

Adil Najam

COMMUNICATING CONSERVATION: A PRESCRIPTIVE STUDY



A Pakistan
National
Conservation
Strategy
Sector Paper

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COMMUNICATING CONSERVATION: A PRESCRIPTIVE STUDY



Adil Najam



ENVIRONMENT &
URBAN AFFAIRS
DIVISION,
GOVERNMENT
OF PAKISTAN

IUCN
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CONTENTS



| | |
|---|-----|
| Glossary of Acronyms and Local Terms | vii |
| First Word | ix |
| Preface | xi |
| Section I: Defining the Strategy | |
| Part One: Why | 3 |
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Communicating the National Conservation Strategy | 4 |
| 3. The Ideal Communication Cycle | 6 |
| 4. The Urgency | 7 |
| Part Two: What | 9 |
| 1. Introduction | 9 |
| 2. The Prescriptive Strategy | 9 |
| 3. Goals | 13 |
| Part Three: Who | 17 |
| 1. Introduction | 17 |
| 2. Decision Makers | 18 |
| 3. Stewards of Natural Resources | 19 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4. Industrial and Business Polluters | 20 |
| 5. Women | 21 |
| 6. Young People and Students | 23 |
| 7. Media Responsive Segments | 24 |
| 8. Particular Interest Groups | 25 |
| 9. General Public | 26 |
| Part Four: How | 29 |
| 1. Introduction | 29 |
| 2. Quantifying the Unquantifiable | 30 |
| Section II: Using the Strategy | |
| Part Five: Asking the Right Questions | 37 |
| 1. Introduction | 37 |
| Part Six: Putting the Strategy into Practice | 41 |
| 1. Introduction | 41 |
| 2. Baseline Facts | 41 |
| 3. What Does the Cube Say? | 42 |
| 4. Strategy for Commutation | 43 |
| Part Seven: Communicating with the Communicators | 45 |
| 1. The Communicators | 45 |
| 2. Print Journalists | 45 |
| 3. Radio Professionals | 49 |
| 4. Television Professionals | 51 |
| 5. Cinema and Advertising Professionals | 53 |
| 6. Religious Opinion Leaders | 55 |
| 7. Teachers | 55 |
| 8. Mothers | 56 |
| 9. Professional Bodies | 56 |
| 10. Political Leaders | 56 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 11. Celebrities | 57 |
| 12. NGOs and Activists | 57 |
| 13. Children | 57 |
| Part Eight: Role of NGOs | 59 |
| 1. Introduction | 59 |
| 2. The NGOs' Role | 60 |
| Part Nine: Institutional Framework | 63 |
| 1. Developing the Media | 63 |
| 2. Institutionalising Media Development | 64 |
| Part Ten: Monitoring Success | 67 |
| 1. Introduction | 67 |
| 2. Monitoring Mechanisms | 68 |
| References | 71 |
| Figures | |
| 1. The Ideal Communication Sustainability Cycle | 7 |
| 2. Overlaps Between Target Audiences | 30 |
| 3. Audience-Mechanism Matrix | 31 |
| 4. Audience-Message Matrix | 32 |
| 5. Message-Mechanism Matrix | 32 |
| 6. The Communication Cube | 33 |
| Tables | |
| 1. Literacy Ratio of Population 10 Years and Above, 1981 | 46 |
| 2. Average Circulation of Newspapers and Magazines, 1987 | 47 |
| 3. Radio's Vital Statistics, 1989 | 50 |
| 4. Analysis of PBC Transmissions, 1987-88 | 50 |
| 5. Analysis of PTV Transmission, 1987-88 | 52 |
| 6. Sources of Advertising on Radio, 1987-88 | 54 |
| 7. Sources of Advertising on Television, 1987-88 | 54 |

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND LOCAL TERMS



| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ABES | Adult Basic Education Society |
| AKRSP | Aga Khan Rural Support Programme |
| APNS | All Pakistan Newspapers Society |
| CEEP | Co-ordinated Environmental Education Programme |
| Chopaal | Communal meeting place in a village |
| Chota | Literally meaning 'little one' but used to describe young children working as apprentices or help at small workshops, restaurants etc. |
| ENGO | Environmental Non-Governmental Organization |
| ESCAP | (United Nations) Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific |
| GOP | Government of Pakistan |
| Haqooq-ul-ibaad | Rights of fellow humans or community spirit |
| Hookah | A water-based tobacco smoking device sometimes referred to in English by the odd-sounding term "hubble bubble" |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, now known as IUCN-The World Conservation Union |
| JRC | Journalists' Resource Centre for the Environment |
| Khokha | Small wayside shack restaurant |
| Maulvi | Religious scholar/mosque priest |
| Mohallah | Neighbourhood or local community |
| NCS | National Conservation Strategy |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |

| | |
|---------|--|
| PARC | Pakistan Agricultural Research Council |
| PBC | Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation |
| PTV | Pakistan Television Corporation |
| Qana'at | The ethic of not wasting things, or conservation ethic |
| RDF | Rural Development Foundation |
| SD | Sustainable Development |
| TRC | Teachers' Resource Centre |
| WCED | World Commission on Environment and Development |
| WCS | World Conservation Strategy |
| WWF | World Wide Fund for Nature |

FIRST WORD



From May 1989 to July 1991 I served as the Communication Officer for the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy Secretariat. This sector paper was one of the outcomes of this process. This paper evolved through my involvement with the development of the National Conservation Strategy and, in many ways, my views on the subject continue to evolve as I observe the implementation of the NCS in Pakistan today. My experiences in assisting in the development of the final NCS report; interacting with the national decision makers in the NCS Steering Committee; trying to communicate the various ideas contained in the strategy to the press, television, radio, and various non-formal communicators; talking to NGOs all over the country; and participating in the NCS public hearings and village meetings have all contributed to this document.

The bulk of this paper was written in 1990 with some sections added later in response to specific comments. Since then, much has changed on Pakistan's communications scene. The press is freer and more assertive than it was; television has new competition from other channels at home and from foreign satellite telecasts; radio's continuing battle for advertising and state support has become yet more arduous; NGOs have proliferated. Although environment in Pakistan is not yet the 'growth industry' that it has become in many Northern countries, the level of environmental interest amongst the media and the public is far greater than it was in 1990. One would like to believe that the NCS had some little role in bringing about this last named change. There is much, however, that remains the same. Most important is the urgency to communicate the message of sustainable development, which is no less today than it was then. In fact, now that the NCS has become national policy, the importance of communicating its message has become even more immediate.

Although written explicitly as a prescriptive sector paper, this report does not pretend to propose the one definitive strategy for how environmental communication should be done. Rather, its purpose is merely to suggest some strategic choices about the various ways in which it could be done in the Pakistani context. The strategy proposed here is one, but by no means the only, strategy for effective environmental communication. Despite its prescriptive tone, this paper repeatedly stresses the importance of adapting its recommendations to specific situations as defined by specific audiences, specific messages and specific mechanisms of communication. It should be seen, therefore,

not as a recipe but as a tool kit — which tool needs to be used where, when, and how will have to be decided by the reader; all that this paper attempts to do is to lay out the tools and suggest how some of the above choices may be facilitated.

Organization of this Paper

This paper is organised in two sections. The first, Defining the Strategy, lays out a prescriptive strategy for environmental communication. This strategy is graphically summed up in the Ideal Communication Cycle (Figure 1) and the Communication Cube (Figure 6). The general strategy emerges from a focus on three specifics — Targets, Messages and Mechanisms. The goal is to come up with a strategy that is general enough to be applied to a wide variety of situations and yet flexible enough to respond and adapt to the specific differences between these situations. The four parts of this section look at why such a strategy is needed, defining what the strategy is, discussing who it is aimed at, and finally going through how it may be applied.

The second section of this paper, Using the Strategy, addresses some of the practical aspects of actually putting such a strategy into practice. It begins with a set of questions that communicators using this (or any other) strategy might find helpful in devising their particular communication programme. A detailed exemplar of how the proposed strategy might be applied in a real situation is also provided. This is followed by a more detailed look at who the principal communicators are and how they can be mobilised for environmental communication. Also included in this section are discussions on the role of NGOs in environmental communication, a proposed institutional framework, and issues pertaining to monitoring the success of communications efforts.

Acknowledgments

My participation in the 'NCS process' was an amazingly rich and rewarding learning experience. I owe a tremendous intellectual debt to the extended NCS community with whom I was able to interact during this period. Most importantly, I must thank Syed Ayub Outub for turning me 'green' and for his mentorship, guidance, encouragement and patience. More than anyone else, I owe my own environmental awareness to him. I must also thank Azharuddin Khan for his companionship, his ready humour and his unique ability to critique without criticising. Their influence on my thinking on this, and all issues environmental, has been so profound that it cannot be singled out for attribution.

My colleagues at the IUCN country office and the Environment and Urban Affairs Division provided me with a stimulating extended working environment. While I owe gratitude to many, I would like to specially mention Aban Marker Kabraji, Saneeya Hussain, Zulfiqar Qureshi and Shamsul Haq, who directly or indirectly influenced the development of this paper. The National Steering Committee of the NCS, particularly its Chairman A.G.N. Kazi, was a source of great inspiration and intellectual insight for me. Steering Committee members Hameed Haroon and Senator Javed Jabbar were particularly important influences and their many comments are extensively reflected in this final version. The many sectoral experts who contributed to the NCS were always patient with my nagging questions. Aslam Azhar, Agha Nasir, Obaidullah Baig, and Navid Zafar provided me valuable insight into the workings of the media, as did so many other friends from the press, television and radio. If there is any good idea in this paper it is, I am sure, borrowed; the mistakes, however, are mine alone.

Adil Najam

PREFACE



This monograph is one of the 29 sectoral and programme papers produced to support the preparation of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy. The NCS is a comprehensive review of the state of the country's environment, and of government and corporate policies, the voluntary sector, community and individual practices, which support or hinder sustainable development. The objective of the NCS is to identify strategic initiatives to conserve the country's natural resources which are the base for lasting improvements in the quality of life.

Environmental impacts do not respect sectoral or administrative boundaries. Yet, conventional development planning is frequently focused on narrow performance criteria and associated financial requirements, ignoring huge costs on downstream ecosystems and economic activities dependent on them. These costs cannot be avoided and must be paid by society, the only questions are when and by which group.

To facilitate an understanding of such 'externalities', one of the first steps of the National Conservation Strategy was to undertake assessments of cross-sectoral impacts from the point of view of each major activity sector. In order to facilitate comparison, the reports were prepared according to common terms of reference. Subsequently, major programme areas that must be given priority in the transition to a sustainable society were identified. The list of economic, environment and programme areas is given overleaf.

A paper on each sector was produced by a well recognized expert supported by peer reviewers in related specialities. The key insights have been incorporated into the Strategy. Since the papers are the reference base of the strategy and contain special interest material, a decision was taken to publish them serially in the form of monographs. It is hoped they will be found useful by researchers of sustainable development in various facets of national life as well as by the interested lay reader.

The sectors are:

1. Economic sectors:

- Agriculture, forestry, livestock, fisheries.

-
- Mining, energy, industries, transport.
 - Human settlements and recreation.

2. Environmental impact sectors:

- Soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and over harvesting of renewable resources.
- Municipal and industrial discharges, environmental health effects, and misuse of water resources.
- Destruction of cultural heritage.

3. Programme areas:

- Incorporation of environment in education, communication, and research; enforcement of laws and regulations; improved administration; use of economic instruments to align market forces with sustainability; promotion of conservation ethics.
- Programmes to promote population planning, women in development, and regional equity.
- Creation of grassroots institutions, with participative management.

SECTION I

DEFINING THE STRATEGY



WHY



1. INTRODUCTION

THE AGE OF COMMUNICATION

We live today in an age of communication, when every commodity is marketable and where the magnitude of sales depends as much upon the quality of the product as it does upon the ferocity of the marketing campaign. Delivering information is still, however, a difficult task — not because there are not enough delivery systems, but because there are so many of them.

Ours is the age of the media. Breathtaking advances in information generation, storage and delivery present potential consumers of information with a mind-boggling range of choices. Alvin Toffler calls this "over-choice" (37).

According to Javed Jabbar, media person, ad-man and a former Information Minister, "one of the dilemmas facing media planners [in Pakistan] in the year 2000 will be how to be sure of reaching target audiences at a time when the freedom of choice in listening to viewing international radio and TV will be even greater than it is today, while low literacy rates will prevent increased use of print media" (21).

It is imperative for environmental communicators to remember that people are inundated

with news today. With so much information competing for space in so many avenues of information dissemination, the task of sending our message across is no mean work "because our messages are often not what some people want to hear" (24).

THE HORSE AND THE WATER

While communicating environmental issues the problem often boils down to convincing people that they really have a problem at hand and that this problem requires their urgent attention. Once this primary goal is achieved the second, and much more difficult, task is of convincing them that environmental problems do have solutions and that these solutions do actually work.

When one has in one's hands a product as potent and as important to national development as a National Conservation Strategy (NCS), the situation becomes something like the proverbial parched horse and a brimming water tank — having a tank full of water is sometimes not really as important as leading that thirsty animal to the water and then getting it to drink!

This is exactly what this communication strategy sets out to do. We have with us an audi-

ence that is in desperate need of an NCS that can ensure for future generations continued (and improved) drinking water, fertile soils and clean air. We have prepared, at the cost of great effort and study, a cross-sectoral strategy that prescribes appropriate solutions to problems. If, at this point, we fail to bring the horse to the water, we would not only be wasting the water but would also be responsible for the death of the horse.

2. COMMUNICATING THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

WHY A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY?

"The task of environmental protection and management is so vast that no amount of effort and investment by environmental experts and planners can be expected to achieve very much without the involvement of the media [and other communication avenues] in motivating large-scale participation of the people" (23).

The conservation of nature and natural resources is no longer a single discipline. It is, in fact, a very broad area and it is this range of activities and interests (and the accompanying conflicts) that fall within it that make most conservation efforts susceptible to administrative log-gerheads and public debate. It is essential that along with the development of an NCS that a major public awareness plan be developed as a vital strategic support (18).

The need for a communication strategy becomes all the more urgent in conservation activities because of their cross-sectoral nature; it involves so many actors that a thorough communication plan is essential to keep it on course (7). One needs to communicate the message of conservation not only to the public at large but also to decision makers in each economic sector who, despite all their knowledge of their own field, might well be totally unaware of the environmental imperatives of other related sectors.

More important than the decision makers are the stewards of natural resources: the farmer, the grazier, the woods person, and the fisher. It is they who in the end become the tools of the environment's destruction, and it is they who must be motivated to safeguard resources, for it is on the continued health and sustainability of these resources that their livelihood depends.

A "lack of awareness of the benefits of conservation and of its relevance to everyday concerns prevents policy makers, development practitioners and the general public from seeing the urgent need to achieve conservation objectives. Ultimately, ecosystems and species are being destroyed because people do not see that it is in their interest not to destroy them. The benefits from natural ecosystems and their component plants and animals are regarded by all but a few, as trivial and dispensable compared with the benefits from those activities that entail their destruction or degradation. Until people understand why they should safeguard ecosystems and species, they will not do so" (19).

It is this awareness at all levels that needs to be created and the NCS Communication Strategy aims at suggesting the tools and mechanisms for the creation of this awareness.

WHY A COMMUNICATOR?

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (seventh edition) defines a communicator as one who tries or "succeeds in conveying information or evoking understanding". In modern idiom the word is also used extensively while describing advertisers, media people, writers and public speakers.

What makes our age the age of communication is the awesome dimensions that this word has taken on in recent years. Aslam Azhar one of the pioneers of Pakistan Television, believes that "communication is not only the vehicle for the transmission of ideas to the broad public, it is also a discipline within which great and contemporary new ideas are generated. Along with writers, artists and other intellectuals, communicators are the cutting edge of history as it moves ever

forward and upward. The sharper the cutting edge, the more accelerated will progress be" (6).

WHO IS THE COMMUNICATOR?

Throughout this study we will be referring to the 'communicator'. Given the variable characteristics of the word, it is only fair to define here what is meant by this term in the context of this study. The communicator that we will be referring to is neither the advertiser, nor the media person, nor an opinion leader who moulds and motivates public opinion through sheer style and charisma. In specific cases a communicator may assume any, or all, of these roles. What is being referred to here is an individual who aims at educating a diverse set of audiences about an equally diverse set of environmental topics. The communicator, then, as addressed here is any individual (a teacher, a religious leader, a mother, etc.), organization (including NGOs and media outfits) or institution which wishes to target messages and information on environmental conservation to select or general audiences.

The communicator may not always be a person or an institution whose sole job is environmental communication. In fact, in many cases it would only be a particular segment of information, from the wide spectrum of environmental concerns, that the person would be interested in transmitting. This would happen in specific projects like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme efforts in the Northern Areas or IUCN-The World Conservation Union's juniper forest project in Ziarat.

In other instances, the environmental communicator would be part of an organization interested in creating general as well as specific awareness of conservation and environment concerns. For example, institutions like the NCS Secretariat, the Ministry of Environment, the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council or the Ministry of Health could all don the role of the communicator when they want to transmit, publicise and communicate information on environmental issues. Similarly, organisations like IUCN and

the World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan assume this role when they wish to achieve the same goal or they want to highlight particular issues and mobilise public or specific interests.

BEYOND THE MEDIA

The more desired eventuality is one where the media itself, which is otherwise a mechanism, assumes the role of the communicator. An ideal self-sustaining communication cycle aims at such a process being developed. However, one must realize that the "media reflects change more often than provokes it. It can debate the issues and explain them. It can raise questions against trends and serve as a watchdog. But it cannot create any social change divorced from existing social values in a perceptible time period" (14).

Furthermore one must remember that the mass media in Pakistan is entangled in a mess of problems and constraints. As Javed Jabbar argues:

"The sector of development communication and development advertising in Pakistan represents an example of a sector in a Third World country characterised by features which can be described as being: sporadic, un-coordinated, non-comprehensive, uneven in quality, predominantly government sponsored and with only a miniscule presence of the private sector" (22).

This is exactly why this communication strategy has gone beyond the mass media in its search for communicators. While the job of being a watchdog or a disseminator of information is one that the media can effectively perform, change in basic attitudes is a task that it cannot tackle alone.

The ethics of conservation are discussed in detail in Part Two, but while looking for the communicators of these ethics one must first answer the question — who disseminates values in Pakistani society? It appears that three groups are essential and central to the task. It must have the support of the various religious reform movements, the school teachers and mothers. For

these are the three gatekeepers and transmitters of values.

Readers of this study may well question why media people, religious leaders, teachers and mothers are not defined as separate target groups in Part Three. This is because the essence of this strategy is that they be treated as (or be converted into) communicators. They are, in fact, not the targets, but the means to reach the targets.

There are at least half a dozen major organized national level religious reform movements, over 220,000 primary and secondary school teachers, and some 17 million mothers of young children. All of these, have in their power, the ability to influence others, and as such are prime candidates to act as the 'opinion leaders' described in Part Two.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The manifold aims and objectives of the NCS communication strategy can best be condensed by defining them as an attempt to make the entire conservation effort sustainable, by generating an interest and an awareness of environmental issues amongst decision makers, stewards of natural resources and the public in general. In our efforts towards a better environment, success will depend upon a citizenry well informed of major problems and willing to actively participate in implementing the necessary measures.

Once a self-sustaining interest in the quality of the environment is generated, it would result in a continuity of efforts and endeavours to maintain a high quality. The governing theme behind this communication strategy is that we have all acted together in denuding this planet and its resources, and now the only course available to protect it from total annihilation is to work together to care for its assets.

Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy aims at putting the nation firmly on the road to sustainable development. The challenge of conservation, or to be more exact, the challenge of sustainable development is an economic chal-

lenge and must be tackled as such. It is the creation of a resolve to face this challenge that this communication strategy aims at.

"People preserve things they value, and this is where the economic challenge comes to the fore. In the past 40 years irreplaceable environmental resources have been lost in the course of development processes that, quite frankly, got their economics wrong. We need a new 'ecological economics' that values the living resources of our planet better" (36).

The very multidisciplinary nature of environmental concerns makes public action and movements the only course available; this can only be achieved through mobilizing mass awareness, which in turn can only be brought about once the media and other communication forces have themselves learnt and accepted the importance of environmental issues and how to relate them to national development.

3. THE IDEAL COMMUNICATION CYCLE

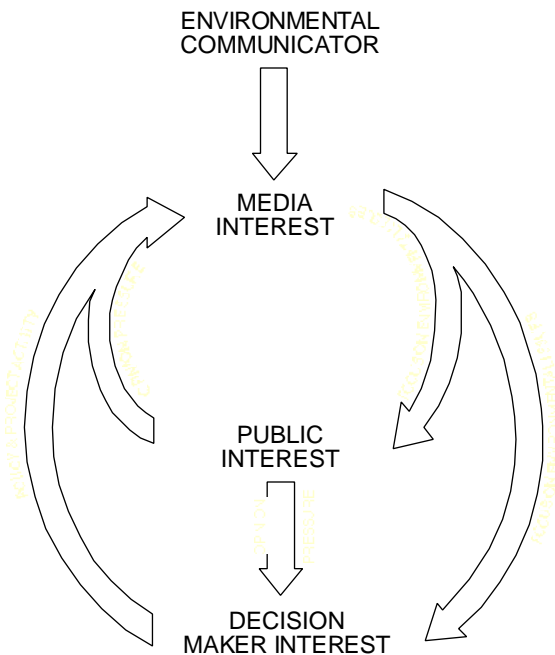
THE AIM

The ideal self-sustaining communication cycle shown in Figure 1 schematically describes the goal of this strategy. The ultimate aim is to make the cycle perpetual and sustainable through 'Teach The Media To Teach The People To Reach The Media'.

FIRST RUN

The starting point is interest-building information through the mass media. The source of this input is the communicator. The cycle suggests that the media and other sources of communication will generate an interest and an awareness in the public, as well in decision makers, by continuously focusing in on environmental issues. The newly created awakening about environmental concerns in the general public will reinforce the decision makers' interests, interests that may turn into a resolve to act

THE IDEAL COMMUNICATION SUSTAINABILITY CYCLE



Teach the Media to Teach the People to Reach the Media

on the subject through actual projects and programmes to safeguard the environment and its natural resources. Such projects and their socio-economic and environmental effects will be given coverage by the media, constituting the second leg of the outer cycle.

The inner cycle, as shown in the figure, is schematically much simpler but practically much more difficult to achieve and much more necessary for the sustainability of the process. This involves, in the first leg, an interest in environmental issues being created in the public as a result of media coverage. In the second leg this interest, once created and rooted amongst the public, translates into public pressure upon the media to continue focusing upon environmental issues.

SUBSEQUENT RUNS

This ideal cycle has to be sustained if it is to fulfill its desired role. In the second and subsequent runs, the outer cycle would involve receiving opinions and criticism from the public and the media on government policies and programmes. As for the inner cycle, if somehow made perpetual, it would create interest amongst environmental groups who would keep a check on all developmental efforts and their sustainability; they would also reinforce the sustainability of the outer cycle.

Ideally, the role of the communicator should only be to initiate this process after which the cyclic motion should be self-fulfilling. However, this ideal situation may never exist. What can, and should, happen is a change in the role of the communicators and in the nature of their inputs into the communication mechanisms.

This may not be the best of analogies, but the case of target audiences here is somewhat similar to that of drug addicts. Just as addicts must raise drug intake with increasing dependency, so it is here: as public awareness grows, the demand for more specific information also increases. No longer is it sufficient to convey that automobiles produce toxic particulates that are released in their exhaust; it is necessary to write about the different levels in air of these particulates and their effect on people's health. The role of the communicator, once the cycle has been initiated, is to provide the media with these details.

In essence, then, the role of the communicator is not very different from that of the drug pusher. The difference is that while one tends to initiate a chain for the improvement of humanity, the other does so for the vitiation of people.

4. THE URGENCY

WHY THE URGENCY

The World Commission on Environment and Development or the Brundtland Commission has very aptly explained it: "it is not that there is

one set of villains and another of victims. All would be better off if each person took into account the effect of his or her acts upon others. But each is unwilling to assume that others will behave in this socially desirable fashion, and hence all continue to pursue narrow self-interests" (40).

The urgency of communicating the message of conservation stems from the need to create a realization that if we, in our individual capacities, continue to exploit the resources of nature then governments, even if they are sincere in their efforts, will never be able to recover the once abundant treasures that we are so mercilessly destroying.

"For the first time in history, the whole world has had its living conditions profoundly altered by the extent of our industrial and agricultural activities and the formidable power of our technologies. The earth has remained a comfortable place for living organisms for a whole 3.5 billion years since life began despite a 25 % increase in the heat output from the sun. Can we maintain this legacy? It is clear that we can, provided we learn to live in harmony with each other and with the earth which supports us" (36).

THE NCS MESSAGE

"The Pakistan NCS will provide a direction, some compass bearings, some indication of how the terrain ahead can be used to advantage instead of constituting a barrier and a hazard. It is not an end, a complete and final answer, but rather a beginning. It is a guide to how Pakistan must be treated if we intend to stay here for at least as long as has passed since the

first Indus civilization settled in this fair and bountiful land" (12).

The NCS message is primarily a message of development: development with a difference, development which is sustainable. Development which is different because it defines people as the facilitators of advancement. Development which is sustainable because it stems from the use (on a continuous basis) as opposed to the abuse (until depletion) of natural resources.

"Development does not occur because government decrees it. Governments can redistribute wealth, but are poor at creating it. Governments can give you many things but they cannot give you economic development. Economic development occurs because of changes in viewpoints, attitudes and practices of people. Working together, cooperating with your neighbours, donating your time, effort, ingenuity and talent to a common goal; not taking, but giving more than your share, are the real secrets of achieving development. Development is not a gift of the government, it is an achievement of the people" (12).

OVER TO BRUNDTLAND

Gro Harlem Brundtland's words are to be remembered: "If we do not succeed in putting our message of urgency through to today's parents and decision makers, we risk undermining our children's fundamental right to a healthy, life-enhancing environment. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development" (8).

WHAT



1. INTRODUCTION

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication, in today's age, is a science. However, it is not an exact science nor is it a science that lends itself too readily to general or quantified rules and procedures. Nonetheless, it is a subject that needs to be dealt with through carefully thought-out procedures and methods.

And yet, communication is as much of an art, if not more, as it is a science. Like all art it is one that thrives upon and derives its beauty from the specific rather than the general. It is only through a juxtaposition of the art and the science of communication that a viable and workable communication strategy can be formed.

THE GENERAL AND THE SPECIFIC

What is required is a set of broad principles, with enough manoeuvring room for specific modifications in special cases. The philosophy of communication, as advocated here, would then entail a case-specific method of communication geared to function within broad groups of

targets, messages and mechanisms. The 'general' prescription for communication would thus result from the cumulative effect of three specifics:

Communication Methodology { Target Specific
Message Specific
Mechanism Specific

With the media already bombarding its audience from all sides on different subjects, the environmental message has to be launched in an extremely competitive milieu. In many cases 'selective attention' acts as an unconscious mechanism to help people cope with the information overload (31). By recognising that this selective attention exists and that there is intense competition for the attention of target audiences, environmental communicators are in a position to adapt to the realities of a world in which the dissemination of environmental information is by no means an easy task (9).

2. THE PRESCRIPTIVE STRATEGY

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY

How does one go about communicating the message of conservation to more than a

hundred million people? Does one get hold of every second citizen on the street and shout at them through a megaphone?

That could well be one way of doing things, but it is certainly not the most convenient way to achieve results.

Devising a communication methodology for sustainable development is a process that requires discrete actions from diverse sources, all aiming to strike at a single goal: greater awareness, leading to better use of the environment and its resources, that is, development that is sustainable in the long run.

The reader would, by now, be in a position to appreciate the basic philosophy of this prescription that before any communication tool or mechanism is designed, the message and the audience must first be defined. It is after one has sifted through these three specifics that any headway towards general prescriptions for communication can be made. In many cases even these 'general' prescriptions would not be as 'general' as one would have liked them to be. However, they would be general enough to point towards the specific communication strategies required in a particular case.

What one has to really achieve is to reach out to an audience and give them the information they need to receive, but in a wrapping that they are ready to accept. This, in a nutshell, is what communication is all about.

And this brings us, once again, to the three vital questions: Who is your target audience? What message do you want to give them? How should you convey this message?

TARGET SPECIFIC

Ideally, a communicator would like to deal individually with each person. However, when you have over a hundred million individuals to contend with, such personal communication is not feasible. The next best alternative is to divide these millions into various groups or targets, which can be dealt with separately. This is the essence of the target specific approach to communication.

It might be argued that it would be better to consider the entire population of a country as one single target. This would certainly make the mechanisms required for communicating environmental awareness much easier. However, the governing factor here is not the ease of communication, but its effectiveness.

The single-audience, multi-message approach may well be extremely useful in communicating the advertising slogan of, say, a toothpaste. Unfortunately, selling toothpaste is very different from selling environmental awareness — the latter requires a very different set of principles and procedures.

When a large number of forces are trying to capture an audience's attention, one cannot afford to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and hope that sooner or later people will hear your message — the risk is that it will be later, rather than sooner. When one is dealing with a time-bomb issue like environmental degradation, 'later' may well be 'too late'!

What the environmental communicator needs to do is to divide the greater audience into smaller target groups that can be handled en bloc due to similar message and mechanism requirements. The selection and definition of these target audiences is of prime importance to any communication strategy, as it is the first step towards the ultimate goal of public awareness.

It is obvious that the lesser the number of groups the easier the communicator's task would be, since one would have to define a smaller number of messages and manage fewer mechanisms. However, the communicator should not be facilitated at the cost of sacrificing the effectiveness of the exercise. The approach taken in target audience selection in Part Three of this study illustrates that, in most instances, each target audience can, and would, have a number of sub-groups which might require special messages and mechanisms. However, as long as these sub-groups merge into a larger audience, as a part within the whole rather than a hole within the whole, it is better to keep them as a sub-group.

The trick is to divide the audience into groups that are general and extensive enough to facili-

tate ease of communication and yet focused enough to check and plug any loss of effectiveness. The target audiences for environmental communication in Pakistan, as contained in the study include: decision makers; stewards of natural resources; industrial and business polluters; women; youth and students; educated cadre; particular interest groups; and the public. Detailed descriptions of all these groups are outlined in Part Three.

MESSAGE SPECIFIC

In essence, the selection of the message flows directly from the definition of the target. However, this message needs to be fine-tuned to make it a more potent and communicable product. Once the audiences have been defined, this task is easily accomplished. The question that the environmental communicator needs to ask is:

- What information does your target audience want to receive?
- What additional message should it receive?
- How does one juxtapose the two for the best effect?

Once these questions are answered, the message is as good as ready. However, at this stage the message may need to be adapted if it is to be equally effective with all sub-groups within a certain target audience.

These alterations would depend upon local/regional requirements e.g., the everyday language and customs of the same group living in different parts of the country. A message which is easily accepted in urban centres may be totally ignored in rural areas because of its presentation (3). Similarly, the message must take into account the resource being used, or misused, by the sub-section within the audience that is being addressed. Also to be kept in mind are the differences in the education level, professions, particular interests etc. within each group.

This study identifies the various environmental message heads relevant to Pakistan. These include agriculture, forestry and vegetation; pollution through poor solid waste disposal, stagnant water, lack of sanitation, vehicular emis-

sions, etc.; population; energy; industry; administration; legislation and research; biodiversity; and mining. This set of messages has been derived from the Pakistan NCS priorities and is self-explanatory in scope and definition.

MECHANISM SPECIFIC

Once the environmental communicator has decided what has to be said to whom, the next question to be answered is how the message can be taken to the target audience. The how of this question derives from the earlier who and what.

Since the medium is sometimes the message (25), it is extremely important that the message should suit the medium, the medium should complement the message, and that both should interact effectively to reach the target audience. The mechanism specific approach, which is the third and final element in the communication strategy being prescribed, entails the choice of the most appropriate mechanism for the most appropriate message for the most appropriate audience.

When one talks about the mechanisms or the media for communication, the ones that come most easily to mind are the press, radio and television. However, when devising a strategy to motivate people one needs to go far beyond these conventional tools. We refer, in this study, to these three as modes of formal communication, and to the others as mechanisms of non-formal communication. In many cases non-formal communication would be triggered off by the formal; but by and large, it is non-formal communication which is more likely to bring forth far-reaching changes in attitudes and perceptions about environmental issues.

The simplest reason for this is the dismal reach of the formal media outlets. Equally problematic for communicators is the media's general apathy towards the need to accept and propagate new ideas. Indeed, there are exceptions to this and signs that the media forces are waking up to contemporary issues like the environment. However, the change is slow in coming, limited to only a few outlets and, on occasion, motivat-

ed more by faddism than an honest urge to elicit a change in attitude. In any case, due to the sheer numerics of reach and accessibility the formal media network, as it exists in Pakistan, is not as 'mass' as its nomenclature implies. This 1989 assessment is, by and large, still valid:

"The oldest branch of the media — the press — provides at the very first glance an indication of the country's linguistic variety [and] its literacy level. . . . Newspapers and periodicals are published in Urdu, English, Sindhi, Pushto, Punjabi, [Brohi, Gujrati] and Balochi. Although the number of these publications runs into thousands, their combined circulation is around 2% of the population, the biggest reason being a low literacy percentage even by Asian standards" (32).

While the English press in Pakistan holds an important and prestigious position in the country since it is read regularly by technocrats, bureaucrats and decision makers, it is the Urdu newspapers which really hold the key to reaching the public. According to a Gallup poll, Urdu publications enjoy 97% of the total newspaper readership in the country.¹

The reach of the electronic media is comparatively better. The most dramatic rise in influence has been that of television. Starting in 1964 with one small centre at Lahore, today there are five television centres and 28 transmitters spread all over the country. With a total count of 1,504,200 television sets, the average total viewership is estimated at about 12,033,600 or some 11.68% of the population. However, Pakistan Television's signal is received by 86.39% of the population in 35.47% of the country's area, indicating that there is tremendous potential for improvement.²

Radio, however, remains the medium with the widest appeal and potential. According to official Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation sources, the signal is received by 100% of the population with 48.6% being regular or occasional listeners. But what makes radio a most potent medium for the environmental communicator is the fact that the large bulk of radio listeners live in otherwise difficult to reach villages and small towns of the country.

A brief overview of the scope of each medium is given here only to illustrate and highlight the importance of using non-formal modes of communication. It is these latter channels which have to be nurtured, since they will reach out to the majority of the public which is neither accessed nor influenced by the press, television or radio.

In deciding which medium is best suited for conveying a certain message to a particular audience, the environmental communicator can gain some insight through the type of advertisements that each gets. For example, 34.5% of all radio advertising revenue is earned from advertisements dealing with fertilizers, pesticides and tractors (28), while agricultural advertising accounts for only 5.78% of the total advertising revenue on television (29).

Keeping in mind the fact that commercial concerns are not in the habit of needlessly wasting their energies and finances, and have the backing of professional advertising consultants to guide and advise them, their interest in a particular medium is a practical indicator of its strength in particular sectors. Thus the above figures would reinforce the hypothesis that when one wishes to target a rural/agricultural audience, radio would prove to be a better medium for the message than television. This conclusion is reaffirmed when one considers the fact that 7% of all radio programmes are purely for a rural audience (1). On the other hand, television has no separate programming for rural areas and messages directed towards this audience are done within the normal programming slots.

This study defines a set of nine mechanisms or modes of communication that environmental communicators may utilize. These include extension and field communication; radio; television; newspapers; magazines; cinema; video; outdoor publicity; and miscellaneous.

Extension and field communication should be taken to include not just communication through extension workers but the holding of village or community meetings, the organization of seminars, workshops and lectures i.e., face-to-face communication with specific groups or sub-groups. Video as defined here would include

only videos specially prepared as communication material on special issues. Outdoor publicity would include all forms of hoardings, posters or chalkings, while miscellaneous includes all non-conventional channels like the use of celebrities, stamps or advertising to further one's message.

3. GOALS

GETTING TO THE GOAL

There are times when communication, and communication alone, stands between success and failure. Take the example of Lee Iacocca and the Chrysler Corporation: from near bankruptcy to profit-making, the company's fortunes reflect what good communication can achieve. Hence when Iacocca said that "the ability to communicate is everything", he knew what he was talking about (17).

Just as sheer hard work and good communication saved Iacocca and his company from total destruction, these two golden ingredients are required for this planet and its environment — in larger doses than ever before!

What is needed at this juncture is to motivate people into an awareness and a concern for the environment, on whose health their survival depends. It is Iacocca again who gives us a prescription of how this can be achieved: "the only way you can motivate people is to communicate with them" (17).

One of the most serious obstacles to the integration of concern for the environment into development issues is the low level of understanding not only on the part of the public but also of decision makers: the government bureaucracy, the elected representatives and even of the academic community. The goal of this strategy is the creation of public awareness. However, before this can be achieved, we will have to reach two other goalposts.

- Creation of opinion leaders.
 - Inculcation of the ethics of conservation.
- It is only through the achievement of these that the greater goal of mass awareness can be

achieved. These two goals are absolutely vital to maintain awareness and concern for the environment, and to translate it into a conversion to an environment-friendly way of life.

OPINION LEADERS

The creation of opinion leaders at all levels of society is of vital importance to the success of this communication strategy. By opinion leaders one does not refer to anything that is even remotely political in nature. What we are aiming at, instead, are individuals within groups who take the lead first in educating themselves, and then in conveying their new-found awareness to those whom they are in contact with.

It is essential to also stress here that these opinion leaders are not extension workers in the conventional sense of the term. In many cases they would, in essence, be doing what extension workers are supposed to do, but what differentiates them from the latter is that they are 'leaders' within their own communities rather than employees of a controlled and formal mechanism. This is what might be called the 'participatory approach' to environmental communication.

The opinion leader option as envisaged in this study is not a new one. Opinion leaders in various disciplines, particularly religious ones, have existed and exist today. What is now required is to facilitate the creation of a cadre of environmental opinion leaders. This has to be done not through the evolution of a hierarchy of paid and trained extension workers but through the development of conditions that propel and accelerate the emergence of these opinion leaders within each group and community.

It is stressed throughout this report that the low literacy rates and the limited reach of the main media makes mass communication a problematic exercise in Pakistan. However, on a happier note, there exist within most communities or groups, individuals who are more conducive to media influences than their contemporaries. This is generally true for all strata of society from the totally illiterate to intellectuals, and from the smallest of farmers to the largest of industrialists.

It is this select set of individuals that has the potential to become opinion leaders and vehicles of communication at a truly 'mass' level.

Another factor that complements this potential is our social structure, which — at every level — supports community dialogue and interaction to make the opinion leaders' role effective. In rural areas, villagers sit together to talk and discuss things fairly often. These meetings are neither organised nor planned to be result-oriented, but by their sheer frequency and regularity hold the promise of being exactly that. Although the potential of this interaction has not been realised, it can be.

If people have to meet every day for a chat and a puff at the hookah it is only logical to assume that all sorts of topics ranging from the totally mundane and frivolous to the most urgent come up for discussion. It is equally logical to assume that there are always some who are more dominant at these discussions than others. It is argued that the ones who dominate these discussions are usually the ones who are also more receptive to media influences. It is only to be expected, then, that these influences would colour the opinions that they propound and that these opinions will be transmitted to their colleagues, who may not pick up as much from the media as from these opinion leaders.

The Pakistani farmer's timely transition to improved seed varieties and fertilizer use was probably as much a result of the *chopaaal*, or village community meeting place, as of any advertising campaign. That the demonstration-effect of farmers, who had been early to experiment and succeed with the new approaches, was the element that speeded this reaction only goes to show the utility of demonstrating the benefits of change.

The scenario we have painted may look overly simple and idealistic, but it is one that can, and does, work. Even in feudal rural settings, the ones more active and heeded at the *chopaaal* may not necessarily be the feudal chiefs. They can well be the *maulvi*, the school teacher or any other person respected for their age or character.

The beauty of the envisaged system is that, in most cases, the opinion leader would receive all

the information disseminated through the formal media but would filter from it only that which is relevant to the community and would pass it on to his/her peers. This is the prime reason why these opinion leaders would be more effective than any extension worker who would, by definition, dish out the same message that s/he has been trained to deliver everywhere, even when it is a message that is not entirely relevant, or of interest, to the immediate audience.

The social interaction we talk about is not limited to the villages alone. Even in towns and cities the same type of regular dialogue exists at institutions like the *khokha*, or wayside restaurant, where rickshaw drivers or daily wage earners assemble in the evening for a cup of tea. Often, these places have a small television set or, at least, a daily newspaper for patrons to flick through. Here too, there are some who are more dominant than others in the discussions that invariably come up. Once again, it is this set of individuals who can prove to be a goldmine in transmitting new ideas.

Even at the upper and middle strata of society, the social interaction and dialogue that exists is far more profound than it is in most developed countries. This 'drawing room/coffee party' social set-up gives us the mechanism for spreading the pollen dust of ideas whose time has come far beyond what mere media communication might achieve.

One sector that requires special attention and focus is the traditional opinion leaders of society. These include religious leaders, social reform groups, teachers, journalists, etc. It could, for example, be extremely useful if we could "prepare school teachers to disseminate basic conservation information and to provide leadership in initiating related conservation activities at the local level" (11). Environmental convertees within these groups can go a long way in acting as the stimulators of rapid change since they all have receptive audiences ready to be influenced.

The institution and mechanism of opinion leaders already exist at all levels of our society. The job of environmental communicators is pri-

marily to colour the opinions of these leaders green!

THE ETHICS OF CONSERVATION

The one question that any environmental communicator, disseminating any message to any target audience is always bound to be asked, and which must be anticipated and answered before it is actually asked, is "why should we conserve?"

The answer is that it is to our benefit to conserve. No matter what group one belongs to or what resource sector one is dealing with, conservation is always the course to be advocated. This is a theme that must run through the entire communication strategy irrespective of what message, to whom, or when. However, the communicator must be careful to present conservation not as 'under-utilization' or 'no utilization' but as 'appropriate utilization' and 'sustainable utilization'. Conservation is, and must be, presented as the opposite of 'waste' and 'misuse' and not as 'miserliness' or 'parsimony'. And this is what brings us to the ethics of conservation which has to be an underlying theme in all messages, for all target groups. While conservation has to be 'marketed' by the communicator primarily for its long-term socio-economic benefits, sight must never be lost of the fact that it is a form of what might be described as 'goodness'. Conservation is, after all, a good, sound social value. Some would insist that it is a moral, and even, religious value.

Like all good values it is one that is beneficial. However, it needs to be practised not only because it is beneficial but also because it is good. Just like speaking the truth will always be beneficial in the long-term, one speaks the truth

not only for benefit but because it is the 'right thing to do'. The very same is the gist of the ethics of conservation which must be embedded as a constant theme in all environmental communication.

Traditionally, there was a strong ethic amongst the Pakistani people based on religious beliefs (Islam in particular condemns all forms of waste), on rural and communal roots (which practised conservation as a necessary tool for survival and well-being) and on endemic poverty (where little was thrown away and that which was thrown away was scavenged as a matter of necessity).

"The ethic is [now] under strong attack from consumerism and [the] material oriented culture being imported from Western Civilization... [These] recent social trends exemplify a bad case of the rat race and keeping up with the Jones'. The flood of remittances from the Middle East in the last decade propagated the 'display and consume' traits among a wide strata of society. The black money from smuggling, and in the eighties from heroin and arms traders is shattering the time honoured values of honesty, frugality and community obligation, not merely among the thousands of racketeer families, but all those millions impressed and influenced by their conspicuous displays. While the social memory of the conserving ethic remains, there is a small window of time, perhaps not more than a generation, to lay the foundation of [a] future resource-use efficient Pakistani society on a model different from that of Western Civilization" (12).

The Pakistan NCS advocates the restoration of the traditional values mentioned above — especially those of qana'at (conservation ethic) and haqooq-ul-ibaad (community spirit) as necessary to its success (13). The aim of this study is no less.

ENDNOTES

1. Quoted in an advertisement placed by the Jang Group of Newspapers in ADASIA, 1989.
2. PTV, 1989. These figures, and others quoted here, reflect the situation in 1991, when this report was first written. Since then, the television scenario has changed substantially with the induction of two new channels and the availability of foreign satellite transmissions.

WHO



1. INTRODUCTION

THE MESSAGE AND THE MECHANISM

Having already discussed the necessity of a target specific, message specific and mechanism specific approach to communication, we now have to define broad groups. Each should exhibit general similarities in problems, attitudes and outlook that can be reached through common messages and mechanisms. These audiences could certainly give us a number of sub-groups, many of which could be broken up further into interest groups. However, the purpose here is to formulate target audiences at the macro rather than the micro level.

The message of conservation is for all people. However, the scope and the magnitude of this message is such that not all of it is for everyone. Each one of us impacts on the environment, but in different ways. Hence, the message should be defined by the audience, and it is these two all-important parameters that then decide the most appropriate methodology and mechanisms for such communication.

TARGET GROUPS

Looking at Pakistani society, one can identify eight main target audiences that need to be tackled through separate messages and, at times, separate mechanisms.

1. Decision makers.
2. Stewards of natural resources.
3. Industrial and business polluters.
4. Women.
5. Youth and students.
6. Educated, media-responsive cadre.
7. Particular interest groups.
8. General public.

Groups 2 and 3 can possibly be welded together to form a single group. This is because they are the prime users as well as abusers of nature and its resources. Therefore, the general message to be conveyed to them both is necessarily the same: one of showing more respect for nature's treasures and exercising more care in its use so as to make all development sustainable.

However the fact that despite similarity in the message to be communicated, this set has been divided into two separate elements is illustrative of the criterion used for grouping these two audiences. Despite the similarities in the results

of their actions and in the desired role for them, these two are often so diametrically different in their social, educational and monetary structuring that they require totally different communication mechanisms.

2. DECISION MAKERS

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

It is important to aim much of the conservation message specifically at decision makers. They hold in their hands the strings to most developmental activities and, therefore, are best placed to put the nation on the road to sustainable, as opposed to resource-abusive, development.

Despite its extremely small size, this target audience is of pivotal importance to all conservation related activity, since actions emerging from within this group can have far reaching and extensive effects on the health of the environment. This category is not always influenced by the mass media alone; but, as a part of general society, enough noise on the public level does have the potential of reaching this audience and translating itself into positive project and policy decisions.

Since the prime aim of the NCS is to integrate conservation efforts with development activities, communicating to this audience and educating them on environmental issues is vital. As Gro Harlem Brundtland puts it: "If we do not succeed in putting our message of urgency through to today's decision makers, we risk undermining our children's fundamental right to a healthy, life-enhancing environment" (8).

THE MESSAGE

The message that needs to be stressed upon is that "development that is inflexible and little influenced by ecological considerations is unlikely to make the best use of available resources. By causing ecological damage it is likely also to cause economic and social damage. The most effective way society can avoid

such problems is to integrate every stage of the conservation and development process; from the initial setting of policies to their eventual implementation and operation" (19). And also that "it is imperative to integrate environmental dimensions in development planning, to enforce practical environmental measures [and] to focus upon major and specific environmental problems" (10).

Broader environmental assessment has to be applied not only to products and projects, but also to policies and programmes, especially major macro-economic, financial and sectoral policies that significantly impact on the environment. What is needed now is a new era of economic growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable.

THE MECHANISM

The conventional outlets can and must be utilised. However, using just these channels will not be enough. Decision makers do not always listen to (or pay heed to) what the media has to say, nor can the media furnish the minute technical details that are needed for policy formulation.

From the point of view of effectiveness, newspapers will certainly be a successful medium of information dissemination to this audience. It can raise general awareness about current concerns and public feeling (something which this group supposedly holds in high esteem).

Of the two electronic media outlets, radio cannot be expected to have much influence on this audience. Television certainly has a role but a limited one because, unlike the press, television (in the Pakistan context) is effectively for everyone and messages have to be generalised to cater to a larger audience. Also, television is still largely state-controlled in Pakistan. Although it might sometimes be worth the effort to float policy messages through television, for the consumption of this as well as other audiences, it has to be primarily used in juxtaposition with other media sources, including outdoor publicity, to instill a general concern for environmental issues.

In the press articles on particular policy issues inserted periodically in newspapers and in carefully selected magazines certainly have an important role to play, but these efforts have to be backed by intensive non-formal communication focusing in on this audience.

This could mean the preparation of video documentaries that look at environmental issues from the decision makers' perspective, underlining the policies that can be taken to curb the rapid deterioration of our environment. Arranging lectures, seminars and meetings where decision makers can come in contact with environmental experts and activities can sometimes galvanise a solution-oriented look at problems.

One of the most productive ways of getting decision makers interested and concerned about environmental issues could be to make them not only listen but talk about these issues. This would first create, and then reaffirm their commitment to the cause. This can be achieved by the formal media continuously pressing the decision makers for statements, comments and clarifications on environmental issues which would force even the non-interested among this group to do their homework on the subject more thoroughly. Furthermore, involving the decision makers in seminars, lectures, meetings etc., would not only expose them to the details of the subject but would, more importantly, open their performance to comment, suggestion and criticism, that might not have received feedback otherwise.

3. STEWARDS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This target group includes farmers, fisher folk, graziers, herders and all other elements who earn their livelihood through natural resource use. A broad grouping by all standards, this sector is probably the single most important target as far as impact of human action on natural resources is concerned.

However, given the extremely low level of lit-

eracy within this group and that they are not accessed by most mass media (press and television), it is a target group that is as difficult to reach with conventional communication techniques as it is important to reach. This is precisely why this group, more than any other, requires a case- and region-targeted communication approach.

Unlike most other targets, this audience would be little or not interested in the academic elements of the conservation message. They would, by and large, be more interested in their own specific problems and specific solutions rather than in the scope of the environmental crises at the national or global level.

THE MESSAGE

The very definition of this audience suggests that the message would have to be targeted at the specific problems of each region and at times, each community. More importantly, the message and the information being communicated would have to be more solution-specific, incentive-specific and situation-specific.

One advantage in formulating a message for this audience is that since their economic well-being depends directly on the use of natural resources, they have a stake in conservation efforts and the incentive of 'better conservation equals better standards of living' will be most relevant.

It is to be impressed upon this target group that unsustainable use of natural resources may momentarily improve their quality of life but such short-sightedness will create serious problems for them and coming generations in the future. Sustainable utilization is somewhat analogous to spending the interest while keeping the capital. A society that insists that all utilization of natural resources be sustainable ensures that it will benefit from the resources virtually indefinitely (19).

THE MECHANISM

The mechanism for transmitting conservation messages to this target group needs serious

consideration since the major avenues of public communication in Pakistan tend to bypass this audience. Illiteracy and a less than satisfactory newspaper network means that the press sector cannot be depended upon to channel the message. Television does have the advantage of offsetting the literacy barrier, but its reach and effectiveness is limited within this group. Nonetheless television, along with cinema, has to be encouraged to focus upon the ethics and utility of conservation for the benefit of this audience. Radio has an advantage which no other medium enjoys. Not only does it reach a substantial cross-section of this target group but it is also heard by this group on a regular basis.

To counter the literacy handicap, outdoor publicity techniques which depend on visuals with little writing, have an important role to play, as do specially produced video documentaries, preferably in the local language. Special efforts ought to be made in cultivating regional and community opinion leaders within this target group since the utility of these extension communicators is paramount. One vehicle for the achievement of this goal could be village and community level 'field-chats' by experts who know the technicalities of the subject, and more importantly, are able to communicate them in the language of the resource user. Much can be achieved in this direction by mobilising rural-based NGOs to take part in this communication exercise.

Such encounters between resource users and scientists can prove to be a greater communication asset than an experts-only gathering. The utility of such an exercise would emerge from the prospects of one convertee converting the entire flock, and there is no better way of communicating the message of conservation to this group than the demonstration approach that such a process entails. The aim is to bring the message to the chopaal to be discussed by the community dwellers over a puff of their hookah. Once this is achieved, half the communication battle is already won.

4. INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS POLLUTERS

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This target audience includes all industrial polluters, big or small; whether they own a large chemical factory on the outskirts of Lahore or run a small rubber industry in the old section of Hyderabad. As long as the lack of proper pollution abatement facilities within their business environs is poisoning nature's capital, they fall within this target grouping. The common factor here would be a lack of awareness and concern for the environment they are ransacking.

As with the stewards of natural resources this target audience is also of pivotal importance because its actions can have a direct effect on the well-being, or otherwise, of the environment. However, this group differs from the earlier one in the sense that it is made up mostly of indirect users and direct abusers of natural resources, while in many cases the previous group are direct users and indirect abusers.

THE MESSAGE

This basic difference between the two audience groups spells the difference in the messages targeted at them. With the natural resource users it is possible to phrase a direct incentive-oriented message. This is not possible with industrial and allied polluters. Since the abuse to natural resources being meted out by this group often may not directly affect it (or its economic well-being), this group has the tendency to look at the environmental impacts of its own making in an off-hand, detached, third-party manner. The environment becomes an external cost, all too easily externalised. The message, therefore, has to be more humanitarian, social impact oriented, and at times, even guilt inducing.

Since the environmental impacts of this group do not always cycle back to them, the standard question such a polluter is likely to ask is "what do I gain from investing in a better envi-

ronment?" Hence, the answer to this question has to be in the message.

The most straightforward reply might be: "If you do not conserve at first development will not last".¹ However, this slogan is easier to appreciate than to implement. What the industrial and business entrepreneur has to be educated about is the subtleties of the Polluter Pays Principle and the fact that environmental pollution does have a cost (27). Unfortunately, these costs are not encountered until the assimilative capacity of the environment has been exceeded. Beyond this point costs cannot be avoided; they will be paid. The policy implications are how and by whom they will be paid, not whether (40).

THE MECHANISM

Since this target audience is often literate, better educated and media-oriented, the message targeted at them should make use of all the conventional media outlets. It should publicise broad environmental concerns as well as focus on the implications of a particular industry's environmental abuse.

Newspapers and magazines can kill the proverbial two birds with one stone (though killing birds is not exactly a popular sport with any environmentalist) by targeting the message at a wide readership and highlighting the problems caused by the activities of such resource abusers and their likely solutions. Such a message would, firstly, educate this group as well as others of the environmental concerns vis-a-vis industry. Secondly, it would help create pressure groups amongst the public that could act as watchdogs over industry.

Television can help in communicating with this audience in a similar manner, but with an added layer of subtlety by incorporating such themes within their entertainment programmes, particularly drama. The most important thing to remember here is that guilt may be induced as a means of creating awareness but not the other way round. Labeling this group as villains should never be the aim, especially in a developing country like Pakistan. Instead, the focus

should be on instilling the feeling that development accompanied by conservation is more lasting and sustainable.

In this regard, it is important for all conventional media to run specific stories/programmes on what needs to be done, why it needs to be done and also, what is being done. An example of an actual project that has improved output and efficiency because of conservation measures can be an infinitely more potent message than long-winded, unsubstantiated accounts of what could be but is not. Particular emphasis must always be laid on how economic benefits can be obtained from, say, pollution abatement or alternative production lines. Communicating the latest advancements or research could prove to be extremely positive and fruitful exercises.

Radio has limited access to this group but certain segments within this sector (small and home industries) can be targeted. Outdoor publicity has similarly limited benefits; its utility stems from its constant presence that serves as a reminder of public perceptions and community responsibilities. Mobilising groups with individuals from this community as its members, such as the Lions Club, the Rotary Club or different professional or social organizations and associations to take up conservation as their slogan is an avenue worth experimenting with. Other important non-formal communication outlets that need to be experimented with are workshops, seminars and lectures for this group (specially the big industrialists) where contact with experts, opinion leaders, activists and decision makers will help in raising awareness.

5. WOMEN

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Women, apart from being one-half of the national population, are also extremely important natural resource users. Communicating the message of conservation to them can spell not just the conversion of one individual but that of an entire family.

"Women are the repository of values in a society. In their role as mothers, they not only pass on the values of the culture to their children but, because they plan for their children's future, their planning horizon is much longer than [that] normally employed by men. Women plan 25 or 30 years ahead as they think about the lives of their children. In the present, they are responsible for finding food, fuel, water and fodder. For these reasons, in most countries, women have become major supporters of non-governmental efforts to preserve the natural environment" (33).

Once we are able to instill the ethics of conservation in the women of the country, more than half the job of communicating this ethic to the future generation is already done. The importance and impact of women as resource users is sufficient for them to be described as the traditional natural scientists (34).

In Pakistan, as managers of water resources, forest and subsistence agriculture, women have fulfilled the essential tasks of growing food, fetching water and gathering fuel. Thus the burden of displacement as well as dwindling resources is invariably borne by women because of their role as family sustainers and nurturers. It is therefore logical to conceptualise women, environment and development as linked in a tri-cornered relationship (26).

THE MESSAGE

The message to be targeted for this audience has to be general as well as case-specific. For example, in the many areas where women in their role as fuelwood collectors damage the environment, it is important to highlight not only the effects of this activity but more importantly, the environment-friendly alternatives for their fuel requirements. It is equally important to target a general message about conservation of natural resources as a way of life. It is the general attitude of qana'at in the use of resources that needs to be brought home to women who are best placed to transmit it to their families (30).

Improvements in the health and education of women, in conjunction with other social changes that raise the status of women, can have a profound effect in bringing down the population growth rate which can place further pressure on the environment. Thus the message of conservation must be complemented with the messages of health care and education (for women and for their families) for the former to be truly effective.

THE MECHANISM

Since this target group includes women from all walks of life and women whose activities overlap with the many different target audiences discussed here, it is impossible to define one unified communication mechanism for the entire group. The approach that must be used with a woman in a town would be very different from what would be used with one living in a remote village. The problems faced and the actions required from the two are so different that entirely different messages and mechanisms may be required.

All media, formal as well as non-formal, need to be mobilised to take the message of conservation to this audience. What needs to be done here is to assert, highlight and re-assert the importance of the ethics of conservation in all communication activities already being aimed at women. A fairly extensive communication programme is already targeted at this group and is endeavouring to educate women in health, family planning, development, home employment and other sectors. All these efforts need to be unified into one cohesive all-encompassing communication package which is spearheaded by the message of conservation.

The press has a role to play, though once again limited due to the poor level of literacy. Radio and television have a much more important part, especially in their morning transmissions, since they have exclusive access to housewives, which no other media enjoys. NGOs dealing with women and development can be

extremely potent communicators also, since they can easily incorporate the message of conservation with the various other messages that they are already disseminating to this group.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENTS

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This target audience includes students from the high school to the university level, as well as those youngsters who may not be students (who may not even be educated) but who are open to media influences. Thus a chota who works as a motor mechanic's apprentice or sits at a general merchant's shop where the radio blares throughout the day would also be a member of this target audience.

Of all the groups, this lot is most open to the message of conservation. Although all communication investments targeted towards this group are long-term in nature, they are without doubt, extremely important and far reaching investments. By definition and by age this is a group of individuals amenable to change and ready to accept new ideas. It is they who are going to become members of all the other target groups tomorrow; this converts any investment made in them into an investment in the future and thus a doubly viable proposition.

THE MESSAGE

The message to this group is of a general nature. But, on most occasions, messages targeted at other audiences would work equally effectively to motivate this group — since they sponge up knowledge and information. From this knowledge stems awareness and from awareness comes the birth of positive activity for the creation of a better environment.

New information-rich environmental themes containing facts about the latest research and future possibilities would be of particular interest to such an audience. For the school-going age groups, information on biodiversity should instill interest while for college/university students

information relating to health, hygiene, the social and global effects of environmental neglect would find eager audiences.

At the educational institution level, much of the message would have to come from within the formal education system; side-by-side, there needs to be substantial input from the mass media aimed specifically at student groups and from co-curricular activities from both within or without the educational institution network. The general focus of the message must be one of optimism and one which specifies not only the environmental concerns of today and tomorrow but, more importantly, identifies the solutions to these dilemmas. What needs to be impressed upon this group, more than any other, is the fact that humanity has the ability to make development sustainable — to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same (40).

THE MECHANISM

This group is like wet clay waiting to be molded into something constructive before the ravages of time harden them into stiff creatures of habits, who can be broken but not remoulded. What makes this group invaluable to the environmental communicator is their ability to grasp and adopt new ideas and their receptivity to media influences. Youth-based NGOs as well as educational institutions should be encouraged to transmit the required attitudes and the necessary information to this audience. Involving young people in awareness programmes at all levels can be particularly beneficial.

While television, radio, press, outdoor publicity, magazines, cinema and all other media outlets need to be tapped, special attention must be given to the message being transmitted: it should not become a sermon. This is one audience that must not be taught. The aim of all communication targeted at this group should be the adoption of conservation in the truest sense of the word. The key word here is direct involvement.

7. MEDIA RESPONSIVE SEGMENTS

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This particular group is a product of Pakistan's low literacy, stark economic differences, and the depressingly small percentage of its population that is fed by and conducive to conventional media outlets. While a special communication mechanism needs to be evolved for people who are not exposed to, or are not responsive to conventional mass media, it is equally important to communicate properly to the media responsive segments of society.²

This target group is extremely important as it includes within its folds nearly all decision makers, most students and a majority of industrial and business polluters. This group is characterised by being educated, interested in social phenomena, enjoying better standards of living and, most importantly, having a tendency of influencing others who may or may not fall within this group.

It is this last named quality that makes them extremely potent from the point of view of environmental communication. In many instances one might find individuals who are not too highly educated and have a low standard of living but who are more interested in what the media has to tell them than others like themselves. Invariably, it is this individual who has an influence over the minds and actions of contemporaries merely because of the information edge that s/he has over them. Particularly in the rural and lower-income group context, communicating to media responsive people amounts to delivering the message to the opinion leaders, who by virtue of being better informed can then become the communicators within their social spheres.³

This group also includes within its folds a sub-group that covers nearly all educated urban, middle/upper-middle class individuals. From this lot stem the decision makers and the individuals most capable of influencing the decision makers. Thus even if the information disseminated to this audience does not reach the

decision makers directly, it would probably do so through social and semi-social contacts.

THE MESSAGE

Since this group has a number of sub-groups within it, there cannot be any standard message prescription for it. Specific issue and solution-oriented messages as well as those underlining the general philosophy of conservation remain important for this audience. The blend and proportions of these have to be decided upon on a media-specific basis, depending upon which medium reaches which sub-audience and in what proportion of effectiveness.

Particular issues to be focused on have to be decided on the merits of prevailing needs, interests and events so as to ensure the maximum effect within the group as a whole and within each of its sub-groups in particular. Since the message spectrum is extremely broad and since this audience is potentially capable of triggering an interest in environmental conservation amongst a number of other audiences, there is a special need to concentrate on them and to encourage all conventional media to convey the desired information and messages to them.

THE MECHANISM

The mechanism for communicating the message of conservation to this group is essentially contained within its own nomenclature — this is a prime example of the media defining not only the message but also the audience. The very fact that this is an audience that is responsive to the media emphasises the need for extensively targeting this group through all available mass media.

By definition, this is a grouping which cannot always be targeted specifically to cater to the message demands of each sub-group within it. Nevertheless, this remains one of the easiest groups to target. Firstly, because it is already open to media influences, and secondly, because specific messages targeted at nearly all the other audiences would, in more cases than most, prove equally effective with this group.

Since special messages need not always be employed, it is only natural that more messages will filter to this group than to any other. This is how it should be. The opinion leaders within each group will emerge from the overlapping segments of those groups with this one.

8. PARTICULAR INTEREST GROUPS

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This group includes all those technocrats, bureaucrats, scientists, experts, university students, research and policy makers who are already interested and attuned to receiving information about any or some particular aspects of the environment. By broad definition it would also include the media, NGOs and also all those resource users/abusers (farmers, industrialists, etc.) who are aware or interested in the environmental consequences of their actions, who want to learn more and are particularly interested in solution-related information. What differentiates this target audience from the many with which it overlaps is the existing interest, or willingness for the creation of such an interest, in specific areas of the environmental spectrum.

The magnitude and scope of the technicalities of modern environmental concerns are such that they arouse the interest of different groups in different ways. For example, the areas of interest of a civil engineer would be very different from the areas that would interest a chemical engineer, an agriculturist or for that matter a marine biologist. However, it is extremely important that the members of each discipline be educated not only in the environmental imperatives of their own sectors, but in the effects their activities are likely to have upon other areas and, finally on the overall environment.

The utility and importance of defining this group as a separate and specific target audience emerges from the following considerations:

- This audience is already open to the message of environmental conservation.
- It has enough command over its own area of interest to understand technical details. Thus

the message can be detailed and specific vis-a-vis both the problem and its solution.

- This audience is usually in a position to implement its convictions, or help in getting them implemented. If a specific interest group being targeted is a resource user then it is likely to implement any conservation technique that promises better results. In the case of academics, it is their proximity and possible influence over the decision makers and opinion leaders and the possibility of their conversion to either of these roles that makes the translation of information to implementation a viable possibility.

By extension of its definition, this group can also include a number of sub-groups that would require particular interest messages to be transmitted to them. For example, religious scholars can play an extremely important role in creating environmental awareness by communicating the ethics of conservation contained in all the religions of the world. Similarly, the military is also a particular interest group that can contribute much if geared into the conservation effort.

THE MESSAGE

It is the understanding of the cross-sectoral approach to environmental conservation that is important for communicating the message of sustainable development. However, it is equally important that the communicator in disseminating information on allied sectors to a specific interest audience does not lose their interest, for this group may be concerned mostly with information about its own area.

It is thus necessary that the message targeted at this audience nail home the utility of a multi-sectoral approach to the environment, but at the same time have enough specific information to keep interest alive.

What needs to be brought home to the academics within this group is the fact that development and conservation are integrally linked. While the former aims to achieve human goals largely through the use of the natural resources of the biosphere, sustainable development aims

at the same goals but ensures that such use can continue in the future. It follows that conservation is a process that needs to be applied cross-sectorally, it has to do with the same kind of planning, prioritising and programming that goes into national development planning.

The messages to the media, NGOs, religious scholars or the military must basically focus on the role that they need to play in the environmental crusade. What is of paramount importance here is the motivational content of the message that can gear them to become the lead actors in the entire environmental communication effort. What needs to be impressed upon the resource users amongst this group is the need for merging economic and environmental considerations when exploiting any natural resource.

Investment in the environment is an investment in development because it is only through conservation that we can achieve sustainable development which is "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (40).

THE MECHANISM

The most advantageous point while targeting the message to this audience is the fact that it is open (and at times even eager) to receive the information that needs to be disseminated. However, the disadvantage is that this is an audience that does not want to be fed simple generalities. It wants information, salient facts, real problems and tangible solutions. Thus, the information that would interest them would not interest most other audiences.

The choice of mechanism is restricted by the fact that in pure numeric terms this is probably the smallest of all target groups with the possible exception of decision makers. But the advantage of overlapping messages is not enjoyed here. In this situation, the use of general purpose media like television, radio and even the

press is restricted; however, to a limited extent television and the press have a role to play by carrying specific information that might be of interest to this group; radio, unfortunately, is not very useful.

In its present frame, cinema and outdoor publicity cannot be utilised due to their limitations of carrying only general messages. However, what can be extremely useful in reaching this audience are specially produced video films and field workshops, seminars and discussions. Specific-subject/technical journals can be a powerful communication method also for, despite their limited circulation, they are capable of considerable outreach.

9. GENERAL PUBLIC

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

This target group is self explanatory and is the logical base of the entire audience pyramid. What is important here, however, is the reason why this audience has been retained as a separate target even though all its components are dealt with in the other groupings. This is because of the utility of running a general campaign for greater environmental awareness and concern that could trigger a process of individual, community and national action.

THE MESSAGE

While general messages have to be directed towards the entire populace, inclusive of the various targets already discussed, there is a need to orchestrate this message in a manner that it serves to educate everyone about the individual, community and national benefits of environmental conservation for sustainable development. What has to be put across to the public is that specific actions and programmes for a better environment have to stem from the general interest of the people themselves. This interest would then be translated into specific activities for the benefit of those very people whose interests triggered this in the first place.

THE MECHANISM

General messages about conservation should be targeted at all the groups. It is the net accumulation of all these messages that will filter down to the public level to create the all-important awareness and concern that will make conservation possible.

In this case it is specially important to gear up the non-formal communication media. Since a majority of people do not have access to the outputs of the formal communication channels, opinion leaders are of paramount importance and it is through these catalysts that the message has to seep down.

All formal and non-formal modes of communication need to be employed to maximum effect. These efforts will then translate into individual interest that would, hopefully, trigger wide scale debate and discussion on the sub-

ject in social, political and other circles. It is from these large scale discussions that awareness, then concern, and finally action for a better environment for our children will emerge.

The governing principle about communicating with the people must be "a reverential respect for the intelligence of the people, illiterate or otherwise. In the age of electronic media, audio and visual literacy have superseded print literacy. We thus witness the phenomenon of a person who may never have been to school but who knows where to find a particular station on his radio set, and then finds it, and listens to it. The cassette tape, TV and cinema have also altered the concept of literacy. Propaganda may temporarily entice but cannot indefinitely endure. Ultimately, reality contradicts the most well planned and the most carefully controlled propaganda" (20).

ENDNOTES

1. The theme of World Environment Day, 1988.
2. The conventional media reaches only a small percentage of the population and not even this percentage can be termed as truly 'media responsive'. This grouping includes within its folds only those individuals who are sufficiently exposed to the media and are sufficiently responsive to its influence for media-provided information and ideas to affect them directly.
3. The ideal is the creation of opinion leaders (see Part Two) within this target audience who could become carriers of the conservation message to elements not as conducive to media communication as themselves. Amongst the urban educated, even if members of this target group, who are converted to the message, are able to focus upon environmental concerns and issues within their social circles, it would be a notable achievement in communication since the message bubble would be expanding. More important is the case of the urban and rural lower income-groups — if these media responsive elements are able to transmit the message they have received from the media to a wider audience while chatting over a cup of tea at a wayside khokha or over a puff of the hookah at the village chopaal.

HOW



1. INTRODUCTION

AN OPENING WORD OF CAUTION

The Communication Strategy was really Part Three of this study. Preceding it was the justification for, and philosophy of the strategy; what follows is an expansion and derivation from it. We have already discussed why we need a strategy for communicating the message of sustainable development, what the basic structure of this strategy is and who it wishes to address. This part focuses on how this strategy can be used.

A word of caution is warranted here. Communication, as we have said earlier, is a science. To forget that is a mistake. But to try to convert it into an exact and precise science might be an even greater folly! To use the Johnny Appleseed analogy: spread the seeds of hope everywhere, and where the ground is fertile they shall sprout, may not be the prescribed strategy but much of the best communication initiatives do stem from this basic, simple theme.

But it is, by no means, an approach that one can rely upon as a strategy. Strategically, one tries, as we have done here, to identify specific clusters, messages and mechanisms that can optimise our efforts. But nowhere can these

groups be rigid compartments conducive to rigid and precise handling procedures. The broad categories and their treatments discussed in Part Three are rough outlines meant to sort what would otherwise be an unmanageable jumble of millions of different people demanding different channels of communication.

What is given in the previous part is the 'meat' of this strategy. What we would try to do here is to illustrate how it can be carved into palatable helpings. But what has to be done with the servings is up to the communicator. Given here are tools and means which might help the communicator in deciding what to do.

TARGET OVERLAPS

This strategy aims at taking specific messages, through specific mechanisms to specific audiences. The final goal is reaching a particular cluster. The target audiences, however, are a complex set of groupings that have intricate overlaps with each other.

Consider, for example, the cluster defined as the educated, media-responsive group and the decision makers. By and large the latter falls within the former. This means that any message targeted through any mechanism at the educat-

ed, media-responsive set would also reach the decision makers. However, the converse of this is not true. Consider also the fact that a sizeable proportion of industrial polluters will be amongst the educated, media-responsive cadre but a very small percentage of the latter group would be in the industrial polluters group. Other similar overlaps exist between the different targets defined in this study.

Knowledge of these overlaps can be extremely useful in deciding the audiences that can be joined together when communicating a particular message.

A general picture of these overlaps — as it emerges from a careful reading of Part Three — is given in Figure 2. Though more qualitative than quantitative in nature, the figure does provide the reader with a fair picture of the overlaps between the various audiences. Four intensities of overlap are depicted in the diagram showing no overlap, little overlap, sizeable overlap and complete overlap.

Since the overlap of audience X to Y can be entirely different from that of Y to X, the figure reads both ways with the top triangle of the diamond referring to the overlap of the upper group with the lower one and the bottom triangle reading the overlap the other way round. Consider for example, the youth and students and the particular interest groups: reading from an upper entry to a lower one, we see that the youth and students has 'little overlap' with the particular interest groups. Reading the same entries the other way round we see that the particular interest groups has a 'sizeable overlap' with youth and students.

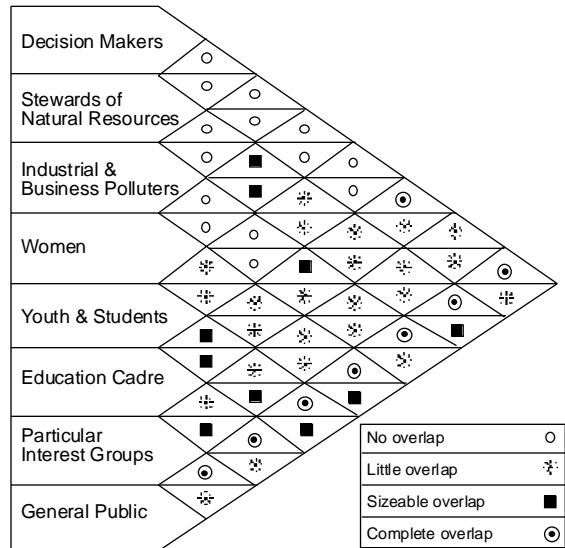
2. QUANTIFYING THE UNQUANTIFIABLE

INTERLINKAGES

While the target groups overlaps discussed are complex, they are made all the more difficult by the fact that the three cornerstones of this strategy — audiences, messages and mech-

FIGURE 2

OVERLAPS BETWEEN TARGET AUDIENCES



anisms — interact with one another. In this section we shall be discussing these linkages and how best they can be quantified, not as much for precision, as for ease of comprehension and handling.

One needs to stress again how important and useful it can be for a communicator to understand the depth of the interlinkages between audiences, messages and mechanisms. The support that such knowledge can afford to a communicator is immense. Knowing that if a certain message is targeted through a certain mechanism at a certain audience, the effort is going to reach a portion of an overlapping audience as well, the communicator can mould her/his approach to optimise the effort for maximum output at minimum input. Some of these interlinkages would have become apparent to the reader. Many others become clear through experiences in specific areas. However, some quantification, no matter how general, of these interlinkages can be of great value to any environmental communicator.

THE MATRIX APPROACH

In trying to quantify the unquantifiable and to give a general (though at times blurred) picture of the linkages, this study has adopted the matrix approach. The rationale is simple. We have the 'dimensions', i.e., the audiences, the messages and the mechanisms. What we want to do is to identify the connections between them. This study identifies a set of 8 target audiences, 8 message groups and 9 mechanisms for communication. Each of these has a certain relationship with the others.

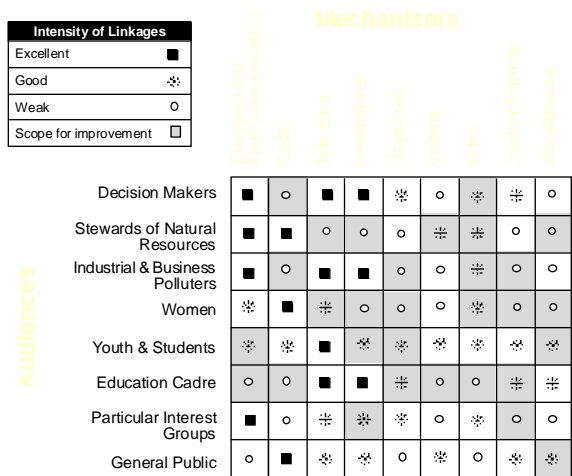
Thus, three types of interlinkages exist: the target-mechanism, the target-message and the message-mechanism. The matrix approach simply entails putting each of them into a grid and then joining the resulting three matrices as three sides of a cube. The intensities of the interlinkages are depicted as being either 'excellent', 'good' or 'weak'. Furthermore, there are certain linkages which presently show a degree of strength which is below their potential and which need to be, and can be, improved. These are depicted in the matrices with a thatched background.

THE AUDIENCE-MECHANISM MATRIX

Let's use an example. It is easier and more effective to reach natural resource users through radio than through television or the press. But, when quantifying this thought and highlighting the importance of a medium, one should not overlook the relatively less, but still important, reach of the others. The all-important question is which mechanism of communication is best suited to reach which audience? In our audience-mechanism matrix (Figure 3) radio is identified as an excellent medium for reaching natural resource users. Television, with its limited reach, is a medium of weak strength for this group, though one with potential as its coverage is extended and its programmes become more relevant to rural needs. Newspapers and magazines, given the prevailing literacy situation amongst this target group, are also weak mechanisms though, once again, ones

FIGURE

AUDIENCE-MECHANISM MATRIX

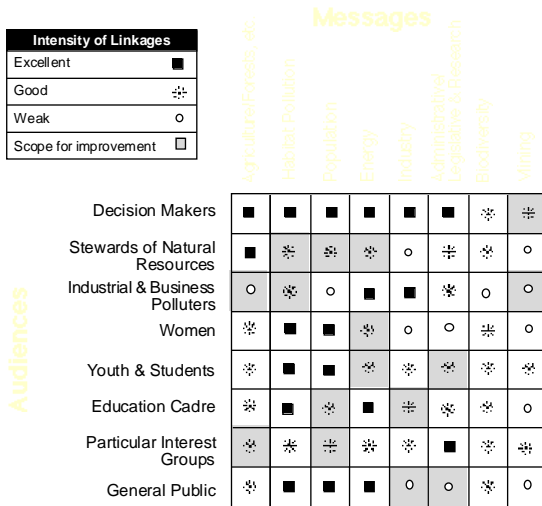


whose reach can, and should be improved as literacy ratios rise. Extensions and field communication can be a strong mechanism, while outdoor publicity is weak. However, cinema is identified as a good channel for this group which still attaches importance to and preference for this medium despite its declining fortunes elsewhere. Important to remember is the fact that these strengths are an indication of the section of the people the mechanism can and does reach, and are not indicative of numbers. Thus, cinema may reach lesser numbers of people even when its strength is marked good, while television's reach in the same target group may be weak even when it reaches a larger number of people.

THE AUDIENCE-MESSAGE MATRIX

Consider now the audience-message matrix (Figure 4). In this matrix the aim is to highlight the priorities of the audiences vis-a-vis the messages. The questions being answered here are: what audience would be more interested in what message? And what message should reach what audience? (The answer to these two questions need not always be the same).

AUDIENCE-MESSAGE MATRIX

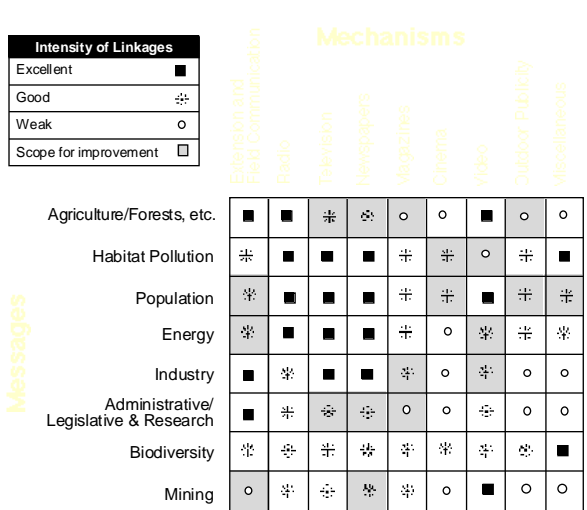


Consider the message of administration, legislature and research. The matrix suggests that this message is excellently suited to particular interest groups and decision makers. It is also suitable for the educated cadre, industrial and business polluters, resource users and the youth and students group.

THE MESSAGE-MECHANISM MATRIX

Equally important are the interlinkages between messages and mechanisms. They help decide which medium is best suited to transmit what message. The message-mechanism matrix (Figure 5) suggests that it is more productive for the environmental communicator to use newspapers for transmitting the messages of population and habitat pollution than, say, for mining, agriculture or forestry. Habitat pollution messages can be transmitted through television, radio, newspapers and miscellaneous communication channels. The scope for using extension and field communication, outdoor publicity, magazines and cinema is good. There is room for further improvement in the use of cinema, while the use of specially prepared videos is limited.

MESSAGE-MECHANISM MATRIX

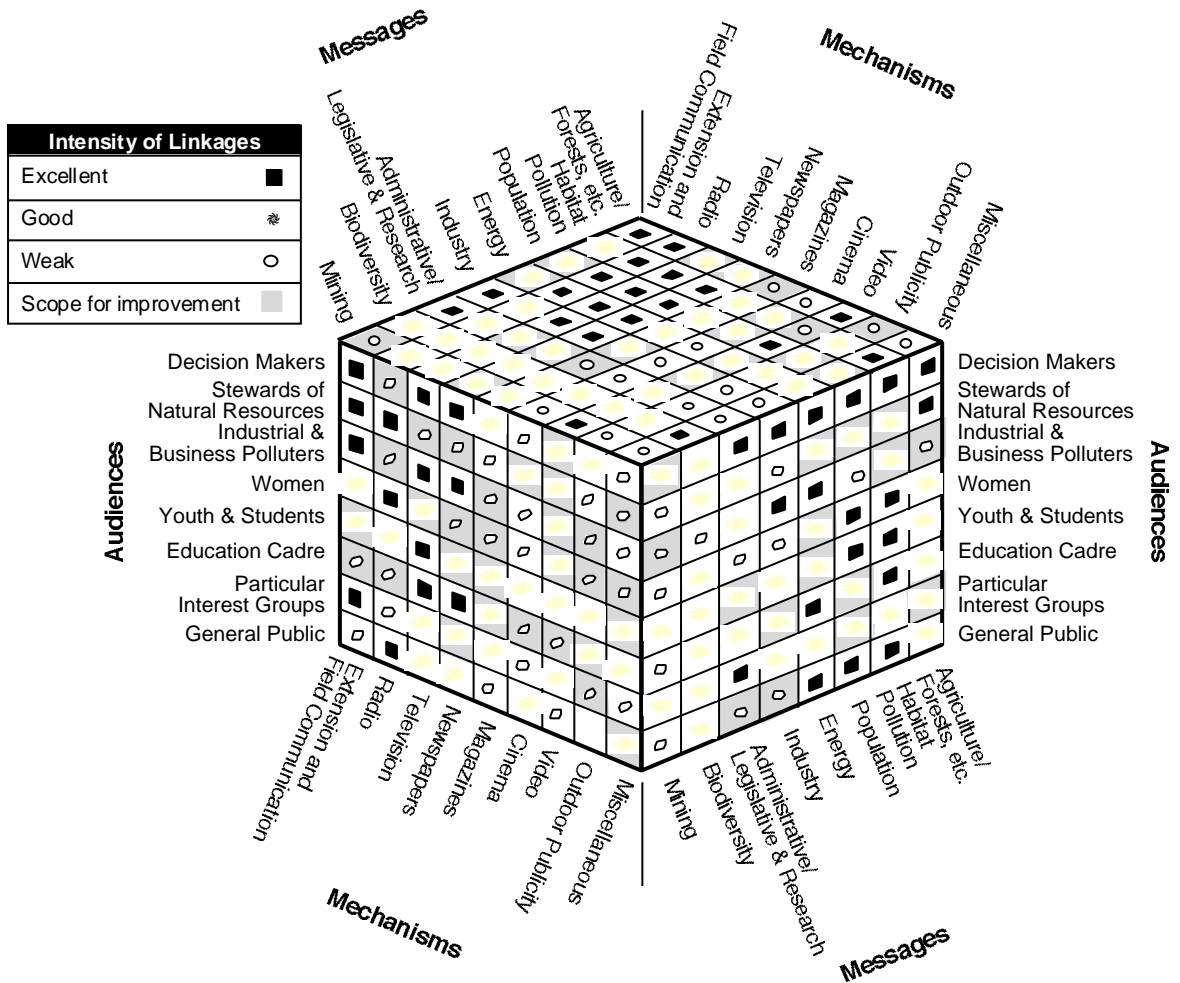


USING THE COMMUNICATION CUBE

Having already gone through the three interaction matrices the reader would have, by now, appreciated the utility of having at one's command an idea of how any two of the three principal actors in communication activity interact. However, the fact to remember is that whatever and wherever the effort may be directed, it will always have an audience, a message being transmitted and a mechanism used to transmit the message. Thus the three key characters act not in pairs but as a trio. Furthermore, it is possible that at one time more than one audience group may be targeted, or more than one message may be transmitted or more than one mechanism may be used, but a minimum of each would always be interacting.

It is possible to use the three matrices discussed earlier to determine the combined effect of the three key players. But it would certainly be much more useful if the three matrices could be combined into one, convenient-to-use tool for gauging the interactions that exist. The communication cube has been developed for exactly this purpose (Figure 6).

THE COMMUNICATION CUBE



The cube is exactly like our earlier matrices with the only difference being that since this has three instead of two axes, we can now accommodate the audiences, the messages and the mechanisms and then see how each interacts with the other.

The communicator would always have as a constant either the audience group to be targeted, the message or information to be disseminated or the mechanism or media at hand. In certain cases s/he would be confined to specific

choices in all three or even two, but most often at least one of them would be restricted to a certain degree. The job, then, would be to prepare a communication package that could provide optimum benefits within the given restrictions. This is where the communication cube may help.

Consider for example, a communicator who wishes to disseminate some information about the energy sector. The cube reveals that this type of information would be relevant for decision makers, industrial and business polluters, the

educated cadre and the general public. It also shows that the mechanisms most suited for this type of message would be radio, television and newspapers. The same matrix would also tell us that amongst the audiences identified, the decision makers, industrial and business polluters and the educated cadre would be effectively reached by television and newspapers but that radio's reach would be weak. It also suggests that the same information could be spread best amongst the public using radio; newspapers and the television would be good, but not excellent. While the information to be dispersed would be one of the controlling factors, the cube should logically lead to the conclusion that the combination of television and newspapers is the mechanism best suited to this need.

In another situation, the same communicator may want to take the message of biogas plants to natural resource users and wishes to determine which medium or mechanism is best suited for this. The cube suggests that this audience can best be reached either through field and extension communication or through radio. Another option is through specially prepared video films or, if a long-term programme is required, through messages intertwined in feature films. The cube now suggests that of these media, cinema is poorly suited to the message of energy; specially prepared videos and extension and field communication is better, while radio is the best. The cube would also stress that radio is an excellent medium not only for the audience in mind, but also for carrying the message to be transmitted. This information should logically lead to the development of a communication package with radio as the lead mechanism supported by video presentations and field

communication programmes.

Now consider, as a third example, the case where our communicator has a message on the energy sector that has to be transmitted to industrial and business polluters; but the only vehicle available is magazines. In this case, since the choice is restricted, the communication cube cannot be used to determine the best communication package. However, it can be used to gauge the possible effectiveness of the effort and for this knowledge to be used for maximum possible effect. A look at the cube would suggest three things:

- Industrial and business polluters are an excellent audience for energy messages;
- Magazines are a weak mechanism for communicating to industrial and business polluters; and
- Magazines are a good, but not excellent, mechanism for communicating the messages of energy.

These facts would lead to the conclusion that the combination that one is restricted to, though not the very best, is also not the very worst and that extra efforts would have to be made for the communication efforts to be a success. It might also lead to a switch over to newspapers rather than magazines, that would lead to three excellent linkages rather than a combination of one weak, one good and one excellent link.

Although this communication cube may seem complicated and of limited practical use, once understood it can be applied to great effect. The following Parts will focus on how it might be actually put to use. Part Five identifies key questions that the environmental communicator must keep in mind while Part Six looks at an actual project and details how this strategy may be used to formulate a communication strategy for the project.

SECTION II

USING
THE STRATEGY



ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS



1. INTRODUCTION

Having defined our strategy for environmental communication, we now turn our focus to issues pertaining to the operationalization of this strategy. This part of the study deals with the practical aspects of communicating environmental issues to the public media. A general checklist of questions is being given; communicators may find them helpful in getting an idea of how successful their efforts with particular messages or information dissemination are likely to be. Such information can lead to more effective communication.

Extensive guidance has been taken from Steven Landfried's paper on Strategies for Effective Information Dissemination in a High Tech Age (24) and the Asian Forum of Environmental Journalists' Reporting on the Environment: A Handbook for Journalists(5).

SELECTING THE MESSAGE CONTENT

Identification and development of the content of a message is the first important step in communication. In many cases, it is one which very few people take seriously enough. The content of the message or the information being

communicated depends not only upon the target media and the target audience but also upon the sincerity of the communicator. Media personnel all over the world have a trained nose that smells out efforts aimed at gaining free advertising — in this field, honesty becomes very important. The checklist of questions follow:

- Exactly what information or ideas need to be conveyed to others?
- How will this information affect your reader/listener/viewer? Is there any way to involve ordinary people in the story to make it more interesting?
- Does your story contain the solution or does it only identify the problem? Does it give information on what people need to do when a threatening event occurs? What precautions should they take? Whom should they contact if they have a problem? How can they work to improve the situation?
- Have you avoided using technical jargon? If you have had to use it, have you defined or explained it immediately after its use? Is it defined so that the ordinary person will understand it?
- Is this material inherently simple or complex? How much detail is needed to support the basic message? Is the requisite detail likely to

overwhelm the primary target audience? Is the story or information too complicated for most people?

- What ambiguities are likely to confuse people completely unfamiliar with its content? What unintended messages may audiences receive from the material? How can ambiguities be reduced or eliminated?
- Will editors look at this information as news or esoteric trivia?
- Can the main idea and the essential information be summarised in one or two sentences by news editors? If not, why not? Will the main ideas lose their integrity if reduced to three sentences of radio or television broadcast — or three inches of newsprint?
- What are the chances that the editing process will modify the information in ways which confuse or misinform target audiences?
- Are the potential benefits of publicising this material worth the attendant risks?
- Why do you want to disseminate this information? To share legitimate news? To sell something? To keep something or someone in the public eye? To remind people of something? To promote an individual? For personal gain? All or some of the above?
- What hidden agendas could be at work here? How have they influenced your creation of the message at hand?

SELECTING THE TARGET AUDIENCE

After the message has been carefully crafted, the environmental communicator's next task is to deliver it to the right audiences. There are times when specific messages will have to be tailored for the converted, but information frequently must be designed and transmitted to neutral or even adversarial audiences. Thus, insightful assessment of potential target audiences is essential to effective information dissemination. While selecting the audience, one is well-served to ask:

- What is the potential audience for this information?
- What potential audiences have not been con-

sidered to date?

- Which media outlet would reach the required target audience best?
- What unintended audience may receive the information and how might they use it?
- How could the information be used to the detriment of your goal in disseminating it?
- To what other audiences could this message be of secondary use?

SELECTING THE MEDIA

The medium is sometimes the message and therefore attention must be invested in the interactive effect of any given medium on the information being communicated. While deciding how to increase the power of messages transmitted to target audiences one is well advised to ask oneself these questions:

- Which medium is best suited for the audience being targeted?
- To what extent is the impact of my message best served by a certain medium?
- How will each medium mould the message? To what extent are those effects positive, negative or undetermined?
- How can my message be best tailored to each medium?
- Do I have the skills and the time to accomplish my goals for each medium?

MONITORING SUCCESS

Success in the field of communication is often difficult to define, much less measure. That is why diverse criteria should be used to assess the impact of environmental information dissemination projects: initial goals, use by the various media and the impact of the information on attitudes and behaviors. Assessment questions might include:

- How many times have stories disseminated by you appeared in print or electronic media, journals, magazines, etc.?
- How many times was the material used in meetings or public sessions with key decision makers?

- How many people were directly exposed to the information by the media, schools, libraries, and audiovisual presentations?
- How often have teachers, students, experts, other media people and ordinary people quoted the information?
- What long-term effects has the message had? Have significant changes occurred in attitude surveys? Have new trends in public statements and voting patterns resulted from the information? Has new legislation or changes in educational curricula resulted?

Part Ten discusses this subject at greater length. While the type of questions listed above can be useful for preliminary analysis, their overuse can be dangerous. The measurement of column-inches can be important but it must never let us lose sight of the real good: changing behaviours and attitudes.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

Effective information dissemination, specially in a field like environmental conservation,

involves hard work, a sense of timing, luck and an ability to keep things in perspective. More specifically, though, success in communicating the environmental message can be reduced to an ability to keep the following considerations in mind while disseminating environment related material:

- What is the message or information to be conveyed?
- Why should this information be shared with others? What are the real motivations behind the desire to communicate it?
- Which audiences could be shared with others? Which audience should it go to?
- What is the best medium to transmit the information/which other media may also be used effectively?
- To what degree are intermediates required to deliver this information? What are the chances of their misediting the material?
- When is the best time to disseminate the material?
- Can the effectiveness of this campaign be assessed for each target audience? If so, how? If not, why not?

PUTTING THE STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE



1. INTRODUCTION

To demonstrate how the communication cube and the communication strategy advocated in this study may be actually put into practice, we will apply it to an actual project proposal. In this section, we first describe the project and its communication goals and then we go on to use the communication cube to design a specific strategy that this project might apply in reaching these goals. At the end, we define two potential communication strategies: one to be used on a full communication budget and one with a limited budget.

2. BASELINE FACTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A demonstration project is to be undertaken in a saline/waterlogged area in central Punjab. The broad objective is to establish whether biological alternatives, capable of being applied simply and inexpensively by local cultivators, are able to rehabilitate waterlogged and saline soil. Such soils can be used for productive agriculture on a sustainable basis, either by the continued

growth of salt-tolerant crops, grasses, shrubs and trees, or through the rehabilitation of the soil to the extent that salt-sensitive crops can be grown, either on a permanent basis or in rotation with salt-tolerant plants.

The immediate objective of the project is to design a field test of the feasibility of biological approaches to the control and rehabilitation of waterlogged and saline soils in the irrigated areas of Pakistan. The project requires putting together a package of salt-tolerant and phreato-phytic species of crops, grasses, shrubs and trees into model farm management plans suitable for farms of various sizes. The farm management plans should be agronomically sound, in that the species recommended will grow and will lead to the rehabilitation of the selected site; they should be economically sound in that subsidies or government assistance may be required to establish saline agriculture approaches initially, but they should be self-supporting once established.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

Being a demonstration project, the communication aspects are of extreme importance. The communication goals of this project are:

- Communicating the success of the project and thereby popularising and encouraging similar efforts elsewhere.
- Communicating the technical and practical details of the project for related groups and individuals who may wish to expand upon these ideas.

3. WHAT DOES THE CUBE SAY?

THE TARGET GROUPS

The audiences that need to be targeted are defined by the project description and its communication goals. The target groups and the sub-groups within them are listed below in order of priority:

- Stewards of natural resources: The first priority must be cultivators within the immediate vicinity of the project who own similarly degraded land.
- Stewards of natural resources: Cultivators owning similar land nearby, and elsewhere, are the second priority group.
- Decision makers: Decision makers in government and semi-government bodies involved in saline/waterlogged reclamation are another important audience.
- Particular interest groups: Experts and all particular interest groups (academicians, donor agencies, etc.) involved with salinity and waterlogging control and reclamation make up a ready-and-willing audience for communication related to this project.
- Stewards of natural resources: Cultivators and farmers in general would also be a target for whom information on biosaline agriculture could yield long-term benefits.

THE MECHANISMS

Knowing the groups to be targeted and knowing that the overall message is about agriculture, we can now refer to the communication cube to decide which mechanisms are best suited to this project.

In this case, the message is where we start

from. The first information that the message-audience matrix provides us is that the stewards of natural resources and the decision makers (our two priority audiences) happen to be priority audiences for all messages related to agriculture. It also tells us that particular interest groups (whom we also wish to target) have a good interaction with messages pertaining to agriculture. The message-mechanism matrix points out that extension and field communication, radio and video presentations are excellent mechanisms for conveying agriculture-based information and messages. (For all matrices referred to here, please see Figures 3 through 6, in Part Four).

Relating this information to the audience-mechanism face of the communication cube, we find that our priority group (stewards of natural resources) is best reached through extension communication and radio, while video presentations can also be a good mechanism for reaching it. These three mechanisms have already emerged as the more useful media for conveying agriculture related messages. Furthermore, the cube points out that extension communication is also an excellent mechanism for reaching decision makers and particular interest groups. These two audiences will also respond well to video presentations though using radio as the main communication mechanism for them would be ill-advised. Television and newspapers, which are excellent for targeting decision makers and good for reaching particular interest groups, cannot be the priority mechanism for natural resource users.

POINTS TO PONDER

Since the cube suggests that extension and field communication is best suited to our messages as well as to the larger groups we wish to target, the logical conclusion would be to adopt this as the lead mechanism in our communication strategy. This is essentially to be done, albeit with one slight reservation. The type of extension communication required to reach the cultivators in their fields is diametrically different from that required to reach the decision

makers and particular interest groups. On the other hand, with video presentations, if the needs of the three audiences are kept in mind at the video preparation stage, the same package can be very effectively used for all three groups, saving the communicator both effort and cost.

The focus of all radio communication should be on cultivators but as the cube suggests the medium does have some potential (with scope of improvement) for reaching decision makers. Television and press, which can be used effectively for reaching decision makers and can be good mechanisms for particular interest groups should also not be entirely neglected since their reach within our primary target audience, though not intense, is certainly growing.

With this information in hand a more detailed communication plan for the project can now be evolved.

4. STRATEGY FOR COMMUNICATION

THE PRIMARY COMMUNICATION PACKAGE

The primary focus of the action plan for communicating the biosaline agriculture demonstration project should be on the use of extension and field communication, radio and video presentations. Use of the first and the last named, however, can be combined.

Special video presentations on the project should be prepared incorporating details of the process and information about the success and benefits of similar projects elsewhere so that it can be used to reach all our three audiences.

Field communication should target cultivators in the project area, near the project area and in areas suffering from problems similar to those of the project area (in that priority). The communicator should also try to utilise the village chopaal for disseminating information about, and interest in, the project. Video presentations, simply written brochures and posters may be used as audiovisual tools. Progressive cultivators, school

teachers, etc. from within the community should be identified and provided with relevant information to spread amongst their colleagues.

Cultivators from adjoining areas (in the first phase) and from areas having similar problems (in subsequent phases) should be brought to the project area to see for themselves the results of biosaline agriculture and hopefully convert to becoming its practitioners and advocates in their own areas.

A set of two seminars/workshops on the project (one to precede the beginning of the project and one to follow its completion) may be arranged to reach decision makers and particular interest audiences. Less elaborate get-togethers and field trips should be arranged periodically during the project to give them a deeper understanding of issues and to reinforce their involvement and interest in it.

Radio communication, in local languages, should be aimed at the cultivators and should provide information about biosaline agriculture and its benefits. Decision makers and particular interest groups should also be involved in the process through interview and discussion programmes. This would not only reinforce their own interest in the subject but would also provide cultivators with authentic details. Information aimed at the cultivators may be addressed through light entertainment/informative programmes. Radio professionals should be invited to the project area to see the process for themselves and involve the actual cultivators in their presentations. This will lead to an improvement in the media outputs, encouragement for the cultivators, and enhanced interest amongst media professionals.

SECONDARY COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

As a secondary but necessary focus, efforts should be made to utilise television and the newspapers. The video presentation prepared may be telecast on TV while newspapers might be requested to report upon the experts' meet-

ings and the project as it proceeds.

Magazines (both technical and news journals) might be a part of the strategy, albeit a small one. Depending upon the 'cassette culture' prevalent in the priority areas, the distribution of specially produced promotional audio cassettes containing popular songs interspersed with project messages and information may also be considered.

A LIMITED BUDGET COMMUNICATION PACKAGE

Since it is probable that a project of this size would have a very limited communication budget, a more affordable communication initiative may be designed with the following salient features:

- Focus on Radio: Radio is probably the most forthcoming and easily accessible formal medium in Pakistan. Reaching radio professionals and getting them to give your message and information a wider audience requires an input that concentrates more on dedicated effort than on funds.
- Extension Communication: It is not necessary (nor, in fact, too desirable) to employ teams of professional extension communicators. This can (and should) be an added responsibility of the field teams. As for the involvement of decision makers and particular interest groups, instead of organising elaborate workshops or seminars this can be achieved

(maybe more effectively) by involving them, as observers or as participants, in formal or informal review panel meetings with the field experts, and maybe also with some of the cultivators. However, the priority in allocating funds must be given to bringing cultivators from adjoining or similar areas to the project area to see the process for themselves. Since the chopaal interaction, upon which so much depends, works primarily on communication through demonstration these grassroot cultivators who have actually seen or worked at biosaline agriculture could be infinitely better and more effective than any professional, paid communicator.

- Video Presentations: Producing a special video is a costly as well as time consuming process. If any documentary on a similar subject has been made in the country or abroad it can be dubbed and edited at a much lower price tag. Moreover, simply recording the candid views of cultivators in the project area and sharing this with farmers elsewhere can be an inexpensive but effective communication device.
- Print Media & Television: Like radio, reaching these media requires more dedicated effort than monetary resources. Field experts can be asked to write articles on, and record interviews and discussions about, the project. Professionals from the print medium and television may also be invited, along with radio professionals, to the project area to study the success of the project for themselves.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNICATORS



1. THE COMMUNICATORS

We have already discussed in Part One why it is important to create a constituency for conservation both within the formal media sector and amongst communicators beyond the media sector. Creating this constituency is a complex task, one where the latter are as open to influence from the media, as the former are from the non-media communicators. Given this two-way flow of influences, it is important for an environmental communicator to simultaneously concentrate on pressure groups within and beyond the media sector.

2. PRINT JOURNALISTS

THE STATE OF PAKISTAN'S PRESS

The All Pakistan Newspaper Society claims 48% newspaper readership in Pakistan with urban figures at 78% (28). But this becomes somewhat absurd when juxtaposed with a literacy rate of 26%. See Table 1.

"In a country which prints 1,748 newspapers and magazines in over 12 languages (inclusive of English and Urdu, the lingua franca), the total

circulation of 2,917,323 copies is a drop in the ocean compared with the population of 111 million and the 26% literacy level" (15). See Table 2.

This is further compounded by the low level of interest in environmental themes that our leading publications have shown in the past. According to one study done in 1988 less than 1% each of total space in two of the largest selling daily newspapers, the English Dawn and the Urdu Jang was devoted to environmental coverage (4). Though press visions are now becoming progressively green, the speed of this change needs to be accelerated.

One would still like to reiterate here that despite these limitations the press remains a most potent medium for communication. Its limited reach may seem small, but it is by no means insignificant. In fact, it represents that all-powerful, dominant minority, influencing whom produces the most far-reaching and long-lasting changes, especially at the policy and decision making levels. Not only does this minority include the entire decision makers cadre, but equally significant, it also includes the bulk of the opinion leaders.

"The environmental reporter in Pakistan is not a breed who is recognised for being a

LITERACY RATIO OF POPULATION 10 YEARS AND ABOVE, 1981

| | ALL AREAS | URBAN AREAS | RURAL AREAS |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | (per cent) | | |
| Pakistan | | | |
| Both sexes | 26.2 | 47.1 | 17.3 |
| Male | 35.1 | 55.3 | 26.2 |
| Female | 16.0 | 37.3 | 7.3 |
| Islamabad | | | |
| Both sexes | 51.8 | 63.3 | 33.8 |
| Male | 63.1 | 71.3 | 49.6 |
| Female | 37.5 | 52.7 | 15.9 |
| Punjab | | | |
| Both sexes | 27.4 | 46.7 | 20.0 |
| Male | 36.8 | 55.2 | 29.6 |
| Female | 16.8 | 36.7 | 9.4 |
| Sindh | | | |
| Both sexes | 31.5 | 50.8 | 15.6 |
| Male | 39.7 | 57.8 | 24.5 |
| Female | 21.6 | 42.2 | 5.2 |
| Balochistan | | | |
| Both sexes | 10.3 | 32.2 | 6.2 |
| Male | 15.2 | 42.4 | 9.8 |
| Female | 4.3 | 18.5 | 1.8 |
| NWFP | | | |
| Both sexes | 16.7 | 35.8 | 13.2 |
| Male | 25.9 | 47.0 | 21.7 |
| Female | 6.5 | 21.9 | 3.8 |
| FATA | | | |
| Both sexes | 6.4 | — | 6.4 |
| Male | 10.9 | — | 10.9 |
| Female | 0.8 | — | 0.8 |

Source: *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 1989*.

Note: For those 10 years and above, with a very loose definition of literacy.

'typewriter guerrilla'. This is because the 'typewriter guerrilla' is too busy being a political journalist" (15).

This is only to be expected in a developing country beset with socio-political and socio-economic problems. To be a good environmental journalist one requires a sensitivity towards issues, an eye for detail, a command over socio-economic realities and, above all, a bent for investigation and perseverance. However, those having all these qualities would rather aim for the top rung of the ladder, which is political journalism, rather than stick to something as 'low key' as environmental journalism.

"The media's low level of interest in the subject can [also] not be blamed on any lack of environmental news....A major constraint preventing the growth of environmental reporting in the country is the low level of awareness and sensitization to the environment among media representatives. Most journalists continue to view environmental concerns as elitist fads. The concept of sustainable development is dismissed as nothing more than the latest buzzword coined by clueless environmentalists" (15).

More than any lack of interest, trained expertise or environmental news, it is the perception of environmental journalism as a fad that remains the major problem. Many feel that the faddism of 'development journalism' which marked the first three-quarters of the decade is now being replaced by the faddism of 'green journalism'.

This may well be a reflection of the state of play in the environment movement in Pakistan, amongst whom there are as many faddists as there are true professionals. However, in either case the important point remains that people are coming towards the field, even if they are doing so for the wrong reasons.

A lot of young journalists entering the profession are being sensitised towards environmental issues. This is partly because, being more receptive to change than the older hands, they have caught the effects of the western media's environmental blitz. However, the most important reason for this growing (and welcome) trend is the fact that these young journalists, who in most cases are denied the 'juicier and high key' issues, find professional respite in environmental stories. It is this vital lot of young journalists now educating them-

TABLE

2

AVERAGE CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, 1987

| FREQUENCY | URDU | ENGLISH | SINDHI | GUJRATI | PUSHTO | BALOCHI/ BROHI | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-------------------|-----------|
| | (number) | | | | | | |
| Dailies | 1,044,677 | 201,169 | 43,833 | 26,107 | 5,545 | — | 1,321,331 |
| Weeklies/ Biweeklies | 577,301 | 63,268 | 6,143 | — | 2,497 | 2,534 | 651,743 |
| Fortnightlies | 37,239 | 18,299 | — | — | — | 340 | 55,878 |
| Monthlies | 824,532 | 45,444 | 10,562 | — | 1,005 | — | 881,543 |
| Quarterlies | 3,085 | 2,972 | — | — | — | — | 6,057 |
| Annuals | — | 771 | — | — | — | — | 771 |
| Total | 2,486,834 | 331,923 | 60,538 | 26,107 | 9,047 | 2,874 | 2,917,323 |

Source: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

selves in environmental journalism who can take the initiative to turn our Fourth Estate green.

REACHING JOURNALISTS

Creating a constituency for one's cause within the print media must be an issue of urgency for any environmental communicator. Any foothold achieved in this area is not only long lasting but can also prove to be a positive influence for similar footholds elsewhere. Reaching print journalists is easy; getting them interested in specific stories or getting a few stories printed in even the best of publications is also not too difficult. However, the main goal is to convert journalists to the environmental cause on a long-term, sustainable basis. This is not that easy.

The first stage in befriending the print journalist is often preparing press briefs, press packs and full-fledged stories for various publications. These would be swallowed (though not necessarily digested) by many publications — dailies, weeklies or monthlies. Not only would many publications print stories, information and press releases but they may be especially interested in prepared articles or features on the environment that could be supplied to them, preferably on an exclusive basis. All this can give the environmental communicator a sense of complacency. However, this is still far from the success that the environmental communicator is really looking for!

A publication may give prize placing to a story that you wrote, or had written for them, but might never depute its best reporters or feature writers to work on similar stories. It is the latter which indicates a publication's real interest in a subject. Given the dearth of good writers, specially on investigative and technical subjects, most publications (even the leading ones) welcome good-quality, pre-prepared stuff on internationally 'in' subjects like the environment and may publish it irrespective of the strength of their commitment to the cause.

All this is stated not to discourage the idea

of feeding the press with briefs, reports and prepared articles or features. These will often be, of necessity, the first step towards reaching the press. What has to be stressed, however, is the need, and the urgent need, to complement this by encouraging reporters and feature writers to write on environmental issues themselves. On occasion, the environmental communicator would prefer feeding newspapers with articles written by leading experts rather than offering stories to non-specialist reporters, out of the fear that the latter may 'kill' the story. This fear could well be true but the price of 'saving the story' may turn out to be the death of the entire constituency-building effort amongst the press.

With environmental reporting in Pakistan still in its infancy one should not expect Pulitzer prize stories from reporters with little or no experience of environmental journalism. However, excessive spoon-feeding can well leave you with a pool of journalists, editors and publications very willing to 'print' environmental reports but not capable of writing the same. If this happens, the entire effort is as good (or as bad) as wasted!

The aim, then, is to build up a team of environmental journalists who are interested in (a) learning about and (b) writing about the environment. Environmental journalism in Pakistan is today at a stage where a reasonably written local story is a much better investment in the future than an excellently written, imported one. Thus, while the environmental communicator must keep a stream of pre-written and prepared environmental stories flowing to various publications, the communicator must also encourage editors to depute their own reporters and writers on environmental issues. This can be done, first by giving editors and journalists 'half-prepared' stories where the facts are all provided but the knitting into a comprehensive whole needs to be done; and later by identifying the issues and people who can lead to good environmental stories.

In the earlier case, the journalist would be 'blessed twice': once by learning him/herself,

and the second time, by teaching others. Even if the journalist misses out on a few points in the beginning, it is a price worth paying considering the long-term benefits. In this regard, converting new cub reporters can sometimes be both easier and more productive in the long-term than spending time on the more senior scribes whose habits and tastes may have been set beyond change. But this last statement is not a rule to be stringently followed, it is only a point to be kept in mind. Even if converting senior journalists towards more environmental concern were easy, it would be more difficult to get them to move away from a subject such as politics to a subject like the environment.

Investigative stories on the environment is one of the ultimate goals of the environmental communicator. However, given Pakistan's peculiar press scenario, one must remember that the journalism of interviews for the sake of investigation can too easily be confused with the journalism of investigation for the sake of interviews. The difference between the two is subtle but all-important. The environmental movement in Pakistan is at a stage where the need is for building concepts rather than individual personalities. At a latter stage, building personalities — specially activist personalities will be important, but for now the first priority must be building concepts. Unfortunately, interviews are much more interesting and fulfilling (and also easier) for journalists than concept stories. Many a journalist may lead themselves into believing that they are doing investigative journalism when all they are really doing is a personality interview. This muddle of priorities can very easily be resolved if journalists are encouraged to conduct 'concept interviews'. The interviewers and interviewees may not always be as enthralled by these, but they are certainly the need of the moment.

3. RADIO PROFESSIONALS

THE STATE OF PAKISTAN'S RADIO

The arrival of television in 1964 and its subsequent sway over public perceptions signified

a gradual loss of radio's prestige. As professionals in both the performing and technical disciplines found the audiovisual charms of television more alluring and glamorous, radio lost the cream of its human resources to its younger, but more enchanting sibling.

Government funds for information network expansion had also to be divided between the two and as advertising revenues rose with development, funds were lured more by the audiovisual appeal of television than the mere sound gimmickry of radio. The public too, or more precisely the well-to-do segment of it which could afford television sets and whose opinions mattered, found television a more exciting medium. As if all this was not enough, the arrival of the portable cassette player added yet another rival. The culmination of all these factors was the relegation of the first born to, what many observers felt, was step-brotherly treatment.

The medium no longer has access to that 5-10% of society which is best addressed through press and television and which has imposed upon itself the mandate of deciding the needs and perceptions of the remaining 90-95% of the populace. But this does not mean that the perceptions and impositions of this minority urban-based, educated, upper/upper-middle class, decision makers are always right. What it does mean is that since the radio message usually does not reach them they tend to neglect, dismiss and forget the reach of the medium amongst the public.

With 19 stations broadcasting more than 300 hours daily in 36 regional and international languages, the reach of the medium is beyond debate. See Table 3. More importantly, the most vital audience for the environmental communicator — the rural-based farmer, grazer, fisher, herder — which is beyond the reach of the press and television, can very well be reached and influenced by radio. Radio emerges as the most important of the communication media for the more practical and vital messages of sustainable development in Pakistan.

RADIO'S VITAL STATISTICS, 1989

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Number of radio stations | | 19 |
| Home service programmes | | 270 hours daily |
| External service programmes | | 18 hours daily |
| World service programmes | | 12.5 hours daily |
| Languages in home service | | 21 |
| Languages in external services | | 15 |
| Short-wave coverage | | |
| | Within country with respect to population | 100% |
| | Within country with respect to area | 100% |
| Medium-wave coverage | | |
| | Within country with respect to population | 97% |
| | Within country with respect to area | 75% |

Source: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

ANALYSIS OF PBC TRANSMISSIONS, 1987-88

| | (per cent) |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Entertainment | 45 |
| Religion | 16 |
| News | 11 |
| Talks/General Information | 10 |
| Rural | 7 |
| Sports | 3 |
| Armed Forces | 2 |
| Science & Technology | 1 |
| Women | 1 |
| Children | 1 |
| Student | 1 |
| Youth | 1 |

Source: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

The greatest strength of radio as a medium of information dissemination in Pakistan is the format of its programming. The bulk of its programmes are entertainment based. And entertainment in this case usually means popular folk and film songs. This is the major attraction for radio listeners. This is why one can hear radios blaring at full volume in the background as the farmers till their land, the motor mechanic and his young apprentices work on repairing vehicles and the day labourer enjoys a well deserved cup of tea at a wayside restaurant. Nearly half of the 300 hours a day that radio broadcasts in Pakistan is composed of such programmes. See Table 4. However, these programmes are not just song. Invariably they are conducted by anchor-persons who between songs, talk. Since they talk not in long sermons but in short doses between well-loved songs, they are also heard. The spectrum of topics they touch upon goes far beyond mere descriptions of songs and singers. From politics to ethics, economics to morality, philosophy to psychology, the morbid to the jovial, the motivational to the frivolous — the whole spectrum of existence

is covered in these short messages transmitted between songs.

What more could the environmental communicator ask for?

The general attitude of radio professionals, be they producers or presenters, towards environmental issues is one of slightly skeptical interest. The faddism of environment prevalent in the press has not yet seeped into radio. This is what makes them skeptical: they know who their audience is but are not sure if the message of sustainable development is for the rural general public or only for the decision-making elite. However, the bulk of radio professionals are willing to experiment with new development related themes like that of sustainable development. They are more ready than professionals in any other medium to adopt environmental concepts and turn green.

REACHING RADIO

Creating a constituency for conservation within the hierarchy of radio professionals is as important as creating one within the press sector, but the mechanism for doing this is effectively different. Feeding radio networks with prepared scripts, programmes or material for programmes will often not be useful because, unlike the press, it is difficult for this sector to use such material unchanged. They would need to adapt it to the specific needs of the specific programmes they wish to use it in. Thus, before any material sent out to them is used it would have to be first understood by the radio people using it. This essentially puts a more stringent limitation upon the information or message you wish to disseminate through the radio.

The material must meet the following criteria:

- It must be relevant.
- It must be simply presented and easily understood.
- It must be topical.
- It must not be so technical that the message is lost in its own details.

Given the particular structure of radio in Pakistan a two-pronged approach is required in the

preliminary stages. The first is converting the anchor-persons of radio's music programmes to environmental issues so that they can talk about them during their couple-of-sentences stints between songs. The good news for environmental communicators is that the majority of these anchor-persons are, by necessity, always looking for new issues to talk about and are thus open to conversion. Furthermore they need to understand, not the fine details (as an environmental journalist would) but only the bold headlines. The job, then, of the environmental communicator, is not to make them semi-experts but only to make them aware of what the major issues are and that these issues are real and urgent and not just empty rhetoric or distant problems.

The second front of activity has to deal with the producers of radio programmes and getting them to either do specific programmes on environmental issues or focus more on these in their normal programming. Getting experts and decision makers to speak about environmental concerns on radio is also an important step and can serve two purposes. Firstly it can disseminate important environmental information and concepts amongst listeners and secondly it can help in educating, if not the experts, at least the decision makers about what issues are more important for the people.

4. TELEVISION PROFESSIONALS

THE STATE OF PAKISTAN'S TELEVISION

The rise of television in the country in this quarter century of its existence has been more spectacular than the rise of radio in the early years of Pakistan. During this very brief period of time Pakistan Television Corporation, the state-run TV network, which started as an experiment has turned into a phenomenon.

More recently PTV has added a second channel. An independent channel from the Shalimar Television Network is now also avail-

able and satellite transmissions are becoming popular in major cities.

Cutting through the literacy barriers that hinder the reach of the press, television has today become a 'necessity of life' not only for the upper, upper-middle and middle classes but even for the 'not so low' half of the urban lower classes.

While television remains the most glamorous and prestigious, and thereby the most sought after, medium in the country it is not as 'mass' a medium as one would want it to be. Its potential for changing values and attitudes remains immense, but largely unharnessed.

Though television's reach is certainly more than that of the print media it remains primarily an urban medium. This is so not only because the bulk of television viewers are in the city but more so because television's entire approach and formatting has predominantly urban overtones which make it difficult for rural TV viewers to 'own' the medium as their urban counterparts do. See Table 5.

Television, like the press, is extremely useful in reaching that 5-10% of the nation's urban, educated decision maker cadre. However, unlike the press, television goes appreciably beyond this cadre and can also cause shifts in general public perceptions, specially at the urban level.

At the level of television professionals — producers as well as performers, particularly stage-show and discussion programme comperes — there already exists an interest in environmental issues. This interest stems not only from it being the 'in thing' at the moment but also from the fact that most environmental issues lend themselves with great facility to television treatment. All this has already translated into a number of environmental programming efforts on PTV's part.

REACHING TELEVISION

Getting to television professionals will always be more difficult than getting to the print journalists or the radio professionals. Much more than the press and radio, the constraints of time

TABLE

5

ANALYSIS OF PTV TRANSMISSIONS, 1987-88

| | (per cent) |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Foreign films/reports | 16.39 |
| News | 12.58 |
| Religion | 7.96 |
| Drama | 7.70 |
| Announcements | 7.69 |
| Current affairs | 6.79 |
| Repeat programmes | 6.71 |
| Features | 5.98 |
| Sports & Festivals | 5.30 |
| World Cup Cricket | 4.58 |
| Music | 4.46 |
| Commercials | 4.21 |
| Children | 2.52 |
| Quiz | 1.59 |
| Educational TV | 1.58 |
| Youth | 1.10 |
| Variety | 1.01 |
| Poetry | 0.76 |
| Women | 0.58 |
| Urdu feature films | 0.56 |

Source: Pakistan Television Corporation.

on television in Pakistan are very stringent.

The problem is compounded by the fact that putting anything on television requires more labour and monetary inputs than those required for either the press or radio. Visuals for environmental programmes are even more difficult and more expensive to arrange and — unlike radio — just getting experts to speak on environmental issues on television is of limited value.

However, none of these difficulties should imply that television in Pakistan is not interested

as an institution in communicating the message of the environment. This is only to highlight that the limitations one faces in using television are much more than those in other media. The job of the environmental communicator is, then, to somehow make environmental communication easier for the medium.

One very promising fact in this regard is that a lot of environmental television production is going on elsewhere in the world and much of this is available to countries like Pakistan at reduced cost. Unlike the press where material written elsewhere is not always usable, and radio where such material is limited in quantity and not conducive to use in Pakistan, visuals prepared for television elsewhere can be selectively adapted and their commentaries translated. This is more relevant in the case of television programming dealing with explanation of concepts that have been produced elsewhere and which, as a rule are always the most expensive to produce. One must stress that anything produced locally must take priority. However, given the limitations and problems that such production entails, using television footage produced elsewhere is not only permissible but, at times, even advisable.

As with radio, the need is to convert the bulk of television professionals: entertainment and information show comperes, drama writers and producers, documentary writers and producers and even news producers. One timely sentence from an entertainment show comperer can sometimes be worth far more than one paragraph, if not a full interview with an expert. Experts and decision makers also need to be brought in for comments and interviews on environmental themes on television but not as much as on radio, since the audiovisual medium requires a visually more comprehensive treatment of issues than that afforded by the views of a few individuals.

The stress has to be on apt visuals, and these are difficult for television professionals to get their hands on. This difficulty emerges from the fact that equipment and personnel often need to travel to the rural areas, far away from the major cities where TV centres are located; it also

requires research to identify which visuals would be most relevant both from the aspect of television technology and environmental relevance. In the latter case the environmental communicator can help the TV professional directly; in the former, too, he can be of assistance in the form of information about sites where good environmental footage can be obtained without going too far away from the television centres.

5. CINEMA AND ADVERTISING PROFESSIONALS

We are not going to deal with this group in detail because communication with them, at least in the early stages, would have to be more by default than by planned assault. Given the prevailing state of cinema in Pakistan and the very working of the advertising industry anywhere in the world, these media are better suited to reflecting changes in society than to creating them. While an environmental communicator can certainly gain some mileage by maintaining links with key personnel in these two industries, the cultivation of such contacts cannot be productive enough to merit strategic importance in a strategy for communication.

Key personnel from the world of cinema can and should be cultivated for spreading the message of environmental conservation through statements and comments on the subject. However, an effort to green our film scripts may not be productive considering the cost-benefit ratio involved. It would be better to concentrate on colouring the attitudes of society green which can then be reflected in our films, and this reflection can, in turn, reinforce attitudes.

In general, the same approach also applies to the world of advertising. Environment-friendly advertising professionals may try to sell a green ad idea to their clients but the final vote is always with the client, and thereby with the clientele of the client. Here too, the base has to be a change in social trends through other media reflected in, rather than instigated by, advertising.

However, advertising data can be of great

use to the environmental communicator. Advertisers are extremely careful about using their money to gain maximum benefit, and therefore go to great lengths in determining how best to market a certain product or message to a specific audience through a particular medium or a variety of media. In most cases the environmental communicator will neither have the time nor the resources to go through such research. However, we can pick up some good hints and pointers from the advertisers' efforts.

"Market research is making steady inroads into the daily regime of marketeers and producers of goods and services who are increasingly resorting to research for product and packaging development and evaluation, for determining consumer attitudes, for computing consumption patterns, for calculating market sizes and for

even gauging the efficacy and reach of their advertising and promotional efforts in various media" (28).

This market research can, in many cases, be equally valid as information on attitudes that is so dear to environmental communicators.

For example, a brief look at the comparative quantum of agricultural advertising on radio and television will clearly show why radio can be much more effective in reaching agro-rural targets or how the more affluent (middle/upper-middle class) audiences can be better reached through television. See Tables 6 and 7.

TABLE 6

SOURCES OF ADVERTISING ON RADIO, 1987-88

| | (per cent) |
|---|------------|
| Fertilizers, Pesticides & Tractors | 34.50 |
| Population Welfare | 11.70 |
| Biscuits, Drinks & Sweets | 9.80 |
| Cosmetics & Toiletries | 7.60 |
| Paints, Detergents, Battery Cells & Other Household Items | 6.40 |
| Cigarettes | 5.40 |
| Bank, Insurance & Bonds | 5.20 |
| Pharmaceutical Products | 4.90 |
| Electronic & Electrical Appliances | 3.10 |
| Airlines & Shipping | 3.00 |
| Tea | 2.81 |
| Automobiles & Tyres | 2.79 |
| Films | 1.65 |
| Power Supply | 0.90 |

Source: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

TABLE 7

SOURCES OF ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION, 1987-88

| | (per cent) |
|---|------------|
| Food, Drink & Powdered Milk | 34.51 |
| Other Goods & Services | 13.50 |
| Cosmetics, Soaps & Toiletries | 11.04 |
| Household Appliances & Electrical Goods | 7.52 |
| Housing & Construction | 6.03 |
| Agriculture | 5.78 |
| Government Advertisements | 4.45 |
| Fabrics & Wearing Apparel | 4.29 |
| Cigarettes | 3.97 |
| Pharmaceutical Products | 3.45 |
| Footwear | 1.55 |
| Entertainment | 0.85 |
| Automobiles | 0.83 |
| Insurance | 0.77 |
| Financial Institutions | 0.66 |
| Books & Magazines | 0.39 |
| Airlines | 0.28 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 0.13 |

Source: Pakistan Television Corporation.

6. RELIGIOUS OPINION LEADERS

In Pakistani society the importance of winning the support of religious leaders cannot be over-emphasized, specially for a message like that of the environment which is entirely in concordance with the teachings of not only Islam but all religions of the world. The ethics of conservation as defined in this study are the teachings of the Quran which condemns all forms of wastage.

The teachings of the Holy Quran are the teachings of conservation and sustainable use, as opposed to miserliness or wanton waste. This thought needs to be put across to the leaders of religious opinion and from them to the public. There are at least half a dozen organised national-scale religious reform movements in the country. Reaching them as well as the many smaller and more regionalised movements can be the key to a truly public awareness of the message of conservation.

The most important fact to be kept in mind by the environmental communicator is that the message of conservation has to be provided to the religious opinion leader not as a new concept but as a concept directly derived from the teachings of Islam. Thus the communicator needs to have some command over Islamic injunctions relevant to conservation and sustainable development. A compilation of Quranic and Hadith references to the ethics of conservation may well be warranted as a tool for environmental communicators.

What needs to be stressed as an argument is that abhorrence of anything that borders on waste is a basic virtue. The Pakistan NCS defines its basic message in terms of qana'at and haqooq-ul-ibad. The environmental communicator will do well to do the same.

7. TEACHERS

Teachers are one of the most vital disseminators of social values. No strategy for communication can ever be complete without the consideration of them as a potent conduit for the transmission of the ethics of conser-

vation to future generations.

While teachers will certainly reflect any change in social values, the objective here is to make them the vehicles of that change rather than its mirror. The question is one of reaching the teachers. The easiest way of doing so is through the various teacher training institutes that work under the federal and provincial governments and through all the colleges with Bachelor and more generally Master level courses in education. Government projects already underway e.g., the Coordinated Environmental Education Programme (CEEP) and NGO initiatives like the ones taken by the Teachers' Resource Centre and the World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan can be a second string for moving towards attitude changes amongst teachers.

"School teachers may be [just] one functional group, but the Strategy must address the wide variation in their attitudes from those who are already motivated to impart conservation values to the majority of despondent and unenlightened rod wielders in rural areas....Good school teachers need the tools of presenting modern ecological knowledge and the course content will itself exude the moral values of sound conservation practices. Average teachers require a boost of their morale as well as conservation teaching kits. Nothing may be more effective than demonstration of the impact good teachers have on students when teaching something relevant and pertinent to the real lives of students. A core of dedicated environmental teachers can have consequences beyond their normal domain if organized for grassroots teachers' motivation campaigns" (12).

Since the education sector, both in the government and private domain, works within a certain system, good or bad, it is imperative that the environmental communicator first tries to reach the teachers from within this system. A second strategy should be to try to reach them through other media which could include not only the popular channels but such innovative mechanisms as a series of environment-related contests at school level which could involve both students and teachers. One example is an

interschool tree planting competition at the provincial level, with prizes to be shared by teachers as well as students in pre-determined ratios. The competition literature sent to schools could give teachers information as well as the incentive that is required for getting them started on the road to disseminating conservation ethics.

8. MOTHERS

"Mothers, poor or rich, have the longest time horizon of any of the large organic groups of society and as such are the natural allies of conservationists, whose pet complaint is that people do not think about the rights of the future generations. However, as a group they are the least accessible and most difficult to organize and involve in a single issue platform.... The key to [imparting the conservation ethic through] mothers is to acknowledge their status as teachers and convert a literate and relatively mobile vanguard among them into Environmental Teachers. The details required of such a programme to be successful are many, but key among them would be receipt of value-loaded knowledge from environmental missionaries and dissemination by vanguard mothers at creches and kindergartens in urban areas and around village wells in the rural ones" (12).

The problem of reaching mothers can best be addressed through NGOs and government agencies working in the field of women's development and literacy. By incorporating the message of environmental ethics into the messages they disseminate amongst women during their literacy and development programmes, a 'vanguard' of environmentally aware mothers can be trained which can then serve in a leadership role in furthering the cause. The prerequisites of literacy, modest surplus land ownership and mobility would be required only for the key women, after which the village well and the mohallah (neighbourhood) midday chat amongst women would propel the effort forward.

9. PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Reaching the different professional bodies with messages, information and suggested changes best suited to their professions is also a vital communication angle. Field and extension communication could cover this angle through holding seminars and workshops on specific issues for these professional audiences.

However, efforts in this direction should not be restricted to holding lectures and workshops. The environmental communicator should make an effort to reach the regulatory sections of professional bodies so that environment-friendly changes or additions can be made at that level.

Professional associations of doctors, engineers, travel agents, businessmen, industrialists, exporters etc., should be encouraged to demand environment-friendly decisions from the government, move towards better environmental practices in their own fields and, at the very minimum, make statements about their positive stand on environmental issues. Wherever applicable, such bodies could also initiate new research or studies into the relevant environmental segments of their professions. Such activity would not only activate interest within the members of that particular professional group but is also likely to leave a healthy impression upon decision makers and professionals from other fields.

10. POLITICAL LEADERS

Political leaders are probably some of the most vital communicators that any movement for change can desire to have on its side. However, they are likely to become the voice for an issue in two cases: either when they believe in the cause strongly and are prepared to go to great lengths to propagate it, or else, as more commonly happens, when they feel that the public at large wants or is ready for a particular cause.

In Pakistan, environmental communicators need to work on both fronts. On the one hand, they must cultivate genuine interest in the environmental movement amongst the leading polit-

ical voices of the country and on the other they need to convince the large bulk of political leaders that the public wants them to take up the environmental cause.

In all probability, it will be a combination of these two approaches which would convert politicians to issues of environmental conservation. At this stage, it should be the job of the environmental communicator to ensure that the politicians are kept well stocked with environmental facts and issues to ponder and comment upon.

Given the penchant for making statements that nearly all our politicians have, one can hope that once we have them hooked on to environmental issues their statements alone would be enough to keep the subject permanently in the news. It is at this juncture that the environmental communicator, through a stream of pertinent environmental information and issues, must try to ensure that it is the tune of environmental conservation and not those who are harping the tune that makes the headlines.

11. CELEBRITIES

Celebrities, like politicians and decision makers, should be encouraged to befriend the cause of environmental conservation so that they can talk about environmental issues and thus enlarge the environmental constituency in the country. By and large, most celebrities want to adopt issues of social importance that they can talk about, make statements about and occasionally do something about. In many cases there exists a genuine concern for the well-being of the environment. The aim of the environmental communicator should be to convert as many of them as possible to environmental issues.

Unlike politicians and decision makers, celebrities need not go into the details and technicalities of environmental issues. As long as they focus on the major issues and speak about them often enough, their role in environmental communication is valuable. Those who manage to find time from their otherwise busy schedules to actually learn about the intricacies of prevail-

ing environmental problems can become absolute gold-mines for environmental communicators and can prove to be the most productive of catalysts as far as enhancing public interest in the cause of a better environment is concerned.

12. NGOS AND ACTIVISTS

Non-governmental organizations are discussed in detail in Part Eight of this document. However, what is important to stress here is the role they have to play as lead communicators of environmental concerns and issues. The importance of NGOs and activists who take up specific issues and concerns and adopt particular causes cannot be over-stressed because, much more than researchers and academicians, it is they who bring the issues into the news and then keep them there until something concrete is done about them.

It has already been stressed that concepts rather than personalities and institutions need to be focused upon. However, in this specific case, both NGOs as institutions and individual activists who adopt environmental causes need the support of the formal media to build up their credibility and thereby the credibility of their cause. However, the balance between the two remains of great importance. Given the way media all over the globe works, it is easy for the importance of issues to be suppressed by the charisma and personality of the activists propounding it. As long as this does not occur and a healthy blend is maintained, environmental activists, within and without the NGO network, deserve encouragement.

13. CHILDREN

The flow of values from parents, particularly mothers, to children is an accepted universal fact. However, in today's age when the gap between generations is as much that of values as it is of information, the flow of information from children to parents is becoming increasingly apparent. With access to information and knowledge becoming easier and more readily available to the younger generation, chil-

dren of today tend to be better informed in many regards than their elders.

Also, given the fact that new subjects, like the environment, are likely to be picked up earlier by children, the flow of information from the young to the old is something that the environmental communicator can utilise. Reaching children through curricula changes,

co-curricular activities, film shows and lectures in schools is also relatively easier than reaching large bodies of parents. This vehicle can be used to take messages and information to children and to transport them to their parents. This could be a long-term investment in the future and also provide a good harvest for the present.

ROLE OF NGOs



1. INTRODUCTION

NGOs: TARGET OR MECHANISM?

The information role that needs to be played by non-government organizations is of paramount importance in any large-scale communication effort. This becomes all the more important in a country like Pakistan with a mass media network which is not as 'mass' as one would like it to be. Readers of this study may well wonder why the NGO movement has not been considered as a specific and separate communication mechanism in the preceding chapters.

The main reason for this deliberate oversight is that the NGO movement in Pakistan is not yet ready to take on this challenge by itself. While the potential for such action certainly exists, the current state of affairs qualifies NGOs more as a target audience within particular interest groups than as a mechanism. However, the importance of NGOs in this strategy is such that they cannot be neglected as an entity. Here, we discuss how NGOs have to play dual roles: of a target audience and of a vital conduit for environmental communication.

THE NGO MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The NGO sector in Pakistan has grown steadily since Independence.¹ Beginning with a small number of NGOs, which were mainly Hindu Trusts or welfare organizations, there are currently 4,000 welfare oriented NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Department (39). In addition, there are 21,000 cooperative societies and a vast array of non-registered organizations (2). Most NGOs in Pakistan are urban-based and their outreach in rural areas is either minimal or non-existent. They tend to be restricted to providing local/neighbourhood coverage — in 1986 the National Council for Social Welfare reported that there were only eight NGOs which were national in scale (38).

The NGOs presently working in Pakistan can be divided into four types:

- Welfare oriented.
- Targeted at improving the economic and social status of women.
- Development oriented.
- Working on the rehabilitation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Despite this proliferation, the scope, impact and growth of these groups has remained limited. Most NGOs have provided an uncertain

quality of service, and have not paid particular attention to developing the capacity of local people to respond to their own needs. This has been because NGOs generally do not have grassroots institutions and function without involving the beneficiaries in programme planning and implementation (38). Few have the structure and the means to perpetuate themselves as self-sustaining development institutions. Their objectives are vague — largely curative rather than preventive, welfare oriented rather than development based — and their activities are limited to the most immediate needs of the community.

"These problems notwithstanding, the potential of NGOs in Pakistan to become meaningful contributors to the country's development has never been greater. Their own growing awareness and skill development, combined with positive Government statements in the 7th Five-Year Plan, and growing international donor support all promise to make this an existing and vibrant field in the years to come" (35).

2. THE NGOS' ROLE

NGOS AS COMMUNICATORS

The NGO network, even as it now exists in Pakistan, can prove to be a great asset for any form of motivational communication, particularly communication for the environment. When merely a quarter of your population is literate, and not even all of that open to media influences, you have no option but to build up and rely upon a parallel communication network capable of reaching the pockets which cannot be tackled by the mass media alone.

It is in the harnessing of this potential that NGOs can be invaluable.

What makes NGOs such a potent communication mechanism is their ability to bypass the restrictions which hinder media messages, and to localise and regionalise the message so that it best suits the particular audience that they are addressing at any one point in time. However, the reason for not discussing the NGOs as a

mechanism alone is that while the potential exists, it is yet far from being at optimum utilization. More importantly, however, the aim here is not to convert the NGOs into a mechanism; rather it is to convert them into communicators.

Once this happens it would be the NGOs themselves who would be using the different mechanisms of communication discussed earlier to optimally transmit the message of conservation. This is a possible phenomenon and nearly all the successful NGOs in Pakistan, and elsewhere, have extremely effective in-built communication programmes. The aim, then, is to hook on to these communication networks wherever they exist and to help in their creation elsewhere.

THE DANGERS OF NGO PROLIFERATION

The NGO network as it now stands is concentrated in pockets rather than spread throughout the country. Going through a list of NGOs one comes across distinct areas of concentration. Certain areas, for certain reasons, have attracted more NGO interest than others. In some cases this can prove to be detrimental for those NGOs as well as for those regions.

While extension and communication is where the NGO role can be of great utility to the environmental communicator, this is an area where a proliferation of NGOs may sometimes produce disastrous results. As an example, consider the scenario where different NGOs focusing on family planning, adult literacy, agriculture, rural development or health all converge simultaneously on a certain area to launch their extension education/information programmes. Assuming that their activities are rural based, the dilemma of the villagers could be both comic and unfortunate. Imagine them collecting to hear the population people give their sermon on Mondays, attend the adult literacy class on Tuesdays, listen to the agriculture talks on Wednesdays, come to the rural development meet on Thursdays and see the health team on Saturdays and Sundays. Such an overkill of NGO activity could well

prove fatal for the entire exercise and for the interest of the village.

This scenario may now seem far-fetched but given the way donor interest is triggering the mushrooming of new NGOs, it could soon become a real possibility.

THE PACKAGE DEAL APPROACH

What is required, then, is the package deal approach where maximum benefits can be obtained through an even spread of NGO activity in various regions of the country. The messages and the activities in which most NGOs indulge are often interconnected. This is all the more true for a multi-sectoral domain like environmental conservation. After all, the message of population is the message of health, that of rural development, that of literacy and that of child care.

In such a situation, the integration of the different messages into cohesive packages is to the benefit of NGOs as well as their target audiences. Multi-dimensional NGOs like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and to some extent the Rural Development Foundation have experimented with success in this direction and it is now time for the development of similar systems by NGOs. For example the Adult Basic Education Society has very successfully incorporated health, hygiene and rural development messages into their adult education programme. Similarly, messages concerning the environment can also be incorporated into the education, development, health and other such programmes already being run by NGOs.

Currently, the majority of Pakistani NGOs are restricted to one activity in one neighbourhood. This results in an inability to conceptualise long-term objectives. Their scope of work has never expanded beyond the interests and time that a few close workers could provide and thus their output have failed to match their potential (16).

What is required then is more coordination between NGOs so that they can incorporate their messages and efforts for maximum effect.

At present, mutual coordination between Pakistani NGOs is weak, if not non-existent. Factors which have prevented them from collaborating have been conceptual, structural and procedural. This has resulted in NGOs being isolated from one another and from the larger development goals. Unfortunately, it may result in needless duplication of activities (38).

DEVELOPMENT, RATHER THAN CREATION, OF NGOS

We already have a number of NGOs working in the rural and women in development sectors. These also happen to be the two largest and vital target audiences of this communication strategy. A number of NGOs are also working in the development sector which provides the environmental communicator with yet another positive overlap.

Thus the situation calls not for the creation of new environment related NGOs but the development, and at times 'greening', of the existing network. Once an awareness of environmental concerns is inculcated within NGOs they will find it relatively easy to overlap and reinforce the message of conservation within messages they are already communicating to their audiences. Since the environmental message has the facility, probably more than any other, to adapt and find its niche in all other development related messages, it can be used extremely effectively to communicate specific messages and solutions to the problems of target audiences.

It is extremely important for the large, multi-dimensional NGOs to adopt environmental issues as a major sector of their activities. But equally important are the environmental NGOs, especially the specific subject type, which focus on particular issues and become the activists demanding or bringing change.

"The conservation movement originated in NGOs and conservation implementation is directly related to the strength and viability of NGOs. Environmental NGOs have two main functions: transmitting information to their mem-

bers and acquaintances about the state of the environment and the threats to its health; and transmitting to government the sense of popular concern about the quality of the environment and the health of the resource base" (12).

On both counts environmental NGOs are of extreme value to the environmental communicator.

TOWARDS BETTER NGO COLLABORATION

How such mutual coordination and collective efforts can come about remains a problem. One possible solution that has been often suggested is the creation of an NGO Resource Centre. However, the fear is that it would only replace a top heavy government bureaucracy with an equally top heavy NGO bureaucracy. This is because most NGOs in Pakistan have emerged from the top rather than from the grassroots and suffer from a tendency towards secrecy, competition for resources and recognition, and exaggerated claims of success (35). However, the creation of such a resource centre for the encouragement

of more extensive informal interaction between NGOs is a possibility which needs to be experimented with, though with extreme care. Collaborative exercises where NGOs dealing with, say, rural development, literacy, women and health, join hands to form a combined action plan for certain localities can also prove to be a useful instrument in enhancing the performance of the NGO sector, especially in the field of environmental communication.

Whatever be the mode, what is important for the environmental communicator is constant and close liaison with the NGO sector. In the first stage this is to get the NGOs interested in environmental issues so that they can instill the message of conservation into their own messages. In the second stage it is to assist the NGOs in becoming the mechanism as well as the communicators of these issues. This can happen only if the NGOs are provided with the latest information about environmental issues which they have to communicate at the grassroots level. In fact, it may not be too far-fetched a hope to see the 'greening' of the NGO sector becoming the catalyst for better NGO collaboration and coordination.

ENDNOTES

1. Information in this section has been largely quoted from Hussain, 1992.'

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK



1. DEVELOPING THE MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

How the public media in its current frame can be best mobilised to communicate the message of sustainable development has just been discussed. The next logical step is to consider how this framework can be structurally improved, to better communicate the message of sustainable development (SD).

As already discussed, the ideal communication sustainability cycle (Figure 1) has to be self-reinforcing to be successful. Over time, it would take the form of a double spiral. The 'media interest' factor being enhanced both qualitatively and quantitatively in both legs of each cycle. Over the many cycles in the double spiral, the medium would be structurally transformed to better communicate SD issues.

While the media will self-improve and self-develop through its own experiences in SD communication, simultaneous efforts are required at the government as well as media level to catalyse rapid changes so as to accelerate this structural development process.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The communication cube (Figure 6) defines, through its hatched squares, the areas within the communication troika that show promise and potential for improvement in their interactive faculties. This information can become a handy baseline for communication efforts.

The development and improvement that is required in these communication mechanisms will partly come itself, as their focus on the environment increases. This, in turn, will trigger qualitative changes in the attitudes of these mechanisms to environmental issues and the combination of these effects can be defined as the 'greening' of these mechanisms. Thus, the greater goal here is not just an increase in the 'amount' of environmental coverage but, more importantly, an increase in the quality, sincerity, and 'ferocity' of this coverage.

IMPROVING SD COMMUNICATION

In the case of state-run electronic media (television and radio) direct guidance from the government can convert the environment into a priority issue for these media. However, the utility

of such directives is minimal and short-term. Similarly, any efforts at focusing media attention on SD issues through government sponsored 'press advice', 'official handouts' or 'advertising coercion' would be, at best, momentary in effect and at worse, counter-productive.

The note of caution to be highlighted here is that whatever steps are taken to develop media mechanisms to better communicate SD issues, they must come from within the media and not be imposed from without. The role of any outside agency must be no more than that of technical information dissemination to the media in a bid to create, or enhance, the media's interest in environmental and SD issues.

The structuring of this information should be done from the recipients' point of view rather than from the disseminator's point of view. Thus, information targeted at television professionals should be structured to suit their requirements and that targeted at the daily press formulated to fulfill their needs. The current use of 'press notes' and 'handouts' would require rethinking with regard to environmental information dissemination to the media and would need to be replaced by a more professional approach.

2. INSTITUTIONALISING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Institutionalising the development of the media network to better communicate sustainable development is as tricky as it is important. The media is bound to resent any government institution aiming to 'better' its performance. Yet, it is also going to welcome any effort, from any source, at 'assisting' it with the collection of information.

What is required, then, is not an institution with a mandate to monitor the media's performance and guide it. What are needed, instead, are clearing-houses of information that the media can utilise at its convenience and to which media professionals can turn for information assimilation, verification and guidance.

Such institutionalization of information need

not be done in isolation. Instead, the dissemination process would have to be integrated into all SD activities, at all stages: policy, implementation and research. Databanks of information for the media as well as the general citizenry should be an in-built feature within all institutions dealing with sustainable development. Such structures are required in:

- Government institutions.
- Para-governmental institutions.
- Non-governmental institutions.

Within government, the Environment and Urban Affairs Division, and the Environment Section in the Planning and Development Division should have information dissemination units for the media built-in so that the latest policy information can be effectively disseminated and the media have a focal point for gathering the information they require on any SD or environmental issue and its policy perspectives. Such units should be duplicated at the provincial levels within appropriate institutions.

All parastatal institutions dealing with SD and environmental issues, whether policy or research oriented, should also have similar dissemination mechanisms built-in, so that any new information generated, or received, can be passed on to the media for further dissemination. Thus, institutions like the Sustainable Development Policy Institute or the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, by maintaining a close liaison with media professionals would not only open their activities to wider public review and thereby create a public mandate for themselves, but would also be in a position to enhance media awareness about SD and environmental issues.

For NGOs, close liaison with the media can serve to create media awareness about the importance, the mechanism and the workability of grassroot initiatives for sustainable development. It can also enhance and catalyse media and NGO development processes.

On a different plane there is a need for communication NGOs focusing on SD as well as SD NGOs focusing on communication. The Journalists' Resource Centre for the Environment within IUCN-The World Conservation Union's

Country Office needs to be duplicated at various levels and upgraded into a Media Resource Centre for the Environment.

TRAINING THE COMMUNICATORS

A process of educating media personnel in the finer details of SD and environmental issues would play an important part in developing a communication network better positioned to facilitate SD communication. This can be achieved through the proposed evaluation and monitoring institutions described in Part Ten whose mandate needs to be expanded to include educating the media on SD issues.

Furthermore, information disseminators within the governmental, parastatal and NGO machinery also require training in communicating conservation and SD issues. Such training could be based on the mechanism for communication and the communication cube that has

been outlined in this annex, and build upon the same with experience and field exposure.

The mandate of the Information Service Academy could be expanded to include SD communication for media professionals as well as government, parastatal and NGO information officers. The training academies of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and the Pakistan Television Corporation can be the focal points for specific environmental communication through radio and television while the All Pakistan Newspapers Society and the Cinema Owners and Film Producers Associations can be the focal points for similar training programmes aimed at journalists and cinema professionals.

For NGOs, the proposed Media Resource Centre can play a similar role and develop a regular set of training programmes for media professionals as well as SD information disseminators within the governmental, parastatal and non-governmental organizations.

MONITORING SUCCESS



1. INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING

The importance of monitoring lies as much in evaluating the success of our efforts as it does in understanding why we have been successful or why we have failed. Monitoring not only gives us a viable system of checks and balances but also provides us with a set of goals, landmarks and milestones which can line the road to awareness and can assist in improving our efforts.

THE DANGERS OF MONITORING

While not denying the importance of monitoring, one must also not lose sight of the fact that monitoring something as broad and intangible as communication is not an easy task. Precise data on attitudes and perceptions is extremely rare, if not outright impossible to obtain. In fact, the more precise such data seems, the more potentially dangerous it can turn out to be. There is nothing as dangerously misleading as the quantification of unquantifiable issues. Errors in the design of such methods can not only be cumulative, but multiplicative.

Monitoring and evaluation are important

aspects of the information dissemination process. However, it is clear that in this age of information overload, it is not enough to say: "I got it in the paper" or "it was mentioned on TV". Certainly, these things are evidence of effort, but ultimately, the real measures of success are whether the right people received and used the intended message, and if it influenced their attitude and behavior in the desired fashion. After all, the proof is not just in the pudding; it is also a question of what people do with it (24).

Instead of opting for any particular monitoring mechanism, one must continuously use all available means of monitoring. However, the note of caution that needs to be repeated again and again is that one must not get carried away by any one particular piece of monitoring data. Monitoring in communication must not be considered to be a precise verdict of an effort being good or bad, successful or unsuccessful. Instead, it should be considered as a hazy (though not unimportant) indication of whether the effort is moving in the right direction or not. More importantly, the best monitoring effort is that which helps us in improving what we are doing — as such, monitoring is not as much an evaluation of our communication strategy design, as it is a part of the design process itself.

2. MONITORING MECHANISMS

COLUMN-INCHES AND MINUTES-ON-AIR

The column-inch, minutes-on-air approach is certainly the easiest of monitoring techniques as far as the formal media is concerned. However, the danger remains that this can also be the most misleading of the various monitoring mechanisms.

The fear is that of getting carried away by seeing so many column-inches in the press or so many minutes on radio or television dedicated to your messages. If the numbers are on one's side, this can indeed give one an enthralling and proud feeling of achievement. However, what is usually forgotten in this case is that these numerics represent the coefficients of input rather than those of output.

Consider, for example, the comparison between a 25-minute specialised programme on the environment in which the best of experts dish out the most relevant facts and views, to a single reference on the environment, of say two minutes, in a popular stage show conducted by a non-expert at prime time. The relevance and authenticity of the first would certainly be greater. In the second case the compere may even have some facts wrong and might well stress on the less important issues. However, the latter could well be the more potent and effective effort, because the 'star' appeal of the programme and its host would guarantee a much larger audience and ensure that the audience not only listens, but also takes in, what is being said.

The same is true for radio and the press. The added problem with monitoring press initiatives by the column-inch approach would be that in a single-channel, single-network system like television or radio any message transmitted does have some minimum guaranteed audience, but this is not so for the press. First, there are many outlets. Second, each outlet (newspaper, magazine, etc.) has varying reach, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Most importantly, your mes-

sage getting the best of space in the best of publications at the best of times still does not have a guaranteed readership. On a slack day when the rest of the news is mundane, a less important piece may be widely read and effective. Similarly, on a day when more interesting subjects are carried, the best of environmental stories may well be killed by the same yardstick.

There are just a few random examples. They have been presented only to highlight the weaknesses of the column-inch and minutes-on-air approach when it is used as a sole monitoring apparatus. This is not to suggest that the system should be discarded altogether. Despite all its limitations it remains the easiest of methods and is in fact a fairly useful one as far as gauging 'input efficiency' is concerned. It also remains a viable indicator of changing media attitudes towards the subject and can certainly be most useful to the communicator as long as it is not considered to be the sole monitor.

DIRECT RESULTS

Results, preferably direct results, is what communication is all about. However, it is rare that direct results are achieved, specially at the macro level. Even where they are, it is difficult to identify and directly attribute them as such. But tangible results can be, and are, achieved at the micro level and must be monitored with care; not only for their frequency but also for the causes that speed (or stall) their achievement.

Indeed, in many instances the activist, results-oriented approach is the one best suited to environmental communication. While the ultimate goal of creating awareness and educating the public as well as decision makers about the concepts of sustainable development remains a continuous underlying target, in many cases the environmental communicator must take up specific causes, set goals and then work towards their speedy realization.

Care, however, must be taken in the realistic selection of goals for 'activist communication'. In one's enthusiasm for results it is easy to bite off more than one can chew. This can prove to

be detrimental not only for the health of one's enthusiasm but also for the cumulative credibility and potency of the communication efforts as a whole.

REACHING THE RIGHT EARS

Spreading the seeds of general awareness on environmental issues in the Johnny Appleseed style and taking up specific action on particular problems must remain integral components of any environmental communication programme. But of principal importance is instilling change not only in attitude but in practice and policy, towards improved conservation and sustainable development.

Improvements in public awareness of environmental issues remains a cardinal long-term mechanism for heralding improved resource management. Equally important, however, are the more immediate changes that are required at the policy and resource use levels. For this, a parallel issue-specific, target-specific communication effort must be incorporated into the action strategy.

The monitoring of such efforts is a precarious exercise, also prone to the dangers of misleading quantification. However, some mechanisms can be adopted to get a rough idea of whether the effort is going in the right direction or not. These might include monitoring shifts (even of the most minor nature) in government policies, in resource use practices and in stringent (or otherwise) implementation of existing legislation. Keeping an eye on how often the information/message communicated by you has been quoted, used, advocated or negated by legislative representatives, government functionaries, public opinion leaders, editorial commentators, academicians or at any public forum could also be of use, as would a listing of the new resource management/use approach advocated in your message being adopted, at what pace, by a resource user (farmer, fisher, grazer, herder etc.) and the concerned research and implementation institutions. However, in gauging the above, one must never for-

get that other forces may have been at work that might have had greater impact than one's own communication package.

TALK AROUND TOWN

As we have discussed at various stages of this document, Pakistan has an effective and intricate social structure. Be it the chopaal interaction for villagers, the khokha interaction for the urban poor or the drawing room culture of the urban rich, the infrastructure for social interaction exists. Not only can this be harnessed as a medium of communication but it can also serve as a monitoring indicator of how far and how effectively your message has travelled.

Luckily, ours is a society where people talk — in fact, we talk a lot. What we talk about depends to a large extent on what the media churns out for us to discuss. Whether the information you have disseminated through the various media is being discussed at chopals, khokhas or in plush drawing rooms is, in fact, a reasonably reliable indicator of the success, or otherwise, of your communication effort, and also of the real reach of the media utilised.

The social interaction that exists in our society, then, is a three-pronged treasure trove: it is a means of retaining and enhancing self-awareness of the subject, a potent conduit for communication and also a viable mechanism for monitoring success.

ATTITUDE SURVEYS

Of all the monitoring mechanisms that we have discussed, the problem in each case has been that (a) they are not quantifiable, (b) they are not complete in themselves, (c) they can be easily misconstrued, (d) they tend to be specific rather than general in their evaluation, and (e) they give part rather than whole results.

It is problems like these that make the monitoring of communication activities a difficult and, at times, a dangerous and misleading proposition. The ultimate aim of any communication drive is a change in public perceptions

and attitudes. But, changes in attitudes do not lend themselves readily to quantification or monitoring.

However, the need to monitor changes in these attitudes is both real and immediate. Furthermore, to gauge changes in attitudes it is important that the monitoring effort be continuous and comparable. The mechanism which fulfills this purpose the best, though not without reservations, is that of periodic attitude surveys: first to set the baseline for future evaluation and later to chart the pace of change of attitudes and thereby improve and adjust the communication efforts.

A separate awareness/attitude survey for media professionals may also be recommended

to see how their own awareness has improved and how they perceive their role as environmental communicators. However, extreme care must be exercised in the formulation of questions, mode of data collection and selection of areas and groups to be surveyed. Any mistake here can cause serious complications in analysis which can, at times, even lead to potentially dangerous changes in the entire action strategy. Care must also be exercised in neither over-exploiting nor over-emphasising the importance of data collected through attitude surveys. Data from opinion surveys must be treated only as rough indicators of public perceptions — important indicators, but equally on many occasions incomplete and unreliable indicators.

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