

SUJOY CHATTERJEE

***Tunes***  
***for the***  
***Troops***

# TUNES FOR THE TROOPS

**A LISTENER'S JOURNEY THROUGH A RADIO PROGRAMME**

**SUJOY CHATTERJEE**

dedicated to the soldiers...

# Preface

*Tunes for the Troops – A Listener’s Journey through a Radio Programme* is an account of the history and memories of a popular radio programme for the entertainment of the military and paramilitary forces, known as *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* or the Troops Programme, broadcast from the Hindi Section of Akashvani Guwahati (formerly also known by All India Radio Guwahati), which has been running for more than sixty-one years in a row.

There has been a great number of books published on radio broadcasting in India. P. C. Chatterji’s *Broadcasting in India*, U. L. Barua’s *This is All India Radio*, Mehra Masani’s *Broadcasting and the People*, H. R. Luthra’s *Indian Broadcasting*, Jasdev Singh’s *On the Wings of Radio Waves – A Broadcaster’s Journey*, Kaushalya Rathnam’s *Everything in Radio for the Masses*, Manohar Mahajan’s *Yaaden Radio Ceylon Ki* are few top names in the list which give a deep insight into the history of radio broadcasting and listening in the country. The authors of these books were eminent broadcasters themselves. Although radio is a simplex (one-way) mode of communication, nevertheless, it has two sides – the broadcaster and the listener. Unless the opinion of the listener is taken, it would reduce to a one-sided affair. Unfortunately, when it comes to books penned by listeners, there hasn’t been any significant attempt made in the country. In the present digital era, although there have been many articles written on radio stations and their programmes by the listeners on social media, there is not a single book written by any listener. This book is a sincere and exhaustive attempt to venture into this area of radio literature.

Having born in the late 1970s, I have grown up listening to the local radio station – Akashvani Guwahati. Specifically, listening to the programme for the military and paramilitary forces, referred to as *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, broadcast daily for 90 minutes or so, in the afternoon, used to be my favourite pastime. Over the past four decades, a lot many memories have accumulated of this ‘still running’ programme, which is more than six decades in age, started in the summer of 1962 owing to the Chinese Aggression. In today’s Internet age, broadcasters and listeners have been writing about their memories of radio programmes over social media. As far as Akashvani Guwahati is concerned, I came across several such articles on the history of this channel and several of its long running programmes. However, it has been quite surprising that this highly popular and one of the most listened-to programmes of the station has remained completely unsung.

It was not long after that I came across the quote of Toni Morrison - “*If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, you must be the one to write it.*” That was the beginning and the most significant motivation behind writing of this book. Soon thereafter, in December 2020, I was pleasantly surprised by an article published in *Dainik Janmabhoomi*, one of the popular Assamese dailies. Written by Rajib Lochan Borthakur, who has been associated with Central Board of Film Certification, Indian Information Service, Doordarshan Imphal as Deputy Director (News), Doordarshan Kolkata as Assistant Director, and AIR Guwahati as News Editor, the article in Assamese, whose title translated to *The Amazement of Shortwave Radio and the Three Sisters of Akashvani Guwahati*, briefly talked about the history of the same Troops Programme. The

article fuelled my passion towards this programme to the extent that I finally kicked off writing this book.

One might raise his eyebrows towards the qualification of the said radio programme towards a full-length book. There are several reasons that may be cited to answer this speculation. The origin and the rationale behind the start of this programme has a great historical importance. The manner in which the *Jawans* associated themselves with this programme and made personal relations was phenomenal. The variety of entertainment segments that were part of this programme was unique and much ahead of all other programmes of similar kind from other stations. Countless trivia and interesting memories related to the presentation of announcers and participation of listeners demand sharing with passionate lovers and listeners of traditional radio globally. Last but not the least, the interesting evolution and journey of the programme from 1962 to 2023 gives a serious insight to how broadcasting and listening has changed with time and how such special-audience programmes have to evolve to maintain their relevance in the present competitive scenario of easily available sources of digital entertainment.

While developing the book, I realised that it needed to be segregated into three parts. The first part comprises of the period from the start of the programme until the time when I started listening to it. This is essentially the period from 1962 to the end of the 1970s. This is that part of the history of the programme for which I had to depend on published information in reliable sources and on genuine people who were either part of this programme or were listeners during that period. Fortunately, I could gather a lot of information from the weekly and bi-monthly Akashvani journals published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B), Government of India. Interactions with retired announcers of that period gave immense insight of developments that took place in that early phase of the programme.

The second part of the book is the period during which I was a regular listener of the programme. This period was from the early 1980s, when I was grown up enough to understand the content, until 2013, when the era of regular announcers at the Hindi Section of Akashvani Guwahati ended forever. Each segment of the programme has been thoroughly discussed in this part with interesting observations.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the scene of entertainment due to the digital and internet revolutions has been changing rapidly leading to an abrupt change in behaviour of listeners towards commercial radio. The impact of this change on the Troops Programme has been captured and analysed at length in the third part of this book. This part also deep dives into possibilities of improving the programme in the present challenging scenario of traditional radio broadcasting to maintain its relevance for future.

In a nutshell, *Tunes for the Troops – A Listener’s Journey through a Radio Programme* is indeed a complete journey full of memories and information about a radio programme that has been written in such a manner that the reader gets a passive listening experience of the programme and enough food for thought towards the future of broadcasting of radio programmes for troops.

# Acknowledgements

Writing a book is more difficult than I anticipated and more satisfying than I could have ever imagined. More so when the book is a historical treatise of a favourite and popular radio programme that has been running for more than sixty years at a stretch. The book would not have seen the light of the day without the selfless help and support of all those kind people who came forward without any reservations to provide authentic and valuable information in whatever capacity they could.

I would like to begin with thanking **Mr. Rajib Lochan Borthakur**, who has been associated with Central Board of Film Certification, Indian Information Service, Doordarshan Imphal as Deputy Director (News), Doordarshan Kolkata as Assistant Director, and AIR Guwahati as News Editor, whose article on the Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati reignited the fire of my passion for this programme, ultimately leading to the penning of this book.

My sincere thanks and gratitude towards **Mrs. Sadhana Phukan** and **Mrs. Tapasi Sengupta**, both retired senior announcers of the Hindi Section of Akashvani Guwahati, cannot be expressed in words who have always recognized me as their sincere listener and have responded to my unending queries surrounding this programme through multiple interactions either over the phone through all these years or during my in-person visit to the radio station in 2009. The information provided by them has been one of the strongest pillars of this book.

I am also highly indebted to former casual announcers, **Dr. Akelabhai** and **Mrs. Madhu Maheshwari**, who had started their journey in radio during the 1980s, for providing valuable insights into the Troops Programme. Their thoughts and description of experiences have significantly enriched the content of the book.

I am equally grateful to several casual announcers of the present team associated with this programme, who have been instrumental in providing valuable details related to their journey through this programme, which brought out how they view the programme and how their modern presentation style has been part of its continuous evolution process. This include **Mrs. Gunaprabha Borah**, **Mrs. Sneha Verma**, **Ms. Anamika Mazumdar**, and **Ms. K. Supriya Devi**.

The book would have stayed incomplete without the help of few radio enthusiasts who provided me information in the capacity of making available several books, journals, published articles and other authentic information through online platforms. This includes **Prof. Surjit Singh**, **Mr. Alokesh Gupta**, and **Mr. Jose Jacob**.

During the writing of this book, I accidentally came across two of my long-time friends connected over social media, who were somehow linked to this programme without my prior knowledge about it. One of them is veteran and famous radio listener of Surat, **Mr. Piyush Mehta**, who provided rare information about Mrs. Manjula Shah, the first Hindi announcer of Akashvani Guwahati. The other friend is **Mr. Udai Bhanu Pande**, again a veteran radio listener and contributor in various radio programmes at various Akashvani stations, who surprised me by

claiming to be one of the listeners of Guwahati's Troops Programme during its initial phase in the mid-1960s. His listening experience of the programme was like a feather in the hat of initial history of the programme. I am also thankful to **Mr. Ajay Singh, Mr. Ramesh Marhatha, Mr. Sunil Kumar Badal** and **Mrs. Shabnam Khanam**, all once upon a time senior announcers at different Akashvani stations, for providing me historical information related to programme for troops from stations like Patna, Ranchi, Jammu, Kathua and the National Channel that immensely helped in developing the Appendix on Landmarks in Troops Programme History. For same reason, I am also thankful to my friend **Raaj Kumar Verma**.

A book on a radio programme for troops is incomplete without including words and views from an ardent radio listener belonging to the Forces fraternity. For this reason, I am extremely thankful to **Mrs. Kiran Verma**, granddaughter of (Late) Sepoy Fakeer Chand of the British Indian Army, daughter of (Late) Subedar R. B. Lal of the Indian Army, and wife of Junior Warrant Officer Krishna Kumar Singh of the Indian Air Force, whose honest and genuine views have complimented the purpose of writing the book.

My sincere thanks to the **Publications Division, Ministry of I&B, Govt. of India**, for making available most of the issues of The Indian Listener and Akashvani journals online. These contain priceless information of the bygone era of broadcasting and one of the most reliable sources for validation of facts and figures. My sincere gratitude also goes to **Prasar Bharati** for the investment in Cuesheet Generator and making all cuesheets available to public over the Internet. The low-level details of each programme outlined in cuesheets have immensely helped in writing the third part of the book.

Writing a book is impossible without a favourable and supportive atmosphere at home. I am immensely thankful to my wife **Debdatta Chatterjee** and son **Shilad**, who have always motivated me towards doing something in addition to the normal office work. At times, when I slowed down, Shilad used to push me to progress towards the completion of the book.

Last but not the least, I would like to name two persons, who left this mortal world during the writing of this book but only after providing useful information. One of them is **(Late) Mrs. Bimlesh Arya**, senior announcer, Akashvani Guwahati, who was associated with this programme from 1964 to 2000. The other person is **(Late) Mr. Mihir Mehta**, senior announcer at Akashvani Ahmedabad, who provided valuable information about Mrs. Manjula Shah, the first Hindi announcer of Akashvani Guwahati. May God keep both of them in eternal peace!

Sujoy Chatterjee

Overland Park,  
Kansas, USA  
26 October 2023

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	.....	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	.....	<b>6</b>
<b>Contents</b>	.....	<b>8</b>
<b>Prologue</b>	.....	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	.....	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Evolution of Hindi at AIR Gauhati</b>	.....	<b>16</b>
<b>3. Gauhati launches Troops Programme</b>	.....	<b>22</b>
<b>4. Initial Expansion</b>	.....	<b>31</b>
<b>5. The Second Expansion</b>	.....	<b>42</b>
<b>6. The Relays</b>	.....	<b>50</b>
<b>7. The Team Onboarding</b>	.....	<b>55</b>
<b>8. Towards a Stable Set-up</b>	.....	<b>62</b>
<b>9. Ways of Working</b>	.....	<b>76</b>
<b>10. Melodies and Memories</b>	.....	<b>85</b>
<b>11. Developments during the Early 90s</b>	.....	<b>153</b>
<b>12. The Shortwave Shutdown</b>	.....	<b>165</b>
<b>13. The New Millennium</b>	.....	<b>180</b>
<b>14. The Paradigm Shift</b>	.....	<b>189</b>
<b>15. My Personal Interactions</b>	.....	<b>198</b>
<b>16. The NextGen Takes Over</b>	.....	<b>209</b>
<b>17. The COVID-19 Period</b>	.....	<b>219</b>
<b>18. The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations</b>	.....	<b>225</b>

<b>19.</b>	<b>The Future</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>20.</b>	<b>The Last Word</b>	<b>251</b>
	<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>258</b>
	<b>Appendix-I: Popular Song Requests (1980-1992)</b>	<b>259</b>
	<b>Appendix-II: Landmarks in Programmes for Troops</b>	<b>265</b>
	<b>Appendix-III: Programme for Troops on Akashvani Network as on 1 October 2023</b>	<b>270</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>271</b>
	<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>282</b>
	<b>List of Illustrations</b>	<b>287</b>
	<b>List of Photographs</b>	<b>288</b>
	<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>289</b>
	<b>About the Author</b>	<b>290</b>

# Prologue

This book is all about a radio programme that has been entertaining the Indian troops deployed in the north-eastern region of the country for more than six decades. I had already started writing the main body of the book when a thought struck my mind. How did the troops across the world entertain themselves before commercial radio broadcasting began? Being a current resident of Kansas, USA, I was aware of the presence of the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. I was equally aware that there was no radio broadcasting during that war. Curiosity of getting any piece of information about the lifestyle of the troops that took part in WWI drove me to pay a visit to the museum. To my sheer delight, there was an Exhibit Hall entitled *Entertaining the Troops*. This was what I was looking for and the main purpose of my visiting the museum was served.

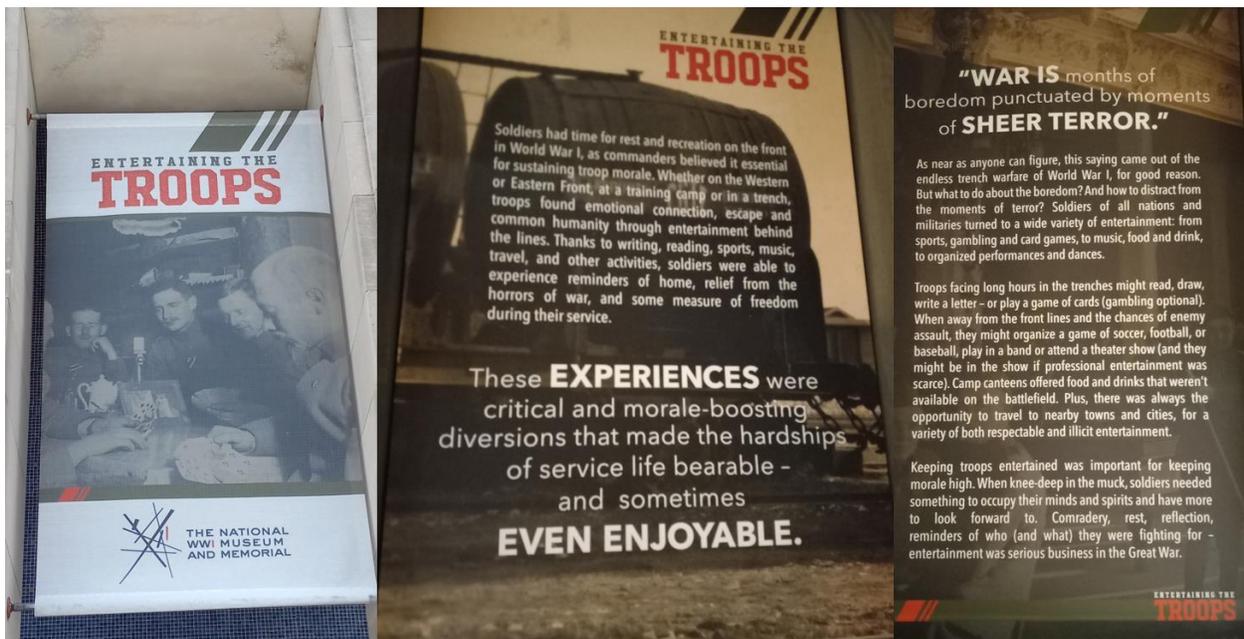


Photo 1: Glimpses from 'Entertaining the Troops' Exhibit Hall at the National World War I Museum and Memorial, Kansas City, USA (All photographs taken by the author)

One of the exhibits read:

*“War is months of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror. As near as anyone can figure, this saying came out of the endless trench warfare of World War I, for good reason. But what to do about the boredom? And how to distract from the moments of terror? Soldiers of all nations and militaries turned to a wide variety of entertainment: from sports, gambling, and card games, to music, food, and drink, to organized performances and dances.*

*Troops facing long hours in the trenches might read, draw, write a letter – or play a game of cards (gambling optional). When away from the front lines and the chances of enemy assault, they might organize a game of soccer, football, or baseball, play in a band, or attend a theatre show (and they might be in the show if professional entertainment was scarce. Camp canteens offered food and drinks that weren't available on the battlefield. Plus, there was always the opportunity to travel to nearby towns and cities, for a variety of both respectable and illicit entertainment.*

*Keeping troops entertained was important for keeping morale high. When knee-deep in the muck, soldiers needed something to occupy their minds and spirits and have more to look forward to. Comradery, rest, reflection, reminders of who (and what) they were fighting for – entertainment was serious business in the Great War.”*

Another exhibit read:

*“Soldiers had time for rest and recreation on the front in WWI, as commanders believed it essential for sustaining troop morale. Whether on the Eastern or Western front, at a training camp or in a trench, troops found emotional connection, escape and common humanity through entertainment behind the lines. Thanks to writing, reading, sports, music, travel, and other activities, soldiers were able to experience reminders of home, relief from the horrors of war, and some measure of freedom during their service.*

*These experiences were critical and morale-boosting diversions that made the hardships of service-life bearable – and sometimes even enjoyable.”*

These and more such exhibits displayed at *Entertaining the Troops* exhibit hall clearly demonstrated how the troops used to entertain themselves until at least the introduction of commercial radio and television broadcasting. The beginning of the era of radio broadcasting changed the way troops used to get entertained.

# 1. Introduction

It is the little enjoyments that spice the life of individuals and communities. And this is all the more significant in case of the Forces personnel, the *Jawans*, the soldiers, deployed in the forward areas who have nothing to look at but the desolate mountains and rocks, barren deserts, thick and dark forests, or endless waters, amid the tensed atmosphere in those sensitive remote areas. To relieve the stress and monotony of these brave hearts, radio has been playing the most vital role through the past eight decades. As told to me by my maternal grandfather who was an ardent lover of the overseas shortwave radio stations throughout his life, it all started with the World War II when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) felt the need of a “Forces Programme”. A complete channel, entitled *BBC Forces Programme*, with programmes broadcast throughout the day, was provisioned for this purpose. The All India Radio (AIR) too realized the need of special broadcasts for Indian troops during the war, especially to connect the soldiers sent to foreign lands to fight against the Axis powers, to their families. This was in the year 1940. By the time the war ended in 1945, various programmes for the Forces and the troops had already evolved and matured as regular programmes, ‘For the Forces’, as they were referred to, and which used to be very popular among all listeners.

However, with the end of WWII, the Forces’ programmes of AIR meant for the Allied Forces lost their significance. Towards the end of April 1946, such programmes started getting called off. By the end of May 1946, all the then AIR stations (Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Lahore, Peshawar, Lucknow, Dacca, Trichy) discontinued their respective programmes for the Forces and replaced them with General Western Music Programme. [1] [2] By October 1946, the programmes meant for the Indian troops stationed overseas, were discontinued for the simple reason that their purpose had been served. The only programme that stayed alive was the one for the ‘Indian Forces in India Command’, broadcasting from Delhi. And this *Sainikon Ke Liye* programme served as the “connecting link” between the pre-Independence and post-Independence Forces programmes on Indian radio.

The WWII had led to the growth of programmes for the Forces in India during British Raj. In the post-Independence era, wars with neighbouring countries have been the dominating factor in the expansion of such programmes down the decades. The first war with the north-western neighbour over the control of Kashmir just after Independence not only led to the commissioning of Radio Kashmir Jammu in December 1947 and Radio Kashmir Srinagar in July 1948 but also introduced programmes for the Armed Forces on both these stations. Thus, these became the first Forces programmes to be introduced in Independent India, with Delhi’s programme continuing to retain its fatherly status. [3] [4] The content of these programmes included film and non-film light music, semi-classical vocal music, classical instrumental and orchestral music, motivational talks, Forces’ information bulletins, stories, plays, skits, performances by the Forces personnel recorded on spots, and excerpts from concerts organized for the entertainment of the Forces and families.

Jullundur was the first AIR station to go on air after independence in November 1947, just one month prior to Jammu, which was set up hurriedly to provide news and information to the millions of Punjabis who arrived in East Punjab undergoing the horrifying experience of partition. To further increase the coverage along the border areas, in February 1948, the Amritsar station came into existence. [5] On 17 May 1949, a half-hour weekly series entitled *Haraaval* was started from the Jullundur-Amritsar station, which was essentially a special programme of interest to the listeners in Active Services based on the talent mainly drawn from the contingents of military and local police. [6] The programme was short-lived and probably went off-air in March 1950 as it could no longer be seen in the Programme Schedule published in *The Indian Listener*.

Apart from these regular programmes for the Forces broadcast from Delhi, Jammu, Srinagar and Jullundur stations, many stations started organizing concerts of classical and light music for the entertainment of the *Jawans* and their families either at the radio stations or at specific venues in the city or directly in the forward areas. The two stations of Radio Kashmir were the most active in organizing such concerts on a regular basis. The edited recordings of such concerts were then broadcast from the respective stations either in the Forces programme or in any general slot. Stations in the south like Hyderabad and Bangalore were not left behind in organizing such concerts. [7] [8] [9] [10]

Until the summer of 1962, there wasn't any further addition to the list of stations broadcasting a regular programme for troops. There were occasional concerts though, from various stations. It was on 17 June 1962 that the fourth regular programme to join the league was introduced by AIR Gauhati – the *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, or the Troops Programme, as it is still called. Since then, the programme has remained one of the most significant broadcasts from the station and has recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. Henceforth, this book is all about this programme.

The book is partitioned into three parts.

**Part One** comprising of chapters 2 through 8 takes the reader through the background and origin of the programme, and its continuous evolution through expansions, relays, transmission modes, and content. Chapter 7 talks about the team of announcers while chapter 8 further looks at the programme in view of the several changes going around in broadcasting field during that period.

**Part Two** comprises of chapters 9 through 15. This is the portion that I have witnessed myself and hence it consists majorly my own memories and experiences with this programme. Chapter 10 deep dives into each segment of the programme and tries to highlight the content and various trivia and interesting aspects associated with each of them. The changing scene of broadcasting and its impacts on the programme gets introduced in chapter 11 and further detailed in chapters 12 through 14. The most emotional part of the book is chapter 15 which tells the reader about my personal interactions with the presenters of the programme who are no longer in service.

**Part Three**, from chapter 16 till the end, depicts the present status of the programme. The impact of transition from regular announcers to a pool of casual announcers, changes in transmission technologies, and the wrath of COVID pandemic are captured in chapters 16 and 17. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the programme is detailed out in chapter 18. Finally, chapters 19 and 20 winds up the book by looking at possibilities for future.

The three appendices at the end provides additional information related to the subject of interest of this book.

Following assumptions and considerations should be kept in mind to avoid confusions while reading the book:

- The words ‘Forces’, ‘troops’, ‘*Jawans*’, ‘soldiers’, ‘servicemen’ are all used interchangeably for the expressing the same category of target listeners. For example, in certain AIR stations, the programme is referred to as Forces Programme and at other stations as Troops Programme. Both are the same in the context of the radio programme although there is a slight difference in literal meaning between the two.
- Akashvani and All India Radio (AIR) represent the same organization. Until May 2023, both were in use before the Central Government chopped off the latter.
- Gauhati and Guwahati are two ways to identify the same place. Gauhati was in use till 1984. Similar is the case for Jullundur – Jalandhar, Simla – Shimla, and Dacca – Dhaka.
- All programme timings are in Indian Standard Time (IST) unless otherwise specified.

# **PART ONE**

## 2. Evolution of Hindi at AIR Gauhati

During WWII, programmes for the Allied Forces from AIR used to be in English while the ones for the Indian troops stationed at foreign lands or at home were in Hindustani. The mix of soldiers from all Indian states led to the selection of Hindustani as the preferred medium for such programmes even though many soldiers from the South Indian states didn't understand the language. There wasn't any other language either that could form the basis of such a programme whose audience could belong to any corner of the country. Hindi or Hindustani, as the language was called in those days, thus continued to be the medium of programmes for the troops from all stations in the post-Independence era. Gauhati couldn't be any exception. In the absence of a Hindi Section at the station, the main pre-requisite to launch a Troops Programme in 1962 was the formation of a formal Hindi Section. This, however, didn't mean that there weren't any Hindi broadcasts from the station prior to 1962. This chapter attempts at capturing the role and contribution of AIR Gauhati towards the promotion and dissemination of Hindi in the region from its birth in 1948 until the start of the Troops Programme in 1962. In other words, the evolution of Hindi broadcasts from the station in that primitive period is discussed.

### **The Birth of AIR Gauhati**

Starting with Jullundur that came into existence on 1 November 1947, a total of 12 new AIR stations came up in the country during 1947 to 1949. With a request from the then Chief Minister of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi, to include North-East in the Phase-1 plan of expansion of radio network, the Central Government allotted a joint station at Shillong and Gauhati. Shillong was the political and administrative capital of the undivided Assam, whereas Gauhati was the cultural capital. So, a combined Shillong-Gauhati station, headquartered at Shillong, could cover all aspects of the entire region. The combined station began operation on 1 July 1948, along with the Srinagar station. [5] [11]

There were two studios, one each at Shillong and Gauhati, connected over a telephone line and two mediumwave Low Power Transmitters (LPT), one each at Shillong (50 W) and Gauhati (1 kW). The station operated on 331.4 m (905 kc/s) in Shillong and 394.7 m (760 kc/s) in Gauhati. Initially, the station had two daily transmissions – the morning session from 07:00 to 08:30 and the evening session from 17:00 to 21:15. [12] The programme timings were divided between the two studios in sequential non-overlapping order. [11] In 1953, the Shillong transmitter was shut down and the station headquarter was shifted to Gauhati. The capacity of the Gauhati transmitter was augmented to 10 kW. Although the auxiliary studio at Shillong continued to feed the Gauhati transmitter on trunk telephone lines, the Shillong-Gauhati station had functionally become the Gauhati station. [13]

### **The Launch of Gauhati-B**

On 4 May 1957, under the Second Five-Year Plan, the Gauhati station shifted its base from its then location at Uzanbazar area to a new permanent campus at Chandmari. The same day, a new 10 kW shortwave transmitter started operation, thus making its coverage available throughout the state and beyond. And thus, was born Gauhati-B operating on 42.11 m in the morning and late evening hours and on 31.33 m in the afternoon and early evening hours. The original channel was renamed as Gauhati-A that continued to operate on 384.6 m. Gauhati-B didn't have any independent programming in its morning and afternoon transmissions. It simply relayed Gauhati-A on the shortwave. However, the evening transmission of Gauhati-B was one of its kind in those days with programmes in many tribal dialects of the North-East. [13] [14] This was the time when only the four metro cities and Srinagar had two channels each as observed in The Indian Listener editions of that period. Gauhati was the second non-metro city after Srinagar to get two channels. The Gauhati station had been broadcasting so far mostly in Assamese and English, with additional broadcasts in tribal dialects like Khasi, Jaintia and Garo. The new shortwave transmitter enabled the station to broadcast in 15 north-eastern dialects that could reach people speaking those dialects in far flung areas of the region, over the shortwave frequencies. [13]

From 24 February 1958, an additional 10 kW shortwave transmitter considerably increased the coverage of the station. The service area got extended up to a radius of about 500 miles and therefore covered the whole of Assam, North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) – the present Arunachal Pradesh, the Centrally administered territories of Tripura and Manipur and even portions of Sikkim and Tibet. [15] The joint broadcasts of Gauhati-A and B were stopped. The A channel started broadcasting on 384.6 m and alternately on 42.11, 31.56, 62.83 and 60.73 m, while Gauhati-B broadcast alternately on 48.94, 31.56 and 62.83 m in non-overlapping mode amongst themselves. Gauhati-B then had its own independent morning and evening transmissions with programmes directed to Manipur, Lushai, Garo, Naga, NEFA, Mikirs, Dimasas, Khasis, Jaintias, and Tripura in various languages and tribal dialects. [16]

## **Initial Hindi Content**

### *Hindustani Film Songs from 1948*

AIR Gauhati's Hindi content dates to as early as its origin in 1948 when programmes of Hindustani light music were broadcast, mostly in the evening transmissions. Although there is published information of programmes entitled *Kathachhabir Gaan* (Songs from Talkies) and *Apunalokar Anurodh* (Listeners' Requests) on 2 and 4 July 1948 respectively, it could not be established if these were from Hindi films. These might have been exclusively Assamese, Bengali, and Hindustani songs or a mix of two or all of them. The first published record of a programme of Hindustani film songs is *Chhayalokat* (In the World of Shadows), which was broadcast between 18:45 and 19:00 on 13 July 1948. [17] Other programmes containing Hindustani film songs like *Chhaya Geet*, *Bolchhabir Geet*, *Chitralkha* and few more were also started during the same period. In *Surar Deul* programme broadcast on 1 October 1948, songs from newly released Hindustani films such as *Amar Raj* (1946), *Heera* (1947) and *Shikarpuri* (1947) were played. [18] Likewise, in *Chitrabani* of 5 November 1948, songs from films *Bela* (1947) and *Bhakta Surdas* (1942) were played. [19] Although all these were programmes of Hindi music, the compering was in Assamese.

### *Hindi Lessons from 1949*

A year later, starting 18 December 1949, AIR decided to introduce a course of lessons in Hindi from stations serving areas where Hindi was not one of the main languages. And thus, was started *Rashtrabhasha Shiko Aahok* (Hindi by Radio) that used to get aired five days a week from the Shillong-Gauhati station, Sundays through Thursdays, between 07:30 and 07:50. [20]

### *Hindi Kavi Sammelan in 1951*

Despite not having a Hindi section, the Shillong-Gauhati station organized a *Hindi Kavi Sammelan* (Conference of Hindi Poets) as early as in 1951. The hour-long symposium was broadcast on 7 April 1951 at 20:00 in which several well-known Hindi poets and litterateurs participated. This included Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, Rameswar Dayal Dube, Hans Kumar Tiwari, Braj Kishore Narain and Ram Gopal Sharma ‘Rudra’. [21] Although staging of Hindi plays at the station during those early days could not be verified, at least there used to be Assamese adaptations of Hindi plays. One such instance was the rendering of the Assamese adaptation of *Woh Bhayanak Raat*, an original Hindi play written by K. B. Sing, broadcast on 19 December 1951. [22]

### *First Announcement in Hindi in 1957*

As mentioned previously, 4 May 1957 was the day when Gauhati-B was launched to transmit programmes in various north-eastern tribal dialects. This was a landmark day in the history of this station not only due to this launch but also due to the fact that the first Hindi announcement went on air on this new channel on this day. One might easily wonder on the need of Hindi announcements on this new channel. Announcements in simple Hindi were used as “linking announcements” for most of the programmes in tribal dialects for which there were no announcers available. Since Assamese was not understood in the tribal areas outside Assam, the use of Hindi was inevitable. [13] For certain programmes, the services of officials of the Assam Government were utilized because of the non-availability of qualified non-officials for such posts. The programmes for NEFA and Dimasa-Kachhar Hill areas were announced in simple Hindi even after one year of the start of such programmes, which was to make way for the respective dialects as soon as qualified men were available. The AIR Gauhati staff would visit the tribal areas once and record items to cover the broadcasts for at least 3 to 6 months, which the announcers would play while announcing them in simple Hindi by the normal announcers. [23].

### **The First ‘Hindi Programme’**

On Tuesday, 19 June 1958, the Gauhati station reached a milestone by broadcasting its first “Hindi Programme” in its true sense, from Gauhati-A. It was a 10-minute talk by Renu Debi at 20:00 on the most typical aspect of Hindi grammar that most Assamese and Bengali speakers get confused of – the Gender. The talk was followed by the reading of Hindi version of a piece from an Assamese classic. [24] Thereafter, *Hindi Karyakram*, as it was called, became a monthly broadcast on every third Thursday of the month. Soon, the programme started including features and short stories. The items broadcast under this programme served two purposes. One was to propagate Assamese history, culture, literature, and tourism among Hindi speaking people in the region, and

the other was simply the other way round, that is, topics related to Hindi literature, and customs and traditions of other parts of the country, for the Assamese listeners. In the first category were talks on topics like, *Assam Ke Log Aur Unki Sanskriti*, *Assam Ka Praakritik Saundarya*, *Assam Ke Lok Geet*, *Asamiya Sahitya Ki Dhara*, *Assam Ke Mitti Ke Bartan Aur Khilaune*, *Swadheenta Sangram Mein Assam* (broadcast on Independence Day eve of 1960), *Bihu*, *Brahmaputra*; and features on great personalities of the region like Sati Joymoti, Lachit Barphukan, Mula Gabharu and others. Santosh Kumar Dakua, Pushpalata Das and Loknath Bharali were among the many speakers invited by the station from time to time to deliver these talks. (Above information has been consolidated by going through all editions of Akashvani journal published during 1958 – 1961. Specific referencing has been avoided here owing to the large number.)

In the second category were talks on topics like *Premchand* by Rajani Kanta Chakravarty, *Jaishankar Prasad Ki Kamayani* by Pareshchandra Sarma, *Hindi Ke Naatak*, *Hindi Kahaaniyan*, *Hindi Ke Upanyaas* by Hemkar Mishra, *Hindi Mein Lokottiyani aur Muhaavaren* by Chhaganlal Jain, *Hindi Kavitaon Mein Haasya*, *Hindi Roopak Aur Sanskrit Naatak* by D. P. Shastri, *Uttar Bharat Ke Khaas Tyohaar* by Joy Prakash Sarma, *Uttar Bharat Ke Lok Geet*, *Kumbh Mela*, *Meera Ke Bhajan* and *Rani Lakshmibai* by Navarun Verma, *Murty Puja Ki Parampara* by Sitaram Chaturvedi, and many others. Readings from the writings of eminent Hindi poets and writers like Premchand (by Kapileshwar Jha), Suryakant Tripathi ‘Nirala’, Jayashankar Prasad (by J. P. Sharma) and others, with comments and illustrations were also made part of this programme. Then there was a third category of talks that had flavours of both first and second categories. Talks on topics such as *Assam Ke Bihu Geet Aur Banaras Taraf Ke Biraha Geet* by Hira Lal Tiwari, *Madhav Dev Aur Surdas Ke Balkrishna* by Chhaganlal Jain fall under this category. Talks on topics surrounding Ramayana was common. *Dakshin Poorvi Asia Mein Ramkatha*, a talk by Vishnu Prabhakar, *Valmiki*, *Tulsi aur Madhav Kandali*, a comparative study of the three versions of the Ramayana, readings with comments from Tulsi Das literature are few examples. All these programmes were broadcast between 1958 and 1962 and have been referenced from the published programme schedules in Akashvani journal.

One of the earliest instances of a Hindi play being dramatized at the Gauhati station was in the programme of 5 March 1959. By then the programme timing had shifted to 19:20, the day of the week and frequency remaining the same. The half-hour play *Manomati* was adapted and translated from the Assamese work of Rajanikanta Bardoloi and was presented by Rajani Kanta Chakravarty and party. [25] After this, plays, skits, sketches and talks in lighter vein were regular affairs of this programme. Few examples of such items broadcast towards the end of the decade and beginning of the next were *Andher Nagari Chaupat Raja* – play adapted from Bharatendu Harishchandra’s drama of the same title, *Art and Kala Store* – play of Phaneshwar Nath ‘Renu’, *Daasi Rahdoi* – play adaptation by Ramendra Nath Sarma of the novel in Assamese entitled *Rahdoi Ligiri* written by Rajanikanta Bardoloi and presented by members of the Cotton College Union Society, Gauhati, ‘*Nayi Duniya*’ – play written & produced by Tarun Azad Deka. [26] [27] [28]

Though there were several programme executives who produced these programmes, Tarun Azad Deka’s name needs a special mention. Being highly knowledgeable in both Assamese and Hindi, his contribution towards the Hindi Programme of AIR Gauhati was immense. Throughout his service life at the station, he wrote and produced many programmes, mostly features, skits and plays. [29] His works during this period included features like *Bashishthashram*, *Tulsidas*, and *Mula Gabharu*, skits like *Dampatya Kalaha*, among others. His expertise in translation between

Assamese and Hindi led to a number of works in both the languages to get translated to each other. On 10 April 1962, the Assamese version of Krishan Chander's Urdu play *Kutte Ki Maut*, translated by Deka, was broadcast in the Programme of Assamese Plays between 19:30 and 20:00 entitled *Kukurar Mrityu*. [30] Deka's talent didn't remain confined to Gauhati station. His plays were broadcast in the National Programme of Plays from Delhi. One of his plays '*Kathpula*', which was a translation of the radio adaptation of Syed Abdul Malik's Assamese story by Mahendra Barthakur, was broadcast from Delhi-A on 24 March 1977 between 21:30 and 22:30. [31] On the Sunday afternoon of 15 May 1983, Deka's yet another adaptation, *Kolahal*, the Assamese Play of Bhavendra Nath Saikia, was broadcast from Delhi-A at 14:30. [32]

In April 1959, the Hindi Programme was expanded and made twice a month affair, broadcasting on second and fourth Sundays between 19:15 and 19:25. [33] Subsequently, the programme was continuously enriched with quality content. Several references could be found in the issues of Akashvani journal of the year 1960 where talks were broadcast in Gauhati's Hindi Programme in the form of series, some examples being *Adhunik Hindi Kavya Par Prabhaav*, *Hindi Ke Musalmaan Kavi*, *Kamrup Ke Mandir*, *Assam Ke Bihu Tyohaar*, *Chalo Sair Karen*. Sketches, skits, dialogues and talks in lighter vein were equally visible in the programme schedules. *He Ram Isne Kya Samjha* and *Langdi Kursi* by Satish Chandra, *Makaan Ki Talash Mein* and *Raat Ki Museebat* by Narayan Jehanabadi, *Main Kunwari Hi Bhali* by Dr. Kanchanlata Sabharwal, *Bade Parivaar Ki Mahima* and *Wo Ajeeb Shakhs Jo Vartamaan Ko Pasand Karta Ho* by Hira Lal Tiwari, *Wo Ajeeb Shakhs Jo Apne Kaam Se Khush Ho* by D. P. Shastri, *Dev Ke Avtaar* by Madan Behari Sharma 'Deep', *Nitya Suna Jaata Hai Meri Museebat Sabse Badi*, '*Kahawaton Ke Kisse*' and the list may continue endlessly.

Within a year, in 1961, Gauhati's Hindi Programme had started organizing discussions inviting participants from the Hindi circle of the region that comprised of litterateurs, scholars, professors, journalists, teachers, and college and university students. A 15-minute discussion on the topic *Hindi Aur Sanskrit* took place in the broadcast of 26 March 1961, participated by Sumati Talukdar, Hiralal Tiwari, and Prakash Chandra Shastri. [34] A 15-minute short notice discussion on the topic *Achchhi Patni Wa Mata Banne Ki Shiksha Hi Mahilaon Ke Liye Yogya Shiksha Hogi* was carried out by university students Lily Bordoloi, Anna Mahanta, Indu Bhushan Lahkar, Purandar Gogoi and Ali Ahmed Hussain in the broadcast of 13 August 1961. [35] From September 1961, the programme became a weekly affair to be broadcast on Mondays at 20:00. [36] From April 1962 onwards, the programme was stabilized to Wednesdays in the same time slot that continued for long thereafter. [37]

To summarize the primitive days of Hindi broadcasts from AIR Gauhati, it won't be an exaggeration to say that the station did a commendable job even without a dedicated Hindi section at the station. Although it was a minor programme quantitatively with just twenty minutes or so per month, the content was significantly diverse. The Gauhati station did its little bit towards the birth and initial growth of Hindi programming between 1958 and 1962 that kept enriching its foundation, after which a formal Hindi Section came into existence.

### **How Hindi Film Music grew at AIR Gauhati**

Since all programmes for the Forces and troops in the post-independence era were mainly based

on film music and Gauhati was not an exception either, it would be interesting to know how this area of entertainment shaped up at the Gauhati station until the start of the Troops Programme. As mentioned previously, the station started broadcasting Hindustani film music since the very beginning. Barring the brief period in the 1950s when airing of film music was banned on AIR, the station continuously entertained its listeners with film music in its evening transmission around 20:00. During the mid-1950s, when the station increased its transmission duration by adding an afternoon transmission, a daily 20-minute programme of Hindi songs, both film and non-film, was kept in the schedule at 13:10, that was just after the Assamese news bulletin of 13:00. Interestingly, the slot starting at 13:10, later, had been the most widely used slot by many stations to air their programme for the Forces. Gauhati's 20-minute programme at 13:10 was however not meant specifically for the troops since it was compered in Assamese. However, on special occasions, musical features in Hindi were broadcast. For instance, on the occasion of Diwali, the programme of 10 November 1958, entitled *Deepon Ki Ek Mala*, comprised of a selection of songs for the occasion. [38] Similarly, a programme of Eid songs entitled *Eid Ke Din* and a bouquet of patriotic songs entitled *Jay Bharat* were broadcast in Hindi on 18 June and 15 August 1959 respectively. [39] [40] The reason for compering the programmes in Hindi on such special occasions might have been to entertain the *Jawans* stationed in forward areas who must have been missing their families on these festival days.

Even though Vividh Bharati Service (VBS), the national light entertainment channel, came into being on 3 October 1957 to compete with Radio Ceylon's immensely popular Hindi Service, it was not until towards the end of 1959 that the Gauhati station got the opportunity to broadcast (relay) its handful of programmes. Until then, the listeners of the region could listen to VBS over shortwave that was radiated from the Bombay and Madras transmitters. Monday, 2 November 1959 was a landmark day for AIR Gauhati when it started "relaying" Vividh Bharati programmes daily on its A-channel, except Sundays, between 08:30 and 09:00; the programme was *Madhuvan* containing mixed Hindi film songs; and again between 14:00 and 15:00 containing *Manoranjan*, a programme of request-based Hindi film songs. [41] This substantially increased the daily quota of Hindi film music on the Gauhati station. However, due to this, the daily 20-minute Hindi songs programme of 13:10 originating from Gauhati was reduced to a mere 10-minute affair and it was no longer a daily broadcast. In other words, VBS had taken its toll on Gauhati's local programme of Hindi music. This setup continued until June 1962 when the start of the Troops programme all of a sudden dramatically increased Hindi film music content originating from the station.

# 3. Gauhati launches Troops Programme

Things shape up according to the need. History reveals that every introduction of a programme for the Forces and troops on commercial radio stations had to do something with a war. Delhi's programme was started for Indian troops sent abroad during WWII; Jammu and Srinagar's programmes owe their introduction to the first war with the north-western neighbour. With tension and unrest staying consistent at that front, Forces' programmes from these two stations have remained significant for a long time. The fourth station to begin a programme for troops was Gauhati. This may be attributed to the Sino-Indian tension cropping up during the 1950s and reaching its peak in 1962. This chapter attempts at summarizing the important developments in tension between the two countries, which ultimately led to the war of 1962. At the same time, it analyses the reasons for zeroing in on Gauhati-B to start a programme for troops deployed in the region. The planning, the concept, and the execution of launching the hour-long daily programme are put forward in this chapter.

## **Background**

After the end of the WWII, the rest of the years of the decade were crucial to both India and China. While India got freedom from the British in 1947, China became the People's Republic of China (PRC) after the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Maintaining friendly relations with China, India was among the first nations to grant diplomatic recognition to the newly formed PRC. [42] However, certain developments in the region during the 1950s led to souring of relations between the two countries. In 1950, the Chinese troops crossed the Sino-Tibetan boundary and moved towards Lhasa, and soon established PRC's sovereignty over Tibet. In 1954, the relations between India and China were strengthened by the Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between India and Tibet region of China along with signing of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence by the two countries. The visit of the Chinese PM also strengthened the ties. However, surprisingly, China included a portion of India's northern frontier on their official map that India objected. Although the Chinese PM once again visited India in 1956 for the second time on a goodwill mission, it didn't work for long as China included a big chunk of Northern Assam and NEFA on their map in September 1958. In January 1959, China spelled out for the first time its claims to over 40,000 square miles of the Indian territory both in Ladakh (Aksai Chin) and NEFA. In April 1959, Dalai Lama escaped from Lhasa fearing arrest by China and crossed into the Indian territory. India's hospitality to Dalai Lama further aggravated the situation with China. [43]

## **Tibetan Programme from Gauhati-B**

Amid the escalating tension between the two countries, it was badly realized that the scene of radio broadcasting in the North-East was not impressive. There was only one AIR station in the entire region – the Gauhati station, that came into operation as Shillong-Gauhati station in 1948 on low

power mediumwave. As discussed earlier, about a decade later, two shortwave transmitters increased the coverage to the entire North-East, however, no new station came up in the region until it was too late. Looking at China's aggression, a strong radio coverage could have played a vital role to combat their propaganda. In the absence of any radio station along the Sikkim – Bhutan belt, on 19 October 1958, AIR Gauhati launched a half-hour 'Tibetan Programme' on its B channel on 48.94 m at 06:45 that played a significant role in disseminating India's views to the Tibetan people. [44]

This programme was in addition to the half-hour Tibetan Programme broadcast from the External Services Division (ESD) of AIR, radiating from Delhi at 18:15 on 19.86 m and 25.47 m. [45] This had started two years prior to Gauhati's programme, on 15 December 1956. [46] ESD and Gauhati together could then reach the Tibetan listeners twice a day. Thus, from the initial phase of the growing escalation between the two countries, AIR Gauhati had been contributing towards counteracting the opponent's propaganda. This important milestone for Gauhati-B is worth noting for the sole reason that this channel is the centre of attraction of this book for it being the platform for the famous Troops Programme from the station.

### **Absence of Troops Programme in North-East**

In August 1959, the growing tensions between India and China resulted in the Chinese troops opening fire on an Indian picket near Migyitun in eastern Ladakh, leading to the death of an Indian soldier. Moreover, they overran the Indian outpost at Longju in north-eastern Ladakh. A month later, on the eastern front, China refused to respect the McMahon Line and claimed 50,000 square miles of territory in Sikkim and Bhutan. Back on the western front, the Chinese troops fired on an Indian patrol in the Aksai Chin area killing nine soldiers and capturing ten. A meeting held in Delhi in April 1960 between the Chinese and Indian PM ended in a deadlock and in June 1960, Chinese troops violated the Indian border near Shipki village in the North-East. This led to an increase in military deployment in the north-eastern region. [43]

Unlike the north-western border areas where there were programmes for the Forces from Jammu and Srinagar stations of Radio Kashmir, there was none for the eastern sector. The concentration of military personnel in the North-East further increased after China occupied 12,000 square miles in the western sector in February 1961. Their aggressive border patrolling and establishing new military formations which started moving into the Indian territory worsened the situation. In December 1961, India adopted the Forward Policy to stem the advancing Chinese frontier line by establishing a few border outposts in both the sectors. [43] Yet, the situation of radio broadcasting remained pathetic in the eastern sector with no new station being introduced. When China issued ultimatum to India in April 1962 demanding the withdrawal of the Indian frontier personnel from the border posts, it was getting more and more clear that the two most populous nations of the world were at loggerheads.

Keeping aside the political impact for a moment and talking about the lives of the Indian soldiers deployed in the eastern sector in Assam and NEFA, there was no Indian public communication medium in those remote terrains except for the broadcasts of AIR Gauhati which were mostly in local languages and tribal dialects that soldiers from other parts of the country didn't understand. Except for the English and Hindi broadcasts relayed from Delhi and the handful of Hindi music,

talks and occasional skits and plays served by Gauhati as mentioned in the previous chapter, there was no way the troops could get entertained and stay informed. To design and deploy a dedicated radio programme for troops, which was the immediate need of the hour, the foremost requirement was to have a Hindi Section at AIR Gauhati. Unlike other programmes for special audiences which could be designed using the local language, a programme for troops could only be imagined in Hindi for obvious reasons as stated before.

### **New Station at Kurseong**

At independence, AIR had six stations – Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Trichy and Lucknow. Between 1947 and 1950, the stations that came up were Jullundur-Amritsar, Jammu, Srinagar, Shillong-Gauhati, Allahabad, Patna, Nagpur, Baroda- Ahmedabad, Dharwar, Hyderabad (acquired from Deccan Radio), Aurangabad, Vijaywada, Calicut, Mysore, Trivandrum and Cuttack. In the First Five Year Plan (1951 – 1955), the stations that started operations were Poona, Rajkot, Jaipur-Ajmer, Indore, Simla and Bangalore. The Second Five Year Plan (1956 – 1960) brought up new stations like Ranchi, Bhopal, Kozhikode-Trichur along with expansion of the existing ones. [47] [48] From this, it is clearly visible that in between August 1947 and March 1961, only two stations were sanctioned for the Eastern region – Shillong-Gauhati and Cuttack while the total number of stations launched during this period was more than twenty. The mistake was largely criticized with the onset of the Chinese aggression. Surprisingly, the original plan of expansion of the AIR network in the Third Five-Year Plan that began on 1 April 1961 was no less indifferent from the previous two. However, the original plan had to be changed altogether in view of the conflict when the inadequate broadcasting infrastructure in the Eastern border areas was exposed. [48]

Consequently, a number of new stations were immediately approved to increase the AIR footprint in the North-East. The first station to come up in the region was Kurseong on a 2-kW shortwave transmitter on 2 June 1962, which was later upgraded to 20 kW after the war. [48] The station's broadcasts were in various languages like Nepalese, Tibetan, Bhutanese, Sikkimese, Bengali and Hindi. While the programmes from this new station must have been instrumental to counteract the neighbour's propaganda, there wasn't much to entertain and inform the troops stationed in the remote inaccessible northern mountains. Among the Hindi programmes, there were news bulletins relayed from Delhi, programmes of Hindi light songs and fortnightly talks and cultural programmes, and few recorded programmes originating from VBS. [49] Despite being a promising candidate for a Troops Programme for it being a shortwave station, AIR Kurseong didn't have one at its inception. It took another two wars of 1965 and 1971, for this station to finally launch a weekly programme for troops in 1971. More about it later in the book! Meanwhile, Gauhati launched a daily programme for troops just two weeks after the commissioning of the Kurseong station in 1962.

### **Planning for a 'Troops Programme' in North-East**

From the series of developments until April 1962 leading to growing tensions between India and China, it was quite apparent to both the sides that all sorts of negotiations and discussions had failed to make any progress. Neither China was ready to accept India's demands, nor India took back its Forward Policy that was increasingly perceived as a grave threat as Delhi increasingly

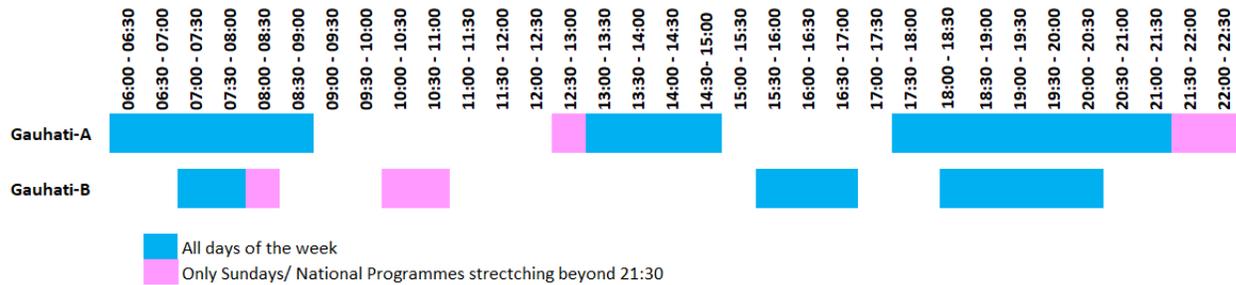
sent probes deeper into border areas and cut off Chinese supply lines. [50] The north-eastern borders had never seen troops deployment of this massive scale before. Large number of additional soldiers from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Territorial Army were mobilized in both Ladakh and Assam-NEFA areas. The absence of a radio programme for the stressed-out soldiers stationed in the latter was badly felt. To recap, during that time, there were only three stations broadcasting programmes for the Forces. *Sainikon Ke Liye* of Jammu and *Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye* of Srinagar stations covered up almost the entire Northern region over their mediumwave and shortwave radiations including border areas on both sides. Delhi's *Sainikon Ke Liye*, also available on shortwave, could reach as far as the border areas of Northern Uttar Pradesh and Northern Bihar. Thus, for the entertainment and motivation of the troops in the north-eastern region, a new programme similar to the ones from Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar was immediately needed from either Gauhati or Kurseong.

### *Choice between Gauhati and Kurseong*

Gauhati was probably always a better choice than Kurseong for at least three important reasons. First, Gauhati had two 10 kW shortwave transmitters as against one 2 kW shortwave transmitter at Kurseong, thus ensuring a wider audience reach penetrating remote areas along the north-eastern borders. Second, the location of Gauhati was more strategic than Kurseong to cover the entire length and breadth of the region effectively and uniformly from Nagaland-Manipur in the east to North Bengal-Sikkim on the west, and from the Arunachal in the north to Mizoram-Tripura in the south. On the contrary, Kurseong would have been a cornered location on one side of the region. Third, Gauhati was then a 14-year-old matured station that had also been broadcasting programmes in Hindi for at least three years even though it didn't have a full-fledged Hindi section. Kurseong was not only a new station but also was not mature enough to handle a programme for the Forces that anticipated huge flow of letters and responses from the listeners, based on the experience of the stations already broadcasting such programmes. In other words, Gauhati was the ideal station between the two for a Forces' programme to be directed towards troops stationed in the entire north-eastern region. The Indian Government gave a special status to the Gauhati station due to its strategic location in view of the increasing advancements of China. The Directorate General (DG) of AIR, on advice of the Central Government, directed the station to design and produce a special and varied broadcast for the troops with immediate effect. [51]

### *Choice between Gauhati-A and Gauhati-B*

If the correct choice of the station was necessary, the correct choice of the channel within the station was equally important. It was decided that the duration of the proposed Troops Programme would be of one hour on a daily basis. Scooping out an hour from the existing transmission time of Gauhati-A was not possible and it would have meant reduction or closure of other programmes. Also, it was impossible to cut down any programme of Gauhati-B as all its programmes were specific tribe-oriented programmes of short durations. In other words, a new daily hour-long programme was not feasible unless an increase in transmission time was approved for the station. The two channels of Gauhati were broadcasting through the three transmitters, one mediumwave and two shortwaves, as illustrated below. [52]



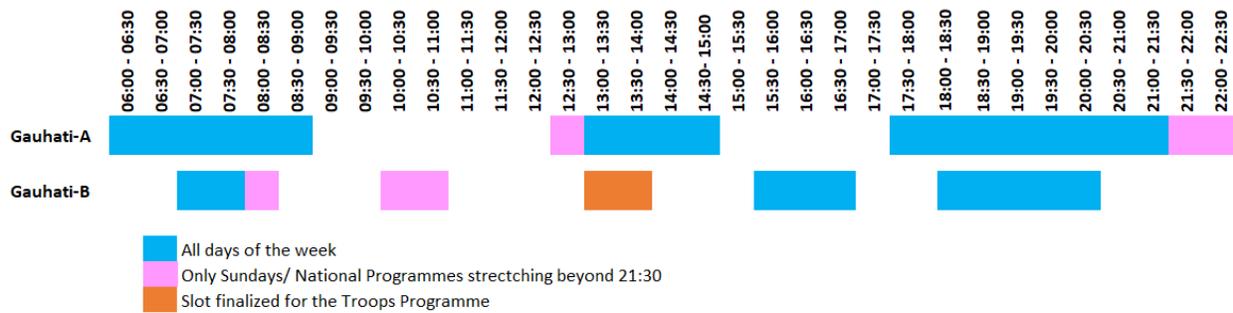
*Illustration 1: Broadcast timings of Gauhati-A and Gauhati-B as on 10 June 1962*

As clearly visible, Gauhati-B was substantially under-utilized as compared to Gauhati-A. Moreover, the prime-time slots were fully occupied for Gauhati-A, while there were several empty slots available at favourable times of the day on Gauhati-B that suited a programme for troops. The history of programmes for the Forces indicated that the best time of the day for such a programme was either the afternoons or the early evenings. Moreover, Delhi’s programme for the Forces was also on its B-channel (Delhi-B). Hence, Gauhati-B was the better choice for this new programme.

### *Selection of Broadcast Time*

After the selection of station and channel, the third step was to finalize the broadcast time for the programme. Gauhati-B used to have three transmissions in those days: Transmission-I from 07:00 to 08:00 (Tibetan programme and programme for Manipur), Transmission-II from 15:30 to 17:00 (programmes for Nagaland and NEFA), and Transmission-III from 18:15 to 20:30 (programmes for Mikirs & Dimasas, Garos, Khasis, Jaintias, Lushais, and a second edition for Manipur). On Sundays, there was an additional half-hour broadcast at 08:00 in Nepalese, entitled *Uttar Anchal Anushthan* and an hour-long midday transmission at 10:00 for the people and labourers of the Tea Gardens of Assam. [52] There was no broadcast between 11:00 and 15:30 and between 17:00 and 18:15, and these were, as mentioned earlier, the most suitable time periods of the day for a programme for troops. The afternoon slot was obviously better than the evening slot for uniform distribution of broadcasts and optimal utilization of the shortwave transmitters.

When the afternoon slot between 11:00 and 15:30 was the unanimous choice, it was time to fix the precise broadcast time for the programme. In those days, the listeners of the region could listen to VBS broadcasts on the shortwave as radiated from Bombay and Madras transmitters and also locally on Gauhati-A between 14:00 and 15:00. Since the Troops programme was going to have light entertainment that was similar to the content presented in VBS programmes, a careful decision for the timing for the new Troops programme was needed to attract the maximum number of listeners instead of letting the listeners get divided between the two. VBS used to broadcast *Indradhanush*, a mixed-bag programme between 11:00 and 12:00 on the weekdays and *Baag Bahaar* (Music Potpourri) and *Chauwara* (Words and Music) on Sundays, half-hour each. There was no broadcast between 12:00 and 14:00. The afternoon session of VBS was from 14:00 to 15:00 containing *Manoranjan*, a programme of listeners’ requests (till 15:30 on Sundays for the weekly family programme *Apna Ghar*). [53] In other words, the best time for Gauhati to broadcast its Troops programme was between 12:00 and 14:00. Finally, the 13:00 – 14:00 slot was nailed.



*Illustration 2: Broadcast timings of Gauhati A and B with Troops Programme included*

## Formation of ‘Hindi Section’

The first step towards the launching of a regular programme for troops was to have a dedicated Hindi Section at the station with a team of Hindi announcers. There was a need for a Programme Executive who would not only design the content and structure of the new programme but also manage the show as a lead. Though there were producers at Gauhati station who were managing the 10-minute weekly Hindi Programme, one such name being Tarun Azad Deka as mentioned earlier, the DG transferred Programme Executive O. P. Tandon from Patna to Gauhati, for Patna being the nearest Hindi-based station. At that time, the Assistant Station Director of Gauhati, who later became the Station Director, was Gopal Das, an eminent scholar from Orissa. Gopal Das and O. P. Tandon jointly started the selection process for Hindi announcers. [51]

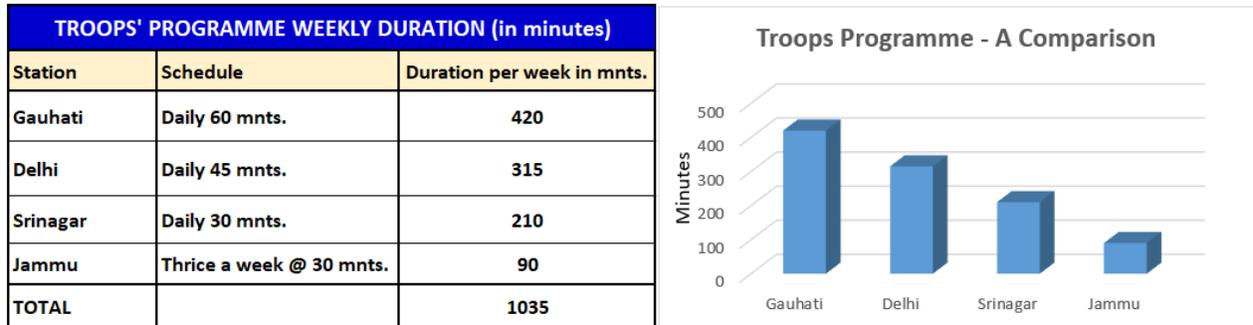
It is natural that a language is spoken in different accents at different places due to several reasons, which could be a mix of anthropological, ethnical, geographical, cultural, social, and behavioural reasons. Same goes with Hindi in different parts of India. Barring the Hindi speaking belt of northern and central India, the language is spoken with varying accent and pronunciation. In such a situation, it was not easy to quickly find Hindi speakers with accent and pronunciation of Hindi and Urdu matching the high standard maintained in AIR in those days. Especially, the standard of the programme could not be lower than those of Delhi, Jammu, and Srinagar. Das and Tandon did not seem to make any compromise on the selection criteria. Going through a screening process based on fluency, pronunciation, accent and voice quality, the lady who was shortlisted was Manjula Shah, who became the first Hindi announcer of the station. And thus, was laid the foundation of Hindi Section at AIR Gauhati. [51]

## The Launch

When the preparations to start a programme for the troops were going on at AIR Gauhati at war footing, various border conflicts and military incidents between India and China were going on in parallel. In May 1962, the IAF was told not to plan for air strikes although it was assessed as being a feasible way to counter the unfavourable ratio of Chinese to Indian troops. In June, a skirmish caused the deaths of dozens of Chinese troops. The Indian Forces established an outpost called the Dhola Post in the Namka Chu valley (that falls in the current Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh) to the south of the Thag La Ridge. The post lied north of the McMahon Line but south

of the ridges along which India interpreted the McMahon Line to run. [54] [55] Amid all such confusions and unexpected developments, the Troops Programme of Gauhati, entitled *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* was launched on the afternoon of Sunday, 17 June 1962 at 13:00 from AIR Gauhati-B on shortwave 48.94 m. [56]

Gauhati, thus joined the elite club of stations producing programmes for the Armed Forces as the fourth member after Delhi, Jammu, and Srinagar. The most significant aspect about Gauhati's newly started programme was that it was the largest programme in duration amongst the four stations as illustrated below.



*Illustration 3: Comparison of duration of Troops Programme on various stations as on 17 June 1962*

The Troops Programme of Gauhati was meant for the entertainment and information of troops stationed in Assam, Nagaland and NEFA. The programme at inception was a composite entertainment hour containing variety segments based on Hindi film music, *Sugam Sangeet* (Hindi Light Music) from both commercial gramophone records and AIR's internal recordings, regional and folk music of India, short plays, skits and variety, and instrumental music. Patriotic and devotional genres were given special focus as these could give mental strength and peace to the stressed-out soldiers at the battlefield. Inspirational and informative short talks were often included. A special feature of the programme was personal messages from the relatives of the troops that were broadcast twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. [56]

At that time, there used to be 10-minute-long English and Hindi news bulletins from Delhi at 13:30 and 13:40 respectively. Even with the introduction of this new afternoon transmission on Gauhati-B, the station chose not to relay either of the bulletins on either of its channels. The only bulletin that was relayed in the afternoon was the Assamese bulletin between 13:00 and 13:10 on Gauhati-A. However, the headlines of the day used to be read out in the Troops Programme itself.

The programme was undoubtedly a big gift to the troops stationed in the region. At the same time, it was like a dream come true for civilian listeners. That was not the period when common households had gramophone players. And even if they did, there weren't enough records to be played for their high cost. Tape recorders hadn't arrived. Frequent visits to cinema halls for watching movies was not taken in good spirit by most middle-class families. Television had not started. Thus, radio was the only and easily accessible mode of entertainment for most households, if not for all. Although VBS programmes had been entertaining the masses of the region for five years, a daily entertainment hour in Hindi from the local station in the afternoon was something

that no one had imagined at that time. And Hindi music being the primary constituent, the programme instantly clicked with the audience, and it was accepted wholeheartedly by all.

### **The War's Fallout**

In September 1962, the dragon began to extend its poisonous fangs towards and over the Indian territory with full force. Their Forces crossed the MacMahon Line in the Thag La region and opened fire on an Indian post and launched another intensified attack. It was 20 October when they launched a massive multi-pronged attack all along the border from Ladakh in the west to NEFA in the east, thus formally breaking out a direct war. Despite all the border tensions, India never expected the otherwise friendly neighbour to launch an attack. The enemy troops outnumbered the Indian soldiers leading to heavy casualties on the Indian side. [43]

Two days later, on 22 October, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, in an emergency broadcast addressed his 'Comrades, friends and fellow countrymen' over the AIR, by not only briefing the nation about the ongoing emergency but also paying his tributes to the troops fighting to protect the sovereignty and integrity of the country and boosted their morale. [57]

*"I am grieved at the setbacks to our troops that have occurred on this frontier and the reverses we have had. They were overwhelmed by vast numbers and by big artillery, mountain guns and heavy mortars which the Chinese Forces have brought with them. I should like to pay a tribute to our officers and men who faced these overwhelming numbers with courage. There may be some more reverses in that area. But one thing is certain – that the final result of this conflict will be in our favour. It cannot be otherwise when a nation like India fights for her freedom and integrity of the country. We have to meet a powerful and unscrupulous opponent. We have, therefore, to build up our strength and power to face this situation adequately and with confidence. The conflict may continue for long. We must prepare ourselves for it mentally and otherwise. We must have faith in ourselves, and I am certain that faith and our preparations will triumph. No other result is conceivable. Let there be this faith and fixed determination to free our country from the aggressor."*

*Jawaharlal Nehru, PM, India (22 October 1962)*

To give listeners a summary of the latest information on the day's situation, additional news bulletins were introduced by AIR's News Services Division (NSD) at 06:40 and 22:30 in November 1962. Three daily commentaries were added – two of them simultaneously in English and Hindi at 20:55 and the third in English at 09:00. A daily special national broadcast in English entitled *India and the Dragon* was started towards the end of November between 21:15 and 21:30 that was relayed by all stations. Special features on the determination of the people and the valour of the *Jawans* were started over Vividh Bharati. [58]

Starting 3 December 1962, AIR NSD introduced a new 15-minute service in NEFA-Assamese as part of disseminating important information to the masses of the region with regard to the developments taking place. The special transmission containing a 10-minute news bulletin and a 5-minute commentary in Assamese was aired daily at 10:30. Relayed by Gauhati-B on the shortwave, the new service was designed to augment the existing daily service for the NEFA area

broadcast from Gauhati-B. [59] Though not meant for the troops in particular, nevertheless, this daily and quick capsule with topics of interest for anyone residing or stationed in NEFA proved to be highly informative to the deployed *Jawans* since many of them were from Assam and NEFA, who understood the language. Gauhati-B was launched in 1957 on the shortwave specifically for broadcasts in various tribal dialects of the North-east. The war of 1962 gave it another and equally important dimension – to entertain the troops through a daily hour-long Troops Programme in the afternoon and to inform the troops and the civilians residing in NEFA through a daily quarter-hour news-based broadcast in late morning.

On 15 November 1962, a massive Chinese attack on the eastern front was faced; Tawang and Walong were overrun in the eastern sector while Rezang La and the Chushul airport in the west were shelled leading to a severe setback for India. The situation for India continued to be grim and on 18 November, the enemy troops captured Bomdi La in NEFA. Nehru once again took to AIR to address the nation on 19 November about the massive setback. [60] With Indian Forces totally exhausted from all means, there was no more counterattacks possible. Finally, on 21 November, China declared a unilateral ceasefire along the entire border and announced withdrawal of its troops to 20 km behind the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The war came to an end. [43]

With this, special programmes on solidarity, unity, patriotism, and tributes towards the Forces personnel who were martyred in the war, in the form of plays, features, talks and songs, started pouring in from all AIR stations across the length and breadth of the country. The significance of Gauhati's Troops Programme increased manifold after the war. When the programme was launched in June, the war was not fully confirmed although military activities were at rise. The war and the aftermath of the war established the programme as a major radio broadcast in the region than ever before.

## 4. Initial Expansion

The Chinese Aggression of 1962 had increased the significance of AIR Gauhati-B astronomically. The channel, which was primarily used for broadcasts in north-eastern tribal dialects until then, became the primary source of motivation, entertainment and information for the thousands of soldiers and airmen deployed in the region through the newly launched *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* and the relay of NEFA-Assamese service originating from NSD Delhi. The previous chapter gave an insight into the various aspects that formed the background, basis, planning, design, and launch of the Troops Programme of Gauhati. The end of the war did not lead to the stagnation of the programme. In fact, it continued to grow quickly both in duration and content. This chapter presents details of the expansions of the programme that took place until the end of 1964.

### The First Expansion

On 27 January 1963, as part of the Republic Day functions, a fund-raising event was organized at the National Stadium, Delhi, for the families of those martyred in the then recently concluded war. In the presence of illustrious audience that included President S. Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, eminent personalities from the film fraternity such as Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor, Rajendra Kumar, Mohammad Rafi and Hemant Kumar, the immortal patriotic classic number '*ae mere watan ke logo, zara aankh mein bhar lo paani*' rendered by Lata Mangeshkar invoking vivid images of the soldiers laying down their lives for the motherland, had moved the audience into tears, including Nehru. [61] The day before, Vividh Bharati introduced its famous programme *Jayamala*, meant for the entertainment of the Armed Forces. The half-hour daily programme at 17:45 comprised of songs requested by the Forces' listeners from all parts of the country. The programme quickly rose to the height of popularity [62]

AIR Gauhati's Troops Programme, *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, might have started four months before the Sino-Indian War, however, the real importance and significance could only be felt during and after the war. With this war, the northern borders of the North-East became a sensitive region with large concentration of military personnel deployed. This in turn saw an ever-increasing participation of listeners in this programme. Inflow of letters increased. The programme became one of the most listened-to broadcasts in the entire region and as far as it could reach. Not only the listeners of the then undivided Assam, NEFA, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura were addicted to this broadcast, but also thousands of military and civilian listeners from the neighbouring states of West Bengal, Bihar, and parts of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) became its ardent followers. [51] Probably looking at its increasing significance and popularity, the station decided to start a half-hour evening edition of the programme starting from Republic Day, thus making it a two-session broadcast, one from 13:00 to 14:00 on 48.94 m and another from 17:30 to 18:00 on 92.74 m (later on 62.83 m). The programme for Nagas and for NEFA also got extended by half-hour from the same day to make the transmission a continuous broadcast of two and a half hours between 15:30 and 18:00. [63] In 1963, Gauhati was the second station after Srinagar to have two

broadcasts in a day for the troops. The expansion may be summarized and compared in tables as below.

GAUHATI-B SCHEDULE			TROOPS' PROGRAMME WEEKLY DURATION (in minutes)		
Time	Before R'Day '63	From R'Day '63	Station	Jun-62	Jun-63
15:30	For Nagas	For Nagas	Gauhati	420	630 ↑
16:00	For NEFA		Srinagar	210	350 ↑
16:30	Close down	For NEFA	Delhi	315	315 ↔
17:00			Jammu	90	210 ↑
17:30		Troops Programme	TOTAL	1035	1505
18:00		Close down			

*Illustration 4: Phase-I expansion of Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1963*

### Performances by Assam Regiment *Jawans*

The Assam Regiment, an infantry regiment of the Indian Army, that recruits exclusively from the north-eastern states has been one of the major military bodies functional in this region since WWII. In the programme schedule of 5 August 1963, performance by the *Jawans* of Assam Regiment was noticed in the Programme for Nagas broadcast from Gauhati-B between 15:30 and 16:30. [64] Folk songs sung by the *Jawans* were regularly included in this programme thereafter for several years as visible in the subsequent issues of Akashvani journal. After the war of 1962, the first AIR station to get commissioned in the North-East was at Kohima. The 1 kW mediumwave station broadcasting at 201.3 m started operation on 4 January 1963. [48] Initially, it had three transmissions – Morning (07:45 to 09:00), Afternoon (13:30 to 15:30) and Evening (18:00 to 21:30). The programmes mainly consisted of news bulletins in Nagamese, Assamese, Hindi, and English, programmes in tribal dialects of Ao, Angami, Sema and Lotha, and relay of VBS and National programmes of Delhi. [65] The mention of Kohima in this book might sound irrelevant for it had nothing to do with Gauhati's Troops Programme. However, the station started including musical performances by the *Jawans* of the Assam Regiment, just as Gauhati-B did, mostly in the Programme in Lotha Naga dialect and in the programme of Tribal Songs.

It could not be established if such performances by *Jawans* were ever made part of Gauhati's Troops Programme though. Nevertheless, there was full justification for doing so. On the other hand, Kohima did not have any programme for troops until 1977. A dedicated programme for the entertainment of the Armed Forces in its afternoon transmission between 14:30 and 15:00 was introduced around the Republic Day of 1977. [66]

### The First Detailed Schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme

Although Gauhati's Troops Programme started in the summer of 1962, it was not until the first week of August 1963 that the first detailed programme schedule was published in Akashvani journal. Table below summarizes different segments that constituted the programme in that primitive phase. [67] A bird-eye view on the schedule is enough to judge the popularity of the programme in those days when radio used to be the only source of film music for most homes and families. Needless to say, the variety and balanced mix of different types of music and other popular items weaved into a compact and composite programme must have made the *Jawans* stick

to their radio sets in the afternoons and in the evenings.

Table 1: First available published schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme - August 1963

AIR GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME - FIRST AVAILABLE PROGRAMME SCHEDULE (AUG' 1963)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
13:00 to 14:00	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet Bhajanawali Aaj Ki Baat Watan Ke Taraane Samachar	Apni Dharti Apna Desh: Feature Aaj Ki Baat Geet Manoranjan Samachar	Aapki Farmaish Aur Patron Ke Uttar Aaj Ki Baat Samachar	Pratigya: Feature Pradeshik Sangeet Aaj Ki Baat Filmi Bhajan Samachar	Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet Aaj Ki Baat Filmi Bhajan Samachar	Filmi Qawwalian Yugal Gaan (Duets) Aaj Ki Baat Prasaar Geet Vividha Samachar	Skit Aapki Farmaish Aur Patron Ke Uttar Aaj Ki Baat Samachar
17:30 to 18:00	Swar Sangam Lok Geet Samachar	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Samachar	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet Qawwalian Samachar	Watan Ke Taraane Yugal Geet (Duets) Samachar	Ghazlen Geet Rangeele Samachar	Filmi Naghme Samachar	Naghme Suhaane Samachar

The different segments need closer inspection. Troops Programme and patriotic songs always go hand in hand for the simple reason that a programme for troops should be capable of generating and enhancing patriotic feelings and motivation among the *Jawans* and the masses, besides providing entertainment. At the same time, overdose of patriotism in such programmes may lead to boredom, especially in the *Jawans*, who already know their duties and look for only entertainment in such programmes. However, the period of 1962-63 was such a period that every Indian was moved by the war and the overdose of patriotism on radio might not have been felt as overdose. Gauhati's Troops Programme was not behind in this overdose, if it can be called like that, and provisioned several segments of patriotic flavour, at least four times a week. The most important one among them was *Watan Ke Taraane*, the section containing patriotic songs from films. Broadcast twice a week in those days (Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings), the programme has continued till date on Monday afternoons.

The National Emergency had triggered the composition of songs on heroic and patriotic themes at AIR. Since October 1962 until December 1963, more than a thousand such songs were written in different languages and set to music at various AIR stations. In other words, since the onset of the emergency, AIR had harnessed music to enthuse listeners and generate patriotic sentiments among the civilians and the troops. Songs on patriotic themes were regularly broadcast from all stations. New songs were written by famous poets and set to music by well-known composers and musicians. The songs reflected a tremendous upsurge of national sentiments that had been aroused by the Chinese aggression and also made one realize the power and usefulness of music to generate sentiments of nationalism. Until December 1963, five programmes featuring selections of these songs, including those from the Border Areas, were broadcast in the National Programme of Music, the first in the series on 12 January 1963 at 21:30. [68] Gauhati's Troops Programme was no exception. Such private recordings of AIR were woven into at least two feature-based sections – *Apni Dharti Apna Desh* on Tuesday afternoons and *Pratigya* on Thursday afternoons.

If the patriotic songs gave courage and enthusiasm to the *Jawans*, it was devotional music that gave solace and peace to their restless minds. Thus, despite the main objective of entertaining the *Jawans*, devotional music, both film and non-film secured multiple places in the broadcast schedule. The section of devotional songs from films was entitled *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* broadcasting on Tuesday evenings. In afternoon session, *bhajans* from films used to be included on Thursdays and Fridays. The Monday afternoon schedule had *Bhajanawali*, the section of non-film devotional music. Just like patriotic genre, the devotional genre was also thus given four-

times-a-week status, indicating its anticipated significance for the *Jawans*, who might have been living in stressful and disturbed state of mind.

Now, let's talk about entertaining the *Jawans*. More specifically, making the *Jawans* laugh out loud through music and drama. Laughter came from the section *Geet Manoranjan*, which was the section of film songs in lighter vein. This Tuesday afternoon segment must have been one of those that the *Jawans* probably waited for eagerly every week. Songs picturized on the leading Bollywood comedians of that era probably had ruled this programme in those days. We shall see later in this book the songs that listeners got to listen from the early 1980s in this segment. The other item that brings laughter is skit, often referred to as *Prahasan* in Hindi in radio broadcasting. As discussed previously, the Hindi Programme on Gauhati-A had already started producing skits, sketches, and plays towards the end of the previous decade. So, allocating a slot for a weekly skit in the Troops schedule was not a problem. It used to be a special attraction of Sunday afternoons. In fact, the afternoon broadcast would begin with a skit. Sometime later, when Vividh Bharati programmes were broadcast in the form of pre-recorded tapes from Gauhati, skits from *Hawa Mahal* programme were included in this segment of the Troops Programme.

Qawwali is one genre of music that is equally entertaining as comic songs or skits. Traditional, yet modern, the qawwalis were broadcast twice a week in the programme – non-film qawwalis on Wednesday evenings in the section entitled *Qawwaliyan* and qawwalis from films on Saturday afternoons under *Filmi Qawwaliyan*. Later, this segment was renamed as '*Majlis-e-Qawwali*', to be discussed later in the book.

A programme for the Armed Forces would have been incomplete without regional music. The *Jawans* belonged to different parts of the country. Staying hundreds of miles away from their families and native places, they were likely to develop homesickness, monotony, and solitude. To give them a taste of their home, their village and their culture, segments of regional music were provisioned. One was *Pradeshik Sangeet* on Thursday afternoons and the other was *Lok Geet* on Monday evenings. Together, these two entertained the troops with regional film and regional non-film and regional folk music. It can be easily imagined how a soldier from Madras would have felt when he heard a Tamil song while roaming inside the forests of NEFA, or how a *Jawan* from Rajasthan might have jumped in joy in his bunker in Assam when a Marwari folk song started playing suddenly on his radio.

On Monday afternoons and Wednesday evenings, there was one of the most popular sections called *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, the segment of songs chosen from one film. Be it from any channel or station, this kind of programme playing all songs of a single film, used to be super popular not only in that period but at least until towards the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 1960s was not the period of tape recorders that people would purchase audio cassettes containing all songs of a film. Thus, listening to all songs of a newly released film on radio was a big treat in those days. I may not be one of those fortunate listeners who witnessed these programmes in those early days, however, I have Udai Bhanu Pande, a veteran radio listener, who himself was also associated with AIR for some time, recalling his fond memories of Gauhati's *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* segment in the Troops Programme:

*"I was only 12 years old then. We were not allowed to listen to the radio. If caught, we*

*used to get a nice beating. There weren't transistors unlike the present day but those were valve-based radio sets that would radiate heat even after switching off. My uncle used to put his palm on the top of the radio to ascertain the generated heat. Sometimes I used to secretly listen to AIR Gauhati's Troops Programme in the evenings around 17:45 on the shortwave. I still remember listening to the songs of films like 'Geet Gaya Pattharon Ne' in the 'Ek Hi Film Ke Geet' programme. As I said I was just 12 years old, so, unable to recall anything more than this."*

Then there were other segments based on different classification and categorization of songs. *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* on Friday afternoons was meant for solo songs sung by one singer. *Yugal Geet* on Thursday evenings and *Yugal Gaan* on Saturday afternoons, essentially based on love duets from films, must have kindled the feelings of love towards their beloved in the hearts of the *Jawans*, or else it must have healed the wounds of distance and separation by reminiscing about the days of their loving union.

*Swar Sangam*, meaning the confluence of voices, was, as the name suggests, a segment of choral songs from films, that were sung by one or more lead singers and accompanied by chorus. This was a speciality of the Monday evening edition. There used to be at least three sections of mixed melodies in the evening transmission in the last three days of the week – *Geet Rangeele* on Fridays, *Filmi Naghme* on Saturdays, and *Naghme Suhaane* on Sundays. While *Geet Rangeele* used to be a programme of colourful songs, *Filmi Naghme* was more inclined towards poetic genre, and *Naghme Suhaane* was a balanced mix of film and non-film songs.

Ever since music started getting recorded at AIR studios, a large number of songs and other musical items have been written, composed, and recorded over the years that gradually grew into a rich archive of recordings across all stations. Although, over the years, Hindi film songs overpowered the Hindi non-film genre, there was a period that lasted at least until the early 1970s when non-film Hindi songs of AIR used to be equally popular. There were several programmes in the broadcast schedule of Gauhati-A to accommodate these AIR recordings. Under the Troops Programme, the segment that was dedicatedly meant for such AIR internal productions was entitled *Prasaar Geet Vividha*. It was a weekly affair on Saturday afternoons. Thus, *Prasaar Geet Vividha* and *Naghme Suhaane* would offer a miscellany of AIR recordings, often referred to as *Prasaar Geet* in AIR terminology.

How could the design of a programme for troops be complete without containing a section of Forces' requests and letters! Radio is a simplex communication method meaning information can be transmitted in one direction, that is, from the radio station (transmitter) to the listeners (receiver). To make it interactive, ever since the beginning of commercial radio broadcasting, the concept of listeners writing letters to the radio stations was adopted globally. Listeners would write letters requesting for songs or other broadcast items, giving their views, feedback and queries related to programmes. Programmes of listeners' requests for songs used to be one of the most popular items in the broadcast schedule of any station globally. The most common expectation of the troops from such a programme used to be the songs of their requests that they requested through letters to the station to play along with their names and also to get replies to the questions sent by them in those letters. Stations like Delhi, Lucknow, Jullundur had *Aap Ki Farmaish* in the schedule during the early 1940s. Talking about request-based programmes for the Forces on radio, *Forces'*

*Choice and Forces' Favourites* were immensely popular on *BBC Forces Programme* during the same period. AIR Gauhati had also started a 'twice a week' programme of listeners' requests right from the first month of its inception in 1948. The Forces' programmes of Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar had provisions for listeners' requests. Specifically, Delhi's *Sainikon Ke Liye* used to have *Sab Ki Pasand* on Sunday evenings. Likewise, Gauhati's Troops Programme used to have *Aap Ki Farmaish Aur Patron Ke Uttar* on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons. Needless to say, this must have been the most attractive offering in the entire arrangement towards the entertainment of the *Jawans*. As indicative in the schedule, the duration of this programme on Wednesday could have been as long as 50 to 55 minutes, while that on Sundays for around 40 minutes. The reason for the evening edition of the programme not having any request-based section could be the fact that Vividh Bharati used to broadcast *Jayamala*, the programme of Armed Forces' song requests, in those days between 17:45 and 18:15, thus partially overlapping with Gauhati's evening programme. Thus, the collision between two request-based programmes audible in the region for the same target audience was averted.

Among several new programmes introduced by the Delhi station during and after the war of 1962, one was the daily 5-minute topical talk-based programme entitled *Aaj Ki Baat* in Hindi on Delhi-A and *Topic for Today* in English on Delhi-B, which were started from the first week of December 1962 in the evening transmission. All stations would relay either or both. Gauhati-A used to relay the English version of Delhi-B at 20:55. [69] Interestingly, *Aaj Ki Baat* was recorded by Gauhati and broadcast the next afternoon in the Troops Programme as an informative segment for the troops. The programme from Delhi got discontinued from 17 July 1966. [70] [71] However, few stations continued sourcing a similar programme locally on their convenient day(s) of the week and timing. AIR Urdu Service, Radio Kashmir Srinagar and Jammu, and AIR Gauhati were such stations. Gauhati chose to continue this segment in the Troops Programme, making it all the more relevant for the *Jawans*. One such instance where Dr. R. C. Awasthi is seen delivering a talk in the programme could be seen in a photograph published in *Akashvani* journal and the talk was broadcast in the programme of 26 December 1968. [72]

Both afternoon and evening editions of Gauhati's Troops Programme would end daily with *Samachar*, the news headlines read by the announcer.

### **The Chacha – Bhateja Duo**

The high-level outline of the newly started Gauhati's Troops Programme has been presented in the previous section. Now, let's deep dive into some striking aspects of the programme. The format of the programme that O. P. Tandon had conceptualized stayed more or less the same over the next six decades, and equally relevant at present, proving his strong vision on the subject. His matchless understanding of radio programming had successfully touched the nerves of soldiers and civilians alike. The DG's decision to send him to Gauhati was undoubtedly the best thing that could have happened to this programme. Consequently, the programme continued to grow and expand into the largest Troops Programme of the country within a decade of its start. Tandon thought that the Troops Programme should be one that could create a special place in the hearts of those countless *Jawans*, who were posted at the borders and in remote areas, thousands of miles away from their families and loved ones. It was easy to play random pieces of music or request-based songs to entertain the Forces. But Tandon's dream about this broadcast was something different. Apart from

the conventional items, Tandon wanted a segment in which the soldiers could find solace by sharing their feelings, thoughts, problems, happiness, and sorrows. His vision was to make this programme a very close companion of the *Jawans*. When the Station Director learnt about his feelings and thoughts about the programme, he jumped at the idea and instantly gave his approval for the concept he was nurturing in his mind. And this led to the formulation of the *Chacha-Bhateeja* duo. [51]

Reading out listeners' letters by one announcer while another giving their replies was not a new thing at that time. All stations had similar programmes in place and so did Gauhati. *Chithir Baabe Dhanyabaad* that translates to *Thanks for your Letters* on Gauhati-A was already a popular programme of the station for many years. Letters of listeners from the Forces used to get replied in Delhi's *Sainikon Ke Liye* as well. However, the point worth mentioning about Gauhati's Troops Programme was the way the letters were read out and answered. And that is the reason for writing this section on a separate note. In the sections *Aapki Farmaish Aur Patron Ke Uttar* and later in *Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patra*, Tandon would appear over the microphone as *Chacha* (Uncle) while Manjula Shah introduced herself as *Bhateeja* (Nephew). Note that she didn't use *Bhateeji*, thus keeping it gender neutral. Manjula Shah as *Bhateeja* would read out the letters containing the experiences and memories of joys, sorrows, woes, questions, queries, reviews, and feedback sent by the *Jawans* while O. P. Tandon as *Chacha* gave their replies just like an elderly and concerned uncle (head) of the family, with a very personal touch. [51] The 'Father' of the programme had now taken the role of 'Uncle'. This concept of replying to listeners' letters in a novel and unusual manner was a new experiment that the listeners fully enjoyed. Needless to say, this mere ten minute segment turned out to be the most popular segment of the entire week.

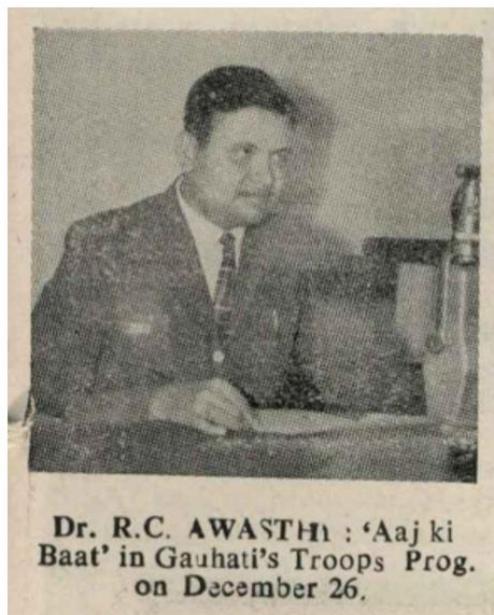


Photo 2: Dr. R. C. Awasthi presenting *Aaj Ki Baat* and Manjula Shah replying to Troops' Letters (Source: *Akashvani journal, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B*)

### ***Fauji Diary***

The popularity of the Troops Programme was rapidly gaining momentum with each passing day. When the programme completed one year, it had already become one of the most popular broadcasts of the station. This motivated the team to introduce new segments and modify the existing ones. A talk-based column entitled *Fauji Diary* was started to provide various kinds of information to and about the Armed Forces. Government messages and local/regional information useful for the troops were included. Advertisements for recruitment in the Armed Forces were made part of this section just like they did in *Fauji Baaten* section in AIR Delhi's programme for the Forces. *Fauji Diary* used to get aired on Wednesday afternoons with a repeat broadcast on Saturday evenings. This section continued at least until the mid-1970s after which it was discontinued. [29]

### ***Punjabi Geet***

When a dedicated weekly section for regional songs was already in place in the form of *Pradeshik Sangeet*, a new addition of *Punjabi Geet* thrice a week was something surprising and unusual. Moreover, it was not a station of northern India. Having a separate section for Assamese songs or songs in north-eastern dialects could be understood, but such prominence given to Punjabi music was interesting. There must have been solid reason for this decision. Punjabi songs being rhythmic, peppy, and unifying go well with the soldiers; many film songs on the subject revealed this fact over the years. Secondly, Punjab has been the state that produced the highest number of servicemen per capita. Although Uttar Pradesh has produced the highest count of servicemen to be followed by Punjab at second place, Punjab certainly topped the list in terms of servicemen versus total population of the state. [73] Thirdly, O. P. Tandon himself being a Punjabi must have been well aware of the first two facts, which might have led him to set up a separate section for Punjabi songs to entertain the troops irrespective of them being Punjabi or otherwise. Punjabi songs went on air on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays in the afternoon. However, this didn't run for long for unknown reasons. In 1964, the segment of Punjabi songs was replaced by more instances of *Pradeshik Sangeet*, thus giving all languages the same status and priority. [74]

### ***Janani Teri Jay Ho***

Even after one year of the war of 1962, the strong current of nationalism and patriotism continued to flow across the length and breadth of the nation. On radio, not only Gauhati but all stations of AIR were continuously broadcasting programmes of patriotic content throughout 1963 and even after. Thus, despite having at least three segments of patriotic genre in Gauhati's Troops Programme, viz., *Watan Ke Taraane*, *Desh Jaag Utha* and *Hamari Pratigya*, a fourth segment entitled *Janani Teri Jay Ho* was started that used to have non-film patriotic songs recorded at AIR. Broadcasting initially on Friday afternoons, it was soon moved to Thursday evenings replacing the evening instance of *Watan Ke Taraane*. Since then, *Watan Ke Taraane* became a weekly segment of Monday afternoons, which is still the case in 2023.

Interestingly, for the special broadcasts of the Republic Day of 1959, an hour-long musical feature with the same title *Janani Teri Jay Ho* was created by O. N. Srivastava based on *Prasaar Geet* produced by the Light Music Units of AIR. This was broadcast on 26 January 1959 at 12:00 from

Delhi-A. [75] It could not be, however, established if this feature was shared with other stations and if Gauhati's segment with the same title had anything to do with it.

### ***Ek Hi Film Ke Geet***

There were weekly two occurrences of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* until towards the end of 1963. The attractiveness of this programme encouraged the listeners to send in their choice of films to be included under this segment. Thus, *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* of Friday afternoons was temporarily discontinued, and replaced with a request based *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, its third instance in a week, which played songs from one film selected by the troops. [76]

It could not be established until when the request-based 'third instance' of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was in place. However, a strange thing was noticed in the broadcast schedule for this segment during mid-1964. This highly popular segment that expanded from two to three instances a week with the third one being request-based, had totally vanished from the programme schedule. The Monday's instance had already been replaced by *Geet Mala* (to be discussed shortly in the book); the Wednesday's instance was replaced by *Geet Rangeele* and the Friday's instance by *Filmi Naghme*. No other section apart from *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was disturbed or discontinued. This creates a suspicion if the halting of the section that played all songs of a film was due to any legal aspect with the music companies and/or film producers, who might have not wanted all songs of a newly released film or otherwise be played together. Alternately, AIR could have also terminated the concept considering it to be free promotion for the new films. Interestingly, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* reappeared in the schedule later, however, the year of reintroduction could not be established.

### **Patriotic Poetry, Spiritual Talks and more!**

The month of November 1963 saw the beginning of at least three new sections that were non-musical. *Janvaani* was essentially the section of poetry recitations dipped in patriotic flavour. This was given place in the schedule of Friday evenings pushing out *Geet Rangeele* to Saturday afternoons, and thus squeezing its other segments. On Tuesday evenings, *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* was followed by a talk on spiritual topics entitled *Aatma-Chintan*. And the third was a series of talks entitled *Aman Ke Dushman* on Thursday evenings, whose content can be well understood from the title. However, all these were short-lived and called off during early next year. [77]

### **Renaming Yugal Gaan to Preet Ladee**

The segment *Yugal Gaan/ Yugal Geet* that played duets from films needed a catchy name like other segments. The title *Preet Ladee* might have indicated two meanings. In Hindi, "ladee" (लड़ी) has at least two meanings. One is string or a chain or a bunch that has multiple attachments or links/ linkages. Thus, *Preet Ladee* would mean a chain of love songs, somewhat like *Geet Mala*. The other meaning of "ladee" is ament or catkins, that is a flowering spike of trees such as willow, which are typically downy, pendulous, and composed of flowers. This again hinted towards a bunch of songs dipped in love. The choice of this name for the segment of love duets was beautiful

indeed! The name was in place in 1963 itself. [78] In those days, many stations aired programme of duets from Hindi films. However, none had titled their programme so beautifully. Almost all used ordinary titles such as *Dogaane* (Jammu, Nagpur), *Yugal Gaan* (Delhi-B, Ranchi), *Yugal Geet* (Indore-Bhopal-Raipur) and so on.

### ***Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish – The Novel Idea***

The first week of 1964 witnessed the launch of a new daily section entitled *Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish*. [79] Although the concept of *Geeton Bhari Kahani* had already been formulated and was in place on Delhi's *Sainikon Ke Liye* and on the General Hindi Overseas Service of ESD, Gauhati's version of the concept was entirely different. This daily segment consisted of a story narration followed by one song of request from the troops that matched the theme of the story. Storytellers used to come from outside and would record their stories for *Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish* just like they did for talks for the Hindi Programme of Gauhati-A. The stories were broadcast, one story per day or in parts depending on the length, and with each story, one song was played. The double attraction of listening to a story and a song of request made the segment immensely popular among the listeners. Nevertheless, to screen the letters of the troops in order to find a suitable song matching the story was both challenging and satisfying for the presenters. The programme being a special audience programme, the troops listeners were allowed to send in their stories as well.

The broadcast would begin every afternoon with *Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish* and other sections would follow. Sometime during mid-1965, the format of this section was modified, and the title got changed to *Ek Kahani Ek Geet* implying that the song included in this section was no longer based on listeners' requests. Storytellers continued to appear at the station for this section while the announcer's responsibility was to identify a suitable song. [29] This continued until the mid-1970s after which this segment was replaced with the daily segment *Aaj Ka Geet*.

### ***Geet Mala – New Provision for requesting Old Songs***

The summer of 1964 marked the completion of two years of Gauhati's Troops Programme. Popularity of the programme was continuously rising as was visible in the increasing trend of song requests. The two instances of *Aap Ki Farmaish* were not adequate to clear off the backlog of song requests. Hence, a third instance of a request-based segment was planned sometime between April and August. [74] Instead of extending *Aap Ki Farmaish* to one more day, a new section entitled *Geet Mala* was launched and it differed from the former in that it played only older songs. This was again a new idea as there was no programme that specifically played old songs on listeners' requests. *Geet Mala* replaced *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* and *Bhajanawali* on Monday afternoons. This was the end of *Bhajanawali*, the non-film devotional music segment in this programme while *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, the film devotional music, continued. *Geet Mala* drew its title from the highly popular countdown show of Radio Ceylon presented by Ameen Sayani by the same name. Instead of using the title of such an enormously popular show of another station, Gauhati could have offered it a more meaningful title such as *Geet Ateet* or *Purani Pasand*, which would have better complemented the content. More details of Gauhati's *Geet Mala* have been presented in a latter chapter in this book.

## 1963 versus 1964

The broadcast schedule of Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* at the end of the year 1963 looked like as shown in table below. [80]

Table 2: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during last week of Dec'1963

AIR GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME - PROGRAMME SCHEDULE (LAST WEEK OF DEC' 1963)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
13:00 to 14:00	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet Bhajanawali Aaj Ki Baat Watan Ke Taraane	Desh Jaag Utha: Feature Aaj Ki Baat Geet Manoranjan Punjabi Geet	Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Fauji Diary	Pradeshik Sangeet Aaj Ki Baat Swar Sangam Punjabi Geet	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet (Request) Aaj Ki Baat Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patron Ke Uttar	Filmi Qawwaliyan Preet Ladi Aaj Ki Baat Geet Rangeele Punjabi Geet	Skit Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat
17:30 to 18:00	Swar Sangam Lok Geet Hamari Pratigya: Feature	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Atmachintan: Talk	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet Ghazal Aur Qawwaliyan	Janani Teri Jay Ho Aman Ke Dushman: Talk Preet Ladi	Prasaar Geet Vividha Janvaani: Poetry Recitations	Filmi Naghmen Fauji Diary	Naghmen Suhaane

With a number of additions, deletions, and modifications of segments, the programme was continuously evolving ever since its inception. The overall schedule as it appeared during the last week of December 1964 is as tabulated below. [81]

Table 3: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during last week of Dec'1964

AIR GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME - PROGRAMME SCHEDULE (DEC' 1964)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
13:00 to 14:00	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Geet Mala Aaj Ki Baat Watan Ke Taraane Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Fauji Diary Geet Manoranjan Aaj Ki Baat Desh Jaag Utha Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Feature Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Filmi Naghmen Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patra Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Filmi Qawwaliyan Aaj Ki Baat Geet Rangeele Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish Skit Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Samachar
17:30 to 18:00	Swar Sangam Ghazlen Aur Qawwaliyan	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Geet Rangeele Pradeshik Sangeet	Preet Ladi Janani Teri Jay Ho	Prasaar Geet Vividha	Filmi Naghmen	Naghmen Suhaane

From above, one can easily establish that the programme had evolved into a more matured and better structured show with more focus on lighter forms of entertainment. With the removal of *Bhajanawali*, *Hamari Pratigya*, *Punjabi Geet*, *Aatma Chintan*, and *Janvaani*, space was created for more popular and new segments such as *Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish*, *Geet Mala* and increase in duration of *Geet Rangeele*, *Filmi Naghme*, *Pradeshik Sangeet*. Barring the setback due to the discontinuation of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, the growth of the programme from June 1962 to December 1964 had been unprecedented.

## 5. The Second Expansion

Entertainment of the Armed Forces of India through radio had gained momentum with the war of 1962. Not only did AIR Gauhati start its daily hour-long Troops Programme and quickly got it expanded to 90 minutes a day, the corresponding programmes from Jammu and Srinagar also got expanded by as high as 133% and 67% respectively after the war of 1962. However, a much wider and a more aggressive expansion was witnessed with the war of 1965. Vividh Bharati's *Jayamala* was expanded from a daily half-hour show to more than five hours a day segregated into several instances spread all over the day. Additionally, the famous *Vishesh Jayamala* was launched. At least three AIR stations, viz., Rajkot, Imphal and Jullundur, started daily programme for the troops. The combined duration of programme for the Forces from Jammu and Srinagar got further increased by 50%. The 45-minute *Sainikon Ke Liye* of Delhi-B was made a 105-minute coordinated show from Delhi-B and Delhi-D. All these changes took place during 1965-66. In 1967, Lucknow and Simla stations also started their Forces' programmes. (Refer Appendix-II for more details.) Thus, the war of 1965 was instrumental in a massive expansion of programmes for the Armed Forces on AIR network. In this chapter, expansions and developments in Gauhati's Troops Programme taking place right after the 1965 War have been discussed.

### **Gauhati's Expansion post-1965 War**

Ever since independence, the conflict over Kashmir had been the predominant issue between India and Pakistan. The other notable dispute was over the Rann of Kutch, a barren region in Gujarat. In as early as 1956, an attempt by Pakistan to gain control of the disputed region was defeated by the Indian Forces. [82] However, during January 1965, tension between the two countries started rising again with an increase in the intensity of Pakistani patrol patrolling in territory controlled by India. Unpleasant encounters between the patrols of Indian and Pakistan police were on the rise and the relations between the two countries kept on souring. [83] In June 1965, upon British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's persuasion to both countries, there was a temporary end to the hostilities. However, highly motivated by its success in the Rann of Kutch, Pakistan developed a misunderstanding that India would be unable to defend itself against a quick military attack just like the war with China. In August, Pakistan planned Operation Gibraltar (the name chosen to draw a parallel to the Muslim conquest of Portugal and Spain that was launched from the port of Gibraltar), which was basically a military operation planned and executed by the Pakistani Army in the Indian administered state of Jammu and Kashmir to cross the Line of Control (LoC) and instigate Muslim-majority Kashmiri population into an uprising against Indian rule. [84] [85] On 5 August, between 26,000 and 33,000 Pakistani soldiers crossed the LoC dressed as Kashmiri locals headed for various areas within Kashmir. Indian Forces, tipped off by the local populace, crossed the cease fire line on 15 August when the country was celebrating its 19<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. The second Indo-Pak War had thus begun. [86]

As already stated, the war of 1965 was instrumental in the launch of several new programmes for the Armed Forces on radio and also in the expansion of the existing ones. A major change was introduced in the programme schedule of Gauhati on the same day, that is, 15 August 1965. Until

then, the only VBS programme that was carried by Gauhati was *Manoranjan* on Gauhati-A on weekdays between 14:00 and 15:00. With the idea of broadcasting more VBS programmes from Gauhati, which was not possible on Gauhati-A for it being the local primary channel in a non-Hindi belt, a plan was chalked out to make use of Gauhati-B for this purpose. Consequently, *Manoranjan* was not only shifted from Gauhati-A to Gauhati-B, but additional broadcast duration was set up for VBS programmes, along with an expansion of the Troops Programme. This is summarized as shown in table below. The new additions are highlighted in yellow while the Troops Programme is brought out in green. [87] [88]

Table 4: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati-B before and after 15 August 1965

BROADCAST SCHEDULE OF GAUHATI-B						
Time	UNTIL 14-AUG 1965			FROM 15-AUG 1965		
	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength
7:00	Tibetan Programme		62.83 m	Tibetan Programme		62.83 m
7:45	Close down	Music Lessons (Gauhati-A)	62.83 m	Close down	Music Lessons (Gauhati-A)	62.83 m
8:00		Nepalese Programme	62.83 m		Nepalese Programme	62.83 m
8:30		Close down	62.83 m		Close down	62.83 m
9:00	Programme for Nagas		48.94 m	Programme for Nagas		48.94 m
10:00	Close down	For Tea Garder Labourers	48.94 m	Close down	For Tea Garder Labourers	48.94 m
11:00		Close down	48.94 m		Close down	48.94 m
10:15					Vividh Bharati	50.25 m
11:00					Vividh Bharati	50.25 m
12:30				Troops Programme		48.94 m
13:00	Troops Programme		48.94 m	Troops Programme		48.94 m
14:00	Close down		48.94 m	Vividh Bharati		48.94 m
15:00				Close down		48.94 m
15:30	Programme for Nagas		50.25 m	Programme for Nagas		50.25 m
16:30	Close down		50.25 m	Close down		50.25 m
16:00	Programme for NEFA		62.83 m	Programme for NEFA		62.83 m
16:45	News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA		62.83 m	News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA		62.83 m
17:00	Programme for Mikirs		62.83 m	Programme for Mikirs		62.83 m
17:15	Programme for Dimasas		62.83 m	Programme for Dimasas		62.83 m
17:30	Troops Programme		62.83 m	Troops Programme		62.83 m
18:00	Close down		62.83 m	Close down		62.83 m
18:15	Programme for Garos		92.74 m	Programme for Garos		92.74 m
19:00	Programme for Khasis/ Jaintias		92.74 m	Programme for Khasis/ Jaintias		92.74 m
19:45	Thadou Programme		92.74 m	Thadou Programme		92.74 m
20:00	Tankhul Programme		92.74 m	Tankhul Programme		92.74 m
20:15	Programme for Lushais		92.74 m	Programme for Lushais		92.74 m
21:00	Close down		92.74 m	News in English		92.74 m
21:15				Focus (Delhi-B)		92.74 m
21:30				Close down		92.74 m

The new schedule meant non-stop light entertainment in Hindi between 11:00 and 15:00 on a daily basis. This 4-hour broadcast (additional 45 minutes on Sundays), mainly comprising Hindi film music, came as an unbelievable gift for the listeners. Nevertheless, it meant the Troops Programme was subjected to an unsaid comparison with VBS since its broadcast was sandwiched between two VBS transmissions. With an additional half-hour getting added to the Troops Programme between 12:30 and 13:00, the presenters made all possible efforts to make it all the more entertaining. *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* had expanded into a complete two-hour programme, the 90-minute afternoon edition and the 30-minute evening edition.

## Four New Programme Segments

Upon the discontinuation of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* in 1964, *Filmi Naghme* and *Geet Rangeele* were made twice-a-week affair to fill up the gap. The absence of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was badly felt for it used to be a very popular segment on every station that had such a programme. When this segment could not be reintroduced in Gauhati's Troops Programme any sooner, it was decided to launch two new segments to compensate the loss. Thus, was started weekly segments *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* and *Sangeet Madhuri* during the first half of 1965. *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* was the segment of songs related to life and philosophy. Motivational and inspirational songs and songs that brought out the eternal truths of human life formed the basis of this segment. If devotional songs brought peace to the minds of the *Jawans*, philosophical songs must have helped them to clear their doubts about life and take correct decisions related to their duties and responsibilities. Looking at the list of films released in 1964-65, few songs from that year perfectly suited for this segment were 'raahi tu ruk mat jaana' (*Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein*), 'raahi manwa dukh ki chinta kyun sataati hai' (*Dosti*), 'wahaan kaun hai tera' (*Guide*), 'is duniya mein jeena ho to sun lo meri baat' (*Gumnaam*), among others. Placed in the schedule of Friday afternoon, this new segment replaced one instance of *Filmi Naghme*.

The other new segment, *Sangeet Madhuri*, was of film songs based on Indian Classical Music. That was the period when every other film used to have a song based on a classical *raaga*. There was thus no dearth of songs for this segment. Songs of this segment have been discussed in detail in a latter chapter in this book. Though this qualitatively rich segment was a highly welcome move, nevertheless, it led to the discontinuation of *Prasaar Geet Vividha*, which it replaced in the schedule of Friday evenings. The declining popularity of Hindi non-film songs could be attributed to the enormous popularity of Hindi film music. Although non-film ghazals remained popular to certain extent, if compared with *adhunik geet* of the eastern region or *bhaav geet* of Maharashtra, Hindi non-film songs were fast declining. Unsure about the accurate reason why AIR went into a low profile when it came to recording and expanding its archive of Hindi non-film songs, what had transpired was that such *Prasaar Geet* soon became a thing of the past. Most of such programmes were replaced with film music ones. In Gauhati's Troops Programme, Sunday's *Naghme Suhaane* was the only weekly segment that continued to feed few non-film songs every week. Sometime later, that too was removed. The name of the segment was changed from *Naghme Suhaane* to *Sabrang*. Non-film songs had completely withdrawn from the Troops Programme. Only non-film ghazals continued.

Two more changes were introduced during early 1965. The skit of Sunday afternoons was moved to Thursday afternoons; and *Ek Kahani Ek Farmaish* was converted to *Ek Kahani Ek Geet* detaching the listeners' request-based song from this section as also mentioned in previous chapter. All changes introduced during the first half of 1965 may be summarized in Table as shown below. The changes are highlighted in red. Note that the afternoon edition was still between 13:00 and 14:00. [89] [90]

Table 5: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during H1-1965

AIR GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME - PROGRAMME SCHEDULE (H1-1965)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
13:00 to 14:00	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Geet Mala Aaj Ki Baat Watan Ke Taraane Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Fauji Diary Geet Manoranjan Aaj Ki Baat Desh Jaag Utha Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Feature Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Filmi Naghme Hai Zindagi Pukarti Skit Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patra Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Filmi Qawwalyan Aaj Ki Baat Geet Rangeele Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Skit Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Samachar
17:30 to 18:00	Swar Sangam Ghazlen Aur Qawwalyan	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Geet Rangeele Pradeshik Sangeet	Preet Ladi Janani Teri Jay Ho	Prasaar-Geet-Vividha Sangeet Madhuri	Filmi Naghme	Naghme Suhaane

After the expansion of the afternoon edition by 30 minutes from the Independence Day of 1965, two new segments were added to the programming variety. One was *Anbole Geet* on Thursday afternoons, probably consisting of unsung or lesser-heard songs. Roughly in line with *Bhoole Bisre Geet* type of programmes on various stations, *Anbole Geet* was indeed an attempt of showcasing those songs that didn't get the recognition they deserved despite being qualitatively rich. The title reminds us of the song penned by eminent poet Ravi Mohan Awasthi – '*bol uthe anbole geet, jab se mile tum paawan meet...*', which was included in his collection of songs entitled *Vividha*.

The war of 1965 gave another thrust to the national sentiments, which were already active since the war of 1962. The Troops Programme introduced yet another patriotic songs-based offering on Saturday afternoons entitled *Ye Hamari Zameen, Ye Hamara Watan*. The final programme structure of during the last week of September 1965 is tabulated below. [91] [92] Visibly clear that the number of segments has been continuously growing making the programme all the more interesting and entertaining for the troops.

Table 6: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during H2-1965

AIR GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME - PROGRAMME SCHEDULE (H2-1965)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
12:30 to 14:00	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Geet Mala Aaj Ki Baat Watan Ke Taraane Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Fauji Diary Geet Manoranjan Aaj Ki Baat Desh Jaag Utha Preet Ladi Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet <b>Anbole Geet</b> Skit Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Hai Zindagi Pukarti Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patra Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet <b>Ye Hamari Zameen,</b> <b>Ye Hamara Watan</b> Filmi Qawwalyan Aaj Ki Baat Geet Rangeele Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar	Ek Kahani Ek Geet Aapki Farmaish Aaj Ki Baat Pradeshik Sangeet Samachar
17:30 to 18:00	Swar Sangam Ghazlen Aur Qawwalyan	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Geet Rangeele	Preet Ladi Janani Teri Jay Ho	Sangeet Madhuri	Filmi Naghme	Naghme Suhaane

## New Mediumwave for Gauhati-B

The Third Five Year Plan (1 April 1961 – 31 March 1966) was the most ambitious plan till then with an allocation of 14 crore rupees. At the end of the Plan, AIR's mediumwave service covered 70% of India's population and 52% of its area, which was a considerable improvement over the previous Plan. [43] Until the war of 1965, the Gauhati station had been broadcasting from one mediumwave and two shortwave transmitters with Gauhati-A on both transmission modes and

Gauhati-B only over shortwave. After the war, towards the end of the year, a new 10 kW mediumwave transmitter was allotted to Gauhati, thus making Gauhati-B available on both medium and short waves. The new mediumwave was chosen for transmission on a wavelength of 291.26 m corresponding to a frequency of 1030 kHz. The arrival of this additional transmitter was complemented by an increased duration of the channel's transmission. However, the duration of the Troops Programme remained unchanged, which had already undergone an expansion by 30 minutes a few months ago. The timing of the afternoon broadcast of the programme was changed though. The programme which was earlier between 12:30 and 14:00 was changed to between 13:00 and 14:30. The station also started relaying the news bulletin in Hindi between 13:40 and 13:50, thus reducing the actual time of the programme by 10 minutes. The evening edition continued to be radiated between 17:30 and 18:00. [93] It is worth mentioning that the new mediumwave operated only between 10:55 and 15:30 for the Troops Programme and various Vividh Bharati programmes. At all other times, the broadcasts of Gauhati-B were available only over shortwave as those were not meant for the local listeners in and around Gauhati but for the remote tribal communities of the North-East. The change in broadcast schedule of Gauhati-B is tabulated below. Note that the early morning transmissions of Gauhati-B are not shown in the table.

*Table 7: Changes in schedule of Gauhati-B with new Mediumwave as on 1 Jan'1966*

<b>CHANGES IN BROADCAST SCHEDULE OF GAUHATI-B</b>						
Time	As on 1 September 1965			As on 1 January 1966		
	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength
10:15		Vividh Bharati	50.25 m	News in English at 10:55		291.26 m, 60.73 m
11:00	Vividh Bharati		50.25 m	Vividh Bharati		291.26 m, 60.73 m
12:00	Vividh Bharati		50.25 m	Close down	Vividh Bharati	291.26 m, 60.73 m
12:30	Close down		50.25 m		Close down	291.26 m, 60.73 m
12:30						
13:00	Troops Programme		48.94 m	Troops Programme		291.26 m, 48.94 m
13:40				News in Hindi		291.26 m, 48.94 m
13:50				Troops Programme (contd.)		291.26 m, 48.94 m
14:00	Vividh Bharati		48.94 m	Vividh Bharati		291.26 m, 48.94 m
14:30	Vividh Bharati		48.94 m	Vividh Bharati		291.26 m, 48.94 m
15:00	Close down		48.94 m	Vividh Bharati		291.26 m, 48.94 m
15:30				Close down		291.26 m, 48.94 m
15:30	Programme for Nagas		50.25 m	News in English Programme for Nagas at 15:35		50.25 m
16:30	Close down		50.25 m	Close down at 16:35		50.25 m
16:00	Programme for NEFA		62.83 m	Programme for NEFA		62.83 m
16:45	News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA		62.83 m	News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA		62.83 m
17:00	Programme for Mikirs		62.83 m	Programme for Mikirs		62.83 m
17:15	Programme for Dimasas		62.83 m	Programme for Dimasas		62.83 m
17:30	Troops Programme		62.83 m	Troops Programme		291.26 m, 62.83 m
18:00	Close down		62.83 m	News in English & Hindi, followed by Interlude		291.26 m
18:15	Programme for Garos		92.74 m	Programme for Garos		291.26 m, 92.74 m
19:00	Programme for Khasis/ Jaintias		92.74 m	Programme for Khasis/ Jaintias		291.26 m, 92.74 m
19:45	Thadou Programme		92.74 m	Thadou Programme		92.74 m
20:00	Tankhul Programme		92.74 m	Tankhul Programme		92.74 m
20:15	Programme for Lushais		92.74 m	Programme for Lushais		92.74 m
21:00	News in English		92.74 m	News in English		92.74 m
21:15	Focus (Delhi-B)		92.74 m	Focus (Delhi-B)		92.74 m
21:30	Close down		92.74 m	Close down		92.74 m

The new mediumwave of Gauhati-B received a hearty welcome from the local urban listeners as they could now listen to Hindi film music-based programmes for several hours (11:00 to 15:30) with good audio clarity and did no longer have to deal with the shortcomings of shortwave. For

the troops that were in the remote frontier areas could listen to the Troops Programme on shortwave as they have been doing, while troops serving in their units located in and around Gauhati could listen to the programme on mediumwave with full clarity and stability. This must have increased the listenership of the Troops Programme in metropolitan Gauhati. The launch of Gauhati's Troops Programme and Vividh Bharati's afternoon broadcasts on the mediumwave was a significant milestone in the broadcasting history of AIR Gauhati. Gauhati-B still operates over traditional mediumwave and have so far been able to successfully resist the threats of conversion to FM technology, thus retaining the nostalgia.

### Launch of Gauhati-C

With two mediumwave and two shortwave transmitters, the two channels of AIR Gauhati (A and B) had each been transmitting on both the transmission technologies. However, starting 8 May 1966, coincidentally marking the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary week of Gauhati-B, it was decided to split Gauhati-B into two channels with Gauhati-B transmitting only over mediumwave and Gauhati-C only over shortwave, while Gauhati-A available over both. Although initially there was no change in the broadcast schedule and the change was reflected only in nomenclature, the demarcation into three channels had significance in the sense that Gauhati was the only station after Delhi to have an officially designated third channel (Channel-C) if the local Vividh Bharati centres were excluded from the list. The split of Gauhati-B into two channels is depicted in table shown below. [94]

Table 8: The split of Gauhati-B into Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C in May 1966

SPLIT OF SCHEDULE BETWEEN GAUHATI-B & GAUHATI-C								
Time	Till April 1966			From May 1966				
	GAUHATI-B (MW & SW)			GAUHATI-B (MW only)		GAUHATI-C (SW only)		
	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength	All days	Wavelength	Weekdays	Sundays	Wavelength
6:45	Tibetan Programme					Tibetan Programme		
7:30	Vividh Bharati   Nepalese Prog.					Vividh Bharati   Nepalese Prog.		
8:00	Programme for Nagaland					Programme for Nagaland		
9:00	Close down					Close down		
9:15	Mizo Programme					Mizo Programme		
10:00	Close down					Close down		
10:50	News in Hindi & English			News in Hindi & English		as in Gauhati-B		
11:00	Vividh Bharati			Vividh Bharati		as in Gauhati-B		
12:30	Close down			Close down		Close down		
13:00	Troops Programme (with News in Hindi at 13:40)			Troops Programme (with News in Hindi at 13:40)		as in Gauhati-B		
14:30	Vividh Bharati			Vividh Bharati		as in Gauhati-B		
15:30	News in English			News in English		as in Gauhati-B		
15:35	Close down			Close down		Close down		
16:00	Programme for Nagas					Programme for Nagas		
17:00	Programme for Mikirs					Programme for Mikirs		
17:15	Programme for Dimasas					Programme for Dimasas		
17:30	Troops Programme			Troops Programme		as in Gauhati-B		
18:00	News in English/Hindi, Interlude			News in English/Hindi, Interlude		Close down		
18:15	Programme for Garos			as in Gauhati-C		Programme for Garos		
19:00	Programme for Khasis			Close down		Programme for Khasis		
19:30	Programme for Jaintias					Programme for Jaintias		
19:45	Thadou Programme					Thadou Programme		
20:00	Tankhul Programme					Tankhul Programme		
20:15	Mizo Programme					Mizo Programme		
21:00	News in English, Focus (Delhi-B)					News in English, Focus (Delhi-B)		
21:30	Surmadhuri					Surmadhuri		
22:00	Close down					Close down		

As observed, there was no impact of the split on the Troops Programme except for the fact that it was identified as a programme of Gauhati-B that was also carried over Gauhati-C wavelength. Also visible is the change in shortwave frequencies, especially the evening edition of the Troops Programme that was earlier available on 62.83 m was changed to 48.74 m. However, this change, if it really took place and not a printing error in Akashvani journal, was not long-lasting. The early evening broadcast between 16:00 and 18:00 was again reverted to 62.83 m.

## Imphal's Troops Programme

Ever since the start of Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1962, it has been the only such programme from any AIR station in the eastern and north-eastern region. The Republic Day of 1966 witnessed the launch of the second such programme from a station in the region when AIR Imphal started its own Troops Programme. During its 29 months journey from the Independence Day of 1963 to the Republic Day of 1966, there has not been any expansion at the Imphal station except for an extra hour added to its evening transmission in 1964. 26 January 1966 was a memorable day in the history of the station when the then and the first Chief Minister of Manipur, Mairembam Koireng Singh inaugurated the Troops Programme from the station at 15:30. In his inaugural message, Koireng dedicated the programme to the Armed Forces stationed in the region. [95] The daily half-hour programme between 15:30 and 16:00 entertained the *Jawans* mainly with film music-based items, with each day of the week having a different theme in terms of genre and category as tabulated below. [96] [97]

Table 9: Weekly schedule of AIR Imphal's Troops Programme at its inception in 1966

TROOPS PROGRAMME OF IMPHAL AT INCEPTION IN 1966			
Day	Programmes	Description	Gauhati's Equivalent Segment
SUN	Rimjhim	Compered programme of film songs	Swar Chhaya
MON	Vividh Sangeet	Mixed melodies	Geet Rangeele, Filmi Naghme
	Sargam	Dance hits from films	
TUE	Bhakti Sangeet	Devotional music	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan
	Navgaan	Non-film songs from AIR recordings	Naghme Suhaane, Prasaar Geet Vividha
WED	Jaya Dhvani	Choice of patriotic songs	Watan Ke Taraane
	Geet Lehri	Film songs	Geet Rangeele, Filmi Naghme
THU	Ek Film Ke Geet	Songs from one film	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet
FRI	Aap Ki Pasand	Songs on requests from Jawans	Aap Ki Farmaish, Geet Mala
SAT	Aap Ki Pasand	Songs on requests from Jawans	Aap Ki Farmaish, Geet Mala

Before the start of the Troops Programme, the afternoon transmission of Imphal used to be between 13:00 and 14:00 and the evening transmission between 16:00 and 21:30. Despite a much shorter afternoon transmission that had better possibilities for a half-hour expansion for the new Troops Programme, it was decided to attach that extra half-hour to the beginning of the evening transmission, thus making it a 15:30 – 21:30 session. This decision could probably have been taken so as not to overlap and compete with Gauhati's already existing and highly popular programme of the same kind, which was being broadcast between 13:00 and 14:30. Since Gauhati's programme was audible in Manipur over the shortwave, there was no fun in letting the *Jawans* get divided between the two. Moreover, Gauhati's evening edition of the programme was at 17:30.

Thus, from all angles, the 15:30 slot was an optimum time for placing a new Troops Programme in the North-East.

Among the presenters of Imphal's Troops Programme, S. N. Chand Singh was a very popular name, who was also a gifted light music artist. Although he used to play the role of an announcer in the Troops' Programme, his singing expertise used to be showcased in programmes of modern songs (*Adhunik Geet*) and devotional music. [98] Being a 1 kW mediumwave station in those days, Imphal's coverage was limited to only in and around the city, thus, making it practically unsuitable for a Troops Programme that needed remote coverage along the frontier areas. In other words, Gauhati's Troops Programme continued to lead in the region. Looking at Imphal's weekly schedule, except for *Sargam*, the segment of dance hits from films, all other segments were replicas of Gauhati's programme, thus not adding any special or exclusive value.

## 6. The Relays

When Station-A receives broadcasts of Station-B through a satellite link, a microwave link or a cable link, and re-broadcasts it in real time to its local radio coverage area over frequencies that listeners can receive on their radio sets, the process is called a 'relay'. The first inter-station relays in AIR began between Delhi and Bombay on 18 January 1939. [46] Since then, the technique has been utilized on massive scale in AIR network, which has proved immensely useful in a big country like India. In AIR network, relays have been majorly in two areas – (1) regional stations relaying national programmes, sports commentaries, and programmes from NSD; (2) one local station relaying important programmes of another (larger) station within the state. However, when it came to relaying Gauhati's Troops Programme, the set-up was exceptional. In the history of this programme, four stations have relayed it and two of these stations belonged to different states. This chapter details out some interesting aspects related to the relaying of Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* by different stations.

### **Siliguri**

As mentioned earlier, the year 1963 witnessed several broadcasting developments in the north-eastern region after the Sino Indian War. The coverage of Gauhati-A mediumwave was augmented through a new 20 kW auxiliary transmitter that began operation on 6 February 1963. After Kohima (4 January 1963), it was Siliguri that got a new radio station on 7 July 1963. When most mediumwave stations were either 1 kW or 10 kW, Siliguri got a 20-kW transmitter. [48] Broadcasting on 192.3 m, it could cover a considerable area in the 'chicken neck' part of India, especially during evening hours.

At its inception, Siliguri mostly relayed broadcasts of Calcutta and Delhi stations except for the weekly programme entitled *Calling All Children* at 12:15 on Sundays and the daily recorded music-based programme at 20:00, which originated from Siliguri. Interestingly, Siliguri also relayed Gauhati's evening edition of Troops Programme between 17:30 and 18:00, and this was the only programme of Gauhati that it relayed. Although it might appear strange for a station of West Bengal relaying a programme originating from a station located in Assam, the decision was carefully and strategically taken. Siliguri had great strategic importance due to its proximity with several international fronts – China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan). It also connected the North-East with mainland India. Thus, being strategically significant and in wake of the war of 1962, there was a substantial number of deployed troops in these bordering areas. So, a programme for the *Jawans* from either Kurseong or Siliguri would have been a good idea. Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* was thus made available on mediumwave in Siliguri. This was interesting at that time since the station originating the programme (Gauhati) was broadcasting it over shortwave while the station relaying it (Siliguri) was on mediumwave. Moreover, this was the first Troops Programme of the country to get relayed by another station.

Interestingly, in just two months, during October 1963, the duration of Troops Programme from Siliguri was extended by half-hour (17:30 – 18:30) while Gauhati was still broadcasting between 17:30 and 18:00. [51] [99] Thus, the second half of the broadcast was sourced from Siliguri itself. This was a significant development for a small station like Siliguri to have a daily one-hour programme for the Armed Forces. Probably, the second half of the programme had the provision of playing requested songs since Gauhati's evening edition didn't have that luxury. The arrangement ran like this for two years after which there started attempts to reduce its duration. This was probably due to starting of new programmes as the station continued to grow. By January 1967, the programme went to its original status, that is, between 17:30 to 18:00. [100]

In due course, Siliguri discontinued Gauhati's Troops Programme and replaced it with its own programme of film music to entertain the troops. Although the exact date of discontinuation is not available, there is an indication that it could be some time around 1986. [29] At that time, Gauhati's evening edition was between 17:05 and 17:45 and Siliguri probably was relaying between 17:15 and 17:45. After discontinuing Gauhati's programme, Siliguri retained the same timing for its own version of the programme. There was no separate Hindi section at AIR Siliguri. Hence, the general (Bengali) announcers used to present the programme in simple Hindi, and it is still the case. While travelling from Gauhati to Calcutta during the late 1980s and early 1990s, I used to carry a portable MW pocket radio receiver with me. The train, Kamrup Express, used to enter the North Bengal region around sunset and the portable receiver would pick up signals of AIR Siliguri station amid terrible noises due to electromagnetic interferences. I vividly remember having listened to their programme for the Forces from 17:15 on several of those trips. Most of the times, the train moved through the beautiful greeneries of Dooars while the film songs entertained the passengers in the compartment. It used to give me goosebumps thinking that the *Jawans* in those forested lands were also probably listening to the same songs. One song that I still remember having listened to was '*jeena kya aji pyar bina, jeevan ke ye hi chaar dina*' (*Dhan Daulat, 1980*). As the train moved farther away, the signals of Siliguri would fade out. Those memories of Kamrup Express and Siliguri's Troops Programme still fills my heart with unlimited nostalgia.

## Shillong

The Shillong-Gauhati joint station was one of the earliest stations of AIR in independent India that started broadcasting from two 1-kW transmitters. However, the Shillong transmitter was decommissioned in 1953 and the station was transformed into an independent station at Gauhati broadcasting from one 10 kW transmitter. On 6 March 1966, the 1 kW transmitter of Shillong was once again powered up and the station started broadcasting independently over a wavelength of 250 m making it the second AIR station of Assam. [48] The transmission time was between 17:00 and 21:30. It started relaying the evening instance of Gauhati's Troops Programme at 17:30, thus becoming the second station after Siliguri in this regard. It also carried Vividh Bharati's *Jay Bharat* programme daily between 18:30 and 18:45. This was the only Vividh Bharati programme that it relayed. It also had its own daily patriotic song element entitled *Jagarani* at 18:55. [101]

Interestingly, when the Pasighat (NEFA) station of AIR started operating from 3 March 1966 from a 250-Watt transmitter on 283.02 m between 16:00 and 20:30, it relayed only two Vividh Bharati programmes – one was *Jay Bharat* at 18:30 and the other was *Vadya Madhuri* at 19:45. [48] [102]

From the fact that both the newly opened Shillong and Pasighat stations just relayed *Jay Bharat*, it can be understood that the intention was to propagate nationalistic sentiments among the people of those far-flung areas of North-East and also to keep the level of patriotic stimulus high among the soldiers guarding the frontiers of NEFA. However, the Shillong station went through a complete makeover after 15 August 1966, removing all relayed programmes of Gauhati-A, Gauhati-B and Vividh Bharati, and in the new schedule, the Troops Programme, *Jaya Bharat*, and *Jagarani*, all were missing as shown in table below. [103] The reason for this distancing from nationalistic elements in the programme schedule could be the completion of one year of the war and hence, these were no longer required.

Table 10: Relay of Gauhati's Troops Programme by Shillong during Mar-Aug 1966

AIR SHILLONG BROADCAST SCHEDULE		
Time	Before 15-Aug 1966	After 15-Aug 1966
17:00	Assamese Indigenous Music	
17:15	Bodo/Rabha Songs	
17:30	<b>Troops Programme (Gauhati-B)</b>	Music from the Hills
18:00	News in English & Hindi	News in English & Hindi
18:10	Local Announcements	Local Announcements
18:15	Sugam Sangeet	
18:30	<b>Jaya Bharat (VBS)</b>	Mixed Fare (Assamese, Bengali and Hindi Songs)
18:45	Regional News (Gauhati-A)	
18:55	Jagarani - Patriotic Song	Light Assamese Songs
19:00	Programme in Khasi (relayed by Gauhati-C)	Programme in Khasi (relayed by Gauhati-C)
19:30	Programme in Jaintia (relayed by Gauhati-C)	Programme in Jaintia (relayed by Gauhati-C)
19:45	Khasi/Jaintia Music	
20:00	Light Music (Indian & Western)	Rhythm Time (Light and Dance Music)
20:15	Talk in English at 20:15 on Saturdays	News in Hindi
20:30	As in Delhi-B	As in Delhi-B
21:00	News in English	News in English
21:15	As in Delhi-B	As in Delhi-B
21:30	Close down	Close down

To conclude, the Shillong station relayed Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1966 for a duration of a little more than five months.

## Agartala

In the Third Five Year Plan, the stations that came up in the North-East during 1966-67 were Aizawl (20 kW MW on 31 July 1966), Agartala (10 kW MW on 26 January 1967) and Tezu (250 W MW on 15 August 1967). [48] Like Siliguri, Agartala was also an auxiliary station at inception meaning it was a relay station relaying programmes of Calcutta and NSD. The intention was to increase the radio footprint in the region without originating any programmes locally. And again, like Siliguri, Agartala also started relaying Gauhati's Troops Programme of the evenings from the very beginning. The station began to radiate on the Republic Day of 1967 between 16:30 and 22:30 on 236.2 m. The curious listeners in and around Agartala must have tuned in to their new local station and must have been delighted to listen to the Hindi entertainment in *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* at 17:30 that reverberated on the mediumwave for the first time at their place, who have been listening to it over the shortwave until then. [100]

The relay of Gauhati's Troops Programme by Agartala was discontinued sometime during February-March 1978 if the programme schedules published in Akashvani journal are to be believed. The relay was replaced with a general Hindi film music programme entitled *Chitrageeti*. [104] Surprisingly, a programme for the Forces from AIR Agartala reappeared in the schedule of 19 September 1982. It was identified as a weekly half-hour programme on Tuesdays at 18:30, with a programme for Youth at the same time on Thursdays and Saturdays. [105] However, soon it disappeared in the subsequent publications never to appear again. It could not be established firmly if this was indeed a new programme for the Forces from the station or it was an inadvertent error. Whatever be the case, it marked the end of Troops Programme from Agartala. The station never broadcast or relay any programme for the Forces thereafter.

## Dibrugarh

The fourth and the most important station to relay Gauhati's Troops Programme was Dibrugarh that started its operation on 2 February 1969 radiating on 526.31 m through a 100-kW high power mediumwave transmitter. [48] It was the first HPT in the north-eastern region and could cover a very large area, especially in its evening transmission. It started with three transmissions – morning between 06:00 and 09:00 (up to 09:30 on Sundays), afternoon between 11:00 and 15:30, and evening between 16:30 and 22:35 (up to 23:05 on Saturdays). It relayed Gauhati-A from 07:30 to 08:00, 19:45 to 20:45 and 21:30 to 22:30 besides the regional news bulletins in Assamese. Importantly, the Dibrugarh station, since its inception, also relayed the Troops Programme of Gauhati-B partially, between 13:50 and 14:30, that is, the second half of the broadcast. [106] This was a milestone in the history of this programme as this relay made the broadcast available on high power mediumwave so that listeners over a vast area could listen to the programme with good clarity that included remote areas of NEFA, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram. In other words, the Dibrugarh station was instrumental in extending the coverage of the Troops broadcast in the border areas of the region on mediumwave which otherwise was available only on shortwave until then, while the low power mediumwave of Gauhati-B could cover only the listeners in and around Gauhati. The *Jawans* stationed in those remote areas could then listen to their favourite programme more clearly, although partially. Despite not sourcing this programme, Dibrugarh's contribution in the proliferation of coverage of this programme has been significant.

The afternoon schedule of Dibrugarh vis-à-vis Gauhati-B is depicted in table below. [106]

*Table 11: Afternoon transmission of Dibrugarh and Gauhati-B/C as on 4 May 1969*

AFTERNOON BROADCAST SCHEDULE OF DIBRUGARH & GAUHATI-B & C		
Time	Dibrugarh (526.3 m)	Gauhati-B (291.3 m) & C (41.96 m)
11:00	Vividh Bharati (relay)	Vividh Bharati (relay)
12:30	Western Music	Close down
13:00	News in Assamese (Delhi)	Troops Programme
13:10	Geetali (Assamese Modern Songs)	
13:30	News in English	
13:40	News in Hindi	News in Hindi
13:50	Troops Programme (Relay from Gauhati)	Troops Programme (contd...)
14:30	Vividh Bharati (relay)	Vividh Bharati (relay)
15:30	Close down	Close down

Dibrugarh has been like a loyal partner of Gauhati over the decades when it came to relaying the Troops Programme. The two stations mutually adapted and adjusted several unavoidable changes in the schedule over the period of more than five decades. The relay timing changed from 13:50 – 14:30 to 13:30 – 14:00, and later to 13:10 – 13:40. The background to these changes have been explained later in this book. Currently, Dibrugarh is the only station to relay this programme between 13:10 and 13:40.

To summarize the relays, there was a considerable period of at least ten years when all the three stations, viz., Siliguri, Agartala and Dibrugarh used to relay Gauhati's Troops Programme together, thus making a vast footprint at regional and local level as outlined in table below.

*Table 12: Coverage summary of Gauhati's Troops Programme as in 1969*

<b>REACH OF GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME IN 1969</b>					
<b>Station</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Wavelength</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Areas covered</b>
Gauhati-B	MW	10-kW	291.3 m	13:00 - 14:30 17:30 - 18:00	Gauhati, Kamrup district and parts of Nalbari, Barpeta, Goalpara & Darrang districts
Gauhati-C	SW	10-kW	48.74 m 62.83 m	13:00 - 14:30 17:30 - 18:00	Entire North-East, parts of Bihar and West Bengal
Siliguri	MW	20-kW	192.3 m	17:30 - 18:00	Siliguri, Jalpaiguri district and parts of Darjeeling & Kalimpong districts
Agartala	MW	10-kW	236.2 m	17:30 - 18:00	Agartala
Dibrugarh	MW	100-kW	526.3 m	13:50 - 14:30	Dibrugarh, Upper Assam, most of present Arunachal Pradesh & Nagaland

# 7. The Team Onboarding

The history of any popular entertainment show is incomplete without talking about the entertainers. When it comes to radio, it's the announcers whom the listeners identify with the programmes. The announcers develop their own unique styles of delivery even though they are required to present their programmes staying within the boundary of set guidelines and protocols. And when one or more announcers stay associated with a programme for a long duration as was the case with Gauhati's Troops Programme where the announcers served for more than three decades each, the attachment of the listeners with them gets really strong. The voices of the presenters become their identities as has been the case with this programme as well.

The programme was started with O. P. Tandon and Manjula Shah as the main presenters, supported by a pool of casual announcers, as mentioned in a previous chapter. However, neither Tandon nor Shah could continue at Gauhati for long. And soon three new regular announcers took their places, who carry forwarded the programme for the next four decades. **Bimlesh Arya** as Rekha bahen, **Tapasi Sengupta** as Seema bahen and **Sadhana Phukan** as Meeta bahen became household names due to their regularity and continuity for a vast duration and their voices became the signatures of the programmes they presented. The tenure of the three long serving regular announcers depicted in the illustration below gives an indication of their significant contribution towards maintaining the popularity of this programme for such a long period.



*Illustration 5: Service period of Regular Announcers (Hindi) at AIR Gauhati*

This chapter unfolds the fascinating stories of how each of the three regular announcers entered the world of radio broadcasting and more specifically, got associated with this programme. It also describes the interesting and logical story behind the assignment of the three radio names for the three announcers – Rekha, Seema and Meeta.

## Bimlesh Arya

Among the initial presenters of Gauhati's Troops Programme, the name that should be mentioned after Manjula Shah is Bimlesh Arya. Although it could not be established if she joined the station along with or in quick succession to Manjula Shah, her Obituary publication by AIR Gauhati had mentioned 1964 as the year of her entry to the station. [107] Also, she had joined initially as a Casual Announcer and was regularized later. [108] Thus, it can be assumed with adequate authenticity that Bimlesh Arya joined the station in 1964 as a Casual Announcer. I still remember one of her replies to a letter from a *Jawan* in *Patrottar* segment in which the *Jawan* had wanted to

know the start date of the Troops Programme. To this, Bimlesh Arya had replied that she didn't know the exact start date and that she was there since 1965. Thus, it is possible that she became a regular announcer a year after she joined as casual.

After O. P. Tandon and Manjula Shah left the station one after another in quick succession (described in following sections), Bimlesh Arya became the senior-most announcer of Gauhati's Hindi Section and continued to lead the Troops Programme till her retirement in 2000, thus, leading the mission to entertain the *Jawans* for long thirty-six years. Bimlesh Arya hailed from Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh. She had a very good Hindi and Urdu pronunciation along with a thin and sweet voice. She had migrated to Gauhati with her husband after her marriage due to her husband's work. She came across an AIR Gauhati advertisement for Hindi casual announcers, applied for it and got selected. There is a mention of O. P. Tandon and Gopal Das taking her interview. [51] As Rekha bahen, she replied to the letters of the *Jawans* for three and half decades at a stretch, thus, forming a very special place in the hearts of those brave hearts. Her style and several interesting incidents related to her replies to the letters have been described in a latter chapter in this book. When her voice disappeared from radio at her retirement, letters poured in from the *Jawans* enquiring about her whereabouts. More about her retirement and its impact later in the book.

### **Transfer of O. P. Tandon**

The role of O. P. Tandon as the Father of Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* has previously been described. Along with Manjula Shah, Bimlesh Arya and other supporting announcers, Tandon's contribution towards the initial evolution of the programme was significant. His concept of *Chacha Bhateja* was unique. Several other segments of the programme were also novel ideas. However, as all good things come to an end, so was his tenure at AIR Gauhati. Unfortunately, the *Chacha Bhateja* pair of Tandon and Shah was short-lived. The purpose of the AIR DG sending Tandon from Patna to Gauhati to design and flag off the Troops programme had been accomplished. The programme was running successfully and had matured enough. So, it was decided to transfer Tandon to Delhi for his next mission. [51] And this ended Tandon's association with AIR Gauhati forever.

However, the job O. P. Tandon had done at Gauhati became immortal. Today, even after six decades, almost all the programmes that he had conceptualized, continue to hit the airwaves during the lazy afternoons on a daily basis. The present-day announcers express their strong liking for the programme because of the interesting concepts of various segments. Although Tandon was associated with this broadcast for a brief period, any write-up on the history and popularity of Gauhati's Troops Programme is incomplete without acknowledging him. Tandon left Gauhati by handing over the programme to Manjula Shah and Bimlesh Arya during the 1960s itself. It is highly unfortunate that no information could be gathered about him and his service life from any reliable or otherwise sources. He just came, introduced a memorable and long-lasting programme for the Armed Forces, and then disappeared forever.

### **Tapasi Sengupta**

From the day it started in 1962, Gauhati's Troops Programme had been gaining momentum with

every passing day, with each day adding new listeners to its existence base. Among those listeners was a teenaged girl living in the campus of Danapur Army Cantonment in Bihar, who one day accidentally stumbled upon this broadcast when the *Jawans* were listening to the radio in the cantonment campus in the afternoon. This teenaged girl was none other than Tapasi Sengupta, who became one of the three legendary voices of this broadcast. With her father working in the Controller of Defence Accounts at Danapur Cantt. that was 15 km from the capital city Patna, Tapasi Dasgupta (she became Sengupta after marriage) grew up in the Cantonment campus, along with her four siblings, more specifically, two brothers and two sisters. They used to stay in Army quarters and the Kendriya Vidyalaya, where she studied, was in the centre of the cantonment. Right from childhood, she was a film music buff. In those days, in middle class families, too much listening of film songs was not considered good. Naturally, there was a timing restriction of listening to film songs at young Tapasi's house. Over a telephonic conversation, she vividly remembered those days of Danapur where the Army *Jawans* used to hang a radio on the tree branch and attach a mic and loudspeaker to it so that all the *Jawans* working nearby could listen to the programmes. The volume was so loud that it sometimes reached student Tapasi's classroom. In the afternoon, the *Jawans* would tune in to Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*. She used to return home from school through the same place where the *Jawans* hung the radio, so, she could listen to the programme right from her classroom until she reached home. The variety, the uniqueness and the wide range of songs used to attract Tapasi and within a short period of time, she developed a strong liking for this programme as a listener and badly wished that she could also present this programme someday. [51] [108]

God seemed to have listened to her prayers. To her utter disbelief, her father was soon transferred to Narangi Army Cantonment, located near Gauhati. In the absence of vacant army quarters, Tapasi's father had to rent a house. And coincidentally, it was just behind the building of AIR Gauhati, near the Red Cross Hospital at Chandmari. An invisible force had brought her very next to the place from where her favourite programme emanated. Tapasi was an eighteen-year-old college student at that time doing her graduation. She shared her memories over telephone that one day she heard an announcement in the same Troops Programme that there was a requirement of casual announcers at the Hindi Section of AIR Gauhati. Her father was dead against the idea as she was doing her graduation and he wanted her to continue with higher studies and get enrolled for a master's degree course. However, she got the support of one of her father's colleagues, who was somehow associated with AIR Gauhati and encouraged Tapasi as he knew about Tapasi's good command over Hindi. Since good Hindi speakers had always been scarce in the region, he was very sure that Tapasi would come out with flying colours. She finally applied for the position, much against her father's wish, and as anticipated, got selected in the position of Casual Announcer. This was in 1968 and she was just 18 years old pursuing bachelor's degree. [51]

Tapasi Sengupta was simply thrilled to share the AIR studio with Manjula Shah and Bimlesh Arya, whom she had been listening from her Danapur Cantonment school days, where the *Jawans* hung the radio from the tree and listened to this broadcast. The voices that she had idolized since school days were sitting next to her in the studio and in the staff room. The thought of those *Jawans* of Danapur listening to her voice without knowing that it was the same girl who used to pass by them in the afternoon while returning from school, was certainly an amazing feeling for her.

When asked about her association with Manjula Shah and Bimlesh Arya, Tapasi Sengupta said that although she had worked with Bimlesh Arya for more than three decades, it was Manjula Shah from whom she learnt the very basics and the nitty-gritty of radio broadcasting. The reason was that Bimlesh Arya was already married when she (Tapasi) joined the station in 1968. So, it was not possible for Arya to spend extra time with her. Manjula Shah, being unmarried, put in a lot of efforts and taught her many things that helped her grow as a broadcaster. Tapasi Sengupta is still grateful to her for her support during her initial days when she needed it the most. When I broke the news of the demise of Manjula Shah in 2020 to her, she said, “*I am feeling very sad to hear the news of her demise. I still remember all those beautiful moments spent with her. May her soul rest in eternal peace.*” [108]

Within a short span of four years, Tapasi Sengupta became a commendable broadcaster. It was her prowess that earned her not only the respect of the listeners but also the attention of the AIR Gauhati management. Whenever there was a cricket match commentary from the Nehru Stadium at Gauhati, it was her who would make the announcements in Hindi (*ye akashvani hai, ab hum aapko Gauhati ke Nehru Stadium liye chalte hain jahaan se aap bhaarat aur...*), and this national level announcement would get relayed by every station of the country. At the age of 22 in the year 1972, Tapasi Sengupta became a regular announcer. Like Bimlesh Arya, she too completed her service life at Gauhati station and retired in 2011 at the age of sixty, thus serving 43 long years towards the growth and popularity of the Troops’ programme. Tapasi Sengupta has been kind enough to share her golden memories several times over telephone from Kolkata, where she resides at present. She remembered how they used to continue with the entertainment of troops despite tough situations like the *gheraos* of the AIR station during Assam Andolan, Janata Curfew and so on. “*I am immensely happy with what I have received from my service life*”, said an excited Tapasi Sengupta. She currently resides at Diamond Park area on Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata. [108]

### **Transfer of Manjula Shah**

After the transfer of O. P. Tandon, the three announcers, namely, Manjula Shah, Bimlesh Arya and the newly joined Tapasi Sengupta have been managing the show with Rajendra Prasad as the Programme Executive. However, there was one more quick separation written in destiny. Manjula Shah, a Gujarati by birth who had been living in Assam with her parents, had got her wedding fixed in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Hence, it was then her turn to leave the Troops Programme of Gauhati. After O. P. Tandon, Manjula Shah, the first Hindi Regular Announcer of the station, also left, transferring her share of responsibilities of the programme to Bimlesh Arya, Tapasi Sengupta and other supporting team members. [51] The position of announcer that Manjula Shah held at Gauhati was a non-transferrable one. So, it was not possible to take a direct transfer as an announcer to another station. Finally, she got selected for the position of Production Assistant in AIR Ahmedabad, where she continued the most part of her service. [108] Sometime during 1999-2000, she took a transfer to AIR Surat as Programme Officer. After two years, she returned to AIR Ahmedabad from where she finally retired after completing her service tenure. [109] Manjula Shah passed away in October 2020 at her residence in Ahmedabad amid COVID-19 pandemic. [110] Unlike Manjula Shah, both Bimlesh Arya and Tapasi Sengupta could stay at Gauhati throughout their service lives, the reason being the permanent workplace of their husbands was Gauhati.

## Sadhana Phukan

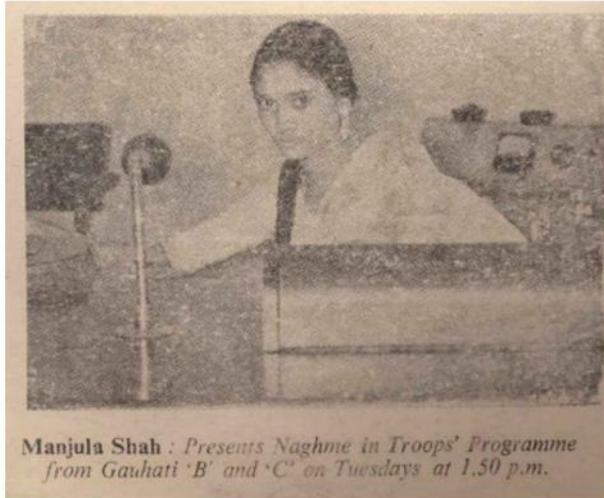
Retired Subedar Major Guneshwar Bora of the British Indian Army had four children – two sons and twin daughters, Geeta, and Sadhana. Due to the transferrable nature of job of Subedar Major Bora, the entire family got the opportunity to live at different places in the country. Sadhana Bora was born at the Namkum Military Hospital, Ranchi in British India. At Independence, Major Bora took handover from the British Indian Army and became part of the Indian Army and was transferred to the National Defence Academy (NDA) Khadagwasla, Poona (now Pune). Due to his good reputation and experience, his tenure was extended twice, which otherwise was a three-year tenure at each posting. Sadhana and her siblings did their schooling at NDA Campus during all these nine years. After retirement, Major Bora went to Jorhat, Assam, as a Recruiting Officer. Since his children have been studying in Hindi/English medium, he had to look for a Hindi/English medium school in Jorhat. Finally, they got admission in Rashtrabhasha Vidyalaya Jorhat from where they completed their school education. Sadhana Bora further did her graduation in 1970 from Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti Wardha, Maharashtra.

Sadhana Bora became Sadhana Phukan after her marriage with Vijay Kumar Phukan and subsequently got settled in Gauhati. Although she had never thought of becoming a radio announcer, while listening to film songs on the radio as a teenager, she always wished that people could hear her voice too on radio someday. But that was just a casual thought as told by her in an interview to AIR Dibrugarh's Senior Citizens' programme – '*Juie Pora Son*' (meaning 'Gold melted in Fire'). [111] Nevertheless, her entry into the world of broadcasting was entirely by chance. On a humorous note, she said that her husband had this peculiar habit of reading each and every piece of text his hand received. He would even start reading the chits of old newspaper after unwrapping the *paan* at the Pan Shop. This habit, however, proved to be of big advantage when Mr. Phukan noticed the advertisement published in the newspaper regarding the requirement of Hindi casual announcers at AIR Gauhati. As he knew about his wife's proficiency in Hindi and that she was looking for a decent and suitable job, he asked her if she would like to apply. She jumped at the idea as she was more comfortable in Hindi than any other language and she could do the job while staying at Gauhati itself. And radio was the dream of her subconscious mind for long. What could have been a better job than this! She immediately applied and got selected through the selection process. Starting as a casual announcer in 1971, Sadhana Phukan became a regular in 1974 and completed her full tenure in the same station as Bimlesh Arya and Tapasi Sengupta. [51] [111] She retired from her services in 2010. Post retirement, she continued for three more years before finally taking leave in 2013 when Prasar Bharati's new guidelines restricted announcers of more than sixty years of age to hold the mic citing reason of voice degradation, a decision that was debatable. Presently, she resides at her home located in Beltala area in Gauhati. [29]

With Bimlesh Arya joining in 1964-65, and Tapasi Sengupta and Sadhana Phukan getting regularized in 1972 and 1974 respectively, it thus effectively took almost a decade for this stable team of three regular announcers to form, which then ruled the afternoon airwaves of Gauhati-B continuously from 1974 to 2000. The team broke in 2000, the year when the first retirement took place. More about it later!

Sadhana Phukan crisply summarized her journey through the Troops' Programme in the same interview to AIR Dibrugarh – "*saal guzarte chale jaate hain, samay ke saath-saath har yaadgaar*

*pal mit-te chale jaate hain. shaayad in yaadgaar palon ko zinda rakhne mein puraane geeton ka mahatwa aaj bhi hamaare maanas patal par jaadui chiraag ka kaam kar jaata hai. Hum puraani yaadon mein kho kar khud ko adhik khushnaseeb samajhne lagte hain.” (“Years go by, every memorable moment gets erased with time. Perhaps the importance of old songs in keeping memorable moments alive even today works as a magic lamp in our minds. By getting lost in old memories, we start considering ourselves more fortunate.”) [111]*



*Manjula Shah : Presents Naghme in Troops' Programme from Gauhati 'B' and 'C' on Tuesdays at 1.50 p.m.*



*Smt. Vimalesh Kumari Arya, who replies to Troops letters on Gauhati 'B' and 'C' on Friday.*



*Tapasi Dasgupta is seen presenting "Aap Ki Farmaish" Programme of film songs from AIR Gauhati.*



*Photo 3: (clockwise from top) Manjula Shah, Bimlesh Arya, Sadhana Phukan, Tapasi Sengupta (Source: Akashvani Journals, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B)*

### **The Story of the Pseudonyms**

The Programme Executive (PEX) for Gauhati's Troops Programme during 1971-72 was Rajendra Prasad. Looking at the continuously increasing popularity of the programme, with new listeners getting added with every passing week, whose evidence was the huge bulk of letters being received, Rajendra Prasad was delighted and equally worried. What worried him was that the three announcers were only in their twenties while their target listeners were mostly the *Jawans* from various units of the Forces, or in other words, mostly young male adults. Although the present generation might wonder at this statement, the society in those days was not very open-minded.

Moreover, Gauhati was comparatively a smaller city with closely knit people and with such an attractive programme format, it would have been extremely difficult to hide the identities of the three announcers. Prasad feared that the revelation of their identities on radio could lead to unpleasant and unsafe situations for them. Taking a stand like a fatherly figure, he made a careful but interesting decision. Why not give imaginary radio names to the three announcers and hide their actual names from the listeners! And thus, Bimlesh Arya became Rekha bahen, Tapasi Sengupta became Seema bahen and Sadhana Phukan became Meeta bahen – the three sisters of *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram!* [112]

Importantly, the naming of the announcers was not done arbitrarily. Prasad observed the looks and nature of the three and carefully arrived at the three names. Bimlesh Arya was lean and thin not only physically but also in her voice. So, he named her *Rekha*, the line. Tapasi Sengupta was a quiet, steady, serious, and soft-spoken person who spoke very little. Prasad named her *Seema*, the limit for her calm and composed nature. And Sadhana Phukan was extremely jolly and friendly, who would laugh aloud at every small joke. So, Prasad couldn't find anything better for her than *Meeta*, the companion. [51] From another angle, the names were equally justified for the Troops Programme. *Rekha* and *Seema*, being near synonyms, signified “border” that the troops were mainly associated with. And *Meeta* signified the bonding of the *Jawans* with the programme. That is, the programme was like a friend of the *Jawans*. Thus, was formed the legendary trio – Rekha bahen, Seema bahen, and Meeta bahen. Down the years, listeners hardly knew the real names of the three announcers and even today, they are remembered with their radio names rather than by their real names.

Within a very short period, the three names Rekha, Seema and Meeta became household names. The *Chacha-Bhateja* concept was successfully replaced by the *Teen Bahene* concept. For the decades to come, these “three sisters of AIR Gauhati” not only remained the favourite sisters of the troops listeners but also became sisters of thousands of civilians, from all over the region. The standard of the programme was so high that many radio veteran listeners would compare it with that of Vividh Bharati and Radio Ceylon's Hindi programmes. And behind this was the responsible attitude of these three announcers, their deep interest in the programme and above all, their ability to touch the nerves of the listeners and make them part of the programme. Rekha, Seema and Meeta bahen had taken the presentation style of Hindi film music to a level such that the mesmerized listeners would daily tune in to the broadcast without fail and listen to the variety of segments broadcast under the programme one after the other. The popularity of the programme could be ascertained by the fact that around 90% of the daily letters that AIR Gauhati received in those days were Forces Letters. The present-day listeners would be surprised to know that the songs that received the highest number of requests from the troops were played as part of the daily *Aaj Ka Geet* section. At times, it would take a longer time to read out the names of the listeners requesting a song than the duration of the song itself. Many a times, the troops personnel visited the radio station to have a glimpse of their favourite sisters. Many would write their personal problems and the sisters would respond to them in the *Patrottar* section. There have been countless instances when the *Jawans* staying away from their families were benefitted by such affectionate replies and solutions to their problems provided in this broadcast. Be it temporary make-shift tents, bunkers, canteens, or dense forests, the *Jawans* waited eagerly to hear their names, ranks and the songs they had requested for. From Bumla Pass to Hasimara, from Doklam to Tawang, and from Changsari to Chhahhaloi, the troops listeners spanned the entire length and breadth of the region. The programme rose to the ultimate altitude of popularity. [29] [51] [108] [111] [112]

## 8. Towards a Stable Set-up

The two wars of 1962 and 1965 weren't enough. With the start of a new decade, little that the people know that the region was heading towards another bloodbath in the form of the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. The political and humanitarian unrest in the entire region that led to massive killings, mass exodus, and humanitarian crimes, made the role of radio all the more important. All of a sudden, radio, for one more time, became a powerful medium to disseminate authentic and rumour-free news and other information to the people of India and across both the eastern and north-western borders. The programmes on radio for the Armed Forces became significant again. Gauhati's Troops Programme was of special importance for the region being in close proximity with the disputed territory of East Pakistan. This chapter takes the reader through the changes taking place at AIR Gauhati during the 1970s and the impact of those changes on the Troops Programme. By the time the reader arrives at the end of the chapter, the Troops Programme, after going through few more evolutionary changes, settles into a stable set-up that stayed intact without any further changes for at least a decade to follow.

### **Western Music before Troops Programme**

Until the end of 1969, Gauhati-B (291.3 m) and Gauhati-C (41.96 m) used to jointly broadcast Vividh Bharati programmes between 11:00 and 12:30 and Troops Programme from 13:00. Thus, there was a half-hour intermission at 12:30. [113] When the Dibrugarh station came into being in February 1969, there was provision for Western Music programme in its afternoon schedule between 12:30 and 13:00. Gauhati did not have any dedicated programme of Western Music in those days. Starting 1 January 1970, Gauhati-B (291.3 m) started relaying Dibrugarh's Western Music programme, thus, filling up the gap between Vividh Bharati and Troops Programme and making the transmission a continuous one from 11:00 to 15:30 (15:45 on Sundays). However, Gauhati-C (41.96 m) did not carry Western Music and the shortwave transmitter continued to be off in that interval. [114]

Listeners must have been delighted to get a continuous four and half hour's transmission that was comprised of popular Hindi film music and Western Music, a perfect dose for the young listeners, including the *Jawans* of the Armed Forces. Even though the dedicated Troops Programme was for 90 minutes, nevertheless, the complete afternoon transmission proved to be fully entertaining to the *Jawans*. The presentation of all the programmes in either Hindi (Vividh Bharati, Troops Programme, Hindi news) or English (Western Music) was another major reason for their popularity among the *Jawans* who belonged to different parts of the country.

### **Enforcement of Hourly News Headlines**

On 26 March 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of East Pakistan called upon his people to resist

Pakistani forces of occupation in a declaration of independence that marked the beginning of the Bangladesh Liberation War. Following the Pakistani military crackdown, the Awami League leaders crossed over to India for safety. With the continuing disturbances, instability and unrest on the eastern front, the necessity of hourly news bulletins throughout the day on radio was felt. The frequency of news bulletins from AIR was not adequate to keep the people updated with the frequent happenings and developments. In view of this, starting 1 August 1971, hourly news capsule bulletins, consecutively in Hindi and English, each of two-minute duration, from early morning till mid-night were started. This in turn led to the re-scheduling of many news bulletins of the afternoon and evening, thus necessitating changes in the broadcast schedule of regional stations. From the viewpoint of Gauhati's Troops Programme, the pre and post news schedule of the afternoon period is worth noticing. This is shown in table below. [115]

*Table 13: Changes in afternoon news bulletin timings in the wake of 1971 War*

AIR NEWS BULLETINS IN AFTERNOON BEFORE & AFTER 1 AUGUST 1971				
Until 31 July 1971		From 1 Aug 1971		Comments
Time	Language	Time	Language	
12:30 - 12:40		12:30 - 12:40	Telugu	
12:40 - 12:50		12:40 - 12:50	Tamil	
12:50 - 13:00	Bangla, Marathi	12:50 - 13:00	Malayalam	
13:00 - 13:10	Assamese, Gujarati	13:00 - 13:02	Hindi	The 2-minute News Headlines were carried by Gauhati-A.
		13:02 - 13:04	English	
13:10 - 13:20	Kannada, Oriya	13:10 - 13:20	Assamese, Kannada	The Assamese bulletin carried by Gauhati-A.
13:20 - 13:30	Malayalam	13:20 - 13:30	Gujarati, Oriya	
13:30 - 13:40	English	13:30 - 13:40	Bangla, Marathi	
13:40 - 13:50	Hindi	13:40 - 13:50	Punjabi	
13:50 - 14:00	Punjabi, Telugu	13:50 - 14:00	Urdu	
14:00 - 14:10	Tamil	14:00 - 14:10	English	English bulletin carried by Gauhati-A
14:10 - 14:20	Urdu	14:10 - 14:20	Hindi	Hindi bulletin carried by Gauhati-B
14:30 - 15:00	English (Slow Speed)	14:30 - 15:00	English (Slow Speed)	

The newly introduced bulletins at 13:00 and 13:02 were carried by Gauhati-A that was having Assamese bulletin at that time previously. The Assamese bulletin was moved from 13:00 to 13:10. The 10-minute English bulletin of 13:30 and Hindi bulletin of 13:40 were deferred to 14:00 and 14:10 respectively. And this was what impacted the Troops Programme and its relay by Dibrugarh. The programme which was earlier broadcast from 13:00 to 13:40 and 13:50 to 14:30 was adjusted to 13:00 to 14:10 and 14:20 to 14:30. Dibrugarh used to relay 40 minutes of the programme from 13:50 to 14:30. The change led to a 10-minute reduction in the relay. The programme was then available from Dibrugarh between 13:30 and 14:00. This set up continued for almost two decades after which another change in the timing of the Assamese news bulletin brought in a change in the relay that has continued till date. More about it later in the book.

### **Slow-speed News Bulletin**

22 September 1969 was the day when AIR introduced a half-hour slow-speed news bulletin in English at 14:30. [46] Stations like Delhi-B, Calcutta-B, Ranchi, Poona, and few others started relaying this bulletin. For Gauhati, it took a couple of years to add this item to its platter. In June 1976, a similar slow-speed bulletin in Hindi was introduced by adjusting the English bulletin. The

two slow-speed bulletins in English and Hindi, each of 25-minute duration, were placed at 14:20 and 14:45 respectively. [116] These bulletins proved to be useful and important sources of news for the smaller newspaper publications and other dailies. The Gauhati station decided to relay the English bulletin on its B-channel. If Akashvani journal publications are to be believed, this relay began sometime during August 1976. This would have meant a cutdown on the duration of Troops Programme by 10 minutes. Thus, the Troops Programme was preponed to 12:30, discontinuing the relay of Western Music from Dibrugarh. This change was first reflected in Akashvani journal dated 17 October 1976. [117] The 13:00 to 14:30 show had become 12:30 to 14:10 show, with a 5-minute Hindi news bulletin at 13:05 dividing the programme into two halves in the new schedule. (The 2-minute bulletins of 13:00 and 13:02 had become 5-minute bulletins by then.) This schedule of the afternoon edition (12:30 to 14:10) continued without any further changes for at least 15 years.

### ***Yuvavani* kicks out Troops Programme**

Gauhati-B on shortwave, which later became Gauhati-C after a new mediumwave transmitter was allotted for Gauhati-B, was launched in 1957 to broadcast programmes in various north-eastern languages and dialects as there was no other station in the region to broadcast in those dialects locally. Until the first few weeks of 1966, there used to be programme for the Nagas between 15:30 and 16:30 on 50.25 m and programme for NEFA between 16:00 and 17:00 on 62.83 m including the news and commentary in Assamese for NEFA broadcast from Delhi at 16:45. [93] This overlapping mode of two broadcasts was eliminated in January 1966 by moving the programme for NEFA to Gauhati-A while the programme for the Nagas continued on Gauhati-C but between 16:00 and 17:00, thus, both being aired at exactly the same time. [118] There used to be programme in Mikir (Karbi) at 17:00, programme in Dimasa at 17:15 and Troops Programme between 17:30 and 18:00 from Gauhati-C. By 1972-73, many stations were functional in the region like Agartala, Aizawl, Dibrugarh, Imphal, Kohima, Pasighat, Shillong, Silchar and Tezu. These stations could source programmes in local dialects. Consequently, the importance of Gauhati's shortwave broadcasts in tribal dialects started reducing. Broadcasts of many tribal dialects were eventually discontinued from Gauhati. The early evening broadcast of Gauhati-C on 62.83 m, which was a two-hour transmission between 16:00 and 18:00, lost 15 minutes, the programme in Dimasa at 17:15 to begin with. Thus, the Troops Programme got preponed to 17:15. This change in timing of the Troops Programme from 17:30 – 18:00 to 17:15 – 17:45 was first noticed in the July 1972 broadcast schedule of Agartala in which the relay of Gauhati's Troops Programme was mentioned to be at the new time. [119] The programme was available on Gauhati-B (291.3 m) as well.

Under the special audience programme category, AIR launched dedicated programming for youth from many stations. Delhi was the first station to start *Yuvavani* on its dedicated Delhi-D channel on 21 July 1969. [120] Six years later, on 15 August 1975, Gauhati station joined the league of stations that broadcast *Yuvavani*. The Chief Minister of Assam had inaugurated the programme on the evening of Independence Day on Gauhati-B at 17:25. Although Gauhati's *Yuvavani* didn't get a dedicated channel unlike Delhi, it was no less than a daily two-hour show between 17:25 and 19:25. [121] Thus, the evening edition of the Troops Programme between 17:15 and 17:45 was kicked out of Gauhati-B and from then onwards it was available only on Gauhati-C over shortwave. In other words, the introduction of *Yuvavani* made the evening edition of the Troops Programme to vanish from mediumwave 291.3 m. This change may be better visualized in a

tabular format as shown below.

Table 14: Changes with the introduction of *Yuvavani* on Gauhati-B

EVENING TRANSMISSION OF GAUHATI-B & GAUHATI-C						
UNTIL 15-AUG 1975			FROM 15-AUG 1975			
Time	Gauhati-B (291.3 m)	Gauhati-C 62.83 m (17:00-17:45) 92.74 m (18:00-22:30)	Time	Gauhati-B (291.3 m)	Gauhati-C 62.83 m (17:00-17:45) 92.74 m (18:00-22:30)	
17:00		Karbi Programme	17:00		Karbi Programme	
17:15	Troops Programme (17:15-17:45)		17:15		Troops Programme (17:15-17:45)	
17:45	Assamese Modern Songs	Close down	17:45	Yuva Vani (17:25-19:25)	Close down	
18:00	News in English & Hindi		18:00		News in English & Hindi	
18:10	Interlude		18:10		Interlude	
18:15	Close down	Garo, Khasi & Jaintia Programmes	18:15		Garo, Khasi & Jaintia Programmes	
			19:25	News in Nepalese		
			19:35	Assamese Modern Songs		
19:45	Vividh Bharati programmes, News and other NSD	Mizo Programme	19:45	Vividh Bharati programmes, News and other NSD	Mizo Programme	
20:30	programmes from Delhi	as in Gauhati-B	20:30	programmes from Delhi	as in Gauhati-B	
22:30	Close down	Close down	22:30	Close down	Close down	

The daily two-hour *Yuvavani* presented in Assamese rose to the heights of popularity among the youth in the evenings while the one and half hour *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* in the afternoons continued to entertain the troops. Till date, Gauhati-B has continued to be known for these two broadcasts that span a major part of its daily transmission duration. While the military related reports, talks and interviews were part of the Troops Programme, interestingly, *Yuvavani* broadcast an interview of Lt. G. C. Srivastava, a Commanding Officer, and other Naval Wing Cadets of the 48 Assam Naval Unit, who took part in a traffic control exercise at Gauhati sometime during early 1976. [122]

### Gauhati-B stabilizes at 289.9 m

That every station/ channel will have a wavelength and a corresponding frequency of transmission is a very basic concept known to all. How does it matter what wavelength a station or a channel has been using. Well, it does matter. It may although appear as just a random number, there is more than that emotionally. When a particular wavelength or a frequency is spoken out by the announcers many times a day for decades, it not only becomes the identity but also gets inscribed in the minds of the listeners just as their house numbers. When a listener returns to his hometown after a long time and listens to the local station, the announcement of the station name and wavelength/ frequency fills him with nostalgia. And if the listeners come across the announcement after several decades, it is enough to give him goosebumps. This is even more powerful when the wavelength hasn't changed for decades as is the case with both the channels of AIR Gauhati. This is especially applicable for mediumwave wavelengths since the shortwave frequencies have been subjected to frequent changes. Mediumwave wavelengths have been comparatively stable over several decades.

When Gauhati-B got its mediumwave transmitter towards the end of 1965, it used to transmit at 291.3 m corresponding to 1030 kHz. Twelve years later, towards the end of 1978, a frequency shift of +5 kHz was applied to this transmitter, thus, making it radiate at 1035 kHz. The wavelength was 289.9 m. [123] Since then, till date, it hasn't changed further. In other words, the channel has continued to get identified by the same wavelength for 45 years in a row now. Same is the situation with Gauhati-A and its wavelength of 411.5 m that has been in place for a similar period at a stretch. Thus, Gauhati-A on 411.5 m and Gauhati-B on 289.9 m have deeply been inscribed in the listeners' minds. The wavelength identification for the Troops Programme – “*mediumwave do sau nawaasi dashamlav nau meter par*” (on mediumwave 289.9 m) – still makes the listeners nostalgic and take them back to the golden era of broadcasting that they have left behind. The evolution of mediumwave wavelengths of AIR Gauhati is summarized in table below. Data has been compiled from various Volume/Issue of Akashvani journal publications.

Table 15: Evolution of Mediumwave wavelengths at AIR Gauhati

EVOLUTION OF MEDIUMWAVE WAVELENGTHS AT AIR GAUHATI		
Shillong-Gauhati	Gauhati-A	Gauhati-B
started in 1948 on: 331.4 m (Shillong) 394.7 m (Gauhati)	Shillong-Gauhati became Gauhati in 1953, with Gauhati transmitter still operating at 384.6 m.	Gauhati-B started on SW in 1957.
Within a month, changed to: 205.5 m (Shillong) 384.6 m (Gauhati)	Changed to 411.0 m in 1959.  Changed to 411.5 m in 1978.	MW transmission started in 1965 on 291.3 m.  Changed to 289.9 m in 1978.
Shillong transmitter shut down in 1953.	No further change.	No further change.

### Gauhati-C stabilizes at 41.96/ 62.83/ 92.74 m

Troops Programme of Gauhati was launched over shortwave to make it reachable in every nook and corner of the north-eastern region. Thus, it is equally important to take a look at the shortwave wavelengths over which the programme has radiated over the years. The evolution path is summarized in table below.

Table 16: Evolution of Shortwave wavelengths of AIR Gauhati-B/C

EVOLUTION OF SHORTWAVE WAVELENGTHS OF AIR GAUHATI-B/C					
May 1957 (A & B)	Jan 1958 (A & B)	Feb 1958 (B)	June 1962 (B)	Aug 1962 (B)	June 1965 (B)
06:45 - 09:00 - 42.11 m 13:00 - 14:00 - 31.33 m 16:00 - 18:30 - 31.33 m 18:45 - 22:00 - 42.11 m	06:45 - 09:00 - 42.11 m 13:00 - 14:00 - 31.33 m 17:30 - 18:30 - 31.33 m 18:45 - 21:30 - 62.83 m	07:15 - 08:15 - 48.94 m 16:30 - 18:30 - 31.33 m 18:45 - 20:30 - 62.83 m	07:00 - 08:30 - 48.94 m 10:00 - 11:00 - 48.94 m 13:00 - 14:00 - 48.94 m 18:45 - 20:30 - 62.83 m	07:00 - 08:30 - 48.94 m 10:00 - 11:00 - 48.94 m 13:00 - 14:00 - 48.94 m 15:30 - 18:00 - 62.83 m 18:15 - 20:30 - 92.74 m	07:00 - 08:30 - 62.83 m 09:00 - 11:00 - 48.94 m 13:00 - 14:00 - 48.94 m 15:30 - 16:30 - 50.25 m 16:00 - 18:00 - 62.83 m 18:15 - 21:00 - 92.74 m
May 1966 (C)	Apr 1967 (C)	Apr 1970 (C)	June 1974 (C)	Dec 1978 (C)	May 1984 (C)
06:45 - 09:00 - 62.83 m 09:00 - 10:00 - 41.96 m 10:50 - 12:30 - 48.94 m 13:00 - 15:35 - 48.94 m 16:00 - 18:00 - 48.94 m 18:15 - 22:00 - 92.74 m	06:30 - 07:45 - 62.83 m 08:00 - 09:00 - 48.74 m 11:00 - 12:30 - 41.96 m 13:00 - 15:45 - 41.96 m 16:00 - 18:00 - 41.96 m 18:15 - 22:40 - 92.74 m	06:30 - 07:45 - 62.83 m 08:00 - 09:15 - 48.94 m 10:50 - 12:30 - 41.96 m 13:00 - 15:45 - 41.96 m 16:00 - 18:00 - 41.96 m 18:15 - 22:40 - 92.74 m	06:30 - 07:45 - 92.74 m 08:00 - 09:15 - 48.94 m 10:50 - 12:30 - 41.96 m 13:00 - 15:45 - 41.96 m 16:00 - 17:45 - 62.83 m 18:15 - 22:40 - 92.74 m	06:30 - 07:45 - 92.74 m 08:00 - 09:15 - 48.94 m 11:30 - 15:45 - 41.96 m 17:00 - 17:45 - 62.83 m 18:00 - 23:00 - 92.74 m	06:00 - 07:00 - 62.83 m 07:15 - 09:15 - 41.96 m 11:30 - 15:45 - 41.96 m 16:45 - 17:45 - 62.83 m 18:00 - 23:00 - 92.74 m

Data has been compiled from various Volume/Issue of Akashvani journal publications. The stable shortwave wavelengths that have remained associated with Gauhati-B (later Gauhati-C) until almost its shutdown in the early 1990s were 41.96 m, 62.83 m and 92.74 m. Gauhati-B was launched in May 1957 on 42.11 m and 31.33 m to carry programmes of Gauhati-A during daytime and to broadcast programmes in tribal dialects in the evening transmission. In January 1958, 62.83 m was launched for the evening transmission. In February 1958, a second shortwave transmitter installation at Gauhati increased the number of frequencies, which replaced 42.11 m with 48.74 m (42.11 m went to Gauhati-A). In 1962, 92.74 m was launched for the evening transmission. And in May 1966, the last wavelength to be associated with Gauhati-C, 41.96 m, was introduced. Juggling and swapping between these frequencies, especially between 62.83 m and 92.74 m for the early morning and early evening/ late evening transmissions and between 41.96 m and 48.74 m for the various daytime transmission, kept happening for many years. As seen in previous table, things got stabilized during the first half of 1984 when the Troops Programme was available on shortwave in the afternoons on 41.96 m and in the evenings on 62.83 m.

The afternoon joint transmission of Gauhati-B (289.9 m) and Gauhati-C (41.96 m) from 11:30/ 12:00 to 15:45 has remained constant throughout. However, the early evening transmission has undergone multiple changes during 1960s-70s. Details of the evolution until 1972 has earlier been provided in this chapter. Continuing with the evolution, in August 1975, the one-hour programme for the Nagas between 16:00 and 17:00 was discontinued, thus, the transmission became a mere 45-minute broadcast between 17:00 and 17:45. [124] In the schedule of February 1976, a Bodo Programme was noticed on Gauhati-B at 16:15. [125] However, in March 1976, the programme was observed on Gauhati-A at the same time that continued thereafter. [126] As mentioned earlier, Gauhati-A was relaying the news and commentary in Assamese for NEFA between 16:45 and 17:00. In the schedule of January 1979, a local programme was noticed on Gauhati-A at 16:45, which indicated that the news and commentary were moved to Gauhati-C. [127] In January 1982, the Karbi Programme on Gauhati-C between 17:00 and 17:15 was transferred to Gauhati-A between 16:00 and 16:30 while the Bodo Programme was placed between 16:30 and 17:00. [128] This, in turn, meant the evening edition of the Troops Programme got extended by 15 minutes (17:00 – 17:45) as shown in table below.

*Table 17: Expansion & adjustments of Bodo, Karbi & Troops Programme amongst Gauhati-A & Gauhati-C*

CHANGES IN EARLY EVENING BROADCASTS OF GAUHATI-A & GAUHATI-C			
in January 1979		in January 1982	
Gauhati-A (411.5, 41.21 m)	Gauhati-C (62.83 m)	Gauhati-A (411.5, 41.21 m)	Gauhati-C (62.83 m)
16:15 - Bodo Programme (30 min)	16:45 - NEFA News & Commentary	16:00 - Karbi Programme (30 min)	16:45 - NEFA News & Commentary
16:45 - Loko Geet/ Bar Geet	17:00 - Karbi Programme (15 min)	16:30 - Bodo Programme (30 min)	17:00 - Troops Programme (45 min)
17:00 - Adhunik Geet (Modern)	17:15 - Troops Programme (30 min)	17:00 - Adhunik Geet (Modern)	17:45 - Close down
17:10 - Vrindagaan (Choral)	17:45 - Close down	17:10 - Vrindagaan (Choral)	
17:15 - Plains Tribal Songs (Rabha/ Karbi/ Miching/ Lalung)		17:15 - Plains Tribal Songs (Rabha/ Karbi/ Miching/ Lalung)	
17:30 - Transmission continues		17:30 - Transmission continues	

Sometime later, the Hindi news bulletin of 17:00 was added to the schedule of Gauhati-C and thus, the Troops Programme was pushed out by 5 minutes (17:05 – 17:45). This schedule of the evening edition of the Troops Programme continued without any further changes until the shutdown of the shortwave transmitter in 1994.

## The Final Stable Schedule

When it comes to AIR Gauhati's Troops Programme, analogy can be clearly drawn with that of the course of a river. A river has broadly three stages. The first stage obviously begins at its origin. It starts flowing as a narrow stream, bouncing off rocks and hills, flowing through the zigzag hilly terrain full of turbulence, with other narrow streams joining in. In the second stage, the turbulent and everchanging stream develops into a full-fledged stable river and starts flowing through the plains steadily. This stage covers the major and stable course of the river. And the third phase is the final phase before flowing into the sea where the river is wide, slow, and stagnant to a large extent. Gauhati's Troops Programme followed a similar course from its origin in 1962 until the writing of this book. Ever since it started, it underwent multiple changes on various aspects like timings, durations, wavelength, programme segments and content, and the regular announcers. During the later part of the 1970s, the programme achieved stability in the sense that neither the timings, nor the programme segments, nor the regular announcers and nor the frequencies/wavelengths changed at least through the next 15 years. The stabilized schedule is as tabulated below. This was the time when I started listening to this programme. Hence, further references of programme schedule from the *Akashvani* journal are no longer required. The detailed description of each of the segments mentioned in the programme schedule has been included in a latter chapter in this book.

Table 18: Stabilized schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme in late 1970s

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (GAUHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME) - STABLE SCHEDULE							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Prahasan (Skit)			
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down	Close Down

Although the Troops Programme constituted the major portion of programming in Hindi from AIR Gauhati, it was not the only offering. The weekly Hindi programme on Gauhati-A that started in June 1958 continued its journey. In 1982, the programme used to be broadcast on Mondays between 20:15 and 20:30. [128] The Hindi section also introduced a 5-minute talk-based daily programme entitled *Khaas Baaten* in 1982, to be broadcast from Gauhati-B at 20:05, following the Sports News bulletin in English at 20:00 and followed by Vividh Bharati's talk-based programme *Chitrashala* at 20:10. To wrap up this section, the overall stable schedule of Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C as in February 1984 is summarized in table below. [129]

Table 19: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C in February 1984

Txn	GAUHATI-B (MW)	GAUHATI-C (SW)
Txn-I		06:00 - Programme for Tea Gardeners 07:00 - Close down <b>(62.83 m)</b>
		07:15 - Programme in Nepalese 07:50 - Pop Music 08:00 - News in Hindi & English 08:20 - Commentary in Khasi (from Shillong) 08:25 - Regional News in English (from Shillong) 08:30 - Programme in Mizo (from Shillong) 09:15 - Close down <b>(41.96 m)</b>
Txn-II	11:30 - VB: Gaurav Gaan, Swar Madhuri (Sundays only) 12:00 - VB: Chitrapat Sangeet <b>12:30 - Troops Programme (including News in Hindi at 13:05)</b> 14:10 - News in Hindi & Slow-speed News in English at 14:20 14:45 - Manoranjani 15:00 - VB: Lok Sangeet (Vishesh Jayamala on Sundays) 15:30 - Close down (at 15:45 on Sundays) <b>(289.9 m, 41.96 m)</b>	
Txn-III	17:00 - News in Hindi & English 17:10 - Yuvavani (17:50 - Comments from the Press 18:00 - News in English & Hindi 19:00 - Sports News in Hindi 19:05 - News in Assamese) 19:25 - News in Nepalese 19:35 - Bhajan, Assamese modern songs, Rabindra Sangeet, Geet & Ghazal 19:45 - VB: Rang-e-Mehfil 20:00 - Sports News in English <b>20:05 - Khaas Baaten</b> 20:10 - VB: Chitrashala 20:15 - Samachar Darshan/ Radio News Reel 20:30 - Today in Parliament   VB: Ek Se Anek 20:45 - News in Hindi 21:00 - VB: Saaz Aur Awaaz <b>(289.9 m)</b>	16:45 - News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA 17:00 - News in Hindi <b>17:05 - Troops Programme</b> 17:45 - Close down <b>(62.83 m)</b>
		18:00 - News in English & Hindi 18:10 - Local Announcements 18:15 - Prog in Garo (from Shillong) 19:00 - Prog in Khasi (from Shillong) 19:40 - Prog in Jaintia (from Shillong) 20:00 - Programme in Mizo (from Shillong) 20:30 - Music of North-East (from Shillong)   Today in Parliament 20:45 - News in Hindi & English <b>(92.74 m)</b>
	21:15 - Spotlight   VB: Hawa Mahal 21:30 - as in Delhi-B   VB: Mishrit Gaan, Phulwari 22:00 - VB: Chhaya Geet 22:30 - VB: Aap Ki Farmaish (Sundays only) 22:30 - Close down (at 23:00 on Sundays) <b>(289.9 m, 92.74 m)</b>	

### Programme Outline and Variety

At inception, when the Troops Programme was a one-hour show between 13:00 and 14:00, there used to be different daily and weekly segments, typically 10-15 minutes each. However, with increase in duration of the programme to up to two hours and fifteen minutes, the durations of

different segments were naturally increased. In its stabilized format (12:30 – 13:05, 13:10 – 14:10, 17:05 – 17:45), each segment was identified as a full-fledged “programme” within the Troops Programme as the announcer would identify each segment as a *karyakram*, meaning a programme. Illustration below provides a snapshot of the programmes distinctly categorized on the basis of several parameters.

<b>Troops Programme</b>	<b>Form of Music</b>	Sangeet Madhuri (Indian Classical)	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai (Westernized)	Panghat (Indian folk)		
	<b>Form of Song Lyrics</b>	Tarannum (Ghazals: Nonfilm)	Filmi Naghme (Ghazals, Nazms)	Majlis-e-Qawwali (Qawwalis)		
	<b>Genre/ Theme</b>	Watan Ke Tarane (Patriotic)	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan (Devotional)	Hai Zindagi Pukaarti (Philosophical)	Geet Manoranjan (Lighter vein)	Geet Rangeele (Shringaar)
	<b>Common Aspect</b>	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet (One film)	Ek Hi Kalaakar Ke Geet (One singer)	Raag Rang (One Lyricist/ Composer)	Ek Aur Anek (One singer with others)	Swar Chhaya (One theme)
	<b>Mixed Melodies</b>	Sabrang (Soft numbers)	Preet Ladee (Duets)	Swar Sangam (Chorus-based)	Shirshak Sangeet (Title songs)	Saaz Aur Awaaz (Instrumentals & songs)
	<b>Period</b>	Geet Mala (Old requests)		Bhoole Bisre Geet (Old forgotten)		
	<b>Requests &amp; Letters</b>	Aaj Ka Geet (Multiple requests)		Aap Ki Farmaish (Mixed requests)	Patrottar (Replies to letters)	
	<b>Others</b>	Prahasan (Skits)	Pradeshik Sangeet (Regional music)			

*Illustration 6: Variety in Gauhati's Troops Programme*

The broadcast would begin with the signature tune at 12:30, quickly followed by the daily *Aaj Ka Geet*. Various weekly/monthly programmes that followed at 12:37 are still on air. After the 5-minute Hindi news bulletin break at 13:05, the second half of the broadcast was from 13:10 for the next one hour. This part of the broadcast was more significant as it fulfilled the song requests of the troops and reading and replying to their letters. The Dibrugarh station relayed the programme between 13:30 and 14:00. Except for three days when three exclusive programmes, namely, *Chayanika*, *Preet Ladee* and *Geet Rangeele* were aired in the evenings, four programmes from the afternoon schedule were placed in the evening schedule for the remaining four days of the week. The programmes were carefully thought of so as to include every possible genre of film music as depicted in the illustration shown above. Discussion of each programme has been dealt with great details in a subsequent chapter in this book.

### **Witness to the Change in Film Music Trends**

On one hand, Gauhati’s Troops Programme used to be the major source of entertainment for the

troops deployed in the north-eastern sector. On the other hand, this programme played a vital role in the promotion and dissemination of Hindi film music down the decades in a chronological fashion. Hindi film music was born in the year 1931 when the first talkie *Alam Ara* was released. Thirty-one years later, Gauhati's Troops' Programme came into existence in 1962. Since then, this broadcast, with utmost sincerity, has continued to feed its listeners with the vast reserve of film music, classified by genres, categories, classifications, and periods. With each passing year, new songs got incorporated into its different programmes and the genre-wise songs database kept on enriching. The changing trends of film music down the years and decades got well captured and noticed across the varied range of programmes.

When the programme started in 1962, film melody was queen. With passage of time, music went to become more and more louder and westernized. Needless to say, *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* got the highest number of song additions to its database down the decades, while the count of classical music-based songs in *Sangeet Madhuri* went down. Listening to *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Aap Ki Farmaish*, the popular chartbusters could be ascertained. Though these were not countdown shows like Ameen Sayani's *Geet Mala*, nevertheless, these programmes continued to give indications of the most popular songs of the period based on the choices from the *Jawans*. The weekly *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* on Friday afternoons and *Chayanika* on Monday evenings ensured that the listeners get to hear all songs from a recently released film. Over the years, these two programmes made the listeners witness the best and the rest of film music.

The change in the standard of lyrics of film songs could be easily felt through *Filmi Naghme* – the programme that played poetic songs of high lyrical content. Ghazals, nazms, mujras and other songs dominated by Urdu, Persian and Arabic origin words formed the basis of this programme. The 1950s and the 1960s were the decades when film music received the best lyrics. With image of the film hero changing in the 1970s from a soft-hearted poetic man to an angry and revolutionary young man who takes law in his own hands, the lyrics of the songs also had to undergo a change to match the character. And thus began the era of light-weight lyrics with louder music. Although ghazals and ghazal-type songs kept coming in films, the standard had certainly deteriorated, with obvious exceptions. The changing styles of qawwalis, devotional songs, folk-based songs could be easily noticed by the regular listeners.

The patriotic genre showed an interesting trend. While the patriotic songs until the early 1960s talked about India's struggle for independence and post-independence nation-building, the post Sino-Indian War songs of the 1960s started hinting at the neighbour's aggression. The western neighbour's repeated aggression also got captured in films quite a number of times and likewise in their songs. Songs belonging to this genre of the recent decades are based mainly on terrorism related plots. The weekly theme-based *Swar Chhaya* of Thursday afternoons was equally significant in capturing the changing trends over the decades from thematic point of view. For example, there have been countless songs written on "eyes" and "heart" over the decades and songs based on these themes have been included in *Swar Chhaya* frequently. However, the songs kept changing at every iteration. Their properties like the lyrical content, expression, weight, melody and singing style have changed with every passing era, and this got well-noticed in this programme. Songs of attraction, seduction and sensuousness formed the basis of *Geet Rangeele*. With concepts remaining the same, the lyrics and presentation became bolder down the years.

In a nutshell, Gauhati's Troops Programme has remained a witness to the changing trends in film

music for the last six decades.

### ***Prahar* – Troops Programme from Kurseong**

Alongside Gauhati’s Troops Programme, it is important to visit similar programmes broadcast from other stations of the region. Imphal’s programme for troops, which was started just after the War of 1965, has earlier been talked about in this book. The War of 1971 led to the start of a weekly programme for the troops from the Kurseong station of AIR. The reader might remember that Gauhati was chosen between Gauhati and Kurseong in 1962 for the first programme of the region meant for troops. Thus, it took almost a decade for Kurseong to get considered for this purpose. The half-hour programme on Tuesdays at 18:30 was entitled *Prahar*, the Guard, broadcast on shortwave 89.42 m. It was meant for infotainment of the *Jawans* posted in the chicken-neck region of the country. Chimi Angmo, one of the popular Hindi announcers of the station, used to present this programme. She also took part in many of the Hindi plays broadcast from the station. Although the accurate date of start of *Prahar* is unknown (the first reference could be found in Akashvani journal of 2 January 1972), it might be assumed to have begun sometime during or just after the War of 1971. The placement of the programme in the evening broadcast schedule is depicted in the table below. [130]

*Table 20: Prahar - Troops Programme from AIR Kurseong*

PLACEMENT OF TROOPS PROGRAMME IN AIR KURSEONG'S EVENING SCHEDULE							
Time	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
18:00 - 18:25	For Rural Listeners in Nepalese			For Tea Plantation Labourers (Nepalese)	For Rural Listeners in Nepalese	For Tea Plantation Labourers (Hindi)	For Rural Listeners in Nepalese
18:25 - 18:30	Daily Programme Summary & Local Announcements						
18:30 - 19:00	Classical Music (Vocal/ Instrumental)		<b>Prahar (for Troops)</b>	Classical Music (Vocal/ Instrumental)	Phir Sunno Hos (repeat of old progs)	Classical Music (Vocal/ Instrumental)	Guras Guchha Variety Prog in Nepalese

Kurseong station acted responsibly when it came to broadcast programmes glorifying the valour and sacrifices of the soldiers. On 14 February 1972, it broadcast a play in Hindi entitled *Jawan* at 19:35. Originally written in Bengali by Manmath Ray, it was adapted in Hindi by Mudra Rakshas. Produced by B. D. Mathur, artistes of the station, including Chimi Angmo, enacted the play. It was the story of two vagabond thieves who come to a house with an intention to steal. To fool the members of that household, they play a trick and pose themselves as trouble-stricken, would-be recruits to the army to fight the enemy in the national emergency. The unexpected and extraordinary hospitality extended to them by that intensely patriotic minded family, however, makes them change their minds and join the army as *Jawans* in reality. [131]

In 1983, *Prahar* became a twice-a-week programme, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 19:00 and 19:25 on 89.42 m. It is interesting to note that the Gangtok station that had started functioning on 1 October 1982 on 266.6 m aired Hindi film songs during the same time slot. [48] Both the stations having common areas of coverage, one on mediumwave and the other on shortwave, the two programmes must have experienced tough competition from each other from the viewpoint of listenership of the *Jawans*. On both the stations, the programmes were followed by the news bulletin in Nepalese originating from NSD, Delhi at 19:25. [132]

## Troops Programme from Kohima

Gauhati, Imphal and Kurseong were the three stations originating programme for the troops in the north-eastern region, with Siliguri, Agartala and Dibrugarh relaying Gauhati's programme partially. Kohima was the fourth station in the region to originate a request-based entertainment programme for the Armed Forces in 1977. The commissioning of Kohima station in 1963 and its broadcasting of musical performances by Assam Regiment *Jawans* has earlier been described in this book. It is surprising that it took almost 14 years for the station to start a regular programme for the *Jawans*. Until January 1977, there used to be a programme of listeners' requests from Hindi films between 14:30 and 15:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. From February, the programme was made exclusive for the Armed Forces. Thus, the general request-based programme became a special audience request-based programme. The afternoon broadcast schedule of Kohima to reflect this change is as tabulated below. [133] [134]

Table 21: Programme for Armed Forces from AIR Kohima

AIR KOHIMA - AFTERNOON TRANSMISSION IN FEBRUARY 1977							
Time	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12:30	Naga Devotional Music	School Broadcast					Modern Naga Melodies
13:00	News in English						
13:05	Lunch Hour Music (Programme of Western Music)						
13:30	Children's Programme	Lunch Hour Music (Programme of Western Music)					Women's Programme
14:00	News in English						
14:10	Film Music (Hindi)	Patriotic songs	Instrumental (Classical)	Vocal (Classical)	Vocal (Classical)	Instrumental (Western)	Instrumental (Classical)
14:30		Folk Songs of Other Regions	Request Prog. for Armed Forces	Request Prog. of Non-Film Records	Request Prog. for Armed Forces	Naga Melodies	Hits from the Past (Western)
15:00	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	School Broadcast
15:30							Close down

By October 1978, the programme appeared four times a week in the broadcast schedule with Saturdays and Sundays joining in. In May 1984, it was a daily programme at 13:05, thus completely overlapping with Gauhati's Troops Programme. [135]

## Gauhati versus Others

When Gauhati started its Troops Programme in 1962, Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar were the only three stations producing a similar programme. During the next twenty years, the list expanded with several other stations joining the league. Stations like Vividh Bharati, Rajkot, Ahmedabad-Baroda, Port Blair, Lucknow, Shimla, Imphal, Kohima, Kurseong, Leh, Rampur, Najibabad, Suratgarh, Bikaner, Vishakhapatnam began to entertain the Armed Forces. Later, Siliguri, North-Eastern Service Shillong, Patna, Ranchi, Kathua and Kargil also started entertaining the *Jawans*. With so many stations trying out their hands in this category of special audience programme as against the handful until the early 1960s, their exclusivity and significance started to matter. So, what was special about Gauhati's programme that made it stand ahead of the rest?

The foremost aspect that separated Gauhati from the rest is the daily duration of the broadcast. Although Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar had substantially increased the duration of this programme

during the 1960s as a result of the two major wars, the duration was later reduced. By the end of the 1970s, most of the programmes for troops were between 25 and 80 minutes a day. As compared to this, Gauhati's duration was 135 minutes. The greater duration made it possible for Gauhati to have a better structured schedule for the entertainment of the *Jawans*. While most of the stations focussed on playing songs requested by the troops or simply playing mixed film songs, barring few stations that were instrumental in organizing spot recordings or producing troops-specific content, Gauhati adopted a very different approach by specifically identifying different kinds of programmes categorized on the basis of different parameters, already described in a previous section. Gauhati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* was thus ahead of others, different from the rest, and truly away from the crowd.

At national level, Radio Ceylon and Vividh Bharati were the only two broadcasters that provided film music-based entertainment in their transmissions spread across the day. Though the duration of Gauhati's Troops Programme was insignificant as compared to the total duration these two channels would broadcast, nevertheless, Gauhati's compact 135 minutes was like a small-scale version of these two radio entertainment giants. If any local or regional station played a comparable volume of film music in that era, it was undoubtedly Gauhati's programme for troops. Moreover, the reception of Radio Ceylon and Vividh Bharati over shortwave was not extraordinary, if not poor. Availability of film songs in the afternoons on clean and clear mediumwave contributed to the popularity of Gauhati's programme.

# **PART TWO**

# 9. Ways of Working

Orchestration is a vital concept in every project execution. Even with the presence of a planned schedule and efficient human and technological resources, the absence of a definitive orchestration strategy may lead to the failure of the project. In relation to radio broadcasting, this orchestration is the Ways of Working implemented towards the execution of a programme. So far in this book, we have dealt with the origin, expansions, stabilized schedule, relays, and the team of Guwahati's Troops Programme. This chapter tries to look a little deeper into how the announcers worked towards the distribution of work amongst themselves, how their methodology worked towards enriching various programmes with songs, and how the casual announcers contributed to whatever capacities they could.

## Programme Distribution

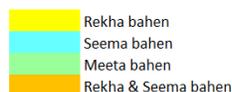
Generally, in an AIR station, the programmes are not fixed or hardcoded to the announcers unless there is a particular reason such as a person has conceptualized or produced it. That means every announcer could present any programme according to the maintained roster of the station. For example, the voices of all Vividh Bharati announcers could be heard in most of its programmes in different days of the week indicating that the distribution was based on the duty roster and not on the programmes. However, Gauhati's Troops Programme followed a different concept in handling of the different individual programmes within the broadcast. The programmes were distributed uniformly among the three regular announcers – Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen), Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen) and Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen). This meant that a particular programme would always be presented by a specific announcer. For example, *Geet Mala* was always presented by Rekha bahen, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* by Seema bahen, and *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* by Meeta bahen. It was only in the absence of one announcer that another announcer would take up her programmes. That would also follow a definitive guideline, described later in this chapter. Below table shows the distribution of programmes amongst the three announcers in normal situation when none of the announcers were on leave.

It may be observed that the total programme duration of the week was divided rather uniformly among the three presenters with Rekha bahen holding a 32.7% share (309 minutes a week), Seema bahen holding a share of 29.6% (280 minutes a week) and Meeta bahen holding the highest among all, a share of 36.6% amounting to 346 minutes per week. In addition, a 10-minute (1.1%) was a joint duration occupied by Rekha bahen and Seema bahen for replying to the letters of the *Jawans* in *Patrottar*. The table also indicates that all three presenters used to be on air on four days of the week – Mon, Tue, Wed and Sat. Each had a weekly off on a different day of the week to optimize and evenly spread out this absence. Rekha bahen had Sundays off, probably being the senior-most. Seema bahen's off day was Thursday while Meeta bahen used to have Fridays off. The surprising fact is that this set-up continued throughout their service lives, that is, neither their off days changed nor the distribution of programmes. It is highly praiseworthy of Seema bahen and Meeta

bahen that they never got a weekend off to spend the entire day with their families. This only speaks about their dedication and selflessness towards the service of the active servicemen.

Table 22: Programme distribution amongst the three regular announcers

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION AMONGST THE REGULAR ANNOUNCERS							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet		Prahasan			
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						



Interestingly, the pre-recorded 5-minute *Khaas Baaten* programme in the evening also followed a similar pattern in distribution. To give a feel of the presence of all three announcers on all seven days of the week, Sunday's *Khaas Baaten* would be presented by Rekha bahen, Thursday's instance by Seema bahen and Friday's instance by Meeta bahen even though they had weekly offs on these respective days. The day-wise share of duration of the Troops Programme and the net weekly share amongst themselves are illustrated below.

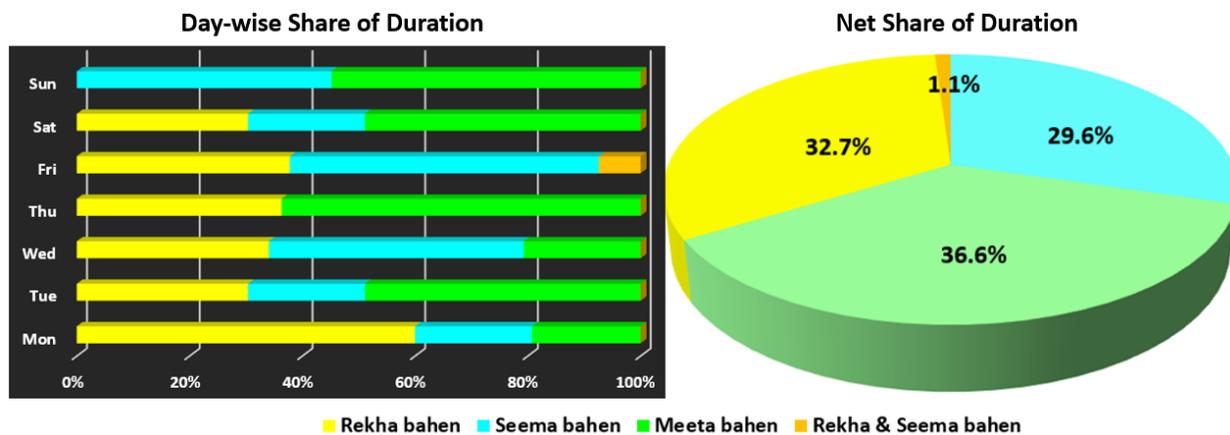


Illustration 7: Percentage share of programme duration amongst announcers

The pinning of programmes to the announcers had both positive and negative consequences. An announcer being made responsible for a programme ensured that she would own it like her baby and try to groom it, nurture it, and improve it with every passing week. She could systematically

include songs rotation-wise covering all decades, thus ensuring variety and lesser repetition. Being the programme owner, she would take accountability of the programme and continuously enhance the list of songs for that programme from her experience, knowledge, interest, memory, and listening to new songs that were released recently. In this way, the announcer would keep track of a particular programme and continuously enrich the list of songs. This approach must have helped with the creation of a huge song database for each individual programme over the decades. Even now when the present-day announcers play certain songs, the veteran listeners could immediately associate them with one of those three announcers who had once taken the pain to create the rich databases.

The negative impact of the fixture of a programme to a particular announcer was that the programme was solely under the influence of one announcer. In other words, the likes and dislikes of the announcer dominated the songs chosen for a particular programme. Since the taste might vary from person to person, so, unless the announcer was truly unbiased and neutral while selecting songs for the programmes, it was quite possible that the listeners would tend to have a feeling of monotony in the programmes. The importance of ‘Job Rotation’ as adopted in most corporate organizations comes into play here. Changing the announcer of a programme in rotation or from time to time, could have added more variety into the programmes and also would have made them more interesting due to the induced unpredictability. This single-handedness of programmes for decades resulted in certain songs never getting played in the programmes and some songs getting more attention than that they actually deserved. Out of the huge list of such unnoticed songs, one song that instantly comes to my mind is the patriotic number from the film *Prem Pujari* (1970) – ‘*prem ke pujari hum hain...*’. Despite the song bringing out the greatness of the Indians and the Indian culture, the Himalayas, the Ganges and so on, this song was never played, at least I never heard, in the *Watan Ke Taraane* programme meant for such songs.

### **Creation of Song Databases**

The genre and category-based programme structure and fixed ownership of each programme led to the creation of song databases for each programme that got enriched with the arrival of gramophone record of every new film. As a listener, it was perceived that gramophone records used to arrive at the station in bunches and not one record at a time. The reason for this perception was due to the sudden appearance of “never played before” songs from several films together, mostly new releases. Every song present on a received gramophone record at the station was scanned not only for its content suitability but also for its classification on the basis of its genre and thus its applicability for a certain programme.

There were some generic rules followed in this exercise. Songs that became hugely popular and for which frequent requests came from the *Jawans*, or in other words, songs that had to be frequently played in *Aaj ka Geet*, *Aap Ki Farmaish* and *Geet Mala* were rarely made part of other programmes to prevent their overdoses. This made lesser-heard songs to be played equally in rest of the programmes. This was a very clever and justified decision at Gauhati, otherwise, most other stations were keen on playing mostly the popular songs in their limited duration programmes. Gauhati was capable in bringing out both popular and lesser-heard numbers of each film. To understand this, let us take the example of the songs of the blockbuster film *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960). The most popular number ‘*jab pyar kiya to darna kya*’ was frequently played in *Geet Mala*,

the programme of old song requests. So, it was spared from the non-request programmes of mixed melodies like *Sabrang*. The classical-based number ‘*mohe panghat pe nandlal chhed gayo re*’ was added to *Sangeet Madhuri*, the two qawwalis, viz., ‘*teri mehfil mein qismat aazma kar hum bhi dekhenge*’ and ‘*ye dil ki lagi kam kya hogi*’ were added to *Majlis-e-Qawwali*, ‘*bekas pe karam keejiye sarkaar-e-madeena*’ got place in *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, while ‘*ae ishq ye sab duniya wale*’ could be heard in *Filmi Naghme*.

Over the years, the same rule remained intact. Let us analyse this with yet another film, *Kudrat*, that was released twenty years after *Mughal-e-Azam*. There were two versions of the popular number ‘*hamein tumse pyar kitna ye ham naheen jaante*’ – one by Kishore Kumar and another by Parveen Sultana. The former was made part of *Filmi Naghme* and the latter, which was a classical style rendition, was added to the database of *Sangeet Madhuri*. I vaguely remember having heard ‘*tune o rangeele kaisa jadoo kiya*’ in either *Sabrang* or in *Saaz Aur Awaaz*. The ghazal-style ‘*sajti hai yunhi mehfil rang yunhi dhalne do*’ used to be frequently played in *Filmi Naghme* while the westernized dance number ‘*chhodo sanam kaahe ka gham*’ was obviously part of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai*. The philosophical title song of the film ‘*sukh dukh ki har ik mala kudrat hi piroti hai*’ used to be played in *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*.

One important observation about the classification of songs is that a song was rarely included in two programmes to lower the probability of its frequent repetition. For instance, the classical-based spiritual number ‘*mann re tu kaahe na dheer dhare*’ (*Chitralkha*) was included in *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* but not in *Sangeet Madhuri*. The latter would rather have other classical-based numbers of the film. The Raag Malkauns-based ‘*mann tarapat hari darshan ko aaj*’ (*Baiju Bawra*) was placed in *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* while it was equally qualified for *Sangeet Madhuri*. Conversely, the devotional number ‘*bade bhole ho, hanste ho sunke duhaai, kanhaai*’ (*Ardhangini*) used to get played in *Sangeet Madhuri* and not in *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*. This must have been possible due to a good coordination among the three announcers. Their mutual understanding ensured that all songs of a film got uniformly distributed across the programmes and at the same time not getting repeated across multiple programmes.

With time, the song databases got appended with the entry of every new gramophone record. When the three announcers retired, these song databases proved to be priceless assets of the station that are still being referred to by the present announcers while selecting songs for a programme. Today, these databases speak volumes about the dedicated work done by them, which also throw light on the evolutionary journey of Hindi film music.

### **Programme Distribution during Absence**

During normal situations, when all three announcers were on duty, the programme distribution used to be like the one depicted previously in this chapter. However, the absence of one announcer due to leave or vacation would lead to rearrangement and temporary redistribution of programmes amongst the other two along with the participation of casual announcers. There was a definitive rule followed for absence management as well. On a normal day involving three announcers, the absence of one announcer didn’t invite the participation of a casual announcer. It was only in the event of at least two regular announcers being unavailable on a day that the services of casual announcer(s) was/were sought. This was more relevant for Sundays, Thursday and Fridays that

had two regular announcers on duty in normal situation. If one announcer was unavailable on these three days, then a casual announcer would be made available. Interestingly, it never happened in the history of this programme that the off days of the regular announcers were changed based on the unavailability of one or more regular announcer(s). It would be interesting to look at how the programmes used to be re-distributed amongst the available presenters when one or more of them were on leave. Below three tables summarize this rearrangement.

Table 23: Programme distribution in absence of Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen)

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION IN ABSENCE OF REKHA BAHEN							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat	Aapki Farmaish	Prahasan			
13:50		3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00			Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Seema bahen alone or with another announcer
	Casual announcer

Table 24: Programme distribution in absence of Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen)

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION IN ABSENCE OF SEEMA BAHEN							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat	Aapki Farmaish	Prahasan			
13:50		3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00			Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Rekha bahen alone or with another announcer
	Casual announcer

Table 25: Programme distribution in absence of Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen)

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION IN ABSENCE OF MEETA BAHEN							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Prahasan			
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Casual announcer
	Rekha & Seema bahen

In the absence of two regular announcers, the programme distribution would look like as below.

Table 26: Programme distribution in absence of two Regular Announcers

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION IN ABSENCE OF TWO REGULAR ANNOUNCERS							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune	Opening Annc. & Band Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Prahasan			
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

	Regular Announcer
	Casual Announcer-1
	Casual Announcer-2
	Casual Announcer -1 & 2 or a recorded version with one Regular and one Casual Announcer

## Role of Casual Announcers

In any film, there are lead actors and there are supporting actors. While the lead actors represent the hero, heroine and related characters, the supporting actors are mainly character artists. Although the leads get the maximum attention and popularity, the supporting actors, although

lesser recognized, play significant roles in the story. Without character artists, no story would be complete. Same goes with the casual announcers of AIR at each station who step in when regular announcers are unavailable for programme presentation. Like all stations, the Hindi section of AIR Gauhati have also witnessed a huge number of casual announcers since beginning who have contributed towards the popularity and success of this programme over the decades.

All announcers at AIR used to begin their career as casual announcers. It was entirely only on requirement basis that positions of regular announcers were filled up through screening tests. All the three regular announcers, viz. Rekha bahen, Seema bahen and Meeta bahen, had entered AIR Gauhati as casual announcers, who were later absorbed as regulars through tests and availability of position for the same. [108] Thus, it was both qualification and fortune that governed any announcer's regularization. This, however, didn't mean that other casual announcers were any less qualified for the role. From time to time, many casual announcers have graced this programme with their way of presentation whenever the regulars were absent. It is now nearly impossible to obtain the names and details of the casual announcers of those early years of this programme. However, names of at least two casual announcers could be unearthed while going through the pages of Akashvani journal. One of them was **Inder Bala**, who was active during the 1960s, and another was **Madhu Bala Sood**, who the listeners heard in and around the mid-1970s. [136] [137]

On certain occasions, casual announcers also got the opportunity to read out the letters of the *Jawans* in *Patrottar* section and for which they were also given "radio names" just like those given to the regular announcers. One such name was **Sushma bahen**, who coincidentally happened to be my distant relative. She had a short tenure at AIR Gauhati during the mid-1980s as a casual announcer. She had to leave radio after securing a permanent job in the public sector since multiple public sector jobs weren't allowed.

Although a casual announcer could be from either gender, it was observed that most of them were ladies. It complimented the brother-sister concept with *Jawans* as brothers and announcers as their sisters. Nevertheless, several male casual announcers have contributed to the Troops Programme from time to time. One of the significant names is **Dr. A. H. Akela**, who is currently known by Dr. Akelabhai. He was active at AIR Gauhati as a casual announcer between 1986 and 1989 before being transferred as a regular announcer at the newly started *Purvottar Seva* (North-Eastern Service, NES) of AIR based at Shillong. His tenure at Gauhati might have been short and spotty, his contribution towards the setting up of NES and popularizing it was phenomenal, which also included *Jay Jawan*, yet another programme for troops in the North-East. More about *Jay Jawan* in a latter chapter. Awarded with Bharatendu Harishchandra Award 2009 by the Publications Division, Ministry of I&B, Government of India for his book *Radio, Sahitya Aur Patrakarita*, Dr. Akelabhai has been a renowned name in the Hindi circle of North-East due to his immense contribution towards the promotion and proliferation of the language in this remote part of the country, which is heavily dominated by tribal population. When asked about his experiences with regard to AIR Guwahati's Troops Programme, he could distinctly recall his first day experience at the station presenting this programme. He said, "At 12:30 pm on 3 June 1986, I executed my first duty at AIR Guwahati in the presence of Senior Announcer Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen). The programme was 'Aaj Ka Geet', and the song was 'sachcha pyar to jhuk nahin sakta dil ki umang ye kehti hai' (Umang). The beautiful memories of that first presentation are still very close to my heart. Programme Executive Sukhdev Shastri came inside the studio and appreciated me." [138] I still remember having listened to Akelabhai and Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen) presenting

*Patrottar* in the absence of Rekha bahen and Seema bahen on a Friday in the late 1980s. Meeta bahen had addressed him as ‘*Akela bhai*’ in the programme. The difference between ‘*Akela bhai*’ and ‘*Akelabhai*’ should be noted here. The *bhai* in ‘*Akela bhai*’ indicated his relationship with the *Jawans* and other announcers of the station. When he joined NES in 1989, I had received a Programme Guide from the station signed by him as A. H. Akela. It has been interesting to learn that later he had officially changed his name to ‘*Akelabhai*’.

Dr. Akelabhai attributes his success as a broadcaster and a litterateur to his *guru* Dr Maharaj Krishna Jain, the founder of *Kahani Lekhan Mahavidyalaya*. Referring to his *guru*, Dr. Akelabhai said, “*I got the company of Dr. Maharaj Krishna Jain in the year 1976 when I was an undergraduate student. The father of one of my classmates was a poet and I was greatly influenced by him. It was at his residence that I met Madan Mohan Srivastava, a student of Kahani Lekhan Mahavidyalaya and through him I got associated with this college. I did a course in the art of story writing and journalism. Slowly I started knowing about Dr. Jain. The biggest thing in him was that he used to reply to every letter and at the end he used to write – ‘anya seva likhen’ (let me know for any other service). Recently, my wife was getting the house cleaned. Meanwhile, a letter written by Dr. Jain on 8 August 1986 came to the fore and I was overwhelmed with emotion. I read the letter again and again, many times. It seemed that this letter was not written about 32 years ago, but only yesterday. The letter was actually the reply to my letter that I had written to him after being selected as Casual Announcer at AIR Guwahati in May 1986. In his reply, he blessed me saying that I would gradually become permanent. And his blessings came to fruition, and I got a permanent appointment on 5 April 1989 as a Regular Announcer in the North-Eastern Service of AIR. I give credit for this to Dr. Jain. He has encouraged me many times with such positive words. To reach the place where I am today, his inspiring invisible power has always motivated me. This is a matter of faith and belief.*” [138]

**Madhu Maheshwari** is another important name among the casual announcers, who served AIR Guwahati between 1989 and 2014. Recalling her association with the *Troops* programme, Madhu Maheshwari said, “*Radio was not my dream, however, when I used to listen to presenters like Ameen Sayani and Tabassum presenting Binaca Geet Mala and other programmes, I too wished I could ‘enter’ (yes, that’s the word we used) into radio. After completing my studies, I became a college lecturer in Political Science. After marriage, I migrated from Bareilly to Guwahati. I was always fond of radio. One day, while listening to this Troops programme, I came across an announcement that there is a need for casual announcers. I applied and became a part of it. And then did I realize that it was actually my dream that I have been carrying with me subconsciously.*” It was a coincidence that both Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen) and Madhu Maheshwari belonged to Bareilly. More interestingly, the two had met while travelling in a City Bus in Gauhati. “*I met Bimlesh ji in a City Bus; she was sitting next to me. When she told me that she was working with AIR, I was so much excited as I had a deep love for radio. In 1989, when I myself joined the Troops Programme, I really felt proud sharing studio with her. She was very sincere at her work and was very much cooperative. Later I came to know that we both belonged to the same city, Bareilly.*”, Madhu Maheshwari said. So, how was her journey at AIR Guwahati? “*I was active on radio from 1989 to 2019 in various roles like Announcer, Talker, Interviewer, and Translator. I received affinity, love, identity, and existence from radio. Undoubtedly, it was my hard work, but radio gave wings to my labour. When Nath Sir (the then Programme Executive) used to tell that my presentation gave a feeling of Vividh Bharati, I would become immensely happy. I learnt a lot from Bimlesh ji, Tapasi ji and Sadhana ji. They were not my ‘madams’, but elder sisters.*” [139] As an

active listener during the period served by Mrs. Maheshwari, I developed high regards for her in my heart because of her good pronunciation and effective presentation skills. Undoubtedly, she has been one of the best casual announcers associated with Guwahati's Troops Programme.

Like Dr. Akelabhai and Madhu Maheshwari, there has been many casual announcers making sure the continuity of the programme in the absence of regular announcers down the decades. Until the end of the previous century, the requirement of casual announcers used to be comparatively less due to the presence of three regular announcers. It was only after the retirement of Rekha bahen that the participation of casual announcers got increased many times. This will be evident from the discussion presented in a latter chapter in this book.



*Photo 4: (from top left in clockwise direction) Inder Bala, Madhu Bala Sood, Madhu Maheshwari, Dr. Akelabhai (Photographs of Inder Bala and Madhu Bala Sood obtained from Akashvani journal, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B. Photographs of Dr. Akelabhai and Madhu Maheshwari obtained from their personal collection with consent.)*

# 10. Melodies and Memories

Although the programme schedule, various segments of the programme and brief descriptions of some of them have been touched upon earlier in the book, an in-depth analysis of each segment and their content is necessary to make the reader aware of how the various segments sounded qualitatively. This, in turn, would serve as evidence towards the claim of immense popularity of the programme. As a regular, consistent, and caring listener from the very early 1980s to early 2000s, the listening experiences, careful observations, and analysis of various aspects of the programme have been immensely useful to write this chapter in great detail. The sections of this chapter are the various segments of the Troops Programme. Each section talks about the content, the songs, important background and information, interesting trivia, and worth sharing listening experiences. At the completion of this chapter, the reader will have a clear and in-depth idea of how Guwahati's Troops Programme sounded to the listeners over the decades. The present status of each segment is also mentioned along with sample lists of songs from recently concluded broadcasts. The bird-eye view of the various programme segments broadcast under the Troops Programme may be summarized in table below.

Table 27: Bird-eye view of various segments of Guwahati's Troops Programme

TROOPS PROGRAMME SEGMENTS		
Name of Programme Segments		Content Type
<i>Aaj Ka Geet</i>	Song of the Day	One song on multiple requests from <i>Jawans</i>
<i>Aap Ki Farmaish</i>	Your Requests	Film songs on requests from <i>Jawans</i>
<i>Geet Mala</i>	Garland of Songs	Old film songs on requests from <i>Jawans</i>
<i>Patrottar</i>	Listeners' Letters	Reading and replying to letters from <i>Jawans</i>
<i>Sangeet Madhuri</i>	Sweet Melodies	Film songs based on Indian Classical Music
<i>Watan Ke Taraane</i>	Songs of the Nation	Patriotic songs from films
<i>Chayanika</i>	Selections	Songs from one or two films
<i>Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan</i>	Songs of Devotion	Devotional songs from films
<i>Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi</i>	Our Songs, Their Music	Film songs based on foreign music
<i>Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet</i>	Songs of a Singer	Solo songs of one singer
<i>Panghat</i>	Rural Rhythm	Film songs based on Indian folk tunes
<i>Sheershak Sangeet</i>	Title Tracks	Title songs from films
<i>Bhoole Bisre Geet</i>	Old and Forgotten	Lesser-heard film songs
<i>Sabrang</i>	All Colours	Mixed melodies from films
<i>Filmi Naghme</i>	Musical Poetry	Film songs with poetic flavour
<i>Pradeshik Sangeet</i>	Regional Music	Film and Non-film Regional and folk songs of India
<i>Preet Ladee</i>	Love Songs	Duets from films
<i>Hai Zindagi Pukaarti</i>	Life Calls	Philosophical songs from films

<i>Saaz Aur Awaaz</i>	Vocals and Instrumentals	Film songs and their instrumentals
<i>Raag Rang</i>	Lyricists and Composers	Film songs of one lyricist or composer
<i>Tarannum</i>	Rendition	Non-film ghazals
<i>Swar Chhaya</i>	Show Theme	Thematic film songs
<i>Prahasan</i>	Skit	Skits and short plays
<i>Geet Rangeele</i>	Colourful Songs	Film songs of <i>Shringaar Rasa</i>
<i>Ek Hi Film Ke Geet</i>	Film of the Week	Songs from one film
<i>Swar Sangam</i>	Confluence of Voices	Film songs with chorus
<i>Geet Manoranjan</i>	Songs of Humour	Film songs in lighter vein
<i>Majlis-e-Qawwali</i>	The Qawwali Mehfil	Qawwalis from films
<i>Ek Aur Anek</i>	One with Others	Film songs of a singer with other co-singers

### Opening Announcement

The joint second transmission of Gauhati-B and C would begin at 12:00 with Vividh Bharati's tape recorded programme *Chitrapat Sangeet* (*Gaurav Gaan* at 11:30 on Sundays). At 12:30, the general announcer would make the closing announcement of VBS programme in Assamese and flag off the Troops Programme with below announcement.

“ইমান পৰে শ্ৰোতা সকলে ব্ৰিটিছ ভাৰতীৰ অনুষ্ঠান 'চিত্ৰপট সংগীত' শুনিলে। এয়া আকাশবাণী গুৱাহাটী। এতিয়া নিবেদন কৰা হৈছে সৈন্য বাহিনীৰ উদ্দেশ্যে প্ৰচাৰিত অনুষ্ঠান।”

*“You have been listening to Vividh Bharati's programme 'Chitrapat Sangeet'. This is Akashvani Gauhati. We now bring you programme for the troops.”*

The Hindi announcer would then begin *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* with below announcement or with a slight variation of words:

“ये आकाशवाणी का गुवाहाटी केन्द्र है, मीडियम वेव दो सौ नवासी दशमलव नौ और शॉर्ट वेव इकतालीस दशमलव छह नौ मीटर पर। इस समय दिन के साढ़े बारह बजे हैं, अब सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम आरम्भ होता है।”

*“This is Akashvani Guwahati station, (broadcasting) on mediumwave 289.9 and shortwave 41.69 meters. It is 12:30 of the day, and now begins the Troops programme.”*

### The Signature Military Band Tune

The opening announcement at 12:30 would be followed by a Military Band tune that served the purpose of signature tune for the programme. During British rule, broadcast of military band music was regular affair on all stations of AIR. Such programmes further increased during the WWII. However, after independence, there was drastic reduction in such broadcasts. Although Delhi,

Jammu and Srinagar were among the handful of stations airing *Fauji Band*, the occurrences were minimal. Just before the Sino-Indian War, the two stations that were regularly broadcasting band music on weekly basis were Hyderabad (on Sundays between 08:30 and 08:35) and Poona (on Saturdays between 18:00 and 18:05). The Sino-Indian War led to an appreciable increase in the broadcast of military band music, marching tunes, and marching songs on many stations of AIR. During the entire emergency period, many martial tunes were composed by the military and the police bands and also by the AIR *Vaadya Vrind*. It is possible that AIR Gauhati chose one among such band tunes that it either produced itself or received centrally, for its Troops Programme that has continued to stay attached to it till date. The tune is a military band instrumental version of the Bengali motivational cum nationalistic song:

“হও ধর্মেতে ধীর, হও কর্মেতে বীর, হও উন্নত শির, নাহি ভয়।  
ভুলি ভেদাভেদ জ্ঞান, হও সবে আগুয়ান, সাথে আছে ভগবান, হবে জয়।”

**Transliteration:**

“hao dharmete dheer, hao karmete beer, hao unnato shir, naahi bhoy  
bhooli bhedaabhed gyan, hao shobe aaguyan, saathe aachhe bhagabaan hobe joy.”

**Translation:**

“Be deterministic in your path of duties, be brave in your deeds, be a better person, don't be afraid. Forgetting all discrimination, look ahead, the Almighty is with you, victory will be yours”.

Penned by Atul Prasad Sen, the famous Bengali composer, lyricist, singer, lawyer, philanthropist, social worker, educationalist and writer, this song is among the many patriotic and nationalistic songs he penned to awaken nationalism in colonial India. This song was also adopted by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, (LBSNAA) as the academy song of the institute. [140]

The military band version of this song has been the signature tune of Gauhati's Troops Programme and continues to be so. Generally, a signature tune is something that is short and crisp, which can be played in its entirety at the beginning and end of a programme. However, this tune being the instrumental of a complete song, the duration is not less than few minutes making it unusual to qualify for the signature tune of a radio programme. It can be assumed that a signature tune was not specifically created for the Troops Programme, but the existing military band version of the mentioned nationalistic song was chosen to serve the purpose of title music. At the beginning of the programme, approximately one minute of the tune used to be played. However, it was not necessary that it was played from the start every day. Different portions of the tune got played on different days depending on the announcer playing it. Even the last part of the tune till its end could be heard occasionally. When the tune was played at the end of the programme, the duration used to be only for few seconds due to lack of time. Ever since digitization has taken place, the tune has started to get played from an audio file. This has resulted in the tune getting played from the starting point every day. In other words, almost the same part gets played on a daily basis nowadays. This was not the case previously and over a period of time, a regular listener could

listen to the complete tune with different portions on different days.

Today, the veteran listeners of the Troops Programme find this band tune nostalgic that refreshes the melodious memories of this programme every time they listen to the tune. For the last sixty-one years, the tune has been reverberating twice a day over the airwaves of AIR Guwahati.

### *Aaj Ka Geet*

Following the opening announcement and the military band tune indicating the start of the programme, the first offering would begin at 12:31 in the form of the daily segment *Aaj Ka Geet*, translating to ‘*Song of the Day*’.

Table 28: Broadcast schedule of *Aaj Ka Geet* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of AAJ KA GEET during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenters</b>
Daily	12:31	12:37	Meeta bahen (M,T,Th,Sa,S); Rekha bahen (W), Seema bahen (F)

Launched sometime during the mid-1970s, it had replaced *Ek Kahaani Ek Geet* as discussed previously. The purpose of *Aaj Ka Geet* was to play a film song that earned multiple simultaneous requests from the troops’ listeners. In other words, the most popular songs of the period would get played in this programme and the selection criteria was multiple requests received from the *Jawans* within a short period of time. The inclusion of this segment was not for the sake of keeping it, but it was the need of the hour. The enormous influx of letters of song requests led to its conceptualization that basically served two purposes. One was to showcase the most popular songs, thus making the segment more interesting. Listeners would wait to hear their names in the long list. At times, it would take almost the same time to read out the names as the duration of the song itself. The other motivation was to control to certain extent the frequent repetition of songs. Bundling multiple requests of the same song reduced the number of plays, thus reducing monotony and overdose of the same songs over and over again.

*Aaj Ka Geet* was presented the most by Meeta bahen on five days of the week – Mon, Tue, Thu, Sat, and Sun. The Wednesday and Friday editions were presented by Rekha bahen and Seema bahen respectively. This indicates the effort Meeta bahen had to put in to classify and organize the song requests from the heap of letters. During my interactions with Seema bahen and Meeta bahen at AIR Gauhati in 2009, I got to know from them that every song request used to get entered in the register to keep track of the fulfilment of the requests. The number of letters received from the listeners rose to such an extent that a dedicated clerk had to be appointed who would simply open the letters and help with updating the register. This position was later moved to a different programme unit after which the three presenters used to select letters for *Aaj Ka Geet* by themselves. [112]

Another notable aspect of *Aaj Ka Geet* was the honesty with which it used to be prepared and presented. Generally, in most of the request-based programmes of AIR stations which received huge quantity of requests, the presenters would select handful of songs from the received requests. However, it was not necessary that the names spoken out with those song requests had actually

requested them. In other words, there was hardly any correlation between the songs and their requesters. This was the case at most stations as I could establish after talking to some announcers and also from my own experiences as a listener requesting songs in such programmes. In the pre-computer era, it is understood that it was practically impossible to sort the names according to requests. However, with introduction of computerized broadcast systems, it was no longer an impossible task to manage the situation with simple spreadsheet applications that have sorting and filtering functions. The stations didn't take that path and the same old practice of randomly including names with "any" song continued. The reason for mentioning this point here is to bring out the honesty of AIR Gauhati presenters in the way *Aaj Ka Geet* was handled. They could also have followed a similar practice and take the names of troops listeners randomly. Thankfully, they didn't do that. The songs were sorted sincerely, and it was ensured that names of listeners actually requesting the song were included. *Aaj Ka Geet* got huge popularity until the early 1990s. The change observed post mid-1990s has been described later in this book.

Since *Aaj Ka Geet* was a one song segment, it wasn't bounded by a time limit. That is, the duration was flexible, and the song was allowed to get completed even if it was of a longer duration. This, however, had an impact on the duration of the next programme, which would usually start at 12:36 or 12:37. A long duration of *Aaj Ka Geet* would mean a reduction in the duration of the next programme that had an upper cut-off limit at 13:05 due to the news bulletin. The impact was mainly felt in the weekly *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* on Fridays that required all songs of a film getting played. Hence, Seema bahen would try to find a song with the minimal duration for Friday's *Aaj Ka Geet*. This was manageable since both *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* were in Seema bahen's kitty. I still remember the frequent inclusion of the 4-minute song 'nafrat ki duniya ko chhod ke pyar ki duniya mein khush rehna mere yaar' (*Haathi Mere Saathi*) or the 4:10 minute 'koyal boli duniya doli' (*Sargam*) in Friday's *Aaj Ka Geet*. At the same time, if the film chosen for *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* had lesser number of songs, the song chosen for *Aaj Ka Geet* would be of longer duration so as to cover up the duration until 13:05. One such long-duration song used to be 'tu jab mujhko pukaare, main daudi aaun nadiya kinaare' (*Kurbaan*) which is of more than 9-minute duration.

With regard to the song details read out by the announcers at Vividh Bharati and Radio Ceylon, they would include the film title, name(s) of the singer(s), lyricist, and music composer of each song. However, AIR Gauhati chose to mention only the name of the film and the singers. Yet, *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* were the only two programmes in which the names of the lyricists and composers were also mentioned. *Aaj Ka Geet* is still in place, though not request-based anymore, and its broadcast time has remained the same, daily at 12:30.

### ***Aap Ki Farmaish and Geet Mala***

The two other request-based programmes, viz. *Aap Ki Farmaish* and *Geet Mala* were mentioned earlier in the book. The former had started since the inception of the Troops Programme in 1962 while the latter was started two years later in 1964 to specifically play old film songs on requests.

*Table 29: Broadcast schedule of Aap Ki Farmaish and Geet Mala during 1980s*

<b>Broadcast Schedule of AAP KI FARMAISH during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenters</b>
Wed, Fri, Sat	13:10	13:50	Rekha bahen (Fri, Sat), Seema bahen (Wed)

Sun	13:10	14:00	Seema bahen
<b>Broadcast Schedule of GEET MALA during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Mon	13:10	13:50	Rekha bahen

The overall plan of playing requested songs is highlighted in the table below with demarcation of announcer presenting each instance.

Table 30: Request-based segments of Guwahati's Troops Programme

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM - REQUEST-BASED PROGRAMMES							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghmen	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet
13:50		2 - Panghat					
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladde	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghmen	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

Rekha bahen
  Seema bahen
  Meeta bahen

The percentage share of net request-based programmes out of the total broadcast duration and the percentage share of each announcer presenting them showed interesting figures as depicted in illustrations below. As observed, 252 minutes (27%) of the total 945 minutes per week was reserved for fulfilling of song requests. These 252 minutes were again distributed amongst the three presenters in the ratio shown on the right side of the illustration. Rekha bahen, being the senior-most, held the largest share of 50%, while the remaining 50% was distributed between Seema bahen and Meeta bahen in almost 3:1 ratio, again governed by the seniority.

It is equally interesting to note the comparison between the duration of request-based programmes for the troops and that for civilian listeners. While the troops enjoyed 252 minutes a week for their requests, the general listeners had to satisfy themselves with 130 minutes of *Kalpataru* (Sun, Wed, Fri between 12:00 and 12:30, and Mon, Thu between 20:25 and 20:45). Thus, the troops had the privilege of having almost double the duration of request-based songs as compared to general listeners, which was truly justified due to the nature of their job profile and sacrifices.

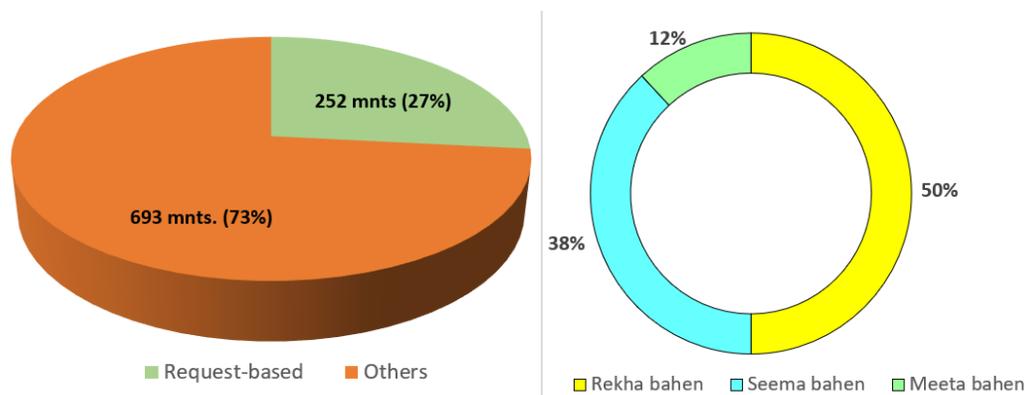


Illustration 8: Percentage share of request-based segments and distribution amongst announcers

*Aap Ki Farmaish* was meant for moderate to new age songs while *Geet Mala* was for old songs. The Wednesday edition of *Aap Ki Farmaish* used to mostly include moderately new songs while the rest of the three editions were mostly based on new songs with obvious exceptions. It was ensured that each edition of the two programmes included requests from the maximum number of *Jawans*. That means, if there were seven songs to be played, those would be from seven different *Jawans*. It was however not a rigid rule and often multiple songs requested by one listener would get played, especially in *Geet Mala* and in Sunday's *Aap Ki Farmaish* which was of a longer duration than the rest. The three request-based programmes together played a major role in the entertainment of the *Jawans* posted at far flung areas of the region over the decades by fulfilling their requests of favourite songs for which there was no source other than radio in that era.

When I started listening to radio in early 1980s, *Geet Mala* used to include songs that were released until around the mid-1960s. Towards the end of the decade, it was like a thumb rule that songs until the 1960s were played in *Geet Mala*, songs of the 1970s were mostly included in Wednesday's *Aap Ki Farmaish*, whereas the other three instances of *Aap Ki Farmaish* mostly included newer songs of late 1970s and the 1980s. I still remember that during the early 1990s, one *Jawan* had once requested to play one song of his choice from the 1984 film *Love Story* in *Geet Mala* programme to which Rekha bahen had replied in *Patrottar* that the song would be played in *Aap Ki Farmaish* since it was not an old song. The oldness and newness of a song is a rather relative concept. It entirely depends on the perception and the age of the person. The songs of 1960s were played in *Geet Mala* during the 1980s. From this angle, the songs of 1990s are equally qualified to be played in the programme today. However, this is neither the case nor it should be. Fortunately, *Geet Mala* has retained its vintage look as the present announcers generally choose to play songs mostly from the 50s, 60s and 70s decades.

Which were the songs that received the all-time highest number of requests? I had asked this question to Seema bahen and Meeta bahen during my visit to the station. The answer was interesting. The *Jawans* used to send frequent requests for the songs of the film *Nadiya Ke Paar* (1982) and *Aakraman* (1975). The reason was not just their liking for the songs of these films. Actually, AIR Guwahati didn't have the songs of *Nadiya Ke Paar* that resulted in the repeated requests for its songs. The station tried its level best to get the gramophone record of this film and every time the name of this film was included in the song requisition list; however, it was never received. The case of *Aakraman* was different though. Someone accidentally broke its gramophone record. The re-requisition of this record met the same fate as *Nadiya Ke Paar*. It was never received

and the *Jawans* kept requesting to play ‘*ye mausam aaya hai kitne saalon mein*’ over and over again. And every time, the presenters of *Patrottar* would cut short a sorry face. [112] ‘*sandese aate hain*’ (*Border*, 1997) was another hugely popular song among the *Jawans* for obvious reason. There was a ban on playing of the songs of certain films during a certain period, probably due to a rights or royalty issue with the related music company. For this and several other songs in the batch, the announcer in *Patrottar* would suggest the *Jawans* to wait for some time for the ban to get lifted from all such songs.

Songs used to be received by the station in batches. Sometimes it so happened that the record of a film took a long time to reach the station for various reasons. This would accumulate song requests at the station and at times, it took several years to fulfil those requests. One good example of this scenario was that of the film *Sanam Bewafa*. Although it was a 1991 film, the songs reached the Guwahati station only towards the end of the decade. Seema bahen recalled that all the requests for its songs were safely secured and it was ensured that all requests, many of which were years old, were fulfilled. For several weeks in *Aap Ki Farmaish* after the songs were received, songs like ‘*choodi maza na degi, kangan maza na dega*’ and ‘*mujhe allah ki qasam tumse pyar ho gaya*’ were played with a huge list of names of the requesting *Jawans*. *Aap Ki Farmaish* had eventually turned into *Aaj Ka Geet*!

Another aspect was the receipt of only one song of a film rather than the complete album. Whenever such a song was played in the programme, listeners would quickly request other songs of the same film. Many would also request to include that film in *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*. In such cases, it was informed in *Patrottar* that they had received only that particular song along with other songs of another film on that gramophone record. Two such songs that I remember were ‘*tumse milna milkar chalna achchha lagta hai*’ (*Amaanat*, 1994) and ‘*saanwli salauni teri jheel si aankhen*’ (*Hum Sab Chor Hain*, 1995). Other songs from these two films never saw the light of the day in the Troops Programme.

A list of popular songs from 300 films has been provided in [Appendix-I](#) at the end of this book, which gives an idea of the songs that used to get frequently played in *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Aap Ki Farmaish* during the period of early 1980s till the early 1990s. The list has been prepared solely from my own listening experience and memories of these programmes.

### ***Patrottar***

Replying to the letters of the *Jawans* has been in place since the very beginning of the Troops Programme. It was during November 1963 that *Aap Ki Farmaish Aur Patron Ke Uttar* of Wednesdays and Sundays was split into *Aap Ki Farmaish* on the same days and a separate section entitled *Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Patron Ke Uttar* on Friday afternoons. The format of the latter as *Chacha Bhateeja* has earlier been discussed. After O. P Tandon left Gauhati, this format was called off and the *Chacha Bhateeja* pairing got replaced by the sister-brother concept, the announcers being the sisters and the *Jawans* being the brothers. After Manjula Shah left, Bimlesh Arya and Tapasi Sengupta took over this segment and their Rekha bahen – Seema bahen pair became immensely popular in no time. *Patrottar*, broadcast on Fridays between 13:50 and 14:00, was probably the shortest yet the most popular segment of the programme for obvious reasons.

Table 31: Broadcast schedule of Patrottar during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of PATROTTAR during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenters
Fri	13:50	14:00	Rekha bahen & Seema bahen together

In fact, the requirement of assigning pseudo names to the announcers was essentially for *Patrottar*, otherwise, the announcers never introduced themselves in any other programme. Seema bahen would read out the letters while Rekha bahen replied. Although there was a possibility to present this segment a little informally, it was never the case. There was a fixed format followed, which was very formal. Probably in those days of broadcasting, informality in presentation was not allowed. In many cases, the scripts and announcements needed to be pre-approved by concerned authorities before they could go on air. Here is how Rekha bahen and Seema bahen used to begin *Patrottar* every week:

रेखा बहन: सैनिक भाइयों को रेखा बहन का नमस्कार, और सीमा बहन, आपको भी।  
सीमा बहन: सैनिक भाइयों को सीमा बहन का नमस्कार, और रेखा बहन, आपको भी।  
रेखा बहन: हम्मम!  
सीमा बहन: यह आज का पहला पत्र है <रैंक व नाम> भाई का।  
रेखा बहन: अच्छा।

**Translation:**

*Rekha bahen:* Greetings to the Jawans from Rekha bahen, and Seema bahen, to you as well!  
*Seema bahen:* Greetings to the Jawans from Seema bahen, and Rekha bahen, to you as well!  
*Rekha bahen:* hmm!  
*Seema bahen:* Here is today's first letter that has come from <Rank & Name> brother.  
*Rekha bahen:* ok.

There used to be five to six letters read out each week and the programme was closed by informing the address of the Troops Programme as below:

सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम,	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram
आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी	Akashvani Guwahati
पिनकोड नंबर 781 003	PIN 781 003

Those were the days when programmes of listeners' letters used to be highly popular on every radio station. Even without any kind of glamour and spark, listeners would wait the whole week for the 10-minute *Patrottar* of Friday afternoons. That was the power of simple and honest entertainment in those days. The content of the letters used to be equally interesting. I still

remember quite a few of them. It was in fact from *Patrottar* that I came to know that Rekha bahen was presenting the programme from 1965. She had mentioned this while replying to a *Jawan* who had asked about the starting date of the programme. Unsure about the date, she simply mentioned that she was there since 1965. Another *Jawan* asked if he could visit the radio station and meet the announcers whose voices they have been listening for years. Rekha bahen had diplomatically replied that what's the point of a physical meeting when they were already meeting daily over the radio and through the letters!

There used to be frequently asked questions from the *Jawans* related to song requests. Below is a consolidated summary of such questions and their answers:

Q1. How many songs could be requested in one letter?

Ans. A maximum of three songs per letter.

Q2. What details needed to be written about each song?

Ans. The first line (first few words) and the title of the film. The names of singers were not mandatory unless the *Jawan* would like to listen to a particular version in case of a multi-version song.

Q3. How many additional names could be included in each letter?

Ans. Names of three additional *Jawans*.

Q4. What kind of letter could be used for communication?

Ans. The letter should have adequate evidence of it being sent by a member from the Armed Forces or one of the Paramilitary Forces. Either the standard "Forces Letter" or a normal letter (Post Card, Inland Letter, Envelope) attested with a Seal by a Senior Officer of the Unit would suffice.

Q5. Could names of family members be included?

Ans. No, *Jawans* only.

With reference to the last question stated above, once a *Jawan*, Rifleman Shyamal Chandra Roy had asked if he could write the name of his wife in his song requests along with a message to her through this programme. It may not sound odd in today's social media environment but in those days of late 1980s, privacy was deep rooted in our social set-up. When Seema bahen read out this question, Rekha bahen was bit unsure and threw back the question towards Seema bahen with a smile, '*kya khayal hai Seema bahen?*' (What do you think Seema bahen?) And then Rekha bahen became serious and tried to explain to the *Jawan* like an elder sister that discussing private life over the radio might not be a good gesture. With advent of time, such privacy got diluted. People were no longer shy to share their personal feelings over public media platforms. Vividh Bharati launched *Jaymala Sandesh* that involved personal messages from the family members of the *Jawans*.

Another interesting letter was from a *Jawan* who wanted to know the name of the first film of actor

Dharmendra and the name of the husband of actress Mala Sinha. Had it been today, the presenter would have gathered this information with a click of the mouse on the internet search engine. But this was not the situation in those days. Rekha bahen didn't have any authentic answer to these questions and advised him to refer or write to a film magazine for such kind of information. Another *Jawan* wanted to get the address of Vividh Bharati's *Jaymala* programme. Rekha bahen did provide him the address but with a request that he would continue to send letters to Guwahati's programme.

Hawaldar Om Dev Singh had a typical problem with the programme that later became an amusing affair. He used to request just one song '*o mere dil ke chain, chain aaye mere dil ko dua keejiye*' (*Mere Jeevan Saathi*). His letter would get selected to be read out in *Patrottar* and the song mentioned would then get played in *Aap Ki Farmaish* of the following Friday by Rekha bahen. However, every time, somehow Hawaldar Singh missed to listen to the song and would again complain in his next letter that his request wasn't fulfilled. Rekha bahen would take his request and would play the song again the following Friday. Again, Hawaldar Singh complained that the song wasn't played. This went for quite a number of times after which Rekha bahen seemed to have lost her patience. When Seema bahen read out Hawaldar Singh's letter that his requested song wasn't played, Rekha bahen remarked jokingly, '*bilkul*' (I knew it). That is, she jokingly agreed that the song wasn't played. She actually didn't have any clue and solution to this peculiar problem. She could only request Hawaldar Singh to keep listening and to also request other songs as requesting the same song again and again was bringing monotony to the programme.

Rifleman K. H. Hemkholein Haokip and his colleague, Rifleman Gaurav Ganguly, heard the voices of the announcers at night in *Khaas Baaten* programme and were confused as to how they were present at the radio station since noon until night. Rifleman Haokip put forward their doubt in *Patrottar* and soon they were relieved to know that *Khaas Baaten* was a recorded programme. This was not the only curious question related to the announcers. Since the afternoon programme was at the luncheon hour, one *Jawan* had once asked, '*aap log khaana kab khaate hain?*' (When do you have your lunch?) Rekha bahen replied that they would either have it early or after the programme but not during the programme.

The Troops Programme was so close to the hearts of the *Jawans* that they would consider it to be part of their lives. The programme used to light up their otherwise monotonous lives. Rifleman Gaurav Ganguly had once acknowledged the contribution of this programme in his life by citing lines of a film song – '*mujhe aisa mila moti, aisa moti koi saagar mein na hoga, mujhe aisa mila taara, aisa taara koi ambar mein na hoga*' (I have got a pearl that won't be found in any ocean; I have got a star that won't be found in any sky.) Some of the listeners got so much attached to the programme that when they had to leave the region due to a transfer, they left with heavy hearts as they wouldn't be able to listen to this programme again. I remember at least two such instances. One is related to Hawaldar Nar Bahadur Mulanwala. He used to be a regular listener of the programme who would send frequent song requests. When he neared his retirement, he wrote to *Patrottar* seeking permission towards sending letters from his home even after his retirement. Knowing that Hawaldar Mulanwala would neither have access to Forces Letters nor he would be able to attest the letters from an officer after retirement, Rekha bahen couldn't dishearten this long-time listener of their programme and replied that he was most welcome to send in letters even after his retirement. This only showed how emotionally both the presenters and the listeners had got attached to this programme over the years.

The other such instance was not related to *Patrottar* but what I heard from Seema bahen during my visit to the station in 2009. There was one regular listener Rifleman Kiran Kumar Pawar, who not only sent song requests but also participated in *Swar Chhaya* programme (to be discussed later in this chapter). When he was transferred to another region, he made it a point to visit AIR Guwahati and meet the three sisters before leaving the region. He appeared at the station, surprised the staff, and while leaving, he wrote few more song requests on a piece of paper lying on the table there. Such affection and liking talked a lot about the unexplainable affinity and attraction of this programme. [112]

While *Patrottar* was under the jurisdiction of Rekha bahen and Seema bahen, nevertheless, Meeta bahen used to get the opportunity to be a part of it whenever both Rekha and Seema bahen remained unavailable. Since Fridays used to be the weekly off for Meeta bahen, she wouldn't be there to present *Patrottar* live. Due to this, a generic rule was followed. If either of Rekha bahen and Seema bahen were absent on a Friday, the other would present *Patrottar* all alone. In the event of both Rekha and Seema bahen unavailable for the entire week, *Patrottar* used to get recorded the previous day for which Meeta bahen would take the lead in managing the show with support from a casual announcer. Meeta bahen would answer the letters which were read out by a casual announcer. In this way, Meeta bahen always teamed up with a casual announcer for *Patrottar*. In my long tenure as a listener of this programme, I never heard Meeta bahen teaming up with either Rekha bahen or Seema bahen for talking to the *Jawans*. This, if done, would have been interesting!

Meeta bahen had once shared a hilarious incident related to *Patrottar* she presented and why she was afraid of presenting it thereafter. In her interview to AIR Dibrugarh, she said that it so happened that she was required to present *Patrottar* live. This must have been when she was working as a casual announcer in the preliminary years when there was no question of Fridays being her weekly off. Regardless of the reason, what is important here is the incident she narrated. Before getting into the incident, I would like to recall my telephonic conversation with her in which she admitted that she has the tendency to laugh out loud at the slightest pretext and that she loves to laugh. With that being said, let's return to the context. Setting the background of the context, Meeta bahen said in the interview that the *Jawans* would sometimes ask such funny questions that one could hardly resist laughing. Meeta bahen started to read out a letter in the programme. One *Jawan* had asked a peculiar question in the letter – '*jis aadmi ka sar ganja hota hai, uska dil kaisa hota hai?*' (How is the heart of a bald person?) Meeta bahen recalled how she had started to laugh after reading this question. The other announcer who was to reply didn't get the chance to say anything due to Meeta bahen's laughing. The more she tried to console and compose herself while reading further, the more she laughed. The programme that day was almost halted due to this. While she regretted for this incident in her interview and said how careful she had to be thereafter to avoid repeating such an incident, nevertheless, the listeners must have enjoyed a lot that day. [29] [111]

Meeta bahen revealed some very significant aspects in her interview to AIR Dibrugarh. The *Jawans* got involved with the programme so deeply that they would consider the three sisters as Godly figures and would often seek advice on their family and personal problems. They would sincerely follow the suggestions and positive advice given by the announcers and used to get benefitted. The *Jawans* thus held the three sisters in high regard. Many times, it had so happened that the *Jawans* would show up at the radio station to have a glimpse of their sisters. And before visiting them, they would visit the famous Kamakhya Temple and bring blessings for the sisters

in the form of *prasad*. They would even honestly confess that the Troops Programme happened to be their only support in their lives, and it was only because of that programme that their morale remained boosted towards the service of the nation. Meeta bahen too confessed that the attachment with the *Jawans* had gone to that level that the announcers never felt that they were doing any professional job. They felt as if they were talking and helping out their own family members. It was like a single big family. The announcers considered it to be their duty to light up the lives of the *Jawans* through entertainment and useful advice towards life. In return, they got pure affection and respect from them. During the time of *Rakshabandhan*, many *Jawans* used to send *raakhi* in their letters every year. [141]

Let us now read the views of Madhu Maheshwari, one of the veterans and most sincere casual announcers, on how she was influenced by *Patrottar*. She said, “*Patrottar used to be one of the most important programmes of the Troops Programme which the regular announcers did not even think of getting done by the casual announcers. During the period when I came, the three regular announcers used to rule. Sadhana ji used to have off on Fridays. Thus, I used to get frequent duties on Fridays. However, the only regular announcer present would alone present Patrottar. They didn’t involve us. Probably, they didn’t consider us capable of doing that. I used to sit quietly in the studio and listen. And if both the regulars were absent on that day, they would record the programme beforehand and we (casual announcers) would just play the recording. Sometimes I used to think that if I had replied to a certain letter, I would not have replied like this. Then came our Program Executive, J. Shailaja Rao, who made even casual announcers a part of Patrottar and then I got to do this much awaited program several times. Although every time I used to go for duty thinking that I should get the programmes of my choice to present, I used to deliver whatever I was offered with honesty and innovation. Once one of my male colleagues who was reading the letters on a particular Friday informed me later that there were some letters in which the Jawans had requested that ‘Madhu bahen’ should reply. The regular announcer’s reply to the Jawans was that Madhu bahen was a part-time announcer and she could not be called in to present the programme just like that.*” Madhu Maheshwari believed firmly that she should have been invited to present the programme as it was requested by the soldiers for whom the programme was after all meant! In other words, adjustments or some kind of arrangement could have definitely been made to respect the request of the *Jawans*. She, however, felt that the bigger and more important thing was that as an announcer, she had made a firm place in the hearts of the soldiers. She feels great to think like this. [139]

*Patrottar* programme was discontinued during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. More about the reasons later in the book.

### ***Sangeet Madhuri***

*Sangeet Madhuri*, the programme of film songs based on Indian classical music, was started during 1965 as mentioned previously. In those days, it used to be broadcast on Friday evenings (17:30 – 18:00). In the stable schedule, the programme was moved to Monday afternoons as seen in table below. After all what could have been better other than Indian classical music to begin the week with when all forms of popular Indian music are based on it!

Table 32: Broadcast schedule of Sangeet Madhuri during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of SANGEET MADHURI during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Mon	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

It is important to note that Vividh Bharati's *Sangeet Sarita* and *Raag Anuraag*, the two programmes based on classical music-based film songs hadn't started when *Sangeet Madhuri* was introduced in the Troops Programme. However, Radio Ceylon's similar programme *Sargam* was already in place, which was started by Gopal Sharma who served Radio Ceylon from 28 April 1956 to 24 April 1967. [142]

Presented by Seema bahen, *Sangeet Madhuri* used to contain film songs that were purely based on Indian classical music. Generally, many songs were loosely based on classical *raagas* or have shades and shadows of *raagas* in them. Several radio programmes used to play such songs in programmes of classical music-based songs. However, *Sangeet Madhuri* was very strict in this matter. For example, the Raag Bhimpalasi-based '*naino mein badra chhaye*' from the film *Mera Saaya* was accepted in the programme while the Raag Nand-based title track of the same film '*tu jahaan-jahaan chalega, mera saaya saath hoga*' never got played. This could be attributed to the fact that the announcers were neither singers themselves nor did they have technical knowledge of classical music. Thus, the songs that were heavily classical in look and feel were made part of the database of *Sangeet Madhuri*. This, at the same time, left out many songs that were semi-classical or loosely classical based to be included in the programme due to lack of information, which was unfortunate. In other words, while the strictness ensured that the purity of the songs and the objective of the programme were intact, nevertheless, the programme gradually became predictive to some extent as the strictness filtered out many songs which could have been well played in the programme and make it more diverse.

The main chunk of songs in *Sangeet Madhuri* were from the 1950s and 1960s decades and were mostly sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Mohd. Rafi and Manna Dey. Lata's songs from films like *Amrapali*, *Chitrlekha*, *Guide*, *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje* would frequently make rounds in the programme every few weeks. '*manmohana bade jhoothe*' (Seema), '*pawan deewani na maane udaaye mora ghunghta*' (Dr. Vidya), '*koi matwala aaya mere dwaare*' (Love in Tokyo), '*chham chham naachat aayi bahaar*' (Chhaya), '*kal naheen paaye jiya more piya tum bin*' (Chhoti Si Mulaqat), '*rasik balma, dil kyun lagaya tose*' (Paying Guest) and several other evergreen songs of Lata blessed this programme for decades. Among the Mohd. Rafi numbers that would frequently hit the programme were '*madhuban mein raadhika naachi re*' (Kohinoor), '*man mora baawra*' (Ragini), '*naache man mora magan tik ta dhiki dhiki*' (Meri Surat Teri Ankhen), '*raadhike tune bansari churaayi*' (Beti Bete), '*navakalpana navaroop se rachana rachi jab naar ki*' (Mrig Trishna). Besides Asha Bhosle solo numbers like '*dekho bijli dole bin baadal ki*' (Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon) and '*chhota sa baalma ankhiyan neend churaaye le gayo*' (Kashmir Ki Kali), two of her duets with Rafi that used to be frequently heard were '*kaise samjhaayun bade nasamajh ho*' (Suraj) and '*saawan aaye ya na aaye, jiya jab jhoom saawan hai*' (Dil Diya Dard Liya). Likewise, two Lata-Rafi duets worth mentioning are Raag Lalit-based '*ek shahenshah ne banwa ke haseen taajmahal*' (Professor) and the raagmala song '*kuhu kuhu bole koyaliya*' (Suvarna Sundari). Another memorable duet of this programme used to be '*baat chalat nayi chunari rang daari*' (Rani Roopmati) by Rafi and Krishna Chonkar.

Manna De's songs had special place in this programme for obvious reason. '*jhanak jhanak tori baaje payaliya*' (*Mere Huzoor*), '*chham chham baaje re payaliya*' (*Jaane Anjaane*), '*gori tori paijaniya*' (*Mehbooba*), '*poochho na kaise maine rain bitaayi*' (*Meri Surat Teri Ankhen*), '*kaun aaya mere mann ke dwaare*' (*Dekh Kabira Roya*), '*phool gendwa na maaro, lagat karejwa mein chot*' (*Chanda Aur Bijli*), '*sur na saje kya gaaun main*' (*Basant Bahar*), '*tere naina talaash kare jise wo hai*' (*Talash*), '*laaga chunari mein daag chhupaun kaise*' (*Dil Hi To Hai*) were the biggest solo hits. The song from the film *Boot Polish*, '*lapak jhapak tu aa re badarwa*', although equally classical based, was not made part of this programme, but added to the list of songs in a lighter vein for *Geet Manoranjan* programme. On the contrary, another classical-cum-comic song, not a Manna De number though, '*kaali ghodi dwaar khadee*' (*Chashm-e-Baddoor*) was made part of *Sangeet Madhuri* and not the other one. The list of Manna De's classical based duets was no short. '*kanha bole na*' (*Sangat*) and '*e sakhi radhike bawri ho gayi*' (*Jurmana*) with Lata, '*tu hai mera prem devta*' (*Kalpna*) with Rafi, '*re mann sur mein gaa*' (*Lal Patthar*) with Asha, '*aayo kahaan se ghanshyam*' (*Buddha Mil Gaya*) with Archana and '*ketaki gulaab juhi champak ban phoole*' (*Basant Bahar*) with Pandit Bhimsen Joshi are the ones that I could think of at this moment. Other than Bhimsen Joshi, songs of few other classical exponents got equal prominence in the programme, one of them being Ustad Amir Khan, whose solo title track of *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje*, and the *Baiju Bawra* duet '*aaj gaawat mann mero jhoom ke*' with D. V. Paluskar were quite popular in this programme. Lakshmi Shankar's '*anaadi mora baalma*' (*Sapna*) and Parveen Sultana's '*hamein tumse pyar kitna*' (*Kudrat*) are two more in this category.

During the 1970s, with the image of the film hero rapidly transforming towards a rough and tough angry young man, the volume of classical-based songs sung by male singers were getting reduced. However, one male singer whose classical-based songs enthralled the listeners during this era was Yesudas. His songs from the films like *Aalap*, *Chitchor*, *Anand Mahal*, *Swami*, *Chashm-e-Baddoor* were massively popular. This was also the period when composer R. D. Burman and Laxmikant-Pyarelal gave several classical-based songs in voices of Lata and Asha. Some Lata songs of this period from the late 60s to the early 80s that became part of *Sangeet Madhuri* were '*baiyan na dharo o balma*' (*Dastak*), '*suno sajna papeehe ne kaha sabse pukaar ke*' (*Aaye Din Bahaar Ke*), '*nadiya kinaare heraaye aayi kangana*' and '*piya bina basiya baaje na*' (*Abhimaan*), '*raina beeti jaaye, shyam na aaye*' (*Amar Prem*), '*chori chori chupke chupke*' (*Aap Ki Kasam*), '*saawan ke jhoole pade tum chale aao*' (*Jurmana*), '*meethe bol bole, bole payaliya*' (*Kinara*), '*beeti na bitaayi raina*' (*Parichay*), '*nindiya se jaagi bahaar*' (*Hero*), while the Asha numbers were '*sooni sooni saans ke sitar par*' (*Lal Patthar*), '*roz roz daali daali kya keh jaaye bhanwara baawra*' (*Angoor*), '*piya baawri pee kahaan*' (*Khoobsoorat*), '*mere angna aaye re ghanshyam aaye re*' (*Naram Garam*) and '*kaisi murli bajaayi ghanshyam*' (*Awaam*).

Although *Sangeet Madhuri* never categorized songs based on their *raag*s, during the rainy season, I remember having listened to an edition of this programme, probably during the early 1990s, in which all songs were rain songs. Songs like '*saawan aaye ya na aaye*', '*jhir jhir barse saawani ankhian*', '*ajhun na aaye baalma saawan beeta jaaye*', '*kahaan se aaye badra, ghulta jaaye kajra*' and few others were played. The inflow of new songs into *Sangeet Madhuri* had begun to decline during the 1980s. Films of the decade hardly had pure classical-based numbers. Although there were semi-classical songs, Seema bahen wouldn't include them. This resulted in a slowdown of this programme. Two films that came as pleasant relief were *Naache Mayuri* and *Sur Sangam*. With all songs of these films based on classical music, *Sangeet Madhuri* got a new look with all songs from these films being played in rotation. Similar was the case with the 1991 film *Lekin* that

had several classical numbers including Lata Mangeshkar's '*kesariya baalma*' and the Asha Bhosle – Satyasheel Deshpande duet '*jhoothi naina bole saanchi batiyan*'. Few other songs from the late 80s to early 90s era were '*naache more man mandir mein koi chhavi naache*' (*Mohabbat Ka Paigaam*) by Anup Jalota and S. Janaki, '*more ghar aaye sajanwa*' (*Imandaar*) by Alka Yagnik, Sadhana Sargam and Suresh Wadkar, '*kab aaoge, jiya naahi laage*' (*Pighalta Aasman*) by Sadhana Sargam, '*radha rani na jaiyo re jamuna ke teer*' (*Sansaar*) by Anuradha Paudwal, '*teri chanchal chanchal aankhon mein maine prem ka saagar pa hi liya*' (*Meera Ka Mohan*) by Yesudas and Anuradha, and '*badra chhaaye neel gagan pe*' (*Geetanjali*) by Kavita Krishnamurthy.

During my visit to AIR Guwahati, Seema bahen had regretted the decline of classical-based songs in Hindi films. She admitted that some of the songs could not be included in the programme as they were either a fusion with western music or had western rhythm or beats. One example was the Alka Yagnik number of *Swades* – '*saanwariya saanwariya, main to hui baawariya*'. [112] She never compromised with the high standard of the programme by including lighter songs that had just shades of classical raagas or were a fusion product. During the first half of the 1990s, *Sangeet Madhuri* was reduced from a weekly programme to a bi/tri-monthly programme, broadcasting on the first, third and fifth Mondays of the month. However, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed few good classically rich film songs that gave *Sangeet Madhuri* a fresh look once again. Some of these were '*albela sajan aayo ri*' (*Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*), '*meri paayal bole chhan*' (*Gaja Gamini*), '*hui main deewani piya baawri*' (*Deewar*), '*kaahe chhed chhed mohe garba lagaaye*' (*Devdas*), '*manmohini more mann bhaave*' (*Yuvraaj*), '*aaoge jab tum o saajna angna phool khilenge*' (*Jab We Met*), '*o re piya, udne laga kyun man bawra re*' (*Aaja Nachle*), and '*mere dholna sun, mere pyar ki dhun*' (*Bhool Bhulaiya*).

*Sangeet Madhuri* continues to be broadcast with the same schedule. The latest song that I have heard in this programme is from the 2013 film *Satyagraha* – '*ras ke bhare tore naina saanwariya*' by Shafqat Amanat Ali and Arpita Chakraborty. Song list of a recent edition of this programme is as tabulated below.

Table 33: List of songs for *Sangeet Madhuri* dated 4 September 2023

SANGEET MADHURI (Date: 4 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
piya bina piya bina basiya	Abhimaan	1973	Lata Mangeshkar
manmohini morey	Yuvraaj	2008	Vijay Prakash, Shreya Ghoshal
ras ke bhare tore naina	Satyagraha	2013	Shafqat Amanat Ali, Arpita Chakraborty
kehta hai mera ye dil piya	Jeans	1998	Kavita Krishnamurthy
bahe naina bhare morey naina	Ra.One	2011	Nandini Shrikar, Vishal Dadlani, Shekhar Ravjiani
piya tora kaisa abhimaan	Raincoat	2004	Hariharan, Shubha Mudgal

### ***Watan Ke Taraane***

*Watan Ke Taraane*, meaning 'Songs of the Nation', is the programme of patriotic and nationalistic songs that not only glorify the nation and the heroic deeds of its brave hearts but also tries to promote unity, secularism, brotherhood, productivity, and nation building. This segment was in

place since the very beginning of the programme.

Table 34: Broadcast schedule of *Watan Ke Taraane* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of WATAN KE TARAANE during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Mon	13:10	13:30	Meeta bahen

The backbone of the programme used to be the vast number of such songs majority of which were sung by Mohd. Rafi and Mahendra Kapoor. That is, a major share of the programme was attributed to these two singers. Both these singers have played a significant role in defining patriotic film songs, which didn't lose their lustre and impact even with the passage of many decades. If we start listing songs sung by these two singers, it could go on for several pages. Nevertheless, songs of other singers were equally significant. Be it Mukesh singing '*hothon pe sachchai rehti hai*' or '*aa ab laut chalen*' in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* or '*chhodo kal ki baaten, kal ki baat puraani*' (*Hum Hindustani*), '*apna desh videsh ke aage haath na phailaaye*' (*Anokha*), '*hum ek hain*' (*Hum Ek Hain*) or Kishore Kumar singing '*dekho veer jawaano apne khoon pe ye ilzaam na aaye*' or '*fauji gaya jab gaaon mein*' (*Aakraman*) or '*hindu hoon na main musalmaan hoon*' (*Maha Chor*), each song played in *Watan Ke Taraane* had its own listening value. Manna De's '*mat ro mata laal tere*' (*Bandini*), '*ae mere pyare watan, tujhe dil qurbaan*' (*Kabuliwala*), '*chale sipaahi dhool udaate*' (*Raj Hath*), '*insaan ka insaan se ho bhaichara*' (*Paigham*) or '*taaqat watan ki tumse hai*' (*Prem Pujari*) with Rafi were not only treat to the ears but also gave goosebumps whenever listened to.

Somehow, male singers got to sing more patriotic songs than their female counterparts in our films since beginning. So, whenever patriotic film songs sung by female singers were included in *Watan Ke Taraane*, that used to be very special. Lata Mangeshkar's '*vandemataram*' (*Anandmath*), '*chalo jhoomte sar se baandhe kafan*' (*Kabuli Khan*), Asha Bhosle's '*de dee hamein aazadi bina khadag bina dhal*' (*Jagruti*), '*bhaarat desh mahaan, ye dharti hai maa hamari*' (*Hum Sab Ek Hain*), '*ka se kul duniya hamaari jisme bhaarat desh hai*' (*Chandi Ki Deewar*) and '*ye dharti hindustan ki*' (*Duniya*), and Usha Mangeshkar's '*desh hamara swarg se sundar*' (*Subhash Chandra*) were few such songs sung by the three Mangeshkar sisters. One song from this list needs special attention. The Asha Bhosle number '*bhaarat desh mahaan*' from the 1969 film *Hum Sab Ek Hain* is nowhere to be found now. Neither details of this obscured film could be found in the Internet ocean, nor this once highly popular song is available on any digital platform. For this reason, memories of this song that used to be frequently played in *Watan Ke Taraane* has remained very special and nostalgic.

Children oriented patriotic songs were also made part of the programme. This included Shanti Mathur's '*nanha munna raahi hoon*' (*Son of India*), Asha Bhosle's '*desh ka pyara sab ka sahara kaun Banega, hum didi*' (*Masoom*), Hemant Kumar's '*insaaf ki dagar pe bachchon dikhaao chalke*' (*Ganga Jamuna*), Rafi's '*hum laaye hain toofaan se kashti nikaal ke*' (*Jagruti*), and Pradeep's '*aao bachchon tumhe dikhaayen jhaanki hindustan ki*' (*Jagruti*).

Although *Watan Ke Taraane* was not a request-based programme, when several requests for patriotic songs got accumulated, they were played in this programme along with the names of the requester *Jawans*. This was the only exception since no other non-request programmes, for example, *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, *Majlis-e-Qawwali* etc., ever included names of listeners.

One reason for this could be the lesser volume of patriotic songs in films as compared to other genres. Since the repetition rate of the songs in *Watan Ke Taraane* was on the higher side, it was a better idea to merge it with patriotic song requests from the troops.

Patriotic duets were equally interesting with Asha Bhosle being the female partner in most of the songs. ‘*saathi haath badhaana*’ (*Naya Daur*) with Rafi, ‘*suno saathiyon, sachchai se badhke naheen dharm dooja*’ (*Paras*) with Mahendra Kapoor, ‘*ye aaj ka bharat hai o saathi*’ (*Mazdoor Zindabad*) with Jaspal Singh are few that I still remember. One interesting inclusion was the Asha-Kishore song ‘*aao jhoome gaayen, milke dhoom machaayen*’ (*Paraya Dhan*). The interesting thing about it was that I never heard this song being played by Meeta bahen in this programme. Once when she was on leave, Rekha bahen had presented *Watan Ke Taraane* and it was on that day that this song was played. Nevertheless, the song has a patriotic flavour and well suited for this programme. Another interesting inclusion was the song ‘*footpaathon ke hum rehne waale*’ from the film *Mashaal*, sung by A. Hariharan, Suresh Wadkar, Shailendra Singh, and Anup Jalota. From the lyrics, the song appears to be better suited for *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* programme rather than *Watan Ke Taraane*. In this context, the mention of two Mahendra Kapoor songs becomes relevant. One is ‘*na munh chhupa ke jiyo aur na sar jhuka ke jiyo*’ (*Gumrah*) and the other is ‘*girna naheen hai gir ke sambhalna hai zindagi, chal chal re raahi chal re*’ (*Holi Aayi Re*). While both essentially delivered the inspirational message of never losing heart and to keep moving in life, the former was included in *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* while the latter in *Watan Ke Taraane*. Although in my opinion both are more suited for *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*, one probable reason for the *Holi Aayi Re* song to be included in *Watan ke Taraane* could be the look and feel of the song that makes it appear like a marching song with the phrase ‘*chal re raahi*’ relating it with the advancing soldiers at the front. On a contrasting note, the song in the film is symbolically directed towards the heroine who has become pregnant without a marriage.

Songs of the river Ganges formed part of *Watan Ke Taraane*. It all started with Hemant Kumar’s ‘*o ganga aaye kahaan se*’ (*Kabuliwala*) to be followed by the title track of *Ganga Tera Paani Amrit* by Rafi. While the former has an undercurrent of unity in diversity, the latter is more of glorifying the history of the motherland with Ganges being a witness to that. The third song in the list was Lata’s ‘*maano to main ganga maa hoon, na maano to behta paani*’ (*Ganga Ki Saugandh*) that teaches the lesson of communal harmony. The title song of *Ganga Ki Lehren* by Lata and Kishore was essentially of the same genre – ‘*machalti hui hawa mein chhamchham, hamaare sang sang chale ganga ki lehren*’. Interestingly and surprisingly, this song became part of *Bandegi ke Geet Aur Bhajan* programme.

Like *Sangeet Madhuri*, the 1980s decade saw a reduction in patriotic numbers although some songs of that era became huge hits, the most noticeable one was ‘*har karam apna karenge ae watan tere liye*’ (*Karma*). After this cult song, Kavita Krishnamurthy got to sing two more patriotic songs – ‘*ik tehzeebon ka sangam hai jise duniya bharat kehti hai*’ (*Angaare*) and ‘*ganga tere desh mein*’ (Title Song) which also used to be played occasionally. When it came to Manoj Kumar’s patriotic films, songs of *Shaheed*, *Upkaar*, *Purab Aur Pashchim* and *Kranti* were the ones mostly played. However, during the late 1980s/ early 1990s, two more of his films were released that had patriotic songs. The 1989 film *Clerk* had three such songs – ‘*kadam kadam badhaaye ja*’ by Mahendra Kapoor, ‘*apne bhaarat pe mar jaayenge*’ by Lata, and ‘*jhoom jhoom kar gaao re, aaj pandrah august hai*’ by Lata and Mahendra. While the first song was accepted wholeheartedly for broadcast in this programme, the other two were soon out of sight for reasons unknown. In fact, the 15<sup>th</sup> of

August song could not be heard even in the special programme of Independence day, indicating its unavailability due to certain reason. The other film was the 1991 released *Deshwasi* that had this song ‘*subah savere sabse pehle bolo ram ram, uske baad karo jhuk kar is mitti ko pranaam*’ by Anuradha Paudwal and Nitin Mukesh, which had become quite popular and got due recognition in *Watan Ke Taraane*. The title song of *Vardi* (1988) by Kumar Sanu – ‘*teri hifaazat meri hifaazat karti hai vardi*’ was well accepted in this programme. In the history of *Watan Ke Taraane*, and probably in the career of Kumar Sanu, there were just two patriotic numbers, the other and the more popular one being ‘*mera mulk mera desh mera ye watan*’ (*Diljale*), sung along with Aditya Narayan.

One interesting aspect of the title song of the 1988 film *Vijay* was that it had two versions, one by Asha Bhosle and the other by Mahendra Kapoor. The opening line of both was the same – ‘*tera karam hi teri vijay hai*’ (your *karma* is your victory) which is inspired from the Bhagvad Geeta shlok ‘*karmanyevaadhikaraste maa phaleshu kadachana*’. However, the undercurrent in the two versions were slightly different. While the female version was more philosophical and life-oriented, the male version with a strong voice and accompanied with chorus, inspires the listener to get on to the path of responsibilities, self-confidence, struggle, and victory citing the reference of the mythological treatise. It’s the mood, look and feel of this version that generates a patriotic flavour. Needless to say, the female version became part of *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* and the male version of *Watan Ke Taraane*.

As mentioned earlier, those were the days when radio broadcasts used to be very formal and strict. Like *Sangeet Madhuri*, the strictness in song selection could be felt in *Watan Ke Taraane* as well. In 1983, a song encouraging communal harmony, sung by Usha Uthup, appeared in the film *Keh Do Pyar Hai*. The song goes like ‘*India, ye hai India, om se hota hai har kaam shuru, rehti hai yahaan Jesus ki rooh, waahe guru, allah hoo*’. The stanzas equally hail the nation. Despite being a strong contender for *Watan Ke Taraane*, it never saw the light of the day in this programme. However, I remember listening to this song in either *Aap Ki Farmaish* or *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai*. The reason for not playing this song in *Watan Ke Taraane* could be attributed to its highly westernized look and feel. In the new era, songs like ‘*It happens only in India*’ (*Pardesi Babu*), ‘*East or West, India is the best*’ (*Judwa*) and the loosely patriotic ‘*phir bhi dil hai hindustani*’ (Title Song) also met the same fate. Even the popular *Pardes* number ‘*ye duniya ik dulhan, dulhan ke maathe ki bindiya, ye mera India*’ never got played in this programme. However, quite interestingly, in the present decade, all these songs are getting played in this programme.

From late 20<sup>th</sup> century, our films have witnessed many patriotic songs in films like *Major Saab*, *Lagaan*, *Lakshya*, *Rang De Basanti*, *Swades*, *Veer Zaara*, thus enriching *Watan Ke Taraane*. The recently released patriotic songs ‘*ae watan watan mere aabaad rahe tu*’ (*Raazi*) and ‘*teri mitti mein mil jaawaan*’ (*Kesari*) are awaited in this programme. Currently, *Watan Ke Taraane* is broadcast on the same day of the week but between 13:40 and 14:00. Song list of one of the latest editions of this programme is as tabulated below.

Table 35: List of songs for *Watan Ke Taraane* dated 11 September 2023

WATAN KE TARAANE (Date: 11 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
des rangeela rangeela	Fanaa	2006	Mahalakshmi Iyer, Chorus
hum logo ko samajh sako to	Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani	2000	Udit Narayan

ye jo des hai tera	Swades	2004	A R Rahman
kuch kariye nas nas meri	Chak De India	2007	Sukhwindara Singh, Salim Merchant

It is surprising to find that there are quite a number of old patriotic songs that were never heard in *Watan Ke Taraane* during the 80s, 90s and 2000s but are getting included currently. Some of these include ‘jaane wale sipaahi se puchho’ (*Usne Kaha Tha*), ‘bolo bolo kiska ye desh’ (*Pyar Ki Pyaas*), ‘vardi hai bhagwaan’ (*Fauji*).

### ***Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan***

The Troops Programme had started in 1962 during the tensed environment with a war being anticipated. Thus, the programme oriented towards the troops had to be one that not only entertained the troops but also give them solace. Probably with this intention, the hourly programme in those initial days had four instances of devotional music during the week. Mondays had *Bhajanawali* in the afternoon, Tuesdays had *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* in the evening, and Thursdays and Fridays had *Filmi Bhajan* in the afternoon. Looking at the titles, it is not very clear if *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* was a non-film affair in those days since a separate *Filmi Bhajan* segment was in place. Nevertheless, *Filmi Bhajan* was soon replaced with *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, thus making it a film song-based segment while *Bhajanawali* continued to be a non-film one. The latter was discontinued sometime later as mentioned previously.

Table 36: Broadcast schedule of *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of BANDEGI KE GEET AUR BHAJAN during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Tue	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen
Fri	17:05	17:45	Seema bahen

Since the beginning of Hindi talkies, devotional songs have been integral part of film music and every other film used to have such numbers. The drama and pathos in the stories stressed upon the need of devotion and hence frequently created situations for songs of this genre. The huge number of such songs accumulated over the first four decades of talkies must have led to the decision of having *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* twice a week, the total duration summed up to almost 70 minutes a week. The 1930s and the 1940s era have witnessed enormous number of devotional songs in films, which must have been part of this programme in its initial days. However, the oldest song that I remember having heard in this programme was the Meera Bhajan from the 1950 film *Jogan* – ‘ghunghat ke pat khol re tohe piya milenge’, sung by Geeta Dutt. I don’t remember having heard any older song than this ever since I started listening to this programme from the early 80s. After *Jogan*, the second oldest film was *Baiju Bawra* (1952) whose two evergreen bhajans – ‘mann tarapat hari darshan ko aaj’ and ‘o duniya ke rakhwale’ – sung by Mohd. Rafi continue to be played till date. Then there was ‘insaaf ka mandir hai ye, bhagwaan ka ghar hai’ from *Amar* (1954) and so on.

Talking about something interesting about this programme, its title itself needs attention. Usually, the name of a devotional music programme on radio used to be of the type *Vandana*, as was the case with AIR Delhi, Jaipur, Gauhati, Simla, Ahmedabad, Imphal, and Jammu. Then there was *Vandanvaar* (Vividh Bharati), *Archana* (AIR Jullundur, Nagpur, Rajkot), *Prabhati* (AIR Bhopal),

*Bhajanamrit* (AIR Bombay), *Bhakti* (AIR Poona), *Geetharadhana* (AIR Bangalore), *Bhakti Ranjani* (AIR Hyderabad, Vijaywada), *Sangeetanjali* (AIR Calcutta), and *Subahgahi* (Radio Kashmir Srinagar, AIR Urdu Service). [87] [88] [89] [90] The reason for listing down the names of devotional music programmes of various stations is to indicate that the names usually indicated a single religion. Gauhati's Troops Programme could also have chosen a short title like *Vandana* or *Aradhana* for its devotional music programme. A five worded title was not required considering the fact that there was no other programme that had five words. Then what could be the reason for such a long title – *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*? The probable reason was to make it sound secular. The origin of the word “*bandegi*” is Persian, thus implying an Islamic connection, whereas the word “*bhajan*” derives its origin in Sanskrit. While “*bandegi*” means devotion, “*bhajan*” means words of praise for the Almighty. Woven together as *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, the unified meaning of the title was thus ‘Songs of Devotion and Praises for the Almighty’. There could not have been a better title for the programme.

The programme was comprised not only of devotional and religion or God-specific songs but also of spiritual songs of self-discovery. The two most heard spiritual songs were ‘*mann re tu kaahe na dheer dhare*’ (*Chitralkha*) and ‘*tora mann darpan kehlaaye*’ (*Kaajal*). Songs included in this programme belonged to films of both social drama and mythology genres. Songs from films like *Jai Santoshi Maa*, *Solah Shukravaar*, *Har Har Gange*, *Gopal Krishna*, *Shiv Mahima*, *Harishchandra Taramati* were from the latter genre. Some uncommon songs that I still remember having heard in this programme, which are no longer heard on any radio channel, include ‘*naheen chahiye rang mahal na dhan daulat ki shaan*’ (*College Girl*), ‘*ae mere dil har dam ye dua kar*’ (*Kabzaa*), ‘*tirupati balaji jay ho tumhari balaji*’ (*Aaj Ka MLA*), the uncommon Lata-Asha duet ‘*nand kishore nand gopaal, jhoole mera laal*’ (*Madhavi*), ‘*kaise natkhat se padaa mera paala*’ (*Insaaf*), ‘*ek roop kai naam manmandir tera dhaam*’ (*Swami Dada*), ‘*daata tere kai naam*’ (*Daata*), ‘*main kya maangu mere kanhaai, tu jaane meri kismet bhalaai*’ (*Bin Phere Hum Tere*), ‘*ram rahim mein antar naahi*’ (*Alag Alag*), ‘*uske bhed niraale, wo hi jaane*’ (*Noorie*), ‘*hum sabko nek raah chalaana mere allah*’ (*Dada*). The major share of songs belonged to the three decades – 50s, 60s, 70s. With time, the story line of films changed that reduced the percentage of devotional, religious and spiritual songs. The devotional songs of the 1990s became louder. Be it ‘*jay ambe jagadambe maa*’ (*Krantiveer*) or ‘*jay maa kaali, jaan chaahe leni pade*’ (*Karn Arjun*), the undercurrent of such songs possessed the feeling of revenge, much against the whole purpose of this programme. This, however, didn't mean that the decade didn't produce good devotional songs. Songs like ‘*teri panaah mein hamein rakhna*’ (*Panaah*), ‘*bando pe apne ae data itna tu upkaar kar*’ (*Hulchul*), ‘*deva ho deva*’ (*Parwana*), ‘*maata maata jay maata*’ (*Trimurty*), ‘*jay jay badri dhaam*’ (*Char Dham*), ‘*tu mere ghar aa maata*’ (*Kasam Teri Kasam*), ‘*he param pita parameshwar aisi jaagruti paida kar*’ (*Jaagruti*) and ‘*is shaan-e-karam ka kya kehna*’ (*Kachche Dhaage*) ensured the continuity of new songs in the programme.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century contributed several good songs to this programme like ‘*piya haaji ali*’ (*Fiza*), ‘*ek tu hi bharosa, ek tu hi sahara*’ (*Pukaar*), ‘*o paalanhaare*’ (*Lagaan*), ‘*pal pal hai bhaari wo vipata hai aayi*’ (*Swades*), ‘*khwaja mere khwaja*’ (*Jodha Akbar*), ‘*manamohana kanha suno na*’ (*Jodha Akbar*), which helped to maintain the relevance of this programme among the current generation of *Jawans*. *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* is currently broadcast on Fridays between 12:38 and 13:05. The selection of diverse and rare songs is still visible in this programme. Songs selected for three recent instances of this programme are tabulated below.

Table 37: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 11 August 2023

<b>BANDEGI KE GEET AUR BHAJAN (Date: 11 August 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
jay radhe radhe krishna krishna	Paramatma	1994	S. P. Balasubrahmanyam
allah tero naam eeshwar tero naam	Hum Dono	1961	Lata Mangeshkar
jay jay govind jay gopal	Dulhan	1974	Lata Mangeshkar
mere shyam mere nandlala	Jyoti	1970	Lata Mangeshkar, Usha Mangeshkar
dekho o deewano tum ye kaam	Hare Rama Hare Krishna	1972	Kishore Kumar
maata o maata pahada waliye	Siskiyan	1983	Narendra Chanchal
he ram, mere mukh mein	Besharam	1978	Mahendra Kapoor

Table 38: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 8 September 2023

<b>BANDEGI KE GEET AUR BHAJAN (Date: 8 September 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
kaanha re tune laakhon raas rachaaye	Truck Driver	1970	Lata Mangeshkar
jay jagat janani	Jay Jagat Janani	1976	Mahendra Kapoor
jay raghunandan jay siya ram	Gharana	1961	Mohd Rafi, Asha Bhosle
din raat badalte hain	Naya Sansaar	1959	Hemant Kumar
kar bhala hoga bhala ant bhale ka bhala	Tangewala	1972	Mukesh
yashomati mayya se bole nandlala	Satyam Shivam Sundaram	1978	Manna Dey, Lata Mangeshkar
bhagwaan ye de vardaana	Tulsi Vivaah	1971	Asha Bhosle

Table 39: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 22 September 2023

<b>BANDEGI KE GEET AUR BHAJAN (Date: 22 September 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
andhkaar chhaya akash jhanjhanaya	Amrit Manthan	1961	Asha Bhosle
jagat bhar ki roshni ke liye	Harishchandra Taramati	1963	Hemant Kumar
ae malik tere bande hum	Do Ankhen Barah Haath	1957	Lata Mangeshkar, Chorus
kaisi tune reet rachi bhagwaan	Onche Log	1965	Manna De, Asha Bhosle
jay bholenath jay ho prabhu	Kunwara Baap	1974	Kishore Kumar, Lata Mangeshkar
ye duniya nahin jaagir kisi ki	Chowkidar	1974	Mohd. Rafi
banaake kyun bigaada re	Zanjeer	1973	Lata Mangeshkar
kanhaiya tujhe aana padega	Maalik	1972	Mahendra Kapoor

### ***Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi***

Not sure if inspired from the 1960 movie title *Dil Apna Aur Preet Paraayi*, the twice-a-week *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* has been one of the original programme ideas for such a programme from any other station was not heard of. Songs based on western music, as Meeta bahen would announce “*videshi dhuno par aadhaarit filmi geet*” to introduce this programme every Tuesday afternoon and Sunday evening, the programme provided foot-tapering entertainment to the lovers of westernized songs of Hindi cinema.

Table 40: Broadcast schedule of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of GEET APNA DHUN PARAAYI during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Tue	13:10	13:30	Meeta bahen
Sun	17:05	17:45	Meeta bahen

Not to be confused with inspired or copied songs exclusively, the songs that were played were essentially westernized in look and feel, thus, allowing a vast number of songs to be part of the programme. Nevertheless, songs inspired and copied from foreign songs also got equal attention. Hindi film music has witnessed western orchestration right from the initial decade when composers like Pankaj Mullick introduced soft western orchestration. In the 1940s, Ghulam Haider, Naushad, C. Ramchandra and others walked on similar paths but with their own unique style. O. P. Nayyar, S. D. Burman and Shankar Jaikishan joined the league in the 1950s. Thus, by the time the Troops Programme started, the reserve of westernized numbers was already huge. When *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* was started, a complete hour per week was allocated, divided into two parts, one of 20 minutes on Tuesdays and the other of 40 minutes on Sundays.

Some songs from the 50s-60s decades that I remember getting played frequently included ‘*pyar hua ikraar hua*’ (*Shree 420*), ‘*ajeeb daastaan hai ye*’ (*Dil Apna Aur Preet Paraayi*), ‘*mera naam chin chin chu*’ (*Howrah Bridge*), ‘*ding dong ding dong ding lala, koi mujhko sambhalo mera dil chala*’ (*Grihasthi*), ‘*pukaarta chala hoon main*’ (*Mere Sanam*), ‘*josh-e-jawani haay haay, nikle jidhar se dhoom machaaye*’ (*Around The World*), ‘*gulaabi raat ki har baat gulaabi*’ (*Upkaar*), ‘*khwaab ho tum ya koi haqeeqat*’ (*Teen Deviyani*), ‘*ye samaa ye rut ye nazaare, dil mera machalne laga*’ (*Do Kaliyan*), ‘*suno zindagi gaati hai*’ (*Pagla Kahin Ka*), ‘*akele akele kahaan ja rahe ho*’ (*An Evening in Paris*), ‘*tumse achchha kaun hai*’ (Title Song), ‘*tu mera main teri duniya jale to jale*’ (*Pyar Hi Pyar*), ‘*ye tumhare raste mein phool kyun khilaati naheen*’ (*My Love*), ‘*sachcha pyar to jhuk naheen sakta*’ (*Umang*), ‘*na sun sun sun sun sun bura*’ (*Priya*), ‘*jeena yahaan marna yahaan*’ (*Mera Naam Joker*) and many more. It was because of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* that I could know about the lesser-heard but beautiful Waltz-based composition ‘*panchhi re, o panchhi, udd ja re*’ (*Hare Kaanch Ki Choodiyan*) sung by Asha Bhosle and Mohd. Rafi. Same with Suman Kalyanpur’s never-heard-before ‘*parde ki baat parde mein rahe to achchha hai*’ (*Night in Calcutta*).

With film music getting louder and louder with the passage of each year, there was an exponential rise in the number of songs that were suitable for this programme. Evergreen cabaret numbers like ‘*aa jaanejaan, aa mera ye husn jawan*’ (*Intequam*), ‘*o haseena zulfon wali*’ (*Teesri Manzil*), ‘*abhi to baaki hai kahaani raaton ki*’ (*Mangu Dada*), ‘*piya tu ab to aaja*’ (*Caravan*), ‘*duniya mein logon ko dhokha tabhi ho jaata hai*’ (*Apna Desh*), ‘*ye mera dil yaar ka deewana*’ (*Don*) were the frontrunners.

Front line composers like Kalyanji Anandji, Laxmikant Pyarelal, R. D. Burman, Bappi Lahiri, Anu Malik, and A. R. Rahman became the torch bearers of this genre of songs containing heavy western orchestration. Listing down the westernized songs created by these composers would take at least a couple of pages. Some notable songs of the 1970s getting played often included but not limited to ‘*hawa ke saath saath*’ (*Seeta Aur Geeta*), ‘*meet na mila re mann ka*’ (*Abhimaan*), ‘*jaaneman jaaneman tere do nayan*’ (*Chhoti Si Baat*), ‘*na bole tum na maine kuch kaha*’ (*Baaton Baaton*)

Mein), ‘*ye jawani hai deewani*’ (Jawani Deewani), ‘*humse badhkar kaun hoga aapka deewana*’ (Aag Aur Daag), ‘*na rootho na rootho meri jaan*’ (Jawan Mohabbat), ‘*gussa itna haseen hai to*’ (Maryada), ‘*o nakhrewali, de de dil mera*’ (Pyar Ka Rishta), ‘*no no aisa na karo*’ (Door Nahin Manzil), ‘*aap ke kamre mein koi rehta hai*’ (Yaadon Ki Baarat), ‘*gulaabi aankhen jo teri dekheen*’ (The Train), ‘*do lafzon ki hai dil ki kahaani*’ (The Great Gambler), ‘*kaahe ko rootha deewana mera*’ (Anamika).

However, few songs of Bappi Lahiri, which probably made the biggest impact on *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* during the 1980s, may be mentioned here – ‘*I am a Disco Dancer*’, ‘*Jimmy Jimmy aaja aaja*’, ‘*koi yahaan aha naache naache*’ (Disco Dancer) ‘*jawan-e-jaaneman haseen dilruba*’, ‘*raat baaki, baat baaki*’ (Namak Halaal), ‘*pyar pyar pyar pyar pyar tu kar le*’ (Suraag), ‘*jeena bhi kya hai jeena, teri ankhen ke bina*’ (Kasam Paida Karne Wale Ki), ‘*ye zindagi chaar din ki*’ (Ek Baar Kaho), ‘*yaar bina chain kahaan re*’ (Saaheb), ‘*mera dil gaayeja zu zu zubi zubi zubi*’ (Dance Dance), ‘*pyar maine tumse kiya*’ (Commando), ‘*I want to hit somebody*’, ‘*ek do teen chaar pyar chahiye kitni baar*’ (Waqt Ki Awaaz), ‘*Tarzan o my Tarzan*’, ‘*mere saath jhoomoge*’, ‘*jee le le jee le le*’ (Tarzan), ‘*tum aur main*’ (Aitbaar), ‘*bhavani junction*’ (Bhavani Junction), ‘*jaan tan se, hum aise jaan-e-jaan tumse pyar karte hain*’ (Diljala), ‘*main aaya tere liye*’ (Street Dancer), ‘*main gulbadan*’ (Locket), ‘*hari om hari*’ (Pyara Dushman), ‘*ramba ho*’ (Armaan), ‘*are you ready...nakabandi*’ (Nakabandi), ‘*jeena hai pyar mein jeena*’, ‘*hum to hain dil ke deewane*’ (Love Love Love), ‘*sooni sadak pe na jaa akele*’ (Pyar Ke Naam Qurbaan). Bappi Lahiri had given many opportunities to the pop singers of that era like Usha Uthup, Alisha Chinoy, Parvati Khan, Sharon Prabhakar, and Vijay Benedict. He also tried to create contrast by inviting ghazal singers like Salma Agha and Penaz Masani to sing westernized numbers. S. Janaki was equally invited to sing his songs. And all these gorgeous voices of the 1980s echoed over Guwahati’s airwaves through *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi*.

If Sangeet Madhuri had most songs sung by Lata Mangeshkar, *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* was undoubtedly Asha Bhosle’s domain for obvious reason. Due to this, whenever a new song sung by Lata was played in the programme, it used to be a real treat to the ears. Songs like ‘*chhodo bhi ye nakhra kar lo pyar hamse*’ (Dil Se Mile Dil), ‘*rootho na, ghadi ghadi tum yunhi chhoti chhoti baaton se*’ (Ahsaas), ‘*jaane do jaane do mujhe jaana hai*’ (Shahenshah), ‘*Jack and Jill went up the hill*’ (Kanoon), ‘*please wait wait wait, wait for me*’ (Sanam Harjaai) used to bring smile whenever they appeared in this programme. Then there were unconventional singers whose songs whenever played added to the variety. Some of these, mostly seductive in nature, may be listed here. Annette Pinto’s ‘*love me darling*’ (Ek Din Bahu Ka), Behroz Chatterjee’s ‘*chhodo chhodo mera haath*’ (Bezubaan), Rajesh Roshan’s ‘*baahon mein aaja, seene se mere tu lag ja sanam*’ (Anubhav), and Ajit Singh’s ‘*mausam ka takaaza hai*’ (Aakarshan) with Kavita Krishnamurthy were some of the frequent fliers.

One special category of songs was that of copied or inspired songs. Prior to the digital and internet revolution, it was almost impossible for the radio announcers to find out the original foreign songs and instrumental pieces that have been copied in Hindi film songs. However, knowingly, or unknowingly, many of such copied and inspired songs have become part of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi*. Some songs in this category might have already been mentioned in this section till now, few more are added here – ‘*chura liya hai tumne jo dil ko*’ (Yaadon Ki Baarat), ‘*jeevan ke har mod pe mil jaayenge humsafar*’ (Jhootha Kahin Ka), ‘*aa dekhien zara kismein kitna hai dam*’ (Rocky), ‘*I just called you to say I love you*’ (Jaan Ki Kasam), ‘*main teri hoon jaanam, tu mera*

*jiya*' (*Khoon Bhari Maang*), '*mere rang mein rangne wali*' (*Maine Pyar Kiya*), '*whole day whole night dil tarse*' (*Yodha*), '*ye kaali kaali aankhen*' (*Baazigar*), '*dil mera churaya kyun*' (*Akele Hum Akele Tum*), '*kaho na kaho ye aankhen bolti hain*' (*Murder*).

The 1990s decade started with '*bin tere sanam mar mitenge hum, aa meri zindagi*' (*Yaara Dildara*). Until towards the mid-90s, songs heavily influenced by western music used to stand out from the crowd. Such songs constituted an independent genre and for which *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* was basically meant. This genre gradually started losing its identity and by the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, every other song was technically eligible for this programme but didn't meet the original objective of the programme. As rightly put by Meeta bahen during my visit to AIR Guwahati in 2009 that nowadays every song is fit for this programme, citing reference to the then newly released song '*dhan te nan*' (*Kaminey*). [112]

Meeta bahen has shared a memorable incident that took place on an evening just before the start of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* programme in her interview to AIR Dibrugarh. She said, "*My father used to tell us about ~Service before Self~. If you are at the 'service' to the nation, you must forget your 'self'. I will share with you one incident. One day during duty, my blood pressure suddenly went up. I was getting ready for the evening programme that was going to start at 17:05. Only ten minutes were remaining, and I was waiting in the staff room. As I tried to stand up to head towards the studio, my head started to spin. I wasn't able to stand up. I kept sitting. I didn't know that I had high blood pressure. That was the first day of it. I was seeing darkness before my eyes. Being weekend evening, everyone else had left for the day. I could hear the voice of the Duty Officer at a distance. But I couldn't gain strength to walk up to his room and inform him about my sickness. Since the time of the programme was getting closer, I somehow started walking with support of the wall. At a distance from where they could see me, I fell down and before losing my consciousness, I somehow indicated to them about my sickness. They came running towards me. They put water on my face and suggested that they are going to call the ambulance and take me to the hospital or to my residence. It was already 17:00 and the programme was about to begin. They told me that I need not do the programme. But I didn't agree. I was adamant that I would go home only after presenting the programme. I won't compromise with my duty. Even if I died serving the soldiers who were there for us, I would consider myself fortunate. They didn't succeed in persuading me to leave for the day. Instead, they took me to the studio and make me sit on the chair. The engineering staff was called to play the gramophone records. I told them how to play the records and that they should just turn on the microphone after each song for me to do the announcements. In this way, for the next 40 minutes, we together presented the programme. When they raised the fader, I would make the announcement and sit back on the chair. It was a memorable scene that several people were standing behind me, sometimes sprinkling water on my face and sometimes fanning above my head, and others struggling with the gramophone and records. I myself didn't remember what announcements I made that day. I just know that I didn't leave the scene without performing the duty.*" [141] Complimenting this incident, Meeta bahen told me that when she retired, she was surprised to find the huge number of accumulated leave days which indicated that she rarely went on vacation. [29] She was truly the epitome of *Service before Self*, as taught by her father.

The discussion of *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* would remain incomplete without mentioning one interesting observation. One song that used be frequently played in this programme during the 1990s was '*o krishna, you are the greatest musician of this world*' (*Meera Ka Mohan*), sung by

Anuradha Paudwal and Kumar Sanu. Lyrically devotional, the composition has a highly westernized rhythm. Many times, it so happened that *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* ended at 13:05 with a Krishna bhajan like ‘*main kya maangoon mere kanhaai, tu jaane meri kisme bhalaai*’ (*Bin Phere Hum Tere*) or ‘*ke din se ho gayi shaam, aao kanhaai mere dhaam*’ (*Chhoti Bahu*), and after the five-minute news break, *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* began with this westernized Krishna number from *Meera Ka Mohan*, thus, giving a continuity to the songs of Krishna genre. In other words, Lord Krishna proved to be the connecting link between the two programmes, which were diametrically apart in terms of their content. Interesting, isn’t it?

The programme is currently broadcast on Tuesdays between 12:38 and 13:05 and on Sundays between 14:30 and 15:00. Few songs of the present era that were recently played in this programme were ‘*luk chhup jaana*’ (*Action Replay*), ‘*pyar tera pyar mujhe kheenche teri or*’ (*Thank You*), ‘*aami shotti bolchhi*’ (*Kahaani*), ‘*It’s the time to disco*’ (*Kal Ho Na Ho*), ‘*My dil goes umm*’ (*Salaam Namaste*), ‘*halka halka sa ye samaa*’ (*Chocolate*), ‘*love me baby*’ (*Aitraaz*), ‘*hare krishna hare ram*’ (*Commando 2*), ‘*anjaana anjaani*’ (*Anjaana Anjaani*). The present announcers have kept the tradition of including songs from all eras still alive, thus giving this programme a diverse look as can be felt from the list of songs that were included in three recent instances of this programme.

Table 41: List of songs for *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* dated 1 August 2023

<b>GEET APNA DHUN PARAAYI (Date: 1 August 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
dil kis kis ko dungii main	Nagina	1972	Asha Bhosle
rang roop ka bazaar hai	Keemat	1973	Asha Bhosle
ae bag ki kaliyon sharm karo	Jungle Mein Mangal	1972	Mohd. Rafi, Kishore Kumar
de do pyar le lo pyar	Pyar Hi Pyar	1969	Mohd. Rafi
jeena yahaan marna yahaan	Mera Naam Joker	1970	Mukesh
ruk meri rani na kar aanakani	Dil Daulat Duniya	1972	Kishore Kumar
geet hai ye zindagi	Jeevan Rekha	1974	Manna Dey

Table 42: List of songs for *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* dated 6 August 2023

<b>GEET APNA DHUN PARAAYI (Date: 6 August 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
chadhee mujhe yaari teri aise	Cocktail	2012	Benny Dayal, Shalmali Kholgade
ae khuda mujhko bataa	Paathshaala	2010	Salim Merchant
what’s going on	Salaam Namaste	2005	Sunidhi Chauhan, Kunal Ganjawala
jaata hai tu kahaan	Yes Boss	1997	Abhijeet, Chorus
dil samandar dil mera	Garam Masala	2005	KK, Sunidhi Chauhan

Table 43: List of songs for *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi* dated 17 September 2023

<b>GEET APNA DHUN PARAAYI (Date: 17 September 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
galyaan saankhali sonyachi	Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahin	1991	Anuradha Paudwal, Babla, Chorus
she is my girlfriend	Bhrashtachar	1989	Kavita Krishnamurthy, Sudesh Bhonsle
tik tik tik chalti hai ghadi	Elaan-e-Jung	1989	Anuradha Paudwal

dil tera jaan teri	Phool Bane Angaarey	1991	Alka Yagnik, Bappi Lahiri
suno to zara dekho to zara	Insaniyat Ke Devta	1993	Kumar Sanu, Sadhana Sargam
mujhe kuch kehna hai aapko	Dil Tera Aashiq	1993	Sudesh Bhonsle, Sadhana Sargam

### *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*

Songs of one artist, as the title indicated, however, didn't mean any kind of artist associated with film or music could be made part of *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*. This 40-minute monthly programme was meant to showcase solo songs sung by a singer.

*Table 44: Broadcast schedule of Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet during 1980s*

<b>Broadcast Schedule of EK HI KALAKAAR KE GEET during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Tue (1,5)	13:30	14:10	Rekha bahen

Until the early 1980s, the top singers of the evergreen era like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Geeta Dutt, Shamshad Begum, Suman Kalyanpur, Mohd. Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Mukesh, Manna Dey, Talat Mahmood, and Mahendra Kapoor used to get featured in this programme with frequent repetition. I don't remember having heard the 1930s-40s singers like K. L. Saigal, Noorjehan and Suraiya, the probable reason could be the unavailability of adequate number of songs that can cover the 40 minutes duration. However, the 1980s decade saw many new additions to the list with the new generation of singers singing appreciable number of songs in the Hindi film industry. This included Shailendra Singh, Yesu Das, Hemlata, S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, Amit Kumar, Suresh Wadkar, Mohd. Aziz, Shabbir Kumar, Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik, Sadhana Sargam, Kavita Krishnamurthy. Songs sung by these singers truly extended the horizon of *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*.

The decade of 1980s was also the decade of ghazals. There was a boom in this genre across the world. Many albums were cut. Innumerable concerts were held. The AIR stations too received gramophone records of ghazals sung by singers like Ghulam Ali, Jagjit Singh, Chandan Das, Pankaj Udhas, Bhupendra, Mitali, Ghanshyam Vaswani, Vandana Bajpayee, Penaz Masani and many others. It was a wise decision for *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* to not confine it to playback singers. The ghazal singers and their albums were also made part of this programme even though there were other arrangements to play ghazals, one of which being the *Tarannum* programme. Thus, Ghulam Ali, Pankaj Udhas, Chandan Das, and others also ruled *Ek Hi Kalakaar ke Geet*.

Although the singers were repeated periodically, it was made a point that the latest hits of the singers got priority so as not to make it monotonous. In this connection, when Lata Mangeshkar was featured in one of the editions sometime towards the end of the 80s decade, I remember few songs of that era that were played – ‘*main teri dushman, dushman tu mera*’ (*Nagina*), ‘*jind le gaya wo dil ka jaani*’ (*Aap Ke Saath*), ‘*vairiya ve kiya kya qusoor maine tera ve*’ (*Naam*) and ‘*din pyar ke aayenge sajaniya*’ (*Savere Wali Gaadi*), among others. One may argue that a programme centred around one artist should include his/her best numbers. But again, that would mean a monotonous repetition of many songs. Instead, the approach adopted to include the newer songs of the artists was more logical.

*Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* programme of 7 June 1988 was special. The Greatest Showman of Indian Cinema, Raj Kapoor had passed away less than a week ago. Being one of the biggest legends of Indian Cinema, his death at a relatively low age of 63 was a big shock to the entire nation. And it happened in Guwahati's Troops Programme that had never happened in the programme before. Since *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* was to be aired in five days, on 7 June, that is, on the first Tuesday of the month as per schedule, a special edition was designed to pay tribute to the Showman of the Millennium. One might wonder how come this programme be based on Raj Kapoor when he was not a singer. Actually, the programme was a tribute to Raj Kapoor through the songs of Mukesh picturized on him. Songs from films like *Awara*, *Aah*, *Shree 420*, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*, *Anari*, *Chhalia*, *Teesri Kasam*, *Mera Naam Joker* were played. This type of tribute was unheard of in Troops Programme. Nor was it observed again thereafter. Thirteen years later, one of the *Jawans* had sent a list of songs sung by Mohd. Rafi to be played in this programme falling on his death anniversary, 31 July 2001. The concerned and sincere *Jawan* had meticulously concluded that Rafi sahab's anniversary fell on the fifth Tuesday of the month that would have *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* programme and sent across his suggestion.

Except for *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, none of the programmes featured more than one song from one film. However, Rekha bahen used to make an exception in *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*. This was done to include those new singers in the programme who had sung adequate songs to make up the 40 minutes of the programme, but the number of films weren't enough to follow the 'one film one song' policy. One good example was the first ever *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* on Kumar Sanu, just after the release of his first big break in the form of *Aashiqui*, probably during 1991. There weren't enough films so as to select one song from each to fill up the duration of the programme. So, it was decided to include all the three solo numbers of *Aashiqui* – 'saanson ki zaroorat hai jaise', 'ab tere bin jee lenge hum' and 'dil ka aalam main kya bataaun tujhe'. The remaining 25 minutes of the programme were filled by few odd numbers like 'teri hifaazat meri hifaazat karti hai vardi' (*Vardi*), 'mohabbat kitne rang badalti hai' (*Aaj Ke Shahenshah*), 'main tujhe chhod ke kahaan jaaunga' (*Trinetra*) and 'meri hasraton ka janaaza utha ke' (*Mehendi Ban Gayi Khoon*). All these songs were from the 1989 – 1991 period. Rekha bahen not only discovered such odd numbers out of these films but also ensured that only solo numbers were played as per the framework of the programme. Her intention to feature him barring all odds was appreciable. The 90s decade saw a huge number of Kumar Sanu solos and the next *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* on him didn't have to go through such a miserable condition.

*Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* is still on air on the first Tuesday of the month but with a halved duration, broadcasting between 13:40 and 14:00. The three editions on the first Tuesdays of August, September and October 2023 featured Mahendra Kapoor, Udit Narayan, and Shreya Ghoshal respectively. The list of included songs is as tabulated below.

Table 45: List of songs for *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* (Aug-Sep-Oct 2023)

EK HI KALAKAAR KE GEET (AUG-SEP-OCT 2023)		
Mahendra Kapoor (1 August)	Udit Narayan (5 September)	Shreya Ghoshal (3 October)
chaand chhupa (Sohni Mahiwal)	jadoo teri nazar (Darr)	mohabbat zindagi (Nazar)
sau saal pehle ki (Saraswati Chandra)	haryala (Badhaai Ho Badhaai)	raat more Saiyan (Police Force)
sikander ne porus se (Anpadh)	chhoti si pyari si (Anari)	ta ra rum pum (Title Song)
mere desh ki dharti (Upkar)	kal bade zor se (APBKDH)	ranga re (Tutak Tutak Tutiyan)

The programme has also been placed on the fifth Thursdays between 12:38 and 13:05 replacing *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*.

### **Panghat**

The word *panghat* (*pan* means water and *ghat* means the place of drawing water) literally means the place in the village where ladies assemble to fetch water. Simply put, it is the village well. What could have been a better word to title the programme of folk music-based film songs! This monthly programme entertained the *Jawans* with folk-based film numbers, thus, bringing them closer to their soil and to the place they belonged. This programme was not just for the sake of having this genre of songs, but carefully thought of, keeping in mind the diverse natives of the *Jawans*, who came from different cultures and were serving the nation in that remote part of the country. *Panghat* undoubtedly gave them the flavour of their soil, their childhood, their music, their culture, their villages, their love, their families.

Table 46: Broadcast schedule of *Panghat* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of PANGHAT during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Tue (2)	13:30	14:10	Rekha bahen

Talking about memories of songs heard in this programme, there were all time hits such as ‘*chalat musaafir moh liya re*’ (*Teesri Kasam*), ‘*jhumka gira re bareilly ke bazaar mein*’ (*Mera Saaya*), ‘*chunari sambhaal gori udi chali jaaye re*’ (*Bahaaron Ke Sapne*), ‘*haay sharmaaun kis kis ko bataaun*’ (*Mera Gaon Mera Desh*), ‘*saiyan le gayi jiya teri pehli najar*’ (*Ek Phool Do Maali*), ‘*ram kare babua hamaar phulwa ko*’ (*Anuraag*), ‘*baalam tere pyar ki thandi aag mein jalte jalte*’ (*Ram Aur Shyam*), ‘*ye gotedaar lehenga niklun jab daal ke*’ (*Dharam Kaanta*), ‘*le de saiyaan odhni*’ (*Pavitra Paapi*), ‘*saiyaan ke gaon mein*’ (*Sajjo Rani*), ‘*jaipur ki choli mangwa de re saiyan*’ (*Gehra Daag*) and many more. The 1980s continued to feed new songs to the database of this programme. Few late 80s numbers I vividly remember having listened to in this programme were ‘*dhola dhol manjeera baaje re*’ (*Joshilay*), ‘*mere saiyaan hai beli ka phool ri sakh*’ (*Geet Mere Pyar Ka*), ‘*oont waali se jo karo yaari more raja*’ (*Bhrashtachar*), ‘*pyar kaahe banaaya ram ne*’ (*Surya*), ‘*jugni aayi dulhan ban kar*’ (*Main Tera Dushman*), ‘*tu mera kaun laage*’ (*Batwara*), ‘*salma ko mil gaya balma*’ (*Paley Khan*), ‘*rakhna athanni sambhaal ke*’ (*Vijay*), ‘*kab aayega mere banjaare*’ (*Banjaran*) and so on. The new age songs like ‘*dola re dola re*’ (*Devdas*), ‘*bindiya chamke choodi khanke*’ (*Tumko Na Bhool Paayenge*) and similar choodi-kangan numbers of the 2000 decade became part of this programme in the new century.

*Panghat* is currently broadcast on the second Tuesday of the month, between 13:40 and 14:00. Let us take a look at the songs played in two recent editions of this programme.

Table 47: List of songs for *Panghat* dated 8 August 2023

<b>PANGHAT (Date: 8 August 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
kahe tose sajna ye tohri sajaniya	Maine Pyar Kiya	1989	Sharda Sinha
bumbhro shyam rang	Mission Kashmir	2000	Sunidhi Chauhan, Shankar M, Jaspinder Nurula

o hamra hansa gayeel bideswa	Gaja Gamini	2000	Kavita Krishnamurthy
kangna re kangna re	Paheli	2005	Sonu Nigam, Shreya Ghoshal, Madhushree, Bela

Table 48: List of songs for Panghat dated 12 September 2023

PANGHAT (Date: 12 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
maahi ve mohabbatan sachchiyan ne	Kaante	2002	Richa Sharma, Sukhwindara Singh
kudi kunwari tere peechhe peechhe	Hadh Kar Di Aapne	2000	Jaspinder Nurula, Anand Raaj Anand
ghunghat mein chaand hoga	Khoobsurat	1999	Kumar Sanu, Kavita Krishnamurthy
main to raste se ja raha tha	Coolie No. 1	1995	Kumar Sanu, Alka Yagnik

### *Sheershak Sangeet*

The title *Sheershak Sangeet* translates to title music and may give the impression of being a programme of songs based on a single word or a topic as was the case with Radio Ceylon that had a programme with the same title. The Radio Ceylon programme used to select one word each week and would play songs starting with that word. However, *Sheershak Sangeet* of Guwahati's Troops Programme was different altogether as it was based on titles songs from films. This type of specific programme to play songs containing the titles of their respective films was something that was unheard of. Nor this type of programme was heard from any other station down the decades. It was truly unique and was real fun to wait for a month to listen to the next batch of title songs. I still remember frequently listening to '*saat ajoobe is duniya mein aathveen apni jodi, tode se bhi toote na ye dharam veer ki jodi*' (*Dharam Veer*) in my early childhood in this programme.

Table 49: Broadcast schedule of *Sheershak Sangeet* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of SHEERSHAK SANGEET during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Tue (3)	13:30	14:10	Rekha bahen

Hasrat Jaipuri, the noted film lyricist, has always been considered to be the King of Title Songs. This was clearly visible in *Sheershak Sangeet*. Title songs penned by him for films like *Hariyali Aur Rasta*, *Pyar Hi Pyar*, *Yakeen*, *April Fool*, *Geet Gaya Pattharon Ne*, *Saanjh Aur Savera*, *Gumnaam*, *Love in Tokyo*, *An Evening in Paris*, *Pyar Mohabbat*, *Chhoti Si Mulaqat*, *Deewana*, *Raat Aur Din*, *Jhuk Gaya Aasman*, *Mere Huzoor*, *Shikaar*, *Tumse Achcha Kaun Hai*, *Pagla Kahin Ka*, *Rootha Na Karo*, *Umang*, *Jaane Anjaane*, *Ankhon Ankhon Mein*, *Do Jasoos*, *Love Marriage*, *Madam X*, *Radha Ka Sangam* were heard in this programme. Apart from the popular title tracks of films, *Sheershak Sangeet* equally featured lesser-heard songs. During the late 1980s/ early 1990s, I remember having listened to title songs from odd films like *Jungbaaz*, *Aasman se Ooncha*, *Aandhi Toofan*, *Jeeva*, *Qayamat*, *Bhawani Junction*, *Raat Ke Andhere Mein* etc.

There have been films whose title songs as they were called were actually theme songs rather than title songs since the name of the film didn't appear in them. Such songs, although referred to as the title songs, weren't made part of *Sheershak Sangeet* so as not to create any kind of confusion among the listeners. In this context, I remember having listened to at least one song that I thought didn't contain the title in it. The song was '*aao tumhe pyar karen, kuch nayi baat karen, ke tumhe*

*choom lene ko jee chahta hai*’ from the film *Itihaas* (1987). That day I couldn’t understand why it was played in *Sheershak Sangeet* when the word “*itihaas*” was not present in the song. Instead, the phrase “*jee chahta hai*” was the title of another film. That day I had given the benefit of doubt to Rekha bahen assuming that it might have been included for possessing the title of another film. Those were not the days of YouTube or Spotify where one could have listened to the songs at his leisure at no cost. Consequently, since then, I had kept this dilemma alive in my subconscious mind only to later realize in the digital era that Rekha bahen was not wrong. And nor was I. The song does contain the word “*itihaas*”. It may not be present in the *mukhda*, but there is just a single occurrence in the entire song and that too towards the end of the song as the last line of the last stanza goes... ‘*pyar ke apne itihaas ki geeta rakh doon, aao tumhe pyar karen...*’ The song contains four stanzas and it so happened that on the fateful day, the song was clipped at the completion of the third stanza. Although it was not the last song of the programme to have met the closing deadline, it was cut short probably to accommodate more songs in the programme. In a nutshell, although the song contained the title of its film, the title word couldn’t see the light of the day in that programme that day. Interesting, isn’t it?

*Sheershak Sangeet* is currently broadcast every Sunday and on the third Tuesday of the month between 13:40 and 14:00. Few recent editions of this programme featured title songs of films such as *Rangeela*, *Hero No.1*, *Biwi No.1*, *Fiza*, *Saathiya*, *Koi Mil Gaya*, *Dhoom*, *Dhoom-2*, *Partner*, *Salaam-e-Ishq*, *Lafange Parinde*, *Dil Dhadakne Do*, *Udaan*, *Prem Ratan Dhan Paayo*, *Dishoom*, *Sanam Re*. Nevertheless, old songs are equally respected in the programme by the current generation of announcers. Songs of a such an edition broadcast recently is as listed below.

Table 50: List of songs for *Sheershak Sangeet* dated 24 September 2023

SHEERSHAK SANGEET (Date: 24 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
jaane wale zara hoshiyar yahan ke hum hain rajkumar	Rajkumar	1964	Mohd Rafi
shareefon ka zamane mein aji bas haal jo dekha ke	Sharafat	1970	Lata Mangeshkar
mere mehboob tujhe meri mohabbat ki qasam	Mere Mehboob	1963	Mohd Rafi
main aashiq hoon bahaaron ka, nazaaron ka	Aashiq	1962	Mukesh

### ***Bhoole Bisre Geet***

The last of the four monthly programmes of Tuesday afternoons used to be *Bhoole Bisre Geet*, the programme of forgotten songs.

Table 51: Broadcast schedule of *Bhoole Bisre Geet* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of BHOOLE BISRE GEET during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Tue (4)	13:30	14:10	Rekha bahen

The concept of this programme and the title is often attributed by the radio listeners to Radio Ceylon and Vividh Bharati. While the former used to have a daily *Puraani Filmon Ka Sangeet* and a weekly *Bhoole Bisre* to showcase old songs, the latter went with *Bhoole Bisre Geet* for the same purpose. However, these two stations were not the pioneers in this field, neither in concept nor in

the title. Hindi film music had originated in 1931 along with the first talkie *Alam Ara*. It was during the second half of the next decade that songs released before eight to ten years began to be treated as old songs. Until the mid-1940s, the programmes of film music used to be titled as *Filmi Gaane*, *Mile-jule Gaane*, *Rang Rangeele Gaane* etc. It was in May 1946 when the first ever programme of “old” film songs, titled as *Kuch Puraane Naghme*, on Tuesday evenings between 19:45 and 20:00 broadcast over Delhi-2 was noticed in its schedule. [143] In the schedule of Tuesday, 25 February 1947, AIR Lahore could be observed broadcasting *Puraani Filmon Se* between 12:30 and 13:00. [144] Likewise, the 11 March 1947 schedule of the station had *Bhoole Bisre Naghme* broadcast on Tuesdays between 13:00 and 13:25. [145] This was probably the first instance of the use of the phrase “*bhoole bisre*” for such a programme. At that time, neither Radio Ceylon nor Vividh Bharati was in existence. Over the years, many stations adopted this phrase, including the two giants, for their respective old music programmes. In July 1949, AIR Lucknow had a programme entitled *Nayi Purani Filmon Se* on Fridays between 13:00 and 13:30, which was changed to *Bhoole Bisre Geet* by 1951 to be broadcast on Saturdays between 13:15 and 13:30. [146] [147] This was probably the first time the title *Bhoole Bisre Geet* was coined. In 1950, AIR Baroda had *Puraani Yaad*. In the 27 May 1950 edition of this programme broadcast between 19:00 and 19:15, songs from films like *Achhut Kanya* (1936), *Doctor* (1941), *Devdas* (1935) and *Jawab* (1942) were played. [148] Down the years, programmes of old film songs were in place in most of the stations. In 1957, even Delhi’s *Sainikon Ke Liye* had a weekly *Bhoole Bisre Geet* on Wednesdays. [149] It would have been a novel idea if AIR Guwahati had chosen a different title for this programme such as *Geet Ateet*, *Sunehri Yaaden*, *Bhulaaye Na Bane* etc. But the title *Bhoole Bisre Geet* has always remained the strongest contender in this context over the decades across all stations.

When I started listening to Guwahati’s *Bhoole Bisre Geet*, the oldest songs that were played belonged to the 1950s. I don’t remember having listened to any 1940s number, not to talk about the 1930s. In other words, songs of K. L. Saigal, Kanan Devi, Pankaj Mullick, K. C. Dey, Shanta Apte, Ashok Kumar, Amirbai Karnataki, Noorjehan were never heard, not at least in the 80s decade. It’s unclear if there was any technical difficulty in playing those old gramophone records on new gramophone players. The reason for this speculation is the broadcast of a special programme of Saigal’s songs from Gauhati-A on 18 January 1967 on the occasion of death anniversary of this first singing superstar. [150] This indicated that Saigal’s gramophone records were available and used to be played in those days. It would be interesting to get information on why playing of songs of the first two decades of Hindi cinema got discontinued from Guwahati. However, in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, when songs started to be played from Compact Discs, I have listened to the Noorjehan song ‘*jawan hai mohabbat, haseen hai zamaana*’ from the 1946 film *Anmol Ghadi* on request from a *Jawan* in *Geet Mala* programme.

Rekha bahen used to include lesser-heard songs of the 1950s and 1960s decades in *Bhoole Bisre Geet*. Singers like Suraiya, Talat Mahmood, Geeta Dutt, Mukesh, Shamshad Begum, Suman Kalyanpur, Sudha Malhotra, Mahendra Kapoor, and several others were heard. Lesser-known songs of Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Mohd. Rafi, Manna Dey, were also played. The objective was not to play old songs but to play forgotten or lesser-heard songs. Due to this, in the late 1990s, the lesser-heard song ‘*baithe baithe aaj aayi mere mann mein*’ from the 1982 film *Patita* was played by Rekha bahen. For a moment, I was surprised to hear a Bappi Lahiri composition in this programme but was later convinced by revisiting the actual purpose of this programme, which was to play “forgotten” songs and not merely “old” songs.

*Bhoole Bisre Geet* is currently broadcast on the fourth Tuesday of the month between 13:40 and 14:00. The content of the programme has got diluted in recent times due to the frequent inclusion of popular old songs. I won't list them here. Instead, few occurrences of lesser-heard and forgotten songs that I have noted down from the Cuesheets available on Prasar Bharati website for this programme over the last two years are as listed in table below.

Table 52: Selective list of songs for *Bhoole Bisre Geet* (November 2021 to September 2023)

<b>BHOOLE BISRE GEET (2021 – 2023)</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
23-Nov-2021	janeman allah khabar	Juari	1968	Lata Mangeshkar, Mahendra Kapoor
28-Dec-2021	dil mein teri yaad	Bin Badal Barsat	1963	Asha Bhosle, Mohd Rafi
26-Jul-2022	tu mere saamne hai	Suhagan	1964	Mohd Rafi
26-Jul-2022	aajkal mein dhal gaya	Beti Bete	1963	Lata Mangeshkar
23-Aug-2022	ye kaun aaya re	Ziddi	1948	Kishore Kumar, Lata Mangeshkar
23-Aug-2022	jaana tha humse door	Adalat	1958	Lata Mangeshkar
23-Aug-2022	door papiha bola	Gajre	1948	Suraiya
27-Sep-2022	main bhanwra tu hai phool	Mela	1948	Mukesh, Shmshad Begum
27-Sep-2022	sharma ke yun na dekh	Neel Kamal	1968	Mohd Rafi
27-Sep-2022	ghadi ghadi mora dil	Madhumati	1958	Lata Mangeshkar
25-Oct-2022	ye duniya hai	Shair	1949	Lata Mangeshkar, Mukesh
22-Nov-2022	kaun desh hai jaana babu	Mukti	1937	Pankaj Mullick
22-Nov-2022	main teri nazar ka suroor	Jahan Ara	1963	Talat Mahmood
24-Jan-2023	doli chadhke dulhan	Doli	1969	Mahendra Kapoor
28-Mar-2023	boojh mera kya naav re	CID	1956	Shmshad Begum
25-Apr-2023	agar ye husn mera pyar	Sunghursh	1968	Lata Mangeshkar
23-May-2023	aaine mein ek chaand si	Elaan	1947	Surendra, Amirbai Karnataki
25-Jul-2023	door koi gaaye dhun ye	Baiju Bawra	1952	Shmshad, Rafi, Lata, Chorus
22-Aug-2023	eena meena deeka	Asha	1957	Asha Bhosle, Chorus
26-Sep-2023	jao ji jao bade dekhe hain	Sharabi	1964	Asha Bhosle, Mohd Rafi

### **Filmi Naghme**

The word *naghma* refers to a melody, a note, or more commonly a song, and is believed to have its origin in Persian-Afghani language. In its generic sense, every song is a *naghma*. So, *Filmi Naghme* should ideally refer to a programme of mixed film songs. However, it wasn't. Film songs could be broadly categorized into two categories – songs with light-weight Hindustani lyrics (language of the common Indian man), and songs with heavy-weight lyrics with significant influence of Persian, Arabic and Urdu languages. The latter was essentially what was offered in *Filmi Naghme*, which was among the first-generation programmes under the Troops Programme,

Table 53: Broadcast schedule of *Filmi Naghme* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of FILMI NAGHME during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Wed	12:37	13:05	Meeta bahen

Sat	17:05	17:45	Meeta bahen
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*Filmi Naghme*, thus, is the programme of song forms such as nazms, ghazals, mujras and anything dominated by poetry. Qawwalis are not made part of it since there is a dedicated programme for that, to be discussed later in this chapter. Due to the enormous volume of songs that qualified for *Filmi Naghme*, the programme was twice-a-week affair. The oldest song that I have ever heard in this programme was Rajkumari's 1949 ghazal '*ghabra ke jo hum sar ko takraaen to achchha ho*' (*Mahal*).

Mohd. Rafi used to be the most heard singer in this programme. From the long list, the ones that I remember include '*chaudahveen ka chaand ho*' (Title Song), '*aaj puraani raahon se koi mujhe awaaz na de*' (*Aadmi*), '*ab kya misaal doon main tumhare shabaab ki*' (*Aarti*), '*guzre hain aaj ishq mein hum us mukaam se*' (*Dil Diya Dard Liya*), '*kabhi khud pe kabhi haalaat pe rona aaya*' (*Hum Dono*), '*kisi ki yaad mein duniya ko hain bhulaye hue*' (*Jahan Ara*), '*phir wo bhooli si yaad aayi hai*' (*Begana*), '*kal raat zindagi se mulaqaat ho gayi*' (*Paalki*), '*khuda bhi aasmaan se jab zameen par dekhta hoga*' (*Dharti*), '*ruk se zara naqaab utha do mere huzoor*' (*Mere Huzoor*), '*aapke haseen rukh pe aaj naya noor hai*' (*Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi*), '*waadiyan mera daaman*' (*Abhilasha*), '*maine poochha chaand se ke dekha hai kahin*' (*Abdullah*), '*ahsaan tera hoga mujh par*' (*Junglee*), '*teri pyari pyari soorat ko kisi ki nazar na lage*' (*Sasural*), '*teri zulfon se judaai to naheen maangi thi*' (*Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai*), '*jo unki tamanna hai barbaad ho ja*' (*Intequam*), '*chhalke teri aankhon se sharaab aur zyada*' (*Arzoo*), '*poochhe jo koi mujhse bahaar kaisi hoti hai*' (*Aap Aaye Bahaar Aayi*), '*chhalkayen jaam aaiye aapki aankhon ke naam*' (*Mere Humdum Mere Dost*), '*chhoo lene do naazuk hothon ko*' (*Kajal*), '*ye zulf agar khul ke bikhar jaaye to achchha*' (*Kajal*), '*ye jo chilman hai dushman hai hamari*' (*Mehboob Ki Mehendi*), '*tere nain nashe de pyaale hain*' (*Gora Aur Kaala*), '*dard-e-dil dar-e-jigar dil mein jagaaya aapne*' (*Karz*). These and many such songs used to be the voices of the youth of that era. No wonder the *Jawans*, in their solitude, immersed themselves in such songs that depicted various faces and stages of love.

Kishore Kumar was also heard, in lesser quantity though. Songs like '*khilte hain gul yahaan khil ke bikharne ko*' (*Sharmilee*), '*ye jo mohabbat hai ye unka hai kaam*' (*Kati Patang*), '*mere deewanepan ki bhi dawa naheen*' (*Mehboob Ki Mehendi*), '*dil aaj shair hai gham aaj naghma hai*' (*Gambler*), '*khizaan ke phool pe aati kabhi bahaar naheen*' (*Do Raaste*), '*wo shaam kuch ajeeb thi*' (*Khamoshi*), '*badi sooni sooni hai zindagi*' (*Mili*), '*jaane kya soch kar naheen guzra*' (*Kinara*), '*dil kya kare jab kisi ko kisi se pyar ho jaaye*' (*Julie*), '*hamein tumse pyar kitna*' (*Kudrat*), '*phir wohi raat hai, raat hai khwab ki*' (*Ghar*), '*haal kya hai dilon ka na puchho sanam*' (*Anokhi Ada*), '*kabhi beqasi ne maara, kabhi bebasi ne maara*' (*Alag Alag*), '*simti si sharmaayi si kis duniya se tum aayi ho*' (*Parwana*), '*chalte mere ye geet yaad rakhna*' (*Chalte Chalte*) were heard frequently.

Singer Mukesh was known for pathos and pain in his voice. Thus, it was not surprising that whenever a song in his voice was selected for *Filmi Naghme*, most of the times it was a sad number. His solos like '*sada khush rahe tu jafa karne wale*' (*Pyar Ka Saagar*), '*jis dil mein basa tha pyar tera us dil ko kabhi ka tod diya*' (*Saheli*), '*teri yaad dil se bhulaane chala hoon*' (*Haryali Aur Rasta*), '*raat aur din deeya jale mere mann mein*' (*Raat Aur Din*), '*do kadam tum na chale do kadam hum na chale*' (*Ek Haseena Do Deewane*), '*zubaan pe dard bhari daastan chali aayi*' (*Maryada*), '*na jaane kahaan kho gaya wo zamana*' (*Begana*), '*ziker hota hai jab mohabbat ka*' (*My Love*) and '*bhooli hui yaadon mujhe itna na sataao*' (*Sanjog*) I vividly remember having listened to in this programme. Mahendra Kapoor's '*chalo ik baar phir se ajnabee ban jaayen hum*

*dono* (Gumrah), and Shailendra Singh's *'main shair to naheen magar ae haseen'* (Bobby) can still be heard in this programme.

Among the female singers, songs of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle were mostly heard from the 1960s-70s decades. *'milti hai zindagi mein mohabbat kabhi kabhi'* (Aankhen), *'gairon pe karam apno pe sitam'* (Aankhen), *'betaab dil ki tamanna yahi hai'* (Hanste Zakhm), *'hum hain mata-e-koocha-o-bazaar ki tarah'* (Dastak), *'hum the jinke sahaare wo hue na hamaare'* (Safar), *'is qadar aap humko jo tadpayenge'* (Apne Rang Hazaar), *'ahal-e-dil yun bhi nibha lete hain'* (Dard) and *'ruke ruke se qadam ruk ke baar baar chale'* (Mausam) were among the frequently heard Lata numbers of this period. Popular Asha numbers included *'ye hai reshmi zulfon ka andhera'* (Mere Sanam), *'koi shikwa bhi naheen koi shikayat bhi naheen'* (Neend Hamari Khwab Tumhare), *'aaj main dekhun jidhar jidhar'* (Doli) and *'ye zindagi jo thi ab tak teri panaahon mein'* (Neel Kamal). The 1980s decade brought many new additions to the list. The Lata numbers of the 80s heard in *Filmi Naghme* included *'dil to hai dil, dil ka aetbaar kya keeje'* (Muqaddar Ka Sikandar), *'aaina wohi rehta hai chehre badal jaate hain'* (Shalimaar), *'humne sanam ko khat likha'* (Shakti), *'dikhaai diye yun ke bekhud kiya'* (Bazaar), *'sun le ye saara zamaana'* (Faasle), *'aaj sar-e-mehfil iqraar karte hain'* (Laila), *'chhup ja chaand sitaaron ki neeyat theek naheen'* (Maati Maange Khoon) and the highly popular *'jaane kya baat hai'* (Sunny). Apart from the classic ghazals of *Umrao Jaan*, the Asha numbers of the 80s to be included in this programme were but not limited to *'gham ki dawa to pyar hai'* (Amanush), *'zaher deta hai mujhe koi dawa deta hai'* (Wohi Baat), *'sajti hai yunhi mehfil rang yunhi dhalne do'* (Kudrat), *'yun to milne ko hum mile hain bahut'* (Faasle), *'geet sunoge huzoor ya main ghazal gaaun'* (Rocky), *'jab apne ho jaayen bewafa to dil toote'* (Souten), *'mera kuchh saamaan tumhare paas padaa hai'* (Ijaazat), *'aur kya ahde wafa hote hain'* (Sunny).

*Filmi Naghme* was mostly solo numbers. The handful of duets to be heard included *'humne teri jafa ka wafa naam rakh diya'* (Chale Hain Sasural), *'paaon chhoo lene do phoolon ko inaayat hogi'* (Taj Mahal), *'sarakti jaaye hai rukh se naqaab aahista aahista'* (Deedar-e-Yaar), *'kya kya na sahe humne sitam aapki khaatir'* (Mere Huzoor), *'simti hui ye ghadiyan phir se na bikhar jaayen'* (Chambal Ki Kasam), *'kisi nazar ko tera intezaar aaj bhi hai'* (Aetbaar), *'dil ki ye arzoo thi koi dilruba mile'* (Nikaah). The songs of Bazaar were all ghazals. The solo numbers like *'dikhaai diye yun ki bekhud kiya'* and *'karoge yaad to har baat yaad aayegi'* were given preference over the only duet of the film *'phir chhidi raat baat phoolon ki'*. Likewise, the popular duet mujra *'salaam-e-ishq meri jaan'* (Muqaddar Ka Sikandar) was never made part of this programme whereas the other lesser-heard mujra of the same film *'wafa jo na kee to jafa bhi na keeje'* sung by Hemlata was accepted. The reason for not having many duets in *Filmi Naghme* could have been due to two reasons. Firstly, there was a separate programme for duet numbers, *Preet Ladee*, on Wednesday itself. Secondly, duets were more popular among the masses resulting in more duet songs getting played in *Aap Ki Farmaish*. Since *Aap Ki Farmaish* was broadcast just after *Filmi Naghme*, the decision of playing solo tracks in *Filmi Naghme* might have been in order to maintain its own distinct identity. Mixed songs in two successive programmes would have led to both losing their identities. The only male duet that I remember having heard in this programme was the Bhupendra – Suresh Wadkar number from *Masoom* – *'huzoor is qadar bhi na itraake chaliye'*.

Films on Muslim subjects like *Mirza Ghalib*, *Mere Mehboob*, *Paalki*, *Pakeezah*, *Umrao Jaan*, *Bazaar* had majority of their songs that fitted well into this programme. Another such film was *Nikaah*. Out of the two Salma Agha numbers, the nazm *'fazaa bhi hain jawaan jawaan, hawa bhi*

*hai rawaan rawaan*’ was frequently heard while the ghazal *‘dil ke armaan aansuon mein beh gaye’* was rarely included, possibly due to the more frequent inclusion of the latter in request-based programmes. However, Mahendra Kapoor’s solo *‘beete hue lamhon ki kasak saath to hogi’* and Ghulam Ali’s popular ghazal *‘chupke chupke raat din aansoo bahaana yaad hai’* were played. Ghulam Ali’s two more film ghazals on the *awaargee* theme that used to be played were *‘chamakte chaand ko toota hua taara bana daala’* (*Awaargi*) and *‘ye dil ye paagal dil mera kyun bujh gaya aawaargee’* (*Maati Maange Khoon*). From late 1970s, the ghazal singers sang many ghazals and ghazal-type songs for films. This category constituted a noticeable share in *Filmi Naghme*. Jagjit Singh could be frequently heard in films like *Arth*, *Aaj*, *Saath-Saath*, *Sarfarosh*. Bhupendra’s two songs with mention of flower – *‘zindagi phoolon ki naheen, phoolon ki tarah mehki rahe’* (*Grihapraves*) and *‘simat ke baahon mein phoolon ka aasmaan aaye’* (*Jumbish*), and the unusual voice of Kabban Mirza singing the two ghazals of *Razia Sultan* – *‘aayi zanjeer ki jhankaar khuda khair kare’* and *‘tera hijr mera naseeb hai’* used to create magic on those quiet afternoons.

With changing time, the new age singers were welcomed in *Filmi Naghme*. Yesu Das’s *‘zid na karo ab to ruko ye raat naheen aayegi’* (*Lahoo Ke Do Rang*), Anwar’s *‘mohabbat ab tijaarat ban gayi hai’* (*Arpan*) and *‘teri aankhon ki chaahat mein to main sab kuch lutaa dunga’* (*Janata Hawaldar*), Amit Kumar’s *‘kya hua ik baat par barson ka yarana gaya’* (*Teri Kasam*), Mohd. Aziz’s *‘dard-e-dil ki kya hai dawaa aap hi kahen’* (*Zid*), *‘ye dil mein rehne wale dil se naheen nikalte’* (*Jawaab*), *‘tumhe dil se chaaha tha humne magar tum hue na hamaare’* (*Meera Ka Mohan*) and *‘pyar to pyar hai, pyar ka umra se kya waasta’* (*Mohabbat Ka Paighaam*), Shabbir Kumar’s *‘ae dost ye dua meri tohfa hai pyar ka’* (*Pyar Kiya Hai Pyar Kareng*), Kumar Sanu’s *‘shab ke jaage hue taaron ko bhi neend aane lagi’* (*Tamanna*) and *‘zindagi ki talaash mein hum maut ke kitne paas aa gaye’* (*Saathi*), Udit Narayan’s *‘paighaam de rahi hai ye shaam dhalte’* (*Anmol*), Sonu Nigam’s *‘achchha sila diya tune mere pyar ka’* (*Bewafa Sanam*), Anuradha Paudwal’s *‘hum to mashhoor hue hain aapki chaahat mein’* (*Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahin*), Alka Yagnik’s *‘shayarana si hai zindagi ki sadaa’* (*Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aayi*), Pankaj Udhas’s *‘chhupana bhi naheen aata’* (*Baazigar*), Vipin Sachdeva’s *‘beiraada nazar mil gayi to mujhse dil wo mera maang baithe’* (*Sanam Bewafa*) were few among the many new entries to the programme over the years.

*Filmi Naghme* was equally significant in bringing out those songs which would never get played in a request-based or other programmes. For instance, the 1993 film *Anmol* had popular numbers like *‘dil ki lagi kaahe jaane na’*, *‘aayegi wo aayegi daudi chali aayegi’*, *‘batao tum kaun ho khayaalon mein jo chha gaye’* and *‘paighaam de rahi hai’*. These songs used to be played in request-based programmes. However, there was a Parveen Sultana number in the film that most people didn’t care about. This song, *‘koi ishq ka rog lagaaye na, lag jaaye to pachhtaaye na’* received a grand welcome from *Filmi Naghme*. In the absence of Meeta bahen, once Rekha bahen, towards the end of her association with AIR Guwahati, had played the popular *‘tadap tadap ke is dil se aah nikalti rahi’* from *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*. This was the last and the latest song I heard her playing on this otherwise Meeta bahen orchestrated programme.

*Filmi Naghme* being a torchbearer of classy poetic songs with rich lyrical content, witnessed a gradual and continuous deterioration in the quality over the decades due to the dilution of song lyrics with changing trends in cinema and society. Nevertheless, this genre continued to be enriched by the new age lyricists whose imagination and urge to discover new words for film lyrics has been of late introducing new lyrical style in film music. The number of new age songs that

could secure a place in this programme is not small. Also, the songs included in this programme are no longer restricted to solo numbers. Few of such new and/or duet songs to be made part of this programme are listed here – ‘tu mujhe qubool main tujhe qubool’ (*Khuda Gawaah*), ‘gumsum chaandni ho masha allah’ (*Saawariya*), ‘kabhi alvida na kehna’ (Title Song), ‘noor-e-khuda’ (*My Name is Khan*), ‘kuch to hai tujhse raabta’ (*Agent Vinod*), ‘mere naina kaafir ho gaye’ (*Dolly Ki Doli*), ‘phir le aaya dil majboor kya keeje’ (*Barfi*), ‘zindagi se chura ke zindagi mein basa ke’ (*Raaz 3*), ‘vaada tumse hai vaada’ (1920).

One interesting observation is about the popular song ‘ae mere humsafar ik zara intezaar’ (*Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*). I never heard this song in *Filmi Naghme*. However, the recent remake of this song sung by Mithoon and Tulsi Kumar for the film *All Is Well* (2015) has made it to this programme. The reason could be attributed to the use of more Urdu poetical words in the stanzas of the new version as compared to the original. *Filmi Naghme* is still broadcast on Wednesdays between 12:38 and 13:05. However, the Saturday’s edition has undergone a change. It is now available between 14:30 and 15:00 as *Nazrana*. The reason for this makeover is explained later in this book. Songs played in a recent edition of *Filmi Naghme* and *Nazrana* are as tabulated below. The two contrasting tables depict songs from two different era, yet equally eligible for these programmes with common undercurrent.

Table 54: List of songs for *Filmi Naghme* dated 13 September 2023

FILMI NAGHME (Date: 13 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
koi duur se awaaz de chale aao	Saheb Bibi Aur Ghulam	1962	Geeta Dutt
ye hawa ye hawa... aa bhi jaa	Gumrah	1963	Mahendra Kapoor
hum hain mata-e-koocha-o-bazaar ki tarah	Dastak	1970	Lata Mangeshkar
pyar deewana hota hai	Kati Patang	1971	Kishore Kumar
wafa jo na kee to jafa bhi na keeje	Muqaddar Ka Sikandar	1978	Hemlata
o mere shah-e-khubaan	Love in Tokyo	1966	Mohd Rafi
aaina wohi rehta hai chehren badal jaate hain	Shalimaar	1978	Lata Mangeshkar
jaane kya soch kar naheen guzra	Kinara	1977	Kishore Kumar

Table 55: List of songs for *Nazrana* dated 29 July 2023

NAZRANA (Date: 13 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
tere vaaste mera ishq sufiyana	The Dirty Picture	2011	Kamal Khan, Chorus
ajnabi shahar hai ajnabi shaam hai	Jaaneman	2006	Sonu Nigam
agar tum mil jao, zamana chhod denge	Zeher	2005	Shreya Ghoshal
tu hi rab tu hi dua	Dangerous Ishq	2012	Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Tulsi Kumar
gumsum chaandni ho masha allah	Saawariya	2007	Kunal Ganjawala, Shreya Ghoshal
kuch to hai tujhse raabta	Agent Vinod	2012	Arijit Singh, Hamsika

*Preet Ladde*

An introduction of *Preet Ladee* programme has been presented earlier in this book. This was also among the first-generation programmes under the Troops Programme.

Table 56: Broadcast schedule of *Preet Ladee* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of PREET LADEE during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Wed	17:05	17:45	Rekha bahen

During the 1980s, Rekha bahen's approach towards this programme was to select lesser-heard and more of B-grade songs since the popular and good ones used to get frequently played in the request-based programmes. For example, consider the film *Pyasa Sawan* (1981). The two popular duets of Lata Mangeshkar and Suresh Wadkar, 'megha re megha re, mat pardes ja re' and 'in haseen waadiyon se do chaar nazaare', used to get played often in *Aap Ki Farmaish* on request of the *Jawans*. Hence, the Asha Bhosle – Kishore Kumar duet 'o meri chhammak chhallo, o mere ram lubhaya' secured a place in *Preet Ladee*. Same was the case with the 1984 film *Jawaani*. The Asha Bhosle – Amit Kumar duet 'tu rootha to main ro dungi sanam' was the most popular number of the film that invited frequent requests from the *Jawans*. Thus, the Lata – Amit Kumar duet 'gali gali dhoonda tujhe, kone kone dekha re' used to get played in *Preet Ladee*.

Songs containing two singers with noticeable chorus voices were usually avoided as there was a separate *Swar Sangam* programme for such songs. Also, male-male, and female-female duets never made it to this programme to complement the title of the programme. Instead, such same gender duets were often made part of *Sabrang*, to be discussed later this chapter.

During the initial few decades of film music, duet songs were lesser in number in films. On an average, two out of six songs in an album used to be duets. Thus, *Preet Ladee* was not justified twice a week. However, the number of duets per film increased manyfold since the beginning of the 1990s, thanks to Gulshan Kumar for his musical films that used to have 8 out of 10 songs as duets of Anuradha Paudwal. Other music companies followed this formula resulting in the decade witnessing the highest number of duets. But during the last ten years, the percentage of duets has again gone down sharply. *Preet Ladee* has been the witness of this swinging rise and fall of duets in our films over the past six decades.

*Preet Ladee* is currently broadcast on Wednesdays between 14:30 and 15:00. Duets selected for a recent instance of the programme are as listed below.

Table 57: List of songs for *Preet Ladee* dated 6 September 2023

PREET LADEE (Date: 6 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
mera mann kyun tumhe chaahe	Mann	1999	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
teri meri teri prem kahani	Bodyguard	2011	Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Shreya Ghoshal
hua hai aaj pehli baar	Sanam Re	2016	Armaan Malik, Palak Muchhal
ae mere humsafar ik zara intezaar	All Is Well	2015	Mithoon Tulsi Kumar
ae dil hamein itna bataa	Hamesha	1997	Udit Narayan, Sadhana Sargam
pehli dafaa is dil mein bhi	Hulchul	1995	Kumar Sanu, Alka Yagnik
tere bin tere bin	Wazir	2016	Sonu Nigam, Shreya Ghoshal

## *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*

As mentioned previously, *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* was introduced sometime during 1965. Described as “*jeevan se sambandhit filmi geet*” meaning philosophical film songs, this programme essentially aimed at boosting the morale of the *Jawans* living monotonous lifestyle far off from their near and dear ones. The songs of this programme were inspirational and motivational, which would generate positive attitude and optimism towards life. The songs need not necessarily be talking only about staying happy for that would be something unrealistic, but they made sure that the listener understood the balanced mix of joys and sorrows in life.

Table 58: Broadcast schedule of *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of HAI ZINDAGI PUKAARTI during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Thu (1,5)	12:37	13:05	Rekha bahen

The Shailendra – Hasrat Jaipuri – Shankar-Jaikishan combo produced many such songs that were often played in the programme. Some examples – ‘*kisi ki muskuraahaton pe ho nisaar*’ (*Anari*), ‘*ajeeb daastaan hai ye*’ (*Dil Apna Aur Preet Paraayi*), ‘*duniya banaane wale kya tere mann mein samaayi*’ (*Teesri Kasam*), ‘*sajan re jhooth mat bolo khuda ke paas jaana hai*’ (*Teesri Kasam*), ‘*is duniya mein jeena ho to sun lo meri baat*’ (*Gumnaam*), ‘*suno zindagi gaati hai*’ (*Pagla Kahin Ka*), ‘*e bhai zara dekh ke chalo*’ (*Mera Naam Joker*), ‘*chale ja chale ja chale ja, jahaan pyar mile*’ (*Jahaan Pyar Mile*), ‘*zindagi ik safar hai suhaana*’ (*Andaaz*). With Vishveshwar Sharma as lyricist, Shankar-Jaikishan’s one of the last songs to be heard in this programme was the title number of *Duniyadari* – ‘*naav kaagaz ki gehra hai paani, zindagi ki yahi hai kahaani*’.

Likewise, Indeevar and Kalyanji-Anandji formed a great pair when it came to philosophical songs. ‘*chhod den saari duniya kisi ke liye*’ (*Saraswati Chandra*), ‘*zindagi ka safar hai ye kaisa safar*’ (*Safar*), ‘*o nadiya chale, chale re dhaara*’ (*Safar*) are few songs from this pair that were frequently played. With Anjaan, Kalyanji-Anandji created ‘*rote hue aate hain sab, hansta hua jo jayega*’ (*Muqaddar Ka Sikander*), ‘*thoda sa gham thodi khushi, yahi to hai zindagi*’ (*Thikana*). How could Sahir Ludhianvi’s songs stay away from this programme! ‘*ponchh kar ashk apni aankhon se, muskuraao to koi baat bane*’ (*Naya Rasta*), ‘*zindagi ke rang kai hain saathi re*’ (*Aadmi Aur Insaan*), ‘*zindagi ittefaaq hai*’ (*Aadmi Aur Insaan*), ‘*aage bhi jaane na tu*’ (*Waqf*) and ‘*na munh chhupa ke jiyo*’ (*Hamraz*) were the most heard ones. And how can one also forget the most powerful song of this genre – ‘*zindagi kaisi hai paheli haay*’ (*Anand*) penned by Yogesh and composed by Salil Chowdhury! Gulzar’s ‘*aane wala pal jaane wala hai*’ (*Golmaal*) has also been one of the most frequently played songs till date.

Raj Kapoor had moved away from Shankar-Jaikishan after the death of Jaikishan. In R. D. Burman’s music, the *Dharam Karam* number ‘*ik din bik jaayega maati ke mol*’ penned by Majrooh Sultanpuri was a highly popular number of that era that frequently made it to *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*. Few other Pancham hits of this programme penned by Anand Bakshi were ‘*rona kabhi nahi rona*’ (*Apna Desh*), ‘*zindagi ke safar mein guzar jaate hain jo makaam*’ (*Aap Ki Kasam*), ‘*is jeevan ki yahi hai kahaani*’ (*Alag Alag*), ‘*sun sun jeene wale jeena hai to jaan le tu*’ (*Swami Dada*). Anand Bakshi wrote the maximum songs for Laxmikant-Pyarelal, which was visible in this genre as well. ‘*tum besahara ho to kisi ka sahara bano*’ (*Anurodh*), ‘*ye jeevan hai, is jeevan ka, yahi hai rangroop*’ (*Piya Ka Ghar*), ‘*aadmi musaafir hai, aata hai jaata hai*’ (*Apnapan*), ‘*rote rote hansna*

*seekho*’ (*Andha Kanoon*) were among those songs of this pair which contributed in making this programme meaningful and melodious. And how can one forget the most played Laxmikant-Pyarelal number ‘*jeevan chalne ka naam, chalte raho subh-o-shaam*’ (*Shor*) written by Inderjit Singh Tulsi! All these songs must have behaved like vitamin tonics in boosting up the *Jawans*.

The new age songs to be played included ‘*zindagi ki yahi reet hai, haar ke baad hi jeet hai*’ (*Mr. India*), ‘*khush rehne ko zaroori kya hai bolo yaar*’ (*King Uncle*), ‘*zindagi se jab mile ajnabi lagi*’ (*Aasman Se Ooncha*), ‘*marne ke darr se mere dil jeena na tu chhod dena*’ (*Jurm*), ‘*waqt ke saath har zakhm bharta naheen*’ (*Begaana*), ‘*kabhi kuch khoya, kabhi kuch paaya*’ (*Zindagi Ek Jua*), ‘*zindagi ke khel mein kaun ye jaane ke hona hai kya*’ (*Khel*), ‘*khushiyan aur gham sehti hai, phir bhi ye chup rehti hai*’ (*Mann*), ‘*ik pal ka jeena phir to hai jaana*’ (*Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai*). *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* continues to be broadcast on the first Thursday of the month at the same time. The edition of fifth Thursday has however been replaced with *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*. Table below lists down the songs played in a recent edition of the programme.

Table 59: List of songs for *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* dated 7 September 2023

HAI ZINDAGI PUKAARTI (Date: 7 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
zindagi kitni khoobsoorat hai	Bin Badal Barasat	1963	Hemant Kumar
kabhi to milegi kahin to milegi	Aarti	1962	Lata Mangeshkar
rote hue aate hain sab hansta hua jo	Muqaddar Ka Sikander	1978	Kishore Kumar
ye lamha filhaal jee lene de	Filhaal	2002	Asha Bhosle
gaadi bula rahi hai seeti baja rahi hai	Dost	1974	Kishore Kumar
geet gaata chal o saathi gungunata chal	Geet Gaata Chal	1975	Jaspal Singh, Chorus
chale ja chale ja jahaan pyar mile	Jahan Pyar Mile	1970	Suman Kalyanpur

### **Saaz Aur Awaaz**

As the name indicates, *Saaz Aur Awaaz* is the programme of instrumental versions of film songs alternating with the songs themselves. On an average, three pairs of songs and their instrumental versions get played in the programme every month.

Table 60: Broadcast schedule of *Saaz Aur Awaaz* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of SAAZ AUR AWAAZ during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Thu (2)	12:37	13:05	Rekha bahen

It would be interesting to look at the evolution of this concept. At Independence, AIR Lucknow used to have a programme entitled *Saazon Par Naghma* that played instrumentals of songs. [151] In early 1950s, the Delhi station had a similar programme entitled *Saazon Par*. [152] In 1966, Producer-Director Subodh Mukherjee made a Hindi film entitled *Saaz Aur Awaaz* which was the love story of a singer and a dancer. Though not confirmed, it is estimated that during the same time, Radio Ceylon’s announcer Chetan Kheda came up with the concept of playing instrumentals and songs in a programme entitled *Awaaz Aur Saaz*. However, it was soon discontinued for unknown reason. Sometime later, the programme was reinstated as *Saaz Aur Awaaz*, probably

inspired from the 1966 film title. [142] In 1971, AIR Urdu Service deployed *Saaz Aur Awaaz* on Wednesday afternoons between 14:15 and 14:30. Vividh Bharati didn't have such programme at that time in its schedule. However, a five-minute *Gunjan* was in place daily at 10:45 to play the instrumental of a film song. [153] In 1972, Delhi-D (*Yuvavani*) used to have a weekly *Saaz Aur Awaaz* on Mondays between 20:40 and 20:50. [154] Before the year 1973 ended, Vividh Bharati too had *Saaz Aur Awaaz* on weekdays between 11:45 and 12:00. [155] There is no conclusive information on when Guwahati's *Saaz Aur Awaaz* began, however, it is interesting to note that in 1975, Urdu Service used to have this programme on Thursday afternoons between 14:05 and 14:30, thus coinciding the day of the week for this programme with Guwahati.

The realization of such a programme on radio was made possible due to the music companies recording the instrumental versions of popular film songs and releasing them over EP and LP gramophone records. Like film songs, their instrumental versions were also broadcast over AIR stations, which not only gave birth to *Saaz Aur Awaaz* kind of programme but also gave popularity to the great musicians, who were not usually known to the public. Enoch Daniels (Piano/Accordion), Van Shipley (Electric Guitar), Sunil Ganguly (Hawaiian Electric Guitar), Milon Gupta (Mouth Organ), S. Hazara Singh (Electric Guitar) were the big names among many others whose film instrumentals could be heard on AIR and Radio Ceylon's *Saaz Aur Awaaz* programmes. All these artists have played their respective instruments in various original film songs and have also worked as music arrangers. When it comes to my memories of Guwahati's *Saaz Aur Awaaz*, the two names which were frequently heard on this programme were those of Sunil Ganguly and Milon Gupta. The songs of *Blackmail* – 'pal pal dil ke paas', 'sharbatī terī aankhon kī' and 'asha o asha tujhe kya hua hai', the *Kudrat* song 'tune o rangeele kaisa jadoo kiya', the *Safar* number 'zindagi ka safar hai ye kaisa safar', the *Padosan* song 'mere saamne wali khidki mein' and the two songs of *Baaton Baaton Mein* – 'suniye kahiye' and 'na bole tum na maine kuch kahaa' were among the frequently played numbers during the 1980s that I remember. In the 1990s, several songs and their instrumentals from films such as *Dil*, *Beta*, *Aayi Milan Ki Raat* etc. became regular members of this programme.

I remember an interesting incident related to this programme. Thursday being the off day for Seema bahen, the day's programmes used to be presented by Rekha bahen and Meeta bahen as per set schedule given earlier in this book. Once Rekha bahen was absent on a Thursday and thus, *Saaz Aur Awaaz* was to be handled by Meeta bahen. The Troops Programme started at 12:30 with the opening announcement by a Casual Announcer, which should have been done by the Regular Announcer (Meeta bahen in this case) as per standard practice followed in case a casual announcer was on duty with a regular announcer. Following the signature band tune, the Casual Announcer presented *Aaj Ka Geet* as per schedule. And then there took place a goof-up. Meeta bahen was still not present in the studio to present her first programme, *Saaz Aur Awaaz*. And the casual announcer unfortunately didn't know what this programme was all about. Since Meeta bahen's absence was unplanned, the casual announcer was not prepared to present the programme and supposedly she didn't have any idea about it. Had it been a normal song-based programme, she would have still managed it. But the concept of alternating instrumentals and songs totally went over her head. She announced that due to certain reason, *Saaz Aur Awaaz* programme was being cancelled for the day and in its place, she will play film songs instead. I don't remember the song that she played but I remember it was one of those songs which used to be frequently played in *Saaz Aur Awaaz*, thus, making it clear to the listeners without telling it explicitly that she was playing songs from the scheduled programme itself. After the song ended, to my disbelief, there appeared the voice of

Meeta bahen. Yes, she had finally arrived. She managed the situation well. Instead of going with what the casual announcer had already announced about the cancellation of *Saaz Aur Awaaz*, she smartly announced that the listeners were listening to *Saaz Aur Awaaz* and that they had just listened to the first song of the programme, and that it was time to listen to its instrumental version. Thus, it was probably for the first time, and probably the last time, in that programme that the instrumental followed the song. From the next song onwards on that day, the usual format was followed.

*Saaz Aur Awaaz* is still in place over both Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (previously Radio Ceylon) and Guwahati's Troops Programme. The difference in them is in the nature of songs that are included. SLBC is still with those old melodies while Guwahati includes new songs and their instrumentals as per availability. It is true that during the 1990s and 2000s decades, only a handful of instrumentals were played in Guwahati's programme and there used to be frequent repetitions. However, since last decade, there has been considerable increase in the instrumentals that has given a new look to this programme. In recent instances of this programme, instrumentals, and songs from both old and new films such as *C.I.D.*, *Guide*, *Buddha Mil Gaya*, *Don*, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, *Chaandni*, *Baazigar*, *Criminal*, *Soldier*, *Yes Boss*, *Dil Se*, *Dil Toh Paagal Hai*, *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, *Jodha Akbar*, *Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na* were played.

### ***Raag Rang***

Not sure about the reason for choosing such a misleading title, Guwahati's *Raag Rang* is the programme of film songs either penned by one lyricist or composed by one music director.

*Table 61: Broadcast schedule of Raag Rang during 1980s*

<b>Broadcast Schedule of RAAG RANG during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Thu (3)	12:37	13:05	Rekha bahen

Usually, *Raag Rang* has often been used to represent programmes related to Indian classical music. Vividh Bharati too had *Raag Rang* for playing raag-based songs. For a programme to showcase the creations of a poet or a composer, a more meaningful title such as *Tarkash* (meaning quiver – a case for carrying arrows) or *Guldasta* (meaning bouquet – a bunch of arranged flowers) would have been better. The concept of Guwahati's *Raag Rang* was derived from Radio Ceylon's *Geetkaar* (songs of one lyricist) and *Sur Sansaar* (songs of one music director). Both these programmes were started by Radio Ceylon's veteran presenter Vijay Kishore Dube. [142] *Raag Rang* being a monthly programme in the Troops Programme, only six lyricists and six composers were possible in a year. This led to only the frontline and popular artists of the ongoing era to get featured in this programme. During the 1980s, the names that dominated this programme were Anand Bakshi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Anjaan, Indeevar, Gulzar, Kalyanji Anandji, Laxmikant Pyarelal, R. D. Burman, Bappi Lahiri, Ravindra Jain, and Anu Malik. The 1990s brought Javed Akhtar, Sameer, Nadeem Shravan, Anand Milind, Jatin Lalit, A. R. Rahman, Himesh Reshammiya to this programme.

Nevertheless, occasionally artists from the golden era of film music were also featured. And this happened specially when new songs of a veteran artist, who otherwise had been dormant for many

years, got released. The most significant example of this was the featuring of composer O. P. Nayyar in *Raag Rang* during the first half of the 1990s when after a gap of many years he scored music in two films – *Nishchay* and *Zid*. After playing new songs like ‘*kisi haseen yaar ki talaash hai*’ (*Nishchay*) and ‘*aap qaatil hain, qayaamat hain, ye haqeeqat hai*’ (*Zid*), rest of the programme was filled with his 1960s chartbusters. Interestingly, a recent *Raag Rang* programme on O. P. Nayyar, broadcast on 17 August 2023, included all old classic songs such as ‘*babuji dheere chalna*’ (*Aar Paar*), ‘*thandi hawa kaali ghata*’ (*Mr. & Mrs. 55*), ‘*meri neendon mein tum*’ (*Naya Andaz*), ‘*aankhon hi aankhon mein*’ (*CID*), ‘*deewana hua baadal*’ (*Kashmir Ki Kali*), ‘*jaiye aap kahaan jayenge*’ (*Mere Sanam*) and ‘*raaton ko chori chori bole mora kangna*’ (*Mohabbat Zindagi Hai*).

Music director Kalyanji of the Kalyanji – Anandji duo had passed away on 24 August 2000. As a tribute, the *Raag Rang* programme of the following month was dedicated to Kalyanji by playing songs composed by the duo. Interestingly, the songs were sent by a regularly participating *Jawan* Rifleman K. H. Hemkholein Haokip. The programme was broadcast on 21 September 2000. The contribution of Rifleman Haokip was significant as he regularly sent his choice of songs for this programme featuring lyricists and composers who were not heard in this programme since ages. Golden era artists like Shailendra, Hasrat Jaipuri, Sahir Ludhianvi, Rajinder Krishan, Shankar Jaikishan, Madan Mohan, S. D. Burman, Jaidev, Usha Khanna, and many others reappeared in this programme after a long time due to his effort. At the same time, artists of the modern period who weren’t heard before were heard due to his efforts. This included, but not limited to Faiz Anwar, Maya Govind, Gulshan Bawra, Gauhar Kanpuri, Shiv Hari, Nikhil Vinay, Aadesh Shrivastava. During my visit to AIR Guwahati, Seema bahen had expressed her surprise about the strong knowledge of Rifleman Haokip, a tribal from a remote north-eastern state, regarding Hindi film music and its artists. [112]

Still on the same schedule, two recent editions of *Raag Rang* programme featuring respectively music director Shankar-Jaikishan and lyricist Sameer are as summarized below.

*Table 62: List of songs for Raag Rang (Composer) dated 21 September 2023*

<b>RAAG RANG – SHANKAR JAIKISHAN (Date: 21 September 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
dil ki nazar se, nazron ki dil se	Anari	1959	Lata Mangeshkar, Mukesh
solah singaar karke jo aayi suhaag raat	Gaban	1967	Mohd. Rafi
dil tera deewana hai sanam	Dil Tera Deewana	1962	Lata Mangeshkar, Mohd. Rafi
itni badi mehfil aur ik dil kisko doon	Dil Apna Aur Preet Paraayi	1960	Asha Bhosle
tujhe dekha tujhe chaaha tujhe pooja	Chhoti Si Mulaqat	1967	Mohd. Rafi, Suman Kalyanpur
pate ki baat kahega, kahega jab bhi	Diwana	1968	Mukesh

*Table 63: List of songs for Raag Rang (Lyricist) dated 19 October 2023*

<b>RAAG RANG – SAMEER (Date: 19 October 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
rok sake to rok main tujhko lene aaya	Zamana Deewana	1995	Vinod Rathod
main ishq usko wo aashiqui hai meri	Vaada	2005	Alka Yagnik, Babul Supriyo
mujhko neend aa rahi hai sone do	Ajnabee	2001	Sonu Nigam, Sunidhi Chauhan
o jaane jaana zara ruk jaana	Deewana Mujhsa Nahin	1990	Udit Narayan, Kavita Krishnamurthy

nazar ke saamne jigar ke paas	Aashiqui	1990	Anuradha Paudwal, Kumar Sanu
sajan o sajan aaja ab aaja	Baaghi	1990	Pramila Gupta

## Tarannum

*Tarannum*, meaning melody, tunes or compositions, was the only programme in the Troops Programme during the 1980s that played non-film songs or more specifically non-film ghazals.

Table 64: Broadcast schedule of *Tarannum* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of TARANNUM during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Thu (4)	12:37	13:05	Rekha bahen

Artists like Mehdi Hasan, Ghulam Ali, Jagjit Singh, Chitra Singh, Pankaj Udhas, Manhar Udhas, Penaz Masani, Vandana Bajpayee were regularly featured. The 1980s witnessed a huge popularity of the ghazal genre. Ghazals were simplified by singers like Jagjit Singh and Pankaj Udhas, which became hugely popular. I remember, as a kid, I enjoyed listening to ‘*chaandi jaisa rang hai tera, sone jaise baal*’ and ‘*dard ki baarish sahi madhyam, zara aahista chal*’ by Pankaj Udhas or Chandan Das’s ‘*piya naheen jab gaon mein, aag lage sab gaon mein*’.

*Tarannum* was not the only segment for playing non-film ghazals. The Wednesday and Friday afternoon programme used to get ended at 14:10 with a ghazal. The 14:00 to 14:10 slot on these two days comprised of a patriotic song followed by a ghazal. During the 1990s, the patriotic song was dropped from Friday’s schedule with two ghazals getting played in that slot. Once Rekha bahen even included a ghazal from the film *Insaaf*, sung by Anuradha Paudwal – ‘*hamsafar milli hai manzil thokaren khaane ke baad, rang laati hai hina patthar pe pis jaane ke baad*’. This was an exception as ghazals from films were part of neither *Tarannum* nor the Wednesday/Friday ghazal segments. Ghazals from films were usually part of *Filmi Naghme* programme.

Currently, non-film ghazals under the Troops Programme are played in *Tarannum* broadcast weekly on Fridays between 13:40 and 14:00 and on the fourth Thursday of the month between 12:38 and 13:05. The combined selection of ghazals for this programme for two recent instances is as tabulated below.

Table 65: List of ghazals for *Tarannum* dated 11 and 24 August 2023

TARANNUM (Date: 11 & 24 August 2023)		
Song	Album	Singers
wo khat ke purze udaa raha tha	Harmony	Jagjit Singh
itna toota hoon ki chhoone se bikhar jaaunga	Tere Shahar Mein	Ghulam Ali
dulhaniya ki doli kahaaron ne looti	Velvet	Roop Kumar Rathod, Sonali Rathod
chandni raat mein jab chaand tumhe dekhega	Kashish	Anup Jalota
koi patta hile hawa to chale	Gulfaam	Hariharan
teri gali se hum jo achanak guzar gaye	Kashish	Anup Jalota
dil mein ek lahar si uthi hai abhi	Best of Ghulam Ali	Ghulam Ali
dil na milte to mulaaquat adhoori rehti	Ek Mehfil	Chandan Das

ghoonghat ko mat khol ke gori ghunghat hai anmol	Ghoonghat	Pankaj Udhas
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### *Swar Chhaya*

The earliest reference of *Swar Chhaya* could be found in the programme schedule published in 1967. It was identified as a programme of musical quiz for troops. [136] In the absence of further information, it could not be established how the quiz, if it was at all, was played and how the *Jawans* participated in the programme. Nevertheless, the title of the programme hinted at thematic songs. It is possible that during the initial phase of this programme, the *Jawans* were given a theme for them to send in their choice of songs based on it. The programme eventually became a non-interactive programme of thematic songs.

Table 66: Broadcast schedule of *Swar Chhaya* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of SWAR CHHAYA during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Thu	13:10	13:30	Rekha bahen

Rekha bahen used to describe this programme as ‘*Swar Chhaya, jismein ek geet ki chhaya doosre geet par padti hai*’ (*Swar Chhaya*, where the shadow of one song falls on the next). There used to be a similar programme entitled *Bhaav Geet* from Radio Ceylon, not to be confused with the genre of Marathi *Bhaav Geet*. The title *Swar Chhaya* forces us to speculate if it was inspired from Vividh Bharati’s *Chhaya Geet*, which was also a programme of similar thematic content. However, this was not true, the reason being *Chhaya Geet* started at a much later date. So, Guwahati’s *Swar Chhaya* might have been influenced from Radio Ceylon’s *Bhaav Geet* but certainly not from Vividh Bharati’s *Chhaya Geet*. It is a pleasant coincidence that both the programmes share the common word *chhaya*.

The 20-minute *Swar Chhaya* used to feature themes that were commonly found in Hindi film songs such as heart, eyes, beauty, love, friendship, romance, passion, rain, wind, spring, moon, life, wait, separation. However, it was never the intention of Rekha bahen to focus on one particular word in all songs of a theme. Instead, stress was on the hidden meaning and the gist. It hardly mattered if there was a common main word in successive songs. Whenever new songs were received at the station, she would select the first song, the “theme marker song”, from the new lot and then fill up the remaining duration with older songs. The theme marker song was identified as ‘*mukhde ka geet*’. I remember when the songs of the 1991 film *Ajooba* were received, she played the song ‘*mera jaane bahaar aa gaya, main to khil ke gulaab ho gayi*’ sung by the four singers Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik, Mohd. Aziz and Sudesh Bhosle as the opening song, to be followed by three older songs – ‘*kabul se aaya hai mera dildaar*’ (*Paley Khan*, 1986), ‘*aaya re aaya mera jaane bahaar aaya*’ (*Insaaf*, 1966) and ‘*ghar aaya mera pardesi*’ (*Awara*, 1951). The theme, as indicative in the songs, was the happiness upon the return of the beloved.

*Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* was a milestone film in changing the course of film music in the late 1980s. When songs of this film arrived at the Guwahati station in 1988, Seema bahen welcomed it in the following instance of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*. However, the day before, Rekha bahen chose the song ‘*ghazab ka hai din socho zara*’ as the theme marker song for *Swar Chhaya*. The three songs to follow were ‘*mausam ka takaaza hai, hum toot ke pyar karen*’ (*Andha Kanoon*, 1983),

‘din hai bahaar ke, tere mere ikraar ke’ (Waqt, 1965), and ‘ye tanhaai haay re haay jaane phir aane na aaye, thaam lo baahen’ (Tere Ghar Ke Samne, 1963). The lyrics of the songs clearly shows that *Swar Chhaya* was not dependent on a single word but on the theme.

*Swar Chhaya* was the only programme in which the conventional style of announcing the song details (film name and singers) was not used. Each song would be followed by lines related to the theme, which formed the connecting bridge between two consecutive songs. It grew into a hugely popular programme. Occasionally, *Jawans* even used to identify songs of their choice based on a theme which Rekha bahen enjoyed including in the programme. I remember Naik Clerk Namo Narayan Sharma sending songs related to blue colour sometime towards the later part of 1980s. The five songs played were ‘neele gagan ke tale, dharti ka pyar pale’ (*Hamraz*), ‘teri neeli neeli aankhon ke dil pe teer chal gaye’ (*Jaane Anjaane*), ‘neela aasmaan so gaya’ (*Silsila*), ‘neel gagan pe udte baadal aa’ (*Khandan*) and ‘o neele parbaton ki dhaara’ (*Aadmi Aur Insaan*). Although this could not be called a set of thematic songs, how could the presenter dishearten the *Jawan* by not accepting it!

*Swar Chhaya* was one programme that probably underwent the highest number of transformations throughout its journey. During the 1990s, not only its duration got almost doubled but also the participation of the *Jawans* increased manyfold. Detailed account of this transformation has been described in Chapter-11 later in this book. *Swar Chhaya* is still broadcast on Thursday afternoons, the current timing being 13:10 to 13:40.

### **Prahasan**

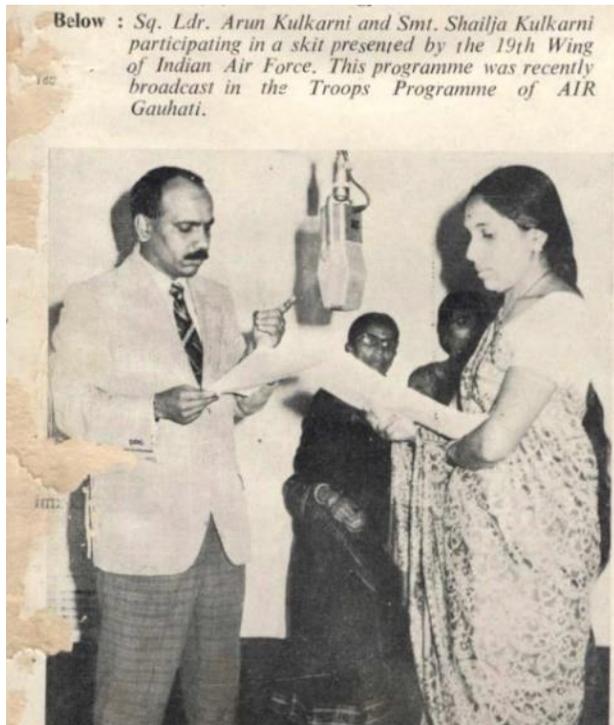
*Prahasan*, or the skit segment of Gauhati’s Troops Programme has been in place since beginning. As mentioned previously in the book, the skit was initially part of Sunday’s programme and later moved to Thursday, well within the umbrella of Dibrugarh’s relay.

Table 67: Broadcast schedule of *Prahasan* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of PRAHASAN during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Thu	13:30	13:45	Meeta bahen

Hindi skits and short plays used to be regularly recorded at the Gauhati station as part of the bi-monthly Hindi Programme of Gauhati-A. This had started towards the end of the 1950s as discussed earlier. When the Troops Programme started in 1962, the idea of wholesome entertainment for the *Jawans* was the driving factor to keep provision of skits. Thus, the skits and plays continued to be part of both Gauhati-A’s Hindi Programme and Gauhati-B’s Troops Programme. AIR Gauhati also invited the servicemen from the Armed Forces to present drama, plays and skits to be broadcast under the Troops Programme. The 19<sup>th</sup> Wing of the Indian Air Force was founded at Borjhar, Gauhati in 1963 as a sequel to the Chinese aggression. [156] Since then, the Airmen used to participate in Gauhati’s Troops Programme not only in the form of song requests but also in delivering creative content. One published reference of such participation could be found in Akashvani publication of 29 June 1975 in which the photograph of Squadron Leader Arun Kulkarni with his wife Shailaja Kulkarni participating in a skit presented by the 19<sup>th</sup> Wing of the Indian Air Force could be seen that was broadcast in the Troops Programme. [157]

The Hindi announcers and drama artists of AIR Gauhati often staged plays and skits in Hindi to



Below : Sq. Ldr. Arun Kulkarni and Smt. Shailja Kulkarni participating in a skit presented by the 19th Wing of Indian Air Force. This programme was recently broadcast in the Troops Programme of AIR Gauhati.

be broadcast in both Hindi Programme and Troops Programme. Meeta bahen, by sharing an old photograph, recalled the recording of a play during the 1970s in which she and Seema bahen participated along with others that included Upendrajit Sharma, Achyut Sharma, Dr. Tripathi, Shakti Nath Jha and Dinesh Das, who later rose to the position of Deputy Directorate General (DDG) of AIR. [29] The photograph could not be reproduced here due to copyright concerns of the owner.

When Vividh Bharati became the Commercial Broadcasting Service and started sending recorded programmes on tapes to the local stations to be broadcast locally, the Gauhati station too started receiving tapes of selected programmes. *Hawa Mahal* used to be one of the programmes whose tapes were received at Gauhati. Although the Gauhati station played those *Hawa Mahal* tapes on a regular basis at 21:15 alternating with NSD's *Spotlight*, selected skits of *Hawa Mahal* were also made part of the Troops Programme in its weekly skit segment of Thursdays. The tapes used to be

Photo 5: Participation of Air Force personnel in a Skit for Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1975 (Source: *Akashvani Journal*, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B)

broadcast in such a manner that the starting and closing announcements of the Vividh Bharati announcer were not heard. Meeta bahen would announce the name of the skit and stop the tape as soon as the performance ended. But no matter how efficiently and concentratedly she performed her duty, sometimes she used to make mistakes. That is, at the end of the skit, a glimpse of Vividh Bharati announcer's voice could be heard. I still remember having listened to memorable humorous skits such as *Karonde Ki Chatni*, *Paansa Palat Gaya*, *Neend Naheen Aati*, *Marne Ke Baad*, and many more.

Meeta bahen had shared an interesting memory related to the Thursday skit segment in her interview to AIR Dibrugarh. Once it so happened that the short play selected from *Hawa Mahal* that she was presenting under the Troops Programme was an emotional drama that was basically a prolonged dialogue between a mother and her ailing daughter. Meeta bahen admitted that being emotional by nature and considering the fact that she is the mother of a daughter; she could relate herself with the play being broadcast. She got so deeply involved into the play that she was totally lost in the world of that mother and her ailing daughter and forgot everything else, even that she was on duty. When the story ended with the passing away of the daughter, Meeta bahen was crying uncontrollably, with tears rolling down her cheeks. She forgot to stop the tape to prevent the voice of the Vividh Bharati announcer to go on air. Fortunately, Rekha bahen entered the studio at that moment looking for something and found Meeta bahen in that condition. Finding the skit had ended and Meeta bahen wasn't taking any action, she immediately jumped into action and quickly made the closing announcement of the skit and announced the next programme, *Pradeshik*

*Sangeet*. Meeta bahen admitted that an announcer should have control over her emotions. She feared that there would be disciplinary action against her, however, luckily nothing of that sort actually happened that day. [141]

*Prahasan* is no longer in the schedule; the reason has been discussed in a latter chapter.

### ***Geet Rangeele***

The origin of *Geet Rangeele* dates back to the initial phase of the Troops Programme when the segment used to be identified as *Yugalgaan*. The subsequent renaming as *Geet Rangeele* and describing it as ‘lyrics from films’ in the programme schedule of Akashvani have been described earlier in the book.

Table 68: Broadcast schedule of *Geet Rangeele* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of GEET RANGEELE during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Thu	17:05	17:45	Meeta bahen

*Geet Rangeele*, the programme of colourful songs, used to be often introduced as “rang rangeele geeton ka karyakram”. It was primarily meant for songs of *Shringaar ras*, although it was never explicitly mentioned like that. Mostly female solos, songs with undercurrents of attraction, sensuousness and seduction were usually played. During the 1980s, I remember having listened to Lata Mangeshkar songs like ‘*ye samaa, samaa hai ye pyar ka*’ (*Jab Jab Phool Khile*), ‘*naina mere rang bhare sapne to sajaane lage*’ (*Blackmail*), ‘*baahon mein chale aa*’ (*Anamika*), ‘*mera naam Rita Christina*’ (*Jhuk Gaya Aasman*), and ‘*kisliye maine pyar kiya, dil ko yunhi beqaraar kiya*’ (*The Train*) and many Asha Bhosle songs for obvious reason, few of my favourites being ‘*sajna hai mujhe sajna ke liye*’ (*Saudagar*), ‘*wo haseen dard de do*’ (*Humsaya*), and ‘*piya tu ab to aaja*’ (*Caravan*). Needless to say, sensuous Geeta Dutt numbers like ‘*jaata kahaan hai deewane, sab kuch yahaan hai sanam*’, ‘*babuji dheere chalna*’, ‘*hoon abhi main jawan ae dil*’, ‘*mera naam chin chin chu*’, ‘*neele aasmaani*’ must have rocked this programme during the 1960s. Playing of the evergreen Shamshad Begum number ‘*saiyan dil mein aana re*’ from the 1951 film *Bahaar* in a recent edition of the programme substantiates this assumption.

From the late 1970s, songs of the next generation singers started pouring in. Be it Arati Mukherjee’s ‘*main wahi darpan wahi, na jaane ye kya ho gaya*’ (*Geet Gaata Chal*) or Hemlata’s ‘*le to aaye ho hamein sapnon ke gaon mein*’ (*Dulhan Wohi Jo Piya Mann Bhaaye*), the new additions made the programme all the more colourful. Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik and Kavita Krishnamurthy were emerging singers during the second half of the 1980s. Two songs of Kavita Krishnamurthy, one each from *Nagina* (1986) and its sequel *Nigahen* (1989) that used to get played in *Geet Rangeele* were ‘*balma aakhir balma ho mere khaali naam ke*’ and ‘*saara saara din tum kaam karoge, pyar kab karoge*’ respectively. Kavita’s another song ‘*naam mera premkali... raste mein wo khada tha*’ (*Chalbaaz*) was also a popular number of this programme. Among Alka Yagnik songs, ‘*meri raaton ki neenden udaa de ki main teri dulhan ban jaaun*’ (*Sarfarosh*), ‘*dilbar dilbar dilbar*’ (*Sirf Tum*), ‘*bambai se gayi dilli, dilli se gayi poona*’ (*Hum Hain Raahi Pyar Ke*), ‘*chhamma chhamma*’ (*China Gate*), ‘*aksar is duniya mein anjaane milte hain*’ (*Dhadkan*), would make frequent rounds in the programme. Four Lata numbers of the early 1990s were ‘*meri bindiya teri nindiya na udaa de to kehna*’ (*Lamhe*), ‘*karun kaun jatan, jaldi ho milan*’ (*Dil Hi To Hai*),

‘choodi maza na degi kangan maza na dega’ (*Sanam Bewafa*) and ‘mere khwaabon mein jo aaye’ (DDLJ).

Alisha Chinoy’s suspense-filled ‘dheere dheere chori chori jab andhera chhaye’ (*Kalyug*) and the seductive ‘dil ko hazaar baar roka roka roka’ (*Murder*) were among her perfect fit numbers for *Geet Rangeele*. Even though most of the songs played in this programme belonged to the sensuous and seductive genres, there was no room for vulgar and double meaning songs. For example, the double meaning song of *Sanam Bewafa* – ‘angoor ka daana hoon, sui na chubha dena’ was never heard even though it fully qualified for this programme. Instead, the other song as mentioned above used to get played. *Geet Rangeele* has come a long way along with other programmes. Started with Geeta Dutt songs, now one can listen to Shreya Ghoshal’s ‘ye ishq haaye baithe bithaaye jannat dikhaaye haan’ (*Jab We Met*) and ‘jaane do na’ (*Cheeni Kam*) or Sunidhi Chauhan’s ‘navraai majhi ladachi ladachi ga’ (*English Vinglish*) and ‘crazy kiya re’ (*Dhoom 2*).

All that we discussed until now about *Geet Rangeele* are female numbers. It doesn’t, however, mean that male singers are banned in this programme. Although in much lesser numbers, songs of attraction and sensuousness by male voices have secured place in this programme from time to time. Few of such songs are ‘chaandni raat hai, tu mere saath hai’ (*Baaghi*) by Abhijeet and Kavita Krishnamurthy, ‘labon ko labon pe sajaao’ (*Bhool Bhulaiyaa*) by KK, ‘mann lafanga bada, apne mann ki kare’ (*Lafange Parinde*) by Mohit Chauhan, ‘kabhi jo baadal barse’ (*Jackpot*) by Arijit Singh, ‘adaa aay haay adaa, qatilana adaa’ (*Garam Masala*) by Sonu Nigam, ‘lamha lamha doori yun pighalti hai’ (*Gangster*) by Abhijeet.

*Geet Rangeele* is still broadcast on Thursday afternoons, the current timing being 14:30 to 15:00. Table below lists the songs played in this programme in one of its recent editions. Look at the continuation of all-female songs trend.

Table 69: List of songs for *Geet Rangeele* dated 5 October 2023

GEET RANGEELE (Date: 5 October 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
chhail chhabeela rang rangeela badan	Saawariya	2007	Alka Yagnik
meri paayal bole chham chham chham	Gaja Gamini	2000	Kavita Krishnamurthy
dilbar dil se pyare, dil ki sunta ja re	Caravan	1971	Lata Mangeshkar, Chorus
ab ke sajan saawan mein aag lagegi	Chupke Chupke	1975	Lata Mangeshkar
o rang rasiya, main to shaam se baithi thi	Paap Aur Punya	1974	Kanchan
sheesha se pee paimaane se pee	Phool Aur Patthar	1966	Asha Bhosle

### ***Ek Hi Film Ke Geet***

Probably the most popular non-request programme, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* of Gauhati’s Troops Programme had adopted its title straightaway from Radio Ceylon’s programme with the same title. Down the years, many radio stations started similar programme either with the same name or with little variation such as *Ek Hi Film Se*, *Ek Hi Film*, *Film Ek Gaane Anek* etc. When Gauhati’s Troops Programme started, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was a twice a week affair, on Monday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. As mentioned previously, the programme was discontinued. When it was resumed probably during the 1970s, it was split into two programmes – *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* on

Friday afternoons and *Chayanika* on Monday evenings. *Chayanika* has been discussed in the next section.

Table 70: Broadcast schedule of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of EK HI FILM KE GEET during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Fri	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

Since the beginning until towards the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* happened to be a highly significant programme, the significance being in the fact that until the digital and Internet revolution that brought film music at the distance of finger's touch and that too at negligible cost, radio used to be the most convenient and affordable source of film songs for most households. Although gramophone, tape recorder and CD player gradually became household items, it was not possible to purchase the records, cassettes, or CDs of every film due to the cost involved. For a person to listen to all songs of a film and to judge the overall quality of an album, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was the first and the sole choice of the people. This resulted in high popularity of this programme. Listeners would wait the entire week predicting what could be the film for next week. Friday as the day for broadcast of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was chosen carefully. Since this programme aimed at playing songs of a recently released film and Friday happened to be the day for the release of films in Bombay, what could have been a better day for this programme! This, in fact, added to the increased curiosity and interest of listeners towards this programme.

The beginning of this programme every week used to be all the more thrilling. Seema bahen, after completing *Aaj Ka Geet*, would announce – “*ab prastut hai hamara saaptahik kaaryakram, Ek Hi Film Ke Geet.*” (“*Now presenting our weekly programme Ek Hi Film Ke Geet.*”) At this point, the listeners would leave whatever they were doing and come closer to the radio. When Seema bahen further said, “*aaj ki film hai...*” (“*Today's film is...*”), here the palpitation of the listeners would further increase. I remember how my elder brother and I would give expressions on our faces just like the present-day emoji icons. We would wear a positive and hopeful surprise on our faces when the line “*aaj ki film hai...*” went on air. And when Seema bahen finally announced the name, the “Wow” emoji on our face would further brighten up if the film was a great musical one or would reduce to a “sad” icon if it was otherwise. We had jumped at the announcements of new films of that era like *Hero*, *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*, *Tohfa* in this programme. Our expressions continued at the announcement of next generation films as well. The first time play of *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* and *Maine Pyar Kiya* in this programme received the same treatment from us as we were going to listen to the songs of these films for the first time. These experiences obviously belonged to the summer breaks and other holidays falling on Friday when we could listen to this programme in the afternoon at home.

*Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was essentially the strategy to let listeners, especially the *Jawans*, listen to the newly received songs so that they could decide their choice of songs from the album and send in their requests. As mentioned earlier, the station received gramophone records, and later CDs, in batches. Until the arrival of the next lot, films from the last received batch would get included in the programme. If the next arrival was delayed, it so happened that one film was included multiple times. I remember listening to the songs of *Maine Pyar Kiya* at least twice in this programme in close succession when it was released. The arrival of a new bunch of film records would literally bring a new season to the programme altogether, for the next several weeks, which was just like a

fresh breeze of air. First, the popular musical films from the lot were included, followed by the not-so-good ones.

Until towards the end of the 1980s decade, barring few exceptions, most film albums contained songs of a total duration of approximately half-hour on average. This ensured that almost all songs of a film got played in the programme. However, the trend changed, and the films started having songs of up to an hour's duration, thus making this programme incapable of playing all the songs. In the 28-minute-long programme, a maximum of six songs could be played, and that too by clipping the start and end of certain songs. Since the songs of a film had to be played from the same gramophone record, to clip the end and start of songs in an aesthetic manner required good skills at the gramophone record player. Seema bahen managed it quite well and this ensured that maximum possible songs would get played and at the same time the clipping of songs didn't annoy the listeners.

*Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* ran on Friday afternoons throughout the 1980s decade until towards the mid-1990s when it met with several noticeable and significant changes. This has been discussed in a later chapter in this book. *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* is currently broadcast on Tuesday afternoons between 13:10 and 13:40.

### ***Chayanika***

*Chayanika*, meaning “selections”, was another version of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, the reason for having a different name was the inclusion of more than one film in the former. Since the duration of *Chayanika* was 40 minutes, there were many films that didn't have songs of total play time of this length. Consequently, two films would get included with all songs from the first film and few songs from the second. Rekha bahen would describe the programme as “*Chayanika, jismein aap sunenge ek ya do filmon ke gaane*” (“*Chayanika, in which you listen to songs from one or two films.*”). Unlike *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* that mostly included latest popular releases, *Chayanika* was meant for both old films and the “not-so-popular” new films. I remember listening to the songs of *Ziddi* (1964) towards the end of the 1980s decade. Likewise, the B-grade songs from the flop film *Mahavira* (1988) were played sometime during the mid-1990s.

*Table 71: Broadcast schedule of Chayanika during 1980s*

<b>Broadcast Schedule of CHAYANIKA during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Mon	17:05	17:45	Rekha bahen

The title *Chayanika* could be found as early as in 1958 when AIR Bombay used to have its daily morning programme of orchestral compositions with this title. During the same time, AIR Calcutta-B used to have a weekly Hindi magazine programme with the same title. [158] AIR Simla's programme of assorted film songs used to have the title *Chayanika* in early 1970s. [159]

Rekha bahen retired from service on 31 December 2000. The year 2001 began on a Monday. Meeta bahen, who took charge of *Chayanika*, played the songs of *Do Jasoos* in the first edition of this programme of the year for it contained the ‘Happy New Year’ song by Shailendra Singh and another song ‘*saal mubarak saheb ji*’ by Mohd. Rafi and Mukesh meant for the same occasion.

Since the early 1990s, the increase in the number of songs in a film led to the inclusion of just a single film in *Chayanika*. Thus, the description “*ek ya do filmon ke gaane*” was no longer applicable. In other words, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* and *Chayanika* became the same programme with two different names. With time, the difference in the content, that is one playing songs of a new popular film while the other playing songs of either an old or a flop film, was lost, and thus, both the programmes lost their unique identities. Currently, *Chayanika* is broadcast on Mondays between 14:30 and 15:00.

*Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* and *Chayanika* are no longer used to show case songs of latest films unlike they once used to be (I leave the reason up to the reader to speculate). A careful observation of the type of films being currently included in these two programmes reveals that they mostly belong to the 1990s and the first fifteen years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Table below lists the films that were made part of these two programmes over a period of eight months during the year 2023.

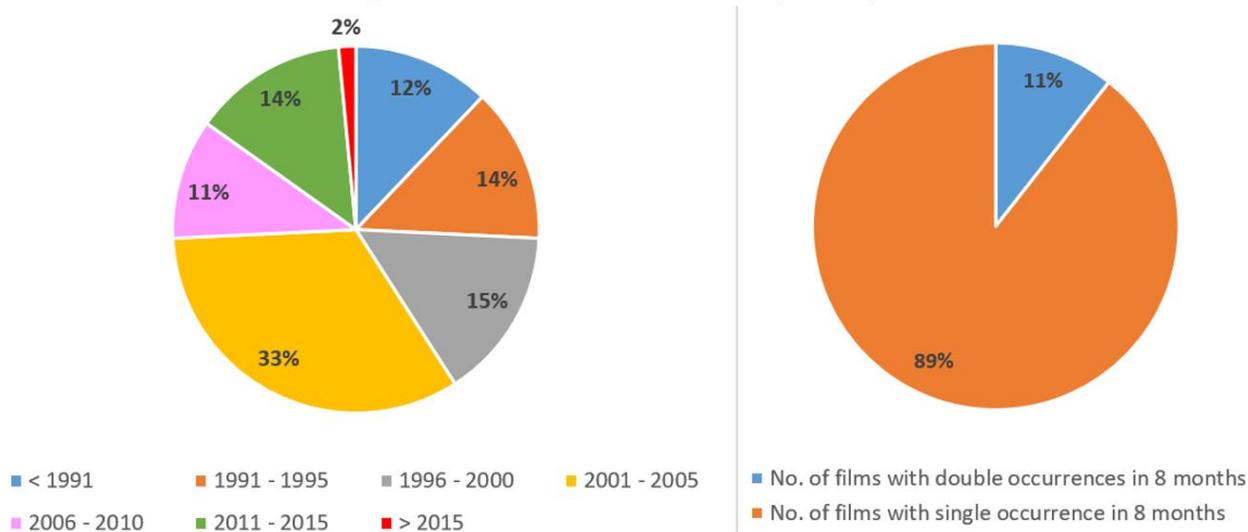
Table 72: List of films selected for *Chayanika* and *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* during April - September 2023

CHAYANIKA & EK HI FILM KE GEET (February - September 2023)					
Chayanika			Ek Hi Film Ke Geet		
Date	Film	Year	Date	Film	Year
06-Feb	Maine Pyar Kiya	1989	07-Feb	Albela	2001
13-Feb	Raja	1995	14-Feb	Teen Deviyan	1965
20-Feb	Aashiqui	1990	21-Feb	Dillagi	1999
27-Feb	Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge	1995	28-Feb	Farz	2001
06-Mar	Umrao Jaan	1981	07-Mar	Andaaz Apna Apna	1994
13-Mar	Bajrangi Baijaan	2015	14-Mar	Aapko Pehle Bhi Kahin Dekha Hai	2003
20-Mar	Jodi No. 1	2001	21-Mar	Hum Aapke Dil Mein Rehte Hain	1999
27-Mar	Qayamat	2003	28-Mar	Talaash	2012
03-Apr	Devdas	2002	04-Apr	Ek Rishtaa	2001
10-Apr	Hogi Pyar Ki Jeet	1999	11-Apr	Kal Ho Naa Ho	2003
17-Apr	Devdas	2002	18-Apr	Dilli Ka Thug	1958
24-Apr	Qayamat	2003	25-Apr	Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara	2011
01-May	Hum Tumhare Hain Sanam	2002	02-May	Ishq	1997
08-May	Krrish	2006	09-May	Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham	2001
15-May	Cocktail	2012	16-May	Parineeta	2005
22-May	Chalte Chalte	2003	23-May	Humko Deewana Kar Gaye	2006
29-May	Dil Hi To Hai	1963	30-May	Chacha Zindabad	1959
05-Jun	Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Sathiyon	2004	06-Jun	Ahista Ahista	2006
12-Jun	Pukaar	2000	13-Jun	Jab We Met	2007
19-Jun	Paheli	2005	20-Jun	Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega	2000
26-Jun	Kaminey	2009	27-Jun	Hum Tumhare Hain Sanam	2002
03-Jul	Duplicate	1998	04-Jul	Rockstar	2011
10-Jul	Barfi	2012	11-Jul	Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya	1998
17-Jul	Tum Bin	2001	18-Jul	Anari	1993
24-Jul	Tumse Achcha Kaun Hai	2002	25-Jul	Ganga Jamuna	1962

31-Jul	Prem Ratan Dhan Paayo	2015	1-Aug	Jeena Marna Tere Sang	1992
7-Aug	Happy New Year	2014	8-Aug	Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai	2000
14-Aug	Pukaar	2000	15-Aug	~Independence Day Special~	
21-Aug	Hero	2015	22-Aug	Tere Naam	2003
28-Aug	Hum Aapke Hain Koun	1994	29-Aug	Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahin	1991
4-Sep	Jab We Met	2007	5-Sep	Bewafa Sanam	1995
11-Sep	Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge	1995	12-Sep	Aapko Pehle Bhi Kahin Dekha Hai	2003
18-Sep	Neerja	2016	19-Sep	~Ganesh Chaturthi special~	
25-Sep	Kaash Aap Hamare Hote	2003	26-Sep	Guru	2007

The percentage distribution of films included in *Chayanika* and *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* programmes over an eight-month period (February to September 2023) according to their period of release is depicted in figure below. It can be observed that least priority has been given to the current era, that is, films released after 2015. The most preferred period is 2001 to 2005 with one-third of the films appearing from this period. Around 54% covers the period of twenty years, from 1991 to 2000 and 2006 to 2015. Around 12% of the films are from the older lot (until 1990), and only 2% belongs to the post-2015 period. The right-side pie indicates that 11% of the programme editions are repetitions during this eight-month period.

**Distribution of Films (Period-wise and Occurrence-wise) in Chayanika & Ek Hi Film Ke Geet**



*Illustration 9: Distribution of films (period and occurrence-wise) in Chayanika and Ek Hi Film Ke Geet over an 8-month Period (Feb - Sep 2023)*

### **Swar Sangam**

*Swar Sangam*, meaning the confluence of voices, is the programme of film songs containing chorus. It was among the first-generation segments in Gauhati's Troops Programme. In 1962 when the Troops Programme started, there were two stations having programme with the same title. One was Vividh Bharati that used to broadcast *Swar Sangam*, the programme of regional songs, daily between 08:15 and 08:30. The other station was Indore-Bhopal that had a weekly 15-minute programme of light music with the same name on Sundays at 18:10. Gauhati's *Swar Sangam* used to be on Monday evenings as we have read previously in this book. Thus, the three *Swar Sangam*

programmes had different content even though they shared the same name. In the stable schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme, *Swar Sangam* was made a monthly affair.

Table 73: Broadcast schedule of *Swar Sangam* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of SWAR SANGAM during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Sat (1,5)	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

The oldest song that I heard in *Swar Sangam* was 'hum bhi hain, tum bhi ho, dono hain aamne saamne' from the film *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (1961) sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Geeta Dutt, Mukesh, Manna Dey, Mahendra Kapoor, and Chorus. Few songs of the bygone era that I remember listening to in this programme in my childhood were 'badra chhaye ke jhoole pad gaya haaye' (*Aaya Sawan Jhoom Ke*), 'koyal kyun gaaye' (*Aap Aaye Bahaar Aayi*), 'ek sawaal main karoon, ek sawaal tum karo' (*Sasural*) etc.

The song with the largest number of singers of that era was probably 'saat sahelian khadi khadi, fariyad sunaaye ghadi ghadi' from the 1982 film *Vidhata*. Sung by Kishore Kumar and seven female singers, namely, Hemlata, Kanchan, Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik, Sadhana Sargam, Padmini Kolhapure and Shivangi Kolhapure, the song was played one or two times in *Swar Sangam*. It was never heard thereafter probably due to its double-meaning lines, which might have got noticed after one or two rounds of play. Songs of one lead singer with chorus were equally placed in this programme. Few such numbers that I remember were 'mere naseeb mein tu hai ke naheen' (*Naseeb*), 'maine kaha phoolon se' (*Mili*), 'sun sahiba sun, pyar ki dhun' (*Ram Teri Ganga Maili*), 'tere geeton ki main deewani o dilbarjani' (*Prem Geet*), 'uparwale tera jawaab naheen' (*Avtaar*), 'ek nayi subah ka paigaam lekar aayega surya' (*Surya*) etc.

The programme continues to be broadcast on the same day and time. A recent instance of the programme played five lesser-heard choral songs from the first four years of the 1970s decade as listed in table below.

Table 74: List of songs for *Swar Sangam* dated 5 August 2023

SWAR SANGAM (Date: 5 August 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
he mujhe dil de naheen to sun le	Mr. Romeo	1973	Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhosle, Bhupendra, R D Burman
jaise suraj ki garmi se jalte hue	Parinay	1974	Sharma Brothers, Chorus
meri jawaani teri deewani aa	Hungama	1971	Asha Bhosle, Chorus
bhaiya re bhaiya, ho ta ta thaiya	Mera Bhaiya	1972	Sushma Shreshtha, Jayashree, Naveen Kumar, Chorus
teri laila banke, teri heer banke	Mangetar	1972	Mohd. Rafi, Asha Bhosle, Usha Mangeshkar, Chorus

### *Geet Manoranjan*

Originally a weekly segment of Tuesday afternoons, *Geet Manoranjan* finally was converted to a monthly programme on the second Saturdays of the month. Songs in a lighter vein, or "haasya ras par aadharit filmi gaane", as described by Seema bahen, constituted this programme.

Table 75: Broadcast schedule of Geet Manoranjan during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of GEET MANORANJAN during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Sat (2)	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

Needless to say, comic songs sung by Kishore Kumar, Mohd. Rafi and Manna Dey formed the backbone of this programme. These songs were mostly, but not limited to, picturized on famous comedians like Johny Walker, I. S. Johar, Mahmood, Mukri, Keshto Mukherjee and others. The second Saturday of the month used to be a school holiday due to which I could regularly listen to this programme all throughout my school life. Be it Kishore Kumar's '*aake seedhi lagi dil pe jaise katariya*' (*Half Ticket*) or Mohd. Rafi's '*sar jo tera chakraaye ya dil dooba jaaye*' (*Pyasa*) or Manna De's '*khaali dabba khaali botal le le mere yaar*' (*Neel Kamal*), this programme was significant in keeping alive the memories of the great comedians of Indian Cinema and the evergreen songs picturized on them. Although there were ample of solo songs sung by these three singers that were played, some of their combo songs were equally popular. This category included '*ek chatur naar karke singaar*' (*Padosan*) by Kishore, Manna De, and Mahmood, '*sa re ga ma*' (*Chupke Chupke*) by Kishore and Rafi, '*bade miya deewane, aise na bano*' (*Shagird*) by Rafi and I. S. Johar among many others. Kishore Kumar's 1980s numbers like '*gangaram kunwara reh gaya*' (*Jeevan Dhaara*), '*ghar mein ram gali mein shyam*' (*Title Song*), '*sun sun sun meri shiridevi*' (*Hum Farishte Nahin*) and '*zindagi kya hai ek lateefa hai*' (*Amrit*) used to be equally popular.

*Geet Manoranjan* had the honour of playing songs sung by film stars. Amitabh Bachchan's '*mere angne mein tumhara kya kaam hai*' (*Lawaris*) and '*padosi apni murgi ko rakhna sambhaal*' (*Jaadugar*), and Shatrughan Sinha's '*ek baat suni hai chachaji batlaane wale hain*' (*Naram Garam*) were among those. The mention of *Naram Garam* reminds me of Hrishikesh Mukherjee films and their songs that used to get played in this programme, the most important ones being '*sun sun sun didi tere liye ik rishta aaya hai*', '*saare niyam tod do*' and '*kayda kayda aakhir fayda*' from the film *Khubsoorat* and '*golmaal hai bhai sab golmaal hai*' and '*ek din sapne mein dekha sapna*' from *Golmaal*, '*duniya rang birangi bhaiya*' (*Rang Birangi*), '*main hoon jhoothi*' and '*bas ek thoda sa uhh, thodi si aah hoti hai*' from *Jhoothi*.

Among other hit numbers, Lata Mangeshkar's '*dekho dekho dekho, bioscope dekho*' (*Dushman*) and Asha Bhosle's several songs like '*palat meri jaan, tere qurbaan*' (*Aan Milo Sajna*), '*apne apne miya pe sabko bada naaz hai*' (*Apna Bana Lo*), '*main lagti hoon Sridevi lagti hoon*' (*Nakabandi*), the Lata-Kishore title song of *Paapi Pet Ka Sawaal Hai*, the Asha-Rafi duet '*ye parda gira do, zara mukhda dikha do*' (*Ek Phool Do Maali*), the list is endless. Few children songs, one being '*teetar ke do aage teetar*' (*Mera Naam Joker*), were also frequently played. Then there was the genre of parody songs, the two most popular being the ones from the films *Ek Phool Do Maali* and *Mr. India*.

In the new era, the nature of comedy changed in films and so did the corresponding songs. They started lacking quality humour. Songs like '*o behna o behna, mere jijaaji ka kya kehna*' (*Shahenshah*), '*hum to hain teen bhai sun le zara*' (*Jigarwala*), '*jab se hui hai shaadi aansoo baha raha hoon*' (*Thanedaar*), '*ek kunwara phir gaya maara*' (*Masti*) started replacing the old ones. Then there was the song of *Main Khiladi Tu Anadi* – '*my adorable darling, I think of you every*

*night every morning*'. This song used to be included in this programme when it released, however, the relevance of this song in this programme is doubtful.

*Geet Manoranjan* continues to tickle the listeners through comic songs on the same day and time of every month. Table below provides the list of songs broadcast in a recent edition of this programme. Interestingly, all songs of the programme belonged to 1970-71 movies.

Table 76: List of songs for *Geet Manoranjan* dated 9 September 2023

GEET MANORANJAN (Date: 9 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
gori ho gori, chhori ho chhori	Pyar Ki Kahani	1971	Kishore Kumar
munne raja bade sayaane	Chhoti Bahu	1971	Lata Mangeshkar
hum jab honge saath saal ke aur tum	Kal Aaj Aur Kal	1971	Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhosle
meri sakhiyon bolo zara	Mela	1971	Mohd. Rafi, Asha Bhosle
lolly pop lolly pop	Devi	1970	Mohd. Rafi, Baba, Chorus
aaaja pyare naache hum jhoom ke	Umang	1970	Kishore Kumar, Mahendra Kapoor
mere bhains ko danda kyun maara	Pagla Kahin Ka	1970	Manna Dey

### *Majlis-e-Qawwali*

Started in the inception year as *Filmi Qawwaliyan*, a weekly segment on Saturday afternoons, the segment was later converted into a monthly programme entitled *Majlis-e-Qawwali*.

Table 77: Broadcast schedule of *Majlis-e-Qawwali* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of MAJLIS-E-QAWWALI during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Sat (3)	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

Famous qawwali numbers from films have continued to be played in this programme for over the past six decades. All-time hits like '*teri mehfil mein qismat aazmakar hum bhi dekhenge*' (*Mughal-e-Azam*), '*ye dil ki lagi kam kya hogi, ye ishq bhala kam kya hoga*' (*Mughal-e-Azam*), '*na to kaarvan ki talash hai... ye ishq ishq hai*' (*Barsat Ki Raat*), '*jab ishq kahin ho jaata hai*' (*Arzoo*), '*ae meri zohra jabeen*' (*Waqt*), '*nigaahen milaane ko jee chahta hai*' (*Dil Hi To Hai*), '*raaz ki baat kehdoon to jaane mehfil mein phir kya ho*' (*Dharma*), '*parda hai parda*' (*Amar Akbar Anthony*), '*hai agar dushman zamana gham naheen*' (*Hum Kisi Se Kam Nahin*), '*pari ho aasmani tum magar tumko to paana hai*' (*Zamane Ko Dikhana Hai*), '*main idhar jaaun ya udhar jaaun*' (*Paalki*), '*chehra chhupa liya hai kisi ne hijab mein*' (*Nikaah*), '*jeena to hai usi ka jisne hai raaz jaana*' (*Adhikar*), '*pal do pal ka saath hamara*' (*The Burning Train*), '*taqdeer ka saara khel hai ye*' (*Hera Pheri*), '*tujhpe qurbaan meri jaan*' (*Qurbani*) were among the most popular offerings in this programme over the years.

In the new era, the volume of qawwalis declined in films. '*der na ho jaaye kahin*' (*Henna*) and '*ik mulaqaat zaroori hai sanam*' (*Sirf Tum*) are the two 1990s qawwalis I can think of having listened to in this programme. The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought several Sufi styled spiritual qawwalis like '*arziyaan*' (*Delhi-6*), '*khwaja mere khwaja*' (*Jodha Akbar*), '*piya haji ali*' (*Fiza*), '*kaya fun*'

(*Rockstar*), ‘*is shaan-e-karam ka kya kehna*’ (*Kachche Dhaage*) and ‘*aaya tere dar par deewana*’ (*Veer Zaara*). However, these also found place in *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* for obvious reason. Same was the case for the two Sai Baba qawwalis of *Amar Akbar Anthony* – ‘*shirdi wale sai baba aaya hoon tere dar pe sawaali*’ and ‘*main tere dar pe aaya hoon, kuch karke jaaunga*’.

There has been many not-so-popular qawwalis in many films down the decades. Since there is a limited section of listeners who enjoy this form of music, the inclusion of such lesser-known qawwalis was minimal in *Majlis-e-Qawwali*. In other words, mostly popular qawwalis were played which could appeal to all listeners equally. This, however, had the negative impact of not playing the uncommon numbers in spite of having them at the station. At the same time, few modern semi-qawwali hit numbers were not accepted in this programme to preserve the sanctity and seriousness of the concept. For example, ‘*tu cheez badi hai mast mast*’ (*Mohra*) and ‘*teri jawani badi mast mast hai*’ (*Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya*) were never heard.

*Majlis-e-Qawwali* can still be heard on the same day and time of the month. A recent instance of the programme played qawwalis as listed in table below.

Table 78: List of songs for *Majlis-e-Qawwali* dated 19 August 2023

MAJLIS-E-QAWWALI (Date: 19 August 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
wallah re wallah wallah	Tees Maar Khan	2010	Shekhar Ravjiani, Kamal Khan, Raja Hassan, Shreya Ghoshal, Chorus
hai agar dushman zamana	Hum Kisi Se Kam Nahin	1977	Mohd. Rafi, Asha Bhosle, Chorus
nigaahen milaane ko jee	Dil Hi To Hai	1963	Asha Bhosle, Chorus
aaye hain badi door se	Gunahon Ka Devta	1967	Mohd. Rafi, Manna Dey, Chorus
bhar do jholi meri ya	Bajrangi Bhaijaan	2015	Adnan Sami, Chorus

### *Ek Aur Anek*

Based on the same concept as introduced by Radio Ceylon in their programme with the same title, *Ek Aur Anek* is the programme of songs sung by one singer with other singers.

Table 79: Broadcast schedule of *Ek Aur Anek* during 1980s

Broadcast Schedule of EK AUR ANEK during 1980s			
Day	Start Time	End Time	Primary Presenter
Sat (4)	12:37	13:05	Seema bahen

Each edition would feature songs, mostly duets, of one singer with multiple other singers. Not sure about the reason but Seema bahen used to feature male singers in this programme. There was a pattern followed with the co-singers. The first song would always have Lata Mangeshkar as the co-singer and the second song would always have Asha Bhosle lending voice with the featured male singer. There wasn’t any fixed sequence of co-singers from the third song onwards. The programme featuring Mohd. Rafi once had Geeta Dutt as the third co-singer to be followed by Suman Kalyanpur. Among the singers of golden era, Mohd. Rafi, Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, Mahendra Kapoor, and Manna De used to get featured. In the absence of Seema bahen, the

programme would get presented by Meeta bahen, who would prefer to feature Lata Mangeshkar, and that was the time when a female singer was on spotlight.

During the 1980s, the new generation of singers entered *Ek Aur Anek*. This included Shailendra Singh, Suresh Wadkar, Amit Kumar, Mohd. Aziz, Shabbir Kumar, and S. P. Balasubrahmanyam. I still remember the summer of 1988 when songs of films like *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, *Ram Avtaar* etc. were received at the Guwahati station. In the discussion of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* earlier in this book, the memory of QSQT has been shared. Interestingly, the following day, the *Ek Aur Anek* programme featured Mohd. Aziz and the first song to be played was ‘*ungli mein angoothi, angoothi mein nageena*’ (*Ram Avtaar*), sung with Lata Mangeshkar, once again maintaining the tradition of the fixed co-singer sequence.

The 1990s decade introduced Kumar Sanu, Udit Narayan, Abhijeet, and Sonu Nigam to this programme. It was mentioned in the section of *Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet* earlier in this book that it was difficult to find eight songs of a new singer from eight different films due to which three songs of *Aashiqui* had to be played in the first ever programme of Kumar Sanu. Similar was the case with *Ek Aur Anek*. Although Sonu Nigam had been singing quite a lot, there weren’t enough unique duets available at the station with different co-singers. Usually, *Ek Aur Anek* would include pure duet numbers. However, Sonu Nigam’s first *Ek Aur Anek* had the song ‘*ye dil deewana*’ from the film *Pardes*, which was not only sung with two singers Hema Sardesai and Shankar Mahadevan but also it was more or less a completely Sonu Nigam number. The other two singers had hardly any lines in the song. There wasn’t any song sung with Lata Mangeshkar at that time. Few songs apart from the *Pardes* track that I still remember having listened to in that programme were ‘*naino ko karne do naino se baat*’ (*Muqabla*) with Anuradha Paudwal, ‘*hamein jab se mohabbat ho gayi hai*’ (*Border*) with Alka Yagnik, ‘*bando pe apne he data itna tu upkaar kar*’ (*Hulchul*) with Sadhana Sargam and ‘*apne deewane ka kar de bura haal*’ (*Dulhe Raja*) with Jaspinder Nurula.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, Rifleman K. H. Hemkholein Haokip was one such *Jawan* who would regularly send songs selected for this programme and his intention used to be picking up singers who were never featured in this programme before. Due to his efforts, singers like Yesu Das, Hariharan, Jaspinder Nurula, Shreya Ghoshal and Sunidhi Chauhan got featured. At the same time, he changed the prevailing tradition of featuring male singers. He would alternately select male and female singers for this programme, and we got to hear Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Geeta Dutt, Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik and Kavita Krishnamurthy at par with their male contemporaries. Interestingly, his programme on Lata Mangeshkar had featured six songs – the first three being old ones sung with Kishore, Rafi, and Mukesh, while the remaining three with new age singers – Kumar Sanu, Udit Narayan, and Abhijeet.

*Ek Aur Anek* also continues to be broadcast the same way as other programmes of this monthly slot. The four programmes falling during June to September 2023 had alternately old and new singers – Mukesh, Tulsi Kumar, Mohd. Rafi, and Sunidhi Chauhan – thus, maintaining variety and a broad inclusivity of all eras (songs spanning 1948 to 2019 in these four editions). The list of songs of these four programmes is given in table below.

Table 80: List of songs for *Ek Aur Anek* from June to September 2023

EK AUR ANEK (June – September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Co-Singers

<b>Featured Artist: Mukesh (24 June)</b>			
duniya ki sair kar lo	Around the World	1967	Sharda
ye kaisa aaya zamana	Humjoli	1970	Kishore Kumar, Mahmood
saat ajoobe is duniya mein aathveen apni	Dharam Veer	1977	Mohd. Rafi
wo kaun hai wo kaun hai	Anjaana	1969	Lata Mangeshkar
main bhanwra tu hai phool	Mela	1948	Shamshad Begum
nadiya kinare nain hamare	Jhoom Utha Akash	1974	Hemlata
<b>Featured Artist: Tulsi Kumar (22 July)</b>			
hum mar jayenge mere yaara	Aashiqui 2	2013	Arijit Singh
main tera ban jaaunga	Kabir Singh	2019	Akhil Sachdeva
ke love mera hit hit soniye	Billu Barber	2009	Neeraj Shridhar
tum jo aaye zindagi mein baat ban gayi	Once Upon a Time in Mumbai	2010	Rahat Fateh Ali Khan
paaniyon sa behta rahun	Satyamev Jayate	2018	Atif Aslam
ae mere humsafar ik zara intezaar	All is Well	2015	Mithoon
shahar ki ladki	Khandaani Shafakhana	2019	Badshah
<b>Featured Artist: Mohd. Rafi (25 August)</b>			
o haseena zulfon wali jaane jahaan	Teesri Manzil	1965	Asha Bhosle
aankhon hi aankhon mein ishara	C.I.D.	1956	Geeta Dutt
tasveer teri dil mein jis din se utaari hai	Maya	1961	Lata Mangeshkar
tara ri tara ri, ye saawan rut tum aur hum	Dastan	1950	Suraiya
main jaan gayi tujhe saiyan	Howrah Bridge	1958	Shamshad Begum
main hoon kaun ye tujhko naheen hai	Ahinsa	1979	Manna Dey
<b>Featured Artist: Sunidhi Chauhan (23 September)</b>			
maine to khaayi kasam	Awara Paagal Deewana	2002	Abhijeet
meri zindagi mein aaye ho aur aise	Armaan	2003	Sonu Nigam
jalaa koi mita koi luta koi re	Baaz	2003	Kailash Kher
kudrat ne bakhsha tha humko	Dil Pardesi Ho Gaya	2003	Udit Narayan
bachke rehna re baba	Bachke Rehna Re Baba	2005	Sowmya Raoh
aankhon hi aankhon mein ye kya baat	Ek Se Badhkar Ek	2004	Kumar Sanu

## **Sabrang**

*Sabrang* was probably the programme which I have listened to the most after *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Aap Ki Farmaish* for it being broadcast on Sunday afternoons.

*Table 81: Broadcast schedule of Sabrang during 1980s*

<b>Broadcast Schedule of SABRANG during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Sun	12:37	13:05	Meeta bahen
Tue	17:05	17:45	Meeta bahen

*Sabrang*, as the name indicates, which literally means “all colours”, was the only programme of mixed melodies, described as “*mile jule filmi geet*”, and presented by Meeta bahen. Originally, it

was *Naghme Suhaane*, a programme of mixed film and non-film songs broadcast on Sunday evenings. Later, in the stable schedule, when non-film songs vanished from all programmes, the programme was reintroduced as *Sabrang*, playing only mixed film songs.

Although identified as a programme of mixed songs, it was not really the case. In fact, songs that didn't fit into the theme, genre, or nature of other programmes, were essentially made part of *Sabrang*. Thus, in one way, *Sabrang* signified "rest of all" category of songs. This "rest of all" category, however, consisted of several sub-categories, the first and the most significant was the category of soft romantic solo numbers by male singers. Since *Geet Rangeele* was a female singer-dominated programme, majority of songs in *Sabrang* used to be from male singers to maintain a balance. During the tenure of Meeta bahen, Kishore Kumar was the most heard singer in this programme. A long list of his songs formed the major share of *Sabrang* over the years. Let's have a quick look at some of those frequently played songs – '*pyar deewana hota hai*' (*Kati Patang*), '*chala jaata hoon kisi ki dhun mein*' (*Mere Jeevan Saathi*), '*jeevan se bhari teri aankhen*' (*Safar*), '*aaj unse pehli mulaqat hogi*' (*Paraya Dhan*), '*dil haaye mera dil tera dil*' (*Paraya Dhan*), '*tum ho mere dil dhadkan*' (*Manzil*), '*nazrana bheja kisi ne pyar ka*' (*Des Pardes*), '*ruk jaana o jaana humse do baaten*' (*Warrant*), '*tere jaisa yaar kahaan*' (*Yarana*), '*raahi naye naye, rasta naya naya*' (*Anand Ashram*), '*liye sapne nigaahon mein, chala hoon teri raahon mein*' (*Mashaal*), '*main to chala jidhar chale rasta*' (*Dhadkan*), '*ik roz main tadap kar is dil ko thaam lunga*' (*Bemisaal*), '*aisa kabhi hua naheen, jo bhi hua khoob hua*' (*Yeh Vaada Raha*), '*jab chaha yara tumne, aankhon se mara tumne*' (*Zabardast*), '*pyar jab na diya zindagi ne kabhi*' (*Sitamgar*), '*jeene ko to jeete hain sabhi*' (*Yeh Vaada Raha*), '*mere liye soona soona*' (*Anand Aur Anand*), '*chalo aaj chalen ik aisi jagah*' (*Khamosh Nigahen*), '*tanha main akela toota tara koi*' (*Sachche Ka Bolbala*), '*main dil tu dhadkan*' (*Adhikaar*), '*raah pe rehte hain, yaadon pe basar karte hain*' (*Namkeen*). The list is endless.

With regard to the *Namkeen* song, this was the only song of this film that Meeta bahen used to play in *Sabrang* and that too frequently. Once Meeta bahen wasn't present. No casual announcer was on duty either. Thus, Seema bahen, the only other regular announcer on duty on Sundays had to present this programme. It appears that Meeta bahen had scheduled '*raah pe rehte hain*' song as usual. However, Seema bahen, for a change, played the other popular number from this film sung by Asha Bhosle and Chorus – '*panta bhaate tatka begun pora*'. That was the first and probably the last instance I heard this song in *Sabrang*. Meeta bahen's liking for Kishore Kumar is also evident in her interview to AIR Dibrugarh in which she mentioned that during her early years, she was very fond of the song '*zarurat hai zarurat hai ik shirimati ki, kalavati ki, seva kare jo pati ki*' from the film *Manmauji*. [111]

When I started listening to the radio in the early 1980s, Kishore Kumar was the top male singer, which is one of the several reasons towards the higher share of his songs in this programme. The previous two decades must have witnessed more songs from Mohd. Rafi and Mukesh. Talking about Rafi numbers that were still audible in *Sabrang* during the 1980s and even after, included '*mera mann tera pyasa*' (*Gambler*), '*main ek raja hoon, tu ek rani hai*' (*Uphaar*) and '*mujhe mat roko, mujhe gaane do*' (*Sargam*) among others. The corresponding Mukesh hits were the two evergreen songs of Anand – '*maine tere liye hi saat rang ke sapne chune*' and '*kahin door jab din dhal jaaye*', and few others like '*kai baar yunhi dekha hai*' (*Rajanigandha*) and '*suhaani chaandni raaten hamein sone naheen deti*' (*Mukti*). Noticeably, most Rafi and Mukesh solos formed part of *Filmi Naghme*, thus balancing out the share of Kishore numbers in *Sabrang*.

Anup Ghoshal's '*tujhse naaraz naheen zindagi*' (*Masoom*), Shyamal Mitra's '*saphal wahi jeevan hai*' (*Anand Ashram*) and '*tum saath ho zindagi bhar ke liye*' (*Sheeshe Ka Ghar*), Mahendra Kapoor's '*maangi thi ek dua jo qabool ho gayi*' (*Shakti*), Yesu Das's '*o goriya re*' (*Naiya*), '*beeti hui raat ki sunaati hai kahani*' (*Ayyash*) and '*dil ke tukde tukde karke muskurake chal diye*' (*Dada*), Shailendra Singh's '*maa ne kaha tha o beta kabhi dil kisi ka na todo*' (*Chacha Bhatija*), and S. P. Balasubrahmanyam's '*tere mere beech mein*' (*Ek Duije Ke Liye*) and '*mere rang mein rangne wali*' (*Maine Pyar Kiya*) were among the solos of other male singers. The 1980s decade introduced songs of several new-age singers in *Sabrang*. Interestingly, Amit Kumar used to have many solo hits in the films he sang. This led to a significant number of his songs getting added to the *Sabrang* database. All songs of Teri Kasam – '*ye zameen gaa rahi hai*', '*dil ki baat kahin lab pe na aa jaaye*', '*geet wo hai haan ji haan*' and '*mere geeton mein meri kahaaniyan hain*' were played in round-robin fashion. Then there were more songs like '*tu mauj main hoon kinara*' (*Lovers*), '*jaaneman jaanejigar jaane tamanna jaan le*' (*Ghazab*), '*soone shaam savere tab se hain mere*' (*Khel*), '*tere liye saari umar jaagun*' (*Yaad Rakhegi Duniya*), '*main ek jhonka hoon thandi pawan ka*' (*Suryavanshi*). Shabbir Kumar's '*parbaton se aaj main takra gaya*' (*Betaab*), '*jheel rakhun kanwal rakhun*' (*Teesra Kinara*) and '*meri maa ne bataya hai, yahi mujhko seekhaya hai*' (*Aandhiyan*), Mohd. Aziz's '*chal mere ghode chal chal chal*' (*Nishchay*) and '*kaash main koi panchhi hota ya hota banjara*' (*Prem Dharm*), and Suresh Wadkar's '*mujhko dekhoge jahaan tak*' (*Ram Teri Ganga Maili*), '*ameer se hoga ya gareeb se hoga*' (*Insaniyat Ke Dushman*), '*yahi hai pyar ka izahaar*' (*Izahaar*) and '*dhadkan zara ruk gayi hai*' (*Prahaar*) were other popular hits of the period to have got incorporated into *Sabrang*.

The 1990s brought four main male singers to *Sabrang*. Starting with the *Aashiqui* solos, Kumar Sanu's solo hits continued to hit this programme, few more being '*prem patra aaya hai*' (*Geet*), '*zindagi ki talaash mein ham*' (*Saathi*), '*mera chaand mujhe aaya hai nazar*' (*Mr. Aashiq*), '*bahut khoobsoorat ghazal likh raha hoon*' (*Shikari*), '*aankhon mein basaaya tha*' (*Takkar*), '*jab tumhe aashiqui maloom hogi*' (*Ajnabee*), '*utra na dil mein koi*' (*Uff Yeh Mohabbat*), '*rooth na jaana tumse kahoon jo*' (*1942 A Love Story*), '*dil paagal deewana*' (*Barsaat*). Abhijeet's '*kahin to milegi mohabbat ki manzil*' (*Milan*), '*ik chanchal shokh haseena*' (*Baaghi*), '*mere khayalon ki malika*' (*Josh*) and '*resham jaisi hain raahen*' (*Ek Tha Dil Ek Thi Dhadkan*), Udit Narayan's '*paighaam de rahi hai ye shaam dhalte dhalte*' (*Anmol*), '*sabne kardi ok*' (*Phool*), '*tu kaun kahaan se aayi hai*' (*Dil Pardesi Ho Gaya*), '*haathon ki lakeeron mein likha hai*' (*Tera Mera Saath Rahe*) and '*deewana main chala use dhoondne*' (*Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya*), and Sonu Nigam's '*meri duniya hai tujhme kahin*' (*Vaastav*), '*tumhe jitna bhulaate hain*' (*Shukriya*), and '*halka halka sa ye samaa*' (*Chocolate*) were representational songs of these singers in this programme. Lesser heard songs like '*dil karta hai tere paas aaun*' (*Andaaz Apna Apna*) by Mangal Singh and '*o hare dupatte wali*' (*Sanam Bewafa*) by Vipin Sachdeva used to make frequent rounds in this programme in those days. Hariharan's '*sun ri sakhi meri pyari sakhi*' (*Humse Hai Muqabla*) and '*dheemi dheemi bheeni bheeni*' (*1947 Earth*) were also no lesser heard.

By now, the reader must have got the flavour of the type of songs that were played in *Sabrang*. The reader must also be thinking that it was a programme of soft and romantic male solo numbers. That was not the case, however. Though lesser in quantity, soft melodious female solos were also played in between, the most of them being Lata and Asha songs. Few Lata solos I remember were '*hothon pe geet jaage*' (*Man Pasand*), '*bindiya tarse kajra barse aaye na saajna*' (*Phir Wohi Raat*), '*bhor bhaye panchhi dhun ye sunaaye*' (*Aanchal*), '*zindagi ke raste mein*' (*Armaan*), '*sajna meri chaabi chhun chhun*' (*Rishta Kaagaz Ka*), '*tere liye palkon ke jhaalar bunoo*' (*Harjaai*), '*geet*

*mere hothon ko de gaya koi* (Kabhi Ajnabi The), *'dil ki lagi kaahe jaane na'* (Anmol), *'pyar ke liye bani main'* (Sau Crore), *'ye bindiya ye kajra kare kya ishaare'* (Vansh), *'meri bindiya teri nindiya'* (Lamhe), *'chocolate limejuice'* (Hum Aapke Hain Koun). The last two songs were equally fit for *Geet Rangeele*, unsure if these were played there as well. Many Asha solos hit *Sabrang*, few of those being *'katra katra milti hai'* (Ijaazat), *'kiske pyar mein khoye hue ho'* (Pasand Apni Apni), *'aaj ka din na jaane kyun achchha lagta hai'* (Anokha Rishta), *'barse phuhaar'* (Thodi Si Bewafai). Arati Mukherjee's *'do naina aur ek kahani'* (Masoom) was heard but not Hemlata's *'akhiyon ke jharokhon se'* (Title song) the reason for which could be the high popularity of the latter for which it used to get frequently played in request-based programmes. Since *Sabrang* featured songs not played in other programmes, many popular solos stayed away from this programme. For example, Lata Mangeshkar's hit solos of the period like *'dil mein tujhe bithaake'* (Fakeera), *'sheesha ho ya dil ho'* (Asha), *'pardes jaake pardesiya'* (Arpan), *'waada na tod'* (Dil Tujhko Diya) and *'tera saath hai to mujhe kya kamee hai'* (Pyasa Sawan) were never played in *Sabrang*. However, the Dr. Kamlesh Awasthi version of the *Pyasa Sawan* song was sometimes included. Same was the case with the Anup Ghoshal version of the Masoom song *'tujhse naaraz naheen zindagi'*. When the songs of *Maine Pyar Kiya* were received, the Lata version of *'dil deewana bin sajna ke mane na'* started getting played in *Sabrang*. However, as the song started receiving many requests, it swiftly got passed on from *Sabrang* to *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Aap Ki Farmaish*. The S. P. Balasubrahmanyam version kept getting played in *Sabrang*.

The three new age singers, Anuradha Paudwal, Alka Yagnik and Kavita Krishnamurthy were also adequately heard in *Sabrang*. *'o mere sapno ke saudagar'* (Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahin), *'main tumhari hoon'* (Sangeet), *'o saathiya o beliya'* (Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya), and *'tu kya pyar karega pyar maine kiya'* (Saheban) were few Anuradha solos from that era. Alka Yagnik's immensely melodious *'main titli rangon ki kali, kabhi is daal pe to kabhi us daal pe'* (Seepiyon) and the semi-classical *'kaaga to ud gaya meethi boli bol ke'* (Damini) would have definitely gone unnoticed if they weren't played regularly in this programme. In the same manner, Kavita Krishnamurthy's *'de rahi hai duaen ye bahena teri'* (Satyamev Jayate), *'tere dil ki tu jaane main apne dil ki jaanu'* (Naam), *'mujhko mohabbat hai tumse, kabhi dhokha na dena'* (Jaan Pehchaan), *'chhutti kar dee meri'* (Nishchay) and *'kehta hai sindoor tera teri bindiya kehti hai'* (Sada Suhagan) were among the initial hits of her career that were once part of *Sabrang*. Later, *'pyar hua chupke se'* (1942 A Love Story) got added to the list.

The genre of children songs was another specialty of *Sabrang*. Be it Kishore Kumar's *'chidiya chu chu karti hai'* (Jyoti), Mohd. Rafi's *'bishan chacha, kuch gaao'*, Lata Mangeshkar's *'kaun hoon main kya naam hai mera'* (Dard Ka Rishta) and *'mere ghar aayi ek nanhi pari'* (Kabhi Kabhie) or in the new era Kavita Krishnamurthy's *'tan tan ghadi mein baj gaye das'* (Aulaad) and Alka Yagnik's *'haathi raja haathi raja jaldi se chalo'* (Dost), *Sabrang* on Sunday afternoons must have equally entertained the children as much as they took the *Jawans* to their childhood years with such songs. And this genre of songs led to the dismissal of the monopoly of solo numbers in this programme since most children tracks had two or more voices. This resulted in a long list of duet songs – *'ye mera jeevan tere liye hai'* (Babu) by Kishore and Alka, *'achchha main mummy se baat karunga'* (Ek Hi Bhoor) by S. P. Balasubrahmanyam and Rajeshwari, *'aankh michauli aisi mujhse khele kyun yahaan'* (Sanjog) by Kavita and S. P. Shailaja, and many others. One of the latest ones in this genre to get included was *'papa mere papa'* (Main Aisa Hi Hoon) by Sonu Nigam, Shreya Ghoshal, and Baby Aparna. Then there was the evergreen Masoom song *'lakdi ki kaathi, kaathi pe ghoda'* by Gauri Bapat, Gurpreet Kaur and Vanita Mishra.

Talking of duets in *Sabrang*, there was another category of songs in which either one of the singers had minimal lines or the song did not belong to the romantic genre for which they weren't included in *Preet Ladee* programme. Such songs made it to *Sabrang*, few of them being 'logo ka dil agar jeetna tumko hai to' (*Man Pasand*) by Rafi and Tina Munim, 'huzoor is qadar bhi na itraake chaliye' (*Masoom*) by Bhupendra and Suresh Wadkar, 'yarana yaar ka na kabhi chhootega' (*Saathi*) by Kumar Sanu and Vipin Sachdeva, 'main koi aisa geet gaaun' (*Yes Boss*) by Abhijeet and Alka Yagnik, and 'dil na kisi ka jaaye ve jaan jaaye to jaaye' (*Kshatriya*) by Lata and Kavita Krishnamurthy. The only Lata-Kishore duet I ever heard in *Sabrang* was the unconventional 'charu chandra ki chanchal chitwan... sa re ga ma pa ma ga re' from *Man Pasand*.

*Sabrang* is currently broadcast on Sundays between 12:38 and 13:05, on Fridays between 13:10 and 13:40, and as *Gunjan* on Tuesdays between 14:30 and 15:00 and on Saturdays between 13:10 and 13:40. The story behind the introduction of *Gunjan* is discussed later in more detail. New age solos heard in these programmes include 'in dino dil mera' (*Life in a Metro*) by Soham, 'darmiyan darmiyan' (*Jodi Breakers*) by Shafqat Amanat Ali, 'laagi tumse mann ki lagan' (*Paap*) and 'o rabba main to mar gaya oye' (*Mausam*) by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, 'kabhi khushboo kabhi jhonka' (*Saaya*) by KK, 'sun zara soniye sun zara' (*Lucky*) by Adnan Sami, 'ab mujhe koi intezaar kahaan' (*Ishqiya*) by Rekha Bhardwaj, 'dil to udne lagaa' (*Tum*) by Shreya Ghoshal among others.

It is nice of the current presenters that the nostalgia of the Sunday afternoons of 1980s has been kept alive by occasionally including songs of the bygone era which used to be played in *Sabrang* in those days, as tabulated below.

Table 82: List of songs for *Sabrang* dated 17 September 2023

SABRANG (Date: 17 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
ek tha bachpan, nanha sa bachpan	Aashirvaad	1968	Lata Mangeshkar
tumse kahoon ek baat paron se halki halki	Dastak	1970	Mohd. Rafi
saajan tere pyar mein main hui barbaad	Mahua	1969	Asha Bhosle
bas yahi apraadh main har baar karta hoon	Pehchaan	1970	Mukesh
hanste hue naina neer bahaaye	Jhoom Utha Akash	1974	Hemlata
jeevan se bhari teri aankhen majboor kare	Safar	1970	Kishore Kumar

Table 83: List of songs for *Sabrang* dated 24 September 2023

SABRANG (Date: 24 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
kahaan tak ye mann ko andhere chhalenge	Baaton Baaton Mein	1979	Kishore Kumar
chhoti si ek kali khili thi baag mein ek din	Jurmana	1979	Lata Mangeshkar
gunche lage hain kehne, phoolon se bhi suna	Taraana	1979	Shailendra Singh
dil deewana bin sajna ke maane na	Maine Pyar Kiya	1989	S. P. Balasubrahmanyam
ye ghungroo maine baandhe to chham	Jeevan Jyoti	1976	Asha Bhosle
har haseen cheez ka main talabgaar hoon	Saudagar	1973	Kishore Kumar

Although *Gunjan* will be discussed later as just mentioned above, nevertheless, it would be a good idea to take a look at the songs played in two recent editions, which makes it clear that *Sabrang*

and *Gunjan* are essentially the same programme with different names. In contrast to the above two tables, the songs broadcast in these two editions of *Gunjan* belonged to the new era as well.

Table 84: List of songs for *Gunjan* dated 27 June 2023

<b>GUNJAN (Date: 27 June 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
abhi abhi to mile ho, abhi na karo	Jism-2	2012	KK
tu chaahiye shaam-o-subah	Bajrangi Bhaijaan	2015	Atif Aslam
chaand taare phool kaliyaan	Tumse Achcha Kaun Hai	2002	Tauseef Akhtar
kyun baar baar aankhon mein tum	Filhaal	2002	Chithra
kahin to milegi mohabbat ki manzil	Milan	1994	Abhijeet
meri bindiya teri nindiya na uda de	Lamhe	1991	Lata Mangeshkar

Table 85: List of songs for *Gunjan* dated 3 October 2023

<b>GUNJAN (Date: 3 October 2023)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
aankhon mein teri ajab si adaayen hain	Om Shaanti Om	2007	KK
maine tere liye hi saat rang ke sapne	Anand	1971	Mukesh
mere laal mujhpe kar tu meherbaani	Yaaron Ka Yaar	1977	Asha Bhosle
tu mile dil khile aur jeene ko kya	Criminal	1995	Kumar Sanu (humming by Chithra)
jaanam dekh lo mit gayeen dooriyan	Veer Zaara	2004	Udit Narayan
kehna hi kya ke nain ek anjaan se ja mile	Bombay	1995	Chithra, Chorus

### ***Pradeshik Sangeet***

Spread over four days, the total weekly duration of regional film and non-film songs broadcast in *Pradeshik Sangeet* was 45 minutes. While Thursday's edition was of mixed languages, the remaining days featured songs of one language each.

Table 86: Broadcast schedule of *Pradeshik Sangeet* during 1980s

<b>Broadcast Schedule of PRADESHIK SANGEET during 1980s</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>	<b>Primary Presenter</b>
Sun	14:00	14:10	Seema bahen
Wed	13:50	14:00	Seema bahen
Thu	13:45	14:00	Meeta bahen
Sat	13:50	14:00	Meeta bahen

If we divide the country into four zones, then the languages in which songs have been heard in Guwahati's *Pradeshik Sangeet* may be listed as shown in the table.

Table 87: Regional languages whose songs featured in *Pradeshik Sangeet*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Languages</b>
NORTH ZONE	Bhojpuri, Punjabi, Uttar Pradesh (folk)
WEST ZONE	Gujarati, Marathi, Rajasthani

SOUTH ZONE	Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu
EAST ZONE	Assamese, Bodo, Bangla, Manipuri, Nepalese, Odiya

Languages which were probably never heard include Kashmiri, Ladakhi, Haryanvi, Garhwali, Kumauni, Chattisgarhi, Maithili, and the north-eastern dialects. Being a station of Assam, it was natural to have a big share of Assamese film and non-film songs. Thus, keeping Assamese at bay, some frequently played regional songs from other states may be listed here. Gurdas Maan's Punjabi song '*angootha dil wali wahi te luwa le*', Mahendra Kapoor's '*khamma khamma oh mara runicha ra dhaniya*' from the Rajasthan film *Baba Ram Deo* and the Oriya duet '*tuhmi mo radha, tuhmi mo seeta*' from the film *Sakhi Gopinath* sung by Anuradha Paudwal and Chitta Jena are still fresh in my memories, probably due to their attractive lyrics, music and singing. One Gujarati ghazal album of Manhar Udhas was also quite popular. Two ghazals of this album used to be frequently played – '*gagan wasi dhara par beghari swaso bhari to jo*' and '*nayan ne bandh rakhi ne mein jyare tamne joya chhe*'. Folk songs of Uttar Pradesh were also included in Pradeshik Sangeet, mostly by Rekha bahen, whenever she got the chance to present it on Saturdays in Meeta bahen's absence. In Bangla, on one hand there were classy Rabindra Sangeet numbers like '*bado asha kore eshechhi go kachhe deke lao*' by Asha Bhosle and on the other hand, there were songs with substandard lyrics like '*asha niye kora nari tari darjaae*' by Abhijeet.

Even with a minor share of regional songs in the Troops Programme both in terms of programme duration and the number of songs available at Guwahati, *Pradeshik Sangeet* must have touched the nerves of the *Jawans* which gave them the taste of the places they belonged to. Although it wasn't possible to have a request based *Pradeshik Sangeet* for same reason, one *Jawan* named Rifleman Gokul Chandra Bodo used to request for Bihu songs every year on the occasion of Rongali Bihu falling during mid-April. Seema bahen had fulfilled his one such request in the *Pradeshik Sangeet* of Wednesday, 14 April 1999.

Over the passage of time, songs that used to be played during the 1980s and 1990s were replaced with new songs. *Pradeshik Sangeet* is currently broadcast on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays between 13:40 and 14:00, thus, totalling to an hour a week, with a 15-minute increase in net duration than before.

### Special Programmes

Special programmes on festivals and on special days of the year has been an integral part of Troops Programme since beginning. The rationale behind this was to include the *Jawans* in the festivities going around since they were at far off places from their families. The occasions on which special programmes are broadcast include New Year Day, Republic Day, Maha Shivratri, Holi, Ram Navami, Eid-ul-Fitr, Muharram, Buddha Poornima, Independence Day, Janmashtami, Raksha Bandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Mahavir Jayanti, Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti, Durga Mahashtami, Vijay Dashami, Deepavali and Christmas. Recently, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's birth anniversary has also been added to the list of special programmes under the Troops Programme. These specials are broadcast in the slot of Dibrugarh's relay (previously 13:30 – 14:00, currently 13:10 – 13:40) to have maximum listenership for such programmes. However, this didn't mean that every special would be of half hour duration. Earlier, the duration of specials varied from 15 minutes to 30 minutes depending on the availability of songs for a particular occasion. The structure of all special

programmes used to be the same – spoken lines followed by songs. In present time, all such special programmes have been standardised for half-hour duration.

The special programme of New Year Day was the only exception in the sense that it was broadcast at the beginning of the programme for the obvious reason of starting the year by wishing the listeners with new year songs. Ever since the film *Do Jasoos* was released in the mid-1970s, the first song of the year in Troops Programme that got played just after the signature band tune used to be ‘*Happy New Year to you*’ by Shailendra Singh and Chorus. This would be followed by few other numbers like ‘*aane wale saal ko salaam*’ (*Aap Ke Saath*), ‘*naya saal aaye tamaashe dikhaaye*’ (*Nazrana Pyar Ka*) etc. This would push *Aaj Ka Geet* by at least 15 minutes, thus reducing the duration of the following programme (that normally started at 12:37). The New Year of 1998 fell on Thursday. Rekha bahen chose to play these songs and few more as a complete *Swar Chhaya* programme broadcast between 13:10 and 13:45. Apart from the mentioned three songs, few other songs included in that programme were ‘*dekho dekho phir aa gaya Happy New Year*’ (*Teri Talash Mein*), ‘*saal ke baarah maheene, baarah maheeno ka saal*’ (*Phool*). To fill up the duration of the programme, at least two songs that were played weren’t purely New Year songs, but they definitely were celebration oriented. These were ‘*shaam suhaani aayi khushiyan banke pehli baar*’ (*Zinda Dil*) and ‘*aaj ki shaam aap ke naam*’ (*Tawaiif*).

The three National occasions, viz., Republic Day, Independence Day, and Gandhi Jayanti were like extensions of *Watan Ke Taraane*, the difference being in the format of not announcing the song details in the specials but few lines on the occasion in between the songs. The most popular special programme of the year happened to be of Holi. This was obvious due to the fact that the Hindi cinema has given us many popular and evergreen Holi songs. Listeners had to wait the whole year to listen to the Holi songs, which were never played on any other day of the year. Over the decades, popular Holi songs from films kept getting added to Holi’s special programme. Such songs included ‘*holi aayi re kanhai*’ (*Mother India*), ‘*laayi hai hazaaron rang holi*’ (*Phool Aur Patthar*), ‘*tan rang lo ji aaj man rang lo*’ (*Kohinoor*), ‘*nandlala holi khele biraj mein dhoom machi hai*’ (*Mastana*), ‘*holi re holi rangon ki doli*’ (*Paraya Dhan*), ‘*piya sang khelun holi phaagun aayo re*’ (*Phagun*), ‘*aaj na chhodenge bas humjoli*’ (*Kati Patang*), ‘*holi ke din dil khil jaate hain*’ (*Sholay*), ‘*holi aayi holi aayi dekho holi aayi re*’ (*Mashaal*), ‘*mal de gulaal mohe*’ (*Kaamchor*), ‘*aisi rang de piya daag na lage koi*’ (*Babu*), ‘*saat rang mein khel rahi hai*’ (*Aakhir Kyun?*), ‘*bhaagi re bhaagi brij bala*’ (*Rajput*), ‘*rang barse bheege chunar wali*’ (*Silsila*), ‘*rang bhare mausam se rang churaa ke*’ (*Bandish*), ‘*maaro bhar bhar kar pichkaari*’ (*Dhanwaan*), ‘*aali re aali re holi*’ (*Zakhmee*) and many more. There is an interesting memory related to Holi specials. Once it so happened that a musical feature, popularly known as *sangeet roopak*, was prepared as a Holi special programme that was based on the mythological story behind Holi celebrations. The narration was done by none other than Rekha bahen, Seema bahen and Meeta bahen. This was a unique programme that had voices of all three of them together and that too in a very different presentation format. The feature was broadcast under Guwahati-A’s Hindi Programme. And it was also selected for broadcast as Holi special under the Troops Programme from Guwahati-B/C. Since the programme was not limited to the troops, the names of the narrators at the end of the programme were mentioned as Bimlesh Arya, Tapasi Sengupta and Sadhana Phukan, and not Rekha, Seema and Meeta bahen. And that was the day when we realized the “fake” names taken by them for addressing to the *Jawans* in the Troops Programme.

Among the religious occasions, Maha Shivratri, Ram Navami, Janmashtami, Durga Ashtami and Vijayadashami were the major ones for which there were ample number of songs available in films. Ganesh Chaturthi has also been included to the list of specials, which wasn't the case earlier. The Ganesh Chaturthi special programme of 2023 featured songs from as old as 1951 to as recent as 2006 films as tabulated below.

Table 88: List of songs for Ganesh Chaturthi special programme dated 19 September 2023

GANESH CHATURTHI SPECIAL (Date: 19 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
morya re, bappa morya re	Don	2006	Shankar Mahadevan, Chorus
muqabla muqabla tere bhakt jano ka	Marte Dum Tak	1987	Mahendra Kapoor, Suresh Wadkar, Hemlata, Shabbir Kumar, Chorus
gaaiye ganapati jag vandana	Poster	1984	Mahendra Kapoor
jay he ganesh jay ganapati	Shri Ganesh Janm	1951	Sulochana Kadam, Chorus
mere manmandir mein tum bhagwan	Dard Ka Rishta	1983	Hariharan, Chorus
bolo jay ganesh	Jay Ganesh	1977	Mahendra Kapoor, Chorus

Specials on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Muharram, Buddha Poornima, and Mahavir Jayanti used to be of 15-20 minutes duration due to lesser number of songs available. For Muharram, non-film songs of mourning depicting the Battle of Karbala used to be played. The Eid song from the film *Dil Apna Aur Preet Paraayi* – ‘*mujhe mil gaya bahaana teri deed ka*’ was a sure-shot for the Eid-ul-Fitr special. In new era, songs like ‘*chaand nazar aa gaya, allah hi allah chha gaya*’ (*Hero Hindustani*) and ‘*eid ka hai yaaron ye payaam*’ (*Tumko Na Bhool Paayenge*) made entry to this annual programme.

Probably the most important special programme used to be that on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, for it being the emotional occasion of celebrating the brother – sister relation between the *Jawans*, and the presenters of the Troops Programme. Meeta bahen had told in her interview to AIR Dibrugarh that the *Jawans* used to send *raakhi* to them or draw pictures of *raakhi* in their letters, which were evidence of how emotionally the *Jawans* were connected with Guwahati's Troops Programme and with the presenters of the programme whom they considered to be their own sisters. [141] While broadcasting the Rakshabandhan special, the presenter would say – “*aaj rakshabandhan ka paawan parv hai. is avasar par ham apne sabhi sainik bhaiyon ka abhinandan karte hain, aur prastut karte hain ye geeton bhari raakhi*”. The last phrase ‘*geeton bhari raakhi*’ was like an acknowledgement to the love and affection the *Jawans* used to show towards them. ‘*ye raakhi bandhan hai aisa*’ (*Beimaan*), ‘*raakhi dhaagon ka tyohaar*’ (*Rakhi*), ‘*bhaiya mere rakhi ke bandhan ko nibhana*’ (*Chhoti Bahen*), ‘*mere bhaiya mere chanda mere anmol ratan*’ (*Kaajal*), ‘*behna ne bhai ki kalaai pe pyar bandha hai*’ (*Resham Ki Dori*), ‘*rang birangi rakhi lekar aayi behna, rakhi bandhwa le mere veer*’ (*Anpadh*), ‘*chanda re, mere bhaiya se kehna, behna yaad kare*’ (*Chambal Ki Kasam*) were the songs without which the programme would be incomplete. In new era, ‘*meri behna deewani hai*’ (*Andha Kanoon*) and ‘*behne hansti hain to hanste hain*’ (*Pyar Ka Devta*) got added to the list of Raakhi songs.

The Deepavali programme used to have songs like ‘*jyoti kalash chhalke*’ (*Bhabhi Ki Choodiyan*), ‘*deep jale dekho*’ (*Dil Daulat Duniya*), ‘*deeya na bujhe ri aaj hamara*’ (*Son of India*), ‘*gyot se gyot jagaate chalo*’ (*Sant Gyaneshwar*). In the new century, ‘*Happy Diwali*’ from the 2005 film *Home Delivery* made it to this special. In 1997, Deepavali was on 30 October, a Thursday. Rekha bahen

merged the special with the regular *Swar Chhaya* and presented a *Swar Chhaya* on the theme of lights. Some non-Diwali songs but on the same theme were added to the programme, two of them being ‘*deeye jalaayen pyar ke chalo isi khushi mein*’ (*Dharti Kahe Pukaar Ke*) – a Party and Piano song and ‘*deepak mere suhaag ka jalta rahe*’ (*Maang Bharo Sajna*) – a Karwa Chauth song.

The last special programme of the year is Christmas. The celebration seemed to be incomplete until the listeners heard songs like ‘*jingle bells jingle bells... aao tumhe chaand pe le jaayen*’ (*Zakhmi*), ‘*teri hai zameen, tera aasmaan*’ (*The Burning Train*), ‘*O Mother Mary*’ (*Bheegi Palkein*) and there was another song sung by Mohd. Rafi on Christmas and Jesus Christ, which I couldn’t recall. No Christmas Carols or other non-film songs were ever played in this programme. After many years, I happened to listen to the Christmas special programme of 2022 broadcast under the Troops Programme and was highly surprised to hear some rare songs. I can’t resist myself from listing them down in below table.

*Table 89: List of songs for Christmas special programme dated 25 December 2022*

<b>CHRISTMAS SPECIAL (Date: 25 December 2022)</b>			
<b>Song</b>	<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Singers</b>
teri hai zameen tera aasmaan	The Burning Train	1980	Sushma Shreshtha, Padmini Kolhapure
ye nek raat hai, ye paak raat hai	Chehre Pe Chehra	1980	Manna Dey
mera dil jhoom, sabko happy christmas	Ek Din Aadhi Raat	1971	Asha Bhosle
hazaaron saal mein koi maseeha aata hai	Krodhi	1981	Lata Mangeshkar
karo baaten, merry christmas to you	Bhanwar	1976	Lata Mangeshkar, Kishore Kumar
tujhme ishwar, allah tujhme, tujhme jesus	Nanha Farishta	1969	Mohd Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Manna De
jingle bells, aao tumhe chaand pe le jayen	Zakhmee	1975	Lata Mangeshkar, Sushma Shreshtha

Last but not the least, radio reports of Foundation Day Celebrations (*Sthaapna Diwas Samaroh*) of various battalions and units of the Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces of the region used to be broadcast under the Troops Programme. These used to be typically 10 to 15 minutes long. These reports prepared in collaboration between AIR and the military units were comprised of crisp summary of celebration events such as speeches by ministers and high rank officials, award distribution, musical and band performances, military shows and parades, and sports activities.

# 11. Developments during the Early 90s

The decade of the 1980s was probably the most stable decade for AIR Guwahati's Troops Programme for it didn't undergo any kind of change. The programme had undergone continuous changes during its initial phase in the 1960s until the mid-1970s. Once stabilized, there weren't any further changes made for at least the next fifteen years or so. This was in fact the scene in radio broadcasting in India from a generic sense. However, things started to change from the early 1990s. This chapter aims at bringing out the major changes introduced in Guwahati's Troops Programme during the early years of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that had noticeable impact on listening.

## **Launch of AIR North-Eastern Service (NES)**

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985 – 1990) introduced two significant services on AIR, significant both in terms of area of coverage and function. One was the National Channel (*Rashtriya Prasaran Seva*) and the other was the North-Eastern Service (*Purvottar Seva*). Broadcast through two high power mediumwave transmitters, the National Channel, introduced in 1987, could reach the entire length and breadth of the country. It operated daily from dusk to dawn, that is, between 18:50 and 06:10 and was primarily meant for the night workers and the Forces personnel. There even used to be a specific programme of Forces' song requests entitled *Sarhad*. Broadcast in Hindi and English from Delhi, the National Channel proved to be the night companion of troops, especially in the remote areas. [160]

The Norther-Eastern Service (NES) was decided to be based at Shillong. Experimental transmission of the service began on the shortwave 90-meter band on 8 April 1989 and the service was formally launched on 3 January 1990. Broadcast at 60.36 m between 16:30 and 22:00, the service, audible in entire North-East and parts of Bihar and West Bengal, aimed at bringing the seven north-eastern states at the same platform, thus, serving as a potpourri of culture, traditions, art, literature, music, tourism, and issues of the region. Being a Hindi-English service like the National Channel, the NES was equally relevant for the troops personnel deployed in the region. The NES left no stones unturned to ensure the entertainment of the servicemen. The most significant offering was *Jay Jawaan* between 17:10 and 18:00 on four days of the week – Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat. This was the programme of song requests from Forces personnel. On remaining three days, songs requests of civilians were fulfilled in *Pasand Aapki*. Looking at the high popularity of the service, a morning transmission was introduced on 2 October 1993 (05:55 – 09:30 on 60.36 m), followed by an afternoon transmission on 2 April 1994 (12:30 – 15:00 on 41 metre band). [138]

Apart from *Jay Jawaan* and *Pasand Aapki*, the troops could entertain themselves from other film music-based programmes broadcast in 07:30 – 08:00, 09:00 – 09:30, and 13:30 – 14:00 time slots. In due course, the phone-in request programmes of NES reached the heights of popularity. Moreover, there were programmes of Western Music, folk and light music of the North-East, and

Hindi light music. All stations of the North-East used to broadcast Hindi film music, but NES was different in the sense that the presentation was in Hindi, which was best suited for troops, who belonged to different parts of the country. Until the launch of NES, it was Guwahati at North-East zone-level, and Imphal and Kohima at state-level, which were airing programmes for troops. Thus, NES emerged as a major competitor of Guwahati's Troops Programme. And more so due to the fact that NES's *Jay Jawaan* coincided with the evening edition of Guwahati's programme. *Jay Jawaan* being a request-based programme, was obvious to attract more *Jawans* towards it. This was evident from the names of the *Jawans* read out in the programme, which were more or less the same as heard in Guwahati's afternoon request-based programmes like *Aaj Ka Geet*, *Aap Ki Farmaish* and *Geet Mala*. Thus, Guwahati's evening edition of the Troops Programme started losing its significance to NES. Reception-wise, the transmission of NES at 60.36 m was clearer than that of Guwahati-C at 62.83 m. Both being on the same 60-meter band, they were next-door neighbours on the tuner dial of radio receivers.

### Change in Dibrugarh Relay

The Dibrugarh station has been the most significant station to relay Guwahati's Troops Programme for it being an HPT. As mentioned earlier in the book, Dibrugarh relayed this programme between 13:50 and 14:30 from the first day of its operation, that is, from 2 February 1969. From 1 August 1971, the time of relay was changed to 13:30 to 14:00 due to a change in news schedule. Since then, there has been no change in timing of this relay until the beginning of the 1990s decade. The change introduced in the early 90s that in turn forced a change in the relay of Troops Programme by Dibrugarh was that in the Assamese News Bulletin broadcast from Delhi. The 13:10 bulletin was shifted to 13:40 by NSD, Delhi. Since Dibrugarh carried this Assamese bulletin for obvious reason, to accommodate this change, it had to adjust the relay of Guwahati's Troops Programme as shown in table below. The new timings for the relay became 13:10 to 13:40.

Table 90: Change in Dibrugarh relay of Troops Programme from early 1990s

CHANGE IN DIBRUGARH RELAY OF TROOPS PROGRAMME		
Time	From 1 Aug 1971	From the Early 1990s
13:00	News in English	News in English
13:05	News in Hindi	News in Hindi
13:10	News in Assamese	Troops Programme (Relay from Gauhati)
13:20	Assamese Modern Songs	
13:30	Troops Programme (Relay from Gauhati)	
13:40		News in Assamese
13:50		Assamese Modern Songs
14:00	News in English	News in English
14:10	News in Hindi	News in Hindi

The above change was not merely a change in time slot. It had implications on the programme schedule. The team at Guwahati had to readjust the sequence of few programmes to adapt to this change. Specifically, the schedules of Thursday and Friday got impacted. This is depicted in illustration below. On Thursdays, the listeners of Dibrugarh could earlier listen to *Prahasan* at 13:30 and *Pradeshik Sangeet* at 13:45. With the change in timing of the relay and without any

programme adjustments by Guwahati, the listeners would have got entitled to *Swar Chhaya* (13:10 to 13:30) and two-third of the *Prahasan* (13:30 to 13:40). It wouldn't have made any sense to listen to an incomplete skit. Hence, *Prahasan* and *Pradeshik Sangeet* were swapped with each other such that the

THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Before	After	Before	After
13:10 Swar Chhaya	Swar Chhaya	13:10 Aap Ki Farmaish	Aap Ki Farmaish
13:30 Prahasan	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:30 Patrottar	Patrottar
13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Prahasan	13:40 Aap Ki Farmaish	Aap Ki Farmaish
14:00		13:50 Patrottar	
		14:00	

*Illustration 10: Changes in programme schedule due to change in Dibrugarh's relay*  
 could no longer listen to the skit but could listen to two-third of *Pradeshik Sangeet*. On Fridays, since *Patrottar* was an important segment, it had to be within the umbrella of Dibrugarh's relay time to attract more listeners and hence, more letters for the programme. Thus, even though it looked odd, *Aap Ki Farmaish* was split into two parts, one between 13:10 and 13:30 and the other between 13:40 and 14:00 with *Patrottar* sandwiched between them at 13:30. In this way, the Dibrugarh listeners could still enjoy both the programmes for the same duration as they had been doing before the change.

The overall broadcast schedule of Troops Programme looked like below.

*Table 91: Adjustments in schedule due to change in Dibrugarh relay*

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM - EARLY 1990s (with change in Dibrugarh Relay Time)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MW 289.9 m, SW 41.69 m							
12:30	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar		
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Prahasan	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Close Down						
SW 62.83 m							
17:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
17:06	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
17:45	Close Down						

- Rekha bahen
- Seema bahen
- Meeta bahen
- Rekha & Seema bahen

## Change in Vividh Bharati Mode

Since the inception of commercial broadcasting, Vividh Bharati programmes used to get recorded centrally on magnetic tapes and shipped to the regional Vividh Bharati centres and other local stations for them to broadcast them locally. The concept had originated from the consideration that the local stations would pause the tapes at appropriate points to broadcast local commercial advertisements. This wasn't aesthetically possible if the local stations relayed the programmes being broadcast from the Bombay or the Madras transmitters. Until the initial years of the 1990s, the same process continued. The Guwahati station also used to receive various recorded VBS programmes which it used to broadcast at convenient slots over Guwahati-B and C channels. In the afternoon transmission, there used to be three such recorded programmes – *Aap Ke Liye* at 12:05 (the programme of new film songs on listeners' requests, which had replaced the long running *Chitrapat Sangeet*), and the two long running programmes, viz., *Lok Sangeet* (Folk Music) at 15:00 and *Anuranjani* (Indian Classical Music) at 15:15. This is shown in table above.

Table 92: Afternoon & early evening schedule of Guwahati-C during early 1990s

Guwahati-B/C Afternoon Session	
Time	Programme
12:00	News in English
12:05	<b>VB: Aap Ke Liye (New songs requests)</b>
12:30	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>
13:05	News in Hindi
13:10	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram (contd.)</b>
14:10	News in Hindi
14:20	Slow-speed News in English
14:40	Manoranjani
15:00	<b>VB: Lok Sangeet (Folk Music)</b>
15:15	<b>VB: Anuranjani (Classical Music)</b>
15:45	Close down
Guwahati-C Early Evening Session	
Time	Programme
16:45	News & Commentary in Assamese for NEFA
17:00	News in Hindi
17:05	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>
17:45	Close down

Then came the revolutionary change when Vividh Bharati stopped sending recorded programmes to local stations over tapes. Instead, the local stations were equipped with uplinks to receive the transmissions directly through satellite communication. This completely changed the ways things were being done at Guwahati's B and C channels. Guwahati-B was made free of VBS programmes while Guwahati-C started relaying Vividh Bharati transmissions live. All the then existing relayed programmes of Shillong station in north-eastern dialects over Guwahati-C were discontinued forever. The newly became independent afternoon transmission of Guwahati-B and the afternoon and evening transmissions of Guwahati-C may be summarized as shown in table below. Clearly, the Troops Programme was impacted. Although there was the negative impact of discontinuation of shortwave for the afternoon edition, the overall duration of the programme had got increased by 30 minutes. Out of these 30 minutes, the afternoon edition received 25 minutes (12:05 to 12:30). This additional duration released from the separation of Vividh Bharati was filled up by extending the Troops Programme. However, nothing special was designed for this newly gained slot. Instead, a daily programme entitled *Film Sangeet* was instituted for playing mixed film songs, in line with *Chitrapat Sangeet* and *Aap Ke Liye*. On the evening front, the programme had to be moved from the 17:05 – 17:45 slot to the 18:15 – 19:00 slot. There was a reason for this. The afternoon transmission of Vividh Bharati would end at 17:30 and the evening transmission would begin at 18:15. Local VBS centres were expected to broadcast their local programmes between 18:15 and 19:00 after which they were expected to relay VBS again. Keeping this in mind and due to the fact that the original 17:05 – 17:45 slot would clash with VBS afternoon session that ended at 17:30,

the evening edition of Troops Programme was rescheduled in the 18:15 – 19:00 slot, thus with an increment of 5 minutes from before. The programmes themselves didn't undergo any change though.

Table 93: Impact of VBS relay on Troops Programme

Guwahati-B Afternoon Session		Guwahati-C Afternoon & Evening Sessions	
Time	Programme	Time	Programme
12:00	News in English	13:00	Vividh Bharati relay
12:05	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram	17:30	Close down
13:05	News in Hindi	18:15	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram
13:10	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram (contd.)	19:00	News in Hindi
14:10	News in Hindi	19:05	Vividh Bharati relay
14:20	Slow-speed News in English	22:30	Close down
14:40	Manoranjani		
15:00	News in English		
15:05	News in Hindi		
15:10	Close down		

One striking impact due to the change in the evening transmission was that the troops listeners were then fed with a 90-minute evening entertainment at a stretch from Guwahati-C (18:15 –to 19:00 – Troops Programme of Guwahati, 19:00 – News in Hindi, and 19:05 to 19:45 – Vividh Bharati's *Jaymala*), thus making a total of nearly three and half hours of daily entertainment through the Guwahati station wavelengths. The updated schedule of Troops Programme looked like as below.

Table 94: Changes in Troops Programme following closure of VBS recorded programmes

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (with Guwahati-B & Guwahati-C separated)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Gauhati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Patrottar	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet
13:50		2 - Panghat	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet			Ghazals		
		4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet					
14:10	Close Down						
Gauhati-C (Shortwave)							
18:15	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
18:16	Chayanika	Sabrang	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
19:00	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Rekha & Seema bahen

### Film Sangeet

As indicated in the previous section, *Film Sangeet* filled up the slot freed from the discontinuation of the recorded Vividh Bharati programme *Aap Ke Liye* between 12:05 and 12:30. *Film Sangeet* was distributed amongst the three announcers with Meeta bahen getting the highest share of four days a week, Seema bahen twice and Rekha bahen just once. Since this programme was purely a programme of mixed film songs, there wasn't any limitation or reservation on the choice of songs. However, the most striking genres like classical, devotional, patriotic and qawwali were avoided. *Sabrang* was also identified as a programme of mixed melodies; however, it wasn't actually the case as we read earlier in the book. But *Film Sangeet* was. *Film Sangeet* mostly played newer songs. The oldest song I remember to have heard in this programme was the 1958 evergreen *Madhumati* duet by Lata and Mukesh – ‘*dil tadap tadap ke keh raha hai aa bhi ja*’. This used to be one of Meeta bahen's frequent selections. Few 1970s popular choices of Meeta bahen included ‘*ye albeli pyar ki raahen*’ (*Dharti*) by Lata and Rafi, ‘*chanda o chanda*’ (*Lakhon Mein Ek*) by Lata and Kishore, ‘*doori na rahe koi, aaj itne kareeb aao*’ (*Kartavya*) by Lata, ‘*tum naheen maanoge, tum naheen jaanoge*’ (*Amardeep*) by Kishore and Anuradha. From the 1980s decade, I remember her playing songs such as ‘*kya ho gaya mujhe puchho na jaanejaan*’ (*Rishta Kaagaz Ka*) by Asha and Kishore, ‘*dekho ye kaun aaya*’ (*Savere Wali Gaadi*) by Asha and Suresh Wadkar, the two Lata – Kishore duets ‘*ye jo nazar hamari tumhari ladi hain jawani mein*’ (*Jail Yatra*) and ‘*kaisi lag rahi hoon main, kahiye kya khayal hai*’ (*Jhootha Sach*), the Shabbir – Anuradha duet ‘*dil beqaraar tha dil beqaraar hai*’ (*Teri Meherbaniyan*), the Lata – Mohd. Aziz duet ‘*meethi meethi sardi hai*’ (*Pyar Kiya Hai Pyar Karenge*), the Kishore – Sadhana Sargam duet ‘*deewana main hoon tera*’ (*Rukhsat*) among many others. ‘*ab raat ho gayi jawaan, gesu kamar tak dhale*’ (*Bulandi*) was probably the only song sung by four singers together (Asha, Rafi, Amit Kumar, Dilraj Kaur) to be played in *Film Sangeet*.

When *Film Sangeet* came into being, it was almost mid-1990s. Naturally, songs of that era dominated this programme. Some notable songs of that era which Meeta bahen frequently played were ‘*o jaanejana jaane bahara sun*’ (*Pratigyabadh*), ‘*raat kal tumhari mujhe yaad aa gayi*’ (*Balwaan*), ‘*kabhi bhoola kabhi yaad kiya*’ (*Sapne Saajan Ke*), ‘*yaara o yaara, milna hamara*’ (*Jeet*), ‘*jadoo hai tera hi jadoo*’ (*Ghulam*), ‘*zara sa jhoom loon main*’ (*DDLJ*), ‘*jab se tumko dekha hai sanam*’ (*Daamini*), ‘*where is the time to hate*’ (*Saatwan Aasman*), ‘*pi pi pi pi piya, ji ji ji ji jiya*’ (*Prem Deewane*), ‘*kitna pyar tumhe karte hain aaj hamein maloom hua*’ (*Ek Ladka Ek Ladki*), ‘*khat maine tere naam likha*’ (*Bekhudi*), ‘*ho jaata hai kaise pyar na jaane koi*’ (*Yalgaar*), ‘*meri saanson mein tum, dil ki dhadkan mein tum*’ (*Aaina*), ‘*batao tum kaun ho*’ (*Anmol*), ‘*waada raha sanam, honge juda na ham*’ (*Khiladi*) and the list can continue to few more pages.

With regard to the last song mentioned above from the film *Khiladi*, there was something interesting. As we all know that one of the commonly faced issues with gramophone records used to be the problem of the records repeating and/or skipping at certain instants. In live programmes, both these issues were noticeable to the listeners when the records got scratched or damaged due to some reason. In certain records, the repeating or the looping happened at the same place every time it was played. The groove of the record where the first line of the song ‘*waada raha sanam, honge juda na hum*’ lay, got scratched. Whenever the song was played, it would start looping in the form ‘*waada raha... waada raha... waada raha...*’. And every time, the announcer had to move the gramophone needle forward to skip the defective groove. Possibly, the song was too much dear to Meeta bahen that she didn't discontinue playing the scratched record. She played it regularly in *Film Sangeet*. Initially, the looping part could be heard few times before she forwarded it. Later, she could well anticipate it happening and hence would immediately move the needle.

This also proved that gramophone record players/ turntables were in use at least until the early 1990s at AIR stations.

While Meeta bahen's selections for *Film Sangeet* used to be mostly popular songs from the current and previous decades, Rekha bahen's take was somewhat different. In her only weekly instance of this programme on Fridays, she would pick uncommon and somewhat B-grade songs, mostly from the 80s and the 90s decades. Her justification was probably to include those songs that never got played in other programmes and which listeners never sent requests for. Few songs that I remember having listened to in Friday's programme were 'aankhon aankhon mein dil gaya apna' (*Saanch Ko Aanch Nahin*), 'kabul se aaya hai mera dildaar' (*Paley Khan*), 'main atharah baras ki ho gayi main kya karun' (*Dilbar*), 'phool khile aaye din bahaar ke ab na kahin jiya laage' (*Qaid Mein Hai Bulbul*). Nevertheless, when new songs were received, probably with the intention to inform the listeners, few hit numbers would be played once or twice in this programme and when these songs received requests from the *Jawans*, they would get switched to *Aap Ki Farmaish*. One such example was that of the title song of the 1997 blockbuster *Dil Toh Paagal Hai*. The first run of this song in Troops Programme was in one of the Friday's *Film Sangeet*, to be followed by *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* the week after. Seema bahen's *Film Sangeet* had two shades. One was to play songs from newly received records. And the other was to play hit numbers from the 1970s, and mostly by Lata, Asha, Kishore, and Rafi. Her most favourite Asha – Kishore duet was probably the 1973 *Joshila* number 'dil mein jo baaten hain, aao kisi dam keh den', which she played frequently.

*Film Sangeet* continues to be broadcast as the opening segment of the Troops Programme, the current timing being 12:12 to 12:30. Usually, three or four songs get played. The current choice and type of songs for this daily programme can be seen in the consolidated list for a week of September 2023 as tabulated below.

Table 95: Consolidated list of songs for *Film Sangeet* from 18 to 24 September 2023

FILM SANGEET (Date: 18 to 24 September 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
gulaabi aankhen jo teri dekheen	Noor	2017	Armaan Malik, Tulsi Kumar, Yash N.
falak tak chal saath mere	Tashan	2008	Udit Narayan, Mahalakshmi Iyer
teri meri ye zindagi	Life Partner	2009	Shreya Ghoshal, Soham Chakraborty
teri chaahat ke deewane hue hum	Mr. Aashiq	1996	Kumar Sanu, Alka Yagnik
massakkali massakkali	Delhi-6	2009	Mohit Chauhan
tujhe dil ye de chuke	Kyonki	2005	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
tera dhyaan kidhar hai	Main Tera Hero	2014	Arijit Singh
kaun tujhe yun pyar karega	M. S. Dhoni	2016	Palak Muchhal
bol do na zara dil mein jo hai	Azhar	2016	Armaan Malik
aur kya zindagaani hai	Ek Rishtaa	2001	Anuradha Paudwal, Mohd. Aziz, Sarika Kapoor, Milind Ingle
jadoo teri nazar khushboo tera badan	Darr	1993	Udit Narayan
dil kitna nadaan hai	Dil Kitna Nadaan Hai	1997	Alka Yagnik
mitwa sun mitwa tujhko kya darr	Lagaan	2001	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
maine jisko dil yeh diya hai	Muskaan	2004	Anuradha Paudwal, Sonu Nigam
ja sanam mujhko hai pyar pe	Na Tum Jaano Na Hum	2002	Kamaal Khan, Sneha Pant
koi to jadoo hai tujh mein	Mukka	1996	Kumar Sanu, Kavita Krishnamurthy

mehboob mere mehboob mere	Fiza	2000	Sunidhi Chauhan, Karsan Sargathia
aaj ke ladke I tell you	Mujhse Dosti Karoge	2002	Alisha Chinoy, Sonu Nigam
sona kitna sona hai	Hero No. 1	1997	Poornima, Udit Narayan
let's party forever	God Tussi Great Ho	2008	Shaan, Sunidhi Chauhan
anarkali disco chali	Housefull 2	2012	Sukhwindara Singh, Mamta Sharma
kudiye di kurti di kya kehna	Ishq in Paris	2012	Wajid
balma tera rasta dekh rahi hoon	Khiladi 786	2012	Shreya Ghoshal, Sreeramchandra
ruki ruki thi zindagi	Mast	1999	Sonu Nigam, Sunidhi Chauhan
sau tarah ke rog le loon	Dishoom	2016	Amit Mishra, Jonita Gandhi
phir mulaqat hogi kabhi	Why Cheat India	2019	Jubin Nautiyal
ban ja tu meri rani tenu mahal	Tumhari Sulu	2017	Guru Randhawa
jeete hain chal	Neerja	2016	Kavita Seth

### Extension and Popularity of *Swar Chhaya*

The discontinuation of recorded Vividh Bharati programmes in turn led to the discontinuation of the *Prahasan* (skit) of Thursday afternoons as there were no more *Hawa Mahal* skits being received. Instead of introducing a new programme, the duration of *Swar Chhaya* was extended, thus making it a 35-minute programme. The changes in Thursday's schedule that occurred in quick succession during the first half of the 1990s are summarized in the table below.

Table 96: Adjustments in Thursday's Schedule during first half of 1990s

SUCCESSIVE CHANGES IN THURSDAY AFTERNOON SCHEDULE			
Time	Until the Early 1990s	After change in Assamese news timing change (Early 1990s)	After discontinuation of VBS (~1993-94)
13:10 - 13:30	Swar Chhaya	Swar Chhaya	Swar Chhaya
13:30 - 13:45	Prahasan (Skit)	Pradeshik Sangeet	
13:45 - 14:00	Pradeshik Sangeet	Prahasan (Skit)	Pradeshik Sangeet

Although the official start time of *Pradeshik Sangeet* was 13:45, *Swar Chhaya* wouldn't finish at least until 13:47, thus making the latter an almost 40-minute programme, which was almost a 100% increase in its duration from its initial structure. This gave the programme more prominence, and it grew up into a very popular segment of the Troops Programme. The *Jawans* started displaying their creative skills by preparing sets of songs for this programme and mailing them to the station. One of the first *Jawans* to have sent such a set was Rifleman Kiran Kumar Pawar. This totally changed the look and content of the programme, which was till then influenced by the selections of Rekha bahen alone. The inclusion of Rifleman Pawar's set of thematic songs in the programme encouraged other *Jawans* in this direction and the programme witnessed the participation of many listeners down the years. When few *Jawans* started sending lesser number of songs, which could not fill up the entire duration of a programme but expected Rekha bahen to include them in the programme, Rekha bahen became bit strict and advised the *Jawans* to send a set of at least ten songs for getting selected for the programme. Once someone sent a set of six songs which Rekha bahen rejected by politely informing the *Jawan* in *Patrottar* to send for themes

for which they could find at least ten songs. She could have easily added four songs from her side. However, that would have encouraged other *Jawans* to follow the same practice.

While Rifleman Pawar continued to send *Swar Chhaya* sets, another *Jawan* who made great contribution to this programme was Rifleman K. H. Hemkholein Haokip. I still remember that Rifleman Haokip had chosen the theme of the arrival of spring and prepared a set of songs for *Swar Chhaya* to be broadcast on the occasion of *Basant Panchami*, falling on Thursday, 10 February 2000. Rifleman Gaurav Ganguly also became a regular contributor for several years. Both Rifleman Haokip and Rifleman Ganguly preferred to select uncommon topics, thus, making the programme even more interesting. If Rifleman Haokip sent songs on themes like *Maanjhi aur Naiya* (The Boat and the Boatman), songs of Father-Son relation, Rifleman Ganguly once sent songs on the theme *Rangeela Rajasthan* (The Colourful Rajasthan). Then there were also *Jawans* who would send songs on common topics like “*dil*”, “*deewana*”, “*pyar*” and “*zindagi*”.

The programme was after all meant for the entertainment of the *Jawans*; so, their participation was well accepted and welcomed. It couldn't have been anything better than the fact that the *Jawans* were getting creative while preparing sets of songs for *Swar Chhaya*. However, some *Jawans* didn't understand the correct objective of the programme. Instead of paying attention to a theme, they focussed on a particular word resulting in the selection of songs which were thematically unrelated. One example of such a programme sent by a *Jawan* was based on the word “*nazar*” instead of the theme of “*nazar*”. The first song was ‘*nazar ke saamne jigar ke paas, koi rehta hai, wo ho tum*’ and the second song was ‘*akeli na bazaar jaaya karo, nazar lag jaayegi*’. Although both songs had the word “*nazar*” common in them, their usages and meanings were totally different. Thus, the thematic songs programme got reduced to word-based songs programme, similar to Radio Ceylon's *Sheershak Sangeet*.

Once a *Jawan* sent a *Swar Chhaya* set entitled “*aaj*”, that is, songs that contained the word “*aaj*” in their *mukhdas*. Rekha bahen showed her strictness again. She included the set in *Swar Chhaya*, however, informing the *Jawan* that his choice of songs wasn't on a particular theme but simply containing the common word “*aaj*”, which was not the intention of the programme. She further explained the meaning of *Swar Chhaya* – “*Swar Chhaya, jismein ek geet ki chhaya agle geet par padti hai*” (the shadow of one song falls on the next in row). Since three of the songs in that set of “*aaj*” songs were related to the weather (*mausam*), Rekha bahen made it a “*Mausam*” themed programme with the first three songs from the list sent by that *Jawan*. These were ‘*aaj mausam bada beimaan hai*’ (*Lofar*), ‘*aaja sanam madhur chandni mein hum tum mile to veerane mein bhi aaj aayegi bahaar*’ (*Chori Chori*) and ‘*aaj mausam ki masti mein gaaye pawan*’ (*Banarsi Thug*). The rest of the songs were different from the ones that the *Jawan* had sent. However, the complete programme was accredited to him.

In current era, *Swar Chhaya* has formally become a topic or word-based programme instead of the original concept of thematic songs. This is evident from the list of songs broadcast in this programme during August-September 2023 as tabulated below.

Table 97: List of songs for *Swar Chhaya* broadcast during August-September 2023

SWAR CHHAYA (August – September 2023)			
Songs	Film	Year	Singers
3 August: Haseena (Pretty girl)			

saara zamana haseeno ka deewana	Yarana	1981	Kishore Kumar
duniya haseeno ka mela	Gupt	1997	Udit Narayan, Sunita Rao
ek haseena thi ek deewana tha	Karz	1980	Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhosle
main hoon haseena	Phool Bane Patthar	1996	Kavita Paudwal
tumse o haseena mujhe mohabbat	Farz	1967	Mohd. Rafi, Suman Kalyanpur
o haseena zulfonwali	Teesri Manzil	1965	Mohd. Rafi, Asha Bhosle
<b>10 August: Pardesi (Outsider)</b>			
aaja re pardesi, main to kab se	Madhumati	1958	Lata Mangeshkar
sajan pardesi balam pardesi	Village Girl	1945	Noorjehan
pardes jaake pardesiya	Arpan	1983	Lata Mangeshkar
ek pardesi mera dil le gaya	Phagun	1958	Asha Bhosle, Mohd. Rafi
ek pardesi door se aaya	Gumrah	1963	Asha Bhosle
pardesiyon se na akhiyan milana	Jab Jab Phool Khile	1965	Mohd. Rafi
<b>17 August: Hawa/ Pawan (Wind)</b>			
mast pawan dole re	Bawarchi	1972	Lata Mangeshkar
koi taaza hawa humko chhoo gayi	Dhaai Akshar Prem Ke	2000	Babul Supriyo
ae hawa mere sang sang chal	Babu	1985	Lata Mangeshkar
thandi hawa ye chandni suhaani	Jhumroo	1961	Kishore Kumar
jab chali thandi hawa	Do Badan	1966	Asha Bhosle
sun ri pawan, pawan purvaiya	Anuraag	1972	Lata Mangeshkar
behti hawa sa tha wo	3 Idiots	2009	Shaan
<b>24 August: Nazar (Sight)</b>			
nazar nazar nazar bekhbar	Shikaar	2004	Sundhi Chauhan, Chorus
nazren mili dil dhadka	Raja	1995	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
tere chehre se nazar naheen hat-ti	Atma	2006	Sonu Nigam, Sunidhi Chauhan
teri ankhon mein mujhe pyar nazar	Aashiq	2001	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
pehli nazar mili tumse	Tera Mera Saath Rahe	2001	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
pehli nazar mein kaisa jadoo	Race	2008	Atif Aslam
<b>31 August: Intezaar (Wait)</b>			
meri kismat mein tu naheen shayad	Prem Rog	1982	Lata Mangeshkar, Suresh Wadkar
intezaar meri subahon ko	Paap	2004	Anuradha Paudwal
bepanaah pyar hai aaja	Krishna Cottage	2004	Shreya Ghoshal
yeh shaam ki tanhaaiyan	Aah	1953	Lata Mangeshkar
kisi nazar ko tera intezaar	Aitbaar	1985	Asha Bhosle, Bhupendra
<b>7 September: Maa (Mother)</b>			
jab chot kabhi mere lag jaati thi	Yaariyan	2014	KK
maa teri chunariya lehraayi	ABCD-2	2015	Arijit Singh
main kabhi batlata naheen par	Taare Zameen Par	2007	Shankar Mahadevan
khushiyon ka din aaya hai	Beta	1992	Anuradha Paudwal
teri ungli pakad ke main chala	Laadla	1994	Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik
o maa meri maa tujhko dekhna hai	Chhoti Bahu	1971	Lata Mangeshkar
<b>14 September: Kismat (Fortune)</b>			
kismat se tum humko mile ho	Pukaar	2000	Anuradha Paudwal, Sonu Nigam

kismat ki baat ka	Aap Beeti	1976	Kishore Kumar, Amit Kumar
kismat ne dekho na khel ye kya	Sautela	1999	Indrajit Dasgupta
kismat ke khel niraale mere bhaiya	Ek Phool Do Maali	1969	Ravi
kismat ka to yahi fasaana hai	Kismat	2016	Kumar Sanu
kismat connection ho jaaye	Kismat Konnection	2008	Neeraj Shridhar
<b>21 September: Paisa (Money)</b>			
kyun paisa paisa karti hai tu	De Dana Dan	2009	Manak E, Selina, RDB
apne ko paisa chahiye	Dhoondte Reh Jaoge	2009	Wajid, Soumya Raoh
paisa kaisa kaisa paisa	Apna Sapna Money Money	2006	Suzanne D'Mello, Hamza Faruqui
paise ka khel niraala	Biwi O Biwi	1981	Asha Bhosle, Mohd. Rafi
paisa phenko tamsha dekho	Dushman	1971	Lata Mangeshkar
khota paisa naheen chalega	Dooriyan	1979	Preeti Sagar, Chorus
<b>28 September: No broadcast due to special programme on the occasion of Eid-e-Milad</b>			

### The Record Duration of Troops Programme

Although the separation of Guwahati-B and Guwahati-C led to the discontinuation of the afternoon edition of Troops Programme over shortwave, whose adverse impact would be discussed in the next chapter, the only positive remarkable thing to happen to this programme was the extended duration which was the longest not only in the history of this programme but also the longest programme for troops of that period amongst all AIR stations.

*Table 98: Evolution of the duration of Guwahati's Troops Programme*

<b>EVOLUTION OF GUWAHATI'S TROOPS PROGRAMME</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Programme Timings</b>	<b>Net Duration per day (min)</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>
1962	13:00 - 14:00	60	At inception
1963	13:00 - 14:00 17:30 - 18:00	90	Evening edition added, possibly from Republic Day
1965	12:30 - 14:00 17:30 - 18:00	120	Expansion of afternoon edition on Independence Day
1966	12:30 - 13:40 13:50 - 14:00 17:30 - 18:00	110	Introduction of 10-minute Hindi news bulletin at 13:40
1966	13:00 - 13:40 13:50 - 14:30 17:30 - 18:00	110	Re-adjustment in timing after the launch of Gauhati-C
1971	13:00 - 14:10 14:20 - 14:30 17:15 - 17:45	110	Change in timing of afternoon edition due to change in Hindi bulletin timing. Change in timing of evening edition due to restructuring of Gauhati-C

1976	12:30 - 13:05 13:10 - 14:10 17:15 - 17:45	125	Re-adjustment in timing after the launch of Slow-speed English news bulletin at 14:20
Early 80s (~1982)	12:30 - 13:05 13:10 - 14:10 17:05 - 17:45	135	10-minute expansion of evening edition after Karbi programme shifted to Gauhati-A
Early 90s (~1993-94)	12:05 - 13:05 13:10 - 14:10 18:15 - 19:00	<b>165</b>	Discontinuation of recorded VBS programmes led to expansion of afternoon edition by 25 min and evening edition by 5 min.

# 12. The Shortwave Shutdown

The target audience of a Troops Programme on radio had always been the large number of *Jawans* of the Armed Forces guarding the frontier areas of the country in far-flung areas where there were no other means and sources of entertainment and public information. Such programmes could be realized over shortwave transmission as mediumwave could not reach those remote areas effectively unless they were radiated from HPTs. Thus, most of the programmes for the Forces from various stations were put on the shortwave channels wherever possible. And Guwahati was no exception. Thus, when the Central Government decided to phase out shortwave transmitters, the adverse impact on Troops Programme was imminent. This chapter describes the consequences of the shutdown of Guwahati-C shortwave transmitter during the mid-1990s and the steps taken by the station to mitigate its impact on the Troops Programme.

## Shutdown of Guwahati-C

Let's recap the journey of transmitters. In 1957, AIR Gauhati got its first shortwave transmitter and thus was launched Gauhati-B over shortwave while Gauhati-A transmitted over mediumwave. Soon Gauhati-A was also on shortwave when the station was allotted a second shortwave transmitter. Gauhati received its second mediumwave transmitter for Gauhati-B in 1965 after the Indo-Pak War. Both Gauhati-A and B were on both MW and SW. In 1966, Gauhati-B was split into Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C with the former transmitting only over MW and the latter only over shortwave. The Troops Programme was available on both MW and SW in the afternoon and only on SW in the evening. In other words, the programme was entirely available on shortwave, thus reaching the thousands of *Jawans* posted in the north-eastern sector. The entire length and breadth of the region and parts of adjoining states of Bihar and West Bengal fell within its range. Moreover, the partial relay by Dibrugarh over a 100 kW HPT ensured the programme was available clearly to a large landmass in the eastern half of the North-East. This wide and strong coverage of the Troops Programme was a major factor in the high penetration level, thus leading to its immense popularity.

Until towards the middle of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the programme made continuous progress with high participation from the *Jawans*. Then the Indian Government made a decision that was going to have a long-lasting impact on radio broadcasting in the country. It was decided to phase out the shortwave transmitters across the country. The lesser significant transmitters were chosen for the first phase. The significance of Guwahati-C was mainly for two reasons; one was to broadcast and relay programmes in various tribal dialects of the North-East and second was to broadcast Troops Programme for the *Jawans* stationed in North-East. The former reason was no longer relevant since by that time, almost all the languages and dialects of North-East were covered by local stations of those areas. People of those areas were no longer dependent on Guwahati-C's shortwave broadcasts to listen to the programmes in their mother-tongue. In other words, Guwahati-C's significance was limited to the Troops Programme, which probably didn't justify its existence keeping in mind the significant maintenance cost of shortwave transmitters.

In the last chapter, it was discussed how Guwahati-C was transformed into a VBS relay centre after recorded tapes of Vividh Bharati programmes were discontinued. In quick succession to this change, there came the everlasting decision of shutting down of the Guwahati-C shortwave transmitter. Sometime during 1994, Guwahati-C reached its final resting place.

*Table 99: The journey of Guwahati-C's evening transmission*

<b>EVENING SCHEDULE OF GUWAHATI-C</b>				
<b>Until Early 1990s</b>		<b>During 1993-94</b>		<b>From 1994</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	
16:45	News in Assamese (NEFA)	18:15	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>	<b>Not in Service</b>
17:05	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>	19:00	News in Hindi	
17:45	Close down (for Freq change)	19:05	Relay of Vividh Bharati	
18:00	Relay from Shillong			
21:15	as in Guwahati-B			
22:30	Close down	22:30	Close down	

Guwahati-A continued to radiate over mediumwave and shortwave while Guwahati-B was available only over mediumwave. To compensate for the lost transmission hours of Guwahati-C, a new morning transmission for Guwahati-B was started. Also, the afternoon transmission was extended by 30 minutes. The impact of shutdown of Guwahati-C has been described in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### Single Edition of Troops Programme

The shutdown of Guwahati-C led to the termination of the evening edition of the Troops Programme. It could not be accommodated in the evening broadcast schedule of Guwahati-B due to *Yuvavani* programme in the 17:10 – 19:25 slot. The best option available was, therefore, to merge it with its afternoon edition and make it a single prolonged programme. Thus, the afternoon edition (12:05 – 14:10) and the evening edition (18:15 – 19:00) were combined into a single broadcast between 12:05 and 15:00. As seen in table below, the afternoon transmission of Guwahati-B quickly became an exclusive transmission for the Troops Programme with hourly news bulletins in between.

*Table 100: Afternoon schedule of Guwahati-B after the shutdown of Guwahati-C*

<b>AFTERNOON SCHEDULE OF GUWAHATI-B</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Until Early 1990s</b>	<b>~ 1993-94</b>	<b>From 1994</b>
12:00	News in English	News in English	News in English
12:05	VB: Aap Ke Liye	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>
12:30	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>		
13:05	News in Hindi	News in Hindi	News in Hindi
13:10	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>
14:10	News in Hindi	News in Hindi	News in Hindi
14:20	Slow-speed News in English	Slow-speed News in English	<b>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</b>
14:40	Manoranjani	Manoranjani	

15:00	VB: Lok Sangeet	News in English	News in English
15:15	VB: Anuranjani	<b>15:05</b> - News in Hindi	<b>15:05</b> - News in Hindi
15:45	Close down	<b>15:10</b> - Close down	<b>15:10</b> - Close down

It was real treat to have an almost three-hour show based on film music-based entertainment in the afternoon. That was the period when television was reaching its height of popularity with Doordarshan's afternoon transmission contained popular items that included soaps, music, and movies. Satellite television had also invaded most households with many private channels feeding the viewers with new age and attractive shows. Television had clearly challenged the radio during this period. Many people switched from radio to television during this period. Nevertheless, many people balanced between the two modes of entertainment. As far as the troops were concerned, television was still not the most convenient source of entertainment for it not being portable and unavailable at remote bases. Thus, radio continued to be their long-time partner. The appreciable rise in the number of Hindi films and the songs during the 1990s together with the active participation of the *Jawans* in not only the request-based but also other creative programmes of Guwahati's Troops Programme continued to put this programme at a very high pedestal in terms of its popularity.

After the merger of the afternoon and evening editions, the revised schedule of the Troops Programme looked like as shown in table below.

Table 101: Troops Programme schedule after the shutdown of Guwahati-C

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (after Guwahati-C shutdown)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:31	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet			Patrottar		
13:50		2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet & Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet
14:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
14:20	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme
15:00	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Rekha & Seema bahen

From the programming perspective, three of the seven programmes of the evening edition got mapped as-is. These were *Chayanika*, *Preet Ladee* and *Geet Rangeele*. The remaining four days witnessed the introduction of new programmes – *Gunjan*, *Geetika*, *Nazrana*, and *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme*. Except for *Geetika*, the rest were mere change in names with content remaining the same. The reason for the change in name was probably not to repeat the name within the same transmission. It was interesting since *Aap Ki Farmaish* and *Pradeshik Sangeet* were already multiple instance programmes within the same transmission session.

*Gunjan* was the new name for the second instance of *Sabrang*. Content-wise, it was yet another programme of mixed film songs. However, the difference lied in the ownership. Unlike *Sabrang*, which was owned by Meeta bahen, *Gunjan* was assigned to Seema bahen. In other words, while moving from evening to afternoon, the slot got transferred from Meeta bahen to Seema bahen. This was probably done to normalize the distribution of total hours between the three of them. With *Sabrang* and *Gunjan* having different presenters, the type of songs included in these programmes were also different from one another in spite of having a common description for the programme. The selection of songs, mostly solo numbers, was largely governed by their personal favourites. While *Sabrang*'s songs were male singer dominated to neutralize the female dominated *Geet Rangeele*, *Gunjan* was more balanced between the two genders.

The Friday schedule witnessed the only new programme in true sense when *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* was replaced by *Geetika*, the programme of evergreen film songs, or in other words, popular old film songs. Instead of playing devotional songs in a programme with a new name unlike *Sabrang – Gunjan*, the new programme presented by Seema bahen was probably founded based on the reasoning that a 14:20 – 15:00 slot was definitely not a suitable slot for playing devotional music. Then onwards, *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan* became a weekly programme of Tuesday early afternoons. *Geetika* was a welcome move as it showcased evergreen songs from the bygone era.

*Nazrana* on Saturdays and *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* on Sundays were absolute carbon copies of *Filmi Naghme* and *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* respectively. Both of these new programmes were presented by Meeta bahen like their original versions. Hence, there was no difference content and presentation wise. *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* was, however, soon discontinued. This has been explained at a later phase.

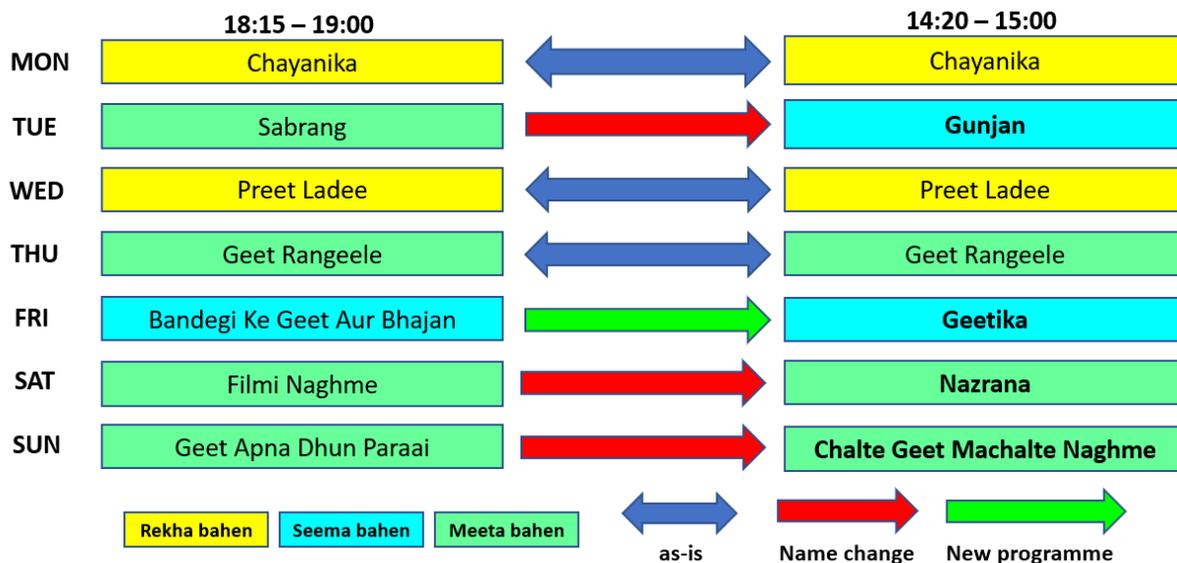
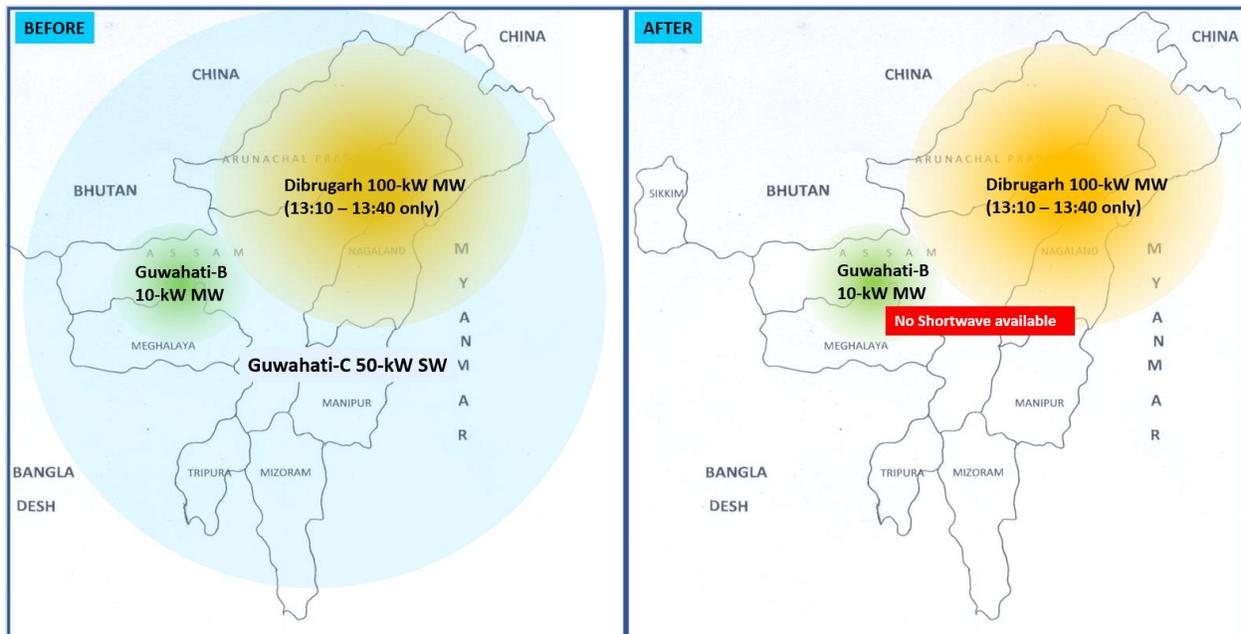


Illustration 11: Programme transformation while migration from evening to afternoon

## Major Blackout

The shutdown of Guwahati-C shortwave did not seem to have any visible impact as far as the programme schedule and net duration was concerned. In fact, addition of new programmes like *Gunjan* and *Geetika* and extension in the afternoon leading to a near three hour long continuous broadcast of film music-based programmes were something that must have been welcomed by most listeners of this channel. However, the real picture of the impact of shortwave discontinuation for the Troops Programme was something totally different. For years, the Troops Programme has been available in the entire length and breadth of the North-East through three transmitters – the 10-kW mediumwave LPT of Guwahati-B (Range: Guwahati Metropolitan, rest of Kamrup district, parts of its adjoining districts like Nalbari, Barpeta, Goalpara, Darrang, and parts of Meghalaya along the border with Assam), the 100-kW Mediumwave HPT of Dibrugarh (Range: Eastern and Upper Assam, the most of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, and parts of northern Manipur), and the 50-kW Shortwave of Guwahati-C (Range: Entire north-eastern region and beyond). Thus, Guwahati-C was the most effective means, to be followed by Dibrugarh, in reaching out to the *Jawans* who were mostly posted in the remote areas. Dibrugarh relaying only 30 minutes of the programme was insufficient to satisfy the listeners who yearned for more knowing that the programme was actually an almost three hour one. As a listener, one would prefer listening to a programme on the mediumwave. Hence, it can be assumed that the *Jawans* stationed outside the satisfactory range of the two mediumwave transmitters used to listen to the broadcast on shortwave.



*Illustration 12: Representation of the change in coverage area of Troops Programme post shortwave shutdown*

When Guwahati-C was shut down, there was a total blackout of the Troops Programme except for the areas covered by Guwahati-B and Dibrugarh as mentioned above. This was a drastic and monumental loss for both *Jawans* and the programme. For the duration between 13:10 and 13:40, an estimated 40% of the region was covered whereas for rest of duration of the programme, the reach was no more than 5%. This approximation is based on my own experiences of listening to both these channels at different places. Dibrugarh could be heard at Guwahati very feebly in the

afternoon. The aerial distance between the two cities is 387 km, which indicates that the range of Dibrugarh was about 320-350 km radius (with strong reception in a 200 km radius). Similarly, Guwahati-B could be heard in New Bongaigaon very feebly in the afternoon, which has an aerial distance of 127 km from Guwahati. Thus, the reach of Guwahati-B was around 100 km (with strong reception in a 60 km radius). The schematic view presented above is for representation purpose only and the coverage areas are not drawn on scale and purely based on approximations based on listening experience at different locations. It gives the reader an idea about the impact of the shutdown of shortwave transmitter on the Troops Programme.

## The Golden Slot and its Concerns

The shutting down of the Guwahati-C shortwave made the partial relay by Dibrugarh the most important part of the Troops Programme since majority of the target listeners belonged to Dibrugarh's HPT coverage. It was evident from the letters read out in *Patrottar* that more than 90% of the letters were from those *Jawans* who tuned in through Dibrugarh. Ironically, there were negligible troops listeners of the Guwahati-B that sourced the programme while most listeners were part of the Dibrugarh relay. This led to a great competition for the 30-minute slot when it came to fulfilling songs requests of the *Jawans*. Every *Jawan* would request the station to fulfil their song requests within the 13:10 – 13:40 slot, otherwise they wouldn't be able to listen to their requested songs. This is evident in the table below which shows the distribution of request-based programmes within and outside the Dibrugarh relay.

Table 102: Impact of shortwave shutdown on request-based programmes

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM (after Guwahati-C shutdown)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Watan Ke Taraane	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:30	Geet Mala	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Patrottar	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:40	Geet Mala	2 - Panghat	Aapki Farmaish (con.)	Swar Chhaya (con.)	Aapki Farmaish (con.)	Aapki Farmaish (con.)	Aapki Farmaish (con.)
13:50		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet		Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet, Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	
14:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
14:20	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme
15:00	Close Down						

Request-based programmes covered by Dibrugarh  
 Request-based programmes not covered by Dibrugarh

It is evident that more than 50% of the request-based programmes lied outside the Dibrugarh range while at least 90% of the requesters belonged to the Dibrugarh coverage area. This meant many songs went unheard by their requesters, which was certainly unfortunate. Three actions were taken in this regard. One was the change in the timing of *Geet Mala* by swapping its timing with *Watan Ke Taraane*. This made *Geet Mala* available between 13:10 and 13:50 like *Aap Ki Farmaish*. The programme which was earlier available for only 10 minutes to the listeners of Dibrugarh (13:30 – 13:40) was now available for half-hour (13:10 – 13:40). This somewhat improved the duration of request-based share for Dibrugarh coverage as depicted in the illustration below.

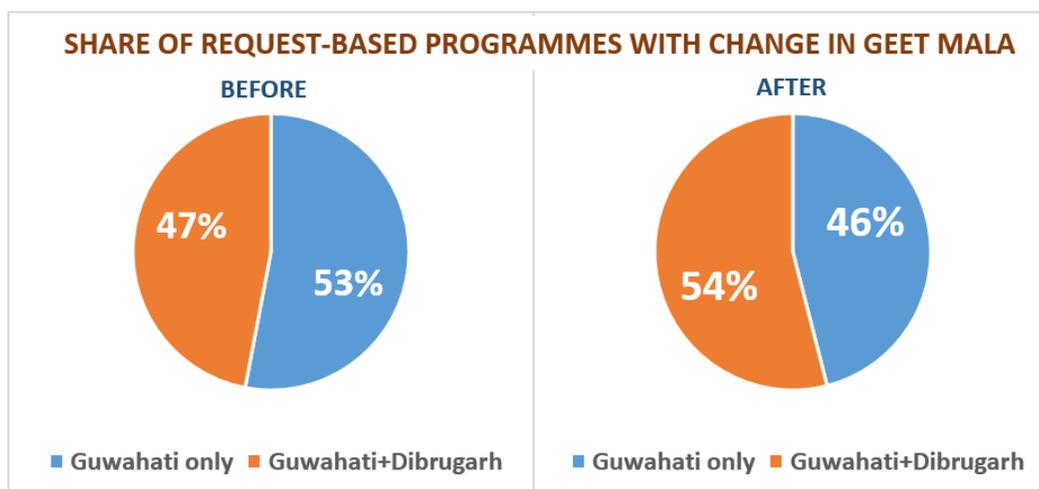


Illustration 13: Change in the share of request-based programmes with change in Geet Mala timing

The second initiative was adding a Programme Summary to the beginning of the broadcast to highlight the contents of the day's programme, and again at 13:10 for the next day's programmes. This must have been an attempt to create awareness and interest among new listeners. The next day's summary was wrongly placed in the Dibrugarh slot since listeners tuning in through Dibrugarh wouldn't be able to listen to most of the programmes being informed in the summary. Realizing this, the time of informing next day's programmes was soon moved to 12:29, that is, between *Film Sangeet* and *Aaj Ka Geet*. With these two changes, the schedule looked like as shown below.

Table 103: Schedule of Troops Programme during mid-1990s

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (Schedule during mid-1990s)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	Sangeet Madhuri	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
	13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
	13:10	Geet Mala	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
	13:30		1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet			Patrottar	
13:50	Watan Ke Taraane	2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet, Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	
14:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
14:20	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Chalte Geet Machaite Naghme
15:00	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Rekha & Seema bahen

The third step towards the optimal usage of the Dibrugarh portion of the broadcast was informing the *Jawans* who sent song requests to mention in their letters whether they were listening to the

programme through Guwahati or through Dibrugarh. In *Patrottar* programme, it was repeatedly requested to provide information if the *Jawans* could listen to the programme after 13:40, which would help them to fulfil their requests effectively. This step helped to a great extent as many *Jawans* did let them know about their inability to listen to the programme outside the Dibrugarh coverage. Requests of those *Jawans* were fulfilled during 13:10 – 13:40. Each programme used to have seven or eight songs; each of the five or six songs played during this golden slot were from different listeners. This was to include as many listeners as possible and to give equal opportunity to all.

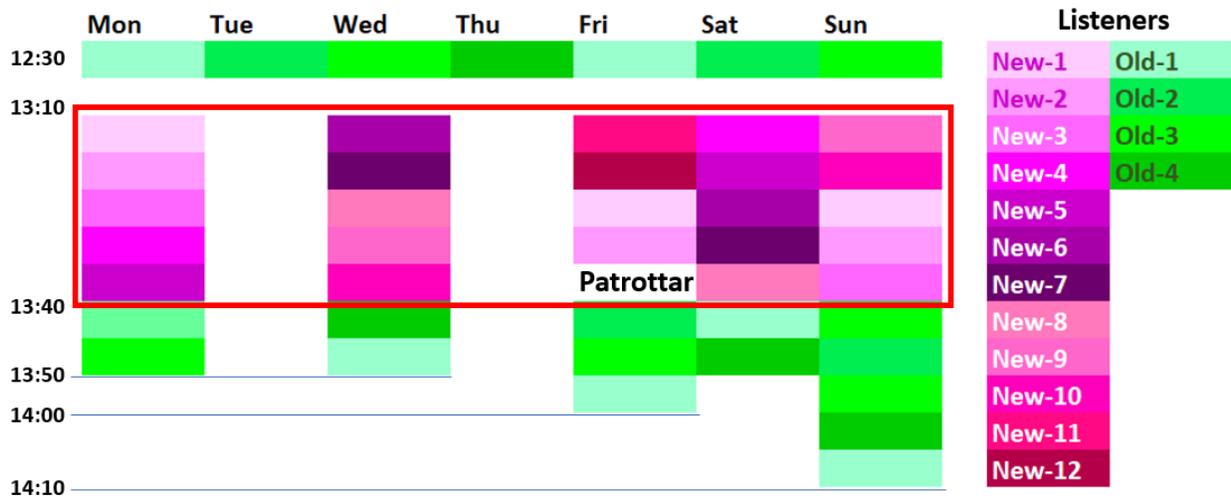
However, this policy didn't work for those *Jawans* who used to send song requests in bulk. For example, Rifleman Shankar Lal Das, Shyamal Chandra Roy, and Gokul Chandra Bodo were among such *Jawans* whose names could be heard frequently. All of them listened to the programme through Dibrugarh as was evident from their letters in *Patrottar*. To give equal opportunity to all the listeners in the Dibrugarh slot, it was not possible to include all requests from such frequent listeners in that slot. Consequently, after a certain point of time, their requests started getting played either after 13:40 or in *Aaj Ka Geet* at 12:30. Needless to say, they were no longer able to listen to their requests. Unfortunately, both Rekha bahen and Seema bahen started playing song requests of these three *Jawans* outside of the Dibrugarh slot. It was only when Meeta bahen presented *Geet Mala* or *Aap Ki Farmaish* in the absence of Rekha and Seema bahen that she played their requests in Dibrugarh slot, probably unaware of the basis on which the other two presenters were doing it otherwise. I remember having listened to *Geet Mala* and *Aap Ki Farmaish* presented by Meeta bahen in which multiple requests of Shankar Lal Das were fulfilled in the same programme and that too between 13:10 and 13:40. Although unexpectedly good for Rifleman Das, this was definitely not justified. However, considering the fact that the other two presenters never played his songs in that slot thus making all his letters go in vain, Meeta bahen at least helped recover his loss on those few selected days of their absence.

For a long time, the last ten minutes of *Geet Mala* and *Aap Ki Farmaish*, that is, between 13:40 and 13:50, played songs requested by these handful of veteran listeners which they couldn't listen. In Sunday's edition of *Aap Ki Farmaish*, which was an hour-long programme, Seema bahen would play five songs of different listeners during 13:10 and 13:40, while in the second half of the programme, multiple requests of those handful of listeners were played to fill up the "Guwahati-only" portion of the programme. This was kind of injustice meted out to those few veteran listeners whose only fault was that they were old listeners and that they sent greater number of letters. It would have been justified if the announcers would have played their songs in the Dibrugarh slot at least once in a blue moon. But it was never the case. Their songs were always played after 13:40. Rekha bahen and Seema bahen might have probably justified this action by playing songs requested by comparatively new listeners in that golden slot, indirectly implying that the senior listeners should pave the way for the newer ones.

One interesting thing happened in relation to this problematic situation. A letter was received in *Patrottar* from Rifleman Shankar Lal Das. He wrote that one of his friends, probably a fellow *Jawan*, who could listen to the programme through Guwahati, had informed him that his requests were continuously being played after 13:40 and that he should inform this to the station so that his songs start getting played during 13:10 – 13:40. Rekha bahen thanked Rifleman Das for informing. Till then, almost every request programme used to have Rifleman Das's song, played after 13:40. After the receipt of this letter, all of a sudden, his songs stopped getting played after 13:40. This,

however, didn't mean that his songs started getting played before 13:40 in the same proportion. This was not possible to give equal chances to all the *Jawans* to listen to their songs in that golden slot. For some time, Rifleman Das's songs were played occasionally between 13:10 and 13:40. After few months, his songs again started getting played only after 13:40. The message was clear. If one is a veteran listener and if he sent song requests in bulk, his requests would only get fulfilled outside the Dibrugarh umbrella. It was very sporting of Rifleman Das that he didn't stop sending letters even though he couldn't listen to his requested songs. As a regular listener and a witness and an observer to this whole situation, I always wished that the song requests were fulfilled in such a way that whether a *Jawan* was a new or an old listener, everyone irrespective of that should have equal privilege of listening to their songs during the Dibrugarh slot. Barring a listener completely from that slot just because he was a veteran was something that didn't make much sense to me.

The then prevailing methodology of fulfilling song requests in the Troops Programme may be illustrated as shown below. For the sake of simplification of the explanation, it is assumed that there were twelve new listeners who used to send comparatively lesser quantity of song requests and there were four veterans who sent requests in bulk. The illustration is meant to give the reader a general idea of how this aspect was handled in the programme. The illustration is not based on any actual data.



*Illustration 14: Handling of song requests with consideration of Dibrugarh's relay*

I always wished that the veterans too could see the light of the day of Dibrugarh's umbrella. If I had the right to propose something on this matter, I would have tweaked the methodology so as to mix and match the requests of the new and veteran listeners such that both got adequate chances to listen to their songs in the golden slot with careful consideration that a new listener's most requests didn't fall outside this golden slot. My proposed methodology for the benefit of both new and old listeners with the same assumptions as above illustration is shown in the illustration below.

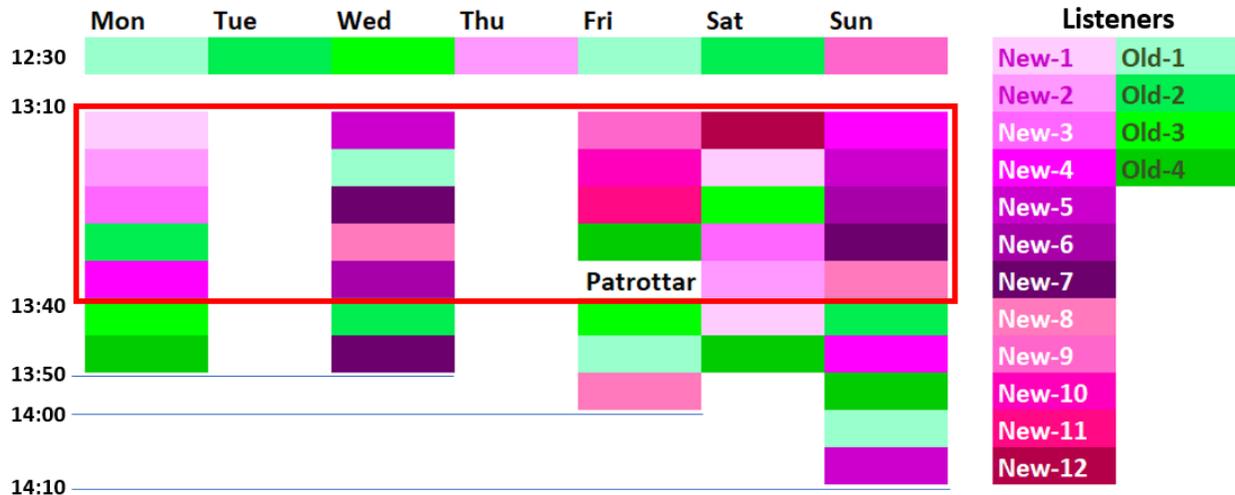


Illustration 15: Proposed handling of song requests with consideration of Dibrugarh's relay

Based on above example, the following two graphical illustrations represent the percentage share of songs for each of these sixteen listeners being played during the specified week during the golden slot (13:10 – 13:40) and outside. While the actual distribution was extreme as evident in the first graph, the proposed was a more optimized one with every listener, be new or veteran, got opportunity to listen to their names and songs during the golden slot.

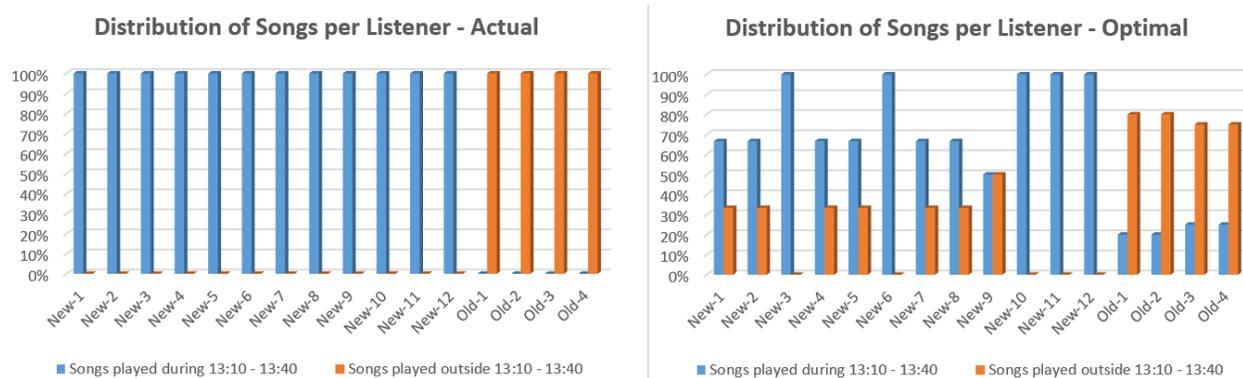


Illustration 16: Graphical comparison of prevailing and proposed methodologies of fulfilling song requests post shortwave shutdown

There were continuous requests from the *Jawans* to play their requested songs in the golden slot. And so were from the presenters to the *Jawans* to let them know if they could listen outside the golden slot for better management of the requests. Few *Jawans* responded on a positive note. Rifle K. H. Hemkholein Haokip and Gaurav Ganguly were among the major contributors. They probably started requesting for songs towards the end of the 1990s decade. Initially, their requests were getting fulfilled in the golden slot. As soon as they informed about their ability to listen to the entire programme, their song requests were moved out of the golden slot, that is, they were played either after 13:40 or in *Aaj Ka Geet* at 12:30. Although this ensured more listeners of Dibrugarh coverage could listen to their songs, there was no respite for veterans like Shankar Lal Das, Shyamal Chandra Roy, and Gokul Chandra Bodo.

*Geet Mala* was supposed to be meant for old songs while *Aap Ki Farmaish* was for the newer ones. However, with the shutdown of shortwave, since the golden slot became a deciding factor of sequencing of songs, it sometimes happened that a comparatively older song was played in *Aap Ki Farmaish* while a comparatively newer song got played in *Geet Mala*. For instance, the song ‘*yaar meri tum bhi ho gazab*’ (*Teen Deviyani*, 1965) on the request of Rifleman Haokip was once played in Sunday’s *Aap Ki Farmaish* after 13:40. And one of the old songs-based *Geet Mala* programmes had the comparatively ‘new’ song ‘*saanjh savere tu yaad aaye*’ (*Maina*, 1992) played on the request of Rifleman Shyamal Chandra Roy as the last song of the programme at around 13:45.

### **Historic Decision on Cricket Commentaries**

The shutdown of shortwave in the mid-1990s led to the drastic reduction in the number of listeners which was clearly evident from the decreasing trend in the volume of letters received. As a listener, I could sense that while listening to *Aaj Ka Geet*, *Aap Ki Farmaish*, *Geet Mala*, and *Patrottar* programmes from the repetitive names of *Jawans* in these programmes. While the three presenters were trying their best to manage this situation by implementing several changes as described in previous sections, one broadcast policy of AIR aggravated the situation. It was the rule that stations that had two channels (excluding Local VBS) would relay all live commentaries of sports and government sponsored events on their B-channel. Since Guwahati had the privilege of three channels, there wasn’t any issue until the shutdown of C-channel. In the event of a cricket match or any other live event in the afternoon, the commentary used to be carried by Guwahati-B while the normal scheduled programmes went on air over Guwahati-C. In other words, during cricket matches, the Troops Programme didn’t get interrupted but used to get broadcast over Guwahati-C on the shortwave.

However, this was no longer possible after the shutdown of Guwahati-C. In its absence, the live commentaries that were unfortunately considered more important than the entertainment of troops, overpowered the Troops Programme, resulting in frequent disruption of this programme whenever there were Cricket One Day Internationals (ODIs) or Test Matches. In those days, most of the ODIs were Day matches meaning the pre-lunch and post-lunch sessions were respectively in the time periods of 09:00 – 12:30 and 13:10 – 16:40. The AIR commentaries would begin 5 minutes prior to each session and ended 5 minutes later. This meant that the only slot available for the Troops Programme was between 12:35 and 13:05. With no other options available, it was done that way only, which didn’t serve any purpose since this slot neither had any request-based programme nor it was under the umbrella of Dibrugarh’s relay.

When it came to cricket matches being played at Guwahati’s Nehru Stadium, there was always an additional responsibility on the Hindi and English sections of AIR Guwahati. It was the set rule of AIR that the announcements at the start and end of each innings or session would be done from the local AIR station studio where the stadium was located, that is, where the match was being played. In other words, the local Hindi and English announcer of AIR would introduce the commentary and the commentators. It would then be followed by the voice of the commentators from the stadium welcoming the listeners. It was during such matches that the announcements made by the local announcers were heard all across the country as the announcement was part of the national live broadcast relayed by all stations. That was why Seema bahen wouldn’t say “*ye*

*akashvani ka Guwahati kendra hai*” unlike the Troops Programme announcements. For cricket commentaries, she would instead say, “*ye akashvani hai. ab hum aapko Guwahati ke Nehru Stadium liye chalte hain jahaan se aap...*” It was Seema bahen who would mostly get the opportunity to make announcements for cricket matches although Rekha bahen was senior to her. On such cricket match days, Seema bahen would be on that special duty and hence would remain absent from the Troops Programme.

I still remember the afternoon of 1 November 1996. There was an ODI between Australia and South Africa at the Nehru Stadium of Guwahati. As usual, Seema bahen was on the special duty of making announcements for the match. It was a Friday. When the first innings ended at 12:30 and it took another 5 minutes by the commentator to wind up the pre-lunch session proceedings, Seema bahen made the live broadcast closure announcement informing the listeners that the post-lunch session would resume at 13:05. Immediately after Seema bahen ended the cricket broadcast, it was Rekha bahen’s voice announcing the start of the Troops Programme for the day. The signature band tune was followed by the announcing of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, which on normal Fridays would be presented by Seema bahen. On that day, Rekha bahen played the songs of the film *Aaya Sawan Jhoom Ke* on the request of Naik Clerk Namo Narayan Sharma. She closed the programme at 13:05 and again the voice of Seema bahen was heard announcing the start of the post-lunch session of the cricket match.

Coming back to the problem of the Troops Programme getting cut short due to cricket commentaries, the situation used to get further grim during Cricket Test Matches when such schedule was followed for five days in succession. The Test Match lunch break wouldn’t even fall within the schedule of the Troops Programme, meaning a complete blackout of the programme. With three test matches in a series, the Troops Programme used to get called off for fifteen days at a stretch. This policy of relaying commentaries over the B-channel led to further alienation of the *Jawans* from the already affected programme. Perhaps the presenters of the programme took up this matter with the management, who gave a serious thought to it. It was finally decided that there would be Troops Programme between 13:10 and 13:40 even if there was a cricket match commentary. This was definitely a historic decision in favour of the Troops Programme. A live cricket commentary paving the way for a film music-based programme for the *Jawans* was something unheard of. Nevertheless, the decision was welcomed wholeheartedly by the *Jawans*. Rekha bahen had proudly and happily broken this news in *Patrottar* to the delight of its listeners.

### **The Changing Course of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet***

*Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was one programme that had a special reason for its existence apart from just being yet another entertainer. It was the source to judge all the songs of new films, which helped the *Jawans* to pick their songs of choice and send requests for them. When there was shortwave, it hardly mattered if the programme was within the Dibrugarh relay or outside. However, with shortwave going off-air, there was a blackout for *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* as well. Majority of the *Jawans* who sent song requests belonged to the Dibrugarh coverage and thus were no longer able to listen to *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*. In other words, they weren’t able to know which new films the station was receiving. Apart from Tuesday’s *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai* and Thursday’s *Swar Chhaya* (the rest of the five days were all song requests), there was no other way to let most of the *Jawans* know about the newest songs that had arrived at the station for which they could send in

requests. These two programmes too had their own limitations due to the nature of their content. Something was needed to address this fallout. Moreover, to increase the participation of *Jawans* in the form of song requests in the already declining trend, awareness of new songs was probably identified as an important measure.

In view of all these factors, it was finally decided to bring *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* under the umbrella of Dibrugarh's relay. A re-arrangement was done in the schedule of Tuesday and Friday keeping the ownership of the programmes intact within the same presenters, as highlighted in table below. With this change, there was no longer any programme presented by Meeta bahen in the Dibrugarh relay slot, thus, making her voice unreachable to most of the *Jawans* except in situations when the other two announcers were unavailable.

Table 104: Adjustments in schedule to accommodate *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* in Dibrugarh relay slot

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (Schedule during later half of 1990s)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	Sangeet Madhuri	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:40		1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet			13:30 Patrottar		
13:50	Watan Ke Taraane	2 - Panghat	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet	Desh Bhakti Geet, Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	
14:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
14:20	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme
15:00	Close Down						

	Rekha bahen
	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Rekha & Seema bahen

## A Funny Incident to Remember

The shutdown of the shortwave was certainly the most unfortunate thing to have happened to this super popular programme, which was nothing less than like chopping off the wings of a bird that was flying high up in the sky. Yet, I would end this chapter by sharing a funny incident related to the shortwave shutdown. It is human behaviour that we easily get used to things that we perform. To be more specific, lines that are spoken multiple times on a daily basis get embedded in the brain and when one tries to reproduce them with slight variations, the brain opposes the change and tries to stick to the words that are embedded since long. In context of the Troops Programme, the three announcers were used to mention both mediumwave and shortwave wavelengths in their announcements. They have been doing this for more than twenty-five years on a daily basis. When shortwave was shutdown, obviously its mention was removed from the announcements. Although the three announcers had adapted themselves to this changed announcement, one day a funny incident happened. Rekha bahen was delivering the opening announcement of the programme at 12:05 – “*ye akashvani ka Guwahati kendra hai, mediumwave 289.9 aur shortwave!!!*”. The last

two words were unexpected, which came out of her mouth spontaneously due to the old habit. There was a pause for two seconds and then she continued with the next line ignoring the error – “*is samay din ke baarah baj kar panch minute hue hain, ab sainik bhaiyon ka karyakram aarambh hota hai.*”

The fun didn't end there. After completing the announcement and before playing the signature band tune, she forgot to mute or shut her microphone and the listeners could clearly hear her saying “*shortwave aa hi jaata hai*” (‘shortwave’ comes spontaneously). She was most likely talking to Meeta bahen who was waiting to begin *Film Sangeet* at 12:07.

## **The Kargil War of 1999**

Whenever there has been a war, radio programmes for the Armed Forces have got prominence and expansions. This was clearly evident after the three wars of 1962, 1965 and 1971. Thereafter, for almost three decades, there had been no formal war and hence, focus on programmes for the Forces and troops started to dilute. However, programmes for the Forces continued on the AIR network as part of special audience programme category. In 1999, the Kargil War once again put the *Jawans* to the forefront. The people of the nation once again started hailing the Armed Forces for the bravery and sacrifices that led to a grand victory for India in the war which was fought between 3 May and 26 July 1999. The following Independence Day was all the more significant to acknowledge the supreme contribution of the Forces by the nation. The speech delivered at Red Fort on 15 August 1999 by the then PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had a major portion dedicated to the Armed Forces. [161]

*“I offer my condolences to the valiant Jawans, officers and others belonging to the Army and the Air Force, who displayed magnificent heroism and the spirit of sacrifice in recapturing that part of our Motherland in Kargil from the enemy. All of us bow our heads in gratitude for those who were martyred in the Kargil war.*

*Almost all our countrymen have seen on television glimpses of the impossible summits, which our heroes overcame and pushed out the enemy. To gain victory at such heights is not only to surmount the sky-piercing peaks, but it also displays the full might of the nation. It is a symbol of the bravery of our Armed Forces.*

*How can we forget such heroes?*

*How can we forget those wounded soldiers whose only wish was: how can we get well and re-join our battalion to repulse the enemy?*

*How can we forget the members of the families of those brave martyrs, who, on receiving the body of their beloved, said, ~We do not have tears in our eyes, we have pride in our heart~?*

*How can we forget the mother whose lament was that she had had only one son, and therefore, could not send another to fight for the country?*

*I know that mere words of solace are not enough. We have to take concrete measures for*

*the families of the martyrs and wounded soldiers so that they may live a life of comfort and dignity.*

*It has been said that we remember and honour soldiers during a war, and in the immediate aftermath. But as the days pass, we forget them. And it is a sad fact that many who sacrificed their life and limb in previous wars were often forgotten. I give you my personal pledge that this will not happen again.”*

*Atal Bihari Vajpayee, PM, India (15 August 1999)*

Guwahati's Troops Programme on that day was special as well. Being a Sunday, Seema bahen was in charge of the special programme to be broadcast at 13:10. In line with the PM's speech, Seema bahen's presentation of the Independence Day Special programme also circled around the Kargil war. Usually, the programme on this day had been focussing primarily on the struggle for freedom, its revolutionaries and around the greatness of the nation. However, the focus of the 1999 programme turned towards the Armed Forces who fought the war of Kargil. Songs such as '*watan pe jo fida hoga, amar wo naujawaan hoga*', '*kar chale hum fida jaan-o-tan saathiyon*', '*hindustan ki qasam, na jhukega sar watan ka*' among others were played in between the spoken lines.

# 13. The New Millennium

Y2K, the much-awaited new millennium had arrived and brought along several revolutionary changes in the telecommunication world that had profound impact on radio broadcasting. The Satellite Television had almost overpowered the traditional radio and television. The new commercial FM Radio broadcasting technology was also gaining momentum that gave a new dimension, velocity, and boost to the radio. However, at the same time, it proved to be a striking competitor to the traditional radio broadcasting over AM (MW and SW). Guwahati's Troops Programme being a traditional broadcast over only mediumwave was hugely exposed to this impact. This chapter attempts to highlight the changes the Troops Programme had undergone during the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Retirement of Rekha bahen**

The year 2000 proved to be a memorable year for it being the last year in the history of AIR Guwahati's *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram* in which the listeners could hear the voices of its three regular announcers, viz., Rekha bahen (Bimlesh Arya), Seema bahen (Tapasi Sengupta) and Meeta bahen (Sadhana Phukan), together. Rekha bahen was supposed to retire from her services in 1998 at the age of 58 years. Everything around her retirement was final along with the future strategy to take the Troops Programme forward. However, in June 1998, the Government of India passed a proposal to increase the retirement age for the Central Government employees from 58 to 60 years. The order of extension of services of Rekha bahen must have come late as Meeta bahen excitedly recalled that it was a last moment surprise for everyone. Rekha bahen's service was extended until 31 December 2000. [29].

I still remember the Troops Programme of 30 December 2000, that is, one day before Rekha bahen's retiral day. That was the day when Rekha bahen's live voice could be heard for the last time over Guwahati's air waves. Although 31 December was her last day, it being a Sunday, she didn't have "on air" duty. Thus, 30 December was her last chance to speak to the *Jawans* and entertain them. It was a Saturday afternoon. She only had *Aap Ki Farmaish* programme in her kitty for the day between 13:10 and 13:50. At 13:39, that is, just before the Dibrugarh station delinks the programme, Rekha bahen paused the ongoing song and started wishing the *Jawans*, and all the listeners in general, a happy and prosperous new year and prayed to the Almighty for everyone's betterment, happiness, and prosperity. This was an unexpected gesture as there was still one day to go for the New Year. Such an announcement was normal for 31 December or 1 January but definitely not for 30 December. Moreover, such announcements on special occasions used to be very formal with a pre-defined selection of words. However, Rekha bahen's words contained a deep personal touch and an undercurrent of emotions and some kind of pain could be felt in her voice.

That day even though I felt her behaviour unusual, I couldn't guess the reason behind it. That she was retiring from service was beyond my imagination. From the following Monday, when her voice was missing on a continuous basis for weeks, things started to get clearer. Within a month, I could correlate her absence and her unexpected announcement on that Saturday afternoon of 30 December. I realized that it was definitely a very humble gesture on her part that she indirectly took leave of her listeners in the best possible way she could keeping in mind that it was a State-run broadcaster that didn't allow any personal sentiments to be shared over its air waves. Rekha bahen's clever approach and that too within the Dibrugarh slot, the golden slot as I used to call it, was appreciable. She knew that 90% of her listeners belonged to that golden slot. With that, Rekha bahen's more than 35 years of association with AIR Guwahati, and more precisely, with the Troops Programme, came to an end.

After completing her full tenure of service life, she returned back to her native place Bareilly at the age of sixty and lived there until her demise on 17 September 2020 at the age of eighty after a cardiac arrest triggering from old age ailments. [8]

### **New Casual Announcers**

In 1978, as per an order from the I&B Ministry, several casual artistes working with AIR were regularized. In 1992, the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) had ordered regularization of all existing casual workers with the AIR. However, in the meantime, the Indian Parliament passed the Prasar Bharati Act to grant autonomy to AIR and DD in 1990 by detaching them from the I&B Ministry. This halted the regularization of casual announcers and recruitment of regular announcers. Prasar Bharati came into existence in 1996 as a statutory autonomous body comprising of AIR and Doordarshan. Although the Act was passed in 1990, it was not enacted until 15 September 1997. There has been no regularization since then.

Rekha bahen's vacant position was also not backfilled either. Seema bahen and Meeta bahen took the Hindi section forward with more frequent support from the casual announcers. Talking about the casual announcers who were active in 2000, the seniormost name would definitely be that of Madhu Maheshwari about whom we have read earlier twice in this book. She was not only the seniormost having joined the station in 1989 but also one of the best presenters as I have felt from my listening experience. In 2000, after Rekha bahen's retirement, positions for new casual announcers must have opened up due to the more frequent requirements. And thus, the Troops Programme received yet another exceptionally good announcer in **Gunaprabha Borah**. When I visited AIR Guwahati in 2009, I wanted to know the names of these two best casual announcers. I could recognize them by their voices but was unaware of their names for obvious reason that they never introduced themselves in any programme and I didn't hear them presenting *Patrottar* ever. Seema bahen tried to guess the two names from my description of their presentation style and finally she took the names of Madhu Maheshwari and Gunaprabha Borah.

It has been my pleasure to get to know about Gunaprabha Borah just like Madhu Maheshwari. Both Meeta bahen and Seema bahen belonged to defence-related families. While Seema bahen's father was in the office of the Controller General of Defence Accounts, Meeta bahen's father retired as a Major in the Indian Army. Coincidentally, Gunaprabha Borah also has a strong military background. Her father, Birendra Borah, had served the Indian Army for 24 years in various

capacities and retired in 1992 in the rank of Hawaldar. Her mother, Meenu Borah had served in the Home Guards organization. As a professional trainer, she provided various kinds of trainings such as beautician, embroidery, home decoration etc. to the family members of the Army personnel wherever her husband was posted. Thus, both of her parents contributed actively to the defence sector. Gunaprabha Borah's husband, Harshvardhan Narnaulia, is a defence contractor while her father-in-law, (Late) R. N. Singh, retired from the Indian Air Force as Warrant Officer. Her mother-in-law Minati Narnaulia also actively participated to train the family members of defence personnel in embroidery work. Hailing from such a background, Gunaprabha Borah's joining of the AIR and contributing towards the entertainment of troops has been none other than taking her family tradition forward. Being born in Allahabad (presently Prayag Raj) and having brought up in the multi-cultural community of the Army campuses of various cities across the country, Gunaprabha Borah was exposed to Hindi and English, which has been the reason for her excellent command over these languages.

So how did she become an announcer of Guwahati's Troops Programme? She spoke about it in detail in a telephonic interview, *"We are three sisters. Even today, we get emotional remembering those moments of our stay in the quarter of Guwahati's Army Campus, where we lived for ten years after our father was transferred from Punjab. We used to listen to the radio, especially this (Troops) programme along with other Assamese programmes like the Play on Sundays. Since childhood, I was curious as to who were the people behind those voices who used to present the programmes! They spoke so well. Someday I would visit them and see the radio station, how programmes were presented and how the programmes reached the listeners. Due to security reasons, we were allowed to go out of the Army Campus only on Sundays. I had completed my graduation in Economics and was waiting for the final results. One day I heard an announcement on the radio that applications for the post of Hindi announcers were invited. That was the year 2000. I could see a ray of hope towards my dream getting fulfilled. I applied thinking it to be a win-win situation. Even if I didn't get selected, at least I would be able to visit the station and meet the*



*Photo 6: Gunaprabha Borah (right) with Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen) (Source: from her personal collection with her consent)*

*announcers. I still remember how I had jumped with joy for ten minutes when the call letter for audition was delivered by the postman."*

*announcers. I still remember how I had jumped with joy for ten minutes when the call letter for audition was delivered by the postman."*

Gunaprabha Borah remembered the day of her selection process and shared an interesting incident, *"When I went for the audition, I was taken aback by the beauty of the radio station campus. I was about to enter the audition, someone from the audition board asked me, ~You are an Assamese girl, and this is a Hindi audition. Do you think you can make it? ~ I replied to him in Assamese, ~Let me try. ~ When I came out after giving the audition, the person who was speculative about my Hindi diction said to me in both surprised and apologetic tone, ~Your Hindi is very good. When*

*I asked you if you could speak Hindi, you answered me in Assamese. If you had replied in Hindi, I would have already known about your Hindi. ~ I said, ~Never mind. I didn't feel bad. ~ When I finally got the offer letter, it seemed as if the dream of my life was fulfilled."*

Remembering her first day of duty, she said, "We were first given three days of training and then allowed to present the first programme. It was a Friday, and I presented my first programme with Tapasi ma'am (Seema bahen). The first programme was Aaj Ka Geet, then Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan, and finally Geetika. That seat was really a hot seat." Thereafter, Gunaprabha Borah got ample opportunities to present programmes with both Seema bahen and Meeta bahen. Sharing her experience of working with both, she said, "When I joined, Bimlesh ma'am (Rekha bahen) had already retired. So, I never got the opportunity to work with her. The personality and the way of working of Tapasi ma'am and Sadhana ma'am were completely different. I have done maximum duties with Tapasi ma'am. She was strict but only regarding the work. Otherwise, she was very nice personally. I was in awe of her style of presenting the programme, her beautiful and sweet voice. I learnt a lot under her guidance. At the same time, I learnt a lot also from Sadhana ma'am. Her voice was also very beautiful and sweet. I shall always remember her guidance too. They were like two rivers of AIR Guwahati family, one calm and flowing at a steady pace while the other very playful. Yet both were friendly, and their confluence provided coolness to that place. I consider both of them to be my gurus and they will always have a very special place in my heart." Needless to say, the calm river was Seema bahen and the playful was Meeta bahen, which every listener could well understand while listening to them over radio.

As mentioned earlier, Seema bahen had praised Gunaprabha Borah's presentation during my visit to the station. As a listener, as I said earlier, Gunaprabha Borah and Madhu Maheshwari were the best. This didn't go unnoticed with the then Station Director Dinesh Das as well. As shared by Gunaprabha Borah, "During my first announcers meeting, in which the Station Director Dinesh Das sir was also present, while leaving at the end of the meeting, he only looked at me and said, ~I am noticing your presentation. I hope that every time the presentation will be better than the last time. ~ That day and today, I have tried to maintain the belief that when our 'Guru' has expectations from us, it is our duty to fulfil that expectation, and that every day and every moment is significant here." Borah expressed her gratitude towards her parents, husband, sisters Chanchala and Bhawani, brothers-in-law Ashwin and Diganta, nephew Achintya, the Akashvani Guwahati family that includes the Forces personnel as listeners, the respected officials, the colleagues, and all listeners in general, for being part of this journey along with her. To end the conversation, she said, "Sujoy ji, I am also grateful to you. Tapasi madam and Sadhana always used to show me your letters. I got to know about since then. May this Troops Programme scale newer heights. With this belief, Jai Hind!" [162]

### **Revised Programme Distribution**

After Rekha bahen's retirement, her share of programmes was distributed amongst Seema bahen and Meeta bahen in an optimal manner so as to minimize the need of casual presenters. It was only on Thursdays and Fridays when a casual announcer was required, these two days being the off days of the two regular announcers. The revised programme distribution with effect from 1 January 2001 is as tabulated below.

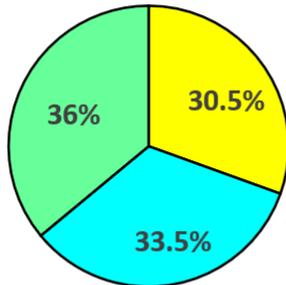
Table 105: Programme distribution after Rekha bahen's retirement

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (w.e.f 1 January 2001)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Gauhati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	Sangeet Madhuri	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	1,3,5 - Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:40		1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:30 Patrottar		
13:50	Watan Ke Taraane	2 - Panghat	Desh Bhakti Geet, Ghazal	Filmi Geet	13:40 Aapki Farmaish	Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00		3 - Shirshak Sangeet			Ghazals	Filmi Geet	
14:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
14:20	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme
15:00	Close Down						

Seema bahen  
 Meeta bahen  
 Casual announcer

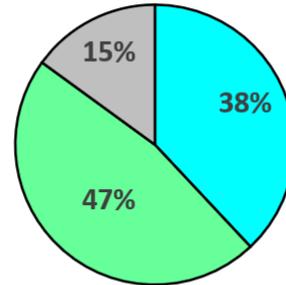
It can be noticed that except for *Geet Mala*, Friday's share of Rekha bahen's programmes and Saturday's *Aaj Ka Geet*, all other programmes of Rekha bahen went to Meeta bahen. At the time of Rekha bahen's retirement, the percentage share of the programmes amongst the three announcers was uniform averaging at 33% (refer previous Programme Distribution table given in the previous chapter). However, a noticeable deviation in the distribution after her retirement was visible. While Seema bahen's 'on-air' time increased by only 4.5%, Meeta bahen's share was increased by 11%, from 36% to 47%. This is illustrated below.

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 31-DEC 2000



Rekha bahen  
  Seema bahen  
  Meeta bahen

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION FROM 1-JAN 2001



Seema bahen  
  Meeta bahen  
  Casual announcers

Illustration 17: Percentage share of programmes before and after Rekha bahen's retirement

### Midday News Bulletins become News Magazines

It was in 2001 when AIR NSD introduced changes in the structure of its major news bulletins of the day. The 10-minute-long morning bulletins at 08:00 and 08:10 were increased by 5 minutes each while the afternoon bulletins of 14:00 and 14:10 were completely revolutionized. They were no longer mere news bulletins but a complete magazine with different segments, excerpts of radio reports, and recorded bytes from onsite journalists and reporters. They became half-hour news

magazines. The English bulletin, transformed into *Middy News*, was placed between 14:00 and 14:30, while the Hindi bulletin, named as *Dopahar Samachar*, was between 14:30 and 15:00. Also, the two 5-minute bulletins at 15:00 and 15:05 were discontinued. This change led to the requirement of programme schedule changes at both Guwahati-A and Guwahati-B. The new timings for the Troops Programme became 12:05 to 13:05, 13:10 to 14:30 and 15:00 to 15:10. There was a net reduction of programme duration by 10 minutes.

Moreover, Guwahati-A had been relaying the English bulletin at 14:00 and Guwahati-B the Hindi bulletin at 14:10. With the shutdown of Guwahati-C, the Nepalese Programme had been accommodated on Guwahati-A on Sunday afternoons. However, the expansion of the English bulletin made it impossible for the channel to accommodate both the bulletin and the Nepalese Programme. It was decided to retain the Nepalese Programme at Guwahati-A and move *Middy News* to Guwahati-B, for Sundays only. This in turn meant that Sunday's Troops Programme got further shortened by half-hour. The toll was on obviously *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* which got discontinued. The revised schedule of the Troops Programme is as tabulated below.

*Table 106: Revised programme schedule of Troops Programme with the launch of Middy News and Dopahar Samachar*

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM (with changed News format)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	Sangeet Madhuri	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish 13:30 Patrottar	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:40	13:50 Watan Ke Taraane	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Aapki Farmaish	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	
14:00	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Middy News
14:30	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar
15:00	Filmi Geet	Filmi Geet	Desh Bhakti Geet, Ghazal	Filmi Geet	Ghazals	Filmi Geet	Filmi Geet
15:10	Close Down						

Seema bahen
Meeta bahen
Casual announcer

The impact of the change could be seen mainly on *Watan Ke Taraane* and the four monthly programmes of Tuesdays. The duration of *Watan Ke Taraane* got reduced by 50%. The situation of the monthly programmes was even worse. These four programmes, viz., *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*, *Panghat*, *Sheershak Sangeet* and *Bhoole Bisre Geet*, used to be originally 40-minute programmes. After the shortwave shutdown, in order to place *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* in the Dibrugarh slot, the duration of these monthly programmes got reduced by 10 minutes (25% reduction) as seen earlier. With the change implemented for the afternoon news bulletins, these got further reduced by 10 minutes, thus, a net 50% reduction. These programmes being monthly affairs, a 20-minute duration was too less.

## **Tarana – The Start of Private Pop Albums**

AIR had long maintained the policy that music from private pop albums would not be played over its air waves. Although non-film light music covering geet and ghazals were part of the AIR programmes, those were mostly recorded at AIR studios and hence the property of AIR. During the 1990s, the emergence and mushrooming of satellite television encouraged artists to expand their horizon of creativity. This gave a boost to non-film private pop albums. There had been private albums in the 1980s decade as well, however, the 1990s saw a major boom in this area. The rising trend continued in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Prasar Bharati too approved the broadcast and telecast of music from private pop albums over AIR and DD respectively.

AIR Guwahati started receiving CDs of such private pop albums. Yes, I said CDs. By that time, the gramophone records and turntables were getting replaced by Compact Disks and CD Player, which was evident from the scratched CDs that resulted in skipping sound, totally different from a scratched vinyl record. At times, a 5-minute song would reach its destination in less than 2-minutes. On several occasions, the announcer had to cut short the unbearably “skipping” song and cut a sorry face towards the listeners. Coming back to private albums, the Troops Programme introduced a weekly 10-minute segment entitled *Tarana* on Tuesdays at 15:00 in which such non-film songs from private albums were played. It was soon made a twice-a-week affair with Thursdays getting added.

The famous private albums of the 1990s such as Alisha Chinoy’s *Made in India*, KK’s *Pal*, Suneeta Rao’s *Pari Hoon Main*, Shaan’s *Tanha Dil*, Sonu Nigam’s *Deewana* and *Mausam*, Lucky Ali’s *O Sanam* and many more such popular tracks hit the Troops Programme. In 2001 itself, there was a restructuring done for Guwahati-B that led *Tarana* find a better and respectable slot in the Troops Programme. This is described in the next section.

## **Restructuring of Guwahati-B**

Although Guwahati-C was shut down seven years ago, there wasn’t any expansion done for Guwahati-B to cover the lost transmission time until 2001. The stable schedule of B and C channels, change of Guwahati-C to a VBS Live Relay channel and then its sudden shutdown have been previously discussed in various chapters. In 2001, a new morning transmission was added to Guwahati-B for the first time in its history. And the afternoon session which was earlier between 12:00 and 15:10 was modified to 11:30 – 15:00 transmission, thus introducing a new half-hour programme of Assamese modern songs at 11:30 and chopping off the last 10 minutes of the Troops Programme at 15:00.

The 10-minutes reduction didn’t have much impact on the Troops Programme except for the discontinuation of the newly started *Tarana* programme as mentioned in the last section. To prevent its discontinuation, *Tarana* was accommodated on the second and the fourth Mondays at 12:38, thus alternating with *Sangeet Madhuri*. The programme was thus handed over from Meeta bahen to Seema bahen. The reason for *Tarana* sharing space with *Sangeet Madhuri* could be the continuous decline of classical music-based film songs. Songs included in a recent edition of *Tarana* are as listed in table below.

Table 107: List of songs for Tarana dated 14 August 2023

TARANA (Date: 14 August 2023)			
Song	Album	Year	Singers
kabhi to nazar milaaao	Kabhi To Nazar Milaaao	2000	Asha Bhosle, Adnan Sami
chupke chupke sakhiyon se wo	Mahek	1999	Pankaj Udhas
gori teri aankhen kehti hain	Gori Teri Ankhen	2001	Lucky Ali, Kavita Krishnamurthy
choodi bhi zid pe aayi hai	Ishq Hua	2000	Anuradha Paudwal
yeh pehli mulaqaat ki meethi si bekhudi	Deewana	1999	Sonu Nigam
palken uthaاون to, palken jhukaاون to	Ahsaas	1999	Anuradha Paudwal, Udit Narayan

On a contrasting note, with regard to the declining trend of classical music-based film songs, Guwahati-A started a new programme entitled *Raag Bichitra* on Mondays between 11:30 and 12:00 with exactly the same content as *Sangeet Madhuri*. It was an interesting development considering two similar programmes on the same day of the week on the two channels one after the other. In 2002, on several occasions, it has so happened that the two songs ‘*albelo sajan aayori*’ (*Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*) and ‘*kaahe chhed chhed mohe*’ (*Devdas*) were played on same day in both the programmes.

### *Nai Filmon Se*

The availability of *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* to the Dibrugarh listeners was hugely welcomed as was evident from the letters in *Patrottar*. Ever since the movement of this programme from Friday 12:38 to Tuesday 13:10, there had been an ever-increasing participation of the *Jawans* towards this programme. However, this was a problem in disguise; problem in the sense that the *Jawans* started suggesting films to be included in this programme on their request. Since the limitation of the programme was that the request of only one *Jawan* could be fulfilled in a week, it created a long queue of requests. The requests were not necessarily for the newest films. Films as old as *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965) had to be included on a *Jawan*’s request. All these led to not meeting the objective for which *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was moved to the Dibrugarh slot, and this change in time proved quite ineffective to meet the objective of informing the *Jawans* of the songs from the latest released films.

With normal requests of film songs going down day by day from around 2002, it was noticeable from the requested songs that the requests mostly belonged to the era until the late 1990s. There were fewer requests for songs from the recently released films. It must have been a matter of speculation as to whether this trend was due to declining quality of film music or for not being able to play new film songs in *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*. Whatever could have been the reason, the ultimate thought was how to improve the influx of letters for new song requests. This led to a new development in the programme schedule. It was decided to start a new programme hand in hand with *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, which would play the latest songs received by the station. And thus, started *Nai Filmon Se*, alternating with *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* on Tuesdays at 13:10. *Nai Filmon Se* was not meant for all songs of one film, but songs from multiple newly released films. Needless to say, Seema bahen became the owner of this programme due to the schedule.

## The Most Varied Schedule ever!

With *Tarana* and *Nai Filmon Se* getting added to the list of segments of the Troops Programme, the total number of distinct segments became 34, which was an all-time high in the history of this programme. The final schedule as was in March 2002, incorporating all changes discussed in this chapter looked like as below.

Table 108: The most varied schedule of Troops Programme in 2002

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (as in 2002)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Gauhati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghmen	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam	Sabrang
	2,4 - Tarana			2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz		2 - Geet Manoranjan	
				3 - Raag Rang		3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali	
				4 - Tarannum		4 - Ek Aur Anek	
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	1,3,5 - Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Aapki Farmaish	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
		2,4 - Nai Filmon Se			13:30 Patrottar		
13:40	13:50 Watan Ke Taraane	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Aapki Farmaish	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	
		2 - Panghat					
		3 - Shirshak Sangeet					
		4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet					
14:00	Chavanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Close down
14:30	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	

	Seema bahen
	Meeta bahen
	Casual announcer

# 14. The Paradigm Shift

Someone has correctly said that the only constant thing in this universe is change. No society has ever remained the same over a period of time. Changes in technology, education, interests, human interactions, relationships lead to social change, which transform our cultural and social lifestyle. Taking place over time, these have firm and long-lasting impact. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a noticeable change was evident in the area of broadcasting, which wasn't visible in that scale ever before. In context of the content of this book, the changing behaviour of troops personnel towards radio programmes designed for them had started towards the middle of the first decade of the current century. Across the country, every Troops Programme saw a steep fall in the level of participation of the *Jawans*. The volume of letters dwindled on year-on-year basis and finally, it reached to such a low that all request-based programmes went off-air across all stations in the country by the middle of the second decade. Specifically, this chapter tries to visit all possible causes of the downward trend in participation of *Jawans* in Guwahati's Troops Programme during the first decade of this century.

## **Nation-wide Decline in Troops Participation**

The gradual decline in troops participation had begun around 2005. This was not the scene at one specific station but everywhere. Vividh Bharati, the most widely available service, was no different. Available across the length and breadth of the country including remote areas over strong shortwave signals, VBS was the most significant source of entertainment for the *Jawans* posted in frontier sectors. Yet, it had to silently accept the continuous alienation of the active servicemen. Although the *Jawans* used to get entertained by all of its programmes, *Jaymala* was specifically meant for them. Except for the Saturday's edition, which used to be presented by film personalities as *Vishesh Jaymala*, the remaining six days of the week were meant for fulfilling song requests of the *Jawans*. However, the situation changed during the second half of the 2000s decade. Song requests began to fall. This led to reduction in request-based editions, making it a thrice a week affair. With *Vishesh Jaymala* still intact for Saturdays, the remaining three days were just normal programmes of mixed film music.

To motivate the *Jawans* towards radio, VBS designed a new programme to be aired on Sunday evenings – *Jaymala Sandesh*, in which the *Jawans* and their family members could dial in telephonically and record their messages to be broadcast in the programme along with a song dedication. The programme got immense popularity when it was launched, and the new concept was highly acclaimed. However, it soon became monotonous as the same few *Jawans*, and the same family members called up frequently. Moreover, there was no concrete mechanism to confirm the identity of the persons calling in. The programme was soon replaced with the second instance of *Vishesh Jaymala*. The song requests further decreased, finally making *Jaymala* a completely non-request-based programme. In the final setup, the five working days of the week had mixed film music, *Vishesh Jaymala* on Saturdays, and *Sainikon Ki Shauryagatha* on Sundays

– a new programme to acknowledge the contribution of the martyrs through musical features based on their heroic stories of sacrifices. Currently, *Jaymala* on all seven days of the week presents mixed film music.

The transformation of programmes for the Forces from bidirectional to unidirectional was observed across all stations towards the end of the first decade. The participation of the *Jawans* completely ended towards the second half of the second decade. Even if there were a handful of *Jawans* requesting songs, those weren't enough to run a request-based programme on regular basis. Eventually, all programmes dedicated for the troops became general film music programmes. Exactly the same thing had happened when after the World War II, the Forces' Programmes for the British Forces were replaced with General Western Music Programmes.

The subsequent sections of this chapter try to analyse the various reasons for such alienation of troops from participating in radio programmes meant for them.

### **Advancements in Mobile and Digital Entertainment**

Technology is one of the driving factors of social change. Mobile phone has been one of the revolutionary inventions of the last century. Although mobile services began commercially in India during the later part of the 1990s, it became popular at a mass scale only after 2005. The mobile phone and other digital devices on which audio files could be played, made it possible to easily store, play, and share music. As compared to audio cassettes and tape recorders, such MP3 Players were much smaller in size with excellent portability. Moreover, a huge number of songs, in thousands, could be stored on them. The *Jawans* started bringing large number of songs with them when they returned from vacation and shared with fellow *Jawans* over Bluetooth. Radio was no longer the only source of music-based entertainment for the *Jawans* posted even in the most remote areas. In fact, the range of music that they could listen dramatically increased. Moreover, they could listen to the songs of their own language that they brought from home. Clearly, the monopoly of radio towards entertaining the troops had diluted.

### **Decline in Letter Writing**

Writing letters, the traditional way using pen and paper used to be not only a form of art but also an effective means of communication, both informationally and emotionally. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, letter writing saw a sharp decline globally. With people increasing communication over fast means of telecommunication like the fixed telephone and later over the mobile phone due to their ever-decreasing cost, traditional letter writing through postal mail declined sharply. Moreover, email communication was gaining momentum. Telephone and email gave strong competition to the traditional postal mail. Although the older generations continued to write letters, the new generation alienated themselves completely from this tradition. Therefore, it was rather unlikely that the new age *Jawans* would write letters to the radio stations requesting for songs. The double action of decreased interest of writing letters and availability of alternate source of songs as discussed in previous section, and the continuous retirement of the servicemen from the older generation led to gradual decline in the volume of letters received at radio stations.

## Limitation of Phone-in and SMS-based Programmes

As published in Akashvani journal dated 10 June 1979 – “An entirely challenging format of programming was introduced for the first time wherein questions from listeners received on telephone with the answers from experts available in the studios are broadcast live. The topic for this first programme in the monthly series ‘PHONE-IN PLEASE’ was ‘Dangers of Alcoholism’.” [163] Although phone-in programmes started in the early 1980s, it wasn’t in place at all stations. And at major stations, such programmes were meant for serious discussions. The bigger stations started phone-in song-request based programmes during the 1990s. At AIR Guwahati, *Phone-in Kalpataru*, a monthly phone-in song request programme started only towards the end of the 1990s. I still remember getting connected over telephone line to the station and talking to the presenter in Assamese and requesting the title song of the Hindi film *Soldier*, which was among the latest released films of that period. Undoubtedly, it was a thrilling first-time experience.

Although phone-in technique was a revolution in the way listeners’ requests were handled and that the traditional mail system no longer remained the only medium of sending song requests, nevertheless, the phone-in concept was of no help to the troops listeners. This was mainly because there was no way that the AIR presenter could verify the identity of the calling listener. There were full chances of civilian listeners impersonating as *Jawans* in order to listen to their names and songs in the Troops Programme. And that would completely void the purpose of the programme. Thus, the phone-in technique was a challenge for programmes meant for special audiences. Even though special audiences like women, children, senior citizens, youth, farmers, industrial workers could still possibly come under the umbrella of phone-in programmes, it was impossible for the troops. On one hand, the phone-in programmes became immensely popular among the civilian listeners and considerably improved participation of the listeners in various programmes; on the other hand, unfortunately, the listeners from the Forces were barred from using this new and effective technique of requesting their favourite songs. They were left with the existing traditional method of writing letters, which was on a continuous decline in the society globally.

Towards the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the email and SMS ways of communicating with radio stations became hugely popular. Listeners could send in their song requests and messages from their mobile phones and personal computers. This once again led to enormous positive response from civilian listeners. Request-based programmes based on phone-in, email, SMS, and WhatsApp were booming all over the country. The presenters were totally overwhelmed with the massive inflow of messages and were having a tough time handling the live programmes. However, the *Jawans* guarding the borders were again restricted from these modern techniques of communication because of the same identity verification issue. Neither email nor SMS nor WhatsApp could confirm that they were genuine members from the Forces fraternity. Thus, while the general listeners grabbed the advantages of the modern methods of engaging with their favourite radio programmes, the *Jawans* still had the one and only way of communication, that is, traditional letters using pen and paper. This was one of the major reasons for the ever-decreasing participation of the *Jawans* in programmes meant for them and their subsequent alienation from the radio in general.

## FM Radio and the New-Gen Audience

On one hand, the traditional radio had welcomed modern modes of communicating with listeners as explained in above sections, on the other hand, the emerging private FM radio stations completely changed the concept of commercial radio broadcasting. Targeting the young generation with new styles of programming concepts, presentation, packaging, advertising, the FM radio was a huge hit. Although FM radio was existent in major cities for quite some time, the north-eastern region witnessed this new and attractive mode of entertainment only during the 2000s. AIR Guwahati got its first 10 kW FM transmitter commissioned on 29 March 2000. Initially, it was put on experimental transmissions carrying Guwahati-A and Guwahati-B programmes alternately. Finally, ‘Vividh Bharati Guwahati’ was officially launched at 100.8 MHz. This, for the first time, delighted the listeners of the Guwahati region to listen to VBS programmes originating from Mumbai over crystal-clear local FM air waves, along with some entertaining and interesting local programming in Assamese between 09:15 and 12:00 and again between 17:30 and 19:00 that included interactive live phone-in and SMS-based programmes. This new FM channel made Guwahati-B appear comparatively dull. Guwahati-A being the primary channel and available over HPT MW and SW still maintained its importance amongst the listeners, however, Guwahati-B started losing its lustre for its extremely limited reach (10 kW LPT) and limited target audience.

In 2001, the first commercial private FM radio station, Radio City 91.1 FM, started operation in Bangalore, making it a historic event in the history of commercial radio broadcasting in India. It was in 2007 when Guwahati city witnessed the launch of the first private FM radio channel – Radio Ooo La 91.9 FM. [164] With humour, romance, popular game shows, shows that talk about taboos, shows that discuss social problems, corporate public responsibility initiatives, crack-a-joke sparklers, DJ shows, quiz contests and more, it definitely made a huge impact on the listeners of the region who were continuously fed with a single style of programming through several decades. By 2010, several other FM stations also began operations in Guwahati and several other cities of North-East, including Shillong, Agartala and Itanagar.

The new generation could relate themselves with the content and type of programming being aired by the private FM radio stations than those by the traditional AIR stations. And this new generation was comprised of the newly recruited young *Jawans* as well. Like general public, it won’t be an exaggeration to believe that the *Jawans* also started leaning towards FM Radio. Although FM coverage might not have been available in remote areas, nevertheless, the areas covered by Guwahati-B over its 10-kW LPT MW were fully covered by VBS Guwahati and the private FM stations of Guwahati. The half-hour Dibrugarh slot (13:10 – 13:40) over 100-kW HPT MW was not sufficient to hold back the listeners for long with new FM stations coming up in several cities of the region.

In a nutshell, the emergence and popularity of FM Radio in the North-East had definitely been one of the major factors in the declining participation of listeners, including troops, in AIR Guwahati’s traditional programmes broadcast over mediumwave.

### **Cutdown on Request-based Programmes**

When the participation of troops in AIR’s Troops Programmes across the country was declining during the 2005 – 2010 period, no special efforts were made to reverse the situation. The indifferent attitude towards this important special-audience programme prevailed throughout all AIR stations.

Instead of preparing a strategy to regain trust and engagement of the Forces personnel by redesigning and remodelling the programme, it was left to die without any treatment. This disinterest and apathy proved fatal to all troop's programmes in general, which otherwise had a glorious past and some even had high historic significance. The continuous decreasing participation of the *Jawans* in Guwahati's Troops Programme led to the reduction of the duration of request-based programmes as could be seen in the programme structure of October 2009.

Table 109: Schedule of Troops Programme in October 2009

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (as in Oct 2009)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m)							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:29	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri 2,4 - Tarana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1,5 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	1,3,5 - Ek Hi Film Ke Geet 2,4 - Nai Filmon Se	Tarang	Swar Chhaya	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish	Aapki Farmaish
13:40	Watan Ke Taraane	1,5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	13:45 Pradeshik Sangeet	Tarannum	13:50 Pradeshik Sangeet	Shirshak Sangeet
14:00	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
14:30	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down

Seema bahen  
 Meeta bahen  
 Casual announcer

The decreasing letters from *Jawans* led to a 24% curtail on the net weekly duration of *Aap Ki Farmaish* and *Geet Mala* programmes as evident in above table. The net duration of request-based programmes as against the total programme duration dropped from 25% to 19%.

Table 110: Decline of request-based programme duration in late 2000s

SHARE OF REQUEST-BASED DURATION			
	Net Weekly Programme Duration (min)	Duration of Request-based Programmes (min)	% Duration of Request-based programmes
in 2002	980	246	25%
by 2009	980	186	19%

Talking about programmes specifically, *Geet Mala* and Sunday's *Aap Ki Farmaish* were gated at 13:40. Friday's *Patrottar* at 13:30 was discontinued as there weren't adequate letters to be replied. The handful of received letters contained mostly song requests. Thus, Friday's 50-minute segment between 13:10 and 14:00 that previously consisted of 40-minutes of *Aap Ki Farmaish* and 10-minutes of *Patrottar* was modified to 30 minutes of *Aap Ki Farmaish* and 20-minutes of *Tarannum* – the programme of non-film ghazals, which used to be only once in a month affair on fourth Thursdays of the month at 12:38. Likewise, *Sheershak Sangeet*, an otherwise monthly programme of third Tuesdays at 13:40, was given an additional weekly slot on Sundays at 13:40. *Watan Ke Taraane* used to be a 20-minute programme until the conversion of the 10-minute 14:00 news

bulletins into 30-minute news magazines after which it had got reduced to a 10-minute show. With decrease in *Geet Mala* duration, *Watan Ke Taraane* regained its lost 10 minutes.

### ***Tarang* – The Final Addition**

While the decrease in letters resulted in decrease in the duration of request-based programmes towards the end of the 2000s decade, Seema bahen decided to start a new programme replacing Wednesday's *Aap Ki Farmaish* altogether. The 40-minute new programme entitled *Tarang* was an artist-centric programme that drew a biographic sketch of the featured artist. Since I had left Guwahati by then, I don't have any memory of this newly started programme. However, when I visited Guwahati in September 2009, I discovered that this programme was already in place. Currently, this weekly programme features film actors and actresses – their biographies and songs picturized on them. However, I remember that the edition of *Tarang* to be broadcast on 30 September 2009 was based on lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi. This meant that the programme when originally started used to include artists from all domains. Since *Raag Rang* and *Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet* were meant for songs only, *Tarang* was more of biography and songs in between.

*Tarang* is currently broadcast on Wednesdays between 13:10 and 13:40. Actors and actress from all eras are included from time to time. The Cuesheets of Prasar Bharati indicate the featuring of Madhubala, Raj Kapoor, Vaijayanthimala, Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor, Sunny Deol, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan, Ajay Devgun, Kajol, Akshay Kumar, Preity Zinta, Saif Ali Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan, Sonam Kapoor, Irrfan Khan, Deepika Padukone, Kunal Khemu, Anushka Sharma, and Zayed Khan in this programme during May – October 2023 period.

### **An Interesting Re-introduction on Sundays!**

When the evening transmission was replaced with an extended afternoon transmission, programmes like *Sabrang*, *Filmi Naghme* and *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai*, which had two instances, one in afternoon and one in evening, were renamed as *Gunjan*, *Nazrana* and *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* respectively, for the instance imported from evening session. Out of these three newly named programmes, *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* got discontinued when the 10-minute news bulletins at 14:00 evolved into half-hour midday news magazines in early 2000s. This was due to the relay of Midday News (English) on Sundays over Guwahati-B due to Nepalese Programme at the same time on Guwahati-A. This has been explained earlier in the book.

However, later in the decade, the Nepalese Programme got a permanent place on Guwahati-A between 15:15 and 15:45, initially on a weekly basis on Sundays and then on daily basis. This made Guwahati-A capable again of carrying the English News at 14:00 and hence, Guwahati-B discontinued Sunday's relay. This, in turn, meant that the slot between 14:00 and 14:30 was available for the discontinued *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme* programme. Interestingly, the programme was reintroduced but not as *Chalte Geet Machalte Naghme*, but as *Geet Apna Dhun Paraai*, thus nullifying the reason for which the three new names were put in place. This anyway didn't matter as few other programmes by then also began to have more than one occurrence such as *Tarannum* and *Sheershak Sangeet*.

## End of an Era – Retirement of Meeta bahen and Seema bahen

A decade after the retirement of Rekha bahen, the time finally arrived for yet another retirement. It was the retirement of Meeta bahen in 2010 and of Seema bahen in quick succession, in 2011. This brought an end to the way the Troops Programme was being presented since beginning. The concept of three sisters entertaining the *Jawans*, as their brothers, had made a huge impact on listeners through the four decades. As all good things come to an end, this day was destined to arrive. And it thus finally did. While Seema bahen left Guwahati forever and got settled in Kolkata with her husband, Meeta bahen was a local resident of Guwahati, settled in Beltala locality. Thus, it was possible for her to contribute towards the programme if given a chance. It was a great decision by AIR Guwahati management to reappoint her on contractual basis to handle the programme since there weren't any regular presenter left and the possibility of regularization of casual announcers was a myth. Several retired announcers could be heard at other stations as well, one of them being the Urdu Service of ESD. Sadhana Phukan, aka Meeta bahen, continued with her services to AIR Guwahati until 2013 after which she had to discontinue as the new rule of Prasar Bharati didn't allow personnel above the age of fifty to work as announcers. With this, the last regular voice of the Troops Programme went off air, handing over the programme to the team comprising of casual announcers. Since then, the programme has been managed by a big pool of casual presenters. The memorable Rekha bahen – Seema bahen – Meeta bahen trio wasn't heard any more on radio. Nevertheless, the enormous quantity of fond memories associated with their voices, presentations, choice of songs has permanently stayed back in the hearts of all listeners, troops and civilians alike.



*Photo 7: (from left) Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen), Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen), Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen) – The Three Veteran Voices of the Troops Programme (Source: Photo of Bimlesh Arya as published in her Obituary by AIR Guwahati; photos of Tapasi Sengupta and Sadhana Phukan are from their personal collection, with their consent)*

## Listeners remembering the ‘Three Sisters’

Although Rekha bahen, Seema bahen and Meeta bahen left AIR Guwahati in 2000, 2011 and 2013 respectively, the impact of their powerful voices didn't let the listeners forget them. This was the

reason when Rajib Borthakur wrote a post in 2020 on his social media page about this programme and its presenters, the veteran listeners from all over Assam took to the comments section of the post and put down their heart. Some of the assorted comments from the post are reproduced below. [165]

***Subha Ranjan Buragohain:***

“একেবাৰে চুটি হাফপেণ্ট পিন্ধি দূপৰীয়া ভাত খাই থকা অথবা কেতিয়াবা স্কুলৰ পৰা আহি থকা সৰু সৰু ছৰি কিছুমান ছয়াময়াকৈ মনলৈ আহি গল। আপোনাৰ লিখনি বসালো, তথ্য সমৃদ্ধও। পাটকাইৰ পাৰৰ সীমামূৰীয়া এলেকাটোত থকা সৈন্যবাহিনীৰ শিৰিৰতো এই অনুষ্ঠান বেডিঅ'ত বাজি আছিল এটা সময়ত। লতা মংগেশকাৰ, মহম্মদ ৰফীৰ পৰা মহম্মদ আজিজলৈকে কিমান যে গীতৰ সমাহাৰ। ঘোষিকাৰ শুল্লা কণ্ঠই বহুতৰে ভাগৰো জুৰুৱা দেখাপাইছিলো কয়লা খনিৰ এলেকাত।”

*(“Vivid images of memories of me eating lunch wearing short half pants or sometimes returning home from school went passed my eyes (while reading your post). Your writing is attractive and informative. There was a time when the programme used to be played on radios in the Army Camp in the border areas along the Pat-kai mountains. There were so many songs from Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi to Mohammed Aziz. The announcer's sweet voice relieved the fatigue of many in the coal mining area.”)*

Note: The Pat-kai are a series of mountains in the Indo-Myanmar border along the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Upper Burma region of Myanmar.

***Nabajyoti Talukdar:***

“বিৰাট ভাল লাগিল। কলেজ নেৰালৈকে বেডিঅ'ৰ গান প্ৰাণৰ বন্ধু আছিল। 'তিন বেহনে'ৰ অনুষ্ঠান শুনি অতি ভাল পোৱাৰ লগতে আৰু এটা কথা শিকিছিলো যে সেনাৰ 'লেঞ্চ নায়ক' পদবীৰ মানুহখিনিয়ে গান শুনি খুব ভাল পায়... অনুৰোধকাৰীৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ নামেই যেন বেছি শুনা পাওঁ!”

*(“It felt so nice. Songs played on radio used to be my best friend until I left college. I enjoyed listening to the 'Teen Bahene' programme (Troops Programme). Additionally, I learnt that the people with the rank of 'Lance Naik' in the Army loved to listen to music... I seemed to hear their names more among the requesters!”)*

***Madhusmita Bora Bhattacharjee:***

“অত্যন্ত ভাল লাগিল পঢ়ি। সৰু কালৰ বহুতো দৃশ্য চকুৰ আগত ভাঁহি গল। সেই মাতকেইটা এতিয়া ও যে কিমান সুন্দৰকৈ মনত আছে !!”

*(“I immensely enjoyed reading it. Many scenes from my childhood came to the mind (while reading your post). I still remember those voices (of the three sisters) so beautifully!!”)*

***Pankaj Borthakur:***

“বহু কথাই জানিবলৈ পাই ভাল লাগিল। বাইদেউকেইগৰাকীক লগ পাইছিলো, সেয়ে লেখাটো পঢ়ি আপ্লুত!”

*(“I’m glad to learn a lot (from your article about the Troops Programme). I had once met the sisters (the three announcers). So, I was impressed to read the article.”)*

**Bidyut Kumar Bhuyan:**

“তিন বেহেনৰ মাত আৰু অন্তৰংগ পৰিবেশনশৈলী এতিয়াও কাণত বাজি আছে। যোৱা শতিকাৰ আশী দশকৰ গাঁৱৰ দিনবোৰ চকুৰ আগত ভাঁহি উঠিছে।”

*(“The voices and the intimate presentation style of the three sisters still ring in my ears. Those memorable village days of the 1980s have started floating in front of my eyes.”)*

**Arunima Goswami:**

“কি সুন্দৰ আছিল পৰিবেশন শৈলী!মনত পৰে।”

*(“What a beautiful style of presentation (of the programme) it used to be! I still remember.”)*

**Kishore Kumar Sharma:**

“ভাল লাগিল পুৰণি কথা মনত পেলাই।”

*(“Nice to remember the old days!”)*

# 15. My Personal Interactions

I don't remember the date or year since when I started listening to the radio. Since radio was present at home from before my birth, naturally I got introduced to it right from day one. The place was a railway colony at Pandu, Guwahati and our railway quarter was just beside a steam locomotive shed. There were railway tracks just in front of the house. I have faint memories of watching steam engines shunting throughout the day. And along with that, the earliest memories of listening to the radio are even fainter isolated pictures that often flash past my eyes, of probably around 1980, when I was only three years old. Those faint pictures include listening to songs in Guwahati's Troops Programme in the afternoon with my elder brother, who was seven years age at that time. Thus, the voices I heard right from my birth were those of my parents, my maternal grandparents, who frequently visited our place, my elder brother, one domestic help and the three voices of the Troops Programme – Rekha bahen, Seema bahen, Meeta bahen. This was the world to which I got introduced at birth. Needless to say, those three voices of radio got embedded so firmly within me that they became inseparable part of my life. This chapter captures all personal interactions I had with them over the past four decades of my life.

## **The Summers of Kahilipara**

I was growing up with the Troops Programme. The voices of the three announcers became so familiar that they became part of the family and our lives. The fixed distribution of programmes amongst themselves made us accurately predict each day who was going to be present when. It was fun to listen to that programme in those tender years even though I understood neither the programmes nor the songs. It was only the attraction of those three voices that drove me towards the radio set. Gradually, with each passing year, my listening skills developed. I started getting the differences between programmes and the type of songs included in each of them. The attraction kept increasing. My kindergarten school was a morning school which would finish by 10:00. Hence, it was possible to listen to the radio in the afternoon. This, however, got impacted from 1982 when I was enrolled in Class-I of the mainstream school. Although not on a daily basis, the listening continued during the weekends and on holidays; and of course, during the ten-day winter and two-month summer breaks.

The two summer months used to be real fun. My brother and I used to spend those two months at our maternal grandparents' place to give them company. The place was Kahilipara, another corner of the Guwahati city. I would get thrilled when in the evenings my grandpa would tune in to overseas stations like BBC, VOA, and many more on his shortwave radio. The radio set used to be under his control from sunset, but during the afternoon, it was all ours. We would listen to the Troops Programme from 12:30 to 14:10, and then would present our own programme in the same style just like the radio announcers did. Our grandpa would get us blank sheets of paper from a nearby shop and we would prepare programme schedule and song lists for each day's programme. This used to be our favourite pastime during those hot summer days. Whenever new songs got

introduced in the actual radio programme, we would also include them in our presentation. Grandpa's wristwatch was the only gadget for time-keeping that we had in our open-air studio, the spacious balcony. I still remember how excited I got when a distant relative of my granny visited us one afternoon while returning from the school where she worked and finding us listening to the Troops Programme told us that her elder sister worked as a Casual Announcer there and had presented *Patrottar* as "Sushma bahen". We were mesmerised to hear that as the image of radio announcers in those was no less than a grand celebrity.

One day while cleaning the drawer of my granny's dressing table, I found an unused postcard. A mischievous idea struck my mind. Since there was a post office at a walking distance, how about sending a song request to the Troops Programme impersonating as a *Jawan*! With high excitement, I put down the details of three songs along with a fake name and a military rank. In the evening, I walked up to the post office and posted the card. And then started the unending wait. Much later I realized that one had to use either a Forces Letter or the letter needed to be attested by an officer of higher rank to get it addressed in the Troops Programme. This discovery had surely disheartened me. I could not intrude into the programme. Years went by. The summer of 1989 was the last summer at Kahilipara. I was twelve at that time when my grandfather passed away. An era had ended.

### **Surprise Call from Seema bahen**

During the 1990s decade, I became more matured and intelligent enough to provide feedback for radio programmes. The Troops Programme had got infused into my blood for having it listened continuously for over a decade. I started sending feedback on normal Inland Letters that comprised of praises, criticisms, and suggestions towards improvement of the programme. The thought that my letters won't be read out in *Patrottar* for the programme was meant only for troops hardly deterred me. My intention was not to listen to my name in the programme but only aimed at its continuous improvement. Still, there was somewhere a faint ray of hope that my letter would get included some day in *Patrottar*. But that day never arrived. The one-sided feedback continued for years. The hobby had turned into a responsibility. It was almost twenty years that I had been listening to the programme and the three regular voices behind it. I wrote letters continuously for over more than a decade, but never got any response from the other end.

My school days ended, and I moved on to pursue engineering at Assam Engineering College in the same city. In 2000, I graduated from college. One Friday evening, the landline telephone rang. I picked up and said hello. A lady, from the other side, said hello and enquired if she was talking to Sujoy. She was speaking in Hindi. I said yes. She then continued, "*Before I introduce myself, let me congratulate you on your success in Engineering, that is, for topping the University.*" Totally confused about the identity of the caller, I thanked her for her wishes. I was trying to guess who could congratulate me on my graduation over the telephone and that too in Hindi. All my relatives would speak in Bangla, and I didn't have any remote friend to call me on telephone in Hindi. While I was thinking all these, the lady continued, "*Did you listen to the radio today?*" This further added to my confusion as I couldn't find any relation of my graduation with the radio. I said yes, foolishly. I finally asked in Hindi, "*Whom I am speaking to?*" And then came the answer that dumbfounded me; something that I couldn't imagine even in my wildest dreams. She said, "*main Seema bahen bol rahi hoon.*" (*This is Seema bahen.*) I didn't know what to say. It was something

that I had never expected and was beyond reality. So, finally the day came when my twenty-year-long worship proved successful, and the deity appeared before me. It so happened that being the University Topper, my name and a brief write-up was published in The Assam Tribune, one of the leading dailies of the region. As I had written to the programme about myself from time to time along with my address, they knew about me. I used to write my complete address and phone number in every letter just with a hidden wish that they might want to contact me personally if not over the airwaves. To my heart's content, Seema bahen told me that they used to read all my letters and liked them a lot. They used to feel bad for not being able to include them in the programme since their hands were tied as it was meant only for the troops. Nevertheless, they would read my letters off-air with great care and attention. After seeing my name in the newspaper, Seema bahen was sure that it was the same person as me. She took out my letters from the almirah where they were stored, fetched my contact number from one of them, and upon reaching home after the day's duty, she called me up.

It was an amazing experience. For a listener who had been listening to a programme for over two decades and writing letters continuously without any response from the other end, a sudden and unexpected call from one of the presenters after twenty years, outside the programme and on a personal note, congratulating me over an academic achievement was something unimaginable. The announcer – listener relation in that golden era of radio broadcasting used to be something unique for sure.

### **Visit to AIR Guwahati**

It was April 2002 when I had to leave Guwahati for higher studies and subsequent professional life. My father too retired and migrated to Kolkata. My connection with Guwahati was physically lost. However, after seven years, I got the golden opportunity to visit Guwahati again. It was towards the end of September 2009, around Durga Puja. An idea came to my mind. Why not visit AIR Guwahati! "*Who knows if I don't get a chance again,*" I thought. It was on Dashehra, 28 September, that I could tune in to the radio in the afternoon. I was relieved to find that Seema bahen was still present and had not retired. She presented a special programme on Vijayadashami between 13:10 and 13:30 followed by *Geet Mala* between 13:30 and 13:40. Meeta bahen wasn't present on duty that day; so, a casual presenter carried on with the remaining programmes – *Watan Ke Taraane* and *Chayanika*. The next day, 29 September, I was further thrilled to hear Meeta bahen's voice at 12:05. So, both hadn't retired. And what could be a better day than that day itself when the availability of both at the station was confirmed by their vocal presence on the airwaves!

I left home leaving the programme behind so that I could reach the station right after the end of the programme (14:30) and before they left the station for the day. It was a bus ride of around 45 minutes to reach AIR Guwahati situated at Chandmari. The bus stop was right next to the main gate of the radio station. I got down from the bus and headed straight towards the main gate. The big board beside the gate with 'All India Radio Guwahati' written in three languages started giving me goosebumps. I was finally at the doorstep of the radio station for the first time that had amazed me for almost three decades. I was unsure if it was allowed for a civilian to enter the AIR campus without any valid reason. Obviously, I didn't have a solid reason or more specifically, an official purpose for the visit. While signing the register at the entrance gate, I told the Security Guard that I had come to visit the announcers, he didn't raise any objection and allowed me to enter. This was

again beyond my expectation. I had at least thought that he would call someone and get permission for me. I walked through the private road inside the campus. It was a beautiful campus with a hill and lots of greenery, and the main AIR building was located on the hill. Guided by directions from the Reception, I was heading towards my ultimate destination. I landed up at the door of the Duty Room. I enquired where could I meet Mrs. Tapasi Sengupta. They showed me the way. I could see from a distance the white letters ‘सैन्य कार्यक्रम/ Troops Programme’ written on a black board at the top of the door of a room. As I appeared at the door, one lady looked up at me. I knew that she could not be anyone other than Seema bahen. I just asked in an interrogative tone, “*Tapasi Sengupta?*” She nodded in agreement. I went up to her desk and introduced myself, “*I am Sujoy Chatterjee.*”

I still remember how Tapasi Sengupta, aka Seema bahen, reacted to that. She jumped off her chair in disbelief. Her eyes sparkled and she was immensely happy. She offered me to sit. After I settled down of my excitement, I noticed another lady sitting next to Seema bahen, writing something on a big-fat register. Her eyes were down at the register but was smiling, probably, listening to our conversation. Gaining a little courage, I asked her, “*kahin aap Meeta bahen to naheen?*” (“*Are you Meeta bahen?*”) At this question, she looked up at me and burst into a loud laughter and nodded in agreement. Then the Programme Executive Mr. Nath came inside the room. Before he could settle down at his table, Seema bahen called him and introduced me. Meeta bahen shared the “*kahin aap Meeta bahen to naheen*” incident with him and had another round of laughter.

Seema bahen and Meeta bahen shared beautiful memories of the good old days of this programme, many of which I have already included in this book in various sections. They said that it’s not only the listeners who look for a good programme, but the announcers also look for sincere listeners, and that a good announcer-listener relation is a great and unique relationship. The more they went on sharing their experiences, the more mesmerized I got. It was like a dream for me listening to them in person. On Seema bahen’s table, I noticed the typed schedule of the next day’s programme, probably the Cue sheet. TS and SP were mentioned in braces against the programmes, which were their initials. I could see a line item as ‘13:10 - Tarang – Sahir Ludhianvi (TS)’. Then I remembered that before leaving the house to meet them, I had heard Meeta bahen mentioning about the programme *Tarang* to be broadcast the next day at 13:10. When I enquired about this new programme to Seema bahen, she again called Mr. Nath to tell him how addicted I was to their programme that I noticed this newly started programme even during my short visit.

The two sisters then told me how they had always wished that I would visit them some day and that finally the day had arrived. They also shared how the *Jawans* would pay surprise visits to them from time to time, the latest one being that of Rifleman Kiran Kumar Pawar, who visited them while leaving the region. While taking their leave, he wrote few songs on a piece of paper, to be played on his request. Seema bahen mentioned that while on one hand, they felt bad that they couldn’t include the letters of civilians who wrote to them, on the other hand, they made sure that the songs requested by civilian listeners got played in various programmes.

The excitement and spark in the eyes of the two senior announcers subsided when they started talking about the then current situation. There wasn’t any replacement given for Rekha bahen. While some of the casual announcers were really good, there were many who didn’t care about the programme and presented it as a formality. Some even said, “*Who listens to this programme after all?*” One of them pronouncing “Mangeshkar” as “Manjeshkar” was the extreme that could

have happened to this programme. Seema bahen mentioned that all casual announcers weren't bad but there was a continuity issue. It was necessary to have regularity of the presenters to have better attachment with the listeners. And the solution to this was to have the best casual announcer regularized to fill the vacant position of Rekha bahen. This never saw the light of the day.

The other aspect that demoralized both Seema bahen and Meeta bahen was the falling standard of film songs. According to them, this was also one of the reasons for decreasing interest in radio programmes. Moreover, the new age films didn't have a variety of genres in their songs. They found it difficult to find suitable songs in new films for programmes like *Sangeet Madhuri*, *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*, *Majlis-e-Qawwali*, *Geet Manoranjan*, *Watan Ke Taraane* and *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti*. Meeta bahen jokingly said that all new songs would fit into *Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi*.

To add to their woes, the nation-wide digitization at AIR led to the complete removal of gramophone turntables before all the gramophone records could get digitized. In other words, it was a "break before make" situation. Due to this, many songs available in the library couldn't be played. At this point, I instantly remembered that the day before, in the Vijayadashami special programme, Seema bahen had played a song of *Seeta Swayamvar*. Before I could mention this, Seema bahen said that she found it difficult to find songs of Lord Rama for that programme and that she didn't have any choice than filling the duration of the programme with that *Seeta Swayamvar* song. Fortunately, in the current era, the lost songs have returned back as can be observed in the list of songs played in the special programmes of *Durga Mahashtami*, *Durga Mahanavami* and *Vijayadashami* of 2023 as tabulated below. It is to be noted that earlier, specials used to go on air on *Ashtami* and *Dashami* only. The addition of a special on *Navami* is yet another positive development of the current period.

Table 111: List of songs for Durga Mahashtami special programme dated 22 October 2023

DURGA MAHASHTAMI SPECIAL (Date: 22 October 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
tune mujhe bulaya sherawaliye	Aasha	1980	Mohd Rafi, Chanchal, Chorus
chalo bulaawa aaya hai	Avtaar	1983	Asha Bhosle, Mahendra Kapoor, Chanchal, Chorus
oonche parvat wali maata	Falak	1988	Mohd Aziz
kab se khadi hoon jagadambe	Bahaar Aane Tak	1990	Anuradha Paudwal
duniya se duur ja raha hoon	Aarzoo	1999	Sonu Nigam

Table 112: List of songs for Durga Mahanavami special programme dated 23 October 2023

DURGA MAHANAVAMI SPECIAL (Date: 23 October 2023)			
Song	Film	Year	Singers
jay ambe gauri (Aarti)	Non-film album	-	Anuradha Paudwal, Chorus
jay maata di	Non-film album	-	Narendra Chanchal, Chorus
ek jug se main tarsi sherawaliye	Jaag Utha Insaan	1984	Mahendra Kapoor, Chorus
jay jay sherawali maa	Jay MaaVaishno Devi	1999	Anuradha Paudwal

Table 113: List of songs for Vijayadashami special programme dated 24 October 2023

VIJAYADASHAMI SPECIAL (Date: 24 October 2023)			
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Song	Film	Year	Singers
raam ji ki nikli sawaari	Sargam	1979	Mohd Rafi, Chorus
durga hai meri maa	Kranti	1981	Mahendra Kapoor, Meenu Purushottam
jay jay ram krishna hari	Sant Gyaneshwar	1964	Mukesh, Shyama Hemady
jay raghunandan jay siyaram	Gharana	1961	Mohd Rafi, Asha Bhosle
raghupati raghav raja raam	Maa, Bahen Aur Biwi	1974	Kishore Kumar, Sharda, Chorus
jay siya raam	Besharam	1978	Mahendra Kapoor

Going back to the discussion taking place in the staff room of AIR Guwahati, looking at the overall prevailing situation at that time, Meeta bahen said that if things went like that, then there would be a big lock hanging outside that room soon. Seema bahen agreed on a serious note. On a positive note, Meeta bahen then mentioned that there were plans of allocating a mobile phone number to which the *Jawans* would be able to send in their song requests and messages. That, however, never saw the light of the day.

After some more discussions, Seema bahen walked up to the adjacent almira and took out a small round tiffin box. There were two sweets in it. She offered one to me and one to Meeta bahen. After some time, Meeta bahen had to leave for home. Seema bahen too winded up the work for the day and wished that I visited her house which was inside the AIR Campus as she wanted to introduce me to her husband. I couldn't turn down her request. She then took me to the Studio from where the announcers presented programmes of Guwahati-B. There wasn't any one inside as the next transmission was to start at 17:00. What surprised me was the presence of a Stand Fan. When I asked about the reason for it being placed there, she told me that the Air Conditioner wasn't working for quite some time. My next question was around the noise that it would generate to which she said that they would switch it off before announcement and would turn it on again when the microphone was off. Braving the scorching heat, they passed the entire summer of 2009 with that Stand Fan. Walking down the corridors, I could see gramophone records piled up in huge stacks, which were waiting to be digitized while the turntables were already removed. Seema bahen took me to the other studios including recording studios and the newsroom. At the library, she introduced me to the librarian. I was embarrassed when Seema bahen told her that I was one of the big critics of their programme citing example of my frequent criticism surrounding the playing of the same songs repeatedly.

### Seema Bahen's Guest Treatment

We then walked down to Seema bahen's staff quarter. Mr. Sengupta was pleasantly surprised to see me as he had heard about me for long. At their place, the discussions were less related to radio and more on the personal front. Although it was the end of September, the hot and humid weather was making it uncomfortable. Seema bahen offered me a glass of soft drink. As I was supposed to meet one of my past colleagues the same evening, I was gradually moving into a 'hurry-up' mode. As I requested to take their leave, Seema bahen wouldn't let me do so before serving me with another round of refreshment. My strong denial didn't work, and she was back with a bowl full of delicious *rice kheer* cooked in traditional Bengali style.

I took their leave and came out of the AIR Campus. That was the only day I visited AIR Guwahati and that was the only in-person meeting I had with Seema bahen and Meeta bahen, or in fact with any announcer of the station. The memories of that day will continue to spark my eyes forever.

### **Meeta Bahen's Emotional Acknowledgement**

During my visit to AIR Guwahati, I came to know that Meeta bahen was retiring in 2010 and Seema bahen in 2011. It was a casual piece of information from their side that came out during the discussion. They didn't even probably bother to keep that in mind that they had mentioned the dates to me. For me, that was a significant piece of information from the programme viewpoint. Their retirements would be no less than important milestones in the journey of this historic programme. So, I sincerely made it a point to remember the dates. After that visit, I neither went to Guwahati ever again nor did I contact them via letters. Contacting over phone was out of question as I lost their numbers after losing my mobile phone.

In the summer of 2010, just before Meeta bahen's retirement in July, I sent her a Retirement Greeting Card wishing her a healthy and peaceful life. I sent the card to the address of the Troops Programme through a Courier Service to make sure it reached its destination. Few days later, one afternoon I received a call from an unknown mobile number. As soon as I answered, there was an over-excited female voice on the other side. After revealing her identity (she took her real name!), she said, *"tumhara card mila, sachmuch meri aankhon mein aansoo aa gaye, aisa lag raha hai jaise pichhle 35 saalon ki tapasya ka phal mil gaya ho!"* ("I received your card. It brought tears to my eyes. I felt as if I received the fruit of my 35-year-long meditation/worship.") And she really meant it as was evident in her excited and genuine voice.

As a nice gesture, Meeta bahen sent me a New Year Greeting Card in January 2011. It was again a surprise for me as there wasn't any communication between us after that phone call. Inside the card, she wrote in Hindi, *"To my brother Sujoy."* I still have that card at my home back in India. Hopefully, I would be able to include it in the next revision of this book. I had called her back to wish her a happy new year. Her husband expressed interest to talk to me. He was equally jolly in his words as was his wife. I once again lost her contact number as my phone was damaged again. Years later, in 2018, when AIR Guwahati launched their WhatsApp number, I contacted them on WhatsApp and enquired about Meeta bahen's number. They were kind enough to share her number without any hesitation. Since then, I am in contact with her over phone. When I asked about her absence on social media platforms, she said, *"It's all fake. Why go there!"*

### **An Unusual Experience of Meeta bahen**

Meeta bahen was very close to Rekha bahen. Being at least ten years older, Rekha bahen was like her elder sister. Often, she would bring tiffin for Meeta bahen by telling her beforehand not to bring tiffin from home. Even though they were just colleagues, there was a deep personal touch in their relation. Meeta bahen, on such occasions, used to bring fruits with her and they shared their lunches. Outside the AIR station, fruit-sellers used to sit in a row on the footpath. Among them, there was an old, poor, and blind fruit-seller. His fruits used to be the worst in quality on most of the days. They were often either overripe or slightly rotten. Naturally, very few people would buy from him. Despite this fact, Meeta bahen, as she recalled over a telephonic conversation, used to

buy from him as a sympathetic gesture, to help him meet his ends, and if not anything else, to help out a blind man. The blind fruit-seller didn't have any cart. He would instead sit on the ground with his fruits. And there used to be a radio to his side.

One morning Meeta bahen went to the man to buy some fruits. There were bananas only, that too in a very bad condition. Those were overripe and no one would like to have them. Yet Meeta bahen asked him to give her four of them. To her utter surprise, the man suddenly caught her hands tightly and requested her to take all the bananas that he had. She said that she didn't need so many and that they were almost perishing. To this the man said that he was giving them free of cost to her. Although Meeta bahen offered him some money while taking the bananas, he didn't take a single penny and started saying, "*aap bhagwaan ho, aap bhagwaan ho, aap se paise naheen lunga!*" ("You are God, you are God, I won't take money from you!"). Finding him in an eccentric mood, Meeta bahen thought not to argue with him and that she would pay him on some other day as appropriate. She took the bananas and headed towards AIR. But to her surprise, the man was never to be found again, ever. She would often look for him every day, but he was nowhere to be found. His last words used to reverberate in Meeta bahen's ears. No one knew from where he came and where he went, but this incident left a deep impact on Meeta bahen.

Since blind people have a great hearing capacity, and because the man was carrying a radio, Meeta bahen speculates that the man might have heard her voice on the radio and that he had recognized her voice. Whatever was the reason, his sudden disappearance remained a secret forever. [29]

### **Meeta Bahen meets Rekha Bahen**

There is more to share about the relation between Meeta bahen and Rekha bahen. During my interaction with Meeta bahen, she told me that she always had the desire to present Thursday's *Swar Chhaya* since it was a creative programme. She had told Rekha bahen about it and used to request her to allow her to present that programme sometimes. But every time Rekha bahen would reject her request jokingly that Meeta bahen would anyway present the programme after her retirement (since Seema bahen had weekly off on Thursday), indirectly maintaining her seniority. After the retirement of Rekha bahen, when Meeta bahen became the regular presenter of *Swar Chhaya*, she could sense that the casual announcers were equally interested to present this popular programme that required writing skills. So, she brought in a change. She included the supporting casual announcer on duty, and they together presented the programme in a conversational theme-based programme rather than just one announcer reading out poetic lines and playing songs. With Meeta bahen's retirement, the format, however, got reverted back to its original.

Keeping aside the professional relation, Rekha bahen and Meeta bahen were like sisters. After Rekha bahen retired in 2000 and permanently left for her native place Bareilly, it was only over occasional phone calls that the two spoke. With time, the frequency of phone calls decreased as is generally the case with everyone. Years passed by and it was almost a decade of Rekha bahen's retirement. Meeta bahen never met her again throughout the decade. However, destiny brought them at one place again, even though it was just for two minutes. It all happened when Meeta bahen and her husband were travelling to Delhi to meet their son who was working there. They were travelling by train from Guwahati to Delhi. On the train, while having conversations with fellow passengers, she realized that the train was going to stop at Bareilly. At once, it came to her

mind that since Rekha bahen lived there, how nice it would be if she could come to meet her at the railway station. Meeta bahen wasn't aware of how far Rekha bahen's house was from the railway station. The train would reach Bareilly the next afternoon. Meeta bahen called up Rekha bahen and informed her about her being on the train to Delhi and that she would be passing over Bareilly the next day. Rekha bahen jumped at the thought of meeting her younger sister after almost a decade, with whom she had worked for nearly thirty years. Rekha bahen's house was at a convenient distance from the station. She took from Meeta bahen the train number, coach number and the time of arrival of the train at Bareilly.

The next afternoon, both were equally excited to meet after such a long time. Rekha bahen reached the station and waited at the assigned platform and expected position of the coach. As soon as the train approached Bareilly, Meeta bahen walked up to the Exit door of the coach and waited for the train to stop. She got down as the train stopped and was pleasantly delighted to find Rekha bahen right in front of her after all those years. Their eyes sparkled in joy and emotions. They embraced each other tightly, exchanged few words. They wished if they could talk for hours, but the stoppage was for just two minutes. At the blink of an eye, it was time to get back on to the train. Meeta bahen got back on the train while Rekha bahen stood on the platform. They kept talking. The train started moving slowly. They waved at each other until they were out of sight. This meeting proved to be their last meeting in-person. Although they spoke over the phone, they could never meet again. [29]

### **My Short Telephonic Conversation with Rekha bahen**

When Meeta bahen was sharing her experience of meeting Rekha bahen at Bareilly station to me, one desire cropped up in my mind. The desire was to speak to Rekha bahen. Till then, I had interacted with Meeta bahen and Seema bahen, both in-person and over telephone. However, I could never interact with Rekha bahen since she had retired years before I visited AIR. It was very kind of Meeta bahen that she shared Rekha bahen's mobile number with me some time during 2019. Generally, people don't share someone else's number without taking his/her permission. I was lucky that Meeta bahen considered me reliable enough. Not only that, Meeta bahen even encouraged me to call her up once. I got possession of Rekha bahen's direct contact number, but I was a bit hesitant to call her up as it was going to be my first interaction with her. The uncertainty about how she would respond to my call made me little uncomfortable.

In the Spring of 2020, the havoc of Coronavirus was all around. People were dying all around like insects. There was a wave of negativity and fear of death all across the world. I, thus, finally decided to call up Rekha bahen without any further delay. With a bit of hesitation and shyness, I called her number. A male voice answered the call. I enquired if I could speak to Bimlesh ji. Within a few seconds, that familiar voice was on the call whom I had last heard on that last Saturday of the year 2000. I was listening to her voice after twenty years and a strange feeling swept through my ears and my heart. She said, "*Hello!*" I said, "*Bimlesh ji, namaskar!*" "*kaun baat kar rahe hain?*" ("*Who is speaking please?*"), she asked. I introduced myself and told her about my long-term association with the Troops Programme as a listener. She at once recognized me and admitted that I used to write letters to them and that I was a very regular participating listener. She then asked me from where I had obtained her number. I told her about the source to which she responded, "*achchha, Sadhana ne diya!*" My shy nature didn't allow me to ask any further

questions to her that day. She then said, “*aapka bahut bahut shukriya jo aap ne hamein yaad kiya*” (“*Thank you very much for remembering me*”). I too thanked her and hung up.

Within few days, the pandemic spread like a wildfire, and we all were traumatized with the news of people dying. There was no atmosphere of discussing radio-related things. Naturally, I never called Rekha bahen again. However, I was in touch with Meeta bahen and Seema bahen over WhatsApp. It was just a few months after my talking to Rekha bahen that I received the heart wrenching news of her demise. At the age of 80, Bimlesh Arya, the famous Rekha bahen of AIR Guwahati’s *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, had left for her heavenly abode on 17 September 2020 due to old-age ailments. An Obituary from AIR Guwahati was published in local dailies the following day. Meeta bahen wrote to me on WhatsApp – “*Troops Programme ka ek sitara doob gaya!*” (“*One star of the Troops Programme has set.*”) [29] [107]

# **PART THREE**

# 16. The NextGen Takes Over

During the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the scene of radio broadcasting and listening was fast changing. The broadcasters of the special-audience programmes were especially having trying times with every passing day to keep their audiences stick to the programmes meant for them. Programme for the Forces and troops was already into the most difficult phase in the history of broadcasting. At Guwahati, the situation was all the more aggravated by the retirement of all regular announcers. The Hindi Section was completely managed by the team of casual announcers under the supervision of the Programme Executive. This chapter analyses the situation and the various developments taking place during the second decade of this century that made profound impact on the Troops Programme.

## **The Show must go on!**

With Meeta bahen's voice disappearing from AIR Guwahati's airwaves in 2013, the era of regular announcers presenting Guwahati's Troops Programme ended. The complete takeover by the pool of casual announcers had its own impact on the programme. The programme which used to follow a definite and rigid distribution of programmes amongst the regular announcers became one where such demarcation was no longer possible due to the manner the assignment of duties of the casual announcers was handled. Nevertheless, two announcers still presented each day's programme by dividing the segments uniformly, but obviously keeping the age-old tradition of the more senior announcer presenting the Dibrugarh segment alive.

We had earlier learnt in this book about Madhu Maheshwari and Gunaprabha Borah, the two most senior casual announcer. After Madhu Maheshwari left the Troops Programme in 2014, Gunaprabha Borah became the leading lady. *"Radio is the world of voice and sound. It is said, ~meri aawaaz hi pehchaan hai, gar yaad rahe~ (my voice is my identity if you remember it). The relationship of voice and radio has had an impact on me since childhood. That is the reason of my becoming an announcer from a listener, which I am proud about. Coming from a military family, discipline and time are very important in our lives. After that, while working on radio, I fully realized the value of time. Every moment matters here. Also, while working here, I got to learn, among other things, how to express my views clearly,"* said Gunaprabha Borah. [162] Towards the end of my conversation with her, I casually asked her to pick just one programme segment from the Troops Programme that she enjoys the most presenting and her pick was *Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan*. She justified her choice saying, *"I like all the segments in the programme, but I like presenting ~Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan~ the most. It gives me peace of mind. Whenever I present this programme, I also pray to the Almighty for the well-being of our brave Jawans, who perform duties in stressful environment and inaccessible areas. May God always protect them from every calamity! When my father used go on (combat) operational duties, we, back at home, used to pray for his early return. We would get peace only after he returned. This is something that the members of a Fauji Family can only understand and feel. This is the reason why I feel the best while*

presenting ~Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan~.” [162]

The other announcers of that period, who have contributed towards the continuity of the Troops Programme include but not limited to Archana Devi, Bipin Kumar, Brij Mohan Prasad, Devanand Das, Diwakar, Lakshman Prasad Chapagain, Mousumi Brahma, Nidhi Mishra, Pranami Goswami, Rikita Singhi, Sima Routh.

### The ‘Unofficial’ Rise and Fall of FM for Guwahati-B

To recap the history quickly, AIR Gauhati-B had started as a shortwave channel on 4 May 1957 radiating at 31.33 and 42.11 metres to broadcast programmes in north-eastern dialects. Just after the Indo-Pak War of 1965, AIR Gauhati was allotted its second medium wave, thus making Gauhati-B a medium wave channel broadcasting at 291.3 m while the existing shortwave channel was renamed as Gauhati-C. The Troops Programme was available over both mediumwave and shortwave in the afternoon due to a combined B and C transmission, while the evening session was available only over shortwave (Gauhati-C). This structure continued for almost thirty years, until 1994, when the C-channel was discontinued due to the decision of phasing out shortwave transmitters. Since then, the B-channel, carrying the Troops Programme, had been available only over the low power mediumwave (10-kW).

Eighteen years later, on 27 November 2012, AIR Guwahati launched an additional FM channel. During that time, AIR Guwahati had one FM channel (VBS Guwahati) transmitting at 100.8 MHz. The additional FM channel was put at 103.3 MHz. There was unconfirmed news that an FM Rainbow channel was being allocated to Guwahati. However, it never saw the light of the day. To begin with, Guwahati-B was placed on the newly commissioned FM transmitter. The reason could be due to the nature of programmes on this channel (e.g., programme for the youth, and programmes of Hindi film music for the Troops) that demanded a FM channel more than Guwahati-A, which was more oriented towards the traditional listeners. Moreover, Guwahati-A was also available globally via Direct-to-Home (DTH) Services of Prasar Bharati, called DD Direct Plus (later renamed as DD Free Dish). Although Guwahati-B was made available on FM 103.3 MHz, it was never officially announced. The programme announcements never mentioned this frequency. However, interestingly, the promotional material of Phone-in programmes under *Yuvavani* shared over the official social media pages of the station used to mention this FM frequency regularly as can be seen in two such promotions done on 23 October and 26 November 2019.

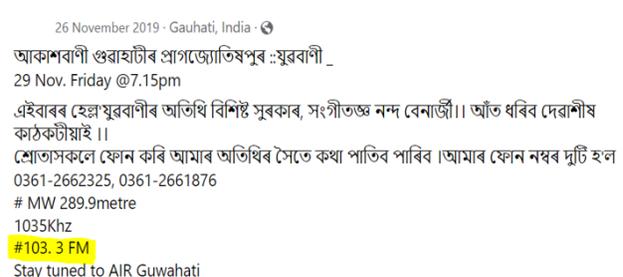
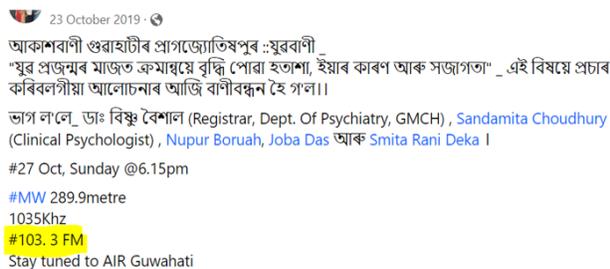


Photo 8: Screenshot of a programme promotion of AIR Guwahati-B (Pragjyotishpur) on their Facebook Page

During the COVID era, both the FM transmitters of Guwahati were shut down. That is, there is currently no more VBS Guwahati over 100.8 MHz and Guwahati-B is also no longer available on 103.3 MHz. Going back to the original speculation of having FM Rainbow Guwahati, it never happened. Instead, two hours of FM Rainbow Delhi is currently relayed by Guwahati-B between 15:00 and 17:00 daily.

### **Guwahati-B goes Digital!**

Until 2007, AIR was an all-analogue transmission system broadcasting over AM (MW/SW) and FM technologies. With one of the HPTs at Khanpur (Delhi) getting upgraded for Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) operation in 2007, AIR joined the elite league of broadcasters having digital transmission capability. [166] By the early years of the second decade of the century, commercial DRM transmissions of AIR were in place. Guwahati made to the prestigious list of AIR stations with DRM capability in March 2014 with the upgradation of the Guwahati-B 10-kW LPT to a 20-kW DRM transmitter. The reason for selecting Guwahati-B over Guwahati-A for DRM could probably be due to the same reasons as cited in previous section.

Since the same AM transmitter could be upgraded for DRM transmission by introducing additional hardware and software, it was comparatively easy to implement. This meant the same transmitter radiated AM at one frequency and DRM at another frequency. As a rule, in AIR, a +9 kHz offset between AM (Mediumwave) and DRM frequency was standardized. Guwahati-B, which was on 289.9 m corresponding to 1035 kHz, was assigned a DRM frequency of  $1035 + 9 = 1044$  kHz. This was made part of the station identification announcements. Sometime during 2020, the +9kHz offset was changed to -9kHz meaning that the DRM frequency was 9 kHz less than the AM frequency. Thus, starting the first week of January 2021, the announcements of Guwahati-B mentioned DRM frequency as 1026 kHz.

With Guwahati-B thus going digital in 2014, the Troops Programme was available on DRM sets with crystal clear reception. The urban listeners of the Kamrup metropolitan city area and the adjoining districts could avail this latest technology of radio broadcasting. However, the cost of DRM receivers was much higher than the normal AM/FM receivers. Apart from the modern cars which were equipped with DRM receiver, very few radio enthusiasts chose to possess a DRM set at home. Needless to say, it was of no use for the *Jawans* with regard to listening of the Troops Programme. Within six months of DRM launch at Guwahati, the shortwave transmitters of Guwahati-A were finally shut down on 16 September 2014, thus wiping out shortwave completely from the station. [167]

Thus, the modes of transmission and frequencies of the three channels of AIR Guwahati as were in 2014 may be summarized as below:

Guwahati-A: AM (MW 411.5 m/ 729 kHz), DTH

Guwahati-B: AM (MW 289.9 m/ 1035 kHz), DRM (1044 kHz), FM 103.3 MHz (unofficial)

VBS Guwahati: FM 100.8 MHz

## Closure of Request-based Programmes

On one hand, the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed the huge popularity of broadcasting technologies such as FM, DTH, DRM and the latest one being Mobile App/ Internet. On the other hand, the passion towards sending song requests was declining in general throughout the country. During the early part of 2010s, the volume of song requests had dwindled to a level at which it was getting more and more difficult to fill in the request-based programme duration.

Some of the reasons for the decreasing interest of troops towards radio were identified earlier in the book. There were more factors which got added to the list during the latter half of the second decade. Smart Phones had replaced the traditional ones. YouTube was growing exponentially both in volume and in popularity. Think of any song and you could listen and watch with a single touch of your finger. Radio, Television and Cinema were no longer the only sources of film music. Listeners were no longer dependent on the radio to listen to their favourite songs. One might argue that the listeners also wanted to hear their names on radio from the mouth of their favourite announcers. Although true in the bygone era, the new era of social media had quickly eaten up that excitement as well. The presence of the modern-day announcers on social media platforms and the ease with which the listeners could communicate with them personally has totally overpowered the charm of writing letters to radio programmes and to the announcers whom they don't know by face and waiting eagerly for those to get included in the programmes. Science and technology have given us speed but have snatched away all excitement and impulses. It is true that there is a restricted usage of smart phones, social media, and internet platforms in Defence Services due to which the above reasoning might not be relevant as the reason for decline of song requests from the *Jawans*. However, one has to remember that the *Jawans* are not from another universe but from the same society we belong to. The changing tastes and behaviour of the modern youth are applicable to everyone, whether civilian or active servicemen.

To a great extent, film music in general was equally losing its charm in this decade. Opinion might differ but everyone would agree to one point that film music had entered its poorest phase since the mid-2010s. Looking at the songs released year on year, the ones that one might like to listen again and again could be counted on fingers. This could also have been instrumental in the rapid decline of radio listeners towards requesting film songs over radio. Whatever might have been the reasons, the outcome was not hidden from anyone. In the absence of song requests, three programmes of Guwahati's Troops Programme were supposed to get discontinued – *Aaj Ka Geet*, *Geet Mala*, *Aap Ki Farmaish*. However, the first two got spared by virtue of their names. Since their names didn't indicate request-based concept, they were simply made non-request-based programmes with the type of songs played remaining the same. That is, *Geet Mala* still included old film songs but not on the requests of *Jawans*. *Aaj Ka Geet* became a daily programme of playing a random song based on announcer's choice. The third one, *Aap Ki Farmaish*, was the one that had to face the wrath of the situation. Its name became the reason of its death for obvious reason. The adjusted programme schedule as was during 2018 is seen in table below. The three occurrences of *Aap Ki Farmaish* on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays were replaced with a second instance of *Sabrang*, *Gunjan* and *Geetika* respectively. Interestingly, *Gunjan* was originally started as a second instance of *Sabrang* when the evening edition was merged with the afternoon one, as explained earlier. These second instances of the two programmes had, in fact, quadrupled *Sabrang*. From amongst other programmes, *Geetika* was the most favourable and the easiest to have a second instance given the abundance of old film songs. In a nutshell, the three programmes chosen to

replace *Aap Ki Farmaish* were all mixed film songs-based programmes.

Table 114: Schedule of Troops Programme during 2018

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM (as in 2018)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m) DRM 1044 kHz   FM 103.3 MHz							
12:05	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:06	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:07	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri 2,4 - Tarana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum 5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Tarang	Swar Chhaya	Sabrang	Gunjan	Geetika
13:50	Watan Ke Taraane	1 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet 5 - Naye Taraane	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Tarannum	Pradeshik Sangeet	Shirshak Sangeet
14:00							
14:15	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar
14:30	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
15:00	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down

Also noted in above schedule was the decrease in duration of the English and Hindi news bulletins of 14:00 by 50% each, resulting in the extension of Troops Programme by 15 minutes (14:00 – 14:15). Instead of introducing any new programme or reverting back to the old format of having patriotic song, ghazals and mixed film songs, the two programmes earlier between 13:10 and 14:00 were extended and adjusted to fill in this additional 15 minutes each day as visible in the schedule. With this extension, the Troops Programme once again became a 2 hours and 35 minutes daily programme as was almost the case when the shortwave was shut down in 1994 (it was 2 hours and 40 minutes then!).

Additionally, *Nayi Filmon Se* previously alternating with *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* was discontinued making the latter a weekly programme again, while a new *Naye Taraane* with same content as *Nayi Filmon Se* was introduced on the fifth Tuesdays of the month between 13:50 and 14:15, kicking out the fifth Tuesday instance of *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* to the fifth Thursday 12:38 – 13:05 slot. In essence, the fifth Thursday edition of *Hai Zindagi Pukaarti* was sacrificed. Currently, *Naye Taraane* is aired between 13:40 and 14:00 on the fifth Tuesday. The August 2023 edition of the programme broadcast on the 29<sup>th</sup> featured songs from *Raid* (2018), *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), *Wazir* (2016) and *Chef* (2017). It is indicative from this list and also from all the song listing done so far in this book that songs from films released in 2020 and later are not yet available at Akashvani Guwahati.

## The New Generation Announcers

Time and tide wait for none. One generation replacing another is the law of nature. This is how civilization on this planet has moved forward. During the period of regular announcers, the requirement of casual announcers was minimal. However, 2013 onwards, the requirement increased manyfold. The complete absence of regular announcers at the Hindi Section of AIR Guwahati led to the recruitment of a large number of casual announcers. They belong to the

modern generation. Naturally, their style of presentation is different from the previous generation. This gave a new and fresh look and feel to the Troops Programme to a great extent. As put in Meeta bahen's words when asked about the future of this programme, *"Today also, the announcers and other staff are doing similar work and working in the same fashion. The only difference now is that the new generation has got introduced. Earlier there used to be only our generation. Now, it is the amalgamation of both ours and the new generation. Certainly, there will be differences. No one can stop it. The thought process of the new generation is different. They demand changes. Due to this change in thinking, the traditional programmes have got subjected to turbulences. There needs to be a control to minimize this turbulence. If the wavelength of the two generations match, things will work wonder. The programmes may be even more beautiful than before."* [141]

One positive aspect of the current set-up of the Troops Programme that every listener can feel is the collaboration between the presenters towards the creation and execution of special programmes. This wasn't the case earlier when only one announcer owned a programme exclusively. Recalling her memorable experience of preparing and presenting the Diwali 2019 special programme for troops along with several other announcers, Anamika Mazumdar, who joined AIR Guwahati the previous year, said, *"It was a group programme. Some of us reached the studio early and we were waiting for others. In the meantime, we completed working on the script, shared each other's opinion, and had good laughs. The funniest part was the capturing of the studio by reaching early because most of the recording studios always remained occupied. In between we enjoyed sharing our lunches we brought from home. We enjoyed editing, mixing of songs and learnt new techniques from seniors."* [168]

When asked about how she made into the world of radio, Anamika Mazumdar promptly gave the credit to her father. In her words, *"I joined All India Radio Guwahati in the year 2018. One day my father informed me about the vacancy for the post of Hindi announcer. Being a student of Biotechnology, I didn't take him seriously. However, my father kept insisting me to go and give it a try. Reluctantly, I appeared at AIR. Soon I cleared all the tests one after the other leaving behind several competitors for the position – the written entrance, the voice audition and finally the personal interview. Voice audition was one of the tests that I enjoyed the most because the jury appreciated my clear voice."* The reason for her father to recommend her towards radio was not just her sweet voice but because of her Hindi skills as well. Despite Bengali being her mother tongue, Anamika developed fluency in spoken Hindi due to her father's transferable job, which gave his family the opportunity to live in various states and interact with different kinds of people with varied language and culture. Moreover, her twelve years of schooling was in various Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan schools, which enriched her fluency and accent of Hindi. Ask her about her favourite segment of the Troops Programme, and her quick answer is – *"Tarang makes me happy the most whenever I present it on Wednesday afternoons. Selecting an actor or actress and researching on his/her journey of struggle, failure, success, and achievements, and then weaving the information with songs picturized on them is really interesting. Their success stories always boost me up."* The opportunity to serve the Indian soldiers through radio has increased her respect for them, admits Anamika Mazumdar, who is probably the youngest presenter of the Troops Programme. She came to know many new things about the soldiers, about their sacrifices and the hard work they do. *"It makes me happy and proud to entertain the Indian brave hearts"*, she added. [168]

Like the Diwali 2019 programme for troops, the Hindi Section, for the first time, contributed

towards the New Year Eve special programme, which was broadcast from Guwahati-A on 31 December from 21:30, to bid farewell to the year 2020. There was a 15-minute slot for the Hindi portion. The same Thursday afternoon of 31 December 2020, in the Troops Programme, the full-length version of the programme was broadcast between 13:20 and 13:50. It was a scripted conversation-based programme in the voices of Sneha Verma, K. Supriya Devi and Anamika Mazumdar, filled with songs in between their conversations. While listening to these three voices, for a moment, the ‘voice images’ of Rekha bahen, Seema bahen and Meeta bahen flashed past my mind. Announcer Sneha Verma recalled her experience of this yet another group presentation, “*We always have interesting and memorable experiences while preparing a package programme for any special occasion like Holi, Diwali, New Year and so on. From writing the script to the recording, preparing the final edited work, every phase is interesting. Last year, for bidding farewell to 2020, I had prepared the script for the programme. The final editing to be done was very interesting as I was the one who had to figure out what my colleagues will think in a particular situation, but when I handed over the script to two of them, they were surprised to read out how I could be so accurate about their thought process and emotions. That was very interesting indeed!*” [169]

Sneha Verma has shared her journey of past five years at AIR Guwahati for the readers of this book. Getting informed by one of her well-wishers about the vacancy, she applied for the position of Hindi announcer at AIR Guwahati. Going through the three-layered selection process of written test, interview, and voice audition, she got selected and joined the station in May 2018. She considers herself tremendously fortunate to become part of this one of the longest running programmes of the country, the Troops Programme of AIR Guwahati. She said, “*This (Troops) programme has made me grow as a person. The way all announcers prepare programmes, it gives us ample scope to bring out our creative faculties. Moreover, the cause of the programme which is to provide a source of entertainment to our soldiers itself is a noble and significant task.*” Sneha Verma fully understands the current situation of almost zero participation of troops in the programme as against tremendous interactions even until a decade ago as she says, “*Even though the popularity (of the programme) amongst the troops has declined over the recent years, yet our endeavour and spirit in presenting the programme remains undominated. I really feel privileged to be a part of this programme. Long Live Troops Programme!*” So, which programmes are her favourites? “*Swar Chhaya, Tarang, Ek Hi Film Ke Geet, and programmes prepared for special occasions are my favourite ones as they give me chance to add my personal flavour in them.*” [169]

Indeed, some of the programmes appeared to be influenced with personal flavour of the new announcers. The concept and themes of *Swar Chhaya* programme continued to be the same as before, however, the presentation has modernized with time. For instance, Sneha Verma presented *Swar Chhaya* on 17 December 2020 on the very common theme – *zindagi*. However, the lines she spoke had completely different outlook, which were unheard of in this programme. Moreover, she shared few quotes in English penned by prolific writers. One of them was by British writer Virginia Woolf – “*Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.*” The other was from the famous poem *Leisure* by W. H. Davies –

*What is this life if, full of care,*

*We have no time to stand and stare?*

Talking more about *Swar Chhaya* presented by the present-day announcers, although its editions revolved around topics dictated by a single word, at times, announcers weave songs not based on a single word but make the songs flow through a river that has a common undercurrent. One such instance was the programme presented by Anamika Mazumdar on 8 April 2021. The selected songs were ‘*motiyon ki ladee hoon main, phulva ki chhadee hoon main*’ (Loafer, Asha Bhosle), ‘*is reshmi paazeb ki jhankaar ke sadke*’ (Laila Majnu, Lata-Rafi), ‘*allah allah allah, wo le gaya chaandi chhalla*’ (Mere Huzoor, Lata Mangeshkar), ‘*phir neend kahaan aati hai jab lag jaati hai mehboob ki mehendi haathon mein*’ (Mehboob Ki Mehendi, Lata-Hemlata), ‘*aankhon mein surma daal ke jab aayegi dulhaniya*’ (Rani Roopmati, Usha Mangeshkar) and ‘*teri bindiya re*’ (Abhimaan, Lata-Rafi). Not only the songs were selected carefully with both variety and a common undercurrent but also the fact that a present generation announcer selecting several uncommon songs of the past (the ones from *Loafer*, *Mere Huzoor*, *Rani Roopmati*) is definitely appreciable.

The *Geet Manoranjan* programme of 9 October 2021 had all comic songs picturized on Govinda. This kind of comedian-based edition of this programme was again something unheard of. Sneha Verma has always tried to make it a little different. Another example is about featuring of lesser-known artists in *Tarang* programme. In a biography-based weekly programme, generally, legendary artists get featured. Inclusion of lesser talked about actors like Fardeen Khan and Ayesha Takia speaks volume about the current presenters’ genuine interest towards the Troops Programme.

Internet has played a vital role towards the change in format of several programmes. Earlier, it was extremely difficult to obtain biographical details of artists and information related to the films, hence, programmes on a particular artist or a film contained only songs with practically no details about the featured artist or the film. The arrival of the Internet has opened the door of vast reserve of information of any kind. Programmes like *Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet*, *Raag Rang* and *Tarang* are no more song-only programmes. Similarly, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet* has also changed with the presenter briefly narrating the story plot, cast and crew, awards and achievements related to the featured film in between the songs. Sometimes, the presenters walk one step ahead by selecting a film for this programme based on its milestone anniversary. One such instance was the *Chayanika* programme of 30 August 2021. When it comes to doing things differently, K. Supriya Devi is another presenter of the present time. For that *Chayanika* programme, she chose the songs of *Saaajan* (1991), which was completing 30 years that day. In between the evergreen songs of the film, details of various records and milestones achieved by the film and its music were shared. This edition of *Chayanika* was an example of how an ordinary programme could be transformed into an extraordinary one.

K. Supriya Devi also joined AIR Guwahati in 2018. At that time, she was pursuing a master’s degree in mass communication from Gauhati University. After one of her classmates informed her about the recruitment drive for Hindi announcers, she applied and went through the three tests and got selected. Despite being a Manipuri by mother tongue, how is her Hindi pronunciation so perfect? The answer lies in her military family background as she says, “*Military background is the reason if my Hindi pronunciation and accent is good. I did my schooling from Army Public School where everybody mostly spoke Hindi. My mother-tongue or any other language didn’t influence me so much as Hindi did.*” Supriya Devi remembers her initial days at AIR Guwahati, “*I still remember, when we newly joined, we just used to get nervous about speaking over the microphone and sometimes got puzzled with the faders (a device or control for varying the volume of sound). Thanks to Shuvra Baishya ma’am and the senior announcers, who were so encouraging*

*and had taught us so much.” Supriya Devi believes editing to be the most important aspect of a radio programme, “While doing radio programmes, we get involved in research, learn new things. We write our scripts, thus enhancing the writing skills. We speak with expressions and intonations, so, I can say that we learn a little bit of acting too. And editing is the most important for a radio programme to make it sound beautiful. We owe this to Rituparna sir (Rituparna Das), who has helped us on several occasions. As a whole, working in radio has definitely boosted our confidence in speech and we have been able to explore our creative side.” [170]*

For a newcomer in any field, mistakes and errors are inevitable. K. Supriya Devi, referring to an incident in this regard, said, “When I am in the studio, I have to keep my personal tensions outside. That was the biggest lesson I learnt working in radio.” She also believes that the programmes done in groups are the most memorable ones. “When all of us come together, it is so much fun to work. We have done few group programmes on Diwali, Holi, and New Year till now.”, she said. Among the long list of segments under the Troops Programme, her favourites are *Film Sangeet*, *Swar Chhaya*, *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, *Chayanika*, *Tarang*, *Raag Rang*, and *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*. Featuring Arijit Singh on *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet* by her shows how long this programme has come along. Also, liking of these fifty-year-old programmes by the present-day announcers proves the continued relevance of these programmes in the present era. [170]

Joyshree Deka is one presenter who is a good singer as well. In the special tribute programme after the demise of Lata Mangeshkar, she began the programme by singing few lines of the evergreen number ‘*lag ja gale ke phir ye haseen raat ho na ho*’ (*Woh Kaun Thi*). This was something never heard before from a Hindi announcer of AIR Guwahati. In a nutshell, the present announcers of the Troops Programme constitute a powerhouse of talent, enthusiasm, novelty, and presentation style that appeals to the modern-day listeners. Earlier, each programme used to be presented by one announcer. This continued for more than three decades, resulting in predictive presentations. Now, since every announcer is able to schedule every programme, the programmes have diversified. Some very rare songs are also getting played. For example, I heard the uncommon Suman Kalyanpur number ‘*bezubaan dil, shor na machaa*’ from the film *Door Nahin Manzil* recently in Saturday’s *Gunjan* programme. ‘*suman samaan tum apna khila khila mann rakhna*’ (*Kotwal Saab*) by the same singer and Asha Bhosle’s ‘*saajan tere pyar mein main to hui barbaad*’ (*Mahua*) are few more such lesser-heard songs chosen recently for *Sabrang*.

Mohd. Rafi’s uncommon ghazal ‘*zindagi aaj mere naam se sharmaati hai*’ (*Son of India*) has reappeared in *Filmi Naghme* after an era. Similarly, listening to Sharda’s rare ghazal ‘*kisi ke dil ko sanam leke yun naheen jaate, huzoor aisa sitam karke yun naheen jaate*’ (*Kal Aaj Aur Kal*) and Pamela Chopra’s unreleased ghazal of *Silsila* – ‘*khud se jo vaada kiya tha wo nibhaaya na gaya, humne chaha tha bahut tumko bhulaya na gaya*’ in this programme in 2023 have been real treats. When it comes to patriotic songs, the database is not large. Yet, recently, a very rare song was played which I never heard before in *Watan Ke Taraane*. This song is ‘*bolo bolo kiska ye desh*’ from the 1961 film *Pyar Ki Pyas*, sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Geeta Dutt, Manna Dey, Baby Renu, and Chorus.

The advantages and disadvantages of a regular announcer-based system over a casual announcer-based system has remained a debatable topic amongst listeners and broadcasters. This book doesn’t aim to take a dig at that. The only thing that is of utmost importance is that whether an announcer, either regular or casual, is sincere towards her presentation.



*Photo 9: Making of Diwali 2019 Special Prog. - (L to R) Diksha Katiyar, Joyshree Deka, Shreya Tripathi, Anamika Mazumdar, K. Supriya Devi; 75th Independence Day celebration (L to R) Brij Mohan Prasad, Joyshree Deka, Anamika Mazumdar, Sneha Verma (Source: AIR Guwahati's official Facebook page)*

# 17. The COVID-19 Period

The COVID-19 period has been one of the darkest phases of the known human civilization. This never-seen-before pandemic has inflicted astronomical impact in every sphere of human life across the globe. There hasn't been a single individual or an institution that remained unaffected, be it physically, emotionally, or financially. Commercial radio broadcasting was no exception. The pandemic introduced several changes in the state-run broadcaster of India which were unthinkable before. Starting from restructuring of broadcast schedule to temporary discontinuation of programmes and services to permanent shutdown of channels, COVID-19 took a serious toll on broadcasting. AIR Guwahati was no exception. This chapter journeys through the pandemic period and tries to quantify its impact on the Troops Programme. Few other developments at the station that had direct or indirect impact on this programme are also touched upon.

## **The Launch of *Paragmala***

As mentioned earlier, the first formal and structured Hindi Programme from Gauhati-A had started in 1958, which was a bimonthly 10-minute programme. There wasn't any formal Hindi Section during that time. It was in 1962, with the launch of the Troops Programme over Gauhati-B that the formal Hindi Section came into being. Around twenty years later, a daily talk based *Khaas Baaten* was started over Gauhati-B. Much later, the bimonthly Hindi Programme of Guwahati-A was transformed into a monthly half-hour *Vividha* programme. In a nutshell, the Troops Programme had always been the major offering from the Hindi Section of AIR Guwahati. 27 January 2020 was a big day for the Hindi Section to have launched a new programme, after decades, to be broadcast from Guwahati-A. Entitled *Paragmala*, meaning a garland of pollen grains, it was essentially a film music-based programme in which songs are weaved through spoken lines on a chosen topic. When instituted, it used to be a scripted and recorded programme with good editing and mixing.

Although *Paragmala* was not a part of the Troops Programme, nevertheless its significance was any less owing to the reason that it was being aired from the A-channel that had much greater reach and penetration than that of Guwahati-B. After the shortwave shutdown, the listenership of Troops Programme fell abruptly. Thus, *Paragmala* was a positive introduction of popular Hindi content reachable to a vast listening area that could entertain the civilians and the soldiers alike. The time slot chosen for *Paragmala* was Mondays, between 11:30 and 12:00, thus, not overlapping with the Troops Programme. The first episode, being broadcast a day after the Republic Day, was based on the topic of Unity in Diversity, and was presented by Diksha Katiyar. *Paragmala* differs from *Swar Chhaya* of Troops Programme in the way that the former is based on topics related to current affairs, thought-provoking issues, important observable days, and topics from daily life, whereas the latter is more a poetic and flowery representation of feelings centred around topics and aspects that dominates the Hindi film stories. Thus, *Paragmala* has no resemblance to any of the more than thirty programme segments broadcast under the Troops Programme, which ensures its distinct

identity.

## **The First COVID Wave**

The emergence of COVID-19 by the novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China in early December 2019, took the form of a pandemic within a very short span. Declared by WHO, as an international public health emergency, it affected over 213 countries and over 26 million people globally by 5 September 2020. [171] The first case in India was officially reported on 30 January 2020, a student who returned from Wuhan to Thrissur, Kerala. The first death in the country was in Karnataka on 11 March with a travel history from Saudi Arabia. As a preventive measure, the Central Government held a nation-wide *Janta Curfew* on 22 March and imposed a nation-wide lockdown starting 24 March 2020 that restricted easy movements both within and outside the country. The havoc increased with each passing day. People were terrified by the fear of death of their near and dear ones. The world hadn't seen such a gloomy situation on this enormous scale ever before.

The functioning of AIR got severely impacted. Protocols were laid down to lower the risk of infection. One step in this regard was to reduce the number of persons appearing at the radio stations. This directly meant cut down of programmes, transmissions, and channels. Examples of the first category were the discontinuation of letter-based programmes and phone-in/ SMS programmes. The letters were believed to be carriers of the virus while the phone-in/ SMS programmes needed additional staff. One example of transmission level cut-down was observed at Vividh Bharati. The round-the-clock service was divided between the central VBS based at Mumbai and AIR Delhi's VBS. While the central VBS aired programmes from 05:55 until 22:00, the Delhi station took over from 22:00 until 05:55. The third category was the most significant one in which many stations were made relay centres that started relaying the primary channel of the capital city of their respective states. The major stations that had multiple channels faced the axing of channels. For instance, AIR Delhi had five channels – Indraprastha (Delhi-A), Rajdhani (Delhi-B), VBS Delhi, FM Gold, and FM Rainbow. There was an additional AIR 24x7 News from the NSD. Starting 24 March 2020, Rajdhani channel was discontinued that led to the permanent closure of the 80-year-old *Sainikon Ke Liye* programme, the oldest and longest running programme for the Armed Forces in the country. In addition, Indraprastha and AIR 24x7 News were merged into a single channel. FM Gold relayed many programmes of this combined channel as well. And VBS Delhi discontinued its local programmes during the day, simply relayed Central VBS during the day and took over at night as mentioned above.

Like Delhi, other major stations with multiple channels did similar reductions. The B-channels of Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Jalandhar and Guwahati were paused. This brought the Troops Programme of Guwahati to come to a halt for the first time ever in its long history. It is true that the programme used to get impacted because of live commentaries of cricket matches and important Government functions since the shutdown of shortwave in the first half of 1990s. However, this kind of long-term closure was something that was never seen before. Guwahati-B started relaying Guwahati-A. The announcements carried the names of both the channels and both of its frequencies. Thus, Guwahati-B was functioning technically, but no programmes were being sourced from it.

The lockdown in Guwahati during the first wave of COVID-19 continued till the end of July 2020.

Although COVID cases didn't show any downward trend, Guwahati-B was made operational from programming perspective starting 1 September 2020. Thus, was resumed the Troops Programme after a stopover of 161 days. Meanwhile, the NSD had implemented major expansion in news bulletins due to the pandemic to keep the people informed in minute details. The hourly news bulletins were expanded from 5 minutes to 10 minutes each. The morning, afternoon, and evening 15-minute bulletins were made half-hour each. This led to rearrangement of the segments of the Troops Programme as seen in table below. None of the segments got discontinued though.

Table 115: Broadcast schedule with rearrangement due to COVID-19 triggered changed news timings

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM (as in Sep 2020)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m   DRM 1044 kHz)							
12:10	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:11	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:12	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri 2,4 - Tarana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum 5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:10	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:20	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Tarang	Swar Chhaya	Sabrang	Gunjan	Geetika
13:50	Watan Ke Taraane	1 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet 5 - Naye Taraane	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Tarannum	Pradeshik Sangeet	Shirshak Sangeet
14:00	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
14:30	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down

### Guwahati-A as 'FM Mahabahu' and Guwahati-B as 'Pragjyotishpur'

To counteract the ever-increasing popularity of private FM radio broadcasting in Guwahati, Prasar Bharati came up with the proposal of not only launching FM services for the Primary Channel of Akashvani Guwahati but also making a complete change in programme content and presentation to attract the urban listeners from all age groups. Thus, was launched Akashvani Guwahati FM Mahabahu on 8 August 2020, broadcasting at FM 101.6 MHz and also continuing on the existing AM 411.5 m on the mediumwave. In other words, Guwahati-A had become FM Mahabahu. Mahabahu represented the mighty Brahmaputra River flowing through the state of Assam.

The other channel continued to be identified as Guwahati-B for some more time. That was the period when all major stations were assigning names to their channels. Kolkata-A and B had become *Geetanjali* and *Sanchayita*; Mumbai-A and B had become *Asmita* and *Samvadita*, and so on. In November 2020, AIR Guwahati assigned the name *Pragjyotishpur* to Guwahati-B on the ancient name of the city. The Hindi announcements in the Troops Programme got changed from "ye akashvani ka Guwahatiendra hai" to "ye akashvani Guwahati Pragjyotishpur hai". Unlike Guwahati-A, although this rebranding of Guwahati-B didn't have any impact on the Troops Programme from content perspective, the 50-year-old format of channel identification announcement had changed.

## **Troops Programme goes Global!**

Started as a shortwave only mode, then becoming a mediumwave plus shortwave affair, few years on FM as well, and finally stabilizing over mediumwave and DRM, the Troops Programme had experienced all kinds of transmission technologies over the six decades. 11 November 2020 was a historic day for this programme and also for the entire channel when it was made available on 'newsonair', the official mobile application (Mobile App) platform of Prasar Bharati. The programme initially available to the entire north-eastern region had later shrunk to Guwahati region after the shutdown of shortwave. With its new presence on the mobile app, it technically became available globally. It can now be listened to from any nook and corner of the world provided there is Internet service available either through a mobile network, a Wi-Fi network, or a broadband cable network and that the listener has a smart phone to install the app.

Ever since I left Guwahati in 2002, except during my few short trips to Guwahati, I was totally out of touch with this programme that I had grown up listening to. The availability of this channel on mobile app restored my listening to this super favourite programme after a gap of around 18 years. How nostalgic I felt listening to this programme from Noida after almost two decades can't be expressed in words. All these years, I had only been speculating about it. At times, I wasn't even sure if it still existed. It was highly surprising to find the programme exactly in the same format and segments even after two decades. Distance and location are no longer barriers to listen to this programme.

## **Swapping of News Bulletins**

On 1 January 2021, the NSD swapped the timings of Hindi and English news bulletins in most of the hours of the day resulting in a kind of messy situation at various local stations that impacted their broadcast schedule. In the northern and western states, Hindi bulletins used to be primarily relayed while the eastern, north-eastern, and southern states relayed English bulletins primarily. This was keeping in mind the more popular language between Hindi and English in a particular region. Stations that had a second channel relayed bulletins in the other language as well. For example, AIR Guwahati's Mahabahu (formerly Guwahati-A) mostly relayed English bulletins while Pragjyotishpur (formerly Guwahati-B) relayed mostly Hindi bulletins. Thus, the sudden swapping of the bulletins resulted in confusion at the local stations on the very first day of the year. Certain channels that were relaying the preferred Hindi bulletins were forced to relay English bulletins at certain hours, and vice versa, as they could not afford to adjust this change in their local broadcast schedule.

Since beginning, the news bulletins relayed within the Troops Programme have been in Hindi. This was logically correct for the reason that the Troops Programme was a Hindi broadcast. An English bulletin inside a Hindi broadcast would have sounded weird. Until 31 Dec 2020, the Hindi bulletin between 13:10 and 13:20 was being relayed by Pragjyotishpur, while Mahabahu relayed the English bulletin between 13:00 and 13:10. However, the change at NSD forced both channels to have the 'other' bulletin. This meant that the English bulletin started getting relayed within the Troops Programme. One of my Keralite friends reported that the announcer at his local station announced the relay of English News bulletin while the Hindi bulletin started. Even the national level channel Vividh Bharati could not escape from this timing change impact. Being a 100%

Hindi channel, it used to relay only the Hindi bulletins during its prime-time broadcast. However, it was then compelled to relay English bulletin of 22:00 instead of the Hindi one.

### **The Second COVID Wave**

The second wave of COVID-19 was even more fatal than the first and had started taking more lives. The panic over the inability to get treatment and medication in hospitals and losing near and dear ones was much higher than that during the first wave. The whole world witnessed the demise of many great personalities. The gloomy atmosphere had gripped the entire planet. The virus had become all the more powerful. Consequently, AIR once again had to curtail its less significant broadcasts to follow the guidelines and protocols as laid down by the Government. Just before the outbreak of COVID-19, there were seven stations that had two channels (A and B) on the mediumwave. These were Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Jalandhar. During the first wave, all of these had halted their B-channels. Later, only Kolkata, Mumbai and Guwahati resumed operations of these channels. The ones of Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad and Jalandhar were permanently shut down. The COVID second wave once again saw the temporary discontinuation of the B-channel of the three stations. At Guwahati, the break this time was from 27 April to 4 July 2021, that is, a little more than two months.

### **The Third COVID Wave**

The third COVID-19 wave in India led to the discontinuation of Guwahati's Pragjyotishpur channel for the third time. The 71-days break was from 20 January to 31 March 2022. Due to the permanent discontinuation of several other redundant channels, there started a speculation amongst listeners and radio enthusiasts surrounding the permanent shutdown of Guwahati's Pragjyotishpur channel. There was unconfirmed news that the two important broadcasts of Pragjyotishpur – *Yuvavani* and *Troops Programme* – would be accommodated on FM Mahabahu with reduced duration. Probably as a preliminary step towards this set-up, the weekly half-hour *Paragmala* was made a daily live programme starting 1 March 2022, to be broadcast from Mahabahu between 11:30 and 12:00. This was a positive development for the Hindi Section of the station to get a daily slot on the primary channel.



*Photo 10: News item published in 'The Assam Tribune' dated 6 March 2022*

The discontinuation of Pragjyotishpur channel for months during the COVID period had impacted

the families of several staff members. Protests were held during early March 2022. The news appeared on media that the casual announcers have urged the Prasar Bharati authority to resume operations of the halted channels, namely, Pragjyotishpur and VBS Guwahati, since the COVID wave peak was already over. While the latter was never resumed, operation of Pragjyotishpur was restored with effect from 1 April 2022. With Troops Programme going on air with the same schedule, the frequency of *Paragmala* was reverted to weekly. However, the programme continued to be a live programme and is still in place as a weekly live programme on Mondays at 11:30.

# 18. The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

17 June 1962 was the day when AIR Guwahati had launched *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, the *Troops Programme* as it is also referred to, as a major platform for the entertainment of the huge number of troops deployed in the region amid the Chinese Aggression. Since then, the programme has continuously served the *Jawans* and have been one of the most effective sources of their leisure and comfort. The programme came down a long way and in 2022, it achieved the milestone of six decades of its continuous journey. The highly motivated present team of the Hindi Section at AIR Guwahati left no stone unturned to plan, design and execute a special broadcast on 17 June 2022 to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historic programme. This chapter describes in detail the special items broadcast to observe this important milestone of the programme. All programme-related details presented in this chapter have been gathered while listening to the broadcast live on *newsonair* app. The messages delivered by officials and their photographs have been obtained from the official promotional video released by AIR Guwahati on its social media page.

## Message from the Station Director

“श्रोतागण, आप तो जानते ही हैं, हमारा एक लोकप्रिय कार्यक्रम होता है, जिसका नाम है 'सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम'। और आगामी 17 जून को ये साठ वर्ष सम्पन्न करने वाला है। इस शुभ अवसर को यादगार करने के लिए हम एक छोटी सी कोशिश कर रहे हैं। और हमारा हमेशा यह कोशिश रहेगा कि ये प्रोग्राम नया नया रूप लेके श्रोताओं के पास पहुँचता रहेगा, मनोरंजन करता रहेगा। हम लोगों की आशा है कि श्रोतागण इसको अपना मानें, और पहले जैसे ये प्रोग्राम सुनते थे, सुनते रहें। सबको हार्दिक प्रणाम।”

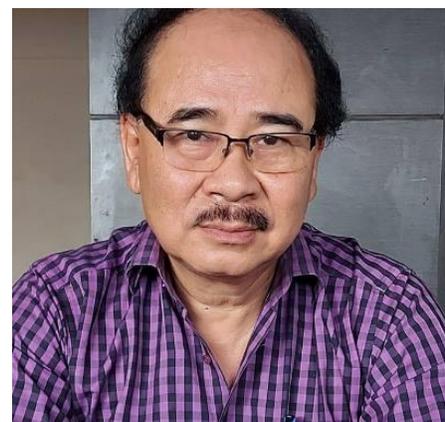


Photo 11: Rajeev Baruah, Station Dir., AIR Guwahati

*“Dear Listeners, you already know that the Troops Programme is one of our popular programmes. And this programme is going to complete sixty years on 17 June. To make this auspicious occasion memorable, we are going to make a small attempt (with reference to the special celebration programmes). And we shall always try that this (Troops) programme, taking new forms, keeps reaching and entertaining the listeners. We expect that the listeners consider this programme to be their own programme and would keep listening to it as have done before. My greetings and wishes to all!”*

- **RAJEEV BARUAH**, STATION DIRECTOR, AKASHVANI GUWAHATI

### Messages from Programme Executives



Photo 12: (L to R) Programme Executives (Hindi Section), AIR Guwahati - Bijon Sinha (current), Shuvra Baishya (Former/ Retd.), Sushma Sharma (Former/ Retd.), Shyamalendu Das (Former)

“आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी का सैनिक भाइयों का यह कार्यक्रम 17 जून 1962 को आरम्भ हुआ था। और इसके साठ साल पूरे होने पर सभी श्रोताओं को शुभकामनाएँ और आशा करता हूँ कि हमारा यह कार्यक्रम सभी सुन सके। धन्यवाद!”

*“This Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati was started on 17 June 1962. On the completion of its sixty years, I congratulate all listeners and hope that all can keep listening. Thank you.”*

- **BIJON SINHA**, Prog. Executive, Hindi Section, Akashvani Guwahati

“ये बड़ी खुशी की बात है कि आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी से प्रसारित सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम साठ साल पूरे करने जा रहा है। इस अवसर पर सभी को शुभकामनाएँ!”

*“This is a happy moment that the Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati is completing sixty years. I extend my best wishes to all.”*

- **SHUVRA BAISHYA**, Former Prog. Executive (Retd.), Hindi Section, Akashvani Guwahati

“श्रोताओं, नमस्कार! हमारा जो 'सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम' है, जो आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी से प्रसारित होता है, यह काफ़ी पुराना और काफ़ी पसन्दीदा कार्यक्रमों में से एक है। यह 1962 में शुरू हुआ था और इसी साल यह साठ साल पूरे करने जा रहा है। तो इसी मौके पर हम अपने कार्यक्रम पसन्द करने वालों को और इस कार्यक्रम के साथ बने रहने के लिए आप सभी को बहुत बहुत धन्यवाद देते हैं, और इस कार्यक्रम के साठ साल पूरे होने के अवसर पर इस कार्यक्रम से जुड़े जो कार्यकर्ता हैं, उन्हें बधाई के पात्र समझते हैं। तो हम इसी तरह से यह कार्यक्रम आगे भी सुनवाते रहेंगे, आप भी हमारे साथ सदा जुड़े रहियेगा। धन्यवाद!”

*“Listeners, greetings! Our Troops Programme, broadcast from Akashvani Guwahati, is a very old and one of the most popular programmes. It started in 1962 and it's going to complete sixty years this year. On this occasion, we would like to thank the listeners who like this programme and who have stayed with this programme. We believe that the presenters of this programme also deserve congratulations. We shall keep on bringing this programme to you. We expect your participation as well. Thank you!”*

- **SUSHMA SHARMA**, Former Prog. Executive (Retd.), Hindi Section, Akashvani Guwahati

“हमारे आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी केन्द्र के प्रागज्योतिषपुर शाखा से प्रसारित 'सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम' अपने साठ वर्ष पूरे करने जा रहा है। इस अवसर पर यह कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि इस कार्यक्रम की लोकप्रियता दिन-ब-दिन बढ़ती ही जा रही है। तो इस कार्यक्रम की लोकप्रियता बढ़ाने के लिए हमारे केन्द्र के इस शाखा के, जितने भी उद्घोषक-उद्घोषिकार्य हैं, उनका काम सच में सराहना-योग्य है। मैं आशा करता हूँ कि हमारे केन्द्र का 'सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम' और भी अच्छा होता रहे, और हमारे जो उद्घोषक-उद्घोषिकार्य हैं, उनसे मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि वो इस कार्यक्रम को और भी अच्छे से करें। आशा है कि आगे जा कर भी हमारे सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम की चारों तरफ़ लोकप्रियता यूं ही बरकरार रहे।”

*“The Troops Programme broadcast from our Akashvani Guwahati's Pragjyotishpur channel is going to complete sixty years. On this occasion, it won't be an exaggeration to say that the popularity of this programme has been ever increasing. And for this, the contribution of the announcers of this channel demands appreciation. I hope that the Troops Programme keep getting better. I would request the announcers to keep improving it. I hope that the popularity of this programme continues in future.”*

- **SHYAMALENDU DAS**, Former Prog. Executive, Hindi Section, Akashvani Guwahati

### Structure of the Special Broadcast

The Troops Programme had resumed on 1 April 2022 after the third interruption due to COVID lockdown. This, in turn, meant that the team had two and half months to prepare for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. This was certainly not a long duration considering the content of the special broadcast. This will be evident in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The overall special schedule of the programme broadcast on 17 June 2022 is as tabulated below.

*Table 116: Special broadcast schedule for the 60th anniversary celebrations*

<b>SPECIAL SCHEDULE OF 17 JUNE 2022</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Segment</b>
12:10	Signature Band Tune and Opening Announcement
12:11	Introduction to the Special Occasion, followed by <i>Shree Ganesh Aarti</i>
12:20	' <i>Sainik Bhaiyon Ke Karyakram ka 60-Varshiya Itihaas</i> ' - Brief outline of the programme's history Recorded Message from Mrs. Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen) - Retd. Announcer (Programme designed & presented by K. Supriya Devi and Sneha Verma)
12:45	Congratulatory Messages & Song requests from Military Personnel (Arranged & Compiled by Gunaprabha Bora; Presented by Anamika Mazumdar & Joyshree Deka)
13:10	News in English
13:20	Short Play dramatized for this occasion - ' <i>Faujiyon ke Gharon Ki Ek Shaam</i> ' (Written by Joyshree Deka and Produced by Sushma Sharma)
13:40	Congratulatory Messages & Song requests from Military Personnel (contd.) (Arranged & Compiled by Gunaprabha Bora; Presented by Anamika Mazumdar & Joyshree Deka)
14:00	Messages from Former Announcers, Current Announcers & Civilian Listeners (Presented by Sneha Verma and K. Supriya Devi)
14:30	Close down

The programme began at 12:10 with opening announcement that introduced the specialty of the day's proceedings. The occasion being auspicious in the journey of this programme, the first offering of the programme was a *Ganesh Aarti* sung by renowned bhajan singer Anup Jalota. What could have been a better start than this! '*ganapati ki sewa mangal mewa, sewa se sab vighna taren, teen lok taintees devta, dwar khade sab arj karen*' – the 8-minute track filled the atmosphere with its pious aura. The subsequent sections detail out rest of the segments of the special broadcast.

### ***Sainik Bhaiyon Ke Karyakram ka 60-Varshiya Itihaas***

The second special segment of the day was a brief sketch of the history of the Troops Programme. Entitled *Sainik Bhaiyon Ke Karyakram Ka 60-Varshiya Itihaas*, this 25-minute-long offering from K. Supriya Devi and Sneha Verma was a crisp yet informative narrative of the programme's journey through its six decades. The segment began with the mention of the origin and list of programmes for the Forces which were in place before the start of Guwahati's programme. The

road to a new journey for the *Jawans* with the radio programme as their travelling companion was complimented by the song ‘*dhuaan chhanta khula gagan mera, nayi dagar naya safar mera, jo ban sake tu hamsafar mera, nazar mila zara...*’. Then came the background of the Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962 that triggered the start of Guwahati’s Troops Programme. The aftermath of the war was well expressed through the song ‘*eeswar allah tere jahaan mein nafrat kyun hai jung hai kyun*’. The mention of O.P. Tandon – Manjula Shah pair and their style of replying *Jawans*’ letters with a personal touch was accompanied with appropriate lines from the song ‘*sarsaraaye, chhoo ke jaaye, behti hawa ko koi thaam na paaye, is safar mein, dukh sukh saare, zindagi ki gathri mein baandh ke laaye*’. Nothing stops with someone. The departure of Tandon and Shah paved the way for new announcers, who took the programme forward. At this point, the song that was played was ‘*maana ki mushkil hai safar, par sun o musafir, o kahin agar tu ruka to, manzil aayegi na phir, kadam kadam milaaye ja, gagan jhukaaye ja*’. How could the segment end without the mention of the three sisters – Rekha bahen, Seema bahen and Meeta bahen! The listeners were delighted to hear the recorded voice of Seema bahen, who had sent her message for this special programme from Kolkata. She had retired in 2011. After a gap of 11 years, her voice reverberated in the same programme that she presented for nearly four decades. This was the real treat for the long-time listeners of this programme and her voice made the special broadcast memorable.

#### Message from Tapasi Sengupta (Seema Bahen)

“आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी केन्द्र से मेरा सम्बन्ध कॉलेज के दिनों से है। 1968 से आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी केन्द्र के सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम से जुड़ी हुई हूँ। उस वक़्त मैं अस्थायी उद्घोषिका थी। उसके बाद 1972 से 2011 तक, लम्बे 39 साल मैं स्थायी उद्घोषिका के तौर पर आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी से जुड़ी रही। लम्बे चार दशक से ज़्यादा वक़्त आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी से जुड़े रहने का अनुभव अति सुखद और आवेगपूर्ण रहा। गीत सुनना और सुनाना तथा फ़ौजी भाइयों के हर सुख-दुख में खुद को शामिल कर पाना, इन सब में इतनी आत्मियता थी जिसे भाषा में वर्णन नहीं कर सकती। उन दिनों दोपहर के वक़्त आप जहाँ से भी गुज़रें, हर घर, हर दुकान, हर गली-नुककड़ से इसी कार्यक्रम की आवाज़ सुनाई पड़ती थी। इतनी चाहत थी इस कार्यक्रम की लोगों के मन में।

एक अनुभव शेयर करना चाहती हूँ। सन 1975, मैं अरुणाचल घूमने गई थी। पहाड़ी रास्ते से हमारी जीप गुज़र रही थी। जाड़े का वक़्त था। हमने देखा, हमारे फ़ौजी भाई बैरक से बाहर अपनी-अपनी खटिया में लेटे हुए धूप सेख रहे हैं। और वे सब अपनी छाती के ऊपर, आप इमाजिन नहीं कर सकते, अपने दोनों हाथों से ट्रान्ज़िस्टर थामे हमारा ये कार्यक्रम सुन रहे हैं। इस सीन को देख कर मैं इतनी ज़्यादा इमोशनल हो गई थी कि मेरी दोनों आँखें नम हो गयीं। तब से मेरे दिल-ओ-दिमाग़ में एक ही बात घूमा करती थी कि अपने-अपने घरों, परिवार जनों से दूर, इतने हाइ ऑल्टिट्यूड पर, पहाड़ों-जंगलों के बीच ये सैनिक भाई हमारे कार्यक्रम के ज़रिये ही अपना मनोरंजन कर रहे हैं। उन दिनों एन्टरटेनमेण्ट के

इतने साधन तो नहीं हुआ करते थे ना जो आज हैं! तब से मैं हर वक़्त अपने इस कार्यक्रम को किस क़दर और बेहतर बना कर उनकी ख़िदमत में पेश कर सकूँ, इसी कोशिश में लगी रहती थी।

मैं आप सब से, जो आज इस सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम को प्रस्तुत कर रहे हैं, उन सब से कहना चाहूँगी कि आप हमारे जाँबाज़ फ़ौजी भाइयों का मनोरंजन कर रहे हैं जो देश की सीमाओं पर जान की बाज़ी लगा कर, हमारे देश और हमारी सुरक्षा कर रहे हैं। उनके चेहरों को याद कर, उनके भरपूर मनोरंजन के लिए मन से, दिल से, कार्यक्रम को बेहतर से बेहतर करने की कोशिश में लगे रहिये। मैं तो अभी बहुत दूर, कोलकाता में सेटल्ड हूँ, पर तहे दिल से इस कार्यक्रम की उन्नति, आप सब की उन्नति की प्रार्थना ईश्वर से करती हूँ।

जय हिन्द!”

*“My association with Akashvani Guwahati dates back to my college days. I have been associated with the Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati since 1968. I was a Casual Announcer that time. Later, from 1972 to 2011, I was associated with Akashvani Guwahati as a Regular Announcer for thirty-nine long years. The experience of staying connected with Akashvani Guwahati for more than four decades was highly pleasant and emotional. To listen and to play songs and to be a part of every joy and sorrow of our Jawans, there was so much of intimacy in all these that I cannot describe in words. In those days, in the afternoons, wherever you pass by, you would hear this programme from every household, every shop, every street and every road. Such was the liking for this programme.*

*I would like to share one experience with you all. It was 1975. I went to Arunachal (Pradesh) on a trip. Our Jeep was moving through a mountainous road. It was wintertime. We saw that our Jawans were out in the sun from their barracks. They were lying down on their respective beds (khatiyas), enjoying the sunshine. And each one of them over their chest, you can't imagine, with both hands, holding transistors and listening to our programme. Watching this scene, I got so emotional that tears rolled down from my eyes. Since then, just one thing used to bother me that our programme was the only means of entertainment for those Jawans who were away from their homes and families, who were on such high altitudes, living tough lives on mountains and inside dense forests. In those days, there weren't so many modes of entertainment as we have today. Since then, the thought of how to make this programme better used to roll in my mind.*

*I would like to remind all of you, who are currently presenting the Troops Programme, that you are performing the task of entertaining our brave Jawans who are keeping the country safe, who are keeping us safe, by endangering their own lives at the border. Keeping those faces in your mind, for their wholesome entertainment, try to do your best through this programme. I am very far away, settled in Kolkata, however, I wholeheartedly pray for the betterment of this programme, for the betterment of all of you.*

*Jai Hind!”*

- **TAPASI SENGUPTA**, Senior Announcer (Retd.), Hindi Section, Akashvani Guwahati

The message was broadcast as part of the segment *Sainik Bhaiyon Ke Karyakram Ka 60-Varshiya Itihaas*, discussed in the previous section. Seema bahen's message was followed by the patriotic number '*bharat hamko jaan se pyara hai, sabse pyara gulistaan hamara hai*'. The segment was signed off by quickly mentioning about the changing trend of technology and listeners' interests.

### **Messages and Song Requests from Defence Personnel**

Presenters Anamika Mazumdar and Joyshree Deka took over from K. Supriya Devi and Sneha Verma to present the next segment of the special broadcast. Split over two parts, one between 12:45 and 13:10 and the other between 13:40 and 14:00, this was another significant effort towards the celebration as it collected messages and song requests from the current and retired military personnel. Senior Casual Announcer Gunaprabha Bora was the person behind the arrangement and compilation of messages broadcast under this segment.

#### ***Lance Naik – Abhimanyu Sharma:***

“यह कार्यक्रम पिछले बीस साल से सुन रहा हूँ। फ़ौज में भर्ती होने से पहले से ही यह कार्यक्रम सुन रहा हूँ। फ़ौज में काम करने की मेरी बहुत इच्छा थी। इसीलिए फ़ौजी से जुड़े इस कार्यक्रम को मैं हमेशा सुनता था। आज भी सुनता हूँ। आशा करता हूँ कि आप सभी इसी तरह इस कार्यक्रम को आगे बढ़ाते जायेंगे।”

*(“I have been listening to this programme for the last twenty years. I have been listening since even before I joined the Army. I had a deep desire to join the Army. That was the reason for me to always listen to this programme. I listen to it today as well. I hope that you will continue to move this programme forward in the same way.”)*

Song: 'jay ho' (*Slumdog Millionaire*)

#### ***Subedar – Ranjeet Rawat:***

“सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ साल पूरे होने की आप सभी को बधाइयाँ देता हूँ। बहुत खुशी की बात है कि इस कार्यक्रम को, चाहे वो फ़ौजी हो या ना हो, सभी पसन्द करते हैं। गीतों की माला को आप सभी ने बहुत खूबसूरती से पिरोया हुआ है। आशा करते हैं कि यह सफ़र यूँही जारी रहे।”

*(“Heartiest congratulations on the sixty years completion of the Troops Programme. It is a matter of joy that irrespective of whether a listener is an active serviceman or a civilian this programme is equally liked by all. You all have strung the garland of songs very beautifully. I hope that the journey continues like this.”)*

Song: 'har karam apna karenge ae watan tere liye' (Karma)

**Radio Operator – Harshvardhan:**

“मेरा नाम हर्षवर्धन है और मैं रेडियो ऑपरेटर के तौर पर फ़ौज से जुड़ा हुआ हूँ। सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साथ साल पूरे होने की बहुत-बहुत शुभकामनायें। इन कार्यक्रमों को हमेशा सुनता हूँ। आशा करता हूँ इसका सफ़र यूँही चलता रहे।”

*(“My name is Harshvardhan, and I am associated with the Defence Services in the capacity of Radio Operator. Heartiest congratulations for the sixty years completion of the Troops Programme. I have always listened to these programmes. I hope that the journey of this programme continues like this.”)*

**Army Officer (Retd.) – Birendra Bora:**

“मैं, प्रथम श्रेणी, बीरेन्द्र बोरा, करीब आज तीस सालों से आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी केन्द्र से प्रसारित सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम को लगातार सुनता आ रहा हूँ। इसके नाते यह कार्यक्रम सफलतापूर्वक लगभग साठ बरस पूरे करने जा रहा है, इस शुभवसर पे मैं, हृदय से, शुभकामनाओं के साथ आशा करता हूँ कि ये सफलतापूर्वक और आगे बढ़ें। जय हिन्द!”

*(“Jay Hind! I, First Class, Birendra Borah, have been continuously listening to Akashvani Guwahati's Troops Programme for nearly thirty years. Due to this association, on this auspicious occasion of completion of sixty years of this programme, I extend my heartiest wishes to you. I wish that the programme continues in future with full success. Jay Hind!”)*

**Warrant Officer – Ram Singh:**

“फ़ौजी ऑफ़िस में अपनी ड्युटी निभा रहा हो या फिर सरहद पर तैनात हो, हमारी दिल की बातों को साझा करता है रेडियो। और उस पर ख़ास कर हमारे लिए बजते कार्यक्रम जो घर परिवार से दूर हमें सुकून पहुँचाते हैं।”

*(“Whether a Jawan is positioned at the front or performing his duty in the office, the radio shares our hearts, our feelings. And on top of that, programmes played especially for us give us solace as we are away from home and family.”)*

Song request: 'main kahin bhi rahoon' (LoC Kargil)

**Sipahi – Amarjeet Singh:**

“मैं सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम में सुनाये जाने वाले गीत सुनता हूँ और अपने साथियों से भी कहता हूँ कि वो भी इस कार्यक्रम को सुना करें। पिछले नौ सालों से मैं यह कार्यक्रम नियमित सुन रहा हूँ। इस कार्यक्रम के साथ वर्ष पूरे होने की शुभकामनायें।”

*("I listen to the songs that are played in the Troops Programme and also recommend to my fellow Jawans to listen to this programme. I have listening to this programme continuously for nine years. Heartiest congratulations on the completion of 60 years.")*

**Hawaladar – Ramendra Kumar:**

“आप मेरी पसन्द पर 'नमस्ते लंदन' फ़िल्म का गीत "में जहाँ रहूँ, कहीं भी रहूँ" बजा दीजियेगा, और इस गीत के ज़रिये मैं और मेरे परिवार की ओर से सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ बरस पूरे होने की बधाइयाँ भेज रहा हूँ।”

*("Please the song 'main jahaan rahoon, kahin bhi rahoon' from the film ~Namaste London~ on my request. Through this song, I, on behalf of my family, sending you best wishes on the completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme.")*

Song request: 'main jahaan rahoon' (Namaste London)

**Sipahi – Amaresh Prasad:**

“सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ बरस पूरे होने की हार्दिक शुभकामनायें। यह कार्यक्रम मुझे एक दोस्त होने का अहसास कराता है। शायद ही मैंने सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम प्रसारित होते समय कोई और कार्यक्रम सुना हो! लगातार इस कार्यक्रम को मैं सुनता रहा हूँ। पिछले सात सालों से इसे रोज़ सुन रहा हूँ।”

*("Heartiest congratulations on the completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme. This programme is just like a friend. I have hardly listened to any other programme while the Troops Programme is on! I have been listening to this program continuously. I have been listening to it every day for the last seven years.")*

**Sipahi – Om Prakash Gupta:**

“सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम, और मेरा रिश्ता बहुत पुराना है। साल 1999 में मेरा तबादला हुआ था। ट्रेन से उतरने के बाद रेल्वे स्टेशन पर गाड़ी का इन्तज़ार कर रहा था जो मेरे कैम्प से आने वाली थी। बैठे-बैठे मैंने सोचा कि क्यों ना एक रेडियो ख़रीद लूँ! तो स्टेशन पर ही मैंने एक रेडियो ख़रीदा। तो रेडियो ख़रीदते ही मीडियम वेव पर सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम लग गया। बस वह दिन, और आज का दिन। मैं हमेशा ही इस कार्यक्रम से जुड़ा रहा, और उम्मीद करता हूँ कि आगे भी जुड़ा रहूँगा। सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ बरस पूरे होने पर तह-ए-दिल से आभार सहित शुभकामनायें आप सभी को। इस खुशी के अवसर पर 'परदेसी बाबू' फ़िल्म का गीत "जहाँ पाँव में पायल" सुनना चाहता हूँ।”

*("The Troops Programme and I have a very old relationship. I was transferred (to the North-East) in the year 1999. After getting down from the train, I was waiting at the railway*

*station for the vehicle which was going to come from my camp. While waiting at the station, I thought why not purchase a radio! So, I bought a radio at the station itself. As soon as I bought the radio, the Troops Programme started playing on medium wave. That day, and today, I have always been associated with this programme, and hope to remain associated in future also. Congratulations to all of you from the bottom of my heart on the completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme. On this happy occasion, I want to listen to the song 'jahan paaon mein paayal' from the movie ~Pardesi Babu~."*)

Song request: 'jahaan paaon mein payal, haath mein kangan' (Pardesi Babu)

**Radio Operator – Vishnu Roy:**

“सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ वर्ष पूर्ति पर बधाई। इस कार्यक्रम को सुनना बहुत अच्छा लगता है। खास कर दोपहर के भोजन के बाद, विश्राम करने के समय पूरी थकान मिट जाती है।”

*“Congratulations on completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme. It is great to listen to this programme. Especially after lunch, all the tiredness disappears while taking rest by listening to the radio.”*

**Commanding Officer – Rajneesh Kumar:**

“सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के जरिये हमें हमेशा आदर, प्रेम, और अपनेपन की भावनायें महसूस होती रही हैं। इसके साठ साल पूरे होने पर दिल से शुभकामनायें देता हूँ। हमराज्र बने अनजाने से, मन में एक विश्वास बन के, रिश्तों का प्रतीक स्वयम आपके-हमारे रिश्ते।”

*“Through the Troops Programme, we have always felt respect, love, and feelings of belongingness. I heartily congratulate you on its completion of sixty years. We became friends unknowingly, by forming a trust in our minds, the symbol of relationships is our relation.”*

**Naib Subedar – Man Bahadur Chhetri:**

“सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम के साठ बरस पूरे होने पर सभी को हार्दिक शुभकामनायें। यह कार्यक्रम कभी मेरे खुशी का हमसफ़र बना तो कभी ग़म का। हर मौके पर इसने अपनी विविधता दिखाई। तभी मेरा और सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम का रिश्ता पिछले बाइस सालों से यूँही बरकरार है। और यूँही बरकरार रहेगा।”

*“Heartiest congratulations to everyone on the completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme. This programme sometimes became my companion of happiness and sometimes of sorrow. It showed its diversity on every occasion. That is why the relationship between this programme and me has remained intact for the last twenty-two years. And it will remain like this.”*

Song request: ‘*mann ka radio bajne de zara*’ (Radio)

Needless to say, this segment refreshed the memories of *Patrottar* and *Aap Ki Farmaish* programmes, which once upon a time used to be the most popular segments of the Troops Programme. With advancement in technology, request-based programmes on radio have lost their significance and lustre in the current era. Nevertheless, these precious and priceless messages and song requests from the military personnel had enhanced the standard of this special broadcast.

### **Special Short Play: *Faujiyon Ke Ghar Ki Ek Shaam***

While the messages and song requests from military personnel formed a very important segment of the special broadcast, there was yet another significant offering to come. Probably for the first time in the history of Akashvani Guwahati’s Troops Programme or at least during my listening experience, the announcers of this programme came forward to write, direct, and dramatize a radio play not only to entertain the troops but also dedicated it to them and to their families. The short radio play entitled *Faujiyon Ke Ghar Ki Ek Shaam* sensibly brought out the feelings of the wives of those countless *Jawans*, who live equally tough and stressful lives as their husbands. Conceptualized and written by Joyshree Deka, it was produced by Former Programme Executive Sushma Sharma and performed by the team of announcers of the Hindi Section. It is worth detailing out the storyline of the play.

Characters:

Sushma Sharma	– Aruna Daadi (Grandmother of Anshu)
Sneha Verma	– Shruti (Daughter-in-Law of Aruna Daadi)
Joyshree Deka	– Kajal (Daughter of Aruna Daadi)
Mausami Brahma	– Sheetal (Neighbour/ friend of Shruti and Kajal)
Anamika Mazumdar	– Anu (Neighbour/ friend of Shruti and Kajal)
K. Supriya Devi	– Megha (Neighbour/ friend of Shruti and Kajal)
Mayanshi Gupta	– Anshu (Son of Shruti)

Plot:

It is a Sunday evening. Aruna Daadi is sitting with her grandson Anshu. Kajal is sitting nearby, listening to their conversation while going through the pages of a magazine, humming a song. She calls her sister-in-law Shruti and complains that her mother has again started the same old story. Shruti agrees and requests her mother-in-law to divert her mind and tell other stories. Daadi justifies herself by arguing that the little one should know how brave his grandfather was, how he had fought with the enemies, and how he had sacrificed his life for the nation. Cutting short her words, Kajal reiterates that she has many times told the story of not only her husband (Kajal’s father/ Anshu’s grandfather) but also of her son (Kajal’s brother) who is also currently in the Indian Army, and that every child in the locality now knows their stories word by word. Daadi feels proud of being the wife of a martyr and the mother of a brave *Jawan*. Little Anshu asks why his father can’t stay at home like other children’s. Before anyone could answer to the little one’s question, the doorbell rings.

Anshu opens the door and announces that Sheetal, Anu and Megha aunties have come. Anshu goes to the other room while the ladies kick off their conversation in the drawing room. After

exchanging few casual words, Shruti mentions about her mother-in-law's same old discussion topic of her husband and her son. Daadi again tries to justify that these memories and incidents are the pillars and support of her life. She recalls how smart her husband looked when he used to get into his uniform. She still remembers the day when he had left after saying that he would return soon to their son Pranav. He returned but as a martyr. The atmosphere of the room gets heavy. Shruti takes Aruna Daadi to her room with the excuse of giving her medicine. Kajal resumes talking to the guests by mentioning that her mother gets emotional recalling the stories of her life. Sheetal, Anu and Megha acknowledge her feelings. '*ae guzarne wali hawa bata, mera itna kaam karegi kya...*', lines from this song gets played that ends in '*main ik din aaunga, main ik din aaunga*' that compliments the mood of the situation.

Shruti returns with tea and snacks. Shruti asks Anu about her business. Anu informs that she is taking fewer orders these days as her health isn't good and that her husband's leave has also been postponed by two months. Sheetal reiterates the importance of the situation and that Anu's husband should be given leave from work immediately, at least for few days. Megha, however, comforts Anu by saying that they will take care of her and moreover Shruti is a nurse. To make the atmosphere of the room lighter, Megha refers Shruti as "nurse madam" to which all burst into laughter. Both Anu and Shruti's husbands are in the Army. Anu talks about the loneliness of the wives of Army men. Shruti agrees and further says that this can be felt only by someone whose husband doesn't come home for months, someone who can't even talk to her husband daily over phone. The song '*zara si aahat hoti hai to dil sochta hai, kahin ye wo to nahin*' gets played.

Megha once again brings Daadi's context into their conversation and supports her behaviour. Afterall, losing husband in the war and again sending the only son to the Army are not small sacrifices on her part. Sheetal wonders how Anu, Shruti and all such wives of *Jawans* stay alone for such long durations. She admits that she won't be able to lead such a life. Megha informs that she always teaches her students at school to respect the *Jawans* guarding the borders of the nation due to which we can sleep peacefully in our homes. Anu recalls the incident of the last Diwali which she had planned to celebrate with her husband. But he couldn't come. Same was the situation during New Year. Shruti concurs with what Anu says and adds that she too gets frightened when her son Anshu listens to his grandmother's stories with deep interest. She fears that her son will also insist upon joining the Army in future. Kajal consoles everyone and says that a *Jawan's* wife should not be so emotional. Instead, they should become the strength of their husbands. If they remain sad, then their husbands won't be able to perform their duties with sincerity and dedication. Everyone agrees to Kajal.

Daadi enters the room announcing that she has listened to everything they were talking about. She too advises not be so emotional and to keep the head raised in pride for being the wife of a *Jawan*. Kajal too hails the wives for supporting their husbands. She makes her sister-in-law Shruti realize that being a nurse, she is also serving the nation. So, if Anshu also serves the nation in future, then it should be something to be proud of. Shruti agrees to Kajal but shows her weakness as a mother. Daadi encourages Shruti not to be weak.

From another room, Anshu's voice is heard. He is calling his mother Shruti as he is feeling hungry. Everyone realizes that it's already dark outside. Each one of them admits having some work or the other at home and prepares to leave. Daadi stops everyone and urges all of them to say *Jay Hind!* With Bankim Chandra's '*vandemataram*' sung by Lata Mangeshkar, the play ends.

## Messages from Announcers and Civilian Listeners

The final segment of the anniversary day broadcast was that of recorded audio messages from few former and current announcers of the programme, and few civilian listeners as well. Among the former announcers, Madhu Maheshwari, Lakshman Prasad Chapagain and Shreya Tripathi had sent their messages. Amongst the current announcers, Brij Mohan Prasad and Rikita Singhi took to the microphone to share their feelings. Selected messages are reproduced below.

### ***Madhu Maheshwari, Former Casual Announcer (1989 – 2017):***

“सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम, यानी द्रूपस प्रोग्राम, गुवाहाटी की साठवीं वर्षगांठ पर मैं मधु महेश्वरी, ढेर सारी शुभकामनायें देते हुए इसके और लम्बी उम्र की कामना करती हूँ। साठ वर्षों का सफ़र किसी कार्यक्रम के लिए कोई छोटा सफ़र नहीं होता। मुझे याद है कि जब 1989 में मैं यहाँ कैजुअल अनाउन्सर के तौर पर चयनित हुई थी, तो मुझे लगा कि मेरे रेडियो अनाउन्सर बनने के सपने को साकार भरा और उन्मुक्त आकाश मिल गया है। तब से 2017 तक लगातार मैं इस सेक्शन से जुड़ी रही हूँ और इस दौरान बड़े गुणी प्रोग्राम एग्ज़िक्युटिव्स के साथ, तरह-तरह के अनाउन्सर्स के साथ मैंने काम किया है, और हर एक से मैंने काफ़ी कुछ सीखा है। सैनिक भाइयों, जब मैं आप से रु-ब-रु होती थी, तो हर बार मुझे स्टुडियो नया लगता था। हर बार मेरे अन्दर एक अलग एक्साइटमेंट होती थी। और जब जब मैंने आपके पत्रों के उत्तर दिये, तो यकीन मानिये कि मुझे एक अलग ही तरह की अनुभूति होती थी। मुझे गर्व है कि मैं वर्षों तक उस कार्यक्रम का हिस्सा रही हूँ जो सैनिक भाइयों का मनोरंजन करता है। उन भाइयों का जो हमारी, हमारे देश की हिफ़ाज़त करते हैं। *Long Live Troops Programme! जय हिन्द! वन्देमातरम!*”

*(“On the sixtieth anniversary of ~Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram~, that is the Troops Programme of Guwahati, I, Madhu Maheshwari extend my best wishes to the programme and pray for its long life. A journey of sixty years is not a short journey for any programme. I remember when I was selected as a casual announcer here in 1989, I felt that my dream of becoming a radio announcer had come true and I had the full open sky above me to fulfil my aspirations. Since then, till 2017, I have been continuously associated with this section and during this time, I have worked with very talented program executives, with a variety of announcers, and I have learnt a lot from each of them. My soldier brothers, every time I came face to face with you, the studio seemed new to me. Every time there was a different excitement inside me. And whenever I replied to your letters, believe me, I had an amazing feeling. I am proud to have been a part of a programme that has been entertaining our military brothers for years. Of those brothers who protect us and our country. Long Live Troops Programme! Jai Hind! I salute you, Motherland!”)*

### ***Rikita Singhi, Casual Announcer (2010 – Present):***

“आसमान की बुलन्दियों पर नाम हो आपका, चाँद की धरती पर मुकाम हो आपका, हम तो रहते हैं छोटी सी दुनिया में, पर खुदा करे सारे जहाँ में नाम हो आपका, नाम हो आपका। फ़ौजी भाइयों, आकाशवाणी के गुवाहाटी केन्द्र का सैनिक भाइयों का कार्यक्रम के साठ वर्ष पूर्ण होने की खुशी में बहुत बहुत बधाई व शुभकामनायें। मैं, रिकिता सिंघि, इस कार्यक्रम की अनाउन्सर हूँ 2010 से अब तक, लगातार। बारह वर्षों से लगातार इस कार्यक्रम से जुड़ी हुई हूँ। और हर दिन कुछ नया, नई अनुभूति, कुछ नया करने को और सीखने को मिलता है। साठ वर्षों का यह सुहाना सफ़र, सचमुच, कम बड़ी बात नहीं किसी कार्यक्रम के लिए। श्रोताओं, आप सभी ने इस कार्यक्रम को जिस क़दर अपनाया है, इतना प्यार व सम्मान दिया है, हम सभी अनाउन्सर्स आपके आभारी हैं और तह-ए-दिल से आपका धन्यवाद करते हैं। हमारा सुहाना सफ़र यूँही आगे भी चलता रहेगा। आप सभी बस सदा हमारे साथ बने रहें, आपका प्यार सैनिक भाइयों के कार्यक्रम पर सदा बरसाते रहें। इसी आशा के साथ, जय हिन्द!”

*(“May your name be on the heights of the sky, may you have a place on the moon, ours is very small world, but may your name be known everywhere. Many congratulations and best wishes to the military brothers, on the occasion of completion of sixty years of the Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati. I, Rikita Singhi, have been the announcer of this programme since 2010, continuously. I have been associated with this programme continuously for twelve years. And every day there is something new, a new experience altogether, something always new to do and learn. This pleasant journey of sixty years is really no small thing for any programme. Listeners, you all have accepted this programme with so much love and respect, we all announcers are grateful to you and thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Our pleasant journey will continue like this. All of you just stay with us always, keep showering your love on this programme. With this hope, Jay Hind!”)*

**Prakash Verma, Veteran Radio Listener from Dibrugarh, Assam:**

“मैं प्रकाश वर्मा, डिब्रुगढ़ निवासी, आकाशवाणी गुवाहाटी केन्द्र के ख-शाखा से प्रसारित फ़ौजी भाइयों के कार्यक्रम पिछले पचास वर्षों से सुनता आ रहा हूँ। सुदूर पहाड़ियों और सीमांचल क्षेत्रों में कार्यरत फ़ौजियों के लिए प्रसारित यह एक मनोरंजक और प्रेरणादायक कार्यक्रम है। इस कार्यक्रम के साठ वर्ष पूरे होने के उपलक्ष्य में मेरी ओर से ढेर सारी शुभकामनायें।”

*(“I, Prakash Verma, resident of Dibrugarh, have been listening to the Troops Programme broadcast from the B-channel of Akashvani Guwahati for the last fifty years. This is an entertaining and inspirational programme broadcast for the soldiers serving in remote hills and border areas. My best wishes to you on the occasion of completion of sixty years of this programme.”)*

The proceedings for the day were winded off at 14:30 with a segment from the evergreen song *'akhiyon ke jharokhon se maine dekha jo saanware, tum duur nazar aaye, badi duur nazar aaye. band karke jharonkhon ko zara baithi jo sochne, mann mein tumhi muskaaye, mann mein tumhi muskaaye'*, indicating how the presenters of the programme feel towards the listeners, especially the soldiers, who still listen to this programme and get entertained.

# 19. The Future

*Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, the Troops Programme of Akashvani Guwahati, has reached the milestone of sixty years. This is probably the correct time to pause for a moment and think about its future considering the various factors that have alienated the soldiers of this country over the last ten years or so, from their once super favourite radio programmes meant for them from various stations of Akashvani. Radio, in general, has been facing tough competition from various entertainment and information platforms with every passing year with the advent of digital communication and Internet technologies. In this era of wide range of fascinating options to entertain oneself, the existence of radio programmes targeted towards specific audiences is at stake. This chapter tries to analyse programmes meant for troops under the present scenario and provide suggestions towards maintaining its relevance, significance, and uniqueness, which may justify their continued existence in the long run.

## **Are the *Jawans* still listening?**

If someone starts a Public Calling Office (PCO) today as it used to be in the 1990s, will he have adequate customers? If a telephone company offers landline phones today, will it attract buyers? If someone invests in Cyber Café in 2023, will he have a flourishing business? The answers to all these questions would probably be in negative. The reason is simple. There are cheaper, more convenient, more attractive, technologically advanced, and better options available for each of these necessities. Same goes with traditional radio broadcasting. Until the mid-1990s, traditional radio used to be the most effective medium to listen to any kind of entertainment. Subsequently, widespread popularity of satellite television, FM radio, Internet, and Online music applications have given tremendous competition to the traditional radio. Nowadays, the freelance digital content creators are coming up with innovative concepts of entertainment with every passing day over various digital platforms. It is expected that the upcoming 5G technology will further revolutionize the entertainment industry. In such a tough and competitive scenario, the traditional radio must adapt itself accordingly to remain existent and relevant.

When it comes to special audience programmes, the same principle is applicable. Once upon a time, the military personnel had only the traditional radio to keep themselves entertained and informed in desolate areas, away from their families. Now, they have multiple options available. It is true that smart phones and internet facilities are not available to all the Servicemen due to reasons like security concerns and weak mobile network coverage in remote areas. Nevertheless, there are several different angles from which this needs to be looked into. For this, what could have been better than to take feedback from someone who not only belongs to a family with a strong military background but also has been a long-time radio listener! Mrs. Kiran Verma, granddaughter of (Late) Sepoy Fakeer Chand of the British Indian Army, daughter of (Late) Subedar R. B. Lal of the Indian Army, and wife of Junior Warrant Officer Krishna Kumar Singh of the Indian Air Force talks about it in detail as below.

*“My grandfather was sent as part of Indian troops to Basrah, Iraq during World War II. My father joined the British Royal Army in 1948. My father was highly inclined towards radio listening and watching movies. He was an active participant in the three wars of 1962, 1965 and 1971. When he used to be at the border, I, along with my mother and two siblings would either stay in the family quarter in a Peace Area or would be at my maternal grandmother’s house. India had been independent for only fifteen years when it had to face the first full-fledged war in 1962. The humble circumstances in which the transfer of power to India took place in 1947, it was yet not a very strong phase for the nation. Although India was on the path of development, resources were less, and challenges were more. Repeated attacks from neighbouring countries aggravated the situation. At such a time, radio was a very powerful medium for entertainment and information. Radio also played an important role in awakening patriotism. Along with various other programmes, song requests of the Jawans started getting prominence in radio programmes. Those times were such that when a listener’s name was announced on the radio, he would jump in joy. War-related news also used to be received through radio. I still remember how my mother used to keep her ears glued to the radio and eyes on the door.*

*Till then television was a dream in India. The morning in our house would start at 6 am with the signature tune of the radio, and at night by 9 pm everyone would go to sleep listening to the news bulletins. Gradually, television sets made their way into homes by the mid-1980s. By the end of that decade, tape recorder or Two-in-One reached every house; but even then, the magic of radio was not over. People started getting gradually alienated from radio from the mid-1990s. By 1994, Cable TV Networks had already started establishing their roots in India. There was no war after 1971. There has been a period of peace in the country. To be very honest, people’s respect for a soldier also decreased. Radio also started losing its significance. Then the era of FM radio definitely dropped the quality of radio content-wise. By the late 90s, traditional radio was almost on the verge of extinction while the standard of living of soldiers considerably improved.*

*As far as I understand, one of the main reasons why soldiers’ letters do not reach the radio programmes anymore is the age of internet, cheap data plans, availability of any song on one click. Now who would write a letter to a radio station, wait for weeks or even months, and then listen to the song with his name on the radio. Leave the soldiers for a moment, who even writes a letter in general these days? Certainly, along with every section of the society, the soldiers of today are also restless. You might know that the Telegram service has long been discontinued. It has been a long time since I saw envelopes, inland letters, and postcards. Today’s soldiers are comfortable, modern, and hence, radio may be old fashioned for them.*

*Today smart phones may be banned for soldiers. But this is not entirely true. Soldiers might not be allowed to use phones during duty hours, otherwise, they keep smart phones when not on duty. My husband retired from the Indian Air Force in 2008 and has had a mobile handset since 2003. The only compulsion was that he could not take it to the duty area or a non-domestic area. Now, like a civilian, a soldier also enjoys all channels available on the television set, all the platforms of social media and the internet is just a click away for most of them. I understand the communication revolution since 1990 has been a major reason for the military brothers turning away from radio. Moreover, nowadays soldiers come from educated and well-to-do families. All means of entertainment are within their easy reach.*

*After 1971, Kargil was an undeclared war under the pseudonym of Operation Vijay in 1999. After this, there were one or two sporadic operations, but there was no such major crisis that would allow the spirit of patriotism to flourish in the heart of a soldier or a civilian. Our film industry has left no stone unturned to degrade the quality of film music with every passing year. Do you think the present-day film songs are worth listening to again and again? Where are patriotic songs heard in films now? Music appears to be paralyzed these days. There are no more sentimental songs in films. They have become shallow.*

*Till 1980, listening was the only means of entertainment. After that, when visual means became available, then this misery was bound to happen to the audio-only platform, or more precisely, to the radio. The new generation either does not know about the old songs or does not want to listen to them. Another reason, as far as I understand, is that the modern life continues to move at a faster rate. The responsibilities and aspirations of today's soldier have increased so much that, despite having all the material means, everyone seems to be short of time. In the era of materialism, man is neither left thoughtful nor rational. Everyone now needs everything at the fingertip, at the push of a button, at swift speed. In such a situation, it is not at all surprising if the soldier has distanced himself from the radio! Once upon a time, letters and radio used to complement each other, now there is neither letter nor radio in its true sense.*

*It might be debatable, but I believe the present-day youth join military only for the benefits it offers. Once during a conversation with the children of my school, I had casually asked who wanted to become what. It's sad that not even a single child showed interest in becoming a soldier. Even the children of soldiers now want to become doctors and engineers. Nowadays, there is no craze for those olive green, sky blue or white uniforms. You tell me, where are the soldiers now who will write letters to Forces programmes on radio and request for songs!" [172]*

## **Revival Strategy Overview**

It's not about Akashvani Guwahati's Troops Programme only. Each and every such programme, including Vividh Bharati's famous and popular *Jaymala*, has no participation of those listeners for whom these are meant. Every such programme has now reduced to a mere mixed film songs programme and has nothing in them to uniquely identify them as programme for troops. Yet, Guwahati's offering is well ahead of others for its variety and diversity. It is interesting that the programme concepts introduced in the 1960s are still relevant. The latest film songs may well fit into various programme segments with equal ease. From this aspect, Guwahati's Troops Programme is still relevant and can serve as an interesting source of entertainment to the listeners. However, the question surrounding the listenership and participation of troops still remains unanswered. Unless a special audience programme has reactions and participation from the community to which it is targeted, it loses its significance and relevance, and it is quite possible that some day one may raise a question about its existence. After all, film songs may be listened to in any programme or on any platform, for which a separate Troops Programme may not necessarily be required.

Nevertheless, with a careful and smartly chalked out strategy, with minimal effort, the programme may be revived in such a manner that it will once again become one of the most talked about programmes of the station. Yes, this is certainly possible. And the key lies in making the targeted

audience, viz., the troops, the contributors of the programme. If items performed by the troops and their families are broadcast under this programme regularly, then not only they will start taking keen interest but will also promote the programme within and outside the military community. With a daily broadcast duration of more than two hours, transmitting in three diverse modes – AM (MW), DRM and Mobile App/Internet, and also partially on FM and High Power AM (MW) through the Dibrugarh transmitters, and most significantly with the current team of young, energetic, and enthusiastic presenters, there should be no reason for not reviving this historic programme from troops' participation point of view.

### **Where to start from?**

The proposed revival project may begin at Narangi Military Station of the Indian Army, which is located less than 10 km from Akashvani Guwahati. The military station, set up in 1961 and spread across around 3500 acres, is one of the most important bases of the Indian Army, and it houses several units including the headquarters of the 51 Sub Area. [173] When such an important and big military campus is present so close to the Akashvani campus, it will be highly unfortunate if the Army personnel working at this unit do not get benefitted from the Troops Programme available from the local radio station. It is not that Guwahati's Troops Programme never featured this Cantonment in its programmes. In late 2010s, the team visited the Cantonment to cover the events of Army Day and Ex-Servicemen's Rally. Interviews of the Forces personnel and family members of the martyrs were recorded and broadcast along with song requests and radio reports of these events.

The other near-by military station is the Air Force Station Borjhar, located around 27 km from Akashvani Guwahati. This station was established in 1962 during the Chinese Aggression and is one of the strategic IAF stations of the region. [156] Thus, the age of Narangi Military Station, Air Force Station Borjhar and Akashvani Guwahati's Troops Programme is almost the same. It would be highly relevant and meaningful if Akashvani Guwahati takes the initiative to start a collaboration with these two military stations. Given the substantial airtime availability for the Troops Programme, the two military stations may be invited to become part of the programme. It will not only showcase the talent of the servicemen of these stations over local radio waves, but also help these defence units to promote and spread information about the many developmental activities they are performing in the region. It will be truly a win-win situation for the Troops Programme and these military stations. This collaboration may very easily lead to the design of a weekly 'Radio Magazine for Troops', which would contain multiple segments covering various aspects and areas of the military lifestyle.

Later, as the second phase of the project, other military and para-military stations and units in the vicinity of Guwahati, such as those of Assam Regiment, Assam Rifles, CRPF and BSF, may be roped in. For example, the 134 Infantry Battalion of the Assam Regiment is located in Rangiya, which is just 50 km from Guwahati. The Assam Rifles Transit Camp located in Khanapara locality of Guwahati city is at a distance of just 11 km from the Akashvani station. Likewise, there are CRPF and BSF stations in and around Guwahati, which may be brought under the collaboration. Such collaboration will surely add new dimensions to the glorious journey of Akashvani Guwahati and to its Troops Programme in particular.

The collaboration may also be further extended to the children and youth in the form of Sainik School and National Cadet Corps (NCC) performances. The Sainik Schools are a system of public schools in India established and managed by the Sainik Schools Society under the Ministry of Defence (MoD). They were conceived in 1961 to rectify the regional and class imbalance amongst the officer cadre of the Indian Military. Sainik Schools, along with one Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) and five Rashtriya Military Schools (RMS), contribute 25% to 30% officer cadets to NDA and INA. There are currently 33 Sainik Schools across the country and MoD will establish 100 more boarding Sainik Schools in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Out of the 33 Sainik Schools, four are located in the North-East. These are at Goalpara (Assam, 1964), Imphal (Manipur, 1971), Punglwa (Nagaland, 2007), and Chhingchhip (Mizoram, 2017). [174] There are 5 NCC Group Headquarters and 27 NCC Units under the Group Headquarters in Assam. Out of these 27 NCC Units, six are located in Guwahati itself. These are 1 Assam Bn. NCC, 30 Assam Eng. Coy NCC, 47 Assam R&V Sqn. NCC, 48 Assam Naval Unit NCC, 50 Assam Air Sqn. NCC, and 60 Assam Girls Bn. NCC. [175]

In a nutshell, inclusion of target audience should also be present in the curriculum of the Troops Programme apart from the existing unidirectional dissemination of entertainment items.

### ***Sainya Sangam – The Concept of a Radio Magazine***

The proposed collaboration between Akashvani Guwahati and the near-by military and para-military stations may well lead to the formulation of a weekly radio magazine programme, which would contain columns and segments directly involving the target audience in them. Visualized as *Sainya Sangam*, that is, the confluence of soldiers, the radio magazine may contain, but not limited to, segments identified in subsequent sub-sections.

### ***Surabhi – Music, Poetry, and Drama Performances by Military Personnel***

As said earlier, the best way to improve troops' participation in the programme is to make them part of it. When the troops personnel will themselves be performing and presenting their programme, they will naturally promote it within their community and beyond. Artistic performances by servicemen on radio is not a new concept. Since the beginning of Forces programmes, military personnel have had performed wholeheartedly. Team from radio stations used to visit the military units and record music and drama-oriented items performed by the *Jawans* in what was referred to as 'spot recordings' ('*sthal recording*' in Hindi). AIR Delhi contributed significantly towards this direction almost until 2020 until the programme was discontinued forever due to the closure of Rajdhani (formerly Delhi-B) channel.

Akashvani Guwahati may explore possibilities in this direction towards encouraging the *Jawans* to showcase their talent through this programme, which can be listened to by their friends and families, doesn't matter where they are located, through the mobile app. As the *Jawans* belong to different cultures, states, and languages, their performances would be highly diverse, giving a brilliantly colourful dimension to the Troops Programme. If the *Jawans* are unable to appear at the radio station for recording, the Akashvani team may visit the military stations periodically, the nearest two to begin with, and carry out spot recordings. Performances in the form of Hindi and regional songs, musical instrument recitals, poetry recitations, and short skits may well fit into this

segment.

### *Sur Jhankaar – Akashvani Light Music Concerts for the Troops*

Light Music Concerts in Forward Areas has been one of the most significant radio programmes towards the entertainment of the Armed Forces until the war of 1971. Artists, announcers, and the supporting technical crew of AIR would travel to the Forward Areas or to the Military Stations to organize concerts for the *Jawans* and their families. Concerts were also organized at AIR stations where the Defence fraternity used to get invited as special guests. Most of the major AIR stations have organized such events from time to time. With no major war after 1971, such concerts started losing their importance and necessity. The recent celebrations on the occasion of 75 years completion of Akashvani Guwahati at the prestigious Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra International Convention Centre has raised hope that regular musical concerts may be organized in front of invited audiences. Even a three-hour concert by Akashvani Grade artists just twice a year would mean a programme duration of twelve hours. The edited recording can be made into twelve half-hour monthly broadcasts, thus covering the entire year.

### *Aap Ke Geet – Song Dedications*

Whenever Akashvani team visits military stations, they may record song dedications from the *Jawans* with messages they would like to send to. These dedications may then be broadcast in the magazine. This might motivate those *Jawans* to tune in to the programme and listen to their voice messages.

### *Ghar Aangan – Programmes involving Families*

With changes in radio transmission technologies, or more precisely the end of shortwave era, the Troops Programme of Guwahati can no longer reach the far-flung border areas of the North-East through the radio set. Neither the low power mediumwave and DRM can reach them, nor smart phone/ mobile app/ internet is accessible to the *Jawans* in those remote areas. Consequently, Akashvani Guwahati should now try to gain most of its listeners locally. Since Guwahati is not a forward area, many families of Defence personnel reside with them in the military campuses. This gives a new angle to the Troops Programme by allowing the family members to participate in the programme. Like general women's programme on radio, wives of Defence personnel may be invited to the radio station and discussions may be carried out on topics of interest and relevance to them. This will again increase listenership of the programme among the Defence community. Moreover, inclusivity of the wives of the *Jawans* will surely be considered an appreciable initiative. Likewise, children of Defence personnel may also be invited to perform music, recitation, storytelling, talks and drama as done for civilian children. In other words, extending the Troops Programme from 'Jawans Only' to their families will extend the horizon of the programme.

### *Nayi Lehren – Goalpara Sainik School and NCC Performances*

What can be better than Akashvani Goalpara arranging performances by the students of Sainik School Goalpara, broadcast them locally and also send them over to Akashvani Guwahati to broadcast them under the Troops Programme! These performances can very well fit into a segment in the proposed magazine. Once a regular collaboration between Akashvani Guwahati-Goalpara and Sainik School Goalpara is in place, it may be extended to the other three Sainik Schools of the region through respective nearest Akashvani stations.

The NCC is the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces, which is open to school and college students on voluntary basis as a Tri-Services Organization, comprising the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, engaged in developing the youth of the country into disciplined and patriotic citizens. The Soldier Youth Foundation (SYF) in India is a voluntary organization which recruits cadets from high schools, higher secondary, colleges and universities all over India. The cadets are given basic military training in small arms and drill. The officers and cadets have no liability for active military service once they complete their course. [176] As mentioned earlier, there are six NCC units located in Guwahati. The Troops Programme may prove to be an excellent platform to showcase the talent drawn from this youth community. *Yuvavani* is the platform on the state-run radio for the civilian youth. Likewise, a segment of the proposed radio magazine may feature items created by NCC cadets – the military youth. This will again add significance and value to the Troops Programme.

### *Khaas Baaten – Informative Talks by Officers*

Short talks by officers in reputed positions in Defence organizations may be well placed in the proposed magazine for these being informative, educative, and motivational. Such talks used to be broadcast regularly from several AIR stations. Apart from military officers, Government and Ministerial level authorities may also deliver their speeches over the Troops Programme, which will definitely be listened to by many. The recent success story of *Mann Ki Baat* is an example that radio still possesses the power to reach every nook and corner of the country with great popularity if the programme is designed carefully. Talks on various topics related to defence and security which every citizen should be aware of may be made part of this segment.

### *Nayi Disha – News Bytes of Developmental Activities by Military Units*

This is a peace period. All the three wings of the Armed Forces have engaged themselves in various developmental activities. For example, the Narangi Military Station Guwahati of the Indian Army is taking up a project to convert the station into a completely renewable energy-based station. [177] The station has also developed a ‘green corridor’ to mitigate animal (elephant)-human conflict. [173] Likewise, different military stations are engaged in various developmental and educational activities. Details and reports of such activities may be made part of the proposed magazine, which will create awareness and help to propagate the developmental work being done by the defence sector which otherwise go unnoticed by the civilians. Short interviews, reports from news journalists, or even a short feature would be interesting broadcast items.

### *Jashn-e-Jawaan – Radio Reports of Events and Celebrations*

Events and celebrations are very common in the military sector. Functions related to Foundation Day, sports activities, award ceremonies, festival celebrations etc. are held often. Short and crisp radio reports of such events once used to be regular features of the Troops Programme. This may be revived and be made part of the proposed magazine.

### *Sainik Samachar – Employment News of Defence Sector*

The connecting link between a civilian and a defence personnel is the application process that transforms a civilian into a *Jawan*. Thus, this angle should not be left untouched in the Troops Programme. Official advertisements of recruitment in the military sector are published regularly. A segment entitled *Sainik Samachar* in line with the general *Rozgaar Samachar* (Employment News) may prove beneficial to the aspiring candidates of the Armed Forces.

### *Get Well Soon! – Talks with Injured Jawans at Military Hospitals*

During World War II, the BBC Forces Programme channel used to broadcast a programme entitled *Here's Wishing You Well Again!* – a unique show meant to boost the morale of the injured soldiers admitted in hospitals and to connect them to their families through radio. It is well understood that such a programme is the necessity only during war period. However, in present context, it is also not altogether a bad idea to visit the 151 Base Military Hospital located at Beltala area of Guwahati, talk to the admitted military personnel who have injured themselves during a military operation or a training exercise, listen to their heroic deeds and record them either in audio or in text, wishing them good health and early recovery, and request them to listen to the Troops Programme on the mobile app. With their consent, airing of their stories may prove to be an interesting segment of the proposed magazine.

For a hospitalized person, there cannot be anything better than a radio to pass time. In fact, browsing a smart phone also becomes tiresome after a period of time while a radio can be listened to for hours with fatigue. It should be refreshing and motivating for the injured and the sick patients to listen to their names on the radio with their stories while they are recovering from injury or trauma. This aspect and the way to realize this concept should be further investigated.

### *Khara Sona – Programme involving Retired Defence Personnel*

This segment is in line with general senior citizen programme. Retired defence personnel who are settled in and around Guwahati may be regularly invited to the Troops Programme and let them speak and share their experiences of life. This will not only make them feel special and honoured but will also motivate the current and aspiring soldiers. The involvement of retired personnel in the programme may be done in several ways such as telephonic interviews, in-person interviews, personnel presenting their own thoughts and experiences as a self-scripted segment etc. They may even present creative programmes as per their interests. Discussions on various topics may be organized involving multiple retired personnel with Akashvani Guwahati announcer acting as the host of the discussion. This segment should be kept flexible, and the retired personnel should be

allowed to participate in whatever form and capacity they want. Flexibility will encourage more such personnel to come forward and speak up. This segment will definitely be one of the most valued segments for it gives a platform to those who are no longer in service and somehow might be feeling alienated from the society in general.

### *Ke Ghar Kab Aaoge – Families of Servicemen posted outside*

Until now, we have been exploring ideas of involving defence personnel and their families who are staying in the vicinity of Guwahati. There is another scenario in which military personnel from the Guwahati region are posted in various other parts of the country while their families are residing in or around Guwahati. If such families could be identified, the Troops Programme may give them the opportunity and honour of including their messages for their *Jawan* along with a song dedication.

### *Bole Sitaare – Celebrities speaking to the Troops*

Among the many new radio programmes started during the war of 1962, one that drew listeners' much attention was the weekly 10-minute interview-based *My Little Bit* from AIR Bombay. Artists and celebrities were interviewed in English and the questions outlined individual efforts to build up the national front. Popular film personalities appeared on this programme and talked about their contribution towards the troops stationed along the Northern and North-Eastern borders. After the war of 1965, Vividh Bharati started its special weekly edition of *Jaymala* entitled *Vishesh Jaymala* where eminent film personalities were invited to speak to the Armed Forces and play their choice of songs. This concept became widely popular, and several other stations started similar programmes locally with slight variations in the concept.

Akashvani Guwahati's Troops Programme may well have a similar segment in which artists and celebrities based in Guwahati from different walks of life are invited to share their stories, experience, feelings with the *Jawans* and play their choice of songs. This is certainly not a difficult task to accomplish considering regular phone-in programmes and interviews involving celebrities are being aired on both FM Mahabahu and in *Yuvavani* programme on Pragjyotishpur channel.

### *Poorvottar Parikrama – All About North-East*

For the troops and their families from various parts of the country who are currently located within the reach of Akashvani Guwahati's Troops Programme, it may be a good idea to inform them about Assam and the North-East, thus, promoting and spreading the culture of the region amongst people of diverse origin. It is unfortunate that most people who don't belong to this region have a very shallow idea about North-East in general. Although such programmes may exist today on various channels of the region, they are mostly in local languages and not in Hindi or English. Talks and features related to art, literature, culture, festivals, traditions, music, dance, tourism, cuisine, and various activities and happenings that take place in the region may form the basis of this segment of the magazine.

### *Agle Maheene – Troops Programme Highlights of Next Month*

This is a monthly segment of the magazine that promotes various programmes broadcast under the umbrella of Troops Programme. This is purely a promotional venture to make the *Jawans* aware of the various entertaining programmes that are in place for them. For example, names of the artists to be featured in *Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet*, *Ek Aur Anek*, *Raag Rang* and *Tarang*, the films to be included in *Chayanika* and *Ek Hi Film Ke Geet*, and glimpses of genre-based programmes, may be announced. Remember the highly popular *Saaptahiki* of Doordarshan? Who knows that some new *Jawans* start listening to the programmes as a result of this promotion!

*Let's summarize the proposed magazine!*

Consolidating all the ideas proposed in above sub-sections towards the design and formulation of a 50-minute weekly radio magazine for troops entitled *Sainya Sangam*, to be broadcast on Sundays between 13:10 and 14:00, the consolidated structure of the final programme may be summarized as depicted in table below.

*Table 117: Structure of the proposed weekly Radio Magazine for Troops*

<b>SAINYA SANGAM - THE PROPOSED 50-MINUTE WEEKLY RADIO MAGAZINE FOR TROOPS</b>					
<b>Time</b>	<b>1st Sunday</b>	<b>2nd Sunday</b>	<b>3rd Sunday</b>	<b>4th Sunday</b>	<b>5th Sunday</b>
13:10	Surabhi	Sur Jhankaar	Nayi Lehren	Bole Sitaare	Ke Ghar Kab Aaoge
13:30					Ghar Aangan/ Khara Sona
13:40	Sainik Samachar	Khaas Baaten	Nayi Disha/ Jashn-e-Jawan	Agle Maheene	Ghar Aangan/ Khara Sona
13:50	Purvottar Parikrama/ Aap Ke Geet	Purvottar Parikrama/ Aap Ke Geet	Purvottar Parikrama/ Aap Ke Geet	Purvottar Parikrama/ Aap Ke Geet	Purvottar Parikrama/ Aap Ke Geet
13:57	Get Well Soon!	Get Well Soon!	Get Well Soon!	Get Well Soon!	Get Well Soon!

### ***Dil Se Dil Tak with Live Streaming***

The new age radio is no longer limited to the radio transmission technologies. With decreasing interest of people in the physical radio sets and with ever increasing use of soft and digital technologies, the radio stations have not only gone online on mobile apps but are also using social media platforms to stream their popular programmes live. In other words, radio has now partially become an audio-video medium. Vividh Bharati has a daily programme entitled *Kuchh Baaten Kuchh Geet* in which songs on a topic are played along with interactions with listeners through Facebook comments. Akashvani Guwahati is not left behind. Several of its programmes such as *Prabhati Taranga* and *Hello Yuvavani* are streamed live on Facebook to attract more listeners. That the strategy has worked pretty well can be understood from the count of likes, comments, and shares on such streamed videos. Moreover, once streamed live, the recorded versions of the videos stay back on the page which people may watch later if they missed the live show. The same strategy may be extended to the Troops Programme, at least once in a week. A new programme, (suggested title – *Dil Se Dil Tak*) may be streamed live in which the announcer will read out messages from

civilian listeners dedicated to the *Jawans* received in the comments section of the streaming video and play their songs of dedication. Such a film music-based live and interactive programme in Hindi on Saturday afternoons might prove to be successful as listeners from all around the globe will be able to participate and send their *sandesh to the soldiers*. Least assured, such a programme will be a new chapter in the history of programmes for Forces and troops.

### ***Yaaden Aap Ki Farmaishon Ki***

Gone is the era when the *Jawans* used to write letters with song requests to the radio stations to be played in the programmes meant for them. However, memories of such programmes are still alive. Announcing the song details along with the names of the *Jawans* and their military ranks used to be a unique aspect of such programmes. The nostalgia may be revived by instituting a weekly programme in which letters from archive are brought to life again by reading them out and playing the songs requested in them years or probably decades ago. This proposal is, however, based on the assumption that Akashvani Guwahati has still preserved those old letters in their archives. These old letters, if available, are undoubtedly priceless assets of the station, which are nothing but evidence of the glorious past of the station and this programme.

This proposed programme will also encourage the existing listeners to send in their song requests. Currently, there is no provision of song requests even if the *Jawans* are willing to send. The door of accepting song requests from *Jawans* should be left open just in case! At the same time, postal address and email address of the Troops Programme should be informed religiously and on a daily basis to encourage troops to write in letters of feedback, suggestions, and song requests.

### **Promotion**

So far in this chapter, a lot many ideas have been provided on how to make the Troops Programme more relevant by reviving participation of troops and their families through various provisions in the programme for their inclusion. However, nothing would work in today's time without an appropriate promotion strategy. All programmes and efforts will go unnoticed if not promoted and marketed properly. It is not that programmes of Akashvani Guwahati are not promoted. Several programmes of FM Mahabahu including *Paragmala* from the Hindi Section and *Yuvavani* of Pragjyotishpur are continuously promoted over both the channels. Unfortunately, the Troops Programme has never been made part of the promotional campaign. Attractive promotional spots of this film music-oriented Troops Programme over FM Mahabahu may prove effective in gaining new and returning listeners.

The promotion should not be limited to the radio channels. An easier but highly effective way to promote is to spread the word over social media platforms. Promotional images, reels, videos, and posts related to varied offerings from the Troops Programme will attract listeners of all age. Last but not the least, promotion of the programme and the *newsonair* app in general should also be done at the nearby military stations to educate and encourage the defence personnel to explore Akashvani programmes instituted for them.

## 20. The Last Word

As acknowledged by many, six decades for a radio programme is not a short duration and not something to be ignored. Not only the memories but also the relevance of the programme even after six decades has been the driving factor towards writing of this book. As we move towards the completion of this book, we look at the current schedule of the programme and the channel as a whole. A listener can feel that Prasar Bharati is currently in the process of streamlining, restructuring, downsizing, unification, and consolidating the channels of each station as can be observed in recent closure of many FM Rainbow and Local VBS channels. Towards the end of the chapter, we try to speculate the impact of this ongoing restructuring on Guwahati's Troops Programme.

### Present and Proposed Schedule

The current broadcast schedule of Guwahati's Troops Programme is as tabulated below.

*Table 118: Schedule of Troops Programme as in September 2023*

SAINIK BHAİYON KA KARYAKRAM (Current Schedule - as in October 2023)							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Guwahati-B (MW 289.9 m   DRM 1026 kHz)							
12:10	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:11	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:12	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri 2,4 - Tarana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum 5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	The News	The News	The News	The News	The News	The News	The News
13:10	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Tarang	Swar Chhaya	Sabrang	Gunjan	Geetika
13:40	Watan Ke Taraane	1 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet 5 - Naye Taraane	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Tarannum	Pradeshik Sangeet	Shirshak Sangeet
14:00	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News
14:15	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar
14:30	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
15:00	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down

The duration of the half-hour 14:00 news bulletins were changed back from 30 minutes to 15 minutes each, sometime during early 2023, after the COVID period was over. However, this didn't increase the duration of Troops Programme; the reason being, earlier, Guwahati-A (Mahabahu) used to relay the English bulletin while Guwahati-B (Pragjyotishpur) relayed Hindi bulletin. Currently, all channels are required to carry both the bulletins of morning 08:00/ 08:15, afternoon 14:00/ 14:15 and evening 20:45/ 21:00 mandatorily. Even Vividh Bharati has not been spared from this. The only change pre and post COVID era in Troops Programme has been in the duration of

Pradeshik Sangeet, which has been made a 20-minute programme thrice a week, which was originally of 10-15 minutes.

Although the content of the Troops Programme is still relevant from entertainment viewpoint, nevertheless, it requires a transformation to maintain its significance so that the authorities may think twice before taking any decision towards its closure in future citing reason of non-participation of the intended target audience. Based on the new programme suggestions described in the previous chapter, an overall schedule is proposed below, which may serve as a guiding reference if the concerned authorities in future would like to think towards the betterment and enrichment of this historic programme in today's context.

*Table 119: A proposed schedule for Troops Programme for increased relevance*

SAINIK BHAIYON KA KARYAKRAM - A Proposed Schedule for Future							
Time	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Gauhati-B (MW 289.9 m   DRM 1026 kHz)							
12:10	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune	Opening Tune
12:11	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary	Prog. Summary
12:12	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet	Film Sangeet
12:30	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet	Aaj Ka Geet
12:37	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.	Next Day's Progs.
12:38	1,3,5 - Sangeet Madhuri 2,4 - Tarana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai	Filmi Naghme	1 - Hai Zindagi Pukaarti 2 - Saaz Aur Awaaz 3 - Raag Rang 4 - Tarannum 5 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet	Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan	1,5 - Swar Sangam 2 - Geet Manoranjan 3 - Mazlis-e-Qawwali 4 - Ek Aur Anek	Sabrang
13:05	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar	Samachar
13:10	Geet Mala	Ek Hi Film Ke Geet	Tarang	Swar Chhaya	Yaaden Aap Ki	Dil Se Dil Tak (with live streaming on FB)	Sainya Sangam (The Weekly Troops Radio Magazine)
13:40	Watan Ke Taraane	1 - Ek Hi Kalakar Ke Geet 2 - Panghat 3 - Shirshak Sangeet 4 - Bhoole Bisre Geet 5 - Naye Taraane	Pradeshik Sangeet	Pradeshik Sangeet	Farmaishon Ki (Letters and Requests of Jawans from the Archives)		
14:00	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News	Midday News
14:15	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar	Dopahar Samachar
14:30	Chayanika	Gunjan	Preet Ladee	Geet Rangeele	Geetika	Nazrana	Geet Apna Dhun Paraai
15:00	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down	Close down

## The Current Situation

The year 2023 is witnessing major changes being introduced by Prasar Bharati in the area of public broadcasting. In the current era of increasing alternate sources of digital entertainment, listening to the traditional radio has been on a continuous decline. Shortwave transmitters have already been phased out. Most of the running mediumwave transmitters have also reached their end of lives. Maintaining them beyond this requires heavy investment, which may not be a clever idea for FM being the current popular radio band. Towards the migration from mediumwave to FM, channels are being unified by merger. Unification, merger and streamlining of channels have led to the closure of several channels across the country recently. Most of the FM Rainbow channels have been discontinued. Several local VBS channels have been closed. Talking about the seven stations that once used to have A and B channels on MW, only two stations – Guwahati and Kolkata have been able to retain both of those channels on MW as can be seen in the table below that summarizes the earlier and present status of their transmission modes.

*Table 120: Transmission modes of AIR stations originally having A and B channels*

### AIR STATIONS HAVING A & B CHANNELS IN THEIR LIFETIME

Station	Channel	Transmission Modes (earlier)	Transmission Modes (current)	Remarks
Delhi	A: Indraprastha	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM	
	B: Rajdhani	AM (MW, SW)	<b>Closed</b>	A new DRM channel is in place
Kolkata	A: Geetanjali	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM, FM	
	B: Sanchayita	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM	
Mumbai	A: Asmita	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM, FM	
	B: Samvadita	AM (MW, SW)	<b>DRM only</b>	
Chennai	A	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM, FM	
	B	AM (MW, SW)	<b>Closed</b>	A new DRM channel is in place
Guwahati	A: Mahabahu	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), FM	
	B: Pragjyotishpur	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM	
Hyderabad	A	AM (MW, SW)	AM (MW), DRM, FM	
	B	AM (MW, SW)	<b>Closed</b>	
Jalandhar	A	AM (MW)	AM (MW), DRM, FM	
	B	AM (MW)	<b>Closed</b>	

Looking at the table, it is a matter of speculation that the B-channel of Guwahati and Kolkata may soon be either shut down or made a pure DRM channel. In either case, it will be a lose-lose situation. Shutting down of Guwahati's Pragjyotishpur channel would mean the end of the Troops Programme unless it is provided a slot on the other channel and making it a pure DRM channel will further reduce the listenership due to the present unpopularity of DRM receivers globally.

If given a chance to justify the existence of Guwahati's Pragjyotishpur channel on any transmission mode, will the station be able to come up with a strong reasoning in favour of it? Let's begin the analysis from the detailed programme schedule of the channel as outlined in table below.

*Table 121: Broadcast schedule of Akashvani Guwahati Pragjyotishpur (Former Guwahati-B) as in October 2023*

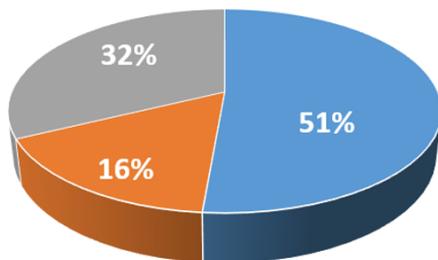
AKASHVANI GUWAHATI PRAGJYOTISHPUR - PROGRAMME SCHEDULE - SEP 2023		
Transmission - I		
Time	Programme	Comments
5:28	Akashvani Signature Tune	
5:30	Vandemataram, Opening Announcement, Date as in different calendars, Mangal Dhwani	
5:35	Bandana - Devotional Music	Programme with same name & similar content broadcast from Mahabahu at the same time.
5:55	Programme Highlights of the Day	
6:00	News in Hindi & English	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi
6:10	Bhajan - Devotional Music	
6:20	Lokogeet - Folk Music of Assam	
6:30	Madhuban - Old Hindi film hits	
7:05	News in Assamese	jointly with Mahabahu
7:15	Aji Pua - A Daily Morning Magazine	jointly with Mahabahu

7:35	Weekly Programmes Mon: Mor Sangeet Yatra (My Musical Journey) Tue : Rupali Lahar (Silver screen) Wed: Smritir Dinlipi (Diary of Memories) Thu : Abhilekhagaror Pora (From Archives) Fri : Chitrageet (Assamese Film Songs) Sat : Upanyas Path (Novel Reading) Sun : Nidaan (Interviews of Doctors)	jointly with Mahabahu
7:55	Niyog Batori - Employment News	Same content as from Mahabahu at 7:00
8:00	Samachar Prabhat & Morning News	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi
8:30	North-East News in English	relay from Shillong
8:35	Adhunik Geet - Assamese Modern Songs	
9:00	Regional News in Assamese	jointly with Mahabahu
9:15	Rupali Dhow - Assamese & Hindi film songs/ Umang - NCERT Sponsored Programme	
9:45	Close down	
<b>Transmission - II</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Comments</b>
11:28	Akashvani Signature Tune	
11:30	Geetimalikar Geet – Assamese Modern Songs	Content taken from Geetimalika of Mahabahu broadcast daily at 8:30
	Post Box 111 from 11:00 to 12:00 (on Sundays)	relay from Delhi
12:00	News in English & Hindi	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi
12:10	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram – Troops Programme	
13:05	News in English	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi
13:10	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram – Troops Prog (cont.)	
14:00	Midday News & Dopahar Samachar	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi
14:30	Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram – Troops Prog (cont.)	
15:00	FM Rainbow Delhi	relay from Delhi
17:00	News in English & Hindi	relay from Delhi
17:10	Yuvavani – Youth Programme	
17:15	Regional News in Assamese	jointly with Mahabahu
17:20	Yuvavani – Youth Programme (cont.)	
18:00	News in Hindi & English	relay from Delhi
18:10	Yuvavani – Youth Programme (cont.)	
18:20	News in Sanskrit	relay from Delhi
18:30	Yuvavani – Youth Programme (cont.)	
18:40	Programme Highlights	jointly with Mahabahu
18:45	Regional News in Assamese	jointly with Mahabahu
19:00	News in English & Hindi	relay from Delhi
19:10	News in Assamese	jointly with Mahabahu
19:20	Yuvavani – Youth Programme (cont.)	
20:15	Lokogeet	
20:30	Bhajans – Film and Non-film/ Today in Parliament	(Today in Parliament – relay from Delhi)
20:45	Samachar Sandhya	jointly with Mahabahu; relay from Delhi

21:00	News at Nine	relay from Delhi
21:15	Spotlight	relay from Delhi
21:30	Ramdhenu - Compered programme of Hindi & Assamese songs on Announcer's choice	
22:00	Indian Classical Music (Vocal/ Recital)	
	(On Sundays, National Programme of Music from 22:00 to 23:00, followed by News in Hindi & English)	relay from Delhi
22:30	Close down (at 23:10 on Sun)	

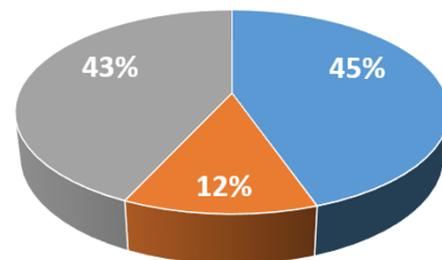
The current programme schedule as tabulated above demands a further statistical analysis since the tabular form may not be adequate for effective visualization. Classification and categorization of programmes on the basis of their content, type, and origin gives interesting results.

**Programme Distribution on Pragjyotishpur (Weekdays)**



■ Programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur  
■ Joint programmes with Mahabahu (excluding relays)

**Programme Distribution on Pragjyotishpur (Sundays)**

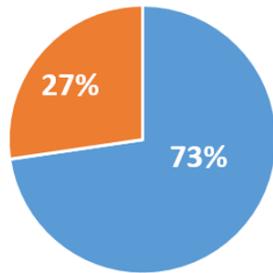


■ Relay from Delhi and Shillong

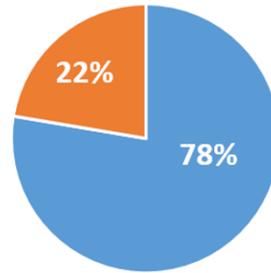
*Illustration 18: Programme distribution on Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023*

In above illustration, it is observed that out of the total broadcast duration of Pragjyotishpur channel, nearly half the duration (51% on weekdays and 45% on Sundays) is occupied by programmes that are sourced from the channel. The remaining half includes relays from Delhi and Shillong and joint broadcasts with Mahabahu channel. Relays are important, however, if both the channels carry the same relays, then it becomes a case of redundant transmission. The share of programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur, and the exclusive relays carried over this channel together constitute nearly three-fourth of the duration (73% on weekdays and 78% on Sundays) as observed in below illustration. In other words, the Pragjyotishpur channel has three-fourth of its transmission time dedicated for exclusive programmes, which is non-overlapping with Mahabahu channel. In other words, a quarter of Pragjyotishpur's daily transmission duration is redundant.

**Exclusive v/s Redundant on Pragjyotishpur (Weekdays)**



**Exclusive v/s Redundant on Pragjyotishpur (Sundays)**

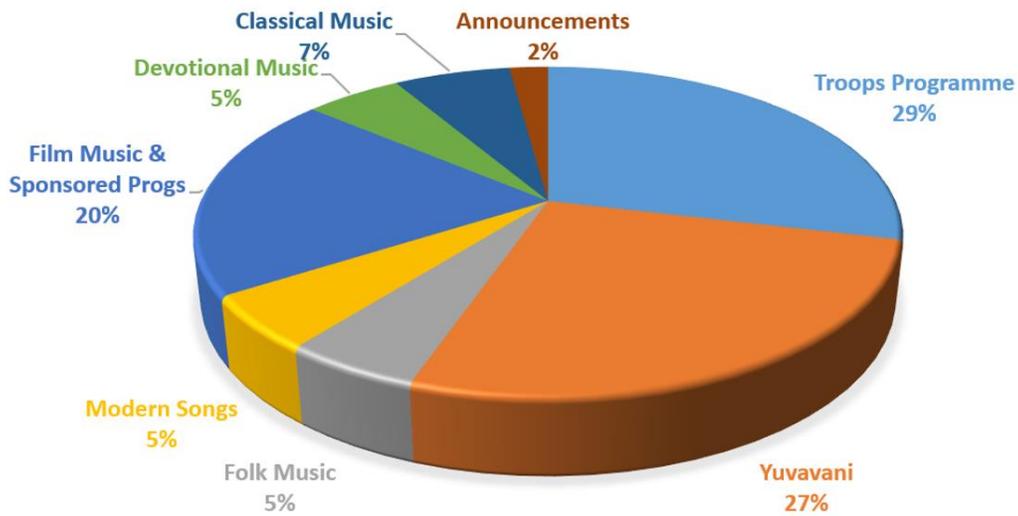


■ Programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur + Relays exclusive to Pragjyotishpur  
■ Redundant programmes on Pragjyotishpur (also broadcast from Mahabahu)

*Illustration 19: Exclusive versus redundant programme share on Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023*

Keeping aside the relays and joint transmissions for a moment and concentrating on the nature of programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur, the following illustration provides insight in this area.

**Distribution of Programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur**



*Illustration 20: Distribution of programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023*

As can be clearly seen, the Troops Programme is the most significant broadcast of the channel even after six decades (29% share), closely followed by Yuvavani at 27%. Together they constitute more than half the daily transmission time (56%). Undoubtedly, as before, these two programmes continue to be the reasons for the existence of the channel. However, the remaining 44% share needs to be looked at as well. Assamese and Hindi film music makes up half of this duration while the remaining half goes to classical, devotional, folk and light music. In essence, the programming originated from Pragjyotishpur channel is totally based on recorded music, barring few talks and

interview-based programmes broadcast under *Yuvavani*. Also, items of all these music forms are also broadcast from Mahabahu. Thus, in one way, the Troops Programme and *Yuvavani* are the only exclusive offerings from Pragjyotishpur in true sense. Together, the two programmes constitute 28% of total broadcast duration of the channel. The intention here is neither to give any judgement nor to sound pessimistic for the heck of it, but to act as the devil's advocate so that all areas towards the justification and future roadmap for the channel and the Troops Programme in particular may be looked into by the authorities concerned.

### **The Final Word**

Going back in time, it gives goosebumps to imagine O. P. Tandon or Manjula Shah giving the opening announcement for the first edition of *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, the Troops Programme, on the afternoon of Sunday, 17 June 1962, at 13:00. A little more than six decades have passed. With its original structure and format still intact, the programme is still around with enthusiastic and entertaining presentation by the current announcers. If participation of troops in the programme may be regained through the suggested initiatives in this book or any other initiatives taken by the station, the programme will become more relevant. Nevertheless, the decision surrounding the continuity of Pragjyotishpur channel will play the most vital role in deciding the future of the Troops Programme.

I wind up on a positive note that Pragjyotishpur will not only continue its operation and so will *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, the Troops Programme, but also the programme will reach newer heights in future.

# Epilogue

In the unavoidable interval between the writing of the main body of this book and its approval by the Department of Publications Division, a notable thing has happened in the Troops Programme, which requires a call out so as to end the book on an optimistic note. This section is intended to give a summary of that event so that the account is brought as up to date as possible.

On 1 December 2023, on the occasion of 59<sup>th</sup> BSF Raising Day, Akashvani Guwahati organized a special programme at Patgaon located in suburban Guwahati that hosts the Frontier Headquarter of the BSF. A detailed half-hour interview of Inspector General D. K. Yadav was broadcast on the occasion on both channels – on *Mahabahu* at 10:30 and on *Pragjyotishpur* at 14:30 under the regular Troops Programme. All aspects surrounding BSF covering its historical significance and its contribution in the north-eastern region, and present day challenges were discussed at length.

On an entertaining note, on the same day, another special programme featuring views and song requests from the officers of BSF was broadcast between 13:10 and 14:00 in the Troops Programme.



*Photo 13: Programme Notification on 59th Foundation Day of BSF. Seen in this photo Bijon Sinha (extreme left), Kartik Sutradhar (second from left), Gunaprabha Borah (extreme right) and BSF officers in uniform (Source: Akashvani Guwahati official Facebook page)*

Special programmes of this order reiterate the continued significance and relevance of special audience programmes for the military and para-military forces on state-run radio channels that can convey the messages at great penetration level.

## Appendix-I: Popular Song Requests (1980-1992)

This section lists down the popular songs of the period from 1980 and 1992, which used to get frequently played in the request-based programmes, viz., *Aaj Ka Geet* and *Aap Ki Farmaish* under the Troops Programme. The list of 300 films and their corresponding popular songs has been built up entirely from my own listening experience of the programme. The start of the period (1980) is governed by the start of my listening to this programme. The end year 1992 marks the last year before the shutdown of the shortwave after which the dramatic decrease in listeners' requests did no longer provide sufficient samples for building up statistics that could give a reliable picture of the popular songs of the period.

*Table 122: List of songs from 300 films (1980-1992) that were mostly heard in Aaj Ka Geet and Aap Ki Farmaish of Troops Programme*

Sl. No.	Year	Film	Songs
1	1980	Aap Ke Deewane	hum to aap ke deewane hain bade mastaane hain
2	1980	Aap To Aise Na The	tu is tarah se meri zindagi mein shaamil hai
3	1980	Alibaba Aur 40 Chor	jadugar jadoo kar jaayega/ khatooba khatooba
4	1980	Asha	sheesha ho ya dil ho aakhir toot jaata hai/ aashaon ke sawan mein
5	1980	Bandish	mere hosh le lo deewana bana do/ rang bhare mausam se rang
6	1980	Chambal Ki Kasam	simti hui ye ghadiyan phir se/ chanda re mere bhaiya se kehna
7	1980	Dhan Daulat	jeena kya aji pyar bina jeevan ke yehi char dina
8	1980	Dostana	dillagi ne dee hawa/ bane chahe dushman/ kitna aasan hai kehna
9	1980	Hum Paanch	kya jaanu main sajaniya chamkegi kab chandaniya ghar mein
10	1980	Judaai	maar gayi mujhe teri judaai/ mausam suhaane aa gaye lo
11	1980	Karz	main solah baras ki/ ek haseena thi/ dard-e-dil/ om shanti om
12	1980	Khubsurat	sun sun didi tere liye ik rishta aaya hai/ piya bawri pee kahaan
13	1980	Lootmaar	jab chhaaye mera jadoo/ hans tu hardam khushiyan ya gham
14	1980	Maang Bharo Sajna	deepak mere suhaag ka jalta rahe
15	1980	Manokamna	tumhara pyar chahiye mujhe jeene ke liye
16	1980	Nazrana Pyar Ka	gham chhupaate raho/ baahon ke ghare mein mausam bahaar ka
17	1980	Phir Wohi Raat	sang mere nikle the saajan haar baithe thodi hi duur chalke
18	1980	Qurbani	aap jaisa koi/ laila o laila/ kya dekhte ho/ hum tumhe chahte hain
19	1980	Ram Balram	ladki pasand ki/ yaar ki khabar mil gayi/ ik rasta do raahi ik chor
20	1980	Shaan	janu meri jaan/ pyar karnewale/ yamma yamma/ doston se pyar
21	1980	Swayamvar	mujhe chhoo rahi hain teri garm saansen
22	1980	The Burning Train	vaada haan vaada/ pal do pal ka saath hamara/ pehli nazar mein
23	1980	Thodi Si Bewafai	hazaar raahen mudke/ ankhon mein humne/ mausam mausam
24	1981	Aas Paas	Tumhe dil mein band kar loon dariya mein phenk doon chaabi
25	1981	Ahista Ahista	nazar se phool chunti hai nazar aahista aahista
26	1981	Bhula Na Dena	seekho to sikhayen tumhe pyar ka sabak
27	1981	Dard	pyar ka dard hai meetha meetha pyara pyara
28	1981	Dhanwan	ye anken dekh kar hum saari duniya bhool jaate hain
29	1981	Ek Duuje Ke Liye	tere mere beech mein/ hum bane tum bane/ hum tum dono jab mil
30	1981	Kranti	zindagi ki na toote ladi pyar karle ghadi do ghadi
31	1981	Krodhi	chal chameli baag mein mewa khilaunga
32	1981	Laawaris	kab ke bichhde hue hum/ apni to jaise taise/ mere angne mein
33	1981	Love Story	yaad aa rahi/ dekho maine dekha/ kaisa tera pyar/ ye ladki zara si
34	1981	Naseeb	mere naseeb mein/ john johny janardan/ zindagi imtihan leti hai
35	1981	Prem Geet	aao mil jaayen hum sugandh aur suman ki tarah
36	1981	Pyasa Sawan	megha re megha re/ tera saath hai to mujhe kya kami hai
37	1981	Rocky	kya yahi pyar hai/ aa dekhien zara kisme kitna hai dam

38	1981	Saajan Ki Saheli	o bewafa, kisi aur ke saajan ki saheli ho gayi
39	1981	Silsila	dekha ek khwab to ye silsile hue/ ye kahaan aa gaye hum
40	1981	Umrao Jaan	in ankhon ki masti ke/ dil cheez kya hai aap meri jaan leejyie
41	1981	Yarana	chhoo kar mere mann ko/ tere jaisa yaar kahaan/ sara zamana
42	1981	Zamane Ko Dikhana Hai	hoga tumse pyara kaun humko to tumse/ poochho na yaar kya hua
43	1982	Baghawat	mere mehboob tujhe salaam/ banjaare hum banjaare
44	1982	Bazaar	phir chhidi raat baat phoolon ki/ dikhaai diye yun ki bekhud kiya
45	1982	Bemisal	kitni khoobsoorat ye tasveer hai ye kashmir hai
46	1982	Bheegi Palken	janam janam ka saath hai tumhara hamara
47	1982	Dharam Kanta	ye gotedaar lehenga niklun jab daal ke
48	1982	Dil-e-Nadan	chandni raat mein ek baar tumhe dekha hai
49	1982	Disco Dancer	I am a disco dancer/ Jimmy Jimmy/ koi yahaan aha nache nache
50	1982	Kamchor	tujh sang preet lagayi sajna/ tumse badh kar duniya mein na dekha
51	1982	Khuddar	angrezi mein kehte hain ki/ mach gaya shor saari nagri re
52	1982	Namak Halaal	aaj rapat jaayen to hamein na/ ke pag ghunghroo baandh
53	1982	Nikaah	dil ke armaan aansuon mein beh gaye
54	1982	Prem Rog	mohabbat hai kya/ bhanwre ne/ meri qismat mein/ ye galiyaan ye
55	1982	Rajput	akela gaya tha main na aaya akela
56	1982	Saath Saath	ye tera ghar ye mera ghar/ tumko dekha to ye khayal aaya
57	1982	Sanam Teri Kasam	nisha.. jaanejaan o meri jaanejaan
58	1982	Satte Pe Satta	dukki pe dukki/ mausam mastana/ zindagi hanske bitayenge
59	1982	Shakti	jaane kaise kab kahaan ikraar ho gaya
60	1982	Teesri Aankh	o babu hamne to pyar kiya hai
61	1982	Teri Kasam	hum jis raste pe chale/ ye zameen ga rahi hai aasman ga raha hai
62	1982	Vakil Babu	hum kahaan kho gaye tum kahaan kho gaye hum mile to ye dono
63	1982	Ye Vaada Raha	tu, tu hai wohi dil ne jise apna kahaa
64	1983	Agar Tum Na Hote	hamein aur jeene ki chaahat na hoti agar tum na hote
65	1983	Andha Kanoon	mausam ka takaaza/ rote rote hansna seekho/ meri behna deewani
66	1983	Arpan	pardes jaake pardesiya/ likhne wale ne likh daale milan ke saath
67	1983	Avtaar	din maheene saal guzarte jayenge hum pyar mein jeete pyar mein
68	1983	Bade Dilwala	jeevan ke din chhote sahi/ kahin na jaa aaj kahin mat ja
69	1983	Betaab	jab hum jawaan honge jaane kahaan honge/ badal yun garajta hai
70	1983	Coolie	dono jawani ki masti mein choor/ jawani ki rail kahin chhoot na
71	1983	Do Gulaab	mere liye tu bani, tere liye main bana, we are silent lovers
72	1983	Ek Jaan Hain Hum	yaad teri aayegi mujhko bada sataayegi
73	1983	Ghunghroo	pyar ke dhaage tode nahin toote
74	1983	Hero	tu mera jaanu hai/ pyar karne wale kabhi darte naheen
75	1983	Himmatwala	naino mein sapna/ taaki o taaki/ wah wah khel shuru ho gaya
76	1983	Kalaakaar	neele neele ambar par chaand jab chhaaye
77	1983	Masoom	tujhse naaraz nahin zindagi hairaan hoon main
78	1983	Mawaali	ui amma ui amma/ jhopadi mein charpai
79	1983	Nishaan	akhiyon hi akhiyon mein/ beliya ab ki yeh bahaar koi gul naya
80	1983	Painter Babu	painter babu, I love you
81	1983	Razia Sultan	ae dil-e-nadan aarzoo kya hai justuju kya hai
82	1983	Romance	maang lunga main tujhe/ aayi aayi aayi teri yaad aayi
83	1983	Souten	shayad meri shaadi ka khayaal/ zindagi pyar ka geet hai
84	1983	Sweekar Kiya Maine	ajnabi kaun ho tum jab se tumhe/ chaand ke paas jo sitara hai
85	1983	Wo Saat Din	pyar kiya nahi jaata ho jaata hai/ kangana aaye haaye kangana
86	1984	Bad Aur Badnaam	humse muqabla karoge haaye
87	1984	Jawani	tu rootha to main ro dungi sanam/ gali gali dhoonda tujhe
88	1984	Laila	saath jeeyenge saath marenge/ geeton se sargam kaliyon se
89	1984	Love Marriage	apna jeevan rail ki patri saath rahen par mil na paayen
90	1984	Manzil Manzil	o meri jaan ab nahin rehna/ lut gaye hum to raahon mein
91	1984	Mashaal	mujhe tum yaad karna aur mujhko yaad aana tum

92	1984	Sharaabi	mujhe naulakkha manga de/ imitihan ho gayi/ de de pyar de
93	1984	Sohni Mahiwal	rab se zyada tera naam leta hoon/ bol do meethe bol soniye
94	1984	Tohfa	pyar ka tohfa tera bana hai/ albela mausam kehta hai swagatam
95	1984	Utsav	mann kyun behka ri behka aadhi raat ko
96	1985	Aakhir Kyun	dushman na kare dost ne wo kaam kiya hai
97	1985	Aitbaar	kisi nazar ko tera intezaar aaj bhi hai
98	1985	Alag Alag	dil mein aag lagaye saawan/ kuch humko tumse kehna to hai
99	1985	Babu	ae hawa mere sang sang/ main kunwari albeli ja rahi thi kahin
100	1985	Do Dilon Ki Daastan	humrahi mere humrahi hai mere sang tu to darr kya
101	1985	Faasle	hum chup hain ke dil sun rahe hain dhadkano ko aahaton ko
102	1985	Geraftaar	dhoop mein nikla na karo roop ki raani
103	1985	Ghulaami	zihale miskin mukun ba ranjish bahaar e hijra bechara dil hai
104	1985	Jhoothi	chanda dekhe chanda to ye chanda sharmaaye
105	1985	Kabhi Ajnabi The	kabhi ajnabi the zameen aasman ye tera haath thama jo hue
106	1985	Lava	dil kya hai ik sheesha hai sheesha mein ik tasveer hai
107	1985	Mard	mard tangewala/ will you marry me/ sun rubiya tumse pyar ho
108	1985	Meri Jung	zindagi har kadam ik nayi jung hai
109	1985	Mohabbat	saanson se nahin, kadmon se nahin, mohabbat se chalti hai duniya
110	1985	Oonche Log	tu mera kya laage o sathiya
111	1985	Pighalta Aasman	mujhe aisa mila moti/ teri meri prem kahani kitaabon mein bhi na
112	1985	Pyar Jhukta Nahin	tumse milkar/ o dilbarjaniya/ tumhe apna sathi banane se pehle
113	1985	Rahi Badal Gaye	ik baat dil mein aayi hai kahun ya na kahun
114	1985	Ram Teri Ganga Maili	husn pahadon ka kya kehna/ sun sahiba sun/ yaara o yaara
115	1985	Saagar	saagar kinare dil ye pukaare tu jo nahin to mera koi nahin hai
116	1985	Saaheb	yaar bina chain kahaan re pyar bina chain kahaan re
117	1985	Sanjog	yashoda ka nand lala brij ka ujala hai
118	1985	Sitamgar	mausam pyar ka rang badalta rahe/ tum dilwalon ke aage lakhon
119	1985	Tawaif	bahut der se dar pe aankhen lagi theen huzoor aate bahut der
120	1985	Teri Meherbaniyan	dil beqaraar tha dil beqaraar hai/ teri meherbaniyan
121	1985	Triveni	sadiyaan beet gayeen tera intezaar kiya
122	1986	Aag Aur Shola	aaj subah jab main jagaa teri kasam aisa lagaa ki tune mujhe yaad
123	1986	Aakhri Raasta	gori ka saajan, saajan ki gori, lo ji shuru ho gayi love story
124	1986	Aap Ke Saath	jind le gaya wo dil ka jaani/ behke behke hain ye jazbaat
125	1986	Amrit	aur nahin kuch tumse kehna jeevan saathi saath mein rehna
126	1986	Dehleez	jhoomti bahaaron ka samaa pyar ki umangen hain jawaan
127	1986	Ek Pal	main to sang jaaun banwaas
128	1986	Ilzaam	I am a street dancer/ pehle pehle pyar ki/ main aaya tere liye
129	1986	Jaanbaaz	tera saath hai kitna pyara/ har kisi ko nahin milta yahaan pyar
130	1986	Jeeva	roz roz aankhon tale ek hi sapna chale
131	1986	Karma	na jaiyo pardes/ har karam apna karenge ae watan tere liye
132	1986	Love 86	o miss de de kiss aaya hai 86
133	1986	Muddat	pyar hamara amar rahega yaad karega jahaan
134	1986	Naam	chitthi aayi hai watan se/ tu kal chala jayega to main kya karunga
135	1986	Nache Mayuri	na tumne kiya na maine kiya par hona tha pyar
136	1986	Nagina	main teri dushman/ bhooli bisri ek/ tune bechain itna zyada kiya
137	1986	Naseeb Apna Apna	zindagi ki jhoomti gaati bahaaron mein sanam
138	1986	Palay Khan	mere sanam tera khat mila, khat mein tune khat likhne ko likha
139	1986	Pyar Ho Gaya	ruki ruki saanson mein teen pyare lafzon mein
140	1986	Pyar Ke Do Pal Pyar Kiya Hai Pyar	pyar ke do pal kahin kho na jaayen milke juda hum kahin ho na
141	1986	Karenge	pyar kiya hai pyar karenge/ meethi meethi sardi hai
142	1986	Sada Suhagan	kehta hai sindoor tera teri bindiya kehti hai
143	1986	Suhaagan	kya suraj ambar ko chhod ke jayega/ sun ri meri behna sun ri meri
144	1986	Swarg Se Sundar	apna ghar hai swarg se sundar

145	1987	Aag Hi Aag	saajan aa jao, vaada ye kar le pyar mein kabhi hum juda na honge
146	1987	Apne Apne	apne apne se lage hamein dekha jo pehli baar tumhe
147	1987	Dance Dance	zubi zubi/ halwa wala/ everybody dance/ yaar mera kho gaya
148	1987	Dil Tujhko Diya	waada na tod meri chadhti jawani tadpe
149	1987	Diljala	itna haseen chehra tera bas mein nahin hai dil hi mera
150	1987	Imaandaar	aur is dil mein kya rakha hai tera hi dard chhupa rakha hai
151	1987	Inaam Dus Hazaar	chaand koi hoga tumsa kahaan
152	1987	Jaan Hatheli Pe	jaan hatheli pe leke aaya tera deewana
153	1987	Jawaab Hum Denge	hairaan hoon main/ jab jab miya biwi mein/ teri ankh mastani hai
154	1987	Kaash	o yaara tu pyaron se hai pyara/ chhoti si hai baat koi nahin jaane
155	1987	Kalyug Aur Ramayan	chal bhaag chalen purab ki or
156	1987	Khudgarz	aap ke aa jaane se/ log kehte hain/ zindagi ka naam dosti
157	1987	Kudrat Ka Kanoon	tujhe kitna pyar karen/ o mukhda chaand ka tukda
158	1987	Marte Dum Tak	chhodenge na hum tera saath o saathi marte dum tak
159	1987	Mera Lahoo	ye lo kaagaz ye lo kalam mere lahoo se likh lo sanam
160	1987	Mr. India	karte hain hum pyar/ hawa hawaii/ kaate nahin kat-te din ye raat
161	1987	Pyar Ke Qabil	red light, no green light
162	1987	Pyar Ki Jeet	mujhe rehna hai tere dil mein kiraya bol kya legi
163	1987	Satyamev Jayate	dil mein ho tum aankh mein tum bolo tumhe kaise chaahun
164	1987	Sindoor	patjhad saawan/ naam saare mujhe bhool/ chalo chalo chalen duur
165	1987	Watan Ke Rakhwale	tere mere beech mein kaun aayega/ jab pyar kiya ikraar kiya
166	1988	Agni	kahaan laya mera yaar pahaadon mein
167	1988	Bees Saal Baad	hum tumhe itna pyar karenge/ mere saamne tu din raat rahe
168	1988	Biwi Ho To Aisi	phool gulaab ka laakhon mein hazaaron mein ek chehra janaab ka
169	1988	Commando	maine maine tujhe tujhe kiya kiya pyar kiya
170	1988	Dariya Dil	wo kehte hain humse abhi umar nahin hai pyar ki
171	1988	Dayavan	aaj phir tumpe pyar aaya hai behad behisaab aaya hai
172	1988	Ganga Jamuna Saraswati	saajan mera us paar hai milne ko dil beqaraar hai
173	1988	Ghar Ghar Ki Kahani	kitne mausam beet gaye/ hello darling tum kaise ho
174	1988	Hamara Khandaan	mere mehboob ruk jao/ maine bhi ek geet likha hai teri surat
175	1988	Hatya	aap ko agar zarurat hai dil mera haazir/ main pyar ki pujaan
176	1988	Janam Janam	janam janam ki pyasi/ kheench laya hai/ chhalke in ankhon ki
177	1988	Jeete Hain Shaan Se	Johny Johny Julie ka dil tumpe aaya Johny
178	1988	Kab Tak Chup Rahungi	kahaan aa gaye hum kahaan kho gaye hum
179	1988	Kabzaa	dil ki adalat pyar ka muqadma dekho vakeel babu ban gaye balma
180	1988	Kasam	kasam kya hoti hai kasam wo hoti hai jo todi na jaaye
181	1988	Khatron Ke Khiladi	tumse bana mera jeevan sundar sapan salona
182	1988	Khoon Bhari Maang	hanste hanste kat jaayen raste/ jeene ke bahaane laakhon hain
183	1988	Mulzim	chal gori pyar ke gaon mein/ kase raho kase raho
184	1988	Paap Ki Duniya	bandhan toote na saari zindagi
185	1988	Pyar Ka Mandir	pyar ke phele kadam pe/ log jahaan par rehte hain us jagah ko wo
186	1988	Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak	papa kehte hain/ ae mere humsafar/ ghazab ka hai/ akele hain to
187	1988	Ram Avtaar	ungli mein angoothi, angoothi mein nagina
188	1988	Rama O Rama	tune ye kaisi duniya banaayi
189	1988	Shahenshah	jaane do jaane do mujhe jaana hai/ hoga thanedaar tu mera hai
190	1988	Tezaab	ek do teen/ kehdo ki tum ho meri varna/ so gaya ye jahaan
191	1988	Vijay	baadal pe chalke aa, saawan mein dhalke aa
192	1988	Waaris	husn ki wadiyon mein/ ghata chha gayi hai/ mere pyar ki umar ho
193	1988	Waqt Ki Awaaz	I want to hit somebody/ tu bhi beqaraar main bhi beqaraar
194	1988	Wo Phir Aayegi	pehla pehla pyar hai jaanam tere liye
195	1989	Aakhri Baazi	jaan ki ye baazi aakhri baazi/ chori chori aap mere dil mein
196	1989	Aasman Se Ooncha	jiya pyar maange jiya aasman se ooncha
197	1989	Bade Ghar Ki Beti	teri payal baji jahaan main ghayal hua wahaan
198	1989	Batwara	tere vaaste re dhola nain mere jaage, tu mera kaun laage

199	1989	Bhrashtachar	tere naina mere naino se meethi meethi baaten karte hain
200	1989	Chaalbaaz	tera beemar mera dil/ na jaane kahan se aayi hai
201	1989	Chaandni	mere hathon mein/ tere mere hothon pe/ lagi aaj saawan ki phir
202	1989	Daata	babul ka ye ghar gori kuch din ka thikana hai
203	1989	Eeshwar	aage sukh to/ baj utha saanson mein/ kaushalya main teri tu mera
204	1989	Guru	jaiyo na jaiyo na/ ghayal tune mujhe kar diya
205	1989	Ilaaka	pyar se bhi zyada tujhe pyar karta hoon
206	1989	Kanoon Ki Awaaz	saajan mere saajan, tumko paakar sab kuch paaya
207	1989	Lal Dupatta Malmal Ka	kya karte the/ na jaane kyun/ suni suni akhiyon mein/ ab dawa ki
208	1989	Love Love Love	jeena hai pyar mein/ hum to hain dil ke deewane/ disco dandiya
209	1989	Main Tera Dushman	jinhe chahiye daulat rabba unko daulat de de
210	1989	Maine Pyar Kiya	dil deewana/ aaja shaam hone/ kabootar ja/ aaya mausam dosti ka
211	1989	Majboor	mere sanam tere sar ki kasam main tera ho gaya hoon
212	1989	Mitti Aur Sona	zindagi mein pehli pehli baar pyar kiya hai
213	1989	Nigaahen	kise dhoondta hai paagal sapere main to saamne khadi hoon tere
214	1989	Parinda	tumse milke aisa laga tumse milke
215	1989	Prem Pratigya	pyar kabhi kam nahin karna koi sitam kar lena
216	1989	Ram Lakhan	one two ka four/ tera naam liya tujhe yaad kiya/ bada dukh deena
217	1989	Santosh	yun lagne lagi aajkal zindagani ke jaise kahin chhod aaye jawani
218	1989	Souten Ki Beti	hum bhool gaye har baat/ ye jo halka halka/ kaun sunega kisko
219	1989	Surya	maine tujhse pyar kiya hai isme meri khata nahin
220	1989	Tridev	oye oye/ gali gali mein/ main teri mohabbat/ gajar ne kiya hai
221	1989	Ustaad	mujhe rab jo kahe tujhe chhod doon
222	1990	Aaj Ka Arjun	gori hain kalaaiyan tu la de mujhe hari hari choodiyan
223	1990	Aashiqui	janejigar janeman/ main duniya bhula/ bas ek sanam chahiye
224	1990	Ameeri Gareebi	bhool bhulaiya teri akhiyan saiyan rasta bhool gayi main
225	1990	Awaargi	bali umar ne mera haal/ ae mere sathiya tu koi/ daak babu aaya
226	1990	Azad Desh Ke Ghulam	saare shikwe gile bhula ke kaho
227	1990	Baaghi	kaisa lagta hai/ har kasam se/ ik chanchal/ chandni raat hai
228	1990	Bahaar Aane Tak	mohabbat inayat karam dekhti hai/ kali teri choti hai parranda tera
229	1990	Dil	mujhe neend na aaye/ humne ghar chhoda hai/ o priya priya
230	1990	Doodh Ka Karz	tumhe dil se kaise juda hum/ shuru ho rahi hai prem kahani
231	1990	Ghayal	mahiya teri kasam/ sochna kya jo bhi hoga dekha jayega
232	1990	Jamaai Raja	pyar hua hai mujhe/ teri pyari pyari baaten mujhe achchhi lagti
233	1990	Jawani Zindabad	sun sun sun mere yaar, masti ke din hain chaar
234	1990	Jungle Love	koyalaya gaati hai/ hum to the anjane/ laila ne kaha jo majnu se
235	1990	Jurm	jab koi baat bigad jaaye jab koi mushkil pad jaaye
236	1990	Nakabandi	are you ready, nakabandi
237	1990	Pati Patni Aur Tawaif	kehna na tum ye kisi se, aaj se ab se abhi se main tera
238	1990	Police Public	main jis din bhula doon tera pyar dil se wo din aakhri ho
239	1990	Sailaab	humko aajkal hai intezaar koi aaye leke pyar
240	1990	Sheshnaag	chhed milan ke geet re mitwa
241	1990	Thanedaar	aur bhala kya maangu main (tamma tamma was never played!)
242	1990	Tum Mere Ho	jab se dekha tumko yaara dhadkan boli dil pukaara
243	1991	100 Days	sun beliya shukriya meherbaani
244	1991	Aayi Milan Ki Raat	kitne dino ke baad hai aayi/ tune pyar ki been/ kasam se kasam se
245	1991	Ajooba	main maati ka gudda tu sone ki gudiya
246	1991	Dil Hai Ki Maanta Nahin	dil hai ki maanta nahin/ adaayen bhi hain mohabbat bhi hai
247	1991	First Love Letter	jab se mile naina tumse mile naina
248	1991	Henna	main hoon khushrang/ anardana/ der na ho jaaye/ main der karta
249	1991	Hum	ek dusre se karte hain pyar (jumma chumma was never played!)
250	1991	Jaan Ki Kasam	jo hum na milenge to gul na khilenge hai milna zaruri hamara
251	1991	Jeena Teri Gali Mein	jaate ho pardes piya/ tere hum ae sanam/ tumse hamara vaada
252	1991	Kurbaan	tu jab jab mujhko pukaare main daudi aun nadiya kinare

253	1991	Lamhe	kabhi main kahun kabhi tum kaho ke maine tumhe ye dil de diya
254	1991	Love	saathiya ye tune kya kiya, beliya ye tune kya kiya
255	1991	Naagmani	zindagi mein jeete jeete marna/ dushman-e-jaan ko hum apni jaan
256	1991	Narsimha	jao tum chaahе jahaan yaad karoge/ humse tum dosti karlo
257	1991	Patthar Ke Phool	kabhi tu chhaliya lagta hai/ tumse hi dekhte jo pyar hua
258	1991	Phool Aur Kaante	dheere dheere pyar ko/ tumse milne ko dil/ maine pyar tumhi se
259	1991	Pyar Bhara Dil	banke kitaab teri tere seene se/ dil dil dil dil na todo gumsum tum
260	1991	Pyar Ka Saaya	har ghadi tere pyar ka saaya chalega mere saath sajna
261	1991	Saajan	bahut pyar karte/ dekha hai pehli baar/ tu shair hai/ mera dil bhi
262	1991	Saathi	hui aankh nam aur ye dil muskuraya/ yarana yaar ka na kabhi
263	1991	Sadak	tumhe apna banaane ki kasam/ hum tere bin kahin reh nahin paate
264	1991	Sanam Bewafa	choodi maza na degi/ mujhe allah ki qasam tumse pyar ho gaya
265	1991	Saudagar	ILU ILU/ saudagar sauda kar/ imli ka boota beri ka ped
266	1991	Saugandh	laila ko bhool jayenge majnu ko bhool jayenge
267	1991	Yaara Dildaara	bin tere sanam mar mitenge hum/ tum hi hamari ho manzil
268	1992	Apradhi	dard-e-dil jeene ka marne ka/ ye pyar bada bedardi hai
269	1992	Balma	bansuriya ab ye hi/ ye mausam bhi gaya/ agar zindagi ho tere
270	1992	Bekhudai	mujhe kya pata tera ghar hai kahaan/ aayegi meri yaad
271	1992	Beta	koyal si teri boli/ dhak dhak karne lagaa/ nach mundeya
272	1992	Bol Radha Bol	bol radha bol tune ye kya/ tu tu tara/ main hoon gaon ki gori babu
273	1992	Deewana	aisi deewangi/ teri ummeed tera intezaar/ teri isi ada pe/ payaliya
274	1992	Dil Ashna Hai	dil ashna hai jigar ashna hai, tumpe to hamari nazar ashna hai
275	1992	Dil Ka Kya Kasoor	ashiqui mein/ milne ki tum/ khata to jab/ mera sanam/ ga raha hun
276	1992	Ek Ladka Ek Ladki	chhoti si duniya mohabbat ki/ kitna pyar tumhe/ phool ye nahin
277	1992	Geet	aap jo mere meet na hote, hothon pe mere geet na hote
278	1992	Heer Ranjha	rab ne banaaya tujhe mere liye
279	1992	Honeymoon	yun na dekho tasveer banke/ tu neendon ki raani/ adha tera dil
280	1992	Jaan Tere Naam	hum lakh chhupayen pyar magar/ kal college band ho jayega
281	1992	Jeena Marna Tere Sang	chaha hai tujhe chahenge/ kal maine khuli ankh se ik sapna dekha
282	1992	Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander	pehla nasha pehla khumaar/ jawan ho yaaron ye tumko hua kya
283	1992	Junoon	deewaron pe likha hai/ milte milte haseen vaadiyon mein
284	1992	Khel	khat likhna hai par sochti hoon/ zindagi ke khel mein kaun ye
285	1992	Khiladi	vaada raha sanam/ kya khabar thi jaana/ hoke mann aaj magan
286	1992	Khuda Gawah	tu mujhe qubool/ tu na ja mere badshah/ rab ko yaad karun
287	1992	Mashooq	o yaara kaisi hai/ kaun ho tum jo/ tumhe dil to de chuke hain
288	1992	Meera Ka Mohan	tune preet jo mujhse/ rab jaisa roop/ tumhe dil se chaha tha
289	1992	Nishchay	kisi haseen yaar ki talash hai/ nayi suraahi taaza paani
290	1992	Radha Ka Sangam	o radha tere bina tera shyam/ hoga hoga hoga radha ka sangam
291	1992	Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman	seene mein dil hai/ loveria hua/ tu mere saath saath aasman se
292	1992	Sangeet	o rabba koi to bataaye pyar hota/ jo geet nahin janma wo geet
293	1992	Sapne Sajan Ke	ye dua hai meri rab se/ kabhi bhula kabhi yaad kiya
294	1992	Satwan Aasman	tum kya mile jaanejaan/ where is the time to hate
295	1992	Shola Aur Shabnam	tu pagal premi awara, dil teri mohabbat ka maara
296	1992	Suryavanshi	jogi tere pyar mein lut jayegi/ goodbye namaste salaam
297	1992	Vansh	aake teri baahon mein har shaam lage/ main to deewani hui
298	1992	Vishwatma	saat samundar/ dil le gayi teri bindiya/ ankhon mein hai kya
299	1992	Yaad Rakhegi Duniya	tujhe rab ne banaya kisliye/ tere liye saari umar jaagun
300	1992	Yalgaar	aakhir tumhe aana hai zara der lagegi

## Appendix-II: Landmarks in Programmes for Troops

- 1940 7 January BBC launches BBC Forces Programme – the first commercial radio channel dedicated to the Forces/Troops in the wake of WWII. Initial transmission was between 18:00 and 00:15 London time. [178]
- 1940 14 April BBC Forces Programme started a 15-minute weekly series ‘For the Indian Forces’ meant for the Indian troops deployed in France. It carried personal messages from India to their sons who were fighting for the British Forces on European ground. BBC collaborated with AIR to get messages recorded in India. [179]
- 1941 5 January A recorded programme by Indian soldiers in Malaya was broadcast at 18:15 from all the four transmitters of AIR Delhi – the first of its kind on AIR. The programme contained short talks in Hindustani by selected Indian soldiers in Malaya, giving lively descriptions of their daily life, accompanied with chorus songs and regimental band performances. [180]
- 1941 2 February A similar programme as above from the Indian soldiers stationed in Egypt was broadcast from AIR Delhi that gave first-hand accounts by Indian soldiers fighting in Egypt, giving intimate glimpses of their daily life and experiences in the frontline. [181]
- 1941 Quarter-1 AIR Delhi launched the first regular and structured programme for troops – ‘For the Indian Troops in Middle East’ – transmitted from Delhi-3 daily between 22:30 and 23:00. [182]
- 1941 BBC Overseas Service and AIR Lahore collaborates to broadcast ‘Hello Punjab!’ – a programme meant for delivering messages of Indian soldiers stationed in Europe to their families in India. [183] [184]
- 1941 25 July AIR Delhi started programme for the Indian Troops in Far East, transmitted from all four transmitters between 16:30 and 17:00. [182]
- 1942 1 May AIR Delhi started programme for the Indian Troops in India and Ceylon from Delhi-3 daily between 19:40 and 20:10. This programme after passing through WWII eventually became AIR Delhi-B’s *Sainikon Ke Liye* in Independent India. [185]
- 1942 1 August AIR Dacca (Dhaka) started programme for the British Forces on Saturdays between 17:45 and 18:15. [186]
- 1942 5 December Popular broadcaster Melville De Mellow started *Forces’ Favourites*, a weekly programme on Saturday afternoons (13:00 – 14:00) from AIR Delhi-1, based on messages and song requests from the Forces. [187]
- 1942 7 December BBC Forces Programme started *Greetings from India* to deliver messages from members of the British Forces in India to their relatives and friends in Great Britain. [188]
- 1943 6 January AIR Madras started programme for the British Forces on Wednesdays between 22:00 and 22:30. [189] [190]
- 1943 16 January AIR Bombay started programme for the British Forces on Saturdays between 18:45 and 19:15. [191] [190]
- 1943 19 January AIR Delhi started *Hippodrome*, a programme for the American Forces from Delhi-2 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 21:45 and 22:05. From July 1943, the programme

- became a one hour show on the same days and same time. The programme had its last edition broadcast on 27 December 1944. [192] [190]
- 1943 22 February AIR Calcutta started programme for the British Forces on Mondays between 18:40 and 19:00. [193] [190]
- 1943 19 April AIR Peshawar started programme for the British Forces on Mondays between 20:30 and 21:00. [194]
- 1943 7 May AIR Lahore started programme for the British Forces on Fridays between 22:00 and 22:30. [195]
- 1943 19 August AIR Lucknow started programme for the British Forces on Thursdays between 22:00 and 22:30. [196]
- 1944 27 February BBC General Forces Programme replaced BBC Forces Programme and BBC General Overseas Service. [197]
- 1944 1 March AIR Delhi started ‘United Nations Troops Programme’, a programme for the Allied Forces of Great Britain, USA, and Soviet Union, from Delhi-4 daily between 18:30 and 19:30. It became ‘All Forces Programme’ in April 1944 broadcasting from Delhi-9. [198] [199]
- 1944 1 July AIR Delhi reorganized ‘All Forces Programme’ with three broadcasts a day – 07:00 to 08:30 on Delhi-7; 13:00 to 14:30 on Delhi-5; 18:30 to 19:30 on Delhi-6 (all shortwave wavelengths). The evening edition eventually got expanded to a three-hour show from 20:00 to 23:00. [200] [201]
- 1945 1 September AIR Delhi replaced ‘All Forces Programme’ with ‘British Forces Programme’ keeping the same timings and durations as above. The name change indicated the departure of American and Canadian Forces from the subcontinent. [202]
- 1946 1 April AIR Delhi expanded the evening session of ‘British Forces Programme’ by 90 minutes. New timing was 18:30 to 23:00. [203]
- 1946 May All programmes for the British/ Allied Forces from all stations of AIR permanently discontinued and replaced with General Western Music programmes. [1] [2]
- 1947 August At Independence, there was only one programme for the Indian Forces on the AIR network – AIR Delhi’s *Sainikon Ke Liye* from Delhi-2 daily between 19:00 and 19:45. [204]
- 1948 - Radio Kashmir Srinagar started *Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye*, a daily half-hour programme for troops at 11:30.
- 1950 Radio Kashmir Jammu started *Sainikon Ke Liye*, a thrice a week half-hour programme for troops at 19:45.
- Both programmes started sometime during 1948-1950. Earliest reference found in February 1951 Programme Schedule published in The Indian Listener. [205]
- 1949 17 May AIR Jullundur started *Haraaval*, a weekly half-hour programme for the Military and Police. The programme ran until 28 Mar 1950. [6]

- 1961 2 April AIR ESD Delhi started weekly programme for Indian Troops in Congo, who were sent there during the Congo Crisis arising out of Congo's Independence in 1960. The programme ran until 20 April 1963. [206]
- 1962 17 June AIR Gauhati-B started *Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram*, a daily one-hour programme for troops at 13:00. [56]
- 1963 26 January Vividh Bharati started *Jayamala*, a half-hour programme of song requests for Armed Forces. [207]
- AIR Gauhati expanded its programme for troops by half hour with an evening edition added between 17:30 and 18:00. [63]
- 1963 7 July AIR Siliguri started relaying the evening edition of Gauhati's programme for troops. Later Siliguri replaced the relay with its own programme for troops. [99]
- 1965 Jan – Feb AIR Delhi-B started *Forces' Requests*, a weekly request-based programme of Western Music on Mondays between 21:45 and 22:30. [208]
- 1965 15 August AIR Rajkot started *Jawano Ke Liye*, a daily half-hour programme for troops at 17:30. It was relayed by AIR Ahmedabad-Baroda. In September 1965, the programme was moved to 13:10 – 13:40. The programme was later renamed as *Jay Bharati*. [209]
- Radio Kashmir Jammu and Srinagar expanded their programmes for troops with Jammu broadcasting its programme from 12:30 to 13:30 while Srinagar broadcasting from 13:30 to 14:10 and 17:30 to 18:30. [210]
- AIR Gauhati's programme for troops expanded from 90 minutes to 120 minutes. New timings were 12:30 to 14:00 and 17:30 to 18:00. [88]
- 1965 10 October AIR Bhuj started relaying Rajkot's programme for troops. [109]
- 1965 Quarter-4 AIR Delhi carried out massive expansion of its programme for troops. New timing was 18:30 to 20:15 on Delhi-D (18:30 to 19:30 was also carried by Delhi-B). [211]
- Vividh Bharati carried out massive expansion of *Jayamala* programme. New timings were 8:30 to 9:30, 11:00 to 12:30 (weekdays), 12:00 to 12:30 (Sundays), 14:30 to 15:30, 18:45 to 19:45, 21:30 to 22:30. [212]
- Vishesh Jayamala* was launched by Vividh Bharati during the same period. The Saturday 18:45 – 19:45 and Sunday 14:30 – 15:30 editions were reserved for this. The first *Vishesh Jayamala* was presented by film actress Nargis.
- Radio Kashmir Jammu and Srinagar further expanded their programme for troops totaling to 225 hours a day. Jammu's timings: 12:30 to 13:30, 14:30 to 15:00, 17:30 to 18:05. Srinagar's timings: 13:40 to 14:10, 15:30 to 16:25, 18:45 to 19:15. [213]
- AIR Rajkot's programme for troops expanded. New timings were 13:10 to 13:40, 13:50 to 14:20. [214]
- 1966 26 January AIR Imphal started programme for troops daily between 15:30 and 16:00. [95]
- 1966 3 April AIR Jullundur started programme for troops daily between 13:30 and 13:30. [215]
- 1967 26 January AIR Agartala started relaying the evening edition of Gauhati's programme for troops. [48] [100]

1967	2 April	AIR Lucknow started <i>Jawano Ke Liye</i> , a programme for troops daily between 14:30 and 15:00. [216]
1967	14 May	AIR Simla started <i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i> , a programme for troops daily between 13:00 and 13:30. [217]
1969	2 February	AIR Dibrugarh started relaying the afternoon edition of Gauhati's programme for troops partially (between 13:50 and 14:30). [48] [106]
1969	21 July	The restructuring of AIR Delhi-D as the <i>Yuvavani</i> youth channel reduced the programme for troops ( <i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i> ) from a 105-minute broadcast on Delhi-B & Delhi-D to a 40-minute broadcast on Delhi-B (18:05 to 18:45). [218] [219]
1971	25 June	AIR Leh started programme for troops daily between 20:00 and 20:45. [220] [48]
1971		AIR Kurseong started <i>Prahari</i> , a weekly half-hour programme for troops on Tuesdays at 18:40. [130]
1972	Quarter-1	AIR Port Blair started weekly programme for troops. Later it was made a daily programme between 13:30 and 14:00. [221]
1976	26 January	AIR Pasighat started <i>Jay Jawaan</i> , a bi-weekly request-based programme for the Police Force (Tuesdays and Fridays between 19:30 and 20:00). [222]
1976 – 1978		<i>Jay Bharati</i> of AIR Rajkot was decentralized. AIR Ahmedabad-Vadodara started its own <i>Jay Bharati</i> while AIR Bhuj continued to relay AIR Rajkot's programme. Sometime later, Rajkot discontinued its programme and both Rajkot and Bhuj started relaying Ahmedabad-Vadodara's programme. [109]
1977	February	AIR Kohima started a bi-weekly request-based programme for the Armed Forces on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 14:30 and 15:00. [133] [134]
1978	27 January	AIR Najibabad started programme for troops thrice a week (Mon, Thu, Sat) between 17:00 and 17:30. [48] [223]
1979	26 January	AIR Rampur started a weekly programme for troops on Saturdays between 13:10 and 14:00. [48] [224]
1979	1 April	AIR Vishakhapatnam started <i>Chitragunjan</i> , a bi-weekly request-based programme for troops on Mondays and Fridays between 17:30 and 17:50. [225]
1981	22 February	AIR Suratgarh started <i>Jay Bharati</i> , a bi-weekly programme for troops on Saturdays and Sundays between 13:10 and 13:50. [48] [226]
1983		AIR Bikaner started a weekly programme for troops on Sundays at 14:20. [227]
		AIR Gwalior started a weekly programme for troops on Sundays between 12:30 and 13:00. [228]
1980s		During the 1980s, AIR Patna and AIR Ranchi started programmes for troops. While Patna's programme was weekly on Sundays at 15:30, Ranchi's programme was daily at 13:30. [229] [230]
1990	3 January	AIR North-Eastern Service Shillong started <i>Jay Jawaan</i> , a programme for troops broadcast on four days of the week between 17:10 and 18:00. [138]

1991	29 April	AIR Kathua started a daily programme for troops between 12:30 and 13:30. The programme was discontinued in February 2022. [231]
1997	14 August	AIR Kargil started programme for troops. Current timing is between 20:00 and 20:45.
2016	24 October	AIR FM Rainbow Delhi started <i>Sandesh to Soldiers</i> , a weekly one-hour programme conceptualized by PM Narendra Modi for the Armed Forces.
2020	24 March	AIR Delhi's 80-year-old programme for troops came to an end with the closure of Rajdhani Channel (formerly Delhi-B).
2022	17 June	AIR Guwahati celebrated 60 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of its programme for troops through a special 140-minute programme conceptualized for this special occasion.
2023	12 August	Vividh Bharati broadcast the last edition of <i>Vishesh Jaymala</i> presented by noted Social Reformer Sudha Murthy. This marked an end to the long journey of this programme that was started right after the war of 1965.
2023	21 October	Vividh Bharati resumes <i>Vishesh Jaymala</i> .

## Appendix-III: Programme for Troops on Akashvani Network as on 1 October 2023

*Table 123: Programme for Troops on Akashvani Network as on 1 October 2023*

Station/ Channel	Programme Name	Mode & Frequency	Programme Timings	Duration/week (minutes)
Guwahati (Pragjyotishpur)	<i>Sainik Bhaiyon Ka Karyakram</i>	MW 1035 kHz DRM 1026 kHz	12:10 – 13:05 13:10 – 14:00 14:30 – 15:00	945
Leh	<i>Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye</i>	MW 1053 kHz SW 49 m/ 60 m FM 101.1 MHz	13:10 – 13:50 18:40 – 19:10	490
Jammu	<i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i>	MW 990 kHz DRM 981 kHz	13:10 – 14:10	420
Srinagar	<i>Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye</i>	MW 1116 kHz FM 103.5 MHz	15:00 – 16:00 (except Sun)	360
Shimla	<i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i>	MW 774 kHz	13:10 – 14:00	350
Ahmedabad-Vadodara	<i>Jay Bharati</i>	MW 846 kHz DRM 837 kHz FM 96.7 MHz	13:30 – 14:15	315
Vividh Bharati	<i>Jaymala</i>	Various local stations	19:00 – 19:45	315
Kargil	<i>Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye</i>	MW 684 kHz MW 1584 kHz FM 100.1 MHz	20:00 – 20:45	315
NES Shillong	<i>Jay Jawaan</i>	FM 100.1 MHz	17:14 – 18:00 17:10 – 17:30 (Sun)	296
Jalandhar	<i>Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye</i>	MW 873 kHz DRM 864 kHz FM 100.6 MHz	13:10 – 13:25 13:30 – 13:40 13:50 – 14:00	245
Itanagar	<i>Geet Mala</i>	MW 675 kHz	13:30 – 14:00	210
Imphal	<i>Fauji Bhaiyon Ke Liye</i>	MW 882 kHz FM 103.5 MHz	14:30 – 15:00	210
Gangtok	<i>Shaurya Gatha</i>	FM 103 MHz	16:00 – 16:30	210
Siliguri	<i>Jowan Bhaider Jonye</i>	MW 711 kHz DRM 702 kHz	17:15 – 17:45	210
Tezu	<i>Jay Jawaan</i>	MW 1332 kHz FM 100.1 MHz	21:30 – 22:00	210
Lucknow	<i>Jawaano Ke Liye</i>	MW 747 kHz DRM 738 kHz FM 100.7 MHz	13:50 – 14:15	175
Kurseong	<i>Jay Jawaan</i>	FM 103.5 MHz	17:07 – 17:30	175
FM Rainbow Delhi	<i>Sandesh to Soldiers</i>	FM 102.6 MHz	16:00 – 17:00 (Thu)	60
Najibabad	<i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i>	MW 954 kHz	12:05 – 12:30 (Tue, Thu)	50
Port Blair	<i>Sainikon Ke Liye</i>	MW 684 kHz FM 100.9 MHz	15:30 – 15:58 (Sat)	28
<b>NET WEEKLY DURATION OF TROOPS PROGRAMME ON AKASHVANI NETWORK (in minutes)</b>				<b>5589</b>

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# List of Tables

Table 1: First available published schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme - August 1963	33
Table 2: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during last week of Dec'1963	41
Table 3: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during last week of Dec'1964	41
Table 4: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati-B before and after 15 August 1965	43
Table 5: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during H1-1965	45
Table 6: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme during H2-1965	45
Table 7: Changes in schedule of Gauhati-B with new Mediumwave as on 1 Jan'1966	46
Table 8: The split of Gauhati-B into Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C in May 1966	47
Table 9: Weekly schedule of AIR Imphal's Troops Programme at its inception in 1966	48
Table 10: Relay of Gauhati's Troops Programme by Shillong during Mar-Aug 1966	52
Table 11: Afternoon transmission of Dibrugarh and Gauhati-B/C as on 4 May 1969	53
Table 12: Coverage summary of Gauhati's Troops Programme as in 1969	54
Table 13: Changes in afternoon news bulletin timings in the wake of 1971 War	63
Table 14: Changes with the introduction of Yuvavani on Gauhati-B	65
Table 15: Evolution of Mediumwave wavelengths at AIR Gauhati	66
Table 16: Evolution of Shortwave wavelengths of AIR Gauhati-B/C	66
Table 17: Expansion & adjustments of Bodo, Karbi & Troops Programme amongst Gauhati-A & Gauhati-C	67
Table 18: Stabilized schedule of Gauhati's Troops Programme in late 1970s	68
Table 19: Broadcast schedule of Gauhati-B and Gauhati-C in February 1984	69
Table 20: Prahari - Troops Programme from AIR Kurseong	72
Table 21: Programme for Armed Forces from AIR Kohima	73
Table 22: Programme distribution amongst the three regular announcers	77
Table 23: Programme distribution in absence of Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen)	80

Table 24: Programme distribution in absence of Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen)	80
Table 25: Programme distribution in absence of Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen)	81
Table 26: Programme distribution in absence of two Regular Announcers	81
Table 27: Bird-eye view of various segments of Guwahati's Troops Programme	85
Table 28: Broadcast schedule of Aaj Ka Geet during 1980s	88
Table 29: Broadcast schedule of Aap Ki Farmaish and Geet Mala during 1980s	89
Table 30: Request-based segments of Guwahati's Troops Programme	90
Table 31: Broadcast schedule of Patrottar during 1980s	93
Table 32: Broadcast schedule of Sangeet Madhuri during 1980s	98
Table 33: List of songs for Sangeet Madhuri dated 4 September 2023	100
Table 34: Broadcast schedule of Watan Ke Taraane during 1980s	101
Table 35: List of songs for Watan Ke Taraane dated 11 September 2023	103
Table 36: Broadcast schedule of Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan during 1980s	104
Table 37: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 11 August 2023	106
Table 38: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 8 September 2023	106
Table 39: List of songs for Bandegi Ke Geet Aur Bhajan dated 22 September 2023	106
Table 40: Broadcast schedule of Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi during 1980s	107
Table 41: List of songs for Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi dated 1 August 2023	110
Table 42: List of songs for Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi dated 6 August 2023	110
Table 43: List of songs for Geet Apna Dhun Paraayi dated 17 September 2023	110
Table 44: Broadcast schedule of Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet during 1980s	111
Table 45: List of songs for Ek Hi Kalakaar Ke Geet (Aug-Sep-Oct 2023)	112
Table 46: Broadcast schedule of Panghat during 1980s	113
Table 47: List of songs for Panghat dated 8 August 2023	113
Table 48: List of songs for Panghat dated 12 September 2023	114
Table 49: Broadcast schedule of Sheershak Sangeet during 1980s	114

Table 50: List of songs for Sheershak Sangeet dated 24 September 2023	115
Table 51: Broadcast schedule of Bhoole Bisre Geet during 1980s	115
Table 52: Selective list of songs for Bhoole Bisre Geet (November 2021 to September 2023)	117
Table 53: Broadcast schedule of Filmi Naghme during 1980s	117
Table 54: List of songs for Filmi Naghme dated 13 September 2023	121
Table 55: List of songs for Nazrana dated 29 July 2023	121
Table 56: Broadcast schedule of Preet Ladee during 1980s	122
Table 57: List of songs for Preet Ladee dated 6 September 2023	122
Table 58: Broadcast schedule of Hai Zindagi Pukaarti during 1980s	123
Table 59: List of songs for Hai Zindagi Pukaarti dated 7 September 2023	124
Table 60: Broadcast schedule of Saaz Aur Awaaz during 1980s	124
Table 61: Broadcast schedule of Raag Rang during 1980s	126
Table 62: List of songs for Raag Rang (Composer) dated 21 September 2023	127
Table 63: List of songs for Raag Rang (Lyricist) dated 19 October 2023	127
Table 64: Broadcast schedule of Tarannum during 1980s	128
Table 65: List of ghazals for Tarannum dated 11 and 24 August 2023	128
Table 66: Broadcast schedule of Swar Chhaya during 1980s	129
Table 67: Broadcast schedule of Prahasan during 1980s	130
Table 68: Broadcast schedule of Geet Rangeele during 1980s	132
Table 69: List of songs for Geet Rangeele dated 5 October 2023	133
Table 70: Broadcast schedule of Ek Hi Film Ke Geet during 1980s	134
Table 71: Broadcast schedule of Chayanika during 1980s	135
Table 72: List of films selected for Chayanika and Ek Hi Film Ke Geet during April - September 2023	136
Table 73: Broadcast schedule of Swar Sangam during 1980s	138
Table 74: List of songs for Swar Sangam dated 5 August 2023	138
Table 75: Broadcast schedule of Geet Manoranjan during 1980s	139

Table 76: List of songs for Geet Manoranjan dated 9 September 2023	140
Table 77: Broadcast schedule of Majlis-e-Qawwali during 1980s	140
Table 78: List of songs for Majlis-e-Qawwali dated 19 August 2023	141
Table 79: Broadcast schedule of Ek Aur Anek during 1980s	141
Table 80: List of songs for Ek Aur Anek from June to September 2023	142
Table 81: Broadcast schedule of Sabrang during 1980s	143
Table 82: List of songs for Sabrang dated 17 September 2023	147
Table 83: List of songs for Sabrang dated 24 September 2023	147
Table 84: List of songs for Gunjan dated 27 June 2023	148
Table 85: List of songs for Gunjan dated 3 October 2023	148
Table 86: Broadcast schedule of Pradeshik Sangeet during 1980s	148
Table 87: Regional languages whose songs featured in Pradeshik Sangeet	148
Table 88: List of songs for Ganesh Chaturthi special programme dated 19 September 2023	151
Table 89: List of songs for Christmas special programme dated 25 December 2022	152
Table 90: Change in Dibrugarh relay of Troops Programme from early 1990s	154
Table 91: Adjustments in schedule due to change in Dibrugarh relay	155
Table 92: Afternoon & early evening schedule of Guwahati-C during early 1990s	156
Table 93: Impact of VBS relay on Troops Programme	157
Table 94: Changes in Troops Programme following closure of VBS recorded programmes	157
Table 95: Consolidated list of songs for Film Sangeet from 18 to 24 September 2023	159
Table 96: Adjustments in Thursday's Schedule during first half of 1990s	160
Table 97: List of songs for Swar Chhaya broadcast during August-September 2023	161
Table 98: Evolution of the duration of Guwahati's Troops Programme	163
Table 99: The journey of Guwahati-C's evening transmission	166
Table 100: Afternoon schedule of Guwahati-B after the shutdown of Guwahati-C	166
Table 101: Troops Programme schedule after the shutdown of Guwahati-C	167

Table 102: Impact of shortwave shutdown on request-based programmes	170
Table 103: Schedule of Troops Programme during mid-1990s	171
Table 104: Adjustments in schedule to accommodate Ek Hi Film Ke Geet in Dibrugarh relay slot	177
Table 105: Programme distribution after Rekha bahen's retirement	184
Table 106: Revised programme schedule of Troops Programme with the launch of Midday News and Dopahar Samachar	185
Table 107: List of songs for Tarana dated 14 August 2023	187
Table 108: The most varied schedule of Troops Programme in 2002	188
Table 109: Schedule of Troops Programme in October 2009	193
Table 110: Decline of request-based programme duration in late 2000s	193
Table 111: List of songs for Durga Mahashtami special programme dated 22 October 2023	202
Table 112: List of songs for Durga Mahanavami special programme dated 23 October 2023	202
Table 113: List of songs for Vijayadashami special programme dated 24 October 2023	202
Table 114: Schedule of Troops Programme during 2018	213
Table 115: Broadcast schedule with rearrangement due to COVID-19 triggered changed news timings	221
Table 116: Special broadcast schedule for the 60th anniversary celebrations	228
Table 117: Structure of the proposed weekly Radio Magazine for Troops	249
Table 118: Schedule of Troops Programme as in September 2023	251
Table 119: A proposed schedule for Troops Programme for increased relevance	252
Table 120: Transmission modes of AIR stations originally having A and B channels	252
Table 121: Broadcast schedule of Akashvani Guwahati Pragjyotishpur (Former Guwahati-B) as in October 2023	253
Table 122: List of songs from 300 films (1980-1992) that were mostly heard in Aaj Ka Geet and Aap Ki Farmaish of Troops Programme	259
Table 123: Programme for Troops on Akashvani Network as on 1 October 2023	270

# List of Illustrations

Illustration 1: Broadcast timings of Gauhati-A and Gauhati-B as on 10 June 1962	26
Illustration 2: Broadcast timings of Gauhati A and B with Troops Programme included	27
Illustration 3: Comparison of duration of Troops Programme on various stations as on 17 June 1962	28
Illustration 4: Phase-I expansion of Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1963	32
Illustration 5: Service period of Regular Announcers (Hindi) at AIR Gauhati	55
Illustration 6: Variety in Gauhati's Troops Programme	70
Illustration 7: Percentage share of programme duration amongst announcers	77
Illustration 8: Percentage share of request-based segments and distribution amongst announcers	91
Illustration 9: Distribution of films (period and occurrence-wise) in Chayanika and Ek Hi Film Ke Geet over an 8-month Period (Feb - Sep 2023)	137
Illustration 10: Changes in programme schedule due to change in Dibrugarh's relay	155
Illustration 11: Programme transformation while migration from evening to afternoon	168
Illustration 12: Representation of the change in coverage area of Troops Programme post shortwave shutdown	169
Illustration 13: Change in the share of request-based programmes with change in Geet Mala timing	171
Illustration 14: Handling of song requests with consideration of Dibrugarh's relay	173
Illustration 15: Proposed handling of song requests with consideration of Dibrugarh's relay	174
Illustration 16: Graphical comparison of prevailing and proposed methodologies of fulfilling song requests post shortwave shutdown	174
Illustration 17: Percentage share of programmes before and after Rekha bahen's retirement	184
Illustration 18: Programme distribution on Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023	255
Illustration 19: Exclusive versus redundant programme share on Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023	256
Illustration 20: Distribution of programmes originated from Pragjyotishpur as in October 2023	256

# List of Photographs

- Photo 1: Glimpses from 'Entertaining the Troops' Exhibit Hall at the National World War I Museum and Memorial, Kansas City, USA (All photographs taken by the author) 10
- Photo 2: Dr. R. C. Awasthi presenting Aaj Ki Baat and Manjula Shah replying to Troops' Letters (Source: Akashvani journal, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B) 37
- Photo 3: (clockwise from top) Manjula Shah, Bimlesh Arya, Sadhana Phukan, Tapasi Sengupta (Source: Akashvani Journals, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B) 60
- Photo 4: (from top left in clockwise direction) Inder Bala, Madhu Bala Sood, Madhu Maheshwari, Dr. Akelabhai (Photographs of Inder Bala and Madhu Bala Sood obtained from Akashvani journal, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B. Photographs of Dr. Akelabhai and Madhu Maheshwari obtained from their personal collection with consent.) 84
- Photo 5: Participation of Air Force personnel in a Skit for Gauhati's Troops Programme in 1975 (Source: Akashvani Journal, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B) 131
- Photo 6: Gunaprabha Borah (right) with Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen) (Source: from her personal collection with her consent) 182
- Photo 7: (from left) Bimlesh Arya (Rekha bahen), Tapasi Sengupta (Seema bahen), Sadhana Phukan (Meeta bahen) – The Three Veteran Voices of the Troops Programme (Source: Photo of Bimlesh Arya as published in her Obituary by AIR Guwahati; photos of Tapasi Sengupta and Sadhana Phukan are from their personal collection, with their consent) 195
- Photo 8: Screenshot of a programme promotion of AIR Guwahati-B (Pragjyotishpur) on their Facebook Page 210
- Photo 9: Making of Diwali 2019 Special Prog. - (L to R) Diksha Katiyar, Joyshree Deka, Shreya Tripathi, Anamika Mazumdar, K. Supriya Devi; 75th Independence Day celebration (L to R) Brij Mohan Prasad, Joyshree Deka, Anamika Mazumdar, Sneha Verma (Source: AIR Guwahati's official Facebook page) 218
- Photo 10: News item published in 'The Assam Tribune' dated 6 March 2022 223
- Photo 11: Rajeev Baruah, Station Dir., AIR Guwahati 225
- Photo 12: (L to R) Programme Executives (Hindi Section), AIR Guwahati - Bijon Sinha (current), Shuvra Baishya (Former/ Retd.), Sushma Sharma (Former/ Retd.), Shyamalendu Das (Former) 226
- Photo 13: Programme Notification on 59th Foundation Day of BSF. Seen in this photo Bijon Sinha (extreme left), Kartik Sutradhar (second from left), Gunaprabha Borah (extreme right) and BSF officers in uniform (Source: Akashvani Guwahati official Facebook page) 258

# Abbreviations

AIR	All India Radio
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSF	Border Security Force
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
DG	Directorate General
DRM	Digital Radio Mondiale
ESD	External Services Division
HPT	High Power Transmitter
IAF	Indian Air Force
I&B	Information and Broadcasting
IST	Indian Standard Time
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LPT	Low Power Transmitter
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MW	Medium Wave
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NDA	National Defence Academy
NEFA	North-East Frontier Agency
NSD	News Services Division
ODI	One Day International
PEX	Programme Executive
RIMC	Rashtriya Indian Military College
RMS	Rashtriya Military Schools
SW	Short Wave
SYF	Soldier Youth Foundation
VBS	Vividh Bharati Seva (Service)
VOA	Voice of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WWI	World War One (1914 – 1919)
WWII	World War Two (1939 – 1945)

# About the Author

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Radio listening has been not only his hobby but a passion for nearly forty years, which is now evident in the form of this book. This, however, is not his first book. His first book, '*Caravan Cine Sangeet Ka – Utpatti Se Swaraaj Ke Vihaan Tak*', published in 2012 by Yash Publishers, Delhi, was his attempt to put forward the history of Hindi Film Music of the Pre-Independence era (1931 to 1947).

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