

11th

STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS(1999-2000)

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

(2000-2001)

ELEVENTH REPORT

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

April , 2000/Chaitra 1922 (Saka)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 17.4.2000

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 17.4.2000

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**COMPOSITIONOF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
(1999-2000)**

Somnath Chatterjee - ChairmanMembers

Lok Sabha

1.Shri Ambareesha

2.Shri Mahendra Baitha

3.Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal

4.Prof. Dukha Bhagat

5.Shri Tara Chand Bhagora

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12Shri Shreechand Kriplani

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- 24Shri Chandra Vijay Singh
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- 26Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake
- 27Shrimati D. M. Vijaya Kumari
- 28Shri Vinay Katiyar
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- 10Shri Kartar Singh Duggal
- 11Miss Lata Mangeshkar
- 12Shri R. N. Arya
- 13/acant
- 14/acant
- 15/acant

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. A.K. Pandey - Additional Secretary
2. Shri P.D.T. Achary - Joint Secretary
3. Shri S.K. Sharma - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Bhupesh Kumar - Assistant Director

INTRODUCTION I, the Chairman Standing Committee on Communications (1999-2000) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on its behalf, present this Eleventh Report on `Demands for Grants (2000-2001) pertaining to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

2. The Standing Committee on Communications(1999-2000) was constituted on 31 December, 1999. One of the functions of the Standing Committee, as laid down in Rule 331E of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, is to consider the Demands for Grants of the concerned Ministry/Department and make a Report on the same to the Houses.
3. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting for the current year i.e. 2000-2001 which were laid on the Table of the House on 15 March, 2000. Thereafter the representatives of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting briefed the Committee on 23rd March., about the Demands for Grants (2000-2001) pertaining to their Ministry. Then the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting 29th March, 2000.
4. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting for placing before it detailed written notes on the subject and for furnishing the information, that the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the subject.
5. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at its sittings held on 13th April, 2000.
6. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;
CHATTERJEE,
13 April, 2000
24 Chaitra, 1922(Saka)
on Communications

SOMNATH

Chairman,
Standing Committee

REPORT

INTRODUCTORY :

1. There has been a change in the Budget Provisions for the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting with effect from 1st April 2000. Prasar Bharati which administers All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan ((DD) has been granted financial assistance in the form of Grants-in-Aid and the commercial earnings of Prasar Bharati which were earlier credited first into the Consolidated Fund of India and then transferred as the non-lapsable funds would be retained by Prasar Bharati.

Earlier, the budget provisions included an element of contribution from revenue earnings of AIR and Doordarshan. From the year 2000-2001, the revenue earnings of AIR and Doordarshan will not be reflected in the non-plan provisions. In view of this for comparison of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 non-plan budget figures for broadcasting sector, no budget support figures have been used.

Budgetary Grants : Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

2. Budgetary Provisions for the years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 proposed by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and approved by the Planning Commission are as under :

(Rs

. in crore)

	1999- 2000	2000-2001		
Media/Sector	Proposed outlay	Approved outlay	Proposed Outlay	Approved Outlay

Broadcasting Sector

(Prasar Bharati)

(i) All India Radio	188.00	122.00	281.15	140.00
DBS	---	45.30	-----	65.00
IEBR	0.00	76.80		75.00
(ii) Doordarshan	659.20	391.52	828.00	500.44
DBS	---	51.80	-----	148.30
IEBR	0.00	339.72		352.14
Total	847.20	513.32	1109.15	640.44

Information Sector

DBS	23.07	17.50	19.23	18.21
IEBR	0.75	1.76	1.51	15.10
Total	23.82	19.26	20.74	33.31

* DBS - Domestic Budgetary Support

III Films Sector

DBS	48.62	30.50	40.00	38.49
IEBR	6.10	6.10	10.70	10.70
Total	54.72	36.60	50.70	49.19

* DBS Domestic Budgetary Support

3. As stated earlier, with effect from 1st April, 2000 the Government under the new system has provided Budget Support

to Prasar Bharati in the form of grants-in-aid (towards revenue section) and Loan (towards Capital Section) as under : (Rs. In crores)

	Plan	Non-Plan	Total	Grant-in-aid
920.00	963.00			43.00
Loans	170.30	-	170.30	

Total	213.30	920.00	1133.30
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In 1999-2000, the Budget Support to Prasar Bharati was Rs. 97.00 crore. This has been increased to Rs. 213.30 crore in 2000-2001 including Rs. 100.00 crore for J & K special package.

4. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting had reportedly proposed an outlay of Rs. 6135.45 crore for the 9th Five Year Plan which was revised to Rs. 4898.00 crore on the advice of Planning Commission. Finally the Planning Commission has approved an outlay of only Rs. 2843.05 crore.

5. For Annual Plan 2000-2001 the Ministry had submitted proposal for Rs. 1180.59 crore (DBS Rs. 741.24 crore and IEBC Rs. 439.35 crore). However, approval has been granted for Rs. 709.35 crore by the Planning Commission.

6. The Committee enquired during the evidence about the adverse effect of the extensive reduction of the plan outlay on the projected schemes for modernisation, upgradation, renewal, replacement and expansion of Media activities particularly in the Broadcasting Sector. The representative of the Ministry submitted that the cut would be in the J & K projects, procurement of O.B Vans, augmentations of Art stations, replacement of Studio cameras, new augmentations and High power short wave transmitters etc.

7. The Committee notes that the Ministry had projected during 1999-2000 to the Planning Commission an outlay of Rs. 18000 lakh for All India Radio which was drastically scaled down to Rs. 12200 lakh. For Information Sector also the outlay was curtailed from the projected Rs. 2382.11 lakh to Rs. 1926.00 lakh. Similarly in case of Films Sector the proposed outlay of Rs. 5472.75 lakh was curtailed to Rs. 3660.00 lakh. In case of outlay projected for 2000-2001 the Planning Commission has resorted to extensive cuts. The Ministry had projected for AIR Annual Plan outlay Rs. 28115 lakh which has been reduced to Rs. 14400 lakh. In case of Doordarshan also the reduction has been equally drastic from Rs. 82800 lakh to Rs. 50044 lakh. The Committee is perturbed at the drastic reduction in annual plan outlay and apprehends that it would lead to substantial shortfall in completion of developmental projects and installation of basic infrastructural equipment. It will hamper the renewal and replacement of old and obsolete equipments and would also take its toll on upgradation of technology. The Committee is of the opinion that in view of the competition in public broadcasting sector from private sector including foreign broadcasting companies all out help should be provided to All India Radio and Doordarshan to substantially improve quality of their network. In no case, financial constraints be allowed to bring down physical projections. Otherwise it will have crippling effect on the functioning of AIR and Doordarshan in future.

Prasar Bharati

8. So far, Prasar Bharati was being treated as any other Government office and it was provided financial assistance through specific major/minor heads covering its various activities. From the year 2000-2001, the financial assistance will be in the form of grants-in-aid (Rs. 963.00 crore) and loan for capital expenditure (Rs. 170.30 crore). This system, it was submitted, would allow greater flexibility to Prasar Bharati in making use of financial assistance. The Ministry has reportedly issued detailed instructions to Prasar Bharati to take timely steps to ensure smooth transition to the new

system as also to ensure that adequate safeguards are provided so that funds are utilised properly.

9. The Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting added that because of this change, a sizable amount of a few hundred crore of rupees will not be part of the Budget. The plan provision has increased from Rs. 145 crore to Rs. 270 crore in the coming year and non-plan provision has increased from Rs. 978 crore to Rs. 1114 crore. The increase in the non-plan outlay is because of increments in pay and allowances and additional dearness allowance. In Plan, there is an increase of Rs. 125 crore. Out of it, 100 crore is for Jammu & Kashmir package which government had approved last year.

Prasar Bharati Board

10. The Committee pointed out during the evidence that Prasar Bharati Board was not fully constituted and enquired the steps being taken in this regard. In reply the Secretary I & B stated that the issue has been held up as the recommendation of the Expert Committee set up to consider the restructuring of Prasar Bharati to make it more professional, competitive, credible and efficient were awaited. He further submitted that the action on it has already been initiated. It is expected that the names of panel would be made available shortly to the Selection Committee chaired by the Vice President of India. On being asked about the present composition of Prasar Bharati Board the Committee was informed that there are only five members on the Board at present. The Committee pointed out that out of the five members in position three were part time and the post of Chairman was lying vacant since 27th June, 1998. No regular CEO has been appointed since 29th Aug. 1998. The vacancies of part time members remain unfilled since 15th May, 1998 and 22nd Nov. 1999. The posts of Member (Finance) and Member (Personnel) were not filled from the very beginning as these posts were abolished at the time of first Ordinance to Prasar Bharati Act and again restored at the time of second Ordinance. The posts of Members representing the employees and elected by them were also lying vacant since 23rd Nov. 1997 and the posts of DG Doordarshan and DG AIR were also lying vacant from August 1991 and June 1999 respectively. The two members were removed while there are so many vacancies and that these two members were made to retire for no apparent or disclosed reason. The Secretary explained that those were term appointments for a period of six years and were retired under the system of rotation on the basis of relative expertise, but when asked could not explain how the principle of rotation was applied to those two members who have been made to retire.

Broadcasting Bill

11. The Committee desired to know the fate of Broadcasting Bill which was introduced in Parliament in April, 1997. In reply, the Secretary I & B informed the Committee that keeping in view the developments from 1997 till date, the Government has reviewed the provisions of Broadcasting Bill and expected to introduce the same during the later part of Budget session 2000 if approved by the Cabinet. On being asked about the proposed changes that were being incorporated in the bill, the Secretary submitted that some of the issues were filling of the vacant positions in the Prasar Bharati Board including that of Chairman, appointment of regular CEO, transfer of employees to the service of Prasar Bharati etc.

12. The Secretary, I & B further added that in the bill arrangements for licencing would be defined. Procedure licencing, conditions and qualifications in terms of ownership, offences and the punishment for them in regard to the various sectors of broadcasting and Cable networking etc.

would be prescribed.

13. In reply, to another query by the Committee in this regard, the representative of the Ministry of I & B submitted that the Ministry was strongly in favour of an early broadcasting law.

14. **The Committee is deeply distressed to note that the Prasar Bharati Board which is provided to consist of 15 members has not been constituted in its true sense. There are now only five members and three of them are functioning on part-time basis. The posts of Chairman and regular CEO of the Prasar Bharti Board are lying vacant since June, 1998 and Aug. 1998 respectively. The part time Members have also not been appointed from May, 1998 and Nov. 1999. The Committee notes that the posts of Member (Finance) and Member (Personnel) have also not been filled and the Members representing employees who have to be elected by them have not been appointed since Nov. 1997. The callous attitude of Government in this regard is regrettable. The sudden removal of the two Members of the Board has been on a totally inexplicable reason. The Committee hopes that filling up of the vacancies of the Board level as well as that of regular CEO would be given top priority and the full-fledged Board would be in position at the earliest. The reasoning that the posts of the two Members removed recently were term appointments and have been retired under the system of rotation on the basis of relative expertise is not convincing at all since the basis of the removal of the said two members has not been disclosed.**

15. **The Committee is distressed to note that the Broadcasting Bill which was introduced in Parliament as early as April, 1997 could not be enacted so far. The delay in the enactment is stated to be partly due to certain changes being incorporated in the Bill to make it broad based. The Committee feels that the time of three years is more than enough to incorporate any modifications that may be needed. The Committee urges the Ministry to expedite enactment of the Bill during the current session of Parliament as it is expected to facilitate improvement in the broadcasting sector.**

All India Radio (AIR)

(i) Studio Projects (AIR)

16. The Ministry had targeted 24 studio projects to be made technically ready during 1999-2000. Out of it only seven projects could be made ready. The remaining 17 studio projects viz Srinagar-VB, Lucknow FM ch., Shillong- FM ch., Khonsa CRS, Changlang CRS, etc have been carried over to 2000-2001.

17. Again, 25 studio projects were decided to be commissioned during 1999-2000. Out of which, only 13 could be commissioned and the rest 12 projects like Nongstoin-CRS, Williamnagar CRS, Mon CRS, Saiha-CRS, Tuensang CRS and Ziro LRS etc were still awaiting commissioning. There was shortfall in meeting financial targets also. The anticipated expenditure during 1999-2000 was Rs. 2047.76 lakh against the SBG of Rs. 2660.00 lakh.

18. The Ministry had targeted to complete seven Broadcasting Centres and five community Radio Stations. Out of which only one Broadcasting Centre was completed. Not a single Community Radio Station could be completed so far. During 1998-99 also out of the target of five Broadcasting centres only one was completed and out of the approved outlay of Rs. 150.00 crore only Rs. 81.58 crore could be spent on various projects. The reasons for under performance have been stated to be delay in completion of civil works, local law and order problem, delay in handing

over sites by the State Governments and delay in procurement of transmitting equipment.

(ii) Transmitter Projects (AIR)

19. As regard transmitter projects, the target was to commission 34 projects during 1999-2000. Out of which only 17 could be commissioned and the remaining 17 projects viz Jammu - 10 KW FM (VB), Guwahati - 10 KW FM (VB) and Dhubri - KW FM etc were still awaiting commissioning. The reasons for delay in commissioning of the projects are again stated to be same viz. non-completion of civil works, law and order problem, non-availability of sites and retendering of works. The anticipated expenditure during 1999-2000 was Rs. 1575.48 lakh spent against the SBG of Rs. 3558.20 lakh.

20. The 9th Plan outlay for All India Radio has been kept at Rs. 80540 lakh, out of which only 31.53 percent i.e. Rs. 25,395.16 lakh could be spent during the first three years of the Plan. As regards physical performance, against the target of 22 Broadcasting centres, 2 relay Centres, 10 Community Radio Centres, 27 MW transmitters, 9 SW and 28 VHF/FM Projects only 5 Broadcasting Centres, one relay Centre, 5 Community Radio Centres, 5 MW, 3 SW and 9 VHF/FM Transmitters could be completed. The percentage wise performance has been 22.72 percent, 50.00 percent, 50.00 percent, 33.33 percent and 32.14 percent respectively. The Government has decided to permit 108 private FM Radio Channels in 40 cities. In reply to a query by the Committee, it has been stated that Private FM Radio Broadcasters would adhere to programmes and advertisement codes as followed by AIR. As a result of auction of FM channels Rs. 425 crore would accrue to Government as Licence Fee for the first year of operation.

Doordarshan

(i) Studio Projects (DD)

21. Doordarshan's terrestrial transmission (National Network Doordarshan I) has 85 HPT, 673 LPT, 249 VLPT and 19 Transposers located all over the country. In addition, DD2 Terrestrial Network which mainly caters to major cities has 10 HPTs, 46 LPT and 4 VLPTs. DD also has 51 studios located at various parts of the country for in house programme production. The terrestrial coverage of DD is stated to be 74.8% by geographical area and 87.9 % by population. In addition to terrestrial channels, DD also operates 21 satellite channels which include 11 Regional Language Channels. One Channel each DD-I, DD-II, DD News, DD Sports, DD Educational, DD International and four State Channels. Proposal in the Budget for 2000-2001 includes Rs. 340.44 crores towards capital expenditure and Rs. 160 crore towards revenue expenditure.

22. Expansion of private satellite channels, particularly in the regional languages has resulted in the fragmentation of viewership and decrease in revenue to Doordarshan, although it is stated that substantial increase in the revenue of Doordarshan has been achieved. However, it seems that neither needed provisions have been made nor the achievement of Doordarshan has been adequate to meet the challenges.

23. The Committee has been informed that out of the target of completion of 13 studio projects, and 9 HPT only 9 studio projects and 1 HPT were completed in 1998-99. On the financial side out of approved outlay of Rs. 449.40 crore expenditure of only Rs. 307.43 crore could be incurred on various schemes during that year. Similarly during the year 1999-2000, out of the target of 4 studios, 9 HPTs (DD-I), 90 LPTs/VLPTs only 3 studios, 4 HPTs (DD-I) and 70 LPTs/VLPTs could be completed. The expenditure incurred upto 31 January 2000 was stated to be Rs. 126.53 crore

out of the outlay of Rs. 296.52 crore. The reasons given for not adhering to the targets are stated to be delay in construction of Studio buildings and construction of towers by contracting agencies, non-availability of sites/buildings for LPT/VLPT projects and law & order problems in certain areas.

24. When asked about the overall performance during the first three years of the Ninth Plan, it has been stated by CEO Doordarshan that out of the 23 Studios, 40 HPTs (DD-I) 40 HPTs (DD-II) and 422 LPTs/VLPTs only 13 studios (56.52 percent), 6 HPTs (DD-I) 15.00 percent, 7 HPTs (DD-II) 17.50 percent and 232 LPTs/VLPTs 54.98 percent could be completed. On the financial side the expenditure incurred as on 31 Jan. 2000 was Rs. 853.36 crore out of the total outlay of Rs. 1836.00 crore.

25. The CEO Prasar Bharati submitted during evidence that there were five areas which have been identified as areas of weaknesses i.e. transmission quality at the transmission end, the signal quality at the cable end, quality of content, declining trend in viewership and revenue.

26. Asked about the steps taken to overcome these weaknesses, the CEO submitted that DD channels have been made available on a 24 hour basis both in analogue and digital modes. The transmission quality has improved as a result of digitalisation. In response to a query about the quality of signals the CEO submitted that there were still problems particularly at the cable end. He admitted that at the cable end the quality was not as good as it should be. There was also certain degree of manipulation in the market on that. Another related problem being faced by Doordarshan was that the Cable operators were not using satellite dish antenna. They were also not observing the must carry clause, the provision under section 8 of the Cable Network Regulation Act which has made it mandatory for the Cable operators to carry two channels of Doordarshan. On a query about punishment for violation of the must carry clause, the CEO submitted that penal provisions were very weak and difficult to be enforced since enforcement could be done by the concerned State Governments after they notified the authorised officers. He further submitted that some States have not even notified the authorised officers despite several reminders. The Committee was informed that the matter has been taken to the Cabinet. It was expected that the legislative support on the issue would be forthcoming shortly.

27. The CEO further submitted that the Ministry planned to give priority to digitalisation of transmission. On being asked about the schedule of digitalisation, the CEO submitted that digital terrestrial transmission would be started by 2001 in the four metropolitan cities. The Secretary of I & B added that the Government has not yet approved any firm programme for digitalisation. The scheme was very expensive costing around Rs. 5000 crore to Rs. 6000 crore for the entire country.

28. The Committee enquired that keeping in view the high cost whether the scheme was desirable and whether the same has been submitted to the Government for approval, the Secretary I & B informed the Committee that the scheme was not yet submitted for approval, however, the Government has approved Pilot projects for Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai. The Pilot projects would be commissioned by March 2001.

29. Justifying the desirability of going digital the CEO submitted that with changing to digital mode, the two DD channels (DD-I, DD-II) would get converted into ten channels because one analogue channel bandwidth is equivalent to five digital channels. The Committee sought further clarification about the viability and the likely burden that citizens would have to bear as a

result of high cost of special TV sets required for the purpose. The Secretary I & B explained that the transmission cost would be reduced by one fourth or one fifth. The quality of picture on TV screen would improve, the digital transmission could be received even in moving vehicles, more channels would be at the disposal of the citizens and the TV set would get access to Internet

30. The Committee, thereafter enquired about the norms in terms of time for advertisements on Electronic Media. The CEO stated that five percent of the broadcast time was allowed for advertisements. In case of Saturday/Sunday films they have two categories of 1800 seconds and 2100 seconds aggregating 30-35 minutes. The CEO admitted that they were charging high price for advertisements and therefore getting low revenue.

31. The CEO submitted that Doordarshan was observing a code of conduct which was much more stringent than applied to private channels. He suggested that the Committee may recommend that the law should be same for all and all the channels must be subjected to the code of conduct applied on Doordarshan.

32. The Committee observes that the physical performance of AIR in relation to installation of infrastructural hardware like Studios and Transmitters has been extremely unsatisfactory. During 1999-2000 the Ministry was able to complete only 7 Studio Projects against a target of 24. The performance is equally dismal in case of commissioning of Studio projects as only 13 could be commissioned against a target of 25. In case of Broadcasting Centres and Community Radio Stations, the performance is more disappointing. The Ministry could construct only one Broadcasting Centre against the target of 7 and nil Community Centres against the target of 5. The pace of expenditure has also been completely unsatisfactory. The Ministry could incur the expenditure of only Rs. 81.58 crore against the outlay of Rs. 150.00 crore for the purpose. The Committee is deeply anguished at such unsatisfactory performance. The Ministry should make serious efforts for energising and strengthening its executive and monitoring wings. The casual approach of the Ministry is further evident from uninspiring performance in installation of the most basic infrastructural projects like transmitters. The Ministry could commission only 17 transmitters in 1999-2000 against a target of 34. It could spend less than half of funds allocated for the purpose as it could incur the expenditure of only Rs. 1575.48 lakh against Rs. 3558.20 lakh provided for it. The Committee recommends that the project construction and monitoring wings should be streamlined with a view to completing the valuable projects timely and the same should not remain only on paper. The Committee may be apprised of the reasons for not commissioning these projects even though the same were technically ready.

33. The Committee notes that the performance of the Doordarshan is also marred with the same deficiencies as is the case with All India Radio. In 1998-99 only one HPT could be setup against the target of 9. On the financial side also the shortfall was very substantial. Only Rs. 307.43 crore could be spent against the outlay of Rs. 449.40 crore. During 1999-2000 also the performance in case of setting up of HPTs has been less than 50 percent as only 4 HPTs have been set up against the target of 9. The financial performance is less than 50 percent as on 31 Jan .2000, it could incur the expenditure of only Rs. 126.53 crore against the outlay of Rs. 296.52 crore. The overall performance of Doordarshan during the first three

years of Ninth Plan has been very unsatisfactory so far as physical and financial achievements are concerned. It could install only 6 HPTs against the target of 40 for DD-I, 7 HPTs against the target of 40 for DD-II. The financial expenditure during this period was less than 50 percent as on 31 Jan 2000. The Committee is constrained to observe that this is a poor commentary on the performance of the National Broadcaster. The Committee is of the view that shortfall in performance should be only in exceptional circumstances like non-availability of required hardware in the market and natural calamities. The oft repeated reasons advanced by the Ministry of its dismal performance like non-availability of sites, contractors problem, law and order problems etc. are not convincing at all and have become stereo-typed and thus cannot be accepted. Therefore, the Committee is of the strong view that the Ministry should seriously review its performance and identify the factors responsible for non-performance. It seems that the monitoring mechanism is weak in the Ministry. Therefore immediate corrective measures are required to be taken. The scarce public resources should not be wasted by reason of delay and incompetence.

34. The Committee is deeply concerned to note the serious drawbacks in the areas of transmission quality, content and presentation of programmes by Doordarshan vis-à-vis the private and foreign T.V. channels. The Committee hopes that the Prasar Bharati Board would be able to introduce digitalisation of transmission at a faster pace resulting in improvement in quality of transmission. However, digitalisation must be followed by an appropriate measure to reduce the price of the special TV sets required to receive the digital transmission. Committee draws some satisfaction from the fact that Prasar Bharati has analysed its weaknesses and remedial steps are being taken to improve quality of transmission and increased number of channels are being made available to the viewers.

35. The Committee takes a serious note of the problem that the Cable Operators are biased against Doordarshan and do not show DD channels through Dish Antenna on profit consideration which cannot be accepted. The Committee approves the idea that the Ministry should make appropriate legislative provisions in the forthcoming Broadcasting Bill to make the cable operators fulfill their obligations. The Government is urged to take faster action in this regard and bring the bill before Parliament at the earliest.

36. The Committee is deeply concerned with excess of advertisements being telecast by Doordarshan and also by other channels. The Committee recommends that code of conduct formulated for the purpose should be strictly observed by Doordarshan. It also feels strongly that the Government should come forward with a legislation to make the private channels conform to the code of conduct applicable to DD.

Information Sector

(i) Press Information Bureau (PIB)

37. During 1999-2000 the Ministry had proposed an outlay of Rs. 450.00 lakh for PIB out of which only Rs. 210.00 lakh were sanctioned. During 2000-2001 the Ministry has proposed the reduced outlay of Rs. 210.00 lakh which have been approved. On the physical performance side the setting up of National Press Centre which was mooted in 1994 has not been implemented since no land has been allotted for it so far. In case of acquisition of vehicles during 1998-99 only one vehicle has been purchased by incurring Rs. 1.91 lakh out of Rs. 14.00 lakh provided for the

purpose. The PIB could incur only Rs. 187.63 lakh on various schemes during 1998-99 out of the plan outlay of Rs. 463.00 lakh. During 1999-2000 no progress has been made in setting up of PIB office at Itanagar under TSP. Out of the financial outlay of Rs. 210.00 lakh only Rs. 62.76 lakh could be incurred as on 31 Jan. 2000.

38. As regard the overall performance of PIB during the first three years of Ninth Plan, it has utilised Rs. 44.31 lakh for setting up mini-media centres out of Rs. 100.00 lakh provided for the purpose and Rs. 2.05 lakh for greater mobility in PIB offices out of Rs. 100.00 lakh allotted for it. The total expenditure as on 31 Jan 2000 has been Rs. 444.54 lakh out of total funds of Rs. 2300.00 lakh. The PIO submitted during evidence that for setting up PIB office at Itanagar (the only state capital without a PIB office) they have taken up the matter of sanctioning of posts with the Expenditure Secretary, but could not succeed as there was plan cut and new posts were not being sanctioned. The Committee pointed out that during 1999-2000 the expenditure was only Rs. 53.00 lakh out of the outlay of Rs. 198.00 lakh. In reply the Press Information Officer (PIO) explained that they would be able to spend Rs. 198.00 lakh finally. She submitted that her constraints were that on one hand Government said that the North East was very important and on the other they did not sanction funds and posts and imposed five percent cut on the top of that. Thus there appears to be a lot of lip service on the problems of North East.

(ii) Publications Division

39. The Ministry had proposed an outlay of Rs. 71.00 lakh during 1999-2000, against which Rs. 60.00 lakh were sanctioned. During 2000-2001 against the projected outlay of Rs. 200.00 lakh only Rs. 97.48 lakh have been sanctioned. During the Ninth Plan Rs. 7.00 lakh were provided for Mobile Books Shops in the NE Region. No progress has been made in this regard so far due to non-creation of post. The expenditure incurred was only Rs. 0.85 lakh as on 31 Jan. 2000. Similarly Rs. 7.00 lakh were provided for training under the head Human Resource Development. On being asked in this connection it was stated that the programme for training of staff was still under process. The Government had also allotted Rs. 13.00 lakh for bringing out Yojana in Oriya, out of it the expenditure of Rs. 5.12 lakh have been incurred and the reason for shortfall has been stated to be non-creation of posts.

40. The representative of the Ministry submitted during evidence that they had planned to start "Tender News Magazine" on the lines of "Rozgar Samachar" to serve the needs of construction agencies as well as construction. The scheme has been postponed for the next year due to inadequate allocation of funds.

CD on Mahatma Gandhi

41. Highlighting the achievements of Publications Division in reply to a query by the Committee, the Secretary, I & B submitted during evidence that the Ministry has brought out a CD on Gandhiji costing Rs. 50.00 lakh and released the same on 2nd October, 1999. The CD is very informative. It has been well received and 3000 copies have already been sold. The Ministry has also taken in hand the Hindi version of it and expected to release the same shortly. Asked about the contents of the CD he submitted that it contained about 50 thousand pages of texts, books, letters written by Gandhiji. The CD also contained 30 Minutes film on Gandhiji, including 500 photographs and 15 minutes of voice of Gandhiji. The Committee appreciates the steps taken by the Ministry in releasing the CD on Gandhiji.

(iii) Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity(DAVP)

42. The Plan outlay for DAVP during 1999-2000 was Rs. 145.00 lakh. It has been scaled down to Rs. 135.00 lakh during 2000-2001. The proposed cut is planned to be made in the head of modernisation of DAVP from Rs. 52.25 lakh in 1999-2000 to Rs. 42.25 lakh in 2000-2001. The Ministry has submitted that the proposed cut has been made since considerable progress has already been made in this regard during the 8th Plan and in the first three years of 9th Plan. During Ninth plan the Directorate could spend Rs. 270.00 lakh (44.97 percent) as on 31 Jan 2000 out of total Rs. 620.00 lakh.

Advertisement and Circulation of Newspapers

43. The D.G. DAVP submitted to the Committee during evidence that the Directorate had 5196 publications/newspapers on their panel to issue advertisements. The Committee enquired whether any panel was prepared and the same has since been reviewed. The witness responded that there were two things which they were carrying out, one was the annual renewal contract. During that renewal process if it was detected that certain newspapers were not meeting the requirements of the advertising policy, those were de-panneled. In reply to a query by the Committee the DG, DAVP stated that the requirement for getting empaneled was the circulation figure. If it is found that certain newspapers had given exaggerated figures then it would be removed from the panel. On being enquired about circulation checks, the witness submitted that for the purpose they were taking the services of three agencies i.e. RNI, Audit Bureau of Circulation and the Chartered Accountants..

44. The Committee enquired whether in view of the doubts being expressed frequently about the credibility of the circulation figures, the Ministry formulated any guidelines about qualifying circulation figures for release of advertisements. The witness replied in the negative. He further informed that the percentage of small newspapers for issuing advertisements in terms of space was 24.62 for medium newspaper it was 37.71 percent and for big ones, it was 37.66 percent. The Committee pointed out that the Ministry had admitted earlier also that there should have been a method of checking the circulation because there should not be any person who receive payment for advertisement with no circulation and that there were some journals whose job was to indulge in character assassination on the basis of false reports and enquired whether there was any machinery to check such unethical practices. The representative of the Ministry submitted that there was a procedure for that. If any newspaper was found indulging in scurrilous writing or inciting communal violence, the district authorities were supposed to take note of it and inform as the Ministry itself had no machinery to check such malpractices. The Secretary I & B further added that Press Council of India has been expressly created to look after that problem also. The representative of Registrar of Newspapers (RNI) admitted that the circulation checking machinery was not very effective. They had only five circulation officers and even out of that one post was vacant. So they relied mostly on paper documents such as cash book, ledger, print capacity etc.

45. On being enquired further the witness submitted that there was backlog checking the claims of circulation. They were taking the cases of 1996, 1997 and 1998. There upon the Secretary of the Ministry also admitted that there was no reliable and reasonable circulation checking agency. It needed urgently to be redressed. He further assured that he was talking to officials of Audit Bureau of Circulation and expressed confidence that he would find a way out in meeting the larger objective

of having proper assessment of circulation.

(iv) Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP)

46. There are 22 Regional Offices and 268 Field Publicity Units financed by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which have been set up to do extensive publicity coverage in rural areas. The reach of the Directorate of Field Publicity is reported to be quite extensive. The Plan outlay in 1998-99 (Actual) was Rs. 255.91 lakh. The Revised Estimates 1999-2000 was Rs. 211 lakh and the provision in the Budget Estimate for 2000-2001 has been reduced to Rs. 165 lakh. Asked about the reasons for continuous reduction in the Plan outlay, the Ministry has stated that it was decided not to purchase films from outside producers/open market, instead Directorate was required to obtain film cassettes which were available with the nodal Ministries like Health & Family Welfare, Rural Development, etc. Another reason stated to be the fact that no new unit has been created in 1999-2000 as a result of economy cut and review of the effectiveness of the Directorate.

47. As regards, the under utilisation of funds during 1998-99 and 1999-2000, it has been stated that the Election Commission had banned programmes meant to popularize Government programmes in view of the elections in some States and General Elections all over the country during 1998 and 1999 respectively. Asked about the physical achievements, it has been stated that during 1998-99, a target of 36,000 tour days was fixed, but achievement was only 24,976 tour days. 49,495 film shows were conducted against the target of 66,000 film shows. Similarly, in 1999-2000, 22,285 film shows were arranged against the target of 37,440.

48. The Committee pointed out that the anti-India propaganda was being carried out from across the border and desired to know what effective measures are proposed by the Directorate of Field Publicity in this regard. In reply the Secretary, I & B stated that Ministry has been looking at the problem from two angles. One is that in some border areas our signals are weak and they are not reaching. This was the situation in large parts of Kashmir so far. For that, a strategy has been worked out to upgrade the power of the transmitters of All-India Radio and Doordarshan particularly near the borders so that in all parts of the country signals of All India Radio and Doordarshan are easily available on a good quality. The whole of J & K package has been designed to serve this purpose and it is under implementation. Continuing, the Secretary I & B stated that the second part is to make programmes more credible and attractive. In some parts of the border it is a matter of preference of listeners and viewers which signals they want to use, - Indian or foreign. So the Kashmir package has a sizeable component for improving the software. The programme component has already been taken up. One significant beginning has been of pooling the various TV channels. They have made available some of their popular programmes to be telecast in Doordarshan channel of Kashmir and the reports received indicate that other channels seem to be fulfilling the desired objectives. The local people are watching this channel much more than earlier. So Doordarshan hopes to continue this collaboration with other channels for the national cause. In addition, it has been stated that the Ministry was working out through an empowered Committee and Prasar Bharati other measures for strengthening the software so that coverage is made more attractive and credible to the listeners. Country's democratic and pluralistic set-up has also reportedly served the purpose in this direction to some extent.

49. The Committee pointed out that in certain border areas outside the country Punjabi language is widely spoken and understood. It would, thus be advantageous if programmes directed at the viewers outside the country are prepared and telecast in Punjabi and other languages which are widely understood by those people. In reply, the CEO Prasar Bharti submitted that Prasar Bharati has accepted this position that complexion of the language is generally the same on both sides of the border. He assured that another review would be conducted to see whether any further refurbishing is required for Punjabi language programmes. He further added that even on the Kashmir Channel Prasar Bharati has been working on several languages.. Sensitivities of the population are taken care of on the border.

50. The Committee is of the view that the role of Press Information Bureau is very crucial since it plays central role in dissemination of information countering the hostile propaganda of some neighbouring countries. As such, the Committee is concerned to note that during 1999-2000 the outlay of Rs. 450.00 lakh projected by PIB was substantially curtailed to Rs. 210.00 lakh at approval stage which resulted in unsatisfactory performance. The Committee is perturbed to know that even the reduced outlay was not utilised fully during the last two years. However, the Committee observes that the attitude of the Ministry is very casual in this regard. It could not set up the PIB office at Itanagar. The Ministry should take the views of the Committee seriously and improve the pace of implementation of projects of such crucial importance.

51. The Committee notes with concern that during 2000-2001 the projected outlay of Rs. 200.00 lakh for Publications Division was sharply reduced to Rs. 97.48 lakh. Even the reduced outlay is not being utilised fully. Out of Rs. 7.00 lakh provided for vehicles only Rs. 0.85 lakh could be utilised. Evidently budgeting procedure has not been taken seriously. On the other hand, the representative of the Ministry submitted during evidence that their project of starting a magazine on 'Tender News' could not take off due to inadequate resources. The Committee takes a serious note of such conflicting attitudes and issues and strongly recommends that the Ministry should streamline and rationalise its system of financial allocation for individual projects.

52. The Committee appreciates the production of CD on Gandhiji by the Publications Division which contains 50 thousand pages on texts, books, letters of Gandhiji. It is a commendable effort. The Committee hopes that the Ministry would take up similar creative projects in hand in future.

53. The Committee observes with concern that the financial performance of DAVP was less than 50 percent during the first three years of the Ninth Plan. It could incur the expenditure of Rs. 270.00 lakh (44.97 percent) out of the outlay of Rs. 620.00 lakh. The Committee notes that DAVP has empaneled newspapers on the basis of circulation figures for the purpose of issuing advertisements. However, the Committee is at a loss to note that the Ministry has not formulated any guidelines to ascertain/verify the circulation figures claimed by newspapers. DAVP was dependent on the services of RNI, Audit Bureau of Circulation and Chartered Accountants in this regard. As such, the Committee observes that authenticity of circulation figures has been suspected by knowledgeable quarters at different points of time. The Committee feels that the Ministry did not pay any attention to the

concern expressed by the Committee last year. The Committee therefore, reiterates that the Ministry should take urgent steps to formulate detailed policy and guidelines in this respect and create some reliable agency to ensure that no person is able to corner advertisement on the basis of false circulation figures.

54. The Committee is also seriously perturbed to note that some journals are indulging in character assassination and scurrilous writing. In this respect also there is no machinery to regulate and discipline such journals and the Government is dependent on District authorities in this regard. The Committee desires that some mechanism be evolved to take such mischievous elements to the task.

55. The Committee views the role of Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) as very crucial as it imparts the required information to the masses and ensures their social and cultural development. Therefore, the Committee deplores the fact that the financial allocations which are so essential to expand the activities of DFP have been reduced continuously as the same were Rs. 255.91 lakh in 1998-99 and Rs. 211.00 lakh in 1999-2000. For 2000-2001 only Rs. 165.00 lakh have been allotted. The Committee also takes a serious note of the decline in financial as well as physical performance of DFP. The reduction has been explained in terms of a reduced purchase of films and taking no further expansion of the Directorate. The Committee is concerned to note that even the reduced outlay could not be fully utilised in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 for various reasons.

56. The Committee is gravely concerned to note that hostile anti-India propaganda has been going on Radio and Television from across the border and effective measures are required to be taken in this regard. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has drawn a strategy and giving effect to it. For J & K, a special package has been drawn up in this regard which is reported to be showing good results. The Committee would like the Ministry to take up such similar steps in regard to the entire border areas as early as possible.

57. The Committee notes that the propaganda being carried out from a neighbouring country has been very effective and it is being done in Punjabi language as it is understood in most part of the border areas. The Committee, therefore, desires that to counter the hostile propaganda, All India Radio and Doordarshan should also prepare software programmes in that language so that message conveyed in the programmes are widely understood.

Film Sector

(i) Films Division

58. Films Division has produced and released during 1999-2000, twenty seven films on various themes like 'Save the Environs for Future', 'Lal Bal Pal', 'Darkness of Terror' on brutal caste massacres in Bihar, 'Ae Vatan Tere Liye' on Kargil, 'Jawan Tujhe Salam' and 'Hamara Bharat' to quote a few.

59. The overall funds allotted for Films Division for Ninth Five Year Plan were Rs. 2450.00 lakh. Out of it Rs. 1305.39 lakh (53.28 percent) have been spent as on 31 January, 2000. The performance has been too poor in regard to creation of marketing and sales potential i.e. 32.05 percent and for market research 14.20 percent for the year 1999-2000. For developing and

equipping Films Division with video facilities, only Rs. 26.30 lakh have been spent as on 31 January, 2000 out of Rs. 157.00 lakh allotted under this head. The Ministry has stated that all the funds would be utilised by 31 March, 2000.

60. On being enquired about screening of documentary films produced by Films Division the Secretary submitted that the cinema hall owners did not find the screening of those documentaries as remunerative and as such did not like to screen the same willingly as they consider it commercially non-attractive. Therefore distributors did not like to receive those films and public was deprived to see the same. The Secretary I & B further explained that cinema hall owners were required to screen documentary films before starting their show, under the conditions of licence. The Cinema owners of Northern and Eastern regions had started raising objection to it. The matter was taken to Supreme Court which has given judgement in favour of Government and ruled that the Cinema owners would have to screen documentaries that educate public. As such, the screening of documentaries in Cinema halls has further started. It was further submitted by the Secretary I & B that the Ministry also proposes to hire cinema halls for two days in a week in various cities to screen relevant film documentaries. The Committee enquired whether the Ministry had sought assistance from film societies who can take up auditoria and screen such films, the Secretary appreciating the suggestion assured that he would exercise that as the first option. The Committee enquired about the number of films screened on Doordarshan Channels. The representative of Films Division submitted that the regional kendras like Trivandrum, Mumbai and Bangalore have screened documentaries of the Films Division. The CEO Prasar Bharati assured that he will go through the films produced by Films Division and if those would augment the channel variety and depth he would take up them for screening on National Channel.

(ii) National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)

61. The financial outlay for NFDC was Rs. 610.00 lakh for 1999-2000 which has been raised to Rs. 1070.00 lakh for 2000-2001. During Ninth Five Year Plan the total outlay made was Rs. 4550.00 lakh. Out of it the expenditure upto 31 January 2000 was Rs. 1535.00 lakh (33.74 percent). The major shortfalls were in case of construction of theatres where the expenditure of Rs. 47.50 lakh only (17.59 percent) have been incurred out of Rs. 270.00 lakh provided for the purpose and in case of import of films the budget provisions made were Rs. 1100.00 lakh and the expenditure incurred was Rs. 194.95 lakh (17.72 percent). On the physical side 44 films (39.28 percent) were produced against the target of 112, 9 theatres (40.28 percent) constructed against the target of 22 percent and 265 films (38.97 percent) were imported against the target 680. The achievement of NFDC in relation to Direct Export of Films was to the value of Rs. 183.00 lakh during 1998-99 against the target of Rs. 150.00 lakh. It has declined to Rs. 75.00 lakh during 1999-2000 against the target of Rs. 175.00 lakh. The reason for it as explained by the Ministry in reply to a query by the Committee was the opening up of the export market and launching of several Satellite Channels for popular films by people of Indian origin covering Europe, Africa and North America. The corporation could not undertake exports to its traditional buyers like Iran and Sri Lanka due to non-payment of earlier consignment.

(iii) Childrens Film Society of India (CFSI)

62. The Budget Estimate for CFSI (Plan) was Rs. 560.00 lakh for 1998-99 however the actual expenditure was only Rs. 349.74 lakh. For 1999-2000 Rs. 460.00 lakh were provided. The funds

(plan) have been raised to Rs. 650.00 lakh for 2000-2001. For the Ninth Plan Rs. 2800.00 lakh were allotted out of which the expenditure/incurred was Rs. 803.94 lakh (28.71 %) as on 31 January, 2000. The major shortfalls were production/purchase of films for children. The outlay was Rs. 1585.00 lakhs the expenditure incurred has been Rs. 591 lakh (37.32%). The reasons given for shortfalls are stated to be non availability of good stories, lack of space required for shooting and hostile weather. Similarly Rs. 800.00 lakh allotted for construction of complex for CFSI could not be utilised due to non-availability of space. On modernisation only Rs. 5.57 lakh have been spent against the outlay Rs. 45.00 lakh, on Audience Research Rs. 13.84 lakh could be spent out of Rs. 45.00 lakh.

63. During 1999-2000 the expenditure incurred on 21 January, 2000 was Rs. 288.16 lakh out of the outlay of Rs. 650.00 lakh. The Committee desired to know the reasons for under utilisation of funds. In reply, the CEO CFSI submitted during evidence that till date CFSI has completed 173 films. They have joined hands even with private TV channels like Sahara for exhibition of their films. Besides, they have made a package of 15 of their outstanding films and distributed the same to schools. The society intended to cover all the schools, however, there was a difficulty with municipality schools because they did not have VCR facility. The CEO CFSI further informed the Committee that most of those films were produced through outside producers. In addition, the society purchased a couple of films from abroad and dubbed the same in various languages.

64. The Committee enquired about the proposal of producing TV serials short-animation films, the number of dubbed version and production of short films etc. in which area the performance of the society during last year was zero. The representative of CFSI submitted that during this year the society has produced three films. In response to another enquiry the representative submitted that not a single film was screened on Doordarshan except 'Kabhi Pass Kabhi Fail'. He was struggling for it but even the awarded films were not screened. The CEO Prasar Bharati when asked about it, submitted that Doordarshan had agreed to screen three Films of CFSI, but the society expected that Doordarshan should pay royalty to it for screening their films. He continued to add that Doordarshan has to sacrifice telecast fee and also give a time slot and access to large number of viewers. The attitude of the society should not have been so commercial.

65. In response to query about timing of screening the films the representative of the society submitted that at least with the private channels they had a proper slot suitable to be watched by children. He further submitted that they were negotiating with Zee TV, commercial theatres and Nandan for commercial screening of their films.

66. The Committee notes that financial performance of Films Division during the first three years of the Ninth Plan has been about 50 percent. It was able to utilise only Rs. 1305.39 lakh out of Rs. 2450.00 lakh sanctioned to it. In respect of creating marketing and sales potential, the performance was too dismal. It was 32.05 per cent and 14.20 per cent respectively. The performance has fallen miserably short of budget amount during 1999-2000 in respect of development of video facilities. The expenditure incurred in this regard was merely Rs 26.30 lakh against the outlay of Rs. 157.00 lakh. The Committee takes a serious note of it.

67. The Committee draws some satisfaction from the fact that Supreme Court has given its ruling in favour of the Government in relation to screening of documentaries produced by Films Division in private cinema halls. The Committee also recommends that the Ministry

should encourage film societies to screen documentaries with social message.

68. The Committee however, takes a serious note of the fact that Doordarshan has not screened any documentary produced by the Films Division on the National Channel. Only a few documentaries have been screened at regional channels. The Films Division was set up with the specific purpose of producing documentaries and short films for public information, education and cultural development. The Division has been producing about 26 films each year in various languages besides Hindi. The Committee strongly recommends that good films produced by the Films Division, which give specific and acceptable message to the society be screened on the Doordarshan channels regularly, even if they are perceived to be not commercially viable. The Committee is of the view that the programmes on the National Channel should not be decided upon only on the basis of their commercial viability and the same should not be the only yardstick. Films produced by the Films Division, a unit of the Ministry should not be denied screening on the National Channel. Doordarshan is certainly expected to be self-sufficient financially and should be making adequate profits but there seems to be an over-emphasis on the commercial aspects, even ignoring the primary objectives of providing information and education apart from entertainment. The success of Doordarshan cannot be measured only by profit it earns but also to the extent it fulfills the national objectives. Competition with the private sector should be more on quality and intrinsic value of the programmes and not on the quantum of profit alone.

It is a matter of grave concern that many of the films have not been screened at all. The Committee would like to be apprised of those films and the steps being taken to screen them on Doordarshan and at Cinema Houses. The films produced by the Films Division, must get priority over programmes produced elsewhere.

69. The Committee notes that the financial performance of NFDC during Ninth Plan was much below expectation. It could incur expenditure of Rs. 1535.00 lakh only (33.74 per cent) out of the outlay of Rs. 4550.00 lakh. The major shortfalls are in crucial sectors like construction of theatres and import of films. Here the performance was 17.59 percent and 17.72 percent respectively. The export of films has declined from Rs. 183.00 lakh (in value) during 1998-99 to Rs. 75.00 lakh (in value) during 1999-2000. The reasons advanced by the NFDC like opening up of export market and launching of private satellite by people of Indian origin abroad are totally unconvincing and rather reflect on the inefficiency and complacency of NFDC. The Committee recommends that the inherent factors responsible for unsatisfactory performance be identified and remedial action taken and the Committee be apprised of the same.

70. The Committee notes with concern that the financial performance of Children's Film Society of India (CFSI) during Ninth Plan was much below the average. It could utilise only Rs. 803.94 lakh (28.71 percent) out of the outlay of Rs. 2800.00 lakh on 31 January, 2000. The reasons advanced by it like non-availability of good stories, required space for shooting and hostile weather gives an impression as if there is dearth of talents in the country. Besides, it also reflects a casual attitude of CFSI. In case of modernisation and Audience Research the financial performance has been equally dismal i.e. the

expenditure incurred is Rs. 5.57 lakh, and Rs. 13.84 lakh respectively against the outlays of Rs. 45.00 lakh each in the respective case

71. The Committee feels happy at the fact that CFSI was distributing cassettes of their films in schools. This activity requires to be encouraged and stepped up. The impediment like non-availability of VCRs in municipality schools should be resolved by taking up the matter with the concerned authorities. The Committee takes a serious note of the fact that expect one no other film of CFSI was screened on the National Channel. Doordarshan should ensure screening of adequate number of CFSI films on Doordarshan on a slot suitable to the children. The Committee reiterates its observation as made with regard to screening of films produced by Films Division.

North-East

All India Radio (North-East)

72. The Ministry has submitted to the Committee in a written reply that a special plan costing Rs. 92 crores to strengthen coverage in the North-East was prepared and submitted to Planning Commission. However, due to paucity of resources, the Commission has asked the Ministry to submit smaller proposals. The existing AIR coverage in North East is given below.

Sl. No.	State	%age of area	%age of population
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	98	99
2.	Assam	92	97
3.	Manipur	69	88
4.	Meghalaya	96	96
5.	Mizoram	89	92
6.	Nagaland	96	97
7.	Tripura	99	99

73. The National average was 90 percent area-wise and 97.3 percent population wise whereas overall coverage of North East was 91.29 percent area-wise and 95.43 percent population wise.

Doordarshan (North-East)

74. Doordarshan is reported to be having 10 studios and a number of HPTs/VLPTs, in the North East and a programme production centre and a Satellite Earth Station at Guwahati. All the primary transmitters were linked to Delhi via Satellite for relay of national service programmes. The expenditure incurred there during 1997-98 was Rs. 27.93 crore and during 1998-99 Rs. 28.58 crore. For 2000-2001 Rs. 29.00 crore have been allotted. Asked about the lower coverage of North East representative of the Ministry stated that the terrain in the North East being hilly there are shadow areas within the coverage zone of existing transmitters requiring setting up of more transposers and VLPTs. The work relating to installation of around 20 HPTs, LPTs VLPTs

and transposers were being under taken forexpansion of primary coverage and DD-II service. The existing Doordarshancoverage in North Eastern region has been given below.

75. The existing coverage of Doordarshanin North East is 53.2 percent area wise and 81.5 percent population wiseagainst the National coverage 74.8 per cent area-wise 87.9 percent population-wise.

76. The Committee pointed out that thepeople in the North East were not provided the facility of Cable network,besides, the coverage was very poor in border areas like J&K and NorthEast and that the people of those areas were not able to get even the NationalNews and the activities of the Government and desired to know the stepsbeing initiated by the Ministry to provide enhanced DD coverage to NorthEast. In reply the CEO Prasar Bharati submitted that there was a problemof sparse population and scattered locations particularly in ArunachalPradesh and in Nagaland and Manipur. The CEO assured that the Ministrywas working on a special programme for North East as in case of J&K. The Committee enquired whether the Government was considering to starta North East channel. The CEO submitted that the same was in the pipeline.

77. The Committee pointed out that eventhough the coverage of Doordarshan in North East was 68 percent as perfigures of the Ministry but in actual practice it was only 45 percent.Besides the AIR coverage in Nagaland though is stated to be 96 percentyet in practice it may be very low as certain parts of Mokokchung and Tuensangwere not properly covered. In reply the representative of the Ministrysubmitted that AIR has a major station at Kohima with an old transmitterof 50 KW. It is planned to replace that with an imported 100 KW transmitterfor which building modifications were underway. It was targeted to be completedin 2001-2002. The representative further submitted that there was interferencefrom the nearby transmitters of the foreign countries resulting in shrinkageof DD coverage and blank spots. To overcome the problem the Ministry hasplanned additional relay centres. They have installed a SW Transmitteralso at Kohima to supplement coverage.

78. In response to a query of the Committeewhether upgradation of the transmitter at Kohima would meet all the requirementsof the North East, the resrepresentative of the Ministry submitted that theupgradation could retain the existing coverage of the existing transmitters.The Secretary I & B, admitted that the coverage in North East was belownational average and the Ministry was conscious of that. In view of the sensitivity at the international borders in that area it needed substantialstrengthening. He further assured that to meet the situation a specialpackage as in case of J&K would be submitted to Cabinet for approvaland the implementation of the same would strengthen the coverage in NorthEast to the National average or even higher.

79. The Committee takes a seriousnote of the fact that in reality the AIR coverage in the North East ismuch below the national average. The national average is 90 percent area-wiseand 97.3 percent population wise whereas, it is 91.29 percent and 95.43percent respectively as per the figures of the Ministry. Similarly, DDcoverage of North East is also very poor, which is 53.2 percent area-wiseand 81.5 percent population wise as compared to national average of 74.8percent and 87.9 percent respectively. However, in actual practice a largepart of North- East is not getting clear signals because of hilly terrainsand are not able to get even national news and the infrastructural installationthere are inadequately manned. The Committee hopes that the proposed specialpackage for the North East

assured by the Ministry as in case of J & K would be finalised soon and implemented as a special programme to bring the North East at par with the national average. It is pertinent to note that in view of the hostile activities on borders, these areas are vulnerable and must be strengthened at the earliest.

NEW DELHI;
CHATTERJEE,
13 April, 2000

24 Chaitra, 1922 (Saka)
on Communications

SOMNATH

Chairman,
Standing Committee