**Evolution of Thoughts on Communication and Development**

Academic thoughts on communication and development were broadly emerged in the early 1950s. Like communication, scholars viewed development from varied from eclectic faculties perspectives. Many scholars think that development means improving of the living conditions of the people in a society. But, debate arises over the ways to achieve the living conditions. Experts from different branches of knowledge outlined diversified thematic approaches to improve the living conditions of people. Such an influential thought was the ‘modernization theory’ which was based on the ‘neo-classical’ economic concept. In this thought, the Western model of economic growth was emphasized where transformation of modern technologies in various spheres of life was considered important for development. People of the third world countries were persuaded to adopt technologies by influencing the government policies in favour of industrialization and urbanization. Preston (2002) argues that the theory of modernization offers new nation states of the third world an easy route to the status of developed economies and societies. The theory of modernization was very influential in the 1950s and 1960s (p.78).

Walt Rostow, a US economist and Special Assistant to President Johnson was one of the key proponents of the free-trade and modernization perspective in the 1960s who compared the process of development for a country in the five stages –traditional society, pre-conditions to take off, take-off, drive to maturity and age of mass consumption (Global Learning: 2017).

In an attempt to understand the relationship between the economic activities, communication and development, Daniel Learner conducted a longitudinal study in the six Middle Eastern countries on 1600 individuals. He revealed that the mass media played significant role in shaping the people’s attitude through viewing and learning the rich cultural systems of the West. The people, through exposure to the diversified content, became aware of what was happening in the developed countries and became ‘mobile personality’ and grew ‘empathy’ to view a situation replacing the individual himself or herself. The second element of social dynamic of the Learner’s study was ‘The Mobility Multiplier: Mass Media’. According to Schramm (1964, p. 47), Learner’s realization about the mass communication was that it served as ‘the great multiplier’ in development which could spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes immeasurably more quickly and widely than ever before.

Learner’s study stimulated Wilbur Schramm and many other communication scholars. In the book ‘Mass Media and National Development (1964)’, he stressed on the use of mass media in popularizing the tech-based development in the Third World countries through attaining skills and exposure to the mass media, and thus contributing to modernizing society. Relevant studies conducted by some prominent rural sociologists including Everett Rogers further put emphasis on the use of electronic media, especially the TV to facilitate adoption of the agricultural innovations in the developing countries.

In the 1950s, it was a common assumption that the low level of development in many countries was partially due to low level of expectations, especially among the farmers. The mass media were thought to have catalytic ability to raise hope among the people. However, media were also considered as the agents for raising frustration. Chu and Alfian (1981), however, held the opinion that the people should not be kept in dark in the face of rising frustration, rather they should be facilitated to participate in the national development.

In the process of development of many third world countries, various government departments like health, education and agriculture included an ‘extension’ department to reach the marginalized people with experimental ideas, information and knowledge. Most of the extension programmes were based on the ‘Diffusion of Innovations’ theory introduced by[Everett Rogers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Everett_Rogers) (1962). He mentions, diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Rogers defines an *innovation* asan idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. “ The diffusion model assumes that a proper combination of mass mediated and interpersonal communication strategies can move individuals from a process of awareness (usually a new technology) through interest, evaluation, trial, and finally the adoption of that technology” (Melkote & Steeves, 2001, p. 56). The model has been criticized as ‘pro-innovation’, ‘pro-persuasion’, and ‘top-down’ approach.

Wilbur Schramm (1964) asserts that only when people are informed and motivated, they can contribute to a national endeavour to develop. In the process of informing, educating and motivating the peasants, the mass media can play significant role according to Schramm. In his words, “In the service of national development, the mass media are agents of social change (p. 114).”

Being inspired especially by the research work of Wilbur Schramm, YVL Rao, an Indian development communication expert, conducted a comprehensive study in two Indian villages and contributed to exploring the relationship of communication and development. Rao (1966) argues that there was a strong role of communication in shaping socio-economic and political sphere of people. In addition, he observed that communication helped a person find alternative ways of making a living. He explored that communication reduces the pressure on land; communication helps raise a family’s economic status and broadens the entrepreneurial base (Rao: 1966, p. 98-99).

These thinkers were influenced by the modernization perspective and tried to explain their thoughts extensively in the light of the paradigm. Gradually, the paradigm has been challenged by the scholars having different point of views on development. Valenzuela &Valenzuela (1998) argues that the modernization perspective had fundamental flaws which made difficult that difficult to provide for a fair test of that’s own assumptions. The perspective drew a model with “universal validity” which assumed that traditional values were not conducive to modern behavioural patterns of actions (p.272). Preston (*ibid,* p. 78) observes that the modernization perspective has subsequently been criticized for illegitimately generalizing the model of the West and more particularly the model of the USA.

Criticizing the modernization approach, ‘critical’ perspectives argued for political and economic restructuring to benefit the people of a society equally. Although this perspective exposed well the flaws of the modernization, it could not suggest the concrete alternatives. ‘Liberation’ perspectives constitute the third wave of scholastic approach to interpret development from the humanitarian ground. According to the perspectives, all the human beings have some potentials who want to be self-reliant by utilizing their capacity to self-development. These three thematic approaches of development were different from each other though their fundamental goal was to define and operationalize development from the respective views.

In the early 1970s, ‘Dependency’ perspective emerged of which the main theme was to keep balance between the developed and the poor nations in terms of global trade. Andre Gunder Frank, a German-born political economist, studied in Latin America was prominent in this thought in the 1970s who stresses on the equal opportunities for the rich and poor nations in the global trade.

Challenging the modernization perspectives, a few Latin American scholars thought of alternative ways in the communication, development and education sectors including other important areas of national development. Much of the inspiration for this shift came from the work of Freire who viewed the traditional pedagogy as analogous to modernization approaches to development (Huesca: 2003).

Paulo Freire(1921 – 1997), the Brazilian educationalist, has left a significant mark on thinking about progressive practice particularly in the education sector which also influenced the communication and development. His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) is one of the famous books which outlined significant theoretical approaches to the aforesaid sectors. In the book, he stressed on the ‘dialogic education’ meaning dialogue between the educators and educatees which was equally important for the communication sector. In the development communication, according to him, participatory approach of designing, disseminating and evaluating messages is more effective where the communicators and the audiences exchange on a single platform of understanding. Freire (1973) analyzed the term e*xtension* used in agricultural projects, in terms of its “associative fields” and concluded that they invited “mechanistic,” “ transmission,” and “invasion” models of communication development(Huesca:2003, p. 210). According to Freire, participatory development approach allows the participation of the targeted people in the development schemes. One of the concerns of Freire was the ‘praxis’ meaning an informed action linked to certain values. He also emphasized on dialogue which not only deepens understanding but also functions as the part of making a difference in the world. Dialogue in itself is a co-operative activity involving mutual sharing with respect. The process is important and can be seen as enhancing community and building social capital and to leading the people to act in the ways that make for justice and human flourishing. Later in some of the countries, the mass media were influenced by this stream of notion and facilitated the development communicators to design media contents in the participatory manner with the targeted audiences.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new thought emerged which is known as the second phase of development economics focusing more directly on poverty and inequality (Meier & Rauch: 2000). The economists in this though believed that only the growth in GNP was not a sufficient condition for the removal of poverty. Being influenced by this thought, the World Bank emphasized redistribution with growth. The International Labour Organization (ILO) concentrated on ‘basic needs’ stressing on poverty alleviation through long-term initiatives. Much of the development literature turned from an emphasis on industrial development to the rural development (*ibid,* p.70). In the 1980s, a different type of perspective was emerged under the banner of ‘Washington Consensus’ where the organizations like the World Trade Organizations, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank advocated for ‘trade not aid’. In this concept, it was believed that free global trade can stimulate economic growth and the large business can profit more without government interventions. It was advocated that if the Transnational Corporations (TNCs) can easily initiate their business interventions in the third world countries, large-scale employment will be created which will result in more local spending and consumption. This will ultimately promote economic growth.

During the 1980s, sustainable development, another influential stream of development thought was chalked out by the Brundtland report. GRO Harlem Brundtland was the former Prime Minister of Norway who chaired the United Nations’ World Commission of Environment and Development. The commission report emphasizes on the environmental factors in the development planning for ensuring sustainable development without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to the report, three key pillars of sustainable development are the social, environmental and economic aspects. All the development projects should be considered in terms of these pillars. The sustainable development needs to be viewed through equality across the society without causing environmental degradation. It should be considered that the economic growth should fit within natural limits, and the earth cannot support an ever-expanding greed of productions. In the field of agriculture, sustainable development can be understood as a process of cultivation where the future generation will not be negatively affected. In this concept, environment friendly agricultural activities are given priority. Natural geo-diversity, bio-diversity and land diversity should not be altered. For example, agricultural activities should not be performed in the forests by cutting down trees, in the water-bodies by filling in the same. Excessive pesticides should not be used rather the farmers are encouraged to use bio-fertilizers for keeping both the soil and human health safe.

In the 1990s, a new stream of development approach emerged especially within the conceptual framework of ‘Human Development’ where the development has been proposed to view as the result of multiple index– expansion of the richness of human life rather than considering the economic growth traditionally measured by GDP and GNP only. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices (UNDP: 2016). The human development approach shifted the development discourse from pursuing material opulence to enhancing human well-being, from maximizing income to expanding capabilities, from optimizing growth to enlarging freedoms. It focused on the richness of human lives rather than on simply the richness of economies, and doing so changed the lens for viewing development results(*ibid*, p.2).

Economist Mahbub Ul Haqwas one of the prominent thinkers on this approach which was later enriched with the successive researches of Amartya Sen, an Indian philosopher and economist who focused on human welfare. He won the Nobel Prize for his great work on famine and poverty. In his research article, ‘Development as Capability Expansion’, Sen (2003) outlines how expansion of human capabilities lead to broaden the pavement of development. According to him, different capabilities i.e. education, skills, awareness of health and other life related aspects directly contribute to the standard of life and living. He believes that all the human beings need to have livelihood assets which they can utilize to make choices. Livelihood assets are not only limited to the things of financial value. Rather, it includes things of human, physical, social and natural value. He stresses on five capitals i.e. social capital meaning representatives, friends, neighbours and leaders; human capital meaning education, knowledge, skills and health; physical capital meaning transport, communications, technology and energy; natural capital meaning land, water, minerals and wild life; and the financial capital meaning wages, savings, pensions and remittances. According to him, ‘capability’ is needed for the human beings to make the right choices from the alternative options. For developing ‘capability’, one needs education, and information of the surroundings. According to Sen, ‘capability’ facilitates people to utilize the aforesaid capitals as per their freedom of choices what they will do. Their decisions will be taken by themselves where the government can create congenial environment for them to apply their choices rightly.

For human development, some experts think of the importance of empowerment, an approach in which it is believed that the marginalized, excluded and the underprivileged people need to be empowered for their socio-economic, cultural, political and above all spiritual development. Women empowerment has become one of the core concentrations of the development experts globally where equal rights and opportunities are emphasized for the women as of their male counterparts. Jo Rawlands (1997) is one of the famous feminist activists and experts who is globally known for her contribution to the empowerment approach. In her famous book ‘Questioning Empowerment (1997)’, she mentions that empowerment originates from the concept of power which can take some forms. For example, she mentions of ‘power over’ as controlling power; ‘power to’ as productive power; ‘power with’ as collective power with a group; and ‘power from within’ as self-acceptance and self-respect (p.13). She argues, “Using the conventional definition, of 'power over', empowerment is bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it. This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making. According to her, individuals are empowered when they are able to maximize the opportunities available to them without constraints. Within the generative, 'power to' and 'power with', interpretation of power, empowerment is concerned with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to the interests of others, in order both to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decisions (p.14).