

SECTION FIVE: MASS MEDIA

Mass Media and Rural Development

Agricultural Communications is defined as the exchange of accurate information about the agricultural and natural resources industries. It is delivered, ideally, through the most effective and efficient channels available using appropriate communication techniques and theories for the audience. The history of formal agricultural communication dates back to 1440 when the Movable Type Printing Press was first invented by Johannes Gutenberg. This invention revolutionized written communication throughout the world. It enabled printers to produce mass quantities of print publications making it much easier than ever done before. Communication in general and agricultural journalism and communication in particular is a very important matter in ensuring rural growth and development. The role of journalism and communication is most often politicized and seen from political angles. It is true that well beyond two - third of the population in Africa is agrarian. Hence a politics that rejects the majority tend to be non - democrat and would end up in fiasco. But Journalism and communication has far more roles in agricultural and rural development. It is involved in helping farmers' improve their production, productivity, profitability and manage farms to the best advantage of the rural poor.

Agricultural communication (or agricultural communications) is a field of study and work that focuses on communication about agriculture-related information among agricultural stakeholders and between agricultural and non-agricultural stakeholders. Agriculture is broadly defined in this discipline to include not only [farming](#), but also food, [fiber](#) (e.g., cotton), animals, rural issues, and [natural resources](#).^[1] Agricultural communication is done formally and informally by [agricultural extension](#) and is considered related to [science communication](#).^[2] However, it has evolved into its own professional field.

By definition, agricultural communicators are science communicators that deal exclusively with the diverse, applied science and business that is agriculture. An agricultural communicator is "expected to bring with him or her a level of specialized knowledge in the agricultural field that typically is not required of the mass communicator".^[3] Agricultural communication also addresses all subject areas related to the complex enterprises of food, feed, fiber, renewable energy, natural resource management, rural development and others, locally to globally. Furthermore, it spans all participants, from scientists to consumers - and all stages of those enterprises, from agricultural research and production to processing, marketing, consumption, nutrition and health.

A growing market for agricultural journalists and broadcasters led to the establishment of agricultural journalism and agricultural communication academic disciplines.

The job market for agricultural communicators includes:

- Farm broadcasting
- Journalists and editors of agricultural/rural magazines and newspapers
- Communication specialist or [public relations](#) practitioner for agricultural commodity organizations, businesses, non-profits
- Sales representative for agricultural business
- Science journalist
- [Land-grant university](#) communication specialist
- Public relations or advertising for firms that specialize in or have agricultural clients

Methods in Agricultural Communication

Stakeholder conferences, symposiums, workshops, seminars and so on are few methods often applied as a forum for agricultural communication. Field Days and field trips: are an integral 'part of agricultural researchers, extension agents, farmers, advisors, scientists annual endeavors during which all the groups and stakeholders in agri business got out into the countryside and see best achievements of farmers and research efforts at first hand.

Approaches in Agricultural communication

Theoretically speaking, agricultural communication is an applied theoretical field. The academic curriculum and scholarly endeavors typically stay within the context of agriculture, natural resources, and occasionally, the life sciences. It examines communication and human dimension issues as they relate to a variety of issues in agriculture and natural resources. Agricultural journalism is not always differentiated from agricultural communications in research. One could argue that when research focuses on media coverage of agricultural issues or when it examines issues within agricultural journalism specifically (i.e., what influences editors of agriculture magazines to publish risk information), then it is more within the realm of agricultural journalism. Journalism is often seen as a subset of communication that is supposed to be fair and balanced like traditional journalism, whereas the broader field of agricultural communication could potentially be viewed as advocacy communication.

Agricultural communicators are expected to have a certain amount of knowledge and familiarity with agriculture. One could also add to that definition and say the communicator also brings with him or her an appreciation, or even affection, for the agriculture industry. While this is also probably true of agricultural journalists, they at least need to be cognizant of their potential bias to ensure they ask critical questions and present unbiased information. Agricultural journalists are trained like

traditional journalists, but bring with them an understanding of agricultural systems and science either through experience and/or academic training.

Agricultural Journalism: Definition and meaning

Agricultural journalism is a specialized branch of journalism which deals with the techniques of receiving, writing, editing and reporting from information through the media like newspapers, periodicals, radio, TV, advertising etc. and the management processes connected with such production. It is the timely reporting and editing with words and photography of agricultural news and information for newspaper, magazine, radio and television.

Mass Communication

Mass Communication is a means of disseminating information or message to large, anonymous and scattered heterogeneous masses of receivers which may be far removed from the message sources through the use of sophisticated equipment. It is the sending of message through a mass medium to a large number of people.

Development Communication

Development communication can be looked at from two perspectives in terms of the use of communication channels. The narrower concept of "development journalism" refers to the use of mass communication (the mass media) in the promotion of development. Development communication on the other hand is broader in shape and makes use of all forms of communication in the development process. In other words, it employs not only the mass media, but also interpersonal channels, group or public means of communication and the traditional channels of communication.

Literatures defines development communication as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country

and the mass of its people from a state of poverty to a more dynamic state of economic growth which make possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potentials. It is observed that development communication is a purposeful communication effort geared towards realization of human potentials and transformation from a bad situation to a good one. That is why many defines development communication as the application of the process of communication to the development process.

ORIGION OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The expressions such as Development reporting or Development news were coined during the early seventies when UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP were willing to fund and encourage a new kind of reporting. The Press of the west was critical of these agencies. The US and British Press has censured them consistently as a reaction to allegations of slanted reporting by the western media while giving reports on the economics and development issues of the developing countries. Various forums discussed the domination of the western Press on the media of the developing nations. In these debates, the city-based print media were found against development reporting because they thought that it was an effort towards management of news. However, smaller newspapers wanted to implement the concept of development reporting.

Consequently, the UNESCO formed the McBride Commission. This commission organized hearings in developing countries. However, such hearings were boycotted by many newspapers, including some newspapers in India. The wire services like AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP were covering such news as were not under their coverage agendas. Developing nations reacted to this new phenomenon. The western media continued to control the mass markets in the developing countries. The developing nations were slow in learning that the western media were out to destroy their social, economic and political canvasses in stealthy fashion. The report of McBride commission clearly mentioned this lethal trend. The developing world became conscious of this trend. Hence, development news was made unacceptable to major newspapers.

However, there were many news agencies in Asia that were doing development reporting jobs in 1994. Stories devoted to development were published in newspapers and magazines. TV, as the new media was also used to do so. TV documentaries were popular till mid nineties. Despite the resistance offered by the Press of the developed world, the media of developing nations continued to splash articles and news on development issues in Asia, Africa and Middle East. These articles and news vied for media space and competed with political gossip, news and entertainment content to clinch more space in the media.

The progress of development reporting in India was slow due to the following reasons:

1. The mass media were catering to the needs of the urban literate readers. The newspapers & magazines publishers were developing content for the urban people and not for the mass markets. Hence, their content was urban oriented.
2. The journalism training institutes did not pay attention to the concept of training in development reporting.
3. The corporate publishing sector was driven by monetary gain. It did not depute development reporters to cover the news of development. It also did not start the in-house training programs to upgrade the reporting skills and research techniques of its existing set of reporters.

Thus, the concept of development reporting could not emerge as a force in the field of journalism in India.

During the seventies and eighties, the information scenario was being changed in India. However, no private sector firm asked its journalists to report progress of various sectors of our economy. The journalists used the news fed by wire services and converted them into routine news. They were not taking any extra pains to cover news related to development. They were literally left on their own to cover news. If any one of the news covered by them had any development content, it was not singled out as a special coverage item. It was

published as a routine news item, feature or article. Hindustan Times can be given the credit of starting the concept of development reporting in India. Its editor, B G Veghese, took the initiative in this context. Further, The times of India started a feature on agriculture and appointed an agriculture correspondent in its Delhi office. Later, Indian Express covered news and events related to environment, economic development and social conflicts. However, the journalists of seventies were not trained in the job of development reporting. They were political reporters and they had nothing to do with the social or economic progress of the nation. As such, the concept of development journalism could not really take off until the late eighties

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND BROADCASTING

It is noted that development communication mobilizes people to participate in development activities. He defines development communication as "the systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations, mainly at the grassroots level. This is in line with another definition of development communication which sees development communication as a social process aimed at producing a common understanding or a consensus among the participants in a development initiative.

Some definitions specifically emphasise on social change. Development communication is seen as the entire process of communication with a specific group of people who require development (target audience), with the purpose of achieving the social change that should change their lives in a positive way, thus giving them better living conditions. A similar point was emphasised by Middleton and Wedeneyer (1985), describing development communication as any series of planned communication activities aimed at individual and social change; and by Rogers (1976:93) as the application of communication with a view to promoting socioeconomic development.

The concepts of communication and development are central to our understanding of development communication. In development communication, the main reason of communication is to bring about or expedite the process of development. Communication is necessary for development because it helps to mobilise people's participation. Communication is a common denominator for development and participation. It is for this reason that the FAO says that communication is the key to human development and the thread that Communication involves an exchange of information, ideas, feeling rather than a mere transmission of information. It is a two-way process between the sender and the receiver of the information.

□ Development is all about transformation from a state to another that is better. It is human centered and ensures that human basic needs are met. It affects the economic, social and mental improvement of human condition.

□ Development communication has to do with the use of communication methods, forms and channels in the process of development. Its purpose is to bring about social change through people's participation.

Purposes of Journalism

1. They may inform, disseminate news and miscellaneous non-news items.
2. They may influence, giving the public either a social or commercial message.
3. They may be entertaining, presenting features, fiction, humour, comics and similar methods.

Functions of Journalism

1. News function

The primary function of press is to inform. Examining the glut of public

occurrences, ideas and situation, newspapermen must determine which will interest the public. Apart from factual presentation of news, for the complex situation the interpretation and explanation are also required.

2. The opinion function

Modern man frequently finds himself in the midst of confusion which product to purchase? What decision to take? Whom to vote? He requires a medium of communication, which will guide him to understand the positive and negative points of the situations because of logical arguments. Thus, the modern press has to be both a daily teacher and a daily tribute. Therefore, the editorial is the only means of building public opinion.

3. The Entertainment function

Entertaining the public is the another function and a business too. Since it is too big a job for the local staff, newspaper rely upon syndicated materials. Entertainment is where you find it. It pops up in human-interest stories and news features. Public interest in various features, comics in particular sometimes determine the choice of a newspaper.

Principles of Farm Journalism

Our purpose in writing is to communicate information. Therefore, our first consideration is our reader audience. If you were writing for a scientific paper, you would use a vocabulary and style different from what you would use when writing for the general public.

How clearly you communicate information to average readers depends on how well you select, sift and sort your facts

1. Select Facts

- a) Suitable subject matter. Does it meet a need? Is it timely? Is it of current interest? Does it
- b) Readers: Who are the people you want to reach? What are their problem, interests and educational levels, Do they have the

environment and capacity to make use of the information?

c) Purpose of Publication: What do you want it to teach and accomplish?

Do you want to stimulate interest in a programme or do you want to influence the people to do something?

(2) Sift Facts

1. Sift essential facts necessary to give information clearly.
2. Screen out difficult concepts, which are beyond reader's experience or understanding (e.g.) pH value, calorific value.
3. Give layman an application of subject rather than a detailed explanation.
4. Express highlights.
5. Do not try to impress the lay reader with all you know.
6. Do not document everything.

(3) Sort Facts

1. Arrange facts in logical order
2. Set out important points in 1-2-3 order(step by step)
3. Guide reader with attractive subheads and suitable illustrations and pictures.

(4) ABC's of Journalism

Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity which are fundamentals of good writing.

(5) Adopt the following Tips for Readability

1. Short sentences, clear in meaning, simple in construction with few prepositional phrases and dependent clauses.
2. Simple words which are familiar and concrete words.
3. Personal or human - interest words.

Journalism is that part of social activity, which is concerned, with the dissemination of news and views about the society. Modern journalism feeds five departments of mass communication. (1) Newspaper and periodicals, (2) Radio, (3) Television, (4) Films and (5) Advertising. Journalism is the systematic and reliable dissemination of public information, public opinion and public entertainment by modern mass media of communication. In modern societies, journalism has become the media of mass education providing supplementary education to students at all stages and to the general masses - educated and uneducated. All activities concerned with the communication of mass media is not journalism but the part of that activity involving writing, preparation and production of the communication messages is journalism. Thus, essentially journalists are writers, authors, reporters, correspondents, editors, sub-editors, interviewers, storywriters, scriptwriters, scenario editors and allied specialists.

Importance

The mass media are capable of reaching vast widespread audiences, thanks to fast moving newspapers/radio broadcasts, TV telecast and the celluloid films. A single broadcasting network to day can reach millions of people at the same time. The world stands of the threshold of new communication systems which enable large number of citizens to regularly and effectively interact with each other. To make full use of the interactive information systems made possible by the computer technology, citizens can remain so well informed that they will be able to perform their duty adequately and efficiently and accelerate the process of development in different social fields.

Modern communication systems reflect the philosophy and achievements of society in all spheres by fast flow and pave the way for the homogeneity of culture-not only with in its geographical unit but also beyond. Journalism is the publication of news and views on various aspects of human activities in

newspapers and periodicals. In a broader sense, the functions of journalism are to convey national policies to the public and to keep the governments at local state and central levels, informed of public needs. It also brings to the notice of the government public reaction to government policies and decisions. In addition, it keeps the public and the government informed of events and happenings at home and abroad.

On one hand, it performs the utilitarian purpose of information and on the other, it provides entertainment to its readers by publishing short stories, poems, sports, cinema, features, etc. A clever journalism by his penmanship creates interest in day-to-day political happenings. He presents the drop events and incidents in an artistic way, which provides the reader information

In modern times, the horizon of journalism has widened and it has transcended the limits of mere reporting of political as well as entertainment and economic news. As it is a vehicle of mass-communications, it is performing the function of social intercourse between the people having identical interests. Hence, we find literary, political, economic and scientific magazines as also household or industrial magazines, which cater to the interests of their respective readers.

Principles of modern journalism

The main function of journalism is to bring to light to the people what its members feel and think journalist are therefore supposed to possess a good deal of intelligence, knowledge and experience as well as natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning. A journalist has the same obligations as a teacher or interpreter as an educationist has. A journalist who misuses his power for any selfish or unworthy purpose is to a high trust. While the freedom of the press needs to be guarded as a vital right of humankind, it has to suffer certain explicit restrictions to subserve social needs. Freedom of the press does not imply promotion of any private interest of the journalist contrary to the general welfare. That is the way the

so-called news communications from sundry sources are not published by sensible journalists without substantiating their value as news both in form and substance. In addition, partisanship in editorial comments, which is knowingly based on a lie, does violence to the best spirit of journalism.

Rules to be followed by a journalist

1. Study the field and have an estimate of what type of articles is published in newspapers, magazines, books etc.
2. Look ideas
3. Develop the idea
4. Keep an unbiased mind
5. Write clearly and meaningfully
6. Remember the people to whom the articles are written
7. Write with a purpose
8. Write on timely subjects
9. Keep in touch with editors
10. Watch out for important events/occasions
11. Establish credibility, politeness and do not assume familiarity
12. Understand the communication process and the elements of communication.

Factors Affecting the Role of Media

What are the constraints affecting Media use in Agriculture?

The notion that the media is an essential partner in agricultural development was unanimously agreed, but concerns were expressed over the multiple constraints that limit the media from realizing its full potential in this role. The reality is that the media, particularly in Africa, is faced with the challenges of poor infrastructure, low salaries, lack of equipment, a lack of specialization (and training for agriculture) and therefore a poor

understanding of development issues. Specific constraints with regard to the themes discussed in week one (including climate, marketing, extension,) were that journalists lack timely and regionally appropriate data to communicate to their audiences. So it is highly recommended to provide greater capacity strengthening to the media working in agriculture.

Different expectations exist between the media and other development partners (e.g. researchers, policy-makers etc.). For media houses, agriculture is not seen as newsworthy, and it is difficult to interpret scientific jargon for their audiences. Amongst researchers and others, there is often a mistrust of the media, they wish to have their stories published/broadcast without cost and they lack the skills to package the information in the right way. Hence, it is highly recommended that more efforts needed to 'bridge the gap' between the media and development partners if agriculture is to have a higher profile amongst target audiences.