

# **MASS COMMUNICATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF PALAMAU COMMISSIONERY OF JHARKHAND STATE**

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## **Abstract**

This article examines the need for urban and regional planning practices to be further developed in the light of both the emergence of information/knowledge/network society and in particular the impact of information and communication technology, (ICT), on spatial change. The ways in which urban and regional planning practices may best be altered in this regard is also addressed. One major aspect of current spatial development trends can be highlighted with reference to the changing nature of our advanced societies' economic base, where knowledge and skills are becoming the most important factors in production. This fundamental economic change moreover envisages a whole host of new functional and organizational possibilities. In consequence, the traditional ways of running businesses in industry, services and other organizations, as well as the activities of everyday life will also undergo a process of fundamental change. Additionally, changes in the traditional pre-requisites governing the location of various activities will occur because they now have new determinants. These developments will have a diversified spatial impact. Therefore ICT, as the main driving force in the development of the information society, should be taken into account in urban and regional planning as an important new aspect in this process. Planners should therefore recognize this new need and challenge. The incorporation of the spatial impact of ICT into planning practices will not however occur without the purposeful actions of those who are responsible for practical planning or those who regulate and support planning. Thus there is a clear need for further information, knowledge and understanding about the spatial impact of ICT and about its consequences on urban and regional development. Planners need updated education and training as well as new planning methods and models based on new spatial and urban theories. In addition, planning legislation and governmental guidelines should include provisions for the impact of the development of the information society and ICT on planning. The work plan aims at the developments made in the Jharkhand state of India and comparison of works done for urban and rural people of the state.

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## **1. The statement of the problem**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are rapidly consolidating global communication networks and international trade with implications for people in developing countries. Despite this there is a worrying lack of empirical evidence or analysis of the actual experiences and effects of ICTs upon poor people's economic and social livelihoods. The constraints of existing information systems on poor women and men and their intersection with ICTs are also little understood in relation to livelihoods. ICTs are technologies offering new ways for communicating and exchanging information and knowledge. They can be used to enable, or strengthen or replace existing information systems and networks. The challenge for those working in ICTs is to define the particular roles that information can be expected to play and where ICTs might be most effectively applied but equally to clarify and be honest about what they cannot do. The information revolution is an intervention with the potential to ensure that knowledge and information on important technologies, methods and practices are put in the right hands. The relevance of this revolution is supported by Balit[1], who pointed out that the least expensive input for rural development is knowledge. Knowledge and information are basic ingredients of food security and are essential for facilitating rural development and bringing about social and economic change. According to Albert Waterson, as quoted by Cohen[2], the purpose of rural development is "to improve the standard of living of the rural population-is multi-sectoral including agriculture, industry and social facilities". Rural communities require information inter alia on supply of inputs, new technologies, early warning systems (drought, pests and diseases), credit, market prices and their competitors. The success of green revolution in Asia and Near East indicates that giving rural communities access to knowledge, technology and services will contribute to expanding and energizing agriculture.

Traditional media and new ICTs have played a major role in diffusing information to rural communities, and have much more potential. There is a need to connect rural communities, research and extension networks and provides access to much needed knowledge, technology and services [3]. Studies on information systems serving rural communities have focused on specific sectors such as agriculture or health, instead of covering the rural community needs in a holistic manner. Rural information systems must involve rural communities and local content must be of prime importance [4]. Traditional media have been used very successfully in developing countries, and rural radio in particular has played a major role in delivering agricultural messages. Print, video, television, films, slides, pictures, drama, dance, folklore, group discussions, meetings, exhibitions and demonstrations have also been used to speed up the flow of information [5]. New ICTs, however, have the potential of getting vast amount of information to rural populations in a more timely, comprehensive and cost effective manner and could be used together with traditional media.

### **Potential of new ICTs for rural development**

New ICTs are becoming more accessible, and users can obtain information from various sources, and one computer could meet the needs of a large rural community. Although the Internet is not a panacea for rural development problems, it can open new communication channels that bring new knowledge and information resources to rural communities [6]. Traditional communication channels have been used successfully but these have been monologic and have not allowed for

much interaction with users. Radio for example has been very effective for disseminating information to all types of audiences, but broadcasting times are sometimes not appropriate for most people. But radio could be linked to the internet, and a few initiatives have been started on this concept. Broadcasters could then disseminate the latest information promptly. Some examples of areas where ICTs could play a catalytic role in developing rural areas include:

- **Decision making process** - Sound decision making is dependent upon availability of comprehensive, timely and up to date information.
- **Market outlook** - Farmers could promote their products and handle simple transactions such as orders over the web while payment transactions for the goods can be handled off-line [7]. It has been shown to be cheaper and faster to trade online than on paper -based medium, telephone or fax. Electronic-commerce could, therefore, enable entrepreneurs to access global market information and open up new regional and global markets that fetch better prices and increase farmers' earnings.
- **Empowering rural communities** – ICTs can empower rural communities and give them “a voice” that permits them to contribute to the development process. With new ICTs, rural communities can acquire the capacity to improve their living conditions and become motivated through training and dialogue with others to a level where they make decisions for their own development [8]. Giving rural people a voice means giving them a seat at the table to express their views and opinions and become part of the decision making process. The approach should be participatory and could lead to improved policy formation and execution. improved policy formulation and strategies, however, require “an educated and informed populace...to reduce poverty, excessive population growth, environmental degradation and other factors that are most often the direct causes of hunger” [9]. New ICTs have the potential to penetrate under-served areas and enhance education through distance learning, facilitate development of relevant local content and faster delivery of information on technical assistance and basic human needs such as food, agriculture, health and water. Farmers can interact with other farmers, their families, neighbors, suppliers, customers and intermediaries and this is a way of educating rural communities. The internet can also enable the remotest village to access regular and reliable information from global library (the web). Different media combinations may, however, be best in different cases- through radio, television, video cassettes, video conferencing, computer programs, and print, CD-ROM or the internet [10]. Rural areas also get greater visibility by having the opportunity to disseminate information about their community to the whole world.
- **Targeting marginalized groups-** Most rural poor people lack the power to access information. ICTs could benefit all stakeholders including the civil society, in particular

youth and women [11]. Other disadvantaged groups that could be targeted include the disabled and subsistence peasants.

- **Creating employment** - Through the establishment of rural information centers, ICTs can create employment opportunities in rural areas by engaging telecentre managers, subject matter specialists, information managers, translators and information technology technicians. Such centers help bridge the gap between urban and rural communities and reduce the rural-urban migration problem. The centers can also provide training and those trained may become small scale entrepreneurs.

### **Constraints in the establishment and management of community-based ICT projects**

Some of general problems that have been experienced in a number of ICT-based rural projects and initiatives include:

- **Policy considerations-** In most developing countries, especially in India, the formulation and implementation of policies in the ICT sector is still very rudimentary and calls for an integrated set of laws, regulations and guidelines that shape the generation, acquisition and utilization of rural development and where policies have been formulated, proper implementation plans are needed. In addition, review strategies are often lacking. At present, regulations are rigid and telecommunication tariffs and import duties on ICT equipment are high. The situation is compounded by lack of political good will.
- **High telecommunication costs in some developing countries-** The cost of basic Internet remains a strong deterrent in many developing countries such as Angola, Kenya, Cuba and India. Although market liberalization has led to entry of several private sector ISPs, service provision is through government phone companies, whose service is inadequate in terms of robustness, low bandwidth, congestion and noisy lines. Others make international calls to ISPs in the United States or elsewhere in Europe, which renders the service rather expensive.
- **Infrastructure-** The telecommunication and electricity infrastructure in developing countries is lacking or is poorly developed in rural areas. Satellite and wireless technologies are now in use in some developing countries, but these are largely developed around cities and even here, the infrastructure is often inadequate. There are problems of low bandwidth and there is a need for strengthening the internet backbone.
- **Lack of local content and language barrier** – Information available through ICTs is mostly in English, which the majority of developing country rural communities cannot read. There is a marked shortage of relevant material in local languages that responds to their needs and this calls for “significant investment and support for local

content”. For example in India – the Village Earth Project and its Consortium for Sustainable Village Development. The project has a library of books, microfiche and CD-ROMs that provide appropriate information resources (statistical, bibliographic, factual and full text) of relevance to rural communities, packaged as print, audio tapes, radio and television programmers, videos, CD-ROMs and on the World Wide Web. For many of these, there is lack of bibliographic control and there are no commonly agreed standards. At the international level, FAO, through its WAICENT web site, makes available many of FAO’s own published sources, including FAO’s Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), the AGRIS and CARIS databases, and the FAO Statistical database. A CD-ROM – “*FAO on the Internet*” – makes this important information accessible to users that have no Internet facilities.

- **High rate of illiteracy in rural areas** – “Illiteracy is a fundamental barrier to participation in knowledge societies”. A large proportion of rural population of developing country nations, majority of who are women, is illiterate and most pictographic and audio-visual information usually has some text that goes with it. This means that these individuals are disadvantaged and lack basic skills required to harness the benefits of ICTs. The assistance of intermediaries may thus be required.
- **Gender insensitivity** – Developing country men and women play different productive community roles in rural development and have different needs and preferences. When new technologies are introduced, they are seen as domain for men, and women and women have often been left out of initiatives associated with new ICTs. Rural women, however have wisdom and indigenous knowledge that is rooted on culture, traditions, values and experience. Their methods of communication and information exchange should thus be harnessed and be complemented with new ICTs. Women also spend most of their income on family welfare and have a greater impact on increasing agricultural productivity and improving quality of family life. Women, youth and the disabled will, therefore, require special treatment (affirmative action), and should be deliberately integrated into all ICT projects and initiatives through gender sensitive project development and implementation. It is only by so doing that a critical mass of information aware people.
- **Inadequate human resources** – To ensure more meaningful participation in rural developments, and to pave way for creation of a critical mass of people that effectively harness ICTs in developing countries, training and capacity building and must be an integral part of all ICT projects. Most staff managing ICT-based projects lack adequate training that would enable them take full advantage of the new technologies. There is need to invest in training and advisory services for information intermediaries, telecentre staff, frontline workers and women’s groups. Focus should be on such skills as how to use ICTs through practical and participatory approaches.

The 'Self Employed Women's Association in India, for example, has trained rural women in the production and use of video to generate income, disseminate new skills and to advocate for changes in policy. Some key players in the training activity have been FAO, CTA, IDRC, IFAD, UNESCO and ministries of agriculture new ICTs.

## 2. Review of the Literature

Mass communication research primarily concentrates on the study of its effects on the society. The dominant paradigm model of mass communication emphasized the powerful nature of mass media in bringing the people of third world countries out of their traditional systems of society and putting them on the path of development. Harold D. Lasswell (1948) came up with an innovative conceptualization of mass media effects during this period. His verbal model of communication approach suggested the following question: who says what, in what channel, to whom and with what effect? He interpreted the theory to mean that human behavior was essentially irrational and susceptible to the powerful effects of mass media. The Bullet Theory (Schramm, 1971) and the Hypodermic Needle Theory (Berlo, 1960) were the terms used to describe this concept of powerful mass media. But this theory faced serious contradictions in the following years. Lazarsfeld Berelson and Gaudet (1948) analysed the effects of mass media on voting behavior. The major finding of these voter studies was to suggest the weakness of mass media in directly influencing the personal decisions of individuals. Hovland et.al. (1949, 1953); Klapper (1960) in their works further undermined the great power of mass media in bringing about direct and lasting effects on the audience. The studies brought that people defended themselves against persuasive messages in three ways: selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention. Klapper (1960) found a tendency for individuals to expose themselves to perceive those items of communication that were consonant with their beliefs, ideas, values and other factors. Allport and Postman (1947), Jones and Kohler (1958), Lavine and Murphy (1958) showed that even recall of information was influenced by factors such as individual's needs, wants, moods, perception, etc.

Perhaps the more valuable longer-term contribution of research on persuasive communication has been in locating the conditions under which effects can occur and in specifying the mediating factors which are involved. A few findings in this sphere can be frequently form the reinforcement of existing attitudes and opinions (Klapper, 1960); secondly, it is clear that effects vary according to the prestige evaluations attached to communication source (Hovland, 1954); thirdly, the more complete the monopoly of mass communication, the more likely it is that opinion change in the desired direction will be achieved (Klapper, 1960); fourthly, communication can be effective in producing a shift on unfamiliar, lightly felt, peripheral issues- those that do not effect much or are not tied to audience predisposition (Berelson and Steiner, 1964); fifthly, the selection and interpretation of contents by the audience is influenced by the existing opinions and interests and by group norms (Riley 1951, Katz 1955) and finally, it has become clear that the structure of interpersonal relations in the audience mediates the flow of communication content and limits and determines whatever effects occur (Katz, 1955).

Mass communication comprises *the institutions and techniques by which a specialized social group employs technological devices to disseminate Symbolic content to large heterogeneous and widely spread audiences* (Janowita, 1980: 41). Communication research in India started



since late 1970s. At the outset this was limited to rural areas. In the early 1960s all studies were conducted either in the name of the mass media and social development or the mass media and social change except Damdey's study of Hariktha. The early pioneers in India were S.C. Dube, M.S.A. Rao, Yogesh Atal, L.R. Nair and Myron weiner. These studies which entered on the radio forum, literacy forum or extension' agencies did not take into account the simultaneous operation of other channels of communication in Indian society. Since the establishment of Indian Institute of mass communication, New Delhi, in 1965 by by the Govt. of India various researches communication and family planning, media habits and information needs, communication and elections, communication for tribal development in North-East Region, response to visuals in posters, role of daily newspapers during election ands and effectiveness of puppetry and Films(Gupta 1985)

Though there is unity in diversity in India in terms of language, religion, climate, people and culture, the women seldom enjoyed quality with-men for a longer period. The ancient law gives like Manu and Kautilya assigned a low status to women so much so that women were often grouped with dogs and chandal<sup>8</sup>. Our civilization, customs and laws have been made by men who have taken good care to keep themselves in a superior position to treat as the chattel and play thing to be exploited for his own advantage and amusement. The women in India have to free themselves from the tyranny of 11 11~n made customs and laws. They will have to carry on the second struggle (along with their participation in the first struggle for freedom) by themselves, for man is not likely to help them. A significant section of social scientists and media researches is engaged in studies related to women in mass media. These studies cover all continents and show how the media have been biased against women. The International association for Mass Communication Research has a separate working group to deal with this area of research. The first meeting of this working group was held in Pairs in 1992.

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The ongoing communication revolution has opened up new possibilities for accelerated development group to deal with this area of research. The first meeting of this working group was held in Paris in specially for upliftment of women and children. World wide feminist movement of women has pointed out that the employment of women in India is low and particularly so in decision making levels. Reviewing the world scene the Mac Bride Commission said that in general inadequate attention is paid in the media to issue of specific importance to women, to the activities to the women's movement, or the social contribution made by independent and gifted women. Women appear in magazine fiction and in television drama and comedy as self deprecating and dependent, irrational, superstitious and overemotional. In advertising women are shown either as the housewives whose interests are limited to domestic needs or as in the sexually allowing background by association of which makes consumer goods more attractive. A number of studies indicate the over effect of the portrayal of women's images. According to Butter L and Paisley the analysis of ratio content shows that neither sex has the corner on goodness, badness or weakness. Attention needs to be drawn to certain other fundamental aspects which have not receive as much publicity as to the question of glamorization by the media of women as a sex object in a growingly market and consumerism oriented developing society like India. The exploitation of the women's image for commercial purposes has been noted and criticized very widely.

Changes during the decade of the nineties included a growing awareness of women's expanding roles in societies. More women's are participating in the labour force than ever Society has begun to re-examine the value of women's contributions. Several studies have attempted to provide evidence supporting or refuting charges of stereotypical female portrayal in television commercials. Women were portrayed more often than men in decorative roles and at home. Schneider and Schneider (1976) reported trends of the male and female roles portrayed in television commercials between 1971 and 1976. On the basis of their findings the author concluded that marketers and society have begun to accept the changing roles of women. Schneider and Schneider (1979) found a trend from 1971 to 1976 in respect of young (18-35) females in television commercials. They noted that this trend signified a movement towards utilization of female character more in line with the actual ages of women in the population. The absence of change in women's family role portrayal between 1977 and 1980 is best interpreted when placed in the broader context of an entire decade. According to Dominich and Rauch (1971) 28% of female characters assumed the role of housewife/mother. In 1976 (Schneider and Schneider) this figure increased to 41% and now it is 51% .In 1972 Dominich and Rauch observed that 22% of the female characters were employed. By 1976 the percentages declined to 18% and in 1979 it continue dropping up to 10% in their study. In 1972 Domich and Rauch found the most frequently recorded role the females were appearing in was that of sex object. The use of male announcers for commercials may constitute biggest violation of women status in advertising. In 1992, according to Dominich and Rauch, a male voice was heard on 87% of the observed advertisement. The proportion dropped to 84% in 1994 but it rise again to 92% in another study.

The power of mass media and magazines in particular to create, select and convey particular image about women is recently focused. In the women studies conference held in Bombay in 1981 the feminist media group blamed the media for perpetuating middle class stereotypes. Participant agreed that by confirming women's problems to separate programmes or separate



pages of the newspaper the media have isolated them from mainstream problems and thus assigned them a low social value. It has also recommended that media training programmes include a course on women and communications.

### **3. Methodology**

The questionnaire method has been used. The analysis has been done through using the primary data and secondary data.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study is an attempt to make a critical analysis of the work done by the state government and various NGO's for Mass Media awareness in Jharkhand State. This study has vital importance not only from academic point of view but also from the development and improvement point of view.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that there is a need to study the followings in detail as this study will be helpful to the growth of people in Jharkhand state. Followings are the objectives of this study

1. To find out the work done by the state Government in Palamau Commissionery of Jharkhand state
2. To identify the future scope of developments in the area of rural development
3. To analyze the problem critically
4. To identify the work done by the NGO's
5. To analyze the progress made by people by themselves in the area of research

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