



Mission Pitroda: Bring Prasar Bharti to the 21st century

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New Delhi, Feb. 6 -- Prompted by the exponential rise in social media, Prasar Bharati, the public service broadcaster, is looking at a generational change through Sam Pitroda Committee, the fourth such committee since 1996. The members of the Pitroda Committee, headed by technocrat Sam Pitroda, met for the first time on Tuesday, has been set up to review the institutional framework of Prasar Bharati, including its relationship with the government and continuing its role as a public broadcaster.

As many as 11 subgroups have been set up to study varied subjects and prepare white papers - in 30-60 days - on Prasar Bharati-government relationship, technology & choices, business development, finance, organisation and HR, programming & content, archiving, global initiatives, social media (for delivery platform), regulatory mechanism and competitive analysis.

"Mainly because of the pressure from social media, the timing is right to revisit Prasar Bharati. We are looking at a generational change, rather than incremental change," Pitroda told reporters after the meeting.

Apart from improving the content, technology, delivery etc, an important task that the committee would need to look at is massive shortage of manpower. Of the sanctioned strength of 48,000, the public broadcaster is managing with barely 33,800 personnel at different levels.

Once the white papers of each sub-group are in, the committee hopes to finalise its report in about 4-6 months time. "The report will go to Prasar Bharati board, the ministry and then move up," Jawahar Sircar, Prasar Bharati CEO, said.

Three other committees - Sengupta Committee in 1996 and Narayanmurthy Committee and Bakshi Committee, both in 2000 - had worked on different aspects, including the law, related to Prasar Bharati and suggested several things. However, the government has barely paid heed to any of the recommendations. Asked if this committee's recommendations would meet the same fate, Pitroda could only say "we have to be prepared for that."

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