

This document is downloaded from DR-NTU, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore.

Title	Seminar on the Impact of the Changing Media Environment on Public Service Broadcasting in Asia : September 28-29, 1995, Seoul : [welcome address]
Author(s)	Menon, Vijay
Citation	
Date	1995
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/1944">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/1944</a>
Rights	

**Paper No. 2**

**Seminar on**  
**“THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGING MEDIA ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC  
SERVICE PROGRAMMING IN ASIA”**

Seoul, September 28 - 30, 1995

**Welcome Address by Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary-General,  
Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), Singapore**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this seminar on “The Impact of the Changing Media Environment on Public Service Programming in Asia”.

Change is indeed the hallmark of our times. Rapid and revolutionary change in technology and more slowly in policy. Broadcasting is not immune to these changes. It is believed that today public broadcasting is on the retreat in many countries.

Quite clearly, the future of public service broadcasting is a matter of concern-not merely in this region but across the globe. In June this year, the European Broadcasting Union held a professional discussion on the ‘Future of Public Service Broadcasting in the Multimedia Era’. A month later, Unesco organized an International Roundtable in Paris on “The Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting”. Today we meet to discuss the nature and scope of changes in the media environment in Asia and how these changes are likely to affect public service programming; how various public broadcasting organizations in the region are responding to the challenges; the extent to which commercialization and privatization are affecting public service programming and the policy and regulatory implications of the changing media environment.

To quote Communication Research Trends published all of eight years ago, “Across the globe, public service broadcasting is being forced to come to terms with demands that it be more entrepreneurial in spirit and better ‘value for money’. It is accused of giving its audience too much of what the broadcasters want and not enough of what the public demands. Promoters of deregulation argue that publicly funded broadcasting services will contract as new technology delivers an abundance of channels, encourages programme diversity and expands consumer choice”.

It is almost ten years since the broadcasting research unit of the BBC published a booklet entitled, “The Public Service Idea and British Broadcasting: Main Principles”. It stated that public service

broadcasting represents a set of delicate and fragile accommodations and compromises: between broadcasting aimed at mass tastes and minority interests; between freedom of the broadcaster and the demands of the audience or the state; and between broadcasting as a servant of national interests and as an autonomous institution.

At the EBU meeting, a Canadian broadcaster asserted: “This is the future in which our role may well change — but I believe that it will be a change that **increases** the importance of public service broadcasting even as it changes its nature”.

That may well be true. But we need to ensure that we bring the right perspective to bear on our discussions, that we explore the policy and regulatory implications and develop actionable recommendations to strengthen public service programmes. We must above all avoid the criticism that “arguments which rage about the idea of public service broadcasting are usually marked by the maximum of rhetoric and the minimum of clarity”.

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with AMIC, I would like to mention that we are a non-profit, non-government organization dedicated to the development of mass communication in the region. We have been aided in our efforts, ever since our founding, by the steadfast support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Government of Singapore. We have also been privileged to receive the encouragement and help of a large number of individuals and institutions, including the Korean Broadcasting Institute, our partner for this Seminar and FES-Korea. We have also had the invaluable assistance of our Honorary Country Representative, Dr. Chang-Keun Lee.

We are glad to be in Seoul for this Seminar. Korea epitomises the new Asia, proud of its values and traditions of the past and successful in its efforts to acquire and adopt the skills and technologies of the present. A country which has surged forward economically to take its rightful place in the councils of the world.

We are grateful to all of you for joining us at this important Seminar. Your presence and active participation will enable us to make a significant contribution to the on-going debate on public service programming.

\* \* \*