

MASS MEDIA'S ROLE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent mass media are used for socio-economic development in some of the less developed countries during the past decade. Moreover, this paper will also explore the underlying factors which could help the less developed nations in utilizing the mass media as a tool for socio-economic change.

INTRODUCTION

Today in most developing countries, mass media of communication are considered effective tools for national development. During the 1950s, Daniel Lerner conducted a survey study in six Middle East countries and interviewed 1,375 individuals. In the light of this study and a study on the development process in the West, Lerner propound a theory of moderization and integrated it with four factors for development: urbanization, literacy, media participation, economic participation and political participation. In Lerner's view, media are essential for the development of empathy [1].

From 1958 onward, a good deal of research work has been taken in this direction. Wilbur Schramm, John C. Merrill, Leslie G. Moeller, Ralph L. Lowenstein and John T. McNelly and other media scholars like Rao, Rees and Peter Meyez-Dohm have contributed on the subject of mass media and national development. These studies, by and large are scattered and mostly descriptive. While during the last decade, many dynamic changes have taken place within the media development in the developing countries, respective governments of less developed nations and members of international organizations like UNESCO are well aware of the role of the mass media and thier use in the development process. Likewise, international attention has been diverted to the mass media, as proved by a UNESCO's recommendation of 1980 to establish a mechanism insuring support in communication development in the developing world.

Use of mass media for national development includes many