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TELUGU NEWS CHANNELS WORKING IN ANDHRA PRADESH STATE

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Abstract

Telugu is the most popularly spoken language in Andhra Pradesh, the first state in India which formulated based on People's language. Hyderabad based Telugu programs of Doordarshan were started on October 23, 1977. In 1983 number of Telugu programs was increased prominently. But during that time Doordarshan was only television available. When government of India took up the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), villages of Andhra Pradesh were also took part. ETV-2 was started on December 28, 2003 as the first news satellite channel in Telugu prior to Parliamentary and Assembly elections, 2004. Since ETV-2 has got ETV and also Eenadu newspaper - hence it could come out as fully fledged news channel from day one. TV-9 entered with bang even though it did not spend much money on publicity in other mass media. This was a different and rare trend, which fetched. I-News, no explanation for is available, as such, was the first 24 x 7 Telugu news channel was launched in 2009. MNR is a prominent name in education field of Andhra Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

The early communication of information was closely linked with development of the language. The spoken information sent by messenger was essential for survival of people-not only to escape from floods or wars, even to know about sources of food also. Earliest methods used to send information over distances, without sending a human messenger, were like drums, horns, birds, shouting, beacon fires, mirrors, smoke etc. In sixth century B.C. the Persians could send news from their capital to the provinces by means of a line of men shouting one to another positioned on hills. This kind of transmission was up to thirty times faster than using messengers. In the first century B.C., the Gauls could call all the warriors to war in just three days using only the human voice in a similar manner. However, in many societies the drum and the horn were the quickest and easiest ways of relaying information by sound waves, by using local repeaters to cover larger distances¹.

The rapid expansion of television hardware in India in the 1980s increased the need for developing more program software to fill the telecast time. Television programming, Doordarshan was expanding rapidly in the 1980's the Cable television industry was mushrooming in major Indian cities. The video cassette recorder (VCR) greatly multiplied entertainment options for Indian audiences.

Telugu is the most popularly spoken language in Andhra Pradesh, the first state in India which formulated based on People's language. Hyderabad based Telugu programs of Doordarshan were started on October 23, 1977. In 1983 number of Telugu programs was increased prominently. But during that time Doordarshan was only television available. When government of India took up the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), villages of Andhra Pradesh were also took partⁱⁱ. But globalization and liberalization paved the way. As it was discussed earlier, efforts in Hindi and Malayalam were made in 1992. In Telugu, it took another two years to gain momentum. It is interesting to know that the origin of Telugu satellite channel was linked with Telugu Cinema. Gemini was the popular name in production of Telugu movies apart from the other languages. Dr. L.V. Prasad, the doyen of Telugu movie field has got close connection with this production banner. The next generation of his family made efforts and started first Telugu satellite Television on February 9, 1995. Initially it had lonely three hours of program; the remaining time of transponder was devoted to Tamil programs. After few years this channel was taken over the Sun network, Chennai.

ETV-2

ETV-2 was started on December 28, 2003 as the first news satellite channel in Telugu prior to Parliamentary and Assembly elections, 2004. Since ETV-2 has got ETV and also Eenadu newspaper - hence it could come out as fully fledged news channel from day one. As it was discussed earlier it has hourly news bulletins of 5 minutes duration each and few bulletins of 30 minutes durationⁱⁱⁱ. But other programs pertaining to spiritual, agricultural, cultural, youth, women, health, sports, language and literature were prominent. A significant aspect to be discussed is there were well produced magazine programs too. Apart from this half an hour bulletins Andhravani exclusively devoted for news of Andhra Pradesh.

ETV-2 has very healthy, well-planned content properly blended aspects like agriculture, education, health, women etc., except political leaning. Even in case of 'sensation', ETV-2 usually avoided. Regarding ETV-2, other important aspect is about Neralu-Ghoralu, a crime-based program. This half an hour program narrates a crime story happened recently, in a dramatized form at 9 pm,



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which is considered to be prime time. This program, goes into air for five days in a week, could grab eye balls since the stories mostly pertaining to sex related crimes.

TV-9

TV-9 entered with bang even though it did not spend much money on publicity in other mass media. This was a different and rare trend, which fetched. Even Eenadu news paper when it was started in 1974, or other news papers like Udayam, Vartha and Sakshi, television channels like Gemini news channel, NTV and TV-5 did give advertisements in print media or electronic media or both. In fact, this different move helped TV-9 to save expenditure.

Then what made TV-9 different? Here one can recollect the success of Aaj Tak regarding lively language and introducing news reader himself or herself like "I am... so and so...". TV-9 also introduced this trend from day one. And the costumes of news anchor were also different from the prevailing style of the day. Though, this was imitation of English channels but new to Telugu people^{iv}. And the language Telugu was not pure or established one but full of English words and colloquial Telugu words which were rare even in Telugu media. Titles of programs mostly in English and even script used in titles were Roman instead of Telugu. This was done to attract college-going and urban youth. But this was not uncommon in Telugu press, but TV-9 style was very aggressive.

The composition of news items was more populist or with more mass appeal. Many a time it was criticized as a sensation. Information related to cinema was made an important component of news bulletin. And another interesting thing which TV-9 brought all of its presenters, not old ones, who jumped out from other channels. But this was very uncommon feature for Telugu channels.

Gemini news channel

Gemini news channel is the third 24X7 news channel in Telugu and also third Telugu channel from the Sun group. When it was started on September 5, 2004, it was Teja news, afterwards renamed as Gemini news. When the news channel started, there were two established news channels of experience of nine months. More or less Gemini news channel took same program format from other two channels and introduced programs like Gopuram (Spiritual), AP Roundup (news from Andhra Pradesh), city lights (Hyderabad news), Film time, Tejeswani (for Women), Business-business, Crime reporter, Viswadarsanam etc^v. When we talk about the Sun group, people easily recollect the happening of June 30, 2001 - where Karunanidhi - the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was arrested in the midnight by the government headed by Jayalalitha. Visuals of 3, 4 minutes of duration were shown again and again as live repeatedly. Presenters and reporters attended duties with black dress in protest. In this incident channel lost credibility, as the recorded program was shown again and again as 'live'. Similarly in Andhra Pradesh, Gemini television did same about Deccan Chronicle - Pawan Kalian tussle issue by showing recorded content as 'live'. But, live coverage of Basheer bagh firing incidents (August 28, 2000) boosted the channel.

Gemini news channel is owned by Sun which did not have any other media unit in Andhra Pradesh. Even in Tamil Nadu the group took over Dinakaran daily much later. Hence, we could see problems of infrastructure / network through their programs. And again, as matter of policy, the Sun group usually spent less on generation of programs. This was also evident from the quality of content^{vi}.

NTV

NTV, the fourth 24X7 news channel in Telugu was launched on August 30, 2007. NTV, along with Bhakti, was promoted by Narendranath Chowdary, a real estate business man from Khammam district of Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh^{vii}. In October, 2008 the third channel from the group Vanita, an exclusive channel for women in Telugu was also started. NTV created hype with more OB vans and more live programs. The channel use to mention on tag line frequently Prati kshanam pratyaksha prasaram (Live telecast every moment). Frequently criticism in Telugu press was that this channel has got shares of politicians from Congress Party. When NTV gave large number of advertisements in all papers published from Andhra Pradesh for their program on elections, Gelupevaridi (who wins elections). There was lot of criticism from political parties. Even Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) criticized strongly that NTV spent Rscores on advertisements (Venugopal, Andhra Bhoomi, February 26, 2008, page 10). Another important aspect of NTV is, that in the initial days it was not available in all the places of Andhra Pradesh. It happened due to non-cooperation from cable operators (Venugopal, Andhra Bhoomi, Sepetmber 4, 2007, page 10). As it happened from day one, this channel lost its viewers to certain extent^{viii}.

I-News

I-News, no explanation for is available, as such, was the first 24 x 7 Telugu news channel was launched in 2009. MNR is a prominent name in education field of Andhra Pradesh, entered into television business with Rajasekhar as CEO. From January 1, 2009



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I-News started with attractive promo and this went on many days with one or two items, which were made exclusively and selectively. In fact, there was no exact date regarding formal inauguration of the channel. To combat competition, they started increasing programs. But the traits of I-News are being good quality of picture and appropriate use of visuals. Again, this channel made sensation with Pin counter a political satire with a caricature, to divert the attention from the other channels.

HMTV

Hyderabad Media Television is a new name for T-Channel. Before its launch its name, which was in the news for a year, was changed to HMTV. Kapil Chit Funds with Dr. K. Ramachandra Murthy, a popular editor in Telugu media, as its CEO, started this channel on February 12, 2009 formally. It was just test signal, but tried with full-fledged programs. HMTV is unique in containing bulletins in English and Urdu. Perhaps this might be the first Telugu 24 x 7 news channels with maximum print media journalists at the top.

Sakshi TV

Sakshi TV was the second satellite 24 x 7 Telugu news Channel, next to ETV-2, comes from a daily newspaper, Sakshi. Earlier it was in the news with Indira TV may be sounding Indira Gandhi. Sakshi, promoted by Jagati Publications, was formally launched on March 1, 2009, with test signal from February 21, 2009. Y.S. Jagan Mohana Reddy, son of late Dr. Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy, then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, started this in the midst of lot of criticism. The promotional advertisement of Sakshi news paper (in electronic media) has become signature tune of the channel.

ABN-Andhra Jyothi

ABN-Andhra Jyothi news channel was launched on October 15, 2009 by Amoda Broadcasting Network Private Limited, owned by Andhra Jyothi, a prominent daily in Telugu. Andhra Jyothi, known for political debates, is run by Vemuri Radhakrishana, a journalist himself.

Conclusion

As per news report (Hindustan Times, New Delhi, February 11, 2009, page 1) it will be possible soon to see highly qualitative picture with high-definition television (HDTV). With expected innovations in future technology, it will be possible to watch television in a moving car as well as on mobile phone.

Recently there was a news report explained the importance of television channels in vernacular languages of India. The neo-rich people of Indian society wanted to watch television channels in their mother tongue, to maintain or protect their roots, even though they read news papers in English. Resulting there will be a tremendous growth in television channels. Khandekar Vanitakohli opined that Telugu language got more variety of television channels in South India. In Tamil and Malayalam there were four genres of channels namely general entertainment channels, music channels, film channels and news channels whereas, Kannada got three namely general, music and news channels. But Telugu got six genres of channels namely general, news, devotional, music, film and women. Only English got eight genres of channels which also including life style, travel, city and sports. In Hindi there were six genres of channels general, music, film, news, devotional and business. Only Telugu television channels got as much genres as Hindi channels. And only English got more genres than Telugu in India.

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