

# Media and Development

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## CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multi-dimensional process involving recognition and reorientation of entire economic and social system. Since much writings and definitions often start with economic development or per capita income, the real development process involves not only changes in the economic structure, but is interlinked with the entire social, political and cultural fabric of the society. It is necessary to note that development does not mean mere increase in the per capita income or mere industrialization but a process involving a number of qualitative changes, nothing less than the upward movement of the entire social system. Development may be interpreted as attainment of a number of modernization ideas, such as rise in productivity, social and economic equalization, modern knowledge and improved institutions and attitudes. Proper and adequate development is not done by dislodging people from their roots, culture and environments. Proper development always helps people to self-sufficient and self-reliant.

According to some renowned economists development works as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy. Growth of GNP ( Gross National Product ) or of individual income can of course, be very important

as means to expanding the freedoms enjoyed by the members of the society. Development requires the removal of major sources of bondage : poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance over activity of repressive states.

Some social activists and renowned communication experts defines that development is removal of poverty, lessening of disparity between regions and classes, building up of the technological infrastructure, modernization of society through shedding feudalism, tribalism and superstition, of the gradual achievement, economic reliance. Development is measured in the improvement of the lives of the people and the strengthening of the family's or the individual's capacity to deal with the rest of the society and of the nation's capacity to deal with the world.

Another concept of development suggests an index of physical quality of life as evidenced by the sate of literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality etc. Yet another notion of development emphasizes freedoms, capabilities and entitlement for better life, which could be expressed in term of a scale, similar to those considered under quality of life. One of the recent entries in the alternative development prospective is sustainable development. It draws attention to the need to conserve resources so that the process

of development would be sustainable without endangering the resources for the future generation.

According to the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation Report development would mean different things to different people in different countries depending on the national priorities ; one child family in China, decreased pesticide use in Philippines, Corruption in India and so on.

The concept and definition of development is ever changing and various objectives are given importance at different time period. But in order to keep the process on, media has been playing a very significant role in enhancing public activism and in drawing attention to the deprivation of the socially and economically backward section of the society. Role of media in the process of development has been recognized as crucial. The fact that people's participation is an essential condition for the success of any developmental programmes. The media can act as an effective catalyst giving way to social transformation.

#### **MASS MEDIA IN BRIEF :**

The media can be considered a combination of content – music, films, TV, radio, publishing, advertisements and electronic games – along with associated technological devices. Over time what constitutes 'the media' has both expanded and proliferated. This became the media which have been closely entwined with technological changes – the consequences of which have affected content, platforms and devices as a whole. These developments have also provided for ownership opportunities and new business models. Each new development extends the reach and changes the format of the media.

We live in a society that depends on information and communication to keep moving in the right direction and do our daily activities

like work, entertainment, health care, education, personal relationships, traveling and anything else that we have to do. In the world of today, media has become almost as necessary as food and clothing. It is true that media is playing an outstanding role in strengthening the society; it's a mirror of the society. Its duty is to inform, educate and entertain the people. It is partly because of them that awareness is spreading in the society. It is the media which shape our lives. Our lives would be incomplete without the media. Our decisions are based on the information that we get from our co workers, news, friends, family, etc. What we need to be aware is that most of our decisions, beliefs and values are based on what we know for a fact, our assumptions and our own experience. In our work we usually know what we have to do on our experience and studies, however on our daily lives we rely on the media to get the current news and facts about what is important and what we should be aware of. We have put our trust on the media as an authority to give us news, entertainment and education. However, the influence of mass media on our kids, teenagers and society is so big that we should know how it really works.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the development of mass media and foundation of a global media. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the transformation of the mass media is accelerating as a consequences of the digitalization of content and it's global distribution over digital platforms to digital devices. Both the print and electronic media houses just doubled their numbers in the last few years. With the pace and rhythm of industrial development and signing of MoUs the regional print and electronic media became healthier day by day. New media do not displace old. Rather they sit side by side. The number of hardcopy newspapers and books publishing are increasing day by day. The same content of those books and newspapers can be accessed on the

internet. Launching of number of 24 hours satellite news channels and publishing number of news papers and extending number of editions will not certainly make a state developed. All the media organizations should bear a strong sense of objective and media policy and everybody's goal should be centered towards the development of the society. Developmental stories don't have any clear cut definition. It depends on countries, states and sometimes for the whole mankind's requirement. Almost all the media organizations want to be the forward player in the media race for getting highest TRP or getting a favor of ABC. But it is the high time to re-valuate all media entrepreneurs about how much space they are sparing for developmental stories and in case of news channels how much time they are sparing for developmental stories round the clock.

The media scenario has undergone spectacular change since independence. India has been witnessing a revolution in communication technology. But in the Indian context, the yardstick of development is entirely different. The level of progress we have achieved is not adequate because of the deviating from the real objective. In the last few decades another new trend of Journalism is introduced that is Development Journalism. Particularly in a developing country like India, development journalism must concern itself with the people. It must show them how to improve their bargaining power with the society. It must make them realize that their future is in their hands. It must describe the process of backbone building. This new trend of journalism must concern itself with the people. It must show them how to improve the bargaining power with the society. It must describe the process of change and modernization, the new discoveries and the products. In the last two decades the world has witnessed tremendous growth in the media industry. Both the print and electronic media houses just doubled. With the pace and rhythm

of industrial development print and electronic media became healthier day by day. Several trends are apparent in the media – most of which have a long history, some of which are new and all of which are experiencing the impact of digitization. As these trends unfold and intertwine they will impact the contribution of the media to development.

A characteristic feature of our country is that it is predominantly rural in its economy. The role of mass media for the holistic development of the people has not received much attention. This is more so in India, where 80 per cent of the people live in villages. Mass media have been considered as potential agencies for the development of people primarily because their reach is wide. Mass media are very suitable instrument for rapid development of developing countries like India. Media has important role in fostering National Unity, literacy, educational technology, distance education, environmental reporting for sustainable development and women empowerment. Developing the theme of National Unity and elaborating the concept like Nationalism, National identity, sub-nationalism is a delightful and inspiring experience. Instances from China where media could be harnessed for enhanced national awareness and Nigeria where media are viewed as National Unifier are particularly noteworthy. The Indian experiences has been different where as the electronic media – so far under the control of Government – are mended to uphold the unity of the country. It has been widely felt in practice that Delhi-centric view has been projected neglecting other parts of the country. There seems to be some validity in the perception that at times enough sensitivity has not always been shown to the cultures, customs and languages from states.

The creation and dissemination of knowledge are key factors in the development process – where the media have been instrumental

as a means of storing and sharing knowledge. The well recognized functions of the media are to educate, inform and entertain where the social and economic contributions of the media to development depend on the nature of the content delivered. Direct development benefits flow from educating and informing, with entertainment possibly a 'hook'. "Edutainment" is a common component of development project.

The development impact of media content- education, information, entertainment and edutainment is related to the relevance of the content delivered. Relevance requires that the information delivered be adapted and disseminated in formats and languages that diverse social groups can understand and act on. Quite often the most relevant content is local, though the concept of "local" operates at different levels – from national to community.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTENT PRODUCTION :**

We all are experiencing the continuously expansion and evolution of mass media. To understand these trends, it is necessary to consider some important characteristics of the industrial economics of content production :

- ❖ **The irrelevant factor :** A wide range of content is offered, but individuals sample a minute fraction of these offerings.
- ❖ **The packaging factor :** For publishing and aggregators it makes sound business sense to assemble an array of relevant and irrelevant materials in one offering to attract mass audience. Newspapers illustrates irrelevance and packaging, offering numerous sections, supplements and pullouts on sports, business, travel, food, health, society and other topics. Some of which are thrown away by readers at the point of sale.

❖ **The venture Capital factor :** Similarly investors are encouraged to take a bundled portfolio approach in an environment of bits and largely misses.

❖ **The fluidity factor :** Most media content can be repackaged into different formats and for different platforms and devices. For instance, recorded music can be repackaged as a stage musical that is later made into a film, for which a sound track of recorded music and ringtones are sold. A theme ride in an amusement park, a cartoon character, a comic book, a TV serial and even a toy may become a film and then a video-game or the process may be reversed. Any successful content product (such as best selling book) is a pre-tested candidate product for reformatting is a different medium.

The media are at the cutting edge of technological change, where the digitalization of content, Next Generation Networks, falling device and distribution costs, ever-increasing abundance and new business models are overturning the pre-existing order of markets and the media, though broadcasting, particularly radio remain crucial in developing countries. This offers new development opportunities requiring new policy initiatives, and the realization of this by the development community. In many instances the media has yet to attain its appropriate status on the list of development priorities.

The media are significant driver of growth in many economics. The business of producing content generates substantial income flows and jobs that contribute directly to the economy. Increase access to knowledge spurs higher level of literacy, which strengthens human capital for higher productivity. The media are also important contributors to social and cultural life and key components of democratic structures. These

contributors to development are often deliberately embodied in the media system.

It is clear that the formal media production sector has a substantial and growing economic presence, including a high proportion of micro, small and medium enterprises. Digital media is a major driver of investment in broadband infrastructure and e-commerce, both of which can transfer the development process. The media's contribution to development occurs simultaneously along five closely intermingled influences: plurality and transparency, behavioural, infrastructure and platform, economic, and trade.

- ❖ **Plurality and transparency** : The contribution that a plural media environment makes good governance, transparency and the functioning of markets (economic and political) which can be seen as the media's political-economic role.
- ❖ **Behavioural** : - The media's contribution to inspiring beneficial changes in the behaviours of individuals, groups and organisations.
- ❖ **Infrastructure and platform** : - Compelling content is essential for and the main driver of investment in new convergent broadband infrastructure and platforms, which hold the potential for transformational development.
- ❖ **Economic** : - The media provide many jobs, especially in smaller size enterprises.
- ❖ **Trade** : - Trade in India, mainly audio-visual products is substantial but asymmetric, certain trade barriers restrain investments and limit opportunities for developing country's exports and so, the media's potential contribution to development.

## MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL ISSUES

### Poverty

Media and other forms of communication can play a vital role in improving the conditions of

life for the world's poorest people. Some of people who are concerned about development issues have been interested in media. They have tried to find ways in which communication and particularly the mass media like newspapers, radio and television can be used to help countries develop and thus reduce the amount of poverty. Most recently, there has been enormous interest in the potential of the internet to aid in development. Many of those who have tried to use the media for development have been activists – journalists, broadcasters, development workers and politicians – but some have had more theoretical role. There had been thousands of books and articles dedicated for trying to understand what role the media might play in development and to find ways in which might play such a role more effectively. Unlike many areas of communication theory, these investigations have often been closely tied to practice; Scholars have theorized about the best way to use the media to help development and activists have tried to implement their findings.

### Education

Education and media have been harnessed to bring about changes in attitude and values – so essential for the task of nation building. Although media certainly have the potential to aid the education system of the country, the success depends upon ensuring the media technology fulfills the needs of learners, teachers and society. Media are particularly suited as adjuncts to Distance Education and Open Learning System. The fact remains that Open and Distance Learning System would not have created a viable and lasting effect, within the overall traditional system of classroom teaching and university education, but for the extensive use of media and communication technologies. Communication not only generates an educational environment, it becomes a vehicle for education. Media technology is being increasingly harnessed to expand educational opportunities.

## Environment

Since the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on Environment, issues concerning environment and development have received sustained media attention. Environment reporting focuses virtually on contemporary crisis of survival. The media coverage of grass root movements throughout the country has certainly the awareness level of environmental issues. Since environmental problems are assuming global dimensions and infringe upon decision taken at multi-lateral levels, the interest generated ranges from the local issues of urban sanitation and deforestation to global warming and green house effects. Environmental issues have also generated “rethink” about the aid and funding procedures of the World Bank, construction of big dams and other environmental projects.

## NATIONAL MEDIA POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT :

The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems in its Report (1987) recommended : Communication be no longer regarded as an incidental service and its development left no chance. Recognition of it's potential warrants the formulation by all nations and particularly developing countries, of comprehensive communication policies linked to overall social, cultural, economic and political goals. Such policies should be based on inter-ministerial and inter-disciplinary consultants with broad public participation.

Stressing the importance of communication policies, the report said, communication policies and development strategies have been considered as essential means of solving the major problems. The then Chairman of Press Council of India, A.N. Sen has however, been of the opinion that it may not be wise to seek to lay down any firm National Media Policy, as the effective implementation of

the policy may create any problem that is likely to solve; although there may not be any difficulty in arriving at a general consensus as to certain norms to be observed by the media instead of seeking to lay down any firm National Media Policy. A policy is generally formulated and adopted for achieving a particular object. In the absence of any such object or fixed goal, there can be no question of framing any policy. A policy adopted for achieving no particular purpose will indeed be meaningless. To properly understand and appreciate whether any National Media Policy is at all necessary at this juncture, we have to bear in mind two important considerations :

1. Whether the same can be adopted without interfering with the independence of media; and
2. Exactly what is the object that the media are expected to achieve and what is the purpose which the media seek to serve.

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of the media continues apace. In its latest phase to top-down pre-existing order is being thoroughly shaken-up. More people in more places can create, distribute, access and apply knowledge in the form of media content – an armed, drive development. For talent rich developing countries, there are new opportunities for redefining new media related development structure. At the same time the development community has to reset its sights.

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