

DOES DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION FOSTER FEMINIST CONTEMPTATIONS ?

Babli Hooda

pursuing M Phil in Mass Communication

from Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana, India

E mail: bablihooda@rediffmail.com

&

Prem Singh

pursuing M Phil in Mass Communication

from Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana, India

Abstract: This paper aims to study the inter-relationship between Feminist thought and development communication. The second point of study in the complex structure of support these two different disciplines receiving in varieties form in mass media. Conclusion of the study is based on content theorization of two national dailies Milap and Nai Duniya. The content study deals with six months' editions. Contents of advertisements are not included in the data pool. Contents of newspaper were residualized accordingly to the feminist perspective. Here, feminist approaches represents both physical and psychological state of emancipation, empowerment and on the other hand humiliation too. Thus present study will purely conclude according to the above said facts and relationship between these two different disciplines that feminism and development communication.

Keywords: *Feminist, content, emancipation, physical, psychological.*

The most significant and longest social movement continuing is movement for emancipation of women. However, the primary goal for women empowerment is to improve the quality of life of women but it has also deep ramifications in social, economic and political scenario of body polity. The media through its reach to people at large has been instrumental though not to the extent desired in supporting the movement for women emancipation by focusing neglect and marginalization of the position of the women in It sounds intriguing how from a highly dignified position in India's mythic history, the woman in India has been relegated to a secondary position. The vested interests of the ruling elite and the male lobby influenced by alien cultures legitimized woman as an individual of little consequence. It would be a sad commentary on the subordinate role of women in India when woman is ideally viewed as Shakti (Power), the origin of power itself but in reality found as helpless, hapless woman without any identity except that of a wife, or the mother who has very little voice in decision making and has very little by way of her own basic choice. Although discrimination against and exploitation of women are global phenomena, their consequences are more tragic in the some parts of the globe particularly in under developed countries where, ignorance, deprivation of the basic necessities of life, and the ever-growing pressure of transition from tradition to modernity- all combine to aggravate the inequalities that women suffer to a point at which their existence is reduced to a continuous battle for survival. Improving the status of women is regarded as the key to narrowing the gender gap and achieving a better quality of life. Women are under great social control and scrutiny which has restricted what they can say and where and to whom. Cultural moves in almost every social set-up determine women's socialization in no certain terms. This has an important bearing on their ability to communicate and to discuss women empowerment it is necessary to deal with the present situation of women in India.

The purpose of this paper is to use feminist contemplation as the model to scrutinize efforts in development communication. The focus of this paper is to examine by content analysis the feminist considerations within the implementation of communication for development. In recent

years development communication has attracted attention in both the theoretical and practical aspects. Efforts have been made to theorize, analyze and define the underlying theoretical assumptions of different approaches in development communication. There is, yet, one aspect that remains underexplored in development communication paradigm: feminism. Facets of feministic uncomplicatedness centers on gender issues in development communication. Given women's unique position in the overlapping of work and family, a feminist perspective of development communication recognizes women's unique position in development by addressing issues such as gender inequality in employment, economic oppression, and child rearing, to name just a few. Feminist sees the process of development as a political struggle for identity formation. Here in this research paper, development communication is used as mediated content and dialogue for connection and empowerment. The nature of both feminism and development communication is essentially transformative and emancipative, a more bottom up awareness support system. As an individual is crucial and center node of decision making, development communication centers on upliftment of marginalized groups and it is to manipulate and transforms individuals from within by changing ideology and cognitive psychology. An uplifted individual dynamically and communally participates in development processes. Development communication acts upon knowledge and information to achieve engaged understanding in communal form. A very similar goal is centralized by feminists but as critical analysis to women position in society and their role in development. Many feminist scholars recognize that everyday women's participation in the process of communication is essential. Involvement by the women to state their opinions in the institutions and systems that govern their lives is not only for recognition that participation is a basic human right, but also for a redistribution of political power in favor of disadvantaged groups. Involvement in decision-making is primarily about confronting the hegemonic structures of power--locally, nationally and globally (Sheth, 1997). It is a political action, a political struggle, a struggle that is not only among states, but also among people. Kothari notes that a major problem associated with development is to underplay politics. This tendency towards depolitization has led to bureaucratization and technocratization of the development process. She further notes that communications is not taken as informatics but as politics on issues of empowerment. Feminist scholars also urge to embrace politics as the art of living together in this world. Phelan (1989) states that "if we are to be free, we must learn to embrace paradox and confusion; in short, we must embrace politics". If politics is

unavoidable, then an appreciation of politics will set us free, from domination and repression. Phelan advocates a feminism that addresses issues of lesbianism by urging lesbian feminists to “grasp the means of production of truth and to claim the status of truth-speakers”.

Development communication arises as an alternative to the top-down development approach, and conventional modernization archetype. The development paradigm appreciates, respect and recognize involvement in development and decision making process as a basic human right, the right to think, expresses oneself. individual’s right to empowerment and emancipation is the base of all intents and purposes of development communication . The above-mentioned demand of all rights for women also funded feminism. Among the central concepts in feminism, empowerment has been the most regularly discussed issue, which directly influences the position of a woman in family and society. For many feminist theorists, the main purpose of feminism is for empowerment. Feminism stand between social and political movements aiming to bring justice into society, and empowerment concerns itself with the transformation of individual and social consciousness, which is the prerequisite for political actions. Is set the following two objective of study underhand based on the feminist media theory that media is giving its unconditional support and focus on analyzing gender as a mechanism that structure material and symbolic world and its experiences of them. In addition, the similarity in the objectives of two different streams that feminism and development communication which advocated the empowerment of downtrodden and vulnerable classes simultaneously the differences of theoretical and practical approaches:

Objectives of the study:

- 1 This study examines the interrelationship among feminist contemplative issues and development communication issues for women empowerment.
- 2 The second purpose of this study is scrutinizing the complex structure of support, these two different disciplines receiving in varieties of form in mass media.

Empowerment is the opposite of appropriation as defined by Said, as the means by which the experiences of the colonized are interpreted by a more dominant group to sustain a particular

representation or view of the “other” as part of an ideological stance. Empowerment is to fuel a person with the ability to see unequal power relations, to analyze the situation and to initiate actions to bring changes into society. Empowerment is to say your say. Thus, communication could play a significant role in the struggle for empowerment and justice.

Empowerment in this research paper is a focus of a vision and concept of energy, capacity, and potential for self-definition. Empowerment is itself about power. The power of self - definition is dissimilar to power of domination, self-actualization and self-determination. In usual terms, power of domination is limited to some group and communities as compared to oppressed one by means of force and illegal way. Under the vision of empowerment as energy and capacity, the sole objective is to increase the power of all actors and not to bind the power only few groups and sectors. It is the power generated from the inner self of the people, from people’s self-consciousness. Communication is the means for empowerment. Communication provides a channel for resistance and silenced voices to be heard. It can come in numerous forms, in the course of discussion, symbols, songs and stories. As long as there is a possibility for voices to be heard, there is the chance for righteousness and empowerment.

The transformation of a society starts at the transformation at the individual level. The essence of development communication actually comprises transformations at the individual level, followed by transformations at the communal and societal level, and followed by transformations at the political level. In the process of development, communication has three functions. First, participants in development learn about new knowledge and practices. Here, communication is the means for learning, which is, in fact, a reciprocal process. Development agencies learning from the people and the people learn from the development agencies, and people also learn from each other. Second, the redefinition and change of the self is achieved in development communication. Paulo Freire called this process as conscientization. He developed the concept of conscientization as part of his literacy pedagogy. Conscientization is the process by which an individual becomes aware of the self and becomes capable of critically assessing oneself positions relative to the surrounding social and political environment. Conscientization also enables individuals to make decisions that affect their lives and empowers individuals to act upon those decisions. Education is not just for the transmission of ideas and skills but also for

empowerment. Communication serves the same role as education, as a vehicle for empowerment to transform individuals from within and enable individuals to come to the self-realization that they can actively participate in the development process, which will profoundly affect their lives.

Third, communication is the manner in itself for associations to be established among persons and in the middle of communities for a better viewpoint. The connectedness is the human provision under which transformed individuals go ahead of the self and establish social or political associations with other persons. The self-awareness and self-realization is further shatterproof in this socializing progression. A feminist pragmatism of participatory communication is helpful in addressing the gender issues in development. The subordinate positions of women in development and efforts made by women to change their subordinate conditions are well documented

In the 1970s, there was a world-wide arousing that women had been debarred from the expansion projects in the Third World as the development community began to understand that the 'trickle down' approach to development had not been successful. Feminists signaled the genesis of the Women in Development (WID) approach by stressing women's exclusion and invisibility from the development. The WID approach therefore advocated that women ought to be treated on equivalent stipulations in the company of men. Based on WID approach of feminism I set hypothesis first.

Hypotheses 1: development communication practices for women empowerment are influenced by WID stream of feminism.

Meanwhile, by the second half of the 1970s, the Women and Development (WAD) approach, tentatively influenced by Marxist-feminists, raised a quantity of questions on the subject of the WID approach. According to the WAD exemplar, though women have constantly contributed to the development route, it was the enslavement of the Third World on the rich countries of the world that was in charge for the exclusion of poor women from development.

Hypothesis 2: development communication is upholding the genesis of WAD feminists.

In the mid-1980s, WID shifted its primary discourse from equity to anti-poverty to efficiency. This resulted in the basic needs approach to development with a prominence on income-generation strategies and skills development for women. The underpinning of the efficiency discourse was to promote economic augmentation through a well-organized use of women's labour. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach is at this time the prime discourse that informs development policies and programmes. GAD aims to not only integrate women into development, but to look for the prospective in development initiatives to transform imbalanced social/gender relations and to empower women. According to Foran, all the above three approaches do not take culture effectively into contemplation. Building on Raymond Williams' concept of culture as lived understanding, she asserts that a Woman, Culture and Development (WCD) lens brings about women's agency into the fore and enables a better understanding about how inequalities are reproduced and challenged. A WCD perspective that would combine culture with development, encircling the day after day experiences of Third World women, would endow with a better understanding of how transformative development takes shape.

With regard to the impact of technologies on women, there has been a tendency on the part of governments and development agencies to treat technologies as neutral, value-free, without taking into account the social, environmental and economic effects of the technology being introduced. A common assumption with respect to technology is that the simple existence of technology itself will advance competence and will thus fetch empowerment and reimbursement to the women.

According to Gurumurthy (2004), this focus on competence and capability compromises concerns related to equity. In any case, social equity requires assurance to women's equal opportunity. Therefore, women's equality needs to be integrated as a cornerstone of any development and communication strategy. The various international organizations had stressed the significance of integrating women equality considerations into policy, programmes, and projects at all levels to promote the social, economic, and political empowerment of women.

While further more researches are necessary, currently available evidence indicates that when women do have access to information and communication, they can substantially improve their

life, and enhance their earnings. Development communication can provide women with skills, training, and market information for their small-scale enterprises. For example, information on reproductive health can contribute to women's economic activities by improving health and decreasing the number of children, thereby improving their income-earning ability. And yet there is recognition of the fact that despite the new opportunities there is need to be cautiously optimistic. For the digital or knowledge society divide is especially sensitive with respect to women. As stated at the Women's Forum at the Global Knowledge II Conference at Kuala Lumpur, 2000, the digital divide is not just an issue of the polarization of the information rich vs. the information poor- it is also a divide between women and men everywhere. While the beneficiaries tend to be the young, urban-based, English speaking Internet users who are also overwhelmingly male, majority of women live in rural areas where connectivity is rare or even non-existent.

Since the early 1990s there has evolved a sustained critique of above said approaches of feminism. 'Postfeminism', as it is commonly known, claims that 'no singular perspective on feminism can speak for women across the multiple differences of class and race' (Ouellette). Although post feminism has become a theoretical endeavour, its origin is to be found in a more popular perception of 'women in power' fuelled by the 1980s media (Faludi 1992; Wolf 1993; Gamble 2001). In a more hostile manner, however, postfeminism display a tendency to blame women because the revolution promised by the second wave feminist has not been completed and not yet happened. In stark contrast to the gender equality aims of earlier feminism, postfeminists assume that equality has been more or less achieved and women are no longer victimized by patriarchal order. Natasha Walter, for example, confidently claims that everywhere you look, you see individual women who are freer and more powerful than women have ever been before.

Postfeminists are sometime referred to as popular feminism because its confident swagger is appealing to public and media interest alike. Moreover, postfeminism is about pandering to mainstream, commercial culture. Most suitable practice of postfeminism is that today, young girls and women are linking fashion with power rather than powerlessness. The rhetoric of young female associates their bright clothes with women power. Women power according to postfeminism is evident in television serials. Post feminism see gender identities as less fixed

and stressed on personal and individual empowering and achievement .The third hypothesis is also based on this assumption of postfeminism.

Hypothesis 3: development communication supporting postfeminism assumption of personal achievement and achieved gender equality.

Method

This study is on the content analysis of two national dailies, these are Milap and Nai Dhunia. Six months editions of both national dailies are included in the study. The content theorization includes two steps of news analysis. The in first step news of development communication were filtered and than in second step news from feminist perspective were tabulated among the filtered news of development communication. Surprisingly, we got only 642 news and stories of development communication, this below the average as compared to the total sum of news in six months of both national dailies. Outcome about the news of feminist perspective was not as below par as we got about 305 news of feminist aspects, which is nearer to average of total number of news in development news category.

Measures: following variables were residualized to test the feminist model in development communication. These, exogenous different variables support diverse approaches of feminism.

Table – 1 Variables used in the study

Variable	Feminist Approach
Empowerment	WID
Self - Capability	WID
Self – expression	Postfeminism
Self – intention	Correlation between three approaches
Action against exploitation	WAD
Motivation to lead others	Postfeminism
Hold on self – earning	WAD

Empowerment and self-capability: these two variables contribute to the philosophy of WID that women are continuously involved in development because of their self-skills and capability.

Self- expression and Motivation to lead others: these are the real artifact of postfeminism ideology that by individual success supremacy over others can be achieve, in other words, women are no more victims of patriarchal order and they are now motivating others in same success terms.

Action against exploitation and Hold on self-earning: these two attributes are added to convey the message of Indian WAD philosophy, which is on many aspects liberal in ideological practices.

Self – intention to empower and equality: this variable is the common critical tenet of all three feminist ideologies included in this study. This is included in variables to conclude whether like interlinking feminist thoughts, different theories of development communication are also interlinking somewhere.

Statistical analysis: a series of analytic steps were taken to test the hypothesis and to answer the objectives of the study. First, a simple percentage method was employed to make a comparative conclusion. Then correlation was computed among the seven variables used. A logistic bivariate regression was used to answer predicted relation among variables and three hypotheses.

Results:

Result of content analysis:

Figure 1. is based on the simple percentage method. Figure 1 depict that lowest value is for motivation to lead others. This means that number of news related to this variable are fewest. This variable is supporting Hypothesis 3, Second variable that support hypothesis 3 is self- expression which comprised of second highest of news (20%) among all seven variables. Sum of percentage of these two variables significantly support hypothesis this

development communication is supporting post feminism assumption of personal achievement and achieved gender equality.

Hypothesis 1. got two maximum supports by percentage method. As two variables empowerment and self - capability received maximum number of new stories. News of

Figure 1, percentage of news



Empowerment has maximum value (32%). Second variable that support hypothesis 1. has percentage value (15%). These values support hypothesis that development communication practices for women issues are influenced by WID stream of feminism. Two values for held on self- earning and action against exploitation have respective values of percentage as (11%) and (13%). These values show least support to hypothesis 2. as there two variables are construct of hypothesis 2, that development communication is upholding the genesis of WAD feminist. Correlation was computed to test this hypothesis separately and values are depicted in table 2.

The percentage value of construct, self -intention to empowerment and equality got 16% news which is third highest among the values of percentage for different variables. This value is low but significant when compared to the highest values. This is an interlinking variable used to depict the association among different variable. The predicted observation is that the different theories of feminism and development communication are inter linked somewhere. This observation is support by the construct’s value. This is also support by the correlation values as shown in table 2. and explained below.

In order to assess the associations between variables, correlations among all seven variables were computed and are shown in table 2. Action against exploitation shows moderate to high association with empowerment, self – capability, and motivation to lead others. Measure for WAD shows low but significant positive correlation with empowerment, self-expression and self- capability and higher correlation with motivation to lead others and hold on self- earning.

Table 2, correlation between variables

	Empowerment	Self-expression	Self-capability	Action against exploitation	Motivation to lead others	Hold on self earning
1empowerment	—					
2Self-expression	.50**	—				
3 self-capability	.61**	.46**	—			
4 action against exploitation	.67**	.39**	.52**	—		
5 motivation to lead others	.33**	.22**	.30**	.26**	—	
6 hold on self-earning	.20**	.21**	.19**	.19**	.32**	—
7 self-intention to empowerment & equality	-.00	-.02	.01	-.03	.20**	.35**

Note; n=305, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Self-intention to empowerment and equality was not significantly correlated with any of the four variables, but it was positively and significantly correlated with motivation to lead others. These results shows that hold on self-earning is associated with motivation to lead others($r=.32, p<.01$). Self-intention to empowerment and equality is positively associated with action against exploitation($r=.19, p<.01$). Similarly, it is positively correlated with self- expression($r=.21, p<.01$), with empowerment($r=.20, p<.01$), and with self-capability($r=.19, p<.01$); yet these correlations were not significantly different from each other. A logistic bivariate regression showed that a one point increase in hold on self-earning was associated with a 56% increase in the odds of hold on self-earning (OR=1.56, SE=0.21, $p<.01$, pseudo $R^2=.04$). This result provides support to the hypotheses 2 that development communication is upholding the genesis of WAD feminists.

Discussion and conclusion

The overall results and analysis supports all three hypothetical statements and one extra predicted observation about the presence of women issues and their interrelationship. Hypothesis first got the maximum supports and other two that H2; H3 got significant number of news in development communication. We are based on this study concluded that Indian development communication strategy in suitably supporting the feministic contemplations. This support is become diffused in nature when studied according to the different feminists theories. Either one or two tenets of different approaches of feminism simultaneously founding support in development news stories (on basis of findings of present study). We are not in position to say that what kind of feminist wave is particularly supported by development communication. Yet, we can certainly assume that issues of feminism are not facing any discrimination in development communication. This is concluded because all three waves of feminism more or less found support in this study. They are different waves but centrally all three are feministic contemplations. Thus, it is pointed out that development communication is rightly and logically upholding the demand of feminism whether these are economic, social and issues of psychological development. Yet, it is said that development communication is strongly supporting women in development approach (WID) and in process of adopting post feminists

ideology.. It is supporting issues of women raised by feminism in 1980s to till date issues of achieved equality of post feminism.

The present study starts with two objectives:

- 1 To study the inter relationship between feminist thought and development communication.
- 2 To scrutinize the complex structure of support, these two different disciplines receiving in varieties of form in mass media.

The first objective of the study that study of interrelationship among feminist thought and development communication, both disciplines shows a positive relationship.

Development communication is supporting feminism's issues in unconditional terms. On the other hand, feminist critique are strongly advocated the theories of development communication, the goal of these theories are the upliftment of 'have not's and repressed classes and races. Feminism is on the hold of that the each person will be included in decision making of policies and thus all individual has equal rights and have must contribute to development.

The present study shows different finding to the second objective of analysis of complex structure of support, these two streams of thoughts receiving in varieties of form in mass media. During the course of study, we came on the point that mass media is showing a favoritism to feminism. During the process of collection of content and news of development communication and news in regards of women issues, it became clear that there is a huge disparity in coverage of news related to both categories'. Mass media is giving a very low attention to the news of developmental stories.

As compared to the low coverage of development news, there is a sustainable prominence of news of women. On each page or on alternative page, we found presence of content related to women. It is either an empowerment story or a story of women exploitation, harassment, and crime against women. The presence of women also found in advertisement. It can be say that in print media, here, there and anywhere women are

certainly figured. Women figured not only in regards of dignity. Stories of crime against women are in maximum number and stories of women achievement can be easily counted. Mass media intentionally or unintentionally is giving its unconditional focus to women issues. Thus, the feminist media theory got support in this study that says that media is analyzing gender as a mechanism that structure material and symbolic world and media is providing its unconditional focus to women experiences of achievement. A further research should be taken on the findings of this study that why are media relegating development news and giving prominence to women issues. A comparative study about the correlation between construct of emancipation and construct of women exploitation with role of media should also carried out the ground provided by this study. A qualitative research, which will raise questions about the supporting and relegating attitudes of media, should be interesting. A survey research based on different classification of women audiences with critical aim to find answer to the media politics of construction of mediated image and personality with its monopoly on communication sources will be worth- finding. A two tiers research plan, at first step content analysis can cultivate finding and on basis of these, finding survey research can be conducted among both man and women. This should be scholastic.

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