

Communication And Its Role In Rural Development

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Abstract

Media / Communication play an important role in the process of development. It can be used for raising awareness in masses about different issues. Professionals and experts are very well aware about the importance of media in their activities and they also formulate policies to accelerate the process of development. Therefore, in developed and developing nations media has great importance and it is related to socio-economic development. This study argues the growth of communication / media on international level and also analyzed its usage and effectiveness in westerns countries on the basis of social and economic change. Along with that other aspects like agriculture, health and some other sectors especially in rural areas are also in encircled. The key aspect of this study is that how media can improve the condition of rural people and which resources can be effective and useful for it.

تلخیص

ترقی کے عمل میں ابلاغ کی اہمیت مسلمہ ہے۔ ابلاغ کی مدد سے لوگوں کے شعور کو اجاگر کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ شعور ترقی کی رفتار میں تیزی کا موجب بنتا ہے۔ پیشہ ورانہ ماہرین اپنی متعلقہ سرگرمیوں میں ابلاغ کی اس اہمیت کو جانتے بھی ہیں اور ترقی کی رفتار بڑھانے کے لئے مختلف پالیسیاں بھی مرتب کرتے ہیں۔ اس طرح ترقی یافتہ ممالک میں ابلاغ بالعموم اور ترقی پذیر ممالک میں بالخصوص مستعمل ہے۔ ابلاغ برائے ترقی کا فلسفہ ذہنی و سماجی اور معاشی ترقی سے منسلک ہے۔ زیر نظر مطالعہ میں بین الاقوامی سطح پر ابلاغ کی نشوونما کے حوالے سے بحث کی گئی ہے اور مغربی ممالک میں اس کی اہمیت و افادیت کے بعد ترقی پذیر ممالک میں اس کے استعمال سے فکری، سماجی اور معاشی تبدیلی کے عمل کا جائزہ لیا گیا ہے۔ زرعی، صحت اور دوسرے شعبوں میں بالخصوص دیہی معاشرے کے حوالے سے مختلف پہلوؤں کا

احاطہ بھی کیا گیا ہے۔ ابلاغ اور ترسیل ابلاغ کے ذرائع نشوونما میں کس طرح معاون ہوتے ہیں اور دیہی معاشرے میں عام لوگوں کی حالت بہتر بنانے کے لئے کون سے ابلاغی وسائل سود مند ہو سکتے ہیں یہ اس مطالعے کا خاصا ہے۔

The communication development implies, in the social context, a 'chance', by considerable 'mass of people' as a tool of social engineering to have greater, acceptable control over their lives. Therefore, it is the need of time, to accelerate the pace of development of human communication for wiping out the poverty even though it may be a different task. Hence it has become essential for the skilled and unskilled body of people including the professionals, namely the doctors, researchers, farming, families, educationalists and engineers who are social fabrics of the society, to pay greater attention to the development in the human communication and to help in getting the 'change' accepted by the mass of people. The communicator is not just to impart information, but also to put spirit of motivation in the human behavioral attitudes. Alan Chalkley said 'not only to give the facts of economic life and to interpret those facts, but to promote them, or bring them home to your readers. You must get your reader to realize how serious the development problem is, to think about the problem, to open their eyes to the possible solutions to punch the hole in the various circle (of poverty) (Alan B. Chalkey, 1970).

To the more explicit the development of communication in human beings must focus on the fact that a mass of people having low literacy rate as well as income and socio economic attributes that go with it, have to be motivated and informed to accept and use a sizeable body of hitherto 'unfamiliar' ideas and skills in a much shorter time than that process would normally take. Hence the term development is defined 'as the art and transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty' to a dynamic state of economic growth (Jaun F. Jamius, 1975). Here the term development is by all means, the use of any or all communication channels that provide linkages in the sphere of education, advancement of science and technology, agriculture, farming, health and sanitation to help achieve the required goals for the betterment and uplift of socio economic infrastructure of the mass of people in the country. The main objectives of the above findings are to 'inform' the developments to the body of people of the problems confronting the development communication, and to solve them with a view to accelerating the pace of development is 'motivation'. The success of communication programs depends more on motivating people to act on the

information given to them and make them accept the 'change' rather than only store the amount of information disseminated to them.

Since 1970's a series of UN Conferences were held beginning with the Stockholm Environment Conference where as the concept of development was broadened with the addition of 'the ecological dimension' and also population, food, employment, human settlements and more than science and technology and its transfer process, and also the communication and information dimension. For the development process. Dag Hammarskjold Report says:

“Development is a whole, it is an integral value loaded, cultural process, it encompasses natural environment, social relations, education, production, consumption and well being. The plurality of roads to development answers to the specificity of cultural or natural situation not universal formula exist” (Dag Hammarskjold, (1975).

Hence the process of development is indigenous; it springs from the heart of each society, which relies first on its own strength and resources and defines in sovereignty the vision of its future, co-operating with societies sharing its problems and aspirations. At the same time, the international community as a whole has the responsibility of guaranteeing the condition for the self-reliant development of each society, for making available to all the fruits of other's experiences and for helping those of its members who are in need.

The other aspect which creates hindrance in respect of the development in the rural communication is styled 'Communication effects gap or knowledge gap'. as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tend to increase rather than decrease. We should know the habits and beliefs of the people inhabiting the rural areas for designing the projects successfully as a prerequisite condition for communicating the new ideas, and for changing habits for the better. It is very essential in the field of agriculture. This means knowing about the audience that how they react to our messages? Are they understanding and accepting the information 'change' which they conceive individually and collectively? Thus, the communicator heading the team of developers must have standard answers ready and with open mind relate to the development which is going to benefit the mass of people.

The factors that are more responsible for the development of the rural areas (i) 'the development work', and (ii) 'the social sciences'. This has not been applied especially in the developing countries because of hiatus between the development planners and administrators and social science researchers. To remove the above bottlenecks. Dr. Bunnage indicates the kind of proportional social science research studies that can be done to avoid failure of the project. He has suggested that: (Jane Burning, 1974).

1. Level of education in areas, possibility of using formal / informal education system at all levels as challenge for change.
2. Area covered by family planning programme (agricultural extension workers should be trained not to imply that increased productivity following adopting of innovating permits larger families). Educational projects need to give greater emphasis to vocational training in new agricultural techniques wherever so required.
3. The term 'action oriented research' frequently signifies research which is oriented to action already planned if not underway. Such research is intended to prove statistical backup for the project, or, where it is included as a project component, is designed to monitor project progress.
4. Use of modern media such as TV and radio, film and print graphics on extension basis to obtain the required goals in the development fields.

In the field of health development, the profit, in comparison to agriculture, is to be made from the much harder to demonstrate. But no doubt, the health development in mass of people is necessary. Hence, the need for the health development is questioned by David Mason who says that,

“How can we communicate health, for instance when there is no obvious and immediate return? How do we convince people that it is not necessarily pre ordained that 20 percent of their children should die before they see their fifth birthday, as they do in Pakistan today? Is the answer an ever increasing army of doctors, nurses and paramedics preaching good health? Or is it a different communication technique that is likely to be more successful: convincing parents that they can take health into their own hands, telling them how to do it, persuading them that I work? The new health development wisdom is that the answer lies in the second ways” (David Mason, 1984).

The 'primary health care' considerably rests with the family itself, therefore, the mass of people which inhabit in the rural areas may be reacted to realize and explained how and by the means to look after themselves and show their health problems. The measures inter-related to be communicated to cope with the health problems are (i) Hygienic living conditions (ii) sanitary system, (iii) food and (iv) medical care and treatment of right time. Hence in Alma Ata during 1978, most of the world joined declaring their belief in primary health care. In the above context the development support communication by way of health education is the primary need in rural areas. Although the messages have been disseminated through radio and T.V through talks and slides, but still there is no motivation in this connection thus, David Mason comments.

“The current communication response in the primary health care context is part and parcel of the overall development response: to know the audience's response – make aware that ill health and child mortality can be tackled by self help to provide some means to testing the idea and the reinforcing favorable evaluation. The communication inputs humble attitude and in choice of medium, the development inputs are modest and appropriate and do not rely on sophisticated medical science and hardly on doctors at all. There are no guarantees of success. If it is there, no one can say that it was the communication strategy that caused it. Like the salt in the bread, it is usually only conspicuous by its absence” (David Mason, 1984).

In summary, the communication development in the rural areas is dependent on the new information, but the motivation is the more essential and key factor attached to it. To make the development projects a success, it is the duty of communicator to help to realize the mass of people that they would surely be benefited of the project, so launched if the change in information is used religiously. The linkages between the researchers farming communities, communicator, for exchanging and applying the new information in development of human communication, is very necessary. Above all, the health communication development in the communicative development is a social fabric.

The communication system and its impact over every walk of life of masses in any country can be evaluated in the context of the environmental conditions, per-capita income, social and cultural value structure mode of transportation, literacy ratio, the political participation and freedom of speech.

Pakistan, as located geographically and, for commenting analytically on media development, is to be divided into two ways rural and urban regions. Rurally located societies depend mostly on agriculture who are mostly illiterate as compared to the urban societies whose socio-economic structure depends upon trade and industry. However, the rurally based population and very industrious, hard working and enthusiastic and they work with zeal and agility, both in the scorching heat of the summer and the biting cold of the winter. Hence it is incumbent upon the rural elite to provide them the same amenities of life which they receive.

The concept of development has evolved since World War-II. Its fundamental meaning is the development of human being and the quality of life. Everett M. Rogers defining development says ‘ A widely participatory process of social change in society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of people through their environment’. Basically the term was restricted to economic dimension and to reliance on traditional western market oriented model of modernization, and the human aspect was totally ignored. In 1950 social dimensions such as health and education were added to the original concept. Development became a purposive change in a society to achieve and improve state of socio-economic condition (Everett, M. Rogers, 1971).

Under the new paradigm, the development has been viewed as an all embracing concept, which deals with a positive change in all directions in a given society. It is changes that lead the people to widely participate in the process of social and material advancement. The term encompasses many connotations. It runs through all the activities of government and its people. Many a time it proves as an acid test for the success or failure of government. ‘A change refers to a state of movement in a given situation either at the time or at two or more different points in time’.

A change might be positive or negative, depending on the situation. But there can be no change without development. Development stands for all that is good, positive and favorable. Development is variably termed as an objective, a program, a movement and a process.

Development Support Communication (DSC) is a newly emerged concept of communication activities that undertake exchange of message at more

participatory level to achieve specific goals of change and development. The philosophy behind the concept of utilizing mass media and other available communication means to reach and mobilize segments of a society towards change in specified walk of human life. The major concern of DSC is to produce message keeping in view the need and importance to message, mass effects and ability of the target audience to consume effectively (Wilbur Schramm, 1964).

Socio economic change has always interested and intrigued human being. It is one of the most fundamental characteristics of human history. Development is a particular form of social change, which brings a society at par with other societies of nations enjoying, improved living conditions. Many people in developing countries are deprived of even the basic knowledge of their problems. The underlying questions are what make societies or nation a communities change? Over the years many scholars from different disciplines have occupied themselves with these question presenting different theories regarding social change. DSC is seen as an interactive process of information dissemination with no permanent sender and receiver. It is considered more than an activity through which target audience 'acquire knowledge and skills enabling people to change themselves, their life style, their environment, their perception about self and their relationship to environment (Colin Fraser & Sonia Restrapu Estradas, 1998).

Communication plays a very vital role in this change process. In view of the existing living conditions in most of the rural areas of the developing countries, DSC has been given considerable attention and has been used as an important tool. It is helpful to the rural groups of population in developing societies, like Pakistan, where socio-economic improvements are urgently needed.

Schramm (1970) says 'communication is at once both clear and obscure. It is clear enough in conventional usage, but obscure when we seek to determine the limits of its implications'. Our purpose at this point is not to indulge in any controversy over definitions of communication. In case of local or national mass media series, it is obviously important to let the men, media and message operate freely without any government or policy constraints and priorities. Message control creates an artificial psychological gap between the agent of change and the receiver. Another factor, which makes DSC successful, is the proper training of DSC communicators. The training includes on the spot surveys and studies of the target communities (Wilbur Schramm, 1964).

Special expertise and in depth understanding of the grass root issues are the prime requirements to materialize campaigns undertaken with participatory spirit / development centers encourage social gathering and motivate the community members. Sense of self-reliance and using the available work force has proven one of the most successful factors in making DSC effective and purposive. New dimension through such aspects as health and education was given prominence. But the spread of such notions as functional literacy and human resources revealed that the concept of development was still dominated by economic growth theories. Rural development and communication were yet to be given serious thought.

From the seventies, however, the development concept was refined and broadened through the addition of first, the ecological dimensions, then of other dimensions, population, food, employment, human sentiments and lately and technology including technology transfer. Now, there is growing recognition of still another crucial dimension, the cultural dimension are seen from another angle, the communication and information dimension. Development as a whole, is an integral environment, social relations, education production, consumption and welfare. Development springs from the heart of each society, relying on its own strength and resources as far as possible.

Until 1960s economic theories explained under development as a consequence of industrial and technical backwardness, while sociological theories put the blame on superstition and fatalism of the illiterate masses. Thus the quickest solution to underdevelopment was believed to be borrowing of modernization strategies of western societies. These strategies however, needed the necessary know how, as well as the capital, which the industrialized countries alone could provide. So developed nations were allowed to enter the poor countries to provide this capital and know how. International aid agencies and financing institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund too entered the poorer countries. So did specialists and advisers in development (Colin Fraser & Sunia Restrepu Estrata, 1998).

DC emerged as field of mass communication studies during the post World War II years, when the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America were asserting their right to independence, self-reliance and non alignment. At the same time, these countries were in a hurry to find solutions to the most urgent needs of their people; the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. Colonial rule had

established massive bureaucracies, skeleton communication and transport and communication infra structures, and few educational and professional institutions and a few industries, centralized economic planning. Large scale industrialization and the development of basic communication appeared at the time to be the most effective strategies for catching up with the economically advanced and industrialized countries. This indeed was the advice preferred by financial bodies like World Bank and IMF, donor countries like USA and other by various arms of UN (dominated at the time by the Big power blocks). Such as UNESCO and by foreign advisers to national governments. Perhaps the most influential advisers in the area of development and communication were Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers and Wilbur Schramm all American academics who were mainstream empirical social scientists in Euro American tradition (Peter Habermann, Guy De Fontgalland, (Editors) 1978).

The most of influential work in growth of development communication, as field in its own right was Lerner. The Passing of Traditional Society sub titled modernizing the Middle East. But this study was not the work of an individual but later part of a large project at the Bureau of Applied Social Research (Formerly the Office of Radio Research) at the Columbia University. The project was founded by the Voice of America. Unlike Daniel Lerner, an ex intelligence officer of the United States Army during World War II, Everett Rogers was low, a farm boy trained in modern agriculture. He found his home community less than impressed with his stock of innovations in agriculture, outside his country he held a marked influence in the field of agriculture extension, through his textbook Diffusion of Innovation Rogers developed his concept and theory of the “diffusion of innovations”. From a synthesis of diffusion research studies in the United States and late editions of diffusion studies in developing countries as well (David K. Berlo, 1968).

Communities and groups in developing societies are diverse in their socio cultural outlook and level of understanding message for changes. In making DSC successful, the change agent has to consider variation factors as the primary one. Secondly DSC needs free flow of information at all available levels, particularly using the services of local media like regional radio, television and community etc these media could be utilized to educate the rural population in new ideas within their cultural context. Since most media in countries like (ours) are Urban oriented, communication setup has to be oriented toward rural areas, the contents have to be made relevant to rural communities. People from within these areas

need to be given a chance to influence the program contents freely. The agents of change from within the village and community setting can develop a lot personal informal contacts with the audience. These contacts often lead to the success of DSC. Leaving all theoretical, personal and professional controversies over the term of aside, it can be best understood that when available mass media, particularly the print media, devotes this content to inform people about specific development plans and projects, it would be termed as Development Journalism (DJ) . Its inherent characteristics, DJ are usually a one way information process and not participatory and its scope can be national, regional or restricted to community. A great number of factors are involved in making DSC activities successful. One basic principle in this context, which needs to be given primary importance is that the socio-economic change and development in any given society or a community cannot happen in isolation. It could be successfully undertaking consideration of the existing socio cultural and ideological behavior of the target audience. Unlike DC and DSC, the term DJ has its roots in the traditions of development countries journalism (Mc-Quail Denis, 1975).

According to John A Lent

“Development communication encompassed western theory and practice, established mainly by US scholars. Alongside, somewhat later, Asian Working Journalists created Development Journalism”.

The main focus of DJ is to propagate and disseminate news concerning development activities undertaken by a government. In other words, DJ was counter concept generated in various developing countries against the development role of the free mass media. The basic idea behind the concept of DJ is to provide information about the development activities and projects DJ in the Asian view is seen simply as reporting the events and news development and is as minor part of DSC (Peter Habermann, Guy De Fontgalland (Editors), 1978)

The task of development journalist is three fold, to inform to interpret, and to promote. “you must get your readers to realize how serious the development problem is to think about the problem, to open their eyes to the possible solutions, to punch the hole in the vicious circle (of poverty)”. In operational terms, the purpose of DC, is selected in terms of specific behavioral objectives such as getting farmers to harvest to many more canvas of rice than what they harvested before on the same area of land, to earn more than before, or on the

specific and observable. The common sources of development message are the research institutions, the colleges and universities of agriculture and other institutions involved in the tactical process of modern change and progress, such as teaching, research and extension (Geoffrey Reveles, 1983).

Planning is a recent phenomenon. It is process of organizing human activity to achieve maximum results. Policy is a strategy. Whatever the differences between policy and planning, the process of planning invariably aids the policy decisions. The relationship between policy and planning is continuous. The result of follow up to the execution of a plan becomes the starting point for discussion on future policy decision. Purpose of both planning and policy is to organize human activity and to gain result. But it is continuous process and consists of among others, a mechanism for effective transmission of information and for maximum utilization of communication media. Planning also creates conditions for public participation, and feedback reinforcement of professional institutions.

It is important to have a band of personnel trained in DC so that the policies and planning in development course could be effectively put into actual practice. As development is the order of the day DC will continue to task under its sunshine for quite some time. This demands mounting of teaching and training programs in DC and its policies and planning. The process of development from all the concerned parties namely the government the semi government and private organizations on the one hand and the people on the other. More specifically the personnel involved in the development activity ought to be involved at all stages of planning.

Planning efforts in development and eco activities in some developing countries have revealed that lack of proper understanding of the people's needs and suspiration has been one of the reasons for either the slow pace of progress or no progress all. If so then it would automatically imply the DC policy and planning are the responsibilities of the government machinery. However , aside from the government information agencies, there are quite a few other agencies involved in the process of dissemination of information to the people in a country.

Development Support Communication can use any channel or combination of channels to achieve objectives of development or each channel can play the role of development communicator. Developing on the situation and socio-economic and cultural setting, the channel might be radio, TV, NPO and other print media or even

extension agency and interpersonal sources. For example, researchers conducted in many developing countries have shown that the mass media, mainly radio and TV are the best communication sources for creating a new idea or message. When it comes to the adoption process, interpersonal sources such as extension agents; friends, neighbors, local leaders, and others are the most effective communication sources. As all these sources are engaged and accomplishing the goals of development, they fall within the ambit of DC. Some of the vital conditions for the development communication are: (Lucian W. Pye, 1983).

- Shift from dissatisfaction to satisfaction.
- Psychology of completeness shift from dissatisfaction to satisfaction.

It said that dissatisfaction is the root cause for change. It stands not only for a shift from less to more but also as a shift from much to more and from more to most. As DC is purposive and development oriented, its basic impulse is motivation and stimulus, it would be impossible to make the people move along certain desired lines. The process of such a shift is beset with many problems related to psychology of the people. This psychology makes it incumbent on DC to transmit the new knowledge about any ideas, object group, society or community in a way that the people do not get psychologically imbalanced. This has a bearing on what to communicate, what not to communicate, why to communicate, when and how to communicate (Peter Habermann, & Guy De Fontgalland (Editors), 1978).

Development is growth oriented all time fundamentally the focus of this process is man and the development of human beings themselves. Thus action can only be relevant if carried out by and with people, not for them. The primary objective is to satisfy the essential needs, material and non-material of people, starting with those of the most disfavored group in society. This process must be related in a harmonious way to the ecological and cultural environment in the light both of local traditions and insights of modern science. It is endogenous of process dependent on self-reliance and on participation of all people in society, therefore it requires policies which focus on the balance guidance and self-experiment between change initiated from above and emancipation liberation from below. It is concerned to create an infrastructure built round economic activities that depend on locally available resources in harmony with the environment. Growth in per capita income and increase agricultural and industrial production development communication philosophy behind is to formulate and apply communication strategies specifically designed for concrete development programs. The major

concern of DSC is to produce message, keeping in view the need and importance of message. The task of other communication effort is to bring socio-economic change in a given society. Dial deals with phenomenon of change and development at grass root level. Development as an objective, a movement, a program and process is un-ending; Development is increasingly used for national development including economic, social, cultural, political aspect of society.

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