

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Introduction of Neo-Capital, Technology and Knowledge based Development to Sri Lankan Development Communication Process

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Abstract

Development communication is a method of communication which strengthens the development process. However, achievement of the desired objectives depends on the investigation of the practical capabilities and their challenges. Further, there should be a prescribed mode to send the development message, through approaches such as participative, internal-origin, imminent and traditional folk media.

The capital and technology are essential components in Sri Lankan development. However, the knowledge base required to connect them is waiting to be properly, discovered. It is evident that though capital and technology is at an advanced level, the knowledge base required for connecting the factors are not readily available. In this presentation, it is proposed, that the knowledge-based methodology can be used to connect neo-capital and technology to the development communication process of state and private sector in Sri Lanka.

Key words Development Communication, Communication Approach, Neo-capital, Technology and Knowledge Based Methodology.

Introduction

The effectiveness of development is measurable by positive changes in the social, economical and cultural environment. It is possible to achieve positive results in the transfer of the message correctly and attractively through successful communication strategies. The aim of this study is to propose and discuss suitable strategies to the field of development communication in Sri Lanka. Some existing concepts on the transfer of the message on connecting capital and technology would be evaluated in this study. Further, the place of subscriber knowledge (education), within the interaction between the capital and technology, is emphasized as an important foundation in transfer of the message of development.

Research Methodology

Development is a progressive aspect. It is a relative phenomenon and cannot be measured by any physical means as it is firmly related to spiritual conditions. Statistic measures should not be employed to assess cultural and spiritual conditions, because spiritual specialties like human behaviour, qualities, objectives, faiths and practices are not subject to such an assessment. Real development is also a complex phenomenon. Accordingly, the qualitative condition is far more important than the quantitative condition. Therefore, studying literature is the most appropriate strategy. The present research focuses mainly on the capital, technology and knowledge. The print media clearly depicts the gradual evolution from the development concept to its

modern advancement and its specialties. In this respect, to carry out an in-depth study of the literary publications including books, articles and magazines is the key methodology of this research. The participatory observations together with interviews were important tools in this study.

Discussion

Change is part of the evolution of societies. Its goals, attitudes, behaviors and necessities make the change more complex. This common principle has a great validity in the process of development and due to it; the contemporary development communicators have been facing varying issues and challenges.

Development is associated with many misconceptions. These misconceptions have existed in the society since the identification of the process of modern development. Economic growth as an indicator of development is a common notion. The theorists believe that real development is the possession of consumer goods such as housing, land, automobiles, food, beverages, clothing and ornaments. In many countries, this notion is associated with the concept of Per Capita Income, which is a form of a primitive narrow scale of measurement of development. However, this type of link to consumerism leads to associate development with wealth and the emergence of money oriented anti-social groups, with primitive characteristics. Therefore, development process has to increase wealth and it should be able to support values, norms and spirituality of the society for long-term social stability. Development becomes a dream in the midst of social instability. The other misconception is that development can only be achieved by investing capital and technology¹. Even though these are compulsory components in the process of development, It may not occur with interaction of these factors alone. Development has to provide benefits to society supported by flow of capital and technology.

Modern communication systems are based on unilateral communication pattern, which is designed and defined by the above-mentioned

false conception of capital and technology with development been measured on the same basis. This is because the governments control communication and the communicator process and distribute the message with the power of sovereignty. The whole knowledge and resource system is transferred to the community using this type of communication through the officials of the government. The outcome of this process is the establishment of a set of unfavorable concepts that obstruct the way to development in relevant officers and institutions¹.

Misconceptions of the community on development in this context are; the community should be taught the new technology, the main object of this is to change attitudes and behavior of community, the messages should be prepared by the messenger, Community is an uneducated group of people with less knowledge to understand the process of development and they belong to the lower economic stratum, the sovereign power is with the officer because the officer distribute resources to them, the whole understanding is with officials and community should compulsorily follow officers advises¹, the community is not the essential aspect in the development. If the project is unsuccessful, there will only be a loss to community.

This concept identifies the community as lazy, nostalgic, and an unfortunate group of people, who have no proper understanding to utilize supplied instructions. The outcome of these misconceptions tends to become great barriers in the process of development and officers tend to use the same solutions previously used as a solution to any condition encountered. Therefore, projects operated within this type of system face many difficulties and fail.

This type of social, economic and political issues prevail in the countries, which were colonized and social integration of the traditional system was destroyed. The political leaders of these countries act according to the needs of colonial masters even after they were granted freedom. The feeble tradition of gaining more through working less was

prevailing in the political traditions of these countries. The attention was paid solely to English educated elite and in Sri Lanka, this became an enormously dangerous and complex social issue.

The life style of national leaders in newly freed countries also affected this situation. They participated in politics to gain the pomposity of colonial superiors and to be worshipped in society rather than doing a service to country. The democratic and republican leaders who grew up with colonized education system and life style did not even wanted to think of how the country should be developed².

Political chaos, conspiracies, struggles, betrayals and upheavals were common. The space to grow interpersonal relationship mutual co-existence and trust was forgotten. A society with deep-rooted anger, hate and suspicion was created and ethnic violence initiated by the colonization began to emerge². The roots of various ethnic and national issues faced by many countries including Sri Lanka and their expansion to terrorism and territorial violence began with the instability created by the elitist leadership, which were guided by the ideas of colonialism. . The detrimental effect of such problems on development is massive and it is one of the major challenges faced by the development communicator in Sri Lanka and countries with similar historical evaluation.

The modern technology has completely been a prey of technological transition. Information technology is now in the foremost position and the society is driven towards development by information technology and knowledge. It has been stated that "the society is mobilizing due to information technology; and it will be the future of the human who living today"³

The role of new technology and its application to modern communication demand heavy capital expenditure, which is problematic in developing countries like Sri Lanka.

Countries that had been colonies are unable to release themselves from the subordinate condition,

which existed during colonial period and are not able to establish the traditional rural life style even after getting their freedom. It is obvious that these awkward traits are visible within development projects in the former colonies, which has resulted in failure to achieve expected goals and targets.

Societal problems related to ethnicity, religion and cast, unwillingness to change, suspicion, traditionalism, nostalgia, fanaticism, and non-criticalness are conspicuous in the third world. They stand strongly against as a powerful challenge before the communicator and relevant institutions when new concepts and new knowledge are distributed in the societies of many third world countries⁴.

The conservative and religious beliefs support ideas of fate and the society attempts to satisfy themselves with what they received from the existing programmes of development. The unwillingness to change is rooted in society, which persuades people to give up traditional demarches and strong beliefs prove difficult⁵ indicates that there is difficulty of persuading people to give up traditional principles and strongly held beliefs', in these societies.

Research indicates that the main cause for failure of the silkworm and fresh water-fishing projects is villagers' religiosity. As an example, in Sri Lanka chicken, pigs and fish farms are found mainly in areas where majority of Catholic people live⁴.

Therefore, an approach is required to investigate this complexity in relation to modern development, impact of colonial heritage and use of traditional beliefs, within the context of development communication. The development communication is generally associated with concepts and theories of modern development model⁶, though general models of modern development are not specific on development communication. However, a review of some existing models of development communication will be presented here to formulate the basis for analysis.

Audience Centered and Approach of Participatory:

Audience centered and participative approach describe the mechanism of human communication process on the basis of telecommunication fundamentals, which explains the influence of sociological and psychological aspects in the process of human communication¹. The terms "subscriber centered" indicate that this approach is receiver based or receiver dominant and development communication within this context will enhance the paths to composite socioeconomic growth. Subscriber centered denotes a method combined with a network of subscribers and various other parties and subscriber oriented refers to a multilateral form and a participating system. Then this approach is thoroughly linked with the interior society (Figure 1).

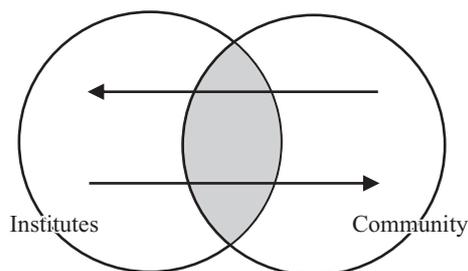


Figure 1. Audience Centered and Participative Approach

It is obvious that subscriber become more important than the communicator. Unlike in unilateral communication, where the subscriber is not respected, collecting their opinions, obligation on their needs and bilateral responds and feedbacks aimed at solutions are obvious in this approach.

The Chinese form of development communication has a close association with this approach, where, the method of development communication introduced by Mao Tse Tung, within a republican method, is accommodated within this approach. Further, the forms of procedure described as reproduction, summarization, measuring, and

transformation into action are included in this approach.

It is clear that many important aspects are hereby respected, which were earlier neglected at the unilateral communication in which the communicator or messenger or the officer was dominant. Especially the performance conducted through the participative communication is concerned as important. The interpersonal relationship occurred between the subscriber or community and the real communicator in the field, rather than the arrogant officer with specialized knowledge creates a very significant step in the success of a development scheme. The equalization with the knowledge of community, building trust, finding solutions by group discussions and satisfactory public relation is considered as more effective, which leads to the construction of a participative society.

A category of community constructed through the above methodology is a participative society. The role of participative community in development process is expected to have positive objectives, common direct relationship and high productivity. Therefore, the subscriber centered development communication is recognized as a very significant strategy in development communication.

Internal-Origin Approach

The method of finding solutions to their problems by themselves is the basis of internal origin approach, also known as interior - born approach. Common reasons for failure of externally originated plans are; non- displaying of actual socio-economic issues that make them suppressed, non- delegation of attitudes, expectations and feelings (including respect for local thinking), and carrying foreign appearance - non-compliance to their traditional life style and existing social conditions⁷.

The long-term prevailing aspects such as suspicion, fear and uncertainty that can be removed are not

included in the plans originating from an outside source. Therefore, they attempt to reject it and the development communicator has to understand the lifestyle of villagers, before proposing a plan. In addition there may be either sociological or socio-psychological reasons for rejection of plans originating from an outside source, which has to be understood by the development communicator.

According to Bittner⁷ the identification of socio cultural backgrounds, their mental conditions and the relevant audience demographics are more important in this context. In addition gender difference, age, income, educational level, class and profession and behavioral patterns and religious beliefs have to be considered as important.

It is a common sociological truth that personal actions are directed, based on subscriber community factors. They either accept or reject the external concept or idea reaching them based on community factors according to Bittner⁷ The audience physiographic; values and norms, beliefs, attitudes and living patterns is important. Accordingly, people are not ready to change overnight the life patterns that they have been used, for centuries⁵.

This is a visible social reality in the third world, where difficulty in imposing the public to give up traditional policies and strongly held beliefs, has become an enormous challenge to development communicator. Under this type of environment, an essentiality of a broader concept of modernization emerges.

Moreover, people unite as groups to participate at the stages of recreation and creating information not only over technical media but also over psychical relations at an early stage of communication. This type of participation is a result of mutual mental interaction⁸ which is an important aspect in communication.

There is another factor to be emphasized in the internal source approach or inter-born. It is the

proper understanding of variation of basic characteristic of development communication methods relevant from country to country and culture-to-culture. Melkote⁹ has explained that there is no worldly common permanent way to development and each society should find its own way of methods for development. Accordingly, the internal origin approach can be introduced as a method of development communication without any dependence on the available level of technology.

Imminent Approach:

When a message is socialized, the link between the message and technology becomes a significant factor in communication. Approach explains the strategies and four factors, which constructs a successful public sentiment. They are; diffusion of message, persistence of message, intensity of message and reasonableness of message

Accordingly, transferring a development message to a village community and stabilizing it as an opinion, becomes a challenge. However, it is not certain that any message or methodology emphasizing above factors will always be successful.

Village community is not composed of people with a low level of education, though their understanding of technological and linguistic knowledge is low. Therefore, the message sent to them should be prepared simply, so it becomes closer to their life style and also easier to understand.

For example, rate of growth of population exceeding the rate of growth of production is a strong barrier to sustainable development. UNESCO¹⁰ indicated that regular demographic control requires a proper development communication method and proposed that a proper development communication is the best and most appropriate

Then socializing a planned way to control demography becomes a complex task and it is highly problematic to introduce the new concept and conduct a discussion with villagers. Researches have revealed that this has been made more controversial by social discipline and tradition in the third world. Few researchers have discovered that, a simple and a systematic way has to be constructed with an aim of accommodating the values and beliefs of the village people.

The Mangaline theory, which is employed in the Philippine development communication provides an important precedent to North East Asia. The said simple immanency is obvious in the agricultural approach to family planning. The two steps emphasized in this communication method are; (a) start with what they know and (b) build with what they have

At this point, development communicator discusses through prominent members of the community. The majority of villagers in farming culture is consulted and the message is transferred. The age gap between children is transferred to them by explaining the value of increasing harvest through an increase of gap between plants¹¹.

The special characteristic of the said imminent structure is that the nature of simple friendly and non-intrusive relationship with the target community enables the socializing of the message.

Traditional Folk Media Approach:

The communication strategy centered with Folk ideologies is the Folk media approach¹². The importance of the place of folk media is explained as "the origin of their spirit is the traditional communication method used among the folk in developing countries"¹³.

Folk media is a basic tactic used in the process of communication among traditional village folk, which is fundamentally the folk culture. All

expectations, aims, beliefs, customs, behaviors, life styles, wealth and abilities of the village are embedded in it.

Hoosen¹³ explains further, that folk media can be introduced as the more effective method of generating reflective social characteristics.

There are many messages transmitted through hooting and drums in the traditional cultures of today. Folk drama including kolam, nadagam, sokery, folk dancing, folklore, folk language, folk music, rabban sural, seepada, viridu, folk games, puppets, processions, auctions, kankari, gammadu, devolmadu, gossiping and many other items in Sri Lankan folk, carry a massive load of messages from many sources to many goals.

Few characteristics can be identified, which can lead to the formation of a methodology as; simple form, thematic content, flexibility and cultural context

The relationship between cultural bond and folk society achieved through above characteristics could be introduced as the centre of this methodology. It is the root, which connect the non-technological traditional folk media in their domain. Through these cultural patterns, the humankind understands the factors, which affect the existence¹⁴.

Accordingly the traditional folk media is undisturbed when compared with their lifestyle and it can be named as an inborn tradition that does not demand any training. The major advantages of utilizing folk media are trustworthiness as it is a part of folk community, ability to launch a successful duet side communication, possibility to enhance the process of communication since the participation originates from the lowest level and ability to use flexibility of features folk to enhance development themes and low cost .

The investigations on use of folk media in development communication reveals that its main

objective is to gain participation of large number of people and increase the impact of communication. "The mass media have served largely as a vehicle for top-down persuasion or as channels to convey information from experts to the people. To rectify this situation, many national governments in Asia Africa and Latin America have incorporated indigenous communication media to increase the effectiveness of communication and to bring about a greater participation of rural and urban poor in the development process¹⁵ According to Jayaweera¹⁶ interpersonal communication is more effective and alive than mass media and the major advantageous of folk media are: it's nativeness, low cost, higher reach to general public, controllability by the public, possibility for public participation and effect the consciousness, ability to adopt most suitable technology and possibility of internal translation.

The communicative abilities shown in the folk media is excellent as finding solutions themselves through mutual discussion in their own language is conducted at this stage. Further, it can be used with a matching technology and external guidance for knowledge transition.

Common factors:

At present messages are socialized through above-mentioned approaches. However, non-availability of a proper methodology has resulted in many failures in reaching the majority of people who live in traditional societies with the message of capital and technology (Figure 2).

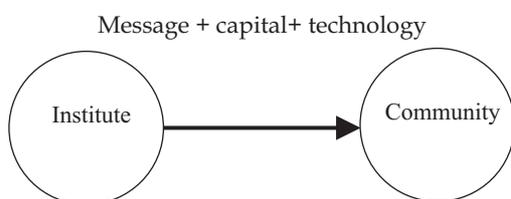


Figure 2. Knowledge Un-Based Community

At present, the modern communication process appears to send a crude message on capital and

technology to village community, when messages are composed of educational knowledge and information technology. It is clear that the real meaning and the broader process is neglected within the narrow description of the message as the letter regarding the development project, technology as the machines and tools and capital as money. However, a complete component equation is required instead of the narrow interpretations, which were used to generate quantitative results in the name of development, for centuries.

As such the author wishes to propose a strategy attached with complete process and methodology related to development conditions that would avoid the above mentioned shortcomings. It is identified as Neo-Capital, technology and knowledge based methodology.

Neo- Capital, Technology and Knowledge based Methodology:

Education and technology are identified as key components of modern development and its immense potentiality to be used as an effective form of development communication is of great importance. At present Neo- Capital, Technology and Knowledge based Methodology will reach the community through previously mentioned approaches. It is because technology and education are processes and, not approaches. .

"It is better to teach a man how to earn a fish than catching one fish, because, by this he will be able to consume fish every day" the popular, saying in Chinese folk tale has a significant value to modern developing world. Deriving the meaning from the above popular folk statement 'instead of spending large sums of money daily for supplying subsidies to an inactive community, it is better to guide them towards active participation on finding solutions to problems of living standards.' The gigantic amounts of money spent in the construction of infrastructure in this process can be counted as a fruitful investment, and capital is identified as a significant factor.

The capital shortages in developing countries hinder their development. Although capital is available sometimes, lack of proper management and methodology makes it ineffective. Therefore, it should be associated with technology and broader knowledge. This is why capital, technology and education are equally important, specially in the developing countries.

The intellectuals in the development arena should endure to provide education with capital and technology for developing world communities. By the term education, a field of life experiences with vast area of regular and irregular subject is defined. This should be a process that drives the life of humankind to a better approach, which contains perspectives on how a person should face problems encountered in their daily social life. The most recent factor of this arena is information and communication technology. The expectation of this new approach to education is to inculcate folk through combination of all levels of knowledge instead of swallowing crude technology partially.

Through this method, it is possible to generate new potentialities needed to eradicate problems such as rural poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

Information and communication technology are indeed generating new possibilities to attack problems of rural poverty, inequality and environmental degradation¹⁷. The function of information technology which can be used to achieve such wide objectives can be subdivided in to three main parts. namely; obtaining support in administrative decision-making, confirming the community services and strengthening community with knowledge and information¹⁷.

There are many problems in modern development process especially in managing rural development projects. They are: decentralization of plan, multitude of institutions bureaucracy and administrative issues, complex schedule activities in large firms and insufficiency of resources.

The modern Information communication technology (ICT) becomes an excellent method because it has proven its practical ability in finding solutions for most of these problems. The subscriber based field constructed of the interaction between the invested capital and expected capital to utilize modern technology, should keep as a better foundation.

Not only that, education may be either regular or irregular. The external living, grounds away from the institutional structures such as schools, temple educational centers, technical colleges, teaching colleges and universities are also essential green lands. A person can gain a similar or greater bulk of knowledge through mere life experiences while another gets a knowledge through books, libraries, laboratories and observatories. It may be science, arts, aesthetic, mathematics or agriculture. If not, it can be another bulk of knowledge in humanities and linguistic. What ever it is, all the things organically abide with human life style.

It means that the education either has better or worse impact over all the human activities and thoughts visible or invisible in the society. If really in need, a person can gain a gigantic knowledge endowment and use it only to accomplish narrow self-intentions and profits. It can be emphasized hereby, that the knowledge gain by a member may at many times use for the benefit of the society or for the degradation and miscarriage of society.

The action take place according to the thinking associated with needs, expectations, and objectives of the society or relevant person. Bribery, corruption, robbery, cheating, fake promises and waste take place internally without any attachment to level of education, set a good example for this type of situation. The false perspectives that have been pertaining in the society for a long period effect in stabilizing such detrimental wounds in society. Therefore, poor thinking will not enrich visible development in any given society.

As such orientation of social thinking towards the

good direction to transform the society to an effective social action is expected by the Neo-Capital, Technology and Knowledge based Methodology presented here by the researcher. It is possible that by the use of this method it is possible to form a worldly healthy humanity, parallel to kindness with good moral conduct. It must be emphasized here that a foundation of broader education knowledge is required to achieve this status of development (Figure 3).

Stable foundation of education in mitigating the arising complex problems in any scheme or program is an important prerequisite in the process described by the researcher. It is an operational truth to say that the effect and the actions of precise concepts, proposals and planning that expect to accomplish such needs are evident when the above mentioned foundation is established. The special characteristic of it is the reflection of the transparency from the beginning of the construction of the fundamental concept to the end

of the complex process. One can think that this is a dream that will never come true. However, establishment of such education will help vastly to reduce such backward thinking.

This process is identified as an effective development communication process and it arises above the fourfold approaches mentioned earlier in this paper as a more active methodology Figure 4.

Conclusion

Many shortcomings seen in the early development communication forms such as social, cultural, political, religious and environmental failures can be avoided with the use of Neo- Capital, Technology and Knowledge based Methodology. It is because all the factors of development are satisfied in the broader foundation of capital and technology. It can therefore be proposed that Capital, Technological and Knowledge based Methodology is a new development



Figure 3. Knowledge Based Communication

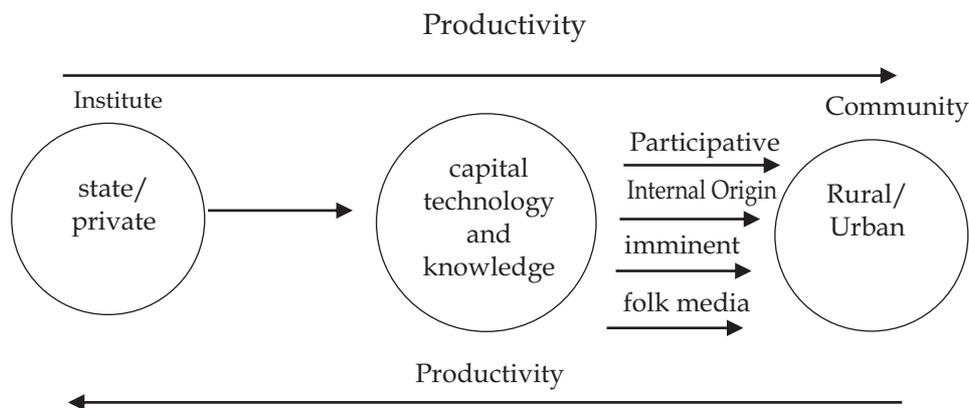


Figure4. Neo-Capital, Technological and knowledge based structure

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