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Broadcast Management 2000: Nepal

By

Shailendra Raj Sharma
A Country Paper for the Seminar on
"Broadcast Management 2000"

Shailendra Raj Sharma
Executive Director
Radio Nepal

The dawn of Democracy in Nepal saw the establishment of Radio Nepal in April, 1991. Since over four decades have elapsed and the Radio Broadcasting have seen many changes. With only a few technicians and equipments and transmission time for only four and half hours a day in the beginning, Radio Nepal at present is a vast and complex organization with 17 hours of broadcasting time in a day.

At present, Radio Nepal broadcasts on two modes of transmission i.e. on shortwave and mediumwave. Shortwave capacity have three 100 KW each transmitters installed in the capital city of Kathmandu. Likewise medium wave capacity have four 100 KW each transmitters and two 10 KW each transmitters installed at the centre of five development region to cover the length and breadth of the country.

In view of the low literacy rate and the poor economic conditions of the people of Nepal, Radio Nepal is providing a considerable part of the broadcast hours on education, agriculture, health and sanitation, family planning and environment and afforestation. And our efforts are underway to provide other Government and non-governmental agencies to involve themselves to make more use the available broadcast time for more educational and informative programme for the overall benefit of the rural masses.

We now broadcast 16 news bulletins. The languages we cover are Nepali, Hindi, Newari, Maithali and English for the news broadcast and several analytical programmes on the current affairs.

A weekly programme 'Parliamentarian Phone In' in which people directly ask the question to their Member of the Parliament and get answers from the MP, is one of the popular programmes over Radio Nepal.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, Radio Nepal is on the way to establish second channel to accommodate more languages and regions of the country in the Radio Broadcast. The recent National Communications Policy of His Majesty's Government of Nepal has for the first time in Nepal envisaged the opening of broadcasting stations in the private sector also, using the FM technology.
The legal framework for such licensing came this year in the form of National Broadcast Act 1993. We have hoped two to three FM stations may come within the years.

So far, Radio Nepal is a self-reliant financially. It generates its sustenance mainly through commercials. After the establishment of FM stations in private sector, we may also have to go to FM in our commercial service.

Nepal, a mountainous country where roughly only nine percent of the population enjoy electricity. Radio has become and will remain a most powerful medium of communication for many more years to come.

Radio Nepal owns a total of more than 650 personnel in different discipline like programme producers, administrators and engineers, technicians etc.

We have not, at the moment, been able to set-up its own training facilities due to various constraints; financial and trainers. We are mostly becoming dependent on the various international organizations like AIBD, BBC, Dautche Wella, AMIC. But, we have felt, those trainings are not sufficient to train the required manpower.

As I understand, training is the backbone of any organization and it is specially two for the technical staff in view of the fast and continuous change in technology. Training has to be imparted right from the day a person joins the service. It is a continuous process and it is very important to determine the training needs of not only the persons but also the organization in each discipline whether it is administration, engineering, programme and management. All the four are like the wheels of a car.

I also understand that the need of training should be:
- to acquaint the trainers the correct perspective of their job description and give all the background information regarding the working media in the language they understand;
- to get the maximum efficiency from the staff;
- to train a person to do better and higher skilled jobs and improve the standards and advance his knowledge.
- to enable the staff performing at standard level and with better capability.
- to establish better maintenance and installation practices;
- to reduce outage of equipment and thus save breakdown in service.

As we march ahead with a plan to establish second channel and with determination to promote more public participation in the field of broadcasting, a modern approach to human resources development should be introduced and identify training priorities, need and requirements etc.