

APPLICABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM: AN APPRAISAL

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Development-oriented journalism, as understood from a Western perspective, is undermined by its construct as a form of protocol journalism because of its predominant reportage on government policies and projects rather than community concerns. Development-journalism is often wedded to concepts like: community dialogue, re-connection with the grassroots, empowerment, public advocacy, catalyst for positive change, and immersion reporting. Western journalists however, see this reporting genre as akin to protocol news reporting, which mainly focuses on government pronouncements and development policies. Perhaps the constructive role of development journalism – regardless of political or cultural settings – has not been promoted as well as it should? Its dull image, however, was less the fault of its fundamental goals than how it was practised by journalists in a media environment that is regulated to excess. Current scepticism with the narrative, change oriented, value-added and advocacy form of development reporting genre is not so much concerned with its alleged subjectivity.

‘Democracy and freedom of the press should be guaranteed and development journalists should strive to be independent observers, critics and advisers not only of government development programmes but also private non-governmental development agencies who must be seen to really be working for the poor. Unravel their systems, work procedures, and assess whether their presence in an area truly benefit the poor families. This supervisory and surveillance role of the media in development would encourage transparency and accountability among development practitioners and ensure that change really does take place.’

“Public journalism“ (or “civic journalism“) and “development journalism“ are terms often used interchangeably by media researchers, media reform advocates and academics. From a practitioner’s perspective, conventional journalists should shake off this wrong perception to enter into the realm of

“development journalism that tells them to re-imagine the craft as a vehicle for community transformation and arena for public discourse.

The approach to journalism called development journalism emerged in the 1960 out of dissatisfaction with the dominance of Western news and communication ideals in development countries. Supporters of development journalism believe that the Western approach to media was not appropriate in developing countries where cultural and economic circumstances radically differ from the West. The world was thus in need of an entirely new type of journalism specifically designed to function in the cultural and political structures of developing countries. This approach to journalism is called development journalism (Papoutsaki, 2007: pp 82-83). The relevance of communication to development is an established paradigm in development studies. It is borne out of the realisation that development is human centered and thus requires communication for its full realisation. Development journalism is related to communication used for the purpose of development of human beings, individuals or society as a whole. The term refers to the press' catalytic role in socio-economic development in developing countries. A Western view, however, is suspicious of this kind of journalism, seeing it as a means by which the state can withhold information that it contends may affect growth. Both a way of empowerment and propaganda, development journalism covers both urban and rural poverty, the environment, agriculture, health and sanitation, gender issues, infrastructure, road safety, education, innovation, human rights, etc. It is the agglutination of communication and development that birthed the word development journalism.

We are all aware of the fact that media plays a very important role in transforming and developing civil society. To inculcate tolerance, positive thinking and a sense of responsibility amongst masses, journalists and journalism play important role. Development journalism is a niche branch of journalism, wherein you are supposed to create awareness about the developmental issues. However, development journalism has attracted considerable hostility over the years. The practice has been blamed for promoting political agendas instead of people's interest. The strong dependency of the state has roused worries from press freedom organisations. Redefined versions of development journalism, however, claim to promote national interests while at the same time safeguarding independent reporting. While primarily seen as a product of the Third World, development journalism – identified under various names by Hachten (1981), Altschull (1995) and McQuail (1994: 131, 132) in their theorisations of media models – had its genesis in the educative agricultural extension programmes of the United

States and Canada in the early to mid 20th century (Stevenson 1994). These aimed to promote development in rural areas by providing information to farmers and other rural dwellers, utilising the mass media as a multiplier (Stevenson 1994: 232). Similar programmes were later implemented in a number of newly independent African and Asian countries, and from these emerged the notion of development communication and its offshoot, development journalism (Stevenson 1994). Development communication utilises the mass media as an agent of social change (Stevenson 1994: 232), based on a foundation of respect for traditional, indigenous and local knowledge (Loo 1994: 2). It emphasises "the primacy of the national development task (economic, social, cultural and political); the pursuit of cultural and informational autonomy; support for democracy; and solidarity with other developing countries" (McQuail 1994: 131). Development journalists can take on the role of 'people's advocate' – giving a 'voice to the voiceless. There are some countries which can boast a plethora of examples of the ways in which development journalists have empowered the marginalised and raised indigenous issues onto the governmental agenda.

Conservative media organisations in Asia are not different from that of the Western media. I wish to call this 'Parrot Journalism'. This is journalism that reflects Western perspectives, prejudices and misconceptions that are blindly followed by Asian journalists and reproduced in their own newspapers and broadcast networks, often in their own language. Because the media in most third world countries were under strict control, news about development was often manipulated to provide a kind of public relations for the doings of governments and state officials and mobilise support for the ruling political party (Stevenson 1993: 145). The latter is such a big irony because at that time most regimes were under one party rule with implied or explicit life presidency as such votes were not as a precious commodity as they are in this dispensation. Because of such bias development journalism did not enjoy credibility among the people. And when freedom of expression was embraced with the dawn of 'multipartism' development journalism had to go with the one-party, autocratic era because in it was the spirit of dictatorship, suppression and oppression. However, it is important to reaffirm that development journalism as was originally intended was supposed to be independent journalism that provided constructive criticism of government and development and inform readers, listeners and viewers about how development in their local and wider communities affected them.

As Ali (1996: 30) points out: "The concept of development journalism is good, and always was, so it is a pity it became embroiled in the acrimonious

debate surrounding the New World Information Order. Unfortunately the phrase is tattered and hackneyed because it has been sabotaged by violently unreadable writers. Because of the negative connotations associated with the term developmental journalism, Shah (1996. 144 -146) has suggested its replacement with the term emancipator journalism to facilitate recognising "a role for journalists as participants in a process of progressive social change." He makes this point in the context that "communication can contribute to participatory democracy, security, peace, and other humanistic principles that are at the core of the discourse on modernity." Emancipatory journalism "requires not only provision of socially relevant information but also journalistic activism in challenging and changing oppressive structures"; gives individuals in communities marginalised by modernisation "a means of voicing critique and articulating alternative visions of society"; and encourages "Journalists to abandon the role of neutral observer while reporting in a manner that is thorough, deeply researched, and historically and culturally grounded, and that promotes social change in favour of the dispossessed." A good journalist must not only describe, but delve, debunk and decode.

Asian journalism too must be aware of "Asian values", narrowly interpreted to suggest that "Western" concepts of human rights, freedoms and gender justice are inapplicable or too intrusive. Located in the developing world, it must necessarily be concerned with the complex and critical issues of development and social change. These stories do not necessarily make glamorous copy and gatekeepers are prone to keep them aside for a rainy day or to tuck them away inconspicuously on an inside page. The reasons are not far to seek. Development is a process while social change occurs even more slowly. Neither has the dramatic impact of events that are more obvious and instant and can be seen, touched, photographed and graphically retold in the "I was there" manner. Development and the change it brings creeps along, its huge, dramatic consequences gestating in the womb of time. It takes patience, skill, and no less clever analysis, to anticipate an event yet to unfold, a seed working unseen to germinate, which has the potential to transform lives.

Development journalism is a more exacting and scientific brand of journalism which draws heavily from the findings of research and development laboratories. Good development journalism asks questions—of ordinary people, not just of officials. It considers reader, writer and written-about to be equal in their humanity. It doesn't patronise but asks the reader to put themselves in the place of people whose lives seem very different

from theirs. Development journalism refers to the practice of journalism concerned with gathering, packaging and disseminating development-oriented news and information (Adebayo, 1990: 45). The concept emanated from efforts by scholars from developing countries to cut the 'umbilical cord' that had tied them to western communication scholarship, since it had been discovered that western models of journalism and journalism-related scholarship were not in fact transferable to developing countries. The work of a journalist can be challenging in developing countries, where it can be even tougher, given political issues, a lack of resources, and the dangerous environments in which the press are sometimes forced to endure as part of their daily work. Development journalism was conceived by a group of independent Asian journalists who believed that since national development depends very heavily upon economics, journalists should be better trained and educated to cover and report fully, impartially, and simply the many problems of a developing nation. Development journalism is thus a consequence of the disillusionment created by dependency syndrome arising from Western dominance of the international flow of information. It is an offshoot of the New International Information and Communication Order. This reaction was spearheaded by developing countries which felt that their interests were not being served by Western news agencies. Such a departure was needed to break the vicious circle of dependency through ownership of the mass media. In additions, developing countries' governments found a ready tool in a tightly control electronic and, to a less extent the print media to legitimate and perpetuate their hold on their people (Soola, 2003).

Development and Development Journalism

According to a manual of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, development means removal of poverty, lessening of disparity between regions and classes and from one section to the other. The generic term 'development' is understood variously. Growth, expansion, enhancement, advancement, progress, maturity, and improvement are all variations of the same theme that 'development' contains. In this context 'development' is as value-laden as the varying, and possibly conflicting, interests of the subjects. Rogers (1976) sees development as a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment. Rogers stressed the endogenous dimension of development. It must be

through people's participation, exploiting their own environment to improve their situation rather than expecting development to "fall from heaven" as it were. Inayatullah (cited in Soola 2003:13), for example, says "development is change toward patterns of society that allow better realisation of human values, that allow a society greater control over its environment and over its political destiny, and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over themselves".

Development journalism is a journalism that makes people understand, accept and actively participate in the implementation of the appropriate development ideas that may extricate people from poverty and backwardness by bringing about rapid national change and building on positive values of development and democratic change. According to Sonderling (2003: 206) Development Journalism was to have been independent journalism that provided constructive criticism of government and development and informed readers about how development affected them. However, the Third World, took the idea of development journalism as a justification to control the mass media. There is nothing holy about development. Yet the term has attracted so many adherences and following that unless measures, especially policy measures, are linked to the term 'development', their success in the eyes of the public remains limited.

Development journalism was first introduced in a global context much less complicated than that of today. The clear political and economic divisions gave people much simpler attitudes and ways of life compared to what we have in the 21st century. The media, like most public institutions, functioned within a much different atmosphere. Nevertheless, development journalism, when first introduced, triggered a heated debate on how journalism should be practiced. However, it was soon realised that development journalism is characterised by its purposiveness, pragmatism, relevance, scientific outlook and technical subject orientation (Jamias, 1991). Development journalism is not merely reporting about events but processes; it is not reporting about personalities but interpreting and analysing issues. It may require high skills and hard work but the reward of this kind of journalism can be tremendous. It may require high skills and hard work but the reward of this kind of journalism can be tremendous. There is no doubt that development journalism bestows heavy responsibility on journalists. Their responsibility is made heavier by the fact they are writing for and about nations or societies which are, or near, the beginning of their development or as sovereign entities. Their news must not be 'saleable commodity like any other' but must be 'responsible' news. Their news must serve as a stimulus to national pride and unity because, for

the young nations, such pride and unity are very important for development to occur.

Development journalism was a practice pioneered by extension agricultural workers in India and the Philippines, whose job was to disseminate information on new agricultural methods, to farmers during a period of broad agrarian reforms. Journalists reporting on rural economics had then been working closely with these agricultural information officers. Indonesia and Malaysia, for a while in the late 70s, were among countries where development journalism was practiced, although it was not given the development journalism tag. Currently, this genre is by definition being practiced by news agencies such as Inter Press Service (www.ips.org) and media communication websites such as *The Hoot* (www.thehoot.org), *The Communication Initiative* (www.cominit.com/), and *Center for Community Journalism and Development* (www.ccjd.org).

Civic journalism initiatives were widely practiced in the mid-60s, albeit informally, by journalists in developing agrarian-based nations such as India, the Philippines and Indonesia. Then, the practice was referred to as "development journalism," a descriptor believed to be first mentioned at an economic writers' training course in Manila in August 1968. Development news was interpreted as information directed at educating the people, enhancing living conditions of the poor and building communities. Development journalism debuted in Asia in the late 1960s when the idea of communication for development was garnering support academically and politically, especially among the newly independent nations. Theoretically equipped with the proliferating development communication paradigm, journalism was believed and expected to play a key role in facilitating and fostering national development. Such a belief and expectation constituted the driving forces behind the rising popularity of development journalism among developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. And it remains vital and vibrant as a journalism practice despite criticisms and prejudices. Development journalism has generated diverse principles and practices. Ironically, such diversity has not been duly captured in journalism studies. What is more disturbing is the absence of systematic and theoretical constructs and corresponding models to describe explain and predict its different practices and performances? The situation is largely caused by the fact that development journalism has long been neglected by the journalism research community. Development communication, which initially held a lot of promise, has paled in significance over the years, while development support communication has gained more acceptances. Non-development communication on the other hand, has continued to grow from strength to

strength. This has, however, been affected by development communication, thus giving rise to the concept of 'development journalism'.

This term designates the journalistic activity of gathering news with a view to satisfying the needs of a country's population. The news thus relates to development, and is invariably positive in its disclosure. There are scholars like Aggarwala (1981) who tend to confuse the issue by saying that development news, the by-product of development journalism, is "not, and should not be, any different from regular news or investigative reporting." With this kind of education, one wonders why the term exists in the first place, and why it should crop up if its sole purpose is to be a synonym of everyday journalism.

The fact of the matter, however, is that development journalism does in fact exist separately from what is generally referred to as journalism. Sussman (1978) for instance sees it, albeit in a restricting sense, as the coverage of scientific and economic news and relating them to the development needs of the country. Rampal (1984) offers a much more expansive and inclusive definition by asserting that development journalism includes activities like the use of the media in formal and non-formal educational purposes. Development journalism tends to be seen as the aggregate responsibilities added onto the usual business of journalism when it comes to be practised in a developmental setting.

Retief (2000) highlights five characteristics of the development approach. Firstly, the media must aid in nation building. Secondly, the media should support and not challenge authority. Thirdly, information belongs to the state. Fourthly, freedom of expression and civil rights are sidelined to the correction of social problems such as poverty and disease. Lastly, countries are given the right to control the flow of information within their borders.

To serve as a stepping-stone for further research, the current chapter begins with a scan of conceptual components and empirical practices of development journalism, followed by a review of its contextual origins, including the indigenisation efforts and the Asian values debate. Readers will also be introduced to its major schools of thought, scholars and publications. Further investigation is made into its pending issues. Last but not least, the chapter identifies key areas for further academic studies.

The Rise and Decline of Development Journalism

Journalism has been going through several major technological changes during the past few decades. The pace of these changes is quickening now,

altering the practice of the profession as never before. These changes, which encompass a wide range of activities from news gathering to dissemination, are bringing many benefits. At the same time, the profession faces some negative impacts too. In 1960s, journalists were reporting government press releases and quotes but giving little attention to detailed analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of development projects. This was when development journalism was conceived. The concept of development journalism emerged at a workshop for economic writers in the Philippines in the late 1960s (Gunaratne, 1996; Stevenson, 1994). At the workshop, the British journalist, Asia-hand and champion of development journalism, Alan Chalkley, told the participants that journalists should alert news audiences to development problems and open their eyes to possible solutions (Chalkley, 1968). Without claiming to be "a new kind of journalism," development journalism represented "a new attitude towards the treatment of certain subjects" in relation to development. It was designed to serve the ordinary people, not the elite (Chalkley, 1980, p. 215). The concept of 'development journalism' has, over time, become possessed by demons of all sorts of confusion. If we want to wrest any useful principles from the concept, it is important that we exorcise the demons it has come to be associated with, not least the demon of the postcolonial state's blatant interference in the practice of journalism. This 'demonisation' of the concept is partly suggested by Shah's observation that 'development journalism', central to many discussions of mass communication and development in the Third World, needs to be reconceptualised because deliberations about its validity and usefulness have been bogged down in arguments structured by Western notions of press freedom. The debate has diverted attention from important questions about how journalism can contribute to participatory democracy, security, peace, and other humanistic values (Shah 1996: 143).

The problematic area of development journalism may be summarised in five key issues. The first issue concerns the vagueness of the concept, as inclined by many commentators (e.g. Organ 1982; Harbor 2001). The ambiguity of the concept has created an opportunity for governments of rather different colours to justify a politicised media policy under the guise of a recognised journalism model. Secondly, the practice has been criticised for its interventionist's stance. Promoting social change, development journalism is related to other interventionist journalism ideologies such as advocacy journalism, liberation journalism, revolutionary journalism and peace journalism (Carpentier 2005, Lee and Maslog 2006, Robie 2006). Some of the potential dilemmas of interventionist journalism models include

the question of who should decide which causes are worthy of journalistic “intervention”, the risk of the media becoming an instrument for changing political agendas (Hanitzsch 2008, Shafer 1998); and the ethical problems associated with media rhetoric where the ends tend to justify the means (Ward 2010). Thirdly, experiments with development journalism reveal a highly uneven journalism practice. The model has been associated with various authoritarian leaders (Steele 2009), is found to suppress investigative journalism (Harbor 2001, Kumbula 1995), and was early determined to become a victim of “perversion by political rhetoric” (Domatob and Hall 1983). Displayed fundamental flaws during election times (Wong 2004), favoured the elite more than ordinary people (Xu, 2009), and generally came to be known as “government-say-so journalism” (Kunczik 1998).

The fourth weakness of development journalism is that the media industry itself has been reluctant to accept the practice. Similarly, in journalism education, development journalism has been seen as a less useful approach in teaching reporting styles than were traditional journalism approaches (Murphy and Scotton 1987). A fifth and final criticism against development journalism is the claim that the model represents ideological contestations rather than genuine care of media and society. Along these lines, Sage’s recent *Encyclopaedia of Journalism* situates the origin of development journalism within the geo-political tensions of the cold war, eventually to be replaced by North / South conflict as epitomised by the global news flow debate (Steele 2009). Countering a Western and Northern media model thus became important for the South, with development journalism being introduced as an alternative to “objective” journalism which supposedly favoured and the affluent North. Development journalism, according to Oreh (1978:40) “must be seen as a frontal attempt by the legislative estates of the Third World countries to permanently influence the World press.” Consequently, development journalism has been accused of being an off shoot of global political contestations rather than a response to demands in the local society.

Good development journalism asks questions - of ordinary people, not just of officials. It considers reader, writer and written-about to be equal in their humanity. It doesn’t patronise but asks the reader to put themselves in the place of people whose lives seem very different from theirs. This would also significantly reduce the negative connotation that the term ‘development journalism’ now has. The perception — that the third world elite utilises ‘development journalism’ to peddle state propaganda on national development — emanated in large measure from the view that there was an absence of ‘press freedom’ in the less developed world. This was on account

of either actual censorship of the press by the state, or media self-censorship on account of its decision to survive in environments that are politically hostile or that lack any serious democratic foundation.

The Concept of Development Journalism

The concept of development journalism can be likened to the practice during the pioneering days of journalism, when all journalism was a sort of advocacy journalism. Though the concept and practice of development journalism is a subject of debate, some have tried to redefine it. Those who are now redefining development journalism do not mean only to expose problems. They do not view development journalism as limited to particular development topics or out of date stuff. Some argue that this type of news reporting needs a solution-oriented approach with more follow-up stories (Uttamchandani, 2005). One media critic notes that as politics, social failures, crimes, and executives dominate mainstream news, the media have “no positive thinking and make no efforts to give the society a new direction.” Journalism committed to development needs to look at the situation in a broader context (Uttamachandani, 2005). In the view of Namra (2004), it should focus on “the needs of the poor, the deprived, and the marginalised, and should emphasise their effective participation in development planning”.

Even though important studies concerning development journalism have been conducted, for many scientists and politicians (social) development is inseparably linked to communication and information. A journalistic concept dealing with development through communication has been the so-called ‘development journalism’. The concepts of development communication, non-development communication, development journalism and development support communication are often confusing because of the similarity of their origin, application, and even linguistically. The idea of “development journalism,” central too many discussions of mass communication and development in the Third World, needs to be reconceptualised because deliberations about its validity and usefulness have been bogged down in arguments structured by Western notions of press freedom. Development journalism as a concept, a framework for news gathering and interpretation is an impressive idea. It is about highlighting what people are doing to transform their lives and the opportunities and assistance available to them. Unfortunately this is exactly where our system collapses; the common person in our country is unaware of the opportunities available to him/her. As a result, the vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy is continuing. The

responsibility mainly rests with the media to provide this information and create awareness.

The concept of development journalism is good, and always was, so it is a pity it became embroiled in the acrimonious debate surrounding the New World Information Order. Development journalism involves reporting on ideas, programmes, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard of people. To be a development journalist one has to have a good grasp of sociology, politics, economics, psychology, science with some philosophy and art thrown in for good measure. This is because development stories do not merely narrate facts or rattle figures and statistics. They go deeper than the surface— giving flesh and blood to socio-economic and political problems. Development stories do not just tell the who, what, where, and when, but more importantly answers the question— why? Development journalism looks into the underlying causes of problems and even goes so far as to propose solution or courses of action. Because of these demands on the development journalist, a very good multi-disciplinary foundation is necessary. A little passion and commitment would not hurt either. In writing a development story, when in doubt, think HELP – which stands for Humanise, Energise, Localise and Personalise. And simplify, simplify, simplify. Basically, it is assumed that journalism is able to influence the development process by reporting on development programmes and activities. Accordingly, it is the journalists' duty to 'critically examine and evaluate the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is' (Aggarwala 1979: 181). This means that news should not only be defined in terms of conflict, timeliness and unusualness, but rather in terms of commitment and participation (Okigbo, 1991 :9).

Development journalism is the synonymous with a "grass root approach" that is, it is decentralised and participatory. It must not limit itself to the communication channels of the mass media alone but also use the traditional communication media. Kunczik (in Wimmer & Wolf 2005) represents development journalism as an intellectual enterprise in which the journalist should form a kind of free intelligence and should critically examine the aims of national development and the applicable instruments in a rational discourse and solve them by reasonable criteria free of social constraints. Accordingly, development journalism has the following tasks: (i) to motivate the audience to actively cooperate in development; and (ii) to defend the interests of those concerned. The credibility of journalism is crucial for the success of this project. Journalism thus needs to be 'decent rally and

participative structured to counteract the metropolis trend in the various social processes' (in Wimmer & Wolf 2005: 2-3).

This view of a journalism that is socially and intellectually engaged is supported by Shah (1996: 146) who represents it as 'emancipatory journalism', which he claims offers a 'more complete and complex' perspective on the relationship between mass media and society in the context of the Third World. It is more complete because it provides a theoretical link between citizen access to mass media and social change and because it articulates a specific mechanism by which journalists can participate in social change. It is more complex because it incorporates principles of diversity and fluidity in the process of building cultural identities and communities and because it challenges journalistic practice by abandoning the idea of objectivity.

The foregoing notion of development journalism actually resonates with other forms of journalism invoked in academic literature. For example, one can readily detect the notion of a subjective journalistic engagement in the emergence of the so-called 'public' or 'civic' journalism movement in the early 1990s. This was in response to the widening gaps between government and citizens, and between news organisations and their audiences. Declines in voter participation in political elections, and in civic participation in local community affairs, were cited as evidence of widespread withdrawal by citizens from democratic processes. Those scholars and journalists who were critical of news organisations' horse-race approach to political campaigns saw this trend as proving widespread public disaffection with mass-mediated political discourse. In response, many news organisations began to experiment with ways to enhance civic commitment and participation in democratic processes and to think of their audiences not as 'consumers' but as 'citizens' (Haas & Steiner 2006: 238-239).

However, a number of key concepts are commonly associated with it, most of them in contrast with widely accepted Western ideals, although this contrast relates more to journalists' attitudes to and perceptions of news, news values, source and issue selection and social objectives than techniques or styles of reporting (Loo 1994: 4). First, while the Western media model is concerned with journalistic rights and freedoms, development journalism places greater weight on journalistic responsibilities (McQuail 1994: 131). Second, the objectivity often considered central to Western journalism is de-emphasised, replaced with "a concern for the consequences of news reports" (Romano 1998: 64), and third, the Western emphasis on adversarial journalism is seen as an "unaffordable luxury" (Stevenson 1994: 34).

For communication specialists such as Bourgault (1995) the goals of development journalism are to "promote grassroots, non-violent, socially

responsible, ecologically sensitive, personally empowering, democratic, dialogical and humanistic forms of communication". At a broad level, the differing interpretations of development journalism locate the media as anything from "instruments to bring about a growth of democratic institutions" to "weapons to further a thirst for personal power" (Altschull 1995: 230, 231). More liberal interpretations utilise the press as a medium of news, an instrument of education, a "multiplier" in the communication process, a social and cultural influence and a channel for the flow of ideas between people and government (Sommerlad 1966: 66). Journalists from India and the Philippines who pioneered development journalism saw it as a way of reporting that encouraged close interaction between journalists and society, in which journalists were not neutral observers but communicators who "share the sentiments of the people in social situations and are changed to some degree as well as changing the situation in which they are a participant" (Loo 1994: 2, 3). However, in some countries, legal and cultural systems combine to create a media environment that is restricted and restrictive, and in which the principles of development journalism are used to control media operations. In its most regimented form, development journalism may be a smokescreen allowing dictators to subject their press to iron controls and strict censorship (Altschull 1995: 236).

The assumptions of development communication concerning modernisation and dependency do not seem to be applicable any more in a global world. More recent approaches do not act on the assumption of an (easily influenced) linear path of development any more, but track down differentiated social processes of globalisation and fragmentation, which apply to the countries of the southern hemisphere as well as the northern ones. However, these processes can be heterogeneous and cause conflicts which affect large parts of the population. Since the focus of development journalism is set on journalism education and practice in the southern hemisphere and therefore constantly faces difficulties, it remains apparent up-to-date. The debate has diverted attention from important questions about how journalism can contribute to participatory democracy, security, peace, and other humanistic values. Although these terms are generally understood to imply that the mass media, if applied carefully can aid the process of development, there is little literature on the conceptualisation, definition and operational parameters of these communication concepts. Paramount in the process is the need to synchronise the issue to be dealt with, the audience for whom the communication message is intended, the nature of the media to be used, and the socio-political and economic context within which the media campaign is to be affected. All four concepts are crucial for development in

their own right. It, however, warns that their effective utilisation calls for high degrees of specificity in their formulation, planning and management.

Development journalism does not reject objectivity as such, but the social and national development is an even higher journalistic aim, to which for instance news-selection has to be subordinated. Does development journalism matter? Do journalists require good journalistic skills to cover development projects? In reality, the two cannot be separated. Good journalism based on ethics, well-balanced information, fairness and accuracy lays the foundation for every type of journalism. In certain situations where development is the core issue, there is a need for journalists to apply such principles to highlight it and make sure that the public is served with accurate information to assist with decision-making. Key components of development journalism include the following five aspects:

- To report the difference between what has been planned to do and what in reality has been achieved, as well as the difference between its claimed and actual impact on people (Aggarwala 1978);
- To focus not “on day-to-day news but on long term development process” (Kunczik, 1988, p. 83);
- To be independent from government and to provide constructive criticisms of government (Aggarwala, 1978; Shah, 1992; Ogan, 1982);
- To shift “journalistic focus to news of economic and social development” while “working constructively with the government” (Richstad, 2000, p. 279) in nation building;
- To empower the ordinary people to improve their own lives and communities (Romano & Hippocrates, 2001).

Good development journalism does not serve a government. It serves the society as a whole by doing its best in giving information on positive as well as negative aspects of development projects. By doing so, it will help in opening up a democratic space for meaningful public participation in the process of development.

Development Journalism and The Changing World

Development journalism means different things to different people. Though development news is fast disappearing from news pages and

television bites, development news still remains relevant. If the digital revolution in the media can be said to be a “perfect storm“, then it is journalists who have been at the eye of that storm, struggling to maintain the quality of their work in increasingly difficult conditions. Broadly speaking, their employers are asking them to do more with less and, in many cases, to learn a whole new set of tools and techniques, while maintaining (or in most cases, increasing) their output. The digital revolution remains both exciting and full of trepidation for people in the industry. Unlike the much simpler affairs of 1950s and 1960s, globalisation has brought in a number of new and more powerful forces that know no boundaries. Modern technology and global trade, for example, now have a far greater impact on human life in some countries than government policies.

The world of journalism is always changing with the different inventions and modifications of technology. During the past five decades, there have been and still co-exist different paradigms of development and development journalism. “Paradigm“ refers to a rather normative conception and thought pattern of a certain field or phenomena under scrutiny, shared by a group of scholars. If a paradigm gains a dominant position, it is also likely to affect thought of politicians, journalists and other professionals, as well as the common people. Varied and contested interpretations have put development journalism in question, and it seems to have been left behind in the fast changing global scenario.

International trade is an issue that clearly manifests the power of globalisation. The free trade economy has shifted economic decision-making power from governments to other players. Today multinational companies and international trade organisations play an equal role with governments when it comes to shaping the world’s economic pattern and people’s lives. While capital and products are moved from one part of the world to another, a large group of people, mostly from poorer countries, is forced to move across borders and continents as cheap labour. While the global economy generates wealth to some groups, its shortcomings bring poverty to others. The 1997 Southeast Asian Financial Crisis is an experience hard to forget. The crisis collapsed thousands of businesses and drove millions of people out of jobs. It spread a domino effect throughout Southeast Asia, leading to unemployment, rising crime rates and political turmoil.

At present, problems such as unemployment, health or environmental degradation have become cross-border by nature. They have grown beyond boundaries, and cannot be dealt with by a single nation state. As a result, development as a means to improve people’s livelihoods becomes an issue

that cannot be handled by one country alone. New types of development processes are needed in order to respond to such a fast-changing global scenario.

A major change also happens on the media front. The arrival of Internet technology poses a challenge to traditional journalism. The Internet has dramatically changed the traditional communication landscape in which information providers and recipients are clearly divided. Gone is the time when journalists confidently served as content providers while the public played the role of passive audiences. The Internet has provided an opportunity for people to play both roles at a speed never experienced before. Through websites and blogs, people can get hold of analysis, raw data, government reports, and drafts of legislation, photos and many other types of information for free within minutes. Different types of information that were difficult to obtain in the old days are given for free on cyber space. There are enough choices in cyber space to keep people well informed without relying only on what journalists can provide.

Is development journalism still irrelevant given the changing scenario? The answer depends on whether it lives up to the challenge. Because poverty continues to pose a threat to millions of people, journalists have no choice but to continue reporting development issues and its impact on people. Development journalism of today must be able to examine and explain the new face of development that has transformed itself into a trans-border affair, involving various players aside from the state, and relating to several complexities.

Information technology, for all its advantages, cannot by itself guarantee a true understanding of what is a complex world. Instead, it leaves people with varieties of choices to decide which information they believe. The world has become overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of information available on cyber space. At one point, the line that divided fact from fiction began to blur. Opinion and hearsay are taken as hard facts. People can be led away from a true understanding of the real world. Development Journalism makes editors yawn and drop these stories to the bottom of the pile, especially on TV. But when we put innovation and creative storytelling back on the development agenda we can charm editors and engage audiences. Solid journalism is needed to make sense of what is really going on around us. Development journalism that applies principles of responsibility, fairness and accuracy is strongly needed to explain the complexities of the development process in order to help societies react sensibly to challenging global situations.

Empirical Turn

Empirical, rather than normative/theoretical work on development journalism probably got its start in the context of professional educators gaining an interest in sharing knowledge about their work. It is argued that both theoretically and empirically, to appropriately understand and outline the role of mediated communication in development journalism, we need to extend scholarship in these fields principally by going multidisciplinary and beyond the examination of the 'technical' possibilities of participation offered by the media, to critically interrogate the conception of 'the audience' by communicators. The empirical study of development journalism was given a renewed impetus when early communication research emerged out of disciplines of sociology, political science and psychology, and was spearheaded. When one takes a cursory look at the vast empirical international literature on journalists' role conceptions, one is bound to contend that journalists' role conceptions are, more often than not, reflections of both the societal and legislative expectations of journalistic performance. Such expectations are often grounded in national media policies and the history of and the relationship between the media and the government / state. Different forms of development journalism can be identified in literature (overview in Kunczik 1995: 90-4). The first form is comparable to a western style investigative journalism. It comprises reporting which critically examines development projects on the one hand and controls government activities on the other hand. However, freedom of the press would be a basic requirement for it. The other form of development journalism can be defined as benevolent-authoritarian. It allows systematic manipulation of information in favour of a subtle development serving the common welfare. At the national level, development journalism was practiced with variations in different countries as its practice was influenced by different social, economic, cultural and political conditions and situations (Chen, 1991; Maslog, 1985; Shah, 1989; Verghese, 1976; Vilanilam, 1975, 1984). Although development journalism was enthusiastically promoted first in the Philippines, it did not win ready acceptance from mainstream journalists largely because few of them bothered to get involved in its conceptualisation or application (Shafer, 1998). After reaching its height in the mid-1980s, development journalism lost its momentum when most journalists reverted to traditional and libertarian Western approaches after the Epifanio de Los Santos Avenue (EDSA) Revolution (Shafer, 1998). Development journalism did not enhance the press's watchdog function but resulted in the press

being the tool of the authoritarian Marcos government (1965–1986). Also, economic constraints on the press have prevented an effective, independent, and critical form of journalism from emerging (Shafer, 1991). Although development journalism is not widely practiced in the Philippines, it remains a vibrant course in journalism education in the country, indicated by the active operation of the department of development journalism at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos.

Development communication in India, a country of sub-continental proportions, acquires many connotations. On one end of the spectrum are the tools and techniques locally applied by charitable and not-for-profit organisations with very close inter-personal relations among the communicators and on the other end is the generic, far-off, one-way sort of communication emanating from the government. Development journalism is enthusiastically advocated and promoted in India where it has been practiced since the late 1960s. The work of the Journalist Association of India (JAI) has focused on the development of independent and quality journalism in support of democratic, social and economic development, under the flagship of Journalists Federation of India. The Times of India alone has grown by 10 percent in the past year, and, with 3.5 million copies printed daily, it is now arguably the largest circulation of English-language newspaper in the world. It is so successful, in fact that the New York Times Company hopes to acquire a 5 percent share. [MSNBC, June 20, 2008]. Obviously, governments prefer to promote the benefits of development and underplay the downside of rapid, unplanned and uncontrolled growth, such as rampant corruption, excessive consumerism, industrial pollution, population displacement, environmental degradation, and economic disparities. On the other hand, the public – especially those members who are benefiting from development, or hope that they will – is hungry for news of positive achievements, of research that will improve their lives and health, and of technology that will enhance the economy – and their own incomes.

In India, print media have been the participants in the political process right from the days of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Press in India in fact has no specific role in covering development except reporting the publication of a five-year development plan, the opening of a plant, the debates in Parliament or a policy statement by government leaders. The reasons for this low-key approach to development were that the intense internal power struggle and the search for political identities occupied almost the total attention of the Press. In addition, the sharp political polarisation within the Press distorted any independent assessment of the development scenario. On the whole, the

scene still persists where the mainstream media is not sufficiently focusing grassroots people's initiatives and movements. It is for this reason; activists of mass movements and organisations have initiated efforts for making an interface possible between mass media and such organisations. One illustrious example and fruit of such interface is the Narmada Bachao Andolan. This movement has assumed a nationwide interest not for the reason that it symbolises people's fight against mega dams, but because it could and is still using mass media in a better and effective way for highlighting itself in the public eye.

The newspapers in Indian languages and English have worked for an ill-informed and biased public opinion instead of an integrated and enduring social order." The reports of many inquiry committees on communal riots indicate that the press has contributed to the escalation of tension between the communities. The Press is still pre-occupied with reporting events, thus disregarding the processes which produced the events. This meant that while the Press reported a famine, it did not interpret the long process of food shortage that led to the famine. While the Press would report on famine, it seldom found it worthwhile to write on the process through which the country gained self-sufficiency in food. The same is the case when reporting on population growth. Later on some rethinking started among journalists in India and other Asian countries on the role of the Press in economic development as they became increasingly conscious of the magnitude of the crisis one after another, from population to rural poverty, from continuing instability in commodity prices to spiralling inflation and widening inequalities within nations. This rethinking led to a positive role of the newspapers in the development process of the country.

The journalist has to change his/her priorities from sensational to socio-economic change and development and improvement of education. In other words, he/she has to take up the role of a catalyst for change, of a motivator and finally of a change agent. Journalists should adopt "SHINE" formula – S for sensitivity, H for honesty, I for innovative, N for news worthy and E for empathy. It is ironical that generally a journalist does not get much support from the management in his new role of a catalyst for change. Nevertheless, there are journalists who are willing to be enterprising and take risks. For instance, George Verghese, a former editor of The Hindustan Times of India decided to start a regular fortnightly column depicting life in a village known as Chatera. The first instalment of "Our Village Chatera" appeared as the cover-story in the Sunday Hindustan Times on February 23, 1969. It never looked back and the feature continued to be published. The result - the project

became a change agent and played the role of a catalyst in planting new ideas and articulating aspirations. It brought science, television, machines, banks, etc. into the village. Verghese managed to open a window to rural India to those who plan for it but seldom get to know it. The project gave an added dimension to journalism, won the affection of a village and helped and encouraged the village to grow. This can happen in many areas.

The Indian approach towards development is based on the assumption that the great mass of the illiterate and poor rural population is a highly valuable development resource. The individual rural families and communities can be guided to the path of development if they are given practical knowledge of the social and natural sciences and technology. The government has the main responsibility for bringing together the force of rural people and the sciences and technologies. This has to be done gradually so that the pattern of life in the village is not disturbed seriously. It can best be done by a decentralised inter-personal communication system at the community block level.

In the expectations of what development journalism is supposed to do, the theoretical bar could be set too high for its practitioners on the ground. Unless media in developing countries adopt pro-social development journalism, efforts to realise meaningful development will remain a challenge. In the growing literature concerning development journalism, proponents often regard it as more applicable to Asian countries including Malaysia and Singapore than the western liberal media (Wong 2004). However, China, believed that "media-government partnership" (Wong 2004 p.2) is necessary for much needed economic development and development journalism has been incorporated in journalism training, education and practice in China, where development has now become a national priority, especially since China started its economic reform and opened to the outside world in the late 1970s. Development journalism has played an increasingly important role in boosting economic, cultural and political development in China (Chen, 1991; Fang, 1983; Wu, 1987; Zhou, 1992;). Just like in Asia, the socio-economic conditions, the desperate needs for economic development, and nation building in Africa and Latin America created a favourable environment for the adoption and growth of development journalism (Domatob & Hall, 1983; Edeani, 1993; Isiaka, 2006; Mwaffisi, 1991). Poverty-stricken and underdeveloped, many countries in those parts of the world have become experimental venues for development journalism since the late 1960s. Governments in these areas continue to use development journalism to maintain their powers and influences, and to aid national political, economic, and cultural development. The ready adoption of development journalism

was originally legitimatised by the neo-colonial reality in Africa, which remained in the grip of colonial domination, inequality and dependence (Domatob & Hall, 1983). The African press is expected to play a major part in informing, educating, motivating, mobilising, and entertaining the people. In practice, although the press has contributed to health, nutrition, family planning, and agriculture education programmes in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroun, Zaire, and Kenya, it has largely been used by “most African ruling groups to consolidate and perpetuate power in the name of development journalism” (Domatob & Hall, 1983, p. 18). Consequently, it is the elite, not the ordinary people who have benefited most from the practice of development journalism.

Contextual History

In comparative studies of media systems a principal focus is on contextual aspects – so called contextual nuances (traditions, values and norms, histories of development) – and how these affect the development of journalism. Among the most interesting research results here is the finding that journalism (as no other profession) is shaded by contextual factors; that journalism does not develop in vacuum – in contrast, journalism cannot be separated from the surrounding political, social and cultural reality. Disclosing these contextual features and their impact on the development of ‘national’ journalism is among the goals performed in comparative studies within this research theme. A number of critical questions will be asked here: Where does the tradition of advocacy and commentary journalism come from? What is the character of political parallelism in different states? How does the role of the state can be evaluated? How journalism can be described in terms of media professionalisation?

Civic journalism initiatives were widely practised in the mid-60s, albeit informally, by journalists in developing agrarian-based nations such as India, the Philippines and Indonesia whose job was to disseminate information on new agricultural methods, to farmers during a period of broad agrarian reforms. Journalists reporting on rural economics had then been working closely with these agricultural information officers. Indonesia and Malaysia, for a while in the late 70s, were among countries where development journalism was practised, although it was not given the development journalism tag. Then, the practice was referred to as “development journalism and was felt necessary for social, economic and political development in Asia in the ”chaotic aftermath of the Pacific War and colonialism in many Asian

countries" (Richstad, 2000, p. 279). It was situated in "the growing number of independent economies in the world, the sharp rise in sophistication and modernisation among them—and, most of all, the soaring aspirations of the people" in the post 1945 years (Chalkley, 1980, p. 215).

Its mission lied "in furthering the emancipation of such deprived groups as the urban poor, the rural people, women and so on and helping them to participate in the political process, that is actively influencing their destinies" (Quebral, 1975; as cited in Kunczik, 1988, p. 85). Theoretically, development journalism was strongly supported by modernisation and development communication theories. In the logic of these approaches, for the developing or underdeveloped countries to modernise themselves, they should learn from the West, importing communication technologies along with ways of doing things from the West including concepts like press freedom and the watchdog function of the media. These approaches also emphasised the effectiveness of the mass media in developing and modernising a nation (Lerner & Schramm, 1967; Pye, 1963; Rogers, 1962, 1976; Schramm, 1964).

Although dependency theorists first drew attention through their criticism of economic dominance of the Third World by the West, they quickly spread their attacks to "social and cultural imperialism. Both were deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of development journalism, in that they provided strong theoretical support and guidelines for the battle against Western cultural invasion and the promotion of national cultural values and identities through development journalism (Kunczik, 1988). Like all maturing theories, dependency theory is attracting its own school of doubters and critics. There is a specific complaint that "Dependencia," as the theory was named by its early Latin America advocates, is so closely based on the social structure of that continent that it does not work well elsewhere in the developing areas or Third World. Nevertheless, it is widely used as the basis of criticism of Western media domination, for example.

Systems theory which takes inputs from society and processes them, the outcome of which could be policies regarding relationships between interrelated and interdependent subsystems, i.e., between journalism and its social, economic, cultural and political environments. In the perspective of the systems theory, different and interdependent relationships between the press and its various environments would produce different perceptions of the press and different types of press models in developing countries (Akahenda, 1983; Edelstein, 1982; Kunczik, 1988; Ogan, 1982). Ideologically, development journalism was closely connected to the movements of the New International Economic Order (a 1974 UN declaration), and the New

World Information Order (called for in 1980 by MacBride Commission). The use of the term "system" should therefore be understood broadly as it takes into account the culture, social and political contexts that may shape relationship in any system.

Development journalism basically stretches this principle of grassroots communication by extending journalistic conventions and the conventional array of stories often framed by crisis, conflict and adversities, to embrace the context of community development imperatives. Thus, development journalism is neither an apology for governments nor a radical form of reporting. Essentially, development journalism is premised on the conviction that stories of the poor, the disenfranchised and the community where their potentials for human development have yet to be fully realised, can be narrated in other forms. That is, to frame and angle the stories towards constructive social change and transformation.

Indigenisation Efforts and The Asian Values Debate

The trajectory of the indigenisation debate reveals the role of electoral competition and party formation in shaping race relations and national identity. It suggests the need for event-centered studies of the way in which political identities are constructed in processes of conflict within the institutional arenas created by liberal political reforms. Most scholars trace the genesis of the debate on Asian values advocating anti-Asian indigenisation efforts. Another major component of its contextual origin was a widely shared concern in Asia that the traditional Western model of news reporting, which emphasised events rather than processes that produced the events (Ali, 1980), was inadequate for developing countries in Asia. Such a concern led to efforts to reform the reporting and editing practices of the Asian press (Abundo, 1986) to replace the Western practice of emphasising sensationalism and commercialism, which produced little coverage of socially important news about the ordinary people, community projects, rural developments, and efforts to address poverty (Wong, 2004).

This is the time for decentralisation, de-Westernisation, differentiation and pluralist thinking, and the number of published works in communication by non-Western researchers has been growing at exponential rates. Hidden behind the proliferation of research publications in the non-Western world, however, are several important issues that need to be discussed: is communication research in the non-Western world to continue to keep steps with the West, or 'claim autonomy' and 'embark on a different path'? If a

different path is preferred and research is to be culturally contextualised, will we then see the end of universal theories? Will intellectual dialogue still be necessary? If yes how can it be established? In as much as the axial Asian philosophies are highly systems-oriented, Asian scholars could make a significant contribution to universalising communication/ embedded in Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Hinduism, among others. The past decade has seen sporadic and somewhat ad hoc efforts to “de-Westernise“ or “internationalise” communication studies (Curran and Park, 2000; Thussu, 2009; Wang, 2011). Critics endeavour to articulate an intellectual voice from a cross-point between East and West, reject a dichotomous view and seek to establish theoretical generality based on cultural specificity in the interest of a fruitful global dialogue. Development journalism has also been boosted by the de-Westernisation efforts in the region. Media scholars and practitioners have now started exploring Asian perspectives on communication and to assess the relevance and applicability of Western communication theory from Chinese, Islamic, Japanese, and Indian perspectives. More efforts are being made to indigenise Western communication theories to suit Asian cultures and adapt their operationalisation to the constraints of multi-ethnic, pluralistic Asian societies. One of the most powerful and influential movements in de-Westernisation efforts is the Asian Values debate, which was initiated in the 1970s. Being more widely shared and emphasised in Asia (Xu, 1998), values were believed to have contributed to the economic miracle achieved first in Japan, and then in Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in the 1970s (Berger & Hsiao, 1988; Seah, 1977; Xu, 1998, 2005). Some Asian leaders like Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore and Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia used Asian values to defend their own principles and practices in modernisation, development, human rights, and democracy to safeguard against perceived threats to Asian cultural identities and diversities from the domination of Western cultures and values (Xu, 2005). By the 1990s, Asian values were also used in journalism to advocate national stability, racial harmony, nation building, and national development as major national considerations to guide journalism practices in Asia (Xu, 2005). This has strongly supported the practice of development journalism in the region.

If the de-Westernising project aims to challenge “the imperialism of the universal“, we must not fall into the reverse trap of “the parochialism of the particular.“ We abhor the Western-cum-universal hegemony, but we are not interested in creating any essentialised theories of Asian journalism. As both a cultural and political concept, Asian values can be historically traced back to the mid-1970s when academic efforts were made in exploring

the relationship between the fast Asian economic development and the Asian cultural values. The concept has been debated largely in the areas of human rights, democracy, freedom of expression, and the relationship between cultural values and development. Whether there exists an "Asian model" of journalism that could be said to reflect Asian values as espoused increasingly by leaders of some Asian nations, notably Singapore and Malaysia (Schidlovsky, 1996). What are Asian values? Does the Asian press cover Asia differently than does the Western press? Is good Asian news coverage different in character than good Western news coverage? Are there common characteristics of Asian society that should be, or can be, reflected by Asian media? What is the role of the media in society? (Schidlovsky, 1996). Answers to these questions differ based on the need for journalists to immerse themselves in the language and culture of countries from which they were reporting. Although media practitioners and scholars were widely divided over Asian values and their existence in journalism, a consensus was reached regarding the need to identify certain universal values deeply rooted in the Asian context and to promote them in the professional sphere (Masterton, 1996). These values are truth, objectivity, social equity, and nonviolence. Although universal, these values have been prioritised in Asia when Asian countries confront the following issues: (a) market practices in conflict with journalistic integrity and professional standards, (b) interference by the boardroom in the newsroom, (c) lack of adequate dialogue and network mechanisms to allow journalist in Asian countries to exchange news and information independent of existing Western or government agencies, and (d) government interference in editorial functioning through various forms of censorship in the name of nation-building and national security (Masterton, 1996, p. 172).

All de-Westernisation efforts pointed to upholding the journalistic values suitable for the Asian contexts and searching for Asian normative theories of the press. Such efforts have contextualised the emergence and growth of the development-oriented practice of journalism, i.e., development journalism.

Schools of Thought

Development Journalism is recognised as a special niche area which requires a journalist to be sensitive, committed and with an in-depth understanding of social processes. As a tool for social justice, development journalism can be very valuable. By speaking for those who cannot, a

development journalist can inform the rest of the world about important issues within developing nations. Looking at the strengths and weaknesses of a country may also help identify ways in which the nation can be helped. This style of development journalism is a tool for empowerment. In Thussu's rather dispiriting summation "Most development issues do not fit into traditional concepts of what constitutes news. The poor who are supposed to be the subject matter of development news are neither affluent nor influential, nor in positions of authority and dominance. In addition, in writing about the dispossessed, journalist gets little return except perhaps some moral satisfaction and professional pride" (1996:11).

This is journalism in the aid of development, journalism that sees its role as that of a partner in progress and not a perennial critic, journalism that celebrates successes and not one that delights in failures, journalism of substance and not one of sensationalism, and the journalism of optimism and not one of gloom and doom. When development journalism is used as a propaganda tool, however, it can become very dangerous. Many citizens are taught that the news is a reliable and useful source of information. For example, within a developing nation which has a corrupt government, journalistic exposes of the government are extremely important for reform. If journalists are not allowed to write about what is actually going on, the citizens are not well served. Several international press organisations release reviews every year which look at the freedom of press in individual nations in an attempt to bring freedom of the press to all countries for this very reason.

Whether Asian journalism is informed by uniquely Asian values has been a much-debated question. But it is one that arguably has no clear answer. Essentially, two schools of thought can be located in the debate. One answers the question in the affirmative: Asian journalism is noticeably different from Western journalism because of the influence of Asian values. The other answers in the negative, but not straightforwardly so. Both do appear to agree, however, on the "need to identify certain universal values which are rooted in the Asian context and to promote them in the professional [journalism] sphere" (Masterton, 1996, p. 171). The phrases "development journalism" and "Asian values" come up often when we study the practices and institutions of journalism in Southeast Asia. The search for the right direction and development in communication has also been driven by the realisation among media policy-makers, practitioners and academics on the influence of Western communication theories and their incompatibilities with the Asian contexts. Asian communication including journalism has been greatly influenced by the Western journalism in its early formative

stages. The establishment of modern newspapers and journalism schools, the training of journalists, and the operation of the press as a whole are among the clear indicators of Western influences on Asian journalism. Although Western journalism has played an important role in the development of Asian journalism, it also has exerted negative influences on Asian journalism, such as sensational approach, adversary practice and entertainment orientation, which remain incompatible with the Asian contexts.

Furthermore, Western communication theories have failed to fully describe, explain or predict the communication phenomenon in Asia. For instance, certain communication behavioural patterns in Asia may not be easily explained by Western theories, such as face, seniority of age and status, different philosophical and religious backgrounds (Gottberg, 1985). In addition, Western communication theories had their own limitations, such as overemphasis on quantitative methods, lack of focus and repetitiveness, weakness in studies of structure and function of communication in societal context, and the absence of culture as a critical factor in communication (Chu, 1985).

There is little direct empirical evidence to tilt the scale one way or the other. Studies of Asian journalism, or those that compare it with Western news work, generally have not been directly tested for normative journalistic values. Still, most of these works could be taken as offering indirect support to one or the other side in the Asian-values debate. There has been "widespread feelings among communication scholars in Asia that there is a pressing need to re-examine Western communication theories in the light of Asian cultures and traditions" (Menon, 1998, p.ix). The need is generated by the fact that Western models and theories have been accepted uncritically at the expense of traditional concepts of communication in Asian cultures (Menon, 1998). The realisation of the incompatibilities of Western communication theories with the Asian contexts has led to the need to modify or adapt the parameters of Western communication theory to the various local conditions and situations in Asia. Moreover, Western-oriented theories can be enriched by using Asian communication processes, behaviour patterns, and experiences. In their search for Asian perspectives in communication, Asian scholars turn to their own rich and long traditions in the fields of religion, philosophy and arts, the core of great cultures. The magnificent cultures in Asia would not be possible without their distinctive approaches to communication. Derived from their rich cultural foundations and philosophical concepts, Asian press philosophies can prove to be very productive in widening the discourse of communication metatheory (Dissanayake, 1988).

I would tentatively define Asia-centric communication scholarship as a theoretical system or a school of thought in communication whose concepts, postulates, and resources are rooted in, or derived from, the cumulative wisdom of diverse Asian cultural traditions. The search of Asian perspective of communication theory should be relevant, addressing issues in their socio-cultural context, concrete, not obscure, observable and be backed by research using adequate, and appropriate methods (Chu, 1985). The search for Asian perspectives in communication does not necessarily mean the total rejection of Western communication theories. It has involved the adaptation, accommodation and preserving national sovereignties. Adaptation is an approach designed to adapt the advantages of the new technologies to the priority needs of the most underprivileged ones so that it can stop their values from being endangered (Modoux, 1996). Accommodation is to accommodate and respect different cultures in a peaceful co-existence environment (Naito, 1996; Gautier, 1996). Besides the adaptation and accommodation strategies, another strategy is to preserve national sovereignty in a global village (Nair, 1996). Reflecting these changes, Romano (2005) divided the major currents of development journalism, under which journalists have been cast in the roles of: (a) journalists as nation builders, (b) journalists as government partners, (c) journalists as agents of empowerment, (d) journalists as watchdogs, and (e) journalists as the guardians of transparency.

Journalists as Nation Builders: The media as the fourth estate of the realm and as a vehicle of conveying information from the diverse sources to the receivers are charged with the responsibilities to inform, entertain, educate, influence and mobilise the public, in order to shed light on issues and foster the development of the Nation. Journalists have to be virtuous in their role of serving the people! A virtuous journalist is one that has respect for the populace and strives to live by the cardinal merits advocated to him; one that does not misrepresent people, falsify texts or use illicit means to gather and disseminate information. He must be objective and have a sense of fairness and justice. One of the most crucial roles of journalists is nation building. One other aspect of development journalism concerns the issue of 'nation-building'. In the minds of those viewing development journalism favourably was the role journalism could play in nation building. The media, it came to be expected, had to be a tool for the creation of national consciousness and unity, and for cooperation and peaceful co-existence of diverse communities. Speeches by policy makers on media freedom often carried—and continue to carry—this theme in the Pacific and in other parts of the third world. The message began to come out so strongly that the media had to respond

to coverage of 'development'. In the absence of newsroom expertise in analysing development, the substitute was to report from media releases and briefings provided by government departments, including speeches made by state officials and politicians. The latter, in turn, played to the media as well, often bringing with them enough copies of their speeches for the reporters present at each occasion. Speech journalism tended to become a defining characteristic of development journalism. This contributed to attracting a bad image of development journalism—of it being an arm of the state, and specifically, of the ruling political forces in the country. Cynical issue stems from ethical problems in journalism such as bribery and corruption, sycophancy, deception, self-censorship, pressure, sensationalism and lots more.

Journalists as Government Partners: In promoting fairness, justice and an understanding of cross-cultural relations, the journalist would indulge in self-censorship, and use their position to encourage and promote social and economic change that leads to a multicultural and economically developed society. Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in 1960s and 70s, looked at journalists as government partners in nation building, and this is the model which we need to emulate. Change is difficult to implement at newsroom levels, therefore it has to commence in journalism schools where budding journalists are exposed to issues in cross-cultural reporting. They are trained to appreciate the importance of widening the focus of journalism to the development role of journalists in a multicultural society. They are taught to reflect sensitivity to cultural and political factors in reporting. Interaction with people and reporting from their point of view and perspectives provides better understanding of community, their needs and aspirations. This perspective is closely related to the nation-building approach but differs from the former in so far as it holds that press freedom should be subjected to the overriding national interests of social, economic and political development priorities (Hatchten, 1999; Lent, 1979; McQuail, 1987; Romano, 2005). The two closely interrelated approaches are widely shared in much of Asia.

Journalists as Agents of Empowerment: Shouldn't we spread journalism out beyond our walls as not only a skill set but also a worldview, getting more people to see and create a demand for the value of accurate and reliable information, organised information, context, and so on? Shouldn't we want to embed journalism the way programmers embed code? Then we wouldn't just teach journalists to go to work for news organisations — or, for that matter, start them — but also to organise news everywhere? This approach holds that journalism should empower the ordinary people, not the elite,

to participate in public life and human development (Dagron, 2001; Shah, 1996, as cited in Romano, 2005).

Journalists as Watchdogs and Guardians of Transparency: Being a watchdog will also mean being a good journalist – one that is willing to take risks in digging things out but this could also mean having good contacts in upper echelon of any government. Being a watchdog will subsequently make a journalist an agent of empowerment and so playing a crucial role in nation-building. A watchdog is a person who takes on the responsibility of ensuring that the government as a whole or any individual, or even a non-government organisation, does not abuse public funds, is not corrupt in any way...and takes on the role of exposing them to ensure justice and seek solutions. Without free press and other civil liberties, good governance and economic development will be undermined (Romano, 2005, p. 11).

The press in Asia is expected to play the role of “a catalyst of social and political change” rather than act as an adversarial institution (Shim, 1995). It should also avoid excessive criticism and defend cultural identity, preserve national unity, and enhance economic growth (Katoppo, 1995). Asian journalists are educators, rather than mere entertainers (Datta-Ray, 1995). In Asia, nation building is still “a critical process,” which “unfortunately, not many Western journalists fully understand or appreciate.” The role of the press in promoting nation building remains a priority in many Asian countries, which “colours Asian priorities and perceptions of journalistic values” (Menon, 1996, vii). For a journalist, nothing is more self-satisfying than producing what is known as a scoop. It brings inner joy and feelings of a job well done while becoming the envy of others in the business.

Unsolved Issues

Many consider that development journalism is more complex and labour-intensive than it might appear. As issues facing the developing world grow ever more complex and difficult, the task of good development journalism should be to throw light on them. Despite its four-decade-long practice across three continents, development journalism is not even listed in the *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey, & Richardson, 2005) volume. The media has been accused of concentrating on political news, which dominates front-page headlines in most newspapers and top stories on radios and television. This has often been attributed to inadequate training or even lack of training in the relevant disciplines among journalists.

The dawn of multiparty democracy, which was concomitant with media freedom and liberalism was seen as an emancipation of the media from government control which in many cases went to the extreme of becoming not only suppressive but also oppressive and coercive. Development journalism therefore is perceived as synonymous to the pre-multiparty democracy government controlled media, which is absolutely antithetical to the spirit of freedom of expression and media freedom in a democracy. It rarely is allowed the prominence of other news categories like how political news are featured in the media today even when the former scores highly on the continuum of news values. Because of such bias development journalism did not enjoy credibility among the people. And when freedom of expression was embraced with the dawn of 'multipartism', development journalism had to go with the one-party, autocratic era because in it was the spirit of dictatorship, suppression and oppression.

As a matter of fact, development journalism and scholarship around it have long been belittled or neglected by the journalism research community. One indication can be found in the limited output of academic studies in the literature of journalism studies. In the past four decades, only 34 articles have been published in academic journals, which are totally out of proportion when compared to its four decade-long practice on three continents.

Among the 34 research articles, one article was published in the 1960s, five in the 1970s, 11 in the 1980s, 14 in the 1990s, but only three since 2000. Some articles were devoted to the examination of what constitutes development news (e.g., McKay, 1993; Ogan, Fair, & Shah, 1984), while others focused on the quantity rather than quality of development news (e.g., Mustapha, 1979; Sutopo, 1983). Several papers examined conceptual issues, principles or functions of development journalism (e.g., Chalkley, 1980; Gunaratne, 1996; Isiaka, 2006; Romano, 1998, 1999; Romano & Hippocrates, 2001; Shah, 1996).

Many studies have been conducted on the digital divide, but few of them have examined the impact of new media on development journalism. New media technologies can greatly facilitate the functions of development journalism in encouraging more participation from the ordinary people in the process of development and also in empowering them to have their voices and views heard and felt in an enlarging public sphere. Unfortunately, these areas have not been adequately examined. Further neglected areas include cultural and political aspects of development, such as freedom from foreign cultural and political control and influence. Few studies have examined how, and to what extent, the press can support the process of developing a nation culturally and politically.

Another missing area examines the effectiveness of development journalism in disseminating development news to ordinary people, empowering them to participate in the process of economic, cultural and political development. Also needed are studies that assess the different factors that shape how development journalism operates in different countries. Furthermore, the gap between what is advocated and what is actually practiced in development journalism has not been adequately addressed. Little research has been done to locate different factors that work to narrow or widen this gap in different countries, as well as to explain how and why influential factors are differently prioritised in different situations.

Democracy and freedom of the press should be guaranteed and development journalists should strive to be independent observers, critics and advisers not only of government development programmes but also private non-governmental development agencies who must be seen to really be working for the poor. Unravel their systems, work procedures, and assess whether their presence in an area truly benefit the poor families. This supervisory and surveillance role of the media in development would encourage transparency and accountability among development practitioners and ensure that change really does take place.

The Way Forward

There is an irreversible trend in society today which rather wonderfully continues what we as an industry started. It's not a 'digital trend' – that's just shorthand. It's a trend about how people are expressing themselves, about how societies will choose to organise themselves, about a new democracy of ideas and information, about changing notions of authority, about the releasing of individual creativity, about an ability to hear previously unheard voice, about respecting, including and harnessing the views of others, about resisting the people who want to close down free speech. If we turn our back on all this and at the same time conclude that there is nothing to learn from it because what 'they' do is different – 'we are journalists, they aren't: we do journalism; they don't' – then, never mind business models, we will be sleepwalking into oblivion.

Development reporting has not quite yet achieved the legitimacy of other fields of reporting. For example, very few of the larger metropolitan dailies in Asia have a development section. Very few of the journalism schools also offer development journalism courses. Clearly, development journalism still has a long way to go. The notions of development journalism

need to be reconceptualised, as the “demonisation” of the concept has shifted attention away from debates on how development journalism can contribute to democracy and nation building (2006: 1). Common elements need to be brought together from a development journalism perspective and a public service broadcasting perspective, to ensure the best possible route to broadcasting (Shah, 1996; Banda, 2006a). Consequently, if a developmental approach is not efficient enough, then this approach must be altered.

Theory development typically focuses on relationship among theoretical constructs, placing little emphasis on relationship between constructs and measures. In most cases, constructs are treated as causes of their measures. The first important area is to standardise conceptualisation of fundamental components of development journalism and to build a set of theoretical constructs explaining different relationships and interactions among its components on the basis of its different practices in different cultures and countries. Another major area to examine involves two sets of principles that influence the way development journalism operates in the case of most developing countries. The first set of principles are those that journalists uphold: (a) to focus on the ordinary rather than the elite, (b) to stay independent and free from government control, (c) to emphasise the process of local development, and (d) to engage and empower local people. The second set of principles is those that governments in developing or newly developed countries would use in regulating the press: (a) social stability and racial harmony, (b) regional/cultural/religious sensibilities, (c) nation building, and (d) national identity. How do these two sets of principles interact and interplay with each other? How can they be reconciled when compromises need to be made for the benefit of overall national development? What is the impact of that interaction or reconciliation between the two different sets of principles on society?

There is always a gap between what the press is expected to be and do in society, and what it actually is and does. This gap is vulnerable to changes in social, economic, cultural, and political conditions and situations. How do social, economic, cultural and political factors influence and shape the way development journalism is expected to operate and the way it actually operates? How should the narrowing or widening of the normative-empirical gap in practicing development journalism be measured and explained? And what models can be developed to describe, explain and predict the changing gap?

Another major area for further studies lies in the use of new media in development journalism to cater to the interests and needs of farmers,

women, children, the elderly, the minorities, and other sectors of the population that have been marginalised by the traditional mass media. How can we take advantage of the new media to bridge the information divide between the haves and the have-nots? As different priorities are assigned to different dimensions of development, and as countries develop at different levels in different contexts, further studies should take note of these different priorities. How effectively do different prioritisations guide development journalism practices, and what is their impact on the people? As development has its economic, cultural and political dimensions, further research should cover these different dimensions instead of focusing on the economic aspects only. Development journalism is practiced differently in different countries. Journalism studies needs to explain the different practices and develop models to describe, explain and predict the way development journalism operates.

Future of Development Journalism

Anthropologists have been critical of their field's tendency to "study down" (Nader, 1969) or focus on the lives of relatively powerless and culturally distant groups. By contrast, it could be argued that development journalism researchers have focused on "studying up" or engaging in "elite research" (Conti & O'Neil, 2007), by paying a disproportionate amount of attention to elite individuals, news organisations and texts. There is no one future for journalism, there are multiple futures. There is no one platform and there is no one solution. Whatever name it goes by – solutions-oriented journalism; plain journalism; future-focused journalism; development journalism; or catalytic journalism – the key tenet of this approach is for journalists to look for constructive, solution-oriented activities that inform, intrigue, and inspire an audience. Intelligent journalism is what will define the future of journalism generally. There is no room for disconnected reporters who only report what they observe, as this role has been taken up by citizen journalists. Instead, journalists must focus on extensive forensic, analytical and investigative reporting. There is a need for informed and educated journalists and mass media personnel who are active and diligent in ensuring that journalism is intelligent and comprehensive rather than one that cannot look beyond the official news releases or opinions of the elite.

Teaching journalism is kind of an oxymoronic concept: most media outlets are state-run or, at the very least, state monitored. Journalists are increasingly required to understand the economics of their trade. They must

be more entrepreneurial and innovative in the way they research, write and deliver their stories. In the absence of quality analysis in print, audio and visual journalism, the future of such journalism looks bleak. This is in no small measure on account of the twin impacts of a rapidly rising proportion of educationally sophisticated population, and the information superhighway. The rapid rise in the utilisation of electronic means of communication has posed one of the most significant challenges to conventional audio, visual and print journalism. The capital requirements to establish an e-media that is devoted to, inter alia, journalism, is far less than what would be taken to set up a print, audio or TV media enterprise. This enables e-media to gradually extricate itself from the strong bondages of commercial and/or state advertising. It also enables the emergence of subscriber-based e-media.

E-journalism is the future. E-journalism is also known as "EJ" or "ENG" for electronic news gatherings most associated with broadcast news where producers, reporters and editors make use of electronic recording devices for gathering and presenting information in telecasts and radio transmissions reaching the public. The growth of e-journalism is itself directly linked to the degree of confidence that the population has in conventional forms of journalism. To maintain confidence of the increasingly sophisticated audience, conventional journalism needs to ensure that reportage is more intelligent and analytical. This point has greater relevance for the third world, where the growth in the educated segment of the population is much faster than what it is in the developed countries. Consequently, the prospect for the emergence and development of e-journalism is much greater in the third world than it is in the developed countries. The prospects of this in the Pacific are significant.

For one, journalism studies have tended to ignore the work that goes on in less glamorous journalistic workplaces which are nevertheless dominant in terms of both the number of news workers employed by such organisations, the quantity of content output, and the audiences for their output. Audiences expect journalists to help them make sense of raw data through linking, channelling and localising the information. With the current flood of information and the hyper-personal media revolution viewers, listeners and readers are expecting more engagement and increased participation in news tailored to meet their specific needs. Therefore, today's journalists must be prepared to interact more with their audience. The future of development journalism, therefore, is no different from the future from development journalism in the third world. Furthermore, the future of development journalism in the third world is no different than the future of journalism

throughout the world. All the 'journalisms' require truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent accounts of events and process in contexts that give them meaning. A failure to provide this would see the erosion of the base for conventional journalism and a greater rise of independent journalism. This will define the fate of journalism in the Pacific.

These times, however, are the most exciting times to be a development journalist. Dramatic changes are underway in the global political and economic arena. The Asia-Pacific region is at the forefront of these changes. The dragon and Indian economies of Asia are growing at a faster rate than any part of the world. All of these changes have profound effects on people's lives and their future. Development journalism plays a very important role in shedding light on the issues arising out of these changes.

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