

Communication Revolution and Its Socio-Cultural Implications

J. K. Doshi

Cultures change but mostly gradually and when changes are rapid, drastic and with far reaching implications we often term as revolution. No society is completely static but pace of change varies from society to society and so are the factors leading to change. Looking back in retrospective two major changes in society world over, industrial revolution and communication revolution have had far reaching implications. To some extent these have run side by side. In the present paper my focus will be mostly on communication technology and its impact on society.

Printing press has been with us in the form of books, journals, magazines and last but not least news papers. Not that the print media have disappeared but in last hundred years or so electronic media in different forms as radio, TV, transistor have ruled the communication scenario. Social scientists and those dealing with media as radio and TV have experimented with the support of government how far media can be used for education, agricultural development, health hygiene and family planning. Our past experience tells us media are effective in creating awareness but able to achieve the final goal of adoption when awareness is supported by a system of supply.

Current communication scenario is vastly different from the past. While in the first quarter of the past century only rich and elite had access to telephone. Today even in the remote rural and tribal areas and slum dwellers have access to telephone which unlike past are more versatile, combine the feature of radio and TV. Today's mobile phones combine the virtues of radio, telephone, TV, cinema and what not. Only a few years back people had to travel hundreds of miles to participate in a conference or seminar. Today video conferencing has become a routine affair in most organizations. Even your mobile phone allows you to have face to face communication as one calling and the called can really see each other. Parents can talk with their children far removed physically from each other, and so can lovers engage in intimate dialogues at a nominal cost of a phone call. WhatsApp has enabled friends, cousins, childhood friends to be in close contact and share, exchange views any time and place of their choice. Rapid breakthroughs in technology have nullified distance barriers.

Dr. J-K. Doshi is currently a member of Vigyan Samiti in Udaipur (Rajasthan). Previously taught Development Communication at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pant Nagar (Uttarakhand)

Media Penetration and Its implications

Because of media penetration we need to understand how different sections of society - young, old, men and women and most importantly children are being affected. Today it is not uncommon to come across children, as young as three-four year old not only hobnobbing but seriously engaged in playing, watching cartoons and other programs. Because of reduced family size - husband, wife and one or two children or husband and wife working from two different locations can still have a feeling of togetherness. Today's information and communication technology comes very handy, may be a little superficially to allow young couples to sustain their relationship. I have no hesitation in admitting many of the children and youngsters are more apt in handling new communication technologies than people of my age group. While one may feel heartened with the skills of these youngsters, there is also anxiety how new communication technology is affecting these kids and others. Recently Govt. of India demonetized five hundred and one thousand rupee currency to flush out black money. While it upset and continues to bother a section of the society it did help the economy. The new IT and communication technology came handy in reorienting masses to use IT. In rural and urban areas, tribals and non-tribals, literate and semi literate. One can argue this has happened at a price. Only time will tell whether the step of demonetization was its worth.

Information Technology V/S Print Media

While Internet provides access to information, knowledge it is happening at the cost of print media. Fewer scholars and students now refer to journals and books but rely more and more on Google app where they have easy access to all kinds of information. The books and journals now collect dust in want of users. There was a time when scholars and academics used to be proud of their collection of books and journals now researchers and scholars get all information just with a touch of their finger on their laptop. While books cost a fortune a laptop delivers desired information virtually free.

New Communication Technology and Crime

General impression is crime rate is increasing. Since we do not have data from past comparison is not possible. Analyzing and reporting crime rate now and in the past has some problem. The general impression is crime rate, particularly crime against women has increased. Just a possibility certain types of programs containing sexually explicit material might be doing that. Frankly more researches need be under taken to arrive at some conclusion.

New Communication Technology and Space Sciences

New communication technology is an essential part of space sciences. Man landed on the moon is an old story. Not only the super powers have successfully landed on the moon even India has successfully sent a satellite to Mars. Information technology has contributed in different sectors of science. Communication technology has contributed to various areas of sciences. I would like to conclude with a note that technology is as good as we make use of it. It largely depends on our wisdom and concern for humanity. Technology is a double edged sword. If it can kill humanity it can also save and serve humanity. Finally I like to add virtually almost everyday innovations take place and the trend is those who can afford, have inclination throw away or pass over to 'kabadi' the junk.