Television was introduced in India on September 15, 1959 in Delhi, little over two decades after British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) began the first television service of the world in 1936. It was with the help provided by UNESCO that it all started.  The programmes were broadcast twice a week for an hour a day on such topics as community health, citizens’ duties and rights, and traffic and road sense. In 1961 the broadcasts were expanded to include a school educational television project. The first major expansion of television in India began in 1972, when a second television station was opened in Bombay. This was followed by stations in Srinagar and Amritsar (1973), and Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow in 1975.1   
For the first 17 years, broadcasting of television spread haltingly and transmission was in black and white. By 1976, the network consisted of eight television stations covering a population of 45 million spread over 75,000 square kilometers. Faced with the difficulty of administering such an extensive television system as part of All India Radio, the government constituted Doordarshan, the national television network, as a separate Department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

**Development**  
There were three ignition points that triggered the phenomenal growth of television in India from mid 1970s. First: The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). Conducted between August 1975 and July 1976, it used a satellite to broadcast educational programmes to villages across six states. The objective was to use television for development, though entertainment programmes were also included. It actually brought television closer to the masses. Second: INSAT-1A, the first of the country's domestic communications satellites became operational in 1982 and made possible the networking of all of Doordarshan's regional stations. For the first time Doordarshan originated a nation-wide feed dubbed the "National Programme" which was fed from Delhi to the other stations. In November 1982, the country hosted the Asian Games and the government introduced color broadcasts for the coverage of the games. The third spark came in the early nineties with the broadcast of satellite TV by foreign programmers like CNN followed by Star TV and a little later by domestic channels such as Zee TV and Sun TV into Indian homes.2  As the government gradually relaxed restrictions (on its own and prompted by the landmark Supreme Court Judgment in 1995 which ruled that the airwaves were not the monopoly of the government)   more and more channels started beaming their content. Television in India grew both vertically and horizontally. More television sets were added in Indian homes. Access to television also increased.

**Present Status**  
There are nearly 138 million households (out of total 223 million) in India who own a television. Cable penetration has reached 80% with the help of the Direct to Home (DTH) platform.3   According to the report released by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and KPMG in 2011 television saw a tremendous increase in the net direct-to-home (DTH) subscriber base totaling to 28 million at the end of 2010.  
Backed by growth in advertising and subscription revenues, the television industry grew by 15.5 per cent in 2010 and is expected to grow at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 16 per cent. Television is expected to account for almost half of the Indian media and entertainment industry revenues, and more than twice the size of print, the second largest media sector.  
The total number of TV channels (both private and government owned) grew from 461 in 2009 to 626 in January 2011. The number of News and Current Affairs channels was 312 and that of Non-News and Current Affairs channels was 314 up till January 2011. A total of 75 channels have been down-linked till January 2011 by a number of foreign broadcasters.4

**Future**  
The future, apparently, looks bright for television in India. The television industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of over 15 per cent till 2015 according to the report released by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and KPMG in 2011.  
However, there are challenges from three aspects: a. technology, b. television viewing practice, and c. content.  
Technology: With the popularity of web enabled devices rising at a very fast pace (in fact in USA and Singapore, it has outpaced Television) Television needs to reposition itself as a convergence tool. The smart TVs are a step towards that.  
TV Viewing Practice: The TV viewing practice is undergoing a drastic change. Gone are the days when TV viewing used to be a social/family activity. It is getting personal now. Therefore there is a growing demand of niche content.  
Content: There will be myriad kinds of contents to cater to the demand of myriad kind of viewers across languages. Providing high quality niche content will be a challenge for the content producers. On the other hand user generated programmes could also be aired like it is done in web and social media.  
Television industry and the Government in India are aware of the challenges and working to meet them as the trends show.5

**Key Trends**  
Digitization: Digitization continues to be a key growth driver for the industry. DTH achieved robust growth of 75 per cent in net subscriber base by adding 12 million subscribers in 2010. With the regulatory push on digitization, ongoing 3G rollouts, increasing mobile and broadband penetration, the market for digital distribution platforms is growing.  
Regionalization: Backed by the increasing purchasing power across tier 2 and tier 3 cities, regional media consumption is expected to continue to rise. Realising the power of regional media, national and foreign players have ventured into regional markets and several others are likely to follow suit. Meanwhile regional players have achieved scale and are now looking to go national and build a pan India presence. Geographical expansion by existing players in television, print and radio is expected to intensify competition and leading to interesting times for these industries.  
New Media: The past decade marked the convergence of media and technology; of user generated content, social media and new publishing models that have changed the way of media consumption. These changes in the way media is consumed are being driven by factors such as content pull from telecom service providers due to the 3G launch, emerging gaming platforms and innovation in technological devices such as tablets. The new breeds of smart TVs are offering excellent convergence opportunities.  
Regulation to drive growth: The government’s thrust on digitization and addressability for cable television, is expected to increase the pace of digitization leading to tremendous growth in DTH and digital cable. Niche formats: Increasing audience segmentation is driving content and delivery. Television showed signs of this growing trend through the launch of several new niche channel genres such as food, action movies etc. It has now become a business prerequisite to assess trends for continually changing customer preferences, lifestyles and media buying habits and incorporate the understanding in focused content, marketing and delivery strategies for each target audience segment.  
Consumer Understanding: With increasing fragmentation and intensity of competition, a deeper understanding of cultural and social references through focused study groups will enable players to target their consumers specifically and build loyalty.  
Innovation: It is becoming increasingly important for industry players to continuously innovate new formats and strategies in order to enable brand loyalty help expand the market.  
Consolidation: Mature players are increasingly looking to build scale across the media value chain and explore cross media synergies. In addition, existing foreign players are looking to expand their Indian portfolio and several other are expected to make an entry into India. Inorganic growth is likely to be a preferred route for many of these players. With increased digitization and accountability, Indian media companies are also expected to generate greater interest from private equity players.

**Challenges for Doordarshan**  
The stupendous growth in television made Doordarshan, India’s national broadcaster one of the players from the exalted position of the sole player. Its monopoly was long gone.   
In 1997, Doordarshan and AIR were converted into government corporations under Prasar Bharati, which was established to serve as the public service broadcaster of the country and to provide greater autonomy for DD and AIR.  
Fifty three years after it switched on, Doordarshan is facing ‘3 R’ challenges: Reach, Relevance and Revenue, like the public service broadcasters of many countries are facing now. With more and more channels jostling for eyeballs (with innovative programming at the best and prurient and provocative at the worst) Doordarshan is losing viewers. Losing viewers (especially the high disposable income urban ones) means losing revenue as well. Critics argue that losing viewers also at the end of the day mean losing relevance.

**Future of Doordarshan**  
Doordarshan now stands at a cross road. With the advancement of technology and change of viewer’s profile and audience taste Doordarshan needs to reinvent itself. It needs to consolidate on its strengths and fight its weaknesses. Its strength lies in its penetration in rural areas, in its credibility and image as a public service broadcaster. Its weakness lies in its unattractive content format and marketing of its content. It is ill managed and is facing quality human resource crunch.  
Doordarshan needs to tighten its belt. In the management domain, it needs good managers who can take and implement decisions and instill good professional work culture. In the hardware domain, it needs to upgrade to full digital platform.  It has to be convergence friendly, fully adaptable to a net savvy environment. Its contents need to be streamed across delivery platforms including social media. Content wise, it has to keep a balance between its role as a public service broadcaster and prime disseminator of news and information. Doordarshan need not and should not go the way other private channels go to earn revenue by telecasting only ‘want-focused’ content. But it should not also be bland and unattractive. A balance is required. That is the challenge before Doordarshan now. How it faces the challenge will determine its future.

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1. Bombay was the second city in India to open a TV centre on October 2, 1972. A television centre was commissioned at Srinagar (Kashmir) on January 26, 1973 and another was opened at Amritsar (Punjab) on September 29, 1973. A relay centre was set up in Poona (Maharashtra) on October 2, 1973. In August 1975 Calcutta (West Bengal) and Madras (Tamil Nadu) opened TV centres.  
2.  [http://www.civilserviceindia.com/subject/Essay/50yrs-of-indian-televisio...](http://www.civilserviceindia.com/subject/Essay/50yrs-of-indian-television4.html)  
3. Equity master.com  
4. [http://www.indiainbusiness.nic.in/industry-infrastructure/service-sector...](http://www.indiainbusiness.nic.in/industry-infrastructure/service-sectors/media-entertainment.htm)  
5. [http://www.indiaincorporated.com/index/item/137-indian-media-industry-to...](http://www.indiaincorporated.com/index/item/137-indian-media-industry-to-hit-)$28bn-by-2015.html