

## Abstract

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 started 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 different 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 people into the process of development. Today government has different websites and call centers that provide instant information or answers queries to questions of development.

**Keywords:** Development, Communication, Mass Media, Satellite technology, New media, Government projects

## Introduction

Communication requires a sender, a message, and a recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the message of the sender.

Communication also refers to 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

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communication refers to the use of different types of media in the context of development. It is also used to mean sharing of information and experience to accelerate development. Where as development refers to the change of society for betterment. It can be both social and economic change for improvement or progress.

The practice of development communication can be traced back to efforts undertaken in various parts of the world during the 1940s, but the widespread application of the concept came about because of the problems that arose in the aftermath of World War II. The rise of the communication sciences in the 1950s saw recognition of the field as an academic discipline, with Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm and Eversett Roger being the earliest influential advocates. The term "development communication" was first coined in 1972 by Nora C. Quebral, who defines the field as...*(the art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equality and the larger unfolding of individual potentials).*

Or as Erskine Childers has defined it, 'development support communications is a discipline in development planning and implementation in which more adequate account is taken of human behavioural factors in the design of development projects and their objectives'; both Childers and Quebral stress that communication for development is not confined to the mass media channels, but includes any and all effective means of communication - interpersonal face-to-face, small group, the stage play, a picture, or even a billboard. According to Quebral (1975), the most important feature of Philippines-style development communications is that the government is the "chief designer and administrator of the master (development) plan wherein, development communication, in this system then is purposive, persuasive, goal-directed, audience-oriented, and interventionist by nature." The theory and practice of development communication continues to evolve today, with different approaches and perspectives unique to the varied development contexts the field has grown in.

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.

## 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, 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 masses. 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 bring 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 helps to educate people, but at the same time brings in consumerism in that place. Consumer wish to own a radio, leads people to 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 man. 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 plays in development communication, while Lerner and others saw all 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 the 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 mass media have become instrument 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 'Krishti 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) Non governmental 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.

**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 development communication has 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 in a large and developing country like India. Politicians and bureaucrats still believe that different economical and infrastructural projects under taken by the government are 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 masses. In 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 loose 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 houses have started and are following the trend of carrying adfriendly 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 for development has not been enough importance and popularity. Community radio can help in development of local area by discussing 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. 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 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 be under the umbrella of public service broadcasting, shall include state owned media as well as noncommercial 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 masses, 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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