

members are welcome to drop in for an eyeball QSO and the exchange of QSLs. It's also an ideal exchange time as work continues on an all Indian-HF amateur kit, plus a locally designed VHF project. And Rajiv Gandhi is no stranger to the Sunday gatherings.

Due to the assistance provided by the Delhi Radio Club a tract of land near the Delhi Flying Club has been donated by the Government of India for a new Shack site. In Hyderabad, capital of the cyclone-prone State of Andhra Pradesh, the local club had received land from the State Government. These are two positive gestures from governments which are slowly learning about amateur radio.

The electronic hobby is over 60 years old in India. Yet it still has not been given the official recognition it deserves nor has it flourished as it should. As there is nothing specifically written in the Indian Charter about amateur radio, it is neither encouraged nor discouraged. Admittedly, in a developing country which is large enough to be called a subcontinent, there are many priorities other than the development of a technical body.

Because of its size and expanding population India is faced with a number of critical problems: unemployment (and under-employment), clean drinking water, adult literacy, elementary education, health care, rural roads, housing and electrification and nutrition for the undernourished. Many of these problems will remain although progress has and is being made to raise the cold statistics we often see as front page headlines: average per capita income of US\$200 per year, a 35 per cent literacy rate, male life expectancy of 42 years and a natural increase of nearly 2 per cent which means that 15 million people, or the equivalent population of Australia, is born every year.

The development of amateur radio in India is not a cure-all for, or even a partial solution to, any of the country's chronic problems, except perhaps unemployment. However, a better public and government understanding of how a group of devoted and enthusiastic, technically-minded individuals can contribute to the nation is definitely needed. Most obvious, of course, is public service.



The vast majority of amateur radio stations in India use converted military receivers and homebuilt transmitters such as this setup in Kodaikanal

Emergency links

Indian amateurs have demonstrated the tangible benefits of amateur radio to the country with valuable public service activities on more than one occasion. In the southern State of Andhra Pradesh hams provided vital communication links when a storm wrecked all other communication facilities. During a Post and Telegraph strike in 1960, amateurs passed important messages for the Government and during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War hams monitored enemy paratroopers.

But the most outstanding example of amateur radio being used for the public good was in September 1979 during the Morvi floods in Gujarat State. On this occasion hams of western India including Jimmy VU2IJ, Vasant VU2RX, Chris VU2KIT, Jai VU2ED, Jayu VU2JAU, Pradeep VU2PCD and Jayant VU2JNT activated emergency stations to provide communications



Leela, VU2CP is one of the most active XYLs in India but operating time from the Madras QTH is shared with her husband, Pan VU2FC

for the Home Guards, relief agencies, government officials and victims of