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"AGAINST RICHES, POWER AND KNOWLEDGE
FOR THE FEW
YOU BEGAN A WAR,
AND WITH GLORY YOU DIED IN ORDER
THAT RICHES, POWER AND KNOWLEDGE
SHOULD BECOME UNIVERSAL"

*An inscription on the granite slab of the Memorial to
Fallen Revolutionaries in the Mars Field in Leningrad,
1918.*

→
Development Information

*An agricultural extension worker in Lusaka tapes an interview with
villagers for a farm forum programme.*



INFORMATION

Man is a communicating animal. He cannot exist without external stimuli in the form of information inputs and communicating with others. Human communication is possible because of man's ability to recreate aspects of human conditions in forms that can be learned and shared and the capacity of the human brain to hold an image, to reflect on it, record it, store it and retrieve it in the form of messages. Communication, defined as "social interaction through messages" is a need without which no man, society or nation can survive. For rational behaviour man depends on a ceaseless flow of information from his environment. A society is woven around communication systems and nations need information for existence in a totally interdependent world.

That 'Knowledge is Power' has been firmly proved in more ways than when the Buddha stated it and Francis Bacon echoed it a few centuries ago. The combination of "riches, power and knowledge" in the quotation above, is pregnant with significance as we shall see. In contemporary society, knowledge is also change and accelerating the acquisition of knowledge means increasing the tempo of change. The relatively

fixed universe of feudal times no longer exists. Nations which were once isolated are tied together by bonds emanating from forces external to these, like the bringing together which the colonial experience wrought as well as by voluntary interaction between nations. The move towards regional co-operation in economic, scientific, technical and even cultural spheres among countries that previously were isolated from the mainstream of knowledge or the information explosion, makes new demands on transmission of knowledge. Today's world is also characterised by competition and aggressiveness in advancement and here information is both a tool as well as a necessary shield required to meet the challenges of this environment.

In feudal times the messages and images, which constituted the information exchanged, were confined to everyday experience and was face to face; and the main means of information exchanged was by conversation although the written language was used by elite groups. Gradually people became aware of groups and cultures outside their own, but transmission was yet primarily oral.

A qualitative jump in information exchange occurs with the Industrial

Revolution in Europe which opened up avenues of information transmission never before thought possible. Instead of the slow process of filtering down, and person to person transmission of information, now came mass production and simultaneous transfer of information and ideas became possible at all levels and in all parts of the world. People were now able to share a common system of messages and at the same time this process resulted in the situation that they were now daily exposed to and made aware of a world which they were a part of, but unfortunately had very little actively to do with. With the growth of technology, communication of knowledge, ideas and experience revolutionised societies and created new vistas for man.

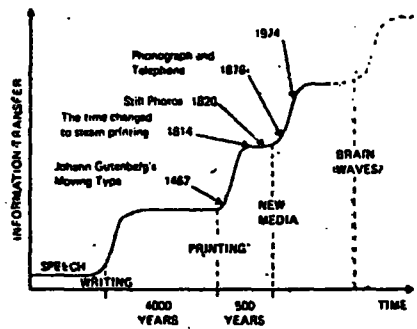
The advent of the Industrial Revolution and the invention of the movable type printing press and paper made it possible to transmit knowledge and information to a larger audience. Publication made it possible for groups of people who were unable to interact personally with each other, because they were too widely dispersed and too numerous, to now interact with each other. The newspaper, periodicals and to a lesser

extent books, are thus major sources of social interaction, knowledge and findings of research. This interaction over the years enabled man to build on knowledge already acquired and transmit new knowledge. The rate at which knowledge was acquired, stored and transmitted has been spiralling through the years. According to estimates, not more than a 1000 titles of books were produced in Europe in the entire period before 1500; (as a contrast to the cultural level differences then, one notes that an emissary of the Chinese Emperor collected 500 titles belonging to one Buddhist sect, the Tantrayana alone, from Sri Lanka in the 7th century). By 1950 the rate of production showed a rapid increase and Europe was producing over 120,000 titles a year—that is what once took a century to produce now took only 10 months. By 1960, what took a century took only 7½ months and by the mid-sixties production in the world had accelerated to 1000 titles per day. This phenomenal growth has been variously referred to as the “information crisis” or “information explosion”.

Today information flows through a myriad of channels. This information is basic to every action of an individual and to every function in society. It is a critical need of all aspects of contemporary life. Government cannot function without information, a business organisation requires information on markets, on industry and on innovations and processes to operate successfully, a professional requires information to build on knowledge already acquired and keep abreast of developments in his subject field. Information provides an administrator with the facts and data required for decision-making. An individual cannot exist without the stimulation he receives by way of communication of experience and knowledge outside him—knowledge which enables him to understand the society he lives in, which makes him aware of what is happening in his country and in the world outside.

A Basic Resource for Development

The mass media now provides man's need for information and entertainment. Radio, television and communication satellites have tended to complete the attenuation of inter-



From the days when all knowledge, information and skills were transferred by word of mouth, evolution of the processes of transfer can be represented by a step function. The points of change coincide with the introduction of static recording-writing, reproduction of static recording-printing, dynamic recording for reproduction—the new media. Throughout the 20th century the change to the new media has continued and this transition period will end only when the media are fully accepted as a normal occurrence in all spheres of human activity. The plateau which will be reached can probably only be superseded by, for example, information transfer by direct electrical injection into the brain according to B. R. Webster, in his book on “*Technology and Access to Communication Media*”, published by UNESCO.

personal communication, a process begun by newspapers, periodicals and books. The information environment of today is characterised by the exponential increase in the flow of information; technological developments had the effect of shrinking the globe in time and distance, which removed a constraint to the free flow of information; the decrease in the time-lag between new discoveries, technological changes and their impact on society with its attendant consequences; the increasing dependence on information and communication services and the growth of a number of systems for meeting these requirements. The increased availability of information has also resulted in conceptual changes with their resultant impact on society. Knowledge and information is also seen by some as a basic resource for development. “A pre-industrial society is essentially based upon raw materials in a game against nature in which there is diminishing returns; an industrial society, is organised primarily around energy and the use of energy for the production of goods and services but a post-industrial society would be organised around information and the utilisation of in-

formation as the basis of organising the flow of knowledge”, says Neelan-gham and Seetharama.

However, there are others who maintain that the “information explosion” is a myth and easier access to information is impeded not so much because of the volume of information, but because of the structures which govern the flow of information. They argue that parallel to the increase in the number of books, journals, reports, theses etc. there has been an increase in the number of professional personnel, many who specialise in narrow fields of study. Further there are more sophisticated techniques available that make the control of information flow easier. The real problem then would be to assess the efficacy of the various media through which information flows.

Components of Information Field

Before assessing the efficacy of other channels of information flow, it would be necessary to sketch briefly the components that form the information field. It consists of a number of functional elements such as the generation of information; distribution of information; storage, retrieval, processing and duplication of information; hardware and software and the information market. Fundamentally the information process consists of linking the information user, with the generators of knowledge. However, it should be noted that the information process is characterised by diversity, lack of well defined boundaries between one process and another and overlapping of functions in the activities of the different components.

Information can be generated by an individual or by a group of people interacting with each other. New discoveries, collection of existing data, development of new processes by research workers and scientists, the work of scholars, artists, authors and reporters, all generate information. They form a heterogeneous group scattered throughout the world. Socio-economic factors, including class, language, subject groupings, all have a bearing on the total information flow.

The information so generated may be distributed through informal channels i.e. by direct inter-personal com-

munication through conversation, lectures, exchange of letters etc. Many still communicate information through the exchange of letters. In early times authors expressed their ideas and their findings to friends by letters. In the present day, it has also taken the form of exchanging manuscripts, pre-prints etc. Information is exchanged at conferences, lectures, meetings of societies and associations. The information generated in this manner is of such significant proportions that many, particularly professionals, find it necessary to be present at those gatherings, if they are to keep abreast of developments in their particular fields of interest. It is of course, not possible to quantify the amount of information that is transferred through informal channels, but it has a definite place in the information flow.

The formal channels of communication consist of newspapers, broadcasting networks, films, communication satellites, books, periodicals and other printed material, as well as unpublished documents such as theses, technical reports etc. It would be appropriate at this stage to question the purpose of the role of the communication media.

Role of the Media

The system of communication, especially the mass media, is a powerful force for the rapid exchange of information. It could be used with advantage to educate the illiterate or it could be used to perpetuate ignorance and to alienate the masses. The world of today is divided into the affluent nations and the deprived nations, the haves and the have-nots. There are wars and there are disputes. The individual nations too are split into the privileged and the underprivileged, the literate and the illiterate. It is being increasingly realised that these differences must be levelled if there is to be peace and harmony in the world. There is a vast storehouse of knowledge and experience that has been accumulated through the ages, which may well contain the answers to many of our problems. Much research and development work has been done and is being done in both the developed and developing countries, and this knowledge can be used by the developing world to

attain a higher and quicker rate of growth. This knowledge is thus an essential resource and a universal resource that can be used to bring about a just world economic order. It is necessary therefore for the communication system to aid the transmission of knowledge from one person to another, from one country to another without distortion and bias. But, in reality, this does not happen, especially in the international sphere. As Kit Nascimento describes strongly, in the Box on pages 6 and 7, the 'foreign presence' can even gain a stranglehold on a smaller nation's communication system.

The communication system could also help establish international understanding by transmitting information about other cultures and other lifestyles and encourage all people and nations to co-operate with each other.

If a society is woven round information and knowledge is considered a universal resource, users must have equal access to this resource. However, a number of factors tend to militate against this ideal. Language barriers, geographical constraints, economic impediments, as well as control over technological know-how prevent a truly universal access to information.

The economic disparities mean that users in developing countries do not have the same quality and quantity of information resources as the users in the richer industrialised countries. Financial priorities limit the procurement process, resulting in insufficient coverage and delays in acquisition. National priorities in developing countries tend to push the information needs further down the ladder in the face of other competing demands having direct economic benefit. For example in Sri Lanka a minute fraction of the total budget was allocated for the information field. However, governments are increasingly recognising the importance of information and have endeavoured to guide the allocation of resources to achieve national objectives.

Because of the economic dependence of the developing countries on the more developed and advanced nations for information, the quality of the information that flows into the developing nations seems suspect. As a

report of Sweden's Dag Hammarskjöld Institute puts it "Under present conditions, information and education are only too often monopolised by the power structure which manipulates public opinion to its own ends and tends to perpetuate preconceived ideas, ignorance and alienation". This has become possible because the producers of media which distribute the information are concentrated in the nations which have the financial resources and the technological know-how. They have been reluctant to make these available to the developing world, unless they control the flow of information. The flow of information has therefore been a one-way affair and the developed countries have not been willing to face up to the consequences of a two-way flow of information.

Dominance-Dependence Relationships

As the following paragraphs show the newspapers, cinema, radio, and T.V. which form the mass media are dependent on international news agencies for their news coverage. According to a survey conducted by the UNESCO in 1972, ninety countries have their own news agencies, while 40 countries have no national agencies. Five national agencies, Agence France Presse (France), Associated Press (USA), Reuters (U.K.), Tass (USSR) and United Press International (USA) monopolise the news field by their technological and financial strength. Apart from the 5 national agencies there are a few others in Egypt, Yugoslavia, India, Japan, Italy, Poland, GDR, FDR, which are developing in importance, though they cannot match the 5 giants. The transnational agencies provide about 95% of the information distributed in the Third World countries. The dominance and control of these nations is even more marked in the audio-visual media; due to the lack of proper infrastructure in the field of radio and T.V., the people in the Third World countries depend on VOA, BBC or Radio France for news of what is happening in their own countries.

"Besides proclaiming the lifestyles of the industrialised countries, they are able to sell their products and know-how. Televised soap operas

THE MENACE OF THE MASS MEDIA

Idealistically, modern mass media communications is a force for international understanding, for the rapid exchange of widely diverse views in a few short moments across a vast planet. But what if the flow of information tends to be almost all one way and the spheres of influence tightly controlled by a few powerful press lords?

Foreign Media, Foreign Ideas

Judging from many of the observations I heard from African, Middle Eastern, Asian and South American delegates attending the Annual General Meeting of the International Broadcast Institute in May 1972, on the subject of the role of the media in economic and social development, I believe I can safely say that the problems of the Caribbean are fairly representative of the problems experienced in most of the developing world.

At the International Broadcast Institute meeting, it was significant that the three areas of greatest concern raised by members from the developing nations and generally subscribed to by the meeting as a whole, were:—

1. the influence of foreign-owned mass media empires on the communications systems within the developing nations;
2. the less developed countries being inundated with foreign ideas, behavioural patterns and cultural influences which conflict with development priorities set by their governments;
3. as a corollary of the first two points, the ways in which the mass communications media can be utilised as an agent for development.

If we are to examine the dangers which threaten the development progress of the smaller, poorer nations from powerful public communications structures centred in the metropolitan countries, it is important that we decide what kind of role the mass communications media ought to be playing in developing nations.

The Media and Development

In their book *"The Emerging Nation"*, Millikan and Blackman stress "the paramount requirement of change in any society is that the people themselves change".

Dr. Wilbur Schramm in his book *"Mass Media and National Development"*, commissioned by UNESCO, makes much the same point. "Each developing country needs desperately to mobilise its human resources and the only way they can do it and keep the time-table (for development) they have in mind is to make full use of modern communications".

It is in this context that the question of ownership and control of the mass media arises together with the question of the influences which are brought to bear on the content of the media.

New nations which have recently escaped the narrow economic bonds placed upon them by a colonial past, are faced with the need to bring about rapid social and economic development. To do this, governments in developing nations have to change unproductive attitudes entrenched by the paternalism of colonial rule, persuade receptive attitudes favourable to co-operation in long-term national effort devoid of short-term tangible rewards.

Tremendous value changes in human behaviour are involved in this sudden thrust towards social and economic independence. In Guyana, for instance, people once slaves or indentured labourers on sugar plantations are told that their economic salvation demands a return to the land from which they have 'escaped' and with which they equate human bondage and undignified work. A population nurtured to regard heavy tweed suits, white shirts and ties as symbols of success, suddenly have to

Development depends on people—their ideas, their attitudes, their priorities. Newspapers, radio and television are a vital influence on all this. But what if these media are controlled by foreign companies and the ideas and priorities they transmit are those of 'Hawaii Five-O', 'The Baron', Hollywood Films and Star Bingo', asks the Guyana Minister of State, Mr. Nascimento in this study of Guyana and other parts of the Commonwealth Caribbean where the "foreign presence" had gained a stranglehold on the mass media.

learn that this form of dress is misplaced and meaningless in a tropical climate. Taste buds which have been attuned to the appreciation of apples and grapes imported from temperate climates are overnight being asked to understand that their local mangoes, pineapples and bananas are just as tasty and that the importation of foreign fruits, vegetables and delicacies is a waste of precious foreign currency.

Effective public communication, guaranteeing an adequate flow of information from government to people and people to government, is an essential ingredient of a successful development programme. Certainly in the independent territories of the Caribbean, the mass media is often the only immediate and effective means for governments to communicate their development programmes and explain the development message.

In fact, to a large extent the press and broadcasting media in small developing nations determine what people know, what people talk about, and to an important but lesser degree, how people act.

This is why the presence and the power of foreign-owned multi-national

mass media empires in developing nations poses one of the greatest threats to the independent development of these nations.

The mass media, if it is to play its part in the development process must be an agent for change. The media must serve the vital role of conveying the message of change, the need and the direction. This is not an argument for the political manipulation and management of news but an argument for, as Schramm puts it, "the conveying of facts, discussions, persuasion and argument, which are parts of the process by which consensus is attained in a free society".

The problem which has been and is still facing many a developing nation, however, is that they inherited public communication systems, press, broadcasting and external telecommunications, which are foreign-owned and controlled; systems which have been developed and are still managed with little commitment to nationalist needs and little thought for indigenous cultural demands; systems which are motivated by and programmed for profit.

Guyana and other parts of the Commonwealth Caribbean make an excellent study of this problem. When Guyana, for instance, became independent in 1966, the only mass circulation morning daily newspaper and both radio channels were owned by foreign mass media empires, the Thomson Organisation and the Rediffusion Group.

The Thomson interests, in particular, have been and are still widespread in the Caribbean region. Often, as was the case until very recently in Guyana, the Thomson presence has enjoyed a monopoly or near monopoly. In Barbados, Thomson owns the only morning daily and Sunday newspapers. In Trinidad, Thomson owns the largest circulation evening, morning daily and Sunday newspapers. In Guyana, Thomson owns the largest circulation morning daily and Sunday newspapers. In addition, Thomson has ownership interests in television rentals in Jamaica, Barbados and Bermuda.

The Rediffusion group owns radio stations in Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica and cable radio in Barbados but no longer exercises a broadcasting monopoly in any of these countries.

Television Contracts

In the broadcasting media, many a developing nation has been tempted into sophisticated systems, notably television, for no better reason than "everyone else has it". Media empires have been quick to take advantage of this lack of understanding to introduce management contract or broadcasting systems to governments, which glitter with the coat of "national interest sugar" but which leave the metropolitan media companies with a handsome profit and the host countries with a handsome headache.

open Third World markets to various colour TV systems more surely than the most aggressive salesman would be able to", Mammad Moxtar Thim. In the African continent over 92% of the programmes are imported,

while in Asia the figure stands around 50%. People of these countries thus watch and listen to programmes which proclaim alien values, lifestyles, culture and outlook. A minority, therefore, because of their financial

resources, organisational structure, and technological superiority are able to impose words and pictures and maintain the dominance-dependence relationship between the rich and poor nations. The objection to such aspects of cultural colonialism is not that they are foreign products but that they do not have an organic relationship with the problems of their audiences. In short the audiences are turned into mere voyeurs of a history and experience outside their lives.

To overcome this obvious one-sidedness in the field of information, (of the global information flow only about 15-20% emanates from the poor countries) and the realisation that the Third World developing countries were treated as some thing apart led the Non-Aligned nations at the summit meeting in Algiers in 1973 to resolve to take suitable corrective action regarding the disparities in the field of information. It was agreed that the Non-Aligned countries should exchange and disseminate information of their domestic and foreign political developments and about the world through newspapers and periodicals, radio, TV and the news media of their respective countries and should formulate plans for sharing of experience in this field. This decision taken up later at Lima and Colombo led to the launching of the pool of Non-Aligned countries News Agencies as a form of exchange of news and information among the Non-Aligned developing countries.

regional, small city and small town newspapers, television and radio stations and other publications in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In Canada, the Thomson Organisation, directly or indirectly, owns or controls, for example, 45 newspapers, three television stations, three television community antennae and rental companies and five radio stations, plus numerous other financial interests.

In the U.S.A., the organisation publishes no less than 7 newspapers. Most are suburban dailies, weeklies and twice weeklies and in many instances monopoly publications with rivalry only from two or three of the large city newspapers with national or State circulation. Thomson controls also five community antennae companies.

In the United Kingdom, Thomson Newspapers owns 32 publications, Thomson Magazines own 66 publications, and the influential Times Newspaper Publications, controlled by Thomson, extends its influence into publications in specialist fields covering medicine, engineering, catering, furnishing, jewellery, breweries, motor accessories, etc.

Millions of minds, with one man holding the opportunity to influence them all. Millions of minds which in turn influence the attitudes of governments in all the major powers, which influence the decisions of investors in the major powers and which influence the foreign policies which super powers may adopt in regard to their relations with the Third World.

Government Ownership

It has been my experience that multi-national mass media empires such as the Thomson Organisation, almost as a rule of thumb, insist, if it can be achieved, on a monopoly as a condition of publication and deliberately resist both private and public effort to provide competition and create freedom of choice through an alternative medium. It is my conviction that their continuing presence and influence in the developing world is a disturbing and destructive one.

The alternative for many a poor developing nation is going to have to be, at least for a time, government ownership of the mass media. This does not rest easy in the mind of the libertarian of the Western world, but let him remember that when his country was at a similar stage of development, the diversified channels of public communication, which are available to the people today, did not exist and the accepted communications ethic was that there should be no publishing which would not be in the interest of the state and its citizens.

The tragedy is that many of the new nations that have established a broadcasting system to include television have entered into this kind of arrangement and are living today to regret it. Most of these nations have made this mistake because they have rushed into television in order to have it as a status symbol and the easiest way to achieve the symbol as quickly as possible is to do business with a management agency.

Governments of these countries have given very little thought to the aims and objects of television and to its public interest value, and as a result have become burdened with a system that is incapable of satisfying the national needs.

Third World nations are generally wiser now, having learnt by bitter experience the consequence of entering into the management-contractor type of arrangement referred to above, but many are still left with the problem of extracting themselves. Quite apart from the huge expense of converting inadequate facilities to permit a greater degree of local programming and the retraining of production staff to meet this demand, television audiences have been psychologically tuned in to expect 'canned' entertainment from abroad. The golden opportunity of exposing a new and captive audience to serious, relevant and informative television has been lost, probably forever.

Freedom of the Press

Obviously no independent government urgently seeking to mobilise its human resources for rapid social and economic development, is going to welcome foreign domination of the nation's mass media. Less still will an independent government welcome a foreign media presence resistant to change and resistant to competition. The Prime Minister of Guyana, Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, told the members of the UNESCO workshop referred to earlier that, in his view, "a nation whose mass media is dominated from outside is not a nation".

Two things occur, however, when an independent government of a small Third World nation seeks to challenge the presence of a foreign-owned multi-national seeking to maintain a dominant hold on the media. First, a storm is raised that the "freedom of the press" is being threatened. Second, the multi-national warns of the potential it has for destroying the nation's international image, especially in regard to foreign private investment.

When Lord Thomson tells a Third World government that he can make things awkward he is not jesting. The Thomson influence spreads to national,

Although a number of developing countries have sophisticated information services, the gaps in the procurement process from abroad, results in having a negative effect on these services.

Translations

Another impediment to equal access to the world store of information is that of language. In the field of science and technology it has been estimated that the English language accounts for about 40% of the world literature. This was not always so. In the 19th century French was the most popular language of science. In some areas like chemistry it was German, whilst in classical antiquity the classical languages of Sanskrit, Greek, Pali, Latin etc. were carriers of the then recognised knowledge. During the first half of the 20th century French, German and English became the major languages of information dissemination. But after World War II, English accounted for about 50% of the literature, while the Russian language gained in importance. Although about 40% of today's scientific literature is in English, English, French and German are increasingly giving way to Japanese, Chinese, Russian and other Eastern European languages and the indigenous languages of the developing world. In the social sciences, according to a study by WLOSSP, in 1973, 40% of the serials were in English, 14% in French, 8% in German, 10% in Spanish and 9% in Slavonic languages.

Translation services are therefore one pre-requisite in the chain of

information transfer, but here again the problem is to find specialist translators to render the foreign language works in their own languages and also to make their own works understandable to the outside world. This problem is not confined to one country or one group of users, but it is more acute in the developing countries. Most developing countries are unable to provide translations from languages other than English. There are difficulties in providing even this service. In Sri Lanka with the decision to switch the medium of instruction to

Sinhala and Tamil, attempts were made by the Government to translate text books. Apart from this and the Marga translation project started a few years ago there have been no major efforts to provide the Sinhala educated public with access to new ideas and printed material outside Sri Lanka.

The following tables show the number of original books published in Sinhala and Tamil and the number of translations for the 6-year period 1970-1975; and the most popular type of literature.

BOOK PRODUCTION IN SRI LANKA

Titles Classified by Subject

1970—1975

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Literary Texts	134	164	231	112	103	92
Law, Pub. Adm., Soc. Welfare	113	77	124	59	108	71
Politics, Economics	83	65	159	143	101	23
History, Biography	67	74	47	30	26	29
Religion, Theology	57	81	88	59	55	51
Linguistics	54	23	26	14	17	10
Geography, Travel	20	18	13	5	4	7
Agriculture, Forestry	20	18	30	8	13	18
Medical Science	20	6	13	7	11	12
Natural Sciences	18	27	59	24	21	20
Mathematics	18	16	16	9	2	6
Philosophy, Psychology	16	19	15	20	15	10
Literature (Hist. & Criticism)	15	15	24	20	18	10
Technology, Industry Trades and Crafts	11	9	11	9	6	3
Sociology, Statistics	10	27	11	6	12	10
Education	10	15	40	35	49	28
Sub-total	666	654	907	560	561	402
Others	702	589	693	940	880	747
Total	1,368	1,243	1,600	1,500	1,441	1,149

Source: Administration Reports of the Director of National Archives.

BOOK PRODUCTION IN SRI LANKA

Number of Titles and Copies Classified by Language of Publication—1970-75

	1970		1971		1972		1973		1974		1975	
	Titles	Copies	Titles	Copies	Titles	Copies	Titles	Copies	Titles	Copies	Titles	Copies
Sinhala	744	5,079,248	607	3,248,992	759	5,410,357	641	4,621,091	557	4,750,977	540	2,194,648
English	360	1,776,681	294	998,560	344	1,250,353	344	2,071,818	361	1,509,393	285	724,298
Tamil	264	1,269,015	238	689,687	249	1,047,397	250	1,530,679	269	1,156,242	222	576,324
Works in 2 or more languages			104	156,873	248	1,048,710	265	745,395	254	877,467	102	457,442
Total	1368	8,124,944	1243	5,094,112	1600	8,756,817	1500	8,968,983	1441	8,294,079	1149	4,252,712

Source: Sri Lanka National Library Services Board—Bibliography Division.

The denial of access to knowledge has deeper socio-economic and political consequences. The new knowledge and ideas that are imported to this country via a foreign language help to perpetuate the barriers and the internal communication gap that exists between the English-educated minority and the majority of the people. Further they are able to maintain their advantageous position in employment and improve their income levels. In the economic sphere the ruling English-educated elites, following the lifestyles of the West, diverted financial resources away from the real needs of the masses to maintain their status quo. Today by virtue of their ability to understand a foreign language, they are better equipped to hold the key

decision-making positions in the country. The urgent need then, is to bridge the information and communication gap and make knowledge also freely available to the Sinhala and Tamil educated masses. But as Sinhala is a purely indigenous language, and confined to this country, the Sinhala reader has to depend entirely on indigenous publications for new knowledge. But books and periodical publications in Sinhala have been limited as can be seen from the table on these pages. One reason for the limited book production has been market limitations which impose certain constraints on publishers. The publishers, therefore have shown a marked preference for publishing popular literature, with an assured

market and in a readership survey conducted by the Marga Institute, fiction ranked first in the order of preference. A subject classification of Sinhala books published during the period 1970-75 indicates that publications in such fields as economics, sociology, science and political thought is limited. But the Marga survey comments "The popularity of newspaper reading as revealed in the Readership Survey indicates the desire among the selected groups to gain access to whatever information that is available in Sinhala." The survey indicates that the feature articles of the newspapers are widely read and evidently serve as a source for the transmission of knowledge on current affairs, politics, science and related fields. The fact that the demand for political newspapers is relatively low also tends to confirm the view that the newspapers are read for their information and knowledge-content.

Just as access to information is far from equal, the capacity or the means available to use the available information differs greatly between individual institutions and nations. Libraries were the earliest means of making available the knowledge generated by a few to a larger community of users. These early libraries were essentially repositories for collections of books, and manuscripts and they developed around temples and monasteries and royalty as in Sri Lanka or the Near Eastern countries and Europe. There was no subject distinction, and subject distinctions that appeared in the later years were more from the environment than from content. Thus libraries attached to temples and monasteries continued to develop along those lines; and examples of this type are found as is evidenced by the ruins of the one attached to the Mahavihara in Sri Lanka. Educational and University libraries developed through the centuries, while other libraries maintained by learned or wealthy citizens, who later on bequeathed or sold these collections, very often, formed the nucleus for State libraries or Municipal libraries. The Saltykovshchedvia and the Lenin State Library in the USSR, the British Museum in U.K., the Bibliotheque Nationale de France are some outstanding examples of this type of development.

PERIODICALS PUBLISHED IN SRI LANKA (1975)
- SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION

	<i>Sinhala</i>	<i>English</i>
Poetry	69	—
Law, Pub. Adm. Social Welfare	9	46
Physics, Economics	54	32
History, Archaeology	14	11
Religion, Theology	98	74
Geography	5	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Dairy	7	23
Medical Science	6	29
Natural Sciences	7	14
Management, Accountancy, Marketing	5	19
Technology, Ind. Trades, Crafts	14	17
Literature	36	2
Sociology, Statistics	5	5
Education	6	14
Fine Arts	22	7
Children's Magazines	14	—
Others*	158	96
*Includes school magazines, house journals and general periodicals	529	390

Source: Department of National Museums, Ceylon Periodicals Directory.

NEWSPAPERS IN SRI LANKA
Numbers being published as at March 1976

	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Fort-nightly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Irregular</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sinhala	6	25	7	15	8	61
Tamil	4	7	—	5	4	20
English	5	7	1	6	—	19
Bilingual	—	2	—	1	—	3
Total	15	41	8	27	12	103

Source: Department of National Archives.

There were 129 newspapers registered with the Department of National Archives at the end of March 1976, of which 76 were Sinhala publications, 25 Tamil, 25 English and 3 Bilingual. Of these 26 appeared to have ceased publication. The other 103 broken down by language and regularity of publication are shown in the table above.

Most of these early libraries were passive storage facilities, whose collections were general in scope. In the 19th century there developed special libraries to serve a specific group of users. With the Industrial Revolution, these libraries were established in industrial undertakings, government departments, scientific institutions and research organisations and gradually the emphasis shifted from the passive repositories to the active "knowledge dispensing" type where the special library and later information centres accepted the responsibility of meeting the information needs of its users in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment.

The advent of the so-called cybernetic age, a decade or two ago brought about changes in the techniques of data processing and transmission of information giving rise to data banks, computer centres, tele-processing networks and other switching-on centres in the developed countries.

All these systems in the information transfer chain co-exist in the world today. These differences in the existing information systems however limit the free flow of information and the quality and the quantity of information available to the user.

Sri Lanka is a country with a long tradition of intellectual activity and the development of libraries kept pace with this literary activity. From the first century B.C., when the Tripitaka texts were committed to writing, it may be assumed that libraries too developed. But direct references to libraries are found only in the Polonnaruwa period where the Cūlavamsa records that King Parakramabahu I constructed two libraries in Polonnaruwa and 128 libraries in Ruhuna. Literary activity and scholarship continued in the subsequent centuries, but with the coming of the Portuguese in the 16th century, monasteries which were the seats of learning and libraries were destroyed, and books burnt. Thus the Kotte period which saw much literary activity was followed by two centuries of inactivity.

The establishment of the Sinhala printing press in 1734 and the introduction of paper for printing gave

new direction for the development of literature and libraries. In the 19th century, missionaries started the publishing of books to further their missionary activities and for educational purposes. Increase in literary and educational activity, as well as the establishment of various societies and institutions further helped this development. The library of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and the Government Oriental Library were established in 1845 and 1870 respectively, and the latter formed the nucleus of the Colombo Museum Library.

The establishment of public libraries began with the establishment of subscription libraries in the 19th century. The Colombo Library was established in 1813 and the Pettah Library was founded in 1829 and these two were amalgamated in 1935 to form the Colombo Public Library. The modern phase of the history of libraries began with the establishment of the University College Library in 1920. Expansion of educational facilities, with the consequent spread of literacy created a demand for more and more library facilities and caused the establishment of small libraries throughout the island. Within the last two decades special libraries have come into existence to serve the needs of research institutes, and Government Departments and Agencies.

Sri Lanka thus has a variety of libraries at school, university, technical college levels as well as at public, special and Government Institution levels. Development of libraries has however been haphazard. Funds for operating these libraries were insufficient and they were autonomous small units which provided library services and functioned in water-tight compartments without any reference to a national plan. There was a shortage of qualified personnel to run these libraries and training facilities limited.

The impetus given to scientific research and scientific policy by the establishment of the National Science Council in 1968 provided the necessary stimulus for the establishment of a body to co-ordinate and develop the resources of science and technical information in the island. It became

apparent that a well organised information network was essential to retrieve the vast amount of information that had been generated in the country and elsewhere. UNESCO proposed the establishment of a National Science and Technical Documentation Centre, but no concrete action was taken to translate this into practice.

In the meantime in 1970 the National Library Services Board was established and given wide powers to plan and assist in the organisation and development of library services and promote and develop Public, University, Technical, School, Government and Special libraries. It was also entrusted with the establishment of a National Library for Sri Lanka. It was expected that the National Library Services Board, would by its activities plan library development on a more rational basis and by co-ordinating the activities of the various service points in the information network avoid duplication and waste.

As University Librarian and leading Sri Lanka authority on the information sciences Ian Goonetilleke says ".....it is possible, by intelligent manipulation and recording of the resources and with the minimum inputs into the prevailing infrastructure, to bring about a comparatively radical transformation of *laissez faire* documentary activity. The problems inherent in the stated objectives are sometimes also of such margin wide and complexity and they cannot be overcome except by national and international effort. In times of economical stress and acute foreign exchange crisis moreover, the things of the flesh are bound to take precedence over the affairs of the intellect. No attempt should therefore be spared in the present, to develop procedures and devices for making existing information quickly available. It is the noblest endeavour of the science and art of documentation to ensure that new discoveries are not lost, and that all further research takes place at the furthest point on the frontier which has already been sign-posted. This is true in the field of social science as it is in the..... and all Asian countries ignore it at their peril".

THE MEDIA AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MESSAGE

Information that is purveyed by the mass media is not neutral information. It is subjected to a conscious and more often unconscious process of pre-selection as to what should be transmitted, in which manner and to whom. The audience to whom the media transmits is likewise pre-selected or in the converse case, the audience pre-selects its media. The manner in which this is done nationally, as well as internationally, depends on the socio-economic and class structure of the different nations and the way it is related internationally.

At any given moment across the world there are literally billions of events occurring that could be projected as news and information. Similarly there are millions of news items projected through the media that are absorbed by audiences. To see how this is done, we have to first have an idea of the inter-linkages between socio-economic structures. We thus first describe the international linkages and their associated problems and then move on to the national sphere. During the last two years, there has been much discussion, specially in the Non-Aligned world of the need for a New World Information Order. But this just demand and discussion has clouded an equally important necessity of new Internal Information Orders within our countries. Our countries being in the Third World are in some instances led by feudal monarchs and the like in addition to more enlightened leaderships, leading to peculiar problems. Therefore it is very vital to assess and analyse our internal structures themselves.

Mass Media and the Third World

A starting point to our discussion on the international dimension is the fact that beginning from five centuries ago countries of the Third World were knit against their will, to a world economy with the Western nations as centres of consumption. This process was accompanied by the use of large-scale violence, suppression of the prior socio-economic formations in our countries and substituting in their stead the aggressive mark of an all embracing colonial order. Because of this process strong

disparities of income, for example, have grown between our countries on the one hand and the western countries on the other. And, these gaps instead of closing continue to grow today.

This uneven distribution of income is but an outer symbol of the deep changes that have been wrought by the colonial past and the continuation of these processes in the neo-colonial present. These resulting socio-economic changes which gave us colonialism bind us to the consuming centre by structures within our societies as well as those without.

To put it briefly, the socio-economic structures in our countries are those that have been created by the colonial presence to service the colonisers' aims. Before the colonial encounter most of our societies were agricultural and feudal in nature. They were not idyllic societies but they were to a certain degree self-sufficient, although they had a high degree of inequality and sometimes cruelty within their structures. The colonial presence removed these feudal and tribal structures and imposed a dependent socio-economic structure, capitalist in nature, as the predominant factor in these countries.

In the concrete, this meant the creation of classes in our countries tied to the colonial presence. This included large business interests related to direct colonial activities like plantations or the ancillaries that arose to serve the main colonial functions. Thus were created the many business groups, as well as professional groups, that were left at the time of formal de-colonisation. In the case of professional groups there arose civil servants, police and armed forces to serve the repressive law and order: the lawyers to serve the new laws concerning property; the engineers to serve the railways and roads which transported the colonial products; doctors to serve this new strata of people and an army of clerks to handle routinised activities of the colonial presence.

Thus directly and indirectly out of the colonial presence was created a bourgeoisie in Sri Lanka and in other Third World countries. It should however be emphasised that this bourgeoisie was not an independent one, but dependent. Its creation and existence was dependent on the

colonial presence. The general financial, cultural, social and intellectual sustenance of this bourgeoisie was dependent on their colonial links.

With formal independence direct political control was nominally renounced by the dominating power but there has been a tendency for dependent patterns to persist by the emergence, for example, of new forms of economic controls.

One of the strongest elements for these dependent structures to persist is the existence of a dependent culture that services this class. Such a culture tends to condition attitudes and values in certain vital segments of society so as to perpetuate certain patterns of dependent behaviour.

In this situation, mass media plays an important role in structuring responses and what the mass media says and whom it represents are very important. The mass media plays an important role vis-a-vis this dependent culture. It can strengthen it and so increase our dependence or help to lessen this hold.

Tools Mass Media Uses

The tools used in the mass media have almost all been inventions of the West, be it the newspapers, radio or television. The ownership patterns of this media are significant. Thus if one were to take a common index like the per capita number of newspapers, radio sets and television sets, we would obtain different maps for the world. In the rich countries, we would have high incidence of mass media organs an observation perhaps obvious but which nevertheless has serious repercussions on the socio-economic structures of our societies. In a Third World country like Sri Lanka, we would similarly tend to obtain skewed ownership patterns, thus the higher income groups among us would tend to have access to more newspapers and magazines, and radios with a capacity to reach many stations etc.

Thus in the access by the people of various countries to channels of mass media, the world economic order is mapped faithfully. Access to more channels of media exist in the rich developed countries. There too, the upper classes have a greater access. Whilst in our countries, our upper classes have a greater access to the media than our lower classes; our

Media in the Socialist Countries

The promotion of the media in the socialist countries begins in the analysis of the class nature of capitalist society and the fact that the media is used often as a form of control by the ruling groups although this recognition has led to certain obvious difficulties. To describe this, one has to diverge slightly to the tactics that were used in these countries to bring about their revolutions. Because of what was perceived as overall capitalist control that existed then, it was theorised largely by Lenin that a highly disciplined party based on a strong leadership by a vanguard should lead the country in its revolution. Lenin emphasised the role of ideas and intellectuals in struggle. Socialist consciousness, he declared "could be brought to them (the workers) only from without. The working class by its own effort is able to develop only trade union consciousness". Lenin emphasised the need for organisation and the concept of vanguardism. A small vanguard consisting of a small carefully selected group from the Party consisting of only the most conscious professional revolutionaries could form a core for revolutionary thought and action. Such a form of organisation was felt necessary to breakthrough the all-embracing capitalist structure.

It is within this context that the mass media in the socialist countries has to be seen. Often the mass media was seen as the link between the professional revolutionary Party and the people. Lenin spoke of the press as "the collective propagandist, agitator and organiser" and Stalin called it the "driving belt" between the Party and the masses. The printed newspaper was supplemented by thousands of wall-newspapers and mimeographed news papers and either handwritten or typewritten copies appeared on the notice boards in factories and other points of communication. Wall newspapers covered more local level situations like production activities, praised outstanding workers and criticised the laggards. The wall newspapers were edited by part-time personnel closely supervised by the local Party officials.

This initial imprint of the vanguard concept and the use of the media as a

conscious instrument of change has persisted to a large extent in its original format even after nearly half a century of socialist control in some countries. That is even after the removal of the hostile capitalist environment in the country.

Because of this apparent tightness of control, there is often perceived a certain degree of arbitrariness (although argued out on theoretical viewpoints) on key issues. Thus although using the same Marxist-Lenin theoretical apparatus, the mass media of different socialist countries gave interpretations of almost the same socio-economic happenings depending on the particular party viewpoints. Very rarely does one see the overt emergence of conflicting views in the mass-media in one socialist country reflecting the different viewpoints. But, however, the media changes its views depending on changes in the leading elements of the Party.

Thus one sees sometimes a classical turnabout in the mass media as for instance that which emerged in the 1950s with the coming to power of Khrushchev and the drive to discredit Stalin's viewpoint. Avid readers of Tsin Hua over the last one year cannot escape noticing changes in the mass media of viewpoints emerging from the changes that are now occurring in China. These vary from the important Tien Mien Square 'incident' (as the Chinese named it at the time) and which led to the ousting of Tseng Shiao Peng and the emergence of the campaign against the right deviationist wing. Now the media echoes a different line with its strong attacks on the so-called 'gang of four' and their policies and demands for reservation of some of the positions held by Tseng Shiao Peng and Chou En Lai. The media now does not report the viewpoint of an year ago, as then it did not report the viewpoints of the present.

Clearly a high degree of arbitrariness resides in the socialist media. Socialist countries have apparently overcome class control in the classical capitalist sense of the media, but have replaced it with a degree of arbitrariness. Obviously the media in these countries are not perfect instruments and the need for improvement is apparent.

It is this selection process that is of vital importance in the information that we receive. Within a broad spectrum of news output that a particular medium turns out, it is possible to find the common factors and guidelines usually set by the respective publisher or producer which colour the output and hence the broad criteria of selection.

Because of their vast technical and financial resources, there is a large amount in physical terms of formal information and news generated in the rich industrialized nations. Because of their higher resources they have the ability to collect what is considered news not only all over the country, but all over the world and then transmit it for use in their countries as well as in other countries. This is done by the well-known media agencies like Reuters, Associated Press etc.

Further insights into the reasons for this situation and its impact are dealt with by Raghavan in the box on page 13.

In many Third World countries, because of links of dependence that we have already described, the output of these generators of the raw material for the media find their way into our media as well. This is for two principal reasons. First is the economic necessity and convenience in using an established media network; purportedly collecting information from all over the world and giving it in an easily assimilable form on a teleprint output. The second and far more important reason is that the dependent culture created out of the colonial and the neo-colonial links are conditioned to demand the output of these media as not only reliable and accurate but also meeting their inner psychological needs.

This process of looking at the media through the dependent culture is very similar, for example, to the tendency during British times for Sri Lanka's middle classes to consider the Raleigh bicycle, the Singer sewing machine and the Austin car, as well as British education, as the best in the world.

The output of the large multinational media firms whether it be through magazines or through news channels percolate our consciousness

upper classes generally tend to have lesser channels than the upper classes in the rich countries.

But although there is thus a greater inequality in access to sources of information more important is the content these channels transmit. Thus many channels in television may exist in a city like New York, but most will be throwing out what is regarded as gullible rubbish as compared with, for example, programmes of a more enlightened media like the BBC.

Information and Entertainment

The media gives out information

and entertainment, let us see how these affect us in turn. Taking information, that is news, first there are millions of events of importance occurring all over the world that can be considered news. But from this wide spectrum of possible news stories, only a few items are selected, recognised and published as news. Illustrative of this attitude is the legend on the masthead of the *New York Times*, one of the world's most influential newspapers, which boldly states.

"All the News
That's First Print"

often by first reaching the upper social classes and through them by a process of trickling down to the rest of the society. Thus there is a strong tendency for structuring the consciousness of our people by what has originally been selected as "news worthy" and is considered of interest in a metropolitan country. What is news-worthy and of interest depend on the socio-economic and other problems and interests of a given country.

We have recently been discovering, more and more, that there is a conflict of interests between the Third World and the rich industrialised countries. Therefore what is of interest in the rich industrialised countries or more accurately what is in the interest of rich industrialised countries may not necessarily be so to our countries. Consequently in the process of selection of news in the industrialised centre countries there

exist strong possibilities not only of selection of news irrelevant to our realities but also selection of news in a way harmful to our interests. When this media output is received as legitimate and correct by our people, there is thus a tendency for it to be in effect an act of betrayal of our own interests.

It is also well-known that this selection of stories from our countries or transmission through the mass media has as times led to deliberate

A New World Communication and Information Structure

There is no clear conceptualization and formulation of what is meant by a new communication and information structure and what its implications are. It is obviously intended that such a new structure should represent an improvement on the existing state of affairs in which the mass media are dominated by a few transnationals belonging to the western industrialized countries.

Basic to the present structure is the role of the mass media in a modern industrialized nation. Unprecedented in scope and power, because of technological advances, in their main function the mass media are the central channels through which we learn about what exists, what is important and what is right with the world. They are part of our culture, and reflect and propagate it. And the basic culture of today's prevailing economic order is the emphasis on the individual as a distinct entity and repository of human values. However, and paradoxically, the mass media have created a false consciousness of this through a diminished view of human potential and worth in general, while seeming to insist on the intrinsic value of each separate human being.

It has been pointed out that US television, for example, is directed at a large but well-defined audience, and its symbolic function is the reinforcement of the conviction that the United States is a democracy (the leaders act in accordance with the wishes of the people), its economy is based on free market competition (governed by the laws of supply and demand), and most likely God is alive, White, Male and pro-American. The middle-class is the message. The reality that these truths are (with the exception of the existence of God) demonstrably false is the reality which will not appear in the world of television. The reality of the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a white and male but very small elite; the reality of the vacuous irrelevance of the 'democratic' process in the determination of the most important political issues; the control and manipulation of consumption by the imperatives of endlessly expanding production; these are the realities which are not conveyed by the Communications Media.

What is true of US television is even more true of the image that is created by the flow of information from the centre to the periphery. Within the industrialized world, North American society

is depicted as the end objective to be achieved, through an imitative development process, and everything in the periphery that is different from that in the centre is a matter for ridicule.

This springs from the value system of that society and its yardsticks to judge merit and achievement.

In addition, the survival of the present order—the consumer society and an expanding industrial system—depends upon the cultivation of a false consciousness of social, economic and political realities. This falsehood is essential if the present order is to remain stable with constantly expanding production and consumption. Expectations must be held at a reasonable level and demand must be directed into appropriate channels. The *sine qua non* of such a system is an economically, socially and politically pliable population; the function of education and information within it is the creation and maintenance of such a population.

The importance and need for a new international communication and information structure transcends the needs of the new international economic order, argues C. Raghavan, a distinguished Indian journalist. He has shown how the leading organs of public opinion of the transnational power structure have misused their "freedom of information" to present a distorted picture of the Third World both to the industrialised countries and the Third World itself.

Complementary to the emphasis on the individual in the modern industrialized society is the concept of scarcity. What is scarce has a higher market value, is saleable and gives more profits. The individual or group that is able to control it is more successful and ultimately has more power. This concept applies to natural resources, goods and services, and even information and knowledge.

These concepts and modes of the industrialized society are also propagated in the periphery, through the present international communication and information structure. Within the nation, and among nations too, the emphasis is on individual ability. A skill that everyone possesses would not qualify as a

measure of the individual's ability. The value system of the industrial society promotes those skills that differentiate rather than those that unite.

This is why, nationally and internationally, the present concept of information puts a premium not on what unites or is common but on what deviates or is scarce. Whence the belief that men biting dogs are news but not dogs biting men.

This is so for a monocultural nation, and more so for the pluralistic cultures prevalent in the Third World nations.

The present structures of international communication and information all controlled by the centre, perform two jobs. First, they propagate within the periphery the false consciousness or image of the centre. The fact that those who propagate it have themselves been brought up on it and therefore believe it does not make it any the less false. Second, they look for what is deviant in the cultures of the Third World—for that alone is saleable—and spread it to other parts of the Third World and to the centre.

There is also a third function that is performed; that of 'feedback' from the periphery to the centre. Modern power structures do not only channel a flow of information from the centre to the periphery, they also provide for the centre a flow of information on the reactions and changes or new situations in the periphery. This is a kind of 'surveillance of the environment' in the Third World—monitoring the various changes in conditions taking place that would have an impact on the power of the centre. This feedback is for the benefit of the governments and managements in the centre. A similar service from the centre to the periphery is not, however, available.

All this is conducted under the umbrella of 'freedom of information'.

In this context, the importance and need for a new international communication and information structure transcends the needs of the new international economic order. The new structure is fundamental to the preservation of the pluralistic cultures of the world and to sustain and foster them rather than destroy and remould them in the monoculture of the western (industrialized) world.

Chakravarti Raghavan

The Silumina's Changing Content and Form

During the period of the last 40 years the Sinhala reading public has undergone a tremendous change; both a qualitative and a quantitative change. A comparison of two copies of the 'Silumina' the popular Sinhala weekly - one published a few decades ago, and the other in recent times, reveals some of these changes.

The two copies selected were, one published in 1931 and the other in 1975. The 1931 copy consists of 20 pages, each page containing 7 columns, of a width of 2½ inches approximately. The copy published in 1975, on the contrary, had dwindled to a mere 10 pages.

The 1931 issue has given a prominent place to news; as much as 31% of the entire paper or 6 of the 20 pages were devoted to news. Of these news items nearly half comprised foreign news. Another noteworthy feature here is the more or less equal distribution of news items throughout the pages; while the last page carried an exclusively pictorial presentation of local news.

In the Silumina of 1975, on the other hand, news takes up only a mere 10% of the entire space, the equivalent of a single page. And of this amount world news occupies only one-third of all news or 3% of space available in the whole paper.

With regard to advertisements, the 1931 copy had set apart a reasonable 22%, equally spread throughout the paper. The 1975 copy, however, has given priority to advertisements over news and other editorial matter by devoting to advertising 46% of its space which is equally, but not systematically, parcelled out in all pages. For instance, some pages have only advertisements. A clear indication of the fact that hard information is given second place, in the face of growing commercialism.

Another major difference to be observed between the two issues, is the presentation of Sports News. The 1931 'Silumina' utilises about 40% of news coverage space for this purpose whereas sports has disappeared altogether, from the recent 'Silumina'.

Among the special features in today's 'Silumina' prominence is given to cartoon and picture serials or stories, cartoons and poems, whereas the 'Silumina' of old used to give a similar position to poetry.

No advance however, can be seen in the space allocated for academic or learned interests. The 1931 'Silumina' contains a supplement devoted to historical and academic matter which took up 23% of the allocated space, whereas in the 1975 issue only 13% of space has been devoted to similar subject matter. The (popular) readership appeal present papers are catering to and have helped to create, now becomes more apparent.

An important difference to be noticed between the two specimen papers, however is in the style of language used, and the mode of presenting news and other items.

The changes in the newspapers over the last forty years reflect the socio-economic changes that have taken place in the country. The class that read the 'Silumina' forty ago was largely the rural elite. They together with some urban elements were the principal elements of the Sinhala intelligentsia. It was also in a sense an elite reading public as reflected in the large (nearly 1/3) amount of space devoted to literary and academic matter. In fact this reading public were the opinion makers that were to influence the cultural changes in the mid 50's. The readership in 1977 on the other hand reveals a mere levelling down in subject matter and even taste.

falsehoods and distortions. In the recent hearing on the CIA by the U.S. Senate Sub-Committee it was revealed how false stories were originated in the Third World and carried around through the mass media. It was also revealed that many personnel associated with the international media have worked closely with Intelligence Agencies. cursory examinations of the output of socialist media will also indicate several (from our perspectives) distortions. These readers of the press releases of the Soviet and Chinese of the Non-aligned Conference would have been left with very different views of their treatment.

Another important aspect of the influence of mass media is the use of not only the same 'news' peddled by multinational news agencies all over the world but also the other output of the media. On a global scale, this is seen in the manner by which some TV programmes are seen uniformly all

over the world. For example a programme like Hawai Five O, regarded as a third rate American production is seen in many countries in the world and tends to structure the habits and aspirations towards the particular package of 'half baked mush' that this programme has come to be. Inappropriate tastes originating from the rich and powerful countries are likewise transmitted through such packages. Thus, during the last ten years a large number of countries are bombarded with the TV and radio messages that the particular concoction Coca Cola is the *REAL* thing or similarly that a particular brand of tooth paste like Signal is better than another package, say like SR, although both come from the same parent company. As widely recognised, such creation of taste has only a tenuous connection with the actual properties of the product.

Sometimes, such transfers of taste by the use of high advertising on

radio and television take lethal forms as has been the recent case of baby foods. Nutritionists have shown that Third World mothers switching over to bottle-feeding on the strength of advertising by baby food companies has resulted in a drop in the intake of correct nutrition. Bottle feeding in a rich country can be afforded by everybody whilst in a poor country, a tin of baby food is relatively expensive. Changing tastes by advertisement and propagandist means may have useful educational values and may be necessary, but where such changes are induced on purely profit criteria emanating from the rich countries, they tend to distort and thwart the aspirations of the poorer countries.

In a country like Sri Lanka which has no television as yet, the radio takes the major form of telecommunication entertainment. The types of inappropriate taste transfer occurs here too but more importantly our structure of radio programmes and presentations have been strongly coloured at least initially by the radio of our mother country, namely Britain. (There was a deviation from the mother-country connection in the case of the commercial radio which was set up by an Australian. The patterns and modes of radio transmission set by this initial Australian still exist in our commercial radio network).

Recently there have been, as a part of the decolonising process, attempts to get away from this imprinting effect of the multinational media. This has similarities to our experience of breaking away from dependence in certain other fields. Thus 20 years ago our export-import trade was tied to our former colonial masters namely Britain; but, now our trading partners are varied and we have a higher degree of choice of to whom we sell and buy. This process has occurred also in the technological sphere in that we have begun to diversify our technological dependence and our technological inputs are from several different countries. Within the last few years a similar process seems to be happening in our media as far as the international sphere is concerned. The output of our radio, as well as the newspapers, do not have international news material only from one or two news agencies as was the case

earlier but from several others including the Socialist ones. By this apparently we seem to have obtained some degree of diversification. But this spectrum of news, from all the media, are not all transmitted but selectively transmitted. And what is selected for transmission depends on those that control our media and which in turn is related to our social structure and our class system and the nature of our State.

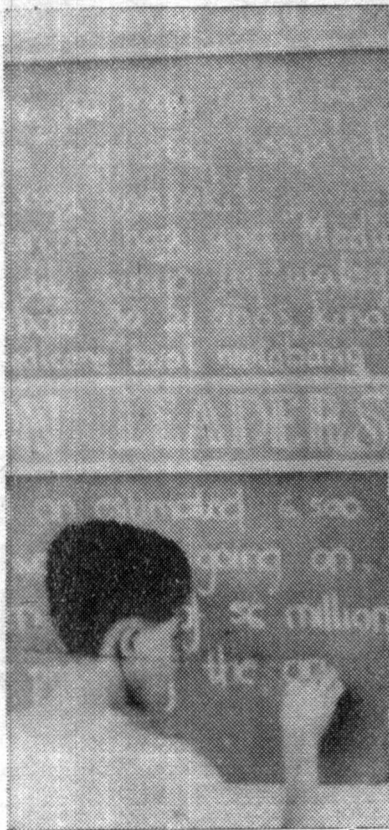
Subsequent to independence in Sri Lanka new social forces have emerged and new dominating classes. By no means is it a Socialist country comparable with say those of the Soviet Union or China and neither is it a liberal democracy like Britain. Sometimes in the media field, it seems to retain elements which evoke bad features of both, normal class control or even more formidably, control by a clique, (a process generally true of

the last twenty years) as well as narrowness and arbitrariness that is apparent in the socialist media. (See boxes for both these aspects). Our box on the leading Sinhala Newspaper 'Silumina' and its changing content and form illustrates what has been happening. Similarly our inside cover on Cartoon Strips indicate the manner in which the changing class structure is reflected in the mass media of the country.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Outside the formal and overt communication media like the press and radio there has been an informal, almost an underground, system of communication. An early form of this in Ceylon was for example folk Jathaka tradition which gave interpretations to the Jathaka stories apart from those depicted in the conventional Jathakas. Further drama like Sokari made irreverent comment on the state of society at the time.

In more recent times, even as recent as 20 to 30 years ago, the *Kavikola Karaya* or the seller of folk ballads was a common feature at bus stands and village gatherings. Here verses often of



The use of walls as communication media, is being used in some parts of Asia for conventional journalistic purposes. One such example is the Philippines' *Moalboal Times* which is a daily newspaper 'printed' on a chain of 25 blackboards.

a scurrilous nature usually highlighted the misdeeds and aberrations of the high and mighty and thus provided an alternate means of communication as opposed to the channels controlled by the rich and powerful.

Another form of informal communication was the traditional *Kelapatthara* where a message written on a piece of paper, often defamatory in character but drawing attention to hidden facts, was pinned on to trees in a village to be seen by everybody.

Yet another form of informal communication are graffiti which are non-formalised writings of people. The classical ones of course are those of Sigiriya. More recent examples are those seen on desks in schools and the university campuses. The contents of the latter, for example, often indicate the expectations and frustrations of today's educated youth.

The use of this type of informal communication in Sri Lanka is perhaps important, if not more, than the mass media, specially as the mass media has within the last few decades been subjected to a high degree of suspicion for lack of credibility. It is these folk channels of communication that have attempted often successfully to undermine the more powerful organs.

Several countries have been attempting to use this type of informal communication channels increasingly for development purposes. A well known example is the use of wall posters in China which has been copied in several countries including, for example, the Philippines. In Sri Lanka the wall poster and slogan were used as communication on an all-island basis by the JVP. This type of wall poster was revived in the student unrest a few months ago and judging from these two examples cited was an effective system of communication.

Another innovative form of communication is the growth of the street drama. In Sri Lanka this has been associated with Gmini Haththotuwegama's small band. They have been performing at street bazaars at festival times like Wesak and have attempted to carry messages of strong social comment.

Hewisi (Drum) As Communicator

Traditional Sinhala Hewisi is a form of "informative music" of Buddhist



The performing arts are being adapted in many parts of the developing world to propagate messages. In India a traditional drama form called — *mukhabhinaya* — dramatic mime (as pictured above) is used by a band of strolling players who travel to rural communities and put on mime plays.

temples. By means of specific beats, important functions pertaining to the temple and the time of performance are communicated to the people. The instruments connected with the Hewisi music are the *Davlo*, *Tammattans* and the *Horana*.

Hewisi music is divided into five main groups: (i) *Piya Hewisi* or the informative music played to communicate the times of offering, (ii) *Theya Hewisi* or music played during the clearing of the seats of offering, (iii) *Yara Hewisi* or the music which announces the sunrise, noon and sunset, (iv) *Poya Hewisi* which is played on fullmoon days, (v) *Gaman Hewisi* or processional music is played while the players are on the move.

WHAT THE DAILIES CONTAIN

Space devoted to the main categories of editorial content and advertisements in the Sinhala and English dailies of two leading newspaper groups

Newspaper	Local News	Letters to the Editor	Social and Personal	Editorials	Cartoons and Illustrated Serials	Foreign News	Features (Local and Foreign)	Sports Local and Foreign	Advertisements	Total (%)	Total No. Col. Inches
Dinamina ...	31.1	0.6	4.3	1.7	2.4	2.9	13.6	1.7	41.7	100.0	12570
Lankadipa ...	47.1	0.1	1.8	2.7	4.6	9.0	6.2	3.2	25.3	100.0	7010
Daily News ...	18.1	1.8	3.4	2.5	—	7.2	5.8	7.1	54.1	100.0	13860
Observer ...	25.1	1.5	.2	—	2.3	23.2	15.2	19.5	13.0	100.0	7580
Daily Mirror ...	34.7	2.1	3.6	2.9	1.1	8.7	13.1	10.1	23.7	100.0	9710

Results of a Sampling of the Content of Five Daily Newspapers over the Year 1975

One day of the week (except Sunday) was taken for each month covering a week during each of the six months January to June. This process was repeated in the six months July to December. The total number of column inches devoted to each of the nine categories listed in the table were measured in the papers selected in the sample; and from these the total for the twelve months arrived at. For example, twelve typical copies of the *Daily News* in 1975 contained a total of 13,860 column inches, followed by the *Dinamina* 12,570; while at the bottom of the scale was the *Lankadipa* 7,010 column inches and the *Ceylon Observer* slightly more with 7,580 column inches. The percentage coverage of each category (editorials, foreign news, advertising etc.) from this total number of column inches is shown in the table above.

Local news takes up the major part of coverage in the dailies with the exception of the *Daily News* and *Dinamina* where advertising occupies first place. Advertisements of all types were found to take up 54.1% of the space in the *Daily News*, and 41.7% of the space in the *Dinamina*, in the sample selected. The *Ceylon Observer* fills only 13% of its space with advertisements.

The *Ceylon Observer* appears to contain an unusually high percentage of foreign news (23.2%) while the other papers carry between 7 to 9% of foreign news with the exception of *Dinamina*, which devotes only 2.9%. The *Observer* also has the largest feature space coverage (15.2%) followed by the *Dinamina* and *Daily News* around 13%.

Sports coverage also takes up almost one fifth of the space in the *Observer*. The English dailies appear to contain a very much higher sports coverage.

Social and Personal items occupy a significant space in the *Dinamina* (4.3%) while Letters to the Editor are given more prominence in the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily News*. Cartoons and Illustrated Serials are given most prominence in the *Lankadipa* (4.6%), followed by *Dinamina* 2.4% and *Observer* 2.3%.

Reporting the Foreign News

News from the Western countries, namely the USA, UK and Western Europe, accounted for a major proportion of the coverage of the dailies included in this survey; with the exception of the *Dinamina*. In both the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror* the coverage of events in these areas took up as much as 43 percent of the space for foreign news. In the *Ceylon Observer* it was 50 percent and the *Lankadipa* 42 percent; while in the *Dinamina* it was only 18 percent.

In the case of the *Dinamina* as much as 60 percent of its foreign news coverage was devoted to items on India and other Asian countries. The percentage of coverage of India and other Asian countries in the other dailies was: *Daily News* 28 percent, *Daily*

Mirror 25 percent, *Ceylon Observer* 23 percent and *Lankadipa* 23 percent.

The highest coverage of news from the Middle East was in the *Lankadipa* which devoted 17 percent of its foreign news reportage to the Arab world; followed by *Daily Mirror* 14 percent, *Daily News* and *Ceylon Observer* 9 percent each, and *Dinamina* 4 percent. Both Africa and South America recorded very little coverage on the foreign news pages of our daily newspapers. The highest coverage from these two major sectors of the developing world was in the *Daily Mirror* where 13 percent of its total foreign news covered events from these developing countries followed by the *Daily News* 12 percent, *Dinamina* 8 percent

Foreign News Reportage in Selected Dailies

Country of Origin	Daily News	Daily Mirror	Ceylon Observer	Dinamina	Lankadipa
U.S.A. No. of items	46	17	37	7	14
% of total	16	16	16	5	15
U.K. No. of items	21	12	30	—	10
% of total	8	9	16	—	5
W. Europe No. of items	39	21	60	13	14
% of total	19	18	18	13	22
E. Europe No. of items	1	1	8	1	—
% of total	—	1	3	2	—
USSR No. of items	11	4	7	4	5
% of total	3	2	5	6	6
China No. of items	5	3	1	—	—
% of total	1	1	1	—	—
M. East No. of items	28	16	23	4	14
% of total	9	14	9	4	17
Africa No. of items	16	10	11	4	5
% of total	9	8	5	5	5
India No. of items	14	10	18	11	14
% of total	7	9	9	21	12
Other Asia No. of items	46	19	37	17	22
% of total	21	15	14	39	16
S. America No. of items	9	4	2	2	2
% of total	3	3	—	3	2
Other Developing No. of items	11	4	10	2	—
% of total	4	2	4	2	—
Total %	100	100	100	100	100
Total No. of Col. inches	1063	872	1649	277	610

Lankadipa 7 percent and *Ceylon Observer* 5 percent.

The trends in this table can be seen very clearly. The major source of foreign news at the time these items were reported was Reuters. The other foreign news source at that time was the Indian agency-Press Trust of India. As discussed in detail, in the earlier pages, the original choice, the dissemination and ultimate selection for publication of this news naturally had a Western bias and therefore Third World news has stood little chance.

Mass media has its very obvious limits and it is necessary in a study of the subject to be aware of this. Specifically in the Sri Lanka case, one can point out to the glaring fact that control of the massmedia specially radio and the newspapers have not been able to bend the population's will to agree with the media message. The population in Sri Lanka is young, articulate, aware and educated. In Sri Lanka over the last 20 years, there have been changes of government at each general election inspite of the fact that such elections saw a tremendous propaganda barrage for those in power by the media.

INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

All citizens have a right to know the facts of development as well as the deeper significance of these facts—both locally and internationally. Under present conditions, as we have seen, information and education are too often monopolised by the power structure which manipulates public opinion to its own ends. In the international sphere a near monopoly of international communications is a fundamental feature of the existing Information Order.

The problem in developing countries today is basically different from that of the industrialised nations. In the USA, UK and France the ministries of information have lost most of their importance, they only play a minor role in the State. For instance, privately owned media make up a great part of the written press in these countries and such is the power and influence these private interests wield that State interference is often looked upon as purely an interference in the concepts of freedom in these countries. These concepts do not often relate to real freedom of expression, (which we have shown in reality cannot exist in an absolute sense) but to underlying ideas of freedom of and for private proprietary interests.

The situation is different in developing countries for several reasons. Firstly, the radio still occupies the prime place in the developing world, where state control is often the rule. The state in many of these countries, is often in the hands of oligarchies manipulated generally by external

agencies and whose real aims, inspite of rhetoric, is the suppression of real expression. Often as a state-owned monopoly, radio makes it possible for them to overcome the problems connected with their low literacy rates. Also the written press in developing countries faces many problems such as newsprint shortages, lack of modern equipment, and high production costs which often puts newspapers beyond the reach of the average person.

Most important, however, is the role of information itself. Information is now generally being recognized as serving the broad functions of: imparting news; entertaining the public; educating; and stimulating or motivating development. Yet what the shape of that development should be is often left uncommunicated and remains the hidden message of much of what goes under "development communication".

In the developed countries education and motivation or stimulation has become relatively the most important, for political and economic reasons.

The newly emerging nations or rather their state apparatus have constantly had to decide on their priorities in economic development since their total funds available were generally less than the total needs of the whole country.

The countries of the Third World have set as their goal, for realising a better life for their peoples, the objective of a rapid economic development. Most of these countries have drawn up economic programmes to provide the framework within which their development policies could be formulated. (Such plans as is well known often remain paper plans). It is in this early phase of economic development that mass communication today, takes on a significant role in that they can accelerate and ease the long social transformation required for economic development, and in particular precipitate and facilitate the task of mobilising human resources behind this national effort.

The developing countries have also realised that the essential decision-making process needs to be more widely spread. Information needs to flow freely not only up and down

between leaders and the village, there should also be a lateral flow; people should talk things over among themselves and arrive at their own group decisions. The decision-making functions can for the most part only be aided by the mass media which feed information into discussions at all levels and could help to make the issues clear. Unless the mass communication media keep in step with the social and economic development plans and the aspirations of the people of these countries they could not make a positive contribution to the development process of these countries. This is not simple but a complex problem; deciding on development is itself an outcome of the impact of the mass media.

The very structure of the developing countries and their inter-relations with the developed countries are such that information and propaganda problems cannot be considered in the same light as those in the developed capitalist and socialist countries. The favourable impact information can have on development is clear. The obstacles in achieving this impact are also very evident now. The need for a new Information Order both internationally, and nationally in the developing countries, and the call for a global effort to be made "to give new international relations their human dimension and to promote the establishment of genuine cooperation between peoples on the basis of equality and recognition of their cultural, political, social and economic diversity.....stripped of the prevailing ethnocentric prejudices, which are the characteristic features of most of the messages currently transmitted", is imperative today.

Such an effort should be concerned both with information and with education in the broadest sense of the word; it should be directed towards what is now termed 'conscientization' of citizens to ensure their full participation in the decision-making process. It should lead to a heightened awareness of the population, where they will have the ability to discriminate not only the broad rights and wrongs, but what is sham and what is real, when they are being manipulated and when they are not. It is the role of communications to give this information so that the citizen can then convert his judgement to either enthusiasm or, if need be, to anger.