

TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2001)

(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
& BROADCASTING

WORKING OF PRASAR BHARATI

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2001)

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

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3. Shri Mahendra Baitha
4. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
5. Prof. Dukha Bhagat
6. Shri Tara Chand Bhagora
7. Shri Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary
8. Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary
9. Shri T. Govindan
10. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
11. Shri Jawahar Lal Jaiswal
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13. Dr. C. Krishnan
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27. Shrimati D.M. Vijaya Kumari
28. Shri Vinay Katiyar
29. Shri A. Krishnaswamy
30. Shri G. Ganga Reddy

(iv)

Rajya Sabha

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32. Shri Balkavi Bairagi
33. Shri Shatrughan Sinha
34. Shri Narendra Mohan
35. Shri Balbir K. Punj
36. Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murthy
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43. Shrimati Kum Kum Rai
44. Dr. Dasari Narayana Rao
45. Shri Rajiv Shukla

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P. D. T. Achary — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri S. K. Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri Bhupesh Kumar — *Assistant Director*

REPORT

WORKING OF PRASAR BHARATI

Introductory

The Broadcasting Media has far reaching impact on public mind, as such, it must be utilised for promoting public good by ensuring plurality and diversity of views and ideas to enable the citizens to arrive at informed judgement on issues of concern to them. Parliament therefore, felt that it was imperative that the broadcasting media should be under the control of the public and operated/regulated by a public statutory corporation, an independent/autonomous public authority representing all sections and interests in the society and reflecting the true spirit of autonomy, accountability and national needs and aspirations. Accordingly, the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) an autonomous statutory body was set up under the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990 with the primary objective, amongst other things, to organise and conduct public broadcasting services to inform, educate and entertain the public and ensure balanced development of broadcasting on Radio and Television. Thus, Prasar Bharati is expected to provide, media content of the highest quality that will empower and enlighten the citizens of India, and audience outside the country, through original and relevant programmes which inform, educate and entertain whilst ensuring a sizable audience and reach.

Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990

2. The Prasar Bharati Act was enacted in 1990 to establish Prasar Bharati but came into force in 1997. The Act has been amended four times through Amendments/Ordinances since its enforcement. However, the Act has not been fully implemented. Even a full-fledged Prasar Bharati Board, as per the provisions of the statute, has not been constituted to deal with the superintendence, control and overall policy matters.

Prasar Bharati Board

3. Section 3 (5) of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990 provides for the Constitution of a 15 member Prasar Bharati Board with composition as under:

Chairman

Executive Member (Chief Executive Officer)

Member (Finance)

Member (Personnel)

Six part time Members

Director General (Akashvani-Ex Officio)

Director General (Doordarshan-Ex Officio)

One representative of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Two representatives of the employees of the Corporation.

4. The Prasar Bharati Board is vested with the general superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Prasar Bharati which exercises all such powers under the Prasar Bharati Act. The present Board was constituted on 23 November, 1997. Out of 15 Members, there are 11 vacancies. The affairs of Prasar Bharati are being conducted by 2 Part time members, one Additional Secretary who is representative of the Ministry of I & B and another Additional Secretary of the Ministry who is holding additional charge of the Executive Member and is designated as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The office of Chairman is lying vacant since 27 June, 1998. One of the part time Members resigned on 15 May, 1998 and another (Prof. Abid Husain) is said to have sought to be relieved in June 2001. Earlier two part-time Members were selectively retired on 22 November, 1999. Their vacancies have not been filled so far. The posts of DG AIR and DG Doordarshan are also lying vacant since June, 1999 and January 1998 respectively as the rules for their recruitment have not been formulated so far and for that reason these vacancies are there since the Act came into force. The two representatives of the employees of the Corporation (to be elected by the employees themselves) have also never been co-opted as the Review Committee set up by the Government suggested that two employees' representatives should not be Members of the Board.

5. The present Board is stated to be consisting of only two part time members, and one representative of the Ministry. The functions of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are being looked after by an Additional Secretary in the Ministry.

6. The Committee enquired about the steps taken to fill up the post of the Executive Member (Chief Executive Officer) as contemplated by Prasar Bharati Act, which is lying vacant since August 1998 and duties of the same were being discharged on ad-hoc basis by an Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Secretary I & B stated in evidence that there was an Executive Member but he was not selected on a regular basis. The posts of Member (Finance) and Member (Personnel) were lying vacant since the beginning. The Committee also enquired about filling up the posts of two part-time Members which were lying vacant since November, 1999 when two members were made to retire from the Board. The Secretary I & B in evidence, stated that in 1999 an attempt to effect amendments in the Prasar Bharati Act was stalled. However, there was a change in Government and political situation was not settled, so no progress could be made, till the elections, in filling up these posts. In reply to query in this regard the Secretary I & B stated that the present Government wanted to fill up the posts of two Director Generals-AIR and DD and the posts of Member (Personnel) and Member (Finance). He further submitted that a Review Committee was set up by the Government to examine various aspects including the organisational set up of Prasar Bharati Board. The Government was awaiting the report which resulted in delay in formulation of Recruitment Rules. The report submitted in May, 2000 has been examined in consultation with various interested parties i.e. Members of the Review Committee, Members of Prasar Bharati Board and employees associations. The reasons for delay are stated to be non-formulation of Rules viz. non-settlement of the issue of salary and perks of the Chairman and Chief Executive Member and uncertainty for about two years in regard to certain basic aspects of the functioning of Prasar Bharati because the four ordinances issued by the Government, could not be converted into law by Parliament and had lapsed.

7. The Secretary, I & B further stated in evidence that recently the Ministry had approached the Selection Committee headed by the Vice President of India for selection of Prasar Bharati Board. However, the Selection Committee in turn wanted to be apprised of the terms and conditions for appointment of the Chairman, Executive Member and other Members of the Board before proceeding further in the matter. The rules pertaining to terms and conditions of the appointment of Chairman, Executive Member and other Members of the Board have since been finalised and notified on 10 November, 2000. The nominee of the President of India on the Selection Committee has also been decided. Hon'ble Vice President of India was requested on 10 November, 2000 to recommend names for the positions of Chairman and three part-time Members, however, no response has been received so far. The Ministry further stated that intention of the Government has been to co-opt Board Members in two or three instalments, after a gap of a month or two to avoid sudden discontinuity in the management of Prasar Bharati.

8. On being enquired about filling up the posts of DG (AIR) and DG (DD) which are lying vacant since August, 1998 and June, 1999 respectively, the Secretary I & B stated that under the Act, the DGs position is to be filled up by the Prasar Bharati Board. The Prasar Bharati Act envisages a recruitment and promotion system to be created within Prasar Bharati. Such rules/system, which would enable them to fill up those posts have not been finalised. He further submitted that the matter was under active consideration. The rules for Members Personnel and Finance proposed by the Prasar Bharati Board have been examined by the Government, and the concurrence of the Department of Personnel and Training has been taken soon and thereafter Ministry intended to further approach the Selection Committee for recommending selection of candidates for those posts. In response to a query, the Secretary I & B stated that process of formulation of Rules had started at the beginning of the year 2000. The Rules pertaining to appointment of DG (AIR) and DG (Doordarshan) would be finalised and notified in the next few days (from 5 September, 2000). The CEO, Prasar Bharati supplemented that after finalisation of Rules the appointment of DGs would take place within 4 to 6 weeks.

9. The Committee enquired why Prasar Bharati Act was not implemented inspite of the clarification given by the Attorney General that the Prasar Bharati Act remains in full force and operative inspite of the lapse of the ordinances. The Secretary I & B admitted that it was not a satisfactory state of affairs and indeed there has been delay in implementation of the Act, although attempts to rectify deficiencies have been made.

10. The Committee finds that Government has failed to implement Prasar Bharati Act enacted in 1990 in letter and spirit. Though the Act was passed by the Parliament in 1990, it came into force as late as in 1997. Many provisions of the Act, like constitution of Prasar Bharati Board consisting of 15 Members representing various interests has not been done till date simply for the reasons that there has been inordinate delay in formulating rules governing conditions of service of Chairman and Members of the Board, and in settling the issues of salary and perks of the Chairman and Chief Executive Member of the Board. Further, formulation of rules for recruitment of Member Personnel, Member Finance, Director Generals of AIR and Doordarshan who have to be on the Prasar Bharati Board, was delayed unusually which is to say the least totally surprising. There have been four attempts to amend the Act by the successive Governments since its enforcement through ordinances which lapsed. There was also confusion because of the constitution of the Review Committee also by the Government. Although the Attorney General of India had clarified that Prasar Bharati Act remains in full force and operative despite the lapsing of the ordinances, the Ministry failed to constitute the Board which is a matter of grave concern. As a result of unexplained inaction on the part of Government, there are now only two part-time Members on the Prasar Bharati Board who alongwith two nominees of the Ministry are "running" its affairs. The way two non-official members were retired in 1999 inspite of many vacancies on the Board appears to be intriguing and has not been explained to the satisfaction of the Committee. The Committee takes a serious view of the fact that the posts of Chairman, four part time Members, DG (AIR) and DG (DD) are laying vacant since June 1998, May 1998, November 1999, June 1999 and January, 1998 respectively and that the Government has not yet appointed even the Member (Finance), Member (Personnel) and the two representatives of the employees. Moreover, the function of the Chief Executive Officer is being looked after by an officer of the rank of Additional Secretary/Special Secretary on ad hoc basis and no regular CEO has been posted. The casual approach of the Government in the matter is evident from the fact that the Selection Committee was not approached for the last one year (till 10 November, 2000) when the subject was taken up for examination by this Committee and the finalisation of terms and conditions of appointment has been delayed on one pretext or another. The Committee strongly recommends that the process of filling up of vacancies in the Prasar Bharati Board be expedited as the truncated Board hardly can function effectively and is incapable of taking urgent and vital decisions in the interest of Prasar Bharati and can hardly be considered as an authority as contemplated by the Act.

Sengupta Committee on the constitution of Prasar Bharati Board

11. The Sengupta Committee (appointed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in December 1995) in its Report, has observed that a part-time Chairman as envisaged in the original Act, is not advisable and a full time Chairman is essential in the interest of ensuring true autonomy and in directing and coordinating the massive diversification in electronic media in the formative years. It has also strongly felt that the functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive should be combined in one functionary namely the full time Chairman. Sengupta Committee has not favoured the election of two representatives of the employees on the Board. It was of the view that the election process involving the employees of All India Radio and Doordarshan in election of the two representatives is sure to introduce a lot of complexities, legal and otherwise, which might vitiate the entire process and jeopardise the free functioning of the Board. It observed that the experience of having workers' representative on the Board of several public sector enterprises has not been known to be successful. As a way out the Sengupta Committee has suggested that the President may appoint one trade union leader of eminence and standing as part-time Member of the Board. Besides, an appropriate scheme of employees participation in management should be devised and implemented by the Corporation below the Board level.

Review Committee on Prasar Bharati Board

12. Another Committee, known as the Review Committee was appointed on 22 November 1999, by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to carry out a comprehensive review of the working of Prasar Bharati. It has recommended that Prasar Bharati Board should deal primarily with the overall matters of policy. On the accountability and structure of the Prasar Bharati, the Review Committee has recommended that Prasar Bharati, the Public Service Broadcaster, should be independent of and distinct from Government. It must play host to informed debate, provide space for alternative and dissenting view points, and should be a voice for the voiceless. Its structure, financing and personnel policies should be such that it must not be at the mercy of or vulnerable to pressures from the Government of the day. On the other hand, it need not give in to the temptation of maximising commercial revenue by broadcasting mindless programmes. At the same time it (a public service broadcaster) must be directly accountable to the public through their representative body, namely, the Parliament for policy and strategic decisions.

13. During the evidence, the Committee enquired about the view taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Review Committee submitted to the Government on 20 May, 2000. The Secretary, Ministry of I & B, in reply, submitted that the Report has been discussed internally within the Ministry, with the Members of the Review Committee, the Prasar Bharati Board and also with the employees associations. The Government was also in the process of seeking the advice and guidance of the Consultative Committee of Parliament. On being asked about the Membership of the Board as recommended by the Review Committee, the CEO, Prasar Bharati, submitted that the Review Committee has recommended amendments to Section 12 (2) (i) of the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990 to the effect that the Board should not have proposed two representatives of the employees, and there should be one wholetime member on the Board (the CEO) and others including Member (Finance), Member (Personnel) and both DGs of AIR and Doordarshan should be in the Management Council, which should be the second tier after the Board. As such, the Board would consist of the Chairman, Six Members, CEO and a representative of the Government.

14. The Committee asked whether it is for this reason that posts of Director Generals AIR and Doordarshan were not filled up for a considerable period. In reply, the Secretary I & B stated that it was not so and that "tangible action" has been taken by the Government to fill up these positions.

15. The Committee enquired about the reasons for not filling up the positions of two representatives of the employees of the Corporation on Prasar Bharati Board as provided in Prasar Bharati Act, 1990. The Secretary, Ministry of I & B stated that the Ministry has been planning to fill up the posts of Official Members first in the next, two or three months and the non-official (part-time) posts would be filled up later. On Review Committee's recommendation for exclusion of representatives of employees, the Secretary I & B submitted that the Expert Committee was within its rights to recommend abolition of those posts, however, it is for the Government to accept or not to accept the same. He further stated that the Government has not taken a final view on the recommendations of the Review Committee.

16. The Committee finds that the Review Committee on Prasar Bharati Board has made certain recommendations on status, rights and functions (duties) of the Prasar Bharati Board. It has been informed that the Government has not yet taken any decision on the same. The Committee is unable to see any reason for the proposed exclusion of the representatives of employees, Member (Finance), Member (Personnel), DG (AIR) and DG (DD), from the Prasar Bharati Board. The Committee trusts that the Governments will take a final view on the recommendations of the Review Committee only after exhaustive consultation with this Committee and the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of I & B and Prasar Bharati in the overall interest of the Organisation.

Objectives of Prasar Bharati

17. In the discharge of its duty, the Corporation is required to be guided by objectives stated in section 12 (1) of Prasar Bharati Act, 1990. As per Section 12 (1), the primary duty of Prasar Bharati is to organise and conduct public broadcasting services to inform, educate and entertain the public and to ensure a balanced development of broadcasting on radio and television. Besides, it shall safeguard the Citizen's right to be informed freely, truthfully and objectively on all matters of public interest, national or international and presenting a fair and balanced view for free flow of information including contrasting views without advocating any opinion or ideology of its own. In addition the Corporation is to provide adequate coverage to diverse cultures, languages and promote social justice, combat exploitation and inequity and other social evils besides promoting national integration. The Committee enquired, about the priorities of the Prasar Bharati keeping in view¹ the three components of its duty i.e. education, information and entertainment, and also the time allotted/utilised for educational, entertainment and information programmes specifically on DD National Channel. In reply, the Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati stated that the time allotted to education programmes has been 18 percent, information programmes 35 percent and for entertainment programmes, which is its revenue earning component, 46 percent. He further submitted that on regional services, the time allotted to educational programmes was 32 percent, in respect of information programmes it was 31.3 percent and on entertainment programmes 36.6 percent. On the news channel, programmes are stated to be mostly information and education based.

18. The Committee sought further clarification about the time allotted to educational programmes as only 18 percent of the total time was being given to it on National Channel. In reply, the CEO has stated that between 0615 to 0700 hours, the UGC programmes are being telecast, from 0900 hours to 0930 hours Doordarshan is telecasting seven major educational programmes *viz.* "Earth Matters" on environment, "Mind Body and Soul" on alternative medicines and health "Image Science" and "India on Line" on computer software and hardware. Further, Doordarshan is also telecasting "Word Review this Week" and "Centre Stage" a cultural review. These are stated to be information programmes, being telecast weekly.

19. The Committee notes with concern that Prasar Bharati has been telecasting educational programmes for 18 per cent of its total telecast time and spends 46 per cent time on programmes on entertainment and 35 percent on information. The programmes on entertainment earn revenue for the Corporation. However, the Committee is of the opinion that Prasar Bharati should give more weightage to education and information programmes and thus fulfill its obligation as a public service broadcaster. There is need to balance the role of Prasar Bharati as a public broadcaster and revenue earner. Excessive emphasis on revenue generation disregarding its role as a public broadcaster will be contrary to its avowed objectives. The Committee desires that a proper balance should be maintained in telecast of programmes so that Prasar Bharati plays its role as a public broadcaster consistent with the necessity of raising adequate resources without affecting the quality of programmes.

Allotment of News slots/Programme slots

20. The Committee had received a number of complaints about favouritism and collusion of Prasar Bharati officials in allotment of time slots to private producers. In certain representations it was alleged that a particular producer with the connivance and active collusion of senior officers of Prasar Bharati and Director DDK, Kolkata has concerned 13 programmes out of 25 programmes telecast daily. The details of slots allotted and name of the programmes are given at Annexure I. It will be seen that total duration of time allotted to this producer is 9 hours daily on DD-1 and DD-7 Channels. Even news telecast which has to be an in-house production as per the guidelines in this regard has been allotted to this private producer in the garb of news and current affairs programme.

21. In this context, the Committee enquired about allotment of time slots to private producers at Doordarshan Kendras for telecast of sponsored news programmes. In reply, the Prasar Bharati informed that Kolkata Doordarshan, Kendra has been telecasting "Khas Khabar" (news bulletins) on DD-I at 6.00 p.m. and on DD-7 at 8.15 a.m., 2.00 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. The programme has been produced by a private company owned by one Shri Ramesh Gandhi which has been telecasting some other programmes like 'Janmabhumi', 'Suprabhat', 'Aaj Ke' and 'Mukho-Mukhi' etc. As regards the credentials of the Company, the Committee has been informed that the proposal for screening 'Janmbhumi' submitted by the company to Doordarshan Kendra, Kolkata was signed by the Director of the company who was an actress in Bengali films and had directed corporated films. The director of the serial has reportedly to his credit a number of films. The Committee has been further informed that it has been adjudged from the Television Rating Programme (TRP) that rating of the programmes produced by the private company had consistently secured the highest position for the last two years generating revenue of Rs. 11,24,69,617/- in a year from September, 1999 to August, 2000 for Doordarshan Kendra, Kolkata which has been higher than that of the programmes of other producers/agencies.

22. In response to a query during evidence about retaining Shri Ramesh Gandhi, owner of the Company on Governing Council of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) even after his premises were raided by Income Tax Department, the Prasar Bharati informed that the institute had not given any intimation to the Ministry regarding any raid on the premises of Shri Ramesh Gandhi and further action thereon by the Income Tax Department.

23. The Committee wanted to know the factual details about a litigation filed by the Company in Kolkata High Court against Prasar Bharati's order of stopping telecast of that programme. In reply, a representative of the Ministry submitted that litigation has been going on for a long time and the same has not reached any logical end. Secondly, there was a possibility of earning good revenue from the programme in question and withdrawal of the appeal by Prasar Bharati was permitted.

24. Asked about the reason for taking the issue to the court the witness stated that since Doordarshan had given notice to the producer of the cancellation of the programme, the producer in protest took the matter to the court and as such, Doordarshan also had to go to the court to defend its action. As the initial order was against it, the Doordarshan went on appeal to the high court. About one and a half years back, it was felt that there should be a dialogue with the producer. As such, there was an agreement outside the court between the Producer and the Doordarshan.

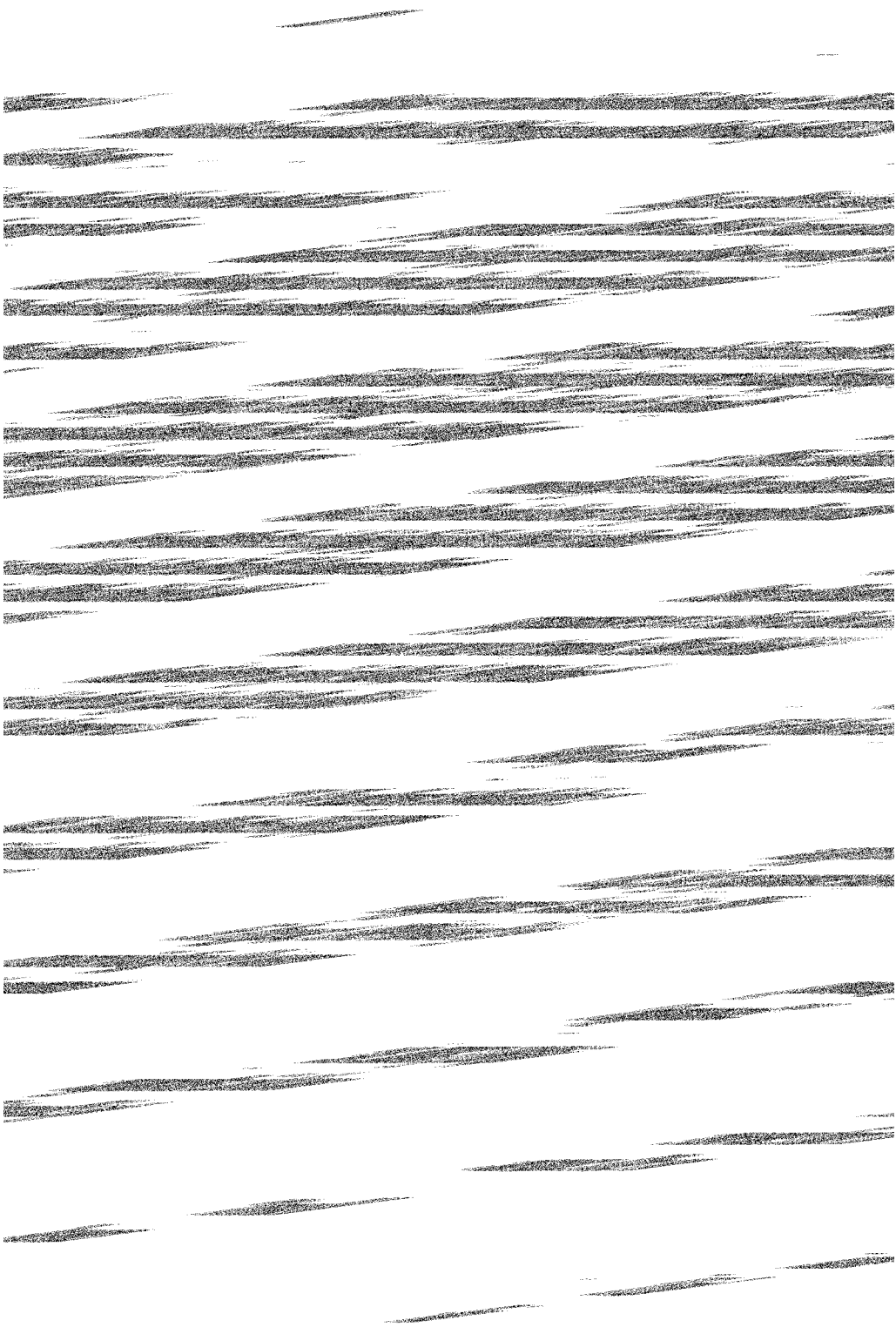
25. The Committee pointed out that representatives of Prasar Bharati could not answer convincingly to the queries raised by the Committee in its earlier meeting like factual basis of the case, the reasons for not pursuing the appeal vigorously, the reasons for its sudden withdrawal and the basis for outside settlement of the case and also the level at which the decision was taken. In reply, the CEO Prasar Bharati evaded answer by stating that the then DDG (Finance), the officer dealing with legal matters of Prasar Bharati, who was aware of the facts of the case, was not present before the Committee since he had to go to Mumbai on that day to file an appeal in the High Court there about a case of bank guarantee involving Rs. 50 crore.

26. The Committee further enquired the nature of the programme 'Khas Khabar' and whether the same was a news programme or a news based current affairs programme, the reasons for increasing its news bulletin from one slot of 20 minutes to 80 minutes and then giving the same to a private company. In response, DDG (Programmes) reiterated that the general impression about that programme (Khas Khabar) was that it was being received very well, the public relations and the general acceptability was very high as per the viewership ratings. The Ministry further submitted in a written reply that in the proposal of 'Khas Khabar' submitted by its producer to CEO Prasar Bharati, it was stated to be a news based current affairs programme and that this was in fact a news programme based on daily events rather than a programme on topical issues (current affairs) and dealt mostly with daily news items Prasar Bharati has further submitted that there were no guidelines to award programmes for telecast by private producers on Doordarshan. As per convention, private producers are allowed/invited to produce current affairs programmes for Doordarshan, but News Bulletins are generally not permitted exception being 'Aaj Tak' on DD-II and 'Khas Khabar' on DD-I and DD-7 at Kolkata. However, only Khas Khabar is allowed to telecast

news bulletin on DD-1 Continuing further the Ministry stated that however, Prasar Bharati Board in its meeting dated 11 March, 1999 had decided that private producers would not be permitted to produce and telecast news bulletins on National or Regional Channels of Doordarshan. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has also submitted that earlier 'Khas Khabar' was a 20 minutes (10+10) programme telecast from Monday to Sunday at 1800 hours to 1820 hours and repeated from 2130 hours to 2150 hours everyday w.e.f. 21 December, 1999. Its duration was increased from 20 minutes to 29 minutes w.e.f. 18 September, 2000 (after the first evidence on the subject was taken by the Committee on 5 September, 2000) *vide* Directorate's approval letter No. DCS/Khas Khabar/RLSS/99/3511 dated 14 September, 2000 and repeat everyday from 0815 hours to 0835 hours.

27. The Committee enquired how a private producer was being allowed to telecast newsbased programme at Kolkata DDK contrary to general policy of the Prasar Bharati. In reply, Prasar Bharati in a written note stated that on instructions from the Directorate, DDK Kolkata has issued notices to the producers to terminate 'Khas Khabar' telecast at 0815 hours and 1400 hours and telecast of 'Mukhomukhi' at 2200 hours w.e.f. 16.10.2000. The notices were also stated to have been issued to revise the agreement for one year only w.e.f. 16.10.2000 in respect of 'Jonmabhumi' telecast at 1820 hours and 2030 hours. 'Khas Khabar' at 1800 hours and 2130 hours and 'Suprabhat' at 0659 hours. However, all the above referred notices have been challenged by the concerned producer namely Rainbow Production of Shri Ramesh Gandhi in the Hon'ble High Court Kolkata and the Hon'ble Court has stayed termination of the same.

28. The Ministry in a written note dated 8 December, 2000, further stated that telecast of 'Khas Khabar' was permitted to add variety and to introduce an element of competition keeping in view the reservations expressed by the News Division of Doordarshan in starting news bulletin of a private producer. The CEO placed the matter for consideration of Prasar Bharati Board on its meeting on 23 September, 1998. The Board deferred the discussion on that item. In the meantime the Company had obtained an injunction order dated 22 September, 1998 restraining Prasar Bharati to take any further steps in the matter. The DDK Kolkata filed a Review Petition in Kolkata High Court on 23 September, 1998 which was rejected. The Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by Prasar Bharati Board in Supreme Court on 14 October 1998 was also dismissed. On a notice served DDK Kolkata to the producer on 27 March, 1999, to take off the programme 'Khas Khabar', the company approached Kolkata High Court on 31 March, 1999 and



“it would be appreciated if the producer is requested to withdraw the petition pending before the Hon’ble High Court, so that the commercial terms and conditions of sponsorship could be revised further to the mutual advantage to both the parties.”

32. DDG (C&S) termed the above suggestion as ‘commercially very important and urgent’. In the Memorandum of Settlement the Company has mentioned,

“their programme was approved as a ‘News Based Current Affairs Programme’ and the present presentation/style of the same was by and large similar to ‘Aaj Tak’ and they would not change/modify the same, at any point of time in future even after the withdrawal of the Writ-Petition.”

33. The Committee enquired whether two repeats of news bulletin ‘Khas Khabar’ were discontinued by DDK Kolkata on the basis of programme exigency alone and thereby prompting the party to go to court and obtain stay order. The Committee wanted to know how on the basis of a programme exigency a programme could be stopped permanently. In reply, the Secretary I & B stated that Government has come to know that a producer has somehow managed to get disproportionately large share of time of DDK Kolkata. The Government has asked an officer to enquire into each single case how such programme was commissioned, how it continued and at whose authority. That report has been made available only a few days back.

34. The Committee further learnt that in one of the programmes of ‘Khas Khabar’ news telecast from DDK Kolkata, Kashmir has been described as ‘India Occupied Kashmir’. The Committee desired to know the facts and also the action taken against the producer of the programme for factually wrong statement made over Doordarshan. In reply, the Ministry made available to the Committee transcripts of the news bulletins of ‘Khas Khabar’, which were different news items described as repeats by the Ministry. In one of the news items dated 21 November, 2000 announcing the news about the decision of Government of unilateral ceasefire, on terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir, the State of J & K was described as ‘India Occupied Kashmir’. The Committee wanted the Government to conduct a proper inquiry to find out how such wrong and misleading information about the territorial integrity of the national was telecast by an Indian broadcaster and that too in a government owned channel. The CEO Prasar Bharati

stated in evidence that the inquiry report on 'Khas Khabar' was received on 22 November, 2000. The matter has been taken up at the Prasar Bharati Board on 7 December, 2000. The Board has taken up a decision that as far as 'Khas Khabar' was concerned it stood by the earlier resolution taken on 11 March, 2000 that news bulletins should be telecast by Doordarshan and no private producer should be allowed to produce and telecast news on national or regional channels. The CEO added that the Board has concluded that 'Khas Khabar' which was being telecast and updated four times a day on DD-7, has ceased to be 'news and current affairs programme' and that it has become a 'news bulletin'. The transcript of the programme also showed that the programme contained more of hard news than news analysis. Under these circumstances, that programme has fallen under the prohibited category and it must be discontinued forthwith. The Board noted the fact the agreements executed for the various time-slots between Doordarshan and the private company has a clear provision for termination of agreements with 15 days notice. It decided that the notice for termination may be issued and substitute arrangements made. The Board felt that notwithstanding the revenue loss, it would be important to ensure that 'news bulletins' are in-house productions so that Doordarshan is able to ensure a balanced plurality of views, news and information as an impartial newscaster.

35. The Committee further enquired the reasons for increasing the time slot of the programme from 15 minutes to 28 minutes whereas all other news bulletins in Bengali were of 10 minutes duration and why no opportunity was given to other commercial players and why the proposal for awarding the slot was not advertised? The Committee also wanted the Ministry to conduct a proper inquiry in the matter to see if any undue favour has been shown to the company for any consideration. The CEO Prasar Bharati stated in evidence that he would not defend each and every decision because some decisions have been wrong decisions also. The Prasar Bharati has taken cognizance of those decisions. He further added that the decision to increase the duration of the programme was taken with a commercial viewpoint. Initially Doordarshan was earning Rs. 34,000/- from the programme 'Khas Khabar' which was later on increased to Rs. 68,000/-. However, the Committee learnt that 'Khas Khabar' programme was deliberately, described by the producer as a news based current affairs programme to pay Doordarshan lower rate of Rs. 2700/- rather than Rs. 27000/- if it were described correctly as news programme.

36. Subsequently, the Committee has been informed that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting would fix responsibility in regard to lapses made in the awarding of slots to the private producer in violation of the norms and that certain disciplinary proceedings have been initiated to fix responsibility and taking action accordingly. The Committee has further been informed that certain litigations on which an adverse order has been issued and against which appeals have been preferred, notices have been issued to the parties concerned. The Committee has been provided with copies of notices which had already been stayed by the Kolkata High Court. However, the Committee was not informed that those notices were not operative notices since there was already a stay order on them.

37. The Committee pointed out to the total failure of the Prasar Bharati in handling the Court cases *vis-a-vis* the private company with regard to telecast of programmes on Kolkata DDK effectively and enquired how Prasar Bharati failed to protect its interest. In reply the CEO Prasar Bharati stated in evidence that these notices had come up before the Hon'ble High Court of Kolkata on 30 March, 2001 and the Court passed an order saying that no further action would be taken without taking leave of the Court on all the four notices. On receipt of the copy of the judgement on 9 April 2001, Prasar Bharati filed an appeal on 10 April 2001 before the Division Bench in respect of one of the notices. They were stated to be in the process of preparing appeal in respect of two other cases also.

38. The Committee enquired how Rainbow Productions and its associates were awarded thirteenth time slots daily for telecast of programmes like 'Suprabhat', 'Khas Khabar' (four times a day), Bengali feature film, 'Aaj Ke', 'Mukhomukhi' and 'Janmabhumi' Bengali feature film etc. on DD-I and DD-7 Bangla Channel without giving any chance to other producers, resulting in monopolisation of Doordarshan Bangla Channel by a single private producer. When the Committee confronted the CEO, Prasar Bharati with these details he stated that he would definitely take steps to end that dominance/monopolisation. Details of these programmes and time slots allotted are as under:—

Details of time slots sanctioned to Rainbow Productions and its associates at Kolkata DD-I & DD-7 (Bangla Channel)

- (i) Janmabhumi at 620 pm on DD I & 7 with repeat at 8.30 pm on DD7

The original sanction of this serial was for just 260 episodes. This has been converted to 260 weekly episodes of 5 parts each *i.e.* 1300 episodes in one go by getting the letter of allotment altered.

- (ii) **Khas Khabar (Bengali News) at 6 pm on DD1 and DD7, 8 am, 2pm & 9.30 pm on DD7**

This allotment was under litigation and Doordarshan spent lacs and lacs of Rupees in litigation trying to stop the telecast. The producer in league with officials of Doordarshan & Prasar Bharati has managed to keep this programme on air.

- (iii) **Kanakanjali at 1.30 pm on DD2 and DD7**

The original sanction of this serial was for just 260 episodes. Although, the applications by the producer was for only 260 episodes this has been converted to 260 weekly episodes of 5 parts each *i.e.* 1300 episodes in one go by getting the Original letter altered.

- (iv) **Sunday Bengali Feature Films at 4 pm on DD1 and DD7**

It is learnt that the average realization of the 65 weeks would work out to less than Rs. 6 lacs including HTA-Fulcrum and Rediffusion. According to an informed source on this account Doordarshan has already lost a revenue of Rs. 15.60 crores in these 65 weeks.

- (v) **Aajke at 6.55 pm on DD1**

It is learnt that Doordarshan used to sell the spots before the News at the rate of Rs. 18,000/- per ten seconds. The total time sold Daily by Doordarshan on an average was 70 sec. The revenue earnings for Doordarshan were Rs. $18000 \times 7 = \text{Rs.} 126,000$. Mr. Ramesh Gandhi paid to Doordarshan only Rs. 7,500/- for the same and so instead of earnings Rs. 126,000 per day DD earned Rs. 7,500/- The loss to the Kendra on this account in a year is Rs. 4.32 crores approximately.

- (vi) **Daily Bengali Features Films on DD-7 11.30 am to 2 pm & 10.30 pm to 1 am**

The allottees were supposed to commence telecast from 1st March but this did not happen. This is causing Doordarshan a loss of Rs. 1.80 lac per day (Rs. 1.04 lac bid amount + Rs. 76,000/- royalty being paid for the films telecast by DD) till the allottee commences telecast.

(vii) Suprabhat at 6.55 to 8.30 am on DD7

The Committee learnt that allotment of this slot was given to Mr. Ramesh Gandhi of Rainbow Productions without any notice to any other producer. After allotment of this slot 10 months back and after fixing up 1st January as commencement date of telecast this slot remained vacant for 1 month. Other Producers are not allowed to keep the slots vacant even for a day for the sake of loss of revenue. The amount of revenue lost in a month is Rs. 3,00,000/- approx.

(viii) Mukho Mukhi at 9.50 pm DD7

The allotment of this slot was given to Mr. Ramesh Gandhi without any notice to any other producer. After allotment of this slot 10 months back and after fixing up 1st January as commencement date of telecast, this slot had been lying vacant whereas other Producers are not allowed to keep the slot vacant even for a day for the sake of loss of revenue. The amount of revenue lost in a month is Rs. 3,00,000/- approx.

(ix) Ferry Ghat on DD-1 & DD-7 10.30 to 11 am

On 14 February, 2000 this slot was allotted to another Producers asking them to come on air from 21 February 2000. But on 17 February this slot withdrawn and allotted to Mr. Ramesh Gandhi under a new name on instructions from Directorate. The Original allottee of this slot has gone to the court. On 19 February the Court gave an interim order that the serial of the Original allottee be telecast. But the Kendra did not comply with the Court Order and the slot was kept vacant. The Kendra has been losing revenue @ Rs. 15000/- per day.

39. The Committee received a number of representation alleging that Prasar Bharati staff was favouring the producer of above mentioned programmes and other producers were being denied equal opportunity. The Committee pointed out that it was apparent that Doordarshan staff and officer were in collusion with the private company and enquired how the Company which was to furnish a bank guarantee for Rs. 54 lakhs was allowed to provide guarantee for only Rs. 60,000 for its 'Janmabhumi' programmes. In reply, the CEO Prasar Bharati assured the Committee that he would look into it. The producer of

the Company was made a Member of SRFTI board and was permitted to use the infrastructure and equipment of the Institute. The Secretary, I & B stated that it was correct that some persons—the owner of Rainbow Productions being one of them, had used the Institute's (SRFTI) infrastructure for making his own private programmes and also that the Institute had not framed rules or rates for that. He further submitted that the Ministry has written officially to the Chairman and the Director of SRFTI to take immediate remedial action in the matter. The Prasar Bharati, subsequently, furnished a written note to the Committee, in reply to a question, furnishing details of renting the equipments/facilities of SRFTI to private companies/individuals, alongwith rental rates and conditions for bring which is placed at Annexure-II.

In a subsequent note, Prasar Bharati has stated that M/s. Rainbow Productions has furnished Bank Guarantee of Rs. 60,000 for 'Janmabhumi' programme against the requirement of Rs. 54 lakh as per guidelines. For 'Khas Khabar' no Bank Guarantee has been taken by Prasar Bharati against the requirement of Rs. 13 lakh. For 'Kankanjali' Bank Guarantee of Rs. 40,000 has been given against the requirement of Rs. 2 lakh respectively.

40. The Committee enquired about the programme 'Ferrighat' the slot which was withdrawn from another producer and then allotted to M/s. Rainbow Productions. The Committee has been informed in reply that the original allottee had filed a court case and being *sub-judice* the slot was lying vacant. Another programme 'Kanakanjali' was also permitted to be telecast in 260 episodes by the same producer which was later on converted to 260 weekly episodes of five parts each resulting into 1300 episodes while other Kendras were allowed to grant extension upto a maximum of 52 episodes under the guidelines. By the instructions issued on 19 November, 1998 the powers of the Directors of Doordarshan Kendra have been restricted to sanction a maximum of 26 episodes. The programme 'Janmabhumi' was sanctioned for 260 weeks by the then DDG (ER) on 4 August, 1997 i.e. prior to the issue of new instructions.

41. The Committee also wanted to know the reasons for sanction of another programme 'Aaj Ke' a five minutes programme on DD-1 at 0655 hours by the same producer. That slot was to be sold by Doordarshan @ Rs. 18,000 per ten seconds. The total time sold daily by Doordarshan on an average was 70 seconds. As such, the revenue earning was to be Rs. 1,26,000 everyday. But it had come to the notice of the Committee that the producer (Rainbow Productions) would be paying to Doordarshan only Rs. 6,500/- which would result in a loss of Rs. 4.32 crore to Doordarshan in a year. The Committee further sought factual information about the daily Bengali Feature Film (which actually started from 21 May 2001 and telecast from 10.35 p.m. to 1.00 a.m.) on Monday to Friday and at 2.30 pm onwards on Saturday which was reportedly allotted to the lowest bidder *i.e.*, Rainbow Productions, on royalty basis resulting in a loss of Rs. 1,80,000 per day to the Doordarshan. Similarly, the programme 'Suprabhat'—a one hour and thirty five minutes slot on DD-7 was also allotted to the proprietors of Rainbow Productions without inviting any bids from other producers on 6 January, 2000 but the same was lying vacant resulting in loss of revenue to the tune of Rs. 3,00,000/- per month to the Doordarshan. Regarding award of 'Mukhomukhi' and 'Suprabhat', programmes DDG (ER) submitted in evidence that DD-7 the Satellite Bengali Channel was made round the clock - 24 hour channel from 1 January, 2000. To get good quality software for running a 24 hours satellite channel was a massive task. The advertising support for such channels particularly during non-prime time was very difficult. At that time the proposals for these two programmes were received directly.

42. Subsequently, Prasar Bharati in a note stated that bids are not invited for filling up of slots falling under sponsored category. Only in special cases bids are invited to generate higher revenue. In awarding 'Suprabhat' and 'Mukhomukhi' programmes no bids were invited as the proposals were submitted directly by the producer to the Directorate for its Bengali satellite Channel which was seldom sought by producers. The proposals were accepted with a view to fill up two slots of the Channel and to bring in variety.

43. Ex-Director DDK Kolkata also confirmed in evidence that all programmes were not selected through bidding. Bidding is being taken recourse to only recently. Earlier only local Committee selected the programmes. The Committee wanted to know whether such revenue earnings programmes were decided in an *ad-hoc* manner and that there were no guidelines and such programmes were decided at the sole discretion of the DDG or the Director? The Secretary I & B stated that "it is a pronounced weakness in the system and in the light of the Audit Report also it has been concluded that Prasar Bharati is a very weak organisation."

44. The Committee learnt that certain agencies were allowed to get away with an outstanding Rs. 3 crore for over 2 years. Those agencies changed their agents to avoid being debarred. Besides, the Rainbow Productions were let off without submitting any Bank Guarantee. An outstanding of Rs. 3.75 crore against Sorcar Private Limited and Rs. 3.00 crore against Arambagh Advertising Limited were also due to Doordarshan. Both the agencies handled the releases of Rainbow Productions. Replying to the queries raised by the Committee in this regard, the CEO, Prasar Bharati stated that he has taken note of all those points very seriously. He assured the Committee that he would personally investigate those irregularities and take necessary action.

45. The Committee enquired how a five minutes programme 'Aaj Ke' was allotted to Rainbow Productions for just Rs. 7500/- with a free commercial time of 90 seconds and how the programme was being telecast just before the in house News Bulletin of Doordarshan which effectively eroded the revenue earnings opportunity of Doordarshan from its own news programme since before awarding this programme Doordarshan used to earn Rs. 18,000/- per ten seconds by placing commercials before the news and thereby earned a revenue of Rs. 2 crore per year before giving time slot to Rainbow Productions. When asked as to who had allotted this time slot, the Director, DDK Kolkata stated in evidence that this was approved long before he took over and that DDK Kolkata had received instructions from the Doordarshan Directorate at Delhi in this regard. Similar queries were raised on the programmes 'Janmabhumi', 'Suprabhat', 'Kuru Kshetra', 'Ferrybhat', 'Mahal', 'Dining Table' and bidding for films. In reply the Secretary, I & B assured the Committee that the points raised in the meeting about the irregularities in allotment of time-slot and undue favour shown to Rainbow Productions would be investigate and the Committee will be intimated of the action taken in due course.

46. In a subsequent meeting on the subject, the Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati stated that an inquiry was held on 27 March, 2000 and it was felt that a more detailed inquiry was necessary to fix responsibility and to look into the allegations in allotment of each time-slot. This inquiry was completed in the month of November, 2000. Continuing he further stated the involvement of one of the parties which is supposed to have lion's share of the time-slot in 6 out of 11 programmes was investigated by the Inquiry Officer. In these 6 programmes 26 per cent of the time was on Doordarshan-I and 70 per

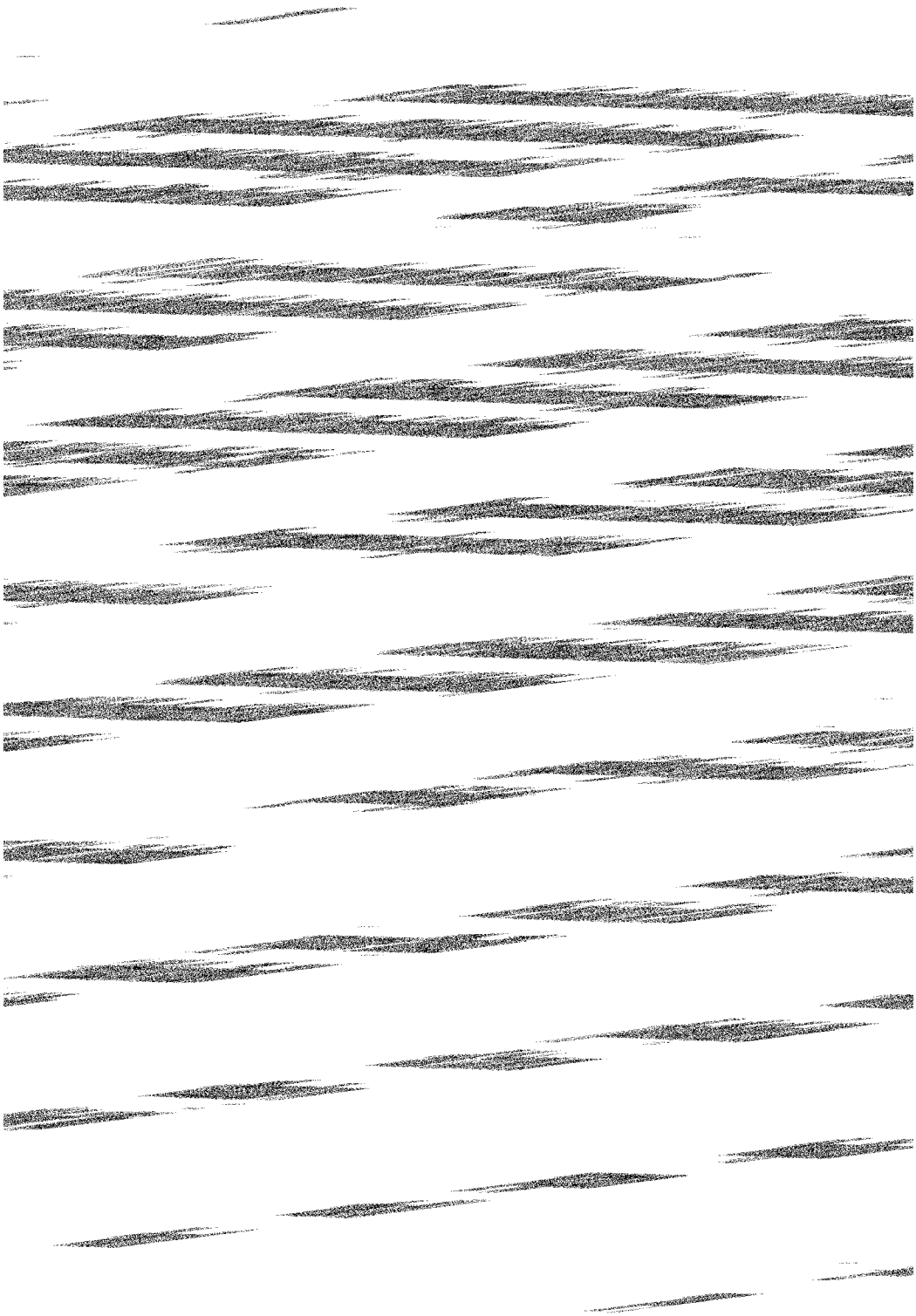
cent of the time slot on Doordarshan-II channel. He added that for various acts of omission and commission, 11 officers were identified by the Inquiry officer. In addition, Prasar Bharati itself after getting into the enquiry report found involvement of 3 more officers. *Prima facie* these officers were responsible for various acts of omission and commission. All the 14 officers were identified and called upon to explain their conduct. Eight officers had replied, while 2 officers had responded by saying that they would like to see the records before furnishing their explanations. Explanations from 3 more officers were yet to be received. The explanations received are stated to be under examination and the Committee has been informed that Prasar Bharati would take a view on each one of them within the next two or three weeks. In a subsequent meeting, the Committee pointed out that inquiry report was submitted on 13 November, 2000 and how the Prasar Bharati could not take any effective step till 29 January, 2001. The Chief Executive Officer replied that in addition to identifying officers for their alleged lapses, the Inquiry Officer also made certain recommendations which were more general in nature regarding procedure and sanction of programmes. Prasar Bharati would require time to understand the intricacies of its functioning in a competitive environment and in a transparent manner. He further clarified that as regards Kolkata Doordarshan programmes, 7 notices were issued out of which 2 were for termination of programmes and the remaining for reduction in the number of time-slots. These notices were earlier stayed by the Hon'ble Court and on 14 February, 2001 have been quashed. He felt that Prasar Bharati would have to re-issue the notices.

47. The Prasar Bharati in a written note submitted to the Committee has stated that the advertising agencies who failed to pay dues in 60 days were not blacklisted but charged interest as per rule, on the dues and till they are in a position to clear the dues they are allowed subsequent booking only against advance payment. In the case of M/s. T. Sarkar similarly line of actions was followed. Their dues amounted to Rs. 3,18,40,065/- of which Rs. 2,30,31,095/- was on account of 'Janmabhumi' till February, 2000. The company (M/s. T. Sarkar) submitted an undertaking to clear the above dues latest by 31 March, 2001. On the submission of undertaking and NoC etc., Prasar Bharati allowed the proposed change of one accredited agency to another accredited agency, [it being the highest revenue generating programme (Rs. 3,05,875/-) per day including repeat], to sustain the revenue flow. The DDK Kolkata has expressed its regrets that inadvertently it did not follow the Circular No. 66 *i.e.* prior permission from Doordarshan Commercial Service should have been taken in such cases.

48. In reply to another query by the Committee regarding telecasting time of 'Aaj Ke', the Ministry/Prasar Bharati stated that this programme was initially slotted on 20 December, 2000 at 2025 hours from Mondays to Fridays except Wednesdays and at 1855 hours for Saturdays and Sundays. Subsequently, the regional time between 2000 hours and 2030 hours was taken away for Network telecast *w.e.f.* 1 March, 2000 and 'Aaj Ke' was re-slotted at 1855 hours. This re-slotting of 'Aaj Ke' did not effect the revenue earning of Doordarshan since the total revenue in 1999 from February to July was Rs. 62,47,150/- and in 2000 Rs. 1,05,98,936/- during the same period *i.e.* Rs. 43,51,786/- were added to the revenue after the introduction of 'Aaj Ke'. The proposal of 'Aaj Ke' was stated to have been received directly at the Directorate. The concept was to telecast one of the import events of the day in Kolkata and telecast a current affairs programme of 5 minutes duration. Prasar Bharati found the concept interesting and recommended it to DDK Kolkata.

49. In another note furnished to the Committee, Prasar Bharati clarified that spot buy rate fixed for News and Current Affairs and other such programmes on Regional Kendras, for Doordarshan in house produced News was Rs. 27,000/- which has since been revised to Rs. 19,500/- in case of mid-break while SBR before news is Rs. 13,000/- per 10 seconds. The Ministry has further stated that sponsorship and spot buy rate fixed for 'in house' programmes are always different from the rate fixed for sponsored programmes produced by outside producers. As such, the rates fixed for both the categories of programmes could not be compared.

50. In regards telecast of Bengali Feature Film, the Ministry has stated that with the approval of the Directorate, Kolkata Doordarshan Kendra invited bids and M/s. T.M. Arts was found to be the highest bidder. Accordingly, the offer was awarded to the company on 24 October, 2000 for commencing telecast *w.e.f.* 1 November, 2000. M/s. T.M. Arts on 31 October, 2000 requested the Kendra to extend time of submission of required Bank Guarantee by another two days which was also permitted. However, on 1 November, 2000 the company requested to allow a few more days. The Kendra did not agree to it and offered the proposal to the next highest bidder M/s. Spell Binders, who accepted the same and started telecast *w.e.f.* 6 November, 2000 after observing all due formalities.



on hard daily news rather a current affairs programme was deliberately allowed in clear violation of the policy decision of Prasar Bharati Board taken on 11 March, 1999 that private producers will not be permitted to produce and telecast news programmes on National or Regional Channels of Doordarshan. Instead of complying with the decision of the Prasar Bharati Board and the views expressed by this Committee during the evidence taken on 5 September, 2000, the Prasar Bharati by way of an Act of defiance increased the duration of the programme 'Khas Khabar' w.e.f. 18 September, 2000. The inept handling of the issue since termination notice issued for the programme "Khas Khabar" and "Mukhomukhi" w.e.f. 16 October, 2000 and sudden withdrawal of the case and the basis for outside settlement, raise many eyebrows and requires to be investigated. In the correspondence and in the affidavits filed before the High Court/Supreme Court the Prasar Bharati has significantly taken the wholly erroneous plea that the programme was 'news based current affairs programme' and not a "News Bulletin" till March, 1999;

- (iv) The officer dealing with the legal matters who was aware of the facts of the case initially deliberately avoided appearance before the Committee without any convincing reason and when the subsequently attended, took up the strange but significant attitude of passing on responsibility to others.
- (v) In allotment of time slots of various programmes the Prasar Bharati has given more weightage to the commercial aspect as admitted by the DDG (F&V) in his note that it would be prudent to accept the additional revenue offered by the producer of "Khas Khabar" which was very high, and they should unnecessarily not lose the same especially when Prasar Bharati was not having a strong case in the High Court because of inconsistencies in their (Prasar Bharati) approach to deal with the programme;
- (vi) Even though news programmes are not awarded to private producers, 'Khas Khabar' which was a hard news based programme by the Ministry's own reckoning, was allowed in the garb of news based current affairs programme and its frequency and time increased from 15 to 20 minutes obviously with ulterior motives.

in award of time slot on a single bid. The Committee also regrets to note that the then CEO Prasar Bharati did not take any action in the matter as promised to the Committee during evidence. The Committee cannot but express its deep concern about the conduct of various officials of Prasar Bharati acting more for the benefit of one private producer thereby violating the conduct rules and damaging the interests of the nation. The Committee strongly recommends to Prasar Bharati Board/Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to look into all such alleged irregularities and take stern action as per relevant rules.

- (x) Prasar Bharati management favoured the private producer at the cost of exchequer in utter violation of rules by accepting Bank Guarantees of inadequate amounts for the programmes telecast by him. In the case of 'Janmabhoomi' Bank Guarantee required as per guidelines was to be of Rs. 54 lakh, but the guarantee given is of Rs. 60,000/- only. In the case of 'Khas Khabar' no bank guarantee has been taken though he was required to furnish the same for Rs. 13 lakh. Similarly for 'Kankanjali' Bank Guarantee of Rs. 40,000 was accepted against the requirement of Rs. 2 lakh. It is thus a case of blatant favouritism which cannot be without any consideration.

52. The Committee recommends that Prasar Bharati should review its/policy pertaining to award of Doordarshan slots to private producers and selections of various types of programmes for telecast on Doordarshan Channels. It needs to take special care in awarding the telecast of programmes based on news and current affairs and should strictly comply with the decision of Prasar Bharati Board taken on 11 March, 1999 not to permit the private producers to produce and telecast news bulletins on national and regional channels of Doordarshan. Prasar Bharati should stop forthwith the telecasting of "Khas Khabar" and other programmes of similar kind through Doordarshan slots in order to preserve its status of a national broadcaster and should take effective steps to contest the proceedings initiated by Rainbow Productions.

53. The Committee notes that the officials of Prasar Bharati at the level of the Directorate as well the Kolkata Doordarshan Kendra, in various communications with the producer and before the courts deliberately described the programme "Khas Khabar" as a news based current affairs programme. The Committee notes with concern that even the senior level officials of Prasar Bharati ignored their

duty to the nation since they pleaded for accepting the additional (high) revenue offered by the producer of 'Khas Khabar' in violation of the norms. The Committee expresses serious concern on the ways of functioning of Prasar Bharati as admitted by the then DDG (F&V) in his note dated 15 November, 1999 that Prasar Bharati did not have a very strong case on 'Khas Khabar' in the Kolkata High Court because of the inconsistencies in the approach of the Prasar Bharati in dealing with the programme. The Committee regrets to note that instead of taking recourse to due process of law in dealing with the case, the Prasar Bharati requested the producer of 'Khas Khabar' to withdraw the petition pending before the High Court and compromised the interests of the Doordarshan and allowed the private, producer-Rainbow Productions to reap profits at the expense of Doordarshan.

54. The Committee views seriously that the infrastructure and equipment of SRFTI was allowed to be used by private producers for production of programmes. The Committee desires an inquiry be conducted into the matter and proper procedure evolved to prevent misuse of public assets in future.

55. Prasar Bharati granted indiscriminate extensions to some programmes produced by private producers as in case of 'Kanakanjali' where previously granted 260 episodes were converted to 260 weekly episodes of five parts each resulting into 1300 episodes. The Committee views that the permission to grant such large number of episodes in one go was neither warranted nor advisable nor it could be permitted without active collusion of concerned officials. Besides, it has resulted in denial of fair opportunities to other producers. Here, the Committee also notes that the guidelines issued on 19 November, 1998 to restrict the powers of Directors of Doordarshan Kendras' to sanction a maximum of 26 episodes were clearly violated. Similar irregularities have taken place in case of granting of episodes for 260 weeks in case of 'Janmabhumi'. The Committee is also seriously concerned with the fact that the some news based programmes including 'Aaj Ke' and 'Khas Khabar' which in fact are 'News Bulletins' (for which telecast fee rate is Rs. 18000 per ten seconds) are being treated as news based current affairs programmes thereby resulting in huge revenue loss to Doordarshan. The slot for telecast of daily Bengali Feature Film was allotted allegedly to the lowest bidder resulting in further revenue loss to Doordarshan. Besides, the Committee is also concerned to note that the slot for telecasting of 'Suprabhat' was allotted to the Rainbow Productions without giving opportunity to other producers to compete resulting in revenue loss to Prasar Bharati and denial of opportunity to others.

56. The Committee views these irregularities seriously and desires an indepth and thorough inquiry be conducted urgently by an independent agency preferably by CBI to ensure that all those who indulged in malpractices are dealt with severely.

57. The Committee finds from the materials produced and evidence tendered that in various cases financial irregularities have taken place resulting in heavy losses to Prasar Bharati, as in some cases private agencies like Rainbow Productions were allowed to avoid payment of an outstanding sum of Rs. 3 crore for 2 years. The same concern was permitted to change their agents to avoid being debarred and moreover they did not submit Bank Guarantee of the appropriate amount in time. It requires to be investigated how the DDK Kolkata conveniently overlooked the instructions contained in Circular No. 66 relating to prior permission of DD commercial service. The former CEO had taken a serious note of these irregularities when pointed out by the Committee in evidence and had promised to personally investigate the same and take necessary action. The Committee regrets to note that so far no action appears to have been taken in this regard. The Committee trusts that Ministry of I&B would take deterrent action against persons found guilty for the alleged irregularities.

58. The Committee takes a serious note of the fact that Prasar Bharati did not invite bids to award time slots to private producers. The Board entertained programmes received directly from the producers in case of 'Suprabhat' and 'Mukho Mukhi'. It smacks of favouring a particular producer and denial of competitive opportunities to others at the cost of exchequer without any valid justification. In most of the cases awarding of slots (selection of programmes) was done by a local committee. The important work of selection of programmes was left to the whims of a handful of Doordarshan officials constituting the so called local committee which violated the well established procedure of inviting bids. The Committee strongly recommends the Prasar Bharati to look into this and issue detailed guidelines to adopt a comprehensive and fair bidding system for award of programme/slot to ensure justice and maximise revenue realisation to Prasar Bharati.

Sale of Air Time slots on Doordarshan Metro

59. The Committee learnt that Prasar Bharati entered into an agreement with M/s. Nine Network, Australia PTY. Ltd. through the Nine Broadcasting India Pvt. Ltd. permitting them to telecast certain programmes of DD Metro at 1900 hrs. to 2100 hrs. and 2100 hrs. to 22.00 hrs. daily. In this context the Committee desired to know the background and details of the Agreement reached with Channel Nine Networks Australia PTY Limited, through Nine Broadcasting India Private Limited under the scheme for 'Bulk Air Time sale of slots' over Doordarshan Metro, In reply, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting stated that in 1991 and 1992, Metro Channel was the premier entertainment channel, but subsequently, it started losing popularity and revenue declined from Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 75 crore and further to Rs. 65 crore. During 1999, it came down to Rs. 50 crore, whereas private Hindi Channels increased their revenue from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 400 crore. In 1999, Prasar Bharati could sell Metro Channel time slots to 42 different producers. But it was found that these producers were indulging in undercutting in the market. So the Prasar Bharati decided to consolidate the programming and to auction half-an-hour time band across the year. Bids were invited for Bulk Air time sale of slots over Doordarshan Metro from 1900 hrs. to 2100 hrs. which appeared in Newspapers on 3 May 2000. The bids were opened on 17 May, 2000. Two bids were received for the slot 1900 hrs. to 2100 hrs.—one from Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Ltd. which quoted Rs. 59 crore for the slot. Another bid was from Zee TV which was next below. The slot was awarded to Channel Nine and the agreement signed on 25 May, 2000 for a period of one year. The price of the bid is stated to be Rs. 48 crore higher than the revenue (Rs. 11 crore) earned by Doordarshan last year for that time slot (1900 hours to 2100 hours).

60. The Company originally planned to begin its transmission from 1 August, 2000, however, with the permission of Prasar Bharati, it started the transmission from 11 September, 2000. Prasar Bharati subsequently floated another bid for time slot 2100 hours to 2200 hours. It has been stated that only one bid was received for that slot, that too was from Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Ltd, for Rs. 62 crore. In response to the third bid for the slot from 2300 hours to 0030 hours, not even a single bid was received. Since pre-qualification bid (2nd bid) was found to be in order alongwith the undertaking submitted by the representative of the company, the Screening

Committee of Prasar Bharati Board approved the bid and that slot was also awarded to Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Ltd. As per the arrangement, M/s. Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Limited was to produce all programmes at their own cost and make the same available to Doordarshan for telecast on Doordarshan Metro. Prasar Bharati would have the right of vetting and censorship of said programmes. In response to a query about the nature and content of those entertainment programmes in Hindi awarded to Channel Nine, the CEO submitted that the Prasar Bharati has prescribed the programmes and imposed on the Company the restriction that they would have to submit the pilots conforming to Doordarshan's Programmes and Advertisements codes. The company itself would produce and market the programmes. The news, current affairs and mythology based programmes would not be permitted.

61. In response to a query on the difficulties faced by Doordarshan to market the programmes the CEO stated that Doordarshan producers were not able to do proper marketing. He submitted that it was the basic weakness of the Doordarshan marketing system that when they allotted half-an-hour slot to individual producers, they started selling the FCT (Free Commercial Time) and started undercutting each other. So, the competition in the market faced by Doordarshan was from its own programmes. The producers tried to out do one another by price cutting which resulted in lowering of average price realisations for the FCT.

62. In response to another query about the possibility of selling out time slots of allotted programmes to other individuals/producers by the bidders, the CEO stated that the Company (M/s. Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Limited) can assign the programmes to other smaller producers and it can combine its efforts of marketing other channels. The capacity to consolidate marketing has enabled M/s. Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Limited to extract a much higher price than what Prasar Bharati was able to earn.

63. When the Committee desired to know under which clause of the agreement Prasar Bharati will ensure production of particular type of programmes, the CEO clarified that the Corporation would have as much authority over the programming as in case of any other sponsored programme as every programmer is required to submit pilots which the Corporation can approve or reject. Besides, the Company is incorporated in India, and subject to all the laws of the land.

64. The Committee further enquired whether Prasar Bharati would gradually sell out more and more time slots to private agencies. In reply, the CEO submitted that it has been the policy of Prasar Bharati to do Prime Time programming primarily on commercial and market considerations and in non-prime-time programming it has been trying to bring in good quality content, which are coming from various private channels both Indian as well as outside viz. Discovery Channel and National Geography Channel and added that Prasar Bharati is also planning to provide a window to terrestrial channel viewers who are deprived of those channels.

65. In response to another query, the CEO clarified that there may be people who may not be able to watch Channel Nine programmes at prime-time. So it has been agreed to in clause 19 of the agreement that programmes telecast from 2100 hours to 2200 hours will be repeated from 1100 hours to 1200 hours over Doordarshan Metro along with all commercial and also over Doordarshan International Channel at a time decided by Doordarshan without any commercials within seven days of the initial telecast which meant that all infrastructure would be made available to that company for six hours at a consideration of Rs. 122 crore. The Secretary, I & B further clarified that the decision to invite a global tender for selling six hour slot was not a routine case but a substantial policy matter regarding utilisation of the time available on Doordarshan and was essentially a part of programme management.

66. In response to a query about the necessity of consultation by Prasar Bharati with the Ministry of I & B/Government of India and clearance of the proposal of inviting global tenders from security angle, the Committee has been informed that Prasar Bharati being an autonomous organisation is fully empowered to take decisions relating to its programme management. It felt that there was no security angle involved as per the Memorandum of Agreement with Channel Nine provided that programmes based on concepts approved by Doordarshan only, will be permitted for telecast. Doordarshan has the right of vetting and clearance of the programmes.

67. The Committee pointed out that it has been the established practice in Government Departments, that whenever there is only one offer in response to a bid, the tender is not opened and fresh tenders were issued inviting intending parties to bid and enquired how tenders were accepted in this case in utter violation of government instructions

or norms. In reply, the CEO, Prasar Bharati stated that the matter was taken to Prasar Bharati Board and the Board felt that even if there was a single bid it should be opened to see if it was above the reserve price. It was further clarified that overwhelming view in the Board was that the slot from 2100 hours to 2200 hours was abandoned by many producers because of the screening of "Kaun Banega Crorepati", and there was a party who had offered Doordarshan Rs. 62 crore *i.e.* Rs. 19.50 crore above the reserved price, so it should be considered. It was also the assessment of Prasar Bharati that if there was a re-bid they definitely would not be able to get that price and it would send a wrong signal to the market and the credibility of Prasar Bharati would be eroded. Prasar Bharati further submitted to the Committee in a written note that the rules did not prohibit opening of a single tender received in response to widely publicised tender invitation. CEO, Prasar Bharati cited from the Manual of Instructions of CPWD which provides that when in response to a tender enquiry only single tender is received officers of CPWD have restricted/regulated power with regard to acceptance of that single tender. It was further contended that acceptance of single tender was approved at a level higher than the prescribed sanctioning authority, since the approval was accorded by Prasar Bharati Board, after detailed deliberations in special review meeting held on 19 August, 2000. The Ministry of I & B has further submitted in written reply that keeping in view the autonomous functioning envisaged in the Prasar Bharati Act, the Ministry followed the policy that Prasar Bharati has full authority to take final decisions in matter of programmes production, marketing and entering operational contracts.

68. The Committee finds that Commercial earnings of Doordarshan Metro Channel was continuously declining in the later part of 1990s. Revenue realisation had come down from Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 50 crore in 1999. On the other hand, earnings of private Hindi Channels had increased from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 400 crore during this period. On commercial considerations Prasar Bharati sold its prime time slots from 1900 hours to 2100 hrs. and from 2100 hrs. to 2200 hrs. for Rs. 59 crore and Rs. 62.5 crore respectively for one year to a company, in which Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Ltd. has substantial stake. It is ironical that a company with substantial foreign stake will produce entertainment programmes in Hindi for Indian viewers.

69. The Committee is perturbed to find that marketing Network of Prasar Bharati is so weak (as admitted by CEO also) that during the last one year it could earn the revenue of Rs. 11 crore only from prime time slot—1900 hrs. to 2100 hrs. for which a foreign company has offered Rs. 59 crore *i.e.* Rs. 48 crore above the revenue earned by Prasar Bharati. It has been explained that producers are indulging in undercutting of each other. The Committee is not fully convinced by this explanation and would like Prasar Bharati to look into it in detail to ensure that there was no malpractice indulged in marketing of time slot. The Committee further recommends that Prasar Bharati should tone up its marketing efforts to garner at least the proportionate revenue potential of the market if not the dominant share. Prasar Bharati which has modern equipment installed in its studios should be capable of producing programmes of superior quality. The Corporation needs to modify and strengthen its own marketing strategy.

70. The Committee is not convinced by the reasoning advanced by Prasar Bharati for accepting single bid tender for time slot 2100 hrs. to 2200 hrs. The Committee is at a loss to understand that a Corporation like Prasar Bharati, entrusted with the responsibility of informing and enlightening the people inside and outside the country, should be guided by the rules adopted in the CPWD when it comes to such sensitive issues like awarding of programmes. Prasar Bharati should have made attempts to attract more competitors to ensure a fair and transparent action. The Corporation also needs to modify its tendering process and make copies of the same available to this Committee for its perusal.

71. The Committee is unable to appreciate the justification to sell out important time slots to foreign/private companies on the plea that the agreement would be restricted to a period of only one year on a performance test. Moreover, the policy of Prasar Bharati to do prime time programming primarily on commercial and market consideration does not conform to the mandate given to it. Since prime time is most important slot, the Committee desire that prime time programming should conform to the mandate of Prasar Bharati as a Public Service Broadcaster instead of being solely guided by commercial and market considerations.

72. The Committee notes that time slots will be made available for telecasting the programmes produced by Channel Nine Network Australia PTY Ltd. for a total of six hours at the consideration of Rs. 122 crore. The Committee feels that allotting everyday six hours' slot to a private company is a serious matter involving far reaching consequences. The Committee is not convinced that all such matters were considered before taking the decision. Though the Committee is not against private participation it recommends that the Corporation should adopt a clear and firm policy on this aspect by taking the views of expert bodies and public representatives and should lay down suitable guidelines to ensure transparency and telecast of suitable programmes consistent with the objectives of Prasar Bharati.

Programmes Review and Planning (PRP) Committee

73. The Committee learnt in evidence that posts of Director Generals, Doordarshan and All India Radio were lying vacant since January 1998 and August 1998 respectively and since these officers have to be members of the Prasar Bharati Board, these vacancies on the Board could not filled up. Besides, posts of Member (Finance) and Member (Personnel) on the Board have never been filled up. Asked about the reasons for not filling up the vacancies, the Secretary, I&B stated in evidence that Government's intention was to fill up the official positions in the first lot and non-official positions in the second lot. In this context, the Committee drew attention of the witness to the minutes of the sitting of the meeting of the Programme Review and Planning Committee meeting held on 8 March 2000 where in it was recorded that from the 1st April, 2000, Akashvani and Doordarshan will start functioning under the umbrella of Prasar Bharati and that there will be no posts of Director General, AIR and DD. Asked to clarify the position, the former Secretary, Ministry of I&B and former CEO, Prasar Bharati stated that they were not aware of the existence of the Programmes Review and Planning (PRP) Committee not to speak of its decision. However, the DDG (ER) explained that it was a routine weekly meeting of Programme Review and Planning Committee which consisted of second rung officers in which they reviewed the programmes and the events that were telecast during previous week. The issue of filling up the posts of DGs did not come within its purview. The Secretary, I&B and CEO, Prasar Bharati explained that there was no intention whatsoever to abolish the posts of DG (AIR) and DG (DD).

74. However, when the Committee pointed out that it was on the records of PRP minutes and that it was not disputed/corrected by any one, the CEO, Prasar Bharati stated that he would get it investigated that whether it was an authorised communication and if so, who had authorised it and how the same was minuted. He assured the Committee that the person concerned would be definitely taken to task.

75. Later on, the Controller of Programmes (Coord.) issued corrigendum on 15 September, 2000 to the Minutes of the PRP meeting deleting controversial Para 3 (a) relating to the posts of DG (AIR) and DG (DD) and issued totally different minutes. In a subsequent sitting of the Committee when the matter again came up for discussion, the CEO, Prasar Bharati clarified that the matter was investigated and checked up from the officer who presided over the PRP Committee meeting and happened to be DDG (Finance) and was also the FA and CCA dealing *inter-alia* with Budget and Finance. During the meeting of PRP on 8 March, 2000 he had mentioned that *w.e.f.* 1 April, 2000, there was going to be separation of the budgetary process and the budget of Prasar Bharati, for the first time, was going to be separated from the Budget of Government of India. That statement of the Chairperson of that meeting was wrongly recorded which was a bonafide error. A warning was issued to the person who recorded the minutes. The CEO admitted that corrigendum to the minutes was issued after the mistake was pointed out by this Committee and prior thereto no one in the Prasar Bharati was aware of the 'mistake'.

76. In reply to a further query, the CEO stated that DDG (Finance) has got the mistake corrected.

77. However, subsequently, the DDG (Finance) clarified that the meetings of PRP were chaired by DDG (Programmes) and he was not a member of PRP. At the relevant meeting he was invited to give a presentation on the revised financial system in Prasar Bharati. He made the presentation saying that the funds would be available henceforth to Prasar Bharati and there would not be any detailed budget of Doordarshan and All India Radio Directorates as was the practice earlier. He regretted that the same was recorded in a different context and that the mistake did not come to his notice because the draft minutes were not circulated in the subsequent meeting of the PRP. He further clarified that he had not drafted and signed those minutes since he attended merely on invitation.

78. The Committee takes a serious note of the casual approach of Prasar Bharati in posting key officials like DG (AIR) and DG (DD) and the manner in which such important matters are discussed and recorded. The minutes of Programmes Review and Planning (PRP) meeting held on 8 March, 2000 has allegedly wrongly recorded that there would be no posts of DG (AIR) and DG (DD). It is strange that the alleged mistake was not detected by anyone and the same came to light six months later on 5 September, 2000 when this Committee pointed it out. The Committee views it as a strange phenomenon that the Secretary, I&B and CEO, Prasar Bharati were not even aware of the existence of the PRP Committee in the Prasar Bharati until the issue was raised in the meeting of the Committee. The minutes referred to above give rise to the reasonable doubt about the real/intention fo Prasar Bharati with regard to the filling of the posts of DG (AIR) and DG (DD) which are lying vacant for 3 years. The Committee is unable to accept simplistic if not naive, explanation about the so-called mistake and is of the view that the Ministry minutes should not only categorically disclose its decision but should also take early steps to fill up the important posts.

79. The Committee strongly deprecates the absence of the senior officials of the Ministry from the meetings of the Committee. Instead of asking the officers responsible for the mistake in drafting minutes of PRP meeting to be present before the Committee and taking them to task, for grave blunder, as was the commitment made by the CEO before the Committee, a purported corrigendum was issued to the minutes of the meeting of PRP without any authority and without calling even the meeting of that Committee, and giving a totally different version after six months of that meeting the purported corrigendum was issued by way of interpolation and as after thought. The Committee feels convinced with the alleged version and is unable to accept the same. The Committee desires the Ministry to take suitably action against the officers responsible for such unauthorised interpolation. Evidently, it was a mischief and not misunderstanding.

Informative/News based programmes**News channel**

80. Doordarshan launched a 24 hours News and Current Affairs channel on 15 August, 1999 telecasting 13 news bulletins daily including Headlines from New Delhi. The Committee pointed out that moving globe was presented for unduly long time before every news headline and interview of experts/eminent persons who expressed only their personal views was also unduly prolonged. In this context, the Committee wanted to know whether it would not be advisable to add important news items by modifying the news format. The CEO, stated in response that earlier in prime time the news was telecast in news reading format by making narration supported by visuals. Recently, the Doordarshan has started anchor based news format on prime time news slot in which their effort was to show some live action and one or two interviews taking place on a day to make the news more interesting to the viewers.

81. In response to a query on the viewership of Doordarshan News Channel, the CEO, Prasar Bharati submitted that he expected to get a viewership of about 7-8 million over a period of one year. In order to achieve that figure Prasar Bharati has taken certain steps like providing integrated receiver decoders and digital receiver decoders to cable operators so that they have the equipment to down link it digitally and screen it. The amended law has enabled Doordarshan to make a notification enlarging the mass carrier obligation and thus taking up new channels to be carried under mass carrier obligation. The Gyandarshan and News Channels can be brought under it and thus made available to the viewers through cable.

82. The Committee appreciates the step taken by Prasar Bharati in starting a separate channel for telecasting news and current affairs programmes. However, the Committee observes that precious news time is wasted in showing Doordarshan Logo, background music and other unnecessary scenes with every news headlines which have no relevance with news. The Committee also finds that there is ample scope to improve live expert interview/views programme and make the news bulletins vibrant with showing live action and visuals. As such, the Committee recommends that Prasar Bharati should improve its news bulletins further by avoiding wastage of precious time on screening avoidable scenes. The air time so saved should be utilised to telecast important messages on development of agriculture and rural areas.

83. The Committee expresses its concern that viewership of such a vital channel is very insignificant. All necessary measures to increase the viewership besides providing necessary facilities to cable operators for down linking and screening the channel and bringing the same under the mass carrier obligation clause of Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act be taken expeditiously with a view to popularise the news channel.

Gyandarshan Channel

84. The Secretary, I&B stated that a balance between programmes on entertainment and education was being maintained within the framework available to the Government and to the Prasar Bharati. He further added that given the resources, Ministry would like to increase the component of education and information beyond what was available at the moment. In response to another query, the Secretary, I&B submitted that the Ministry has been able to start during the last 12 months an exclusive channel, namely Gyandarshan.

85. The Committee enquired about the viewership, the age group of targetted viewers, as it was found during study tour that people were not even aware of the channel and cable operators were not showing it. The Committee also enquired about the efforts being made to make it popular and to increase the duration of its programmes. In response the witness clarified that "Gyandarshan Channel" is a satellite based channel, so it is restricted to the cable communication only, accounting about 50 per cent of TV homes. The viewership of the Channel was in the source form and it was not being recorded by the statisticians. He admitted that it did not have a significant viewership. The Committee was further informed that the channel was started on 26 January, 2000 and normally a channel takes a period of about one year to establish itself. The Ministry is stated to be in the process of establishing programming and quality. The duration of programmes has been for two and a half to three hours only which is being attended to by Ministry of Human Resource Development.

86. In response to a further query, the witness stated that Prasar Bharati had suggested to the Human Resource Development Ministry that it would be appropriate to originate six hours programming and repeat it rather than leaving the channel blank. The Ministry of Human Resource Development is reportedly attempting to produce six hours programme by itself, but it will take time as it would require studio and other infrastructure for considerable time to produce programmes. The witness expressed hope that as soon as the channel would start operating on a continuous basis, the viewership would increase. The Prasar Bharati is also stated to be making efforts to make people aware and increase the viewership of that channel.

87. The Committee enquired whether aspects like healthcare, family welfare, population control and other social and cultural aspects are included in the programme content of the channel. In reply, the CEO stated that he will have an interaction with the Ministry of Human Resource Development on such important issues and that Prasar Bharati has been concerned with educational programmes and has provided its infrastructure to Human Resource Development for imparting curriculum based education.

88. In response to a query about providing TV sets to primary schools so that students could watch Educational Channel, the Secretary, I&B stated that there is a centrally sponsored scheme for providing TV sets to primary schools since 1987 and tens of thousands of primary schools have been provided with TV sets under the scheme by the Department of Education.

89. The Committee notes with satisfaction that Prasar Bharati recognising the significance of increased educational and informative programmes has started an exclusive channel by the name of "Gyandarshan" which is broadcasting UGC programmes and other educative/informative programmes in the morning. However, the Committee finds that people at large are not even aware of the existence of such a channel, since it is a satellite channel and cable operators are unwilling to screen the same. Besides, the Committee also observes that duration of programmes (two and half hours) is grossly inadequate. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that "Gyandarshan" channel be converted into a terrestrial channel to make it available to the people directly without involvement of Cable Operators. The Government should also take all necessary steps expeditiously to popularise it, increase the duration and improve the quality of its contents. Prasar Bharati requires to render more active contribution in coordination with Ministry of Human Resource Development, since spread of education is one of the important component of its statutory mandate. The Committee also notes that production, broadcast and telecast of programmes on the themes involving healthcare, family welfare, Social Welfare and population control should receive greater thrust in the interest of the society and the country at large.

International Channel (DD World)

90. The Ministry of I&B informed the Committee that International Channel of DD endeavours to build bridges of communication with Indians living abroad and telecast programmes on Indian culture, values, traditions, diversity and unity etc., for the entire world through high quality programmes. In reply to query about the impact of DD International and the suggestions/representations received from viewers to improve the programmes telecast on this channel, the Ministry submitted that no formal survey has been carried out yet about the impact of DD International. However, constant feedback was being obtained from our Embassies, High Commissions and letters and e-mails were being received from viewers from countries like U.S.A., U.A.E., U.K., etc., requesting for stronger signals and wholesome programming. The Ministry, further, submitted that in view of the same the programming of DD International was being re-structured in a phased manner.

91. The CEO, Prasar Bharati stated in evidence that the best contents on different DD channels would be culled out and put on DD International. In response to a query on expanding the reach of the channel, the CEO, Prasar Bharati stated that the Ministry have already floated global bids and the response to those bids has been quite good. Prasar Bharati was planning to beam DD International and DD news to U.K. and Europe in view of interest shown by Non-Resident-Indians about the developments taking place in India. The CEO expressed hope that within one year the DD International would start generating revenue of approximately Rs. 27 crores.

92. The Committee notes that International Channels of Doordarshan is disseminating pertinent information on Indian cultural values and traditions and projecting image of the country abroad. However, the Committee regrets that these Channels are not being managed imaginatively and so far no formal survey has been conducted to assess the expectations of the NRIs and foreign viewers from the DD International Channel. The Committee recommends that a survey be conducted and necessary steps taken to meet the genuine expectations of the viewers and also improve quality, contents and reach of the transmissions.

Uplinking

93. The Committee enquired about the measures taken by the Government to regulate the programmes uplinked by foreign companies from Hong Kong and other such places, which does not fall under the purview of Broadcasting law and result in loss of revenue to the country. The Secretary I&B submitted that it was not possible to stop their transmission by legislation, however, as an alternate measure, the Government was ready to regulate/stop their transmission by implementing the programme code on the Cable Operators. On being enquired by the Committee whether it was possible to regulate them by the amendments made recently in the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, the Secretary, Ministry of I&B submitted that Government would have to take a decision in that regard. Besides, there being 70,000 cable operators in the country, it would not be possible to regulate all of them.

94. The Committee has been informed in a written reply that with a view to encourage all the TV Channels targetting Indian viewers, to uplink from India and to come under the ambit of Indian laws, the uplinking policy has been further liberalised recently permitting all TV Channels irrespective of their ownership (equity structure or management control) to uplink from India provided they undertake to comply with the Broadcasting codes of the country. The Committee has been further informed that the Government was in the process of finalising a comprehensive integrated legislation which would *inter-alia*, provide for a regulatory authority for regulating private broadcasting in the country.

95. The Committee notes with concern that certain foreign companies are telecasting uncensored programmes by uplinking from outside the country without subjecting themselves to regulation of Indian broadcasting laws which is also resulting in revenue loss to the country. The Committee trusts that such companies would be brought within the purview of Broadcasting laws by permitting them to uplink from India. The Committee desires that adoption of legislative measures to establish a Broadcasting Regulatory Authority which can effectively control uncensored programmes be expedited.

Advertisement code and Programme code

96. The Committee wanted to know the mechanism evolved to scrutinise the nature and values etc., of the programmes and advertisements which are telecast on Doordarshan and other channels and pointed out that at times there has been complaints about the suitability of some programmes and advertisements in general and particularly for the young people. In response the Secretary, Ministry of I&B stated that there are internal arrangements in Prasar Bharati to scrutinise/screen the programmes before they are telecast. There is a Committee to decide it and to ensure the quality as well as marketing ability of the programme.

97. The Committee further enquired whether the programmes being telecast by channels other than Doordarshan, which telecast such programmes frequently, would be brought under the purview of Programme/Advertisement codes. In response, the CEO Prasar Bharati submitted that before the passing of the amendments in Cable Television Network Act, the Programme/Advertisement Codes were applicable only on the DD Programmes and the other channels which were being telecast from foreign land were out of its purview. But after the amendments, the other channels have also been brought under the purview of the codes by regulating their operation through cable operators.

98. The Committee is of the view that suitable arrangements should be made by Prasar Bharati to scrutinise the quality and content of programmes, including advertisements, so that they maintain basic standard. The Committee recommends that guidelines in this regard be laid down clearly and followed strictly.

**Financial self sufficiency
(Revenue Earning)**

99. The Committee enquired whether Prasar Bharati was facing any impediment in performing its role as a Public Service Broadcaster and in giving priority to its objective of imparting information, education and entertainment. In reply, the Secretary, I&B stated that the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance have been emphasising for the last 18 years, since the beginning of satellite transmission in the country on the maximisation of revenue by the Doordarshan and All India Radio. According to him, in every Annual

Plan and also in the Five Year Plan, the net Plan support given to Prasar Bharati has been bare minimum. The Budget Provision was for Rs. 1808 crore for 2000-2001 and out of the same, net plan support was only Rs. 120 crore. As such, the pressure on Prasar Bharati to maximise its income was and is obvious. The CEO, Prasar Bharati added that the Review Committee and the Prasar Bharati Board have recommended that in order to ensure that the contents of programmes were not driven solely by commercial needs, it would be desirable for Prasar Bharati to attain financial self-sufficiency within a period of five years to become independent and distinct from the Government. As such, the organisation should not require, in the long run, major funding from the Government.

100. The Committee enquired whether Prasar Bharati has formulated any special policy or programmes for raising its revenue without affecting the quality of programmes. In response, the CEO Prasar Bharati submitted that the Corporation has been contemplating and trying to identify the avenues of revenue other than through advertisement. The Prasar Bharati Board is of the view that excessive dependence on market mechanism for a public broadcaster is neither good nor desirable. In this context, Government may be requested to frame legislation to permit a one time levy of a cess or a surcharge on excise duty itself on the sale of colour TV sets which may be collected alongwith the excise duty and thereafter, the Government may transfer the entire proceeds of the surcharge to Prasar Bharati. The Sengupta Committee has also recommended to this effect. Another source identified is subscription revenue. The CEO further, submitted that the Sports Channel of Doordarshan would charge the Cable Operators Rs. 5.90 per subscriber which would be much less than what ESPN and Star Sports are charging. However, the CEO agreed with the Committee that a public service broadcaster must provide the service at competitive rates. He further stated that Prasar Bharati has got a commitment of subscription revenue to the tune of about Rs. 20 crore.

101. The CEO further stated that the other area identified for raising revenue is leasing out the infrastructure of Prasar Bharati to private producers. The FM Channels have been privatised and FM Radio frequencies have been allotted to various private sector parties. The Prasar Bharati owns infrastructure in the form of lands, buildings and transmission towers. It would allow these to be utilised by private sector on rental basis resulting in accrual of rental revenue to Prasar Bharati.

102. The Committee wanted to know whether, in view of the meagre revenue being earned by Prasar Bharati on sponsored time slots as compared with private channels, it has any plan to set up a Marketing Division. The CEO submitted that Prasar Bharati wanted to set up a Marketing Division and a Strategic Planning Division. However, it could not do so, as sanction from Finance Ministry was not forthcoming for creation of new posts. The proposal has been pending for a long time with that Ministry.

103. The Committee agrees to the necessity of in-house generation of revenue as suggested by Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance besides attaching importance to the view that the Corporation should be excessively depend upon market mechanism for its financial needs. It should be independent and distinct from the Government to play the role of a public broadcaster in the true sense. In view of the above, the Committee appreciates that Prasar Bharati should strive to attain financial self-sufficiency in due course and its functioning should not be influenced by the Government.

104. The Committee also endorses the idea of Prasar Bharati to raise revenue by adopting measures that do not affect the quality of its programmes, and also to earn revenue by leasing out its infrastructure on rental basis to private organisations since its vast infrastructure built at enormous cost is not utilised optimally. However, it should be allowed only after framing the detailed guidelines taking into account the fair compensation for use of costly infrastructure and equipments by outsiders. The use of Prasar Bharati infrastructure should be periodically monitored. It should also be ensured that in house production does not suffer on this account and there should not be any scope for malpractice detrimental to the interest of Prasar Bharati. The Committee further recommends the setting up of a Marketing Division and a Strategic Planning Division to streamline and strengthen its functioning and for increasing revenue collection.

Utilisation of Prasar Bharati Infrastructure

105. The Committee in the course of study tours found that studios and other infrastructure built with huge public resources, were being utilised inadequately for production of programmes. In this context the Committee wanted to know if Prasar Bharati explored the possibilities to make available the infrastructure to private producers

on rental basis. The CEO stated in reply that Prasar Bharati has been permitting its installations to be utilised by private agencies on payment of rent or hire charges. He admitted that Shimla Doordarshan Kendra has not been doing well as hardly any programme is produced locally. He assured that necessary measures would be taken to utilize the infrastructure optimally. The CEO further added that the Corporation was working on a scheme whereby the use of studios would be permitted during non-duty hours by private producers on a lease basis. As regards Shantiniketan Production Centre, he submitted that it was supposed to produce programmes and give it to Kolkata Doordarshan Kendra for telecast. The Corporation has been working in that direction and a senior level officer was posted there. He assured that he would call the officer to find out the necessary facilities that are required there and make the same available urgently.

106. In response to another query, the Committee has been informed that at Patna DDK Studio, 8.15 hours programme was recorded in a month while at Shimla, Jalpaiguri and Shantiniketan only field recording was being done. The studios at Sambalpur, Vijayawada, Pune, Indore, Gwalior and Jagdalpur have not been utilised for production/transmission of programmes. However, recording has been done for 0.25 hrs, 15.00 hrs, 3.6 hrs, 3.7 hrs, 1.04 hrs and 3.1 hours per month respectively at these places. The Committee further enquired about the reasons for not using optimally the modern infrastructure installed at Shantiniketan which is stated to have been built at the cost of Rs. 36 crore and was being used for half-an-hour only in a fortnight. The Committee also wanted to know the justification of investing crores of rupees in those studios/production centres if the same are not to be utilised to the optimum level. The CEO Prasar Bharati stated in reply, that there are certain bottlenecks as people are not willing to be posted at those places. He further submitted that there are visible over staffing at major centres in All India Radio and Doordarshan where as the smaller centres are under staffed, though staff has been posted at various places by way of redeployment. The CEO admitted that it was not a satisfactory situation. However he added that during the last one year overall utilisation of studios has improved. In reply to a query, about alleged misutilisation of various facilities at Production Centres for private production of programmes in connivance with the DD staff, the Committee has been informed that no compliant has been received regarding misutilisation of assets by private parties, except that CBI has conducted an enquiry relating to alleged misuse of engineering equipments at CPC Delhi. The Prasar Bharati has further stated that existing provision of supervision and inspection to check such malpractices are being strengthened further. As regards guidelines to prohibit Prasar Bharati employees from undertaking private jobs/production of programmes, it has been submitted that the employees are governed by CCS (conduct) Rules and are not permitted to undertake any private jobs/production of programmes.

107. The Committee regrets to note that infrastructure built with investment of crores of rupees from the public exchequer for production at various DD Kendras like Shimla, Shantiniketan and Patna are lying unused. The Committee is perturbed to note that Patna studio recorded only 8.15 hours programme in a month, while only field work is being done at Shimla, Jalpaiguri and Shantiniketan. Similarly at various other important places infrastructure has been utilized merely for a few hours in a month which is grossly inadequate vis-a-vis, the facilities installed there, resulting in wastage of huge public funds. The Committee is not convinced at all with the explanation that major centres are overstaffed and the smaller ones under staffed which can only be termed as mismanagement, neglect of planning and lack of foresight on the part of Prasar Bharati. The Committee strongly recommends that required steps like redeployment and tapping the local talent etc. be initiated promptly.

108. The Committee is aware of the misutilisation of Government infrastructure by private producers at various places in connivance with Doordarshan staff. It has been receiving complaints to that effect quite often. In one of the complaints names of officials working for production of programmes of a private producer who is connected with Calcutta DDK have been given. The Committee had passed on those complaints to CEO Prasar Bharati and Secretary I & B. In view of these facts the reasoning that employees are not permitted to undertake private job does not carry on conviction and is clearly by way of after thoughts. The Ministry does not seem to be concerned. The Committee recommends that Prasar Bharati should strengthen and streamline its supervisory/inspecting machinery, conduct surprise checks and submit a detailed note to the Committee about its findings and necessary steps taken to remedy the malady.

Broadcasting Services in the North-East

109. The Committee pointed out that in the course of a study tour it is learnt about the unsatisfactory functioning of telecast/broadcasting services in the North-Eastern States particularly in Nagaland, where only four Doordarshan officials were working at Kohima DD Kendra and only 58 minutes programme was being telecast from Monday to Friday and that the Kendra was not in a position to relay the programmes as 72 posts of staff were reportedly abolished in 1996 and 31 posts are lying vacant. The Committee also wanted to know about the working of Short Wave transmitter in Kohima due to which people could not view the programmes with clarity and the same is required to be upgraded to 100 K.W. The CEO, Prasar Bharati in reply assured that necessary steps would be taken. He stated that as per his information, All India Radio, Kohima was broadcasting news in 16 dialects.

110. The Committee further enquired about the steps taken by Prasar Bharati to bring the people of North-Eastern States into the mainstream and provide improved broadcasting services to them. The CEO stated the indifferent power supply interrupted. All India Radio broadcasting and generator was not fully powered and unable to run a 50 K.W. Transmitter.

111. The Committee pointed out that in a Television programme telecast on North-East between 1.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. demographic scenes of some other place was shown while commentary was on Tripura. The same scenes were repeated in different slots and same footage/theme was used for depicting different places/states. In this context, the Committee wanted to know the reasons for not employing the talented local people from North-Eastern states for producing/telecasting programmes pertaining to those states who are familiar with the Geography/culture of the area. The Committee also enquired about the reasons for installing VLPTs in remote areas of North-Eastern states instead of LPTs since VLPTs are unmanned transmitters and there is no provision to rectify the defects that develop in the transmitter.

112. In reply, the CEO Prasar Bharati stated that problem in the North-East has been of deployment as people are not willing to go there and work. In order to overcome that problem unmanned equipments (VLPTs) are installed there. The Secretary, I & B fully shared the view that local recruitment is the answer to the problem of shortage of staff and problem of unemployment and non-tapping the local talent. He further stated that the constraint faced by Prasar Bharati was mainly because of cadres. If it was an all India or regional cadre, the recruiting officer did not have the right to select a local person. On a further query about contractual appointments, the Secretary submitted that the same is prohibited under the rules.

113. The Committee note with serious concern that sensitive North-Eastern States, which are facing serious insurgency problem, are not being paid due attention by Prasar Bharati, since even in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, only four Doordarshan officials were in position producing 58 minutes programme in a week, as 72 posts have been abolished in 1996 and 31 posts are lying vacant. The Committee is perturbed at the casual and negligent attitude of Doordarshan, as in a TV programme telecast at 1.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. on the North East, the demographic scenes were shown from some other place while commentary was made for another place from the same footage which amounts to disinformation and playing with the sentiments of the local people.

114. This requires to be investigated and stern action taken against the producer of the programme. Again, Prasar Bharati has installed VLPTs in the area which are unmanned and incapable of transmitting the programmes with clarity to the remote and hilly areas. The Committee views that the explanation given to those problems/deficiencies that the transmitter was not working due to non-supply of electricity, the capacity of production infrastructure was not being tapped fully due to unwillingness of staff to go there and work and that the VLPTs were installed to overcome the shortage of staff, are not convincing at all. The Committee is seriously concerned with the problems of North-East and have already made several strong recommendations on various deficiencies observed in North-Eastern states. The Committee is constrained to observe that no concrete action is taken on the recommendations. Therefore, the Committee reiterates that Prasar Bharati should take urgent measures to overcome the difficulties/deficiencies in the broadcasting/telecasting services in that area and bring the people of the area in the mainstream who feel alienated and neglected, because of lack of responsive attitude on the part of the Government.

115. The Committee strongly recommends recruitment of the local people who are familiar with the geography and culture of the area and hopefully can present authentic information in programmes. The Committee also hopes that the Government will take suitable measures to overcome reluctance of staff to be posted in North East.

116. The 50 K.W. Transmitter should be upgraded at the earliest and step taken to overcome the erratic power supply so that transmission may reach the remote border areas. Urgent action should be taken to attend to the problems of VLPTs and wherever possible faulty VLPTs should be replaced with LPTs which have higher range and are less fault prone. The senior officers should make surprise visits to the area to tone up the administrative machinery.

NEW DELHI;
10 August, 2001
19 Sravana, 1923 (Saka)

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Information Technology.

DOORDARSHAN KENDRA CALCUTTA

DD-7

Fix Point Chart

Time	Programme Name	Producer
6.55 to 8.15 am	Shuprobhat	Ramesh Gandhi
8.15 to 8.35 am	Khas Khabar	Ramesh Gandhi
8.35 to 10.00 am	No programme/Filler
10.00 to 10.30 am	Ramkrishna	SM Bhura
10.30 to 11.00 am	Ferri Ghat	Ramesh Gandhi
11.00 to 11.30 am	In-House Programme	DDK
11.30. to 2.10 pm	Bengali Feature Film	Ramesh Gandhi
2.10 to 2.30 pm	Khas Khabar	Ramesh Gandhi
2.30 to 3.00 pm	Mahaprabhu	Kamal Doshi
3.00 to 3.25 pm	Mohini	Mukul Roychowdhury
3.25 to 3.55 pm	Bhool Thikana	Mrinmoy Chakraborty
4.00 to 5.30 pm	In-House Programme	DDK
5.30 to 6.00 pm	Day wise Programmes	Day wise Producers
6.00 to 6.20 pm	Khas Khabar	Ramesh Gandhi
6.20 to 6.55 pm	Janmabhumi	Ramesh Gandhi
6.55 to 7.00 pm	Ajke	Ramesh Gandhi
7.00 to 7.30 pm	Bengali News	DDK
7.30 to 8.00 pm	Day wise Programmes	Day wise Producers
8.00 to 8.30 pm	to be allotted to	Ramesh Gandhi
8.30 to 9.00 pm	Janmabhumi	Ramesh Gandhi
9.00 to 9.30 pm	Ramkrishna	SM Bhura
9.30 to 9.50 pm	Khas Khabar	Ramesh Gandhi
9.50 to 10.20 pm	Mukho Mukhi	Ramesh Gandhi
10.20 to 10.30 pm	Bengali News	DDK
10.30. to 12.30 am	Bengali Feature Film	Ramesh Gandhi

ANNEXURE-II

SRFTI—RENTAL RATES OF EQUIPMENT

SRFTI has not offered any of its production facilities to the Dean for private production. The facilities were, however, rented out on two different occasions to (i) M/s. Rainbow Productions Ltd. and (ii) Gautam Ghose, the Chairman on the following rental and general terms and conditions:

List of equipment	Rental rates
1. AVID for film & video editing	Rs. 600/- per hour
2. Two Stennbecks (both 16 mm & 35 mm)	Rs. 1200/- per shift of 8 hours.
3. One 35 mm Moviola	Rs. 500/- per shift of 8 hours.
4. Beta A/B Role & cut-to-cut Edit Suite	Rs. 2750/- per shift of 8 hours.
5. Negative cutting room	Rs. 300/- per shift of 8 hours.

Conditions for hiring

- (i) Remuneration of the attendants will be paid directly by the hirer.
- (ii) A deposit of Rs. 10,000/- will have to be paid by the hirer, which will be adjusted against the rental charges and adjusting breakage, damages of equipment, if any.
- (iii) A discount of 25% on the rental charges will be made available for students passed out from Institute, faculty members, members of the Academic Council and Governing Council.

The valuation of the equipment is the composite cost for renting *i.e.* cost elements of attending manpower, electricity and use of other related facilities besides the cost of equipment as per rentals.

The renting of equipment was permitted following a decision, in principle, by the Governing Council, the apex policy-making body of the Institute in order to generate revenue. At present, there is no formal guidelines available for renting out equipment by the Institute. Renting out the equipment has since been stopped pending formulation of the guidelines.

The terms and conditions of Renting out of equipment provided a deposit of Rs. 10,000/- as caution money to be given by the Private Producers for adjustment against any minor breakages, etc. as precautions to prevent any damages to the property of the Institute. Adequate precautions were also ensured by attaching a technical attendant throughout the period of utilization of the equipment by the private producers.

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (1999-2000)

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 5th September, 2000 from 1100 hours to 1315 hours in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mahendra Baitha
3. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
4. Prof. Dukha Bhagat
5. Shri Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary
6. Shri T. Govindan
7. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
8. Shri Jawahar Lal Jaiswal
9. Shri K.K. Kaliappan
10. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
11. Shri G. Ram Mohan
12. Shri A.K. Moorthy
13. Shri Karia Munda
14. Shri K. Balrama Krishna Murthy
15. Shri Sheeshram Singh Ravi
16. Shri Saroj Tufani
17. Rajkumari Ratna Singh
18. Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake
19. Shri A. Krishnaswamy

Rajya Sabha

20. Dr. M.N. Das
21. Shri Balkavi Bairagi
22. Shri Shatrughan Sinha
23. Shri Balbir K. Punj
24. Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murthy
25. Shri Munavvar Hasan
26. Shri Kartar Singh Duggal
27. Shri R.N. Arya
28. Shrimati Kum Kum Rai
29. Shri Rajiv Shukla

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri S.K. Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri Bhupesh Kumar — *Assistant Director*

Representatives of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

1. Shri Y.N. Chaturvedi — Secretary
2. Shri R.R. Shah — Spl. Secretary, I & B and CEO,
Prasar Bharati
3. Smt. Aruna Makhan — Addl. Secretary and Financial
Advisor
4. Shri R.C. Mishra — Joint Secretary (B)
5. Shri S.C. Tiwary — Director
6. Shri Amarnatha Shetty — Director

All India Radio

1. Shri H.M. Joshi — Engineer-in-Chief
2. Shri K.M. Paul — Chief Engineer
3. Shri P. Mohanadoss — Chief Engineer
4. Dr. P.C. Hembram — DDG

Doordarshan

1. Shri B.K. De — Engineer-in-Chief
2. Shri Harish Awashthi — DG Channel Development
3. Shri T.R. Malakar — DDG
4. Shri K. Kunhikrishnan — DDG
5. Dr. P.K. Seth — DDG
6. Shri R.K. Gupta — Chief Engineer

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Officers accompanying him.

3. Thereafter, the Chairman and Members of the Committee sought information from the representatives of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati on various issues about the working of Prasar Bharati like filling up the vacancies in the Prasar Bharati Board, meeting of Programmes Review and Planning (PRP), recommendations of Review Committee, viewership of Doordarshan, coverage of Olympic games, regional channels, Gyandarshan and other channels of Doordarshan, uplinking, revenue generation, quality of programmes, Advertisment code, utilisation of DD infrastructure and shortage of staff etc. The representatives of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati replied to the queries of the Members on the above mentioned issues.

4. The Chairman, thanked the representatives of the Ministry for their cooperation by expressing their views frankly on the points raised by the Members.

5. A verbatim record of the sitting has been kept.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (1999-2000)

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 20th September, 2000 from 1100 hours to 1300 hours in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

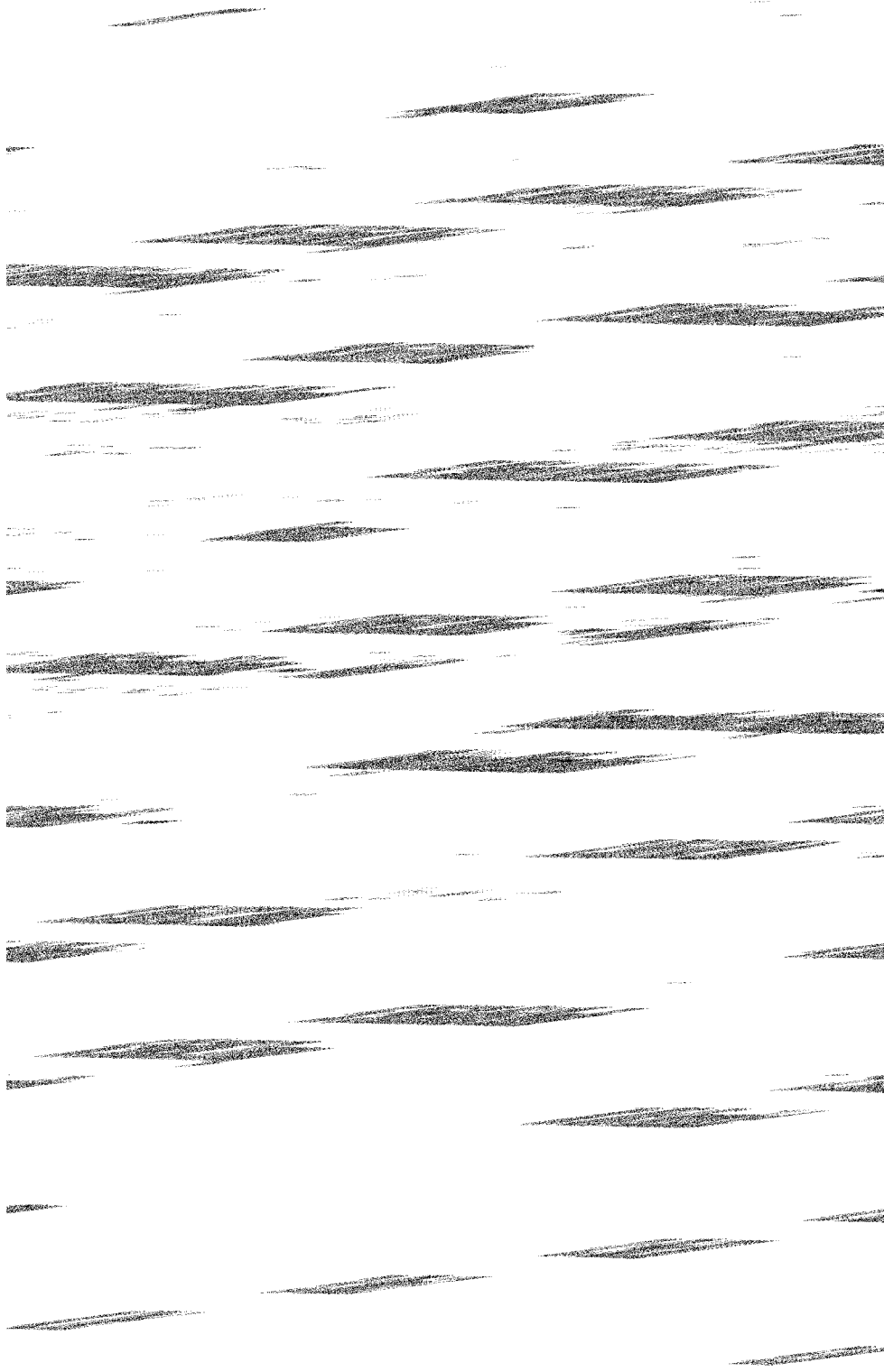
PRESENT

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mahendra Baitha
3. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
4. Prof. Dukha Bhagat
5. Shri Tara Chand Bhagora
6. Shri Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary
7. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
8. Shri K.K. Kaliappan
9. Dr. C. Krishnan
10. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
11. Shri G. Ram Mohan
12. Shri A.K. Moorthy
13. Shri Karia Munda
14. Shri K. Balrama Krishna Murthy
15. Shri Sheeshram Singh Ravi
16. Shri K.A. Sangtam
17. Sardar Buta Singh
18. Rajkumari Ratna Singh
19. Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake
20. Shrimati D.M. Vijaya Kumari
21. Shri Vinay Katiyar
22. Shri A. Krishnaswamy



Doordarshan

1. Shri B.K. De — Engineer-in-Chief
2. Shri Harish Awashthi — DG Channel Development
3. Shri T.R. Malakar — DDG
4. Shri K. Kunhikrishnan — DDG
5. Shri R.K. Gupta — Chief Engineer
6. Dr. P.K. Seth — DDG

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Officers accompanying him.

3. The Committee sought certain clarifications from the representatives of the Ministry on the issues relating to working of Prasar Bharati as well as points arising out of the written replies to the questionnaire, furnished by the Ministry like meeting of Programmes Review and Planning (PRP), Selling of DD slots, DD Metro Channel, Bidding process for tenders, Advertisement Code, amendments incorporated in Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act 1995, telecast of Olympic games, utilisation of programme production centres, and broadcasting services in the North-Eastern States etc.

4. The Representatives of the Ministry replied to the queries of the Members on the above mentioned issues.

5. A verbatim record of the sitting has been kept.

The Committee then, adjourned to meet again at 1500 hours.

4. The Committee sought clarifications from the representatives of the Ministry on various issues pertaining to working of Prasar Bharati and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting like wrong recording of Minutes of Programmes Review and Planning (PRP) meeting awarding of slots to private producers to telecast news based/current affairs programmes and various other TV serials, CBI raids on Doordarshan officials, starting at 24 hour channel by Doordarshan Calcutta, withdrawal of court case by Doordarshan against M/s. Rainbow Productions, monopolisation of DD-7 Calcutta by a private producer, tendering system in Prasar Bharati, Films Division and status of industry to Film Industry etc.

5. The representatives of the Ministry replied to the queries of the Members.

6. A verbatim record of the sitting has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX IV

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (1999-2000)

The Committee sat on Wednesday, 6 December, 2000 from 1500 hours to 1650 hours in Committee Room No. 53, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
3. Shri Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary
4. Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary
5. Dr. C. Krishnan
6. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
7. Shri Sheeshram Singh Ravi
8. Shri K.A. Sangtam
9. Rajkumari Ratna Singh
10. Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake

Rajya Sabha

11. Shri Balkavi Bairagi
12. Shri Narendra Mohan
13. Shri Balbir K. Punj
15. Shri Kartar Singh Duggal
16. Shri K. Rama Mohana Rao
17. Shrimati Kum Kum Rai
18. Shri Rajiv Shukla

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri S.K. Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri Bhupesh Kumar — *Assistant Director*

Representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

1. Shri Y.N. Chaturvedi — *Secretary (I & B)*
2. Shri R.R. Shah — *Spl. Secretray, I&B and Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati*

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 3. Smt. Aruna Makhan | — | Addl. Secretary & Financial Adviser (I&B) |
| 4. Shri Rakesh Mohan | — | Joint Secretary (P&A), (I&B) |
| 5. Shri Sudhir Bhandari | — | Chief Controller of Accounts |
| 6. Shri S.C. Tewary | — | Director (BP&L) |
| 7. Ms. Sunanda Sharma | — | Director (PC&Fin.) |

All India Radio

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Shri K.M. Paul | — | Chief Engineer (D) |
| 2. Shri P. Mohanadoss | — | Chief Engineer (MR) |
| 3. Shri M.D. Gaikwad, | — | Dy. Director General (P) |

Doordarshan

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Shri B.K. De | — | Engineer-in-Chief |
| 2. Shri R.C. Mishra | — | Executive Director |
| 3. Smt. Deepak Sandhu | — | Additional Director General (N&CA) |
| 4. Shri T.R. Malakar | — | Deputy Director General |
| 5. Shri K. Kunhikrishnan | — | Deputy Director General |
| 6. Shri R.K. Gupta | — | Chief Engineer |
| 7. Shri R.K. Sinha | — | Controller of Programmes |
| 8. Ms. Usha Bhasin | — | Controller of Programmes |
| 9. Shri S.D. Singh | — | General Manager (Per.) |

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Officers accompanying him.

3. The Committee sought certain clarifications from the representatives of the Ministry on various issues pertaining to the functioning of Prasar Bharati and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting like delay in full composition of Prasar Bharati Board, finalisation and notification of Rules for recruitment for the Prasar Bharati officials, posting by deputation on various portfolios in Prasar Bharati, Evaluation of the quality of programmes, mechanism for regulating the contents of news based and other programmes produced by private producers, previewing of programmes, programme codes, in house production of programmes, revenue generation, marketing system of programmes, viewership, payment to artists and telecast quality of DD-I etc.

4. The representatives of the Ministry and Prasar Bharati replied to the queries of the Members.

5. A verbatim record of sitting has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX V

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (1999-2000)

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 12 December, 2000 from 1500 hours to 1650 hours in Committee Room No. 63, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
3. Shri Tara Chand Bhagora
4. Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary
5. Shri Jawahar Lal Jaiswal
6. Shri K.K. Kaliappan
7. Dr. C. Krishnan
8. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
9. Shri Sheeshram Singh Ravi
10. Shri K.A. Sangtam
11. Rajkumari Ratna Singh
12. Shri Vinay Kumar Sorake
13. Shrimati D.M. Vijaya Kumari
14. Shri G. Ganga Reddy

Rajya Sabha

15. Dr. M.N. Das
16. Shri Narendra Mohan
17. Shri Balbir K. Punj
18. Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murthy
19. Shri Munavvar Hasan
20. Shri P.N. Siva
21. Shri Kartar Singh Duggal
22. Shri R.N. Arya
23. Shri K. Rama Mohana Rao
24. Shri Rajiv Shukla

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri S.K. Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri Bhupesh Kumar — *Assistant Director*

Representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

1. Shri Y.N. Chaturvedi, Secretary (I&B)
2. Shri R.R. Shah, Spl. Secretary, I&B and Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati
3. Smt. Aruna Makhan, Addl. Secretary & Financial Adviser (I&B)
4. Shri Rakesh Mohan, Joint Secretary (P&A), (I&B)
5. Shri Sudhir Bhandari, Chief Controller of Accounts
6. Shri S.C. Tewary, Director (BP&L)
7. Ms. Sunanda Sharma, Director (PC&Fin.)

All India Radio

1. Shri K.M. Paul, Chief Engineer (D)
2. Shri A.V. Swaminathan, Chief Engineer (MR)
3. Shri M.D. Gaikwad, Dy. Director General (P)

Doordarshan

1. Shri B.K. De, Engineer-in-Chief
2. Smt. Deepak Sandhu, Additional Director General (N&CA)
3. Shri T.R. Malakar, Deputy Director General
4. Shri K.Kunhikrishnan, Deputy Director General
5. Shri R.K. Gupta, Chief Enginner
6. Shri Biswanath Das, DTC, Calcutta
7. Shri R.N. Chakraborty, DDG (Retired)
8. Shri R.C. Mishra, Executive Director
9. Shri S.D. Singh, General Manager (Per.)
10. Shri R.K. Sinha, Controller of Programmes (Coord.)
11. Dr. P.K. Seth, Former DDG (Doordarshan)
12. Shri A.K. Biswas, Director, Calcutta (Doordarshan)

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Secretary and other officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati accompanying him.

3. The Chairman expressed concern at the late supply of replies to the questionnaire by the Ministry and advised that the same should have been made available earlier.

4. The Committee sought further clarification from the representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati on various issues pertaining to the functioning of Prasar Bharati like the progress made in the inquiry promised in alleged irregularities made in allotment of programme slots to private producers, telecast of news bulletins/news based programmes, floating of bids for awarding of Doordarshan slots, sale of DD metro slots to Channel Nine Network PTY Limited and composition of Prasar Bharati Board etc.

5. The representatives of the Ministry and Prasar Bharati replied to the queries of the Members.

6. A verbatim record of sitting has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX VI

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (2001)

The Committee sat on Friday, 19 February, 2001 from 1500 hours to 1630 hours in Committee Room 'E', Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Somnath Chatterjee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mahendra Baitha
3. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
4. Shri Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary
5. Shri Jawahar Lal Jaiswal
6. Dr. C. Krishnan
7. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
8. Shri K.A. Sangtam
9. Sardar Buta Singh
10. Rajkumari Ratna Singh
11. Shrimati D.M. Vijaya Kumari

Rajya Sabha

12. Dr. M.N. Das
13. Shri Balkavi Bairagi
14. Shri Narendra Mohan
15. Shri Balbir K. Punj
16. Shri R.N. Arya
17. Shri K. Rama Mohana Rao
18. Shrimati Kum Kum Rai
19. Shri Rajiv Shukla

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.K. Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
2. Shri Bhupesh Kumar — *Assistant Director*

Representatives of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Shri Pawan Chopra | — | Secretary (I&B) |
| 2. Shri Anil Baijal | — | Addl. Secretary, and CEO,
Prasar Bharati |
| 3. Smt. Aruna Makhan | — | Addl. Secretary & Financial
Adviser (I&B) |
| 4. Shri Rakesh Mohan | — | Joint Secretary (B), (I&B) |
| 5. Shri Sudhir Bhandari | — | Chief Controller of Accounts |
| 6. Shri S.C. Tewary | — | Director (BP&L) |

All India Radio

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri K.M. Paul | — | Chief Engineer (D) |
| 2. Dr. P.C. Hembrum | — | DDG (PP&D) |
| 3. Shri P. Mohandoss | — | Chief Engineer (MR) |

Doordarshan

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Shri B.K. De | — | Engineer-in-Chief |
| 2. Smt. Deepak Sandhu | — | ADG (N&CA) |
| 3. Shri T.R. Malakar | — | DDG |
| 4. Shri K. Kunnikrishnan | — | DDG |
| 5. Shri R.K. Gupta | — | Chief Engineer |
| 6. Shri Biswanath Das | — | DTC, Calcutta |
| 7. Shri R.N. Chakraborty | — | DDG (Retd.) |
| 8. Shri R.C. Mishra | — | Executive Director |
| 9. Shri S.D. Singh | — | GM (Per) |
| 10. Shri R.K. Sinha | — | CP (Coord) |
| 11. Dr. P.K. Seth | — | Ex. DDG |
| 12. Shri A.K. Biswas | — | CP (Formerly Dir. DDK,
Calcutta) |

2. At the outset, the Chairman, welcomed the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and officers accompanying him.

3. Thereafter, the Committee sought certain clarifications from the representatives of the Ministry on various issues pertaining to the functioning of Prasar Bharati and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting like alleged irregularities in allocation of programmes of DDK Kolkata coverage of Akashvani and Doordarshan, recommendations of Geeta Krishnan Committee Report, Policy guidelines, Constitution of Prasar Bharati Board and FM Channels etc.

4. The representatives of the Ministry and Prasar Bharati replied to the queries of the Members.

5. A verbatim record of the sitting has been kept.

The Committee, then, adjourned.



2. ***

3. ***

4. ***

5. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the Draft Twenty Fifth report on 'Working of Prasar Bharati' and adopted the same without any modifications/amendments.

The Committee then adjourned.