Television came to India on September 15, 1959 with experimental transmission from Delhi. It was a modest beginning with a makeshift studio and low power transmitter.

The objective was to find out what it can achieve in community development and formal education. The funding of $20,000 and equipment was offered by United States.

One hundred and eighty teleclubs were set up within the range of 40 Kilometers of transmitter. Every club was provided with a television set by UNESCO. All India Radio provided the engineering and the programme professionals

The Akashvani Auditorium was converted into the studio from where the regular programmes of Indian TV were put on the air although the first experimental programmes were telecast from a makeshift studio in Akashvani Bhavan.

The service itself was also known as a Pilot project, aided by UNESCO, because the programmes, put out on mere two days a week, was intended to be experimental in nature to test the efficacy of television medium in carrying relevant and useful messages of social education to the power section of society.

In 1961 television programmes for teachers were started. A daily one hour service with a news bulletin was started in 1965 including entertainment programmes. In 1967 rural programmes and Krishi Darshan were started for farmers in 80 village teleclubs in Delhi and Haryana.

In 1972 TV services were extended to a second city Mumbai. By 1975 Calcutta, Chennai, Srinagar, Amritsar and Lucknow also had TV stations. In 1975-76 the satellite Instructional Television Experiment brought TV to 2,400 villages in the most in accessible and the least developed areas for one year.

From 1976, television was separated from All India Radio and constituted a new body under a new banner called as Doordarshan. At present, Doordarshan is one of the media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

In 1982, a regular satellite link between Delhi and other transmitters was established to facilitate the introduction of the National Programme. With this the era of fast expansion of TV services through low power transmitters was also heralded. The following are some other land marks in the history of Doordarshan:

1976 Jan. 1 Commercials on TV

1976 April 1 Doordarshan separated from All India Radio and given a separate banner – Doordarshan

Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body established under the Prasar Bharati Act and came into existence on 23.11.1997. It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country. The objectives of public service broadcasting are achieved in terms of Prasar Bharati Act through All India Radio and Doordarshan, which earlier were working as media units under the Ministry of I&B and since the above said date became constituents of Prasar Bharati.