

**RELEVANCE OF THE COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN
BRINGING ABOUT RURAL DEVELOPMENT :
A CRITICAL REVIEW**



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Dedicated to
"BHAIYA"
in loving memory

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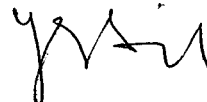
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REVIEW, submitted by MR DEVENDRA PRATAP SINGH
is an original work and has not been previously
submitted for any degree of this or any other
University. We recommend that this Dissertation
be presented before the examiners for their
consideration of the award of M.Phil Degree.



(PROF. YOGENDRA SINGH)
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P R E F A C E

The study relates to the role of Communication media in bringing about rural development in India.

The connotation in which the word development used in this study is different from the way it is usually understood in the common rural development parlance.

The official approach to rural development evolved right from the inception of community development programmes in the early fifties, has demonstrated its failure in improving the living standards of the rural poor both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

The biases in the development programmes and a wrong understanding of the rural social structure has led to the incorrect formulation of approaches to development. Identifying the rural populations as a homogeneous entity having common interests and communicating through the traditional leaders (opinion leaders) resulted in the cornering of the benefits of development programmes by a minority rural elite. The opinion leaders, a majority of them drawn from the landed gentry.

In the first chapter an attempt is made to discuss the biases and assumptions in the rural development models

stemming from western perceptions on third world realities. The western influence in understanding the third world agrarian societies based on a mechanistic dichotomy between modern industrialised west and traditional Underdeveloped societies most often resulted in identifying the causes of Underdevelopment in the so called backward values and traditional structures which tend to block the development process. This view, as is obvious does not take into account the concrete historical and class realities of the third world in its theoretical formulations. The development models built such an incorrect understanding and the resultant communication techniques failed to grapple with the realities of these rural societies. The communication strategies also suffered from the same inadequacies inherent to the development models built on wrong assumptions.

The second chapter deals with some aspects of agriculture in India with reference to the communication policies taking the five year plans and other development programmes. In this context struggles relating to land and rich peasant sections, controlling large land holdings utilised the development messages and the incentives provided to strengthen their own position. Even those rural development programmes specially towards weaker sections, such the economic inputs dumped into a heavily

stratified rural society were syphoned off at the top by a minority rich who control the economy and thereby the political and decision making processes.

In a situation where the prevailing structural inequalities - Unequal distribution of land and other resources, and the oppressive value system which supports the unequal relations to the advantage of the richer sections were sought to be maintained intact, the development programmes basically could not effect any changes in improving the living standards of the rural poor sections.

The third chapter deals with the impact of Mass Media on knowledge attitude and acceptance of the family planning programme.

Conclusions having some general relevance to the communication processes in the present social context are mentioned in the end.

My sincere thanks to my supervisor Professor Yogendra Singh cannot be expressed in words. I express my deep gratitude for the talks and valuable discussions we had, which helped me gratly to clear my own mind about various aspects of the subject. It is a privelege for me to live in close contact with a person of outstanding ability and a wide human outlook.

I wish to express my special thanks to my friend who typed this dissertation and the staff of JNU, Indian Institute of Mass Communication and National Institute of Health and Family Welfare Libraries who extended all possible help in providing material.

Last, but not the least my heartfelt thanks goes to my wife . Smita who was always a source of encouragement in completing my work.

Devendra Pratap Singh
Devendra Pratap Singh

INTRODUCTION

Development is essentially a socio-economic process of change aimed to raise the standard living, the quality of life and human dignity.

The process of growth and change in the social, economic and technological structures and functions is the essence of development. This process will have to pass through the diffusion of new ideas within the social body. New ideas are expected to bring about structural improvements in the economic technological and social system.

The Government being the source of new ideas and the community the recipient. The Communication system being the agent through which ideas are channelled from their conceptor to the recipient. Communication to the people about new ideas contained in the various development programme forms an integral, part of the development process itself. So communication is one of the vital instruments in bringing about development. The functions of communication is to motivate the involvement and the participation of the people in the development process, people include, everyone from Government officials at top policy and planning level to farmers in a rural society whose lives will be hopefully improved through and by the activities of the development project.

Communication technique and methods used can and do range through an infinite variety of media from the basic, interpersonal, face to face communication to intermediate technology in radio, film and printed publications to the selective use of more sophisticated modern technology such as educational television and the so called mass communication media.

The applied use of Mass Communication media has a most important role to play. Mass media is defined in the dictionary of social sciences as-all the impersonal means of communication, by which visual and/or auditory messages are transmitted directly to audiences. Included among the Mass Media are television, radio, motion, pictures, magazines, newspapers, books, bill-boards etc.

But it may be noted that Mass Media Communication does not by itself lead to sustained innovation adoption. It can indeed create a climate, a popular awareness of the possibility of change. But from more defined groups of people from "innovation awareness" to "innovation adoption" needs more than Mass Media Consumption.

In the developing countries like India where 79% of the people live in the rural area with a high rate of illiteracy (35- percent - 1981 census) and a great percentage of uneducated people interpersonal communication (face to face) is the most

effective means of information. The rural population constitutes more of a "listening society" than a "reading society".

As a communication medium, radio is commonly owned by the people including the rural population. People in rural community are more radio broadcasting oriented rather than printed material oriented, caused by some factors i.e. illiteracy, economic conditions etc. Its extensive scope of dissemination and diffusion has made radio a popular communication medium used by Government to diffuse and disseminate new ideas of development programmes. But until now radio as a medium has been limited for the cause of entertainment only. The role of Media of Mass communication has not been fully comprehended in our country. It is therefore not surprising that it has not been accorded a high priority in our plans. Although the Planning Commission has recognised the lack of expected public response to previous plans, it has overlooked the potentialities of modern media in enlisting public cooperation in implementing plans and programmes designed for progress and prosperity of the community.¹

(a) Chenda Commission has realised that human resources are decisive in all programmes in all progress and that without an informed and cooperative people, plans for social and

1. Govt. of India, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting - Report, Delhi (1968).

economic development cannot be sustained and implemented. Development requires millions of individual and group decisions - decisions to change traditional attitudes and ways, to learn new skills and try new things. These decisions have to be taken democratically based on information and persuasion. Dube's criticism that the communication policies and trends in the developing countries trend to be time bound and target oriented, is valid for India also (b) Communication media are largely utilised to impart information with a view to increase awareness of and arousing interest in specific innovations, to exhort the masses to adopt recommended practices and attitudes, and also, to a limited extent to teach them particular skills and techniques.²

It is not being systematically used to build images of life as subject to deliberate change, of the possibility of economic growth of what is to be cultured and educated, and of the modernized portions of the world. Nor it is used to inculcate desired attitudes and attributes of empathy, high aspirational level combined with energy and discipline, strong secular aspirations, computing strategies on a broad scale, means-end considerations uninhibited by emphasis on functional rather than ascribed roles increased reliance on organised voluntary associations, and achievement motivation.

2. S.C. Dube, A Note on Communication in Economic Development (East-West Centre Seminar,)

Communication media are not being effectively utilized to build a climate for change, or to instill the attitudes without which sustained growth is not possible. With such a narrow perspective towards communication, India cannot fully exploit its potentials for building the psychological and social infrastructures of modernisation.

Lerner³ has observed a very high correlation between measures of economic growth and those of communications. Rao⁴ has concluded that when information comes to an isolated community, it triggers change. He holds information as a big contribution towards development, and mentions empathy and the mobile personality as key psychological variables in bringing about change. He has also pointed out that ability to think in abstract terms and confidence in future are attributes of great importance; it is needless to say that this ability of abstract thinking develops only through education and information. Another pertinent observation made by him is that the channels of information and its wide reinforcement has been thus recognised as a key factor in speed and smoothness of the development process. Lerner not only sees communication as a smoother transition but also as the great multiplier of ideas and information for national development. According to

3. Lerner, D., Passing of the traditional Society,

4. Rao, Y.V.L., Communication and Development : A Study of two Indian Villages (University of Minnesota Press, 1966).

Deutsch⁵ (a) communication can do much in bringing true social coherence, in weaving people and regions together.

Our fundamental problem is to persuade the rural population to adopt new ideas, techniques. Social relationships and to inculcate desired attitudes and attributes. New Ideas do not often sell themselves, they require promotion education and training. These could be achieved only by the means of mass communication.

✓ In a developing country like ours, mass media have many important functions to perform. They can widen horizons - can bring the distant near; make the strange familiar and, thus can greatly help to bridge the gap between traditional and modern society.

As the Mac Bride Commission⁶ pointed out, communication can be an instrument of power, a revolutionary weapon, a commercial product or a means of education; In India the mass media - the radio, TV, the Cinema and the press - have a vital role which extends far beyond merely providing news, commentaries or entertainment.

5. Deutsch I.K.- Nationalism and social communication, MIT (1956)

6. Mac Bride Commission report.

Until recently, this potential and the useful role which the mass media can play as pointed out, were largely ignored and only sporadic efforts were made to exploit the potential fully and use the media for socially fruitful objectives. In fact, the mass media can be relevant and effective only if it is appropriate to the social and cultural pattern of our developing country. All evidence points to the fact that the vast potential of the media for social change is not being realised. A sustained involvement and persistence in the drive to achieve the desired goals are absent even though official pronouncements to the effect that the media, of which the radio and TV are under state control, were meant largely to bring about social change of the right type.

The recent assessments and studies of the impact of the radio and TV on Indian society indicate that by and large, the media serve the purpose of providing entertainment especially films and film music. The educational aspect is ignored. Most of the listeners switch off their sets when instruction is being imparted in various spheres through radio or TV programmes. Perhaps the only durable impact of the media is in the area of agriculture but that to only minimal. The countrys general set up the social problems, the social oppression and repression, the all remain largely unaffected. Nor despite the extension of the TV and the radio coverage to large areas through satellites and INSAT-I are the prospects of bringing about

change especially among the rural people.

The fact is that the problem is complex and multi-sided because of the baffling variety of languages, traditions, cultural attitudes the heterogeneous structure, the persistent social and economic disparities besides the extensive illiterary (according to the 1981 Census is 35).

India and most of the developing countries have not yet reached the minimum desirable standard of mass media availability formulated by the UNESCO in the 1960-⁷ 10 (Newspaper copies, five radio receivers and two TV sets for each 100 people) Because of the illiteracy and the economic handicap a majority of our people in the country side still remains outside the formal channels of Mass communication. So the desired change is not in sight and the social relevance of the media is low. Another draw back is that the planners, administrators and the media men tend to be urban oriented. Their attitude to rural affairs and audiences is one of dislike and their knowledge of the country side is superficial. The position has improved lately on papers and the wide gulf remains. The women who matter a great deal in social life, their position remains the same. Adequate feed back so necessary and intelligent participation in the programme is indispensable.

7. UNESCO report - Media (relevance in the developed Countries (1960)

Our economy has vast potentials of growth and development, but our growth strategy based on borrowed ideologies, borrowed theories and borrowed experiences has made it impossible for us to recognise them and realize them. This resultant crisis is thus, one of potential dangers and of potential opportunities. Daniel Lerner found that Modernization and economic development involve three phases - growth in urbanization, growth in literacy and finally growth in mass media. Thus, the function of mass media is to open up the large masses in society to new information new thought, new attitudes, and new aspiration, which lead them to new achievements. Since this has been successfully implemented in the western world like America, Britain and Germany and in the eastern world like Japan and Singapore, there is no reason why India being the Seventh industrial power should stay behind.

The difficulties that lie in the way of using communication effectively as a tool of development are many. (1) Communication policies are time-bound and unsystematic (2) communication networks are inadequate (3) wide gaps exist between the small modernizing elite and the large mass of tradition bound people. (4) Mass media are limited chiefly to the elite (5) traditional communication networks are little used (6) There is scientific knowledge of the situation in which communication is expected to function (7) Communication is little tried and its working not entirely understood in developing societies.

Finally, the developing countries often do not have a very clear image of the modernity they are working towards.

There is, thus, a need to organize an infrastructural layout and a programme pattern for mass communication, which are tailored to the needs and aspirations of an area or community or audience, which the two together are intended to save. Alas ! this is at present an unattainable goal. And today, inequality, uneven development and wide if not also widening disparities seem to be a fact of life and of this land. Even the media men are so blinkered by the conditions in urban and affluent areas that they have not yet begun to think of an area approach to mass communication problems as they prevail in the depressed, deprived areas of the rural world.

Media men have to understand the challenge of the total developmental process and the relevance of their sectoral or selected media activities to the greater needs of the balance growth. M.V. Desai illustrates and supports this hypothesis by providing examples from the field of (1) Agriculture (2) Area development or integral use of land and water resources (3) Literary work in the villages and (4) Farm broadcasting, with special reference to the communication aspects of rural life. While some innovations have ill effects on the lives of the rural people, others are quite beneficial. However,

innovations are usually concerned with immediate problems and immediate benefits and are often at the cost of long range benefits which are important for lasting and enduring rural changes. Such snapshots of change might give some idea of the types of rural change which might be the hope and ambition of mass communicators to bring about.

A communication is an essential catalyst in any development programme but if it is not the panacea for all problems of development communication priorities need to be worked out carefully to meet the national needs and these should be periodically evaluated and modified with regard to mass-media improvement.

(1) In a democratic set up like ours, the mass media among other tasks should strive to keep the citizens fully ecologically aware. So that the process of rural development can be expedited with the active participation of the enlightened rural people.

(2) In order to change the very character of the mass media, the present Urban-bias should be replaced by a rural outlook which should be reflected in narrative devices as well as in the content e.g. culture, local dialects etc.

(3) Due emphasis needs to be placed in rural communication strategy to create a sense of involvement, participation and cooperation among the people. Efforts should be made to break

the present psychosis of dependence on the Government for everything.

(4) A coordinated approach to the respective media expansion programmes has to evolved. Even so the audio-visual media would be the obvious choice in view of the low literacy in rural areas. Moreover audio-visual materials can be produced by using intermediate technology at a reasonably large scale but at a relatively low cost.

(5) More stress should be laid on the training of media men than the provision of mass communication facilities. So as to enable them to lead towards corrective action and balanced growth.

The new society cannot be built up unless education and mass communication play their legitimate roles. The present tendency to leave things to evolve by themselves is fatal to the orderly progress of the Indian Society. Neither the constructive Sarvodaya Workers nor the disruptive naxalites, both of whom are fully alive to the situation in the land, have been able to make any progress in their efforts because of the failure to use effectively the means of communication available and extend them so that people in the urban slums and in the rural and hilly tracts of the country can be influenced and roused to participate in the building up of new society.

This paper is an overview of the communication media policies, in Family Planning and agriculture with special reference to rural India. It is intended to delineate to what extent communication media can go. It intends to show that in a given political socio-economic system of India, certain messages to particular audiences are apt to be rendered expensive, as the role of communication in such areas, cannot be more than supportive and complementary. To this effort will be made to establish the neglected areas in communication media policies and why the message does not percolate swiftly and to rulers and planners convenience. The review of both, the problems of agriculture and family planning in the context of communication media is further separately analysed.

Agriculture (Problem)

A little over 72 percent of India's population live in the rural areas. K.A.P.Menon says "There is no doubt that if land reform measures are taken up with sense of urgency, it will certainly benefit large groups of rural population who have got very small and extremely uneconomic holdings or sometimes no land base at all". Menon adds "The extent of unemployment and under employment in the villages is of such magnitude that agriculture and allied programmes alone will not be able to absorb this force... 8

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8. K.P.A. Menon: Towards integrated rural development: The Indian experience; a pamphlet by the Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Published in 1980.

Then a look at the land allocation while it is applauded that India produced in the year 1978/79 on all time high of 130.5 million tonnes of food grain as compared to 50 million tones on independence. Seventy percent of the peasants (whom Indian indiscriminately call farmers with little regard to rural stratification) cultivate only 20% of the area under cultivation out of 70 million holdings, 23 million are below 0.5 hectares in size. And Menon says of them".. vast areas remain under developed with very low productivity.

That half an hectare, with dismal yields, supports an average of four or five members, who besides trying with the under developed land, they work as labourers in those farm owned by a 30 per cent minority. A record of food grain production therefore is just associated with the labour of millions of peasants in form of labourers and not owners of cash accruing from sales of crops.

However, a barren piece of land isolated, attended to by ignorant illiterates unreachable by a village level worker, its tiller without money to buy inputs or without knowledge of existence of loans, permanently engaged by a big farmer in the neighbourhood, for his survival and that of his family members such land is almost useless and its tiller a helpless lot feeding on husks of frustration. If droughts strike

twice as Dr. R.P. Singh⁹ says, this peasant will never think again of cultivating his piece, even if information was reaching him on how to use modern agriculture techniques.

The dynamics of land systems intend and semi-feudal operations that are a feature of rural India, have it that the small land holders are permanently frustrated as their holdings are continually, but systematically absorbed into big farms. Failure to get meaningful harvest because of drought, smallness of the land, inability to secure inputs and at times, short of time as they spend much time on big farmers land, they are obviously forced to sell the small pieces or simply surrender them to landlords whom they are for a few rupees.

And here, when the majority are turned into farm labourers, opportunities for them get chance even during peak seasons, remuneration get thinner and helplessness reign.

A noted surgeon, Dr. L.H. Hirananda writes on rural poverty in India "..... In our country, about 200 million live in absolute penury and hunger and starving parents often kill their children and finally commit suicide. Children are

9. Dr. R.P. Singh - IIMC, extension work in agriculture 1981.

kidnapped, their limbs amputated and they are used as beggars in large cities. When the poor sells one kidney to save his family from hunger he is indulging in enthausia. This situation is not confined but cities are alive with such examples.¹⁰

Two schemes introduced in the fourth five year plan - small farmers development agency and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers development agency had had an insignificant achievement. The All India rural credit committee¹¹ appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to look into the agencies operations concluded in its report that credit was not flowing to small and marginal farmers. Those who borrowed from the cooperatives, their numbers went up proportionately with the size of the assets. Subrata Banerji laments on the same when he says that in rural India, various land reform measures "have not touched the main problem of exploitation without a redistribution of land, all the government aid has been cornered by the rural rich. This has accentuated poverty in the rural areas."¹²

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10. Dr.L.H. Hiranandan, Murder of Millions, Blitz, Sept 20, 1980. Dr. writes against the proposed mercy killing bill.
 11. All India Rural Credit Review Committee reports as quoted by K.P.A. Menon.
 12. Subrata Banerji, Thirty five years after Independence : a review of economic performance in India, Blitz, Aug 15, 1980.

Even where some reform had had some impact, say the allocation of half an hectare to a household, the case in West Bengal proves that beneficiaries have not been able to improve their lot to "any appreciable extent". For operational holdings have not been economically viable. The cost of production is very high and another big problem is lack of sufficient supply of input.¹³

In some cases where credit has, as a phenomenon, reached the people, the situation has not been all that different. "Institutional credit has been advanced for production purposes, but it has largely been utilized for consumption purpose, and it cannot be helped where the main question is survival...".

The land distribution act, that many look to for changes in allocation of land on what they call distributing 'surplus' land above certain ceilings is said to be full of loop holes. A country where the entire might of the judicial pronouncements is thrown on the side of the existing social order, "based on the unviolability of private property relations in rural areas, has hardly any chance of success.

Coming back to the media has been well observed i.e. the problem of Newspaper reach in rural areas especially in connection with illiteracy. This applies to all public-actions

13. Girish Mishra, Next step in rural India, Patriot, Feb 21, 81.

as far as the majority of the people is concerned. But as far back as 1960s plans to use radio to transmit information on agriculture were launched. It is at this time progress had been made in laboratories of various agricultural institutes, where new seeds capable of high yields were abundantly available what we call a 'laboratory revolution' had taken place.

↓ It is a record that a district in South India was able to cultivate and harvest what came to be known as "Radio rice". It is said that farmers used to listen to radio broadcasts on their newly acquired radio transistors from where they learnt new agricultural technologies.

There are two major points here. First it is only district Tanjore in Tamil Nadu in the whole of India that reaped radio rice second, the district is said to be well understood, who can "well irrigate" the land and afford radio transistors. And no wonder "radio rice" is a creation of some media correspondents who visited the area and got fascinated, otherwise Tanjore is not known for spectacular listening or possession of radio transistors.

The "Green revolution" of Punjab and Haryana states cannot be attributed to the transistor revolution. A

succinct study of property relations and land politics in Punjab¹⁴ since the just half of the 19th century does not provide any basis for exciting news when the area gets a bumper crop. The same applies to Haryana and the already discussed Tanjore.

Moreover there are those "miraculous high yielding varieties of wheat in the first half of the 1950s that were responsible for the green revolution, as they gave an almost fourfold increase in the yield per acre.¹⁵ After all, hybrid seeds could be developed only for a few crops like Wheat, Jawar, Maize, Bajra and Cotton. Where rice is the major crop, whether one glued his ear to the transistor it would definitely be futile.

What in fact G.N.S. Raghavan calls a spectacle of the farmer carrying a transistor radio to his field, is indeed confined to areas where the peoples major occupation is yielding enough, and from which ones desire is compelled to buy a transistor. Here also not for educational purpose as is often wildly alleged.¹⁶

Family Planning (Problem)

India has the world's largest government sponsored voluntary family planning programme. The infrastructure is

14. E.P.W., Vol.XVI, No.8, Feb 1981.

15. op.cit.

16. G.N.S. Raghavan - Do Mass Media reach the masses?. Communicator, IIMC, Vol XV, No.3, July 80.

vast. The services rendered are of a wide variety and the amount spent is quite sizable.

But has India, since the launching of the programme on a massive scale in 1962, been able to achieve commensurate results? With an average of Rs.100 crore annual budget India now implement the programme through 35358 primary health centres and 46564 sub centres. Out of the 393 districts in the country 368 have primary health centres employing 73,976 people.

Out of 100 eligible couples in the age group 15.44, the programme has been able to protect 22 so far. The number of people who have accepted any one from of birth controls 41.43 million. Nearly 38 million unwanted birth have been averted.

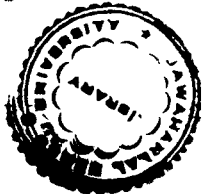
The target set up the time of launching the programme in 1962 was to bring down birth rate from 42 per thousand to 25 per thousand. But by 1977 it could be brought only to 33 per 1000. The performance of the programme was not satisfactory during 1977 to 1979.

The outcome of the 1981 general census, putting the figures at over 680 million, a growth of 24.75 percent, is unwelcome. The increase here is not viewed as that of an added valuable, creative and productive force but a burden, a liability. Hence the need for doubled effort in mobilising all available resources to check population advance.



It is at this crucial stage the communication media comes in. The need to communicate with bureaucrats, workers, peasants, industrialists, landlords, landless, politicians, jobless and even beggars - to tell them the need for reducing birth or spacing them, getting their response and working on that response to furnish them with requirements - necessary for the implementation of the programme is indeed hectic task.

The press, the radio and television are other forms of media are being utilized for the family planning programmes. Documentary films have been produced in greater numbers for the same. Of late, it has been discovered that the mass media does not sufficiently reach the people to emphasize the use of condoms, sterilization or application of intra-uterine devices. Personal contact - interpersonal - communication is sought as the most effective way delivering delicate messages that deal with the behaviour of men and women. Accordingly, 300,000 workers are now in the field, all over the country, executing family welfare programmes which are referred as family planning programmes.¹⁷



Family planning media planners believe very strongly that the problem in the whole programme is the adamant attitude of the target audience. Therefore family planning programmes, aimed at reducing the birth rate in the country

17. Professor V.R. Naik - Institute of health and Family Welfare - March 1981.

as the major task, are reasoned out as "value change programmes". This question of attitude in family planning,¹⁸ is also found in agriculture. The supposed applier of new technologies is said to be reluctant to change his old-age attitude and in addition suffer from lack of information.¹⁹ Since agriculture absorbs about 99 percent of the rural population and ²⁰ it is among this majority we find unquestionably big per centage of fertility, it is important to look at population and agriculture as necessarily interlinked subjects.

One significant aspects in both fields is that rulers and, surprisingly, planners attribute and short comings to insufficient supply of information for the "farmers ignorance and lack of knowledge of modern technology is crucial and is impending agricultural progress."²¹

18. An interview with Prof Naik with IIMC.

19. K.N. Singh - Farm information Development and transfer systems in rural development and Communication policies - IIMC 1980, p.109.

20. The number of those engaged in non-agricultural activities is negligible, and almost non-existent as production on the land is almost a culture of the rural masses. Even the landless are forced to work for the big farmers or work as share-croppers, or live on the sweat of others in extended families.

21. Ibid. P-109.

However a decline in agricultural production²² to 2.2 per cent per annum between 1964/65 and now, as compared to 3.2 per cent in the previous 15 years since 1951/52, inspite of the widely publicised "green revolution" and a grotesque potrait of marginal farmers who have become subsistence and subsequently agricultural labourers²³ and eventually landless and unemployed, seem to have little or nothing to do with information dissemination. Hence the insistence of information flow to the grass root level."

In population control, the Government has been forced to repeatedly revise its goals. In 1962 it was declared that the birth rate should be brought down to 25 per 1,000 persons by 1973.²⁴ It was not reached. In 1969 the rate was still (conservatively estimated that year) at 37. This made the planning commission to set a target rate of 32 per 1,000 to be reached by 1974 saying the goal of 25 per 1,000 would be reached about 1980-82. The 32 per 1,000 persons target was also not reached. Sample registration scheme put the rate at 34.6 per 1,000 in 1973. Then it was estimated that the 30 per 1,000 would

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22. Illustrated Weekly - Madras, 1981 - Article by the director of Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy.
23. Bunker Roy of SWRTC, a voluntary rural agency in Tilonia village near Udaipur in an article Rural poverty Urban ignorance - Hindustan Times, October, 19, 1980.
24. B.L. Raina, The Family Planning Programme in India - Studies in Family Planning. Vol I, No. 3, April 1964.

be reached in 1978. It did not materialize. The sixth five year plan puts 1983 as the date when the target of 30 per 1,000 would be reached.²⁵

These estimations have always been based on expectation that the media would do their job, the condom would work, and any other contraceptive devices would be applied. It must be a shock of the century to planners who have to note that the 1981 census, according to the census registrar general, has put the birth rate at 36 per 1,000 persons. He reports "..... birth rate has reduced from 41 per 1,000 in 1971 to 36 in 1981 ...".²⁶ This suggests that the 34.6 target has not been reached and besides past projections being based on wrong figures, targets as indicate above are not within the scope in the targeted dates. Therefore, the constant revision of targets, and now the revelation of faulty projections which have been going on for many years (1979 projections in population increase exceeded by 12 million),²⁷ cannot be blamed on the media or attributed to inefficient means of communication to and with the "grass root".

Whatever achieved through the media is inadequate. The media should be utilized fully, the radio, the television

25. UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities) Report of Mission on needs assessment for population activities April 1979 as quoted from Govt. of India, expert Committee on population projections.

26. Times of India - A news report, March 19, 1981.

27. Ibid.

hoardings, person to person and so on. At present only the middle class and the people in the cities have been motivated but the people in the villages are still the same.

The basic motivation will come only when the masses will realise that family planning is for them, an immediate interest. If the villagers can be ensured certain nutritional inputs so that they know that their children have got a fair chance of surviving then and then only will the people agree to have fewer children.

CHAPTER - IAPPROACHES TO COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT
OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Any attempt to use Mass Communication for rural development can be said to have an theoretical foundation. That is, it is based on certain assumptions about how people acquire and accept or reject information, ideas and beliefs and about how they use their knowledge and act on the basis of convictions.

Similarly, every such effort also presupposes a concept of development. For example for some development is handing over technology to the unskilled so that they can become more productive for others it is awakening the intellectual and decision making potential of the rural people so that they themselves can change the very structure of the society. These two underlying concepts - one regarding the nature of communication and the other that of development are closely related.

The theoretical study of communications role in rural development has advanced with the growth of empirical knowledge as a result of finding out what works and what does not. New approaches have been devised to overcome perceived weaknesses in previous efforts, and attempts have been made to explain why some approaches fail and others succeed.

The theoretical study of rural development communication has also been influenced by the evolution of accepted ideas about development. It has not only been concerned with how communication contributes to bringing about change and why; it has also had to consider shifts in thinking about what kinds of changes rural development should foster.

Thus, although theoreticians tend to state their views in absolute terms there are no absolutely right or wrong theoretical models for rural development communication. A model that seems to work in one kind of development situation may not be suitable for another. Today theoreticians know much more about Communication in rural setting than a decade before.

An attempt has been made to examine a number of communication approaches in rural development in less developed countries. Our object is to see how certain assumptions and principles of rural development influence communication and what some of the implications of different approaches of Communication are.²⁸

28. Wilbur Schramm, "Communication and Change in the developing countries" - (Ed) Lerner and Schramm 1972.

Critique of Conventional Approaches in Development Communication; The biases and myths in the prevailing development approaches:

It has been commonly held among the planners, 'development experts' and administrators that the traditional institutions, values, beliefs and the unchanging attitudes of the agrarian population form stumbling blocks in the way of development of the third world rural areas. The poor peasants and landless labourers who form the bulk of the agrarian population are considered as change 'resistant', closed to creative innovations and generally passive towards changing their life situations. The stereotypes - passivity, apathy, distrust and resistance to change of the peasantry as opposed to 'achievement motivation' continue to prevail in the thinking of the planners and in the formulation of the strategies of development. But the historical evidence from various parts of rural areas in India seem to controvert the assumptions held by the development 'planners'. Pushed to the point of starvation and alienated from their lands - the only source of subsistence - peasants in the recent past and present have shown greater potentialities and organizational skills in mobilizing themselves on the questions of land, wages and on issues relating to socio - cultural domination of the upper crust of the rural society on their lives.

Reports pouring into the press on the agrarian struggles waged in the rural areas often involving police firings and deaths (in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu States) seem to contradict the assumption that peasants are unwilling to be mobilized into development programmes; that the development messages turned out by the media did not affect the rural masses in motivating them to participate in the development programmes; that the information disseminated did not interest the tradition oriented unchanging Indian peasant. On the other hand the mobilization witnessed show the contrary trend, that if peasants convinced of the goals of a programme of action that could change their living conditions, do not hesitate in the least to actively participate even in the face of severe repression. To put this observation in historical perspective, peasants in backward asiatic societies like China and Vietnam took part in radical anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements and transformed their societies in a dramatic manner, given an ideological direction. In Latin American countries like Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Gautemala and Peru, peasanta applied conflict resolution strategies to change their conditions of living.²⁹

29. Peasant Rebellion in Latin America Gervilt, Huizer - Marwafi Pub., New Delhi, 1978.

In India both in the pre and post Independence period various peasant movements sprung up aimed at altering the land relations in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere.³⁰

Yet, all these experiences have not seriously shaken the notions held by the social scientists and development planners on the peasants,³¹ causing any rethinking and change in the orientation of the strategies of development.

Rural development in India has been considered as a solution to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment of the multitudes of the agrarian population living in more than 5,50,000 villages.³² As far back as 1952 itself the community development programme was initiated with a small pilot project at Mehawa in Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh. Considerable support was given to this scheme by the Indo-American technical fund and the Ford Foundation. Over a period of time, more and more villages came under this all over India and this programme was incorporated into the five year development plans.³³

30. Telanga Armed Struggle - Sundariah, P., PPH, New Delhi, 1956

31. Desai, A.R. (Ed): Peasant Struggles in India, Popular Publication, Bombay.

32. Rural Development in Action: UMAKANT, Bombay, Somaiya Publication:

33. Ibid.

In the later period various other schemes for rural development were adopted which includes integrated rural development programmes, small Farmers Development Programmes and various tribal development programmes. Besides this, a number of voluntary associations financed by both indigeneous and external sources have proliferated in the rural areas aiming at ameliorating the living conditions of the rural lot.³⁴

An attempt is made in the following part to discuss the assumptions underlying these development programmes at a general level.

Western Biases in the THEORETICAL Understanding of Third World Agrarian Societies:

The Philosophy underlying these programmes is primarily derived from western models of development which can be subsumed under the modernization theories.

These models based on a dichotomy between the western Industrialized societies and the Third World under developed societies sought to explain the causes of under development in terms of the presence or absence of certain variable. For instance, Smelser in his model of structural differentiation identifies a developed economy and society as a highly differ-

34. Mukherjee, K.K., Report on Voluntary Organizations engaged in rural development, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1978.

entiated structure (with complex organizational and professional structures and communication networks, etc.) and an underdeveloped one as relatively lacking in differentiation. Hence initiating changes in the later ones should begin with introducing those elements that characterize developed societies. Commercialization of agriculture, dissemination of scientific and technological skills and innovations building faster and efficient communication facilities are the essential factors to effect modernization process, to mention a few.³⁵

Hoselitz³⁶ applying Parsons pattern variables argues that developed countries are characterized by the variables of Universalism, achievement orientation, functional specificity and the underdeveloped countries by the opposite variables of Particularism ascription and Functional diffuseness.³⁷ The assumption is that introducing the former's advanced variables would generate the dynamics of change in the traditional under developed societies.

35. SMELSER, N.J. Industrialization and society in-Dalton, G. (Ed): Economic Development and Social Changes, New York. The Natural History Press, 1971.

36. HOSELITZ, B.F., Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth, Chicago Press 1960.

37. Op. cit.

✓ Max Weber in his work on "The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism" had argued, how the this worldly value orientations in Protestantism provided a basis for the rational organization of the capitalist economy, facilitated hard work and the spiritual incentives needed for economic development.³⁸ On the other hand Asiatic religions like Hinduism oriented to the other world, and traditional beliefs like the Indian Peasants Fetishism around the tools of production blocked the rise of productive forces.³⁹ That factors like colonial plunder and a fleecing zamindari system stultified the indigeneous industrialization in immuneration of the peasantry did not figure in Weber's analysis is not relevant in this context. The point however, is that such kinds of theoretical constructs still dominate the thinking of social scientists while formulating a development model for the backward peasant societies in the Third World.

Socio-cultural obstacles and socio-cultural Pre-requisites to development:

The two other themes that arise out of the modernization model for development is the notion of social and cultural

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38. Max Weber: The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism, translated by TALCOTT PARSONS, 1930, London, George Allen and Unwin 1930.
39. Foster, G.M., Traditional Cultures: The Impact of technological change, Harper and Row, 1962.

barriers to development to explain why certain peasant groups resist change and are conservative in their attitude towards economic development. The other theme is the observe of it, the problem of identifying the social and cultural factors that facilitate the economic take-off and development. In the first case, peasant cognitive systems and the associated institutions are sought to be explained as the major cultural obstacles to change.⁴⁰

Foster in his studies on Mexican villages found strong evidence that peasants espoused conservatism and lacked interest in exploiting new social and economic opportunities and the messages of development on the media did not motivate them to action. From this he generalised his findings that the Peasant's view of the world is strikingly different from other categories of persons. The Peasants' perception of their social world in terms of an unsecure competitive game in which this gains are always at the expense of somebody else, lead to their withdrawal or unwillingness to avail themselves of the new opportunities for the fear that this will lead to increasing socio-economic inequalities and internal conflict.

As an anti-thesis to the idea of barriers or obstacles in the view that certain factors act to, make it possible for,

40. Wilbert, E. Moore, Social Change, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice - HALL, 1963, pp. 93-97.

or encourage economic development to take place. These factors have been variously referred to as 'pre-requisites', 'preconditions', 'stimulants' or 'facilitating factors'. A long catalogue of economic and infrastructural facilities have been considered necessary for economic growth. For instance, improvement in technology, availability of capital and credit facilities, adequate market structures and above all communication facilities and media network for quicker dissemination of information.

Wilbert, E. Moore, in his discussion on Industrialization emphasized the role of values like a placement system grounded on merit in performance as opposed to the values of traditional societies based on kinship ties, status and obligation, in promoting economic development. He also considers the value "institutionalization of rationality" an important factor in facilitating economic take off.⁴¹

Cliffard Geertz also talks about the normative and institutional changes that precede economic growth and prepare the ground for it. He considers it pertinent to pose the question what sorts of social and cultural transformations are underway during the pre-take-off period which may later facilitate development.⁴²

41. Wilbert Moore- Social Change. Prentice Hall, N. York 1969.

42. Geertz, C. Social development and economic change, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1963, p.3.

An answer to this kind of question is provided in the sociological literature on development by authors like Hoselitz, Mecllelland and Hagen.⁴³ This school of thought believes that attitudinal and value changes are reinterpretations of ideology and are essential pre-requisites for creating a developed society and economy. The intellectual origins of this school can be traced to Max Weber's writings on Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.⁴⁴

The foregoing brief exposition presents a linear western biased model of development based on the assumptions of a dichotomy between the western and traditional societies and identifying the patterns that are present in the western developed societies to attribute the under development of third world societies to the lack of those factors or patterns. The introduction of these factors - will all advanced technological and scientific institutional structures and the social values and cultural norms that are necessary for the economic growth is considered essential for effecting a development transformation of those societies.

43. Hoselitz, B.F. Op. cit., Mccllelland, D.C; The achieving society, New York, Free Press, 1961 and

44. HAGEN, E. On the theory of social change, Homeword, Illinois Dorsey Press, 1962.

Communication'Top to down'
OR
"Trickle down process ..."

In the foregoing part the western bias in the strategies of development has been outlined. In such a model the issues of underdevelopment and understanding the peasants' potential for change in the third world context are grossly distorted in the perception of the planners and communicologists. Such a distortion of perception stems from either the negligence of the historical and class contradictors arising out of the antagonistic interests between the mutually opposed agrarian classes in a rural situation.

The communication experts and development planners mostly with urban background did not have the opportunity to identify with the poor and their problems, who are supposedly the beneficiaries of the programmes of development. Their class background and their perception of the objective reality prevailing in the rural areas prevented their from becoming familiar with the "view from below".⁴⁵ They are hardly trained to look at the overall situation's through the labourer's the peasants' eyes. Biased with a sense of superiority in relation to the poor and the illiterate, they are prepared to teach, to utilize communication techniques, but not to listen, to learn and genuinely communicate in the form of dialogue.

45. Gerrilt Huizer and Bruce Manhein (Eds.): The politics of anthropology, The Hague Monton 1939.

The growing unrest and frustration in the rural areas is as little understood as farmely the apprent apathy and resistance to change, by these planners. Instead of understanding the objective causes behind the rural unrest, they tried and are still trying to meet the situation by giving palliatives, piece meal reforms and by additional resources channelized through the dominant interests, and in most of the cases by outright repression. This unrest in the peasantry is ignored and feared rather than trying to understand it as a positive sign of their potentiality to change.

This misunderstanding and bias about the peasantry seems to be a universal factor in the contemporary development programmes through out the underdeveloped countries in Latin America, Africa, South and South East Asia. In the case of India the United Nations official document regarding the development of local rural communities assumed that "the people living in a locality have many and varied interests in common".⁴⁶ But very soon the weakness of this common interest approach became evident and the UN evaluation mission itself recognised the irreconciability of the rural class interests between the money lenders - landlords and sharecroppers, tenants and land labourers and recognized the falacity of

46. Quoted in United Nations, Popular participation in Development : Emerging trends in Community Development, New York, 1971, p.6.

seeing common interests between these two broad rural sections.⁴⁷

Consensual Approach

Despite the early signals the "UN evaluation mission made the consensual approach continued to dominate the rural development programmes. As was pointed by A.R. Desai, the Community development movement implicitly accepted among others, the assumptions that individual groups and classes in a village community have common interests which are sufficiently common to create general enthusiasm, and further that conflicts of interests were sufficiently reconcilable. Desai further noted, quoting from official as well as academic sources that these assumptions proved to be unrealistic. In fact, the better-off benefitted most from the programmes and a growing disparity and inequality became visible in the rural areas.⁴⁸

Communication through traditional leaders (Opinion leaders):

As a part of the harmony based strategy development workers, agricultural extension workers generally accepted the idea that communicating new ideas and innovations through the established traditional leaders in the village would automatically benefit the whole village community. This communicat-

47. UN report on Community Development Evaluation Mission in India, New York, 1959, p.414

48. Desai, A.R., Community Development projects: A sociological analysis, in A.R. Desai (Ed.) Rural sociology in India, Popular Prakashan 1969, pp. 615-8.

ion strategy, followed in most countries has been called 'trickle down process' or 'oil stain approach'. It is also officially named in the communication parlance as "two step flow of information."⁴⁹

Information about improved technology; high yielding variety of seeds, fertilizers and improved farm implements who first to be given to the more advanced farmers - the 'opinion leaders' who were prepared to accept the new innovations, with the expectation that the other farmers would follow their example.

In a traditional stratified rural society characterized by a high degree of unequal distribution of land and other resources, channelizing development information and inputs lead to the further widening of the already existing gulf between the rural rich and the poor. These traditional leaders in most cases are invariably drawn from the upper echelons of the agrarian societies, holding a large chunk of land holdings with irrigation facilities, and having access to media and information. They drew their power both from their monopoly over the land and other resources, and from their superior position in the Caste and ritual hierarchy in a stratified agrarian society.

49. Beteille, Andre - Studies in Agrarian Social Structure Delhi, Oxford University Press 1978, p. 148.

In an agrarian society based on objective inequalities - maldistribution of resources where production is carried on Feudal relations, channelizing development inputs and information through the opinion leaders strengthens those very sections which are already well-off and further sharpen the contradictions between the rich and the poor.

In the case of the later development programmes, despite being geared to specific weaker sections in the rural areas the marginal and small peasants, the same process of cornering of the development benefits by the rural elite was strangely witnessed. The growing alienation of land from the peasants, the large scale eviction of the tenants and share croppers, and the perpetual immiseration of the rural proletariat and their migration to the urban areas to find a living in the past points out to the direction of these development programmes are leading to.⁵⁰

The extension and community development approach:

Perhaps the oldest and the most common approach of rural development communication in less developed countries is the extension service for the dissemination of useful and practical information on agriculture, internal economics and public

50. Rao, Laxman, Y.V. Communication and development, Minneosta Press, 1966, p. 97-114.

Sharma, H.P. - The Green revolution in India - in Kathleen Gough & H P Sharma (Eds) Imperialism & revolution in South Asia - New York, M.R. Press, 1978, p.94.

health. This approach is based on ideas borrowed from the West, particularly from the U.S. The rationale for this approach is that there is a growing body of practical knowledge available from scientific and technical research that can be extended to the individual rural families to keep them improve their position. The assumptions underlying this approach are that the rural families are interested in receiving new information and that they have the necessary supporting resources or can procure them in order to supply the new information in useful activities.⁵¹

✓ In developing countries extension services are offered by different departments of the Government bureaucratic organization. Professional administrators, specialists and technicians organize the services. Each department extends the services to the rural population by its extension agents. The extension agents visit the villages, arrange demonstration of improved practices, and contact individual families. ✓

The community development approach of rural development in the result of a number of different influences: (1) dissatisfaction with the uncoordinated extension activities of competing Government department; (2) the successful example of planned development in the Soviet Union; (3) Sociological theory and principles of community organization and social

51. Extension approach - a review Haile Meukerios Agricultural extension services (International Council for Educational Development, 1972.

change; and (4) international development assistance from the UN and the United States.

The Indian approach is based on the assumption that the great mass of the illiterate and poor rural population is a highly valuable development source. The Industrial rural families and the communities can be guided to the path of development if they are given practical knowledge of the social and natural services and technology. The Government has the main responsibility for bringing together the forces of the rural Mass and the sciences and technologies. This has to be done rapidly so that the pattern of life in the villages is not seriously dislocated. It can best be done by decentralized interpersonal communication system at the community development block level. Each community development block is served by a team of multipurpose village-level workers supported by the subject matter specialists at the block level and supervised and coordinated by the block development officer. The total programme is planned, guided and supported by a national level community development organization.⁵²

In the community development approach, the multipurpose village-level worker is the key communicator. Although he has a rural background, he does not belong to the village community.

52.(a) India's roots of democracy (Jean Joyce),
(b) Rural development administration (P.R.Dubashi)
(c) Blossoms in the Dust (Kusum Nair)

His socio-economic status in the society makes him more of a mediator between the rural elite and the development bureaucracy of the Government development (Dube, S.C., 1958, p.157-221). A notable variation in the extension of a community development approach of communication is practiced in a number of less developed countries. This variation is based on the assumption that the local leaders and local voluntary organization in the villages can become effective extension agents if trained and supported by the development agencies. Such a method can make much better use of the interpersonal communication and influence network in the village community than the extension method using Government agencies. It can work better if the peasant are organized into cooperatives or associations, and the organization leaders are trained and guided to perform extension services for theme members. This method is used in the French African "Amination rurale" programme of several, Irary, Coast, Daliomey (Goussault 1968, pp.525-550). In Bangladesh and Pakistan the rural cooperatives under the integrated rural development programme make the intensive use of this method of communication and extension.

Approaches to Communication - ITS EFFECTS:

It can be well observed that in some of the third world countries community development approach has generated much awareness and interest in development among the rural population.

The flow of scientific and technical information and advice from the west has reached the villages and aroused expectations of the people. But the corresponding flow of material resources needed to transform information into practice has not taken place.

The general tendency of Government in these countries has been to yield to pressure from the relatively prosperous class of people in the rural society.⁵³ The so-called green revolution has come to benefit the landlords and rich peasants much more than the poor peasants and landless workers. The beneficiaries of rural development the relatively prosperous class of people in the villages have become a powerful⁵⁴ political force. They have established effective communication linkages with the sources of power at the national level. They are now demanding more complex and better technical information, more productive material inputs and consumer goods, and have effective social and administrative services from the Government.

In contrast, the poor villagers who do not own adequate means of production to apply the new technologies have become more alienated. They are unorganized, and have no communication linkages with the sources of power at the national level.

53. On India's community development programme, Myrdal noted. It can no longer be regarded as a programme to supplement the lower strata effects at development. It has become a device for channelling Government assistance to not so poor. Asian drama, Vol.2, p.1343.

54. Dube, S.C: Communication, and planned change in India. Lerner & Schramm, p.156-57.

They cannot exert adequate pressure on the Government to bring about institutional changes that would create opportunities for them to participate with processes of development. Many leaders in the Government admit the need for institutional change, and the desirability of organizing and reorganizing the rural poor. The political faces operating in favour of the poor villagers are not strong enough to compel the leaders to initiate radical reform.

CHAPTER IIAGRICULTURE

It is usual to emphasize the importance of Agriculture in the Indian economy and in any other under developed economy-by pointing out that agriculture accounts for about half of the country's national income and employs about 70 of its labour force. One may also add that agriculture provides raw materials for a number of industries, which together account for about 50% of the national income generated in India's manufacturing sector. During recent years, we have all rediscovered that India is still poor and that our poverty is mainly concentrated among agricultural labourers. It follows that Indian agriculture would have to be developed in such a manner as to provide more production base to this sector and more remunerative employment to the agricultural labourers.⁵⁵

If agriculture is regarded as an industry its sustained growth is dependent on the nexus of science and resources more than any other industry. Keart, Bryanrt et al pointed out that the three kinds of

55. 'Asian Drama' (New York 1968) and the Challenge of World Poverty (Pelican edition 1971) Gunnar Myrdal.

sources are needed for the rapid agricultural progress. These are -

- (1) Capable scientists at work on the problems of farm people
- (2) Farmers who have confidence that science can help them
- (3) A bridge of communication to carry the message to and fro between source and the user.

It is therefore, that communication becomes a sine-qua-non for the adoption of agricultural innovations. It is this vital bridge that carries the results of research from the scientists, laboratory to the tillers and back. Frank Gleem rightly puts it, "The investigator advances knowledge, the interpreter advances progress."

Today, with millions of farms engaged in agricultural production, with meagre financial resources, backed by little or no managerial skills, and also because of many other constraints, agriculture, by and large can be considered having a status even lower than a cottage industry. The latest developments in agricultural technology evolved by research scientists, either do not immediately percolate to the farmers, as they become available only belatedly, in a distorted

farm, through wrong channels or let a turn when it is not needed or else they are not persuasive at all in nature.

What we aim at this growth in agriculture sector to feed our millions of people. There are two sectors of growth: 1) expansion of traditional inputs of land capital and labour 2) growth that springs from the production and application of new knowledge, production, dissemination and application. It is tough solution to these that we hope for long term sustained increase in national agricultural output. The main problem facing us today is not the lack of technology and scientific discovered by converting them into production accomplishment and using them as a tool of socio-economic change.

All the kinds of Human change required development, take long and are costly. And yet as Millikan & Blackner argue so persuasively "the permanent requirement of change in any society is that the people themselves must change". As we see it, this is the point where modern communication becomes so important for development.

Agriculture in India

The traditional methods of agriculture in India involve a combination of land, labour, animal power and a few implements for tillage, inter-cultivation, irrigation and harvest. These inputs are organized and combined in a production success that was changed little since vedic times. Religious philosophy led a farmer through progress and ritual in connection with vains, diseases etc. due to his total dependence on nature.

Over times the diffusion, meaningful innovation and the process of refining the production techniques have led to a close similarity of methods amongst widely scattered societies. Variation in the complex ecology of soil, climate, elevation, plant adaption and marketing institution affected the selection of production techniques very little, although relative demand expressed in the price mechanism offered the allocation of resources among alternative crops from one region to another.

This does not mean that output under traditional condition is static than has always been inventive and even within the restricted space of inherited wisdom there have been opportunities for

the perceptive and zealous craftsman to select, try and adopt minute changes in practices that yield better returns or to design new and more efficient way of meeting the challenges from time to time.

Diffusion of these findings seem to assure a small rate of growth in output thus left to itself, traditional agriculture has a slow long term growth, which fails to keep pace with the growth in population. The substance of traditional agriculture is the real inputs and the techniques of combining these to initiate and control biological processes.

During British rule the country's agriculture remained stagnant and due to diverse food habits and high death rate there was less burden on food grains. In the closing decades of the foreign rule, Indian agriculture was caught, in a series of crisis.

To break free from the restraints of traditional agriculture, attention must be focussed on changing inputs. This ultimately demands a full attack on the problem of farm education. It is a fact that the country's agricultural

stagnation is not due to shortage of knowledge about new inputs and new production methods, but due to reluctance on the part of farmers to cast off old ways and adopt new ones for which they have their own reasons.

Realising the necessity of change in the tradition bound agriculture of the country, the Government immediately after independence placed heavy emphasis on the extension of knowledge to the cultivators by providing an elaborate structure of administration and personnel for disseminating information at the village level.

Dynamic research programme taken up as research is one of the main-springs of agricultural growth. But research unless communicated to farmers is futile as communication without research results.

While Indian farmer have not met plan expectations their records is not very impressive. In the present context whenever new inputs have been made available together with adaptable innovations these have been accepted and the results were by far encouraging.

The complex changes of practices that simultaneously involve rotations, water management, proper application of protective chemicals, use of fertilizers and new implements require a formal apparatus to assure the spread of accurate relevant information and ensure its adoption. The very complexity of this message and its area of operation make it a difficult proposition indeed.

Steps taken for Agriculture Development and Flow of Information after Independence :

Mahatma Gandhi's programme for reconstruction of life on the rural areas probably set the ball rolling towards rural development. Inspired by his ideas several states (notably Bombay, Madras and Uttar Pradesh) had initiated programmes of rural development even before our independence.

Agrarian reforms were implemented inspite of tough resistance from big land lords and rich farmers. Emphasis was placed on developing major and minor irrigation schemes and net irrigation area was increased by 45% from 20.9 million hectares in 1950-51 to 30.3 million hectares in 1969-70.

With facilities like easy credit and other incentives the area under cultivation also increased from net sown area of 119 million hectares in 1950-51 to 139 million hectares in 1969-70. The farmer broke free from the clutches of money lenders, and banks were advised to provide easy credit facilities to the farmers.

Inputs like fertilizers, tools and implements and pesticides together with improved seeds were brought within the easy reach of farmers through cooperatives and other agencies.

The Government at various levels set aside considerable resources for developing the infrastructure of agriculture. Generally about 1/5th of the total plan outlay was devoted to agriculture. Thus upto 1971-72 Rs. 7,000 crores were spent on agriculture and allied heads.

Research in Agriculture was given a sound base, when at the time of independence only one research institute existed. Now almost all states have an agricultural University with all the measures taken by the Government, there are still certain limitations. The poor farmer can hardly

offered to buy fertilizers so as to increase the production. Likewise we are still dependant on the monsoon since underground water resources and new irrigation facilities are not yet finally developed.

After the grow more-food campaign failed to produce the required result, an inquiry committee was set up to investigate the causes of failure under the Chairmanship of Shri Krishnamachari. Their report had much to do with the introduction of community development projects. They pointed out that agricultural improvement is inextricably linked with a whole set of social problems..... and all aspects of rural life are interrelated and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt in isolation. This report and the American model resulted in community development programme and national extension service.

In the first five year plan it was said "community development is the method and rural extension is the agency through which five year plan seeks to initiate a process of transferring the social and economic life of the villagers. In the evaluation report on the first years working of

community projects it was said that the community projects and the national extension service had been promoted to attain four ends.

- a) Progressive outlook among the rural population
- b) Habits of co-operative action
- c) increased production
- d) increased employment.

Through this agency the research findings in agriculture were taken to the farmers, but as the programme envisaged multifarious activities there was little or no emphasis on agriculture development in its proper sense.

Because Agriculture extension was originally conceived for the relatively better educated average American farm family, it did not prove successful in this country where social, economic and psychological factors are entirely different.

Presently, the Ministries of food agriculture, community development and cooperation and education directly and through the various agencies at the Union and state level and through Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are disseminating agro information throughout the country.

Several agricultural universities in the country in addition to training personnel and conducting research in agricultural sciences have undertaken extension work. Presently the emphasis on development of Backward areas and on small and marginal farmers.

Communication Development-(Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP))

By 1960, under pressure for increased food production the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) was established in 15 pilot districts in India. Strictly speaking, the IADP was not an outgoing part of the community development programme but it was established within the framework of that programme. It used the community development administrative structure but with added personnel and equipment in the pilot projects. One new area of activity was the establishment of district communication support offices.

Dr. Webster believes that although the information/communication support in IADP was concentrated mostly on food production the method could be adopted to support any future integrated development. He said the most striking development

in communication in the IADP was the deliberate intensification of communication support at the district level. The IADP was undertaken in 1960 in one district in each of the then 15 Indian states to test the potential for INCREASING food production by providing, to participating farmers, a package of production practice such as good seed, timely, credit, fertilizer and pesticides, and improved cultural practices used in combination.

✓ The IADP was thus a pilot programme in 15 of the 325 districts of the country. An integral element of this programme was the addition of a special agricultural staff in each pilot district. Within this district organisation there was an agricultural information office, a distinct innovation in agricultural innovation in India. Before the IADP programme began there were state agricultural information officers, the IADP brought the active information function to the district level.

An information unit with a staffing pattern of four technical officers was set up in each of the intensive districts with the district agricultural information officer was primarily

responsible for radio information. Communication in the community development programme was interpersonal at the village level and was supported by general mass media support on a national regional and state scale. In agriculture where local conditions vary widely, an agricultural information staff within the district could support the local programme in terms of local interests and needs.

In India, the district agricultural information officer emerged as a new force in agricultural communication. The concept became recognized and was subsequently adopted in some other districts. At the beginning of 1970 there were approximately 40 to 50 of India's 225 districts which had assigned some person to carry out this function.

The district agricultural information officers responsibilities included, reporting producing information materials training fieldworker, speaking for the agricultural programme for the district promoting special educational campaigns and serving as a link in a two-way communication process in which he fed useful information back to administration on how farmers received the programmes, thus enabling the administrators to modify or improve the programme as necessary.

The educational and informational function of the District agricultural information officer applied to many aspects of agricultural production: Credit, Cooperatives, marketing, storage and other aspects beyond the normal production activities, with their heavy emphasis on agricultural production, their contribution to general community development was less direct, although there were good examples of activities such as road building, improvement of water supplies and the like.

✓ The IADP encouraged and accelerated the use of radio in agricultural information in India. Coincidentally, with the emphasis on radio in the district agricultural information offices, All India Radio, the Government Controlled Radio, established farm radio units in a number of their regional and state stations, resulting in a greater localization and usefulness of radio to the farmers. An excellent example of the use of radio was in the district of Tanjore in Southern India. A new rice variety was being introduced and it became widely accepted, in part through the concentrated and on-going efforts to promote it via radio throughout the period that this variety was

being introduced there was radio reporting on the variety, when to plant and how to care for it. What sprays to use for insects and diseases, and other information. The district information office had developed a close working relationship with the nearest radio station and news and specific information about the new rice was on the radio regularly to the extent that the rice variety became known locally as "radio rice".

Information over the radio was timed to coincide with the information given to the block and village level workers. The village worker was thus reinforced because the advice he gave, the farmer was supported by what the farmer heard on the radio.

The district agricultural organization administering the IDP had more than normal staff and equipment in order to discover what could be accomplished. Webster sees in the Indian district agricultural information, a potential for communication support of integrated rural development. He says - The district in India is a logical area for integration of communication in support of rural development. Development activity in the

district is centralized on the district offices of various ministers and departments. The tendency is for each agency to go its own way, but the recipient for most programmes is the same the Farmer and his family. In a country as short on resources as India, there are seductive potential economies in the integrating of programmes and informational materials. Programme in agriculture, health, and population are carried on generally and are good candidates for integration.

In the I/DP some very limited efforts were made to integrate agricultural and family planning messages. That experience suggests that although such integrated communication is difficult, it can be achieved at National, State and District levels of administration,, need to be in accord. The most difficult is the state level. Local officers are willing to carry out joint efforts, but they hesitate to take initiative without state clearance. If there is a national commitment to integration there needs to be a strategy of substantial cross training among officers at the state level. Ideally if state level officers can understand the principle of integration they can then let the district people work out its details and if the district people know they have the freedom to work together.

The Indian IADP experience was useful in demonstrating how to organize and support development with information at the district level. It has created a climate for serious attempts at integration both in programme and in communication.

Table

Distortion of Agricultural Information
occurring from District to Village level
in IADP district.

	Message 1	Message 2	Message 3
Original message	100.00	100.00	100.00
District level	55.27	70.12	80.77
Block level	52.16	62.20	71.24
VLW's level	28.74	42.73	56.62

Message 1 - Folior spray of Urea on Wheat crop-

Complex and very new

Message 2 - Control of stem borers in maize

crop - same

Message 3 - Use of 2,4-D to control weeds -

Simple and old.

Media Habits in Rural Society

✓ To communicate is to transmit a message but a message unlike a physical entity cannot travel in its united form. Transmission calls for a medium in which selected elements correspond to selected features of the original.

SIMON (1957) pointed out that the action of an individual was a function of his exposure to the sources of information. He further defined exposure as the willingness of a former to react with a particular information.media.

Thus communication channels are important stimuli to the individual in the adoption process. It provides a link between the diffusion of an innovation and its final adoption.

Most of the research conducted points out that there is a high correlation between the measures of communication growth. The amount of information available and the wideness of its distribution is the key factor in the speed and smoothness of development. Agricultural progress in any developing country depends upon the speed with which reliable, practically oriented, accurate

information related to the recommended farm practices and innovations are conveyed to the tillers of the soil.

Daniel Lerner, pointed out the existance of different communication patterns in different social systems. An attempt was made to study, if there were any differences in communication pattern of progressive and non-progressive villages in Delhi - territory. Shankariah said that farm consultation pattern of high yielding varieties information followed best farmer pattern in the progressive village, whereas in the now progressive village it followed friendship pattern. He found that differences in the perception of credibility existed due to different communication sources.

Credibility of Information Sources

<u>Progressive Village</u>	<u>Non-Progressive village</u>
1. Specialists	1. Demonstrations
2. Radio	2. Progressive farmers
3. Progressive farmers	3. Specialists
4. Block extension agency	4. Block extension agency
5. Demonstration	5. Radio
6. Folders	6. Folders
7. Newspapers	7. Newspapers

Impediments in Rural Society

The archaic, ~~Fe~~feudalistic land systems have been perpetuated and protected by the law and this is further defended as ethical, democratic and in line with Indian peasant psychology and tradition. But this peasant generally referred to as farmer, supposedly to avoid rural stratification, has not, after all had his psychology maintained. For in the face of economic strangulation, he has been,, all and again, a victim.

An expert immersed in rural development activities should be able to tell the real situation and conditions of the rural people: "The laws ~~are~~ being used to further protect the strong the revenue infrastructure is there basically to strengthen the hands of rural oligarchy; the village cooperatives are tools of the dominant minority." ⁵⁸

And if this is not enough to tell the situation in the rural set up, Bunker Roy adds".. Ask the rural poor what exploitation means and they do not know what you are talking about

58. Bunker Roy - Patriot Feb. 20, 1981.

because it is happening to them every day, it is their life.....so tell them they are being exploited is to tell them they are breathing". J.S. Yadava adds salt to a wound. He blasts into bitter facts and figures: "After 35 years of independence, according to official figures", he says, "We have 73 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population living below poverty line, which means that a person spends only Re. 1 per day to meet all needs, housing, education, health, transport etc.". The only problem with Yadava in his later argument is that he sees communication as being mainly faulty just as he puts it ".....The weakness of the economic policies and plans apart, the failure is that of communication".⁵⁹ He fails to appreciate the fact that "Ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is a ruling material force of society, is at the same time, its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal....controls the means of mental production.....Individuals

59. J.S. Yadava, Communication and the challenge of rural development in rural development and communication policies, IIMC, 1980.

comprising the ruling class.....rule as a class..
 as thinkers, as producers of ideas and regulate
 the production of the ideas of their age.....⁶⁰

Communication therefore, at the service
 of rulers, to impart their ideas, plans, attitudes
 enforce their economic culture, full of "dos" and
 "dents" which have little or no effect at all on
 the audience in terms of social and economic
 security, is not likely to develop in the minds of
 the poor, the alleged "critical conscience" capable
 of influencing their community.

Another significant factor we must consider
 here is unemployment and underemployment. Although
 there are no figures which reflect the full extent
 of unemployment in country, the employment exchange
 indicates the trend. Job seekers on live register
 totalled 9.8 million in 1976. Four years later, on
 31 March, 1980, the figure had jumped to 14.7 million-
⁶¹
 a 50 per cent increase. Those who did not come to
 the employment bureaux or who do not know they exist,

60. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels on the German
 Ideology as quoted in Marx and Engels, on
 Literature and art, from Collected Works,
 Marx & Engels Vol. 5 Moscow, 1976, pp.59-61
 These ideas are more valid today as when they
 were pronounced.

61. On social oppression and atrocities committed
 against women, a pamphlet presented at the
 National Women Conference in Kerala, Dec. 1980.

are estimated in millions, of course excluding those surplus and under utilized hands in the rural areas.

To this again adds the caste system of India which manifested itself as a vertical structure. S.C. Dube writes on "social structure and Peasant Communities" the individual castes permanently keep apart and at the same time are "linked and kept together by some well-designed expectations and obligations which integrate them ⁶² into a village system."

What is called "integration into village social system" here is dominance by a high caste, that by virtue of its social position, it also commands economic dominance. Almost all major studies in sociology in India indicate that people with big business, land and any other heavily propertied communities belong to upper castes. One such study⁶³ says classes have taken particular caste character. The Zamindar (landlord), those the study calls tenant - landlord. Cultivators

62. Rural sociology in India, A.R. Desai (Ed.) Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1969.

63. Pradhan S Prasad: Dynamics of Rural Bihar - Times of India, March 17, 1981, New Delhi.

and big farmers, are mostly upper caste Hindus in the case of Bihar. Top agriculturists households constitutes 16 per cent of all rural households but own about 60 per cent of the cultivable land. And a little over 80 per cent of those 16 per cent households are upper caste Hindus.

Working on this premises, the spartial relations between castes, which is more of material wealth than sheer hierarchial organisation signified an isolation of ideas and attitudes. Relationship in this case, is that of slave and master, and the flow of information is on these basis: Rural India is still a scene of schedule tribes and schedule castes. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have the largest population of these people. The above mentioned states have two thirds of total pool of unemployment in the country, with 71.04 per cent of the country's total schedule castes and 55.17 per cent of schedule tribes. Here are the most downtrodden who not only lack education and general literacy, but have no employment opportunities and occupational mobility, they suffer from indebtness, humiliating conditions of life and work (toilet cleaning for the lowest caste on the social ladder) and social oppression.

The majority continued to be denied "access to drinking water wells, eating places, roads etc. and any attempt by them to cross these barriers is met with brutal physical assault....The laws are ineffective.⁶⁵ In such a situation communication becomes a myth as any effort in telling people to be motivated. Communication in agriculture stumbles and then falls, never to reach millions who are landless poorly paid in farms, unemployed, indebted, semi employed and those begging or starving. When all round them is ostensible rhetoric about "green revolution" and self sufficiency in food and plans to export surplus.

Communication Strategy -

Problem of Organizational Communication

The problem of communication is not only between extension workers and farmers or rural people. The problem exists right with the agricultural universities and at different levels of extension service such as district, block and village level.

Today, besides the network of official extension service throughout the country, a large number of autonomous and private organisations and

65. Ibid

agencies are involved in promotion and communication of agricultural and other technologies and programmes of rural change. What is needed at the moment is a coordinated and integrated approach in this task, both official and non-official agencies supplementing and complementing each others efforts. Optimum use of all the mass media (radio, television etc.) demonstration and farmers training camps in proper combination would certainly bring about change in the village of developing countries like India and meet the growing need for knowing none and more in time about modern agricultural methods and developments.

It may also be pointed out that rural development and change require many and repeated behavioural changes among rural people. But at the same appropriate structural changes by the researches, planners, communication, bankers and financial institutions to bring about effective rural development.

CHAPTER IIII. Family Planning

In the mid and late 1950's, a team of experts from the United States was conducting a special survey on population and population problems in India. This was in Ludhiana, in Punjab. The team that stayed from 1956 to 1960 made a report that was to be later known as 'The Khanna Study'. John E Gordon, member of the group, dilated :

"The problem" (population) can be viewed as a malady of society comparable to a community overrun by conquerors, or a mid nineteenth century Ireland struck by potato blight."⁶⁶ If this statement was being heard by Britain's most cynical imperialist, Cecil Rhodes or his Lieutenant Joseph Chamberlain, they would have grinned with satisfaction. For the Rhodes, the question of big population and its consequent pressure and explosion, was a threat to British Civilisation. Civilisation means population problems.

Talking of imperialism, not in connection with population, Cecil Rhodes told his Journalist friend called Stead, in 1895. "I was in the East of London (working

66. The Khanna Study - Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, USA 1971, p. 297

class quarter) yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for 'bread', and on my way back home I pondered over the scene and I became more than convinced of the importance of imperialism... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the U.K. from a bloody civil war. We colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The empire as I always said is a 'bread and butter' question. If you want to avoid civil war you must become imperialists.⁶⁷

That time, Britain had gone through its most flourishing period of free competition, i.e., between 1840 and 1860. The ideas to form cartels was accompanied by another in Rhodes mind. That of exporting 'surplus' population so as to ease the problem at home, but again because the exported population would be representative of the British empire, then they would conquer and rule the new lands, acquire wealth and fulfil the imperialists dream, that of 'creating new markets for the goods' from Britain.

67. quote in VI by Lenin - Imperialism the highest stage of capitalism, p. 92. Article written by M Beer on 'modern British imperialism'.

India cannot think in these terms. When Rhodes lived in the era of colonisation emergence of capital and its dominance, When he was millionaire and 'King of Finance' who chartered a simplified way of conquering Africa and was responsible for the Anglo-Boer war of 1895. The present era is that of liberation, and after all, imperialism has changed both its tactics and strategy.

Britain according to Rhodes was being perturbed by a population of 80 millions. Today India has more than eight times the figure; neither in an economic boon nor with sufficient capital for such an adventure. But it is determined to reduce the birth rate.

India's desire to curb high rate population growth rates as few back as 1925, when it was still under British colonial rule. It is in this year the first birth control clinic was opened by a private practitioner. Five years later the British authority in Mysore ordered the opening of such clinics in the state to check the advance of population.⁶⁸

Independent India saw the construction of more clinics especially in the first and second five year plans (1951-56) and (1956-61). Dr Ashok Mitra claims that the

68. Sumanta Banerjee - Family Planning : A Critique for the Indian programme, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi 1974.

period 1951-56 was for initiating social behaviour and biomedical research arranging for advice on family planning in Government and rural medical centres.⁶⁹ In the second five year plan 1956-61, clinics which were brought to the appropriate channel through which advice could be given to the population were increased from 147 to 4,165 and research was not extended to communication and demography, and voluntary sterilisation was introduced in many states.

Expenditure in the first five year plan was estimated at Rs.1.45 million while in the second plan Rs.21.56 million was allocated. It is in third five year plan that allocation for family planning and health was increased to Rs.248.60 million and from this amount, research projects in communication had to be funded. The third five year plan says among other things:

"The intensification of the educational programme is crucial to the success of the entire movement. Information has to be made available to the largest possible scale and conditions created in which individuals can freely resort to family planning."⁷⁰

69. Ashok Mitra in *India's population*, New Delhi 1978
Vol. II, p. 633

70. Sumanta Banerjee - *op. cit.*, p. 675

A fully fledged department of family planning was created in the Ministry of Health, family planning and urban development and still in the third five year plan, a further Rs. 24 million crores was provided to strengthen campaigns and boost communication programmes. Films, press, radio and later television, wall paintings, bill boards other instant media were put to use.

Significantly all the channels aimed at lakhs of millions of Indians speaking 15 main languages and numerous dialects, over 80 per cent living in rural expanse where 70% of them are illiterate and unreachable by any mentioned channels especially during the monsoon seasons. This feature is partly responsible for an unchanged figure of 41 per 1,000 during the last decades upto 1981.

The lamentable figure of the two decades faced the Government to form a team of experts to look into the problems of communication. A mass communication study team sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, reported:

"There is need for much more accurate knowledge of target audience and of the motivation and knowledge which make the audience have favourable to the desired actions. Above all success in the family planning programme will require study planning and massive sustained campaigns."⁷¹

71. Report of the Mass Media Communication Study Team Govt. of India 1963, p. 12

In the fourth five year plan family planning was allocated 315 crores; Rs.15 crores being allocated for communication. The fifth plan allocated 497.36 crores (revised plan) for family planning. The sixth plan has indeed indicated the government's commitment to the task of reducing the birth rate. The all time record allocation of Rs.1065 crores has been committed to the programme.

Besides the United Nations fund for population activities (UNFPA) is to spend about Rs.800million (US 100\$ million), on some projects in family planning in five years beginning 1980, according to Mr Jeffrey Salkeld, an information Chief with the UNFPA in Delhi.⁷² This is the UN body second plan in India. In its first plan, 1974-79, UNFPA spends Rs.360 million (US \$ 45 million). This money is meant for among other projects training of health workers in the field, training of traditional midwives, general support fund to the Government sterilisation programme, building of clinics and health centres.

All this money was supposed to yield good results. But what has been the trend? A survey conducted by Kerala University department of statistics

72. Op. cit.

found that 'Newspaper did not reach rural people and their value as source of communication was barely restricted by illiterates in the population.'⁷³ Twenty years later the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting reported that over the years it had found that while planning was fairly and widely practised by people in the higher socio economic strata, its acceptance is particularly limited among the poorer and backward sections of the society whose abject life conditions often drive them to higher reproduction thus completing a vicious circle.'⁷⁴

The year 1976 is very much near to today than when the Kerala survey was finalised but while Kerala pointed out illiteracy as a barrier, which still is the information ministry went yonder. It singled out the socio economic backwardness as a reason for non receptability of the message though it messes it up with what is called vicious circle.

The point which the Kerala survey and the ministry are not striking at directly is the inaccessibility to education and literacy, but for this purpose, it is fair to assume that they are covered by the general term of 'backwardness' and 'abject life conditions' as cited above.

73. Family planning communication in India. LPEI mono graph series No. 8. National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi 1969, p. 77

74. Background to News on all India Radio as published in 14 op. cit.

Inspite of all this Indian scholars having done researches and used them and others to write more books on the subject, they still suggest more research on behaviour and 'related subjects'. Sumanta Banerjee⁷⁵ suggests a 'thorough probe into the basic psychological attitudes of the rural poor to understand communication preference etc., and the adoption behaviour in terms of perception, individual and normative beliefs, fears, needs, desires, interest etc.'. This is in relation with socio-cultural and demographic variables.'

Literacy and written Media

In the absence of such survey the problem has to be considered empirically in the light of the social and economic patterns prevalent in India. The major factor that has to be taken into account is the high degree of illiteracy in our country. The percentage literacy in 1981 is 35 per cent only. Among the 6 crore of people who can write as well as read 5 crore are without even a middle school standard of education. In such a situation it is difficult to expect that the written word will carry much weight. It is no doubt true that the printed word is effective in creating a two step flow of communication, namely, influencing the masses through the opinion leaders.

75. Op cit. - Sumanta Banerjee

Print alone, among the different media, allows the reader to control the occasion, pace and the direction of exposure and permits him easy re-exposure. Moreover, there is a more active creative participation on the part of the reader than is demanded of the audience in the other media, in that sense that the communication is less 'structured'. The main printed media are booklets and newspapers. The reading habit has not caught in even among who have the capacity to read mainly due to the comparatively high cost of books. This clearly explains the absence of book shops in our villages where the percentage of literacy is appallingly low not to speak of the percentage who reach the matric level. In this respect the newspapers are more popular in villages than books hence they offer themselves as the better of the two as the media for dissemination of knowledge of family planning.

In 1960, there were over 6,900 newspapers (including weeklies, monthlies, etc.) published in India with a circulation of 144.37 lakh. Even assuming that more than one person will share the newspaper the population exposed to the media of newspapers still remains a small proportion. It is our aim not only to develop a new media but also to make the fullest possible use of the existing media, but also to make the fullest possible use of the existing media. Two important measures may be suggested

in order to make the newspapers play a more effective role for the propagation of family planning. Firstly steps have to be taken to reduce the price of newspapers so as to be within the reach of even the poorest classes. Secondly, news items concerning family planning should be given greater coverage than what has been given up to now. Special supplements on family planning may be brought out more than once in an year and articles on family planning have to be published more often.

The visual media

While the measures suggested above are important in the 'propaganda offensive' needed for family planning they can hardly have the impact on the majority of the population who are illiterate. We need media other than the written word which can convey effectively whatever is intended to be conveyed. The visual media are widely believed to be uniquely effective simply because they are visual. They command a closer attention from the audiences than do the other media. Important among such media are posters, loudspeakers and movies.

The efficacy of posters as a means of transmitting information in India has been amply demonstrated by the two general elections where people elected their representatives by a knowledge of their symbols. A set

of 'posters' which can tell the people where they can obtain family planning information will be useful. An example of imaginative use of posters is the 'Happy family Calendar' brought out by the Madras Government. This calendar has simplified the practice of the rhythm method considerably. Such illustrative callendars, distributed free of cost are sure to be well received by the people.

Like posters, loudspeakers have proved their effectiveness in conveying information about the parties during the General Elections. Probably they are more effective than posters in this respect because in that ideas can be communicated to the subjects directly. Loudspeakers are widely used in China to stimulate public enthusiasm in the task of reconstruction and the 'great leap forward'. A similar drive for family planning is needed in India if family planning has to take root in a shorter time.⁷⁶

76. K.B. Vaidyanathan - Mass Media for Communication in Family Planning in India. Journal of Family Welfare January 1978, Vol I

Family Planning Oriented Broadcasts

The Broadcasting media (e.g., radio) are able to provide their audience with a sense of participation, personal access and reality which approximately face to face contact. The limitation of radio in India has in the fact that its coverage is limited to the privileged few. There is however room for optimism if we take stock of the past achievements in this field. The broadcasting network has 42 radio stations spread all over India and covering almost all the language groups. There are special programmes for women, children and the rural folk. The promotion of rural listening has been given due importance and over 72,000 community sets were expected to be installed during the second plan period.

Cinemas - Movies

The movies are the best mass communication media available in India. In 1951 there were about 3,000 cinema houses spread in 1487 places all over the country while this is a small number of a country like India, a substantial portion of the population must be seeing a picture at least once in a year. The news reels and documentaries produced by the Films Division have helped greatly in the spread of knowledge. Such documentaries on family planning should also become a regular feature. Films division should make such documentaries

and show it in the remote rural areas.⁷⁷ Such documentaries have been considered as an entertainment only by the rural masses.

Impediments to Family Planning Communication

In the eyes of communicators, both in family planning and agriculture there are few problems hampering the flow of information. Some of these problems have been cited which include non-coordination of information sources, lack of common strategy, 'insufficient' research on behaviour of information recipient, and lack of proper knowledge of communication system. Other problems are in the case of family planning, the burning desire for a son makes a couple continue reproducing. Fear of loss of advantage (in a society where many children contribute family prestige and a man's worth is calculated against a number of children), insecurity resulting from conditions of life that makes many children a 'bulwark' against a hostile milieu value systems, sex taboos and chastity perpetuated by religious teachings that family planning might result in 'women and men mixing freely and making love unnecessarily' contrary to morals of society.

Traditions have a role to play too. While a couple could abstain voluntarily, or by mere chance be able to escape from the share of danger periods, the loop, suggests

77. Op. cit

to traditionalists that a woman should now be 'loose' as this new technique provide 'freedom' from uncertainty. Male chauvinists would argue that their wives and girls would now lower man's prestige and dignity. This attitude is harboured by many men and women and in most cases, a couple that never talks about sex except in its vulgar manner, sex for the same of it suffer a great deal from this malaise. This too goes with the desire for a son which makes a man without the slightest regard for his partner, insist on reproduction - exactly wearing the attitude of a brick-kiln - work one child after the other.

Inter spousal communication

Inter spousal communication is said to be an important factor influencing the decision to adopt contraceptive both in modern and traditional samples. A report of the Economic Commission for Asia and for East indicates that the existence of open channels of communication between husband and wife is an important factor in the adoption of family limitation practices.⁷⁸ Stressing the importance of international variables, Tien⁷⁹ point out that "In matters of fertility decision, patterns

78. United Nations Report of the working group on communication aspects of family planning programme and selected papers population studies series 330 New York UN Economic Commission for Asia and East, 1967

79. Tien, H. ynan, The intermediate variables, social structure and fertility change. A critique. Demography 5, No. 1, p. 155, 1968

and processes of interaction between husband and wife can undoubtedly have major consequences for family size. Certain studies have been conducted and reveals that communication between husband and wife encourages the use of contraception and thus depresses fertility. In the rural areas there is a lack of husband-wife communication and later with the children on sexual matters.

A study was conducted to determine the net effect and relative importance of inter spousal communication. The analysis is based on the result of the 'urban and rural attitudes to family planning survey, 1971 conducted in all known Indian states except Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. The sample included 63 or adult males and females over the age of 21 years who were randomly selected from electoral rolls. The responses were recorded on a structural interview schedule.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Those who discussed family size with their spouses 47.2% used F.P. methods while 52.8% had never practiced family planning. In contrast of those who never discussed the desired number of children with their spouses, only 12.8% had practiced family planning while 87.2% never had used contraceptive methods.

2. At each level of age, education, income actual family size, as well as among the various occupational, religious and resolvental groups the communicating respondents have

a significantly higher practice of contraception as compared to those who never discussed this topic with their spouse. This clearly indicates that irrespective of the socio economic status interspousal communication has a very profound effect on the practice of contraception.⁸⁰

False start and false starters

Family planners introduced their campaign - Do ya teen Bachele - Bas (two or three children are enough). More slogan were manufactured and the most popular was the one telling people to have small families if they wanted to be happy.

I Ironically if the audiences they addressed were barren couples a families with one or two children longing for more. Those were unhappy. The message did not sink. It was not comprehended under only historical logic. The people knew better what problems were. For those who had four or five children the message was a source of shock. In a place where you earn 50 paise to Rs.2 per day, and three hands could mean Rs.6 at Rs. 2 each, the acceptance of the message was to have unpleasant economic consequences.

80. Bhatia, J.C. and Neuman (Alfred) Interspousal communication and practice of contraception in India. Journal of Family Welfare, vol. XXVI, No. 4, June 1980.

born would survive because of rampant killer diseases, voluntary limitation was an absurd act. The situation is best explained by Mahmood Mandani - when writing on the Khanna report,⁸¹ and campaigns and programmes drawn by American experts in Ludhiana. He says "No programme would have succeeded because birth control contradicted the vital interests of the majority of the villagers. To practice contraception would have meant to wilfully court disaster."

A couple in a society alive with taboos and religiously fettered; where children are regarded as gift from God and have to reproduce to the last egg; where the value systems demand a son who on father's last minutes would run to the sacred Ganga to bring the 'sacred water' so that the father dies bless have the message about the small family does not percolate and probably will never."

We are not going into specificities of diversity in language (another barrier to communication), selectivity depending on how much the people know and their social economic status compelling them to take the course that will ensure their existence. Now are we suggesting to enlist problems of illiteracy, castes etc., and blame researchers for their mostly quantitative methodology which ignores variables like economic status, social stratifications and social psychological factors.

Unemployment in rural and urban areas has been discussed, abysmal poverty in which millions swim, landlessness and helplessness all have defied the mass media. No wonder Mrs Gandhi noted this defiance earlier and decided to take 'drastic' measures in 1976, for looking at the amount of money poured into researches, media, seminars, courses paying of personnel infrastructure, etc. Drastic measures were necessary in the eyes of the rulers. Her announcement was followed by compulsory sterilisation - mostly in the northern states. This is the only birth control device the Government could enforce. And it worked of course not miraculously as there is never a miracle in force, but in two years, an increase of 50 per cent adoptees was recorded.⁸³ The so-called major aims of family planning communication were overlooked and just dismissed as unworkable.

Employers in Government offices institutions and factories were directed to take measures in regard to preferential allotment of houses, land, etc., for those who accepted sterilisation. Therefore many were actually forced to undergo sterilisation.

83. Ram Chabra, Population question in The Statesman. February 2 and 3, 1981

A new Government under Janata that came to power in March 1977 ruled out the use of force and renamed family planning - 'female welfare'. But as objectives remained the same the threa remained.

However, a lesson has been learnt. Thirty years of investment in the campaigns have had little impact on the population growth and the rulers had decided to use force. Deplorable, however, coercion force because the only alternative when rulers, or specifically their economies failed or did not try to employ additional hands and heads that increased every day. Poverty in the large section of the community has been increasing and becoming absolute. For, because of the inability of productive sectors to absorb the available labour each year added 21 million.⁸⁴

What a good reading piece for sociologists and anthropologists who have vowed to die with a questionnaire in one hand and a pencil in the other. Polemics aside it is a piece of 'comedy' implying that the people should be let

84. Revised estimates of the expert committee on population constituted by the planning commissioner as of March 1978. (quoted from Family Welfare Programme in India, a brief account by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, May 1978.

in their present abject poverty and abysmal ignorance so that researchers could get something fascinating on this populace. Such are the researchers, among many we find in documentation centres and libraries.

A concern in this trend has been voiced by N. Bisht and F.B.Desai,⁸⁵ who report that nuptiality, fertility and family planning, claimed more than 40 per cent of over 41000 books, reports, articles, papers and mime-graphed writings available at the end of 1971 in the field of demography. But they correctly conclude that all this has been a failure, for, the studies have been merely descriptive, without probing real issues, factors and explore implications of findings for policy formation and programming.

However, family planning authorities are not yet discouraged. The sixth five year plan envisages a field worker in every village in the country. The 'Cafeteria Approach' (extension communication approach) is believed to be a magic with which planners will conquer doubts and fears which have proved unbeatable by conventional media.

85. N. Bisht and P. B. Desai - Some aspects of fertility data in population statistics in India (Ed.). Ashish Bose et al. Vikas Publishing House Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi 1977, p: 66

Professor Naik argues that family planning gains take longer to be noticed.⁸⁶ Again fear of loss of advantage in family planning, especially those who have to be sterilised, reduces gain tangibility, he says. But planners and the Government are confident that the new approach, where a field worker will have to visit families, will create, among other things, credibility, and bring about proximity and intimacy at family as at least village level.

86. Professor V. R. Naik in an interview on Family Planning Communication, IIMC, New Delhi

CONCLUSION

The major component of the development plans of communication strategy suffer from the same inadequacies and biases inherent in the latter, is evident in the Indian experience in development communications.

Notwithstanding a few empirical studies conducted on Indian villages in development communication, which tend to over emphasize the benefits of communication, which tend to over emphasize the benefits of communication in terms of its achievements in socio-economic and political spheres contributing to greater mobility and opportunities for rural population, the evidence suggests the contrary.

Development information, mostly regarding agricultural innovations and advanced techniques to raise the agricultural production was mainly directed to those classes having adequate facilities of land and irrigation. Broadcasting through radio, utilising audio-visual and projection techniques and using print media for the dissemination of development information in itself cannot motivate the

rural masses to utilize the information to improve their living conditions, lacking resources, a bulk of them being landless and poor peasantry having non-viable holding of land, the development information involving costly farm inputs, cannot be obviously be expected to respond positively to the media campaign aiming at increasing agricultural production. On the other hand, this information did strike its target audience unwittingly or intentionally who had the adequate resources to act upon and utilize this information to improve their own position. Their advantageous position in the rural hierarchy in terms of access to resources, information and media over the majority of the deprived lot enabled them to use the development messages and the infrastructural and institutional facilities (like credit, subsidies, free expertise and other incentives) to consolidate their hold vis-a-vis the weaker sections. As a result the living conditions of the majority of the rural poor changed from bad to worse with more and more of its members pushed far below the poverty line.

Thus it is a little wonder that the communication strategy adopted to pursue the development objectives ignoring the objective inequalities

helped in preserving and strengthening the prevailing status quo in the villages. The bulk of the poor however, limited by the structural factors and failing to see any concrete advantages in the development messages to their real life situations, because increasingly apathetic and negative towards the whole communication process. To them, the 'Mass Media' remained as yet another alienating structure in their perception of the overall context riddled with inequalities and deprivation.

Thus the argument that communication strategy failed to involve and motivate people to development goals seems untenable since the message did reach a class those who could utilize them. The rise of the rich peasantry from the green revolution benefitting from the introduction of commercialized and market oriented agricultural production is contributed by the communication process enabling faster dissemination of agricultural information. The point however, is that for a large portion of the rural population, the development approach and the concomitant communication strategy adopted remained little relevant and failed to motivate them.

It is not illiteracy, ignorance or the backward traditional institution that hinder the dissemination of information but rather an inadequate policy based on an incorrect understanding of the objective conditions prevailing in the rural areas that resulted in the failure of the development programmes. The questions of land reform aiming at the redistribution of land to the landless, minimum wages to the landless labourers and providing institutional resources to the poor peasants by passing the traditional vested interests were never raised and even when raised met with lukewarm treatment.

It is in this context that a powerful communication strategy aimed at making the oppressed to become critically aware of their predicament and motivate them to action becomes essential.

It will be noted that we have not dealt strictly with communication hardware which is in abundance in India. Whatever has been discussed it is felt safe to conclude that the present system of communication media in agriculture and family planning, will not work, at least not with the speed and convenience demanded by rulers and planners, but along the effect it is supposed to bring. In fact it reveals one: the use of force in future in

family planning and legislation against the rural poor in a manner reminiscent of the Bombay prevention of Begging Act of 1959 which is now being adopted in other cities in the country including Delhi. And when such time dawns on the rural unemployed the degree of enslavement will be unparalleled in history.

It is imperative to note that when there is now technologies in agriculture and information is distributed on their application then there must be people to implement and land on which this can be done. Inputs have to be made available for all, free or at low cost as incentives and on long term repayment system, especially for those who will be paying back from their farm yields. Rural workers have to be assured or someone is seen to be doing something about it the media and extension workers can preach a million more years and the situation of the people would be worsening and the message unheard or unaccepted where it happens to reach.

The poor who bank on many hands in easing here and there would not only fail to understand but reject any proposition to limit the number of their children- at tender age because of preventable diseases but which are beyond their power, will wilfully accept birth control until they are assured of their first borns survival.

Very much in need today is a complete restructuring of the rural setup. Give land to the tillers and diversify agriculture to be able to increase the suction of labour which is abundant in rural areas. The 'peasantisation' of rural labourers, employed and semiemployed, would be a retrogressive step, while employment for the rural people in a completely restructured and diversified rural economy, would be the only answer.

The above would be a result of overall economic policy of the country. The creation of a self-generating, self sustaining and people oriented economy whose dynamism must spring from the mobilised masses labour and creativity, is the immediate need. Indeed a socialist economy that will, besides having people at heart in all planning ensure the employment of all labour available and grant employment as a constitutional right of the people.

Communication in such a strategy has a dual role to perform. At one level it should counter the false images myths and values the official media spreads in order to perpetuate the prevailing inequalities, and at another level it has to break the

state of alienation of the masses submerged in reality make them critically reflect upon the objective realities causing their underdevelopment, poverty, deprivation, dehumanization and oppression.

The process of communication does not stop here. Critical awareness should lead to PRAXIS a purposeful action aimed at changing the very alienating and oppressing realities which controlled the oppressed hitherto.

It is this purposeful communication involving praxis that has relevance in the present Indian context. Devoid of any purpose, divorced from the existential situations of the rural masses, the development messages had succeeded very little in eliciting positive response from the target - the rural poor, lack of understanding and empathy with the problems of the poor, evident in the development goals reflected in a communication strategy alien to their needs and aspirations. In this paradox the very channels used in communicating development information became alienated and lost credibility.

For a moment consider the future colour TV flashing multi-coloured images of a peasant spreading fertilizers in a lush green paddy field, wouldn't it have frustrating and alienating effect on the deprived audience.

Keeping the stark inequalities in the rural areas intact, without altering the land relations, one could not obviously expect miracles from merely communicating development information. In the Indian context like any other third world country, changing the objective basis of inequalities (re-distribution of land and resources, to be precise) would be the surest way to the development of the development programmes to reorientate towards this end.

For the fear of overstating the forms of communication media discussed in chapters became really communicative only when they reflect the aspirations of the people and critically convey the message relating to the existing situation in a creative manner. Technological perfection and complexities of the media do not really matter when the message is purposeful and genuinely change oriented.

This finally leads to the fact that communication is the product of social praxis. The goals and direction of a social movement will inevitably choose the relevant means and modes of communication and so doing, as it happened historically it comes into contradiction with the official media, dominated by the class opposed to change. Class struggle as is evident in all spheres of social life is just as inevitable as communications also.

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