

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF THE TRIBUNE

Somak Sen

Ph. D. Student, Guru Nanak Dev University, Punjab, India

Website: www.gndu.ac.in

Email: somakishere@gmail.com

Abstract:

Media has been playing an important role in educating the society since time immemorial. Politics, sports, economics, environment – all are extensively covered by the media. Science is also not an exception. Media has been delivering important news on scientific developments across the world since decades. The aim is to develop the mankind as well as civilization as a whole. Among various media, newspapers play a significant role as it provides an analytical and interpretative reporting on scientific topics. It, thus, helps to acknowledge the readers a lot about the concerned topics. Besides, it is a source of record for future purposes. How, The Tribune, a noted daily of northern India, has been covering science journalism since decades, is covered here. A month long study has been done with due care.

Keywords: *Media, newspaper, The Tribune, science, journalism, report, communication, development, health, medicine.*

Introduction:

Communication means to share idea, beliefs, principles, knowledge with others. The word communication, we all know, has been derived from the Latin word ‘communis’, which means commonality. Communication helps in developing, maintaining and improving the relationship between human beings. Everyone in this world needs to communicate; otherwise, they cannot sustain. Without communication, development is impossible. Since time immemorial, communication has been taking place between living organisms, be it human beings, animals or even plants. Even scientists discovered that plants also respond to various stimuli based on

circumstances. This is the essence of communication. Denis McQuail, the pioneer in the study of communication defines the word communication as “Communication is a process which increases commonality, but also requires elements of commonality for it to occur at all.”

Communication needs a presupposed environment, it is considered as the tool which can improve or even destroy the relationship among human beings. It is a vehicle which is considered as the machine of civilization, it generates a common pond of ideas and beliefs, it also helps to strengthen the realizations of togetherness and establishes civilization.

Science Communication and role of media:

Among varied kinds of communication, science communication is also remarkable. Science means a kind of special knowledge over a particular topic. Man needs to be communicated on scientific topics to develop the society as a whole. Here lies the significance of science communication. Newspapers and other media provide a lot of scientific knowledge to its readers as well as viewers across the globe. It is necessary to deliver scientific knowledge to the readers to bring overall development in a society. People should be aware of every technological development, be it technological gadgets, medicine, health related issues, electronic development, agricultural development, etc. It helps to bring economic development of a country. If the audience would read more scientific stories, they would develop their rational thinking and would be able to form a better democratic society. That would be the renaissance of communication. The same has been in practice since decades.

The newspapers in India are also not an exception in this regard. A large number of national and regional newspapers in India regularly publish scientific news for their readers. The audio-visual channels and the broadcasting medium also perform a significant role in this context.

Following are some noted English dailies of India which cover the science news on a regular basis. The section names are as follows:

The Hindu – Science and Technology

The Indian Express – Technology

The Hindustan Times – Science / Tech

The Times of India – Science / Tech

The Telegraph – Knowhow

The Tribune – Science & Technology

Daily Post – Science and Technology / Gallery

Role of The Tribune in science communication:

Here I am giving a short description of one of the leading newspapers in the northern India, The Tribune and its role in science communication. The Tribune has a long history in this regard to discuss here. The paper was first started by Dyal Singh Majithia, a philanthropist on 2nd February, 1881. With the tagline of ‘Voice of the People’, this paper is considered as the mouthpiece of the northern India. Apart from the English edition named ‘The Tribune’, the Tribune group publishes other two daily newspapers also. The Hindi version is known as Dainik Tribune and the Punjabi daily is known as Punjabi Tribune. The Editor-in-chief of The Tribune is Mr. Raj Chengappa. Mr. Santosh Tewari is the Editor of the Dainik Tribune and Mr. Varinder Walia is presently heading the Punjabi Tribune. Both the Dainik Tribune and the Punjabi Tribune were started on 15 August, 1978. While the internet edition of The Tribune was started on July 1998, the same was followed for the rest two dailies on 16 August, 2010. The Tribune is actually managed by The Tribune Trust, under the guidance of Mr. Raj Chengappa. Though The Tribune commenced its journey from Lahore, Pakistan before independence, now it is considered as a completely Indian daily, published from Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Bathinda (districts of Punjab), New Delhi and Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir). Apart from the folio pages like ‘Punjab’, ‘Doaba / Majha’, ‘Haryana’, ‘Jammu and Kashmir’, ‘Himachal Pradesh’, ‘Nation’, ‘Business’, ‘News’, ‘Opinion’ and ‘Sports’, this English daily contains a regular folio named ‘Science & Communication’ and ‘Wellness’. This is a very important part of this newspaper as it covers extensively many scientific developments across the world. The list of the subject is also varied. Technological developments, physical problems of human beings and the solutions, medical problems, diagnosis of several dreadful diseases – all are covered here extensively. The

readers also like this section as they come to know a lot about scientific things. This is how The Tribune plays an important role in delivering scientific knowledge to its readers.

Here I have given a number of scientific articles and their details provided by The Tribune. A month long study has been conducted and the outcome is as follows:

May 6, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **Bask in sun to beat Vitamin D deficiency** by Kuldeep Chauhan, TNS

Gist: Hill people need to roam in sun in order to gain Vitamin D, as they are less exposed to the Sun compared to the people of plains. Deficiency of the Vitamin D causes muscular, skeletal and mental disorders. It can also cause rickets and there is a possibility of breast, colon and rectum cancer if anyone lacks Vitamin D in his / her body.

May 30, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **Real-time studies needed to slowdown melting of glaciers: Chief Secy** by TNS

Gist: The scientists, researchers and administrators expressed their deep concern over natural change, climatic behaviour and the receding glaciers. They also stated the need to establish effective management to save the lives of 800 million people, depended completely on the Himalayan river system.

Title: **GSI for control release of water from Geepang Gath lake** by Rakesh Lohumi, TNS

Gist: The glaciers at Geepang Gath are melting fast and it can wreak havoc in future, if landslide or cloudburst takes place there. The warning has been given by the experts from Geological Survey of India.

May 31, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **Scientists for coordinated research effort on glaciers**, TNS

Gist: The report stated about the need and importance of effective networking of institutions regarding research on climate change, reaction of glaciers and the Himalayan river system.

Basically, it reported on a workshop on ‘Snow, Glaciers and the Himalayan River System’, organized by the State Centre for Climate Change at Shimla.

Coincidentally, the cloudburst and landslides took place few days after at Uttarakhand and caused havoc. More than 5000 people, mostly tourists as well as pilgrims lost their lives, a number of tourist places including Kedarnath Temple, Badrinath Dham were completely destroyed by the Himalayan Tsunami. The rescue operation is still on.

June 5, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 12:

Title: **Smoking a leading cause of preventable death** by Dr. Harinder Singh Bedi

Gist: Smoking causes cancer and other deadly diseases. Smoking is held responsible for killing one in ten adults globally. Almost six million people lost their lives due to smoking across the globe each year, and more than six lakh people die due to second hand or passive smoking every year. Smoking reduces a person’s life by fourteen years or more. It also causes a smoker to expense thousands of rupees per year which ultimately gives back nothing positive but a hazardous and painful climax.

Title: **Is acupuncture a research-proven treatment?** – ANI

Gist: Opposing views have been reported by the researchers regarding the use of acupuncture to get relief from pain.

Title: **4 lifestyle changes could protect heart, reduce death risk** – ANI

Gist: To reduce abnormal death risk, one should do regular exercise, maintain normal weight, avoid smoking and take Mediterranean diet regularly.

Title: **Vinegar test lowers cervical cancer deaths** – ANI

Gist: Researchers and experts opined that vinegar test can be practised in underdeveloped nations to detect cancer.

Title: **How to protect your kids’ eyes from too much sun exposure** – ANI

Gist: The Sun's UVA and UVB rays are detrimental for skin. Guardians try their best to protect their children's skin by using sunscreen lotions, but they also should take care of their kids' eyes as over exposure to sun light can cause damage to retina and aging of lens. Using of sunglasses is necessary for those who would be in sun for twenty minutes or more.

Title: **New treatment could cut down insulin injections for diabetics** – ANI

Gist: New discoveries have been made by some scientists which underlines a decreasing need of injecting insulin for the diabetic patients, if the disease gets detected earlier.

Title: **The pimples problem of teenagers** by Dr. Harsh Sharma

Gist: Hormonal changes in body, stress and complex life style are the main causes of acne. Consuming junk foods, using market based cosmetic products can aggravate the pimple problem. Eating of fruits and vegetables, drinking plain water can reduce the problem. Homeopathy treatment can be proved beneficial in this regard.

June 6, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **Forest Dept ties up with National Remote Sensing Centre** by Rakesh Lohumi, TNS

Gist: The Himachal Pradesh forest department tied up with the NRSC for using the remote sensing technology in order to monitor the forest wealth, water resources and land use planning.

June 7, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 12:

Title: **A 'devil' who cracked the dementia code** by David McNeill

Gist: Ryuta Kawashima, a Japanese neuroscientist discovered brain puzzle series which would help to keep memories strong in the old ages also. Children of Japan are very much fond of this. Dementia, the loss of memory is an alarming disease among the aged people in the United States and also in many European countries including United Kingdom. If this puzzle games of Kawashima would be introduced at full fledge there, the aged people can lead a better healthy life.

June 11, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **Rose without thorns developed by Himalayan institute** by Lalit Mohan, TNS

Gist: Researchers and scientists from the Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (IHBT), a CSIR center at Palampur, Himachal Pradesh have cultivated red roses without thorns. It is for the first time in Himachal and the IHBT is taking the patent for the same. This is a unique scientific development indeed. The scientists also had developed pink rose without thorns.

June 14, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 12:

Title: **Study shows dangers of chemical used in plastic packaging** by Steve Connor, The Independent

Gist: A chemical product namely Bisphenol A (BPA) can affect the brain work. It is widely used in plastic packaging and lining of drinks. Though it has been applied on the laboratory rats, some scientists claim that whether it would effect in the same way on human beings or not. The application of BPA on some pregnant rats showed some changes in their sex specific behaviour. It has been also reported that BPA can interfere with female hormones. It is found in minimum quantities in most people.

June 17, 2013, Jalandhar edition, page 10:

Title: **A small, but 'fruitful' innovation!** by Man Mohan, Roving Editor

Gist: The shelf life of fruits and vegetables can become longer through the uses of 'Fruwash', a biodegradable emulsion. It has been reported that if the fruits and vegetables are washed with 'Fruwash', then their purity and freshness can become longer from three days to six weeks even without refrigeration. Even we do not have to sprinkle water on the fruits and vegetables if they are once washed with 'Fruwash'. This is undoubtedly a remarkable event.

Conclusion:

A month long study of The Tribune regarding its coverage on science communication has revealed that the newspaper attempts its best to make the readers aware about various scientific developments starting from agriculture, environment, health, medical and other issues. People

also come to know about varied topics other than political news which helps them a lot to get educated on different subjects. This is the significance of science communication and this newspaper has been playing a brilliant role in this regard. Hope the newspaper would continue its role in delivering the science related news in its future edition also. It is certainly a remarkable attempt on the part of the newspaper to make the society advanced through knowledge and later through applications.

References:

1. Kuldeep Chauhan, TNS, “Bask in sun to beat Vitamin D deficiency”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, May 6, 2013, p. 10.
2. TNS, “Real-time studies needed to slowdown melting of glaciers: Chief Secy”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, May 30, 2013, p. 10.
3. Rakesh Lohumi, TNS, “GSI for control release of water from Geepang Gath lake”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, May 30, 2013, p. 10.
4. TNS, “Scientists for coordinated research effort on glaciers”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, May 31, 2013, p. 10.
5. Dr. Harinder Singh Bedi, “Smoking a leading cause of preventable death”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
6. ANI, “Is acupuncture a research-proven treatment?”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
7. ANI, “4 lifestyle changes could protect heart, reduce death risk”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
8. ANI, “Vinegar test lowers cervical cancer deaths”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
9. ANI, “How to protect your kids’ eyes from too much sun exposure”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.

10. ANI, “New treatment could cut down insulin injections for diabetics”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
11. Dr. Harsh Sharma, “The pimples problem of teenagers”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 5, 2013, p. 12.
12. Rakesh Lohumi, TNS, “Forest Dept ties up with National Remote Sensing Centre”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 6, 2013, p. 10.
13. David McNeill, “A ‘devil’ who cracked the dementia code”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 7, 2013, p. 12.
14. Lalit Mohan, TNS, “Rose without thorns developed by Himalayan institute”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 11, 2013, p. 10.
15. Steve Connor, The Independent, “Study shows dangers of chemical used in plastic packaging”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 14, 2013, p. 12.
16. Man Mohan, Roving Editor, “A small, but ‘fruitful’ innovation!”, *The Tribune*, Jalandhar edition, June 17, 2013, p. 10.