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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Muhaddes, M</td>
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Bangladesh Betar was established as the national organization for broadcasting under a Presidential order in 1972, immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign country in 1971.

Bangladesh Betar has nine stations located in the nine regions of the country - the main Broadcasting station known as the National Broadcasting House, being located in Dhaka - the capital city of Bangladesh. It has the total transmission power of more than fifteen hundred kilowatts in the AM Medium wave band for local and national coverage, above seven hundred kilowatts in AM short-wave band zonal and external coverage and about 12 kilowatts in the FM VHF band for local coverage. Bangladesh Betar has total transmission capacity of more than two thousand kilowatts, which covers the entire country both in respect of area and population.

Bangladesh Betar broadcasts 171 hrs programmes from all its stations everyday. Of the total broadcast hours, 55% is devoted to entertainment programmes like music, songs, dramas, etc. while 45% broadcast hour is allocated for different programmes on various subjects of public interest. The national programmes are broadcast from the Dhaka station of the Betar and relayed by all stations. Regional stations also produce their own programmes and broadcast the same direct from their respective stations. At present, Bangladesh Betar is broadcasting 28 News bulletins and two news commentaries daily, 16 from Dhaka and the rest are from the regional stations.

Like any broadcasting organization with public service in view Bangladesh Betar has the objective to inform, educate and entertain; its one special objective being to bring about social and attitudinal change through motivational programmes. These programmes are supposed to share people’s ideas and opinions in a number of ways. A new dimension has been added to our priority schedule now by the frequency of national calamities hitting Bangladesh almost every year. During these calamities or other emergency periods, Bangladesh Betar continues its sessions without any break until normalcy returns.

Bangladesh being a poor and developing country, the majority of its people can hardly afford to buy TV sets and maintain it. Moreover, supply of electricity is also very limited in rural areas of Bangladesh. So most of the rural people and urban people living in slum areas depend principally on transistor Radio sets as a means of their recreation and information. Bangladesh Betar has been broadcasting programme on agriculture, health and family welfare, education, child and mother care, sanitation, plantation etc. It has been observed that these programmes have so long been successfully geared towards the targeted groups. The impact of these programme are so deep that people in general have become far more aware of the day to day problems they are confronted with. Programmes on population control and population planning have met with tremendous success because of its wide acceptance by general people. Programmes on agriculture has helped a lot in bringing positive changes in the method of cultivation, pest control and use of fertilizers. Bangladesh with an unfortunately long history of food deficit is now on the threshold of self-sufficiency in food and Bangladesh Betar’s contribution in this field has been aptly appreciated by all concerned including our Government.
Bangladesh Betar produces and broadcasts programmes including news bulletins for its overseas listeners from its External Services Unit, in six different languages, namely-Bangla, English, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and Nepalese. These programmes are produced by professional experts, keeping in view the interest of the listeners living in different countries of South Asia, Europe and the Middle Eastern countries.

But as the time advances radio broadcasting is going to face harder and harder competition. Popularity of TV is on the increase with the greater spread of electric supply network, introduction new terrestrial and satellite channels. IT is changing the pattern of communication, entertainment and information flow. Radio broadcasting must utilize the new technology for its new and wider role in the new environment.

Bangladesh Betar is managing its broadcasting programme with old model equipment. Betar has to depend on the foreign suppliers for spare parts, which takes about four to five months for procurement. It has been observed that with the development of modern technology most of the suppliers do not produce the spares for the transmitters they supplied to our country. We have, therefore, become apprehensive about the availability of spares in future. So Bangladesh along with other least developing countries making desperate effort to replace the old equipment and to go for new and modern technologies in its broadcasting systems.

**CHANGES : THE MAIN CHALLENGE**

The configuration of communication as well as information is shifting as old-timers find themselves challenged on all fronts with competing transmission networks, message-services etc. In the 1940’s there used to be radio sets that had vacuum tubes. The progress of the digital techniques mainly contributed by computer development and the progress of digital transmission systems based on it has merged computer and communication. It is really a happy marriage of computer and communication. Bangladesh Betar must adapt to this change for its survival and for maintaining its befitting role in the national life.

**INTERNET :**

Radio can actively be in the internet in various aspects to attract the large number of listeners all over the world.

**INTERNET : A USER FRIENDLY INTERFACE**

Internet acts as a user-friendly interface. This is the reason why many people have chosen Internet as their own network. There are a lot of user outside Bangladesh who can be informed about news, culture and various messages, as necessary, by Bangladesh Betar. At the same time, Bangladesh Betar can connect different broadcasting stations in the country and abroad with the local community in Bangladesh.

**INFORMATION NETWORK**

The whole world is now acting as a global village under one umbrella. It is the information network that worked effectively as a tool for sharing and distributing information. Information may be a text, data, images, animation, sound or video. Radio is needed to keep pace with the change occurring in information network. It can increase its area of communication, number and sizes of audiences using the gift of modern science and technology.
INTERNET : A CULTURE

Internet users have developed a different culture. They readily share information. Most software is either free, shareware or comparatively low priced. In cyberspace, communication style among users is casual and fast.

INTERNET : IN THE EYE OF BANGLADESH BETAR.

• Area of Implication

Bangladesh Betar, as a member of the world of information community believes in multipurpose utilization of Internet. At present we are thinking to utilize Internet in the following fields:

a) Starting a new web page of Bangladesh and hyperlink it with other international broadcasting organizations.

b) Utilizing E-mail and browsing facilities to inform the news of the world to Bangladeshi audience and also to write script.

c) Communicating with the regional broadcasting stations of Bangladesh and transmission of programmes.

d) Introduce Internet broadcasting to inform news related to Bangladesh to all over the world especially for the people who speak in Bangla.

• Barriers

In a developing country like Bangladesh, it is not easy to implement Internet so quickly due to the following barriers –

a) **Lack of technology**: Bangladesh Betar is not computerized and lacks the technology necessary for introducing Internet for communication as well as a broadcasting medium. Bangladesh Betar does not have any separate server to transmit the messages.

b) **Lack of Human Resource**: There are few people skilled in computer and Internet to make the best use of it.

• Future of Internet in Bangladesh

We hope to overcome the barriers and introduce Internet in broadcasting as early as possible. Bangladesh Betar has taken some necessary steps regarding this.

The following strategies and actions are being considered in this regard:

a) A number of organizations in Bangladesh are facilitating Internet services. To attract their users, they are also interested to support Bangladesh Betar in this regard. Bangladesh Betar can utilize this source.

b) Information can be made free through Internet. We can share our views with other broadcasting organizations to solve the existing problems as quickly as possible. I hope it
is not far away when all the broadcasting organizations will work together on Internet and radio will work as a necessary information tool in the new century too.

CONCLUSION

We understand that our radio broadcasting has to refashion itself to take advantage of all the new opportunities of IT. Competition from TV and IT will grow. But we have to capitalize on the IT itself for widening our coverage and effectiveness. We would seek co-operation in the form of technology transfer and hardware and software assistance.