

# **Radio Broadcasting in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)**

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**Radio Broadcasting was the most popular medium of education and entertainment, and the Radio Ceylon / Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, had to play an important role in providing the listener with a good transmission of high quality.**

**Management- In early 1952- at Head Quarters in Torrington Square, Colombo**

**Director General: Mr.John N.Lampson\*- Succeeded the same year by Mr.M.J.Perera  
Chief Engineer : Mr.Fletcher\*-**

**succeeded by Addl. Chief Engineer Mr. N.S.Wickremasinghe**

**Chief Technical Adviser: Mr.Russell\***

**Head of Programmes: Mr.Morfood\***

**\* Went back to England after handing over to the Ceylonese.**

**Engineer Studios : Mr.H.B.F.de Silva (went back to the Dept of Telecommunications)  
succeeded by Engineer Mr.S.K.Waloo pillai**

**Mr. M.Wimalaratne was appointed Asst.Engineer Maintenance**

**Mr.A.W.Dharmapala was appointed Asst.Eng.Operations and O.B**

**Mr.R.E.H.Perera transferred from Ekala, appointed Asst. Eng.O.B.**

**Officers in charge of shifts were: Messrs. A.F.M.Perera,K.M.C.Jayawardena, Ian.De  
La harpe**

**O.C.Laboratory: Mr. C.De Silva- other T.AA were Messrs T.A.Peiris, Bertram Peiris,  
P.S.Dharmasiri,**

**Facilities for Programme Productions, Recordings etc.**

**There were 10 production studios, from where most of the programmes produced were fed Live, via the 3 Control Positions (CP1,CP2,CP3) in the Main Control room to the Transmitting stations. In addition there were continuity studios for the Domestic Commercial services and the foreign services fed via the Main Control room to the transmitting stations. The programme feeds were through under ground cables laid to the 2 transmitting stations.**

**Prior to 1952, there were 2 categories of employees**

- 1)\_ Those who came from the Telecommunications Department to the Broadcasting**
- 2) Those who came from Radio SEAC to the Department of Broadcasting.**

**In June 1952,T.A.Trainees were recruited, in terms of a Gazette notification, appeared**

**in the Govt.Gazette of 14.03.1952.**

**They were Messrs. (B.Ratnayake), (M.A.Ratnayake), (A.Q.T.R.Muthupulle), ( D.S.W. Kuruppu ), ( K.P.Perera), W.D.G.Rabel, D.C.Kelaniyage, T.D.Padmasiri, W.D.Perera, ( A.X.Pereira ), W.J.T.K.Fernando, ( G.M.Fernando ) S.Thayanantharajah, ( L. Gunasekara ), (G.E.Wijeratne )  
( ) all within brackets are deceased.**

### **Ekala Short Wave Transmitting Station.**

**Senior staff at the time:**

**Engineer Transmitters: Mr. Ellawala ( released to the Telecommunication Department)**

**Mr. David Buell, Asst Engineer took over duties as Engineer Transmitters**

**S.K.Waloo pillai- Asst Engineer was transferred to Studios as Engineer Studios.**

**Senior Officers who came from Radio SEAC were Messrs. R.E.H.Perera,**

**N.P.Meegama, T.S.White, A.Rajahmoney, G. Wijesinghe, A.Holsinger,**

**N.F.Gunasekara, Freddie Gomes**

### **Equipment installed at the Station**

**There were 3 x 250W transmitters and a 1KW transmitter carrying the domestic services Sinhala, Tamil, English National services and the commercial service.**

**Marconi 100kw transmitter and 3x 7.5 KW transmitters carried Foreign Service Transmissions on 11, 13, 16, 25, 31, 41 Meter Bands, beamed to Africa, U.K, Mid. East, Far East, Asia and South East Asia. Most popular in India was our Hindi Service Programme.**

**Later on in 1953 Voice of America started installing 3 sets of 35 kw Collins Transmitters for their broadcasts from Ceylon which came in to operation from 1954.**

**Around 1958 the 250w transmitters and the 7.5 kw transmitters at Ekala were replaced by 10kw Phillips transmitters with a few additional transmitters also.**

### **Medium Wave Transmitting Station at Welikada.**

**Staff at the time in 1952**

**O.I.C –Mr.V.C..Heyn, Mesrs. L.E.Thillekaratna, M.K.A.Perera, R.E.Bharethi’**

**J.R.Xavier, Rajasooriar were the other officers attached to the station**

**Equipment at the Station**

**15 KW Transmitter – carried the Sinhala National Service. 2 x 250 W transmitters carried the Tamil Service and the Sinhala Commercial Service, 1 KW transmitter carried the English Service**

**Domestic Programmes on Medium Wave had a very limited coverage. Only the listeners in Colombo and it’s very near suburbs had a clear reception. The other areas of the island received radio broadcasts on Short Wave, receptions being not very reliable, due to signal fading noise etc.**

**Clear reception of signals locally were possible on Medium Wave and V.H.F/F.M. V.H.F/F.M. Under the Colombo Plan, 6nos 100W V.H.F/F.M transmitters were installed at the Studios in Torrington Square to feed the programmes from Studios to Ekala and later on to the Diyagama Main M.W Tx Station.. VHF/FM was in an experimental stage and only the Listeners in Colombo and near suburbs were able to listen to these programmes on VHF/FM.**

**Therefore it was imperative to give a better reception to these areas of the island**

by a planned Medium Wave expansion scheme.

With this in view and also to provide additional Radio programme channels a new Medium Wave Transmitting Station with more powerful Transmitters was set up at Diyagama, Homagama.

MW transmitters at Welikada were shut down with the operations at Diyagama. Equipment installed were, 3 sets of 2x20Kw transmitters in parallel operation, each giving an output of 40KW, 2 nos 2x25KW giving a 50KW output and a single 25KW transmitter.

2 Regional M.W transmitting stations came up in Anuradhapura and Kandy, giving these areas a better reception of the Sinhala national service.

VHF/FM Transmitting was set up in Uda Radella in the Nuwara Eliya District which served some parts of the island,

In the year 1969, phase 1 of the Medium Wave expansion scheme under German aid was started, setting up transmitting stations at Maho and Weeraketiya, with a single 50KW transmitter at each station to carry the Sinhala National service programme and a VHF/FM (250W transmitter) repeater station at Deniyaya to feed programme to the Weeraketiya station.

Phase 11 of the M.W. expansion project was setting up Medium Wave stations in Jaffna and Ampara with 2 transmitters of 20KW each, to transmit 2 programmes from each of these stations and a VHF/FM repeater at Mannar for the programme feed to Jaffna.

Both these projects were out right gifts from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In 1979, under phase 111, the final phase of German assistance in the development of Radio Broadcasting, it was proposed to extend the service areas to those not covered by these stations, by setting up Medium Wave transmitting stations at Ambewela, Kantale, Mahiyangana and Ratnapura and by setting up a VHF/FM repeater at Karagahatenna to provide a better and reliable programme feed via Mannar to Jaffna as the signal from Radella to Mannar was not reliable. The VHF/FM station at Karagahatenna serves the areas in the Northern, Eastern and North Western provinces.

It was also proposed to upgrade the existing regional transmitting stations at Maho, Weeraketiya, Jaffna, Ampara and Kandy by installing additional Transmitters.

M.W. transmitters installed under phase 3, were PDM transmitters with higher efficiency to keep the energy consumption very low and reduce operational and maintenance costs.

Ambewela – 4 sets of 20Kw transmitters with 2 combiners for parallel operation giving 40 Kw output for each transmission, a Diplexer to couple the outputs of the transmitters to the same radiator mast.

Kantale - 2 sets of 20 Kw transmitters, a diplexer, Radiator mast and all other Accessories

Ratnapura – 2 sets 10 Kw transmitters, a diplexer, Radiator mast and all other

### **Accessories**

**Mahiyangana- 3 nos 1 kw conventional type Marconi transmitters.**

**Karagahtenna – 3 sets of 1kw VHF/FM transmitters. AEG Telefunken.**

### **Upgrading of existing stations**

**Maho and Weeraketiya – 2 x 20 kw PDM transmitters with combiner**

**Jaffna and Ampara – 1 transmitter each with 20 kw capacity**

**Kandy – 1x10kw PDM transmitter, a diplexer and other accessories**

### **Short Wave expansion project:**

**SLBC was active on the International scene in Broadcasting. It is a member of the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union ( ABU ) and was associated with other Broadcasting Unions such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU)**

**In 1998- under Japanese grant Aid, SLBC was provided with 2 nos 300kw Short Wave transmitters, the Antenna structure including 3 Aerial masts, high band and low band aerial curtains, baluns for matching 50ohm unbalanced output to 300 ohm feeder lines and auto aerial aerial switching arrangement.**

### **New Multi Studio complex**

**In October 1989- A new studio complex under Japanese grant aid.**

**Work commenced around January 1991.**