Rural Development is need of the hour for a country like India, which is on the threshold of being a big world power with the capacity to influencing the course of events on our planet. However, this is a dream which we can realize only when we are a country with no internal dissensions and strife, a country with affair economic system and cohesive social order. In fact the essence of development lies not in a regimented system where none dares to disagree but in all-inclusive dispensation in which every one plays an equal role. The quest for rural development must lead us in the direction of empowering those sections of society who are in the need of being empowered. To understand what role media can play in rural development we have to understand media scenario in all its dimensions, the present study is designed.

The spread of education and general awareness on one hand and the revolutionary changes in communication and information technologies on other hand have made media the most potent means of mass education and mass mobilisation in our time. Media is now being increasingly viewed as the most effective and sought after means of communication. In fact media now influences all works of our life -personal, social and professional.

Rural development is need of the hour for a country like India, which is on the threshold of being a big world power with the capacity to influencing the course of events on our planet. However, this is a dream which we can realize only when we are a country with no internal dissensions and strife, a country with affair economic system and cohesive social order. In fact the essence of development lies not in a regimented system where none dares to disagree but in an all-inclusive dispensation
in which every one plays an equal role. The quest for rural development must lead us in the direction of empowering those section of society who are in the need of being empowered. This is the real meaning of democracy and this is the area in which media can and media must play an important role.

To understand what role media can play in rural development we have to understand media scenario in all its dimensions. We have to understand scope, reach and impact of media on society as well as the functions it is supposed to perform. We also have to understand how media influences social change in a developing society. But before this it will be worth to see how information technology has changed the face of media as well as the society which media caters to.

The speed of technological developments in the fields of communication has no doubt changed the face of media and society in the past two to three decades. These developments are so fast that the social scientists and researchers are finding it difficult to assess, assimilate understand and interpret their impact on different communities and social groups. The diffusion of new information technologies are making such inroads into the Indian societies that their multiple applications are giving birth to more and more cynicism. Media is a helpless victim of this phenomenon.

After the conversion of the whole world into a global village the new information technologies which have brought the video, the sound, the graphics and text together at a great speed and skills, are basically aiming at creating an information society which, in the very near future, will widen the gap between the information rich and the information poor. The unequal pace of technological development between the urban and rural areas, where are both producers and beneficiaries of technology, has increased inequities between urban centers and rural periphery. Today's technology, itself class oriented, tending to increase divisions between social groups. The gap between information rich and information poor has widened. The Indian media is therefore, living in a situation where it does not know where to go. To survive it has to follow the lead being given by the IT revolution. To live up to its tradition it has to show commitment for those sections of society who are becoming information starved.

For centuries our society has been depending upon the traditional means of communication processes and word of mouth. Human relationships, interpersonal communication processes and word of mouth.
Human relationships in closed Indian society used to develop in a natural, healthy and productive social environment. But in the early nineties the satellite and cable televisions created new type of society (so far, mainly in the urban areas,) by bombarding our households with alien messages.

The new information technology is creating a pseudo-environment, in which users tend to believe that by acquiring it, they have acquired everything, including wisdom, thought and logic. Most of the receivers fail to understand that what they do get are information packages, consciously or unconsciously designed for creating an atmosphere of artificial intelligence. The receivers also develop a tendency to absorb the information, which is easy to understand. “In a way the television is taking conversation out of the family, the computers are responsible for taking human relationships away from the society. A society which has been bound together by inter-personal and group communication is sure to feel uncomfortable with the new information culture. However, very few are able to view this as a problem in the process of our development.

As we know our media is now entirely information technology driven. As we can see information technology has a very dynamic relationship with the society and culture. We see the scenario for media in the world dominated by the influence of information technology. No doubt this technology brings revolution in the modes of communication by making it more diverse, intra and interactive and mentally more provocative. But the fear is the diversity would lead to regimentation and segmentation, which may further lead to stagnation, loneliness, disintegration, insecurity and isolation. All these major psychological issues in relation to development. That is why it can pose a threat to the individual and group identities and local cultures in case of a plural society like ours.

Yet despite all the changes brought about by information on social scene as well as in media remains a dominant factor with its capacity to appeal to the minds of people. Yet we often witness a tendency to take a very narrow view of media and limit our vision by our media use and our media habits. The whole range, scope and use of media has to be appreciated if we want its application in solving the problems our society faces from time to time. The whole range and dimension of media has to be understood if we want to know how media can play a role in promoting the culture of development.

In the wake of increasing commercialization, media’s role in expressing public thoughts is shrinking and more constraints and barriers are developing in the way of free and fair interaction between the media
and the public. Media and the information systems in the developing countries are being governed by dominant concepts of the West. The developing countries can meet the challenge only through developing alternative concepts of media programming, which have roots in their own social and cultural settings. This demands a great amount of will to experiment on the part of entire gamut of media industry.

Media Scenario

Media Scenario basically comprises TV, reach radio, reach newspapers, advertising, other print media forms, attempts at social marketing and net newspapers or cyber journalism. Various forms of traditional media which are integrated in to one social system. These forms are not merely entertainment based. They are essential means od education on various aspacts of life. They also form part of larger media scenario. Yet independent news media - print, electronic or even cyber remains the most important media for its capacity to scrutinize public affairs without fear or favour and hold us accountable to our jobs and responsibilities. Its good health and right attitude is therefore, very important to all of us In the all important task of national integration the importance of independent news media can not be over emphasised.

We can understand the media reach in indian scenario by having an idea of the total number of newspaper, journals, and periodicals as well as the number of radio stations, TV channels, satellite links and media related websites. In the recent years there has been a steady trend towards what we can describe as micro media — the media of small newspaper, limited circulation journals and community radio.

Basic Formulations

- It is difficult to delineate the total range and impact of this vast organized and at times unorganized media scenario.

- No section of India population is in fact totally media starved.

- Going by the modern idiom of information have and information have-nots. The only thing you can perhaps question is the type and quality of information the vast sections of India’s population get.

- Indian press, which was in fore front of indian”s struggle for freedom from the British and has evolved with the evolution of India consciousness and entry of India in the modern world, therefore, still cares more of tradition, historically and content.
India’s national radio national radio network All India Radio has 100 regional stations. There are over 200 local broadcasting radio stations, all government owned (AIR), throughout India. Though a lot many private channels have come in the field of TV the national network Doordarshan is still the biggest telecaster with its three regular channels with terrestrial rights.

Let us try to see what sort of a media community all these media forms create in our country.

- India has 70 million homes with TV, of which 25 million homes have cable & satellite.
- Perpetration
- The installed base of PCs in Indian home however around 3-4 million
- Cable TV subscribers -30.08 million in 2000 increased by about 79% to 53.88 million by 2005
- According to a study.
- According to an Indian readership survey, the press reaches about 33% of India's population, while TV reaches 47%.
- India is expected to have 25m Internet users by the end of year 2005, up from three million in 2000 and 5.5 million at 2001 beginning.
- According to RNI -(press highlights in 2000)
- UP produced the largest no. (8,750) followed by delhi (6,543) and Maharashtra(5,610).
- The largest number of periodicals and newspaper are brought out in Hindi (19,685) followed English (7,175).
- The total number of registered newspaper has risen from 49,145 as on Dec 31,2000 to 51,900 as on December 31,2004

But to know how best media can help promote the climate of development, especially in rural areas we must know how our changing society is influenced by media.

As we know the change is brought about more through a process of internalization of certain ideas than by any modification in the external environment. In simple words, one’s idea is perceived and corrected by learning through interaction or any other process are more responsible for change in individual and group behaviour than concrete structers that may be built around an individual or group. The media seeks to consolidate the process of internalization.
Since media has the power to expose an individual or group of individuals to new ideas and international, its potential as a change agent is perhaps the strongest. Since mass media has an overwhelming reach, its potential as a change agent is perceived to have a multiple effect.

Social change is a by-product of man’s effort to control his external conditions. In modifying his environment man sets up a double process or social change. Certain social relationships are imposed on him by his civilization, others are imposed on him by his civilization, others are imposed on him by his civilization.

There is an intimate connection between our behalf and our institutions, our valuations and our social relationships. Certainly all cultural change involves social change because the two are closely interwoven.

Most of the Developing countries are emerging from a textual and colonial background. The old socio economic structures are giving way to new ones. The media, which is the mirror of society, has to relate itself to these changes. The media, has to guide the course of action in the developing societies, apply correctives where needed and also mould itself to the changing realities of the time.

The only worthwhile sensationalism in news is the sensation of social and economic change. Unfortunately Indian media has been specializing in the cult of personality. What some person does, how he behaves or what he says is important, not the issues that matter, the causes that move men, the desperate needs and urges of the people at large, the living conditions of people in villages and tribal areas.

The romance of a dacoit’s surrender is presented in colourful language, but the deeper roots of dacoities in Central and Northern India are nobody’s concern. There are told attempts at unearthing corruption but no investigations into the basic causes of corruption, which is a social cancer as widespread as society and is corroding it. The main cause is the desperate search for funds by political parties, which have to fight costly elections in immense electorates, in which the ruling party leads, This party has made no attempt to reduce political corruption which is the source of all other corruption apart from the economic causes including capitalism under the patronage of multinational funds.

A media person is a historian in a hurry, but even in his hurry he should not, if he is to be true to his profession, give up the historical sense, forget the historical perspective. He has to combine many disciplines.
and in recording and interpreting what is happening to the society around him, he has to be a sociologist also.

Media can perform various functions in promoting consciousness for development. Broadly Media can help contribute in three spheres which will in turns make our society cohesive and better organized.

The three areas are
(a) Economic (b) Social (c) Political

We are one of the few countries in the developing world where right to information has been granted to people. Media has been in the forefront of the campaign for the right to information. The right to information gives a real teeth to democracy which will provide a sense of security and power to the beleaguered of society and give them confidence in system. This confidence is essential for national reconstruction.

The media has a symbiotic relationship with democracy, which in rural terms means empowering the weak. The two cannot exist without each other. The essentials of democracy are well informed citizenry, an equal and effective right to every member of society to participate in the affairs of the state and accountability of all those who are excercising public power and utilizing public resources.

Media is the fourth estate of a democratic polity and scrutiny of public affairs and ascertaining accountability of those who are in the power is its job. Beside the media also provides intelligent in puts by initiating public debates and this improves the quality of governmental decisions. A real and participatory democracy in which decision-making is done in full public view is the best guarantee of achieving all round development.

Functions media can perform
Broadly the functions of media can be divided in to three:-
1.Economic 2-Sociological and 3-Political

In the sphere of economic inputs media can help a person find alternative ways of making aliving, which would reduces the pressure on land and raise a family’s economic status. Media can help create demand for goods and motivate local initiatives to meet rising demands. It can also help sensitise people to broaden the entre preneural base media’s curruption to overall economic development has been fully realized and it has become a self perpetuating process.

In the sociological sphere of activity media aids in the process of status change form heredity to achievement. To do this it has successfully
motivated illiterate to become literate. In our feudal society with its sharp caste and class differences media can help shift influence from age and traditional status to knowledge and ability. To the traditional leaders to compete for status retention media motivates to acquire knowledge and adapt to changes. Media can also help bring about greater equality and a greater respect for human dignity and make cultural and social change a self perpetuating process.

In the political sphere of its activity media helps in the process of power change from heredity to achievement. It motivates traditional leaders to defend their power by raising their information level and helps the masses recognize their own importance in the power structure and act as a stimulus to political participation.

Media helps the government learn of the needs of the public and plan its programs and makes the public know of government plans and programs. Media also helps a community achieve power through mutual cooperation, something which is our concern at the moment and makes a political growth a self-perpetuating process. To sum up we can say that media bring about greater equality and respect for human dignity in the political arena.

**Culture, Media and Rural Development**

We can develop when there is unity in diversity in our society there are lot of many diverse cultural streams. However all of them have to be treated with care and respect. However, the biggest impediment in showing respect to diverse cultural streams is our largely misunderstood stress on mainstream. Mainstream has become a mind set for most of the media persons because subconsciously media shored the misplaced apprehensions of the Establishment that diversity is a danger to the security of the country while the truth is on the other side.

In the past few years there has been a lot of discussions on culture as an integrating force. The discussion has left a lot of people confused. Media too has failed to grasp the essence of Indian cultural diversity with the result that at many times media reporting to cause differences and promote disharmony in society. It is therefore, necessary that before determining the role of media in national integration we should clearly spell out for media what we as a society understand by Indian culture. In this regard the following questions has to be answered:

- What is the real face of Indian culture in its totality? How to blend the old and new in our living culture so that we neither become
orthodox while talking about our past values or become rootless while chasing the mirage of modernism

- What is the relationship between mass communication and Indian culture and civilization? What was the form of mass communication in the pre-industrial world? How was it directed and what was its value system?

- What is the role and responsibility of means of mass communication like newspaper, TV, radio, and advertising in today India? Is the media discharging its responsibility as it should?

- Society and media have a symbolic relationship. Both are repellant on each other. Soviet influences media as much as media influences society. What is the real and active forever of this relationship?

- What relationship you have with means of mass communication. Is it a one-sided relationship in which you are mere a recipient? If not then what should you do to make it a two-way relationship and how?

With technology increasing defining our lives and with mobility of people, goods, and services becoming easier, traditional cultures find themselves in a situation, where their environment is eroded and their relevance is questioned. This environment naturally breeds a sense of insecurity and alienation. The important questions is how can media contribute to preserving these cultures for the sake of promoting development by functioning in this environment.

To capture and express these diversity of our cultural heritage, we need a much bigger media base than what we have at present. This will be possible not by the efforts of big media houses owning chain newspapers and venturing into small towns. It can be possible by taking mass media to masses and involving members of these cultural groups in media production. A lot many such efforts are under way either by individual initiative or by the initiative of genuine NGO workers. However, there is need to promote these efforts and for this we may need a re-look at our media policy. There is also a need to revise the government advertising policy to support these small initiatives. Moreover, there is need to organize workshops and training programmes to improve the skills of those who are producing small newspapers.

But more than any policy initiative that we take it is necessary that we have a mindset that considers small is beautiful, it is essential. It is necessary that our obsession with big and few must go.
From a PR executive to a bureaucrat to a political leader ask anyone about the press and only three-four big names come up. Media graduates prefer to hang around big metropolitan dailies rather than accept jobs in medium and small papers, where they can get better status and greater work opportunities. While talented journalists rot and frustrate without work in big dailies the middle and small newspapers are manned by pseudo professionals and non professionals. Respective wage boards have institutionalized this anamoly. For those who think that major English dailies are all about our print media it should be rewarding to know that only four English dailies - The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, Indian Express and the Hindu figure in the list of 20 top dailies of country. More over, the big newspapers in English, Hindi and a few in regional languages comprise only 32.7% of the total circulation of all dailies.

The resources-starved small press comprises 33% of total circulation of all dailies. The small dailies no doubt have their problems at times they do not adhere to the high norms of professionalism - yet none can deny that collectively they are fore more representatives of our plural ethos than the big guns of metropolitan cities.

The range of small papers is really wide. How many of us know that we have newspapers in 77 folk languages and dialects, in this country besides 19 principal languages. We have newspapers. not only in Kashmiri, Konkan, Manipuri, Nepali, Sindhi and Sanskrit but also in Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian and Burmese. Then how many of us have heard of such Indian Languages as Angika, Gangte, Kabur and Haruti. Little doubt through the small press we can discover our own country. But we tend to ignore it, and in the process we often the pulse of the people.

The government has taken a good initiative in the form of community radio. People got a platform through which they can address issues like health, education and public facilities pertaining to their area. The local people or the community can get attention of the regional the national media through this platform. The government is giving funds and grants to help the cause.

It is time we should do something to sustain and nurture our diversity through the pluralism of press in the process of change.

References
Parmar, Shyam, “Traditional Folk Media in India” (1994)