

MMC 304 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**COURSE INTRODUCTION**

This course presents an insight into theories, concepts, methodologies and strategies in the field of communication for development. It presents a chronological evolution and comparison of approaches and findings. The goal of this course is to clarify the understandings and the uses of the most influential theories, strategies, and techniques in the field of communication for social change.

On successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept and process of development;
- Understand how the discipline of communication for development has evolved as a political process;
- Critique and evaluate communication campaigns with developmental focus in India;
- Critique and evaluate different genres of developmental journalism undertaken by Indian media professionals.

UNIT-1 : THEORIES, METHODOLOGIES AND STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Theory refers to sets of concepts and propositions that articulate relations among variables to explain and predict situations and results. Theories explain the nature and causes of a given problem and provide guidelines for practical interventions. Diagnoses problems to identify strategies and specific courses of action for programmatic interventions that use a variety of techniques.

Since the 1950s, a diversity of theoretical and empirical traditions has converged in the field of development communication. Such convergence produced a rich analytical vocabulary but also conceptual confusion. The field has not experienced a uni-linear evolution in which new approaches superseded and replaced previous ones. Instead, different theories and practices that originated in different disciplines have existed and have been used simultaneously. The following sections identifies the main theoretical approaches and their practical applications, traces their origins, draws comparisons, and indicates strengths and weaknesses.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Development theories has its origins in post-war international aid programs to countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa that were struggling with poverty, illiteracy, poor health and a lack of economic, political and social infrastructures.

Development communication commonly refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the developing world. It is derived from theories of development and social change that identified the main problems of the post-war world in terms of a lack of development or progress equivalent to Western countries.

Development theories have their roots in mid-century optimism about the prospects that large parts of the post-colonial world could eventually “catch-up” and resemble Western countries. After the last remains of European empires in Africa and Asia crumbled in the 1950s and 1960s, a dominant question in policy and academic quarters was how to address the abysmal disparities between the developed and underdeveloped worlds.

Development originally meant the process by which Third World societies could become more like Western developed societies as measured in terms of political system, economic growth, and educational levels. Development was synonymous with political democracy, rising levels of productivity and industrialization, high literacy rates, longer life expectancy, and the like. The implicit

assumption was that there was one form of development as expressed in developed countries that underdeveloped societies needed to replicate.

Since then, numerous studies have provided diverse definitions of development communication. Definitions reflect different scientific premises of researchers as well as interests and political agendas of a myriad of foundations and organizations in the development field. Recent definitions state that **the ultimate goal of “development communication” is to raise the quality of life of populations, including increase income and well-being, eradicate social injustice, promote land reform and freedom of speech, and establish community centres for leisure and entertainment. The current aim of development communication is to remove constraints for a more equal and participatory society.**

Although a multiplicity of theories and concepts emerged during the past fifty years, studies and interventions have fundamentally offered two different diagnoses and answers to the problem of underdevelopment. While one approach to development has argued that the problem was largely due to lack of information among populations, the other one suggested that power inequality was the underlying problem. Because the diagnoses were different, the recommendations were also different.

It could be said that theories and intervention approaches fell in different camps on the following points:

- ☐ Cultural vs. environmental explanations for underdevelopment.
- ☐ Psychological vs. socio-political theories and interventions.
- ☐ Attitudinal and behaviour models vs. structural and social models.
- ☐ Individual vs. community-centred interventions development.
- ☐ Hierarchical and sender-oriented vs. horizontal and participatory communication models.
- ☐ Active vs. passive conceptions of audiences and populations.
- ☐ Participation as means vs. participation as end.

These divergences are explored in the examination of theories and approaches below.

1.3 MODERNIZATION APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Behaviour change models have been the dominant paradigm in the field of development communication. Different theories and strategies believed that problems of development were basically rooted in lack of knowledge and systematic interventions were needed to provide people with information to change behaviour.

The early generation of development communication studies was dominated by modernization theory. This theory suggested that cultural and information deficits lie underneath development problems, and therefore could not be resolved only through economic assistance. Instead, the difficulties in Third World countries were at least partially related to the existence of a traditional culture that inhibited development. Third World countries lacked the necessary culture to move into a modern stage. Culture was viewed as the “bottleneck” that prevented the adoption of modern attitudes and behaviour. It was understood that personalities determined social structure. Traditional personalities, characterized by authoritarianism, low self-esteem, and resistance to innovation, were diametrically different from modern personalities and, consequently, anti-development.

One of modernization’s central tenets was that ideas are the independent variable that explains specific outcomes. Based on this, development communication proposed that changes in ideas would result in transformations of behaviour. The low rate of agricultural output, the high rate of fertility and mortality, or the low rates of literacy found in the underdeveloped world were explained by the persistence of traditional values and attitudes that prevented modernization. The goal was, therefore, to instill modern values and information through the transfer of media technology and the adoption of innovations and culture originated in the developed world. The Western model of development was upheld as the model to be emulated worldwide.

Because the problem of underdeveloped regions was believed to be an information problem, communication was presented as the instrument that would solve it. Exposure to mass media was one of the factors among others (e.g. urbanization, literacy) that could bring about modern attitudes. This knowledge-transfer model defined the field for years to come. There was a clear pro-media, pro-innovation, and pro-persuasion focus. The emphasis was put on media-centred persuasion activities that could improve literacy and, in turn, allow populations to break free from traditionalism.

This view of change originated in two communication models. One was the Shannon-Weaver model of sender-receiver, originally developed in engineering studies that set out to explain the transmission of information among machines. It became extremely influential in communication studies. The other was the propaganda model developed during World War II according to which the mass media had “magic bullet” effects in changing attitudes and behaviour.

1.4. MEDIA IN MODERNIZATION APPROACH

From a **transmission/persuasion perspective**, communication was understood as a linear, unidirectional process in which senders send information through media channels to receivers. Consequently, development communication was equated with the massive introduction of media technologies to promote modernization, and the widespread adoption of the mass media (newspapers, radio, cinemas, and later television) was seen as pivotal for the effectiveness of communication interventions. The media were both channels and indicators of modernization: they would serve as the agents of diffusion of modern culture, and also, suggested the degree of modernization of society.

The emphasis on the diffusion of media technologies meant that modernization could be measured and quantified in terms of media penetration. The numbers of television and radio sets and newspaper consumption were accepted as indicators of modern attitudes. Statistics produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) showing the penetration of newspapers, radio and television sets became proxy of development. Researchers found that in countries where people were more exposed to modern media, more favourable attitudes towards modernization and development. Based on these findings, national governments and specialists agreed to champion the media as instruments for the dissemination of modern ideas that would improve agriculture, health, education, and politics. So-called “small” media such as publications, posters and leaflets were also recommended as crucial to the success of what became known as Development Support Communication, that is, the creation of the human environment necessary for a development program to succeed”.

1.5 DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

Diffusion of innovation theory has important theoretical links with both communication effects research and research on the role of media in modernizing traditional societies.

According to Everett M Rogers, whose work is most prominent in the area of diffusion studies, **development communications entailed a "process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behaviour**. Usually the source wants to alter the receiver's knowledge of some idea, create or change his attitude toward the idea, or persuade him to adopt the idea as part of his regular behaviour.

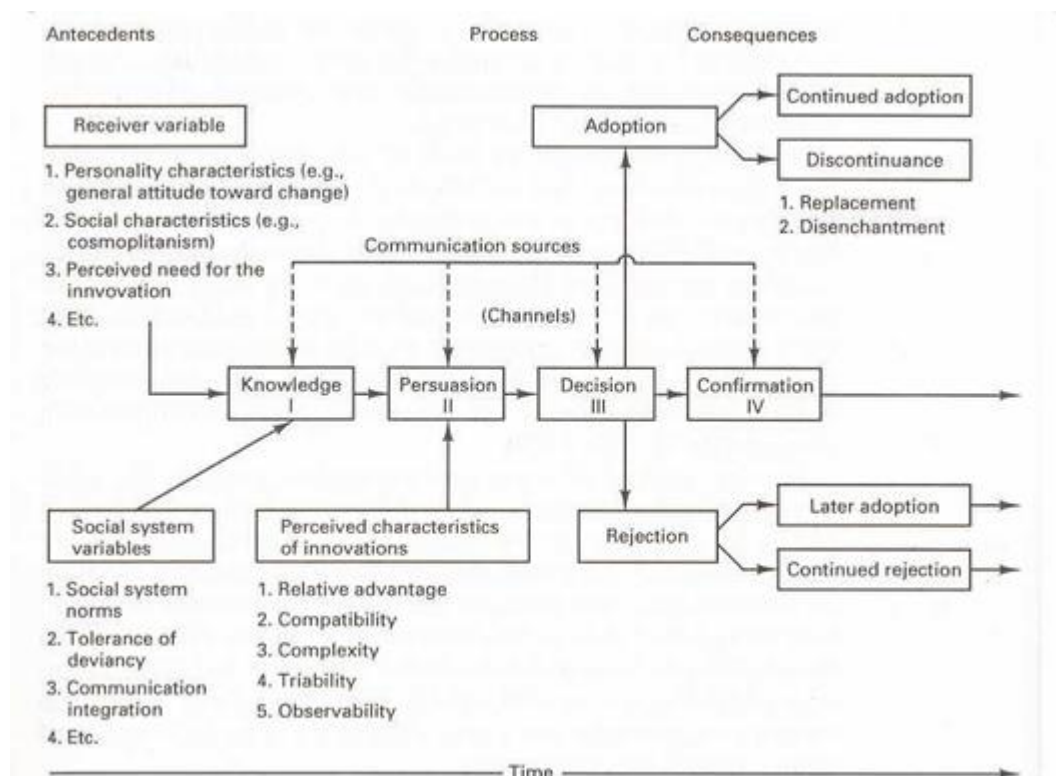
Viewed sociologically, the process of diffusion may be characterized as the (1) acceptance, (2) over time, (3) of some specific item, an idea or practice, (4) by individuals, groups or other adopting units,

linked (5) to specific channels of communication, (6) to a social structure, and (7) to a given system of values, or culture.

Rogers identified the following elements in the diffusion of an idea or innovation: the Innovation, its communication and the channels of communication and the social system within which and for which the process occurs. Adoption was defined as the process through which the individual arrived at the decision to adopt or reject an innovation from the time of first awareness.

The innovation decision process was a mental process through which an individual or other unit making decisions passes –

1. Knowledge – exposure to an innovation and some understanding of how it functions
2. Persuasion – formation of an attitude towards the innovation
3. Decision – activity resulting in a choice to adopt or reject the innovation
4. Implementation – putting the innovation into use
5. Confirmation – reinforcement or reversal of the innovation decision made.



Rogers categorized the characteristics of an innovation that affect their rate of adoption as follows –

1. Relative advantage – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes

2. Compatibility – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters
3. Complexity – the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use
4. Trialability – the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis
5. Observability – the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others

Rogers also specified five adopter categories, classifying individuals or other decision making units according to their rate of adoption of an innovation.

1. Innovators – venturesome, eager to try new ideas, more cosmopolitan relationships than their peers
2. Early adopters – respectable localities, usually highest degree of opinion leadership within social system
3. Early majority – deliberate, interact frequently with their peers but seldom hold leadership positions
4. Late majority – sceptical, often adopt an innovation because of economic necessity or increasing network pressure
5. Laggards – traditionalists, most local, many are near isolates, point of reference is the past.

However, diverging from the media-centrism and “**magic bullet**” theory of effects that underpinned earlier analyses, Rogers and subsequent “diffusion” studies concluded that the media had a great importance in increasing awareness but that interpersonal communication and personal sources were crucial in making decisions to adopt innovations. This revision incorporated insights from the opinion leader theory according to which there are two steps in information flow: from the media to opinion leaders, and from leaders to the masses. Media audiences rely on the opinions of members of their social networks rather solely or mainly on the mass media.

1.6 OTHER THEORIES IN THE TRADITION OF THE DOMINANT PARADIGM

In contrast to powerful media effects models that suggested a direct relation between the mass media and the masses, Lazarsfeld and Katz found that interpersonal relations were crucial in channelling and shaping opinion. This insight was incorporated in diffusion studies, which proposed that both exposure to mass media and face-to-face interaction were necessary to induce effective change. The

effectiveness of field workers in transmitting information in agricultural development projects also suggested the importance of interpersonal networks in disseminating innovations.

Consequently, a triadic model of communication was recommended that included change agents, beneficiaries, and communicators.

Other positions suggested that the traditional model needed to integrate a process orientation that was not only focussed on the results of intervention but also to pay attention to content, and address the cognitive dimensions (not just behaviour). Many of these observations were integrated into the diffusion approach.

By the mid-1970s, Rogers' definition of communication showed important changes that partially responded to criticisms. Development was theorized as a participatory process of social change intended to bring social and material advancement. Communication was no longer focussed on persuasion (transmission of information between individuals and groups), but was understood as a process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding.

In the early 1970s, modernization theory was the dominant paradigm of development communication. The climate of enthusiasm and "missionary zeal," that had existed a decade earlier had notably receded but the notion that the diffusion of information and innovations could solve problems of underdevelopment prevailed.

The inadequacies of the diffusion model however led to its replacement by the social marketing approach which provided a model for the strategic, scientific determination of message and media strategies to disseminate ideas to promote social messages.

1.6 SOCIAL MARKETING

The origins of social marketing hark back to the intention of marketing to expand its disciplinary boundaries. Social marketing did not have its origin in the then dominant approaches in development communication. Social marketing grew out of the disciplines of advertising and marketing in the United States. The central premise of these disciplines underlies social marketing strategies: the goal of an advertising/marketing campaign is to make the public aware about the existence, the price, and the benefits of specific products.

Among various reasons, the emergence of social marketing responded to two main developments: the political climate in the late 1960s that put pressure on various disciplines to attend to social issues, and the emergence of non-profit organizations that found marketing to be a useful tool. Social marketing was marketing's response to the need to be "socially relevant" and "socially responsible." It was a reaction of marketing as both discipline and industry to be sensitive to social issues and to strive towards the social good. But it was also a way for marketing to provide intervention tools to organizations whose business was the promotion of social change.

Social marketing consisted of putting into practice standard techniques in commercial marketing to promote pro-social behaviour. From marketing and advertising, it imported theories of consumer behaviour into the development communication. The analysis of consumer behaviour required to understand the complexities, conflicts and influences that create consumer needs and how needs can be met. Influences include environmental, individual, and information processing and decision making. At the core of social marketing theory is the exchange model according to which individuals, groups and organizations exchange resources for perceived benefits of purchasing products. The aim of interventions is to create voluntary exchanges.

Social marketing's focus on behaviour change, understanding of communication as persuasion ("transmission of information"), and top-down approach to instrument change suggested an affinity with modernization and diffusion of innovation theories. Similar to diffusion theory, it conceptually subscribed to a sequential model of behaviour change in which individuals cognitively move from acquisition of knowledge to adjustment of attitudes toward behaviour change. However, it was not a natural extension of studies in development communication.

One of the standard definitions of social marketing states that **"it is the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving consideration of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research"**. More recently, it has been defined it as **"the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are apart."** Others have defined it as the application of management and marketing technologies to pro-social and non-profit programme.

Social marketing's goal is to position a product such as condoms by giving information that could help fulfill, rather than create, uncovered demand. It intends to "reduce the psychological, social, economic and practical distance between the consumer and the behaviour". The goal would be to

make condom-use affordable, available and attractive. If couples of reproductive age do not want more children but do not use any contraceptive, the task of social marketing is to find out why and what information needs to be provided so they can make informed choices. This requires sorting out cultural beliefs that account for such behaviour or for why people are unwilling to engage in certain health practices even when they are informed about their positive results. This knowledge is the baseline that allows a successful positioning of a product. A product needs to be positioned in the context of community beliefs.

1.6.1 SOCIAL MARKETING EXPERIENCES IN INDIA

Social marketing has been used in developing countries in many interventions such as condom use, breast-feeding, and immunization programs. According to Chapman Walsh and associates (1993, 107-108), “early health applications of social marketing emerged as part of the international development efforts and were implemented in the third world during the 1960s and 1970s. Programs promoting immunization, family planning, various agricultural reforms, and nutrition were conducted in numerous countries in Africa, Asia and South America during the 1970s. The first nationwide contraceptive program social marketing program, the Nirodh condom project in India, began in 1967 with funding from the Ford Foundation.” The substantial increase in condom sales was attributed to the distribution and promotion of condoms at a subsidized price. The success of the Indian experience informed subsequent social marketing interventions such as the distribution of infant-weaning formula in public health clinics.

1.6.2 PROBLEMS WITH THE SOCIAL MARKETING APPROACH

In the third world countries questions were raised about the motives of the sponsors, the effectiveness of the applications, and, ultimately, the validity of the results.

The social marketing of powdered milk products, replacing or supplementing breastfeeding in the third world, provides an example of these problems. In the 1960's multinational firms selling infant formulas moved into the virgin markets of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Booklets, mass media, loudspeaker vans, and distribution through the medical profession were used in successful promotion campaigns to switch traditional breastfeeding to artificial products. Poor people, however, could not afford such products, and many mothers diluted the formula to make it last longer or were unable to properly sterilize the water or bottle. The promotion of breast milk substitutes often resulted in an

erosion of breastfeeding and led to increases in diarrheal diseases and malnutrition, contributing to the high levels of infant mortality in the third world.”

Critics have lambasted social marketing for manipulating populations and being solely concerned with goals without regard for means. For much of its concerns about ethics, critics argue, social marketing subscribes to a utilitarian ethical model that prioritizes ends over means. In the name of achieving certain goals, social marketing justifies any methods. Like marketing, social marketing deceives and manipulates people into certain behaviours.

Social marketers have responded by arguing that campaigns inform publics and that they use methods that are not intrinsically good or bad. Judgments should be contingent on what goals they are meant to serve, they argue. Moreover, the widely held belief that marketing has the ability to trick and make people do what otherwise they would not is misinformed and incorrect. The reluctance of people to tailor behaviour to the recommendations of social marketing campaigns, and the fact that campaigns need to be adjusted to socio-cultural contexts and morals are evidence that social marketing lacks the much-attributed power of manipulating audiences. If a product goes against traditional beliefs and behaviour, campaigns are likely to fail.

1.6.3 ETHICAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing needs to be consumer oriented, and knowledgeable of the belief systems and the communication channels used in a community. Products need to be marketed according to the preferences and habits of customers. Market research is necessary because it provides development specialists with tools to know consumers better and, therefore, to prevent potential problems and pitfalls in behaviour change. This is precisely marketing's main contribution: systematic, research-based information about consumers that is indispensable for the success of interventions. Marketing research techniques are valuable for finding out thoughts and attitudes about a given issue that help prevent possible failures and position a product.

For its advocates, one of the main strengths of social marketing is that it allows to position products and concepts in traditional belief systems. The inclination of many programs to forgo in-depth research of targeted populations for funding or time considerations, social marketers suggest, reflects the lack of understanding about the need to have basic research to plan, execute and evaluate interventions. They argue that social marketing cannot manipulate populations by positioning a product with false appeals to local beliefs and practices. If the desired behaviour is not present in the local population, social marketing cannot deceive by wrapping the product with existing beliefs. When a product is intended to have effects that are not present in the target population, social

marketers cannot provide false information that may resonate with local belief systems but, instead, need to provide truthful information about its consequences. For example, if “dehydration” does not exist as a health concept in the community, it would be ethically wrong for social marketing to position a dehydration product by falsely appealing to existing health beliefs in order to sell it. That would be deceptive and manipulative and is sure to backfire. The goal should be long-term health benefits rather than the short-term goals of a given campaign.

1.6.4 THE LESSONS OF SOCIAL MARKETING CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

- ☐ Persistence and a long-term perspective are essential. Only programs with sustainable support and commitment have proven to have impact on diffusion of new ideas and practices, particularly in cases of complex behaviour patterns.
- ☐ Segmentation of the audience is central. Some researchers have identified different lifestyle clusters that allow a better identification of different market niches.
- ☐ Mapping target groups is necessary. Designers of interventions need to know where potential consumers live, their routines, and relations vis-à-vis multiple messages.
- ☐ Incentives foster motivation among all participants in interventions.
- ☐ The teaching of skills is crucial to support behaviour change.
- ☐ Leadership support is essential for program success.
- ☐ Community participation builds local awareness and ownership. Integrating support from different stakeholders sets apart social marketing from commercial advertising as it aims to be integrated with community initiatives.
- ☐ Feedback makes it possible to improve and refine programs.

1.7 HEALTH PROMOTION AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The trajectory of health promotion in development communication resembles the move of social marketing and diffusion of innovation, from originally gaining influence in the United States to being introduced in interventions in developing countries.

The prevalent view was that changes in personal behaviours were needed to have a healthier population. Although the idea that institutional changes were also necessary to achieve that goal made strides, health promotion remained focused on personal change at the expense of community actions and responsibility. A substantial number of studies were offered as conclusive evidence that personal choices determined changes in health behaviour, and were positively related with new developments that indicated the decrease of unhealthy practices.

This highly individualistic perspective was initially criticized in the context of developed countries for “blaming the victim” and ignoring social conditions that facilitated and encouraged unhealthy behaviours. It gave a free ride to larger social and political processes that were responsible for disease and essentially depoliticized the question of health behaviour. To its critics, individual-centred health promotion ignores the surrounding social context (poverty, racism) in which individual health behaviours take place as well as the fact that certain unhealthy behaviours are more likely to be found among certain groups. They pointed out that the overall context needed to be considered both as responsible and as the possible target of change.

Recent understandings of health promotion such as the one promoted by the World Health Organization have moved away from individualistic views by stressing the idea that individual and social actions need to be integrated. The goal of health promotion is to provide and maintain conditions that make it possible for people to make healthy choices. Health education is an important component of health promotion. It refers to learning experiences to facilitate individual adoption of healthy habits.

1.8 ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION

Entertainment-education is another strategy that shares behaviour-change premises with theforementioned theories and strategies. Entertainment-education is a communication strategy to disseminate information through the media. As applied in development communication, it was originally developed in Mexico in the mid-1970s and has been used in 75 countries, including India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Turkey, Gambia, and Pakistan. Paradigmatic examples of this approach have been soap operas in Latin America and in India that were intended to provide information about family planning, sexual behaviour, and health issues. Literacy and agricultural development have also been central themes of several entertainment education efforts.

Entertainment-education is not a theory but a strategy to maximize the reach and effectiveness of health messages through the combination of entertainment and education. The fact that its premises are derived from socio-psychology and human communication theories place entertainment-education in the modernization/diffusion theory trunk. It subscribes to the Shannon-Weaver model of communication of sender channel-message-receiver. Like diffusion theory, it is concerned with behaviour change through the dissemination of information. It is based on Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, a framework currently dominant in health promotion.

Entertainment-education is premised on the idea that individuals learn behaviour by observing role models, particularly in the mass media. Imitation and influence are the expected outcomes of interventions. Entertainment-education initiatives were based on Bandura's model of cognitive sub-processes: **attention, retention, production and motivational** processes that help understand why individuals imitate socially desirable behaviour. This process depends on the existence of role models in the messages: good models, bad models, and those who embark on a transition from bad to good.

Entertainment-education refers to “the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour”.

Like social marketing and health promotion, it is concerned with social change at individual and community levels. Its focus is on how entertainment media such as soap operas, songs, cartoons, comics and theatre can be used to transmit information that can result in pro-social behaviour. Certainly, the use of entertainment for social purposes is not new as they have been used for centuries. What is novel is the systematic research and implementation of educational, pro-social messages in entertainment media in the developed world.

One of the starting points of entertainment-education is that populations around the world are widely exposed to entertainment media content. The heavy consumption of media messages suggests that the media have an unmatched capacity to tell people how to dress, talk and think. The problem is, as numerous studies document, that entertainment messages are rarely positive. In the attempt to maximize audiences by appealing to the lowest common denominator, the media are filled with anti-social messages such as violence, racism, stereotyping, and sexual promiscuity. However, the pervasiveness of the media provides numerous opportunities to communicate messages that can help people in solving a myriad of problems that they confront.

Another central premise is that education does not necessarily need to be dull but it can incorporate entertainment formats to generate pro-social attitudes and behaviour. This could solve the problem that audiences find social messages uninteresting and boring, and prefer to consume entertainment media. What characterizes the latter is the intention of the messages (to divert rather than to educate) and to capture audiences' interest.

These characteristics should not be dismissed as superficial and mindless but need to be closely examined to analyze the potential of entertainment to educate the public in an

engaging manner. Moreover, because they are entertaining and widely popular, entertainment-education messages can also be profitable for television networks and other commercial ventures.

Besides television entertainment, entertainment-education interventions were also implemented in music and music videos promoting sexual control, and radio soap operas that promoted women's issues, AIDS and sex education, and family planning. In the mid-1980s, a campaign was implemented to promote sexual restraint among Mexican teenagers. It consisted of songs and music videos featuring a male and female singer as well as public service announcements. Evaluation analysis concluded that the campaign had a number of positive consequences: teenagers felt freer to talk about sex, became more sensitized about the relevance of sex, messages reinforced teenagers who already practiced abstinence, and demand for family planning services modestly increase.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. What are the different approaches to development communication?
2. What are the primary assumptions of the modernization approach to development communication?
3. What is meant by diffusion of innovation and what are the different categories of adopters?
4. What are advantages and disadvantages of social marketing?
5. Trace the origin of development communication in third world context, and identify the role international stakeholders played for that.

UNIT: 2 : CRITIQUES OF THE DOMINANT PARADIGM - TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the late 1960s, the field of development communication split in two broad approaches: one that revised but largely continued the premises and goals of modernization and diffusion theories, and another that has championed a participatory view of communication in contrast to information- and behaviour-centred theories. Both approaches have dominated the field. Although in recent years there have been attempts to incorporate insights from both traditions, no comprehensive view has evolved. This unit provides an overview of these critical traditions.

2.2 DEPENDENCY THEORY

A Marxist criticism of the modernization approach of the West was forwarded in the Dependency Perspective arising out of the Latin American Scholars who attempted to explain the underdevelopment of their region vis-à-vis the Western European nations. Dependency theorists while dismissing the modernization approach as being rooted in positivist, behaviourist models maintained that underdevelopment of nations cannot be attributed to internal characteristic of nations alone but results from interconnections between external and internal variables.

Against modernization theories, dependency theorists argued that the problems of underdevelopment were largely determined by external factors and the way former colonies were integrated into the world economy. It forcefully stated that the problems of the underdeveloped world were political rather than the result of the lack of information. What kept Third World countries underdeveloped were social and economic factors, namely the dominated position that those countries had in the global order. Underdevelopment, they argued, was the flip side and the consequence of the development of the Western world. The latter concentrated economic power and political decisions which led to underdevelopment and dependency. Third world countries were politically and culturally dependent on the West, particularly on the United States.

Apart from external problems, internal structures were also responsible for the problems of underdevelopment. Dependency positions charged development programs for failing to address structures of inequality and targeting individual rather than social factors. Unequal land distribution, lack of credit for peasants, and poor health care services strongly limited the possibilities for an overall improvement in social conditions. Interventions were doomed when basic conditions that could make it possible for people to adopt new attitudes and behaviours were missing.

According to dependency perspective underdevelopment was the result of a complex phenomenon whereby external constraints on peripheral, newly de-colonized nations within the global structure interplayed with internal variables to reinforce the monopoly of the West. Dependency theory saw development and underdevelopment as interrelated processes and argued that the condition of the underdeveloped nations was not a stage in the process of evolution towards development, but rather the result of extant international structures. It maintained that Western, monopolist, capitalist powers at the centre ensured continued economic dependence of the peripheral nations by reproducing social, economic and political structures in accordance with their own interests.

2.3 DEPENDENCY THEORY AND MEDIA

According to the dependency perspective innovations promoted by development programs were adopted by individuals from higher socioeconomic strata living in cities rather than by rural and

poor populations. In singling out the mass media as having a central role in introducing innovations, modernization theories ignored the issue of media ownership and control. Urban and powerful interests controlled the media that was supposed to promote development. The media were not interested in championing social goals or helping underprivileged populations but in transmitting entertainment and trivial information. The relation between media structure and content was virtually ignored in modernization theories. Only a small percentage of programming was devoted to development issues and in regions such as Latin America, the media were commercially run and their the central goal was profit-making not social change.

Modernization theories as applied in the Third World featured, alien premises, objects and methods. The solution to underdevelopment problems was essentially political, rather than merely informational. What was required was social change in order to transform the general distribution of power and resources. Information and media policies were necessary to deal with communication problems. Solutions to underdevelopment required major changes in media structures that were dominated by commercial principles and foreign interests. Policies needed to promote national and public goals that could put the media in the service of the people rather than as pipelines for capitalist ideologies.

Dependency theory was thus critical of the mass media centric approach of the modernization paradigm and asked for more systematic analysis of the patterns of media ownership and control. While on one hand dependency approach championed the cause of socio-economic and political struggle of self-determination by the Non-aligned Nations, on the other hand it put its weight behind demands for equitable flow of information across the globe and initiation of a 'new world information and communication order'.

2.4 THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER (NWICO)

The Non-aligned Nations' Movement (1960 – 1980), started with the newly formed states of Asia, Africa and socialist countries like Cuba, China etc., was at that time seeking rights of political, economic and cultural self-determination against the imperialist forces. It looked at development as a political process and sought for de-colonization of information from the influence of Western media dominance. These debates compelled the United Nations and its associate agencies to take up the issue of 'free flow' of information across the globe as articulation of the right to 'freedom of expression' enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems or the MacBride Commission (1977) was formed to enquire into the problems of communication in contemporary society particularly relating to mass

media and news, and to suggest a new communication order to solve these problems against the backdrop of technological innovations and raising complexities in international relations so as to further peace and human development. The MacBride Commission Report (1980) titled *Many Voices One World* observed that new technologies no doubt open paths for a new era of communication but they also pose significant threats towards ensuring freedom of expression as harnessing its potential required considerable capital and control over resources. The structures of communication were thus no more neutral than its content and were considered as a force vested with 'absolute and omnipresent powers'. An improvement in the status of communication was inextricably linked with an overall improvement in societal conditions becoming less oppressive, more equal, just and democratic.

The report thus emphasized that communication can no longer be regarded merely as an incidental service and its development left to chance. It recommended institutionalization of national communication policies linked to overall political, economic, social and cultural development of the people; and democratization of communication and strengthening of national media to avoid dependence on external sources. The committee noted that developing countries should end their dependence on external sources of communication and overcome the problems posed by inadequate infrastructure and other resources. It said -

The critics from the developing countries have found, by experience that the theory of "free flow" is invalidated by the overwhelming preponderance of information circulated from a small number of industrialized countries into the huge areas of the developing world. In order to be really free, information flows have to be two-way, not simply in one direction. The concentration of news agencies, telecommunication facilities, mass media, data resources, manufacturers of communication equipment in a small number of highly developed countries does, in fact, preclude any chance of a free flow between equals, a democratic exchange among free partners. (UNESCO, 1980, p.142)

It recommended that developing countries should plan the installation and development of adequate technologies and infrastructures required to become self-reliant in communications capacity. Communication technologies were to be implemented for satisfying people's 'basic needs' through 'development support communication'. The committee also recommended for extension of media production facilities to rural areas in order to "facilitate production of programmes relevant to community development efforts, stimulate participation and provide opportunity for diversified cultural expression." The commission's report was adopted by UNESCO even while it faced severe criticism of being supportive of government control of media and infringing on journalistic freedom.

Though the debate following MacBride Commission's report did not alter the international communication scenario substantially yet it proved to be a forerunner in highlighting the implications of monopolistic practices on local cultures, people and their economies. By equating the right to communicate, right to participate and form informed decisions with the spirit of democratization, the commission could successfully shift emphasis from ensuring plurality of sources to ensuring a two-way reciprocal process of communication in the international discourse.

2.5 CRITIQUE OF THE DEPENDENCY PERSPECTIVE

The coming of globalization and liberalization marked a dilution in the framework of three-tier world system of First, Second and Third Worlds, and relegation of the centre-periphery continuum which could now be found in every region. This prompted consideration for a new concept of development emphasizing cultural identity and multidimensionality. The 'global' and 'networked' world of today, characterized by its distinct regional and national entities, now had to confront multifaceted crises. Apart from the obvious economic and financial crisis, there are social, ideological, moral, political, ethnic, ecological and security crises. This made the previously held dependency perspective more difficult to support owing to the growing interdependency of regions, nations and communities. This followed from the assumption that there are no countries or communities that are self-sufficient and function completely autonomously; nor are there any nations whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. A new viewpoint on development and social change thus emerged from this criticism of the dependency approach which proposed for a 'bottom-up', self-development approach from the perspective of the local community whereby both the 'centre' and 'periphery' could be studied independently as well as their inter-relationship.

During the period 1987 – 1996 communication research also highlighted the need to conduct more policy studies and institutional analysis of development agency coordination. This was followed by the need to research and develop indigenous models of communication and development through participatory research.

2.6 PARTICIPATORY THEORIES AND APPROACHES

The need for participation of local communities; the need to give due importance to their knowledge and practices; and the need to engage in dialogic communication through decentralized media systems started gaining ground among communication practitioners and development theorists alike. The mass media centric top-down approach to development was thus taken over by the bottom-up, participatory approach to development.

The notion of participatory communication dwells on the importance of cultural identity of local communities, and of democratisation and participation at all levels - international, national, local and individual. By this, the concept of participation is considered etymologically to be at the core of the word communication and hence significant for the success of development. According to this philosophy participatory communication is seen as a dialogical process whereby members of the community democratically guide the process of change for their own community, for the benefit of the majority. Unlike the modernization theorists, participatory theorists and practitioners emphasize on sensitivity towards local cultures and contexts for the success of development communication. In the participatory development process the earlier 'subjects' or 'receivers' of the modernization approach would have a larger say in the process of decision-making.

The top-down approach of persuasion models implicitly assumed that the knowledge of governments and agencies was correct, and that indigenous populations either did not know or had incorrect beliefs. Because programs came from outside villages, communities felt that innovations did not belong to them but to the government and thus expected the latter to fix things when they went wrong. The sense of disempowerment was also rooted in the fact that "targeted" populations did not have the choice to reject recommendations or introduce modifications to interventions.

Participatory theories argued for a redefinition of development communication through abandonment of the persuasion bias inherited from propaganda theories and reorientation towards a model of information exchange. It called for systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development. The emphasis was no longer to be on creating a need for the information being disseminated but on disseminating the information for which there was already a need. Participatory development communication needed to move away from being media-centric to becoming more people centric so as to inform, motivate and train rural population at the grassroots.

2.7. THE TWO APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Participatory theories evolved from two major theoretical approaches. One credited to the dialogic communication philosophy put forth by Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1983); and the other from the self-management and empowerment perspective of UNESCO.

Freire offered the concept of liberating education that conceived communication as dialogue and participation. The goal of communication should be conscientization, which Freire defined as free dialogue that prioritized cultural identity, trust and commitment. His approach has been called

“dialogical pedagogy” which defined equity in distribution and active grassroots participation as central principles. Communication should provide a sense of ownership to participants through sharing and reconstructing experiences.

Freire argued that subjugated people should be treated as fully human subjects in any political process. He believed that the average citizen was not an empty vessel into which facts could be poured, but he needs to be treated as a knowing being. Every individual has capacities of reflection, conceptualisation, critical thinking, and making decisions for planning and social change. According to him action and reflection are organically interconnected and are dialectic processes that lead to the process of ‘conscientization’ whereby there is free dialogue prioritizing cultural identity, trust and commitment. His approach has been called “dialogical pedagogy” which defined equity in distribution, empowerment and active grassroots participation as central principles in development and understood it as a process of individual and community self-determination.

Freire’s model and participatory models in general proposed a human-centered approach that valued the importance of interpersonal channels of communication in decision making processes at the community level. Studies in a variety of Third World rural settings found that marginal and illiterate groups preferred to communicate face-to-face rather than through mass media or other one-way sources of communication. The recommendation was that development workers should rely more on interpersonal methods of communication rather than national media and technologies, and that they should act as facilitators of dialogue.

UNESCO’s discourse on participatory communication stems from right to information section in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

It is based on the concepts of access, participation and self-management with each indicating differential levels of public involvement -

- Access refers to the use of media for public service. It may be defined in terms of the opportunities available to the public to choose varied and relevant programmes, and to have a means of feedback to transmit its reactions and demands to production organizations.
- Participation indicates a higher level of involvement of the public in management of communication systems. Here the public are involved in the planning, decision making and production processes of communication enterprises.

- Participation may infer no more than representation and consultation of the public in decision-making. On the other hand, self-management is the most advanced form of participation. In this case, the public exercises the power of decision-making within communication enterprises, and is fully involved in the formulation of communication policies and plans.

The Friereian and UNESCO perspectives, though widely accepted as normative theories of participation, have distinct ideologies about the levels of participation that may be allowed and the nature of communication enterprise. While UNESCO advocates for a progressive process of participation, for Friere there can be nothing short of absolute participation. Again, while Friere looks at communication by the oppressed public, UNESCO looks at an institutional perspective to communication.

The outcomes of participatory communication can be seen either from the social movement perspective or the project-based institutional perspective. From both the perspectives the tangible outcomes can be observed at least at three different levels. Firstly, at the individual psycho-social level it provides the courage of ownership towards problems and the commitment to solve it; secondly, at the skills level it emphasizes the acquirement of competencies and capacities to engage with a developmental problem; and thirdly, at the institutional level or the level of community development to bring about required reform.

2.8 ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Ten major reasons for the adoption of participatory approach in development projects:

- More will be accomplished.
- Services can be provided at a lower cost.
- Participation has intrinsic values for participants, alleviating feeling of alienation and powerlessness.
- Participation is a catalyst for further development efforts.
- Participation leads to a sense of responsibility for the project.
- Participation guarantees that a felt need is involved.
- Participation ensures that things are done the right way.
- Participation ensures the use of indigenous knowledge and expertise.
- Participation brings freedom from dependence on professionals;
- Participation brings about conscientization, that is, it helps people understand the nature of the constraints which are hindering their escape from poverty.

Arnstein (1969) argues that levels of citizen participation can range from non-participation as a substitute for genuine participation, to mere tokenism where people are allowed to have a voice through information and consultation. A progression of this is where citizen participation leads to citizen power in terms of decision making and management.

2.9 TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

Passive participation

People participate by being told by an administration or project management what is going to happen or has already happened.

Participation in information giving

People participate by answering questions posed by researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches, but do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings. The findings of the research are not shared with the participants or checked for accuracy by them.

Participation by consultation

People participate by being consulted on their views. External professionals define both problems and solutions, and may (but are not obliged to) modify these in the light of people's responses. However, local people do not share in decision-making.

Participation for material

People participate by providing resources—for example labour, or land—incentives in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the location but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

Functional participation

People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement tends to come after major decisions have been made, rather than during the planning stage.

Interactive participation

People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups have control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-mobilization

People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Jan Servaes, Communication for development and social change, 2008, pp. 238

2.10. CRITICISMS OF THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Certainly, participatory communication has not lacked critics. Even though vindicating some tenets of participatory theories, other positions argued that they were elaborated at a theoretical level and did not provide specific guidelines for interventions.

2.10.1 NO IMMEDIATE SOLUTION

One problem in participatory models was that it was not clear that communities needed to be involved for certain results to be achieved. In some cases such as epidemics and other public health crises, quick and top-down solutions could achieve positive results. Participation communication ignores that expediency may also positively contribute to development. Belabouring through grassroots decision-making process is slower than centralized decisions, and thus not advisable in cases that require prompt resolutions. Participation might be a good long-term strategy but has shortcomings when applied to short-term and urgent issues.

Another problem was that participation in all stages does not have similar relevance. It was not clear what participation entailed. If decisions were made outside of the community and the latter was assigned the role of implementing and evaluating results, some positions argued, participation was limited to instances that depended on decisions previously made. It was not true participation and, therefore, maintained power inequalities.

2.10.2 FOCUS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Another problem was that the focus on interpersonal relations underplayed the potential of the mass media in promoting development as participation and process. Little attention was paid to the uses of mass media in participatory settings, an issue that is particularly relevant considering that populations, even in remote areas, are constantly exposed to commercial media messages that stand in opposition to the goals set by programs. This lack was particularly evident in Freire's theory of dialogical communication that is based on group interactions and underplays the role of the mass media.

2.10.3 PROBLEMS OF NONDEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

Participatory approaches usually avoided the issue that people who lived in nondemocratic

societies might be wary to participate out of fear of retaliation. Moreover, people can be manipulated into participating. This would violate local autonomy and the possibility that members might not be interested in taking an active role. Critics argued that participatory communication, like social marketing, could also be seen as foreign, pushing for certain goals and actions that have not resulted from inside communities. Participatory communication did not offer the chance not to participate, and implicitly coerced people to adopt a certain attitude.

2.10.4 IDEALISTIC

Social marketers charged that participatory approaches were too idealistic, falling short from offering specific practical guidelines, and offering recommendations with limited impact. These shortcomings are particularly pronounced when funds for development communication are short and funding agencies are interested in obtaining cost-effective results not just at the local but also the national level.

2.10.5 INDIVIDUALISTIC DEMOCRACY

Other critics, particularly in Asia, thought that participatory models were premised on Western-styled ideas of democracy and participation that do not fit political cultures elsewhere. Individualism rather than community and conflict rather than consensus lie at the heart of participatory models developed in the West. Participation can also promote division, confusion, and disruption that do little to solve problems. It may privilege powerful and active members of the community at the expense of the community as a whole. Education and decision-making skills, rather than participation for its own sake, should be promoted.

To these criticisms, advocates of participatory models admitted that divisions and conflicts might result but, they argued, the answer should be teaching negotiation and mediation skills rather than opting for interventions that disempower people in the name of consensus-building. Although advocates of participatory theories viewed their critics as favouring government centralization and leaving power inequalities intact, they admitted that some original premises needed to be revised.

Participatory approaches needed to:

- ☐ Be sensitive to the potential convenience of short-term and rapid solutions.
- ☐ Recognize that recommendations for participation could also be seen as foreign and manipulative by local communities (just like modernization theories).
- ☐ Translate participatory ideas into actual programs.
- ☐ Be aware that the communities may be uninterested in spending time in democratic processes of decision-making and, instead, might prefer to invest their time on other activities.

□ Recognize that communities are not necessarily harmonious and that participation may actually deepen divisions.

2.11 MEDIA ADVOCACY

Media advocacy is another approach that questions central premises of the traditional paradigm. Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media to advance social or public policy initiatives. Its goals are to stimulate debate and promote responsible portrayals and coverage of health issues.

Advocacy requires the mobilization of resources and groups in support of certain issues and policies to change public opinion and decisions. It consists of the organization of information for dissemination through various interpersonal and media channels towards gaining political and social acceptance of certain issues.

Like education-entertainment strategies, media advocacy rejects the idea that the media can be a source of only anti-social messages, and instead, proposes to include socially relevant themes in entertainment. Both share the perspective that because the media are the main source of information about health issues, interventions need to focus on the media. Both also believe in the capacity of the media to transmit information that can result in changes. Unlike education-entertainment, which has been mostly concerned with directly influencing audiences, media advocacy centres on shaping the public debate about public health. It is not information-centered but aims to incorporate social themes in entertainment content in order to influence public agendas. It takes a political and social approach that differs from the social-psychological premises and diagnoses found in education-entertainment. And, in contrast to education-entertainment, it is less convinced about the power of the media to be extremely effective in changing attitudes and behaviour.

Media advocacy locates problems in political and social conditions and hence promotes social, rather than individual and behavioural changes to health issues. It approaches health not as a personal issue but as a matter of social justice. It is explicitly set against the individualistic assumptions of mainstream approaches found in the dominant paradigm of development communication that fault individuals for unhealthy and antisocial behaviours and propose individual solutions based on the idea that health is primarily a question of individual responsibility. Instead, it advocates changes in the social environment that legitimize certain behaviours. For example, it sees tobacco and alcohol companies rather than individual smokers and drinkers as responsible for unhealthy behaviour. Therefore, those companies should be the targets of advocacy and communication activities. Actions should target, for example, access to unhealthy products by involving communities in implementing policy changes

According to media advocacy theory, campaigns are not the panacea not only because their effectiveness is questionable but also because they ignore the social causes of unhealthy behaviour. Public service announcements have shown limited success in stimulating change and fail to address the social and economic environment that ultimately determines health risk factors. Social marketing does not face head-on the fundamental structures that sustain unhealthy behaviour. Social advocacy does not minimize the importance of individual changes but, instead, it strongly argues that the latter require changes in social conditions. Because external conditions are responsible for health, the strategy should target those conditions instead of focusing on lifestyle behaviours. Promoting individual health habits in developing countries without, for example, advocating for clean water supplies underplays the factors responsible for disease.

2.12 ROLE OF MEDIA IN ADVOCACY

Media advocacy adopts a participatory approach that emphasizes the need of communities to gain control and power to transform their environments. It assigns the media a pivotal role in raising issues that need to be discussed and putting pressure on decision-makers. However, advocacy is not solely concerned with media actions. Because it concludes that health problems are fundamentally rooted in power inequalities, it promotes a dual strategy to build power that includes the formation of coalitions and grassroots actions coupled with media actions and lobbying.

Media advocacy theory assumes that the media largely shape public debate and, consequently, political and social interventions. To be politically effective, then, influencing news agendas is mandatory. AIDS and tobacco control coalitions and groups in the United States have been successful in their use of the mass media that has resulted in support, funding and the implementation of public policies. Media-savviness is necessary to get widespread coverage of certain health issues and to shape how stories are presented. Here again social advocacy differs from social marketing. Social advocacy is not about putting in action centralized actions to relay information to consumers but, rather, providing skills to communities so they can influence media coverage. It approaches the media not in terms of “health messages” but as agenda-setters of policy initiatives. Placing messages is not only insufficient to correct problems but it is also the wrong strategy: the target of media interventions should be news divisions rather than the advertising departments of media organizations.

In summary, advocacy consists of a large number of information activities, such as lobbying with decision makers through personal contacts and direct mail; holding seminars, rallies and news-making events; ensuring regular newspaper, magazine, television and radio coverage and obtaining endorsements from known people. The goal of advocacy is to make the innovation a political or national priority that cannot be swept aside with a change in government. In the context of development programs, media advocacy may be carried out by key people in international agencies,

as well as special ambassadors, but is gradually taken over by people in national and local leadership positions and the print and electronic media.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Discuss the constraints of the dominant paradigm of development with reasons why alternative paradigms have emerged.
2. According to the non-western intellectuals western based modernization had failed to deliver. Explain the emergence of Alternative paradigm of development in this context and chief features of the Alternative paradigm.
3. Elaborate the dialogic pedagogy which forms the basis for participatory communication and elaborate the challenges in its application in development projects.
4. What are the primary criticisms of the participatory approach to development? How can those be overcome?
5. Outline the imbalances in the world information flow and give an overview of the suggestions put forth by the MacBride Commission to address the same.

UNIT: 3 RECENT APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The historic United Nations conferences and summits held in the past two decades generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. These remarkable participatory processes, and the array of development goals that were agreed through them, laid the groundwork for the Millennium Summit, at which a series of challenging time-bound goals and targets were adopted. Many were later collated as the Millennium Development Goals, which have succeeded in galvanizing an exceptional momentum to meet the needs of the world's poorest. The current unit provides an overview of such internationally accepted approaches to development and also highlights some unique institutions of local governance India that are expected to facilitate grassroots participation in such development initiatives.

3.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Just like the different approaches to development there are also multiple approaches to the understanding of sustainable development. At least two opposing ones are worth mentioning - A 'Western' perspective represented by the Brundtland Commission, and an 'Eastern' Buddhist perspective as presented by the Thai philosopher and monk Phra Dhammapidhok.

'Western' perspective: the Brundtland Commission

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission, defined sustainable development as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Core issues and necessary conditions for sustainable development as identified by the WCED are:

- Population and development
- Food security
- Species and ecosystems

- Energy
- Industry
- Urban challenge.

Pursuit of this kind of sustainable development requires:

- A political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making
- An economic system that provides for solutions for the tensions arising from disharmonious development
- A production system that respects the obligation to preserve the ecological base for development
- A technological system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance
- An administrative system that is flexible and has the capacity for self-correction
- A communication system that gets this organized and accepted by all parties concerned at all levels of society.

‘Eastern’ perspective: Phra Dhammapidhok

Phra Dhammapidhok, a famous Buddhist monk and philosopher, points out that sustainable development in a Western perspective lacks the human development dimension. He states that the Western ideology emphasizes ‘competition’. Therefore the concept of ‘compromising’ is used in the above WCED definition. Compromising means lessen the needs of all parties. If the other parties do not want to compromise, you have to compromise your own needs and that will lead to frustration. Development will not be sustained if people are not happy.

He consequently reaches the conclusion that the western perception of and road to sustainability, based on Western ethics, leads development into a dead end. From a Buddhist perspective, sustainability concerns *ecology, economy and evolvability*. The concept ‘evolvability’ means the potential of human beings to develop themselves into less selfish persons. The main core of sustainable development is to encourage and convince human beings to live in harmony with their environment, not to control or destroy it. If humans have been socialized correctly, they will express the correct attitude towards nature and the environment and act accordingly.

He argues that in a correct relation system of developed mankind one should accept the fact that human-being is part of the existence of nature and relates to its ecology. Human-being should develop itself to have a higher capacity to help his fellows and other species in the natural domain; to live in a harmonious way and lessen exploitations in order to contribute to a happier world.

Source: Jan Servaes & Patchanee Malikhao (2004) Communication and Sustainable Development Background Paper. FAO

3.3 INDICES OF DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

By 1990 an alternative perspective to development was developed by UNDP which shifted the focus from economic development to human development whereby the emphasis was more on enhancing people's capabilities and enriching the quality of their lives rather than relying on the power of the market forces to end poverty. By this, poverty was seen as a multidimensional phenomenon and not simply as lack of material well-being. Poverty also encompassed poor health and education, deprivation of knowledge and communication, inability to exercise human and political rights and the absence of dignity, confidence and self-respect. Human development was seen as a process of eradicating such poverty by enlarging people's choices, building human capabilities and by enabling them to participate in the life of their community and in decisions affecting their lives. Based on the virtues of efficiency, equity and freedom; and moving away from the basic needs approach, human development attempts for:

- Social progress through better access to knowledge and health services
- Growth with equity for all sections of people including women
- Participation and freedom in terms of empowerment, democratic governance, gender equality, civil and political rights and cultural liberty
- Sustainability for future generations in ecological, economic and social terms
- Human security against chronic threats like hunger and abrupt disruptions such as joblessness, famine, conflict, etc

Following this, the Human Development Reports (HDR) compiled for different countries are drawn on four main parameters.

- HDI (Human Development Index) indicates a summary measure of human development,
- GDI (Gender-related Development Index) is HDI adjusted for gender inequality,
- GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) measures gender equality in economic and political participation and decision making, and
- HPI (Human Poverty Index): captures the level of human poverty.

The overall ranking of a nation in the country HDR is decided after collating data based on all the above indicators. This created a benchmark to evaluate the progress of nations across different regions of the world. UNDP through its HDRs went on to identify that there were huge disparities in levels of economic progress, education and gender equality among nations. While Latin America, Europe, Central Asia and Middle East accounted for less than 10 percent of the world's poor, the other 90 percent were spread over East and South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. There was also high prevalence of infant mortality and other diseases like HIV/AIDS. Experiences were also vastly different at sub-national levels and for ethnic minorities and women.

3.4 THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

Faced with this picture of global poverty and inequality, the international community set itself several goals for the opening years of the twenty first century, based on discussions at various United Nations conferences. These international development goals, included reducing income poverty and human deprivation, promote democratic governance and create possibilities for sustainable development. The UN Millennium Summit 2000 identified eradication of extreme poverty as a priority agenda for world development and set specific targets, mostly by the year 2015, to achieve standard measures for protection of human rights, assure democracy and good governance, support the vulnerable, and promote environmental sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by world leaders as a follow-up to the summit are a set of comprehensive and specific development goals agreed upon for wider cooperation on development agenda. The eight time-bound goals provide concrete, numerical benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in its many dimensions. They include goals and targets on income poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality, environmental degradation and the global partnership for development. They are –

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The signatory nations to the Millennium Declaration have unanimously committed to take up strategies to achieve each of the goals by the target date and initiate various projects following individual national priorities.

3.5 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Two of the most influential forces driving development communication in the early years of this century have been the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The MDGs became an important political and moral force when they were adopted by more than 190 nations whose representatives convened in New York at a Millennium Summit in September 2000. The subsequent Millennium Declaration listed specific development targets to be met by the year

2015. They included cutting world poverty in half, universal primary education, reducing child mortality by two-thirds, reducing by two-thirds the proportion of the population without clean drinking water, combating the incidence of malaria and HIV/AIDS, and other development goals. Parallel to and intersecting with this great attention to the MDGs was the two-part World Summit on the Information Society. Held in two phases—Geneva, Switzerland in 2003 and Tunis in 2005—WSIS laid out challenges and applications related to the use of information and communication technologies for accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

While there are people who question the investment in information technologies rather than clinics and medicines, dramatic examples of the value of information and communication resources make a strong case for what is called ICT4D, or Information and Communication Technology for Development.

During the lifespan of the MDGs, governments, civil society and the private sector will be building broadband infrastructures, public digital databases and other resources to provide people with the kinds of information and communication services that may help us meet a variety of important economic and social goals. Already, the English language shows movement in this direction with new words like ‘eGovernment’, ‘eHealth’, ‘eEducation’, ‘eCommerce’ and ‘eDevelopment’. A major challenge for many nations, however, will be to help poor people gain access to appropriate and relevant ICT resources.

3.6 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Various global initiatives for sustainable development prompted the UN agencies to recognize ICTs as key player in the fight against global poverty and as an effective tool in helping the developing countries to achieve the MDGs. UNDP identified some strategic areas for ICT related interventions in development. These include among others, building a national strategy on ICT for Development (ICT4D); undertaking capacity building measures and awareness campaigns; and promote e-governance for better citizen participation and transparency.

In this context it becomes imperative to understand what exactly constitutes ‘Information and Communication Technologies’.

The World Bank defines ICTs as -

ICT consists of the hardware, software, networks, and media for the collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text, images), as well as related services. ICT include functions that support both communication in various forms as well as information storage, retrieval, analysis and sharing. It can be split into Information and Communication Infrastructure (ICI) and Information Technology (IT). ICI refers to physical

telecommunications systems and networks (cellar, broadcast, cable, satellite, postal) and the services that utilize them (Internet, voice, mail, radio, and television). IT in turn refers to the hardware and software of information collection, storage, processing, and presentation.

In the 1990s expansion of telecommunication network was considered to be the catalyst for economic growth and social development - a strong telecommunication network indicating a vibrant economy. Telecommunications for Development theory focused on the benefits of the use of interactive telecommunication technology for economic growth and social integration over the persuasion and attitude change theory of the modernization approach. The theory emphasized on the state to invest in improving the telecommunications network which would in-turn improve the delivery of public services and would promote economic and social integration. The emphasis was on improving the channels of communication, delivery of public services and reduction in the high transaction cost. The multiplier effect of telecom investment on GDP was likely to be higher because of both the direct and indirect effect that this investment had on production.

Since then information and telecommunication technology innovations have come a long way from telecom, television and radio to the new age technologies of internet and mobile telephony with supposedly higher potential of fostering economic and social growth by providing better interconnectivity within and among nations, societies and communities. ICTs have an enormously important role to play in building the social capability to generate information and to apply knowledge for sustainable development. A well-developed information and communication network infrastructure that is adapted to regional, national and local conditions, and rendered accessible and affordable, can accelerate the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all individuals, communities and peoples.

3.7 ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ICTS

Many developing nations are considering harnessing ICT as the means to transcend existing structural and historical weaknesses in the economic, political and social spheres. ICT is also seen to have the potential to leverage human development, whereby technological change is intrinsically linked with economic growth and improvement in human capabilities. Advances in digital technology and the concomitant 'digital revolution' can usher unprecedented changes in production processes, commerce, government and education and create new forms of economic growth to benefit all sections of the population.

Advances in medicine, agriculture, energy, communications, etc. can directly build human capabilities through improvement in health, longevity, knowledge and

greater participation in social, economic and political life. It can also expand human choices through productivity gains and increase in income. Human capabilities in turn, through creative application of education, can trigger further technological change which can be harnessed for building human capabilities and expanding choices (UNDP 2004).

ICT is seen to impact development in multifaceted ways ranging from increasing economic opportunities to facilitating human development. Some of the areas where implementation of ICT can lead to positive development and contribute towards achieving the MDG were analysed by UNDP through indicator based analysis. While the supply side indicators would pertain to availability of personal computers, internet facility, density of telephones and the like; the development potential of ICT was analysed through its impact on different sections of the society including the vulnerable sections and its potential to improve efficiency and speed in institutional operations. The deployment of ICT for development necessitates creation of a supportive governance and appropriate legal framework. ICT in governance can improve opportunities for various vulnerable groups to have access to and participate in the process of human development. If poverty reduction is the most important economic application of ICT, providing access to better governance practices is the most significant action for ICT within a democratic society. Growth of ICT, protection of human rights, sustenance of democracy and good governance are all connected into a virtuous spiral where each concomitantly help in the propagation of the other.

3.8 DIGITAL DIVIDE

The term coined to explain these various inequalities is ‘digital divide’ and is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon impacting social and political structures globally. The term ‘digital divide’ refers to the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and to their use of the internet for a wide variety of activities. The digital divide reflects various differences among and within countries (OECD, 2001). Understood as the gap between ICT ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, the digital divide has come to represent another criteria in the development index of nations.

Growth of ICT capital is seen to be positively correlated to growth of GDP thus consolidating a strong relationship between new-age communication technology and economic development. By extension of this phenomenon the developed nations are better equipped to harness the benefits of ICTs and leverage economic development through better internet access. Spread of internet to remote rural areas provides multiple opportunities of socio-economic and democratic development for poorer societies. But the developing nations are usually characterized by poor communication infrastructure and limited scope of investment in research and development for growth of internet technology. This

exacerbates the existing inequalities between nations leading to a global divide in terms of differential levels of internet usage.

The growth of internet technology is also found to follow a trajectory similar to earlier communication technologies like television, radio and telecommunication. Thus diffusion of new-age communication tools is representative of existing disparities in international communication flows highlighted earlier by Maitland Commission (1984). Poorer societies at the periphery of information network continue to remain disadvantaged compared to more advantaged societies at the centre of the network even after advent of new technologies.

Studies reveal wide disparities across the globe with regard to distribution of high-end internet facilities –

- There are 459 computers per 1000 people in USA while there are only seven per thousand in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- While the developing world has 85% of the world population, it has 42% of the share of internet users.
- The internet penetration rate of the developed world was eight times that of the developing world.
- Over three quarters of the global population live in 92 economies with below average performance in ICT opportunity index.

3.9 TYPES TO DIGITAL DIVIDE

Concerted efforts have been initiated internationally to improve access to ICT for those untouched by this revolution but given the difference in pace of growth between the developed and developing nations, the digital divide between the North and South has only widened over time. Thus the international disparity in access to ICT has evolved as continuity, rather exacerbation, of already existing disparities between rich and poor nations. The developed world of the North has continued to maintain its exponential growth while developing nations in the southern hemisphere struggle to bridge the gap and grapple with other characteristic social and cultural variables.

Another disparity that has contributed to the ‘global divide’ is ‘Anglo-Saxon linguistic and cultural hegemony’ on the internet. There is a linguistic and cultural barrier on the internet where majority of

the content is dominated by one or the other 'northern languages'. Studies have revealed that more than 80 per cent of the content on the internet is in English, which is a language understood by only one in ten people worldwide. This English speaking minority are representative of the educated elite from developed nations or those affluent few located in the more prosperous urban pockets of developing nations.

Another divide that exists within every nation irrespective of its southern or northern alignment – that between those who are rich, powerful and educated, and those who are not. Thus a sizeable population of disadvantaged people within each country remain unaffected by the revolution sweeping their more affluent countrymen. These beneficiaries of information and knowledge industry constitute an elite group within each society who can be called the 'digerati'. This neo-elite group does not derive its superiority from traditional advantages of caste, inherited wealth or family connection but from their ability to manoeuvre knowledge. However, unfortunately the prosperity and wealth generated by the digerati does not get circulated in manners so as to trickle down to the urban or rural poor and only goes on to reinforces a close-knit market economy created and sustained by them.

Digital divide is exemplified by existing social stratifications of household income, gender, age, occupation, education etc. Policy interventions to ameliorate this problem thus must go beyond the evident technology implications to address the more subtle social inequalities which run the risk of being exacerbated due to lack of access to new-age IC technologies.

3.10 LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE AS DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

The concept of decentralised development management is neither new nor alien to Indian experience. In ancient India, there were various traditional modes of managing resources and implementing development programmes through local involvement (Maithani, Rizwana 1991). These had different degrees of authority and approval and operated with varied structures with the aim of promoting "social welfare" through "public participation". Institutionalising this practice and giving it constitutional recognition as the Panchayati Raj Act 1992 was a process that went through a number of reviews and reorganizations.

The Gandhian ideology of "Gram Swaraj" had been an integral part in formulating national policy for the revival of village panchayats. The Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 40 of the Indian Constitution enshrining this philosophy and recognizing the aspirations of local self governance mandated: "the State shall take steps to organize Village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self governance." The ground for development through decentralized governance was set by Prime

Minister Nehru when he introduced the Community Development Programme in 1947. This was followed by the National Extension Service in 1953. The bureaucratization of both these programmes and their subsequent failure prompted the government to set up a review committee headed by Balwant Ray Mehta in 1957. The committee recommended the three-tier Panchayati Raj System at the village – block – district levels. The recommendations of the committee were adopted and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were set up in some states like Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh etc. but the centralization of governance could not be overcome. Subsequently various other committees were constituted to look into the prospect and scope of PRIs viz. Ashok Mehta Committee (1977), G V K Rao Committee (1985) and L M Singvi Committee (1986). But the lack of constitutional status never allowed PRIs to become effective institutions of decentralized governance. Attempts by subsequent governments to streamline the bill were defeated. Finally the 73rd Constitutional Amendment which gave constitutional status to PRIs was passed by Parliament on December 23, 1992 and became effective from April 24, 1993 under the aegis of Narasimha Rao government. This Act entitled 'The Panchayats' consisted provisions from articles 243 to 243-O and added Part - IX to the Constitution of India giving a practical shape to the bottom-up approach of planning and governance and ensuring “genuine transfer of power” to the people.

3.11 SPECIAL PROVISIONS UNDER THE PANCHAYATS ACT

A Panchayat according to this act is an institution of self-government for rural areas. The act provides for three tier system of governance at village, intermediate and district level for states with population above 20 lakh and two-tier (village and district) for other less populated states. Article 243G of the Act says that the State may endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government for -

(a) the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice;

(b) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as

may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule (annexure: Schedule XI of Indian Constitution).

Further, clause 243M exempts the states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and tribal areas of Assam, Manipur and Tripura from the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act and allows these states/areas to continue with their existing traditional institutions of local self governance.

Taking advantage of such Constitutional provisions which empowers the State Legislatures to endow Panchayats with varying powers and functions, the Northeastern region has pioneered some

institutions of decentralized development, mention may be made of the Autonomous District Councils and Village Development Boards in this context.

This is in further consonance with the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution which gives special status to administration of tribal areas of Northeast India through formation of Autonomous District and Regional Councils. The emphasis in the Sixth Schedule is on self-rule as many of the communities in habiting the northeastern region had ruled themselves until the British subjugated them in the 19th Century. Dr. Ambedkar had provided the rationale behind the Sixth Schedule saying that the tribes of Assam¹ were “different” as unlike their counterparts in rest of the country who were Hinduised and had assimilated with the culture and civilization of the people around them; the tribes in ‘Assam’ had not adopted the modes and manners of the Hindus around them and continued to practice their own laws of inheritance, marriage and other customs. This distinction prompted the makers of the Constitution to have a “different sort of scheme for Assam” from the one provided for other tribal territories and gave them considerable local autonomy. The other regions in India outside northeast which also have large tribal population are covered by the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution and there the emphasis is on “welfare and advancement” of the tribal people.

Again, article 371A of the Constitution makes exclusive provisions for religious or social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, ownership and transfer of land and its resources within the state of Nagaland. This act while giving recognition to the traditional practices of the Naga people also validates the uniqueness of their culture when compared to other states of India as well as in northeast.

3.12 ASSAM – LOCAL GOVERNANCE

After independence, Assam was one of the pioneer States in India to have legislation on Panchayati Raj. The Assam Rural Panchayat Act was passed in 1948. The Act brought into existence two types of panchayats viz, the primary panchayat and the rural panchayat. A noteworthy feature of this Act was the enumeration of 34 functions covering almost all aspects of rural life. After their establishment, under the Constitution of 1950, autonomous hill districts were exempted from the provisions of the Assam Rural Panchayat Act, 1948. In the meantime, the Community Development Programme was launched nationwide to accelerate the process of rural development followed by the

¹Assam as defined during Independence including NorthEastFrontierProvince, currently the states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Assam territory is currently defined in the Indian Constitution as -The territories which immediately before the commencement of this Constitution were comprised in the Province of Assam, the Khasi States and the Assam Tribal Areas, but excluding the territories specified in the Schedule to the Assam (Alteration of Boundaries) Act, 1951 and the territories specified in sub-section (1) of section 3 of the State of Nagaland Act, 1962 and the territories specified in sections 5, 6 and 7 of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

introduction of National Extension Service and the subsequent constitution of the Balwantrao Mehta Committee to review the working of the Community Development Programme in 1957.

In conformity with Mehta Committee's recommendations GOA enacted the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959. This Act provided for a three-tier structure with GaonPanchayat (GP) at the base level, AnchalikPanchayat (AP) at the intermediate level and MahkumaParishad (MP) at the Sub-divisional level. The GaonPanchayat was the executive body of the GaonSabha.

The Assam Panchayat Act, 1959 was again replaced by the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1972. The Act of 1972 abolished the intermediate level AP and introduced a two tier system having MP at the Sub-divisional level and GP at the lower level. The salient feature of the Act has been the extension of Panchayati Raj system to tea garden areas.

The Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1986 replaced the earlier Act of 1972. The Act of 1986 again reintroduced the three-tier system of GP having a population ranging from 6000 to 8000 at the village level, AP at the intermediate level (co-terminus with the block) and MP at the apex level (co-terminus with the Sub-division).

In keeping with the provisions of the 73rd Amendment Act, the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 was enacted and it replaced the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1986. The first panchayat election in terms of the Act of 1994 was held in October 1996. Subsequent elections were held in December 2001 and December 2007.

PROBABLE QUESTIONS

1. What is sustainable development? Are there significant differences between the western and eastern perspectives of sustainable development?
2. What are the millennium development goals? Critically evaluate India's status vis-à-vis achieving these goals within the target period.
3. How is the Human development index different from the earlier idea of development indicated by the modernization approach?
4. Decentralization is the cornerstone of development policies in India. Critically analyze the merits and demerits of such an approach in the light of some development programmes in India.

UNIT: 4: PUTTING DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM INTO PRACTICE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

While articulating the theories of development provides us with a better understanding of the development philosophy from both the institutional and people-centric perspectives, it is also important to gain expertise in putting this knowledge into practice as part of journalistic profession. This unit provides an overview into the challenges of development journalism as well as introduces the significance of non-institutional indigenous means of communication as a viable catalyst for development praxis.

4.2 DEFINING DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

An examination of the various definitions of the term "development journalism" shows that in some contexts it refers to the communication process that is used to serve the development goals of the government. Usually called development support communication, such journalism uses all forms--mass media, folk media, and small group and interpersonal communication--to promote the total development plans of an authoritarian regime. In other contexts, development journalism has been used in a manner similar to that of investigative reporting. Viewed in this manner, the role of the development journalist is to examine critically the existing development programs and projects of a government, compare the planned project with its actual implementation, and report any observed shortcomings.

Any discussion of development journalism is usually emotionally charged. The developing nations claim that the Western journalists are protecting their own capitalistic interests in the world when they attack development journalism as "government say-so journalism." On the other hand, Western journalists fear that the establishment of the principles of development journalism will mean an end to the freedom to collect information first-hand in foreign countries.

4.3 THE BEGINNING OF DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

The idea of "development journalism" was conceived in the 1960s at the Press Foundation of Asia. This approach to journalism emerged out of dissatisfaction with the dominance of Western news and communication ideals in developing countries, these being inaccurately covering socio-economic development. There was a real need of reflection on new type of journalism specifically designed to function in the cultural and political structures.

Since then, the approach of media promotion on development issues, the question on how journalists report on development - in parallel to electronic technologies that take root or to so-called "citizen journalism" emerging in wealthy countries - placed journalism as a powerful tool that empowers individuals, builds stronger local communities and elevates global awareness on development.

Journalists have to adapt to new ways of covering development issues as being the ears and eyes of society and the voices of the voiceless through bottom-up reporting. Indeed, this acclaimed "watchdog" role, reportages on development issues that bring attention to issues that are overlooked or under-represented often only raises awareness of problems.

4.4 ADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNALISM

Development journalism has a lot of attraction for developing countries. First, in countries where poverty is the norm, the government of the day wants and needs as much support as it can get. A press that reports government inefficiencies is therefore not welcome.

Also the government will probably have to take decisions which are based on the common good but which harm individual liberties. These decisions may be highly unpopular but they have to be taken, and a hostile press can hold back government's progress while a supportive press can help the government push these policies ahead.

One definition of the duty of a journalist reporting on development is to:

"critically examine, evaluate and report the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference

between its impact on people as claimed by government officials, and as it actually is.” The most important function of development journalism is its ability to **nation build**.

4.5 DISADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

The pitfalls of the development approach are many. First, the press becomes far less critical and eventually is forced to give up its “watchdog” role in society. As it continually panders to the government, the media loses its critical edge and becomes nothing more than another government mouthpiece. When this happens, it paves the way for a virulent underground or alternative press with a strong anti-government approach.

The most dangerous pitfall is the fact that the press gives up its right to question and demand accountability from the government of the day. As the press tries to promote the government and the common good, it can start to lose sight of the individual and the individual’s human rights. In other words, a developmental press has come to be equated with one in which the government exercises tight control and prevents freedom of expression, all in the name of noble ends.

In 1975 Indira Gandhi imposed strict censorship in India during the period of Emergency. But despite this censorship, many Indian journalists sneaked into their news columns words, phrases and even sentences and paragraphs that escaped the attention of the censors and that conveyed concealed meanings to knowledgeable readers.

Overall, the message for any government is that it will have to struggle to keep up control of the media for very long and will need huge resources to police the system. What starts out as a good idea to promote development may end up a nightmare

4.6 JOURNALISM DURING CONFLICT SITUATION

Good journalism is difficult work at the best of times. There is never enough information and not enough time. Reporters rely on their training and standards to overcome these difficulties and deliver news which is accurate and impartial. That is the traditional role of journalism — to enable the public to make well-informed decisions.

However, when a society is threatened by violent conflict, journalism faces greater difficulties. Opposing sides seek to control the media. Information can be unreliable or censored. There is personal risk. But this is also when good journalism is most important.

To provide reliable information to the public in a time of violent conflict requires additional journalism skills. Reporters need to understand more about what causes conflict, and how conflict develops and ends. Reporters need to know where to look for these causes and solutions. By providing this information, journalism makes the public far more well-informed about the conflict beneath the violence, and can assist in resolving it. Reporters need to be aware of this crucial role that journalism can play in a time of conflict.

4.6.1 WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Conflict is a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share.

Not all conflict is violent. Conflict is normal when there is change. Some people want change, but others disagree. If their disagreement or their conflict is managed peacefully, it can be a positive process. But when conflict is not managed properly, it becomes violent. In violent conflict, people fear for their safety and survival. When we say conflict, we are usually referring to violent conflict.

4.6.2 WHAT CAUSES CONFLICT?*

Almost world-wide, it is predictable that conflict will arise where:

- Resources are scarce and not shared fairly, as in food, housing, jobs or land.
- There is little or no communication between the two groups.
- The groups have incorrect ideas and beliefs about each other.
- Unresolved grievances exist from the past.
- Power is unevenly distributed.

4.7 JOURNALISM'S UNCONSCIOUS ROLES

One of the most important things to take place is communication. For two sides in a conflict to move towards a non-violent resolution, they must first talk. This is where good journalism comes in. Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced.

These are several elements of conflict resolution that good journalism can deliver, automatically, as part of its daily work:

1. Channelling communication:

The news media is often the most important channel of communication that exists between sides in a conflict. Sometimes the media is used by one side to broadcast intimidating messages. But other times, the parties speak to each other through the media or through specific journalists.

2. Educating:

Each side needs to know about the other side's difficulty in moving towards reconciliation. Journalism which explores each side's particular difficulties, such as its politics or powerful interests can help educate the other side to avoid demands for simplistic and immediate solutions.

3. Confidence-building:

Lack of trust is a major factor contributing to conflict. The media can reduce suspicion by digging into hot issues and revealing them so there are no secrets to fear. Good journalism can also present news that shows resolution is possible by giving examples from other places and by explaining local efforts at reconciliation.

4. Correcting misperceptions:

By examining and reporting on the two sides' misperceptions of each other, the media encourages disputing sides to revise their views and move closer to reducing conflict.

5. Making them human:

Getting to know the other side, giving them names and faces, is an essential step. This is why negotiators put the two sides in the same room. Good journalism also does this by putting real people in the story and describing how the issue affects them.

6. Identifying underlying interests:

In a conflict both sides need to understand the bottom-line interests of the other. Good reporting does this by asking tough questions and seeking out the real meaning of what leaders say. Good reporting also looks beyond the leaders' interests and seeks the larger groups' interest.

7. Emotional outlet:

In conflict resolution, there must be outlets for each side to express their grievances or anger or they will explode in frustration and make things worse. The media can provide important outlets by allowing both sides to speak. Many disputes can be fought out in the media, instead of in the streets, and the conflict can be addressed before it turns violent.

8. Framing the conflict:

In a conflict, describing the problem in a different way can reduce tension and launch negotiations. In good journalism, editors and reporters are always looking for a different angle, an alternative view, a new insight which will still attract an audience to the same story. Good journalism can help reframe conflicts for the two sides.

9. Face-saving, consensus-building:

When two parties try to resolve a conflict they must calm the fears of their supporters. By reporting what they say, the media allows leaders in a conflict to conduct face-saving and consensus-building, even reaching to refugees and exiles in far-away places.

10. Solution-building:

In a conflict, both sides must eventually present specific proposals to respond to grievances. On a daily basis, good reporting does this by asking the disputing parties for their solutions instead of just repeating their rhetoric of grievances. Good journalism is a constant process of seeking solutions.

11. Encouraging a balance of power:

Conflicting groups, regardless of inequalities, have to believe they will be given attention if they meet the other side in negotiations. Good journalism encourages negotiation because the reporting is impartial and balanced. It gives attention to all sides. It encourages a balance of power for the purpose of hearing grievances and seeking solutions.

4.8 A checklist for conflict sensitive journalism

- Avoid reporting a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides. Find other affected interests and include their stories, opinions and goals. Interview merchants affected by the general strike, workers who are unable to work, refugees from the countryside who want an end to violence etc.
- Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands. Go beyond the elites. Report the words of ordinary people who may voice the opinions shared by many.
- Avoid only reporting what divides the sides in conflict. Ask the opposing sides questions which may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals which they may share.
- Avoid always focusing on the suffering and fear of only one side. Treat all sides' suffering as equally newsworthy.

- Avoid words like devastated, tragedy and terrorized to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one side. Do not use them yourself. Only quote someone else who uses these words.
 - Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination is the murder of a head of state and no-one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians. Soldiers and policemen are not massacred. Genocide means killing an entire people. Do not minimize suffering, but use strong language carefully.
 - Avoid words like terrorist, extremist or fanatic. These words take sides, make the other side seem impossible to negotiate with. Call people what they call themselves.
 - Avoid making an opinion into a fact. If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact.
 - Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas to the leaders and report their response.
- As journalists, our most powerful tools are the words we use. And the pictures and sounds. We can use our tools to build understanding instead of fears and myths.

4.6 to 4.8 Source: Conflict sensitive journalism – A handbook by Ross Howard, International Media Support

4.9 Indigenous knowledge as conduit to development

Indigenous technical knowledge is a new focus in development circles. Growing numbers of scientists and organizations are recognizing that it offers cheap, locally adapted solutions to development problems, or that it can be melded with scientific knowledge to boost productivity and living standards.

But most indigenous knowledge is not written down. It is held in people's heads, passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. But how is this information communicated? How do people learn indigenous knowledge? Who is involved? How is the communication organized? Indigenous communication includes the transmission of entertainment, news, persuasion, announcements and social exchanges of every type.

4.10 Why is indigenous knowledge important?

Studying indigenous communication is important for many reasons.

- (a) **Indigenous communication has value in its own right.** It is an important aspect of culture and it is the means by which a culture is preserved, handed down and adapted. But indigenous communication is being eroded by exogenous systems - the mass media, schools, agricultural extension, bureaucracies - endangering the survival of much valuable information.
- (b) **Exogenous channels have limited range.** Television and newspapers are largely confined to urban areas in the Third World. Even the most widespread exogenous channels, extension personnel and radio, fail to reach many rural people. Indigenous channels, by contrast, are ubiquitous. They are needed to convey messages to people out of the reach of exogenous channels.
- (c) **Indigenous channels have high credibility.** Because they are familiar and are controlled locally, indigenous channels are highly credible. Local audiences are often skeptical of the externally controlled mass media.
- (d) **Indigenous channels are important conduits of change.** Research has shown the importance of informal, interpersonal contacts in persuading people to adopt, or reject, innovations. Such contacts are often made through indigenous channels.
- (e) **Development programs can use indigenous communication to collect and to disseminate information.** Outsiders can tap indigenous channels for information on the local situation and for feedback on project initiatives. Many projects rely on indigenous channels to diffuse innovations and development messages. Some have made explicit use of indigenous channels such as folk media and village organizations. There remains much untapped potential in using such approaches.
- (f) **Indigenous channels offer opportunities for participation by local people in development efforts.** They allow local people to communicate among themselves and with development professionals and decision makers. Local people can retain control over local media more easily than over technology-intensive media.
- (g) **If indigenous communication is ignored, the result might be inappropriate development efforts.** For instance, planners failed to recognize the role of a network of "water temples" in controlling irrigation in Bali, Indonesia. This led them to introduce cropping methods and construct canals and dams that were not appropriate to local conditions.

- (h) Indigenous communication is being eroded, endangering the survival of much valuable information.**

4.11 Forms and Channels of indigenous knowledge

Indigenous communication can take many different forms.

(a) Folk media. Folk media are the indigenous equivalents of mass media. They are used primarily for entertainment, but also to promote education, values and cultural continuity. They include festivals, plays and puppet shows, dance, song, story-telling, poetry, debates such as the Filipino *balagtasan*, parades and carnivals. Many have been adapted to transmit messages about family planning, politics and other exogenous topics.

(b) Indigenous organizations and social gatherings. Indigenous organizations include religious groups, village meetings, irrigation associations, mothers' clubs and loan associations. Apart from the formal communication they permit, such organizations provide many opportunities for informal interaction.

(c) Deliberate instruction. Parents teach children, craftspeople instruct apprentices, elders guide young people, adolescents undergo initiation rites. Many societies have traditional, often religious, schools. Most of what we need to survive, we learn not through the occasional puppet show, or even at school or through the media, but through deliberate instruction. This is true even in modern societies. Yet deliberate instruction has received little attention from development specialists.

(d) Records. Many societies keep formal records - written, carved, painted or memorized. South Asian treatises on animal management written on palm leaves, ancient *bai lan* scripts on leaves preserved in Thai Buddhist temples, and similar leaves containing records of land ownership and tax obligations in Bali are examples. Such records do not have to be written: Indian storytellers narrate memorized historical epics and genealogies at length. Proverbs and folklore are other vehicles.

(e) Unstructured channels. Indigenous communication occurs in many other settings: talk at home and at the well, in the fields and on the road, in the teahouse and coffee shop, in the chief's house and at the market, and wherever else people meet and talk. This communication is not organized or orchestrated but spontaneous and informal. The importance of such

channels is illustrated by the role of informal networks in Iranian bazaars in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran.

- (f) **Direct observation.** Communication doesn't have to be intentional. A farmer may see a neighbour's bumper crop and conclude that the variety or technique used is good. Nor does the source have to be another person: a dark cloud tells us a thunderstorm is coming just as clearly as another person could.

The forms of indigenous knowledge are different and it is important that every development professional remains sensitive to such knowledge systems and makes them a part of all development interventions.

Suggested questions

1. Enumerate the problems and prospects of Development Journalism in Indian context?
2. Identify a social issue, and explain how Indian media is performing in this issue. If media performance is encouraging, find out the reasons, and if they are not doing well, what remedial action you would suggest.
3. What is the importance of indigenous channel of communication in development? Identify one indigenous channel of communication and evaluate how it can be instrumental in taking forward the development message.

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