

Press Reports Prasar Bharati (AIR & DD)

This site has collections of all media reports related to Prasar Bharati, All India Radio and Doordarshan for interested Staff members & others.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2013

Doordarshan may get new identity, go BBC way

Source: Hindustan Times epaper | *Zia Haq* zia.haq@hindustantimes.com

Date: 4th February, 2013

Doordarshan, India's drifting, sedate state broadcaster, has mattered little for most Indians. Now, even the government is beginning to tire.

Doordarshan may make a historic switch from being an archaic "state broadcaster-like entity" to a full "public broadcast service" on the lines of the UK's BBC, which is funded directly by Parliament, or the US's PBC, funded by a mix of revenue and public finance.

When state broadcasters, which are essentially mere mouthpieces of the government, are made into public broadcast services, they become more independent, credible and profitable, according to the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, a think-tank.

Information and broadcasting minister Manish Tewari, suave and relatively younger at 47, has pushed for a timely re-look into what kind of Doordarshan should India have.

So, a high-level panel headed by the Prime Minister's innovations adviser on Sam Pitroda has been asked to suggest an overhaul of Prasar Bharati, which manages Doordarshan.

In a nation where TV watching is a national pastime, housewives prefer melodramatic soaps on private channels. As for news, Doordarshan and its stiff newsreaders are no longer the "golden mean" for the country's noisy political discourse.

Yet, the government spends close to R1,800 crore annually on Doordarshan, but is required to maintain an "arm's length" from it.



ILLUSTRATION: ARHIMANVII

India opened its media space in 1991, resulting in a boom of commercial broadcasters and 852 private channels are currently on air.

"Where does that leave the government? There is a need to re-appraise the role of Prasar Bharati," Tewari said.