



Philosophy and Dimensions of National Communication Policy

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Volume 1

Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation

14 Perspectives on Development Communication

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But one aspect of communication development is of special concern to the new and emerging countries. This is the contribution that effective communication can make to economic and social development.

Wilbur Schramm, 1964.

Introduction

AT the annual Meeting of the International Broadcast Institute at Cologne in 1973, a report of the Working Committee on "Communication in Support of Development" had these definitions of the key concepts:

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| Development: | The improvement of the well-being of the individual and the betterment of the quality of his or her life. |
| Communication: | The transfer of information between individuals or groups of individuals by human or technical means. |
| Development support communication: | The systematic use of communication in the planning and implementation of development. |

While these definitions appear to capture the central issues of these key concepts, they are not operational enough. They fail to provide the framework for explanations and demonstrations to enable an in-depth understanding and a realistic and practical application. In order to discuss our topic, such a framework is imperative.

Development

One of the best known apostles of Development and Communication, Everett Rogers, defined development as a "widely participatory process of social change and materials advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment".¹ Another specialist, this time from a developing country – Inayatullah – in his definition identifies the different aspects of development. He defined development as "change toward patterns of society that allow better realization of human values, that allow a society greater control over its environments and over its own political destiny, and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over themselves".²

Interface of Communication Development

A close examination of the basic tenets of the new development paradigm⁹ and of the ultimate requirements of the new communication approach to development¹⁰ would reveal very close similarities between them. To begin with, participation is the key variable in the development paradigm, just as it is for the new communication approach to development. In broad terms, the ultimate objectives of national development (urban and rural) are economic development, equitable distribution of facilities and of benefits, national cohesiveness, and human development. These are also, in broad terms, the ultimate objectives of development communication, even though, because of the importance attached to intelligent understanding of development issues, development communication gives pride of place to human development. In order to achieve these ultimate objectives, both the new development paradigm and the new communication approach stress the need for the following;

- equality of the distribution of social and economic benefits, information and education;
- popular participation in development planning and execution accompanied by decentralisation of activities to local level;
- self-reliance and independence in development with emphasis on the potential of local resources;
- integration of traditional with modern systems, so that development is a synchronisation of old and new ideas, with the exact mix somewhat different at such local level.

However, development communication goes further to identify other actions that should be taken in order to pave the way for achieving the above goals. At the International Conference on Communication Policies for Rapidly Developing Societies held at Moshhad, Iran, 1975, a working group identified specific activities that development communication must strive to accomplish in order to contribute effectively to development. These include:

- determination of the needs of the people and the provision of sufficient citizen access to the communication systems to serve as effective feedback to the government;
- provision of horizontal and vertical (interactive) communication linkages at all levels of society and communication channels through which people at all levels of society and in all regions and localities have the capacity to communicate with one another in order to accomplish the co-ordination necessary for human and material development;
- provision of local community support for the preservation of culture; provision of local media to serve as effective channels;
- provision of relevant information;
- support for specific development projects and social services; and
- raising people's awareness of development projects and opportunities, and helping to foster attitudes and motivation that contribute to development.

Goals and objectives identification are not the only areas in which development and communication are correlated. Research has shown that they also correlate very

strongly in goal achievement. The use of media of communication has been shown to lead to positive and effective development behaviour. At three levels of analysis — individual, community and national — there is substantive evidence from many countries in the developing world that development and communication are strongly correlated.

At the individual level, there are many factor-analytic studies showing communication variables to be significantly correlated with development variables.¹¹ At the community level, many examples also abound. For example, Rao¹² in a comparative study of two Indian villages, found strong correlation between communication and social, economic and political development. In a survey of about 460 villages in Turkey, Fray¹³ found clear correlations between communication and development. One of the examples of studies at the national level that showed strong correlations between communication and development is that of Lerner¹⁴ which, in about 50 countries, showed that media participation was highly correlated with literacy, urbanisation, and political participation; Lerner also found that the degree of change in communication corresponded with behavioural changes. A UNESCO study, to take another national level example, found in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia, a strong correlation between mass media factors and economic factors in general development.¹⁵ Similar findings were also reported by, among others, Schramm and Cater¹⁶ for one hundred countries and by Farace¹⁷ for more than fifty countries.

Even though these studies did not say anything about causality, the incidence of correlation is so frequent and the relationships so strong that it does not seem wrong to say that communication has been both cause and effect in the complex interplay of factors which make for development, both at societal and individual levels. In addition, the correlations are so strong that they provide concrete justification for building communication into the development process based on specific circumstances contributing to make communication an accelerator of development.

Development communication is not merely a matter of transmitting information about how things can be done better by using available facilities. It is much more than the exchange of problem-solving information. It also involves the generation of psychic mobility or empathy, raising of aspirations, teaching of new skills and encouragement of local participation in development activities. Development communication assumes the broader function of helping people to restructure their mental framework in interpreting specific events and phenomena, and to relate to the broader world beyond their immediate environment. To be effective in doing this, communication activities in development must be interwoven with other socio-economic and political processes. Development activities require rural people as well as urban people in the government and in business and other urban sectors to establish new social relations with each other. Communication processes facilitate the growth and development of such human relationships. Both the mass media and interpersonal communication systems are necessary to establish and maintain these relationships. But they cannot perform these roles effectively unless they are incorporated into the total development process. Many development specialists now believe that the chief factor of production in modern times, in both developed and developing countries, is information — seen as knowledge, education or human capi-

tal.¹⁸ To neglect this chief factor of production in the planning, execution and evaluation of development activities is unwittingly to call for confusion in the interface of the technical and social aspects of development, and consequently, the non-realisation of the full and positive benefits of communication.

Approach to Development Communication

Development Communication takes as its starting point both the 'Felt Needs' at community or local level, and the 'Action Needs' as identified by planners. The operational strategy for meeting these two sets of needs follows four stages of activities.¹⁹ The first is identifying and analysing the innovations sought by the community and those that development agents want to introduce — to whom, when and with what material means. This is generally known as the diffusion stage in development communication. In the second stage, which is known as the social process stage, the thrust of activities is towards determining how existing social, cultural, psychological and organisational factors may facilitate or hinder the adoption of new practices among the groups of people concerned. In the third stage, efforts are geared towards identifying existing media and how they relate to the people. Here, one looks at what combinations of communication channels exist and can be used in the communities — traditional and interpersonal channels, as well as modern print and electronic media — for communication 'feed' both into and from the community or communities. Finally, after repeating these analyses for geographically or sectorally related projects, locally tailored communication programmes are drawn up and implemented in phases with the real action potential in the communities (taking into account available supplementary input from outside the community).

Three different approaches to putting the above stages into operation have been identified.²⁰ These are the interpersonal approach which could be through the extension and community development method or through ideological and mass mobilisation; the mass media approach which could be through centralised method or through localised method; and the integrated approach, which combines all the approaches and methods in appropriate ratio depending upon the identified felt needs and socio-cultural situation in each community.

Extension and Community Development Method

This is the oldest method of using communication to generate development. It is basically oriented to rural development although it can also apply to sub-urban development. The main thrust of this method is the dissemination of useful and practical information on agriculture, home economics, health and sanitation, etc. Such dissemination is done through the face-to-face method of communication. Agents travel from village to village providing the rural communities with useful information on how to implement new ideas and practices and also teaching them through practical demonstrations.

This method assumes that rural communities are interested in new ideas and practices in order to improve their living conditions. It also assumes that there are necessary and sufficient resources to support their endeavours; that is, to enable the people to apply available new information to useful development activities. It further

assumes, as indicated in the *Animation Rurale* Programmes of Senegal, Togo, Ivory Coast, and Benin ²¹ that there is a crop of educated, intelligent and public spirited leaders within the communities, who can motivate the masses to positive development directed endeavours.

The basic tenets of the Extension and Community Development method can be summarised as follows:

- that there are no solutions to problems that are imposed on local communities from the outside; that local communities must first arrive at the problem definition and then its solution on their own;
- that the social animator — the communicator — is to be as closely identified with the local community as possible;
- that he is to be non-directive in his approach;
- that communication's chief role is to help define the problem, but not give the solution; and
- that community participation and social action are the goals, and therefore feedback from the community is essential.

One of the countries in which this method has been used is India. The country held, and rightly too, that the great mass of the illiterate and poor rural population is a highly valuable development resource.²² She therefore worked from the premise that the individual rural family and the communities can be guided to the path of development if they were given practical knowledge of the social and natural sciences. The government decided that the best way to achieve the projected goals was to decentralise interpersonal communication to the community block level. Each community development block was served by a team of multi-purpose village-level workers supported by the subject-matter specialists at the block level, and supervised and co-ordinated by the block development officer. The whole programme was planned, guided and supported by a national-level community development organisation.²³ The multi-purpose village-level worker is the key communicator in this method; he serves as a mediator between the rural elite and the development bureaucracy of the government.

The Extension and Community Development method is no longer used on a wide scale. This is because of its limitations — inability to extend programmes to every corner of the rural communities and therefore of generating total development endeavours. This was succinctly brought home in Bangladesh during the evaluation of her Comilla Project by Rahim.²⁵ Initially, the interpersonal channels used provided adequate information from the villages for the evaluation of progress and for taking necessary corrective measures in solving problems faced by the project. However, as the project expanded, it was noticed that the feedback mechanism was strained; the interpersonal channels were overloaded. The capacity of the system could not be increased within the inherent constraints of its structure. Hence, in subsequent comilla-type projects in that country, the communication model used was that which linked mass media to inter-personal channels. This appears to be the trend now all over the developing world.

Ideological and Mass Mobilisation Method

This is another of the communication methods that make extensive use of interpersonal channels. In this method, the channels are activated not by development agents, but by the political party cadres. This is because this method sees development, especially rural development, as a process which begins with a radical change in the political orientation of the people — radical change the ultimate result of which is the formation of new social relations. The main function of development communication therefore is seen as that of "promoting and heightening" the political consciousness of the people.

The primary goal of this method is the ability of workers and peasants to be self-reliant through mobilisation of internal resources, and thus to be in a position to control their future. Physical and human development is subsumed under political consciousness, because it is held that political awareness would motivate people to participate in development activities to satisfy their needs and aspirations. The operational structure of this method is virtually the same as that of the extension and community development method. But the structure and direction of message contents are different. While the former deals directly with human and physical development problems, the latter lays emphasis on political awareness as a prelude to any other type of development.

Two countries best known for the ideological and mass mobilisation method are Tanzania and China. In Tanzania, the ideological messages in rural development communication originate from the Arusha Declaration of the Tanganyika African National Union party and the essays on African socialism and socialist education by the first President of the country — Julius Nyerere. In China, development communication messages are predicated on the socialist ideology of the Communist Party.

The Tanganyika African National Union — the only political party in Tanzania — assumes responsibility for rural development communication. Therefore, it is the duty of party cadres and government officials to expose the rural population to constant ideological messages transmitted through face-to-face communication, village meetings, rural training centres and political meetings. The basic unit used as a channel is called the *cell*, consisting of a small number of households, whose main functions are (a) to bring people's problems and grievances to the party and the government (b) to communicate to the people the purposes, plans, and problems of the government and the party, and (c) to mobilise groups for the implementation of development projects. Tanzania has since linked this method with the mass media.

In China, the basic unit for development communication is the Commune, comprising of the village-level work teams and the brigades. The communication strategy follows two processes — the *Mass Line*, which is the vertical communication process that regulates the relationship between the top and lower level party officials and the members of the commune, work teams and work brigades; and the *Criticism and Struggle*, which is the horizontal communication that regulates ideological education, conflict management, and decision-making at different levels.

Centralised Mass Media Method

This method lays emphasis on centralised control of both mass media infrastructure

and the direction and flow of mass media messages. If we were to construct a continuum with Extension and Community Development at one end, Centralised Mass Media Method would be at the other. It relies wholly on the mass media for its message flow and almost completely ignores the interpersonal system. Because it uses the mass media for dissemination, its coverage potential is substantial; and because the content of its messages is of a general nature, there is usually something of relevance, no matter how small, to different segments of the society. It is based on the assumption that a 'good and relevant message' is capable of being accepted by the individual on his own, irrespective of the origin of the messages, and that the best and hopeful way to attract and hold a mass audience is to offer open and spontaneous and continuous vicarious satisfaction as well as education.

This is the method used by most countries in developing societies. Many agree that developing countries adopt this method because it is the cheapest and easiest method to use. However, research has shown that it is also the least effective in ensuring intelligent understanding and effectiveness of development messages.²⁶

In this method, programmes and messages are planned, produced and disseminated by 'experts' and programme officers in the urban headquarters of media organisations with very little or no reference to the views and opinions of the receiving audiences. Whether we are talking of radio, which is the most accessible medium especially for rural audiences, or of the newspaper, whose content is meaningless unless one was literate, or of television — the urban elite medium — whose impact in rural communities is very minimal, the procedure is always the same. Development messages are planned and executed without consultation with the audiences to whom the messages are eventually directed. The result is that message contents are usually at variance with the felt needs of the people, and therefore have very little chance of succeeding. Not only is there no organisation at the reception but also, because of the desire to reach the largest number of people, the messages are always of a general nature. Effective development messages demand some sort of organised action at the reception end, and also demand specificity in message content to ensure relevance.

Centralised Mass Media method appears to have derived its operational strategy from the Development Media theory²⁷ which requires the mass media to join the government in the task of nation-building and development. While the theory makes no reference to the people, it requires control and sanction of the mass media by the government in the interest of national objectives. This is why centralisation of activities is seen by media personnel using this method as imperative, in order to keep a sharp eye on everything that is done or not done, and in order not to provoke the anger of the government. It is primarily concerned with what the government wants and what ideas media personnel have rather than with constructing messages that would motivate the rural population to positive action towards meeting their own felt needs. It is therefore no wonder that the result of using this method anywhere in the developing world has left much to be desired. It generally succeeds in generating 'effectiveness' of messages, that is creating an understanding atmosphere in which the target audiences would accept the demands of the messages and act accordingly.²⁸

Localised Mass Media Method

—This method is also very much media-oriented, deriving its strength from the Democratic-Participant Media theory.²⁹ It lays emphasis on interaction with the people, and on establishment of local media channels to provide access for the people. The starting point in this method is the identification of the problems of the people through personal calls, meetings and discussions by media personnel who are required to enter into the socio-cultural context of the people. Because of the need for specificity in message content, the localised method calls for the establishment of local media — local radio, rural press, television production studios and viewing centres. Each of these provides access and opportunities for the participation of the rural population in the planning and production of development messages. This method appears to be the answer to Rogers'³⁰ warning that:

Unless a communication strategy includes a two-way flow of messages, makes sure that rural people have access to adequate channels and can express themselves in freedom, and unless the authorities are willing to listen to the message which come from the country-side and to learn from them, the 'best' of such strategies will come to naught.

Through local media, the rural population can talk among themselves, talk to the authorities and participate fully in the construction and dissemination of development messages meant for them. Such an interactive atmosphere based on correct interpretation of the needs and aspirations of the people creates an understanding climate in which confidence, credibility and willingness to make personal and community contributions are at their best. An investigation into the impact of Radio O-Y-O (a mobile rural radio) in the then Western Nigeria provides a concrete evidence to support the usefulness of the localised mass media method. Not only did many members of the rural community participate in the radio activities, but also the participative acts of these members radiated to non-participants thus leading to wide-range acceptance of the radio messages and consequent changes in behaviour according to the demands of the messages.³¹ The same is true of the impact of rural press in Mali,³² and in Liberia.³³ The very act of participating in the planning and production of messages disseminated through these rural media, created self-confidence in the participants and turned them into honorary messengers of development.

The localised mass media method is the best of all the methods described so far. It has strong potentials for ensuring positive results in the task of development — both human and material. But in many cases, this method is used in isolation, that is, without linkage with existing traditional channels and modes of communication. The result is that it unwittingly alienates many of the people within the communities that it is set up to serve. It would appear, therefore, that the impact of the localised mass media method would be by far greater when linked with traditional channels and modes of communication than when used alone. This is why specialists in the field of development communication are more comfortable with an integrated approach.

Integrated Approach

This is the approach which combines interpersonal and mass media approaches into one, avoiding their limitations and problems but taking advantage of their potentials.

The integrated approach uses the mass media and interpersonal communication at the same time. Not only does the interpersonal component involve the use of the extension and community development method as well as the ideological and mass mobilisation method, but also the mass media component involves the use of centralised and localised methods. All these are then linked up with traditional channels and modes of communication.

The structure of communication in any society is largely determined by the growth and development of technology and by economic and cultural institutions. To the extent that societies differ in their patterns of economic and socio-cultural heritage, their communication patterns also are likely to differ. In traditional, rural communities, direct face-to-face communication is valued as the most reliable and authentic form of communication. In such societies, the purpose of communication is usually to promote social harmony rather than to bring about change and growth. But the ultimate goal of development communication is to cause positive and effective change through the provision of necessary information (backed up by physical input) that would create understanding and build up self-confidence and motivation to change. The thrust of the integrated approach therefore is to feed the interpersonal and traditional network with information that would generate discussions which, in turn, would lead to intelligent understanding of development objectives and each person's rôle in achieving these objectives.

To feed the interpersonal channels, development communication depends on the mass media which have the potential for rapid dissemination and wide-area coverage. The limits of interpersonal channel is soon reached if development takes on a national character. Then the importance of the mass media becomes obvious. The mass media have the power to disseminate information and development messages rapidly and across the nation, but they are generally not able to change people's attitudes. The interpersonal channel lacks the above enhancing characteristics of the mass media, but is relatively effective in inducing attitudinal change and effective development behaviour, largely due to the impact of opinion leaders and of peer-group pressure. Hence the need for a communication model (integrated approach) that would link the mass media to interpersonal channels. In development activities, the mass media can hardly operate successfully alone. They need the support of interpersonal channels of communication, which includes traditional and folk media and modes of communication.

In rural Africa, no communication strategy is likely to succeed unless it takes into account the five basic principles that underlie the system of traditional communication — supremacy of the community, respect for old age, utility of the individual, sanctity of authority and religion as a way of life.³⁴ These principles infuse relevance and context into communication within rural communities. Therefore, any communication strategy which completely ignores traditional modes and channels cannot successfully win and retain the people's attention for long. Any communication message which completely ignores the values that underlie the context in which the people communicate, cannot produce the attitudinal and behavioural changes necessary for rural development. As research has shown³⁵ not only are two media better than one medium for effective communication, but also a combination of the mass media and interpersonal communication is better than using either alone.

A modest suggestion as to how the mass media could be effectively used in order to integrate their messages with interpersonal communication and folk/traditional modes and media of communication is given below. The suggestion is with reference to the three most popular mass media — radio, television and newspaper. Each of these has the potential for playing specific role or roles that are very important in rural development. One or the other of these media provides a channel for direct teaching, production of magazine programmes, features, short talks, short stories, riddles, music, question and answer sessions, jokes and discussions, spot announcements, drama, playlets and documentaries. Our suggestion shows which of these programme activities is most likely to be most effective on which medium and at what level of the development efforts. For this purpose, development activity has been divided into three stages — Mobilisation, Implementation and Consolidation. An example of the type of activities considered important under each stage is also given. In addition, the suggestion contains examples of the type of media activities that would most likely be effective and in what medium. For the print media, the schedule contains the suggested procedure for the urban population, using conventional newspapers, and for the rural population, using the rural press.

Television

Mobilisation Stage

- General mobilisation of the nation.
- Motivation of policy-makers as well as the influential and educated members of the society.
- Motivation of the educated to participate in literacy work.
- Motivation of the illiterate to get them to participate in development activities.

Types of Programme

1. Talks and features
2. Plays — dramatic forms and playlets
3. Discussions
4. Documentaries
5. Spot announcements
6. Jingles
7. Question and Answer sessions

Implementation Stage

- Demonstrations — what to do and how to do it
- Reports and actions taken
- Appeals from the authorities
- Literacy teaching
- General news and information

Types of Programme

1. Demonstrations
2. Documentaries
3. Magazines
4. Discussions
5. Interviews
6. Talks
7. Jingles
8. Questions and Answer sessions

Consolidation Stage

- Reports of completed activities and on-going ones
- Teaching of advanced literacy
- Information on new practices and procedures
- Information on new skills
- How to improve on gains made

Types of Programme

1. Direct teaching and instruction in literacy
2. Magazine programmes
3. Demonstration programmes
4. Interviews
5. Discussions
6. Talks
7. Jingles
8. Question and Answer sessions

Radio

Mobilisation Stage

- Mobilisation of the general public
- Motivation of policy-makers and the educated population
- Mobilisation of the illiterate and rural population

Types of Programme

1. Jingles
2. Magazines
3. Drama and playlets
4. Short stories
5. Discussions
6. Sport announcements
7. Talks and features
8. Question and Answer Sessions

Implementation Stage

- Create avenue and opportunities for participation
- Support teachers and extension agents
- Create enhancing mode in the rural communities
- Analyse previous practices
- Support written materials
- Provide information about location of materials and support agents, opportunities for participation and access and support services

Types of Programme

1. News and information
2. Interviews
3. Discussions
4. Drama and playlets
5. Short stories
6. Variety and light entertainment
7. Jingles
8. Question and Answer sessions

Consolidation Stage

- Propagation
- Dissemination of results of activities
- Sustenance of efforts and motivation
- Sustenance of literacy gains
- Reinforcement of public support and efforts

Types of Programme

1. Talks
2. Interviews
3. Discussions
4. Magazines
5. Drama and playlets
6. News conferences
7. Wise sayings and adages
8. Question and Answer sessions

Print**Mobilisation Stage**

- Motivation of the literate members of the society
- Motivation of the policy-makers and businessmen
- National and individual benefits of rural development

Types of Material

1. Feature articles
2. Analysis of issues
3. News and Information
4. Box announcements
5. Comparative analysis of rural situations
6. Editorials
7. Question and Answer sessions

Implementation Stage (Urban Population)

- Moral and financial support
- Information on on-going activities
- Information on needs and requirements
- Literacy

Types of Material

1. Government statements
2. Statements from national leaders
3. Editorials
4. Feature articles
5. Interviews
6. News analyses
7. Box announcements
8. Question and Answer sessions

Implementation Stage (Rural Population)

- Directions on what to do and how to do it
- Encouragement
- Sustenance of enthusiasm
- Literacy reading materials
- Dissemination of project news

Types of Material: (Rural Press)

1. News and information
2. Reports of projects
3. Message of support from government and community leaders
4. Literacy news and materials
5. Interviews
6. Short stories
7. Graphic representations and tit-bits
8. Views and opinions
9. Question and Answer sessions

Consolidation Stage

- Sustenance of gains made
- Encouragement towards higher objectives
- Building up a spirit of self-help
- Propagating the benefits of rural development
- Literacy and Non-formal education

Types of Material: (Conventional Newspapers)

1. Editorials
2. Features articles
3. News Analyses
4. Government statements
5. Statements from leaders and chiefs
6. Interviews
7. News and information
8. Educational Supplements

Types of Material: (Rural Press)

1. Editorials
2. Reports of projects and community activities
3. Interviews
4. Short stories
5. Idioms and Adages
6. Statements from community leaders
7. News and Information
8. Statements from the government

The success of such activity schedule depends very much on how well the mass media programmes are integrated with, not only interpersonal communication systems in general, but also with traditional and folk media in particular. The ratio of each system and each approach in the integration will normally depend on the socio-cultural, economic and environmental conditions of each locality. This is because, to be effective, integration of all the approaches and systems must be based on existing traditional channels and modes of communication which are usually a reflection of the socio-cultural, economic and environmental conditions. Rural communities, especially those that most need development messages, by virtue of their conditions, still rely heavily on traditional media for information and messages. These traditional media and modes are what they have relied upon for years, and they have very strong confidence in them. Only the mass media strategies, which utilise these traditional media and modes in collecting materials to be included in their modern media programmes, and in disseminating further, interpreting and consolidating mass media messages would prove effective in rural development. Moemeka's³⁶ findings in a survey to determine which of seven media — social forums, town crier, village market, village school, newspapers, radio and television — in villages in Bendel State of Nigeria were most effective depended upon the villages' response to three development projects (Operation Feed the Nation, Local Government Reforms, and Universal

Free Primary Education). The survey showed clearly the superiority of traditional media. Even though more than 80% of the respondents said that they first heard of the development projects on radio, 14% through traditional media and 5% from the newspaper (no one mentioned the television) reactions to the projects and subsequent messages were almost exclusively influenced by discussions and decisions that took place through the face-to-face contact provided by the traditional media. This finding supports the categorical statement made by Yu³⁶ that no communication policy can afford to continue to concentrate on the mass media while ignoring traditional/folk media and other channels of popular culture. The mass media are most effective when combined with interpersonal media as in media forums or with traditional media such as village theatre and travelling story-tellers.

Development Communication Planning

In development communication, planning is a deliberate, systematic and continuous effort to organise human activity for the efficient use of communication resources and for the realisation of communication policies, in the context of a particular country's development goals, means and priorities and subject to its prevailing forms of social, economic and political organisation. Development communication planning, therefore, must take into account the development environment and goals of the country in which the planning takes place. In addition, the country's political ideology, social issues, communication facilities and systems, as well as available resources must all be properly studied before planning the communication strategy that would suit the environment.

Unfortunately, communication is usually brought into the planning of development programmes only as an after-thought. Emphasis in most developing countries is always on publicity. For the authorities in such countries there is no difference between information (provision of facts and figures) and communication (exchange of ideas). No serious thought is usually given to the importance of communication — mass, interpersonal, traditional and folk — in development. Provisions are usually made for publicising development plans and objectives, but very little is done for feedback and for discussions. Hence a common complaint of communication researchers and practitioners is that communication policies and plans are too often in the hands of those who do not know enough about communication to set up or contribute to the communication systems that best serve the development needs of their countries.

In development communication planning, communication should not be seen only as a tool, a supporting mechanism or an independent variable in development. Communication should be viewed as an integral part of development plans, one of whose major objectives is to create communication systems or modes that would provide opportunity for people to have access to means of communication, and to make use of these means in improving the quality of their lives. Therefore, in seeking solutions to the problems of communication in development; it is imperative to first look at the larger development process, and then at the role or roles of communication within the larger system.

In order to put the beginning of development planning on a sound footing, it is necessary to answer relevant questions like these:

- What are the country's development goals and objectives, particularly with respect to communication?
- What is the state of the existing communication system?
- Are existing communication systems appropriate and adequate in achieving identified objectives?
- What are some new communication technologies that can be used to make the existing system more efficient?
- What consistencies exist between the infrastructure and the institutions?
- What are the consistencies between project goals and national goals?
- Where are the weak points in the linkages among different levels — projects, national and rural?

These questions must be addressed truthfully and realistically in order to develop an efficient and realistic development communication plan, the first step in which is *identification of communication needs and resources*. This is the most crucial element in development communication planning, but unfortunately, it is the one element that is often neglected. However, communication needs are very strongly related to overall development goals and also linked to existing development status. The UNESCO³⁷ has outlined five major activities that help in identifying the communication needs and resources of a country.

- The collection of basic data and systematic analysis of the country upon such bases as population densities, geographic limitations to communication, variety of social structures, ecology and agriculture, industrial capacity, manpower capacity, etc.;
- The production of an inventory of the present communication resources, including modern and traditional media and analysis of the variety of present communication structures. Such inventory should also include the study of the audience, its communication consumption patterns, etc.;
- Critical analysis of consumption communication policies, (or lack of it) including such considerations as ownership, structures, decision-making, etc.;
- Critical analysis of the communication needs of the society especially in relation to the existing social and communication structures and the uses to which communication is put;
- Analysis of the communication components in all aspects of national development plans and programmes in order to ascertain the communication requirements of the programmes. These needs must then be reconciled with the means and capacities available.

The second step in development communication planning is *Goal Clarification*. This involves the continuing process of writing carefully worded statements of desired outcomes which are based upon identified problems, which are probably achievable by available strategies and operations within existing resources, and which may be appealing and acceptable to audiences and political groups. The next step is *Strategy Selection* which involves the careful analysis of competing strategies in order to choose an appropriate way to approach goals, using the best available data about the existing state of the environment and the community. The fourth element in development communication planning is *Operational Planning*. This is where the specification

is made of detailed actions and schedules for events, including the kinds of data-gathering and evaluations that will permit continuous re-examination of all other elements. Learning to plan as suggested here means that one is also planning so as to learn — and thus the cycle of planning and learning goes on. Finally, there is *Evaluation*. This is the process of gathering data, analysing those data for trends and abnormal variations, establishing criteria for making judgements based on those analyses, and using these data analyses and judgements as the basis for reviewing all other aspects of the plan.

Conclusion

Development communication is not merely concerned with providing information on development activities. Besides creating an opportunity for the people to know about the technical nature of new ideas and on how they work and with what effect, development communication plays the more important role of creating an atmosphere for understanding how these new ideas fit into the real social situation in which the people operate. Its ultimate goal is to catalyse local development activities, local development planning and implementation, and local communication to pave the way to development. Communication here should not stop with conventional mass media. If development communication must succeed, then it must include strong components of social organisation and inter-personal as well as traditional modes and media. In addition, those in charge of planning development communication must be those who understand the social structure (those who have entered into the socio-cultural context of the people), who understand how change can take place in it — not merely how development messages can be disseminated.

What has been said so far would tend to indicate that the starting point for the use of communication in development with regards to policy planning and execution ought not to be the would-be persuaders (the government) but the individual and social needs. Important reasons exist for letting the people become the initiators, the planners and the beneficiaries of development projects and communication messages. It is the man in the street, the peasant in the field and the workers in the factory who are the essential element — the basic building block — of development. Somehow, the views of these citizens have to be taken into account. They are often inarticulate views but they must be heard by sympathetic people who will articulate them, summarise them and bounce them back again to the peasants and the workers to see if the summaries and the policies that developed from them meet with their understanding and approval.³⁸

One of the most successful development communication campaign is the revolution of China. Mao's conception of the sort of man required to keep up the revolutionary struggle is one who is wholly obedient to party discipline, loyal and dedicated to the regime's goals, self-sacrificing and very unconcerned about his personal welfare, and always willing to place the good of the revolution as a whole above parochial interests or specialised concerns.³⁹ Developing countries could translate these ideals into their own plans and demand them from the people. It is good to remind the people of the need to make sacrifices in the attempt to win their willingness to work hard for themselves and for the nation. But an essential element of this approach is that

sacrifices must be shared. Only when the masses see that their leaders are undergoing corresponding hardships will they accept the credibility of this approach. Words have to be matched with action before development communication can become effective.

Elite expectation of one-sided sacrifice is not the only problem associated with the failure of development generally and development communication in particular. There are also the problems of corruption and coercion. But about the most devastating impediment is corruption. Friedric⁴⁰ calls corruption "a major obstacle of development both economic and social". Myrdal⁴¹ says that the prevalence of corruption provides strong inhibition and obstacles to development. And Horowitz⁴² complains that the relationship of deviance to development has remained largely unexplored at the more prosaic and more significant levels. Particularly important in this connection is the relationship of development with corruption and bribery.

Before development communication can be effective in development — both rural and urban — there must be a clear cut set of objectives and a policy to communicate them to the masses. The flow of development communication must begin from the lowest rung of the ladder. Opportunity for the rural population to express their views, opinions and concerns should be available. And the communication inputs must be related to the flow of physical input. Attempts must be made to keep the messages relevant to the practical activities that could be undertaken by the people, in order to avoid frustration.

In addition, the credibility and integrity of the authorities and of project officials must not be in doubt; they should be a shining example for the rural communities to follow. There should be very strong communication links between the rural communities and the urban centres of information. For it makes little sense for any developing country to talk about the development of its people while standing clear from the fundamental question of the 'human' and 'society'. A developing society should not just be shouting about the need to respect the wisdom and wishes of the masses if the elite or the leadership is not only ignorant of the masses but also remains remote or arrogant; if the masses have little interest and faith in the leadership; and if the communication system does not serve the express needs of the people.

Notes

- This title represents the present stage in the evolution of an appropriate name to call 'those communication actions geared towards enlisting full human participation and understanding of development activities.' One of the earliest names was Communication in Support of Development (International Broadcasting Institute, ISI, 1975). The ISI was followed by United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, which called its Project Support Communication (1976). The most popular name among social scientists and especially Aid Agencies has been Development Support Communication. But today, communication specialists working in the area of development, for obvious conceptual and operational reasons, prefer the name Development Communication.
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