**E-CONTENT**

 **MJMC,  SEM-II, PAPER : CC-8**

**Topic : Historical Context of Development Communication**

 **Date : 14-01-2020, TIME : 12.00 P.M.-1.00 P.M.**

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**Historical Context of Development Communication**

Historically, the notion of development has been accorded to the domain of developing countries, meaning those with comparatively fewer resources than the wealthier countries supporting bilateral and multilateral development institutions. More recently, the field of development has been merging into a more broadly defined interest in social change, applicable to any group, regardless of material base or geographical setting, actively engaged in promoting economic, political, social, or cultural progress. Social change may be occurring as a result of a variety of factors, such as long-term shifts in policies and political leadership, economic circumstances, demographic characteristics, normative conditions, and ideological values: development communication intersects with social change at the point of intentional, strategic, organized interventions.

Following World War II, development communication emerged as a foreign aid strategy, designed by northern, western institutions to promote modernization among less wealthy countries. Early approaches articulated by Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and others advocated the promotion of media toward modernization, through individual change (such as empathy, advanced by Lerner) as well as structural change (addressed by Schramm). According to these scholars, through individual attention to mediated news as well as fiction, consumers would become more modern, meaning capitalist and democratically inclined, constituents. These early efforts were also more focused on rural development. Everett Rogers expanded upon the individual process of social change through his articulation of diffusion of innovations, charting a path across the projected rate of adoption of new practices.

These theories equating development with modernization were advanced mostly from US-based academic and development institutions. From the mid-1970s, scholars in Latin America and Asia initiated critiques, joined by others, of these models of development, for being ethnocentric, linear, acontextual, and hierarchical. These critiques were grounded in broader concerns with cultural imperialism and dependency, drawing attention toward global conditions rather than the internal national contexts highlighted in earlier models. The processes of development, along with media production and distribution, were then recognized as privileging those with political and economic capital to the detriment of those without these resources.

Emerging from these critiques came a profound stance advocating participation, in opposition to hierarchically and narrowly defined terms of development. Overall, participatory approaches center their attention on the people engaged in and affected by social change interventions. Development is accorded to communities over nations, while communication is envisioned as dialogic rather than linear. Multiplicity refers to the aspect of participatory communication that recognizes diversity in approaches to development, as opposed to assuming social change occurs along one universal path. The role of the development communicator then becomes one of facilitator rather than outside expert, such that local knowledge is privileged over external advice.