

Comprehending the Mismatch Between Development's Sense Goal and Communication Reality: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The paper discusses the mismatch between development's Sense ,Goal and Communication Reality: A Literature Review. It aims to understand the potential, resources, and competence of the Developing Communities from Within (DCFw) development approach for sustainable trans-generational progress of communities. The study uses a three-stage literature review method to identify gaps in earlier works, evaluate dominant communication strategies for development, and comprehend the actual communication reality at the grassroots level. The authors found that the shift from modernization to participatory development and the convergence of Information-Communication technology (ICT4D) have led to a need for more policy research and indigenous models of communication and development through participatory research. They also emphasise the importance of understanding the human dimension of development, which encompasses material well-being, human activity, and the capacity to evolve across time. The paper concludes that the development paradigm should be based on the actual sense of the world and the creative skills of individuals.

KEYWORDS: Developing Communities From Within (DCFw), Development Communication, Sense of Development (SoD), ICT4D, Participatory Communication

INTRODUCTION

There exists a diversity of perspectives among individuals on the conceptualization of development and communication. Nevertheless, there is a consensus among both the general public and experts that development entails an improvement in one or more of the five domains of human interest, namely physical, social, cultural, political, and economic. This improvement can occur either at the individual level, societal level, or perhaps even both simultaneously. The relative importance of these five domains is contingent upon the developmental perspective employed to analyse and measure the actuality of development. However, communication is commonly perceived as a fundamental process through which individuals exchange thoughts and ideas, serving various purposes such as recreational engagement, enhancing productivity, persuasion, fostering shared understanding, and more. The recognition of planning as a fundamental component of development has not been universally acknowledged. This recognition typically arrives at a later stage, and individuals from

many fields who possess the skills of writing, speaking, and utilising media devices are capable of engaging in this operational aspect of development. Within this particular context, a multitude of approaches have been put out in order to comprehend the intricate connection between development and communication.

Objective:

To draw reasons for understanding the potential, resources, and competence of the Developing Communities from Within (DCFw) development approach for sustainable transgenerational progress of communities is set against the development policies followed from outside with no role or bare minimum role of locals, the literature review would be based on informed and critical opinions for searching solutions to development that is unsustainable for people and nature in the short term. This paper discusses explanations for development failures by analyzing the findings of a few well-

known studies on development and communication phenomena conducted between 1996 and 2012.

Methodology:

Through a three-stage literature review method, this study applies three broad coordinates to comprehend the link between development and communication. The three coordinates are Sense of Development (SoD), Goals of Development (GoD), and Instruments of Development (IoD). The current study is restricted to these three coordinates. As a result, no other details from previous investigations have been investigated.

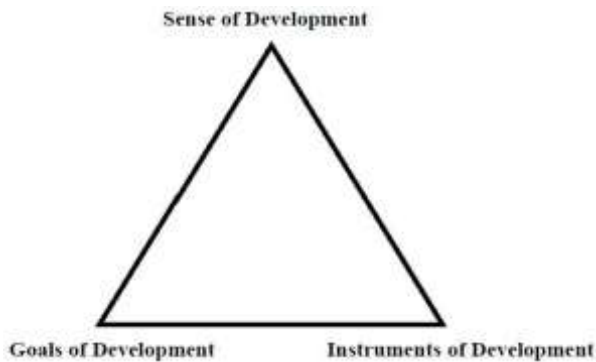


Fig 2.1: Development Triad

In sync with the objective, a purposive literature review has been adopted for the present study. The literature Review has been conducted in three stages in consideration of the need to identify the gaps in the earlier works which substantiate the following three sub-objectives:

1. To use the Developing Community from Within (DCFW) approach;
2. To evaluate the dominant communication strategies for development that have been followed thus far; and
3. To comprehend the actual communication reality at the grassroots level.

First Stage of Review: Why Developing Community from Within (DCFW) Approach Taken for Current Research?

Considering the abundance of studies emerging from the fear of community-development praxis dissonance, only representative and summative studies have been included in the present study. The first study (1997) is a meta-analysis that delves into the development-communication interface in the continuum of changes associated with increasing awareness about development sustainability. The second study, based on UNESCO deliberations in quest of fighting poverty with appropriate development techniques (1998), in which great economists and state representatives from around the world participated, is a set of prescriptions deemed urgent by the deliberation. The third study (2008) addresses the practical communication issues that exist in current development communication programmes. The fourth study (2003), based on UNESCO's prescriptions for Communication for Development and Social Change, accurately defines the issues to be faced. The fifth study (2011), based on the Assam University Silchar project (1998-2000 action phase and on), offers practical side clues by utilizing perspectives from three

thinker-experimenters from colonial India with roots in civilizational continuity and instruments of socioeconomic change developed from within the country's classical knowledge and community-practiced resources with the goal of developing communities with transgenerational sustainability with progress.

After examining 140 journal articles, book chapters, and books published between 1987 and 1996, Fair and Shah (1997) found:

"In the 1987–1996 period, Lerner's modernization model completely disappears. Instead, the most frequently used theoretical framework is participatory development, an optimist postmodern orientation, which is almost the polar opposite of Lerner who viewed mass communication as playing a top-down role in social change. Also vanishing from research in this latter period is the two-step flow model, which was drawn upon by modernization scholars... Both periods do make use of theories or approaches such as knowledge gap, indirect influence, and uses and gratifications" (Fair and Shah, 1997:10).

The researchers identified two gaps, they being as follows:

".... the need to conduct more policy research, including institutional analysis of development agency coordination.... the need to research and develop indigenous models of communication and development through participatory research" (Fair and Shah, 1997:19).

Their research concludes that by the turn of the century, the shift from Modernization to Participatory Development was accompanied by Information-Communication technology convergence, providing high hope that ICT4D would replace the weakness of mass communication's top-down role in social change and two-step flow model of communication.

On the basis of a study and development of the key ideas of the UNESCO discussion "Rethinking development: Do we need a paradigm shift" conducted in its headquarters in Paris on November 30, 1998, Bartoli (1999), at UNESCO's invitation, wrote:

"It is neither doctrine, ideology nor "world view" in the Schumpeterian sense that should dictate the interpretation of development. It is with reference to the actual sense of the world, with a view to seizing and transforming it through the creative skills of men and women, that the "new paradigm" must be considered, and economics consigned to its role as an instrument in the service of all aspects of life, with human objectives. Development is not merely growth. It assumes a human dimension when it encompasses the enhancement of material well-being in low-income countries, be it food, health, education, or the duration and dignity of life; in other words, components not inherent in development. It also assumes a human dimension when, through vigorous human activity, it seeks to establish for men and women the world over

the conditions essential to the maintenance and blossoming of life. It is pluridimensional when it is a "project" (Francois Perroux), "an historical progression" (Ignacy Sachs); far from being restricted to countries which "diplomacy by terminology" (Gunnar Myrdal) defines as "backward", "least developed", "underdeveloped" or "developing", it affects all peoples and all nations" (Bartoli, 1999:9).

According to Bartoli (1999), the essence of multidimensionality, such as transgenerational development in historical time based on tradition and community transformation, alludes to the primacy of what is human and their enormous capacity to evolve across time. Mefalopulos (2008) identified the medium of communication itself as a key problem in his analysis of the main issues that led to the failure of development communication programmes. He observed:

"If the main causes of many past failures are to be ascribed to the insufficient, or the absence of, stakeholders' engagement in the problem analysis of social, political, and cultural environments, there can be little doubt that dialog and the professional use of two-way communication are the best remedies to successfully address this issue. The dialogic functions of communication, in addition to its more informative functions, have become crucial to rectify past mistakes and to enhance projects' design and sustainability. The dialog-based approach can define priorities and project objectives in a more reliable and effective way, thus shaping and improving the overall design of the initiative" (Mefalopulos, 2008: 66).

Mefalopulos (2008) eschewed the top-down communication strategy that was prevalent in the development communication paradigm in favour of a more practical and interesting type of two-way communication between the information-givers and the information-seekers.

Servaes (2003), who directed UNESCO's global endeavour to find a communication mode that would serve the purpose of sustainability, remarked:

"Since the demarcation of the First, Second, and Third Worlds has broken down and the cross-over center-periphery can be found in every region, there is a need for a new concept of development which emphasizes cultural identity and multidimensionality. The present-day 'global' world, in general as well as in its distinct regional and national entities, is confronted with multifaceted crises. Apart from the obvious economic and financial crisis, one could also refer to social, ideological, moral, political, ethnic, ecological, and security crises. In other words, the previously-held dependency perspective has become more difficult to support because of the growing interdependency of regions, nations, and communities in our so-called 'global' world. From the criticism of the two paradigms above, particularly that of the dependency approach, a new viewpoint on development and social

change has come to the forefront. The common starting point here is the examination of the changes from 'bottom-up', from the self-development of the local community. The basic assumption is that there are no countries or communities that function completely autonomously and that are completely self-sufficient, nor are there any nations whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. Every society is dependent in one way or another, both in form and in degree. Thus, a framework was sought within which both the Centre and the Periphery could be studied separately and in their mutual relationship" (Servaes, 2003:18).

Servaes' view, which is based on broad conclusions concerning the failure of top-down development and its facilitation of communication in modernization and dependency approaches, clearly suggests that the community should take its own efforts for two reasons. In this environment, reducing dependency and ensuring greater utilization of external funds are critical.

Inferring from the results of the Assam University Rural Communication Project which reflected the community's own communication-prominent ability to transform from poverty to prosperity in a sustainable manner (Action Phase 1998–2000; Interim Sustainability Phase 2001–2004) with almost no outside development agency assistance, LohaChoudhury (2011) noted:

"In this sense ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress as the vision of community, country, and governance becomes meaningful. As it requires a shift from obsession with money, 'Man Standard' in economic initiatives for development as a long-term goal, and increasing individual capacity to earn by serving the people in all avatars (consumer, judgment or client, relation) as the immediate but continuous goal should be implemented. Nature is the big existence in which we are part should be the refrain deciding the strategy for all development initiatives with the pledge to keep the ecosystem balance intact. The time has come when communication should again be restated as the consciousness of humanity and the priceless gift of nature which awaits utilization for unfurling human potential towards evolving into a better human civilization. For the first time, the Information as man's contribution to the development and preservation of world into a better living habitat in every conceivable area of human action is demonstrated. Its systemic presence in action system for development may take us further correcting much of the damage we have done over last five hundred years" (LohaChoudhury, 2011: 87-88).

This observation offers a sustainable vision in which people can advance in life and live communally without losing individualism or being a member of the state. Instead, a people who respect

themselves, cooperate with one another, and with nature as a whole would make better use of the state's limited resources.

Second Stage of Review: Where Communication for Development Proves Inadequate?

Chakraborty (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of four previous impact assessment studies conducted by various government agencies in India to better understand the communication-development result linkage for grassroots development efforts. The review article, released in 2014, emphasizes the limits of the government communication agents' Information-Education-Communication (IEC) approach. The current study accessed the four original reports for additions to acquire a response on six dimensions of communication as IoD, using the 2014 study as the mother source for review. A summary of the four original reports is provided below.:

The 1999 Evaluation of IEC Programmes by the Union Ministry of Rural Development: It was part of a mid-term review of seven poverty-relief and rural development schemes. The survey was carried out in 128 districts, 461 blocks, and 2,305 villages across the country, and it included 10,359 beneficiaries and 2,220 non-beneficiaries for the reference periods 1996-1997, 1997-1998, and 1998-1999. The survey evaluated the effectiveness of existing means and channels of communication in informing and educating Below Poverty Line (BPL) families about the various schemes sponsored by the Union Ministry of Rural Development on wage employment, self-employment & entrepreneurship development, skill enhancement, social assistance, and special area development. Chakraborty (2014) states:

“The survey pointed out the poor feat of IEC efforts and felt that there was an urgent need to review and revise the conventional approach of IEC, as there was considerable divergence between the findings of the survey and the views of officials. For instance, most DRDAs expressed a preference for radio, television, and newspapers for IEC campaigns on rural development, though Panchayats of as many as 18 States/UTs had less than or up to 50% access to newspapers, and access to radio and television was also inadequate. Survey observed that people in the rural areas still tend to rely considerably on interpersonal contact and traditional media as a source of information.”

The 2009 Impact Assessment Study by the Prasar Bharati, the public service broadcaster of India: According to the findings of this study, interpersonal communication (IPC) methods were the primary source of information on development programmes for the majority of the public (61.6%). Furthermore, folk media, mid-media, and mass media all played vital roles as information sources.

The 2011 Impact Assessment Study by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD): The impact of the MoRD's IEC Division's special television campaign to create awareness about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was examined in this study. The study looked at the

reach and impact of two television commercials that aired in Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the National Capital Region in February 2011. The commercials were “Hindustan Ki Guarantee” and “Zamana Kehta Hai”. Regarding this report, Chakraborty (2014) observes:

“The sample size was pre-determined as 3600 households, spread over three states but only 3593 households could be obtained as sample. Majority of the sample houses belonged to APL (Above Poverty Level) families as exposure to television was one of the criteria for selecting the samples. About two-fifths of the sample of 3593 households belongs to SC (Scheduled Caste) category. The study proved to be very effective in understanding the media habits of the rural people and efficacy of the MGNREGA messages disseminated through various media. The findings of this study established that the penetration of television among the BPL (Below Poverty Level) households who are the core target group of MGNREGS is very limited.”

The 2013 CAG performance audit report on MGNREGA: The report evaluated the IEC activities conducted by the MoRD and state administrations critically and expressed discontent with their implementation. The Audit Report stated: “*Audit observed that Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) plans were not formulated in 12 states and two UTs. Shortfalls in utilization of IEC funds were also noticed. In a demand-driven scheme like MGNREGS, awareness of beneficiary rights would be a critical factor for its success. The low level of IEC activities would have an adverse effect on the awareness levels of the beneficiaries and would, in turn, hamper the beneficiaries from fully realizing their rights.*” (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Division, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2013).

Third Stage Review: The Communication Reality at Grassroots

From the assessments conducted in 1999, 2011, and 2013, it was determined that conventional IEC used between 1996 and 2013 failed to meet communication goals. All reports identified pursuing mass media campaigns as the primary culprit. A reverberation of ‘first stage review’ investigations is found here.

Comparing this mass media-dominated communication strategy to the reality of modalities of communication and media presence at the grassroots, Government of India evaluations found cognitive dissonance between strategists and the ‘beneficiary in audience’. The general conclusion was that the IEC's efforts to enlighten and educate the poor about development programmes meant to improve their condition were ineffective. This cognitive dissonance between MoRD and states and UTs was demonstrated by the absence of any state/UT level-specific IEC for MGNREGAs by 12 states and two UTs. As 100% of GOI programmes such as MGNREGS were typically administered by states and UTs, this demonstrates a communication breakdown between two levels of programme administrators in terms of persuasion, engagement, monitoring, and evaluation in a timely manner. How can this be resolved?

The investigation conducted by Prasar Bharati in 2009 revealed the reality of rural communication. It was established beyond a reasonable doubt that interpersonal communication and vernacular communication were the most preferred. In 2011, MoRD's one-month study with two visual spots on MNREGAS revealed, in addition to the absence of mass media ownership and access failure among BPL families, the same preference for communication in rural areas. It was a replication of a 1999 study that demonstrated villages' familiarity with interpersonal communication and vernacular media. This suggests that mass media-based mediatization failed to penetrate the homes of the impoverished in rural India between 1996 and 2011.

The disparity between the District Rural Development Agency's (DRDA) IEC preference and rural reality demonstrates dissonance between DRDAs and the 'beneficiary in audience'. DRDAs preferred radio, television, and newspapers for IEC campaigns, despite the fact that villages in as many as 18 States/UTs had less than or up to 50 percent access to newspapers, and radio access was inadequate. This demonstrates two levels of communication failure. First between MoRD's IEC division and strategy coordinators demonstrated by retaining the majority of IEC's budget for mass media in IRDP until its transition to MGNREGA since 2006. Second, a collapse in communication between DRDA and MoRD left the reality of rural communication unaddressed in the strategy, despite a 1999 report highlighting the urgency.

The CAG evaluation (2013) of the IEC strategy for MGNREGS revealed an institutional culture in 12 states and 2 UTs that lacked a sense of urgency to assist the poor with their right to earn while staying in their own village, which would aid decent urbanization by reducing lean season pressure on urban infrastructure and basic services. All four studies indicate that the SoD of government programme institutions and agencies began to fail. Otherwise, personnel motivation would have helped bridge the gap between comprehending reality and formulating strategy.

Knowledge Gap Found:

Several problems must be addressed at the grassroots level, as revealed by the three-stage literature review. These may be summarized as follows:

- The sustainability of development within a community is contingent upon its alignment with the community's latent and potent needs, as well as its carrying capacity within the ecosystem. This ecosystem encompasses various dimensions, including human relationships, skills, self-esteem, nature, culture, physical resources, and communication. Furthermore, development must also be situated within the historical progression of the community, taking into account factors such as resources, relationships, skills, culture, and the promotion of sustainable practices.
- One potential approach to address this operational bottleneck is to explore the community's intergenerational trajectory and methods of incorporating new knowledge and practices into the longstanding institutions it has developed over time. This can help

establish and maintain conventions, routines, norms, and competencies that promote stability.

- The effective resolution of the issue of sustainable development necessitates a reimagining of communication practices on the terms of the community, as each activity undertaken by institutions within and outside the community is enhanced through the utilization of communication as community resources in the dimensions of time, space, memory, and techniques.
- The capacity of individuals to independently take initiative can be seen as a manifestation of effective intra-community communication, indicating their aptitude for sustaining and advancing progress.

Hence, the primary concern revolves around investigating the correlation between self-initiatives and collective initiatives in utilizing the communication resources available within a community to ensure the sustainability of development. The rationale for undertaking this investigation is rooted in the existing problem.

Conclusion

This review utilizes the three dimensions of development, namely Sense of Development (SoD), Goals of Development (GoD), and Instruments of Development (IoD), to analyze the communication strategies implemented in countries that are not considered developed. Through this analysis, it becomes evident that development failure in relation to communication can be attributed to the Instruments of Development (IoD). Building upon the research findings presented in this chapter, it can be argued that the effectiveness of development communication in achieving sustainable development goals is contingent upon a comprehensive understanding of existing communication practices within a given community. This understanding should encompass factors such as sharing of time, space, trans-generationality quotient, functionality for community, and memory of differing types to overcome ownership, reach, and access issues.

It is evident that the utilization of mass media involvement by institutional bodies has been ineffective in achieving the desired outcomes in the realms of poverty reduction, health development, implementation of the right-to-employment guarantee, and overall development goals. The failure can be attributed to a lack of consideration for the grassroots reality of people's engagement in communication, with a particular emphasis on planning shortcomings.

The term "planning failure" is employed in this context to encompass all the various elements that must be taken into account. These elements include the actual local needs, as well as the social, political, cultural, economic, and communication-related factors that shape the context. Additionally, the individuals involved in communication, such as those in management positions, within institutional chains of communication, and engaged in community communication and message attenuation, are also important considerations. Furthermore, the rationality of space and time in programme execution, which extends beyond mere timelines and beneficiary locations, is crucial for

comprehending communication as an integral component of development.

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