Chapter III

Theoretical framework

It is said the formal communication channels are the media. As it is defined, “media are social systems that operate according to specific goals, values, organizational styles and technological capabilities”. Therefore people are the main components of media. The media are being influenced by the society and the society in turn is being influenced by the media. The audience is dependent on the media to find their own reflection. Radio can help the communities as a whole to learn from each other and enrich their lives from the education which they would receive through radio.

The interdependency of the society and the media is the essence of the interdependency theory developed by Defleur and Ball Rokeach. Both these scholars maintained that media and society are interdependent with each other. They are in the system of our present society. Absence of one makes the other handicapped. Without the existing communion link the political and economic systems are paralysed. Rokeach and Defleur say that when a traditional and non-traditional society disintegrates or decline, the demand for information or the use of media rise accordingly. The potential of mass media messages to achieve a broad range of cognitive, affective and behavioural effects would increase when the media serve many unique and central information delivery functions. The potentiality would increase when a traditional society adjusts with the modern norms and there are conflicts present in the society between the old traditional system and the new awareness of the new vision of the audience at large.

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system that operates according to specific goals, values, organizational styles and technological capabilities. Therefore people are main components of media. The media are being influenced by the society and the society in turn is being influenced by the media. The audience is dependent on the media to find their own reflection. Radio can help the communities as a whole to learn from each other and enrich their lives from the education which they would receive through radio.

Community Radio helps in mutual learning among the residents in a community. Radio programmes encourage the audience to engage themselves in discussion to clarify and reduce uncertainties about what they hear on air. This not only enhances mutual learning but also builds strong ties among the members of a community. Thus the influence of radio is verbal as well as it is also horizontal. The influence of radio can be much broader and deeper than instructional learning and teaching in formal classroom. Its contribution is beyond the culture of classroom and higher than the so called learning process. In the same manner the CR as a medium can bind society and the audience in a profound relationship which enriches each other and educates the people to change the status of their lives and of the society for better. CR could be used to achieve many ends and purposes depending on the priorities set.

As such, CR can be viewed not only as a form of social organization, but also as a vehicle for democracy. These additional roles of CR need to be viewed within the greater context of the Uses and Gratification theory which is based on the premise that the audience uses the media to gratify certain identified needs.²

McQuail in 1994 defined four domains of individual needs which the media could gratify:

- the use of media as a form of diversion or escapism
- the use of media as a form of companionship for those who are socially isolated.
- the use of media to understand and evaluate one’s personal identity
- the use of media as a form of surveillance to provide information on the social work.

3.1 : Diffusion of Innovation Approach and Development

Unlike Daniel Lerner, who was an intelligence officer of the United States Army during World War II, Everett Rogers was an Iowa farm-boy trained in modern agriculture. He found his home community less-than-impressed with his stock of innovations in agriculture, although outside his country he had a marked influence on the field of agricultural extension through his textbook on diffusion of innovations, now in its third edition. Rogers developed his concepts and theory of the diffusion of innovations from a synthesis of diffusion research studies in the United States, and in later editions, of diffusion studies in developing countries as well. He defined an innovation as ‘an idea perceived as new by the individual’. He noted that: It really matters little, as far as human behavior is concerned, whether or not an idea is objectively new as measured by the amount of time elapsed since its first use or discovery. It is the newness of the idea to the individual that determines his reaction to it.

It later editions, however, an innovation is no more just an idea, it is also a practice or object perceived as new by an individual. Indeed, by the third edition, Rogers begins to use technology as a synonym for innovation, and urges for the adoption of a convergence model that stresses the intricacy of interpersonal communication networks that are in operation during the process of diffusion. Roger’s concept of development also underwent slight changes. His view in 1962 was that ‘development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization.’ A decade later, he believed development to be a widely participatory process of social change, 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.
In fact, by the mid-1970s, Rogers proclaimed the passing of the dominant paradigm, the modernization model though apparently excluding his own diffusion of innovation model. He propagated his model of modernization in developing countries urging that it had cross cultural applications. Rogers’ work was in fact an extension of Lerner’s; he adopted Lerner’s notions of empathy, cosmopolitan nature, and attitude change; his unit of analysis was the individual, and his main concern was with the social mind, with the change of culture, and of attitudes and ideas.

Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovations was in essence a synthesis of hundreds of diffusion studies in agriculture. Each of its successive editions took account of the innumerable studies conducted worldwide and in different disciplines, but the arguments about the efficacy of the strategies remained unchanged. As McAnany points out in a review of the third edition of the book, the core seven out of eleven chapters of the book which deal with the generalizations deriving from his diffusion of innovations model have remained substantially the same. The original model, derived from his work at Iowa State University, has not been revised to take account of the ever more comprehensive reviews of the studies that make up the other four chapters of the book in later editions.

3.2: The Diffusion of Innovations Model: Media and Development

Beginning in the 1950s, Latin America saw many energetic challenges to the institutions that had sustained social, political and economic inequalities in Latin American society for centuries. Revolution in Bolivia (1952) and Cuba (1959) and strong reform movements highlighted the need for urgent changes in Latin American society. For local and international elites there was great concern for restoring political stability and increasing economic growth, to develop Latin America and other under developed regions. In 1984 Bradford Burns wrote, Efforts like the United States Alliance for Progress were designed to replicate the successful rebuilding of post-war Europe through the Marshall Plan, all the while containing the revolutionary option in Latin America. Communication was to be a major component of development strategies. But, much as Innis predicted, these
development efforts often led to increased centralised control of economic processes while reinforcing the monopoly of knowledge held by planners and technicians.

Modernisation was the dominant theoretical paradigm that shaped the application of communication to development programs. Modernisation was predicated on the assumption that the type of development that had occurred in North America and Europe could be replicated in other regions of the world. Modernisation theory, in very schematic terms, assumed that development was a linear, evolutionary process that brought traditional society, based on subsistence production methods and "backward" cultural practices forward into a modern, industrialised and technological society through economic growth.4

The consolidation of the modernisation development model in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with the emergence of communications studies. Borrowing heavily from the fields of sociology, behavioural psychology and marketing, early communications researchers attempted to measure the impact and effects of mass media on individuals and concluded that the deliberate and planned use of the mass media could be an effective means of bringing about social change by influencing key individuals' attitudes and behaviour.5

These various ideas about the nature of media and social change coalesced in the diffusion of innovations development model. Rogers, explained diffusion of innovations as a deliberate campaign where professional, change agents targeted key community members of traditional societies, the "opinion leaders," and influenced them into adopting a technique or innovation and then subsequently passing that innovation on throughout the community. Larry Shore sums up the modernization and diffusion approach to development by saying - what was needed were to change the attitudes, values, and aspirations of the individuals in the population; from that would result the benefits of
modernization. The problem with development, then, lay in the individual who was ignorant and traditional. Exposure to new ways of thinking, through mass media could remedy the problem.⁶

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, international agencies and national governments applied the diffusion model to a variety of development projects, most often, but not exclusively, directed to rural populations. For example, agronomists and economic planners were interested in transforming agricultural production to a more efficient model - one that would generate more wealth and free individuals from the agricultural workforce to pursue employment in industrial occupations. Other examples were literacy and mathematics programs in Nicaragua, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

3.3: Concept of Mass Media as a Magic Multiplier

Wilbur Schramm extended the arguments of Lerner and Rogers in favor of modernization through mass media, which he termed ‘the magic multipliers’. His work was part of the efforts of the United Nations and UNESCO for a programme of concrete action to build up press, radio broadcasting, film and television facilities in countries in process of economic and social development. The survey on which the book was based was carried out by UNESCO by means of a series of meetings in Bangkok, Santiago, and Paris.

To Schramm, as to mainstream social scientists of the time, the mass media were ‘agents of social change,’ almost miraculous in their power to bring about that change. Schramm argued that the mass media could help accomplish the transition to new customs and practices (the innovations of Rogers) and, in some cases, to different social relationships. Behind such changes in behavior must necessary lie substantial changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills, and social norms. The process he elaborated was simple: first, the awareness of a need which is not satisfied by present customs and behavior; second, the need to invent or borrow behavior that comes close to meeting the need. Hence, a nation that wants to accelerate the process of development will try to make its people more widely and
quickly aware of the needs and opportunities for meeting them. This would facilitate the decision-making process and help the people put the new practices smoothly and swiftly into effect. Schramm went further than Lerner and Rogers in taking cultural linkages into account, in acknowledging ‘resistance to change’ and in urging ‘an understanding participation.’ However, his model of communication was still manipulative of behavior towards the desired end of innovation adoption. It still cited a strong correlation between high media exposure and development as empirical evidence.

Schramm argued forcefully that the mass media had the potential to widen horizons, to focus attention, to raise aspirations, and to create a climate for development. They also had the potential to confer status, to enforce social norms, to help form tastes, and to affect lightly held attitudes. He was optimistic about the potential of the mass media (and also educational media such as programmed instruction, language laboratories, and electronic digital computers) in all types of education and training. Unlike Lerner and Rogers however, he conceded that ‘the mass media can help only indirectly to change strongly held attitudes and valued practices.’

Schramm therefore recommended that a developing country should review its restrictions on the import of informational materials and should not hesitate to make use of new technical developments in communication in cases where these new developments fit its needs and capabilities. ‘the challenge,’ he concluded, ‘was to put the resources and the power of modern communication skillfully and fully behind economic and social development.’ He described as fortuitous, ‘almost miraculous’, that modern mass communications should be available to multiply informational resources. So carried away was Schramm by his messianic role that he observed in a final flourish that ‘it is hardly possible to imagine national economic and social development without some modern information multiplier; and indeed, without mass communication probably the great freedom movements and national stirrings of the last few decades would never have come about at all’. Such was the faith of the purveyors of modernization models.
3.4: Dependency Theory of Media and Development

Dependency theories or models came to the fore in the early 1970s as a reaction to modernization models. These new theories were the production of the application of Marxist theories of imperialism, though both Marxists and non-Marxists were instrumental in articulating them.

The original version of dependency and underdevelopment theory was outlined by Paul Baran (1967) and Andre Gunder Frank (1967). Their primary concern was finding out the causes of backwardness of the nonaligned countries within the dynamics of the world capitalist system. They assumed that underdevelopment was due, not to some original state of affairs, but the result of the same historical process by which the now-developed capitalist countries became economically advanced and industrialized. Thus, Baran argued that underdevelopment was the obverse side of development; the capitalist countries had become ‘developed’ by exploiting their colonies for centuries. Such economic exploitation had left the colonies with a narrowly specialized, export-oriented primary production structure managed by an elite which shared the cultural lifestyle and tastes of the dominant classes in capitalist states. These elite continue to perpetuate the rule of ex-colonies; hence a kind of neo-imperialism still prevails.

This dependency approach rejected the concept of a unified state as actor and the notion of a global system as a collection of nation states; rather, the dependency approach was a worldwide approach. Gunder Frank elaborated the theory by postulating three ‘laws of motion’ of the process of development and underdevelopment, and coined the twin concept ‘metropolis-satellite’ to characterize the nature of imperialist economic relations. The ties of dominance and dependency, he explained, run in a chain-like fashion throughout the global capitalist system, with metropolitan (or centre) states appropriating the surplus from the satellites (or periphery), their towns removing the surplus from the
hinterland, their landlords from the peasants, their merchants from shopkeepers, and finally, the shopkeepers from the customers.


Development Communication as a sub-field of mass communication emerged in the years subsequent to the Second World War as newly independent Asian, African, and Latin American countries ventured out to become progressive, self-sustaining and industrialized. The use of the term ‘development’ became associated with themes like modernization, nationwide economic growth and technological diffusion leading to centralized planning, large-scale industrialization, and the expansion of basic communication infrastructure.

The terms ‘another development’ and ‘multiplicity in one world’ that came into play can be traced back to the 70s when former United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold urged that development should have more than just economic dimensions. ‘Another development’ favours a multiplicity of approaches based on the context and the basic, felt needs, and the empowerment of the most oppressed sectors of various societies at divergent levels.

This interdependency of the society and the media is the essence of the interdependency theory developed by Defleur and Ball Rokeach. Defleur and Rokeach maintained that media and society are interdependent with each other. They are in the system of our modern society. Absence of one makes the other handicapped. Without the existing communion link the political and economic systems are paralysed. How would the government convey messages to the nation? How would the businessman sell their products without the help of the communication networks? Not only this, other larger aspects of society cannot work without communication. Without the audience and the existing social systems, communication networks are reduced to nil. Media reinforce human values. These include entertainment and leisure. They serve all kinds of
information about the world, society, science, economics, marriage, child rearing, health etc. So media are the central part of the modern society. It can be said that media are the central part of the modern society. It can be said that media are the maker and life of modern society. To play such a role media constantly interact with the society. Media learn from the society in order to cater to the needs of the people. Defleur and Rokeach assume that the ultimate basis of the media influence lies in the tripartite relationship among the larger societal system, the media’s role in the system and the relationship of the audience to the media. Defleur and Rokeach say that the degree of dependence on media information is the key variable in understanding when and why media messages alter audience feeling or behaviour.

Defleur and Rokeach suggested two major hypothesis of their theory:

1. The greater the number and centrality of specific information delivery function served by a medium, the greater the audience and societal dependency on the medium.

2. In societies with developed media systems, the audience dependency on media information increases as the level of the structural instability increases.

Radio could be used to achieve many ends and purposes depending on the priorities set. In India in this decade of literacy, the main goal or topmost priority should be to eradicate illiteracy. For that radio must play a very important role. The people have been depending on the service provided by the CR for information. It has brought a drastic change in the condition of illiteracy and education and has brought about a psychological change in the population. The content of its programme shapes the knowledge of the people and they lead themselves to a new awareness. The basic idea of the theory is that amongst a given range of issues and topics, the specific educational programmes are to be aired by radio.

### 3.6: Development Communication: An approach to Modernization
Perhaps the most influential advisers in the area of development and communication during the 1960s and 1970s were Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers, and Wilbur Schramm, all American academics who were mainstream empirical social scientists in the Euro-American tradition. The most influential work in the growth of development communication as a field in its own right was Lerner’s ‘The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle-East’. This study was not the work of an individual, rather it was part of a large project of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR) (formerly the Office of Radio Research) at Columbia University in New York City. The Project was funded by the Voice of America, and its primary aim was to study the listenership to Voice of America as well as to Radio Moscow, in selected countries of Europe and West Asia. Lerner himself supervised the field study, particularly that in Turkey.

The BASR, like other social research centers in the United States at the time, was staffed by social psychologists who had their training in the country’s propaganda efforts during World War II. Hardt’s survey of comparative research studies in the social sciences during World War II leads her to conclude that much of the research was within the context of war (regarding propaganda) and industrialization (relating to advertising), and that academicians were generally associated with it at levels. After the war these same academicians’ moved into universities like Columbia. They made no distinction between academic research and government or business oriented research. Their funds for research were, after all, from these same sources.

Thus, in the early 1940s, BASR did research on radio audiences and programs, readership studies for Time, Life and Tide, as well as advertising studies for manufacturers of toothpastes, vitamins, liniment, whiskey and wine. Lazarsfeld, who dominated the intellectual life of Columbia for almost a quarter century, made clear that there is hardly any difference between academic and the commercial study as far as methods and contents go; they differ only with respect to purposes and finances (Converse, 1987. His justification of such studies was that the results were fed back into teaching and the
Further, much academic research continued to be based upon the social and political values of Western societies and reflected confidence in the role of the United States as a model democracy. In sum, social science research was generally seen as a contribution to the intelligence-gathering activities of the United States government; international communication and development communication were part of this politically manipulative process.

Lerner held a largely unilinear evolutionary perspective rooted in the naïve belief that development meant change from a traditional to a modern society. Lerner postulated that development (or modernization) was fundamentally a communication process; that way to ‘modernize’ was to invest in large-scale projects in building up the infrastructure for modern development communication systems. Lerner argued that modernization was a prerequisite for making literacy widespread. Literacy would, be believed, lead to greater mass media exposure; greater mass media exposure would, in its turn, result in higher rates of literacy. Mass media exposure and literacy were seen as related to economic and political participation. The role of mass media was therefore, to mobilize human resources by motivating change in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. So the mass media were seen as mobility multipliers capable of producing empathy the capacity to put oneself in the other’s shoes and be able to relate to a rapidly changing environment, and to be future oriented, ambitious, competitive, rational, with a desire to progress and consume. The traditional values of community sharing, religious resignation to one’s lot of life, and satisfaction with one’s role and position in society had to be discarded if development were to take place. It was evident that Lerner, in the name of development and modernization, was propagating the political philosophy of free-enterprise, capitalism, and American-style democracy.\textsuperscript{13}
3.7: Development Communication and Community Radio

The path that theories of development communication have taken bears an eerie resemblance to the one taken by developmental theory at large. For decades, they have rested on presuppositions that have little or no bearing with empirical observations. These mimic in different ways the following pattern. The rural and the marginalized need to be helped. And this help must come in the form of outside intervention. This help can take the form of aid, technology, education, political rights, and in the case of communication specifically, ideas and information. This overall approach of exogenously induced change assumes the receivers to be a monolithic mass of morons who are incapable of articulating their own needs, their own notions of change and their own definitions of development.

They are the perfect sponges, absorbing all the wonderful messages directed at them, and whether through the two-step flow (E.M. Rogers cited in Hartmann et al., 1989: 26) or by the sheer strength of the great information multipliers (W. Schramm cited in Hartmann et al., 1989) characteristic of the media, incorporate them into their daily lives. As a result of this external support, the world becomes a more equitable place sooner rather than later. And all of humanity is indebted to the development and developmental communications experts for eternity. Unfortunately, the world has not changed much. Basic inequities remain (where they have not increased), and so do similar theories. However, what has emerged is a more sagacious view. Real societies are too complicated and local conditions too varied for universal solutions to be applicable, though the dimensions of the problems of development are now better understood.

A challenge to this dominant, top-down trend in developmental communication has been present for some time, but has not been able to influence communication policy planners in the third world countries. This alternative view outlines a framework where “the status distance between teacher and student, communicator and audience, is abolished. Communication functions more as a dialogue in which the former learns as well as teaches, and the latter is enabled to understand better the causes of his oppression and thereby to do something about it.”
A constructive dialogue can take place only amongst equals. And to be able to do so implies the partnership and participation of the entire community in all processes of media production and dissemination. It is this approach that CR actually exemplifies. CR also strikes at the heart of the tool with which status quo in a society is maintained - the control of knowledge. Those who have access to such knowledge are loath to give it up. And to give up control over something as important as broadcasting can be very threatening to existing power structures. The limits of representative democracy and of broadcasting’s representative public service role within it are essentially the same; power accrues to the representatives, not those whom they represent.15

Moreover, media producers thrive on the mystification of the production process and its associated technology. The possession of this ‘specialised’ knowledge grants them a position of power. In practice, production processes can be carried out by anyone with just basic training. When production shifts to the community, the demystification of technology occurs simultaneously. No longer can technology remain distant from the people that it is expected to serve. No longer is the process an esoteric one to which a privileged few have access. No longer can the dominant grammar of the media be sustained, for now it can be redefined by the audience itself. This process then results in the emasculation of the dominant media production industry and its proponents. Consumers of a particular product becoming producers of the same is the worst nightmare of those who gain from established economic structures. It has also been observed that “knowledge of the operational aspects of mass communication increases interest in the media, and creates a critical awareness in listening to the messages they carry.”

An audience that is critically aware of the way in which media products can be designed consciously to suit a certain end and may not necessarily represent the ‘truth’, is a dangerous one to contend with for those who stand to gain by it. At the same time, if communities are empowered enough to create an alternative media of their own, the mainstream media industry stands to lose the very basis on which it exists, its consumers. It is an unequal world, and it is in the interest of some to keep it so.

CR in India at the moment stands on the threshold of fundamentally changing the basic
notion of the role media can play in the empowerment of people. But a major barrier continues to exist in the form of the lack of legislative framework, perhaps fuelled by the resistance of established interest groups. Against the argument that this is the sole barrier to community media being widely propagated, is the one that even if these legislative reforms were to take place, the deeply embedded hierarchical social structures within which CR would have to operate would mitigate the beneficial developmental effects of it. While lobby groups and advocates of community media continue to pressurize the government to formulate laws that would make free the airwaves in the truest sense of the term, it is the second hurdle which is infinitely more difficult to overcome. In a similar vein, it is possible that the group currently influencing public policy on broadcasting in India will not lose as much power as it fears. CR does not seek to replace other forms of broadcasting. It simply gives a voice to the peripheral millions. A three tiered broadcasting model, with the national, private and community media playing complementary roles, has a precedence in other developing nations and much can be learnt from such systems. When CR does take off, it will be a rewarding exercise to observe the ways in which its active presence can be causally related to an improvement in the condition of the marginalized sections of society. However, while it may be tempting to romanticize the power CR grants and the benefits it can bring, it is important to understand that it must only be as ‘useful’ as the community wants it to be.

To use the exogenous ‘we must teach people how to use this new tool’ approach would be to merely replicate the follies of the past. Organizations and lobbyists, who are impatient to use this tool in what would hopefully be a more liberal environment, must be careful in this regard. If it is to be a true CR, it must be wholly and completely left in the hands of the community concerned. Even training and workshops to familiarize members of communities with the technology must facilitate an independent interpretation of the way it can be used. CR can be successful only if it liberates people to communicate with themselves. In their own language, in their own form and on their own terms.
3.8: Development Communication and development of the grassroots people.

Until the 1990s, economic theories explained underdevelopment as a consequence of industrial and technical backwardness, while sociological theories put the blame on superstition and fatalism, cultural backwardness of the illiterate masses. Thus, the quickest solution to underdevelopment was believed to be the borrowing of modernization strategies of Western societies which were deemed to be developed. These strategies, however, needed the necessary know-how as well as capital which the industrialized countries alone could provide. So multinationals were allowed to enter the poorer countries to provide this capital and knowledge. International aid agencies and financing institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) too entered the poorer countries along with specialist and advisers in ‘development’.

Development Communication emerged as a field of mass communication during the post-World War II years when the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America were asserting their right to independence, self-reliance, and nonalignment. At the same time, these countries were in a hurry to find solutions to the most urgent needs of their people, it was the eradication of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Colonial rule had established massive bureaucracies, skeletal transport and communication infrastructure, some educational and professional institutions if learning, and a few industries. Centralized economic planning, large scale industrialization, and the development of basic communications appeared at the time to be the most effective strategies for catching up with the economically advanced and industrialized countries. This indeed was the advice proffered by financial bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, donor agencies like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), by the various arms of the United Nations (dominated at the time by the big powers) such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNSECO), and by foreign advisers to national governments.

3.9: CR and Participatory Communication for Social Change
Development Communication as a sub-field of mass communication emerged in the years subsequent to the Second World War as newly independent Asian, African, and Latin American countries ventured out to become progressive, self-sustaining and industrialized. The use of the term ‘development’ became associated with themes like modernization, nationwide economic growth and technological diffusion leading to centralized planning, large-scale industrialization, and the expansion of basic communication infrastructure\textsuperscript{16}. This dominant paradigm promoted a top-down approach and the ‘one size fits all’ policy prescriptions by the World Bank, IMF and WTO for development. Nations started imagining their underdevelopment. Their physical and social realities were produced and reproduced in the dialectic of development and underdevelopment, ‘marginalizing and precluding other ways of seeing things’\textsuperscript{17}. The Third World was invented through this discourse.

The mainstream empirical social scientists in the Euro-American tradition whose works influenced the communication and development wisdom during the 50s and 60s were Daniel Lerner (The Passing of Traditional Society), Everett M. Rogers (Diffusion of Innovations) and Wilbur Schramm (Mass Media and National Development) (Kumar, 1994). They talked of mass media as instruments to change the mindset of the people and to create a climate for modernization and development, which will eventually produce higher level of living. Lerner (1958) believed that development meant change from a traditional to a modern society. Lerner argued that modernization was a prerequisite for making literacy widespread. Mass media and literacy were seen as related to economic and political maturity.

Rogers made a mark in the area of agricultural extension through his Diffusion of Innovations model. Describing ‘innovation’ as an ‘idea’ or a ‘practice’ or a ‘technology’ perceives as new by an individual, Rogers defines development as ‘a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organizations’. He believed in the ability of communication channels and opinion leaders to disseminate knowledge about new practices and ideas and to convince
target groups to adopt the exogenously introduced innovations. To Schramm, the mass media were ‘agents of social change’- marvelous ‘Magic Multipliers’ in their potential to bring about a change. He argued that the mass media could help accomplish the transition to new customs and practices (the innovations of Rogers) in order to widen horizons, to raise aspirations and to create a climate for development.

The mid-70s saw disenchantment with the postulates underlying the modernization and economic growth oriented theories of development including diffusion of innovation approaches, as they did not correspond to the social realities and cultural milieu in the Third World countries. Evaluation reports of the extension programmes indicated that the main beneficiaries of the little success that was visible in agriculture, health, nutrition and educational extension programmes, were the better-off sections of society. The hope that development benefits would eventually trickle down to the neediest was belied as rural social structures thwarted all attempts to reach the poor. At the international level also, the main beneficiaries were the multinational industrial firms and the financing banks and institutions.

Dependency approach came to the fore in the early 70s when modernization and innovations perspective on development was challenged by Latin American social scientists and the neo-Marxists (proponents of structuralism). It was Paul A. Baran who first articulated the thesis that development and underdevelopment are ‘interrelated processes’ and uncompromisingly designated Western monopoly capitalism as the main cause of the chronic backwardness of the developing countries. Other scholars within the dependency school worked on multiple variables to infer that underdevelopment was the result of the same historical process by which the ‘developed’ countries became economically advanced. This consciousness resulted in the new nations disassociating themselves from the super powers and moving to form the non-aligned nations for political, economic and cultural self-determination within the international community of nations. The New International Economic Order is an example of an attempt toward this
At the macro-level, the dependency debate played an important role in the movement for a New World Information and Communication Order from the late 60s to the early 80s. Third World news networks were established and people from developing countries wrote articles about themselves from their own perspectives. Mass communicators made serious efforts at redirecting information flows away from the conventional gate-keeping junctions located in London, Paris, Madrid and New York 20. The outcome of this approach was a bigger dependence on advanced countries for finance, marketing, capital goods, and design and led to mounting foreign debt and dumping of obsolete equipment and technologies in recipient countries 21.

The Third World response to the modernization and the dependency models of development came not so much as a well-defined, coherent and clearly mapped approach. It was more a critique by scholars in the 80s who disapproved universal application of development models and pointed out that development must be conceived as an integral, multidimensional and dialectic process which can differ from one society to another22. The one common standpoint that the newer approaches on development shared was that the orientation of social change must be ‘bottom-up’ and aimed at self-development of the local community.

The terms ‘another development’ and ‘multiplicity in one world’ that came into play can be traced back to the 70s when former United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold urged that development should have more than just economic dimensions. ‘Another development’ favours a multiplicity of approaches based on the context and the basic, felt needs, and the empowerment of the most oppressed sectors of various societies at divergent levels23. Participation and cultural identity are vital elements of such alternative approaches to development. With this shift in focus of development
approaches, the participatory communication model that emerged sought to transform the elitist, vertical and top-down character of the diffusion model of communication (congruent with the modernization theories) and incorporate democratization and participation at all levels in the planning and production of media content. New approaches to communication brought a greater knowledge of and respect for forms of people’s communication, which were consonant with the cultural identity of the community.

As per McQuail, Another communication favoured multiplicity, smallness of scale, locality, and deinstitutionalization, interchange of sender-receiver roles and horizontality of communication links at all levels of society. It emphasized the need to establish decentralized media systems with a more receiver-centric rather than communicator orientation and accent on an exchange of information and ‘meanings’ rather than on persuasion.

CR often applies participatory communication approaches. The nature and extent of community participation in a CR station varies from minimal participation when outsiders make the decisions- to full involvement of the community members in the decision-making process beginning from the initiation to the establishment, management, financing, administration, program production and evaluation. Participatory communication approaches place decision-making in the hands of ordinary people. It can democratize communication and empower the marginalized people. It tends to stress the importance of the cultural identity of local communities and participation at all levels- international, national, local and individual.

Some people favor community participation as a means of reaching certain goals since it makes projects and programs more humane, effective and sustainable. However, others see participation as an end in itself. For them, participation is a set of desired processes and relationships. Public participation is important for preventing the monopolization of communication. It fosters a fair balance between different parties involved in the communication process. Public participation enhances media autonomy and promotes a
plurality of opinions. Thus, communication facilities may serve not just those in power but society as a whole.

References


