Development Communication Theories: (1) Dominant Paradigm

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Wilbur Schramm

- Wilbur Schramm (1964) was the first to recognize that communication can play an important role in the national development of the third world countries.

- He believed that mass media could better the lives of people by supplementing the information resources and exposing people for learning opportunities.

- He conceptualized a relationship between development communication and economic growth, which has been the guiding paradigm for development programmes.
He suggested that as economic activity spreads, knowledge must be gathered more broadly, shared widely and transferred swiftly.

So development nations must be prepared to support enormous increase in the day-to-day communication within the system.
Dominant Paradigm.....

• This paradigm is rooted in the concept of development as modernization.

• From economic and technological perspectives, the Post World War -II period and decades of 1950's and 1960's, especially, was a time when development was viewed as a synonymous to economic growth measured in aggregate terms.
The central idea of this paradigm was to solve development-related problems through modernization.

The western model for development predominated in the 1950's and 1960's.

Rogers gave this model the name 'Dominant Paradigm' of development as it exercised a dominant influence in the field of development.

Underdeveloped countries were asked to follow the footsteps of developed countries.
The model puts major emphasis on Modernization and believes that increased productivity, industrialization and economic growth could achieve it. This paradigm argued under-development as a consequence of the industrial, technical and cultural backwardness and means that modernization was the only solution to it.
• Under dominant paradigm, the level of national development was defined as a *Gross National Product*. Further, industrial revolution, capital-intensive technology, economic growth and education were meant as a way to define and measure development outcomes.
• The ideological perspective underlying this concept was bound to a belief in the benefits of **industrialization in a capitalist economic system**.

• The technological products of the industrial system were assumed to carry solutions to the political and economic problems experienced in “under-developed” regions or countries.
• The “problem” defined for research was to determine and measure beneficial economic, political and social changes coinciding with industrial development and technological change.

• The technology was to be used as a channel for transmission of message containing ‘modern’ information.
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- Development was equated with economic growth and communication was associated to disseminate information and messages aimed to promote modernization.

- Because of the overestimated belief, SMCR model was adopted.