

Commentary

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## DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN INDIA: PROSPECT, ISSUES AND TRENDS

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**Abstract:** *How did the discipline and practice of development communication begin? Who were the founders and how were the first experiments implemented? The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of development communication. To do so, the first section focuses on the theoretical perspective and evolution of development communication. This study then specifies the components of development communication and, having done so, proceeds to evaluate the various approaches to this conceptual formulation. Thus, it discusses the extension and community development approach, the ideological and mass mobilization method, the centralized mass media method, the localized mass media method, and the integrated approach. It concludes that since development communication is not simply concerned with the mere provision of information on development activities, it should not stop with conventional mass media. Rather, it must involve strong components of social organization and interpersonal and traditional modes and media if it is to succeed.*

**Keywords:** *development communication, community development, mass media methods, social organizations, changing technologies*

### Introduction

Development” and “communication” are two terms heavily loaded with different conceptions and a richness of uses and functions shaped by their various theoretical underpinnings. Such richness often leads to ambiguities and a lack of clarity that affects the field of development communication. The wide range of interpretations of key terminology and the rapid evolution of some concepts have led to inconsistencies in the way basic terms are understood and used. What we have here, in fact, is more of an approach than a discipline. As far as its definitions are concerned, they usually consist of general statements. Thus, the communication media, in the context of development, are generally used to support development initiatives by the dissemination of messages that encourage the public to support development-oriented projects. Although development strategies in developing countries diverge widely, the usual pattern for broadcasting and the press has been predominantly the same: informing the population about projects, illustrating the advantages of these projects, and recommending that they be supported. A typical example of such a strategy is situated in the area of family planning, where communication means such as posters, pamphlets, radio, and television attempt to persuade the public to accept birth control methods. Similar strategies are used in campaigns regarding health and nutrition, agricultural projects, education, and so on.

The concept of development communication arose within the framework of the contribution that communication and the media made to development in the countries of the Third World. Development communications are organized efforts to use communications processes and media to bring social and economic improvements, generally in developing countries. The field emerged in the late 1950's amid high hopes that radio and television could be put to use in the world's most disadvantaged countries to bring about dramatic progress. Early communications theorists like Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner based their high expectations upon the apparent success of World War II propaganda, to which academia and Hollywood had contributed.

Also with World War II came dozens of new, very poor, countries, left by their former colonial overseers with little infrastructure, education, or political stability. It was widely accepted that mass media could bring education, essential skills, social unity, and a desire to "modernize." Walt Rostow theorized that societies progress through specific stages of development on their way to modernity, what he termed "the age of high mass consumption." Lerner suggested that exposure to Western media would create "empathy" for modern culture, and a desire to move from traditional to modern ways. Early development communications, especially that sponsored by the U.S. government, was also seen as a means of "winning hearts and minds" over to a capitalist way of life.

These early approaches made a number of erroneous assumptions, and have been largely forsaken in contemporary approaches to development. Obstacles to development were naively

seen as rooted in developing countries, not as products of international relationships. Modernization was presumed to equate to Westernization, and to be a necessary prerequisite to meeting human needs. Development was seen as a top-down process, whereby centralized mass media could bring about widespread change. Producers of development media often failed to ask if the audience can receive the message (television penetration in developing countries is minimal and radio penetration in the early days of development communication was light), understand the message (a problem in countries with dozens of languages and dialects), act upon the message (with the necessary tools or other forms of structural support), and want to act upon the message. And because it was based upon a propaganda model, development communications efforts were often seen as propaganda and distrusted.

Projects embodying these philosophies have enjoyed little success. In the 1970s and 1980s, a new paradigm of development communication emerged which better recognized the process of deliberate underdevelopment as a function of colonialism, the great diversity of the cultures involved, the differences between elite versus popular goals for social change, the considerable political and ideological constraints to change, and the endless varieties of ways different cultures communicate.

But in some instances mass media technologies, including television, have been "magic multipliers" of development benefits. Educational television has been used effectively to supplement the work of teachers in classrooms in the teaching of literacy and other skills, but only in well designed programs which are integrated with other educational efforts. Consumer video equipment and VCRs have been used to supplement communications efforts in some small projects.

Some developing countries have demonstrated success in using satellite television to provide useful information to portions of their populations out of reach of terrestrial broadcasting. In 1975 and 1976, an experimental satellite communications project called SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) was used to bring informational television programs to rural India. Some changes in beliefs and behaviors did occur, but there is little indication that satellite television was the best means to that end. The project did lead to Indian development of its own satellite network. China has also embarked on a ambitious program of satellite use for development, claiming substantial success in rural education. When television has succeeded as an educational tool in developing countries, it is only when very specific viewing conditions are met. For example, programs are best viewed in small groups with a teacher to introduce them and to lead a discussion afterwards.

Several of types of organizations work with local governments to develop communication projects. The United Nations provides multi-lateral aid to governments. Non-profit non-governmental organizations (NGO) conduct development projects worldwide using U.N., government, or private funding. And government agencies, such as the U.S. Agency for

International Development (USAID) provide assistance to developing countries, but with political strings attached. There are three common types of development campaigns: Persuasion, changing what people do; Education, changing social values; and Informing, empowering people to change by increasing knowledge. This third approach is now perceived as the most useful. Instead of attempting to modernize people, contemporary efforts attempt to reduce inequality by targeting the poorest segments of society, involving people in their own development, giving them independence from central authority, and employing "small" and "appropriate" technologies. The emphasis has shifted from economic growth to meeting basic needs.

In this new view of development, communication becomes an important catalyst for change, but not its cause. Local folk media, for example, is employed to reduce media's bias toward literacy and provide information in a traditional, familiar form. Development journalism provides people with information on change in their society, and works at the local level to advocate change. Where mass media is now employed in developing societies, community newspapers and radio prove far more accessible and useful than television. The rapid spread of entertainment television in the developing world is proving to be more a disruption to traditional social structures than an agent of progress. One emerging genre of television does show promise for contributing to development. The telenovela, pioneered in Brazil, has demonstrated some success in disseminating "pro-social" messages. Such programs are now being evaluated in many countries for their effectiveness in contributing to population control, health education, and other development goals.

### **Development Communication in India**

Tracing its history we have to go back to communities who listened to rural radio broadcasts in the 1940s, the Indian school of development communication. One distinguishing element of those early programs was that they focused on the use of indigenous languages –Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada. India's earliest organized experiments in development communication were held in the 1960s, sponsored by India's universities and other educational institutions, and by the Bretton Woods-school institutions. Educational institutions that played an important part in this effort include the University of Poona, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi University, the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the University of Kerala.

India is a developing country with lot of achievements in all the fields of modern day life including that of science & technology, agriculture and industry. Now development communication is such a tool of development that it is highly necessary for a developing nation like us. It has therefore been increasingly recognized that people's active participation is an essential component of sustainable development. Any intervention with the intent of achieving a real and sustainable improvement in the living conditions of people is doomed to failure unless

the intended beneficiaries are actively involved in the process. Unless people participate in all phases of an intervention, from problem identification to research and implementation of solutions, the likelihood that sustainable change will occur is slim. Development communication is at the very heart of this challenge: it is the process by which people become leading actors in their own development. Communication enables people to go from being recipients of external development interventions to generators of their own development.

The 20th century has witnessed the immense impact of communication technologies, from the spread of sound recording, motion pictures and radio as world-wide phenomena to the emergence of television as a dominant influence in nearly every institution, to the explosion of the Internet at the turn of the new century. The digital revolution is far from over, as new inventions repeatedly challenge assumptions that were themselves formed only yesterday. This is an exciting and critically important moment for communication scholars to contribute to understanding, and shaping the parameters of our changing technological and academic environment.

Because it is communication with a social conscience, development communication is heavily oriented towards man, that is, towards the human aspects of development. Even though it is primarily associated with rural development, it is also concerned with urban, particularly suburban problems. It plays two broad roles. The first is a transformational role through which it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of life and social justice. The second is a socialization role through which it strives to maintain some of the established values of society that are consonant with development. In playing these roles, development communication creates an enhancing atmosphere for the exchange of ideas that produce a happy balance in social and economic advancement between physical output and human relationships.

### **Key Issues about Development Communication**

Many myths and misconceptions are nurtured about communication, especially when related to the field of development. These misconceptions can often be the cause of misunderstandings and lead to inconsistent and ineffective use of communication concepts and practices. The first two points on this list are about communication in general, while the others refer to development communication in particular.

1. *“Communications” and “communication” are not the same thing.* The plural form refers mainly to activities and products, including information technologies, media products, and services (the Internet, satellites, broadcasts, and so forth). The singular form, on the other hand, usually refers to the process of communication, emphasizing its dialogical and analytical

functions rather than its informative nature and media products. This distinction is significant at the theoretical, methodological, and operational levels.

2. *There is a sharp difference between everyday communication and professional communication.* Such a statement might seem obvious, but the two are frequently equated, either overtly or more subtly, as in, “He or she communicates well; hence, he or she is a good communicator.” A person who communicates well is not necessarily a person who can make effective and professional use of communication. Each human being is a born communicator, but not everyone can communicate strategically, using the knowledge of principles and experience in practical applications. A professional (development) communication specialist understands relevant theories and practices and is capable of designing effective strategies that draw from the full range of communication approaches and methods to achieve intended objectives.

3. *There is a significant difference between development communication and other types of communication.* Both theoretically and practically, there are many different types of applications in the communication family. In this article I refer to four main types of communication: advocacy communication, corporate communication, internal communication, and development communication. Each has a different scope and requires specific knowledge and skills to be performed effectively. Expertise in one area of communication is not sufficient to ensure results if applied in another area.

4. *The main scope and functions of development communication are not exclusively about communicating information and messages, but they also involve engaging stakeholders and assessing the situation.* Communication is not only about “selling ideas.” Such a conception could have been appropriate in the past, when communication was identified with mass media and the linear Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver model, whose purpose was to inform audiences and persuade them to change. Not surprisingly, the first systematic research on the effects of communication was carried out soon after World War II, when communication activities were mostly associated with a controversial concept—propaganda. Currently, the scope of development communication has broadened to include an analytical aspect as well as a dialogical one—intended to open public spaces where perceptions, opinions, and knowledge of relevant stakeholders can be aired and assessed.

5. *Development communication initiatives can never be successful unless proper communication research is conducted before deciding on the strategy.* A communication professional should not design a communication campaign or strategy without having all the relevant data to inform his or her decision. If further research is needed to obtain relevant data, to identify gaps, or to validate the project assumptions, the communication specialist must not hesitate to make such a request to the project management. Even when a communication specialist is called in the middle

of a project whose objectives appear straightforward and clearly defined, specific communication research should be carried out if there are gaps in the available data. Assumptions based on the experts' knowledge should always be triangulated with other sources to ensure their overall validity. Given its interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature, communication research should ideally be carried out at the inception of any development initiative, regardless of the sector or if a communication component would be needed at a later stage.

6. *To be effective in their work, development communication specialists need to have a specific and in-depth knowledge of the theory and practical applications of the discipline.* In addition to being familiar with the relevant literature about the various communication theories, models, and applications, development communication specialists should also be educated in the basic principles and practices of other interrelated disciplines, such as anthropology, marketing, sociology, ethnography, psychology, adult education, and social research. In the current development framework, it is particularly important that a specialist be acquainted with participatory research methods and techniques, monitoring and evaluation tools, and basic principles of strategy design. Additionally, a good professional should also have the right attitude toward people, being empathic and willing to listen and to facilitate dialog in order to elicit and incorporate stakeholders' perceptions and opinions. Most of all, a professional development communication specialist needs to be consistently issue-focused, rather than institution-focused.

7. *Development communication support can only be as effective as the project itself.* Even the most well-designed communication strategy will fail if the overall objectives of the project are not properly determined, if they do not enjoy a broad consensus from stakeholders, or if the activities are not implemented in a satisfactory manner. Sometimes communication experts are called in and asked to provide solutions to problems that were not clearly investigated and defined, or to support objectives that are disconnected from the political and social reality on the ground. In such cases, the ideal solution is to carry out field research or a communication-based assessment to probe key issues, constraints, and feasible options. Tight deadlines and budget limitations, however, often induce managers to put pressure on communication experts to produce quick fixes, trying to force them to act as short-term damage-control public relations or "spin doctors." In such cases, the basic foundations of development communication are neglected, and the results are usually disappointing, especially over the long term.

8. *Development communication is not exclusively about behavior change.* The areas of intervention and the applications of development communication extend beyond the traditional notion of behavior change to include, among other things, probing socioeconomic and political factors, identifying priorities, assessing risks and opportunities, empowering people, strengthening institutions, and promoting social change within complex cultural and political environments. That development communication is often associated with behavior change could

be ascribed to a number of factors, such as its application in health programs or its use in mass media to persuade audiences to adopt certain practices. These kinds of interventions are among the most visible, relying heavily on communication campaigns to change people's behaviors and to eliminate or reduce often fatal risks (for example, AIDS). The reality of development, though, is complex and often requires broader changes than specific individual behaviors.

9. *Media and information technologies are not the backbone of development communication.* As a matter of fact, the value-added of development communication occurs before media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are even considered. Of course, media and information technologies are part of development communication, and they are important and useful means to support development. Their application, however, comes at a later stage, and their impact is greatly affected by the communication work done in the research phase. Project managers should be wary of "one-size-fits-all" solutions that appear to solve all problems by using media products. Past experience indicates that unless such instruments are used in connection with other approaches and based on proper research, they seldom deliver the intended results.

10. *Participatory approaches and participatory communication approaches are not the same thing and should not be used interchangeably, but they can be used together, as their functions are often complementary, especially during the research phase.* Even if there are some similarities between the two types of approaches, most renowned participatory approaches, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) or participatory action research (PAR), do not usually assess the range and level of people's perceptions and attitudes on key issues, identify communication entry points, and map out the information and communication systems that can be used later to design and implement the communication strategy. Instead, these are all key activities carried out in a participatory communication assessment.

## **Relevance of Development Communication In India**

Development communication is an essential feature for the Indian situation as we are still a developing nation with a large population next only to that of China. It is important to note that we do possess an enormously large amount of resources of all kinds including human and natural ones. But we are yet to achieve the kind of universal development of masses which should have been the optimum given the country's situation.

Immediately after Independence in 1947, we faced the challenge of bringing about an equitable and regionally-balanced distribution of wealth and development of the distant places of the country with limited resources. But, while the efforts of the government authorities are growing high, the population is also growing at an explosive rate over the years, thus causing a negative



effect on all developmental initiatives.

It is important to note that India also possesses the largest pool of trained manpower in science and technology though our living standard still deserves a lot to be done. This is why development communication is still highly relevant for the Indian situation and its significance is growing every passing year due to the changing scenario. It is common knowledge that the more than two centuries of colonial rule of the country had left us with a very low level of progress along with an extremely higher rate of exploitation which is normal under such circumstances. This has left the state machinery of the country after Independence with several major and vital challenges. These included – a very low level of literacy, lack of an adequate industrial base and infrastructure etc. among others.

Our experience of the past fifty one years has demonstrated the crucial importance of communication in the field of development. Within this perspective of development communication, two trends developed successively: an approach that favored large-scale actions and relied on the mass media, and an approach that promoted grassroots communication (also called community communication), promoting small-scale projects and relying especially on the light media (videos, posters, slide presentation, etc.). These trends, which still coexist today to various degrees within the field of development communication, are linked to the evolution of the development and communication models that have marked development efforts up to now.

The trend toward mass communication initially marked the first two decades during which the media were utilized in the field of development. It espoused the idea that it was enough to disseminate the knowledge and the technologies of the North to ensure that they were adopted. Once adopted, they would achieve the development of the South. This first vision of development is referred to as the paradigm of "modernization." These initial experiences, centered mainly around the mass media, relied both on a communication model based on persuasion and information transmission, and on a development model based on increasing economic activity and changes in values and attitudes.

The intervention paradigm of these two decades, which is found in two publications that had a decisive impact on the orientations adopted at that time - *The Passing of Traditional Society* by Daniel Lerner (1958) and *Mass Media and National Development* by Wilbur Schramm (1964) - consists of a very simple communication model that can be described in stimulus-response terms, based both on the logic of persuasion and on a development model linking the latter to increased productivity. One of the models resulting from this paradigm that had a major influence on communication practices in the area of educational development is the innovation dissemination model. This model, resulting from an extension of agricultural practices exported to the developing countries, involves the transmission of information to farmers by a resource person and was formulated in theory by Everett Rogers in 1962. This theory rested on three main

elements: the target population of the innovation, the innovation to be transmitted, and the sources and communication channels.

This model has been criticized by several people for its reductionism. It did not take into account the different types of target populations (e.g., prosperous farmers who own land and are open to new techniques versus other farmers who are illiterate, poor, and exploited). It also failed to take into account the impact of the economic and political structures on the capacity to adopt innovations. The same charge of blindness where social, political and economic factors are concerned also applies to innovations that require a process of diffusion. Finally, communication channels and sources were generally used within the framework of vertical, top-to-bottom communication. There was never any mention of horizontal communication between the groups in the communities affected by the problem that the innovation was meant to resolve, or of vertical, bottom-to-top communication, which would have made it possible to bring the people's problems to the attention of the decision-makers and the experts. Since then, the development model as well as the communication models has evolved considerably. The vast amount of experience in the use of the media for educational or informative purposes in the development process has led to the development of new orientations and new practices. At the same time, several criticisms have been raised with regard to the first development models and to the functionalist vision of the development communication model.

A new model emphasizing the endogenous character of development has made it possible to define development as a global process, for which societies are responsible. In this new perspective, development is not something that can come from the outside. It is a participatory process of social change within a given society. This model has also made it possible to extend the concept of development to nonmaterial notions by bringing into the equation notions of social equality, liberty, revenue distribution, grassroots participation in development, etc.

The conceptions everyone had of the role of communication in development have changed radically. In the first development model, the communication paradigm consisted of transmitting the technology necessary for the growth of productivity. In the second, it consists of stimulating the potential for change within a community. The concept of grassroots participation in the development process has become a key concept. The first result of these changes in vision on day-to-day practice was the need to move from a relatively simple vision of a one-way transmission of technical information, to the promotion of bi - or multilateral systems based on grassroots participation. At the same time as this change in communication and development models was taking place, two development paradigms were developing which helped to orient communication interventions.

On one hand, several people were questioning the modernization model because they saw that communication did not lead to development, and observed that in fact, the countries of the South

appeared to be sliding further and further into poverty, low salaries, and poor living conditions. This criticism, which was developed above all in Latin America, emphasized the link between this situation and the situation of economic dependence on the industrialized North: the development of the countries in the North was conditional on the underdevelopment of the countries of the Third World, and the "centre" developed at the expense of the "periphery." This situation is referred to as the paradigm of "dependence." According to this paradigm, obstacles to development come first and foremost from external, not internal, obstacles: that is to say, the international economic system. Consequently, the mass media cannot act as agents of change, since they transmit the western message, and the capitalist and conservative ideology. This paradigm, which is still in existence today, was also criticized because it put too much emphasis on the contradictions at the international level and not enough on the contradictions at the local and the national level.

Its extension at the national level emphasized the relationship between communication and politicization. One of the models resulting from this paradigm, which exercised in the past, and today still exercises a determining influence on the development communication practices, is the consciousness model inseparable from the social and political processes necessary for development. However, the fact is that the mere transfer of knowledge by an authority source to a passive receiver does nothing to help promote growth in the latter as a human being with an independent and critical conscience capable of influencing and changing society. For development communication to be effective, it had to be linked not only to the process of acquiring technical knowledge and skills, but also to the awareness-raising, politicization and organization processes. This model is explained in *The Education of the Oppressed* (Freire 1973), saying that development communication can be considered as a tool that the grassroots can use to take control. This tool can be used for the following purposes: becoming aware of the various facets of the real development problems in their region; organizing in order to react collectively and effectively to these problems; bringing to light the conflicts that divide the various interest groups; becoming politicized - learning to provide alternatives to problem situations and finding solutions to various problems; and becoming "technicized" - obtaining the necessary tools to put to concrete use the solutions provided by the community.

This model and its applications have also been subject to criticism. It was stated, among other things, that politicization through the community media may constitute an adequate approach in countries that tolerate recourse to political action; but in most developing countries, this political action would lead to changing conditions, and the confrontations that follow would commonly lead to repression and regression of democratic rights. Thus, rather than a direct politicization approach, many prefer an approach based on education, where the objective is not to cause a confrontation but to provide the tools necessary for organization.

A third paradigm orienting the formulation of development communication models and

interventions is one that is generally called "the paradigm of another development." This paradigm emphasizes not only material development but also the development of values and cultures. Where development communication interventions are concerned, it emphasizes the small media operating in networks and the use of grassroots communication approaches. According to this paradigm, grassroots participation reinforces the chances that communities will adopt activities appropriate for them.

Finally, we saw recently, notably in the case of the fight against AIDS and the promotion of condom use, approaches resulting from social marketing, having recourse at the same time to research techniques adapted to small groups, and to communities and the large-scale use of the mass media. To these approaches we will also have to add all the practices related to basic education, informal education, distance learning, literacy, and post-literacy activities that have their own methodologies and community-level communication and media communication approaches. In short, the field of development communication is vast and its divisions are numerous. The different paradigms that have marked its evolution are still active to various degrees, and the models that are attached to them are as different as the ideologies and the orientations that inspired them.

### **Conceptual Evolution**

From the 1940's to the 60's, the age of the big media, the various communications approach to development included understanding in three areas (i) communication effects approach (ii) Diffusion of innovations approach and (iii) Mass Media and the modernization approach. In the communications effects approach, the earliest models of mass media effects conceptualized the impact of mass media as direct, powerful and uniform on individuals living in "modern", industrial societies termed as "mass societies". Also, the earlier models saw communication as a linear and one way process flowing from a powerful source to a passive receiver. After the II world war, there was a change of opinion in the sense that realization dawned that mass media rather than being sole agents of attitudinal and behavioral change were more agents of reinforcement. Thus, early formulations did exhibit conceptual shortcomings that "stem from essentially the same idealist conception of history that informs the main sociological approach". They were simplistic and in sufficient accounts of social and political dynamics of change and lacked an adequate conception of the relationship between culture and social structure.

However, the shift in emphasis regarding role of mass media from one of dominant and powerful Influence to that of moderate or minimal effects did not make any significant difference of formulations advocating use of mass media for development in the III world countries. The view was that information and communication can be transferred to fields such as agricultural extension, health, education etc. Diffusions of innovations approach has important theoretical

links with effects research, wherein the ability of media and opinion leaders to bring about knowledge and new ideas among a target audience which would in turn lead to its adoption.

There are four critical variables summarized the development process: urbanization leading to increased literacy which in turn affects mass media exposure resulting in greater economic and political participation. A simple linear process but most important hypothesis has to do with the nature of the 'modern individual' who is characterized by an ability to accommodate to change plus a high degree of empathy. Generally people in traditional societies could expand their empathy by exposure to the mass media which in effect meant that mass media, in the third world, had the potential of bringing about modernization into isolated traditional communities and replacing the structure of life, values and behaviour which one sees in the western world. Thus, research in this tradition created high expectations for the media's role towards development benefits in the third world. The whole approach up to the 60's was that the media would make indigenous' audiences react favorably to opening up to the world and to the principles of market economy. "The desired changes (developmental) were connected to a vertical, elitist, relationship in which the "strong" were "helping" and "weak" to be seduced by the blessings of science and technology, which were perceived as being exclusively western "inventors" .

In the 1970's, it became abundantly clear that a socio-economic scenario had diminished the promise of development communication. Mass media proved not to be an independent variable but itself was subject to various situational, political, social and economic factors. New approaches were broached upon primarily because there was wide ideological debate categories such as analysis of the ownership of media structure, international structures for transmission and production of information, class analysis of the communication process, the political economy of communications, the appeal for an inauguration of a north south dialogue towards a new world order of information, all these started being discussed and thought about, a process that continues till today . These debates arose because of the rising belief that the communication models and theories are basically exported from the first world and that they were suited only to explain the media phenomena in those societies rooted in that a cultural tradition.

There was then, a progressive reflection on the "state of development" achieved up to the 60's wherein the situation of the very poor had only but deteriorated. From the 70's the stress was on (i) equity in distribution of information and other benefits of development (ii) active participation of people at the grassroots (iii) Independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own objectives and (iv) integration of the old and new ideas, the traditional and modern systems suited to the needs of a community. In the 60's and 70's these views were challenged critically commonly accepted notions of communication were challenged critically. Some condemned traditional literacy training as authoritarian in which the teachers "deposit" the set of

values of the rich in the poor, who can later “cash in” on those “deposits” for material goods given to them as reward for passivity. Genuine communication is free dialogue actively sharing and reconstructing experience, education is the creative discovery of the world and not transmission of knowledge from the powerful to the powerless. Some even proposed ‘conscientisation’ as a democratic method for people to gain collective awareness of natural and social realities, a method that is based on non-directed discussion of individual and cultural problems in small cultural circles, stimulated only by ‘generative words’ selected from the people’s ‘minimum thematic universe’ . This would, in turn show the exploited that society is changeable.

The interrelation of ideas to the process of development education is evident. Many regarded the transplantation of the agricultural extension program of the United States as opposite to true educational practice because it came with the assumption that it came from the “seat of wisdom to the seat of ignorance”. In summation, two paradigms on communication and development come through in the evolutionary process during the last five decades - the Modernization Paradigm and the Dependency Paradigm. The Modernization Paradigm spelled out development as a spontaneous, unilinear and irreversible process which in turn implied functional specialization. In this, development was to be stimulated by external, endogenous factors and by internal measures geared towards supporting modern sectors and modernizing traditional sectors. In the Dependency Paradigm, the whole development process was towards the philosophy of disassociation from the world market in goal of self-reliance as the most important perceived obstacle to development are external to the underdeveloped nation . None of these ‘paradigms’ explained the dismal record of economic and social development in the third world.

## **A Theoretical Perspective**

Communication theories such as the ‘diffusion of innovations’, the ‘two-step- flow’ or the ‘extension’ approaches are quite congruent with other modernisation theories. According to the diffusion theory, this perspective implies ‘that the role of communication was (1) to transfer technological innovations from development agencies to their clients, and (2) to create an appetite for change through raising a ‘climate for modernization’ among the members of the public’.

The elitist, vertical or top-down orientation of the diffusion model is obvious. However, the reality often proves much more complex than the theory. Therefore, many authors and development workers point out that decision-making and planning cannot be done by bureaucrats and policymakers for the people but only by these ‘experts’ together with all concerned institutions and the people. In other words, in accordance with discussions on international

political and academic forums and these people refer to newer insights on the role and place of communication for development which favours two-way and horizontal communication: 'The systematic utilization of appropriate communication and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural population, mainly at the grass-root level'. Though it can be argued that this approach still remains 'paternalistic' or a social marketing strategy, it at least distinguishes between policy and planning-making at micro and macro levels.

For the present purpose, society refers to the material base (economic, political resources and power) to relationships in various social collectives (nation, community and family). It has to be noted that the history of modern society has usually been written in terms of a materially driven process, with society as a 'base' and culture as superstructure'. Culture, herein, refers to other essential aspects of collective social life, especially to meanings and practices. Mass communication can be both societal and cultural phenomena. However; there are four main options available for describing mass media and society. If we consider mass media as an aspect of base, then it is the option of materialism where in the culture is dependent on the economic and power structure of a society. What is then assumed is that whoever owns or controls the media chooses and sets the limit to what they do and can do. It is in the light of the media content that the option of idealism is presented. It is opposite to the earlier option wherein, here, it is believed that it is the media content, ideas and values conveyed by the media that seen as a cause of social change, irrespective of who owns and controls. Interdependence implies that mass media and society are continually interaction and influencing each other, in which, the media responds on a continuous basis to the demands of society, also innovates to a changing socio-cultural climate which in turn sets off new demands. The autonomy option does not go with this view in the sense that it is likely that society and mass media can vary independently up to a point. This goes with the view of critics who are skeptical about the power of the media to influence ideas, values or behaviors. Going further would be to seek a frame of reference for connecting media and society as below:

The above representation points out to the fact that media institutions are not independent in relation to the rest of society, they too being subject to rules, influences etc. All elements in the figure are dependent on each other. People/masses acquire information and meaning of "reality" via direct observation and experience, from institutions directly, from institutions via the media and from the media autonomously and the influence of larger events and of economic and political forces comes partly channeled from the mass media. However, what is ambiguous in the representation is whether media institutions would be able to assert itself minus controls specified when any such situation arises. However, one must also recognize that the media operates in a society where the power structure is distributed unevenly between the classes. It is related to the prevailing structure of political and economic power.

In this context, two models of media power one of dominant media and the other of pluralist media can be mentioned. The dominant media model sees media as a subservient part of other institution which themselves are interrelated. The media is owned by a small number of powerful people which disseminate a limited view of the ruling classes. The masses are given a limited view, with no critical feedback which results into an attempt to legitimize the existing power structure. The pluralist model is exactly the opposite where it is held that there is no unified and dominant elite and change and control are both possible. In this model, the masses can differentiate, initiate demand and can react to what the media offers. This does not close the option of a “mixed approach” where mass domination is within limits and counter forces are resisted by the audience/masses. The dominant media model reflects the mass society view. Mass society refers to the relationship between individuals and social order around them where in individuals are presumed to be in a situation of ‘psychological isolation’ from others, impersonality in their interactions with others and are relatively free from the demands of binding informal social obligations, view carried by some sociologists well into the 20th century. Putting these ideas onto the media, it would mean an atomized public, centralized media, one way transmission, and media being used for control and/or manipulation and people using media for identity.

The “intellectuals” are the dominant groups exercising the function of hegemony and political Government. Furthermore, some explained that the “spontaneous” consent given by the mass to the direction imposed on social life by the dominant group is “historically” caused by the prestige and confidence the dominant group enjoy because of its position and function in the world of production. The functionalist theory of media says that more an audience is reliant on the mass media for information and more a society is in a state of crisis then more the power the media is likely to have. This functionalist approach has been criticized for its inadequacy in dealing with issues of power and conflict but one can see how the media are functional in the exercise of power, (Functionalism claims to explain social practices and institutions in terms of needs of the society and individual). As per this view, media is considered essential to society for integration, co- operation, order, control, stability, mobilization, continuity of values and culture.

### **Interface of Communication and Development**

Paradigms and the approaches concerning communication for development are classified as those being part of the dominant (modernization) paradigm or of the critical development tradition. A close examination of the basic tenets of the new development paradigm and of the ultimate requirements of the new communication approach to development would reveal very



close similarity between them. To begin with, participation is the key variable in the new development paradigm, just as it is for the new communication approach to development. In broad terms, the ultimate objectives of national development (urban and rural) are economic development, equitable distribution of facilities and benefits, national cohesion and human development. These are also, in broad terms, the ultimate objectives of development communication, even though, because of the importance attached to intelligent understanding of development issues, development communication gives pride of place to human development. In order to achieve these ultimate objectives, both the new development paradigm and the new communication approach stress the need for:

1. Equality of the distribution of social and economic benefits, information and education;
2. Popular participation in development planning and execution, accompanied by decentralization of activities to the local level;
3. Self-reliance and independence in development with emphasis on the potential of local resources; and
4. Integration of traditional with modern systems, so that development is a syncretization of old and new ideas, with the exact mixture somewhat different in each locale.

However, development communication is not merely a matter of transmitting information about how things can be done better by using available facilities. It is much more than the exchange of problem-solving information. It also involves the generation of psychic mobility or empathy, rising of aspirations, teaching of new skills and encouragement of local participation in development activities. Development communication assumes the broader function of helping people to restructure their mental framework in interpreting specific events and phenomena, and to relate to the broader world beyond their immediate environments. To be effective in doing this, communication activities in development must be inter-woven with other socioeconomic and political processes. Development activities require rural people as well as urban people, in the government, and in business and other sectors to establish new social relations with each other. Communication processes facilitate the growth and development of such human relationships. Both the mass media and interpersonal communication systems are necessary in establishing and maintaining these relationships. But they cannot perform these roles effectively unless they are incorporated into the total development process. Many development specialists now believe that the chief factor of production in modern times, in both developed and developing countries, is information seen as knowledge, education or human capital. To neglect this chief factor of production in the planning, execution and evaluation of development

activities is to unwittingly call for confusion in the interface between technical and social aspects of development and, hence, failure to realize the full benefits of development.

### **Approaches and Perspectives to Development Communication**

The task of determining which communication approach and planning strategy to adopt in development communication projects is expected to be a deliberate and systematic endeavour. The execution of development communication programs and projects, therefore, takes as its starting point, both the "felt needs" at the social system level, and the "action needs" as identified by development planners. Translating information and complex socio-behavioural messages into creative and effective approaches that trigger dialogue among participants is often one of the most challenging tasks within the design and delivery of a communication for development initiative. Technically sound and strategic communication initiatives run the risk of failure if they do not involve intended participants, consider local ethos and cultural modes of communication, or are perceived as boring, pedantic, insensitive, or disempowering by the participant groups. Development Communication takes as its starting point both the 'felt needs' at community or local level, and the 'action needs' as identified by planners. The operational strategy for meeting these two sets of needs follows four stages of activities. The first is identifying and analyzing the innovations sought by the community and those that development agents want to introduce to whom, when and with what material means. This is generally known as the diffusion stage in development communication. In the second stage, which is known as the social process stage, the thrust of activities is towards determining how existing social, cultural, psychological and indigenous communication factors, as well as government organizational factors, would help or hinder the adoption of new practices among the groups of people concerned. In the third stage, efforts are geared towards identifying existing media and how they relate to the people. Here, one looks at what combination of communication channels exist and how they can be used in the communities—traditional and interpersonal channels, as well as modern print and electronic media—for communication 'feed' both into and from the community or communities. Finally, after repeating these analyses for geographically or sectorally related projects, locally tailored communication programmes are drawn up and implemented in phases with the real action potential in the communities (taking into account available supplementary inputs from outside the community).

Three different approaches to putting the above stages into operation have been identified. These are the interpersonal approach which could be through the extension and community development method or through ideological and mass mobilization; the mass media approach which could be through centralized method or through localized method; and the integrated approach, which combines all the approaches and methods in appropriate ratio depending upon the identified felt needs and socio-cultural situation in each community.

## **Extension and Community Development Method**

This is the oldest method of using communication to generate development. It is basically oriented to rural community development although it can also apply to suburban and urban development efforts. The main thrust of this method is the communication of useful and practical information on such issues as agriculture, home economics, health, civic responsibility, law and order, sanitation, and so on, through face-to-face and interpersonal (handbills, letters, telephone, etc.) methods of communication.

The utilization of the method is predicated on the assumption that the following basic conditions are present: (a) that the communities or social systems are interested in the new ideas and practices in order to improve their living conditions; (b) that there are necessary and sufficient resources to support the development endeavour, that is, to enable the people to apply available new information toward the development goals; and (c) that there is a group of educated, intelligent, and public spirited leaders within the community or social system who can motivate the masses to positive development-oriented objectives; these groups can be village Sarpanch / priests/community elders / tribe leaders. The basic principles of the method can be summarized as follows:

- That there are no solutions to problems that are imposed on local communities from the outside; that the people must be the principal actors in defining and finding solutions to their problems;
- That the development communicator (social animator) is to be as closely identified with the local community as possible
- That he/she is to be nondirective in his/her approach
- That communication's chief role is to help define the problem, not give the solution
- That community participation and social action is the goal, and therefore feedback from the community is an essential element.

One of the countries in which this method has been used is India. The country held, and rightly too, that the great mass of the illiterate and poor rural population is a highly valuable development resource. Many tried to exhort that the individual rural family and the communities can be guided to the path of development if they were given practical knowledge of the social and natural sciences. The government decided that the best way to achieve the projected goals was to decentralize interpersonal communication to the community block level. Each community development block was served by a team of multi-purpose village-level workers supported by the subject matter specialists at the block level, and supervised and co-ordinated by the block development officer. The whole programme was planned, guided and supported by a national

level community development organization. The multi-purpose village level worker is the key communicator in this method: he/she serves as a mediator between the rural elite and the development bureaucracy of the government.

### **Ideological and Social Mobilization Method**

Social mobilization is often used by grassroots-based social movements but can also become a tool of elite and the state itself. The process usually takes the form of large public gatherings such as mass meetings etc and is unique communication methods that makes extensive use of interpersonal channels. In this method, the channels are activated not by development agents, but by the political party cadres. This is because this method sees development, especially rural development, as a process which begins with a radical change in the political orientation of the

People—radical change the ultimate result of which is the formation of new social relations. The main function of development communication, therefore, is seen as that of promoting and 'lightening' the political consciousness of the people. The primary goal of this method is the ability of workers and peasants to be self-reliant through mobilization of internal resources, and thus to be in a position to control their future. Physical and human development is subsumed under political consciousness because it is held that political awareness would motivate people to participate in development activities to satisfy their needs and aspirations. The operational structure of this method is virtually the same as that of the extension and community development method. But the structure and direction of message contents are different. While the former deals directly with human and physical development problems, the latter lays emphasis on political awareness as a prelude to any other type of development.

### **The Mass Media Approach**

The mass media have become instruments not only for information but also for education and development. Because of their unique characteristics of speedy delivery of messages and extensive reach (wide-area coverage), they have been found to be particularly useful in the dissemination of development messages to large and dispersed populations, and, when properly used, in immediate follow-up with opportunities for exchange of ideas on the information/messages provided. The use of media in development can be treated at two levels: mass media, often using television, radio, and print media in campaigns aimed at inducing the adoption of innovations or other changes in behaviors; and community media, mainly using radio and other folk expressions such as theater, concerned with giving voice and representation to the various segments of local communities. Under this aspect, the program tries to promote use of various media (including interpersonal relations and traditional means of communication as

much as the modern media) within systems of interactive or two-way communication that can be appropriated by groups or communities, and that are based not on the transmission of information or hortatory messages, but on facilitating the exchange of ideas. In any given context, the use of these systems must be linked to a process of community communication that will define the parameters under which they are designed or introduced, the conditions for setting them up, and the ways in which they can be evaluated.

The history of development communication in India can be traced to rural radio broadcasts in the 1940s in different languages. Have you ever heard a rural programme on radio? If you come from a rural area, you probably would have heard. People who present these programmes speak in a language or dialect that the people in your area speak. The programmes may be about farming and related subjects. The programme may comprise of interviews with experts, officials and farmers, folk songs and information about weather, market rates, availability of improved seeds and implements. There would also be programmes on related fields. During the 1950s, the government started huge developmental programmes throughout the country. In fact, when Doordarshan started on 15th September 1959; it was concentrating only on programmes on agriculture. Many of you might have seen the 'Krishi Darshan' programme on Doordarshan. Later in 1975, when India used satellites for telecasting television programmes in what is known as SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment), the programmes on education and development were made available to 2400 villages in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.

As far as the print media is concerned, after Independence when the Five Year Plans were initiated by the government for planned development, it was the newspapers which gave great importance to development themes. They wrote on various government development programmes and how the people could make use of them. If the print media have contributed to development communication, the electronic media – radio and television especially All India Radio and Doordarshan have spread messages on development as the main part of their broadcasts. However, amongst all the media that are used for development communication, traditional media are the closest to people who need messages of development like the farmers and workers. Such forms of media are participatory and effective. You may have seen construction workers cooking their meal of dal and rice over open fires in front of their tents set up temporarily on the roadside. They need to be educated about the values of balanced nutrition, cleanliness, hygiene and water and sanitation. Have you wondered how messages on such issues are communicated?

In various parts of India, groups of volunteers use street theatre as a medium for development communication. This is done through humorous skits and plays through which the importance of literacy, hygiene etc. are enacted. The content for the skits is drawn from the audience's life. For

example, they are told about “balanced nutrition” . This means supplementing their staple diet of dal and rice with green leafy vegetables known to cure night blindness, an ailment common among construction workers. Similarly, female construction workers and their children are taught how to read and write. However, problems in communicating a message in an effective way have been a matter of concern to development workers. How can people be taught new skills at a low cost? What would be a good way to deal with sensitive topics such as health issues? How can complicated new research, like that in agriculture for example, be simplified so that ordinary people can benefit? One option has been the use of comics. But, in order to achieve the desired results, these comics should be created locally. But what are ‘comics’? You must have all at some point of time read a comic. Comics involve story telling using visuals which must follow local ideas and culture in order to be understood correctly by people. The important thing about comics is that they are made by people on their own issues in their own language. So, readers find them closer to their day-to-day lives.

Programmes are organized in the remote areas of Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, and the North East to provide training to rural communicators to enable them to use comics in development communication. Information on sensitive health issues such as HIV/AIDS has been communicated through the medium of comics in several states. However, you must understand that development communication using various media is possible only with the active involvement of the following:

- (i) Development agencies like departments of agriculture.
- (ii) Voluntary organizations
- (iii) Concerned citizens
- (iv) Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)

Whenever we speak about development, the contribution of voluntary groups, concerned citizens and nongovernmental organizations cannot be ignored. Actually these groups help the government in implementing development programmes. Of course the government, both central and state has various departments to reach out to people on various issues. The NGOs undertake studies, conduct research and develop appropriate messages for spreading awareness on various issues pertaining to development.

In the main, mass media approach to the use of communication for development finds expression in two methods: the Centralized Mass Media method and the Localized, or Decentralized, Mass Media method.

### **Centralized Mass Media Method**

This method lays emphasis on centralized control of both mass media infrastructure and the direction and flow of mass media messages. If we were to construct a continuum with extension and community development at one end, centralized mass media method would be at the other. It relies wholly on the mass media for its messages flow and almost completely ignores the interpersonal system. Because it uses the mass media for dissemination, its coverage potential is substantial: and because the content of its messages is of a general nature, there is usually something of relevance, no matter how small, to different segments of the society. It is based on the assumption that a 'good and relevant message' is capable of being accepted by the individual on his/her own, irrespective of the origin of the message, and that the best and hopeful way to attract and hold a mass audience is to offer open and spontaneous and continuous vicarious satisfaction as well as education.

This is the method used by most countries in developing societies. Many agree that developing countries adopt this method because it is the cheapest and easiest method to use. However, research has shown that it is also the least effective in ensuring intelligent understanding and effectiveness of development messages. In this method, programmes/messages are planned, produced and disseminated by 'experts' and programme officers in the urban headquarters of media organizations with very little or no reference to the views and opinions of the receiving audiences. Whether we are talking of radio, which is the most accessible medium especially for rural audiences, or of the newspaper,—whose content are meaningless unless one was literate, or of television—the urban elite medium—whose impact in rural communities is very minimal, the procedure is always the same. Development messages are planned and executed without consultation with the audiences to whom the messages are eventually directed. The result is that message contents are usually at variance with the felt needs of the people and, therefore, have very little chance of succeeding. Not only is there no organization at the reception end, but also, because of the desire to reach the largest number of people, the messages are always of a general nature. Effective development messages demand some sort of organized action at the reception end, and also demand specificity in message content to ensure relevance

Centralized Mass Media method appears to have derived its operational strategy from the Development Media theory which requires the mass media to join the government in the task of nation-building and development. While the theory makes no reference to the people-the target audience-it requires control and sanction of the mass media by the government "in the interest of national objectives." This is why centralization of activities is seen by media personnel or organizations that use the method as imperative; such control helps to keep a sharp eye on everything that is done or not done, and therefore to avoid provoking the anger of the government. The method is primarily concerned with what the government wants, and what ideas media personnel have to meet those wants, rather than with the construction of messages that would motivate the people to positive actions through intelligent understanding of their

needs and of how to meet those needs. It is therefore no wonder that the result of using this method anywhere, especially in the developing world, has left much to be desired. It generally succeeds in generating affectedness of messages, that is, getting the messages to reach the target audiences; but it almost always fails in ensuring effectiveness of messages, that is, creating an understanding atmosphere in which the target audiences would accept the demands of the messages and act according to those demands.

### **Localized Mass Media Method**

Through local media the people can talk to themselves, talk to the authorities, and participate fully in the construction and dissemination of development messages meant for them. There can be little doubt that media are instrumental in increasing knowledge and influencing attitudes and behaviors, but this influence is not as strong as originally believed, especially if it does not take the local context into account. For instance, the vibrant world of community radio that has emerged in recent years is often more empowering and influential than the more celebrated medium of television, at least at the local level. The blind faith placed on media in the past as a means to push or even leapfrog development in poorer countries resembles the current hype for ICTs. The rise of more sophisticated communication and information technologies, such as satellites or the Internet, has opened new horizons and opportunities. The potential of the new technologies has not only increased the penetration of mass media, for instance, through satellites, but it has also created new opportunities to enhance communication at the local level utilizing technologies such as the Internet or mobile telephones. The establishment of “telecenters” in rural areas is spreading in many countries as a way to support local development in the social and economic dimension.

The knowledge of traditional channels and strategies of communication used in the various environments where the interventions are made to induce the people to take responsibility for the communication process has also been identified for the enhancement of local knowledge, to allow both for the bridging in of modern knowledge and the valorization of community knowledge. This method is also very much media oriented but, deriving its strength from the democratic participant media theory, it lays emphasis on interaction with the people and on establishment of local media channels to provide access for the people. The starting point in this method is the identification of the problems of the people through personal calls, meetings and discussions by media personnel who are required to enter into the socio-cultural contexts of the people. Because of the need for specificity in message content, localized method calls for the establishment of local media —local radio, rural press and/or television production/viewing centers. Each of these provides access and opportunities for participation of the rural population in the planning and production of development messages.



Through local media, the rural population can talk to themselves, talk to the authorities and participate fully in the construction and dissemination of development messages meant for them. Such an interactive atmosphere based on correct interpretation of the needs and aspirations of the people creates an understanding climate in which confidence, credibility and willingness to make personal and community contributions are at their best. An investigation into the impact of Radio in India provides evidence to support the usefulness of the localized mass media method. Not only did many members of the rural community participate in the radio's activities, but also the participative acts of these members radiated to non-participants thus leading to wide range acceptance of the radio messages and consequent changes in behaviour according to the demands of the messages. The very act of participating in the planning and production of messages disseminated through these rural media, create self confidence in the participants and turn them into honorary messengers of development.

### **Integrated Approach**

This is the approach which combines interpersonal and mass media approaches into one, avoiding their limitations and problems but taking advantage of their potentials. The integrated approach uses the mass media and interpersonal communication at the same time. Not only does the interpersonal component involve the use of the extension and community development method as well as the ideological and mass mobilization method, but the mass media component also involves the use of centralized and localized methods. All these are then linked up with traditional channels and modes of communication.

The structure of communication in any society is largely determined by the growth and development of technology and by economic and cultural institutions. To the extent that societies differ in their patterns of economic and socio-cultural heritage, their communication patterns are also likely to differ from one another. In traditional societies or rural communities, direct face to face communication is valued as the most reliable and authentic form of communication. In such societies, the purpose of communication is usually to promote social harmony rather than individual well-being; to reinforce stability and order rather than to bring about change and growth.

However, the ultimate goal of development communication is to cause positive and effective change through the provision of necessary information (backed up by physical inputs) that would create understanding and build self-confidence and motivation to change. The thrust of the integrated approach, therefore, is to feed the interpersonal and traditional network with information that would generate discussions which, in turn, would lead to intelligent understanding of development objectives and each person's role in achieving these objectives. To feed the interpersonal channels, development communication depends on the mass media which

have the potential for rapid dissemination and wide-area coverage. The limits of interpersonal channels are soon reached if development takes on a national character. Then the importance of the mass media becomes obvious. They have the power to disseminate information and development messages rapidly and, across the nation, but they are generally not able to change peoples' attitudes. Interpersonal channel lacks the enhancing characteristics of the mass media, but is relatively effective in inducing attitude change and effective development behaviours, largely due to the impact of opinion leaders and of peer-group pressures. Hence the need for a communication model (integrated approach) that would link the mass media to interpersonal channels.

In rural India, no communication strategy is likely to succeed unless it takes into account the five basic principles that underlie the system of traditional communication—supremacy of the community, respect for old age, utility of the individual, sanctity of authority and religion as a way of life . These principles infuse relevance and context into communication within rural communities. Therefore, any communication strategy which completely ignores traditional modes and channels cannot successfully win and retain the people's attention for long. Any communication message which completely ignores the values that underlie the context in which the people communicate cannot produce the attitude and behavioural changes necessary for rural development. As research has shown, not only are two media better than one medium for effective communication, but also a combination of the mass media and interpersonal communication is better than using either alone.

To be effective, integration of all the approaches and systems must be based on existing traditional channels and modes of communication which are usually a reflection of the sociocultural, economic and environmental conditions. Rural communities, especially those that most need development messages, by virtue of their conditions, still rely heavily on traditional media for information and messages. These traditional media and modes are what they have relied upon for years, and they have very strong confidence in them. Only the mass media strategies which utilize these traditional media and modes in collecting materials to be included in their modern media programmes, and in disseminating further, interpreting and consolidating mass media messages would prove effective in rural development. The mass media are most effective when combined with interpersonal media as in media forums or with traditional media such as village theatre and travelling storytellers.

### **Development Communication Planning**

The planning calls for recording in minute detail the sequential order of activities, the hierarchical order of authority or supervision, and specific assignment of responsibilities. It also

calls for broad guidelines as to how the assignments are to be carried out with respect to time. In development communication, planning is a deliberate, systematic and continuous effort to organize human activity for the efficient use of communication resources and for the realization of communication policies in the context of a particular country's development goals, means and priorities and subject to its prevailing forms of social, economic and political organization. Development communication planning, therefore, must take into account the development environment and goals of the country in which the planning takes place. In addition, the country's political ideology, social issues, communication facilities and systems, as well as available resources must all be properly studied before planning the communication strategy that would suit the environment.

Unfortunately, communication is usually brought in to the planning of development programmes only as an afterthought. Emphasis in most developing countries is always on publicity. For the authorities in such countries, there is no difference between information (provision of facts and figures) and communication (exchange of ideas). No serious thought is given to the importance of communication mass, interpersonal, traditional and folk, in development. Provisions are usually made for publicizing development plans and objectives, but very little is done for feedback and for discussions. Hence, a common complaint of communication researchers and practitioners is that communication policies and plans are too often in the hands of those who do not know enough about communication to set up or contribute to the communication systems that best serve the development needs of their countries.

In development communication planning, communication should not be seen only as a tool, a supporting mechanism or an independent variable in development. Communication should be viewed as an integral part of development plans, one of whose major objectives is to create communication systems or models that could provide opportunity for people to have access to means of communication, and to make use of these means in improving the quality of their lives. Therefore, in seeking solutions to the problems of communication in development, it is imperative to first look at the larger development process, and then at the role or roles of communication within the larger system.

In order to put the beginning of development planning on a sound footing, it is necessary to answer relevant questions like: What are the country's development goals and objectives, particularly with respect to communication?

### **Summation**

- India's development communication experience over the past 51 years has taught us a lot about the role of communication in development. The main lesson probably has

been the recognition of the need to move from communication practices based on the one-and-only model of information transmission removed from the community processes, to practices involving the grassroots in their development.

- Our experience in India shows us that the point of departure for development communication is not the dissemination of an innovation or of a new idea that is full of promise, but the grassroots expression of its needs. It follows that the communication models based exclusively on models of information transmission removed from community processes clearly are doomed to failure.
- Participation, by putting the emphasis on the needs and the viewpoints of the individuals and groups, becomes the key concept of development communication in India. Recourse to a systemic methodology and the implementation of horizontal processes - in which the people are directly associated with the communication process and are thus more likely to formulate their problems themselves, become aware of new possibilities, and take their knowledge and their viewpoints into consideration in the communication process - constitute the major elements of its methodology. The implementation processes are essentially interactive and participatory at all levels, and coincide with the fundamental mission of International Research Development Centre (IDRC), India - Empowerment through Knowledge: "Empowerment is often seen as something one can do to another person. This is not so. People are empowered by an environment that gives them the freedom to express themselves".
- Where the orientations to be pursued are concerned, a major line is the communication support of the concept of "new development," emphasizing decentralization, access to communication, and participation.
- Several researchers in India also emphasize the reinforcement of institutional and individual skills, ways of approaching decision-makers, and grassroots communication. However, the fact remains that to be durable, development must take into account human factors and make it possible for the communities in question to decide for themselves what objectives they want to aim for and what means they want to use. Development communication is the tool that makes this process possible. As a corollary, the directions to be pursued are predicated on knowing the needs of the target group and their channels of communication, stimulating the processes of community participation and decision-making, reinforcing the action of agents of change, and influencing the development of institutional and national policies.
- Historically, where research themes are concerned in India, attention has always been paid to the effects of the mass media. This focus has corresponded to a modernization paradigm and the utilization of the media to create a global environment for development and the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and new attitudes. It has led to research and intervention with a view to intensifying and developing the contribution of the mass media to formal and informal education.

- It is interesting to note that in the 1970s, people turned to the role of communication in supporting development activities and specific projects (family planning, oral rehydration, basic health care, agriculture, etc.). Attention then turned to the potential of small media and community media: participatory videos, audio cassette forums, and traditional media (theatre, puppet shows, stories, etc.). People also placed more emphasis on the contribution of communication to the promotion of democratic and social rights, which led to the development of community radio and communication agencies dedicated to these aspects.
- Finally, during these past few years, interest in India has focused on various areas like the impact of new communication technologies (satellite, telephone, E-mail, etc.), and each of these areas has its respective importance and has been contributing to stimulating and supporting development communication interventions.

One must also recognize the fact that development communication is expensive especially when it comes to satellites or computer communications. However, there is need to establish a basic infrastructure for media in the third world. Without doubt, it would only pay if essential investments are made towards infrastructure in this field as the benefits would only pay in the long run. The vast disparity and widening inequalities and the reasons why they have occurred must be recognized and all tools of development communication should be first geared to tackle these issues. Until then the concept of global village would remain an elusive myth. What is also crucial is the vital question as to what is the role of media in a system which has given us Bosnia, Chechnya, Darfur, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir or many such examples?

## **Conclusion**

Development communication is not merely concerned with providing information on development activities. Besides creating opportunity for the people to know about the technical nature of new ideas and on how they work and with what effect, development communication plays the more important role of creating an atmosphere for understanding how these new ideas fit into the real social situation in which the people operate. Its ultimate goal is to catalyze local development activities, local development planning and implementation, and local communication to smoothen the path to development. Communication here should not stop with conventional mass media. If development communication must succeed, then it must include strong components of social organization and interpersonal as well as traditional modes and media. In addition, those in charge of planning development communication must be those who understand the social structure (those who have entered into the socio-cultural contexts of the people) and how change can take place in it, not merely how development messages can be disseminated.

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