CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
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All developing countries have been giving top priority to mass media for disseminating information among the people and for activating them to achieve better socio-economic levels. This is due to the development potential of the mass media. India also is making use of this agency for achieving rapid socio-economic transformation.

The present study was aimed at finding out the relation between mass communication and development in an Indian setting. Since majority of the population of India are rural, our study emphasised the interaction between mass communication and rural development.

The main objectives of the study were:
1) to find out the media habit of the rural population.
2) to find out the socio-economic behaviour of the rural people.

3) to estimate the extent of correlation between mass media utilization and socio-economic development and the variation in the relationship on account of differences in the socio-economic and cultural background of the population.

4) to find out the association of different sections of the population with the three media, namely, press, radio and cinema.

5) to analyse the capacity of the mass media to inculcate awareness about development practices in the rural population and induce adoption of the practice.

With these objectives several specific hypotheses were formulated for testing.

The source of primary data was the interview of 400 heads of households belonging to two areas which are having different amount of social overheads. The amount of social overheads of the rural areas was assessed by the method discussed in chapter II. The selection of the sample was made in such a way that the different religious/caste groups were included in it. Interview was conducted using a well developed schedule. Suitable measuring instruments
were constructed to measure the variables, namely, mass media exposure and socio-economic status of the people. Karl Pearson's product moment method of correlation and chi-square test of association were used for testing the relationship between the variables.

The major findings of the study are given below:

**Media Habit**

A man who is more exposed to one medium of mass communication will be exposed to other media also to a greater extent than a man who is lesser exposed to any of the media.

Among the three media, namely, press, radio and cinema, the rural people are more exposed to the radio. The major reason for this is the absence of the literacy barrier for listening to the radio.

Rural people's preference for development news of newspapers is very much influenced by their religious/caste affiliation, educational attainment, income, socio-economic status and nature of main occupation. But it is found that age and residence in places having different social overheads have no influence on the preference. Another interesting result is that the people have preference for reading newspapers which are owned and/or managed by
members of their own religion/community.

Regarding the radio, it is seen that the rural People's preference for development-oriented programmes of it is influenced by their age, religious/caste affiliation, income, socio-economic status, main occupation and social overheads of the area of residence. But contrary to the case of newspapers, here, education is found to have no influence on the preference for development programmes of the radio. The relationship between the above background variables and preference for entertainment broadcasts of the radio was also analysed. It was found that the association between age and the preference is lacking. Social overheads also have no influence on the preference. But the preference is determined by all other background variables.

**Socio-Economic behaviour**

A very significant finding in this regard was that the return from paddy cultivation is not related to such variables as income, socio-economic status, education and age. A rational explanation for this is that paddy cultivation as a profitable pursuit has been abandoned by the upper segment of the rural population. However, religious/caste affiliation and social overheads of the area of residence are related to the dependent variable.
Interestingly, all background variables were found to be related to the return from cash crops. On the whole, it is to be concluded that the better-off sections of the rural population are more interested in cash crops.

The level of adoption of development practices is determined by religious/caste affiliation, education, income, socio-economic status and nature of main occupation. Here too, it was seen that age and difference in the social overheads of the area of residence are not related to the level of adoption.

The pattern of incurring debts is found to vary with the educational status of the people. The less educated section borrow money for unproductive investments. The borrowing habit is free from the influence of other background variables.

**Relationship between mass media and rural development**

There exists a strong positive correlation between mass media exposure and socio-economic development of the rural people. The correlation index is 0.7453. This shows that change in one of the variables can create change in the other significantly. However, the direction of the cause-effect relationship is yet to be established.
Age of the respondents as a background variable has no influence on the correlation pattern of the variables. The degree of the correlation is higher for the literates and for the high income group. Regarding the influence of religion/caste, the degree of relationship between the variables is low for the two communities, namely, Hindu (SC) and Muslim. The pattern of the correlation is similar for the Christians and the Hindus (Non-SC). The nature of main occupation has strong influence on the relationship. It is noteworthy that the inter-relationship between the variables is the highest for the agriculturists though it is not significantly greater than that for the other occupational groups except manual labourers. However, the social overheads of the area have no influence on the relationship.

Mass media and rural people

The exposure of the rural people to the three media, namely, press, radio and cinema, when taken together is found to be associated with such background variables as education, religious/caste affiliation, income, socio-economic status and main occupation. The social overheads and age have no influence on the people's exposure to the media.

Enquiry into the association between the background variables and exposure to each of the media reveals
that there is no difference in the extent of exposure to the press on account of the difference in age. But regarding the radio, the older section of the people is more exposed to the medium. The younger group is more exposed to the cinema. Religious/caste affiliation influences the people's exposure to all the media. The exposure to each of the media is found to increase with increase in educational attainment. The income also augments the people's exposure to each of the media. The exposure to the press, the radio and the cinema increases with increase in socio-economic status. The nature of main occupation is a determining factor on the people's absorption of the communications of the individual medium. No association was found to exist between exposure to any one of the media and the amount of social overheads of the place of residence.

Mass Media in the process of Rural Development

The effect of the media on the process of development was analysed at two specific and important stages in the process.

It is found that the media have fairly high influence in causing awareness about modern practices for development. 64.75% of the respondents consider media as the primary source of information about development practices ranging from one to eight. Only about one-third of the respondents
do not consider media as primary source of information on any of the development practices.

The degree of awareness contributed by mass media is related to age, education, religious/caste affiliation, income, socio-economic status, main occupation and the amount of social overheads of the area of residence.

But for inducing adoption, the media are poor agents. Only 26.25% of the sample have adopted modern practices ranging from one to eight mainly due to the influence of the media.

Here also, the level of adoption is associated with education, income, socio-economic status and the nature of main occupation. But age, religious/caste affiliation and social overheads of the area do not influence the level of adoption induced by the media persuasion.

The implication drawn from the analyses of the influence of education, income, socio-economic status and the nature of main occupation on the relationship between mass media consumption and development and the level of adoption of development practices induced by mass media is that when a fair stage of development is achieved, the mass communication boost it further. Till that stage is attained the media could prepare social-psychological ground for the
take-off in development. This indicates that the media are more useful and could be utilised for those sections of the rural population who have passed the take-off stage. The net result is the widening of the gap in knowledge and material achievement between the developed and the less developed sections of the society.

Suggestions based on the findings

It has been found that the media communication is a better promoter of development for those sections of rural population who have attained a certain level of socio-economic advancement. That is, the less advanced categories are benefiting less by development communication. Their absorption of the communications can be increased only if they are brought into the take-off stage on the socio-economic front. For this the extension agencies have to concentrate their attention on these sections of the society.

Credibility and practicability of messages are important criteria for acting upon them. Hence the messages must be clearly worded, highly descriptive and trustworthy. Moreover, the loss suffered by faithful media accepters is to be genuinely compensated to induce innovativeness and experimentation. Imaginative thinking is required for devising a suitable set up for implementing this theme in
practice. This will gradually augment the credibility of
the media among the general public.

The development communication is more palatable
to the socio-economically better-off category, while enter-
tainment aspects are equally attractive to all sections of
the population. This is because the lower stratum believes
that the development communication is useful only for those
who have money for investment. A more favourable attitude
towards development communication must be cultivated among
this less advanced group so that the communication on non-
cash input practices at least may be made acceptable and
beneficial to them. Here also interpersonal contact is
necessary.

Religious ethic is an important factor which
determines the media habit. The forward communities have
habits which are conducive for development. Methods to
lighten the negative effects of adverse religious/caste
values on the backward sections are to be devised to weed
out the inertia of those categories.

It is seen that the correlation between mass media
exposure and development is the highest for the agriculturists.
This indicates that mass media are suitable agencies for
bringing about agricultural development and rural transfor-
mation. This is especially true in the case of the radio. We have seen that the rural people are more exposed to this medium. Moreover, it is revealed that there is no relationship between education and exposure to the medium. Hence it is most suited for spreading information among rural people who are lesser educated. In view of this fact the quality and coverage of broadcast meant for rural people are to be improved. Too much of technical terms and very sophisticated language are to be avoided in the broadcasts. Formation of rural forums for conducting discussions on development broadcasts may help to alleviate the difficulties created by the lack of personal contacts between the communicator and the receiver.

Cash crops are the favourites of the upper socio-economic groups of the rural population. They are switching from consumption to cash crops by converting paddy fields to gardens. This is not a healthy practice especially in the background of frequent food deficits. The trend could be arrested by the judicious use of the media.