



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

65 Glorious Years: Doordarshan's Legacy in Shaping India's Broadcasting History

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Doordarshan, established on **September 15, 1959**, marked the **beginning of India's broadcasting era**. As an autonomous public service broadcaster under the Government of India, it is one of the two divisions of Prasar Bharati. Today, **Doordarshan remains India's largest broadcasting entity**, with a vast network of studios and transmitters. It provides television, online, and mobile services, reaching both metropolitan and regional areas, as well as international audiences.

History

Doordarshan began as a modest experiment in public service telecasting. **The then President of India, Shri Rajendra Prasad inaugurated the first broadcast on September 15, 1959**. In 1959, a leading European company exhibited its closed-circuit TV equipment at an international exposition. At the end of the expo, the equipment was gifted to the people of India.

The experiment became a regular service in 1965 when Doordarshan began beaming signals to homes in and around the country's capital, New Delhi. By 1972 services were extended to Mumbai and Amritsar and by 1975, to seven more cities. **Till 1975 it was a part of All India Radio**. On April 1, 1976, it transformed to become a separate Department in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and later came under Prasar Bharati.

A new signature image was designed by the National Institute of Design and a signature tune was created by Pandit Ravi Shankar. The first telecast in colour took place on August 15, 1982, when the national program started.

Present Scenario

Over the years Doordarshan has grown into a network operating **35 satellite channels** out of which **6 are All India channels** and are **22 Regional Channels(24X7)**. Also, **DD operates 6 Regional (Non 24X7) and 1 International Channel**. There are total no. of **59 transmitters**. In addition to above stations, Doordarshan is operating DD DTH service "DD Free Dish" from Earth Station, Todapur, Delhi.



Doordarshan's ahead of times programmes

Doordarshan's timeless stories and impeccable storytelling are unmatched. Despite limited resources and technology, shows like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, *Hum Log*, *Buniyaad*, *Malgudi Days*, and *Udaan* set a benchmark for quality content. Doordarshan has delivered content to generations and continues to play a vital role in creating awareness.



Initiatives of Doordarshan during COVID Pandemic

India's public broadcaster amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown collaborated with various **State Government institutions, along with All India Radio to broadcast virtual classes and other educational content through their regional channels across the country on TV, Radio, and YouTube.** In the absence of school classes, these virtual classes helped lakhs of students, especially the 10th and 12th standard students in preparation for their board and competitive examinations.

Also, to keep learning an interesting activity, apart from the curriculum content, virtual classes in a few states included storytelling by eminent personalities and quiz shows.

Technology upgrade in DD

Doordarshan Kisan has launched two AI anchors — **AI Krish and AI Bhoomi.** These AI anchors make Doordarshan Kisan the first government TV channel in India to employ artificial intelligence in this way. The AI anchors are designed to look and functional just like human presenters, capable of delivering news 24/7 without breaks. AI anchors can speak 50 languages.



DD Free Dish

DD FreeDish DTH service is owned and operated by Public Service Broadcaster Prasar Bharati. DD FreeDish is the only Free-to-Air (FTA) Direct-To-Home (DTH) service where there is no monthly subscription fee from the viewers. **It is very affordable for all as it requires only a small one-time investment of about Rs. 1500/- to 2000/- for purchasing of Set-top-Box (STB) and small-sized Dish Antenna with accessories.**

According to, FICCI-EY As of January 2024, DD Free Dish hosted 167 MPEG2 (the generic coding of moving pictures and associated audio information) channels including 37 Doordarshan channels, 51 educational channels and 79 private channels, apart from 22 MPEG4 channels. This unique free to air model of DD Free Dish has made it the largest DTH platform and today DD Free Dish reaches to about 45 million households (as per the FICCI E&Y report 2023).



Highlights

- To embark the 65 glorious years of Doordarshan a social media campaign **#DilseDD@65** has been started. Under which the mission and vision of DD is being shared with the audience in the form of video.
- DD is now offering a diverse range of programs to both entertain and educate its audience. Viewers can start their day with the Divya Darshan of Ramlalla at 6:00 am, immersing themselves in the live broadcast of the Holy Aarti from Ayodhya. The channel also features a variety of spiritual and religious shows, including *Usha Parinaya*, *Aradhana*, *Mahabharat*, *Sai Baba*, and *Sankat Mochan Hanuman*.

- For younger viewers, DD has introduced daily soaps such as *Models and Hum Toh Middle Class Hain Ji*. Additionally, the channel is showcasing new and offbeat programs like *Cyber Crime ki Duniya Bach Ke Rehna, Desi Rasoi Se, and Khet Khet Mein*.
- The Government has approved continuation of the Central Sector Scheme “**Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development**” with an outlay of **Rs. 2539.61 crore** for the period 2021-26 with various components including expansion of reach of public service broadcasting in remote, tribal, Left-Wing Extremism, border areas, aspirational districts and other such areas of strategic/national importance.
- Based on the theme of *Naye Bharat Ka Naya Doordarshan*, Doordarshan aired a mega historical show titled *Swaraj- Bharat Ke Swatantrata Sangram Ki Samagra Gatha*, a 75 episodes mega show illustrating the glorious history of India’s freedom struggle.
- During the covid lockdown, Doordarshan touched new records in terms of viewership. The old iconic serials were re-broadcast on DD National and DD Bharati.
- In yet another step to make the entire DD Network relevant to the changing times, DD SPORTS has become DD SPORTS HD. This has enabled the viewers to watch the telecast of the major international sporting events in High-Definition transmission.
- Prasar Bharati plays a very important role in nation building and lays continuous focus on providing meaningful and accurate content to one and all, both within the country and abroad. (As of December 2023) Prasar Bharati has signed 46 number of MoUs with different countries
- For the state of Arunachal Pradesh, DD Arunprabha channel was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 9th February 2019.
- On March 07, 2022, India’s public broadcaster Prasar Bharati signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with ‘Yupp TV’**, an over-the-top (OTT) platform, which is a gateway for television viewers across the globe. With this, DD India is now available on the OTT platform of **Yupp TV in USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand**.
- With the changing times Doordarshan is reinventing itself and has come out with a new look and feel. DD National, the flagship channel of Doordarshan Network has started a number of new programmes. For the first time Bollywood’s showman **Subhash Ghai** has come with a **TV series called Jaanki**.
- DD National has taken several new initiatives like starting daily **Hindi feature film, a morning magazine show - DD Morning Show, and reinventing Chitrahaar and Rangoli** which are regarded as iconic programmes of Doordarshan.

- Mumbai-based Kids YouTube channel **PunToon Kids** has formed a partnership with Doordarshan to broadcast its content on DD.

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