

Another fall out of De Recognition of Associations.

Another Reason why Associations were De Recognized

The hidden Agenda of Management becoming clear now

First LPT Closure and now Preparing the Prasar Bharati a
Corporate Entity.

The opportunity is made available to Mgmt by some power greedy
and Anti Employee Leaders.

News from Press

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I&B ministry evaluates plan to make Prasar Bharati a corporate entity

The idea behind the so-called corporatization of Prasar Bharati is to reduce the dependence of the public broadcaster on government funds

Harveen Ahluwalia

Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati. Prasar Bharati is an autonomous body set up by an act of Parliament and runs Doordarshan and All India Radio. Photo: Priyanka Parashar/Mint

New Delhi: The information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry is evaluating a proposal to turn Prasar Bharati into a corporate entity—a move that may enable the state broadcaster cut its dependence on public funds.

Prasar Bharati recently submitted a set of recommendations to the ministry after the latter sought its inputs on the proposal, two people familiar with the development said on condition of anonymity.

The Hindustan Times reported in January that a panel of secretaries had recommended turning Doordarshan and All India Radio (AIR) into corporate entities in a presentation to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The panel also suggested doing away with Prasar Bharati altogether after corporatizing the two entities. The ministry asked Prasar Bharati for its feedback on this.

Prasar Bharati is an autonomous body set up by an act of Parliament and runs Doordarshan and All India Radio. Doordarshan operates 23 television channels across

the country and All India Radio runs 416 radio stations. All the capital expenditure, and salary expenses of Prasar Bharati are taken care of by the central government.

For the year 2017-18, the I&B ministry has allocated a total of Rs2,996 crore to Prasar Bharati, up from last year's Rs2,766 crore. Last year, the broadcaster's accumulated loss totalled Rs2,108 crore.

The idea behind the so-called corporatization proposal, the two people cited above said, is to reduce the dependence of the public broadcaster on government funds and give greater independence in decision-making to Doordarshan and All India Radio.

The appointment this month of Shashi Shekhar Vempati, a media professional and former head of online media company Niti Digital, as the chief executive officer (CEO) of Prasar Bharati may be a part of the overall plan, one of the two added.

"This is the first time in the history of Prasar Bharati that a non-IAS (Indian Administrative Service) person has been appointed to run the organization, despite various IAS contenders. The government is changing age-old practices and evaluating the future of the organisation." In its response to the ministry, Prasar Bharati has suggested merging Doordarshan and All India Radio into a single entity.

"Corporatizing DD and AIR as separate entities will entail higher expenditure as both will continue to maintain separate infrastructure and manpower. The organization will not be able to compete with private channels," the recommendations said, adding that an integrated marketing effort and operations would help the broadcaster generate more revenue. Mint has seen a copy of the recommendations.

Priyanka Chaudhary, a director at Grant Thornton India LLP, said a merger makes sense.

"Internal re-organisation and utilising available resources optimally will be key. Broadcasters need to embrace change and re-align to more efficient structures as they expand reach. Corporatization could be the catalyst for much-needed growth although it cannot be considered a panacea," she said.

A former I&B secretary, who did not wish to be identified said that turning Prasar Bharati into a corporate entity could prove counter-productive. "A lot of money will go into corporatizing both entities. And the mandate of public broadcasting will die with the corporatization. The government should either focus on strengthening both verticals with better programming or just wind up Prasar Bharati altogether."

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Topics: Prasar Bharati I&B ministry Doordarshan All India Radio corporatization

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