

# An Introspective Study of National Development in Bangladesh through Mass Media

**Md. Burhan Uddin**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Media Studies  
Manarat International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Editor, Daily Bangla Bazaar, www.bangla-bazaar.com*

**Md. Abu Bakar Siddique\***

*Associate Professor & Head, Department of Education  
Royal University of Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Editor, Daily Press Watch, www.dailypresswatch.com*

**Farhana Chowdhury**

*Undergraduate Student, Department of Journalism and Media Studies  
Manarat International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh*

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**Abstract:** Media works as a teacher to teach us about development, to make us aware of the betterment of life, and make us teach new skills. Also, it can help us while deciding on adopting any changes, also plays the role of gatekeeper. Mass Media is called the fourth estate of a nation. So, the role of media in development is beyond description. If information dissemination is the key factor of change in society, the media works as the agent of spreading information. Media the agenda setter must work in a free environment with the full democratic scenario for ensuring development. Therefore, the paper reviewed the secondary data and finally depicted some introspective viewpoints on the function of mass media in national development.

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## **Introduction**

Media is the third eye of life through which people can see inside a nation, phenomenon, event, or anything informative. Media which is the plural form of medium is the main tool of communication, mass media is the largest form of all media where people in the highest number can communicate together, and it communicates through publishing, broadcasting, telecasting, etc. In any democratic country, mass media plays a very major role. According to Schramm (1964) media has three roles to play, those are *Informing*, *Educating*, and *Participation*. It helps to build, rebuild, modify, and most importantly reflect public opinion. Our world or even beyond it are covered with a blanket of communication. From the very beginning of life, people started communicating with each other. Day by day the process of communication has grown up to be easier, people at different times researched mostly to make new communication tools which would make it faster, easier, and effective. It is all about communication actually, in this essay we would try to discuss how the main tool of communication which is mass media works and should work for national development. So, the current study depicts an introspective review of the national sectors that can be developed through mass media.

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\*Corresponding Author

### **Agent of social change**

Mass media plays a various role as an agent of social change. It doesn't change everything within a day or a short period. Change in a society that comes through the mass media lasts long, so the effect of it fall slowly. Mass media fully started emerging in Bangladesh after the liberation war. Before the arrival of mass media, Bangladesh was not at all developed, the economy was lower, people were not aware of their rights, maximum people were below the poverty line, GDP was lower, society was fully man dominant. Proper education, human rights nothing was there at that time. Soon after media started emerging people also become a part of mass communication, women came forward, education system gradually increased towards a positive change, economy, GDP grew up. People become aware of their rights, better lifestyle, equality, etc. It all started with print media, soon after that radio, television came in. The new addition is the internet as the media tool which now has become so popular. But the internet has not got the tag of being a mass media. However, media or communication works as the organizer, catalyst, maintainer, equalizer, motivator, etc. for the social change. In a nutshell, mass media can bring about a radical change and it also influences our social, civil, cultural, political-economic, and splendid outlook.

### **Development communication and media**

The term development communication came into the spotlight on 10th December 1971 at the University of Philippines in Los Banos (Chavez, 2018). There is no certain word or sentence which can define development. This is so comprehensive and it includes all aspects of the life of individuals and nations. Rather it can be described from several perspectives. In the early 1960s development was only economy, industry, and higher GDP based. Schramm (1964) in his book Communication and national development has shown development as an economy-based idea (also cited in Lerner, 1966) where he also brought about political and social factors but the main focus was on the economy. After practicing this dominant theory of development people or the policymakers saw this is not the actual development. Though they are earning more money, growing per capita income, GDP growing rapidly but on the other hand, they are also harming the lives of people, plants, natural creatures, and the overall natural environment. Soon after that, the definition of development changed and policymakers started thinking from another point of view. SDG came in and countries are now trying to achieve the goals of it. So, development can be defined as a social change that brings positivity. On the contrary, communication simply means the act of exchanging information from one place to another to an individual or a group. So, development communication means using or applying the process, strategies of communication to achieve positive change in every sector or factor o life.

### **National development and its factors**

National development simply means to improve the environment of a nation by assuring all the fundamental needs. Here the term environment means both social and natural environment. According to the decade report of UN, "National development is a growth plus change, in turn, is social, cultural as well as economic and qualitative as well as quantitative." (cited in National Development, 2018). The main factors can be divided into 3 major parts, those are economic, political, and social. These 3 components have more sub-sectors, some of the important sectors are democracy, education and culture, economic affordability (GDP, per capita income, capital formation, etc.), natural resources and agriculture, politics, technical skill, corruption, and crime.

### **The function of Mass Media for National Development**

The development of a nation means the development of humans, where better life, proper food, and water with all the fundamental rights are included. In short, people will get economic solvency, a good political environment, and peace full of social elements.

- a) *Politics*: In the political environment, here media's role can be found in democracy, good governance, public relation, human rights, political transparency, foreign policy, etc. Mass media can work for development only if the political parties are co-operative. Media can share information about democracy, make people aware of their political rights by providing information, can be a watchdog for showing people if all the wings of politics are working properly and also media would be the representative of public and write for their rights.
- b) *Economy*: In the economic sphere media can play their role in economic policy, growth of GDP, GNP, economic empowerment, business, advertisement, tourism, agriculture, etc. Media would show the actual scenario of the economy of a country, who are holding the economic empowerment what should be done for making people more economically solvent, which sectors influence our economy most and which sector to be given more concentration should be revealed through mass media, helpful business, problems and hopes of tourism sector everything should be the concern of mass media. Mass media also helps the economy by showing advertise.
- c) *Social Development*: Thirdly media can play a vital role in different sectors of social issues like education, technical skills, equality, corruption, crime, drugs, population control, security etc. Media has a lot to do in this sector. The media would come out as an investigator with all the social problems. Mass media has already played a role in several sectors. For example, mass media aware people about violence against women, equal rights, birth control, human right, proper education, etc. mass media need to work now with the security as it's a covid-19 era also should work for making people aware of technical skill because we have 92 universities in Bangladesh. Keeping all the corruption aside we do not need so many scholars we need some skillful workers too. Media would be full of easily accessed information for people also would represent them. All the positive changes that occur in these sectors is because of communication and mass media makes communication more essentially.

So, the role of media in national development can be summarized as a teacher, influencer, watchdog, motivational agent, decision-making agent, collaboration agent, investigator, etc. And mass media can help in development from the root level by consuming these factors:

- a. Easy access: People of rural areas don't have the opportunity to reach mass media always. It is the responsibility of the media itself to ensure easy access.
- b. Regional language: mass media should use the specific language of each community. When people find the language easy to understand they easily get the message.
- c. Community press, radio of broadcasting system: Spreading Information should be community-based to make it more reachable. That's why consisting of community press, radio, or TV channel is important.
- d. Advocacy journalism: a journalist should practice advocacy journalism to make people aware of something they don't know but is good for them.

### **Protecting Civil rights**

Media plays a key role in both defending and endorsing human rights in the world. It can make people aware of the need to encourage certain values in the cause of civil rights which are of eternal value to mankind. Concord, non-violence, decommissioning, conservation and preferment of environmental balances and uncontaminated atmosphere and safeguarding human rights to all irrespective of caste, color, and creed should be the minimum common agenda for the media. However, the media can perform this role in different ways. It can make people aware of their rights, expose its violations and focus attention on people and areas in need of the protection of human rights and pursue their case till they achieve them (Siddique, 2019).

### **Educational Function of Mass Media**

Mass media also has a significant instructive role: Students from rural areas can take a lesson from watching certain television programs. They also can learn a lot of things by listening to the radio. Salam (2017) considers that almost every national daily, both Bangla and English, has its education page; they publish both institutional and general knowledge-based reports for students which is supportive for expanding educational growth. Education is much more than going to schools and colleges, its purpose is to create awareness among people of what mass media can do in the rural and urban areas of the country (Siddique, 2019). Thus, education can be ensured more credibly.

### **Obstructions of Mass Media**

Mass media faces some barriers while working for development those can be:

- a. *Zero democracy*: Mass media can't work properly without democracy.
- b. *Unrest politics*: Unrest politics sometimes leads upon the mass media and collapse it down.
- c. *Unavailability of mass media*: People living in the rural area can't always reach the mass media.
- d. *Not understanding mass people's nerve*: As the representative of mass people, mass media should understand what people demand.
- e. *Group influence is more powerful than media*: Sometimes community influence is far more powerful than what the media says. They would always believe in their leader.
- f. *Following native culture*
- g. *Following prejudice, etc.*

### **Conclusion**

The positive impact of mass media has been so strong always. But all the components are interlinked. For example, the economic environment needs media for its betterment also people need economic solvency for having access to mass media. However, the mass media has always been a fighter for national development, especially for a country like Bangladesh. Though the situation here is a bit shaken mass media are consecutively influencing people towards development. Also, the new addition internet which is not a mass media makes a more powerful impact in both a positive and negative way. Journalists being aware of influencing people toward development. They should work more on analyzing, appreciate, or criticize development related factors.

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