UNIT 5 DEVELOPMENT REPORTING

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- define development and development reporting;
- identify the areas it includes;
- describe the special skills needed to cover these areas of reporting, and
- reason out why and how a particular treatment is necessary to do the development reporting for a particular mass medium.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this block of 'Specialised Reporting', we have so far discussed court reporting, legislature reporting, science and technology reporting and sports reporting.

In this unit, we shall concentrate on development reporting. We shall consider the definition of development reporting. We shall discuss various skills and the training required for the development reporting. And we would like to create a rationale which would make our development reporting useful.

This is the last unit in this block. In the next block, we shall discuss the various skills and the orientation required by a reporter to write for print medium.

Activity 1

Before you proceed, involve yourself in an activity which will give you a first-hand experience on how the development issues are handled by the newspapers.

In India, we have a lot of development projects and issues which are of national importance, such as Narmada Project. There are many issues which have local colour and significance. The newspaper, being the vehicle of public consciousness, keep a strong vigil on these projects and issues.
- Now, select an issue of a daily newspaper,
- List all the news items which you think are on the developmental projects and issues.
- State what good these reports will do to the people.
The proforma given below may help you to complete this activity in a more organised manner.

Newspaper: ........................................................................................................................

Date of Issue: ........................................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Development News item</th>
<th>Good to the people</th>
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5.2 THE MEANING AND CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT REPORTING

Development reporting is somewhat different from routine reporting from court, legislatures, crime, science and technology or sports. However, it may involve writing our programmes and policies resulting in economic change, social programmes and community feelings and reactions to programme and change.

Ever since India adopted a process of planned development through the five year plans in 1951, rapid transformation have taken place in all walks of life in the country. Some of these changes have been welcomed by the people, but many developments have been opposed by them. Moreover, as development takes place, numerous new issues are thrown up which become controversial and assume the shapes of agitation, protests and dharnas. As a developmental reporter, you will be required to help in creating awareness about these developmental issues. The main task will involve informing readers, listeners, and viewers about the various plans, programmes, schemes and projects drawn up by government and different government agencies. The development reporter will be expected to create an
atmosphere of understanding the objectives of these schemes and ultimately mobilizing people in seeking their willing participation in development programmes and processes. However, a move widely accepted definition among the communicators, states that the "development is a processes which facilities and results in participation and advancements, both material and social, of the widest possible number of people in a given society." It is through the participation of the people that the production of food is increased, new roads are built, rails are laid, houses are constructed, facilities of safe drinking water are provided, electricity and communication lines are laid to supply electricity to and connect remote rural areas. More and more hospitals, clinics and primary health centres are opened to provide medical service to the people. More schools, colleges and universities are established to educate people. More cinema houses, radio stations and television centres are set up to inform, educate and entertain people. The food, clothing and shelter, safe drinking water, water to irrigate fields, medical care and sanitation are among the basic necessities of life. These needs are fulfilled through development. The basic objective of development is to raise the income and the living standard of the people.

Development reporting needs some special skills, preparations, and qualities to be imbibed by reporters of print or electronic media. To be able to do this job successfully, a reporter has to collect information on different development programmes.

5.2.1 Styles of Development Reporting

Development has led to some disastrous results such as widespread pollution of air, water and soil, besides deforestation. This resulted in a rethinking on what constitutes development, and has given rise to several questions which the media practitioner have to report. With the result, that development is required to provide not only food, hygiene and health, nutrition and security but also ecological protection. It has increased the responsibility of the development journalists. Therefore, a journalist reporting on developmental issues should organise and arrange his report logically.

- He has to collect data on the area which is being developed. This may involve interviewing the people for whom the development projects have been planned and also the authorities concerned with planning, implementation, and monitoring.

- In writing development stories, you have to be equipped with factual information which is generally not easily available.

- You will have to develop your own outlook which is more important than styles and techniques.

- Your language must be as simple as possible. When you mention the figures of development, expenditure, population, income, etc. round up these instead of using fractions. The expression "Your income will be doubled if you take a crop of mungbeans during summer", is more effective than to give the exact figures of incomes raised in experimental plots in different areas.

- Comparative figures always help. For example, when you report on the impact on any new technology, dig up information before the introduction of technology and compare it with the change brought about after the adoption of new technology.

5.2.2 The Development Process

The Process of development is generally slow, because people are slow in adopting novel ideas. For example, though extensive researches have established the potentials of growing high yielding varieties of grains, the process of adoption of the varieties is slow. Many people are displaced when their lands are acquired, to build roads, dams, and power stations etc. The process of development also requires people's participation and acceptance. It is here that the development reporter explains to the people the rationale behind building roads, schools and hospitals, use of high yielding resistant varieties, on the use of organic fertilizers and other such matters.

Although the government has spent billions of rupees on different development programmes in the seven five year plans since 1951, not much has been achieved in terms of making masses literate, providing them the basic minimum needs, increasing the per capita income
and generally uplifting their living standard. On the other hand, a lot of damage has been done in the name of development. For example, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that over 75 percent of the annual global deforestation of 17 million hectares occurs for expanding food production. Irrigation without proper drainage results in soils getting alkaline or saline. Indiscriminate use of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides causes adverse changes in biological balance as well as leads to an increase in the incidence of cancer and other diseases. Massive industrialization without checks on releasing effluents and smoke results in dangerous levels of toxic chemicals in air, water and soils. Therefore, the process of development has become very complex and in many parts of the world the people are opposing large development programmes, almost to the extent of attaining an anti-development attitude. All these issues need to be presented to the people and the authorities. Development reporters in all mass media can help a great deal in this direction.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) Mention any two major objectives of a development report.

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2) How would you organise your report on development Project/Issues?

Please list them down.

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5.3 SUCCESS STORIES

Most sought after stories in development reporting are “success stories”. An often quoted success story of “Development” at the international level, is that of Japan which has become an economic power in just 30 years. In India, the “Green Revolution” stories of Punjab, Haryana, and western U.P. attract a positive response from the readers. The success stories of individuals who started from scratch and made it big by sheer hard work and dedication are also read with interest.

The same is true of the development stories or failures. People can learn lessons both from success and failures of others. From success stories, they learn “when he can do it, why not I”. From failures, they learn to avoid mistakes committed by others.

The well known development writers such as Sunder Lal Bahuguna and Bharat Dogra have done commendable jobs in focussing on issues of rehabilitation of 30,000 families displaced due to the implementation of dam projects such as Pongor, Tehri Dams in Himachal Pradesh and UP. Bharat Dogra’s article entitled “Worms in Break Basket” won him ecolades from several quarters.

Besides, among the several positive aspects of development reporting is the example of a village called Chhatera near Delhi, adopted for development by the Hindustan Times reporters under the leadership of Mr. B.G. Verghese. Titled “Our Village Chhatera”, it started with the condition of the village at the time when the project was taken up. With the help of the scientists of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI, New Delhi) under the guidance of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the new farm technology was introduced in the village and reporters visited the village to report the progress of development as it took place. This was a remarkable experiment in development reporting ever ventured in India by any mass medium.

However, on the negative side, there are writers who see only the wrong side of the picture. Many of them are biased and dislike India to develop into a powerful force in the world. However, an objective writer on development in India during the last forty years, cannot ignore the tremendous progress the country has made in various fields such as agriculture including dairy and poultry, space, defence, nuclear sciences, textiles and other industries. Before independence, even a needle was not made in India. Now, we are a major exporter of engineering goods. What India expects a development reporter to focus on, is constructive criticism. You cannot outright reject a project without giving valid scientific reasons and alternatives. For example, Sunder Lal Bahuguna while rejecting construction of the Tehri Dam quotes scientific studies to prove that the area of the Tehri Dam is earthquake-prone and big dams will create serious human and environment problems that it will solve. Instead, he has suggested to construct small dams at different places on the same river.

5.4 WHERE’S A DEVELOPMENT STORY

There are areas of development news and ideas which are only casually or rarely covered in the media. There are innumerable government and voluntary bodies, large institutional sector, or research institutions and several noted researchers and scientists doing a lot of good work for the society. Thus, there are thousands of excellent development stories lying buried under reams of paper and stored in labs which never see the light of day because of the indifference of mass media or due to want of a good development writer. Enter into any lab and you will surely hit a path breaking development story.

Day in and day out, many state and central government departments and ministries dole out handouts, press releases, news letters, annual reports and a plethora of other publications. Don’t throw them away, keep them for future references. However, never depend on them entirely. It is always better to talk to the concerned scientists or administrator on whose work the handout/press release is based.
The Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Government of India brings out a lot of press releases, handouts, and reports. These documents contain a lot of information which are not always reported by the newspaper. In fact, very few of them are reported and that too in a very condensed form. Have a first-hand experience with the content of these press releases.

- Collect the documents of PIB released in a month
- Browse through these documents
- Identify the items which you think should have been used by the newspaper.

Be mobile, and meet people who are involved in benchmark researches in labs and libraries. Attend seminars, symposia, and conferences. Ask questions. Collect background material. Build up your own library. The news books and research journals are myriad. ‘Taste’ a lot, read a few. Vary your reading frequently. Try to keep up with the latest trends in the world of science and human endeavour as best as you can. This is the most difficult yet most rewarding source of discovering development journalism. After a while, you will learn to find them quickly.

In addition, a keen habit of reading will sharpen your knowledge, style, and technique. You will never be short of ideas and you will always be ahead of others in the field. However, even if the development reporters remain mere reporter of economic and social scene, they are still doing a great job. If they add a bit of background to their stories, they will be doing a better job. But if they can also write to stimulate thought, interest, and action then they are doing the complete job indeed.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
   ii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) What are the habits which a reporter must constantly be developing?

2) What impact the positive and the negative reports on the development projects and issues may have on the readers?

5.4.1 Tasks of Development Reporting

Roughly, a development reporter has three tasks to perform, inform, interpret, and promote. If properly executed, a development reporters job is more exacting than that of mere news reporters. A development report must be included with a noble motive of supporting, crusading, or promoting a cause. However, let us be cautious about “Promotions”. Often, though mistakenly, development journalism is branded as advocacy journalism, public relation, or “bootlicking”. A sincere development writer’s role in the overall progress of the country is as vital as that of a person working with his own hands. Indeed, there are many attractions to trap a development reporter. Five star cocktails and dinner parties, foreign trips, precious gifts, and simply bribing. As a development journalist you will have to develop a sixth sense to smell the rot before it envelops you. Avoid “mouthpiece writing” at any cost.
But this is a very difficult task, bedecked with unlimited hurdles. Besides, picking holes in a project factually and truthfully is bound to attract somebody, somewhere. Reporting failure is bound to annoy a lot of people. But that is the first and foremost task of a development reporter. Besides, the reporter must be honest to highlight the achievements and laurels won by the people executing the schemes.

Therefore, to be a successful development reporter, you must inculcate certain characteristics. Some of which are:

- **Fostering a wide range of contacts**
  
  Be in contact at the national level with development departments, ministries of rural development, agriculture, environment and planning, social welfare, child and women development, scientific institutions, universities. Your rapport with different individuals in various institutions will help you collect good development news and features. Also, you should develop contacts in the Press Information Bureau and other information departments of states and public or private sector institutions.

- **Contacts with international organizations**
  
  The United Nations is the biggest organization responsible to help the countries in development. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme, UNICEF, World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)—all these organizations have their offices in New Delhi which frequently publish excellent reports on their area of activity at the global level. Keep in touch with their public information officers to gather information about their projects.

- **Keep a desk diary**
  
  Mark items forward in time. Known upcoming events such as World Health Day (April), World Food Day (October 16), etc., and dates of seminars and symposia. Use your diary as a follow-up system; it will remind you to inquire what happened to the promises and predictions of public figures. They will not like you for it, but it is part of your job.

- **Maintain your own reference material**
  
  Keep clippings of good development features, articles, general stories, pamphlets, leaflets, reports, and any printed document of relevance to your area. In addition cultivate friendships with senior development communicators. You will learn a lot from them.

According to most of the communication experts, the major difference between conventional journalism and developmental journalism is "purposiveness". The task of the development reporter is not only to inform, to report the facts or to interpret, but also to do promotion, to elicit action or some other behavioural change. You write your story to set an agenda for action. In short, development journalism is a journalist's agenda which he/she sets for all those who are involved in the development activities.

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Note:**

1) Some critics have called 'development journalism' as 'envelopmental journalism'. Why are the critics so harsh on the developmental journalists?

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2) Mention two advantages which a development reporter may derive from a wide-range of contacts with various national and international agencies.

5.4.2 Specialized Skills Required for Development Reporting

Development reporting encompasses a number of areas indicated early in this unit. Every field needs and demands special skills to report on that particular area fully and competently. In this section, we will identify the areas of development reporting and list the special skills needed to write on these areas.

Over 70 percent of India's population subsists on agriculture directly or indirectly. Therefore, agricultural progress and development in the rural areas are the most important areas of development reporting. Scientific research has undoubtedly transformed the countryside in all aspects by transferring technologies from labs to land. For example developments in plants, innovations in mineral fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, and other chemicals, both at the production and post harvest phases of agriculture; developments in improved farm machinery, irrigation sources and techniques, post harvest processing, storage and marketing; management and monitoring techniques leading to more efficient land and water use, management of energy, crop and pest control; and provision of effective marketing facilities form a system of land and water use, structured primarily for the needs of the family to any one responsive to the needs of the market.

Thus, as a communicator, you have a very formidable task of collecting information, transforming it into a right format and passing it on to the users. Again, the success stories will inspire more. Avoid technical jargon and approach directly in a simple language. Tap every source of information. There are about 250 periodicals on farming, which provide basic information on agriculture and useful data on rural development. In addition, rural programmes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGPs) and many others, seek to provide employment to the unemployed and raise the income levels of the people. All these programmes need impartial and objective scrutiny at every stage of their execution. No doubt, there are weaknesses and shortcomings in their implementation. Despite all efforts made in the past, there are still an estimated 200 million poor persons in the rural areas living below the poverty line.

So as a development reporter, you have a prodigious task before you. You can choose any programme and monitor its progress in a regular column in your medium, electronic or print. You can help in finding out why the benefits of these programmes are not reaching the target people. You can help in mobilising people's participation in these programmes.

Similarly, concentrate on the areas of health and hygiene, social and economic issues, industrial development, energy and environment, women's and children's welfare, literacy and adult education, population and family planning, marriages and other customs. In fact, there are subjects galore which can be focussed on now and again. And there are urgent issues in each area which lend themselves to doing features, news, special articles or photo features. Besides, new issues are thrown up every day. For example, communal harmony, social tensions, religions, bigotry and what have you.
Activity 3

The following news item was published in ‘The Hindu’, Wednesday February 16, 1994. It is on some recent research. Read the news item and complete the activity.

**Strides in farm research**

BLUE is one of the most pleasing colours to the eye. It is the most popular colour too, studies have shown. But to make clothes blue, cotton that grows white has to be dyed using artificial colouring agents which are a source of pollution.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the cotton could itself grow blue? This is just what genetic engineering are attempting. Researchers in America are trying to introduce certain genes into cotton plants that are responsible for production of the blue pigment in the indigo plant.

Transgenic cotton that defends itself from pest invasions by means of a bacterial toxin gene has been developed. People are also exploring the possibility of using toxins from insects like scorpions.

Biotechnologists in China and America have recently tested rice, genetically modified to fight a particular virus called redstripe. The results of the trial were encouraging.

Trials have begun in Africa of a genetically engineered vaccine against rinderpest and capripox, two viral diseases that kill millions of cattle, sheep and goats in developing countries every year.

American entomologists has traced the ability to individual genes, which he is transferring to bacteria as a first step towards creating biological tools for removing pesticides and herbicides from soil and water.

Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) toxins have been hailed as the biological alternative to control of pests. But recently, a handful of pest populations have shown resistance to Bt toxins. Efforts are going on to forestall the development of this resistance.

Trials have begun in Australia of a genetically engineered vaccine against rinderpest and capripox, two viral diseases that kill millions of cattle, sheep and goats in developing countries every year.

What do sheep and the sunflower have in common apart from the letter ‘S’? Genes from the yellow flowers are being produced. The sunflower gene makes an amino-acid rich protein and sheep are known to produce more wool when supplied with large amounts of these amino-acids.

A rose by any other name will smell as sweet, said the bard. The same should hold good whatever colour they are. Finnish geneticists have succeeded in turning red flowers of the commercially important species Gubera hybrida a paler shade by simply ‘switching off’ the gene which makes the flower red.

One might have to take a new look at evolution, if genes are used as a standard. Researchers who have compared sequences of ribosomal RNA say that fungi are closer to animals genetically than to plants.

Researchers in Edinburgh have produced transgenic sheep that carry the human gene for a protein called alpha-1-antitrypsin, which the sheep produce in their milk. Antitrypsin, is required to treat a lung disease called hereditary emphysema, but is very expensive to produce in the laboratory.

The first genetically engineered food — a tomato — will soon be on sale. The tomato has an extra gene added to prevent it going soft and mushy as it ripens. (Madras Science Correspondent).

- Rewrite this news item for your local newspaper in your mother tongue keeping the main points intact
- Your news item must not be more than 300 words. Use the space given below to write your news item
5.5 DEVELOPMENT REPORTING FOR MASS MEDIA

In this section we shall discuss how a development reporter should adopt the media and adapt his/her skills to suit the characteristics of various media.

5.5.1 Development Reporting for Press

In this section, you will learn how a particular mass medium can effectively serve the cause of development. As a development reporter, you will be required to process and present facts in an intelligible form to the reader/viewer/listener. Although electronic media, radio and television, have made a veritable impact on the masses, print media will remain most decisive and educative for a long time to come. In India, print medium occupies an important place. There are more than 1500 daily newspapers published in all the 18 national and other languages. Several newspapers devote full pages to development news. For example The Indian Express, The Pioneer, and The Hindu in English set aside one full page for "Development News" once a week. Development stories are best done in the form of a feature article. In another unit, you would have learnt as to how a feature is written. Besides, newly started development work or those proceeding at a snail's pace, thereby leading to tremendous loss in funds or causing terrible inconvenience to the public can be presented in the form of news items or featurized news stories.

In fact, photo features on development projects can also be presented effectively. Interviews with the recipients of the benefits of the projects already completed can also help evaluate their impact on the masses. Such writings can also induce authorities to expedite other projects under implementation.

Development stories pertaining to the topics mentioned earlier, appear on the development pages of the newspapers from time to time. The Hindu published a separate page on agriculture issues and farming researches, and how these can be taken to the land from the lab. In addition, other subjects relate to particular crops, seeds, marketing, fertilizers, pesticides, rural life and allied areas. The reporters visit the countryside regularly, to collect material for the page. Similarly, a number of newspapers in almost all national languages carry news, features, interviews, interpretative and investigative stories on development subjects. In fact, the two national news agencies, PTI and UNI, maintain separate desks to focus on development stories.
An imaginative development writer can do free lancing for the press, radio, and television. Besides employment, opportunities exist in different newspaper establishments to cover development news. A development reporter however has a challenging job and requires hard work, commitment and dedication. But the compensation in terms of contribution to the national development are tremendously satisfying.

**Activity 4**

Collect development news for a week from the newspaper you read.

- Cut and paste all these news items in sheets of paper. Use one sheet for one news item.
- Categorise these items as per the following theme.
  - Agriculture
  - Farming
  - Development projects like dams, roads, bridges etc.
  - Science and Technology
  - Miscellaneous

In the space provided below write four sentences on the findings.

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**5.5.2 Development Reporting for Radio**

In India, radio has proved its utility as a potent audio medium for creating awareness among people in several areas of human endeavour, including development. It helps in promoting an instinctive urge for development consciously, by broadcasting programmes designed to help people diagnose their problems and clarify their objectives so that they may be able to make their decisions more wisely. India has of late witnessed tremendous expansion in the two electronic media, radio and television. From six radio stations in 1947, All India Radio (AIR) has grown to nearly 200 radio stations, catering to the local and regional audiences. Rural Radio Forums were started in 149 stations. Seven radio stations were used for broadcasting 20 programmes to 150 village groups clustered in five unilingual districts of one state in the first pilot project. Each forum consisted of 10 to 20 villages. They gathered to hear and discuss programmes. An elected secretary kept minutes of the meetings, while a chairperson (who was elected for short term) led discussions.

The forums often raised questions about new problems and appealed to AIR for additional information or for advice on how to adapt information to the local conditions. A typical programme devoted 20 minutes to a substantive agricultural issue and ended with a 10 minutes dialogue in response to questions raised by previous programmes. Brief comments on market reports and weather were also aired. Listeners and participants in forum groups could hear as many as 50 hours of radio programming. They could also experience as many as 100 opportunities to participate in, or hear subsequent local discussions. Evidence from carefully conducted field experiments confirmed that the Indian government’s “grow more food” campaign had been stimulated by this combination of mass media, interpersonal communication and subsequent feedback. Field experiments which compared villages with “rural radio forums to villages without them were filled with praise.”... a success beyond expectations.

Increase in knowledge in the forum villages was spectacular, whereas in the nonforum villages it was negligible. Growth of the relatively cheap transistor radio, reduced the villagers’ desire to attend forum meetings. They preferred to stay home and listen to other types of programmes. This led to their demise, although some listeners’ clubs are still operating.
Regular radio farm and home units have been established in all the radio stations headed by farm radio officers to run agricultural and rural development programmes. About 20 radio stations have science cells headed by “science officers.” Various campaigns against smoking and drugs were carried through radio with the help of experts.

Thus, as a development reporter for radio, there is plenty of scope to write scripts, to devise special programmes and also the work in the capacity as a free lancer to do development field stories.

While reporting development for radio, you must remember that you are talking to the people. Of course, you can always read your scripts if the broadcast is in your own voice. However, you should not appear as if you are reading. To achieve this, you must write your scripts in simple language. In the spoken word, your approach has to be personal, with a person to person or a special I-and-you quality. When you want to reach people who cannot read or write, or the people who live in remote villages, and when you want to reach people speedily, the radio is the answer. The “development” is actually meant for these people, who have been left out of the development due to various reasons but the foremost barrier has been their own ignorance. Your radio talk, radio-feature, radio-drama, radio-discussion must be able to break that barrier. You use radio to inform, alert, suggest, direct, interest, stimulate and motivate people. A good development programme to be put on radio must be recorded in the field. It will give an impression of informality and intimacy to the listener. These factors make radio programmes impressive, effective, and purposeful.

**Check Your Progress 4**

**Note:**

i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) Mention four areas a development news reporter needs to research on, before writing a piece.

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2) Mention three skills a development reporter needs to acquire, in order to present a report on a radio programme.

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5.5.3 Development Reporting for Television

Television was first started in India in a small way in 1959. As a development reporter, you can use television to spread know-how, to as many people as within the reach of a television centre or even to the whole country through national hook-up. However, to be effective, your development programme must be field-based. You must remember that television is a visual medium. And if visuals are missing or the cameraman fails to focus on the relevant visuals, then the television’s impact will be completely lost.

For making a good television programme with a view to motivate people for development, requires a lot of effort, research, and commitment. In 1975, some researchers undertook the task of developing audience profiles of the people who were likely to receive television programmes through SITE - Satellite Instructional Television Experiment transmission. Each profile contained information on a cluster of three to four districts in a state, covering
aspects such as language, customs, values, beliefs, social structure, economy, agriculture, health, hygiene, nutrition, mother-child care and family planning. Television programmes could be telecast to support development programmes in all these spheres.

For writing a good television script, fewer words and more visuals are needed. Much more is communicated through visuals. You may first shoot the film according to a rough script, or you may first write the complete script and then take up shooting according to it. It works both ways. It is better to involve yourself at every level of the production of such a programme. If you just write the script and give it to a producer and do not accompany the camera team for shooting at the site, the programme may miss some of the vital points.

Besides, you must also sit with the video-editor to prepare the final version of the programme. Never make only studio based development programme for television. Go to the spots. Visit the remote areas. The development will never remain an exercise on paper, if television is used properly and fearlessly.

A well made television programme can help you expose the loopholes in our planning and implementation of the developmental plans.

5.5.4 Reporting on Sustainable Development

The term "sustainable development" was popularized by the report of the World Commission Environment and Development (WCED), also called the Bruntland Report with the title "Our Common Future" published in 1987. A strategy for sustainable living titled “Caring for the Earth” prepared by the International Union for Conservation (IUCN), the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and the World Wide life fund (WWF) defines sustainable development as “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.” According to Dr. M.S. Swaminathan “A dynamic concept of carrying capacity would imply in operational terms the conservation of natural ecosystems as well as their continuous improvement through research, training, technology, community cooperation and public policies.

To some, sustainable development is a long awaited call for political recognition of global environmental decay, economic injustice and limits to material growth. Economics driven growth has led to a 20-trillion global economy. The decline in environmental quality has however underlined the need for harmonizing the logic of economics with that of ecology. A destructive consequence of human action is the gradual conversion of the surface of the earth into wastelands and degraded lands. Globally, 15 percent of the total earth surface has undergone human induced soil degradation. About 24 percent of the human-occupied territory of the earth is degraded only by human activities. At least 66 million hectares of irrigated land is affected by salinization. About 1 million hectares of it prime farmland in rainfed areas is being lost each year to urbanization. There are also similar frightening figures with reference to water pollution and ground water exhaustion. Compounding these problems is the gradual diversion of forest lands for a variety of other uses, thereby resulting in the loss of habitats rich in biological diversity.

The new paradigm of development places as much stress on ecological sustainability as on economic and social sustainability. The sustainable development, therefore, represents an opportunity for humanity to correct a historical error and develop a gentler, more balanced, and stable relationship with the natural world. This view of sustainable development also raises moral considerations such as the need in a limited world for a more equitable sharing of the world’s resources.

The industrialized countries have intensified their efforts to arrest soil erosion, conserve water and biological diversity and reduce the consumption of mineral fertilizers and chemical pesticides and at the same time stabilize the per hectare productivity at the current high levels.

According to Dr. M.S. Swaminathan ("From Stockholm to Rio-de Janerio: The Road to Sustainable Agriculture" 1987), the problem facing us today is not so much of discovering what must be done to ensure sustainability, as learning how to do it. The technologies which can promote sustainability rely heavily on knowledge as a substitute for capital, farin
grown inputs as substitutes for market purchased ones and community co-operation as a supplement to individual action.

With this background, a total reorientation is required in development reporting in India. When writing about any development project, you must ask questions like how it will improve the quality of life of the people without damaging the quality of air, water, and soil and also without eroding the moral and social values.

Check Your Progress 5

Note:  
i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) State whether the following statements are 'correct' or 'incorrect':
   a) Television relies heavily on the works of a reporter than the visuals.
      [ ] correct [ ] incorrect
   b) A TV reporter on a developmental issue will be able to perform well if he/she involves himself/herself at every stage of the programme.
      [ ] correct [ ] incorrect
   c) A developmental TV report should include a lot of field based footages.
      [ ] correct [ ] incorrect
   d) 'Sustainable development' means more industrialisation.
      [ ] correct [ ] incorrect
   e) Fifteen percent of the total earth surface is destroyed by elephants and not by humans.
      [ ] correct [ ] incorrect

2) Mention at least four aspect of 'Sustainable Development'.

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5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have told you about the meaning, concept and process of development reporting. We have discussed and learned about the styles and characteristics of development reporting. Besides, we have understood the basic techniques of reporting on agricultural and rural problems and programmes, health and hygiene, social and economic problems, industrial development, energy and environment. You have been acquainted with the various aspects of development reporting for press, radio, and TV. You now know a lot about the need of sustainable development.

The development has been defined as a process which facilitates and results in participations and advancement, both material and social, of the widest number in a given society. The process of development is slow, painful and requires hard work and commitment. Even after spending billions of rupees in seven five-year plans, not much has been achieved in uplifting the standard of living.

Much destruction has been done in the name of development. As a development reporter, you will be required to collect information from different development departments and offices through press information and from public relation officers, and may be required to interview concerned authorities and also the people for whom the development has been planned. Quote only when necessary and the data should be in round figures. Use simple language, develop your own outlook and style. Write success stories as well as stories of failures. Visit areas where development has taken place, or not taking place.
Much can be learned by reading the stories of well-known development journalists like B.G. Verghese, Bharat Dogra, Sunder Lal Bahuguna and Usha Rai. Keep clippings of good stories. Build up your own library. Never hesitate to discuss issues of development with the concerned people. Attend seminars and symposia.

Being a predominantly agrarian economy, the development of India depends on agricultural and rural development. India has become self-sufficient in food through areas of Punjab, Haryana, and western U.P.

Adoption of high yielding varieties and improved techniques have resulted in increased food production. However, about 80 percent of the technologies are still waiting to be transferred to the field. You can help in transferring these technologies from laboratory to the land through mass media. Concentrate on non-green revolution areas which include rainfed areas and eastern India.

Indian society is riddled with problems of health, nutrition, superstitions, social evils, grinding poverty, environment degradation and several other pressing issues. A development reporter is expected to look at all these and other problems with sympathy and understanding to help find acceptable solutions.

As a development reporter, you will do better if in addition to the print media, you also develop skills to use the electronic media, that is, radio, and TV. For radio, you will be required to write in a style as if you are talking to the listeners. For TV, you will keep in mind that very few words can be used because it is a visual medium and a picture can reveal much more than thousands of words. The medium of television is much more glamorous, exciting and spectacular. Its potential is unsurpassed. Its impact is far greater.

While accepting the challenge in being a development reporter, you will always keep it in mind that India or for that matter the whole less-developed world needs to speed up its economic development in ways that are environmentally sound and can be sustained over time. True sustainable development requires that we recognize the reality of ecological limits to material growth and to live on the interest of our remaining ecological capital. We must change from a society which is oriented to satisfy the artificial wants of a few, to one which is committed to satisfying the basic needs of all. These are some of the urgent tasks awaiting a development reporter.

5.7 FURTHER READING


M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Centre For Research on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, 14, Second Main Road, Kottur Gardens, Kotturpuram, Madras.

5.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) a) To report the aims and objectives of the development
   b) Whether or not the project is proving beneficial for the target audience.

2) • Facts must be collected and cross-checked.
   • The aims and objectives should be clarified.
   • The statistics should be collected and cross-checked.
   • Numbers and statistics should be avoided as far as possible.
- The language should be simple.
- The report should have a logical flow.

Check Your Progress 2

1) • Must read magazines, journals, newspapers etc.
   • Must read various topics and disciplines.
   • Must attend a lot of seminars and workshops and participate actively.
   • Always cross check facts, figures etc.
   • Keep writing in simple and readable language.

2) The positive reports on the development projects and issues will definitely create an atmosphere of hope and enthusiasm. The general public may be motivated to contribute their bit to the development of the country.

The negative reports will alert the readers about some development issues and projects. The nation may become aware of the waste of public fund, talent and time because of the failure of projects. It will make the people more cautious and help them to learn what not to do in future.

Check Your Progress 3

1) In many cases the critics are correct. Many politicians and government officials from Third World Countries are not performing adequately. The development projects which they undertake and supervise end up without providing any benefit to the people. But, these powerful people are clever enough to take the press on their side. They dole out a lot of expensive gifts and cash to the journalists and demand praise and positive coverage. The journalists write positive reports on the development projects because of the envelops they receive from the powerful people. Thus, this type of journalism is sometimes called as 'envelopmental' journalism instead of 'developmental journalism'.

2) With a wide range of contact, a development reporter will have (1) an easy access to the officers of these organisation and (2) he/she will be in a position to come to know the latest happenings, moves etc. of these agencies. These will help the reporter to report correctly and adequately.

Check Your Progress 4

1) • The original plan of the project will all inputs.
   • The progress made so far.
   • The problems faced in the past.
   • The future course of the project.

2) • Ability to comprehend the aspirations and wants of the people.
   • Ability to talk to people across.
   • Ability to communicate in a simple and spoken language.

Check Your Progress 5

1) a) incorrect
   b) correct
   c) correct
   d) incorrect
   e) incorrect

2) “Sustainable Development” means
   • less pollution.
   • preservation of the natural resources.
   • usage of natural resources without disturbing the cycle of growth.
   • more food and shelter for human beings.