

**Summary of the recommendations of the inter-departmental committee
on introducing competition in the electronic media under the
chairmanship of Shri K.A.Varadan, Additional Secretary in the Ministry
of Information and broadcasting:**

(October, 1991)

i) The Committee recognises the importance of introducing competition in the Electronic Media to provide additional outlets to the creative talent, to strengthen the democratic fabric of the nation and help better in meeting the cultural aspirations of different regions.

ii) There is need to guard against the dangers of unrestrained commercialism which may follow the establishment of additional channels financed solely through advertising. The dangers, of control of these media falling into the hands of unscrupulous or anti-national elements also should not be discounted.

5.3 In regard to approach to the new broadcasting system the following recommendations have been made:

i) Subject to viability of operations preference should be given to setting up new TV/Radio channels in different parts of the country for regional broadcasts. These transmitters can, over a period of time, link up suitably either by forming a consortium or by entering into suitable arrangements amongst themselves. Such a link-up would provide inter-regional network.

ii)

a) Simultaneously, the second Doordarshan channels in the four metropolitan cities can be leased out to suitable licensees.

b) Also simultaneously, additional radio channels including FM stations wherever available may also be similarly leased out.

These actions under this option should be taken only after suitable legislation is passed.

(iii) The option to permit one agency or consortium to set up a series of transmitters in the country will, in the opinion of the Committee, rank only next to the option of permitting a number of licensees to set up different TV/Radio transmitters in the country.

(iv) The Committee does not recommend leasing out a particular chunk of time from an existing TV/Radio channel.

(v) The option of a licensee leasing a transponder on a satellite for satellite-derived direct broadcast would perhaps be appropriate for developmental or educational telecast. The Committee notes that as of now there is no such spare space segment available. As and when one becomes available, the Government can take an appropriate decision.

(Para 2.14)

5.4 The Committee feels that in view of the sensitive nature of the choice, the selection of agencies for grant of licence should be performed by an independent agency in a transparent manner. It feels that the organisations eligible to receive licences should be public limited companies with major interest groups concerned with broadcasting represented in management and with open access to shareholding. Such organisations should be willing to abide by guidelines to be prescribed by the government regarding their functioning. Certain cross media restrictions are recommended in order to avoid monopoly over information sources. Preference may be given to public bodies like Universities, cooperative institutions etc. if they apply for licences.

(Para 3.3, 3.4)

5.7 The Committee has suggested that the Broadcasting Council of India to be constituted through a legislation, amending the relevant sections in the *Prasar Bharati Act*, be entrusted with the functions of licensing, monitoring of programmes and quality rating.

(Paras 3.11, 3.12 and 3.13)

5.8 The Committee has recommended that a new legislation be enacted to govern the setting up and operation of additional broadcast channels, and has outlined the areas where such legislation will be required.

(Paras 4.1 and 4.2)