

Media Trends and Development Communication: With Special Reference to Print Media

Dr.G.Kondala Rao,

I.I.S.,

Ph.D. (journalism),

F.P.O., D.F.P.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,

Government of India,

Srikakulam

Andhra Pradesh

India

Abstract

”The medium is the message.”

**— Marshall McLuhan, the media expert says in “Understanding Media: The
Extensions of Man”**

What is development? and what is Communication?

There are many definitions to this.....Development Communication is communication with a social conscience. It takes humans into account. Development communication is primarily associated with rural problems, but is also concerned with urban problems. It has two primary roles: a transforming role, as it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of values of society. Development communication seeks to create an atmosphere for change, as well as providing innovations through which society may change. This paper explores the recent trends and developments in communication with special reference to print media.

Keywords: development communication, communication empowerment, contribution of print media in information and transfer of knowledge.

“The medium is the message” a popular quote by McLuhan who opines that a medium affects society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium but by the characteristics of the medium itself.

There are many definitions to Development Communication. Development communication is communication with a social conscience. It takes humans into account. Development communication is primarily associated with rural problems, but is also concerned with urban problems. It has two primary roles: a transforming role, as it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of values of society. Development communication seeks to create an atmosphere for change, as well as providing innovations through which society may change.

Development communication has been defined in several ways by economic development experts, sociologists and communication experts. The terminology ‘development communication’ originated in Asia. Definitions differ from region to region depending on the definers view of development.

Development communication is a communication used for the development of human beings. Print media and electronic media both play a significant role in the development communication of any country. In India, the Government uses print media to secure wide coverage of messages through various newspapers and journals. Print media as a traditional media plays a significant role in the development communication. In India, print media strengths have largely been shaped by its historical experiences and, in particular, by its association with the freedom struggle as well as movements for social emancipation, reform, and amelioration. Today various modern and sophisticated technologies like, Internet, Whatsapp and other social media are using by the print media in both developed and under-developed countries and they also face stiff competition from electronic media.

However, it is a fact that communication is used as an empowerment tool for developing society. In other words, communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in development activities. Millions of people in developing countries are excluded from a wide range of information and knowledge, with the rural poor in particular remaining isolated from both traditional media and new information and communication technologies which would improve their life.

In development communication there are two words “development” and “communication”. The meaning of these two words is communication is a message

understood or sharing of experience. Development is about change. It is about changing for the better. It could be about social or economic change for improvement or progress”. When we refer to development communication, it is about such communication that can be used for development. It is about using communication to change or improve something. The messages which are designed to transform the behavior of people or for improving their quality of life can be termed as development communication and these messages used to change the socio-economic condition of people. Therefore, development communication can be defined as the use of communication to promote development. Media like print media and electronic media play a significant role in development communication of country. Even after the advent of electronic media like radio and television, the print media has not lost its charm or relevance. Print media has the advantage of making a longer impact on the minds of the reader with more in-depth reporting and analysis.

CONTRIBUTION OF PRINT MEDIA:

The contribution of print media in providing information and transfer of knowledge is remarkable. Now-a-days, print media is faster than all ever before due to amazing advances in 3G technology in recent years. Technical breakthroughs alter the way we perceive the universe and manner in which we communicate with one another. So it's become important to study recent trends of print media-newspaper, magazines, booklet etc., in the development communication of country and worldwide.

As far as the print media is concerned, after Independence when the Five Year Plans were initiated by the government for planned development, it was the newspapers which gave great importance to development themes. They wrote on various government development programs and how the people could make use of them. They cover about farming and related subjects and information about weather, market rates, availability of improved seeds and implements. The scientific and technological advancements have brought about steady fast development in the media world. New media are coming up while the old ones are being improved upon and in this process their availability has increased manifolds. They are now conquering even the remote and distant regions of the world. This multifaceted development has brought about a lot more variety than could be imagined. Today you have a variety of newspapers both in English and local languages. There are plenty of Small Newspapers and Evenings available in every District Head Quarter. Mid Day and Afternoon are quite famous in Mumbai. Samna, a Marathi daily is quite popular in Maharashtra State.

Print medium was the first to be used as mass media for communicating the information. Till date print media is one of the powerful media among the rural people.

History of print media and written communication follows the progress of civilization which in turn moves in response to changing cultural technologies. The transfer of 4 complex information, ideas and concepts from one individual to another, or to a group, underwent extreme evolution since prehistoric times. It has been 30,000 years later since the first recorded evidence of written communication and it is still dramatically changing. The Press in India, particularly the Indian language newspapers, was in the forefront of the struggle for freedom. Many leaders from Mahatma Gandhi downwards used their newspapers to activate the people to participate in the freedom struggle. But the newspapers are no longer active in the fight against poverty, disease, illiteracy and superstition.

Mahatma Gandhi used his Young India and Harijan quite systematically and usefully. Political leaders used the Press to rouse the people. It was, therefore, natural that the British rulers of India used every weapon in their armoury to silence the nationalist press. Newspapers always had the sword of Damocles hanging over their head. Security was asked at the slightest pretext and editors and publishers were prosecuted for sedition. Some editors were even transported to the Andaman. For the editors and people who worked in newspapers, journalism was a mission. Even captains of commerce who published newspapers treated this activity as their contribution to the struggle for freedom. Wages for journalists were poor and there was no security. Newspaper publication was not profitable and journalism was not paying as compared to other professions but things changed after Independence and each year saw acceleration in change. The first newspaper published in India was the Bengal Gazette started by James Augustus Hickey in 1780.

Although the paper was rather frivolous in nature as it mostly only published gossip and advertisements, the thriving media industry owes its existence to James Augustus Hickey and his Gazette. Soon after, papers such as Bombay Herald and the Bombay Courier were started in the country. Interestingly, the Bombay Courier later merged with the Times of India newspaper. In 1818, the first regional language newspaper Samachar Darpan was published in Bengali. The Bombay Samachar started in 1822, remains to this day the oldest newspaper in Asia. In the pre-independence era, newspapers had one agenda in their minds—to further their ideology.

Bal Ganghadar Tilak is a prominent stalwart of the pre-independence era and a revolutionary leader who used his newspaper as a vehicle of communicating his ideas and ideals of the freedom struggle. Kesari, which was established in 1880, was published in Marathi. Prior to 1947, the newspaper industry had only one goal –to proliferate the cause of Independence. After India became Independent in 1947, British owners of the newspapers like The Times of India also left the country, handing over the businesses to Indian companies. Editors of pro-freedom struggle Indian newspapers had anti-British stance till 1947.

These newspapers gradually changed their approach; some became pro-establishment and the others adopted aggressive anti-establishment strategies. The publishers during the subsequent decades expanded their groups and chains with additions of new editions at other centers or new publications. It means after the independence of India scene of print media has changed. There has been a phenomenal rise in the number of newspapers and their circulation. The number of pages has increased. The quality of production has improved all rounds. Even medium Indian language newspapers have taken advantage of the advances in printing and communication technology to bring out multiple edition dailies. The best example of this one is Daily Sakaal which is among the first newspapers not only in Maharashtra but also in India, to have adopted modern management systems and processes. It has deployed the latest technology made available through partners who are world leaders in their areas of specialisation. Newspapers of the big chains face a stiff competition from these newspapers because they are equally well produced.

The government accepted the demand for security of service for people working in newspapers and news agencies. All this helped in the growth in the number of newspapers and their circulation. The eighties and nineties saw the growth of medium Indian language newspapers. They adapted the latest printing and communication technology to bring out multiple editions.

After Freedom Post 1947, newspapers in India had a choice to make either align with the government and support all its initiatives or act as a critique to the newly democratised country and its head. Newspapers at first acted as unofficial sponsors of its various initiatives and schemes. The five year plan especially came highly endorsed by the national newspapers. Most of the newspapers in India came into existence post independence. Today thousands of magazines and newspapers are in circulation. Whilst in the early days of democracy, the Indian government enjoyed full support of the media houses.

In the pre-Independence era, the editorial in a newspaper was widely read and the newspaper was used as an instrument of social change. But in the new era, the editorial became shorter in length and weak in impact. The new generation of industrialist-publishers is now more interested in profits instead of society's obligation. Therefore, they closed down serious literary and political publications so as to retain the profit from the flagship publications. The tendency grew to treat the newspaper more as a marketable product than as an instrument of social change.

In the 21st century, presently, Indian print media is one of the largest print media in the world. The Times of India being the 8th most circulated newspaper in the world with a daily circulation of 3.146 millions.

However, the Print Media play a pivotal role in the national Development and in the all round development of the public. Even though, the proliferation of the electronic channels rule the rust; the print media can safeguard its plurality and importance in the scenario.

Let me conclude with a great saying , “I became a journalist to come as close as possible to the heart of the world.” – Henry Luce

References:

1. Audit Bureau of Circulation
2. Hasan Dr Shamsul, 'Print media utilization pattern among the homemaker's.
3. Ram, N. (editor-in-chief of the Hindu) 'Newspaper futures: India and world'.
4. Thakur, Dr.Kiran (Retired Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Communications and Journalism, University of Pune, Maharashtra) 'Newspaper trends in India: A case study of Marathi dailies in Maharashtra'..
5. *"From the Village to the Medium", published by the Communication Foundation for Asia: Manila, 1976.*

Web-sites:

1. https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/455.Marshall_McLuhan
2. <http://www.nandamurifans.com>, The Top 10 Newspapers in India by Circulation.
3. <http://www.library.thinkquest.org> The newspaper: the process behind the presentation and the newspaper history