**Growth of Television in India**

Television began in India way back in 1959 as a part of All India Radio when it was formally commissioned on September 15 as an experimental service. Its aim was to promote social education and general awareness. The early programmes on these experimental broadcasts were generally educational programmes for school children and farmers.

It was not until Smt. Indira Gandhi was in charge of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry that television was commissioned as a regular daily service from 15th August 1965. In the beginning, only educational programmes and news were telecast.

Gradually entertainment programmes—mostly plays, concerts and film- based music/dance—were also telecast. The television service was extended to Bombay (now, Mumbai) and Amritsar in 1972.

The period 1975-76 was an important landmark in the history of Indian television when the GOI launched Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). Under this programme, the Indian government used the American satellite ATS-6 to broadcast educational programmes to Indian villages. Six states were selected for this experiment and television sets were distributed in these states.

In 1976, Doordarshan, which was All India Radio’s television arm until then became a separate department.

In 1982, a regular satellite link between Delhi and other transmitters was established to facilitate the introduction of the National Programme/ national telecasts .

In 1982, colour television was introduced in the Indian market.

A major milestone in the history of Indian television was the coverage of the Ninth Asian Games in 1982. Doordarshan provided national coverage for the first time through the satellite INSAT 1A. Also, for the first time, the transmission was in colour.

By 1983, government sanctioned a huge expansion of Doordarshan. Several new transmitters were set up throughout the country. Thus towards the end of 80s around 75 per cent of the population could be covered by the transmitters.

In 1997, Prasar Bharati, a statutory autonomous body was established. Doordarshan along with AIR was converted into government corporations under Prasar Bharati.

Over time, regional channels were opened and the reach of television widened stupendously.

In 1991-92, the Indian government started a series of economic reforms. This led to the liberalisation of the broadcasting industry, allowing in private and foreign broadcasters and opening the sector up to cable television.

The Supreme Court ruling of 1995 which stated that the airwaves are not the monopoly of the Indian government boosted their growth.

Several regional channels also came into being during this period. Sun TV (Tamil), Asianet (Malayalam) and Eenadu TV were a few of them. Today almost all major Indian languages have television channels in them.

Apart from the regional channels, a host of international channels like CNN, BBC and Discovery are also available to the Indian television audience. With different categories of channels like 24 hour news channels, religious channels, cartoon channels and movie channels, there is something for everyone to watch.

 Zee TV was introduced as the first privately-owned Indian channel to broadcast over cable followed by Asia Television Network (ATN) and the Star TV Network became a pioneering foreign channel in Indian television scene.

A few years later many foreign channels like CNN, Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel and BBC made their foray into India. Special Sports channels also came up—such as ESPN—as well as channels solely for movies, Indian and foreign.

Throughout the 1990s, along with a multitude of Hindi-language channels, several regional and English language channels flourished all over India.

Now television transmitters carry Doordarshan signals to almost three fourth of the country's population.

From its humble beginning as a part of All India Radio, Doordarshan has grown into a major television broadcaster with around 30 channels. This includes Regional Language Satellite Channels, State Networks, International Channel and All India Channels like DD National, DD News, DD Sports, DD Gyandarshan, DD Bharati, Loksabha Channel and DD Urdu. DD-1 is the primary channel, the flag-ship of Doordarshan.

India has the world’s second largest TV market after China. As per industry estimates, as on March 2016, of the existing 2841 million households, around 1811 million have Television sets which are being served by cable TV services, DTH services, IPTV services in addition to a terrestrial TV network of Doordarshan.

There are 48 pay broadcasters, an estimated 60,000 cable operators, 6000 Multi System Operators (MSOs), six pay DTH operators, in addition to the public service broadcaster- Doordarshan, providing a free-to- air a DTH service. Of the 869 registered TV channels with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at the close of financial year 2015-16, 205 are Standard Definition (SD) pay TV channels (including 5 advertisements – free pay channels) and 58 are High Definition (HD) Pay TV channels.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India released an Annual Report of 2017-2018 today which gives a broad outlook of how the Indian Television Industry has fared. As per the report, India’s television industry has grown from Rs 58,800 crore in 2016-17 to Rs 66,0007 crore (as per FICCI-EY Report 2018) in 2017-18, thereby registering a growth of 12.24 per cent.

The report also cites that in the last couple of year, broadcasters have introduced many HD pay television channels. As of March 31, 2018, there are 95 operational HD Channels.