

MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Payel Sen Choudhury

Lecturer, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,

New Alipore College, Kolkata, India

Email: payelsen@gmail.com

Abstract: *Communication is used for more than just passing on information from one person to another. It is often used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in developmental activities. Such form of communication is known as development communication. According to Everett Rogers “Development communication refers to the uses to which communication are put in order to further development.” It can thus be said to be an approach to communication which provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives. Development communication has two primary roles, i.e. Transforming role, as it steps social change in the direction of the hygiene taste of today’s generation in this competitive market and a socializing role by seeking to maintain some of the established values of the society.*

Media plays an important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forum for discussion of issues, teach ideas, skills for a better life and create a base of consensus for stability of the state . From the early stages of the introduction of the media in India various attempts were made to exploit their potential for development purposes. The history of development communication in India can be traced to 1940’s when radio broadcast was done in different languages to promote development communication through various programmes, like—Programs for Rural Audience, Educational Programs and Family Welfare Programs. Today television in our country is also used as a medium for social education, weapon against ignorance and awareness among the people, through is difference programs like Educational Television (ETV), Countrywide Classroom (CWC), Teleconferencing etc. Experiments in Satellite technology has been conducted in recent years

to bring about Social change and development. This has been done in the form of SITE Program and Kheda Communication Projects.

New Technologies have also been put to serious use for development communication. New technologies like mobile, website and internet are interactive in nature. Interactivity, instant feedback and persuasion capability are used to rope in common person into the process of development. Today government has different websites and call centers that provide instant information or answers queries to questions of development.

Right from its inception, development communication has been pursued by all kinds of media, both traditional and new. However, sadly enough, it had been put into more theoretical use. Its possibilities, people's change of demand and opportunities have not been d to its limit to get an overall success. Both the strength and weakness of the media and the message and access of people to these medium should be considered to achieve success in real sense and not only in pen and paper.

Key words: *development, communication, mass media, satellite technology, new media, government projects.*

Introduction

Communication is a two way process where messages flow both ways. Communication also refers to that use of different forms of media, such as print, electronic media (radio, television), new media etc. These media are used as an empowerment tool, i.e. it is used as a tool to facilitate and encourage the participation of people in developmental activities. Different mass media is used to effectively communicate knowledge and information to people for developmental purpose.

The term 'Development Communication' can be divided into two terms, i.e.— *Communication and Development*. Here *communication* refers to the use of different types and media in the context of development. It is also used to mean sharing of information and experience to accelerate development. Whereas *development* refers to the change of society for betterment. It can be both social and economic change for improvement or progress.

Thus when we refer to *development communication*, it is about such communication that can be used for development. It is about using communication to change or improve the way of living of the citizen of a country. Here we use different types of messages to change the socio-economic condition of people. These messages are designed to transform the behaviour of people or for improving their quality of life. Therefore, development communication can be defined as the use of communication to promote development.

Mass communication expert Everett M. Rogers defined development communication as “It refers to the uses to which communication is put in order to further development. Such applications are intended to either further develop in a general way, such as by increasing the level of the mass media exposure among the nation's citizen, in order to create a favourable climate for development, or to support a specific definite program or project”. In the above mentioned definition Rogers said that for the development of community; the community will create an environment or climate for development. This climate will be of two types — a) physical climate and b) psychological climate.

F. Rosario Braid on the other hand is of the opinion that development communication is “*an element of the management process in the overall planning and implementation of the developmental programs*” Thus, development communication can be said to be an identification and proper utilization of appropriate expertise in the development process that will assist in increasing the participation of the people for whom it is meant, even if it is at the grass root level.

Development communication thus can be said to have two primary *roles*, i.e., (a) *transforming role*, as it seeks social changes for a higher quality of life. (b) *Socializing role*, by seeking to maintain some of the established values of the society. The *role* can be discussed as following:

- A) Development communication is used for *transforming role* by bringing in social change in a way that will bring a higher quality of life. Here communication acts as an instrument to achieve these objectives.
- B) Development communication also tries to maintain the established values of the society by playing a *socializing role*. In playing these roles, development communication seeks to create an atmosphere for change as well as providing innovation through which society may change.

Development communication process is however successful only with the presence of a few key elements in the approach. These are:

It should be responsive, should wing on feedback, should be innovative and creative, should be sustainable and continuous, independent validation

For a successful development communication policy it is necessary to identify the core areas of development. The *core areas* of development are Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Food, Security, Communication, Irrigation, Public works, Employment, Environment, Ecology and Education.

Use of technology in Development Communication

Mass media and technology should be extensively and tactfully used for development purpose. It should be kept in mind that it is a weapon in the hands of the government for positive developmental purpose. When the media is used for developmental purpose, develop communicator has to keep in mind that the usage should be extensive. And for this purpose the mass media structure should be planned and efforts should be made to reach out to maximum number of people every time. Daniel Lerner in 1958, while discussing the relation of development with that of any mass media said that: “the greater the communication facilities, the greater or even faster is modernization.”

According to Wilbur Schramm, the role of media in development can be divided into three parts i.e. (i) to inform (ii) to instruct and (iii) to participate.

To inform: for the development of the society, correct social, political and economic influence is the main criteria. This information should be both national and international. People should be aware of the areas or facts which hamper the development process.

To instruct: Mass literacy is an essential criteria to development. This is possible by imbibing basic skills among the people. Mass media plays an important role in this. Mass media can instruct people and educate them. Projects like Educational Television and Gyan Darshan are few such examples where media is used to instruct people, educate them and teach them basic skills. These basic skills help people to develop their standard of living.

To participate: Voluntary and steady participation of the citizen of the country is necessary for its overall development. Such participation is possible in a liberal society. Such awareness is possible through debate, conflict and discussion. Discussions and debate helps people to know current issues, participate in developmental programme and bring a change in the standard of living of the society.

Media in developing and under developed countries strive to bring in developmental change, through its message to the mass. Mass media through interpretation, analysis and discussion point out the drawbacks of the society and core areas of development. The message should be such that it should create an urge for change and development among the common men. The media in its aim to developmental changes shall function as a decision maker and teacher.

D. Lerner, while discussing the role of radio (as a medium of mass communication) said that the emergence of radio in different villages and town not only help to educate people, but at the same time bring in consumerism in that place. Consumer arouse wish to own a radio, due to which the people work harder and usher in better standard of living (a form of development). Radio programmes help to educate people about different social issues like farming, agriculture, health, small scale industry etc. Radio forums are a weapon for radio programme producers to involve people in developmental projects. Here use is made of Telecentre where communities gather to phone in. Discussions on difference topics are done as well as queries by expert are answered.

Television as a mass medium has a huge appeal to common person. For such reason, television is used in a planned manner to motivate people to participate in developmental programs. Feature, documentaries or development campaigns should be such that it creates interest in the mind of viewers, contents should be contemporary to attract people of all ages and should be capable of influencing viewers to take part in the developmental programs.

Wilbur Schramm in his book Mass Media and National Development discussed the role mass media play in development communication while Lerner and others saw all of the media outputs as having modernising effect. For Schramm it was their content that was the key to their use in development. Schramm has put a lot of importance on feed back for successful communication for development. Because a proper feed back helps implementation to findings whether or not the community is meeting their purpose or aim. According to him, it should never be a one way traffic. Modern communication technologies, according to him, would be of great use to meet the demand by multiplying the messages and reaching each and every worker associated with developmental work.

Use of mass media for development—Indian overview

The history of organised development communication in India can be traced to rural radio broadcast in the 1940's. Independent India's earliest organised experiments in development communication started with communication development projects initiated by the union government in the 1950's. Different medium was used in the following manner for development purpose:

NEWSPAPER as a medium of Development Communication: The power of the press arises from its ability of appealing to the minds of the people and being capable of moving their hearts. However, it has been noticed that the press has not met the requisite interest in developmental communication. In order to correct the imbalances noticed in the media coverage of Rural Development Programs and to ensure that these program are portrayed in proper perspective, several steps are taken to sensitize the media about issues relating to rural development.

The Ministry on a regular basis interacts with the Press mainly through the Press Information Bureau (PIB). Review press conference, press tours and workshops are organised through PIB, with the financial assistance from the Ministry, so as to sensitize press persons about Rural Development Program. For the purpose of creating awareness in respect of rural develop programs among the general public and opinion makers and for disseminating information about new initiatives, the Ministry issues advertisements at regular intervals in national and regional press through DAVP. To enable people in rural areas to access information on Rural Development Program a booklet 'Gram Vikas' Programs at a glance is brought out in regional languages.

RADIO as a means of development communication: Radio from its very inception played an important role in development communication; this is mainly due to its advantage of reaching to a large number of people from difference section of the society. Universities and other educational institutes' especially agricultural universities, through their extension networks and international organisations under the UN umbrella carried the development communication experiment. Community radio is another important medium which is growing in importance especially in rural India. Here, NGOs and educational institutions are given license to set up a local community radio station to broadcast information and messages on

developmental aspects. Participation of local community is encouraged. As community radio provides a platform to villager to broadcast local issues, it has the potential to get positive action.

Radio Rural Forum: All India Radio has been the forerunner in the process of implementing communication strategy adopted by the government. The Radio Rural Forum experiment of 1956, covered 156 villages. It contained 30 minute duration program two days a week on different issues like agriculture and varied subjects that could promote rural development. Efforts are being constantly made to use radio for social change. Apart from radio rural forum, other continuous efforts are being made to bring in development. As in the case of project taken up to promote adult literacy in the 1980s. More recently, NGOs have helped broadcast program on women and legal rights etc.

Local Service of AIR: On the basis of the Verghese Committee (1978) report which recommended a franchise system for promoting local radio for education and development. Several NGOs use local radio to further their development activities. For instance, Chetana of Kolkata records their program on adult education, in the field using local talents.

School Broadcast: Programs for school are broadcast from the metros and other centers of AIR. Many teachers make excellent broadcast through this platform. AIR draws up these programs on the advice of Consultative Panels for School Broadcast.

TELEVISION as a Medium for Development Communication: TV in India was introduced in 1959, on an experimental basis. Its very inception was with the aim to see what TV could achieve in community development and formal education. From this we can very well understand the importance of television for development communication. Today, after 50 years of Indian television, we see that broadcasters still broadcast program with an eye on social responsibility, serials that incorporate socially relevant themes, interactive talk shows and open forums with government representatives responding to audience queries are popular programmes. In 1967, Delhi Television centre launched Krishi Darshan Program at the behest of Dr. Bikram Sarabhai and Prof R. S. Swaminathan. The object of this program was popularisation of modern method in agriculture through the television.

TV has been used as an aid to satellite communication technology to effectively bring in development. Satellite communications technology offers unique capability of being able to reach out to very large numbers spread over large distances even in the most remote corners of the country. In India, ISRO has continuously pursued the utilization of space technology

for education and development. This has been done through different projects like Educational TV (ETV), SITE, Kheda project and Country wide classroom (CWC) project. Over a period of last 30 years, these programmes have been designed to cater to the country's need for education, training, and general awareness among the rural poor. Among them few efforts shall be discussed in the following categories. These are:

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE, 1975-76): This one year project was primarily undertaken to develop special development programmes through the satellite communication to six rural clusters, which included a total of 2330 villages of 20 districts spread over six states—Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Its objectives were:

1. Improve the rural primary education.
2. Provide training to teachers.
3. Improve agriculture, health, hygiene, and nutritional practices and
4. Contribute to family planning and national integration.

The success of SITE can be judged from the fact that, after the completion of the project evaluation studies showed that exposure to developmental messages through television had contributed to the widening of horizon of the villagers.

Kheda Communication Project (KCP, (1975-89): SITE demonstrated that the centralization, inherent in the technology of direct broadcasting, was a limitation, hence the idea of 'limited rebroadcast' was conceived, giving birth to the KCP. This project was launched in 1975. 607 community television sets have been installed in 443 villages of Kheda district of Gujrat. Doordarshan and space application centre produces programme for one hour everyday. The programmes mainly concentrate on and discussed the problem of the poorer classes. Evaluation of Kheda project revealed that women in particular gained knowledge from TV viewing. The serials generated self-confidence, realization of equality etc.

Educational Television (ETV): Education is a vital instrument of social transformation and important input in development effort. The Indian National Satellite (INSAT) is being used to provide Educational TV (ETV), services for primary school children in six states. University Grants Commission (UGC) is using this for its countrywide classroom programme on higher education (college sector). INSAT is also used by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for distance education programmes and Doordarshan for Science Channel programmes. To meet the needs of development ISRO has taken up the 'Tele-Education' by launching EDUSAT, a satellite totally dedicated to the nation's need for

education. EDUSAT strengthens education efforts by augmenting curriculum based teaching, providing effective teachers' training, and community participation. The networks are capable of facilitating live lectures/power point presentations with student interaction, web based learning, interactive training, virtual laboratory, video conferencing, data/video broadcast, database access for reference material/library/recorded lectures etc., on line examination and admissions, distribution of administrative information, etc.

NEW MEDIA as a medium of Development Communication: New media or computers started creeping in the Indian Society around 1986. The actual transition in India happened after 1996 when several independent media houses brought out news website. Today, new media has become an active tool in the run to development communication. This takes various forms like E-Governance, E-Choupal, Telecentres etc.

E-GOVERNANCE: In simple terms, electronic governance is the delivery of public services and information at the doorstep of the people with the help of computers. Citizens can use the Information Community Technology (ICT) as administrative tools to pave the way for a silent, social change. E-governance can play the role of a catalyst for sustainable inclusive growth. E-governance uses the ICT for planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programmes. Through e-governance, government can carry out effective Management Information System (MIS) and get real time information and reports of activities at the Block level. The Karnataka government's Bhoomi project has led to the computerisation of the centuries-old system of handwritten land records in the rural area.

E-medicine, through use of new media, can reach quality healthcare in a remote village. A Kolkata-based hospital leverages e-governance for tropical medicine. The hospital employs telemedicine to assist doctors in rural areas. This method does away with patients having to travel all the way to Kolkata, from remote villages, for treatment. A villager gets the benefit of being treated by both a local doctor and a specialist in the state capital.

E-CHOUPAL: Traditionally, choupal is known as the central gathering place in the village, a kind of rural forum, where people discuss, debate and decide on their course of action about some burning issues in the community. E-choupals in the digital age share information through the Internet while retaining their pristine, democratic character. The Internet has started revolutionising the way Indian farmers do business. The system constitutes an Internet

enabled kiosk in a village, manned by a villager. He is familiar with computers and known as the choupal sanchalak (one who conducts the forum). The sanchalak acts as the interface between the computer and the farmer. Farmers can use the kiosks to check the current market prices of agricultural commodities, access market data better farming practices. Initially apprehensive, farmers have slowly but steadily familiarised themselves with the new system. New Media's interactivity and easy access have made it a commendable medium for development communication.

Conclusion

Media Community expert Rostow, Lerner and Schramm discussed the importance of development communication in communication process. But how much effective have development communication been, is a question that arises in our mind. This is because, even after the omnipresence of media in our society; there is a vast difference between the rich and the poor in most developing countries.

According to experts the main obstruction in the path to development is that the scope of information is not available to everybody and that the development brought through development communication should be equally shared by all section of the society. Opening up of different mass media is necessary so that common people have easy access to them. Availability of information will open up new avenues of development.

In Indian context, mass-media expert functions in a manner as if development communication is a favour they are doing to common people. Development communication sadly is not given its due importance to a large and developing country like India. Politicians and bureaucrats still believe that different economical and infrastructural projects under taken by the government is enough to eradicate poverty. Development communicator of our country laid more stress on the projects undertaken by the government rather than communicating these information to the mass.

India, despite the communication and information technology revolution, there does not appear to be a commensurate change in the lives of millions of the poor. Indeed for the poor the promise of the new information age — knowledge for all- seems as a distant star.

With the advent of electronic media it was thought that the print media will lose its importance, and ultimately perish. But, this never happened. Print media with its features and advantages not only competed with electronic media but is still a favourite among many, specially the educated class who are info-holic, prefer interpretation and love reading in their leisure hours. However, print media has become highly commercialized, and social responsibility has taken a back seat. Today a key feature of print media, unfortunately, is the glossy reporting. With the increasing cost of news –print and production, and the pressure of market imperatives, news paper house has started and is following the trend of carrying ad-friendly fluff at the cost of more serious developmental reports. There have been trends of leading dailies over the past few years to drop their special sections devoted to development and health.

The government controlled media has been more or less toeing a centralized form of communication. AIR (All India Radio) during its initial days formulated its community policies in Delhi and got it translated to various languages for broadcasting. However, in this process it never looked into regional variations of the problems, and the necessity of customizing the messages was not felt. Hence, spending so much transmission time on such issues and messages could never give positive result.

Community radio, an important weapon to development has not been enough importance and popularity. Community radio can help in development of local area by upholding their problem or disseminating information locally. Steps have not been taken by the government to popularize this form of radio to support and influence communities to set up these. Rules have not properly been framed to regularise the contents of private channels. Plans should have been drawn in a manner to strictly promote development through radio channels which have not been done.

The state controlled television, Doordarshan, which has a very wide coverage area too has its program designed in the same fashion and hence suffer from the same affliction as that of radio. Here, programs are prepared without keeping the target audience in mind. Development communicator fails to prepare development messages and programmes that can inform as well as entertain its viewers. A good development communicator is one who can pass on development message without bringing in boredom. But broadcasters in television have often failed in it. Projects like SITE and Kheda though initially successful could not be continued throughout years later. Educational TV or Country Wide Classroom projects are more successful on pen and paper than practically. It failed to meet its targeted TRP points. Programmes like Gyan Darshan, though educational and informative in its approach, but

lacks efficiency in its presentation. School and college goers who are most used to private satellite channels are rarely even aware of these programmes.

Development communicators should try to popularize these programmes. This can be done by being more interesting and attractive in its approach and bring variety in choice of subjects. Use of more colours, picture and info-graphic can make the presentation styles more acceptable. In such a condition it is necessary for a developing country like India, to most urgently rethink their communication policies and research priorities to address the information problems and knowledge gaps in social development. Development communicator should try in applying communication technology for economic and social changes. Problems that lie in the path should be found out and highlighted. This should include both government policies and other different policies that initiate faster social development to match and sustain the momentum of economic progress.

Given, the current media scenario, and the needs of the development sector, it is necessary for a development communicator to develop a regulatory framework that shall under the umbrella of public service broadcasting shall include state owned media as well as non-commercial broadcasting. This will encourage non-profit institutions such as community organizations, local bodies and NGOs to participate in development communication. Media education and literacy to create demand for better, need based media stories and programmes are necessary. This is important to attract readers and viewers and to pass the development messages among the common mass, for which the programmes are undertaken. Decentralisation and provision of training for communities is necessary for local broadcasting like community radio. Putting communication resources in the hands of community is a way to achieve success in developmental projects with the use of mass-media.

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