

All India Radio to only be referred to as Akashvani: A brief history of the Indian public broadcaster

By IASToppers | 2023-05-06 15:05:00



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The Parliament has recently passed the provisions of **the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990**.



[ref-Telegraph india]

About the provisions:

- The public broadcaster- **All India Radio (AIR)** will be exclusively referred to as **Akashvani** in all broadcasts and programmes.

History of the AIR before independence:

- **Guglielmo Marconi** sent out the **first** radio transmission in **1895**, but it took 2 decades for radio broadcasting to become **commercially** available.
- In India, **the Radio Club of Bombay** sent out the **first** commercial transmission in **1923**.
- Later, the **Calcutta Radio Club** was started and then radio broadcasts reached **Madras** as the **Madras Presidency Radio Club**.
- The **Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC)** came into existence in **1927**.
 - But it became bankrupt in **1930**.
- In **1930**, the Indian State Broadcasting Service (**ISBS**) commenced its operations under the **Department of Industries and Labour**.
- **Lionel Fielden** was appointed as **India's first Controller of Broadcasting** in **1935**.
- In 1936, **ISBS** became **All India Radio** and was brought under the **Department of Communications**.
- Later, AIR was brought under the **Department of Information and Broadcasting** which is now called the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** (under whose **jurisdiction** it remains till date).

History of AIR after independence:

- At the time of Independence, India had **radio stations** at Delhi, Lucknow, Bombay, Madras and Trichy.
- Jawaharlal Nehru's speech "**Tryst with Destiny**" was broadcasted at **AIR** in 1947.
- **Frequency Modulation (FM)** broadcasting began in **1977** in **Chennai**.

Current status of Akashvani:

- Today **Akashvani** has a network of over **262 radio stations**, coverage of **92%** of India's **area** and nearly all **population**.
- It **broadcasts** in **23 languages** and **146 dialects**.
- It has an **External Services Division** which broadcasts in **11 Indian** and **16 foreign languages**.
 - This helps reaching out to more than **100 countries**.
- Its **News Services Division** broadcasts **647 bulletins** daily for a **total duration** of nearly **56 hours**.
- **AIR 18 FM stereo** channels, largely targets the **urban** audience.

History of nomenclature- Akashvani:

- The name **Akashvani** was adopted by **AIR** in **1956**.
- It was used **interchangeably** with AIR, to refer to its **Hindi broadcasting**.