

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Framework

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(A) Significance of Public Relations :

The need to speed up the process of development and change makes it imperative for the administration to become a catalyst of change in the prevailing socio-political culture. The success of a democratic system and of the entire developmental programme rests basically on a sound and healthy citizen-administration relationship which will ensure a responsible, responsive, open and communicative administration on the one hand, and an alert, informed and articulated citizen-response, on the other. The effective functioning of a democratic polity is to be tested by the degree of availability of the relevant flow of information, the quality of decisions made on the basis of such information, and the smooth working of the feedback mechanisms. Such a democratic polity can witness a higher degree of

popular participation only when it is provided with a high degree of social awareness, which, in turn, depends to a large extent, on the proper and effective utilization of the media of mass communication. Advancement in technology achieved by the western countries has brought about a far-reaching change in the techniques of communication and the mass media which can accelerate, even if indirectly, the tempo of change and the pace of development. All social change involves tension. The flow of information is of the greatest importance in regulating the level of social tension. Communication, thus, acts as a kind of temperature-controlling agency.¹ While citizen-administration relationship may largely be an incidence of the prevailing level of socio-political culture and system of values that will govern its operational style and pattern, it is nevertheless necessary to consider what steps could be taken at the institutional, organisational and procedural levels to facilitate smooth and healthy communication and understanding between the two partners in the democratic process. A successful public relations machinery ought to establish and realise a rapport with the community on the basis of shared values, rather than confine itself to the mechanical task of publicity and propaganda.

Mere information regarding public policies and state actions is not enough. Government must make every effort to generate and foster a positive attitude towards its policies

in order to ensure a high degree of popular participation and compliance, without which all the developmental efforts will become counter-productive. The basic objective should be not merely dissolution and isolation of the area and spheres of misunderstanding and conflict, but establishment of legitimacy and credibility for the entire institutional complex that the policies and processes of development come to signify.

W.A. Robson, therefore, very aptly describes 'public relations' as a movement from the provision of factual material to the realm of persuasion, of propaganda, of a conscious attempt to influence.²

(B) Definition, Concept and Practice of Public Relations

Bernays defines public relations as a three-fold activity which consists of (1) information given to the public; (2) persuasion directed at the public to modify attitudes and actions; (3) efforts to integrate attitudes of an institution with its publics and of the publics with those of institution.³ To Bernays, Public relations activity is vital for ensuring public support and understanding in a world of competition. According to Bernays, four specific steps have to be taken in formulating a public relations programme : (1) formulation of objective; (2) analysis of the public attitude towards the industry and the services it renders; (3) a study of this analysis with a view to keynoting the approach to the public

in terms of action by the industry; this is to be followed by the formulation of policy and a program for educating the public; and (4) the carrying out of this program by dramatizing it through various media of communication.⁴

Prof. Edward J. Robinson, in his book "Communication and Public Relations", treats public relations as 'an applied social and behavioural science' and points out that the execution of any public relations programme on the part of an organization should involve four different steps : first, the measurement, evaluation and interpretation of the attitudes of various relevant publics; second, assisting management in defining objectives for increasing public understanding and acceptance of the organization's products, plans, policies and personnel; third, equating these objectives with the interests, needs and goals of the various relevant publics; and fourth, the development, execution and evaluation of a programme to earn public understanding and acceptance.⁵

The British Institute of Public Relations defines public relations as "the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public."⁶ According to this Institute, the precise functions of the public relations department of any organization are, in the first place, to present the organization to explain the services provided in such a way that the public will easily understand them and take interest in

them; secondly, to explain to the public any new policy or change of policy in order to enlist as far as possible a general acceptance of and cooperation in such decisions; thirdly, to help the public to formulate its opinion and determine its wants on an informed basis; fourthly, to ensure that anything the organization presents to the public through any of the media of publicity is sound for its purpose and seemly in its form; fifthly, to help the organization to keep in touch with the movements of public opinion; and lastly, to protect the organization against unserved or ill-informed attack from outside.⁷

The fundamental objective of public relations practice is, thus, to develop and encourage attitudes and behaviour which will help to develop mutual understanding between the organization and its publics.⁸ Public relations recognizes a long-term responsibility and can succeed only when the basic policy is ethical and the means used are truthful. In fact, a successful use of public relations techniques, instead of bolstering up a weak policy, may only expose its weaknesses. Besides, public relations must always be positive in demonstrating the facts in order to secure belief and co-operation since denials of facts do not convince the public.

A good public relations campaign requires a sound basic policy and the application of sound publicity techniques to achieve the desired goal. The achievement of this end involves a set of functional or operating procedures which

include : (1) a study of the prevailing climate of opinion based on research data; (2) an interpretation of these data and findings in terms of their meaningful impact on the management function; (3) based on this interpretation, a setting up of policies and programs which will relate the management function favourable to the public interest; (4) a program of information to the public about these policies by means of the mass media of communication.⁹ A public relations program in action, then, attempts, first, to relate the policies of the organization to the best interest of the publics involved, and second, to devise ways and means of telling the public involved about these policies and activities by utilizing all available and relevant media of communication. Sound relationship with the public depends on the performance that satisfies the public, and the communication of such satisfactory performance. Performance, coupled with interpretation and communication, move public opinion. Public relations is not sailing with the winds of public opinion, but rather, navigating an institution through them. It requires a sure and sensitive reading of the changing environment.

The organized practice of public relations to bring about a harmonious adjustment between an institution and its Publics is a continuous and problem-solving process that involves four basic steps : fact-finding and feedback; planning and programming; action and communication; and evaluation.¹⁰ The first two steps, i.e., fact-finding and planning,

distinguish public relations from publicity. Bertrand R. Canfield classifies public relations functions into five categories : research, planning, coordinating, administration and production.¹¹ Research includes opinion surveys of the various publics of an organization. The general objectives of research include probing basic attitudes, measuring actual opinions, identifying leaders of opinion, reducing costs by concentrating upon the most valid targets, testing themes and media, timing, discovering the strength of antagonistic views, achieving two-way communication, revealing trouble before it develops and using opinion research as a communication tool in itself.¹² Public relations as a concerted effort to influence people's opinion in accordance with pre-established objectives demands a thorough knowledge of the climate of public opinion. In order to understand the patterns of attitude and behaviour of individuals, public relations practitioners have thus come to rely heavily on the methods and techniques of motivational research.¹³

The practice of public relations, thus, begins with fact-finding and feedback. Failure on the part of an organization to successfully monitor public opinion is likely to result in organizational disaster. Organizations, like biological organisms, must carry out surveillance of the environment if they wish to survive in the face to external hazards. Thus, every organization needs public relations for monitoring public opinion which is considered as not only the first step

in public relations but the most important and the most difficult one. Public relations serves as the link between an organization and its publics so that the organization may be responsive to its publics. Public relations, instead of being confined to the role of information-giving, should assume the role of information-seeking.¹⁴ In order to ascertain public opinion towards an organization accurately, the public relations activities of the organization must be based on methodological and systematic research to pinpoint the publics, discover their leaders and learn their values, viewpoints and language. These values and viewpoints can be learned only through systematic and sympathetic listening. Thus communication starts with listening. Many wrong decisions are made today because of inaccurate assessment of public attitudes and opinions, rather than of willful disregard of them. Research in public relations practice has two basic purposes : first, the collection and collation of facts used in planning a course of action and in determining channels and content of the informational program; and second, exploration of basic attitudes, opinions expressed and information held by members of an organization's public. The research process includes, first, a definition of the problem. Once the problem is defined, the second step would involve the identification of the publics and their inter-relationships, as well as the best ways of reaching and influencing them.¹⁵

The second step in the public relations process is planning and decision-making. After the attitudes, ideas, opinions and reactions of the publics have been measured, and the problem has been defined accurately, the task of the public relations practitioners is to determine first public relations objective on the basis of the stated objective of the organization, and then, keeping in view the public relations objective, strategic decisions can be made concerning plans of action in the form of projects or programs. Thinking in terms of strategy is at the heart of public relations planning. A strategy is a plan to use selected means in predetermined ways to attain the desired result.¹⁶ Formulation of a public relations program is not an easy job. A written public relations program aimed at specific objectives, with projects designed to achieve those goals, helps the administration to make sure that the public relations effort is consistent with the institution's goals. Paul Burton points out seven basic steps that are common in formulating nearly all programs. These are : (1) preliminary research; (2) isolation of problems; (3) establishment of policy; (4) extended or depth research; (5) determination of objectives; (6) development of a plan of action and (7) execution of the plan.¹⁷ Frank Jefkins offers a public relations planning model that comprise six definite steps : (1) appreciation of the situation; (2) definition of objectives; (3) definition of publics; (4) choice of media and techniques; (5) budget; and (6) evaluation of results.¹⁸

The third step in the public relations practice is action and communication. Once the problem has been defined, the publics are identified, and the program has been worked out, the next step is to decide on the content and channels of communication best suited to gain the intended audience's attention and cooperation. Communication and action make up the main thrust in a program. To communicate effectively, the sender's words and symbols must mean the same thing to the receiver that they do to the sender.¹⁹ There are three basic elements in communication : the source or sender, the message or the content of communication and the destination or the receiver. Effective communication requires efficiency on the part of all three. The communicator must have adequate information and credibility in the eyes of the receiver. The credibility of the communicator depends on his expertness and trustworthiness. High credibility increase the probability of favourable attitude change and low credibility lessens it. Secondly, the message must be within the receiver's capacity to comprehend and it must motivate the receiver's self-interest and cause him to respond. To reach its target, the message must (1) be salient to the receiver - that is, it must possess a "psychological closeness"; and (2) be pertinent, that is, it must relate to the discrimination a person makes when he is evaluating alternatives.²⁰ Thirdly, people are inclined to receive communications that are favourable or congenial to their

predispositions. The desires, attitudes, wishes and expectations of the receiver, when he is receiving a message, are a much more important determinant of communication impact than the content of the message.

The final step in the process is evaluation of the impact of a communication program. Evaluation leads logically back into fact-finding and feedback. In a continuing program, it is difficult to separate the two aspects of public relations research. Extensive feedback is essential to an effective communication program. One of the weaknesses of contemporary practice is the lack of evaluation to measure the success or failure of a program.

Evaluation may take one of the two forms - pretesting before launching an expensive campaign, and posttesting that will uncover the mistakes that need not be repeated.²¹ Unread leaflets, unheard broadcasts, unviewed films - however abundantly and skillfully produced - have no chance of influencing an audience that is not there. Volume of output does not guarantee that an audience is reached. Dissemination does not equal communication.

A specific program's effectiveness can be evaluated by measuring in terms of four dimensions. They are audience coverage, audience response, communication impact and process of influence.²² The real test of a communication program is its result. In addition to observation of results apparently

obtained, the impact of a program can be measured by other methods such as the focussed interview, impact analysis and experimental studies.

(C) Origin of the Concept and Practice of Public Relations

The awareness of public opinion in the business world began to develop in the late 1880's when big business houses were under attack for their serious national abuses in the American liberal democracy that was challenged to meet a crisis created by the economic, technological and social changes of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Business, as a result, adopted a type of public relations that could better be described as publicity which was concerned principally with the task of whitewashing the deeds of businessmen without any alteration of its conduct whatsoever.²³ As the 20th century made its headway, the phrase "the public be damned", that characterized the period between 1865-1900, as William Vanderbilt, head of the New York Central, uttered that phrase in 1879, was to give way to "the public be informed" realization of Ivy Lee, a public relations counsel.²⁴ The American Telephone and Telegraph Company was a pioneer in the field of public relations as it was one of the first firms to take the help of outside public relations counsel in handling the information of the company with a view to correcting the misunderstanding or lack of knowledge

on the part of the public.²⁵ Although the term 'public relations' was hardly used before 1920, it was Theodore Newton Vail, President of the American Telephone and Telegraph, who first used the term as early as in 1908 to emphasize its informational aspect.²⁶

At the governmental level, public relations found its way during World War I. However, publicity as a part of public relations practice had long been used by the American Presidents to uphold their leadership, and Theodore Roosevelt was a veteran in dealing with the press. Only one week after the United States entered the World War I, on April 6, 1917, the Committee on Public Information was set up under the direction of George Creel.²⁷ The Committee collected news from all available government sources and distributed them through all the existing channels of mass communication like posters, advertising, exhibits, pamphlets, newspapers, envelope stuffers, etc. However, public relations activities during the war never reached their full potentialities due to the lack of proper coordination, and war publicity, to a great extent, was based on propaganda. Nevertheless, the war demonstrated the fact that all kinds of organizations - business houses, private institutions, universities or government organizations - needed the public they dealt with and that favourable public attitudes could only be developed through dissemination of information and persuasion.²⁸

The concept of public relations gained a new dimension between 1919 and 1929 through a growing feeling that words alone were not enough. Words had to be backed by deeds and business. In order to command lasting public support, business must take into account the public relations aspect of its deeds at the policy-making level. Public relations is not a one-way traffic in which leadership manipulates the public and public opinion. It is a two-way channel in which leadership and the public find integration with each other.

Public relations as a management function received a new treatment in 1938 when Paul Garrett considered it as an essential management function within a large corporation with every management policy or action having a public relations aspect. Garrett pointed out, "If the American business system is to preserve the right to continue its contributions to the general welfare, it must learn to interpret itself in deeds and in words that have meaning to others than itself."²⁹

John W. Hill defined the function of corporate public relations as "the management function which gives the same organized and careful attention to the asset of good will as is given to any other major asset of the business."³⁰ T.J. Ross explained public relations, first, as the recognition on the part of an individual, a company or an institution, of the principle of living up to one's public responsibilities and seeking to deserve, to obtain and to protect a favourable public attitude; second, as an active policy and function of management

involving all sorts of practical decisions of everyday business; third, in terms of techniques that are used to articulate the policy; and fourth, in terms of the activities of the public relations counsels associated with individuals, corporations or any other organization.³¹ Thus corporate public relations is a function of management which helps a company establish and maintain a good name for itself and its products or services through professional communication techniques.

Fortune, the magazine of businessmen, took cognizance of public relations in 1938 when one of its articles pointed out that America's favourite subject of attack was business and American people were never sold on business, particularly the modern industrial variety. The article concluded with the prediction that the supposed cure for this situation was what the businessman called public relations. In an article on "Business and Government", it warned that American business could avoid committing suicide only by practising sound public relations.³²

The period from 1929 to 1941 marked a great turning point in the history of public relations. As a result of the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression, public relations has greatly enlarged its activities. Business realised that in addition to selling its products under the unfavourable conditions of economic decline, it needed also and above all to sell itself to the public, to explain its

contributions to the entire economic system.³³ The growing awareness of the nature and importance of public relations was further evidenced by the active interest shown in the field by newspapers, magazines, universities, social scientists, research organizations and political parties.

As the decade came to an end, Europe was already engaged in World War II and both the American and British governments were engaged in the public relations activities for widespread public support in favour of their deeds in a scale never thought of before.

In Britain, public relations practices began to be recognized in the nineteen thirties. The thought that relations with the public were of vital importance tended to mature first in those organizations where a major sector of the general public could be identified as of commercial importance. Service corporations like London Transport and national promotional bodies like the Empire Marketing Board, were among the first to adopt public relations thinking and practice in Britain.³⁴

However, like in the United States, public relations activities in Britain were also highlighted and became the direct concern of the British government during World War II. War suddenly enlarged the need to inform the people of the objective and progress of the nation's battle in greater details through the press and radio, posters and pamphlets

and films and lecture tours.³⁵ After the war, both in the central and the local governments, this concept of informing the people for favourable public attitudes and support for their deeds remained and gained new dimensions in the context of changing social attitudes that called for a sense of responsibility and responsiveness on the part of the official. The governments are thus felt to be more directly accountable to the electorate.

(D) Public Relations and Communication

The practice of public relations is related directly to the process of mass communication and of opinion formation. Mutual understanding that constitutes the basic objective of any public relations programme requires a two-way communication. Public relations is the communication and interpretation of information and ideas from an institution to its public and the communication of information, ideas and opinions from those publics to the institution in a sincere effort to establish a mutuality of interest and thus achieve the harmonious adjustment of an institution to its community.³⁶ Public relations involves the skillful use of the art of communication in the interest of informing and influencing public opinion. Communication is a process by which an individual, the communicator, transmits stimuli, usually verbal symbols, to modify the behaviour of other individuals who are the communicatees.³⁷

An effective communication requires : (1) the communicator, i.e., the person who initiates the process; (2) the communicatee, that is, the recipient (3) the content of the communication - the communique and (4) the effect achieved by the communication. Thus, the act of communicating, in a public relations sense, involves the relaying or transmitting of a sign or symbol — verbal, written or pictorial — from a specific source to a specific audience or receiver by means of any one or all of several media that act as channels for the transmission of the symbols - newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, motion pictures, or direct speech — for the express purpose of influencing the opinion and actions of the receiving individual or group, i.e., the public.³⁸ An act of communication directed at influencing public opinion is successful, if it accomplishes the original public relations objective of motivating public opinion to some overt act. In other words, communication is successful when the effect produced by the communique is that intended by the communicator. If communication is faulty, all attempts to inform, persuade and integrate are likely to be wasted. To be effective, communication should be designed for the situation, time, place and audience. It means careful selection of media and technique as well as words and symbols. The same words and symbols may have different meanings for different people. Besides, there may be barriers - social, age, language, political or economic - to the understanding and clarity of message. The meaning of the message may be

distorted in course of its transmission from the source to the receiver. Beyond the strategic planning of the public relations campaign, therefore, is the problem of what to communicate (the content of the message), how to communicate (by publicity release, speech, press interview or some other instrument), and where to communicate (by one or more of the media - press radio, television and others). However, public relations is not identical with the art of mass communication since it includes both the art of communicating that relies upon the technical resources of mass media and the communication content. A public relations campaign, in practice, involves four different phases of its execution ; analysis, interpretation, implementation and action, and the techniques of public relations, such as publicity and advertising, employ mass media more frequently at the final or action phase of the campaign.³⁹

Mass media have become vital centres for the transmission of knowledge, the dissemination of facts and the directing of various emotional appeals to influence public opinion. Successful public relations, in the pragmatic or publicity stage, is the presentation of the facts in terms of sufficient dramatic or emotional appeals to influence public opinion affirmatively. Mass media are, thus, intrinsic to the very practice of public relations, since they are the avenues through which public relations content goes forth from source to receiving audience.

Cutlip and Center worked out the 7c's of communication as credibility, context, content, clarity continuity and consistency, channels and capability of audience.⁴⁰ Communication should start with a climate of belief, the climate built by the performance of organization, be it a business concern or the government. A communication program must square with the realities of its environment. The context should confirm, and not contradict the measure and provide for participation and playback. The message to be communicated should have meaning for the receiver and be put in simple terms so that the receiver can understand what the sender wants to make him understood. Communication is an unending process. It requires repetition to achieve penetration and takes into account the capability of the audience. Communications are most effective when they require the least effort on the part of the recipient.

Communication has acquired special relevance in the context of national development where the mass media are supposed to act as agents of social change. Development implies certain progressive change in the old order and traditional value system. Development broadly connotes a process which seeks to rebuild and restructure traditional societies with reference to the goals of nation-building and social-economic and technological progress. It involves transformation of old values, modification of behavioural patterns, change in traditional loyalties, establishment of

effective institutions, and the emergence and distribution of new functions required to effectuate new social purposes.⁴¹ Its basic characteristic is systematic societal change and an increasing capacity of society to deal effectively with its problems of adaptation, integration, pattern-maintenance and tension-management and goal-attainment.⁴² In this process of transformation, mass media can play a useful role in bringing about substantial changes in the attitudes, values beliefs and social norms. During the fifties and the sixties, when the modernization paradigm held the field and dominated the thinking and public policies of the developing countries committed to rapid socio-economic and political development, the mass media were hailed as indices and agents of modernization,⁴³ and the traditional media, as they were the products of the indigenous culture, were considered as antidevelopment. But the concept of development has changed quite dramatically since the seventies, from the earlier definitions that stressed economic growth obtained through industrialization and urbanization, to social development involving not just economic but social, political and cultural elements, which has as its goal the improvement in the quality of life of all or the majority of people through equity in distribution of information and other benefits of development, and active participation of people at the grassroots. Everett Rogers summarizes this new concept of development as 'a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended

to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.⁴⁴ He characterised it as the passing of the dominant paradigm.

Rural development requires a holistic, comprehensive and an integrated approach towards all-round development of the rural areas by way of bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes, and making the optimum utilization of all available resources with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of life of the rural people. In India, programmes for rural development require a participatory rural community where information flows not only downward from government to the people but also upward from people to the government and across horizontally among the people. The integration between development and communication and the communication support to development is an essential part of development programmes and must be built into them. The communication-gap that has been created because of the erstwhile one-way communication from the uninformed experts to the uneducated and ignorant people below has resulted in serious distortions in the perceptions of development. An integrative, interactive and participatory model of communication can only help to build bridges between the experts, the development planners and administrators on the one hand and the rural masses who are supposed to be the beneficiaries

of development on the other.

In the economic arena, for example, development is largely a matter of increasing productivity that primarily begins with agriculture, even though rural development is far broader in concept and range than were agricultural development. Changes in agricultural practices in traditional societies often shake the total pattern of life as, to the people in a traditional society, agriculture is not only a means of livelihood but the way of life they are contended with. The introduction of any new agricultural innovation in such a society must be considered not only in terms of increased productivity, but also in terms of the extent to which it would affect the life of the cultivator, his beliefs and values. This calls for an in-depth knowledge of the culture of people among whom the changes are to be introduced and the use of the media of communication in a calculated way both for informative and persuasive purposes, because, any wrong step in their use may be counterproductive.

The task of communication in invoking the desired changes is to ensure a regular flow of information about new innovations, to focus on the need for changes, the methods and means to bring about changes and the raising of aspirations of the people for a better way of life or what is called of promoting empathy among the people.⁴⁵ However, mass media are seldom sufficient to produce direct changes of attitudes or

behaviour on their own, and the influence of persons or groups with whom the individual is in direct contact is a crucial factor in determining individual behaviour. Only when mass media channels are mixed with interpersonal channels and with organizations in the village, social development in the sense of freeing men from all economic, technological, political and cultural impoverishment and servitude can take place.⁴⁶

The newer concepts of development, emphasize, inter alia, the preserving and sustaining of local traditional cultures and the use of the indigenous channels of communication or the folk media that are intimate with the people at the grass-roots, highly participatory and have greater potentiality for integration with the modern mass media. The folk media, if employed judiciously, can very well serve as vehicles for disseminating development-oriented messages and are credible channels for promoting planned changes in the attitudes and behavioural patterns of the rural masses.

The influence of mass communication was once viewed as operating by a 'two-step flow' process;⁴⁷ the more aware members of groups tend to be most readily reached by the media and these 'influentials' or opinion 'leaders' in turn were instrumental in spreading the message to others. In other words, the main function of mass communication was to create the awareness of a possible innovation among the audience, while the development of favourable attitudes and

finally the adoption of the new practice depend primarily upon the response of influentials in the group. Although this two-step flow theory has got some utility in the explanation of the communication process, it does not adequately explain what happens in a multi-step, multidirectional process. Schramm has pointed out that in most cases of communication there is no two-step flow from media to leader to follower.⁴⁸

Schramm outlined three important functions of communication - the watchman, decision-maker and teacher functions - within a society, be it traditional or modernizing.⁴⁹ While the first group of functions is performed by the mass media directly, with regard to the second group of functions, they can help only indirectly. The third group of functions can be handled directly in part and partly in combination with interpersonal communication. Acceptance of the communication message goes at least through five stages; awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption.⁵⁰ This is termed as the diffusion process by which new ideas are spread to members of a social system - the mass media have their greatest impact in creating awareness and evoking interest. In the later stages, however, face-to-face and personal relationships play an important role in accepting the ideas.

Another important factor in making communication successful is to ensure understanding participation in

decision-making on social change, particularly where group norms are involved. A crucial mistake in the implementation of many development programs in developing countries is the failure in securing understanding cooperation of the people. Communication is a two-way process. It involves giving as well as receiving information and direction. While this fact has been recognized in defining the role of the Community Development Projects as agents of communication and change, in actual practice the projects have tended to assume the role of the giver and the village people have mostly been at the receiving end.⁵¹

In the new concepts of development, self-development and participation are regarded as central to the development process. The role of communication in the self-development efforts is to provide technical information about development problems and possibilities and about appropriate innovations in response to the articulated needs of the people and the emphasize is on lateral, horizontal and bottom-up flows of communication.⁵² The role of development agencies is essentially limited to performing a service function in terms of collecting technical information and making them available to the users whenever necessary and not a prescriptive one. The goal of participatory development approach is to conscientize people so that they may be able to identify their needs and problems and decide on the course of action to solve them. Communication channels in this approach are

to be used to generate a dialogue to help people talk together and understand each other. Diaz Bordenave outlined the functions of communication media in these participatory efforts as to (i) help in the development of a community's cultural identity; (ii) act as a vehicle for citizens' self-expression; (iii) facilitate problem-articulation; and (iv) serve as tools for diagnosis of the community's problems.⁵³ Today, the role of communication in development activities is being visualized as encouraging and facilitating more and more participation by the beneficiaries on a co-equal basis of knowledge-sharing⁵⁴ with technical experts. Since its original conceptualization by the Comparative Administrative Group (CAG) in the early 1960s, in the U.S.A, which was based on the modernization paradigm and the diffusion of western values and technology, the concept of development administration has changed radically over the last four decades, and rural development, in its holistic meaning, has become a matter of major concern, with its emphasis on decentralized and participatory processes of planning and implementation, distributive justice and transformation of the traditional system. Thinking in the field of communication has also moved beyond the conventional patterns towards ensuring participatory rural community. The enactment of the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 relating to panchayats has come to incorporate and assert this new perception, legitimising the involvement of the panchayat institutions and the people at various levels for implementing the rural development programmes.

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