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1.1 Communication and Development

In a world of ever-increasing wants, 'development' is the watch ward. The human quest for need-fulfillment and for the alternatives has remained unchanged since the dawn of civilization. In the process of evolution, many forms of animals and birds have undergone changes. Man is not an exception. Those forms that could not change disappeared from the scene. As revolutions replaced evolution in the human society, the hunger for change became acute. Revolutions, political, industrial and information had the sole objective of changes for the better. We can call this process as 'development'. Now, irrespective of politico-economic and socio-cultural variables, as some experts have described, it has become a 'mania'. 'Developmentation' has become synonymously equal to other 'isms'. For the developed countries, it is for more and for the underprivileged for their survival. True, the space age development needs are different from the development ideas of the Stone-age. Development as a concept was introduced by Ibn. Khaldum. (1332-1406 AD), an Islamic social thinker, in his Muquaddimati (an introduction to history or prolegomena). Some view the Tunisian as the founder of sociology and demography. Khaldun used the Arabic term, ilm-al-umran to
describe a new science of development or of society, which is now described as sociology. In a way, his work was basically a paradigm and methodology of sociology. The notion of development was used to measure the basic causes of historical evolutions. Idn Khaldum thought were to be in the economic and social structure of human societies. For nearly two centuries, his work remained the single most comprehensive analysis of social development and social organisation.¹

The beginning of seventeenth century marked other efforts in other parts of the world to define the concept of development based on the prevalent social, economic and political conditions. However, it was only after the World War II, a number of newly liberated countries started searching for various development alternatives in the backdrop of centuries-old colonial experiences. Development became equated with growth, modernisation, change, democracy, productivity and not the least, industrialisation.

The new nations were characterised as traditional, static, agricultural, primitive, rigid and scriptive and categorised as underdeveloped. Some theorists, a bit more sensitive to the stigma of being backward referred to them as developing nations.²

These developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa are called the third world. "By default, the first world

²
describes the industrialized countries of North America, Western Europe and the Soviet Union. This characterization is considered ethno-centric by many outside the Western Nations and is generally adhered to by them when describing the world.³

Development of the third world was the immediate concern of the west after the war. Harry S. Truman the then President of the United States in 1949 inaugural address observed that more than half of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. The food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant, their poverty is a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in the history humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people.⁴

Truman proposed a point four programme, thus establishing a model which the developed world gleefully accepted. The Western model was immediately made available for the third World. It was supposed to be the only way by which the Less Developed Countries (LDC) could progress.

In his book ‘the stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist Manifesto W. W.Rostow identified live important stages of development. Traditional society - The preconditions for take off — The take-off — The claim to maturity — Age of high mass consumption.⁵

Economic growth was the key factor in this model of
development. Mass production would lead to a fascinating growth in variety of products and services. This type of mass production was to be achieved through rapid industrialization. At the heart of industrialization were inputs of modern scientific technology and capital which substituted physical labour. The development indicators were Gross National Product, Per Capita income and the industrial production, but neither agriculture nor raw material.\(^6\)

This Western model of development was called the *dominant paradigm*. The advocates of this model were Daniel Lemer, E.M.Rogers, Wilbur Schramn et al. Daniel Lemer in his book *The passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East* (1958).

"The western model of modernisation exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global, for example, increasing urbanisation has tended to raise literacy, raising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has 'gone with' wider economic participation (per capita income) and Political Participation (Voting). The model evolved in the West is a historic fact. The same basic model reappears in virtually all modernising societies on all continents of the world regardless of variations in race, colour, creed."\(^7\)

*Lemer* believed that mass media exposure could act as a
key catalyst for modernization. Rogers defined modernization, as a process of changing individuals from a traditional way of life to a technically advanced social system. He visualized modernization through diffusion of innovations. He offered a linear top-to-bottom model of communication in which the source (change agent) communicates actively to the members of a social system (receiver) with a purpose of diffusing the innovations (message) through communication channels (media).  

Willbur Schramm stressed economic development through progress in the industrial sector. He suggested more capital to generate more capital. So to achieve development static, agricultural, primitive, rigid and a scriptive societies were to be remade into dynamic, industrialized, urbanised and socially mobile nations. The old paradigm of development prevailed till 70s. By then the experiences in the developing countries revealed its limited applicability and greater irrelevance. As such the correlation between media exposure and modernity did not have universal application Rogers found out that. 

“In many respects deep-rooted attitudes cannot easily be changed by simply exposing the people to modern media. Only new principles and practices which do not run in the face of established traditions and customs may be easily accepted”.

Increase in GNP brought in this own side effects such as
increased unemployment, under-employment, urban poverty and congestion. The trickle down affects of benefits proved a chimera. The rich became richer and the poor, poorer, particularly LDCs.\textsuperscript{11}

In many instances, the people who used the media most frequently were not more modern than their counterpart who used the media less. This has led to the conclusion that the media cannot be easily isolated as the prime movers in modernising attitudes.\textsuperscript{12}

The Dominant paradigm failed to deliver the goods in many developing country. A close look at the situation reveals a wide hiatus between the developed and developing nations as far the quality of life was concerned. Because countries like People’s Republic of China and Cuba, which had deviated from, the dominant paradigm path, achieved success using their own models. Following their example one can easily infer that multiple and varied models are available for development.\textsuperscript{13}

Different experiences of the developing nations have made the exponents of old paradigm discard their own theory and offer a new model based on the experiences of the developing nations which is known as new paradigm. In consonance with the changed situation, Rogers revised his earlier definition of development as a widely participatory process of social change
in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.\textsuperscript{14}

The new paradigm was actually a meta model of development with some distinctive commitment. It did not advocate a fixed pathway for development. It depended upon a particular country’s social, political and economic structure. Its development needs and the availability of resources and technology. The salient features of the new paradigm as Rogers described are:

- Development is assessed in terms of quality of life. The ideal development is envisioned as a locally unique blending of modern and traditional values and institutions.
- Decentralised planning, popular participation at local levels.
- Self-reliance, self- development and self-management.
- Distributive Justice of economic gain to reduce the distance between the rich and the poor.
- Emphasis is placed on specific models of development communication. These models include traditional media and descriptions of the communication network within the community. Attention is given to social and international
structural factors that impede development, rather than concentrating exclusively on deficiencies of individuals or of the nation.\textsuperscript{15}

The varied experiences, needs and priorities of different countries of the world diversified the development priorities resulting in the mushrooming of ideas related to development paradigms. They were built on one another rather than breaking fundamentally with the previous theories. The new approaches are basically pluralistic and focus on both human and economic concerns. Consequently increased attention is being paid to basic needs of people, health, nutrition, sanitation and shelter, placing emphasis on non-material indicators of development such as self-determination, self-reliance, and cultural autonomy, maintaining the ecological balance by protecting forests, water resources, air, ozone layer etc; and putting the spotlight on human rights such as the right to free expression, right to communicate and right to equitable employment and wages.\textsuperscript{16}

Nature and culture have also attracted the attention of development theorists Wans and Dissanayake advocated development without affecting either the cultural or the natural environment making the people masters of their own destiny was emphasized meaning that development should be participatory in character.\textsuperscript{17}
Majid Tehranian preferred a synthesis of moral, spiritual and cultural factors with economic development. He defined development as social learning and dialogue. And the capacity of a society to empower its members to define, negotiate and solve their own social problems autonomously. He saw periodic imbalance between our scientific and technological knowledge and our moral and spiritual advances as cultural lag. He further said: If theories and strategies of social development were torn away from the spiritual and cultural foundations of human life as they had increasingly been in an over-technocratic, over-programmed World we would run the risk of social decay and self destruction.18

Sustainability was another aspect of development which could not be ignored. The world commission on Environment and Development had defined 'sustainable development as meeting the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs.19

In 1973 E.F.Schumacher, a British intellectual challenged the so-called achievements of development. In his classic work ‘small is beautiful’ he argued that development which was not sustainable was not real development. The fossil fuel which was not man-made but a natural gift, could not be recycled and should only be used as a capital. But man achieved
development using this irreplaceable natural capital as the income. According to him 'the claim of solving the problem of production' was an illusion of Man.\textsuperscript{20}

The system of mass production based on sophisticated, highly capital intensive, high energy-input dependent and human labour saving technology, presupposes that you are already rich, for a great deal of capital investment is needed to establish one single work place. It is inherently violent, ecologically damaging, self-defeating in terms of non-renewable resources and stultifying for the human person.\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{Schumacher} had supported the Gandhian model that "the poor of the world could not be helped by mass-production, only through production by the masses". He prescribed a simple, cheap and free technology as against super-technology which made man as slave. He designated that as intermediate technology, self-help technology or people's technology.\textsuperscript{22}

Mahatma Gandhi, the great visionary of twentieth century; offered his own model of development. In fact, his model covered every walk of rural life In India. He strongly believed that India lived in her countryside and a western development model would be catastrophic. He wrote in young India.

What is the need of India following the path of Industrialization like Western people? Western civilization is urban cantered. It will be easy for small countries like England
Gandhiji, whose model was based on village self-sufficiency, described it as.

My idea of village swaraj is that, it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village’s first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis.

So much so the Gandhian model was based on the principles of participation, self-reliance, production by the masses, decentralisation, concern for the traditional, cultural and spiritual values of the society, distributive justice of the economic gain. But India moved just in the opposite direction. So though India had tremendous achievements in her four decades of planned growth the basic problems had also grown proportionately.
Villanimal described the contrast in Indian development like Today we have many buildings but millions still dwell on pavements. The remarkable achievements in food production but millions are still left without proper food, cloth production is also more but millions are still inadequately clothed; despite growth in number of schools millions remain unlettered. So more growth without distribution is a curse rather than blessing, because in a multi-tiered structure like ours the benefits of all plans and projects ought to go into the very same sectors where the benefits of the post efforts at growth had already accumulated.

1.2 Communication and Development

Communication plays a vital role in human society by helping mankind to interact with others. It is an essential tool for the development of civilization. Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is the bridge of the meaning. It involves systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.

Communication has been derived from the Latin word “Communis” which means common. It refers to the various means or media of transmitting information from one individual to another or one place to other.
Civilization started as men started communicating. This feature differentiated him from his fellow animals. In olden days, communication is one to one, announcements in the open yard by Royal Messengers, letters carried by messengers and pigeons, fire signals, flags etc.

In our contemporary social system, communication plays an important role in every part of our life especially in education, business, career, politics and the like. Communication helps in creating building and developing relationship and business value through several media in communication such as to face interaction, Mails (snail mail and e-mail), Telephone, Mobile, Internet etc. In the present day world, the information technologies have been successful in building superhighway for communication. Knowledge is supposed to be the power- generating force. Communication technologies are found contributing substantially to the development processes.

Communication is as ancient as human civilization. It has always played a supportive role to development, the relationship between communication and development reached new heights after World War II. Most developing countries viewed mass media as potential stimulants for an economic take-off. Investment from the United Nations and multilateral aid agencies in this sector was not insignificant to speed up development. But, in most developing countries development
fell short of largest despite heavy investments. The low returns set the question of soul-searching rolling. What went wrong and where? The shocking results communication, experts made the trade a cautious path.26

While the role of communication media in development is undisputable, yet the type of progress dictatable by media has often given rise to different opinions. The diversity of communication use, situation, audience and then the programme itself has made communication complex. A universally acceptable explanation is still elusive.

1.3 THE INDIAN CONTEXT

The meaning of Development Communication has to be multiplexed in a multi-ethnic country like India. Unity in diversity is her culture and way of life. India has an exhilarating history of 5000 years with tradition and ancient practices continue to co-exist: with modern technological advances. They derive mutual strength and inspiration and in turn made a composite culture possible. These diversities when listed are:

- Cultural diversity: India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. Besides, Islam, Christianity and Zarastainism have found a place for themselves. The Hindu religion is further divided by many castes and sub-castes with their own identities.
- Language: Apart from 18 official languages, more than 1652
language are spoken in the country.

- **Demography:** As per the 2001 census, about three-fourths of the population, 74.29 per cent lives in villages. Most of them are farmers.

- **Literacy:** The total literacy is 52.11 per cent. The male literacy is 63.86 per cent and female literacy 31.42 per cent.

- **Economic Status:** About 29.9 per cent of the total population and 33.4 per cent of the rural population live below the poverty line.

There are 28,491 publications with a total circulation of more than 302.75 lakhs. The broadcast network comprises of 124 stations, 139 MW transmitters, 143 SW transition and 36 FM transmitters.

Radio covers 85 per cent of the total geographic area and 95.7 per cent of the total population. There are 48 programme production centres of Doordarshan besides the central programme production centre at New Delhi. About 545 transmitters of varying capacity are now reaching 84 per cent of the population. Cinema is 90-years old in India. It produces the highest number of motion pictures in the world. In 1991, a total of 910 films were made in 18 languages. The country has total 13181 movie houses listed as on March 1991.27

While the growth of mass media over the years is much encouraging its uneven distribution is, however discouraging.
J.S. Yadava identified four factors for the poor reach of mass media in the rural sector. They were - i) Low literacy, ii) Low purchasing power, iii) Poor means of transportation for timely delivery of newspapers or maintenance of Radio/TV, and iv) lack of relevant information.

As a consequence, the mass media being urban based are largely the class media as well. Elaborating urban rural dichotomy in India Villanilam noted- it goes without saying that information is power, and it is no wonder that the centers of power in this country are in metropolises which happen to be also the centers of information generation, control and dissemination. Parallel or concomitant to this phenomenon of communication concentration is the concentration of wealth and the means to generate wealth. The poor, helpless, hopeless millions in this country who live in rural areas and for whose sake all development plans are presumable envisaged, have unfortunately no participatory role to play in the communication scene. The concentration of wealth and the concentration of information (media, educational institutions etc) go on uninterruptedly in the urban areas. The urban rural dichotomy or in other words the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing as the years go by. So to bridge the gap between the information generating centres and the production centers is of immediate concern.
References


21. Ibid., p. 128

22. Ibid., p. 128

23. Mahatma Gandhi, (1929), Young India, July,25


