

INDEPENDENT MEDIA - AUTONOMOUS COMMUNICATION
FOR
MAINTAINABLE GROWTH - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(ABSTRACT)

“Growth” refers to the expansion of physical-material-mental aspects while “Development” is about evolution of environmental- social- cultural facets. “Independent” implies lack of dependence on corporate or government and “Autonomous” signifies freedom from the control of society and culture. “Maintainable” is something which is indestructible and “Sustainable” is that which is continual.

In this light ,Maintainable growth is expansion of material-physical without destruction and sustainable development is evolution sans disruption. This is achieved by a fair regime and attained by a non- discriminatory environment.

Media plays a critical role in transforming unbridled growth to maintainable by making the narrative rational . Communication acts as a catalyst to convert mutation to sustainable evolution via a proportional discourse .

Independent media surpasses the regular media by going beyond public information to Public education and advocacy . Autonomous communication transcends routine consciousness to include social literacy and activism.

This provides an equilibrium to growth and a balance in development. Therein media and communication perform different roles viz. Independent Media provides quality information-Specialised and niche –for negotiated ground building ;autonomous communication fishes out sensitive details - about marginalised , ostracised – towards bargaining a consensus .

It calls for an Integrated –cum- holistic approach to realize the ideal. For media, that is to be a proactive , active , co-active partner in growth ,and for communication to become a preventive , corrective ,responsive associate in development.

To sum , while growth may be achievable by government and development attainable by the state , “ Maintainable growth” is not possible without media and “ sustainable development ” would be impossible without communication.

Keywords – Independent Media ; Autonomous Communication Maintainable Growth ; Sustainable Development ; Inclusive ; Participatory; rational , proportional ; simultaneous , conjunctional.

Background - Asia / India being mostly underdeveloped needs a relatively stronger media than the west. This so since in backward regions the poor need a greater voice. However, the ground reality is almost its opposite - media in the continent / India is comparatively weak. In that sense even if there is development , it is not sustainable , much less inclusive. The global model of Capital and technology with advertiser as the king chips away its independence . A subscription model is not viable in a largely low income readership / audience. Public service media has a limited presence but is mostly propagandist. Research reveals that no model of Independent media exists in Asia; the western model is not sustainable .Without which a sustainable model of development is suspect. Hence one has to search for original models – An Asian/ Indian Model is the need of the hour rather than merely Asianised / Indianised version of others.

Aim –To figure out an integrated –cum- holistic approach for the role of media in maintainable growth and communication in sustainable development

Questions- How can media play a role in different aspects of maintainable growth ?

What modes of communication are suitable for roles in varying aspects of sustainable evolution ?

Methods used- Analytic –cum- integrative ; Inductive- cum- deductive

Findings-Only a Holistic - cum- integrative approach can enable media and communication to play their designated roles in maintainable growth and

sustainable development respectively. My findings are primarily based on own work experience and search for an original model;the role of research is limited

Conclusion - While growth may be achievable by government and development attainable by the state , “ Maintainable growth” is not possible without media and “sustainable development” would be impossible without communication.

Ref : * Media’s role in sustainable development undeniable,2017 -www.unesco.org

- Communication and sustainable development (9th UN Roundtable onference,2007)

(FULL PAPER)

“Growth” refers to the expansion of physical-material-mental aspects while “Development” is about evolution of environmental- social- cultural facets. “Independent” implies lack of dependence on corporate or government alone and “Autonomous” signifies freedom from the control of society and culture. “Maintainable” is something which is indestructible and “Sustainable” is that which is continual.

In this light ,Maintainable growth is expansion of material-physical without destruction and sustainable development is evolution sans disruption. It is construction sans destruction in perfect conditions ; construction in conjunction with destruction in ideal circumstances , destruction followed by construction in practical terms but in no case does it stand for destruction alone ; likewise , it is continuous evolution over generations in perfect environment , continual evolution over generations in an ideal situation , continual evolution with simultaneous devolution in pragmatic conditions but at no time there is only devolution sans evolution.

Similarly, in a perfect environment Independent media is one which is dependent neither on government nor on corporate , in ideal circumstances it is not totally dependent on either while in practical scenario it is partially independent of both but in no case is Independent media entirely government controlled or corporate dominated .Perfectly autonomous communication is not at all reliant on

society and culture , in an ideal situation it relies partially at most on their diktats , pragmatically it is at least partially autonomous of both but in no case is it controlled entirely by either society or culture. All this is achieved by a fair regime and attained by a non- discriminatory environment.

How does one achieve such a regime and the desirable environment ? That is done with the help of Independent media and autonomous communication. Media plays a critical role in transforming unbridled growth to maintainable by making the narrative rational. The rationality of narrative is achieved by providing space to growth and backwardness in media in the right ratio - by pointing at the dark aspects of growth and signaling towards the growth potential of backward areas. Communication acts as a catalyst to convert mutation to sustainable evolution via a proportional discourse . The proportionality of narrative is achieved by apportioning time to development and underdevelopment in media in the right proportion - by voicing the downside of development and hinting at the talent of isolated, marginalised , ostracised sections. Independent media surpasses the regular media by going beyond public information to Public education and advocacy . That is done by bringing issues and policies into focus over individuals and events. Autonomous communication transcends routine consciousness to include social literacy and activism.

This provides an equilibrium to growth and a balance in development. Therein media and communication perform different roles viz. Independent Media provides quality information- Specialised and niche –for negotiated ground building ; autonomous communication fishes out sensitive details - about marginalised , ostracised – towards bargaining a consensus . That is achieved by debating among citizens and questioning the powerful ; by giving voice to the voiceless and reaching out to the last man respectively.

Asia / India being mostly underdeveloped needs a relatively even stronger media than the west. This is so since in backward regions the poor need greater voice. However , the ground reality is almost the opposite - the media in the continent / India is comparatively weak. In that sense even if there is development , it is not sustainable , much less inclusive. The global model of Capital and technology with advertiser as the king chips away its independence . A subscription model is not viable in a largely low income readership / audience.

Advertiser being the king limits independence. Public service media has a limited presence but is mostly propagandist,

Going beyond that , Asia needs its own system of growth and model of development. Transposing western approach on a region which has half the resources and twice its population is a sure recipe for disaster. Must follow Asian Model of development with GDH ,GDW alongwith GDP- which ought to be necessarily inclusive and participatory for maintainable growth and sustainable development.

A Multipronged approach would be needed to fructify the vision of Independent media for sustainable development. To begin with ,the idea would have to be sold to the governments by lobbying and advocacy ; next, it would have to be marketed to citizens by public education thru quality content and distribution by public service media. Alongwith , capacity building of journalists and skill training to sensitise them to development issues would be needed. To build upon it curricula and programmes would have to be designed in journalism & Mass communication schools about Sustainable development and maintainable growth. Building networks of specialised Journalists and Niche reporters would go a long way too. Content sharing and joint production is another area to further the cause. The combination of High tech and Big Capital has to be matched with innovative content by dedicated journalists with tech improvisations and shoestring capital. Creation of databases and archival material could also be helpful.

CSR is like carbon credits of environmental pollution - each entity , individual must do its bit for sustainability. Digital media and community informatics can play a great role by bringing in the niche and specialised content ; also , the content about marginalised and ostracized .

It is important to develop communities from within and without - by promoting success stories at the grassroots besides highlighting the movements and struggles of the disadvantaged to enhance their space .The media can play an important role in mobilizing society ;it can also assign importance to some issues and expose gaps in others. In doing so, it becomes part of the institution-building process, shaping the norms of acceptable and legitimate sustainable development

practices. The idea must be to introduce sustainability both at the level of design as also of implementation- **Devcom** and **Growthmedia**.

Research reveals that no sustainable model of Independent media exists in Asia. Without which a sustainable model of development is suspect. Hence one has to search for original models – An Asian / Indian Model is the need of the hour rather than merely Asianised / Indianised version of others. The western model is not sustainable ; in a post modern world , an independent model is possible with greater cooperation among Journalists .

Independent media must promote a maintainable lifestyle and support a sustainable way of life . Aim should be not merely a win- win but win all scenario. By increasing public awareness and enhancing social consciousness it can improve sustainability. Perhaps a Multimedia- cum- multiple media design would work well.

To facilitate independent media for sustainability both freedom of speech and constitutional guarantee for funding Public service media would go a long way. As also empowering and enabling citizens. Furthermore , it could help to extend the SAARC model of media cooperation to BIMSTEC , ASEAN etc. A model of Public-cum- corporate -cum subscription funding.

All in all, it calls for an Integrated-cum- holistic approach to realize the ideal. For media, that is to be a proactive , active , co-active partner in growth , and for communication to become a preventive , corrective , responsive associate in development. Begin as undifferentiated media - cum - communication individuals at one end to the integrated entities of Media and Communication which are complementary and supplementary to each other , at the other end.

The spectrum extends over complementary growth stories of exclusive , unique sectors ; supplementary development communication ; complementary social security coverage ; supplementary welfare reportage ; training budding journalists about SDG ; promoting unsung heroes; highlighting lost causes ; sensitizing the corporate for their social purpose ; sensitising governments about community priorities ; promoting inclusivity , highlighting participation ; empowering and enabling initiatives till rights and entitlements awareness.

Only an independent media can ensure maintainability , sustainability ; regular media distorts growth .To sum , while growth may be achievable by government and development attainable by the state , “ Maintainable growth” is not possible without media and “sustainable development” would be impossible without communication.
