

study tour  
souvenir '79

Department of mass communication and journalism department of mass communication and journalism department of mass communication and journalism

department of mass communication  
and journalism  
university of dacca

souvenir '79

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**published by the study tour committee  
department of mass communication and journalism  
university of dacca**

## Message

I am happy to learn that a group of students accompanied by teachers of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism are going on a study tour of India and Nepal.

The tour will, I hope, provide them with an opportunity of visiting newspaper establishments and other organisations connected with mass communication in these countries.

I believe experience gained through this visit would help them broaden their outlook and have a better understanding of the problems of mass communication.

Prof. Fazlul Halim Chowdhury  
Vice Chancellor,  
University of Dacca.



## Message

To the students of Journalism  
and Mass Communication in the  
University of Dacca—

Good luck to you as you follow  
the path toward excellence in com-  
munication. What you are learning  
will be of importance not only to  
the mass media of Bangladesh, but  
also to the development of that  
country.

I congratulate you on what  
you are accomplishing and look  
forward to more news of you.



Wilbur Schramm  
2 February, 1979

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The Department received the above message from Dr. Wilbur Schramm, an eminent scholar on mass communication, immediately before the publication of this souvenir.



## STUDY TOUR COMMITTEE



From R to L : Quazi Rownak Hossain ( member ),  
Mahbub Alam ( member  
Quazi Mannan ( Chairman ),  
A. T. M. Mahmood ( Convener ),  
Md. Jahangir ( member ),  
A. S. M. Bazlul Huq ( member ),





TEACHERS



TEACHERS WITH SOME STUDENTS

## Preface

Thinking, it is said, is but silent speech. And we think.

Writing is speaking on paper. Through this study tour souvenir, we teachers and students of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Dacca University have written.

It is nearly a venture into the maze of journalism. We have taken up this venture with much of humility. To find solutions to problems has not been the endeavour ; but then, we have our probing eyes fixed on socio-economic matrix within which we function. Most of the write-ups in this publication are indicative of that.

To write, we must learn. It would be erroneous if we remain glued to our desks, hearing the tricklings on subjects and attending practical classes. This sphere of learning needs be expanded. Hence the need for visiting places and meeting people.

In one of his poems Tagore says, we seldom try to know our immediate surroundings intimately. This deprives us of many definite joys that could otherwise have been part of our life.

In our bid to know people and places, we organise visits to different parts of the country every year. This year we plan to extend the horizon. We are going on a visit to India and Nepal and during the tour we propose to visit different newspapers and mass media institutions in those countries. This will be of much help to us.

This small publication has come out to carry through years its remembrance of lasting debt to all to whom it owes its very existence.

We are particularly grateful to the Vice Chancellor, University of Dacca, without whose help and sympathy this study tour could hardly be materialised. We also express our indebtedness to the Ittefaq Group of Publications, Petro-bangla, M/s. Mariner's Limited and such other organisations who have extended their helping hands in making this study tour a success.



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নির্গল সেন

## কাগজের মানুষ

সকালের কাগজটি হাতে এলে অনেক কথাই মনে পড়ে। কে বা খবর রাখে! কত টুকুই-বা প্রয়োজন! কে-বা জানে কাগজের মানুষের কথা! কত দুঃখ, কত বেদনা, কত অশ্রু এর পিছনে! সে হিসাব কে রাখে!

কেউ ছবি দেখে, কেউ খবর পড়ে, কেউ অভিসম্পাত দেয়, কেউ শাপ-শাপান্ত করে। কাগজটাকেই মনে হয় সবকিছু। পিছনের মানুষগুলো হারিয়ে যায় অনেক ভিড়ের অরণ্যে। কিন্তু একটা কাগজ কি এমনি করেই বের হয়? ইচ্ছে হলেই কি ভোরবেলা একটা কাগজ হাতে পাওয়া যায়? যে হকার ছেলেট কাগজ ফেরী করে, রোদে পোড়ে, ঝুটিতে ভিজে ঘরে ঘরে কাগজ পৌঁছে দেয়, তার কতটুকু খবর থাকে এই কাগজে? সে কি কখনও ভেবেছে এই কথা, সে কি দুঃখ করেছে কখনও, ফ্লোভ প্রকাশ করেছে কারো কাছে?

না। তবে দুঃখ প্রকাশের সময় কোথায়? কার কাছে সে দুঃখের কথা বলবে? এ কাগজ তার জীবিকা। এ কাগজ তাকে কোনমতে আধপেটা খেতে সুযোগ দেয়। কাগজ পৌঁছে দেয়া তার কাজ। দুঃখ-বেদনা সেতো আর সকলের জন্যে।

তারপর। যারা কাগজের অফিসে বসে কাজ করেন। যারা লক্ষ্য রাখেন কাগজটা পৌঁছাল কিনা? কতটুকু বিজ্ঞাপন এল। কত টাকা আদায় হল। তাঁদের কথা কেই-বা জানে? কাগজের কালো কালো অক্ষর তাঁদের কাহিনী তো তুলে ধরে না। কেউ কি খবর রাখে ঐ বিজ্ঞাপনের বহর না বাড়ালে নিয়মিত টাকা আদায় না হলে মাস শেষে বেতন হবে না। আসবে না নিউজপ্ৰিণ্ট। ছাপা হবে না পত্রিকা। খবর বহন করে নিয়ে যাবে না ঘরে ঘরে।

তারপর যারা কালো কালো অক্ষরগুলো তুলে ধরেন, তাকিয়ে তাকিয়ে চোখের আয়ু কমিয়ে দেন, সারাদিন মেশিনটাকে নিয়ে হিমশিম খান, তাঁদের কথাও বা কে জানে!

কেউ কি জানে যে, ঐ কালো অক্ষরগুলো তুলতে তুলতে জীবনের বত রক্তি অক্ষরগুলো হারিয়ে যায়, কত রঙিন স্বপ্ন কৃষ্ণ কালো হয়ে যায়। কেউ কি জানে মেশিনের শব্দ যখন বাইরের পৃথিবীর শব্দ মুছে দেয়, মেশিন থেকে পাতার সঙ্গ পাতা অক্ষর রাজান কাগজগুলো বের হতে থাকে, তখন কি আনন্দ। তখন কি স্বস্তি। তখন কি শান্তি! এ শান্তি সব অশান্তিকে ভুলিয়ে দেয়। জীবনের সব দুঃখ কষ্ট তখন কেমন যেন শব্দের সাথে মিলে একাকার হয়ে যায়। তবু মনে হয় কাগজটা বের হল কিনা। সব ঠিক মত ছাপা হল কিনা। সময়মত সবার ঘরে পৌঁছাবে কিনা। মাঝে মাঝে আশঙ্কা হয়—এ কাগজ না নিয়েই ট্রেন, বিমান বা প্লিমারগুলো ছেড়ে যাবে না ক ?

এ কাগজে কিন্তু তাঁদের খবর থাকে না। এ কাগজের উপার্জন হয়ত তার বাড়ীতে আনন্দের ঢেউ আনেনা। তবুও মেশিন থেকে যখন কাগজ বের হতে থাকে তখনকার আনন্দের সীমা নেই।

এইতো জীবন। এইতো কাগজের মানুষের জীবন। সবার যখন ঘুম তখন মানুষগুলোর জাগার পালা শুরু। চারিদিকে যখন নিরুন্ন তখন তাঁরা শব্দময়। জীবন তখন এখানে উদ্ভাস। এখানে তখন সংবাদের ভীড়। সম্পাদকের টেবিল থেকে শুরু করে সংশোধনী টেবিল সবই—তখন মগ্ন।

সংবাদপত্রের অফিসে রাতের বয়স বাড়ার সাথে সাথে সংবাদের ভিড় বাড়তে থাকে। টেলিপ্রিন্টার শব্দ করতে থাকে। কন্যাকুমারিকা থেকে কামসকটকা, উদ্ভাশা অন্তরীপ থেকে সুর্যজ, মধ্যপ্রাচ্য, রোডেশিয়া, নামিবিয়া আরও কত কাহিনী। একের পর এক টেবিল ভরপুর হয়ে উঠে। দিনাজপুর থেকে কক্সবাজার পর্যন্ত সকল সংবাদদাতা ভাবে তার খবরই বুকি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। তার খবরই তো ছাপা হবে। পাটকল শ্রমিক ভাবে আমার খবরই সবচেয়ে বড় খবর। আমার খবরই তো ছাপা হবে। এমনি করে সবাই ভাবে সবার গুরুত্বের কথা। ভাবে আঙুন লাগা, সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা, মিছিল, সভা আর ঝড় তুফানের কথা। সবার জীবনে সবইতো গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কারো কাছে কোন গুরুত্বই কম নয়।

কিন্তু কাগজের মানুষের কাছে? তার কাছে তো সবাই খবর। সকল খবরই খবর সব। দেশই তার দেশ। সারা বিশ্বই তার টেবিলে। তাই তাকে কাটতে হয়, ছাঁটতে হয়, মালিকের মজি রাখতে হয়, আইন-আদালতের কথা মনে রাখতে হয়। কাগজ সাজাতে হয় সবার কথা ভেবেই। তাই কেউ খুশী হয়, কেউ হয় না। কেউ দুঃখ পায়, কেউ উগ্না প্রকাশ করে, কেউ অভিসম্পাত করে সাংবাদিকদের, আঙুন জালিয়ে দেয় সংবাদপত্র অফিসে। তখন ভাববার অবকাশ থাকে না যে, এ আঙুন অনেকের ঘরেই আঙুনই নিভিয়ে দেবে। অনেকের ঘড়েই হাঁড়ি চড়বে না। এর একমাত্র শিকার হবে কাগজের মানুষেরা।

কিন্তু উপায় কি? এইতো কাগজের মানুষের জীবন। এ জীবনকে এড়ান যাবে না। এ কাগজতো প্রচারপত্র। এ কাগজতো মানুষকে উদ্ভেজিত করে। মানুষকে উদ্ভেজন



থেকে রেহাই দেয়। কখনও আশার বাণী শুনায়। কখনও নিরাশার অঙ্ককারে ঠেলে দেয়। তাই আনন্দ, ক্রোধ, উদ্ভা আর ক্ষোভ কাগজের সাথে অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাবে জড়িত। একটাকে আর একটা থেকে পৃথক করা যায় না।

এমনি করেই পৃথক করা যায় না কাগজ থেকে কাগজের মানুষের জীবন। কাগজের দুঃখ-স্বখ আর উত্থান-পতনের সাথে কাগজের মানুষকে জড়িয়ে যেতে হয়।

তাই কাগজ যদি মানুষকে খুশী করতে না পারে, কাগজ যদি মানুষের কথা লিখতে না পারে, যদি মানুষকে আনন্দ দিতে না পারে, যদি সত্যকে তুলে ধরতে না পারে, তাহলে অসত্য প্রকাশের অভিযোগে কাগজকে তো বিচারের কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড়াতেই হবে।

এ বিচার থেকে কাগজের মানুষেরও রেহাই নেই। সাধারণ মানুষ কোনদিনই কাগজের মানুষের কথা বুঝবে না, জানবেনা যে তারা সরকারও নয়, মালিকও নয়। কাগজ তাদের মতে চলে না, কাগজ তাদের কথা বলে না। সাধারণ মানুষ একথা বুঝে না। তারা সত্য ঘটনা জানতে চায়। কাগজে সত্য ঘটনা না পেলে কাগজের মানুষকে ধিক্কার দেয়। অভিসম্পাত দেয়।

তাই কাগজের মানুষকে বাঁচতে হলে কাগজে সত্য কথা লেখার সংগ্রামকে জোরদার করতে হবে। সে সংগ্রামে কখনও মালিক, কখনও সরকার হবে প্রতিপক্ষ। সংগ্রাম হতে পারে তীব্রতর, পথ হয়ত হবে না কুসুমাস্তীর্ণ, কিন্তু তবুও সংগ্রাম না করে সম্মান নিয়ে বাঁচার উপায় কোথায়? এমনি করে সমাজে সকলের অভিসম্পাত কুড়িয়ে বেঁচে থাকা কি আদৌ বাঁচা! সে প্রশ্ন নতুন করে ভেবে দেখবার সময় এসেছে।

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লেখক বাংলাদেশ ফেডারেল সাংবাদিক ইউনিয়নের প্রাক্তন সভাপতি এবং একজন প্রতিষ্ঠিত কলাম্‌নিষ্ট।



‘যাহা দেখিব তাহাই লিখিব।’

shahigui huq

## Rewriting news stories

The need for rewriting a reporter's copy or wire service copies arises out of two main considerations. First, unwieldy copies have to be pruned and recast so they fit into the available space. This is a basic function of the desk, yet in the process of what we broadly call "editing" a copy it some times becomes essential to completely rewrite a given story to make it compact and coherent. Some 'facts' in a story, seen from different angles by different sources, need careful sifting so that, when presented in a compact form, a reader can easily get to the main points of it, without having to go through a maze of truths, half-truths and, not infrequently, brazenly twisted facts. Admittedly this is a very difficult task. On the one hand it involves the art of separating the grain from the chaff, on the other, care has to be taken so that different viewpoints receive appropriate coverage. Hence the importance of a rewriteman.

To cite an example, an AFP copy on an event in Indochina would, almost as a rule, differ both in format and content from the AP copy on the same event. The subjectivity that creeps into a copy because of particular bias of an agency (whose copies again are the end result of rewrite job) goes to make a strong case for rewriting a story in countries like ours. In fact this issue of subjective and often tendentious reporting by the western press of events in developing countries has become an important factor in the field of mass communication in Asia, Africa and Latin America. While the issue will perhaps need a more thorough analysis before the Third World countries decide on how to deal with what some of political leaders of developing countries consider a deliberate attempt by the western press to garble the communication between the government and the people, copy rewriting will assume greater importance. We need not dilate on the issue further here, but the point is obvious: the responsibility of a rewriteman or sub-editor in ensuring the sanctity of facts emerges supreme. This ability of

a rewrite man can best be developed only when he is fully knowledgeable about the subject he deals with. One way of doing it would be to develop specialised desks in the copy editing sections — an imperative which is still a far cry in almost all our news-papers.

The second important consideration for rewriting a story arises out of the need to establish some sort of standard in the presentation of the stories. One good story does not make a good newspaper. One or two good reporters may turn out very well-written stories that would hardly need any retouching. But then stories coming from as varied sources as the tickers, the government department in the form of handouts, and press releases from socio-political organisation call for what an eminent journalist so aptly describes as a 'thorough overhaul'. And this basically involves improvement of the language of the copy.

How does one go about it? There is hardly any hard and fast rule about rewriting a bad copy. Even then some points have been mentioned by eminent journalists by way of some ground rules for improving the language of a copy.

a) Among the more important duties of rewrite man is that of raising the standard of the language he uses. Many readers who are in a hurry may not detect grammatical mistakes. That may also be the case with a reporter in a hurry or in a thrall about a good story that he has got. The rewrite man has a duty to look for these mistakes in the copy.

b) One of the pitfalls against which a rewrite man who works as a check on hastily written copies has to guard are clichés. Newspaper men writing in a hurry inevitably fall into the habit of writing clichés. It is difficult for most reporters, or rewrite man, trying to beat the clock to invent on the spur of the moment some variations of hackneyed openings.

A New York magazine once employed rewrite men to cut out clichés and use bright new phrases. The difference that this made to the magazine was astonishing. It read better and there was an immediate improvement in the circulation.

Speaking of clichés, one noted British Editor says: an excellent rule to ask rewrite man to observe is that if a noun and adjective seem to go "inevitably together they deserve to be looked over". "Hasty retreat", "Sorry plight" are dull stereotypes made duller by continued use. Most clichés may have been vivid expressions once, but repetition has made them stale. "Acid test" is one good



example of how a bright phrase first used by President Woodrow Wilson has turned into a tired expression in about fifty years of overuse by unimaginative reporters or rewriterman.

c) Warning has often been given by eminent writers about writing too much according to stiff conventions. What Somerset Maugham said in *The Summing Up* could be kept in mind by all who has anything to do with original writing or rewriting a bad piece. Says Maugham, "People who write for the Press seem to lose the faculty of seeing things for themselves; they see from a generalised standpoint, vividly often, sometimes with hectic brightness, yet never with that idiosyncrasy which may give only a partial picture of the facts but is suffused by the personality of the observer". "The Press" laments Maugham, "in fact, kills the individuality of those who write for it".

The death of the individuality to which Maugham refers is "the result of writing too much by formula, as many journalists, many schoolmasters and many civil servants do". A rewriterman, or a sub-editor, in imparting a freshness to a run-of-the-mill story has to try to write with more dash.

d) Simplicity is generally overstressed by all good writers as a golden rule for writing good copies which easily communicate. But it is a very difficult task. Only clear thinking can result in lucid writing. Hence the need for clear ideas about what we really want to write.

Perhaps we have dwelt too long on the problem of writing grammatically correct sentences and making them, at the same time, attractive. To be brief about what a rewriterman can do is to polish each sentence until each is so clear, compact and interesting that even a comparatively less educated person not only understands it, but also enjoys it. Creative imagination and seasoned judgment are two qualities which stand in good stead with a good rewriterman. "Every story challenges him to improve it, retaining as far as possible the words of the original writer. Often the story needs no textual change, but if it omits important facts, the rewriterman sees to it that they are inserted".

Rewriterman's job can be sometimes very unenviable. To the junior he is "a soulless butcher of literary masterpiece but to the experienced reporter he is a freindly backstop and constructive partner".

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The rewriter has a clear idea about all aspects of the standard structure of the news story and all its variations. He must have the same broad level of knowledge as the original writer of a news story. He must be quick in finding fresh and vigorous phrases for the particular kind of a given story. He must have keen sense about where a story needs elaboration and conversely where it needs drastic cut in size and exuberance. He must be quick in finding the necessary reference material to make a story complete when it is hopelessly inadequate.

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g, a. i. m. nuruddin

## Behind Most Advertising Copy Failures

'Boom' is the expression that truly sums up the present profile of advertising business in Bangladesh. The reason for this is much too obvious. Prior to December 16, 1971 advertising business was, more or less, a close preserve of the privileged few in erstwhile Pakistan. This business remained largely concentrated in and around the port city of Karachi which for all practical purposes was the hub of commercial activities in Pakistan. Bangladesh or former East Pakistan was then made to function as its hinterland. As such Bangladesh remained industrially backward, and advertising business was never allowed to raise its head in this part of the world.

This explains the appallingly poor number of Advertising Agencies in our country as well as the negligible number of advertisements in the newspapers, radio and television in the pre-independence period. Over and above, the few advertisements that reached the media here were mostly produced by Agencies located in and around Karachi.

The table, however, turned with the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign nation, and with Dacca becoming not only the centre of political gravity for the new nation but also the nerve-centre of all commercial activities. New mills, factories, industries and commercial establishments came up in quick succession. New products and services came into the market as a result of which a good number of Advertising Agencies sprang up in the capital city. The newspaper pages are now replete with

display advertisements. The same holds good for radio and television.

In spite of the significant increase in the volume of advertisements it appears from a close look that with the notable exception of a few advertisements, majority of them are so poor in tone and texture that they hardly do any registration business for the audience. Consequently, the advertisements are easily forgotten, and utterly fail to serve any useful purpose.

This brings to the fore a very pertinent question: What is really wrong with these advertisements? Before going straight into the question, I feel it is necessary to speak a few words about advertising and its intricacies by way of a preface. This is for the simple reason that quite a good number of people associated with the advertising business here are still under the wrong impression that whatever is produced by them should carry the tag of advertisement.

There will be no two opinion when it is said that advertising is salesmanship, and that copy is the vocal chord. It is the voice of the seller beamed at the buyer. Hence it cannot afford to be discordant, neither superfluous. "The less said the better" is a fairly good prescription, provided in dispensing it the copywriter does not confuse brevity with lack of clarity and forcefulness.

The purpose of an advertising copy is to stimulate the desire of prospective customers to go for the product or service advertised. The focal angle of a copy should, therefore, be pointed at three basic human desires, viz., desire for self-preservation, self-assertion and sex-attraction. Not only this. A good copy should also take into account the effective radiations of basic desires into instincts like pleasure, possession, devotion, comfort, love for beauty, fear, and imitation.

While writing a copy it should invariably be kept in mind that the theme of an advertisement is the main prop of the copy, and that copywriter must find a central idea before he builds up a copy structure. This is because every product or service that is being offered for sale tries to exploit some particular appeal angle. A copywriter should, therefore, do the picking and choosing about the type of copy he will use, and here wide and varied is his range. He may take resort to human interest copy, reason-why copy, rationalization copy, reminder copy, sense-appeal copy, recipe or how copy, dialogue copy, prestige copy, descriptive copy, story,



copy, testimonial copy, verse copy, competition copy, editorial copy, and finally composite copy.

But the story does not end there. Despite having the right appeal, suitable illustration, adequate spread-over of white space, lively headline, and catchy slogan, an advertising copy may fail if certain basic factors are not taken good care of.

Thus we are confronted with the question: When do advertising copies actually go wrong? And what basic factors are to be taken into consideration to avoid the lapses?

In this connection the first and foremost reason is the indiscriminate use of long and difficult words, and long and complicated sentences. A copywriter should remember that short, simple words sell best. It is also advisable that whenever possible one syllable word should be used. Such lively words should be used in the copy which would cause the audience in his imagination to see, hear, smell, taste and feel.

Connected with the above is the allied pitfall of using long and winding sentences which only succeed in one thing. They confuse the audience, as the sales message lacks the needed punch and the required pull.

In a copy a sentence should contain only one main idea. The beginning and the end of the sentence are the most important parts of the message and should, therefore, carry the vital selling words. Use of active verbs, pictorial nouns, and the present tense construction of the sentence help a copy in getting a lively tone. The use of dashes and dots at times makes for easy reading.

Another villain of the piece is the long paragraph in a copy. Regarding short paragraph the saying still holds good that it has the effect "like the crack of a whip". Unnecessarily long copies are more a deterrent than help. This is for the simple reason that in the bustle and hurry of modern life the average time one spends in receiving an advertising message is only a few minutes. It, therefore, pays to be brief and newsy in advertising and copywriting.

Another bugbear for a copywriter is the language unsuited to the pros-

pective buyer. The copywriter should write in a manner which is appropriate to the subject. For instance for a hardware product it is always necessary to start with a straight forward description. There is no room for being emotional here. If the product advertised is popular convenience, homely familiar style is called for. When the product being offered for sale is of exclusive variety, the answer is sophisticated and degant style, but in the case of children's product the language has to be enthusiastic in nature. The advertisement of a razor blade warrants bold, brisk copy whereas if the services of a dentist or a doctor are sought to be advertised, restraint in copy should be the key-note.

Just as newswriting gets badly affected through indiscriminate use of bromides and cliches, similarly copies start showing palpable cracks in their texture if too many superlatives are resorted to. A sensible copy-writer, therefore, should use the "soft pedal" method in order that the gist of the copy is believed by the readers.

To conclude, in the organic structure of an advertisement, copy has the place of a pulsating heart. If it lags in rhythmic beat and if it does not supply the necessary nourishment to the other units of an advertisement, neither a slogan, nor a headline, nor for that matter the illustration could possibly be effective in their purpose. Judged that way, there is no exaggeration if it is said that a copy is the king-pin of the entire advertising spread-over; it is the arch-stone on which rests the entire structure of a sales message.



sakhawat ali khan

## Should we report rumours ?

We seldom see speculative news in our daily newspapers. Our editors perhaps take it as a motto : 'when in doubt, leave it out.' Weeklies are a bit different in this respect. But it must be admitted that circulation of those publications is not sufficient enough to exert any meaningful influence on the readers.

Newspaper lives by disclosure. Perhaps there would be no two opinions about it if it is said that description of an incident is not enough to make things clear to readers. A serious receiver expects some interpretation. Apart from mere 'facts', he wants presentation of 'both sides' of a story and is also interested to know what others think about the same event.

To make the discussion simple, let us ask ourselves if the journalists should report rumours too.

Before answering that question we should see what the word 'rumour' means. Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary gives six meanings. They are ; clamour, general talk, repute, hearsay, flying report, a current story. The last two meanings are obviously in the newsman's language. And if we accept the last meaning, i. e. 'a current story' it becomes imperative for a newsman to report 'rumours' in his newspaper.

But here again we have some difficulty. We are known for an uncommon skill for producing rumours. Our newsprint surplus will safely be exhausted if our

editors decide to print all the rumours that we produce. So one should be choosy. We may report rumours, but only a few selected ones. We should keep it in mind that rumours coming from 'knowledgeable' sources may have almost the same credibility as that of an objective report. Speculative stories are often nothing but stories based on such rumours. We readers will be happy if our editors do not stick to the above mentioned motto so religiously and instead take us for a brief while out of that stuffy room of objective reporting to the airy world of believable rumour.

I am not that much an optimist to expect that even our Radio and Television will go for reporting such harmless rumours. I am concerned with our daily newspapers, both government owned and private, as they conventionally enjoy flexibility, if not freedom. We do not know exactly why, but it is a fact that some of the reports that we see in government owned newspapers, cannot be expected in Radio and Television. The solution of the puzzle lies perhaps in the difference of meaning of the word 'ownership' and 'control'. I have one hypothesis in this regard. Let me explain.

The Radio and Television in our country were established by the government but newspapers were launched mainly by private initiative. During Pakistan rule we saw the creation of the Press Trust, but most of the 'Trusted' papers had been already in existence when the Trust came into being. The Bengali daily 'Dainik Pakistan' was perhaps the only exception. After liberation the abandoned newspapers were taken over by the government. So perhaps it was not that obligatory on the part of the government 'to look deep into the affairs' of the newly owned newspapers, as they felt obliged to do so in case of Radio and Television. This 'authoritative reluctance' coupled with the fear of resistance from the Journalists' Unions, made the government take a rather 'liberal' attitude towards government owned press. If the above mentioned hypothesis is even partially correct, the newspapers in our country can easily try to be speculative to some extent. By speculation I do not mean kite flying in journalism. But by reporting some of the probabilities that the people will definitely come to know from other sources, the newspapers could at least prove to be sincere. In its absence, the 'negative' role of newspapers in the name of objectivity will rather lessen their utility. And if silence continues on such 'open issues', it might even damage the credibility of the newspapers.



The other day I had a talk with one of our senior journalists who explained that the extent of speculation that is possible in a weekly will not appear 'decent' in a daily. I did not agree; nor did I argue. Isn't it unethical to keep the readers of a daily newspaper completely in the dark about some of the big speculative stories that appear in a weekly? In the name of difference between weeklies and dailies, is it fair to introduce two practices in journalism? A scan of British and American dailies and news magazines will only bear out the fact that there hardly exists any such difference in treatment of speculative news. Isn't it a fact that daily newspapers in those countries print speculative stories whenever the occasion demands? To conclude, I must admit that there might be some other factors responsible for the absence of speculative stories in our daily newspapers; we had better not speculate on that. It would be safer if the editors speak out, else we fail to see the wood for the trees.

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.....communication is not something that has a life of its own; it is something people do. It is the fundamental process of society, the way the people relate to each other.

—Wilbur Schramm



shamsul majid haroon

## Role of Radio

Radio is the most potent, most vital medium of communication in an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh. It sustains what is so majestically called mass communication. Without radio there would be very little of mass communication in the underdeveloped countries. Whatever mass communication is available in our country or for that matter in any underdeveloped country, radio accounts for the most part of it. It is the medium on which Govt. has to fall back frequently in order to establish contact and rapport with the people.

The importance of the role played by radio can hardly be overemphasized. It is capable of making significant contributions to all round development. In the underdeveloped countries the greater part of the people live on the land, are isolated by illiteracy and lack of transport. Effective communication with these people and their active participation in nation building activities should be considered indispensable. "For the success of any social and economic development scheme, communication between the planners, their agents and the people is of the utmost importance. In this necessary communication, broadcasting can be of immense value."

Radio broadcasting when properly used can prove to be the most effective link with the far flung populations. It can be a major factor in bringing about necessary change of beliefs and attitudes so vitally needed for development. "In national development broadcasting can serve as an important agent of social change and action."

Radio's power lies in its ability to cross the barriers of illiteracy and distance. It can reach the remotest part of any country in no time. It has the advantage of being understood, more or less, by all types of listeners. All these combine to make radio the most effective and useful instrument for motivating different types of people.

The flexibility of production enables radio, more than any other medium to adapt to changing ideas and conditions. Radio addresses to the entire personality of the listener as its programs can range widely over information, education and entertainment.

In terms of general availability radio is the leading medium of mass communication. In the underdeveloped countries there are more radio sets than copies of daily newspaper, television seats or cinema seats. It has the added advantage of being comparatively less expensive. After the initial expenditure for transmitters and receivers financial involvement is minimum.

Radio broadcasting should be treated as a vital 'infrastructure'. "Like schools, which are the subject of public policy and whose significance is not judged in terms of immediate profits, the establishment and use of broadcasting facilities represent a long-range investment expected to contribute to the promotion of the human and material resources of a nation. Like investment in education, these resources should be expected to yield results in the form of informed, motivated and skilled public, and in the increasing availability of productive manpower".

The underdeveloped countries of the world including Bangladesh are ceaselessly trying for economic development and self-reliance. Their endeavour can be strengthened by radio broadcasting. "Broadcasting has a profound impact on the economic life of the country. Not only is it an important industry in its own right, but its impact on the economy is inevitable and profound. It constitutes one of the nerve centres of a modern industrialized and commercialized society. It can stimulate and guide productive activities. Its use for commercial publicity has a direct impact on production and consumption, on import and foreign exchange."

- References: 1) Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, No. 49, UNESCO, 1967. 2) Broadcasting And The Public by Summers & Summers, Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc. Belmont, California, USA, 1966.

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md. tawhidul anwar

## The Play of The Press

When the Canada-born prophet of modern mass media Marshall McLuhan came out with his famous epigram 'The Medium is The Message', every body laughed him away. But his thesis has proved to mean several things. In any society the medium is so important that it is, in fact, the message. It is more so in a developing country like ours.

If we go for a content-wise classification of the national newspapers, an issue of the Ittefaq will not sound the same as an issue of the Sangbad or the Azad or the Dainik Bangla will do the same day. If this be the premise, if the policy of the paper transcends everything else, what then are the journalists struggling for ?

This is one problem. There are hordes of other related issues.

How should we synthesize journalism as a mission with that as an industry ? Are the journalists to function within a social system provided by national politics, and when politics fail, do they have any independent role to play ? What mechanism could possibly be evolved to ensure some semblance of freedom for the press ?

Sweeping generalisation in the form of an answer would be very risky. But cross-currents of opinions of important personalities involved in the profession only suggest that the press is a divided house.

Surely, there are three camps. One doing more and more of what a

progressive editor has described as 'economism', the second believes in professionalism and the third in activism.

Economism has, no doubt, become the go of all the professions. In journalism too, fighting for one's economic welfare will, of course, be one struggle; 'but why should it dampen their struggle for still more important a cause, when the cause is to do something about their own freedom to write what they see?'

This is a query which every newspaper reader loosely asks. Even a distinguished member of the profession could not but say, "The urge to learn and improve has become deadened now and the tendency to swing with the current has increased manifold."

A teacher in journalism has an explanation to this query. The readers have high expectations about the journalists and because of the very structure of the national press, the journalists can hardly come up to that expectation.

A past union leader also held the same view. He, however, traces in brief the evolution of the press on the soil, which, to start with, was more or less, perhaps more more than less, political. In the later years, the press had turned into a place of shelter for the activists of all hierarchies and hues. This way, the press had become a part of the democratic system. But after the liberation, a fundamental change came in the ownership with more and more control of the government over the press.

Himself a columnist of repute, the union leader has something specific to offer. The history of Bangladesh, he says, is replete with examples that the press could perform their duties with full measure of its devotion to the hopes and aspirations of the society whenever politics allowed them to do so. Thus it would be erroneous to say that journalists are the vanguard of political movement, they are only the conscience keepers.

If they are only that, they should act as that. Have they?

The answer lies in the success or otherwise of the struggle for the freedom of press by the journalists as a community. The union leaders can claim a badge of honour on their escutcheon in the annulment of the black laws enacted during the Pakistani days to gag the press, in the enactment of the Press Council Act in 1974 and in the Award of the Wage Board in 1977. The setting up of a Press Institute to provide in-serving training to the working journalists and allied people is another success for union leaders.



But one swallow does not make a summer. A success here and a success there should not make the community complacent. The Wage Board Award has given them an acceptable minimum ; much is yet to be realised. One safest way to do that is to earn the profession a repute and come up to the expectation of the readers.

Which way would they then go by ? Professionalism or activism ?

Before anything can be said the terms need be explained.

“I shall lease out my pen but not the soul”, a professionalist explains his position.

“What does that really mean ? If you have leased out your pen, you have leased out your soul, in fact, everything”, goes a counter argument.

Another professionalist thus comes to the rescue : ‘I shall do whatever I am asked to do, but if I do not believe in the work I am to do, I shall take care that I do it in a masterly inactivity.’

The professionalists almost agree that as for the policy of the paper the journalists can hardly reason why. The argument runs like this : ‘Formerly journalism was purely a mission. The journalist himself was the owner of the paper. He needed a small amount of money to start a paper, but its furtherance was indeed a problem. Now journalism is a mission within an industry. Today it needs lakhs of rupees, even a crore, to start a paper; and once it is established its furtherance is hardly a problem. The industrialist knows his business. In the process of its making economically viable he will make certain compromises; he will not even hesitate to barter away the freedom of the journalists.

If journalism is an industry to the owners, it is also a mission to the journalists. It is expected that the industry can only be commercially viable if it can dish out what the people want to know, precisely the truth, nothing but the truth. But if the industry cares for a little about its readership and depends too much on government advertisements the policy will definitely be tilted towards supporting the activities of the government, right or wrong.

What then is left to the journalists ?

The professionalists in such a situation would find a leeway, a tolerance limit. They will try to adjust 'without altogether selling their soul,' and if situation goes beyond the limit of their tolerance, they will resign.

This is indicative of a defeatist mentality, the activists charged. They would prefer a struggle to correct the situation. They prefer imprisonment after writing what they see. Their thesis is that in a society like ours, practice of professionalism may turn one into a 'mercenary' "There are examples. We have some very powerful pens. But many of them sang in praise of their masters with all the melody at their command".

This opens up a new horizon toward understanding the profession of journalism which must combine the depth of knowledge with the strength of character. That means combining the techniques of writing and knowledge of facts with the courage to write what they see.

The professionalists, it seems, take more care of the technical side of the profession than the socio-psychological side of it. The activists do not disagree that there should be a style ; they only lay equal emphasis on the question of courage. They would allure the attention of the readers by courageous writing of events and eventualities and at the same time hold the readers' interest on to the the last line with the help of the techniques of writing.

A professor has this to add : Techniques can be imparted, but one has to learn to be courageous the hardest way while in the profession.

A journalist who has to his credit an imprisonment has said : "You must identify yourself with the problems of the society, that would only provide you the needed strength to write what you see".

He believes that the press in any third world nation tends to be politicalised and to that extend highly subjective. To him journalism is a political weapon, not a profession.

He says : 'When I write, I cannot write in complete disregard for the society within which I function as a citizen.'



Possibly he is right. In fact, journalism today has almost discarded the shirt-front type of objective news writing. Reporting today is mostly investigative and interpretative. And if a reporter is to provide the needed flesh and blood to a news event he must write what the readers ordinarily do not see.

It is here that a journalist can hardly say things in truer perspective if they remain glued to objectivity in a puritan way. The first world war and also the great depression of the 30's took the newspaper readers unawares because of the reporters' strict adherence to objectivity.

But in a developing country like ours, even objective news writing is a far cry. Most of the journalists are given to deal with canned information. And canned information is full of redundancy. Redundant things over and over again lead to narcotic dysfunction among the readers. They grow a distaste for whatever comes out in the paper. Credibility gap between the people and the press widens. The press thus earns a bad name.

Every member of the profession earnestly feels that there should be an end to it. The professionalists demand of the authorities to repair the damage. The activists take the matter themselves. They say, freedom of journalists to write what they see is never given ; it has to be earned.

This suggests that there should be a strong union for the journalists, else as a community they would hardly be able to discharge their duties to the society as the conscience keepers.

The community is yet to make its mark; to be precise, the community as a whole is yet to outshine the work of a few of its members, past and present. We may not agree with the philosophy Manik Meah preached, says an analyst, but it can hardly be denied that he was the only popular columnist who moulded public opinion like a politician.

There were others who came with occasional strength to tell the people what the latter wanted to know. In so doing, some suffered dismissal, imprisonment, and some even embraced death.

An editor of a weekly has said these martyrs and miletones of the profession were but the product of the community.

He is also right as he refers to a period of time in the past when the community as a whole as well as its members in their individual capacities dominated in matters of merit and courage.

Are we keeping that up today ?

We may find an answer either in the affirmative or in the negative and a load of arguments to back it up. But one thing can surely be said and that is that a happy blending of merit and courage in a journalist is the need of the hour. If it was in the past, the press today cannot afford to be without it. So let there be a fresh play of the press over power, not a routine play of power over the press.

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quazi mannan

## Communication and Development

Economic development in an emerging country involves fundamental changes in the whole way of life of the people who have lived for centuries within traditional customs. The essential feature of the ascent to modernity is change—change of attitude, change of habit, change in domestic living, in farm practices and in village organisations. In economic terms, this means a better use of resources, the learning of new skills, greater efficiency and productivity, the organisation of labour and marketing, co-operation and in due course mechanisation and industrialisation.

The press in almost every country is concerned with problems of development and change in all their complexity and infinite variety. This involvement is sometimes conscious and sometimes involuntary but nearly always inescapable. It is expressed in a hundred and one ways. The press, like other media of communication, is above everything else, a product of life as is lived in an age. It is subject to all the influences and forces that are at work at a given time. The press like other media of mass communication, plays a vital role in fostering economic development. One of its important functions is to concern itself with problems of development and planning. It is also concerned with the profound impact these phenomena make on the lives of these nations. Trends, decisions, activities and programmes having a bearing on the economy have excited the interest of the press. The press in the advanced countries can generally be said to have a good grasp of economic growth and change. It is an understanding born of experience. As such, it has come to possess suitable criteria for determining the nature and extent of its commitment to national progress. On the other hand, the developing world's press cannot be said to have lived through a similar experience of socio-economic transformation. It is only now being made fully conscious of the dynamics of social and economic growth. In the underdeveloped world the press has already awakened to an awareness of its potential-

ties as a medium of communication. In recent times it has shown eagerness to acquit itself of its responsibilities in the developing countries. This eagerness is shown by the fact that it is making all out effort to keep the public informed of the decisions, policies, programming and other related matters of development.

It is hardly necessary therefore to ask whether the press has a role to play in economic development. The whole point in considering such a role is to determine its character and extent and its accommodation and limitations. Many of the effects of a community's progress on the public media are obvious and their determination does not tax one's analytical powers too much. As the process of economic construction and social renovation advances and as the levels of literacy and culture begin to rise, the subjects and issues the public media deal with are progressively diversified. Among the more tangible signs of the impact of development upon the media in the newly developing world are a rapid increase in the circulation and financial and technological resources of newspapers and journals over the past two decades, the phenomenal expansion of the film industry and its market over the past quarter century and the transistor revolution of the past one and a half decade. Some of these advances can be quantified in fairly precise terms.

In order to bring out the role of the press in policy making and programming, it is advisable that a discussion of the subject should be organised around two themes—one, the impact of the medium upon the decision making elites and, two, the capacity of the medium to affect the course and pace of development by influencing the community's thinking attitude and conduct. The press in some ways acts as an intermediary between the decision makers and the community in the sense that it brings news concerning one side to the other.

It is important to note in this context that the degree of influence which the press can exert on the community in the interest of mobilising public support for developmental activities is in direct proportion to the extent of the leverage it can claim with the decision makers. Suppose the press lacks the capacity to influence in any significant way the decision of the ministers, planners and bureaucrats. Can such a press influence the community's conduct in ways which will promote planned development? Can it secure the conscious approval of the masses for national targets and priorities?

Now we take the question of the impact of the press upon the decision of the elites. These elites lay down the priorities in public expenditure, fix the goals of development according to what they believe to be the dictates of the people's welfare and determine the way in which these goals are to be realised. Decision



making in the sphere of development policy or the formulation of a national plan take place in a certain institutional setting and in accordance with the constitutional principles of the political and economic system obtaining in the country. The basic decisions are made by or on behalf of the makers of political and economic power, and these conform to the spirit in which the community's established structure works. These decisions taken as a whole constitutes the hard core of the long term strategy of development, which is not usually subject to alteration. This may suggest that decision makers have no room for manoeuvre left to them. But this is not correct since planners in both free enterprise and socialist system are known to enjoy a large measure of freedom as long as they remain within the given framework. They have a wide range of option available to them. All this means that though the press and public opinion cannot easily alter those aspects of planning which are fundamental to the system, they can in theory, affect the determination of many matters of great importance and bring about changes. The press acts as the watchdog of the public interest.

The development process affects almost every aspect of life in the developing countries. It not only sets the pattern of contemporary life but also determines the shape of the society of the future. Considering the tremendous importance which is attached to national planning, the press has a duty to subject the structure, the stipulations and the provisions of a national plan to the searchlight of scrutiny and try to determine which of its elements deserve to be supported and which of them call for a critical appraisal. The press unless it has been reduced to the position of being an appendage of the decision makers is not under an absolute obligation to uphold all the stipulations of a national plan or the socio-economic status quo ; in fact it is under a moral obligation to seek to alter the status quo and to challenge policies and action that militate against the interest of the people.

The planners may sometimes be tempted to demand that the press lend total and unqualified support not only to the developmental endeavour in the broad sense but to the particular development strategy being followed with all its specific prescription. In their anxiety to sell a plan of development, policy makers may be tempted to prevent the dialectic of the policy argument from being presented for public scrutiny and to advocate intensive use of propaganda to evoke popular support. This extreme approach, if carried to its logical conclusion, can reduce the press to the status of a public relations outfit for the planning organisations. That this could happen is not an idle fear. Attempts have been made, not without success, in more than one underdeveloped countries to use the public media to disseminate misinformation, dish out grossly exaggerated accounts of achievement, misrepresent facts in a bid to conceal failures and to make the public see economic movements as glories, achieve-

ments. This trend, justified as a sign of the public media's commitment to progress and socio economic upbuilding has undermined the credibility of the media. To the extent that its purpose was to popularise official planning among the people and to evoke popular participation in developmental activities, the effort has proved to be self defeating. After All, when a communicator has promised his credibility and reputation for objectivity one need not be too dissappointed to find the audience receiving his message with scepticism. This has not been the only loss.

Now let us take the second theme, namely, the capacity of the press to influence the community's thinking, attitudes and conduct in relation to development.

Mass communication is always a two-way street. The public opinion making process is properly advanced only when the communicator receives as well as transmits, learns as well as teaches. The full effectiveness of the media's role as mass communicators in the context of development depends, among other things, on a real and full understanding of the interests of the common people as derived from a close contact with the masses. There must be a sincere desire to advance those interests to promote a dialogue between policy making elites and the multitudes with a view to enabling the two to a common awareness of problems and to work towards agreed purposes.

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m. golam rahman

## Non-aligned News-pool

The three-day conference of the representatives of the Press federations and associations of the non-aligned countries was held in Baghdad recently which set up two special committees. The first committee dealt with the proposals relating to training of journalists, exchanging information and protecting journalists, against ill-treatment inside their own country or abroad. The second committee discussed the question of solidarity among non-aligned journalists and their activities for human emancipation, economic-political and social progress.

The Baghdad conference reflected the aims and objectives of the fourth summit conference in Algiers and the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of non-aligned countries in the year 1973 and 1975 respectively. The six-day conference (July 8-13, 1976) of Information Ministers and representatives of non-aligned countries firmly resolved to launch a news agencies Pool to fill the vital gap in information. The step was taken to blow up communication monopoly of transnational news agencies.

The giant multi-national news agencies of the western world dominates over the news media of the developing countries. "The wordage given to a fall Princess Anne of England had from a horse-back was about three times larger than the news coverage of the Indian sub-continent done by a leading international news agency during a particular week,"—"Soccer matches in America claim many times larger wordage on international wire services than the entire space devoted to the African continent." The big five news agencies of the western world are trying to project the distorted picture through monopoly of news media. The above mentioned two instances of news coverage can be considered in this regard.

A draft UNESCO declaration released on Sept. 11, 1978 calls for more news from developing nations, "with the international community" and UNESCO watching over the balance. This draft declaration indicates the unhealthy and inadequate flows of news to the developing countries which needs more attention.

In the opinion of John A. R. Lee (UNESCO) "It is self-evident that the content of international flow of communications and 'news flow' cannot be unrelated to the power interests of the political or economic owner of the news medium, in the same way the interests of the medium cannot deviate very far from those of social class in power in society."

In order to exercise their own international authority the monopolistic news agencies, consider that they should command global communication, retain control over technical facilities of global information and over the content of the information flow. W.P. Davison says, "Telecommunication has progressed from being an essential support to our international activities to being also an instrument of foreign policy."

The conference of the Information Ministers of the non-aligned countries took note of "the persistent and serious imbalance in the current global information situation and its adverse effects on the developing countries," recognised the need to "liberate their information and mass media from colonial legacy and expressed" collective determination to rectify this situation and add a new dimension to the ever increasing cooperation among non-aligned countries by promoting mutual cooperation among themselves in all fields of information, communication, mass media and social and cultural interaction."

The leader of Bangladesh delegation, said in the conference that the major innovative significance of the Pool is that it is expected to present original and authentic information about each member country itself without the intervention of any outside editorial filter. The Iraqi Minister for Information, said the formation of the Pool would be a "turning point in moulding of public opinion in non-aligned countries and the world at large."

The constitution of the Press Agencies Pool makes it clear that the Pool "is not a supra-national news agency." All Pool participating news agencies have the same rights in terms of the circulation of the material each



makes available to Pool. "None of the Pool-participating agencies has a dominant role." Cooperation is founded on the agreements reached on the basis of full respect for democratic procedure and equality.

The objectives of the non-aligned news agencies Pool are: 1. The Pool is intended to improve and expand mutual exchange of information and further strengthen mutual cooperation among non-aligned countries in their efforts to promote and attain their aims. 2. Objective information is the basic premise of the Pool, with emphasis on progressive, economic socio-economic, socio-political and cultural development as well as mutual cooperation and action. 3. The Pool is intended to facilitate dissemination of correct and factual information about non-aligned countries, their mutual cooperation and other subjects of common interest among non-aligned countries as well as the international community in general. 4. The Pool is intended to fill the gap which exists in this field by providing further information about the non-aligned countries and their policies. News items included in the Pool could also be made available to other news agencies, mass communication media and other interested organisations. 5. The Pool is intended to substitute news exchange arrangements already existing among non-aligned countries.

The intercommunication has been made easier because about 40 of 62 non-aligned countries are in contact with the Atlantic/Pacific/Indian Ocean satellites through their earth stations. Still the difficulties ahead are not small as the multinational giant agencies together control the most sophisticated private communication system in the world.

At present 21 national news agencies including BSS of Bangladesh participate in the Non-aligned Newspool. The coordinating committee, which met in its first meeting at Cairo in January 1977, has decided to recognise 14 agencies as redistribution centres. Moreover, the Organisation of Asian News Agencies (OANA), based in Jakarta beams news from several Asian agencies including those that are not non-aligned.

Some qualitative and quantitative improvements have been marked in the coverage of news from Asia, Africa and Latin America for which Pool is responsible though the coverage of news is one-tenth of the global coverage so far projected. From the technical view point, the Non-aligned News Pool is completely feasible.

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abdul halim

## The Quest for Knowledge Goes on

In Bangladesh the role of the three mass media—radio, television and newspapers—is both complementary and competitive.

The sphere of their collaboration is larger than that of competition.

In analysing the role of mass media, the literacy of the people and their economic condition must be taken into consideration.

Radio is the most popular mass medium in our country.

The reason is simple: the contents of the radio programme can easily be “decoded” by our people as it is not necessary to be literate to do so.

During the liberation struggle and after liberation, radio listening had almost become a regular habit with our people, particularly with our rural population.

The comparatively low cost of a transistorised radio set has also contributed to making this medium popular.

Whereas literacy is a must in “decoding” a newspaper, the economic condition of the reader must also permit him to subscribe to it. Distribution problem in the interior is also a factor in the newspaper’s popularity.

But there has been a tremendous awakening among our people since the beginning of the liberation struggle.

This is probably one of the main reasons why the number of radio listeners as well as the number of newspapers and their circulation increased enormously after independence.



The latest mass medium introduced to our people is television. It is mostly confined to the urban well-to-do people. Still, its popularity is growing, no doubt.

But since radio and television are physically owned and directly controlled by the Government they have not that credibility which a newspaper enjoys.

People would listen to radio or television to know the latest events or hard news. But it cannot give in-depth analysis of events.

People also want inside or background story of an event, entertainment and other aspects of the news which a newspaper fulfills.

Thus the simultaneous increase of popularity of both radio and newspapers and a growing popularity of television show that they are not competitive, but complementary and supplementary to each other. They all help in motivating our people.

Still newspapers are facing a good deal of competition from radio and television.

Generally speaking, audio visual media appeal more to the people. Therefore, coverage of only hard news would not help. Newspapers to be effective are to carry more features, varieties and also what is called featurisation of news.

To attract readership from rural population, detailed coverage of "mofussil" (district) news has become imperative.

Another peculiar phenomenon is that the bulk of our readership is in the urban areas. The news bulletins of television cover almost all the main hard news a newspaper is supposed to carry the next morning.

So, unless the newspaper is different in headline and content it has comparatively less appeal to the readers.

This is particularly true of newspapers identified, rightly or wrongly, as pro-government.

Here the question of credibility gap also counts.

This element of competition, however subtle it may be, can't be ignored.

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c. r. bain

## PR in Developing Countries

Public Relations has become a familiar phrase in majority of the developing countries including Bangladesh. As it often happens with new words and phrases with wider currency, public relations has come to mean all sorts of things.

Some mistake public relations either for propaganda or for publicity or advertising; others maintain that it is a means for getting free editorial mentions. Still others look at it as contact work with politicians, senior civil servants and other high-ups in the society. In a sense it is none of these things. Rather, it is a process of motivating the thought patterns of other people. In other words, it is an instrument of attitude control.

There was a time when it was possible for the management to say with impunity that the public be damned and that the business of business was business. Those were the days of free-for-all individualism and the object of business was considered to be only profit making with little regard for larger human factors.

But things have radically changed since then. The increasing accent on public relations today is a recognition of the power that common man is beginning to exercise in every sector of society. In the present context the existence and growth of any business, whether in the private or public sector, or for that matter any institution, eventually depend not only on its support "in the plebiscite of market place" but more importantly on the sanction of the general public. Even Governments and legislatures derive their power from, and owe their tenure of office to, the general public. Therefore, it is a good business policy for all the developing countries to communicate to, and win the support of, the public through a deliberate, planned and sustained public relations programme.

Most of the developing countries today stand on the threshold of a new



era. These countries are in a state of transition. Slowly but steadily, their tradition-bound societies are being transformed into modern, forward-looking economies. For the vast majority of people in these countries the effective environment so long extended literally as far about as they could see. Today, they are being gradually exposed to the influence of the larger world and are being drawn into the orbit of modern ways of living.

In this changed circumstances public relations has a vital role to play in the following areas of national development :-

1. It can create the climate for stepping up productivity in agriculture and industry, both in the private and public sectors.
2. It can mobilise the support of the commonman in various nation-building projects aimed at changing the face of the respective countries.
3. It can also be an effective force to check the unbridled growth in their population.

In advanced countries of the world, public relations has taken on a new meaning and a new look. But in most of the developing countries, the methods pursued for the prime objectives of attitude formation and attitude-change are outdated and outmoded. They are still employing the techniques of 1930's in an age of satellite communication.

By way of change the developing countries should project messages more of interpretative character rather than of purely objective nature. This is necessary because objective presentation of news, views and messages in the developing countries where the rate of illiteracy is too high, cannot possibly do the correct attitude-conditioning. The people in these countries have to be taught about what is going to be done and for this interpretation is imperative.

In most of the developing countries illiteracy is too high, so much so that two out of every three persons cannot read and write. For such an unlettered mass of people the printed media will be of little use. Spoken word is the only viable means to communicate any message or idea to them.

Of course, interpersonal communication can also be resorted to through meetings, rallies etc. Audio-visual units can also go a long way in doing public relations job in developing countries. To improve the standard of public relations a broad based education is the first pre-requisite. Study of human psychology should constitute an integral part of this broad based education.

Public relations is a specialised job. This should be particularly borne in mind at the time of recruiting PR personnel. Effort should be made to recruit the right type of persons with PR propensity, giving weightage to the mental make up of the persons. Persons with amiable personality and lively interest in people are found to make successful PR practitioners.

PR as a profession should be made attractive both financially and otherwise. This will help attract people with high calibre to the profession.

Public relations men should make it their mission to develop good equation with all publics based on a full knowledge of the organisations they serve and their working.

PR practitioners must remember that public relations becomes propaganda when it is devoid of ethics.

Last but not the least requirement to put PR on a sound footing in developing countries is to have an enlightened management which will give more latitude to the PR set-up. Instead of becoming a mere appendage of the management, the PR personnel should be allowed sufficient freedom to plan and execute PR programmes. These will, to a great extent, help remove the ills that bedevil public relations in developing countries.



arefin siddique

# Producer-Consumer Communication

ADVERTISING which is being variously called as 'Voice of Business' 'Mass Communication in Marketing' or 'Journalism in Action' is basically communication. It is communication between producers and sellers on one hand and consumers and users on the other. Advertising has now become an indispensable part of our life.

In many countries of the world advertising has, by now, emerged as an industry in itself. It is no longer purported as a mere adjunct of trade and commerce rather it is a major industry in its own right. This entails the range of magnitude and impact of advertising upon contemporaneous economy. Our era is an age of mass-production and high-consumption which necessitates continuous and colossal communication between producers and consumers for fruitful operation of commerce and industry.

Production and consumption, closely connected, form the infrastructure of modern economy. Consumption, in economics, is the gainful utilization of goods or services to meet public wants and wishes. The target of all business and commercial pursuits are toward meaningful expansion of their product-market in order to reach maximum customers in minimum time with lowest financial involvement. Advertising is the only machinery which can expeditiously execute this mini-maxi strategy of commercial concerns.

Apart from winning the race of market competition, advertisement has two basic goals. These are to raise the demand curve for the product (that is to intensify the selling whatever the price) and to lower elasticity of demand (so that future price increase does not cause large-scale sales reduc-

tion). Advertisement also stimulates for improving the product and creating "brand loyalty" or "brand-image."

Twentieth century advertising has become so wide-spread in operation that it is absolutely impossible to remain isolated from the constant bombardment of advertisement messages being thrown. Persuasive selling messages are being beamed towards the public through radio, TV, film, newspaper, magazines, billboards posters, neon-signs, hand-bills etc. for shaping their opinion on the products, services or ideas advocated. Today's production-consumption syndrome has elevated the advertising from a mere informer or notifier to a significant tool of marketing and forceful moulder of public opinion.

**POPULAR CULTURE:** Huge physical, mental and pecuniary resources presently being spent in advertising industry have made the business a glamorous and dazzling one. High expenditure and intensive ingenuity and creativity endowed upon modelling, copywriting, illustration, photography, jingle and symphony have made advertising an important yardstick of popular culture. Exciting and exotic realm of advertising has reached such a sophistication in literary writing and art that arch critics of advertising also "often admit that some of the best popular writings and art have been developed by the advertising agencies".

**CONSUMER SOVEREIGNTY:** While advertising and publicizing, proper alertness needs to be maintained so that consumer sovereignty is not hampered or affected. Consumers reign supreme in marketing and producers and traders are there to satisfy the needs of the consumers by offering their merchandise.

Consumer sovereignty envisages that all business endeavours are aimed at satisfying the needs of consumers in which production, apportion and mutual substitution are means and consumption is the end. Today's great many buyers who are too widely scattered and practically inaccessible to be influenced adequately enough through personal contact have paved the way for advertising to flourish as an instrument of mass distribution and mass selling but in no way allow it to interfere on Consumer's Sovereignty through manipulation and coercion. There are rigid advertising ethics in force to be respected while preparing advertisements for print or broadcast media.



In our developing economy advertising has a special role to play in bringing mobility and competition in the market by stepping up ad-making effort since communication is of key importance to mobility. Consummation of this endeavour calls for a battery of well-educated, imaginative and creative 'wordsmiths' who will be able to beam alluring and pulling messages towards consumers on producers' behalf.

If the producers and consumers could be clinched effectively, the market will flourish swishingly. Moreover, the whole set of market operators i.e. producers, sellers, buyers and consumers would lay increasing importance on advertising as they will find it an effective bridge between them.

ahaduzzaman

## Taking the theatre to the people

Dacca began to throb with the theatre after independence. Young students of Dacca University blazed the trail. 'Nagorik' started regular show on ticket. 'Theatre' followed. 'Dacca Theatre' was born with the cry of a rebel. "...A royal elephant ran wild," was a remark.

Through many set-backs Dionysus seems to have had a foothold. At the end of the seventies we can say that the theatre is now a recognised art in Bangladesh. They have made definite changes in the production of plays. Audiences who were once bored with 'nauseating drama' now breathe in fresh air. Not that all the groups have been able to keep pace with the change. They still move along the rut. Sometimes they bring in novelty through stunts.

The over-all situation, however, is much livelier than before. 'Nagorik', 'Theatre', 'Dacca Theatre' have become household words. They have their distinct styles. They are innovative in their own way. Their acting, scene designing, costuming, lightening and music impress us. The slogan—"get used to seeing the theatre buying tickets"—which was raised by 'Nagorik' is now a reality. Almost every production of the prominent groups draws quite an audience. 'Houseful' signs are hung up almost regularly.

The Theatre is gradually taking a sizeable chunk of cinema audience. On the face of it, it is assuring. But the theatre has not yet ceased to be the coveted treasure for certain groups of people and there it is annoying.

The theatre groups have some arguments to offer: "We understand, high-priced tickets are a big 'No' to many. Hire of the halls is very costly; this makes production cost high." Profitmaking is not their end, but they must



live out. The arguments are reasonable. But can people be kept isolated on these grounds ?

Theatre groups have a responsibility of reaching the theatre to common people. 'Nagorik' raised the slogan of a 'public theatre hall', a common demand by now from all the theatre groups.

Shilpa Kala Academy has erected a stage that does not serve the need for a modern one.

Again, the erection of a theatre hall does not necessarily mean common people will rush to theatre. The great responsibility in this regard devolves on the theatre groups. The crying need of the hour is a united front for the theatre groups.

The formation of such a front is not at all difficult. Almost all groups have some like views. Nagorik says, 'We want the theatre reflect life. 'Natya chakra' aims at the development of new talents in play-writing, directing, acting etc. 'Theatre' aims at producing good plays regularly. Dacca Theatre says, "We'll express our views about a progressive society through drama." Other groups raise similar slogans.

The slogans will be truly meaningful when they are all-out to entertain as well as motivate the people to bring about a change. They must effectively communicate with the people and this will help them in selecting the right play at the right moment. There is a tendency among certain groups to create smoke-screen of obscurity in play production. They have to be direct and simple. Realistic plays, however, should not be mistaken for crude representation of life. We need realism inspissated with the 'core' of life.

'Lehrstück', a kind of instructive realistic plays, which became popular in Germany at the beginning of the thirties can be instructive for us. Some of these plays can be adapted in Bengali in the perspective of our social condition. In Bangladesh we have had two adaptations of Brecht's plays which raised unprecedented enthusiasm among our audience. Our theatre groups can go a long way following the 'Epic Theatre.' Galileo in the play 'the Life of Galileo' says, "The misery of the multitude is as the hills, and from pulpit and

desk is proclaimed as immutable as hills.' Our theatre workers have to take a vow to wipe out the miseries of the multitude. Actors' close contact with the common people will make them more conscious about the art of acting. They will get stripped of all artificialities in acting when they realise that labour is the source of aesthetic feeling.

And artificialities have to be given up in all theatre activities. We have to be sincere in thought and action. Theatre groups have confined the plays to the city auditoriums. The theatre has to be brought out into the open air. Otherwise, 'Shah Jahan,' 'Dui Bon', 'Shakuntala' will have asphyxiation in the stuffiness of the so-called stage.



ashfaque munier

## Lessening of the Load

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In a Sufi text, a person asked a camel which was tougher for him, going uphill or downhill; the camel replied, 'neither of them, it is the load that I am concerned about.'

In human life this load is, from an axiological point of view, the problem of humanization..., a better environment to live in. Moreover, from the expositions of human interaction we become aware of the fact that, while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is man's vocation. But there is a duality in this awareness... the necessity of being aware and to make others aware.

The fact that I am aware that I want to become a journalist, is a more concrete reality than my being one in the future'.

Like the camel in the Sufi story we too are concerned about the 'load that we all need to carry. But unlike the camel, we learn to listen, to see, to perceive the ways of lessening this 'load'. How? We talk about it, write about it, try to do something about it.

Without making this piece an essay let me convey what I have heard from two journalists talking to each other.....

.....When such and such paper was closed down and the editor imprisoned, the union had to fight singlehanded. Only the editor could be released.

"If the closure could not be stopped, the release should not have been pressed for"—was the suggestion. "A benevolent fund could instead be instituted to help the family or such families".

This sounds like a cover by technical courage for the family to let the editor's decision stand. Here, I ask myself if some points could be found to support this lessening of load.

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The author is a second year Hons. student of the Deptt.

quazi zebun nahar dila

## Two Things First

My father scolded me the other day when I answered a query with semantic noise.

A member in the interview board was a little annoyed when I was trying to give an answer I did not know.

I heard it from my teacher whose teacher Mr. Atiqzaman Khan used to say, "confused thinkng leads to confused writing."

My language teacher summed it up saying, "first clarity, then clarity and finally clarity."

They say, clarity had better go with simplicity. And I am told in the first line of chapter one of the book by Dr. Rudolf Flesch, "If you have smattering of Chinese, you could teach yourself simple English in no time" I add, "That should teach me simple Bengali too in no time."

The Chinese rendering of the sentence 'two men bit two dogs' would be, the book said, something like — 'two man finish bite two dog'.

One can be serious and philosophic and talk about the 'insignificance of man'. A Chinese would say something about 'man no mark'.

In Chinese one cannot say things like, 'it is reported by reliable authorities'. One has to say, 'people I rely on say'.

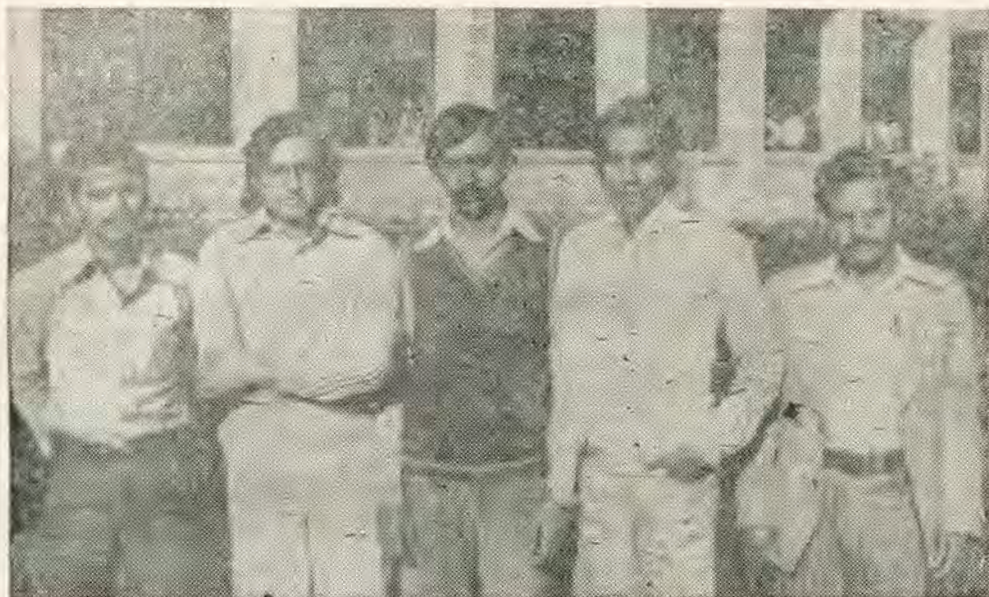
I want to be nearly this simple in writing. I want to be clear in thinking too.

I wish to be a journalist.

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The authoress is a first year Hons, student of the Deptt.





GROUP OF OUTGOING STUDENTS



M. A ( FINAL ) STUDENTS





**M. A. ( PREL. ) STUDENTS**



**ANOTHER GROUP OF STUDENTS**





TEACHERS AND STUDENTS  
FINALISING TOUR PROGRAMME

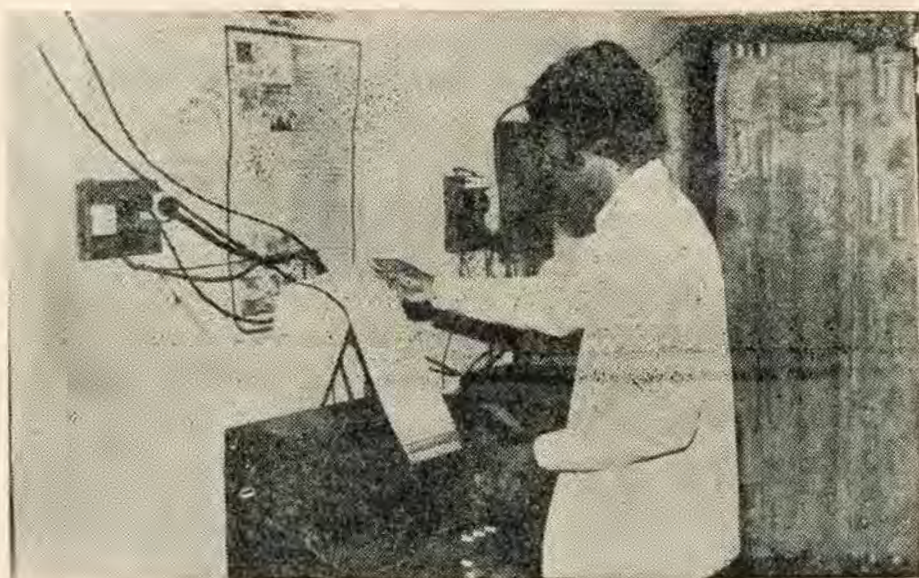


2ND YEAR HONOURS STUDENTS





PICNIC



NEWSROOM



## **Profile of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dacca.**

Journalism and with that Mass Communication as an academic discipline has been so exacting and demanding that some academicians and pioneers of journalism in the country thought it proper in the early part of 1962 to propose for the opening of a department in the University of Dacca. Preliminary details for the setting up of the department were settled in a series of meetings. And it was in pursuance of the recommendations of the Press Commission appointed by the erstwhile Government of Pakistan on September 28, 1958 under the chairmanship of Mr. H. B. Tyabji, ex-Chief Judge, Chief Court of Sind ( Report of the Body was submitted on April 4, 1959 ) that the University of Dacca decided to open the Department of Journalism in 1962. The Department started functioning from August 2 of the same year with the appointment of Mr. Atiquzzaman Khan as the Head of the Department.

Initially the Department offered a one-year post-graduate diploma course. A syllabus was drawn up. The editors of national newspapers and news agencies were consulted in the preparation of the syllabus and meticulous care was taken to strike a balance between the academic side of teaching and its practical application.

The classes of the first session of the Department began on October 24, 1962,

The Department offered a two-year M. A. course from the academic session 1968-69. A separate syllabus was drawn up. The programmes

offered by the Department were so designed as to have pronounced communication bias and, what was more, the practical orientation. This was done because, for all practical purposes, 'communication is a logical basis for journalism'.

In fact, it was in as far back as 1970 that this department got recognition from the UNESCO. The Department was mentioned by the UNESCO as a research establishment in Mass Communication.

Since then, the Department has to its credit the production of a good number of research papers on various fields of Mass Communication.

From the last academic session a three-year Honours Course has also been introduced and the Department has been renamed as the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism.



a. t. m. mahmood

## Mass Communication Club

The long longed for has at last come about. The Communication Club has come into being. The Club has provided dimensions to the academic life of the students of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism. The new relation of the elders and the youngers now transcends that of the teachers and the taught.

The Department today glows with the joy of the freshers and the senior students no longer feel the acute symptom of being officially detached, after they have appeared at the final examination. The Communication Club is there to keep them attached.

Unlike other associations, this Club is a little serious. The Club objectives will bear it out. It says it wants to popularise Mass Communication as a field of study and research through seminars, symposia, research works, publications as well as to organise those interested in the field through various cultural activities.

The Mass Communication Club is but an effective hyphen between the students of the Department—past and present. It is a club with a difference.

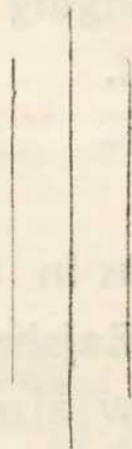
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The author is an M. A. (Final) examinee and the general secretary of Mass Communication Club.

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বাংলাদেশ টেকসটাইল মিলস কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক প্রত্যেকটি বিভাগে, জেলায়, বিভিন্ন মহকুমায় এবং থানায় এ পর্যন্ত প্রদর্শনী ও বিক্রয় কেন্দ্র খোলা হয়েছে। এই সব বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রে নির্ধারিত মূল্যে মিলে তৈরী বিভিন্ন প্রকারের শাড়ী, লুঙ্গি, খুতি, আন্ধি, শালু, লিনেন, লংক্রথ, পপলিন, মার্কিন, ড্রিল, গ্রে-কাপড়, ছিট কাপড়, মাসে-লাইজড কাপড়, মলমল, ছাতার কাপড়, কস্বল, মশারীর কাপড়, পর্দার কাপড়, নাইলন টেরিলিন কাপড়, ভয়েল, সাটিং, স্মুটিং, বিছানার চাদর, উলের শাল ও মিশ্র শাল, মাখন জীন, রু, ডেনিম ইত্যাদি পাওয়া যায়।

আপনি দেশের যে অঞ্চলেই থাকুন, আপনার নিকটস্থ বি, টি, এম, সি, প্রদর্শনী ও বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রে থেকে সহজেই আপনার বস্ত্রের চাহিদা মেটাতে পারেন। ঢাকায় শিল্প প্রদর্শনী '৭৯ চলাকালে আমাদের ষ্টল থেকেও এই সব সামগ্রী কিনতে পারেন।



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