled with a committee of advisors who are expected to give him gratuitous advice from time to time. All this is not to say that no competent features have been produced by A.I.R. Some experienced members of the staff have given us programmes which nobody need be ashamed of. Their success only underlines the fact that the writer-producer must collect all his material himself; much care and attention must be paid to editing and other details of production. In this, experience and constant practice count. In the field of documentary features, more perhaps than anywhere else, we have need to develop the expert.

Above all, there is the special problem presented by the diversity of languages in India with which A.I.R. is to contend with. A fundamental fact about the feature or radio documentary is that it is a presentation of reality. In the feature, actual persons give interviews or describe their activities and experiences. Much of the value of the feature derives from its authenticity. These interviews are frequently recorded in an Indian language. If you record an interview with a worker in Andhra, he naturally will speak in Telugu. When the master-script of the feature is prepared all the interviews are translated into Hindi. The master-script when it reaches various stations is then translated again into the regional

language of the station. Drama voices are then booked for the production. Now, in this process, what is left of the "actuality" element in the documentary? One device which is adopted is to use the voice of the person who actually gave the interview in his own regional language for a few seconds and then to present the translated version in the language of the broadcast. This device is, of course, fairly satisfactory if used occasionally. But if it is used repeatedly in a programme, it tends to become irritating. Generally speaking, therefore, it may be said that features do not lend themselves to translation since translation robs them of their chief merit which is authenticity.

Three Annuals

The picture of A.I.R.'s National spoken word programmes would not be complete without reference to three annuals, the National Symposium of Poets on the eve of Republic Day, the Sahitya Sammaroh held in April, and the Radio Week. The first two were started in 1956 and are the direct creations of J. C. Mathur.

The National Symposium was broadcast first on the eve of the Republic Day in the year 1956. For the first few years, the programme was devised in the following manner. One poet representing each of the languages in India was asked to write a poem for the occasion. Each poem was then translated in verse into all the other languages. The contributing poets all came to Delhi for the central programme before an invited audience. Each poet recited his poem and this was followed by its verse translation in Hindi. The first half of the programme, mainly made up of speeches, was relayed by all stations. Thereafter the stations continued their own programmes in the language of the region. Thus, for instance, from Poona we would broadcast a recording of the original poem in Punjabi in the author's voice, followed by the Marathi verse translation of it and so on. The programme is scheduled at 9.30 P.M. and generally lasts about two hours. The Hindi programme is broadcast from Delhi and is relayed by all stations in the Hindi-speaking zone. A.I.R. has wisely refrained from conducting any survey to find out what listening the National Symposium enjoys either at the commencement of the programme

or at its conclusion. That the planners themselves are in doubt of its success is evident from changes which have been made in recent years. Firstly, there was criticism that an invitation to the programme had become a sort of State recognition for the poets who were being invited in accordance with seniority. Inspiration had deserted some of these poets and the work they produced for this important broadcast was of little worth. Secondly, poems produced to order, often did not materialise at the right time, which left insufficient time for the translators. A new procedure has, therefore, been evolved according to which the poem to be recited at the symposium is selected from among those which have already been broadcast from the stations during the previous twelve months. Committees are set up at the stations to examine them and to recommend the best three or four for inclusion in the National Symposium. The final choice is made at the Directorate-General on the advice of the Chief Producer of the Spoken word Programmes.

One does not know what listening this programme commands, nor how many of the translations have been thrown up which can be considered poetry in the language of the translation. Despite the fanfare that is recorded to the programme, A.I.R. has been shy of publishing the poems and the translations broadcast during the last five years. What may pass off on the air (assuming it is heard at all) may not necessarily stand critical scrutiny in cold print.

All India Radio has also been careful to avoid compiling figures of the cost of such a programme. Poets and translators get fifty rupees each as basic fee. All the 13 poets and, say, half the translators come to Delhi from other stations, and their T.A. and D.A. has to be paid for; in a few cases air travel is permitted. Let us calculate Rs. 300 for each of the 13 poets and Rs. 200 for each of the 6 translators who come from outside. Rs. 50 each has to be paid to the remaining 6 translators who reside in Delhi. To this, let us add fifty rupees each for 12 translations in twelve languages. Forgetting for the time being expenses on publicity, entertainment, tape recording, electricity on extended transmissions at all stations, the total cost comes to a modest twelve thousand five hundred rupees for a programme which no one is known to listen to and whose quality no one would care to vouch for!

But the Poets symposium pales into insignificance in compari-

son with the Literary Symposium or Sahitya Sammaroh. This gathering, of some 100 writers and producers, meets for 3 days to discuss a subject of general interest. In 1961 the subject was "Tagore and Indian literatures"; in 1962 "the Problem of Translation"; in 1963 "The writer and the Emergency" and in 1964 "Folk Literature." Other subjects discussed have been the development of prose, the development of drama and so on.

The procedure followed for the Sammaroh is extremely complicated. To begin with there is a ten-minute paper on the subject as it affects each language. For instance, a separate ten-minute talk will be prepared on the development of prose in the last century in Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, and all the other recognised languages. These reviews are not read at the symposium but are broadcast from the stations. Using these language reviews as a basis, four summaries of the whole material under different heads are then prepared at Delhi. For instance, one speaker will take up the development of prose in fiction, another will deal with criticism, a third will consider scientific literation, and a fourth biography. These four papers are read out at an inaugural function of the Sammaroh in Delhi. The inaugural function is followed by discussions the delegates splitting into different groups for the purpose. The group discussions are followed by a "plenary session" in which reports on the group discussions are presented and conclusions drawn. Very little of what transpires at the Sammaroh is put into broadcasts. In three days of talk the broadcast material produced comes to about 4 hours, including over two hours on the regional language surveys.[58] On the Sammaroh, A.I.R. spends something in the neighbourhood of half a lakh rupees including fees and TA to participants, entertainment (some drama or opera is produced by the Song and Drama Division for the guests), transport for the participants and publicity. No assessment has ever been made of the impact of this expensive programme on listeners nor has the broadcast material ever been published. How far this trafficking in culture is the business of a broadcasting organisation is a question on the tongues of all those connected with this programme, though none may speak his mind.

Radio Week (it started as a Radio Month) in 1953 was origi-

[58] Since the Emergency this programme is being presented on an austerity basis.

nally organized as part of the drive to increase the numbers of radio licences in the country. The radio trade was also associated with it. Since then the trade has been forgotten, and what remains is a concentrated week of programmes, many before invited audiences. Some fancy additions such as Culture Week and Humour Week have happily died in their infancy. The authorities have carefully avoided compiling data about this and all such special ventures. A.I.R. does not for instance know whether there is any overall increase in listening during Radio Week in comparison with an average week. It does not know whether there is more listening at the beginning of the week and less as the week wears on. There is no attempt to evaluate the quality of the programmes as such. All these matters are evidently unimportant for those at the helm of affairs in A.I.R. What is important is that the Radio Week provides them with a concentrated opportunity for currying favour with V.I.Ps. Such persons and their families and friends are invited to studio concerts and variety shows. This any how is a purpose which is served well by the Radio Week.

A word remains to be said about the fees which A.I.R. pays for spoken word programmes to talkers, voices and writers. A fee of Rs. 25 for a radio talk came into existence in 1937. This was the standard against which every other payment was fixed and it continues to be the standard twenty-five years later. National Programme talkers receive Rs. 100 (a privilege shared by a few Hindi Talkers). Members of Parliament get Rs. 50 but the vast majority are still round about the twenty-five rupee mark. The same applies to Drama Artists. Something has been done for playwrights. An original script for the National Programme of plays (for broadcast in all languages) can fetch Rs. 450, but then almost no one writes original radio plays. The A.I.R. authorities seem to be quite unaware of the development of opportunities in films and theatre, which have arisen in the past quarter of a century, nor yet of the fall in the purchasing power of the rupee. An honorarium of Rs. 25 which was appropriate in the infancy of broadcasting bears no relevance to the price level today, when writing is for many a profession and not a hobby. If some of the funds lavished on the special programmes arranged by A.I.R. were diverted to writers, talkers and artists, worthier fare may be forthcoming.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION

THE MINISTRY AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

In the course of this narrative, we have now reached a stage where we might usefully discuss the administrative set-up under which All India Radio is functioning. This is necessary to understand why broadcasting in India has failed to make an impact on the masses, and how the Government of India has failed to give this service the importance it deserves. It is true that the Government and the people are not unaware of the potentialities of this mighty organ. On all important occasions, at times of emergency and during periods of crisis, A.I.R. has been pressed into service like Alladin's magic lamp.[1]

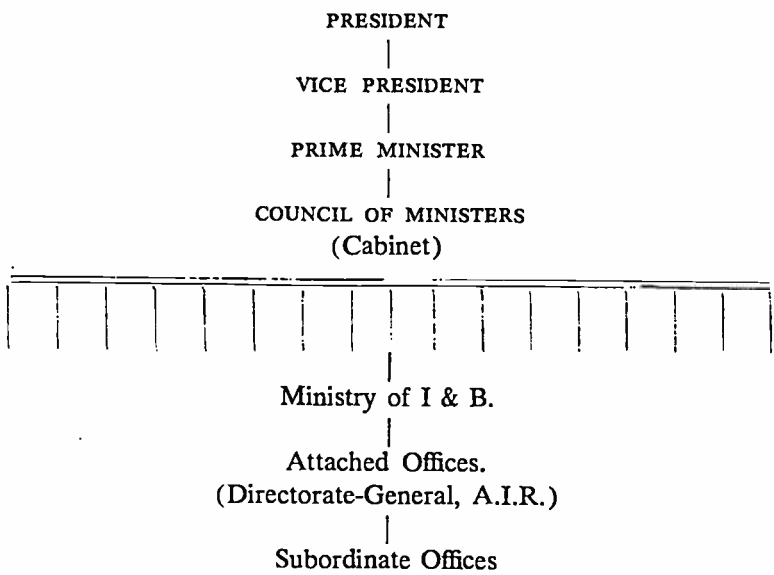
In 1947, Lord Mountbatten announced over A.I.R. the British Government's decision to grant India freedom with partition, and Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mohammad Ali Jinnah explained to the people the grounds of their acceptance of the scheme. On the midnight of August 14/15, A.I.R. announced the birth of a new nation. On January 30, 1948, A.I.R. informed the country at 6 P.M. of the tragic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi which had taken place a few minutes earlier; the whole nation followed the course of the cortege to the cremation ground through A.I.R.'s running commentary. The proclamation of the birth of the Indian Republic on January 26, 1950 was carried to every corner of the country and beyond.

On January 26, 1951.... The story is endless. Year after year a situation arose and A.I.R. was there to fulfil its task. In 1960, it was the strike of the Central Government employees which threatened to disrupt vital communications. In 1961, the threat

[1] In the emergency created by the Chinese aggression the Prime Minister's broadcast to the nation on 22nd October, 1962; in early November he recorded a message for the troops and rushed to A.I.R. on 17th November to announce the fall of Bomdila. The Finance Minister's broadcast on 26th October and then on 3rd November, 1962. Immediate steps were taken to utilize A.I.R. in the national emergency.

was to national unity and then again the Prime Minister and the Government turned to exploit A.I.R.'s capacity. The Government recognized the part which A.I.R. could play in national integration, and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan generously acknowledged the contribution which A.I.R. had already made, and was continuing to make in this direction. It is, however, a pity that while the Government has used A.I.R. on critical occasions and may have been momentarily aware of its importance, most of the time A.I.R. has always been taken for granted and relegated to an insignificant position in the government machinery. It is yet to be appreciated that for any government worth the name, a well run broadcasting service is essential.

What place does A.I.R. occupy in the administrative set-up of the Government? We will, however, avoid the temptation of discussing the constitution of India at length, but make only a reference to some relevant aspects. The following chart will explain the position:



The President is the head of the Union, and all actions taken by the Government of India are in the name of the President. All legal powers vest in the President, he is a constitutional head. The

Vice-President is the *Ex-officio* Chairman of the Upper House of the Federal legislature, i.e. the Council of States and performs the duties of the President under specified circumstances. The President is guided by the Council of Ministers. Article 74 of the constitution provides that "there shall be a council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head." The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Parliament, and lasts as long as it enjoys the confidence of the House of the People. The real power, however, rests with the Cabinet, though it is not mentioned in the Constitution. All ministers are members of the Council of Ministers, but only the senior ones are in the Cabinet. This is to be noted specifically since for years together the Minister holding the port-folio of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was not a member of the Cabinet!

The Central Secretariat is the apex of the administration of the Government of India. It is divided into various units and each unit is called a Ministry. Every Ministry has at its head a Minister, but a Minister may have more than one Ministry under him. There are, however, certain other units and departments which are not directly under any Ministry, such as the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, the Election Commission, the Union Public Service Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Cabinet Secretariat. At present there are 19 ministries in the Government of India, and each Ministry has its own attached offices and subordinate offices.

The procedure by which the Government of India works is well-known. When a reference reaches a Ministry either from a member of the public or from an attached or a subordinate office, it first goes to an Assistant who passes it with appropriate "noting" to the Section Officer, then it goes to the Under Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the Joint Secretary and finally to the Secretary. Some of the less important references are disposed of by comparatively junior officers.

A very important question arises: what are the functions of a Minister and how does he discharge his responsibilities? In spite of the fact that we are wedded to parliamentary form of democratic government, some of the healthy traditions which are associated with it have not been established in this country. It does not need elaborate research to learn that the ultimate responsibility

of administration is to be shouldered by the elected representatives of the people. But the elected representatives of the people have in fact very little hand in running the administration once they elect their leader who becomes the Prime Minister, and who in turn selects his Council of Ministers. We are not concerned here with the accountability of the Minister to the legislature or ultimately to the people. What we want to see is how best he can function. The ministers are politicians and hold their posts or make their exit in accordance with the political fortunes of the party they belong to. They are amateurs in administration and most of them know nothing of the work they are called upon to administer. It is the permanent public servants who are the backbone of the administration. They are the experts and provide stability to the execution of policies and plans.

In the context of the above observations we may now examine the administrative set up of AIR. AIR is an attached office in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India. With the dawn of freedom the department saw at its helm Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was also the Deputy Prime Minister. After his death and till 1962, the Minister in charge of Information and Broadcasting did not hold a cabinet rank. Susequently, the Ministers did hold a cabinet rank. It is heartening to note that the present Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi is a very senior member of the cabinet. The Director General of AIR ranks lower than a Joint Secretary in the Government of India and his position is the very last in the order of precedence for formal occasions.

Lionel Fielden's autobiography *The Natural Bent* gives us some idea of the battle he fought between the year 1935 and 1940 with officialdom for a proper recognition of A.I.R. as the organization which demanded autonomy and independence not normally permissible to an attached office of the Government. Nevertheless, when Fielden was the Controller of Broadcasting, because of his own personal connections he was invited as a guest to stay at the Viceregal Lodge, Simla, to discuss the future of broadcasting. When the occasion demanded he could meet the Viceroy, cut out the usual formalities of red tape, and present the viewpoint of A.I.R. directly to the Head of the state. A. S. Bokhari, as Director-General of A.I.R. during the days when the radio's impor-

tance could not be ignored, and because of his personal brilliance, commanded great respect and prestige. Since then the position of the Director-General has deteriorated progressively. The suspension and subsequent removal of N. A. S. Lakshmanan from the post of Director-General did irreparable damage to the prestige and importance of the post. Some of the financial powers of the Director-General were reduced by half. If some of these have been restored since, they mean considerably less today than they did ten years ago. More important than the loss of financial powers was the manner in which the Director-General was shorn of his administrative and programme responsibilities. For several intervening years, the Director-General could not transfer a Programme Assistant without the approval of the Ministry, and in this and every other administrative matter, the Ministry (not to speak of the Minister) could interfere with impunity. Between 1952 and 1962, Dr. B. V. Keskar, interfered in almost everything. He was not content to lay down policies but desired to be consulted even in petty matters. The appointment of members of advisory and audition committees, the framing of rules for audition of artists, the rates of payment to artists, the holding of Radio Week—not to mention the names of the artists (together with dates, ragas and accompanists) figuring in the National Programme, these and a hundred other things became the prerogative of the Ministry not of the Director-General during Dr. Keskar's regime.

At any meeting of importance, when the affairs of All India Radio come up for discussion, the officials of the Ministry take precedence and outnumber those of A.I.R. Gone are the days when Fielden could meet the Viceroy. In the 15 years since Independence, I doubt if the Prime Minister has spent half an hour with the Director-General to know more about A.I.R. With the members of the Indian Civil Service out of the picture, it would not be surprising if the Prime Minister were not to know the name of the Head of this department!

For this sorry state of affairs there are several reasons which have been discussed in their proper places in the pages of this book. The key to the problem lies in a proper recognition of the position of the Director-General and his relationship with the Ministry in the present government set-up. Should A.I.R. be made into a public corporation at any future stage, the essentials of this

problem would remain; it would result in the equation between the Director-General and the Board of Governors. There is a parallel problem here between A.I.R. and the B.B.C., and there is much to learn from the B.B.C. and the reports of the various committees which have gone into its working.

The first thing which has been universally recognised is the importance of the Director-General. In the B.B.C., he wields an authority which is unique in Britain. Even in the present set-up in India, the Director-General of A.I.R. could have enormous influence. It is thus essential that he should be an outstanding personality, of powerful intellect, with a mind of his own and capable of taking decisions. Above all else, the Director-General must be a person whose integrity is unquestionable. Only such a person could command wide respect and could be entrusted with vast powers. The B.B.C. has had two such towering personalities at its head. Lord Reith who, in a sense, created the B.B.C. and nursed it for not less than sixteen years; and again for 9 years ending in 1952, when the destinies of the Corporation were in the hands of Sir William Haley, who resigned to take over the editorship of the *London Times*. Of both Reith and Haley it has been said that they were strong men who could stand up to any one and resisted pressures from influential quarters. Lord Simon is critical of both Reith and Haley and it is, therefore, all the more instructive to see his comment on this Director-General who filled the six years that divided these two stalwarts. "During the interval of about six years between Reith and Haley there was a lack of firm guidance. Financial Control was inadequate and the staff lost confidence that they would be protected against unfair criticism or attempted interference from outside."[2]

In India, the Government seems to have failed to appreciate totally the importance of the post of the Director-General. As already mentioned the A.I.R.'s Director-General does not even rank as a Joint Secretary, though such a rank is carried by several other Directors-General in the Government of India. After the departure of an outstanding figure such as A. S. Bokhari, who held this post for about six years, we have since 1946 had no less than seven Directors-General in 16 years. When we remember that J. C.

[2] *The B.B.C. From Within*, Lord Simon of Wythenshawe; published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London (1953), p. 59.

Mathur held the post for 6 years, we realise how very short the terms of others were. Part reasons for these short terms was that the ICS men who held the post all soon became due for promotion as Joint Secretaries. Perforce they were posted out. Only J. C. Mathur held, in a personal capacity, the rank of Joint Secretary for the last year of his office. It is evident beyond the shadow of a doubt that no one can make an impression if he holds the post for just a couple of years. Not only has this happened in the past but there is every likelihood of it happening in the future, if the Government does not take stock of and remedy the situation. If the rule of seniority is followed, the next three or four departmental candidates will have hardly two years a piece. No drastic action to pull A.I.R. out of its present ruts can be taken by a Director-General on the eve of retirement. If the situation is to be saved, the Government will have to fill the post by selection on outstanding merit, as is done in the armed forces. A person past fifty should not be in the running for Director-General, so that each incumbent has the full term of five years before him. The post must of necessity be upgraded to the rank of an Additional Secretary so that the Director-General can deal directly with the Minister in all matters of importance.

Just as the Director-General is the chief executive official of A.I.R. working under a Ministry and a Minister, so the Director-General of the B.B.C. has above him a Board of Governors under a Chairman. The parallel, though not exact, is close enough. In the B.B.C., the relationship of the Chairman and Board of Governors to the Director-General has been regulated in accordance with what is known as the Whitley document:

> The Chairman and Governors of the British Broadcasting Corporation act primarily as Trustees to safeguard the Broadcasting Service in the national interest. Their functions are not executive, their responsibilities are general and not particular, and they are not divided up for purposes of departmental supervision. . . . With the Director-General they discuss and then decide upon major matters of policy and finance, but they leave the execution of that policy and the general administration of the Service in all its branches to the Director-General and his competent officers.

The Beveridge Report was evidently anxious to provide checks on bureaucracy and interpreting its spirit. Lord Simon contends: "policy is hard to define. It would be more correct to say that the Board should make all decisions which it considers to be of major importance, whether they are decisions relating to policy, finance or any other matter. In particular the Board should make decisions on all matters of controversy (political, religious or cultural) which may arouse strong feelings in Parliament or in other important sections of the public."[3]

Broadly speaking, this should be the demarcation of the responsibilities between the Minister and the Director-General. Details of administrative and financial powers of the Director-General should be worked out bearing these principles in mind. Incidentally, the day to day administration of a large organization such as A.I.R. cannot be carried on without substantial administrative and financial powers.

One of the points which the Beveridge Report emphasises and which is specially important for us, is the need for the Governors to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the working of the B.B.C. Individual governors are encouraged to specialize in particular departments and one of them is required to make a deep study of the financial procedures of the Corporation. Without a thorough understanding of broadcasting, the Governors cannot expect to make a worthwhile contribution to the B.B.C. and its output, and, moreover, they cannot keep a proper check on the bureaucracy. Lord Simon, amplifying this point, contends that it takes a chairman of the Board of Governors two years to become effective; before that, he does not know enough.

Those responsible for broadcasting in India at the Ministerial level would be advised to ponder over this view. It indicates a sense of humility and a scientific approach to a problem, which is worthy of emulation. In India it is assumed that no one needs to study broadcasting. Dr. Keskar had not been many days in office when he announced a number of new policies in regard to A.I.R. The late P. M. Lad, the Secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, and J. C. Mathur, the former Director-General, each in his own way and at his own level acted in pre-

[3] *The B.B.C. From Within,* Lord Simon of Wythenshawe: published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London (1953), p. 68.

cisely the same manner. They knew nothing about A.I.R. and yet were busy vigorously pursuing all sorts of fanciful schemes with misdirected zeal. Their policies may be described as "the long way back home"—ten years of wasted effort which in most cases brought A.I.R. back again to where it stood in 1947. There is danger indeed that this process of doing new things without acquainting oneself with the nature of the medium, and without reference to the past policies and procedures of A.I.R., will be repeated by the new incumbents.

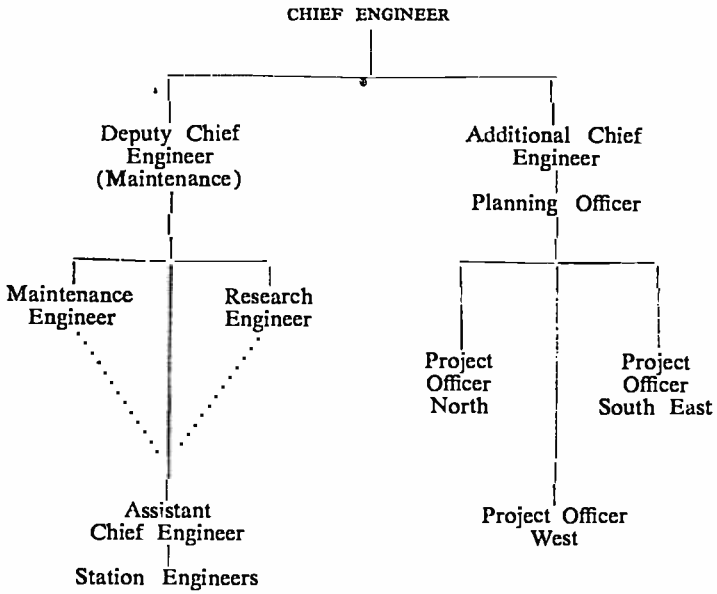
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE STATION DIRECTORS

The executive head of All India Radio is the Director-General. On him lies the heavy responsibility of executing the plans and policies of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as far as they pertain to All India Radio. He is, at least he ought to be, the final judge of the execution of what has been thought and planned at a higher level. In the previous section, we have discussed in detail the Director-General—the personal qualities he should be endowed with, his official functions and responsibilities *vis-a-vis* the Ministry—and we shall now examine his office in relation to those who come below him.

The engineering section is headed by the Chief Engineer. In rank, he is next only to the Director-General and is assisted by an Additional Chief Engineer who is in charge of development, by a Deputy Chief Engineer and other senior staff. The Additional Chief Engineer heads the Planning and Development Unit of A.I.R., consisting of a battery of Planning Officers who are responsible for the different aspects of development such as transmitters, studios, etc. Till 1962, the P & D Unit was headed by a Deputy Chief Engineer but the up grading of the post indicates the importance attached by the Ministry to its word. The chart below illustrates the position:

Heads of engineering sections in all offices including the various radio stations in the country receive instructions from the Chief Engineer on all technical matters. However, for day to day administrative work they function under the heads of the offices.

The Director-General has three Deputy Directors-General under him—the Deputy Director-General (Administration); the Deputy



Director-General (Programmes) and the Deputy Director-General (Inspection). The post of the D.D.G. (Inspection) is of recent origin and the incumbent is required to go round the stations and units periodically to inspect their working. All programme matters, including programme schedules, appointment of staff artists and producers, etc. fall within the jurisdiction of the Deputy Director-General (Programmes). He is assisted by the Director of Programmes (Policy) and the Director of Programme (Personnel). The Deputy Director-General (Administration) holds a very key position as recruitment, postings, transfers, promotion and various other administrative matters relating to programme staff. It is interesting to note that the number of Deputy Directors-General in 1947 was the same as in 1964.

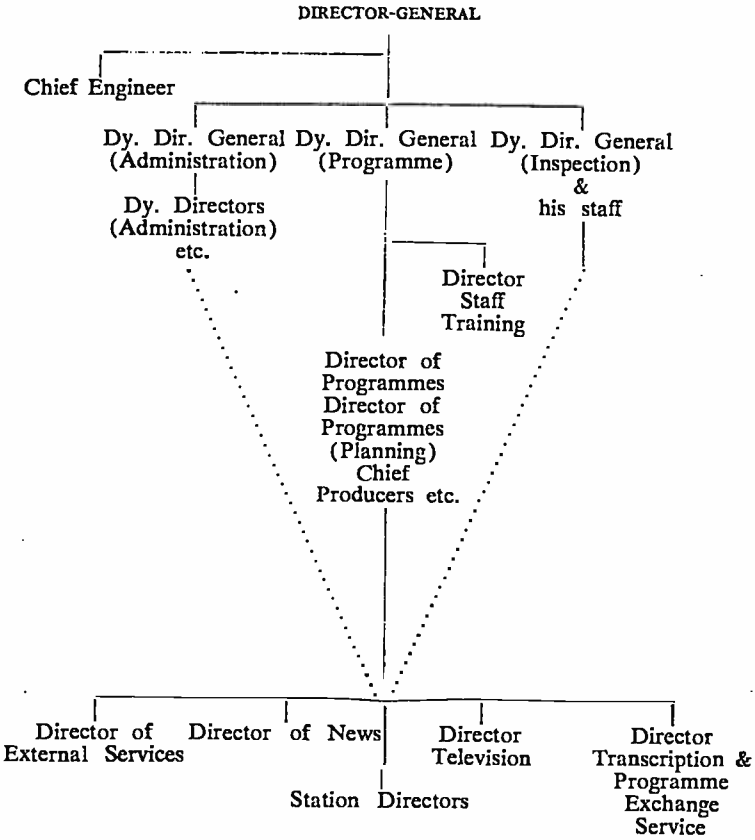
The posts of the Director of Programmes and the Director of Programme (Planning) are filled by Station Directors, not necessarily by seniority. It is interesting to note that up to 1961 there were only two posts. One Officer dealt with all programme matters while the other was responsible for personnel, contracts and copyright. By the end of 1963 the number of posts of Direc-

tors of Programmes had risen to six, the persons responsible respectively for Policy, Emergency, Personnel, Plan Publicity, Development and Kashmir. This does not appear to make for a rational division of duties nor are the functions discharged of equal responsibility. While two incumbents are senior Station Directors in the Selection Grade, two others are quite junior and one is not in the programme cadre of AIR. While the Directors of Programmes in the old days exercised considerable authority and influence with heads of stations who could consult them on important questions, there seems to be little left in this designation today.

There are two other very senior officers: the Director of External Services Division and the Director of News Services Division. Till recently these posts were considered to be of the rank of the Deputy Director-General and were placed directly under the Director-General. On the recommendation of the Second Pay Commission, these posts have been placed on par with the posts of selection grade Station Directors, i.e. below the Deputy Directors-General.

The chart given below will illustrate the foregoing narrative:

It is not difficult to comprehend that just as the Minister and the Ministry should leave it to the Director-General to execute policies after they have been formulated, similarly, the Director-General and his officers (who constitute the Directorate-General) should desist from unnecessarily interfering with the work of the Station Directors and their staff. Just as the functions of the Ministry and the Director-General must be distinct, each working within his own sphere, in the same way the stations must be allowed to get on with their own job of broadcasting good programmes. Important as the Minister and the Director-General may be in the sphere of policy direction, it is the stations which are concerned with the actual broadcasts, on the quality of which everything ultimately depends. The station director and the staff of a radio station must be on their toes all the time, ready to jump at every opportunity which crops up for an interesting and lively programme. It must be a co-operative and well-knit team, and this team must have sufficient elbow room to act on its own initiative at short notice. The need for speedy action is of essence in broadcasting, for it is in this respect, *inter alia,* that it has a great ad-



vantage over the press. But thanks to red tape, everything takes shape in "due course." Everything has to be anticipated several months in advance so that prior approval of the appropriate authority can be obtained.

With the Minister and the Ministry usurping the functions of the Director-General, it was natural that every one should move down one step, if not many more, all along the line. The Director-General and his office, deprived of their normal functions started interfering in the work of the stations. What should be the distribution of duties in the Station Director's Office, and which artists and talkers should be patronized have become matters of concern at the Directorate's level. A Station Director dare not take

initiative in a matter normally falling within his purview, for fear that the Director-General may be interested in the matter and has entirely different ideas. The most successful Station Directors are those who do nothing on their own and having studied the personal references of the Minister, and the next lower high officials are willing to disburse their patronage in the right quarters. At the bottom of the ladder is the Programme Executive, who has had chiefly to swallow insult and indignity from artists and others who have an "approach" to high quarters and who do not care for ordinary administrative proprieties.

A Station Director barely carries the rank of an Under Secretary, and in terms of financial powers his position is no better than an Information Officer Grade I in the Central Information Service or an Education Officer in the Ministry of Education. The post of the Programme Executive, for example, had to wait for more than 38 years to be gazetted in 1962. And on occasions such as Republic Day, when A.I.R. arranges the vital running commentary, the permit a Programme Executive carries entitles him to the sort of privileges that are given to a clerk, a peon or other miscellaneous staff on sundry duties. While the Railway and the Posts and Telegraphs are recognised as "Essential Services" by the Government, no such status is accorded to A.I.R.

It is necessary to indicate in broad outline how the freedom and initiative of the stations has been whittled down in the last ten years, and how they can be restored in the interests of good broadcasting. While the pious reports and memoranda which the government brings out every now and then emphasise the need for devolution of authority and responsibility, an entirely contrary and much more powerful tendency is also at work, namely, the craze for standardization. Standardization is not enforced merely on a few basic issues, but on every imaginable point, which means there is no scope for initiative at the station. It would be difficult to find an organization where more standardization and centralization have been enforced than in A.I.R. and at such high cost. If the National Symposium of Poets is to be arranged on the 26th January, every year, it must be relayed partly from Delhi Station and partly originated by stations till midnight, and it should be so from Srinagar to Trivandrum, even if the temperature in Srinagar is below freezing point with listeners fast asleep.

Similarly if 'C' class music artists are to be weeded out, they should be weeded out not only in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, but also in Gauhati where artists of 'B' category are few and of 'A' category non-existent. Also, endless directives on Radio week, Cultural week, Humour Week, Music Competitions, Inter-university Radio Play Competitions, Discussion Competition, Auditions, Exemptions, increments to music artists (where the power of the Station Director is limited to five rupees once in several years)—all the hocus-pocus which leaves the station neither the time nor the energy to deal with anything except complying with orders, must be swept aside. Directives there ought to be, but they must be well-chosen, on subjects which require guidance, on essential points but with sufficient scope for the adaptation of the directions to peculiar local conditions.

In place of the present system of interminable rules and instructions, what is necessary is a real personal contact between the Director-General and the stations. The only personal contact consists at present of flying visits, lasting hardly a day, which the Director-General occasionally pays to the stations to preside over a meeting of the Programme Advisory Committee. So far as the station is concerned these visits serve no purpose, since the Director-General has no time to watch the station at work or to get to know the staff. The Deputy Director-General (Inspection) with his team visits the stations once in three years or so for an inspection. This is a sort of internal scrutiny and is conducted in precisely the same manner as the Accountant-General's audit. Files and registers are examined with care—all the administrative aspects of programmes are gone into with thoroughness, not with imagination. The wood is lost for the trees. Rarely does the inspecting officer walk into the studios to watch a rehearsal or to listen to a programme that is actually being broadcast. In the early days after independence, one Directorate Officer arrived innocently to preside over a meeting. He was a dour individual who desired only to be left alone in his hotel and refused entertainment. On his second day, he walked into the daily programme meeting. It was then that the staff members discovered that he had a portable radio set concealed in his baggage and had been listening tirelessly to the programmes for two days! When he questioned them at the meeting, his observations were based on personal knowledge, and

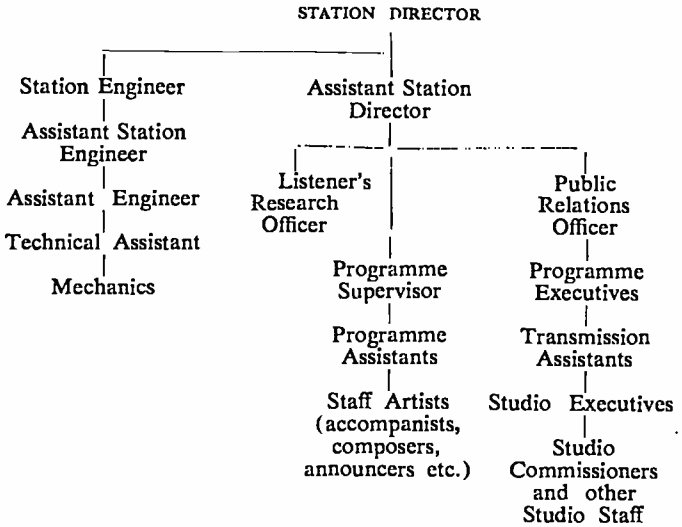
there was the satisfaction of knowing that he was interested in the staff and the work in which they were engaged. But that was before A.I.R. boasted of an Inspection Unit and long before handy transistors were heard of.

Something of that personal touch and genuine interest in *Programmes* not on paper but what actually goes on the air, has to be brought back into A.I.R. How exactly it is to be done is a problem to wrestle with in the face of the huge expansion of the radio network. It is a necessary and essential part of the idea of a "performance audit" which one often hears; the function of audit being conceived not merely to uncover what has gone wrong, but to assess the positive achievements of a station's programmes. Only after the present attitude of playing for safe mediocrity and avoiding trouble is replaced by a zest for aiming high, and taking well-calculated risks, will A.I.R.'s programmes excite listeners and demand their attention.

Let us for a while examine the structure of the office of the Station Director. In the early years of broadcasting, there used to be a Director of Programmes under the Station Director. The Director of Programmes had under him a number of Programme Assistants and announcers. On the engineering side there used to be a Station Engineer, Assistant Station Engineer, Technical Assistants and Mechanics. The post of Assistant Station Director was created for the first time in 1935-36. There used to be 3 or 4 Programme Assistants at each station. The work at all stations was increasing rapidly and the staff found it difficult to cope with it. Subsequently, the number of Programme Assistants at each station was increased. The designation "Director of Programmes" was changed to "Programme Executive." An additional post of Programme Executive was created in the wake of World War II and was called "Programme Executive (War)," which after the war became a regular post with the appellation "war" removed. Later, the importance of public relations and assessment of listening began to be felt and the posts of the Public Relations Officer and the Listener's Research Officer were created. The Programme Assistants were hard pressed with work. Besides attending regular office they had to run after talkers, musicians and dramatists and attend to numerous other details. Most irksome was the fact that, in addition to all this, a Programme Assistant was called up on

transmission duty two or three times in a week, in the morning or in the evening, which sometimes meant staying at the radio station from early morning to late at night. To relieve this category of harassed employees the posts of Programme Supervisor and the Transmission Assistant were created. This was the position immediately before 1947, when India gained independence and remained so for quite some time after independence.

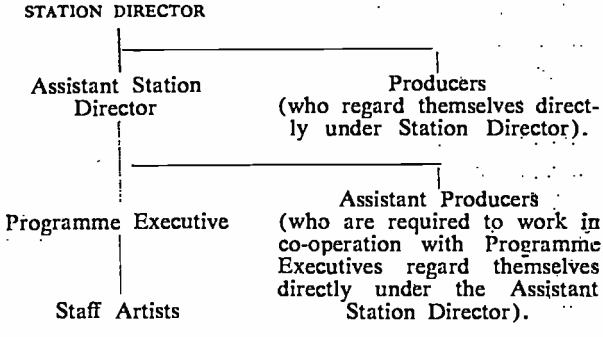
The chart given here illustrates this position.



(The Listener's Research Officer and Public Relations Officer were at par with the Assistant Station Director in pay scale, etc., but for administrative purposes Assistant Station Directors were superior as they derived all their administrative powers from the Station Directors).

The position of the staff has been changing during the last few years, and unfortunately not always on sound lines. Because of the policies of A.I.R., the staff at the stations felt frustrated. Employees were rotting in various cadres for years together without any promotion. Some of the changes effected by the authorities can at best be called short-term remedies which were likely to involve the department in many difficulties in future. The Listener's Research Officers and the Public Relations Officers have almost vanished; in fact, the last mentioned post was abolished. The post of Transmission Assistant was converted into "Transmission Exe-

cutive." The posts of "Programme Assistant" and "Programme Executive" were merged and now there are only Programme Executives. Similarly the post of "Technical Assistant" was merged with that of "Assistant Engineer." A new cadre of "Shift Assistant" was created. Another reform of far-reaching character was the large-scale recruitment of Producers and Assistant Producers, engaged on "contract," to look after the planning and production of programmes with the idea that Programme Executives should be in charge of programme administration only. After ten years of working this scheme, the position which obtains is far from clear. Some of the producers have failed to handle production work successfully and some of the Programme Executives, instead of looking after administration, actually plan, present and produce programmes. The Department has refused to declare who is in charge of the Section, and, in case of things going wrong, who should be answerable. Vague directions couched in ethical terms were issued by the Directorate during Dr. Keskar's regime calling upon Producers and Programme Executives to co-exist and to co-operate with one another. As far as the administration of programmes is concerned the following chart gives the present position of the personnel:



PROGRAMME EXECUTIVES

The person on whom the main burden of planning and producing programmes falls is the Programme Executive. In the early days, this official was known as the Programme Assistant and the hierarchy at each station, starting from the bottom up was Programme

Assistant, Programme Executive, Assistant Station Director, and Station Director. There were about 4 to 6 Programme Assistants to one Programme Executive, who, apart from producing a few programmes himself, functioned as a supervisory and co-ordinating authority. In 1958, the cadres of Programme Assistant and Programme Executive were merged, and the amalgamated cadre was designated as Programme Executive. These things are purely by way of explanation. What is important is that it is on the man at the bottom of the programme ladder on whom the main burden of planning and production rests.

For more than 25 years this official—Programme Assistant—nourished broadcasting in this country by his effort and talent. But for the missionary zeal of the early days, broadcasting would not have been what it is today. He kept himself in constant touch with professors, scholars, writers, poets, dramatists and thinkers to remain abreast of important happenings and progressive literary trends. He was constantly in search of new ideas and new talent. He planned programmes, discovered talkers, muscians, dramatists and actors; exchanged ideas, finalised plans; sent details of programmes for publication in programme journals; studied scripts, discussed changes with authors and conducted rehearsals spread over many days prior to the final broadcast. Besides all this a Programme Assistant had to take his turn on transmission duty twice or three times a week to supervise the actual broadcast of programmes as planned. This was indeed a weighty assignment, demanding alertness, intellectual awareness and a keen artistic sense on the part of those who wanted to fulfil it with any measure of success.

What type of person was needed for such a job? What should be his qualifications? Must he have a degree from a University? Must he be a poet of repute, a writer of note, a dramatist of genius, in short, must he necessarily be a creative artist? What should be the criterion whereby to judge him as an organizer, a planner and a producer? Lionel Fielden, the first Controller of Broadcasting in India, discussed this question in a broadcast talk in 1938 on "Broadcasting as a Career," the text of which we fortunately have on record. This gives a clear picture of the qualities which the early pioneers of broadcasting in India sought in a programme producer, then officially designated, Programme Assis-

tant. Fielden listed three qualities which he considered of paramount importance: *imaginative ability, intellectual curiosity,* and *alertness.*

Let us proceed further and examine what Fielden had to say about each quality and what reasoning he adduced in respect of each:

Imaginative Ability. "It is they (programme staff) who must in the first place suggest the subjects, speakers, and artists to be included in broadcast programmes . . . it is chiefly through their ingenuity and trouble that the human material of programmes can be produced in such a way as to hold listener's attention. . . . The programme staff of a broadcasting station is in the same position as the editor of a newspaper who can make an exciting column out of a dull item of news, or a film producer who can twist a boring story into a first rate picture . . . the first necessity of those who wish to join the programme staff of broadcasting is precisely this infinite quality of being able to make bricks without straw—or if you like to put in another way, a special type of creative imagination."

Intellectual curiosity. ". . .Broadcasting deals with every subject under the sun, and the man who makes a success of it must be, in the best sense of the word, a dilettante—he must take an interest in, and know something about, everything. . . ."

Alertness. ". . .A broadcasting station, though you may not think it, has a continual series of crisis, the speaker fails to arrive, the lights go out, the lines break down, the singer faints, the manuscript is lost . . . the singer goes out of tune, the orchestra which is out of balance. . . . All these things need a constant alertness, and if that alertness is not present in a programme staff, the programmes will decline and fall into a dull routine."

One of the many battles which Lionel Fielden fought was about the sort of person who was needed for this job, and this was bound up with the status and salary, which A.I.R. offered. When Fielden arrived in India the Programme Assistant was employed on sixty rupees a month. For such a pittance, even in the middle thirtees,

one could not get a young man of presentable personality, sound general education, imagination and journalistic or artistic interests. After much wrangling, the government agreed to a starting salary of one hundred rupees; Fielden was far from satisfied but he accepted it as a starting-point. The Vice-Chancellors of various universities were addressed and asked to suggest the names of persons who had just finished their studies, and who answered to Fielden's description. The first recruits were made between 1936 and 1938 and things got going. The microphone was a hungry monster who had to be fed continually and this young band of zealots worked almost round the clock, coaxing and cajoling artists, improvising programmes and personally filling in breaches.

The normal procedure, till 1947, of recruiting Programme Assistants was that A.I.R. advertised the posts in all the leading newspapers of the country, and made selections through a Board of Selection on the basis of interviews. A departmental committee screened the applications and decided who should be called for interview before the Board. The Board met in Delhi with the Director-General or the Deputy Director-General presiding. Other members consisted of two senior Station Directors and two distinguished outsiders, generally educationists or persons known for their interest in the fine arts.

After 1947, when India attained independence, a number of stations came up in quick succession at various places like Patna, Cuttack, Shillong, Gauhati, Nagpur, etc., and recruitment of Programme Assistants was done through specially constituted Boards of Selection which met at these places. The Boards were presided over by a Deputy Director-General and generally included a senior Station Director, the local Station Director and the Vice-Chancellor of the region's university. The candidates selected at these centres were mostly those who belonged to the state in which the radio station was located.

But in the process, the Department bungled and this led to some serious difficulty. In view of the rapid development and consequent increase of work at various stations, a Station Director sometimes felt the immediate necessity of recruiting additional Programme Assistants. He recommended some candidates who in his opinion had the requisite qualifications, and on his recommendations the Director-General made appointments under the powers vested in

him. These were called selections on an *ad hoc* basis. While various boards of selection were recruiting Programme Assistants at various stations, the department did not advise persons selected on *ad hoc* basis to apply for these posts and so get their appointments regularised. In short, Programme Assistants appointed on an *ad hoc* basis were never given an opportunity to get their appointments regularized. In fact, they never suspected that their appointments were irregular. Later, these Programme Assistants who were selected on an *ad hoc* basis were declared junior to those who had come through regular Boards, in spite of the fact that they had joined the Department much earlier and had much longer service to their credit. This is a classic illustration of the administrative inefficiency of A.I.R. The consequences of this bungling have not as yet been fairly settled to the satisfaction of the persons concerned.

The attempt always was to select lively persons with good education and a literary or artistic flair, and it was hoped that the rest would be acquired in the rough and tumble of actual broadcasting. Lionel Fielden had succeeded in getting the approval of the government to raise the starting salary from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 per month. Later it was increased to Rs. 210 and then to Rs. 250. The first Pay Commission fixed the starting salary at Rs. 280 and this came into operation in 1948. In a new and expanding department, prospects appeared to be reasonably bright. A good worker could expect promotion to a higher post in three or four years. But quite apart from the financial prospects, the absorbing interest of the work itself—meeting people from all walks of life, a satisfying feeling that one was doing something creative, and the pitch and tempo of broadcasting which kept one alert all the time were rich experiences. At times, there was hardly any line drawn between one's office and one's private life, for at any moment one could stumble across an incident suggesting a programme of a *pan wallah* whose tones and accent perfectly fit the bill of a voice one had been looking for in a projected radio play. Today, this kind of alertness is not there even during office hours.

Most of the old hands had received promotions by 1948 and had became Programme Executives. The post of Programme Assistant itself was up graded in 1949 and became a Class II post. It may, however, be stated that A.I.R. has been manifestly unfair

to its staff inasmuch as there was no quota of posts reserved for promotion from lower to higher cadres. Posts were advertised; and both the existing staff and outsiders alike had to apply and compete. Everything depended on the 15-minute interview before the Union Public Service Commission! And scores of old hands had to suffer in this process. It took a decade of fighting before the claims of departmental candidates for a promotion quota were recognized.

The first big blow to the old hands—Programme Assistants who had been promoted Programme Executives—came in 1951 immediately after the suspension of the Director-General, Lakshmanan. It was decided that all persons officiating in posts for which they had not been approved by the Union Public Service Commission were to be reverted to their original posts. Many were reverted. But this decision was not carried out uniformly. There were significant exceptions, and those who were reverted did not feel that all this was fairly done. The department may or may not have been at fault in getting these appointments regularized by the proper authority. The fact is that the brunt of it fell on the staff who were not themselves responsible for delays or short circuiting of the prescribed procedure. It was a big damper to the hopes, of many who had been officiating in the higher posts for many years and were suddenly moved down to where they started. For the majority of programme staff this was a blow from which they never recovered. A number of those recruited in 1948 and even earlier remain today at the bottom of the ladder. It is indeed a unique feature in the Government of India that they have not moved up one step in fourteen years. When you compare this with the rapid promotions which have taken place in other departments, it will be evident that A.I.R. is on the brink of a major administrative crisis. Some day one hopes light will be thrown on this era of genocide in the history of A.I.R.

Lakshmanan's removal was followed by the emergence on the scene of Dr. B. V. Keskar as Minister. Towards the end of 1953, the Minister initiated steps for terminating the services of a large number of Programme Assistants. The argument was that recruitment had not been made on a linguistic basis and it was hence necessary to jettison almost a third of the incumbents in the cadre. Of course, none of this was made public and the surmise from

subsequent events is that the Cabinet was never consulted. The authorities in Delhi were secretly preparing lists and vague rumours were afloat.

Here was not a question of swallowing indignity or insult; Programme Assistants had done that already. This was now a question of bread and butter. Small, insignificant, without any staff association to back them, they took up the unequal struggle. The matter was raised in Parliament after the axe of retrenchment had fallen on the first lot of 22 Programme Assistants. The Minister, B. V. Keskar, made some vague and misleading observations in Parliament to justify his department's acts of ommission and commission. On behalf of the retrenched Programme Assistants a rejoinder was sent to the Prime Minister and circulated to all the ministers and members of Parliament. This rejoinder gives the position most accurately and throws light on the administrative inefficiency of the department. It would be of interest to peruse it:

"Dr. Keskar, while replying on the 11th December, 1953, in the Council of States to a short notice question by Mr. C. G. K. Reddy on the Retrenchment issue in All India Radio, made certain observations which were not only evasive but were incidentally eloquent of the unprecedented administrative bungling with which the authorities in power seek to ruin the careers of Programme staff who have given the best years of their lives to the Department. Some of the points in Dr. Keskar's reply needing clarification are:

1. The Hon'ble Minister observed that "Recruitment to this cadre (Programme Assistants) must be made through U.P.S.C., because of its conversion into Class II. . . . In order to regularise the cadre, the U.P.S.C. was asked to scrutinise the cases of all Programme Assistants."

"To this we propose to enlighten everybody that probably the Hon'ble Minister and his Department are aware that this upgrading was done sometime in the year 1949. This obviously is a classic case of dereliction of duty on the part of the Department that they should have decided to do now what they were bound by rules to do nearly four years ago. The so-called "regularisation" is not only, therefore, rather a delayed affair, but will obviously be too arbitrary inasmuch as the "the Cate-

gorisation of them according to merits" can hardly be a rational basis in these shady circumstances. The administrative machinery of the Department should clarify as to why regularisation was not done earlier for a period of four years in flagrant violation of Home Ministry Notification No. F. 322/II/35-Ests, dated 1st April, 1937 as amended upto 14th June, 1950, which clearly lays down that officers cannot be retained in service over a period of 3 years without reference to U.P.S.C. by the end of which period at the latest, they are either dismissed or retained for permanent employment. The fact that this was not done only proves that the innocent are being sought to be punished for the clear fault of those who happened to preside over their careers.

"2. *Surplus Staff*: The Hon'ble Minister observed that the question of permanent strength of the cadre at the various stations was also examined in detail and it was found that the number of persons employed was much larger than the number required by A.I.R.

"To this, we might say that the pioneering men in the field of Broadcasting in India had earlier considered that a minimum of 10 Programme Assistants were required at each medium wave station and about 15 Programme Assistants at bigger stations, but suddenly the present regime has discovered that 6 to 10 Programme Assistants are enough to cope with the work of smaller and bigger stations respectively. This situation is another patent case at fallacious planning on paper because recent appointment and future possibilities of employment of highly paid supervisors, etc. at salaries of Rs. 1,000 p.m. will only sidetrack the expenditure from one head to another. The Programme Assistants who handle the bulk of Programme Planning and production work will continue to be the mainspring of the Department, whereas, the new high salaried personnel have no definite plan of work before them. In any case, if the staff has all along been surplus this should not have been realised after having spent many lakhs of rupees for so many years on Programme Assistants, majority of whom, have waned into maturity and no alternative avenues of employment are open to them at this stage. If, however, the staff being retrenched has in fact been surplus all along (which is not, of course, true)

this is another instance of waste of Government money and the callous gambling with the lives of so many of us—which could be easily avoided if the Department had taken expeditious action as already discussed in para 1 above. The expansion of A.I.R. under the Five Year Plan is a settled fact—all the present properly trained staff would surely be an asset for the new half a dozen stations that are soon coming up. In fact there is no genuine case for retrenchment at all.

"3. *Myth of Merit List, U.P.S.C. Duped*: The Hon'ble Minister again observed that "the U.P.S.C. was asked to examine the question of retrenching the surplus staff and the Commission had categorised them according to merits."

"The very basis of retrenchment seems to have no logic about it. For instance a person senior-most at the time of Partition and having worked for about 5 years in the higher post of a Programme Executive is also threatened with dismissal on the basis of some linguistic jugglery. To add insult to injury not only are those affected whom U.P.S.C. has found unsuitable, but we understand even some of those who have only recently been declared approved by the U.P.S.C., may be the next casualties in addition to the 22 Programme Assistants who have already been served with notices of dismissal. No greater farce could be enacted to dupe the U.P.S.C. by throwing all justice to the winds. The so-called linguistic retrenchment has hit hardest the Tamilians, the Bengalies and the Urdu-knowing Punjabis. It is incredible that the U.P.S.C. member could ever have associated himself with the arrangement and accepted this linguistic basis of categorisation. It is, however, a mystery whether the U.P.S.C. member at all knew that there was no linguistic consideration while recruitment to this cadre was being made from time to time. Whether the U.P.S.C. member was duped or was made as willing party to this linguistic categorisation in which no regard at all was bestowed on the seniority of the persons affected—it remains a fact that the whole arrangement is illegal and unconstitutional in so far as it offends the Fundamental Rights under Article 16(1) (2) of the Constitution of India, viz. undue discrimination has been shown against Senior Programme Assistants in removing them from their posts while

retaining persons very much junior to them. The so-called merit list must needs be scrapped.

"4. *Length of Service of no consequence*: The Hon'ble Minister in his statement has repeated over and over again that in all, 22 people had been given notices of termination of services whereas it is an open secret in the Broadcasting House that a complete list of 51 persons is ready for dismissal. It is, therefore, feared that after the adjournment of the present session of the Parliament another 29 Programme Assistants will be served with similar notices. We think this will be a most unfortunate development for which the Department will be entirely responsible."

Dr. Keskar beat a strategic retreat but not before he had taken a toll of 22 Programme Assistants. It would have been a folly to expect the Minister to leave Programme Assistants alone. Thwarted in his effort to get rid of them, he embarked on a policy which forced them to a living death inside A.I.R. This was through the appointment of producers who were made to take up all the creative work of the Programme Assistant, leaving the latter to attend only to secretarial work styled as "Programme Administration." This story is told in greater detail in the following Section dealing with Staff Artists and Producers. Suffice to say that the Minister left no whim untried to see that the class of programme were known as Programme Assistants or Programme Executives is completely neutralised professionally.

However, there are two points which are important in this context and which deserve consideration for each of them leads us back to the key role of the Programme Executive.

The Beveridge Committee recognized that, in the B.B.C., promotion meant that programme men were drawn away from production to administration. In many cases the persons concerned were more interested and suited to production than administration. At the same time they could not ignore the economic advantages which administrative jobs afforded nor could they be insensitive to the status which goes with these posts. The B.B.C. has been concerned, therefore, to ensure that economically at any rate, the "producer" does not suffer. In A.I.R., however, right from the

first step, one gets further and further removed from production. This problem started making itself felt even in Bokhari's time. The lines on which he was thinking was the introduction of a selection grade for Programme Assistants which would take a person up to Rs. 1000 a month. This was the maximum of the Station Director's scale before to the first Pay Commission's recommendation. It was envisaged that if a person, with a flair for production, was prepared to remain a Programme Assistant instead of accepting the administrative responsibilities of a Programme Executive, or Assistant Station Director or Station Director, he could do so without financial loss. It appears that no further thought has been given to this aspect of the matter and the question has been side-tracked by the introduction of the so-called production cadre. If A.I.R. is not to be deprived of the experience and talent of its best programme men, some solution should be found to this problem.

If there is to be any awareness of broadcasting problems at the top, the post of the Director-General and others at the directional level must be manned by persons who have had direct experience of production. The tragedy in the last ten years of broadcasting in India is directly attributable to the lack of this essential requirement.

A senior Government official once stated that administration means administration of personnel—procedures for drawing salaries, T.A., pension and leave rules etc. The unstated implication was that personnel are the same, no matter what they do, and therefore "administration" means the same thing in all departments of the government. One had no doubt that he was voicing the views of the majority of officials, and was giving expression to the practical philosophy of the Government of India. According to this view, an ICS or IAS officer is equally equipped to administer the armed forces or a cultural establishment. So applied, this philosophy makes a farce of a service like broadcasting. Administration in broadcasting must subordinate itself to the requirements of programme considerations creating thereby congenial conditions for the production of good programmes. Administration may be efficient in itself, and yet not quite favourable for creative work like broadcasting. Those who have been at the helm of affairs in A.I.R. over the past decade may have known something about

the administration of a district, but they did not understand the requirements of broadcasting. Only a person who has had actual experience of programme production will be in a position to keep administration from encroaching on the interests of the programmes.

Future Directors-General of A.I.R. then, must be drawn from those who have distinguished themselves as programme men. It is essential to recruit for this and other important posts men of outstanding ability, imagination and courage who with maturity and experience will be able to give a new outlook to programme policy.

Lately, a step, though a very small one, has been taken in the right direction. The Second Pay Commission has fixed the pay scale of Programme Executives as Rs. 350-20-590-EB-30-800. Some of the incumbents would be able to get selection grade and go upto Rs. 900. This compares very unfavourably, with the IAS, and other All-India Services in respect of initial pay, advancement and promotion. While an IAS officer would be in charge of a district within 6 or 7 years of joining service, a Programme Executive would be exceptionally lucky if he were to become a Station Director in a decade and if he does his starting salary then would be just about Rs. 700. Greater opportunities of promotion within a reasonable period of time will have to be provided if broadcasting is to attract the imaginative and intellectually alive from amongst the youth of the country.

STAFF ARTISTS AND PRODUCERS

Apart from the staff who are regular Government Servants such as the programme, engineering and administrative staff, All India Radio engages a large number of persons who are employed on contract. These persons are designated staff artists. Staff artists are engaged on renewable contracts of one to three years, and their total strength in 1961 was one thousand four hundred and eighty-eight. Of this, the special category of staff artists known as "Producers" account for one hundred and ninety-three.[4]

Staff artists are employed for a variety of jobs. Musicians

[4] These figures are taken from the A.I.R. Silver Jubilee Folder *Some Facts and Figures* (1961).

mainly to function as accompanists, announcers, script writers, stock characters in rural and other programmes, drama voices, translators and copyists. After the war, in 1946-47, the fee of staff artists ranged from about Rs. 80 to Rs. 1,000 per month. Copyists were usually paid Rs. 80, whereas News Readers received Rs. 600 per month on their first appointment and went upto Rs. 1,000. A staff artists fee is inclusive of all allowances. Until recently, there were no prescribed rules of appointment. If the Station Director felt the need of, say, an additional tabla player or announcer he appointed a person on a contract which was renewable from month to month. The selection was made from among the persons on the station's lists who had some experience of broadcasting. After this trial period of monthly contracts, the station was expected to obtain the sanction of the Director-General for the artist's appointment as a staff artist. In spite of these instructions a number of persons were engaged for years on monthly contracts. One of the very good things accomplished by the late P. M. Lad during his short tenure as Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was to put an end to this nefarious practice. Today there are hardly any such "monthly paid" artists left in A.I.R.

Rules of appointment were prescribed in October 1960. All vacancies are to be advertised in the press or on the radio, and selections are to be made by regularly constituted committees of not less than three persons. For the higher posts in the Programme Production cadre (Asst. Producers/Producers/Deputy Chief Producers and Chief Producers) the selection committee includes one non-official.

In the early days, the benefits of staff artists were not clearly specified. This was taken in hand in the early fifties and are laid down in the A.I.R. Manual Vol. I which was printed in 1956. Staff Artists are entitled to leave and medical attention on lines similar to regular government servants. Women are entitled to maternity leave. In New Delhi they are entitled to government accommodation. A gratuity scheme has been introduced with effect from 1952 (service prior to that does not count towards gratuity) according to which roughly one month's salary for each year of service is payable to a staff artist when he finally relinquishes service.

All this has been to the good. Unfortunately, however, the enhancement of pay scales has not kept pace with the conferment of other benefits. Whereas the starting salary prescribed in 1947 was Rs. 80 per month, sixteen years later this minimum rose only to Rs. 100. In certain cases there has been no increase at all. For instance, in the past announcers were rarely offered less than Rs. 150 as a starting pay and frequently a considerably higher start was given. Today the first contract to announcers is almost invariably for Rs. 150. Prior to 1955 some 'C' class muscians were employed (if those with better gradings were not available) and such persons were given monthly salaries between Rs. 120 and Rs. 150. Under the present rules no musician graded less than 'B' is normally to be employed and yet the fee offered is only Rs. 150.

The substitution of the annual contract by a three year contract has also tended to work to the monetary disadvantage of staff artists. The fee prescribed under the three year contract holds good for the entire period of the contract. In other words there is no increment for three years. Under the old system a good worker could earn an increment every year. Moreover, increments have been prescribed for the different pay ranges. Thus for staff artists drawing upto Rs. 300 (and these constitute the vast majority) the prescribed increment is Rs. 10. The usual procedure is that at the time of renewal of contracts, artists assessed as "outstanding" are given two increments, those assessed as "good" one increment and those assessed as "ordinary" no increment. In a few very rare cases 3 increments are also given. Formerly an outstanding worker could look forward to a rapid increase in emoluments, which is not possible in the standardized system now in operation. Incidentally, the procedure of not allowing an increment to staff artists assessed as ordinary, brings out an important point of distinction between these workers and regular government servants. The increment of a government servant can be withheld only as a measure of penalty after the person is charge-sheeted, given an opportunity to defend himself and then found guilty of some specific offence. Even a below average government servant does as a matter of right, go on drawing the increments in the prescribed scale till he comes to the stage of efficiency bar. In the case of staff artists in A.I.R., the specious argument is that

the increment is not a right. Virtually a new contract is offered and it is within the competence of the authorities to give a higher fee or not as they think fit.

The result of this niggardliness has been that staff artists in A.I.R. are a deeply frustrated lot. Ten or fifteen years of specialised service in A.I.R. renders them unfit for any alternative employment. With nothing to look forward to, it is not surprising that they should become indifferent to their work. On the other hand the Station Directors know that, at the salaries offered, better people will not be available in the employment market. Perforce they show some laxity in the enforcement of discipline and maintenance of standards of work. Thus a sort of cold war has developed between the administration and staff artists, and I believe that this is an important factor in the deterioration of the quality of work which we have been witnessing in the last few years. What is needed is a realistic approach to the problem of staff artists. A.I.R. must offer salaries which will attract young people of talent. They must be offered opportunities to develop their talent with adequate monetary advancement at least on par with the regular employees of All India Radio. Over and above this, measures should be taken to improve the status of the staff artists. This can only happen if the authorities realize that programmes do not consist of what is written on a piece of paper but what goes on the air and it is the Staff Artists who are mostly responsible for the actual broadcasts. From this fundamental change in the manner of looking at things will follow an appreciation of the importance of the Staff Artists and the respect and consideration which is due to them.

The position of staff artists leads us on to that special category known as Production Staff who came into existence in 1953. It all started with an attempt to woo Hindi writers who felt that they had been poorly treated under the Bokhari regime, and who, with the advent of independence, considered themselves sufficiently strong to boycott All India Radio. C. B. Rao, then Deputy Director-General (Programmes), himself a well-known Hindi writer and a personal friend of the eminent poet Sumitranandan Pant, was able to persuade him to accept an appointment in All India Radio. He was designated Hindi Adviser and was posted at Allahabad Station. Shortly thereafter, Bhagwati Charan Verma

and Uday Shankar Bhatt were posted at the Lucknow and Delhi Stations respectively. About the same time, a Music Adviser Dr. Sumati Mutatkar was appointed as the Directorate-General and a few such advisers were also posted at the stations.

The duties and responsibilities of these "advisers" were of a nebulous nature. Most of the persons appointed were well-known figures in the literary or music world, fairly advanced in years, and had little interest in acquiring the techniques of broadcasting. By and large, they were concerned to see that the offers of broadcast went to the right quarters, and for the rest they were willing to leave the permanent staff to run the show. There were no fixed hours of work and no specific duties. Most of the advisers were personally known to the Minister, Dr. B. V. Keskar, and had direct access to him so that a Station Director was well aware that it was not worth his while to offend these important persons. In fact, a memorandum was issued to the Station Directors which stated that the "advisers" had been appointed for a special purpose, and members of the programme staff who were not prepared to co-operate with them had no place in A.I.R. This special purpose was defined as "improvement of programmes." In the budget, in addition to the specific sum alloted for programmes, an additional amount began to be set aside for "improvement of programmes" —like the cream on your coffee!

This first phase in the policy of appointing highly paid staff on contract continued till about 1956. The fact was that the purpose for which the advisers were appointed was not fulfilled; there was, if any thing, a falling off in programme quality. Morever, and especially at the Hindi stations, even if one group of writers and artists were won over by the advisers, another group were offended. The rivalries of opposing groups continued unabated. Officialdom had to find a suitable explanation for the failure of the new policy. The reason given was that the new workers were saddled with responsibility, but enjoyed no powers: they could at best advise. So, the next move was to give them more power. The designation was changed from Adviser to Producer.

In 1956, a large number of Chief and Deputy Chief Producers at the Directorate, and Producers and Assistant Producers at the Stations, were appointed. At some stations in which the Minister and senior officials in the Ministry were not interested, the Station

Directors were asked to suggest names. But at other places, it was at the initiative of the Minister or the Secretary that writers and musicians were contracted by A.I.R. The final choice was that of the Minister, Dr. Keskar, or the Secretary P. M. Lad. A definite attempt was also made at this time to court persons who had hitherto opposed the policy of the Minister either in respect of the music audition system or in any other way. Thus for instance at the Calcutta Station, where the music audition system had been hotly opposed, two principal actors in the opposition, Jnan Prakash Ghosh and Suresh Chakravarty were appointed as Producers on terms which have never since been repeated. Similar steps were taken at Bombay. Vilayat Hussain Khan the elderly *Khayal* singer, who had played a leading part in the agitation at this station, was appointed a *Salakhar*.

The producers having been appointed, detailed and complicated instructions were issued to the Station Directors by the Director-General. The Producer was made all powerful. The Station Director was told to meet him every day and to seek his advice wherever necessary. Producers were to fix their own hours of work and routine duties were not to be alloted to them. They were to be encouraged to pursue their own creative work. Programme Assistants were called upon to place their experience and technical knowledge at the disposal of the producers, and, occasionally, a few of them were permitted to produce a programme or two, though it was the view of the Director-General that not many of them were fit for the honour!

The years 1956 to 1961 are probably the most difficult that the programme staff, not excluding the Station Directors, had to face. The majority of producers were interested only in seeing that patronage went to the right quarters. For the rest they took the fullest advantage of their positions pursuing their own ends through music schools to which they were attached, or with film producers and publishers in whom they were interested. Programme Assistants reduced officially to the status of personal secretaries responsible only for routine administration, were in fact forced to produce the programmes which the producers should have done and which were often billed and announced in their names. Station Directors who joined issue with producers invariably got the worst of it. In the face of mounting criticism of the

programmes and charges of favouritism and nepotism, this state of affairs could not continue. Some producers who were too powerful and important and could not be dealt with in other ways, were made *Salakhars* (Advisers). *Salakhars* who draw a monthly honorarium of Rs. 500 are expected to attend Advisory Committee meetings and to advise the Station Director on various matters. They are required to send the Director-General a three-monthly report on the programmes of the station to which they are attached; but it is well-known that some *Salakhars* did not bother to send even one such report in several years. *Salakhars* are paid, in addition to their salaries, fees upto a limit of Rs. 300 a month (in the case of muscians) and Rs. 200 (in the case of others) for their own broadcasts. Another method adopted for dealing with the producers was to transfer them to places where their nuisance value was minimal. In a few cases the department had gone so far as not to renew producers' contracts, but this was obviously done in the case of those who unfortunately had no strings to pull. It is beginning to be realized now that the Producers' function is primarily in the studio. He must know his job and attend to it in detail. On the other hand the authorities are becoming conscious of the important role which the Programme Executives play in broadcasting, for it is from the ranks of these persons that Station Directors and Directors-General will be drawn.

There is no doubt that of the many innovations made by Dr. Keskar, the introduction of the "producer system" has easily been the most damaging for A.I.R. It is to this that we must turn our attention.

To begin with, the personal basis on which the appointments were made, placed patronage in the hands of one Minister in a manner which has been unprecedented in the Government of India. It was in the hands of the Minister for instance to appoint a Chief Producer in the Directorate-General on a salary of Rs. 1,200 a month. Not only could a person be appointed for an initial period of 3 years, but the contract could be renewed any number of times for further periods of three years solely at the will of the Minister. Normally in making an appointment various procedures have to be followed. Firstly, a post has to be created and a case has to be made out to show that there is sufficient work

to justify the post. For posts of Assistant Station Directors, carrying gazetted status and a scale of Rs. 400 to Rs. 900, the Director-General has first to get the proposal processed through the Economy Committee consisting of senior officers in his own office. In the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting a further scrutiny is made and then the Financial Adviser's concurrence has to be obtained. Only then is the proposal put up to the Finance Ministry for approval. After approval the recruitment is made through the Union Public Service Commission.

In the case of Production Staff (including Chief Producers, Deputy Chief Producers, Conductor of the Vadya Vrind, Producers and Assistant Producers) no such formalities are necessary. From a Chief Producer on a 3 years renewable contract on Rs. 1,200 per month to an Assistant Producer on a salary of Rs. 300 per month the word of one single man became law. No post had to be created; no justification for an additional hand was necessary. A Station Director receives out of the blue a copy of an order appointing a person on his staff and pretty soon the person arrives, and has to be provided with the usual office facilities and some work even if there is none—at least on paper!

This is no exaggeration. Let us examine in some detail the position at the Directorate-General as it stood in April 1962. In 1956-58, there were, for Music, a Chief Producer, two Deputy Chief Producers and two Producers; for School and Educational Broadcasts, one chief Producer; for Women and Children's Programmes, one Chief Producer; for Hindi Spoken Word, one Deputy Chief Producer and for Drama, one Deputy Chief Producer. The Music staff at the Directorate remained constant for quite some time except for two additional appointments in the shape of a Deputy Chief Producer for Karnatak Music and a Producer for Folk Music. The contract of the Chief Producer, School and Educational Broadcasts, was not renewed in 1959, and five years have passed with tranquillity.[5] The Deputy Chief Producer Drama, after an expensive trip to the British Broadcasting Corporation, left A.I.R. by the middle of 1961. A successor was appointed after a gap of two years. The Chief Producer, Women and Children Programmes passed away towards the end of 1961 and has not

[5] A Deputy Chief Producer for School Broadcasts has, however, been appointed in 1964.

been replaced. Pannalal Ghosh, Conductor of the A.I.R. National Orchestra (Northern), died in 1960 and was not replaced till 1963. Shri T. K. Jayarama Iyer, Conductor of the A.I.R. National Orchestra (Karnatak), suffered a stroke in the summer of 1961. A successor was found only in 1963. It will thus be seen that these five posts were not filled for periods varying from five years to one year. Either the department needs to be pulled up for failing to fill in these "important" posts, or the posts themselves need to be abolished. In both cases, the department is at fault. This case exposed the truth, that these appointments made in the name of improvement of programmes, were purely largesse scattered for politico-personal profiteering.

The question arises, on what grounds were these persons selected for these lucrative and important positions? It is believed that the personal predilections of the Minister and his penchant for buying up those who opposed him, and not the qualifications or experience of a candidate were the deciding factors. Let us as a sample examine the credentials of the Central Music Unit of the Directorate as it stood in 1962. The Chief Producer, over 65 years of age, had spent his life as a teacher of philosophy in a college in Uttar Pradesh where he had ended up as Principal. He was not a musician of any distinction, nor even an author of note on music. On what basis, then, was he picked up after retirement and given a job on a sum that was more than double what he had ever drawn in his own profession? The Deputy Chief Producer (Light Music), nearing seventy was known all over the country to have been interested only in classical music. He had worked in A.I.R. as a Programme Executive (then designated Director of Programme) and had left the service in somewhat unusual circumstances in the early forties. He wielded some power as a music teacher in Calcutta, and had been a stern critic of the audition system. The Deputy Chief Producer (classical) was an engineer who had been taken on by A.I.R. after retirement. He had no known qualifications as a musician. The Deputy Chief Producer (Karnatak) was a Station Director considered an authority in his field. Of the two Producers, one was an undistinguished student of the Harris College of Lucknow and the other was a lady, widow of a well-known professor in Lucknow, with no recognized qualifications in music and no experience of organiza-

tional or administrative nature.

Presuming that all these persons had enough knowledge of music and were quite efficient at their work, how would these persons have faired in a selection by such a body as the U.P.S.C., in comparison with others who might have applied, had the posts been properly advertised?

Obviously, the appointments of producers were not made with reference to the work which had to be done by them nor were they made on the basis of competitive merit. In fact, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting peopled A.I.R. Stations with admirers indebted to him by his patronage. Persons selected and appointed in this manner were hardly likely to give the Minister impartial advice on programme matters. They were a burden on the stations and they undermined the morale and initiative of the regular staff. A few producers who were honest and able, identified themselves with the genuine interests of the stations. Inevitably such producers fell out with the one or the other pet of the powers that be and in such cases, the department did not hesitate the unbridled use of its power to discredit and drive them out. The victimisation of B. D. Manav at the Allahabad station is well known to A.I.R. staff. Thus the personal spoil system had not, and, indeed, could not work in the interests of the producers themselves.

A crucial point which requires consideration is the effect of the appointment of producers on the regular programme staff of A.I.R.: the Programme Executives and Assistant Station Directors. Prior to the appointment of producers, production was being handled by Programme Executives. In fact, according to their terms of recruitment, planning and supervision of programmes and the production of all-important programmes was their main responsibility. When the producers were appointed this work was taken away "on paper" from the Programme Executives, and they were required to devote themselves to "programme administration"—i.e., the issue of contracts, correspondence and various arrangements ancillary to broadcasting. Naturally this aroused considerable resentment in the minds of the programme staff. Production work is interesting, and provides scope for creativity and personal expression. The Programme Executives had been recruited for such work and had acquired experience and skill in

its execution. Suddenly, all this was withdrawn and they were faced with professional hara-kiri. The fact that in most cases the Programme Executive had to continue to do production work only to cover up the incompetence of producers, who took all the bouquets and passed on all the brickbats, was another deplorable aspect of the system. There was little, however, that could be done for the Programme Executives. The Minister was adamant; and the then Director-General, himself an outsider to broadcasting, could not be expected to take up the cudgels on their behalf, and the Station Directors, most of them unconfirmed, preferred discretion to valour. Nevertheless, the Minister was aware of the climate of resentment. This was one of the points on which I laid some emphasis in my resignation from A.I.R. in 1960, after 15 years of service. In addressing the Station Directors at the Annual Conference in 1961 the Minister felt it necessary to refer to the state of resentment and to argue that it was the prerogative of the government to assign whatever duties it considered fit to any class of its employees, and the employees had no right to claim certain duties for themselves. A Programme Executive may have been recruited for some work in the old days but it was open to the government to change that work. This argument is so full of half-truths mixed with falsehoods that it needs little examination. No doubt in the final analysis a government servant holds office at the pleasure of the President, and it is open to the President on the advice of his cabinet to redefine his sphere of duties and responsibilities. This would be quite constitutional. But not quite so if a Minister of State, entirely on his own initiative and decision changes the duties and responsibilities of the employees of the department. Moreover, if duties and responsibilities of a post are to be changed, this must be done in a reasonable manner with reference to the existing procedure and a host of other factors. For instance if the Director-General of A.I.R. recruited on the basis of certain specific qualifications and a particular type of experience draws today a salary of Rs. 2,250 and administers a budget of some six crores, then no government would be so arbitrary or so foolish as to continue to pay him his salary even after reducing his powers, privileges and responsibilities to those now wielded by a Station Director who draws half his pay. And if in circumstances purely imaginary any government is indiscreet enough to

do such a thing, it would be correct and honourable for the Director-General to point out that it was uneconomic, unjust and morally wrong for the government to maintain such a dummy of a Director-General. But beggars are not choosers, and stooges do not protest. Just such an arbitrary, uneconomic, unjust and unethical policy was initiated by the Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr. B. V. Keskar, in withdrawing "production" from the duties of Programme Executives. The Minister did all this in a quiet, surreptitious manner without apprising the cabinet fully of what was going on. If an appeal had been made to the U.P.S.C., there can be no doubt as to the outcome. Unhappily, there was no one to bell the cat.

The "producer system" stands now at the cross-roads. With a number of vested interests that have grown up in the last decade, it is doubtful if its total abolition or replacement is possible. What can and should be done is to see that it is channelled along proper lines. To begin with, the recruitment of producers must be placed on a regular basis. Only from persons appointed on merit can A.I.R. expect a worthwhile contribution, not only to programmes but also the qualities of integrity and impartiality of judgment, which are vital to any programme or administrative activity. A broadcasting organisation lives on a constant inflow of new ideas and new talent. It also needs trained and experienced programme men to which it can turn from time to time for individual programmes. Persons who are engaged on contracts for relatively short periods would serve both these needs. For when they join A.I.R. they will bring in new ideas and when they leave, they will leave as trained broadcasters to whom A.I.R. can later on entrust individual assignments.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND LISTENER RESEARCH

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A service like broadcasting cannot afford to disregard completely the changes in public taste. While it should avoid playing to the gallery, at the same time, it has also to see that as far as possible it should project good taste because good taste and public taste are sometimes not congruent. In less developed countries like India the divergence between the two is more sharp than in the case of countries where the gulf which separates the layman from the expert is insignificant. Naturally, therefore, the task of planning attractive broadcast programmes for an audience whose tastes vary a great deal, becomes all the more difficult. Loft to itself, A.I.R.'s quite capable of planning programmes that would be acceptable to the largest number, it has the necessary talent and imagination for the task. In the matter of taste, it is wise to follow a democratic approach. This explains A.I.R.'s policy of associating enlightened public opinion with its programme activities through the agency of Advisory Committees. A.I.R. has a number of such committees, some of them are fairly old.

There are at present three Central Committees to advise the Ministry on the programmes of A.I.R. and 23 committees at stations to advise them on general programmes.[1] In addition there are Rural Advisory Committees at all stations, a Tribal Advisory Committee at Gauhati, School Broadcast Consultative Panels and University Broadcast Panels and Industrial Advisory Committees at the stations.

The first advisory committee set up was at the Delhi Station. To begin with about a dozen citizens of Delhi formed a committee when they met informally on invitation. Formal recognition to this committee was conveyed in a press note issued on 2nd August, 1936, by the Department of Industries and Labour, Government

[1] *Report on the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for* 1961-62, p. 26.

of India. There were 14 members in this recognised committee, designated the Delhi Station Advisory Council. The Controller of Broadcasting was its President and the Director of the Delhi Station, its Secretary. The Educational commissioner with the Government of India was its *ex-officio* member. Other members of the committee were, Prof. B. N. Ganguli, Dr. S. K. Sen, Pt. Haksar, Mr. Shiv Raj Bahadur, Mr. Ghulam Mohammed, Mrs. Asaf Ali, Mrs. K. Krishna Rao, Prof. Mirza Mohammed Said, Hon'ble Raja Charanjit Singh, Sir M. Yamin Khan, Lala Shri Ram, Rai Bahadur Ram Kishore and Dr. Zakir Hussain. I have listed these names only to illustrate that some thought had been bestowed on the selection of the members. Unfortunately, various extraneous considerations now outweigh the selection of members. The members' duties were to make recommendations on general policies pertaining to programmes, report on selected programmes and comment on proposed programme schedules. A number of suggestions made by this committee were given effect to, such as, the introduction of a Radio Play Competition (July, 1937); the introduction of School Broadcasts; and the issuing of a questionnaire to 1,500 listeners (December, 1936).

Later on, advisory committees were set up at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. Each committee had 5 members. While reconstituting the Advisory Committee at Delhi, the number of members was also reduced from 14 to 5. The terms of reference of the new committees were:

1. "To keep the Controller in touch with local public opinion in the matter of programme construction and to advise him on such matters as may be referred to them for advice,
2. "The committees will be purely advisory bodies and will not have any administrative functions,
3. "Two members of each committee will retire every two years and make room for two other persons. The decision as to who should retire will rest with Government, and
4. "Service on the committee will be entirely honorary. Meetings will be convened by the Controller at his discretion, but not less than twice a year."

These principles, more or less, even now govern the functioning

of the advisory committees attached to various stations.

We may now proceed to discuss these committees a little in detail. The three central committees to advise the Ministry on A.I.R. are the Central Programme Advisory Committee (CPAC), the Central Advisory Board of Music (CABM) and the Music Audition Board (MAB). The CPAC is a general body which deals with all programme matters. This committee consists of a few Members of Parliament, writers, poets and dramatists and educationists. The total strength is about 25 members. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting is the Chairman of the committee and the Director-General, A.I.R., its Secretary. The Committee meets once a year when it considers a review of the main programme activities of A.I.R. in the preceding year; and is also presented with a preview of programmes planned for the coming year. Finally, there are specific questions which are referred to the committee for advice.

The Central Advisory Board of Music (CABM) also comprising some 25 members who are either musicologists, musicians or connoisseurs, meets annually under the chairmanship of the Minister. It considers broadly the music programmes of A.I.R. according to the classification and procedure of the CPAC.

Members of the MAB who are experts dealing specifically with the audition of artists in A.I.R. are expected to meet occasionally to discuss purely technical questions of classification of different types of music and so on. This committee has met only on two or three occasions in the last ten years of its existence and is likely to become defunct. It was formed by Dr. Keskar shortly after the new system of auditions came into existence. At that time there were some questions of procedure and classification of musical forms which needed decision. But the fact that the committee does not meet for years together is itself an indication of its uselessness.

The most important are the Programme Advisory Committees, advising various stations of A.I.R. The programme Advisory Committee at a station generally consists of 6 to 10 persons. Members are appointed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for a term of 2 years which is renewable in each case. The State governments are consulted before the appointments are made. The persons appointed are members in their individual capacities and not as representing any group or interest. The Committees meet

twice a year. The Director-General or one of the Deputy Director-General usually presides over one meeting of the committee, while the second is held with the Station Director in the chair.

The Rural, Industrial and Tribal Advisory Committees meet every three months and are presided over by the Station Director. Representatives of State Development Departments attend these meetings at which the quarterly schedules of these programmes are discussed. The Schools Broadcast Consultative Panels and the University Broadcast Panels are intended to advise the stations on the topics on which broadcasts may be arranged. They meet approximately twice a year.

For a long time the meetings of the Programme Advisory Committees (all other committees are later innovations) were considered important events at stations. The programme staff usually remained busy for 10 to 15 days preparing the reviews and previews of important broadcasts. The Director-General was expected to visit the station concerned to preside over the meetings. This in itself was considered important and was regarded as a sort of an official inspection. The number of stations started increasing after 1947 and the Director-General started absenting himself from these meetings (though one can hardly find any justification for this) and a Deputy Director-General began deputising for him. Soon the Deputy Directors-General, too, found this business to be avoidable. Eventually, it became a matter of course to the Station Director to preside and the Assistant Station Director to act as the Secretary. There were quite a few stations at one stage which had only Assistant Station Directors incharge or Station Directors without Assistant Directors to assist them. In all such cases the next senior programme officer, that is, the Programme Executive acted as Secretary. As the interest of the top officers in these meetings waned, the importance of these committees decreased rapidly; the members, too, developed a casual approach towards the purpose of such meetings, though not so casual when they wanted to use their position for extending patronage to their friends.

There is another aspect to these committees which may be mentioned here. A.I.R. takes care to ensure that only such persons are appointed to the committees whose views are in conformity with those of the Ministry.[2] A few conformist writers and

[2] It is interesting that the Reddi Ministry did not reappoint to the Cen-

artists are a godsend. Apart from these, the general run of members are persons who have little or no interest in programmes and hardly even listen to A.I.R. Members are generally of advanced age, and journalists or representatives of the press are carefully excluded. A few members are interested in getting programmes for themselves or for their hangers on and are barely able to clothe these requests with a reasonable cover of decorum. Informed criticism and worthwhile suggestions are totally lacking. In fact, it becomes often difficult to keep the discussions going, or to keep them within the limits of relevancy. On many occasions, the level of approach has been so poor that to prepare a draft copy of the minutes which would sound respectable seemed almost impossible.

What, it may be asked, is the value of such bodies and committees to A.I.R.? It can be said without contradiction that these committees serve little purpose. The question then arises as to what should be done about the advisory committees? It must be admitted that such non-official committees are a part of the paraphernalia of democracy. The B.B.C., too, has its share of committees and they are also subject to a similar sort of criticism. While the utility of such committees can never be very appreciable, it should nevertheless be possible to obtain some benefit, provided certain conditions are fulfilled. The foremost among these is the composition of the committees. A.I.R. should not try to deny itself the benefit of informed criticism and it should endeavour to nominate to its advisory committees those who are capable of rendering such service. It should be possible for professional men and women who are actively pursuing their interests in the arts, science, journalism, education and theatre to help A.I.R. with expert advice. Such advice cannot be had from those who have retired from active life and spend their time in nostalgic preoccupations. In the second place, members of advisory committees must appreciate that, when they meet, they meet to discuss important questions and that their decisions on such questions may have far-reaching consequences on the majority of listeners. To discuss

tral Programme Advisory Committee Mama Warerkar and the Poet Dinkar, severe critics of the Minister's Hindi policy. These two stalwarts of the Keskar regime would normally have had their terms of membership extended had the old regime continued.

inconsequential matters at such meetings would be sheer waste of time.

One thing, however, is certain that members of such committees cannot attach more importance to them than what the department itself attaches to them. It is a fact that, during certain years, the Minister attended more meetings than the Director-General or the Deputy Director-General did. While there is no ban on the Minister taking an interest in such meetings, there is no excuse for the high programme officials to be indifferent to them.

PROGRAMME JOURNALS

It is an irony of fate that the programme journals of A.I.R. which should normally command a wide circulation are actually the least known and the least read. What is more they have played no part in the cultural renaissance through which the country has been passing. Quite apart from the more important aspect of judging the merit of these journals, on the basis of their literary and artistic standards, most of them have been financial failures. A.I.R. at present publishes programme journals in eight languages for listeners within the country.[3] Among them *Akashvani,* which is published in English, is a weekly. The others, brought out fortnightly, are: *Awaz* (Urdu), *Akashvani* (Hindi) formerly known as *Sarang, Betar Jagat* (Bengali), *Vanoli* (Tamil), *Vani* (Telugu), *Nabhovani* (Gujarati), and *Akashi* (Assamese).

The English Journal: Akashvani

The Indian Broadcasting Company Limited, formed in 1926, had set up two radio stations in 1927 at Bombay (July 23) and Calcutta (August 26). Almost simultaneously it started its official organ in English, a modest fortnightly journal, the *Indian Radio Times* in 1927, which carried the programmes of the Bombay and Calcutta Stations, besides technical notes and reprint of selected broadcast talks. As the Indian Broadcasting Company decided to go into liquidation with effect from the 1st March, 1930, the *Indian Radio Times* came out with a farewell issue on the 7th

[3] There are eight journals for foreign listeners which are mentioned in the Chapter on External Broadcasts.

February, bemoaning the death of broadcasting in India.

The Government, however, decided to take over broadcasting and the Indian State Broadcasting Service came into existence on April 1, 1930, when the *Indian Radio Times* was revived. The circulation of the journal stood at 2,750 during 1930-32 but registered considerable increase in the following years largely due to the fact that the British Broadcasting Corporation started the Empire Broadcasting Service at the end of 1932, and the *Indian Radio Times* published regularly the details of these B.B.C. programmes. The increase after the introduction of these programmes is revealed by the following figures:

1932-33	3,600
1933-34	4,500
1934-35	8,000

The name of the journal was changed to the *Indian Listener* in December, 1925. In April 1937, the journal was placed independently under the charge of an Editor with a separate office and was taken away from the control of the Station Director, Bombay. The growth of the circulation of the *Indian Listener* kept pace with the increase in the number of stations. New stations at Delhi (January 1937), Peshawar (taken over from the Provincial Government in April 1937), Lahore (December 1937), Lucknow (April 1938), Tiruchirappali and Dacca (1939) led to an increase in the circulation as the figures given below show:

1935-36	13,500
1936-37	16,500
1937-38	18,500
1938-39	21,250

It is to be noted that from 1940 to the time of the country's partition in 1947, no new stations were opened but the circulation of the *Indian Listener* kept on increasing rapidly, and by 1947 it reached the respectable figure of 30,000. This increase kept in pace with the increase in radio licences.

In 1930, when the radio licences in force in India were only 7,719 the circulation of the English programme journal was 2,750.

By 1939 the licences increased to 92,782 and the circulation of the journal soared to 21,000. Shortly after the partition of the country, when the licences in force were a little less than 3 lakhs, the estimated circulation of the *Indian Listener* was 30,000.

In 1956, it was decided to discard the name "All India Radio" and instead use the new name *Akashvani* for all broadcasts except those in English, both in the home services and for external services. The impact of this decision on the English programme journal was felt as soon as its name underwent a change for the second time on January 5, 1963 from the *Indian Listener* to *Akashvani*. It is almost a tragedy that the circulation of the *Indian Listener* (now *Akashvani*) has been consistently dwindling and was a mere 6,800 towards the close of 1963.[4]

Indian Language Journals

The first radio journal to be published in an Indian Language is the *Betar Jagat* in Bengali. It made its appearance in September, 1929.[5] Published every fortnight it used to be sold at one anna a copy with an annual subscription equivalent to Rs. 1.87 P. The *Betar Jagat* has made steady progress since its very inception. Not only has its circulation increased over the years, but its get-up, contents and programme coverage have systematically improved.

The *Betar Jagat* is viewed with respect among Bengali readers. It now gives details of programmes of all stations of the eastern zone and brief outlines of selected programmes of other zonal stations. In 1963, it commanded a circulation of 77,000.[6] The selection of articles, the reprint of broadcast material and notes on programmes have shown great enterprise and it was a matter of happiness that for some 2 or 3 years it even earned a profit. The latest reports, unfortunately, are that it has lost that position.

[4] For figures of circulation of *Akashvani* (English), *Akashvani* (Hindi) and *Awaz* (Urdu). I am grateful to the Akashvani Unit, Publications Unit, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Letter No. AD/IL/6 dated 29th November 1963).

[5] *Vide* letter No. Cal-BV-23(2)62-9 dated 17th May, 1963 of the Editor *Betar Jagat*.

[6] *Vide* letter No. Cal-BJ-5(1)63 Advt. dated 7th October 1963 of the Editor, the *Betar Jagat*.

The publication of the *Awaz* synchronised with the opening of the Delhi station on the 1st January, 1936. To begin with, it carried the programmes of the Delhi Station only, and later those of Bombay and Calcutta and still later of the Peshawar, Lahore and Lucknow stations. Now it publicises the programmes of all the Hindi stations, and the highlights of other zonal stations.

In the beginning the *Awaz* was published in two scripts: Persian and Devnagri. Its bilingual character was both unnecessary and uneconomical. It was therefore, decided to bifurcate the *Awaz* into two journals. The *Awaz* became the Urdu fortnightly of A.I.R., and a new fortnightly the *Sarang* emerged as the Hindi journal on 1st July, 1938. During 1938-39 *Awaz* was taken away from the control of the station Director, A.I.R., Delhi and placed under the Editor, *Indian Listener*. At present the circulation of the *Awaz* stands at a miserable 1,500. The circulation of the *Sarang*, now *Akashvani*, started increasing after 1947, because of the opening of a large number of radio stations in the Hindi speaking areas but has not gone beyond 4,200 till today. The Tamil journal *Vanoli* and the Telugu *Vani* made their appearance on 16th June, 1938, when the Madras station of A.I.R. went on the air. After only six issues of *Vani* were out, it was decided to stop its publication for want of demand. *Vani* restarted after about 11 years with the issue dated 22nd May, 1949,[7] has at present a circulation of 13,000.[8] The Vanoli's circulation is 37,000.[9]

The Gujarati radio journal *Nabhovani* was started in January 1947, by the Baroda Broadcasting Service.[10] It came under All India Radio when the Baroda Broadcasting Service passed into its hands on the 16th December, 1948. *Akashi* (Assamese) started publication on 22nd February, 1959 and has a paltry circulation of 1,400. It is interesting to note that in spite of the tremendous progress made by the regional languages in India, A.I.R. has not been able to start programme journals in all the regional languages.

[7] *Vide* Editor Vani's letter No. VL. 3 dated 14th May, 1963.

[8] *Vide* Editor Vani's letter No. VL-(4) dated 9th September 1963.

[9] *Vide* Editor Vanoli's letter No. VM-4 dated 28th November 1963.

[10] This is on the basis of Sub-Editor, Nabhovani's letter No. N/9/63 dated 23rd May, 1963.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

It is pertinent to raise a question here. Why is it that in 1963; when the number of radio licences has crossed the 2.5 million mark (which is more than seven times what it was in 1948), the circulation of *Akashvani* (English) has gone down to more than one fourth of what it was in 1948? How is it that the Hindi journal has a petty circulation of 4,800 copies, *Awaz* a mere 1,500, *Akashi* only 1,400, and *Nabhovani* less than 2,000? While *Vani* and *Vanoli* have fairly respectable circulation figures it is only *Betar Jagat* which has made the grade. In recent years its circulation has increased from 70,000 to 77,000.

There were some who believed that with the coming of independence, newspapers in the English language would be at death's door. The facts have turned out quite differently. Apart from the growth of the press in the Indian Language, the greatest increase by far in circulation has been registered in respect of English newspapers.

This has been established clearly, at least by now, that there is no conflict between the growth of the Indian language press and that of English. There is evidently considerable scope for the development of both. The reasons for this may be several. One, perhaps, is the All India perspective maintained by English newspapers among the reading public. In other words, whether in Cape Comorin or in Kashmir, the Indian reader, is interested in all-India and world news and he reads the English newspapers only because it caters to these needs in a way in which the Indian language newspapers have not succeeded in doing. Incidentally in an India torn by fissiparous tendencies, such an indication of unity and perspective are indeed heartening.

Coming back to the radio journals, the first point is the argument which tries to explain away the decline in the circulation of *Akashvani* (English) on the basis of certain general tendencies in Indian newspaper circulation falls to the ground. Considering the steep rise in the National and All-India programmes, one would have expected the opposite, quite apart from general tendencies in the country. In any case this consideration could not apply to such journals as *Akashvani* (Hindi), *Awaz* (Urdu) and the others.

The failure of A.I.R.'s programme journals can in my opinion

be attributed to two main causes. Firstly, *Akashvani* (English), and *Akashvani* (Hindi) which could have become all-India journals were transferred (along with *Awaz*) out of the control of A.I.R. and placed in 1955 under the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This step was taken by P. M. Lad, who unfortunately shared with Dr. Keskar, the fetish for centralisation. At one stroke A.I.R.'s journals were placed in the hands of another department and one which had shown no evidence of conspicuous competence. The policy followed by the Editor of this group of journals was dictated by the Director, Publications Division. If A.I.R. wanted anything of importance done, it must make a reference to the Ministry, who in due course would call for the views of the Director, Publications Division. At long last some uneasy compromise between conflicting views would be achieved, all at the expense of the journals. In such a situation, those responsible for bringing out these journals with only a remote interest in A.I.R. could hardly be expected to show the necessary amount of enterprise and quick responsiveness so vital in the broadcaster-listener relationship. It seems that the Ministry has at last woken up to the absurdity of this arrangement. The management of these journals has been handed back to A.I.R. with effect from the 1st April, 1964.

The second reason for the failure of the journals, is that A.I.R. has never troubled to place them on a sound footing. The department has been of the opinion that all that is required to bring out a journal is to appoint an Editor (usually an Assistant Editor) and a couple of proof-readers and clerks. There was no understanding of the requirements of advertising and circulation promotion which are paramount in the highly competitive world of today. A journal such as the *Betar Jagat* whose present circulation is 77,000 has been running on the strength of one Editor, and one Sub-editor. Between them they are responsible not only for all editorial matters but also for the entire business side of the journal—advertising, circulation and distribution. With such naive ideas in the heads of the high-ups, the wonder is not that the journals have failed but that they should have been running at all.

LISTENER RESEARCH

In these pages the question of listener research, or its absence, has come up several times. With so many new ventures launched since 1947, one should have thought that A.I.R. would have been keen to assess the impact which its programmes were making on listeners. Considerable programme funds have been shown in the accounts every year as having been spent on the "improvement of programme"—it is immaterial what areas of programme activity are covered under this category—but one has to search in vain to find figures pertaining to assessment of public opinion regarding A.I.R.'s programmes (or their improvement!).

Here a few questions must be squarely faced, and their answers sought honestly and objectively. Why listener research? Is it essential? What is the practice in other advanced countries? And what is the record of All India Radio in the field of listener research?

It is understandable that in countries where broadcasting is justified by what it propagates rather than by what the listeners may or may not like, the question of any kind of research into listeners reactions or preferences would not arise. In such countries all is well with broadcasting if propagation is complete and indoctrination successful. But this is broadcasting at its worst. However, it can be theoretically argued that even in totalitarian countries broadcasting authorities would be interested in assessing the results of their attempt to lead (or mislead) audiences in a particular direction. Even so this cannot be termed as straight-forward listener research as understood in the context of modern broadcasting in various enlightened States of the world.

At the other extreme stands American broadcasting, the entire superstructure of which is raised on the foundation of public preferences and listener research. There are a very large number of stations partly broadcasting independent programmes and partly relaying programmes in a chain of big networks. Influential advertisers spend huge amounts in advertising their products through sponsored programmes, whose main aim is to win over maximum audiences. In this context it becomes extremely important for advertisers to know the size of the audience for each programme and the constant attempt is to put out programmes which will attract the largest audiences. This type of broadcasting has its own de-

fects and perhaps educational broadcasts suffer considerably in this system. However, in America great strides have been made in developing various techniques for evaluating public opinion.

In 1929, Archibald Crossley, a statistician, used the "Recall" method interrogating listeners by getting them to remember the programmes which they had heard previously. By 1934, Clark-Hooper had developed the "coincidental" telephone-query system which became extremely popular throughout the United States. In 1942, A. C. Nielsen perfected an "Audimeter," a mechanical instrument, which recorded on a strip of paper the duration of time for which the receiving set was tuned. Door to door surveys and mail questionnaires were used by Dr. P. L. Whan and other types of studies were introduced by Dr. Frank Stanton and Dr. Paul Lazarsfeld. These are only a few of the techniques adopted in America for evaluating listeners reactions. The point worth noticing is that in spite of the considerable work done in this field in America, scholars feel that all these systems leave much to be desired and there is a constant effort towards improvement. In our country the tiniest achievement is proclaimed a landmark.[11]

A fine example of an audience research unit in public service broadcasting is to be found in the B.B.C. The B.B.C.'s audience research department sets about to perform two functions. Firstly, it gives Corporation and the programme planners an idea of their box office. (For example, how many listeners did last night's "Report from Britain" command?) To ensure this the B.B.C. employs interviewers to question some 2,800 people, a sample or cross-section of the public, and ask them what broadcasts they listened to the previous day. Within 24 hours, estimates of audiences for *every item broadcast* are computed and are given wide circulation within the B.B.C.

But the size of the audiences alone is not all that the B.B.C. is interested in. All those who tuned into a programme need not have liked it. The opinions of listeners are also of interest and these are obtained from a panel of 4,200 listeners. These listeners' panels are made up of persons representing all shades of opi-

[11] For detailed study of this subject, the reader may refer to *The American Radio* by Llewellyn White; published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.

nion, who have volunteered to answer questions about the broadcasts they listen to. Listeners send in their opinions weekly and it is impressed on them that they should report frankly only on such programmes which they would normally listen to. "Duty" listening is not required.

Apart from the two above mentioned surveys, which are carried out continuously and are of immediate concern to programme planners, the B.B.C. also conducts research which is of general interest to the community as a whole. For instance, there have been extensive surveys on the impact of television on leisure, on the attitudes, prejudices and stock of knowledge of particular groups in the country. These research projects bring the B.B.C. into touch with the universities and industry, which are concerned with similar sociological research problems.

The scope and functions of listener research are wider than finding out the total number of listeners tuning to various programmes, howsoever important this may in itself be. The following excerpt, from a report on a survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago analysed and interpreted by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Patricia L. Kendall, is revealing:

> Information on program preferences can be used to reveal not only the stability of radio tastes, but also differences between various sectors of the population. And the latter is perhaps the more interesting use . . . all social groups spend approximately the same amount of time listening to the radio, but when we examine what it is they actually listen to, marked group differences appear. Now there are two ways in which we can approach these differences. On the one hand, we can focus our attention on the social groups themselves. We can determine which program types are the particular favourites of men and which of women; we can find out what types have special appeal for educated listeners and which for uneducated; we can see whether city dwellers have different preferences from people living in rural areas, and so on. Or we can turn the question around and investigate the audiences for specific programs. Who listens to news broadcasts and who to quiz programs? Is the audience for classical music composed of different social groups

than the audience for mystery shows?[12]

Broadly speaking, we might say that public service broadcasting organizations have their own listener research sections while commercial organizations prefer to get their audience research conducted by outside agencies. The policy of commercial radio is explained by the fact that in selling time, audience figures compiled by an independent body would carry more weight with buyers than figures supplied by the radio service itself. Public service broadcasting organizations, on the other hand, prefer to organize their own listener research since they feel that an internal unit would understand their own special needs better. Listener research findings are given great publicity in America for obvious reasons. The B.B.C. keeps the findings of audience Research Department secret, and Lord Simon explains the reason in these words: "If the figures for each individual broadcast is quoted without a full knowledge of the circumstances such as what broadcasts come before and after, what is being broadcast at the time on the other programmes, what are the listening habits of the public at that particular time, it may be grossly misleading and most unfair to the artist."

In India, the problems of listener research are extremely complex. With a population of 400 million people, India has a number of cultural zones with marked characteristics. Fourteen major languages and about 200 dialects are spoken throughout the length and breadth of the country. Customs, habits, religious practices, local fairs and festivals, lend a colourful diversity to the social milieu prevailing in the country. Therefore, it is necessary for a planner of radio programmes, to have a good understanding of the social, cultural, religious and educational interests of listeners residing in the various zones. Added to this are the problems pertaining to the people residing in rural areas scattered in 6 lakh villages. For an organization, which is not run on a commercial basis but as a public utility, listener research may not be the final determining factor, but one must accept that programme planners will get lost in the wilderness of guess-work if listener research did not provide facts and figures to serve as lighthouses for programme

[12] *Radio Listening in America,* Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Patricia L. Kendall, published by Prentice-Hall Inc., New York, 1948, p. 23.

navigators.

To safeguard its own position, one should have thought that A.I.R. would be armed with audience research data to justify its programme policy. But as we have noticed no such data is available. This is a matter which should give one cause for thought, for as the Broadcasting Committee of 1951 in the U.K. said in its report, "broadcasting without a study of the audiences is dull dictation."

Till 1945, there was no listener research worth the name in A.I.R. except a none too accurate analysis of letters received from listeners. A Listener Research Unit was set up in All India Radio in 1946. A post of Assistant Director Listener Research was created at the Directorate-General and Listener Research Officers, with the same status and grade as Assistant Station Directors, were appointed in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Lucknow and Lahore (now in Pakistan). Apart from analysing listeners reactions reflected in their letters, these Officers were supposed to conduct surveys in respect of programmes at stations where they were posted and at other stations in their zone. A number of useful surveys were conducted in the early years of its existence. An attempt was made to find out the stratification and composition of listening groups, the educational level of various types of listeners, the average size of a listening family, etc., through a number of surveys based on random sampling. A.I.R. also attempted through field surveys to find out the size of listening audiences for various categories of programmes put out from various stations. Besides, A.I.R. claims to have conducted surveys with a view to finding the impact of broadcasting on the habits of the peoples, the influence of rural programmes on the agricultural processes, type of programmes which interest children and women, reactions to talks, plays, features, music and other programmes. But one does not know where all this data lies.

It will not be out of place to state that had A.I.R. been allowed to develop on normal lines, listener research activity would have played its proper function. However, it was nipped in the bud as soon as the Keskar regime got into stride. Instead of expanding listener research the authorities discouraged it. Fewer and fewer surveys were conducted. The authorities wanted to channel enquiries on unscientific lines which went against the grain of the

Listener Research Officers whose early work had been highly praised for its theoretical soundness. These Officers were soon reduced to doing odd jobs at the stations. Lacking all avenues of advancement and thoroughly frustrated, they looked for employment elsewhere and the lucky ones succeeded. In 1964, eighteen years after it was born, Listener Research in A.I.R. is almost at a standstill, if not defunct. Only three Listener Research Officers have yet to leave A.I.R., the other posts, if not already surrendered have been lying vacant for the past 6 years. There has been talk of reorganizing research in A.I.R. but nothing tangible has appeared so far, except that the vacant posts have been filled. One of the curious facts about Listener Research in A.I.R. is that it has been treated as a hush hush affair. All reports on surveys are treated as confidential documents and most members of the A.I.R. staff, including Station Directors, are quite unaware of the work undertaken, and its findings. A report on a survey conducted in Lucknow is said to contain valuable information on the listening habits of the people of Lucknow. Those responsible for programme planning should have taken note of some of the facts revealed in the reports. But, unfortunately, no one inside the organization took listener research seriously, with the result that while the general public has been kept in complete darkness about this side of A.I.R.'s activity.

In replying to a resolution in the Rajya Sabha for a Commission of Inquiry into A.I.R. with a view to turning it into a Public corporation, Dr. Keskar argued that if A.I.R. became a Corporation, the Members of Parliament would have less hold over it than they have at present. Since Dr. Keskar repeated this argument more than once, he evidently considered it important. I have dealt with this point in detail later in this book. Here I wish merely to draw attention to the fact that in a democratic set up the public are entitled to information about the working of departments where public money is spent. Parliament is the natural forum through which information is made available in debates on the budget estimates, and by means of questions, resolutions, etc. This information, however, comes sporadically and is limited in various ways. But the public are entitled to, and in fact should be given, more detailed information about the programme schemes launched by A.I.R. My contention is that Listener Research reports provide

important information which should be available to the public if there is to be informed appreciation and criticism of our radio organisation. The main findings of surveys should be released to the press for the benefit of the public while the *detailed* reports could be issued by the Publications Division as priced pamplets.

It may be argued that the publication of Listener Research data would sound the death-knell of public service broadcasting since the popularity of informative and educative programmes would always be far less than that of light entertainment which is the *forte* of commercial broadcasting. To say the least this argument is not at all convincing. When we accept broadcasting as a public service it follows that we are not interested in mere popularity. While some programmes of popular entertainment will be broadcast, others will necessarily command comparatively small audiences. This is axiomatic and goes without saying. What is important for a public service broadcasting organisation is to find out whether the programmes put out for limited audiences are holding their ground, gaining ground or losing it. If it is the last, then why? It seems to be commonly assumed that in competition between public service broadcasting and commercial services it is the commercial service which will always come out on top. This is far from the truth. The experience of Australia where commercial and public service broadcasting organizations have had to compete for a considerable period is instructive. Despite the attractions of jazz from the commercial service, the Australian Broadcasting Commission have found that audiences for classical music programmes have always been on the increase. Our own experience with the commercial service of Radio Ceylon has also been similar. Initially, no doubt, this service took away a number of listeners from A.I.R. But it is interesting to note that Ceylon has recently been putting out performances by some of the top artists of Indian Classical music. Moreover, in Ceylon itself, there has been considerable criticism of the commercial set-up. It was contended that, whereas A.I.R. had done a great deal for the furtherance of Indian culture and provided opportunities for Indian artists, Radio Ceylon had merely been patronising cheap foreign music.

Again the B.B.C. has clearly recognised that, while Audience Research data should be available to programme planners and the general public, programme policy should not be dictated by the

"box office." A clear and proper distinction is drawn within the Corporation between, conducting audience research *and the dissemination of its findings,* and the executive action on the issues with which these findings are concerned. The former is the field of the Department; the latter is not. The issues are rarely simple enough as to be resolved by reference to audience research alone. How often its findings must be considered in conjunction with other factors, such as critical professional judgments, the exercise of taste, and conformity to the Corporation's conception of its obligations under the Charter.[13]

[13] *B.B.C. Handbook,* 1955, p. 43.

CHAPTER V

WHY A BROADCASTING ENQUIRY COMMISSION?

Practically every aspect of broadcasting in India handled (or mishandled) by A.I.R. has been discussed in considerable details in the foregoing chapters. Whether this discussion amply justifies the institution of a commission of enquiry into the working of A.I.R. or not, is a question for the reader to answer. Perhaps, he is already convinced that things are not as they should be and, therefore, deserve to be looked into. Even if he is not, the question is worth further examination.

Since independence in 1947, the Government and the people of India have addressed themselves to the task of national development in various fields with varying degrees of success. We have had a spate of commissions, committees, enquiries, surveys, probes and explorations into various aspects of our national life. All this is symptomatic of a resurgent country. It symbolizes the will of a nation to develop in all fields. It represents the urge of the people to have better standards in various walks of life.

It is not the intention to present here a comprehensive list of commissions and committees that were set up in various fields, but simply to give an idea of the range of activities covered by such committees. In the sphere of education alone we have had a number of commissions. The Universities Commission with Dr. Radhakrishnan as Chairman made important recommendations in 1948 pertaining to University education. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) reported in August 1953. This was not all. Gandhiji had his own views about basic education. We had the Committee on Basic Education headed by Dr. Zakir Hussain (Nai Taleem). After education, let us take agriculture. The First Agricultural Labour Enquiry (1950-51) was followed by the second Agricultural Labour Enquiry (1956-57) for the study of unemployment, wages, income, expenditure, indebtedness and other related problems. By 1950, the number of commissions increased rapidly. The National Calendar Committee (1952) re-

commended in 1955 a calendar based on Saka era (finally adopted from 22nd March, 1957). 1953 saw the appointment of the Backward Classes Commission which reported its findings—(or lack of them) in 1955. The Government of India constituted the Prohibition Enquiry Committee in 1954 on the basis of which the Lok Sabha recommended on 31st March, 1956 that effective steps be taken to enforce prohibition throughout the country. In 1955, the Law Commission was constituted which submitted various suggestions for reforms in judicial administration. As the work regarding revision of statute law remained incomplete the Law Commission was reconstituted on 20th December, 1958. Then, there was the Official Language Commission, sanctified and ordained by our Constitution, to recommend steps for progressive use of Hindi for all or any of the official purposes of the Union. There have been scores of surveys in the field of Health, and the High Level Committee on Floods, The Finance Commission, the Pay Commission, etc.

The Necessity of a Commission

It may perhaps be asked: do these enquiry committees help? What has been their record? Are they a panacea of our ills? It will not be difficult to prove that, but for this type of critical probing, the country would have hardly made the progress it has. At the same time, it cannot be asserted that the country has derived as much benefit from these commissions as it should have. For this the fault generally lies with the Government. For example, if there is a lot of confusion still prevalent in the sphere of education, it is in spite of the various commissions that we have had. To take an instance, it is essential that there should be a well-directed policy flowing from a central authority for the entire country if secondary education is to be properly organised. But the Union Government failed to persuade the State governments in this regard. Obviously, do not have open minds and we persist in our fads. Talking of basic education, Prof. G. C. Chatterjee, Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education, says, "All responsible authorities, including the originator of the scheme, Dr. Zakir Hussain, have declared that basic education has been a complete failure. Yet the

powers insist that we carry on with this farce.[1] The classic example of rushing ahead with a reform which was neither necessary nor sufficiently useful so far as the people were concerned, was the adoption of a National Calendar based on the Saka era. Perhaps the most significant use of the calendar is in the news broadcasts put out by All India Radio. Take again the case of the Backward Classes Commission. Nothing much has come out of it since it failed to grapple with the realities of the problem.

In short, the appointment of a commission of enquiry will not *ipso facto* solve the problem it enquires into. The degree of success which a commission is likely to achieve will depend mainly on two things—first, on the calibre of its members; and secondly, on the ability of the Government to make use of the recommendations by initiating suitable action on them. The appointment of an enquiry commission is not a panacea in itself, but it is certainly the first step to a reform.

Some Precedents in Other Countries

Broadcasting in Britain is run by a corporation, under a charter issued by the Government. Every time the charter becomes renewable a commission of enquiry goes into various aspects of broadcasting activity and gives its recommendations on the basis of which the Government takes action. The following commissions have functioned in the past:

(*i*) Earl of Crawford's Committee (1925), renewal of charter for the period 1927-36.

(*ii*) Lord Ullswater's Committee (1935), renewal of charter for the period 1937-46.

(*iii*) There was no enquiry in 1945 but the Government issued a White Paper in 1946, and renewed the charter from 1947 to 1951, later extended upto June 30, 1952.

(*iv*) Lord Beveridge's Committee (1950) led to the grant of charter from July 1952 to June 1962.

(*v*) The latest enquiry committee (1960) was headed by Sir Harry Pilkington. It presented its report to the Postmaster-General on 5th June, 1962.

[1] *The Statesman*, issue dated August 15, 1963.

It may be stated that all major reforms or land-marks in the history of British broadcasting can be traced to various enquiry commissions. For example, a perusal of the latest report, the Pilkington Report, shows that the commission has 120 recommendations to make covering organizational matters pertaining to the B.B.C., Independent Television, existing and new services, technical matters and relay services.[2] This alone speaks of the usefulness of the report, even if some of the recommendations may not eventtually be accepted.

In America, the picture is different. Hundreds of stations are run by organizations under a licence, from the Federal Communications Commission, which is renewable after every three years. Broadcasting is commercial orientated and the emphasis is on such programmes as would be popular with the people irrespective of their educative bias. There is evidence of a growing feeling among some people in America that pressure should be brought to bear on the stations to give adequate time to educational, topical, controversial and other subjects. It would not be surprising if such pressure is exerted in favour of such a trend at the time of renewal of licences.

The basic point is that the enlightened section in the community must take a lead to mobilize public opinion in favour of a reform if it is to come about eventually.

Why No Broadcasting Commission So Far?

One may well ask why All India Radio has been a back number, and why nobody has bothered to find out the lines on which this national institution has developed during the long years of its existence. The apathy towards All India Radio is all the more intriguing and un-understandable when we find that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had been keen to explore the two other fields which concern it, the press and the films. In both these fields enquiries were conducted several years ago and some of the recommendations actively implemented. It seems strange indeed *that so far no enquiry committee has been appointed to assess the past and the present progress of All India Radio and the measures*

[2] *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting* 1960, published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London (1962), pp. 287-296.

needed for its proper development in future.

For this shocking indifference, the blame lies on the Government of India; Parliament; The Press; and the Listeners.

Hostility of the Government

The Government of India, to be exact, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, has never been enthusiastic about the idea of a critical probe into the working of All India Radio and during the last decade has been positively hostile to even a remote suggestion in this regard. The dawn of independence saw Sardar Patel at the helm of affairs in this Ministry. Unfortunately, his stewardship was cut short by his death in December 1949.

For a few years after him, Shri R. R. Diwakar took over the Ministry. This was a period of transition and nothing much happened by way of formulation of new policies. Dr. B. V. Keskar came into the scene when in 1952 he was appointed the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, in which post he remained for almost a decade. He seldom gave a hearing to those with whom he did not agree. He maintained autocratic control in areas in which he was personally interested. No argument need be adduced to convince the reader that the setting-up of a commission of enquiry is not intended either to condemn or to praise those who have been responsible for a particular activity. It is an attempt to assess past achievements and failings and to recommend a course of action for the future in the best interests of the country. Unfortunately, however, the Keskar regime always looked upon the appointment of a broadcasting commission as implied criticism of its policies and, therefore, resisted it stubbornly. Whenever the question was raised in Parliament, the Government and the Congress Party mobilised every resource to reject the demand.

It is possible that many of those who demand an enquiry committee are dissatisfied with the role played by broadcasting in the nation's life. But a large number of people demand an enquiry with an open mind. Their argument runs somewhat as follows:

"...A.I.R. is now over 30 years old. It is high time to make inventories and take stock ... radio stands head and shoulders

high above the other means of mass contact . . . an investigation into ways for the best utilisation of radio's potentialities is national urgency. . . . It is no use dwelling on our past achievements. The pertinent question is keeping in view the country's plans for development and the potentialities and importance of radio as a means of mass contact, we are going ahead with its progress at a pace commensurate with our resources."[3]

For its apathy and hostility towards an enquiry committee, the Congress Government must, therefore, accept its share of blame.

Dr. B. V. Keskar could have promoted the institution of an enquiry committee in the early years of his decade in office. After that as things went, the question did not arise. He was himself the originator of a number of ill-conceived plans and poorly executed schemes which any enquiry would have exposed, a number of irregularities would have come to light of which he was an active party, if not the prime chief promoter. His defeat in the General Elections in 1962, followed by another in 1963 in a bye-election, read with the fact that almost every other Minister in the Union Government got elected, will go down in the annals of broadcasting as a telling verdict on his performance as a Minister.

The hopes of an enquiry committee were faintly revived when Dr. Gopala Reddi became the Minister in 1962 with a cabinet rank, an honour which Dr. Keskar did not enjoy. Any such hopes were, however, soon dispelled for Dr. Reddi neither showed the inclination nor the drive to study the conditions that called for an enquiry. He made his exit on 30th August, 1962, along with five others who were relieved of their ministerial responsibilities to enable them to devote their energies to party work.

If there is a feeling in some quarters, that the Government of India is not interested in appointing any enquiry committee in broadcasting, it has itself largely to blame. The reason is not far to seek. As a result of such a committee's findings the Government, and consequently, the reigning party, may lose direct control over this powerful weapon of propaganda. But such an attitude is in the interest of neither democracy nor broadcasting. The Government has never cared to dispel such a feeling.

[3] *The Radio Times of India*, issue November 1960.

Parliament Does Not Grapple With The Issue

Though the primary responsibility for not constituting an enquiry commission to probe into the functioning of A.I.R. must be placed on the Government, Parliament must share the blame. A close study of the proceedings in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha beginning from 1947, particularly when they pertained to any aspect of broadcasting, would reveal that not once has the question of a broadcasting enquiry commission been adequately discussed by the members. The overall performance of the members of all the political parties in this regard has been disappointing. The members of Parliament are a privileged class and one might be treading on delicate ground. But the fact is that this question has never been discussed dispassionately, and in the proper perspective, with full data at the command of the members. The question has been raised now and then by members but invariably, it has been side-tracked by Government spokesmen trotting out irrelevancies. For example, the proceedings of the debates on the budget grants of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting make interesting reading. The arguments proceed somewhat on these lines:

(*a*) The Government, generally through the Minister, proudly states the number of new stations opened, new advisory committees appointed, new systems of auditions started, music and dramatic competitions held, attempts at producing light music items, on-the-spot recording of folk music in rural areas, increasing number of national programmes, etc.

(*b*) The spokesman of the Congress party haltingly add their words of tribute to the "excellent" work done by A.I.R., and shower their praises on national programmes of music, drama, features, and facts and figures are quoted emphasising "expansion" of activity in various directions.

(*c*) The opposition parties generally put forward their grouse that A.I.R. acts as a vehicle of propaganda for the Congress Party, particularly in news bulletins, which gives it an unfair advantage over them. Occasionally, the opposition has charged officials with showing favouritism in the booking of music and drama artists, and in the case of talkers, their selection is alleged to be confined

only to those who hold certain views, more or less, in conformity with those of the Congress party. Sometimes grievances of staff artists and regular staff have been voiced, which have been brushed aside by the Minister without stopping to examine the facts.

(*d*) A subject which has sometimes cut across party affiliations is what A.I.R. has or has not done for the propagation of Hindi.

But, alas, with broadcasting rotting in the unhealthy world of apathy, un-understanding and self-interest, issues which do not even touch the problem on the fringe receive more time and attention. Betterment of broadcasting does not consist in more stations, more advisory committees, more programmes; nor can its success be judged from what it is doing to propagate Hindi. These are all means to an end—the end is to inform, entertain and educate the millions of listener, to carry genius to the common man and help him become a good citizen, for only good citizens can run a democracy with success. Even now, it is for the Parliament to see that this medium is used to subserve the social and cultural needs of the country in such a way that it furthers the pace of development in all the other walks of our national life. Let conditions in the country decide the exact functions of the medium. Let it not be left to the choice of wrongheaded politicians with frothy concepts to decide what is good or bad for broadcasting.

Our Parliament is full of scores of talented members interested in diverse fields, such as social reforms, rural and agricultural problems, labour relations and industrial development; there are others who have made education, medicine, finance, foreign affairs, law, planning and a hundred other subjects as their special fields of study and research. But there are not even half a dozen members in Parliament who can be said to be devoted to the expert study of broadcasting. This is why broadcasting has never received an adequate hearing.

The Press: Need for Informed Criticism

When broadcasting was born more than forty years ago, and was still a baby, its elder brother, the press, did not take very kindly to it. The press feared that broadcasting, particularly the

broadcast of news bulletins, would progressively affect the circulation of newspapers. But it was soon discovered that the result was just the opposite. Broadcasting whetted peoples' appetite for knowledge and general awareness and lent an indirect hand in boosting up newspaper circulation in every country. The short-lived period of suspicion and hostility gave way to mutual understanding and complementary effort. Broadcasting had entered the second happy phase when it came to India.

The press in our country, unfortunately, has never taken a very keen interest in broadcasting and as such has not kept watch on its development. Now, happily, things are improving. Almost all daily newspapers (and some weeklies) have weekly radio columns devoted to critical appraisal of various types of broadcast programmes. A critic's job is not only to give us a periodical commentary on some outstanding programmes which give him pleasure, or excite his ire. He must address himself to bigger and broader problems which affect broadcasting as a whole, and must ensure that the basic principles of broadcasting and of democracy are not compromised.

But before we reach that elevated stage we have to pass through the process by which broadcasting is not only accepted but respected as a medium of informing, entertaining, and educating people. Very little attention has been paid by scholars and writers and by our press to this aspect of the problem. What are the potentialities of broadcasting? How much control should the Government exercise? What are its limitations? What is its past record? Has it developed on right lines? What so far has been its impact on the masses? What are the possible lines on which it can develop in future? These and scores of other such issues are crying out for consideration.

Talking of press criticism of A.I.R. it is necessary to draw attention to an unhealthy tendency which has been developing in the last few years. This is the effort to treat criticism within the department as a form of "disloyalty" and to use patronage to prevent critical reports from appearing in the press. Critics have been sedulously counted, and numerous bookings have been given to those who have written favourably, while those who have refused to play ball have been excluded from A.I.R.'s list of broadcasters. Moreover, the authorities have worked on the assumption that its

critics have obtained information from members of the staff, and a virtual witch-hunt has been taking place inside the portals of Broadcasting House. A stage has been reached in which programme staff refuse to discuss questions about broadcasting with outsiders, particularly with persons connected with the press. It is evident that a tendency of this kind is entirely undemocratic. While secrecy may be maintained on a restricted number of official matters, on the vast majority of questions the pros and cons must be debated in the open. In this context the following remarks of Sir Hugh Carlton Green, Director General of the B.B.C. are worth pondering:

> "I think people would think less in terms of rows if they understood better what critical discussion was—free critical discussion—and the amount of it that goes on in the B.B.C. People who work in the B.B.C. are encouraged to be openly critical about one another's work, and—being selected among other things for their intelligence and ability to be critical and for the strength of character to give and to take criticism—they don't need much encouraging. Naturally critical discussion at all working levels is repeated in out-of-hour talk at B.B.C. clubs and B.B.C. pubs. When outsiders hear it, and there is no reason why they should'nt, it some times gets blown up into a picture of an organization ravaged from top to bottom and left to right by a multitude of marauding robber barons."[4]

Listeners Must Play a Dynamic Role

If the Government, Parliament and the press is to be blamed for the present state of broadcasting in the country, can listeners be blameless? If they do not bother about radio programmes hardly any one else will do so for long. They must ensure that the food being served to them is wholesome, satisfying to their taste and appetite. Listening alone will not suffice though that is a "must." Listeners must organize themselves to make their point of view felt through concerted group action. In some countries, listeners' councils and associations have played a big role in making people

[4] This extract is taken from an interview with Hugh Carlton Green published in the *London Observer* of 22nd March, 1964.

aware of the short-coming of radio programmes and policies. The formation of an A.I.R.'s Listeners' Council is overdue!

What the Enquiry Commission Need Investigate

So far we have stressed the need for appointing an enquiry commission to examine all aspects of broadcasting in this country; and we have considered the reasons which have stood in the way of such an enquiry. We now turn to a more important question. Assuming that the Government of India agrees to constitute such an enquiry commission, what problems should it examine! Obviously a detailed answer is not possible. Scores of problems will unfold themselves as the enquiry proceeds, hundreds of listeners will come forward and provide valuable data and many scholars will tender their expert advice. In the pages that follow we shall confine ourselves to a discussion of a few of the important problems to which an enquiry commission must address itself.

IS THE SYSTEM ROOTED IN THE SOIL?

The first question which any enquiry commission will have to consider carefully is whether the present system of broadcasting in this country is in consonance with the concept of Indian parliamentary democracy. Is it in tune with Indian life and does it get its sustenance from the soil? To answer this question we must review broadly the different systems in various countries. To quote the words of Charles Siepman: "At one end of the scale are countries like Russia and other totalitarian states where radio is under the complete control of government. There are democratic countries also like Denmark, where state control obtains. Sweden exemplifies a democratic country where government participates in, but does not control, the operation of a radio monopoly, with which business interests are also associated. Britain and France illustrate countries where radio is monopolistic, but where government has only a reserve power; that is, it does not normally concern itself either with the overall determination of policy or with day-to-day operations. We in America are at the other end of the scale where private enterprise operates competitively within a loose framework of governmental regulation. Canada, Australia, and New

Zealand represent countries where a public corporation operates together with commercial radio as we know it in America."[5]

As we all know broadcasting was started in India by a private company but, as it went into liquidation due to financial stringency, was taken over by the government after a few years. It suited the British Government and the then Government of India to run it as a "government monopoly." The British Government and the Government of India were motivated by self-interest; service of the people was a by-product. Broadcasting was a medium through which the government could carry on its propaganda. Everything else was secondary. Are we to continue with this government monopoly? Is it in keeping with the spirit of our democratic constitution? Frankly speaking, the system of broadcasting in India is more akin to the one prevalent in totalitarian countries than to the one either in Britain or U.S.A. This alone provides food for thought. The basic factor which determines the nature of a system is how far the government keeps control over it. Dr. Keskar let the cat out of the bag when the matter came up through a resolution in the Rajya Sabha in February 1960. He contended that commissions of enquiry into the B.B.C. were held periodically, especially at the time of the renewal of the charter because the British Parliament had no hold on the B.B.C. Periodic enquiries were, therefore, necessary. But in our country where the affairs of A.I.R. were always open to enquiry and inspection by the Parliament, no enquiry commission was needed. There is a factual error so far as to B.B.C. is concerned. For example, in the case of the B.B.C. the audited accounts of the B.B.C. together with a report on its work are placed before Parliament each year and it is open to members to make whatever enquiries they like on any aspect of the working of the Corporation through the Postmaster-General. This is part of the charter of the B.B.C. and is specifically provided for. It is evident that the argument confuses two issues. Day-to-day parliamentary control is one thing, and an assessment in broad terms with a formulation of policies and objectives is quite another. According to Dr. Keskar's argument there would have been no need for any of the commissions of enquiry actually set up by the government!

[5] *Radio, Television and Society*, Charles A. Siepman, Oxford University Press, New York (1950), p. 114.

Should It Be a Government Department or a Corporation?

Should broadcasting continue to be run as a government department or should a public corporation be entrusted with the task? This is an important question which needs most thorough understanding and a careful solution.

The Government's fear of the idea of setting up A.I.R. as a corporation is not without foundation. When A.I.R. was formed it was considered that like the B.B.C. A.I.R. would become a corporation. It is significant that even today entrants to service are required to sign a declaration that they will be prepared to serve under a corporation should government decide to convert A.I.R. into one. This, coupled with the criticism of all opposition parties that A.I.R. has been used as an instrument of propaganda by the party in power, has led to the fear that a commission of enquiry would result in the loss of government control. The arguments put forward against the idea of a corporation are, however, as we shall see, as thin as those used against the proposal to set up an enquiry commission. Here again, it would be naive to suppose that the mere setting-up of a corporation would solve A.I.R.'s problems.

Now that a large number of corporations have been working in India for the past few years, the country has been able to see for itself how efficient they have been. It is, of course, too early to judge, but to all appearances the two main advantages of corporations have not so far been realized. The LIC affair showed that the corporation was not free of government interference, and that the chief executives were taking orders from the Minister like any government department. In the case of Hindustan Steel it has been admitted that a huge secretariat (with all the trappings of government) has grown up in Calcutta leaving little initiative in the hands of the steel producing units. However, these may represent extreme cases, and the general run of corporations may not be as bad as either.

With more time and experience Indian corporations are likely to develop an individuality of their own. A good deal will no doubt depend on the men chosen to head them. If the present policy of conveniently providing for ICS men on the verge of retirement continues, the chances are that they will carry with them the old procedures of red tape, excess caution and evasion of

responsibility. In that case, the prospects for an Indian Broadcasting Corporation are far from bright. We have to wait and see what is in store for us.

It has been argued on several occasions that if A.I.R. is turned into a corporation, Parliament would cease to have any hold on its working. As we have already seen this is quite untrue of the B.B.C. With so many corporations in our own country, we need not go to the B.B.C. to see that this contention is false. The work of corporations has come in for considerable questioning in Parliament, and the Minister concerned has had to answer criticisms in much the same way as he would for a regular department. As an example, we would refer to the debate in the Lok Sabha in May 1960, on the working of the Hindustan Steel.

It has been contended that A.I.R. is not economically self-sufficient: its expenditure exceeds its income, and on this account the evil day of turning it into a corporation is sought to be put off. An abstract of the financial position as printed in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's Report for 1961-62 shows a deficit of approximately one crore and some lakhs. The figures, however, do not include the customs revenue accruing to government on the import of radio receivers and spare parts. If this amount is also taken into consideration, A.I.R. would make a slight profit of about 35 lakhs. Stating the position for the year 1962-63, Mr. M. R. Masani speaking in the Lok Sabha on the 18th March, 1964, said that the budget figures for A.I.R. showed an expenditure of rupees 5.76 crores and income from licences as rupees 4.89 crores. If customs duty of 1.47 crores were taken into account, the loss of rupees 87 lakhs would be turned into a profit of 60 lakhs. It will thus be seen that there is no gap between revenue and expenditure. In Britain, the government pays a subvention to the Corporation for running the External Services. On this pattern, the government could be expected to compensate A.I.R. to the tune of several lakhs which are being spent on the External Services Division. Moreover, some further payments to A.I.R. would be justified on account of programme time set aside for government publicity. All in all, the financial dependence of A.I.R. on the government is not at all a hurdle as it is made out to be.

It must be recognised, however, that the argument in terms of

economics is basically unsound. For, as a *public service* A.I.R. has a right to be financed from public funds. When the government decided to nationalize air transport in India, the crux of the argument was that air transport was a public service which was not being developed in the national interest, because commercial companies were interested only in those routes which paid high dividends. Both IAC and Air-India suffered losses for several years after nationalization. The Government provides grants to universities, totalling several crore rupees a year though universities are not government departments, and keeping the universities free of government interference is an honoured practice in our country. Why then is it being argued that a public service such as broadcasting should be independent only if it is economically self-sufficient? It is quite unreasonable to contend that if the government pays for broadcasting it must do so on the condition that A.I.R. remains under its direct control. Such limited horizons were characteristic of the Keskar regime when personal domination blighted the fair prospect of Indian broadcasting. Widely different is the message of Gandhiji inscribed over the portals of Broadcasting House:

"I DO NOT WANT MY HOUSE TO BE WALLED ON ALL SIDES AND MY WINDOWS STUFFED. I WANT THE CULTURE OF ALL LANDS TO BE BLOWN ABOUT MY HOUSE AS FREELY AS POSSIBLE BUT I REFUSE TO BE BLOWN OFF MY FEET BY ANY OF THEM. MINE IS NOT A RELIGION OF THE PRISON HOUSE. IT HAS ROOM FOR THE LEAST AMONG GOD'S CREATIONS. BUT IT IS PROOF AGAINST INSOLENT PRIDE OF RACE, RELIGION OR COLOUR."

SHOULD THERE BE COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING?

One problem which has sometimes been discussed in the press and the Parliament is whether commercial broadcasts should be permitted over A.I.R. or not. Commercial broadcasts can be of two types. Those in which the advertiser has full control over the contents of the programme and are generally called "sponsored programmes"; and those which are fully within the control of the broadcasting authority, but the advertiser's name is broadcast in the beginning and at the end of the programme and often during

the programme. This is purely and simply "broadcast advertisement."

As early as 1952, Mr. S. K. Patil had urged the government seriously to consider the desirability of introducing commercial broadcasting in the country. It has been argued by some that commercial broadcasts would bring in revenue which can be utilised for A.I.R.'s developmental activities. A.I.R., it has been further stressed, would not be able to make enough money from licence fees keeping in view the present rate of growth of licences. Business and industrial interests have advocated that there should be a powerful transmitter to carry commercial broadcasts to neighbouring countries to promote export. Such a transmitter will "(*a*) pay for its costs, (*b*) earn additional income both in Indian currency as well as in foreign exchange, and (*c*) save the Indian Exporter from spending a major part of foreign exchange earnings on the publicity of the products abroad he wishes to sell."[0]

Things are, however, not as simple as that. How many countries can one transmitter serve? There are only a few hours when listening is convenient. What are our export possibilities in neighbouring countries? How shall we contact far off countries where export markets exist, such as Africa, but where language difficulties come in the way? No country has successfully boosted up exports on the strength of specially directed broadcasts.

In actual practice when one talks of commercial broadcasts, one refers to home broadcasts. The British and American broadcasting systems, almost since their birth, have stood in this respect in opposite camps. The B.B.C., as conceived by Reith, has always felt that it has a mission and a responsibility to standards set by itself for its listeners. On the other hand, "the radio industry in America has done its best to promote the theory that programmes should be broadcast in rough proportion to their popularity." American broadcasting, being commercial, broadcasts programmes with the object of capturing the maximum number of listeners. Advertisers pay most for the most popular items which quite often are of cheap type.

Though the people in America have largely accepted these commercial advertisements as part of the fare, some of the comments mentioned below are also often heard:

[0] *The Radio Times of India*, issue dated October 1962, p. 8.

"Commercials spoil the program by interrupting it."
"Commercials are boring and repetitious."
"Commercials claim too much for the product."
"Commercials are often in bad taste."
"Commercials are noisy and distracting."[7]

Let us not take sides at this stage. What emerges from the above observations is that the subject is too important to be decided by any one according to his likes or dislikes.

ARE THE PROGRAMME POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SOUND?

Nobody would suggest that routine programme matters and their execution should be the subject matter of an enquiry, but major policies of a basic nature must be examined and scrutinised. Let us take, for example, the language policy of A.I.R. For years together, Dr. Keskar followed a certain policy. After his defeat in the General Elections in 1962, Dr. Reddi, the new Minister, embarked upon a different policy against which there was considerable protest from the protagonists of Hindi. The basic question arises: how is any person, however highly placed he may be, competent to take final decisions in matters of such national importance purely on his personal judgment? These things have happened in A.I.R. A policy which is followed by one Minister for years is declared faulty by the succeeding Minister within a few days of his taking over.

There are scores of such illustrations. Dr. Keskar, one fine morning, ordered: more classical music, ban film music, produce A.I.R.'s own light music, etc., and that became law. Another Minister took charge and said all this was to be put aside. There should be more of light music, not so much stress on classical music, Hindi should be simplified, and so on and so forth; orders poured out in scores obliterating all previous orders on various subjects.

To meet the challenge of film music from Radio Ceylon, the Vividh Bharati Service was inaugurated. It has met with some success, but why has the Vividh Bharati so far failed to develop

[7] *Radio Listening in America*, Report of a survey conducted by The National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago; analyzed and interpreted by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Patricia L. Kendall. Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. New York (1948), p. 65.

its own personality? It is largely due to the fact that the basic philosophy behind this service was not entirely thought out in detail.

Take again our external broadcasts. Many of the countries, particularly in Africa, have so far remained completely uncared for and uncatered for. There are others where our programmes are not received properly. On what lines should the external services be developed? There are many problems which need to be looked into as far as our external services are concerned. It is not possible here to go into the details of many programme matters but the point is that important policy matters must be decided after proper examination and careful thought; and then the execution of these policies should be left to professional programme men. That there is no clarity even with regard to some minor matters will be illustrated by an example which is almost ludicrous. In December 1947, prior to the opening of the Patna Station on 26th January, 1948, the Station Director, who was a talented person otherwise, called a meeting of the programme officers and said: "I want one programme everyday for children; one programme everyday for women; one programme everyday for the commonman; one dramatic programme everyday; one orchestral composition everyday. Please put up your plans." The staff was shocked and tried to reason with him that this was much beyond their human and financial resources. But he remained adamant, and the programmes were actually broadcast even if it were at the cost of quality. After his transfer, the succeeding officers steadily reduced these programmes. One wondered how the Directorate-General permitted this sort of planning, how they imagined that a new station could do what even the bigger zonal stations like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi could not achieve after years of experience and considerable resources at their disposal. The fact was that there was no co-ordination between the stations and the Directorate-General and there were no well-laid out policies. We must be clear as to what we want, what our listeners want, what we feel they should want, how the balance is to be struck, what place have controversy plays, and what the case for serious broadcasting in India is?[8] There are scores of problems awaiting study and solution.

[8] This problem is discussed by N. L. Chawla in his article "Case for Serious Broadcasting in India" in the *Radio Times of India*, issue February 1960.

HOW GOOD IS A.I.R. AS AN EMPLOYER?

One of the things that any enquiry commission would have to go into is the types of evil which are habitually associated with a monopoly. When Lord Beveridge commenced his enquiry he is reported to have had a considerable bias against the B.B.C. Witnesses appearing before him often felt like prisoners in the dock. He was determined to go to the bottom of the evils of complacency, inefficiency and favouritism which, he believed, were the inevitable faults of monopoly.

In a country like India where employment opportunities in the cultural field are extremely limited, it is important that A.I.R. should set for itself very high standards as an employer. Jobs must be given on the basis of merit alone; efficiency, imaginative enterprise and integrity must be valued. Opportunities for advancement must be provided and conditions must be created in which employees can be happy and contented and can put in their best.

Enough has been said earlier in this book to show that A.I.R.'s record on these counts is poor indeed. The case of the Programme Executives is a case in point. Scores of them have not moved up even one rung in the official ladder in over 15 years of service. The production cadre seems to have been on the spoil system. People such as Ravi Shankar have left A.I.R. in disgust. While a host of sycophants have been paid retainer fees for no return at all, scores of lesser known but talented and honest producers have suddenly found their contracts terminated, or else, placed in such conditions that no alternative was left except to resign. There are stories of personal vendettas against musicians and writers who failed to oblige or who happened to belong to the wrong school. Worst of all is the case of the staff artists who have earned neither wealth nor prestige nor even a pension for their old age. To them have fallen the crumbs from the bureaucrats' tables and on these they have been expected to build their happiness.

Lord Beveridge tells us that during the enquiry they heard of three cases of alleged unjust treatment to former employees. Two cases were easily disposed of. But in the single remaining case the commission went into every aspect of the matter. What were the real circumstances in which the employees had to work? Who were his superiors? What were their qualifications, abilities and

temperament? And so on and so forth. In the end the commission felt that in merely terminating his contract the B.B.C. had treated the complainant leniently. Some such passion for getting to the bottom of things will be required on the part of the commission of enquiry into Indian broadcasting, if it is to do its work with any thoroughness.

EPILOGUE

AIR AND THE EMERGENCY

The Chinese invasion fell on us like an avalanche, sudden and swift, sweeping everthing before it. The unilateral cease-fire, within a month of the invasion, when the rich plains of Assam lay unprotected before the invader, caused relief and bewilderment. With the lapse of time, the relief seems almost to have become a habit, and only the Government ordinances on paper are there to remind us that danger still lurks behind the snowclad heights of the Himalayas. The other reminder of the Chinese menace was the A.I.R. programme "India and the Dragon"* which went on till people referred to it as "India and the Dragon." With Indian prisoners of war long back home, the mists of time are obscuring the rout in NEFA which shook our national prestige to its foundations, and temporarily knocked us out of the make-believe world of the previous fifteen years. As the lull continues, defeats will start turning into victories on government files, and the dust of controversy and live interest which surrounded A.I.R. in those fateful months will settle into the crust of indifference. The signs are indeed ominous of A.I.R. having already been pushed back into its old place as an unimportant little wheel in the ever-growing government machine.

The pertinent question that we have to ask is how did A.I.R. react to the emergency? How far was it able to disseminate news, counter Chinese propaganda and shape public opinion to meet the aggression. Luckily for us, these questions have been dealt with in two articles which appeared in the *Hindustan Times* in its issues of the 7th and 10th February, 1963. The first article, appearing under the caption "A Point of View" written by Chanchal Sarkar, castigates A.I.R. on several counts for failing to rise to the occasion. The second article entitled "Another Point of View" is amusingly enough attributed to "A Listener" but its contents,

* "India and the Dragon" was abandoned with effect from the 5th January, 1964 when a new programme "Facus" took the air. This deals with current affairs in general.

which include extracts from letters received at A.I.R. stations, show clearly the hand of a government official. It is indeed ironic that this little slip should have given away the source of this contrived apology for A.I.R. supposedly written by "A Listener" outraged by Sarkar's criticism. However, between them, these two articles cover the ground of what can be said in criticism and in favour of A.I.R.'s role in the emergency. Briefly, Sarkar's thesis is as follows:

A.I.R., as the most important publicity wing of the government, was completely in the dark regarding policy on the border issue. A.I.R. asked for guidance but received none and, therefore, continued with its usual cultural pattern including the Sangeet Sammelan, while the aggression started and developed. Newspaper reporters and foreign correspondents were sending out despatches from Tezpur, but the national broadcasting service awaited the setting-up of a press camp before its correspondent arrived in Assam. A.I.R. was always late with the news. It was still reporting the evacuation of Tezpur when people were returning to that city. This caused confusion and drove people to listen to Peking and foreign stations. When A.I.R. did start its political commentaries and propaganda programmes, it did so with more vigour than sense. Its commentaries were based on emotion and sentiment and covered too much time at peak listening hours. The External Services had almost ceased to function and reproduced Home Service broadcasts without reference to the special needs of target areas. A.I.R. was being dictated to by other departments of the government and had no voice in its own affairs. And finally, A.I.R.'s transmitters were weak and ineffective while Peking was flooding India and the world with its propaganda carried on a battery of powerful transmitters including one 1,000 Kw medium-wave transmitter. Concluding, Sarkar acknowledged the enormous growth in A.I.R.'s listening and welcomed the reappearance of political comment by well-known journalists and others in the following words:

> "But all is not dark. Broadcasting has notched up some gains. Since the Chinese incursion more people listen to A.I.R. than ever before: this listening must be retained. Faced by the realities of the Emergency a good bit of pettifogging 'censorship'

(that is too serious a word) has disappeared and people are, to a great extent, being allowed their say. The rudiments of a political broadcasting unit seem to have come willy-nilly into existence. If this is allowed to grow and to have firm co-ordination with policy making bodies and if direction is not left entirely to bureaucrats with no special knowledge of a powerful and creative medium, then Indian broadcasting may yet wake up from its long sleep."[1]

In the government rejoinder it was contended that A.I.R. could not act till a state of emergency was declared in the country! This occurred on 26th October, four days after Pandit Nehru's broadcast. And, incidentally, a point which is not accounted for at all, is that A.I.R.'s special bulletins and commentaries did not start till 1st November. Some important items such as "India and the Dragon" had to wait for another ten days before they were put on the air. A.I.R. claims that its news bulletins, commentaries and patriotic songs have been tremendously popular and commanded listening to a degree unprecedented in A.I.R.'s history. A survey carried out by the Department of Sociology of Patna University showed that more people were listening to A.I.R. than to any other station, including commercial stations. The press, particularly the regional language newspapers, were regularly printing A.I.R.'s scripts such as *Topic for Today, India and the Dragon,* etc. This showed that A.I.R. had filled a void.

For delay in reporting defeats on the front, A.I.R. argued that this was necessary in the interests of the security of our troops. How A.I.R.'s silence ensured the security of Indian troops is not clear, especially when news of Chinese victories was being given out by Peking and other foreign stations. In fact, it is believed that Indian army officers cut off in the Lohit Valley listened to foreign stations to keep track of what was happening to their comrades in Tawang and Bomdila. If anything, this information was useful to them.

The External Services, the government apology claimed, retained its separate existence though there was greater sharing of programmes with the Home Services. It did not attempt to explain

[1] Incidentally, Sarkar, who is an excellent broadcaster, has never been booked by A.I.R. since the appearance of this article.

the fact that the anti-Chinese slant of "India and the Dragon" was antagonizing the Chinese populations in South East Asian countries. Further, it was claimed, that since listeners did not sit glued to the radio set for several hours at a stretch there was nothing wrong in propaganda programmes following each other at peak listening hours. These programmes were heard by different sets of people.

It will be seen that these two pictures supplement each other at a few points though the overall pictures of A.I.R. presented by them vary considerably. There is no gainsaying the fact that A.I.R. played a most vital role in informing and moulding public opinion. But it is also a fact that its initiative and freedom of movement were hampered by its position as a minor cog in the government machine. Moreover, there was poverty of leadership and an absence of initiative and imagination. A bold and imaginative Director-General would have changed the complexion of A.I.R.'s programmes on the very morning after the Prime Minister's broadcast of the 22nd October, instead of waiting a week or more. An A.I.R. correspondent, backed up with the entire resources of the Gauhati station, could have been at Tezpur before the Press Information Bureau woke up to what had happened. The content and tone of A.I.R.'s emergency programmes would have been constantly changing to suit the needs of the country. Before one programme got stale, a new one would have been on the air. Not one of these things happened. At each stage A.I.R. waited for orders! The sorry neglect of A.I.R. by the government in the matter of transmitters was mercilessly shown up during the emergency. While Peking filled the other with its strident political propaganda, A.I.R.'s voice in its own country was feeble and intermittent.

Will government profit from experience and give A.I.R. the importance and freedom to function which a national broadcasting organization deserves? Only the future will tell. Government action in its turn, will depend on the people and their awareness of the role which a responsible and sensitive broadcasting organization could play in the country's national life.

A.I.R.—V.O.A. DEAL

In discussing the emergency, it is necessary to say a word about

the A.I.R.-V.O.A. deal, news of which burst upon the public early in July 1963. This concerned the setting-up of a 1,000 Kilowatt medium-wave transmitter in Calcutta by the Voice of America. The terms of the agreement as given in the *Times of India* of the 26th July, were on these lines: The U.S. government undertook to sell to the government of India for one rupee a 1,000 Kw medium-wave transmitter, together with primary and secondary power distribution system, antenna an earth system, emergency power supply equipment and various other ancillary equipment for studios and receiving centre. The price of rupee one was to include the cost of transportation.

The VOA agreed to pay A.I.R. an annual fee of rupee one for five years for relaying its broadcasts to South East Asia for 3 hours daily during the optimum listening period. The transmitter and receiving centre would be manned by A.I.R. personnel, but the VOA would appoint a liaison officer in Delhi who would be attached to the U.S. Embassy.

After 5 years the agreement could be renewed on mutually acceptable terms; alternatively, the U.S. government would be able to buy back the transmitter and ancillary equipment for one rupee.

The VOA would be entitled to relay to South East Asia its programmes for seven countries in their languages. The countries are Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

A.I.R. could use the transmitter for home or external services, except that programmes in Urdu and Bengali could not be broadcast in the Home Service during the non-optimum period, and Hindi programmes could not be radiated during her share of the optimum period. This was evidently intended to safe-guard the interests of Pakistan.

The optimum period was defined as 6 hours—between 4 and 6 A.M. IST and between 6 and 10 P.M. IST.

The amazing thing about this far-reaching agreement was that though it was not a secret document, its terms and conditions were never officially released to the press. A brief inconspicuous official release merely mentioned that an agreement for a mega-watt transmitter had been arrived at, which most people, including newspapermen failed to notice. It was not till the *Statesman* commented on it editorially in its issue of the 11th July, 1963, that the coun-

try woke up to the importance of the agreement which for some unknown reasons, the senior officials of A.I.R. and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry were trying to smuggle into the country. The furore that followed was something unprecedented in the history of broadcasting. While the Prime Minister accepted responsibility for the whole affair, the agreement having been discussed with him in general terms, the fact emerged that the cabinet had never been consulted and was completely in the dark.

Shri Gopala Reddi, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, is reported to have said that he was "happy to be out of it" suggesting thereby that the agreement was signed without his knowledge. How he could divest himself of responsibility is not easily understood. The only person in the government who spoke up in defence of the agreement was the Deputy Minister, Mr. Sham Nath and he further complicated the situation by failing to notice the distinction between Chinese personnel drawn from Hongkong and Taiwan (to man A.I.R.'s Chinese services)! The utter inaptitude shown in the handling of this affair by those who head A.I.R. and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry speaks volumes of their intellectual calibre, tact and understanding of public relations. However much one way cow down official subordinates through bluster, threats and a general atmosphere of hush-hush, the public at large are fundamentally democratic and cannot be pushed into situations through bluff and concealment. This is the major lesson which emerges from the abortive A.I.R.-VOA deal.

All responsible people in the country have deeply regretted the creation of a situation which has done no good to any one. The fact is that, due to the neglect of the Keskar regime and the neglect of others, before and after, the External Services of A.I.R. simply did not have enough resources in transmitters to meet the propaganda menace of Peking. The sins of a decade and a half cannot, however, be wiped out without payment of toll. A.I.R. surely needs a 1,000 Kw medium-wave transmitter—not one but a number of them—and a transmitter of this kind will take at least two years in construction and erection before it goes on the A.I.R. The U.S. Government terms may not have been entirely to our liking in some respects; But the chief question that arises is, what has government done to obtain a 1,000 Kw transmitter from any other source? More than a year after the VOA deal fell through,

definite orders have yet to be placed for such a transmitter.

The U.S. Government's reluctance to alter the clauses of the agreement after its signature is understandable. The point is, what did the Indian delegation do during the negotiations to obtain better terms?

The press reports spoke of a cabinet enquiry into the whole affair. It remains doubtful whether any serious probe was ever, or could be, made into the conduct of the negotiations. It appeared from the newspapers that the U.S. Government had approached no less than 6 other countries in S.E. Asia, several of them closely committed to the U.S. through aid and defence pacts. Not one of them had agreed to receive the transmitter. It must have come as a pleasant shock to the U.S. negotiators that India, committed to non-alignment and a recipient of aid from the eastern bloc, was prepared to swallow the terms hook line and sinker! Mindful of their own self-interest as the U.S. Government officials are, India could have obtained the transmitters on terms more acceptable to the public and in broad consonance with her general policies. Obtaining the transmitters without obligation for relays would have involved hard bargaining. Something should also have been done about two aspects of the terms of the agreement which appear to be particularly unrealistic. After the initial five years, who is the owner of the transmitter? There is no clear answer. The U.S. Government can sign a fresh agreement, or we are told, can buy back the transmitter for the token price of one rupee. What then is the net gain to us for relaying U.S. programmes? India might have agreed to paying the price of relaying VOA programmes for five years (excluding English and the Indian languages) provided we could call the transmitter our own and use it as we chose after that period. The other regrettable aspect of the terms was the restrictions on India's use of the transmitter. If we were indeed "buying" the transmitter, how could restrictions on our use of it be justified?

With a clarity about the issues, with honesty and openness to see the other main's point of view without giving away one's own, India and the U.S. might have come to a mutually beneficial agreement. Unfortunately, these mental and moral qualities could hardly be expected from the brass hats of A.I.R. and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry!

POSTSCRIPT

THE PASSING OF NEHRU

This book was already in the press when Nehru passed away Although he had never been his old self since the stroke he suffered at Bhuvaneshwar Session of the Congress in January, 1964, the end was sudden and unexpected. Only a few days before his death he had addressed a press conference where he had brushed aside a question about the appointment of a deputy with the remark "My life is not ending so very soon."

The outcry against AIR's handling of the news of Nehru's passing away was something unprecedented in the annals of broadcasting. Criticism of AIR for delay in informing the public, for the amateurish running commentaries on the funeral procession and for the unimaginative programmes presented during the period of mourning soon turned to more basic issues. While several newspapers made direct allegations of corruption and nepotism against the Director General, others criticized the general deterioration of programmes which they attributed to a variety of factors. The unique feature of the criticism was that it was voiced in all the sections of the press all over the country. Nevertheless one was happy to find widespread realization of the need for a full scale inquiry into Indian Broadcasting which is the *leit-motif* of my thesis on Broadcasting in India.

Let us, however, see how AIR dealt with the passing away of Nehru. It is known that Jawaharlal Nehru first complained of some discomfort while he was shaving at about 6 o'Clock in the morning. He suffered a heart attack and lost consciousness never to recover it again. The doctors arrived at about 6.30 A.M. There was no mention of the late Prime Minister's condition in the morning news bulletins of AIR although these are on the air one after the other till 9 A.M. The News Service Division seems to have woken up to the fact that the Prime Minister was lying seriously ill only at 11 A.M. when an announcement to this effect had already been made in both houses of Parliament. While this was scandalous; for those who know the working of AIR's Reporting Unit it

was not very surprising. As has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, AIR's correspondents are not on the look out for *news*. They follow a stereotyped round by visiting government offices, parliament etc. and pick up what is served to them. This is exactly what they did on the morning of the 27th May.

What happened between 11 A.M. and 2.25 P.M. or there about when the Delhi Station announced the death of Nehru is an amazing story of inaction and incompetence. The Director General was informed by a Senior Officer of the News Services Division regarding the announcement made in Parliament. One would imagine that the Director General would summon the top executives of his staff to inform them of the situation, evolve an over-all plan to prepare for all eventualities and assign to each a particular responsibility. Thereafter the Director General himself or the Deputy Director General Incharge of Programmes should have rushed to the Prime Minister's House where the President and members of the cabinet had assembled. He would thus be available for consultation and issue of orders on the spot. But no such thing happened. Neither the Director General not his deputy, nor even the Director of News was sent to the Prime Minister's House. Some junior official was assigned this task. He got no further than the gates of the house! Ultimately AIR's source of news that Jawaharlal Nehru was no more than a creed message from the Press Trust of India.

The Director General, according to all accounts, did not call a meeting of his staff. He confided his secret to the Deputy Director General Programmes and it seems that he too was not prepared to share his confidence with the others. At 11.30 A.M. the Prime Minister's condition was said to be desperate! But at 12 noon when the Delhi station commenced its midday transmission nothing was done to tell the people of India that he was lying between life and death. Neither the Director General nor his Deputy thought of forewarning the stations of AIR to be prepared for eventualities. Most stations close down at 2 in the afternoon and this is what actually happened. So when the news of Nehru's death was announced, most of the stations had gone off the air—as usual!

In the announcement of the news there was further bungling. At about 2.15 P.M. the Delhi stations interrupted its normal programmes and asked listeners to stand by for an important announ-

cement. Doleful music was put on and the people waited. The doleful music seemed to go on endlessly. Then the news were given and listeners were asked to wait for an important broadcast. Eventually at about 2.45 P.M. a short news bulletin on the demise of Nehru was announced by Melville de Mellow. It was stated that the President would broadcast to the nation at 8.30 P.M. This bulletin was repeated at intervals and at 3.30 P.M. the Delhi station also went off the air.

The last minute confusion in making the announcement of Nehru's death arose because AIR was told that the President would broadcast to the nation. All India Radio did not seem to appreciate that AIR itself should announce the news, to which the President's broadcast would be a follow up. It was thought that the President should be used to break the news. This did not happen because telephone lines between the Prime Minister's House and the AIR studios which were being rigged up at the last moment failed. At this point the President returned to Rashtrapati Bhavan hoping to make the broadcast from the studio maintained there. But the lines from the studio to the Control Room in Broadcasting House also did not *materialize* and the President therefore decided to abandon the idea of speaking to the people. Had the Director General made himself available at the Prime Minister's residence he could have brought the President straight to AIR itself for the broadcast. And had he warned the Chief Engineer, arrangements for the telephone lines could have been made in advance. As it happened the Chief Engineer was not present in Broadcasting House when news of the tragedy was received!

When Delhi Station came on the air again at 5 P.M. news of Nehru's death had spread like wild fire throughout the country. Mr. G. L. Nanda had been sworn in as the care-taker Prime Minister. Arrangements for the funeral were afoot. It was believed at this time that the funeral procession would start at 8 o'Clock next morning. Delhi's evening newspapers carried the story. But the Delhi Station did not think it worth its while to enlighten the public. Doleful music without announcements was being broadcast. Listeners guessed, if they did not know already, that Nehru was dead. But the station took no positive steps to enlighten them. The programme for the forces had opened with the usual announ-

cement in Hindi, "Now you will hear our special programme for our *Fauji Bhais*." Doleful music started and went on coldly for the full length of the programme. Then the closing announcement followed (as usual) "That is the end of our special programme directed to the forces." This is a sample of the enterprize shown by the premier station of AIR on this occasion. Fortunately this was not the pattern at the other stations which showed more sense of responsibility. However, at 8.30 P.M. the President broadcast to the nation. He was followed at 9.30 P.M. by Mr. G. L. Nanda and it was not till about 10 o'Clock that AIR presented its feature in English on Jawaharlal Nehru.

The commentary on the funeral procession on the following afternoon has come in for considerable criticism. The basic weakness which was brought out was AIR's neglect of outside broadcasts—OBs as they are known in radio parlance. Apart from Melville de Mellow none of the English commentators had any experience to speak of. Should a broadcasting organization such as AIR have to fall back on untrained commentators on an occasion like this? Two of them rose manfully to the occasion; most of them were, however, guilty of various blunders and one habitually referred to Nehru's younger grandson Sanjay by the name of his elder brother Rajiv who was in London! The arrival of important personalities at the burning ghat was totally missed including the President Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dean Rusk (who flew from Palam to Shanti Ghat in a helicopter). The Hindi commentators did considerably better.

A few other points remain to be touched upon. Firstly there is the question of Nehru's voice. In an interview reported in the *Statesman* of 3 July, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, shortly after assuming office as Minister for Information & Broadcasting stated she was unaware of the ban on AIR's use of recording of her father's voice. The Nehru family had not expressed any views on this question. It was being argued on behalf of AIR that broadcast of recordings of Nehru's voice would have been contrary to Indian tradition. Talk of "Tradition" on such issues is irrelevant and confusing. The point for consideration is whether the broadcast of Nehru's voice would have sustained the morale of the people. My view is that hearing his voice immediately after his death would have added to the people's grief. But I do not see why the voice recordings

could not have been used after the mourning period.

Dispensing with percussion accompaniment and broadcasting doleful music without announcements for 12 days as AIR did, was to shirk its responsibility and to drive away listeners. While light programmes should certainly have been dispensed with during the period of mourning, the putting out of wailing music endlessly is a meaningless programme-planning procedure on such occasions. During this period AIR should have devised music programmes to sustain and uplift the people. Apart from devotional songs, classical vocal and instrumental music expressive of the appropriate sentiments should have been presented. Wailing music is an easy way out of a responsibility.

One part which surprisingly has not found mention in the press has been the very poor showing of AIR's External Services. News bulletins, commentaries and talks were indeed broadcast (after the usual delays) in the External Services. But the major part of each programme was devoted to music. And here again wailing music, without announcements went on for the whole period of mourning. AIR could hardly have found a more perfect means of driving away its few listeners in foreign countries. On what grounds, rational or traditional, this policy was adopted is beyond understanding.

A careful study of AIR's record during the past few years will show that its response to the challenges presented by the Chinese invasion and the death of Nehru followed an identical pattern. In both cases there was to begin with delay in responding. Secondly an unimaginative and crude overdoing of sentiment. Thirdly the distinction between Home and External Programmes was obliterated.

These facts show that there is something seriously wrong with the leadership in AIR. But the reader of this narrative will know that it does not end there. A thorough overhaul is necessary if AIR is to face successfully the many tasks ahead.

APPENDIX I

TELEVISION

On September 15, 1959, the experimental Television Service of All India Radio, was inaugurated in Delhi by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The Service is on Channel 4; Band 1; 62.25 Mc/s (Picture) and 67.75 Mc/s (Sound). The primary purpose of this pilot project, was "experimentation, training and evaluation". Experimentation with the new medium, training of the personnel for running it and evaluation of the new medium as a vehicle of communication and education was the right approach towards experimental television. The service was started as a part of a UNESCO project.

To begin with TV sets were installed at 21 community centres of adult education and social welfare work. A tele-club was formed at each centre. These clubs were expected to promote organised viewing, conduct post-viewing discussions and to communicate to All India Radio the comments and conclusions reached at these discussions. For this purpose a convener was appointed at each club. The programmes were put out for one hour every Tuesday and Friday. Tele-cast items were educational and informative and mostly consisted of talks, interviews, discussions and documentary films. There were occasionally plays, skits, dance-drama, ballet, light and classical music. The Television camera has shown enterprise by going out of the studios on important occasions like Independence Day, Republic Day, State Visits of Foreign Dignitaries and Holi and Diwali festivals. It has also brought pictures to viewers of cultural events like Folk Dances from the National Stadium. The programme generally included 40 minutes of live tele-cast and the rest films. The service was operated from the Akashvani Bhawan in New Delhi and was effective within 12 to 15 miles. About 150 to 200 persons were estimated to have viewed programme at each of the 21 centres. Later 45 television sets were received from UNESCO and these were distributed among secondary schools. This brought the total number of sets in operation to 66. Tele-clubs were also organised at these schools.

According to the present schedule (April-September 1964) of Social Education TV, these programmes are tele-cast on Tuesdays for 40 minutes from 19.00 to 19.40 hours and on Fridays for 70 minutes from 19.00 to 20.10 hours.

All India Radio made the first move towards educational television programmes in January-March 1960 when every Tuesday an experimental programme was tele-cast for school children from 3 to 4 P.M. replacing the evening programme. This experiment was encouraging in spite of a number of handicaps, such as, batches of school children from various schools were required to go to a nearby community centre where a TV set was installed.

A reference must be made to two important projects undertaken by the Television Unit in cooperation with UNESCO and the Ford Foundation.

The UNESCO project was concerned with the study of the effectiveness of social education television programmes on organised groups of viewers. Under the project twenty programmes were tele-cast beginning in December, 1960 and completed in May 1961. Five subjects were selected and on each four programmes were specially prepared. The subjects dealt with were: traffic and road sense; community health; adulteration of food stuffs; good manners; and encroachment on public property and town planning. On the successful completion of these programmes, another set of twenty programmes were tele-cast.

According to the Report of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the year 1960-61 the work of evaluation of these programmes was entrusted to the Indian Adult Education Association and the National Fundamental Education Centre of the Ministry of Education. No report, however, has as yet been published.

The Ford Foundation project was in the field of in-school instructional programmes and may be said to have laid the foundations of the school TV service.

A four-year agreement was made with the Ford Foundation of the United States of America for launching a regular television programme for schools in Delhi. This service came into operation on October 23, 1961. Every week eight lessons of 20 minutes each were tele-cast for the benefit of secondary school students. These lessons were repeated in the afternoon so as to make them available to students of schools running second shifts. To begin

with 3 lessons in chemistry and physics each, one Hindi and one English lesson were put out. Later on lessons in current Affairs and Geography were introduced. In accordance with this agreement 600 TV sets are to be installed in secondary schools by the year 1965.

The agreement also provides for the supply of technical equipment, sending of AIR staff on deputation abroad for training and the availability to AIR of experts on educational TV from America.

This project started with 250 television sets installed in 144 schools having AC electric supply and it was proposed to cover all the higher secondary schools in Delhi in due course. By the end of 1962, 388 television sets had been installed in 192 schools. Fifteen thousand students viewed science lessons and about 50,000 students took advantage of the language lessons.[1]

The present schedule (April-September 1964) of School Television is as follows:

Day	09.25 *to* 09.45 *Hrs.*	11.00 *to* 11.20 *Hours*
Monday	Chemistry X	Physics IX
Tuesday	Physics X	Chemistry IX
Wednesday	English VI	Physics XI
Thursday	Chemistry X	Physics IX
Friday	Physics X	Chemistry XI
Saturday	English VI	English VII

The lessons tele-cast at 09.25 hours are repeated at 12.25 hours and those at 11.00 hours are put out again at 17.00 hours. Roman numerals indicate the standard of the classes for which these programmes are meant.

Dr. Paul Nemath was expected to undertake an evaluation of these programmes but so far no report has come out in the press. However, on the basis of personal contacts with schools, reports from viewing schools, discussions with teachers etc., All India Radio has gathered the impression that the impact of school TV has been on the whole very encouraging. AIR claims, that as a result of TV programmes academic performance of television-

[1] *India* 1963, published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 130.

students has improved; interest in science has increased; and teaching standards have become better. These are big claims and call for a full fledged evaluation report.

In the Ministry's report for the year 1961-62 it was stated that provision for an entertainment television programme had been included in the third plan. This television centre was to be set up at Bombay. After the Chinese invasion in October 1962, this proposal was evidently put into cold storage. More recently, however, reports have been appearing in the press which suggest that government are reconsidering the whole question. The possibility of setting up television centres in collaboration with foreign firms for the production of entertainment programmes at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras are being examined. Educational television programmes would also be expanded.

The basic issue in regard to television which has to be examined is that of expense. And in discussing the matter we have to be careful not to be influenced by considerations of prestige. For it has to be recognized that in most developing countries television has tended to become a national status symbol. If we leave aside the case of Japan with whom we cannot stand comparison, several less developed West Asian and African countries have introduced television. National prestige, so the argument runs, is at stake. India is represented as a country which is being left behind in this race and it is assured that the race is for something which is worthwhile. What is not recognized or publically admitted by the supporters of television is that the centres in West Asia and Africa are almost wholly dependent on foreign capital and present films of very poor quality. If India introduces commercial television it will get involved in this rat race, with its many repercussions. Not the least important of these will be the effect of commercial television on sound broadcasting. The search for wider popularity and the consequent deterioration in artistic standards, in sound broadcasting seems to be inevitable. Why, then it may be asked, enter this race for television at all on the grounds of an empty national prestige? This is a question which has to be squarely faced.

The next question which has to be considered is whether the country can in its present economic state of inflation and soaring prices, afford a luxury service such as television? It is imperative that our resources be husbanded properly. Expenditure has to be

channelled into productive enterprizes; expense on luxury and prestige items has to be severely curtailed. If this is so it is not clear how the country can think of introducing television for entertainment. In my own mind I have no doubt that the introduction of television will mean diversion of finance and effort away from sound broadcasting. Our resources both in men and money are too short even for the effective development of radio. Splitting them will mean the failure of both.

The use of television for schools and social education is of course welcome in principle. But in view of the high cost of such services, achievements and expansion have to be carefully watched. If the television programmes for schools in Delhi have been as successful as claimed by AIR it is not clear why Dr. Neurath's evaluation report has not been published. It must also be pointed out that occasional reports can serve only a limited function. What is acquired is a constant, if not continuous and evaluation. If this is not done the successes and failures of particular courses never become apparent and there is a possibility of deterioration in the quality of the service. Incidentally the extension of school television to states other than Delhi would give rise to problems. Education being a state subject, a venture of this kind can be successful only if there is willing and whole-hearted cooperation between AIR and the education department of the state concerned. The influence of the centre in Delhi state is obviously far greater than that which it is known to exercise in other parts of the country. The introduction of educational television in other states will, therefore, require considerable preparatory work. Unless the state governments are convinced and eager, school television will suffer the same fate as school broadcasting.

Where the social education scheme is concerned the problem of evaluation itself raises a number of complex problems. Attendance at the tele-clubs is of course a test of popularity. But here since the object is education and improvement of the community, mere popularity will not take us very far. The publication of the evaluation report is, therefore, essential.

APPENDIX II

GROWTH OF LISTENING

When Lord Irwin inaugurated the Bombay Station on 23rd July 1927 (followed by Calcutta Station on 26th August) the total number of licenced listeners in India were estimated to be less than 1,000. The end of the year saw these rise to 3,594. There was increase in the number of licences for the next two years: 1928 (6,152) and 1929 (7,779) but surprisingly the figures showed a decline towards the end of 1930 when the total licences in force were 7,719. For the next two years licences remained more or less stationary. However, there was sudden increase of radio sets with the inauguration of BBC's Empire Service in 1932. We have discussed most of these factors earlier in the book while dealing with the early history of broadcasting. Here it is sufficient to say that ever since 1930, the radio licences have been on the increase..

Radio licence figures are published by the Postal Authorities at the end of every quarter and consolidated figures are made available at the end of every year. The following data has been collected from various records and may be of interest to those who are interested in the study of the growth of listening habit in the country.

There are at present twelve types of licences in force. In the category of domestic broadcast receiver licences (commonly called BRL) there are four subdivisions—BRL (domestic); BRL (villages); BRL (cheap radios); BRL (tourists). The other categories are: public libraries, demonstration, community, hospitals and sanatoria, possession, schools and crystal. There are 3 categories of T.V. Licences—domestic, commercial and demonstration. The charges of Post & Telegraphs Department for its services of collection, maintenance and antipiracy activities are Rs. 2 per set.

TOTAL LICENCES

The total number of broadcast receiving licences in force in the country on the 31st December of each year is given on page 259.

(i) *Domestic Broadcasting Receiver Licences*

These licences are issued for radio sets for private and domestic operation at a given address. These are non-transferable. The annual licence fee charged by the Government is Rs. 15 per set in urban areas and Rs. 10 in rural areas. Rs. 3 is charged for every additional set owned by the licensee. For cheap domestic sets a reduced fee of Rs. 7.50p. is levied (Rs. 2.50p. for every additional set). Tourists are charged a concessional fee of Rs. 7.50p. per set. This constitutes the largest category of listening and, in many ways, is said to be "pure listening." Thus the growth of domestic licences is most significant for any study of the growth of listening habit.

Year	No. of Licences	Year	No. of Licences	Year	No. of Licences
1927	3,594	1939	1,00,439	1951	6,85,508
1928	6,152	1940	1,28,379	1952	7,58,620
1929	7,775	1941	1,56,903	1953	8,37,749
1930	7,719	1942	1,75,616	1954	9,07,194
1931	8,056	1943	1,86,544	1955	10,29,816
1932	8,557	1944	2,05,852	1956	11,76,520
1933	10,872	1945	2,17,045	1957	13,47,216
1934	16,179	1946	2,52,571	1958	15,59,972
1935	24,839	1947	2,75,955	1959	18,76,439
1936	37,797	1948	3,18,990	1960	21,42,754
1937	50,680	1949	4,08,060	1961	22,45,548
1938	64,480	1950	5,46,319	1962	25,98,608

In early years of broadcasting in India, licences were mostly *domestic*; community listening is a later development. The following figures illustrate the growth of domestic listening:

Year	B.R.L. Domestic
1938	61,902
1939	92,772
1940	1,19,417
1941	1,47,121
1942	1,65,675
1943	1,76,061
1944	1,93,585
1945	2,02,829
1946	2,32,368
1947	2,48,274
1948	2,86,046
1949	3,69,728
1950	5,07,324
1951	6,35,026
1952	6,94,560
1953	7,69,505
1954	8,35,246
1955	9,47,353
1956	10,75,909
1957	12,30,814
1958	14,27,421
1959	17,18,182
1960	19,79,820
1961	20,80,780
1962	24,20,681

(ii) *Commercial Broadcast Receiver Licences*

These licences are applicable, to those radio sets which are used in business premises to which the public has access. An annual fee of Rs. 50 is charged per set and a fee of Rs. 5 for an additional set.

Year	*C.B.R. Licences*
1939	3,817
1940	4,757
1941	5,608
1942	5,397
1943	5,730
1944	6,924
1945	8,265
1946	11,533
1947	16,628
1948	21,679
1949	26,235
1950	26,726
1951	27,217
1952	34,026
1953	33,474
1954	32,596
1955	35,318
1956	39,873
1957	41,726
1958	44,400
1959	49,847
1960	52,684
1961	55,748
1962	56,961

(iii) *Possession Licences*

These licences must be obtained by all dealers in wireless telegraphy (including telephony) apparatus. A 'dealer' is a person who "deals in or manufactures for gain wireless telegraphy apparatus." The fee for a possession licence is Rs. 15 per year. There were 13,319 such licences in force on 31st December, 1962.

(iv) *Demonstration Licences*

Dealers in wireless apparatus "who wish to demonstrate wireless receiving apparatus on their premises or at the residence of a prospective customer" must draw demonstration licences. Only one set can be de-

monstrated at one time. A set can be demonstrated at a prospective buyer's residence for not more than 15 days. A fee of Rs. 15 is charged for such a licence. There were 2,612 licences in force in 1962.

(v) *Community Licences*

There has been considerable growth of community listening particularly in rural areas. The Central Government started a subsidy scheme in 1954-55 under which the State Governments were given an amount of Rs. 150 or half the cost of a set whichever is less, for each set installed. Under this scheme sets were to be distributed in villages having at least a population of 1,000. Figures for community licences before 1942 are not available.

Year	*Community Licences*
1942	1,050
1943	1,268
1944	1,554
1945	2,029
1946	1,890
1947	2,039
1948	1,761
1949	2,566
1950	3,362
1951	5,000
1952	6,613
1953	7,112
1954	9,192
1955	13,274
1956	21,751
1957	29,100
1958	36,257
1959	49,230
1960	49,590
1961	56,602
1962	58,969

(vi) *School Licences*

Schools are granted licences at a concessional rate of Rs. 3. As a result of the introduction of school broadcasts from various stations, these licensing have increased many fold since 1951:

Year	*School Licences*
1951	2,382
1952	2,972
1953	3,830
1954	4,939
1955	6,958
1956	8,290
1957	10,165
1958	11,649
1959	15,556
1960	17,027
1961	15,088
1962	16,623

(vii) *Crystal Licences*

A crystal licence cost Rs. 3 per year.

Year	*Crystal Licences*
1951	7,376
1952	11,043
1953	14,366
1954	16,473
1955	18,198
1956	21,473
1957	25,523
1958	29,399
1959	31,489
1960	30,253
1961	24,119
1962	29,411

(viii) *Public Library Licences*

A licence for a radio set at a public library costs annually Rs. 3. No figures for such licences are available.

(ix) *Television Licences*

The annual fees chargeable for T.V. licences are:

(*a*) Domestic	Rs. 30
(*b*) Commercial	Rs. 120
(*c*) Demonstration	Rs. 30

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ERRATA

Page No.	Line No.	Incorrect	Correct
19	22	listener's	listeners
36	34	Tulajali	Tulajaji
45	29	that have espousing	that have espoused
46	2	listener's	listeners
72	33	is so indeed	is so, is indeed
73	26	listener's	listeners
80	13	come	came
115	3	been only to prompt	been only too prompt
128	12	by then "as dead as mutton"	by then, are "as dead as mutton"
131	7 & 18	listener's	listeners
131	35	filled	billed
132	7	been	then
147	3	number	member
147	17	listener's	listeners
149	29	The air underlying	The idea underlying
150	9 & 14	listener's	listeners
155	2	talkers'	talkers
160	21	recorded	accorded
161	18	literation	literature
178	5 Centre (Chart)	Programme Assistants Transmission Assistants	Transmission Assistants Programme Assistants
189	6	before to the first pay commission	before the first PAY commission
191	7	artists	artist's
194	3	as	at
202	10	Left	Left
232	26	so far as to BBC	so far as the BBC
238	34	what place have controversy plays	what place does controversy has
241	10	to it as "India and the Dragon"	"to it as India and the Drag On."
244	28	other	ether
246	21	one way cow	one may cow
246	35	on the AIR	on the air
247	35	'main's'	'man's'
249	38	Delhi Stations	Delhi Station
255	21	Dr. Paul Nemnath	Dr. Paul Neurath
257	15 & 16	What is acquired is a constant, if not continuous and evaluation	What is required is a, constant, if not continuous evaluation