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NEW DELHI, Feb 5, 2013

An expert committee constituted to review the institutional framework of Prasar Bharati has set up 11 working groups to examine a range of issues including financing to the national public service broadcaster and its relationship with the government.

The decision was taken at the first meeting of the seven-member committee headed by Prime Minister's adviser on public information infrastructure and innovation Sam Pitroda here on Tuesday.

The panel was constituted by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry on January 29 to suggest measures to revamp Prasar Bharati. "These working groups will undertake in-depth study of the subjects assigned to them and submit white papers with 30 to 60 days," Pitroda told reporters after the meeting. The names of those 11 working groups will be finalised in three to four days, he added.

Besides, a website will be created to invite suggestions from the people. "We are looking for ideas from public, industry, private sector, experts and everybody else," he said. It is time to bring "generational change" in the functioning of the Prasar Bharati.

"Need has been expressed in various quarters to re-visit the matter in the changed scenario. The group will go into detail on the issue and submit its report with recommendations," a Prasar Bharati official said.

Another working group will examine the issues of strengthening the financial management of the Prasar Bharati and make recommendations to improve the system and procedures. As the Prasar Bharati has been mired with various organisational issue, one of the groups will look into them.

"There have hardly been recruitments since 15-20 years. While people are retiring every month there are no replacements. Many new centres and activities have been started without any manpower. Also, there are no skilled people for managing some key areas like marketing, archives and new media," an official said.

One of the groups will examine the issues of business development as it was now essential to make it financially independent and sustainable so that it does not depend on government grants, while another will suggest plan to ensure global presence of Doordarshan.

Another area of concern has been programming and content. "Unless there are excellent content, the services will not be able to attract listeners and viewers. One group will specifically examine various aspects of this issue and make suggestions," the official said.

Working groups will separately look into social media in cyber space, creation of a regulatory mechanism and competitive analysis.

As the choice of technology was another area of concern for the Prasar Bharati. "It has often been seen that the organisation has not been able to keep pace with the development of technology. One of the groups will examine these aspects and suggest appropriate policies and processes," the official said.

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