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Semester: Autumn 2026

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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Development Support Communication (965) • Level: M.Sc.

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1–4)

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and then write the assignment in their own words. Copying this guide word for word is not recommended.

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 40

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Question 1: Evolution, Philosophy and Needs of Development Support Communication (20 Marks)

Q.1 How has the phenomenon of Development Support Communication (DSC) evolved over the years? Also discuss the philosophy and needs of DSC.

Introduction

Development Support Communication, generally abbreviated as DSC, is the planned and systematic use of communication to support development programmes and to bring about positive social and behavioural change. It is not publicity, and it is not ordinary journalism. It is communication deliberately designed, on the basis of research, to help a specific development effort — in health, agriculture, education, family planning, water and sanitation, environment or poverty reduction — to reach its goals by informing people, changing attitudes, building skills, mobilising participation and obtaining feedback. The term became popular through the work of the United Nations agencies, especially UNDP, FAO and UNICEF, but the practice

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behind it is much older. To understand DSC properly, a student must trace how the idea of development communication itself changed from a one-way, top-down transfer of information in the 1950s to the participatory, dialogue-based approach of today, because DSC was born precisely out of the failures of the earlier approach.

Evolution of Development Support Communication

1. The Early Phase: Modernisation and One-Way Information (1950s)

After the Second World War, dozens of new states emerged in Asia and Africa, and development became an international project supported by the United Nations, the World Bank and bilateral aid agencies. Thinkers such as Daniel Lerner, in The Passing of Traditional Society (1958), and Wilbur Schramm, in Mass Media and National Development (1964), argued that the mass media could act as a "great multiplier" of development: radio, newspapers and film would expose traditional people to modern ideas, create empathy with modern life, raise aspirations and teach new techniques. Communication in this phase was understood mainly as the transmission of information from experts and governments to passive audiences. The model was vertical, one-way and persuasive, and success was measured by the number of messages sent and the size of the audience reached, not by whether people understood, accepted or could act upon the messages.

2. Diffusion of Innovations and the Extension Approach (1960s)

In the 1960s Everett Rogers' theory of the diffusion of innovations gave development communication a more scientific shape. Rogers showed that a new idea or practice — a seed variety, a contraceptive, a latrine — spreads through a social system over time, through

identifiable stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation, and that opinion leaders and interpersonal channels are often more powerful than mass media in the later stages. Agricultural extension services, health educators and family-planning field workers applied this model on a large scale. Yet field experience began to expose its limits: information alone did not remove poverty, because the real obstacles were often landlessness, lack of credit, poor roads, weak services and unequal power, not simply ignorance. Campaigns that were designed in capital cities frequently failed in villages whose language, culture and priorities the planners had never studied.

Figure 1: Evolution of Development Support Communication

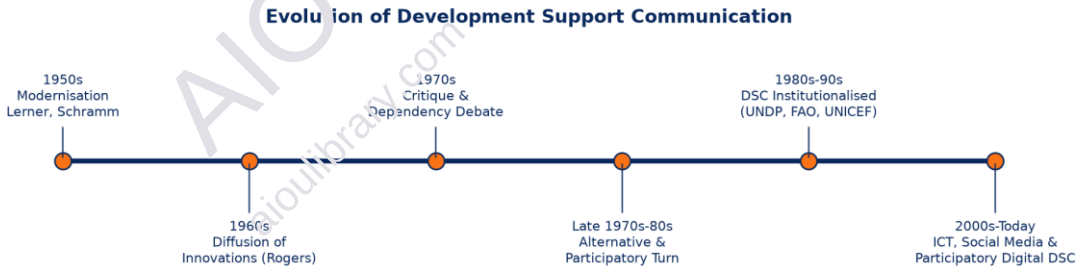

Figure 1: From one-way information and modernisation in the 1950s to participatory, digital and dialogue-based DSC today.

3. The Critique and the Search for Alternatives (1970s)

The 1970s brought a serious re-examination. Dependency theorists argued that the modernisation model blamed the poor for their poverty and served the interests of the developed countries. The demand for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), debated in UNESCO and summarised in the MacBride Report Many Voices, One World (1980), exposed the one-way flow of news and entertainment from the North to the South. At the same time, Paulo Freire's idea of dialogical communication and conscientisation

influenced practitioners to see the people not as empty vessels to be filled, but as partners who possess knowledge and must participate in defining their own problems. Development itself was redefined: it was no longer only growth in GNP, but equity, basic needs, self-reliance, cultural identity and participation. Communication theory followed development theory, as it always does.

4. The Emergence of DSC as a Distinct Discipline (Late 1970s–1990s)

It was in this changed climate that Development Support Communication emerged as a distinct, programme-based discipline. Erskine Childers and other UNDP practitioners popularised the term to describe communication that is built into a development project from the very beginning — at the planning stage — rather than added at the end as publicity for decisions already taken. DSC units were established in ministries and in UN-supported projects; communication needs assessments, baseline studies, message pre-testing, media planning and evaluation became routine parts of project documents. UNICEF's social mobilisation for child immunisation, FAO's communication support to rural development, and population and AIDS communication programmes of the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated that professionally planned communication could raise immunisation coverage, promote oral rehydration therapy and change health behaviour on a national scale, provided the services themselves actually existed to meet the demand that communication created.

5. The Participatory and Digital Phase (2000s to the Present)

In the twenty-first century, DSC has been transformed once again. Participatory communication, community radio, participatory video and theatre for development placed the

tools of communication in the hands of communities themselves. The spread of mobile telephones, the internet and social media then removed the old scarcity of channels: a health worker can send voice messages in a local language, farmers can receive weather and price information on their phones, and citizens can report a broken water pump or an absent teacher directly to the authorities. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) assume such two-way communication in almost every sector. The contemporary DSC practitioner is therefore less a broadcaster of messages and more a facilitator of dialogue, a researcher of audiences and a manager of a planned communication process that uses a planned mix of mass, interpersonal, traditional and digital media.

Philosophy of Development Support Communication

The philosophy of DSC is the set of values and beliefs that distinguishes it from propaganda, advertising and routine information work. Its first principle is that development is for people and by people: human beings are the subject, not the object, of development, so communication must respect their dignity, knowledge and right to decide. Its second principle is participation: those who are affected by a programme should take part in identifying the problem, designing the message, choosing the channel and judging the result, because participation creates ownership, and ownership sustains change after the project ends. Third, DSC believes in dialogue rather than monologue; communication is a horizontal, two-way exchange in which planners also listen and are prepared to modify the programme itself in the light of what they hear. Fourth, it is committed to equity and to reaching the disadvantaged — the poor, women, rural communities and minorities — who are usually the last to receive information and services. Fifth, it respects cultural identity: messages must be built within the

language, symbols, values and media habits of the community, not imported mechanically from another culture. Sixth, DSC is integrated and long-term: it is part of the development programme itself, not an outside publicity appendage, and it accepts that attitudes and behaviour change slowly and need reinforcement. Finally, it is ethical and truthful: it persuades by facts, demonstration and trust, never by deception, because a single exposed falsehood destroys the credibility on which all future communication depends.

Needs of Development Support Communication

DSC is needed because almost every development problem has a communication dimension that money and technology alone cannot solve. First, there is an information need: people cannot adopt a practice they have never heard of, and they cannot use a service whose existence, cost and location are unknown to them. Second, there is a motivational need: even informed people may not act because of fear, habit, fatalism or social pressure, so communication must build motivation, confidence and social support for the new behaviour. Third, there is a skill need: many practices — preparing oral rehydration solution, composting, safe water storage — must be demonstrated step by step, which is a communication task. Fourth, governments and agencies need feedback: without systematic listening, planners do not know why a programme is failing, and DSC research supplies that feedback. Fifth, DSC is needed for mobilisation and coordination, so that communities, field workers, NGOs and departments pull in the same direction instead of duplicating or contradicting one another. Sixth, it is needed to create a favourable policy and social climate, in which leaders, religious figures, teachers and the media support the change and early adopters are praised rather than ridiculed. In Pakistan, for example, the repeated lesson of polio eradication, family planning and

sanitation programmes has been that vaccines, contraceptives and latrines alone do not succeed; trusted, local, two-way communication is what converts availability into acceptance and acceptance into regular practice.

Conclusion

To conclude, DSC has evolved from the one-way transmission of modernising messages in the 1950s, through the diffusion and extension models of the 1960s and the critical, participatory rethinking of the 1970s, to a planned, research-based and dialogue-centred discipline that today also uses digital and social media. Its philosophy rests on human dignity, participation, dialogue, equity, cultural respect, integration with development programmes and truthfulness. It is needed wherever development requires people to know, to believe, to learn a skill, to participate and to give feedback — which is to say, in almost every development effort. A programme without DSC may deliver goods and services, but it cannot reliably deliver understanding, acceptance and lasting change.

Question 2: Comparison of DSC, Development Communication and Development Journalism (20 Marks)

Q.2 Make a comparison between Development Support Communication (DSC), Development Communication (DC), and Development Journalism (DJ).

Introduction

The three terms Development Support Communication (DSC), Development Communication (DC) and Development Journalism (DJ) are closely related, and students often use them as if they were identical. They are not. All three are concerned with communication and development, and all three grew out of the same post-war concern with poverty and national progress, but they differ in scope, in purpose, in who practises them, in the channels they use and in their relationship with the government and the audience. Development Communication is the broadest and oldest concept; Development Journalism is the application of developmental concern within the profession of journalism; and Development Support Communication is the narrowest and most programme-specific of the three — a planned communication component that supports a particular development project or sector. A clear comparison is best presented first in words and then in a table.

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Development Communication (DC)

Development Communication is the general, umbrella concept. Nora Quebral, who gave the field its classic definition in the Philippines in the early 1970s, described it as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of human potential. DC therefore covers every deliberate use of communication for development: government information services, extension, health education, literacy campaigns, development broadcasting, community media and much else. It is both a field of study and a field of practice, it works at the national and societal level, and its

time horizon is long, because it aims at the transformation of a whole society's attitudes, institutions and patterns of life. Its practitioners include planners, extension workers, broadcasters, educators and communication specialists, and its loyalty is to the broad goals of national development rather than to any single project.

Development Journalism (DJ)

Development Journalism is journalism practised with a developmental conscience. It arose in Asia and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, when journalists and governments in the new states argued that the Western news values of conflict, sensation and instant events were not enough for societies struggling with poverty, disease and illiteracy. The development journalist reports development issues — agriculture, health, education, water, population, environment, local industry and the working of development projects — in depth, explains their background and human meaning, investigates whether public money is reaching the people, and gives voice to communities that routine news ignores. DJ is practised by professional journalists working in newspapers, radio, television and digital news media, who remain journalists: their first obligation is to truthful, independent reporting for the general public, and they are free — indeed obliged — to criticise a development programme that is corrupt or failing. DJ therefore informs and watches; it does not itself implement a programme, and it does not take instructions from a project about what conclusion its reporting should reach.

Development Support Communication (DSC)

Development Support Communication is more specific and more operational than both. It is the planned use of communication strategies, messages and media to support a defined

development programme or project and to achieve its stated objectives within a stated period. A DSC specialist begins with research on a defined target audience, identifies the communication problem that stands between that audience and the desired behaviour — for example, mothers in a district who do not complete their children's immunisation — designs messages and selects a media mix, pre-tests materials, works through field staff and community structures, and evaluates the change achieved. DSC is thus accountable in a way the other two are not: it is judged by measurable results for a programme, such as increased clinic attendance, adoption of a seed variety or enrolment of girls. Its practitioners are communication planners and project communication officers, usually employed by government departments, UN agencies, NGOs or projects, and its communication is openly purposive and persuasive, although ethical DSC always remains truthful and participatory.

Table 1: Comparison of DSC, Development Communication and Development Journalism

Aspect	Development Communication (DC)	Development Journalism (DJ)	Development Support Communication (DSC)
Scope	Broadest; the whole field of communication for national development	Limited to the news media and the profession of journalism	Narrowest; communication support to a specific programme or project
Main purpose	Overall transformation of society towards development, equality and human fulfilment	To inform the public, explain development issues and act as a watchdog on development activity	To achieve the specific, measurable objectives of a development programme
Practitioners	Planners, extension workers, educators, broadcasters, communication scholars	Professional journalists and editors in print, broadcast and digital news media	Communication planners, project communication officers, social mobilisation specialists
Audience	The whole society or large population	The general reading, listening and viewing	Clearly defined target audiences / beneficiary

Aspect	Development Communication (DC)	Development Journalism (DJ)	Development Support Communication (DSC)
	groups	public	groups of a programme
Channels used	All channels: mass, interpersonal, traditional, group and digital	News media: newspapers, radio, television, news websites and social media pages	A planned media mix chosen for the audience: mass, interpersonal, folk, group and digital
Time horizon	Long term and continuous	Day-to-day and issue-based following the news cycle	Bounded by the project period and campaign phases
Relation with government / programme	Generally supportive of national development goals, at a broad level	Independent and critical; free to expose failure and corruption	Works for and within the programme; accountable to programme management
Criterion of success	Broad social change and development over time	Quality, depth and public impact of coverage; public awareness and accountability	Measured change in knowledge, attitude and practice of the target audience
Typical example	A national policy of using radio and extension for rural development	An investigative series on why a rural water scheme failed	A planned communication campaign that raises full immunisation in a district from 55% to 80% (illustrative target)

Similarities Among the Three

The comparison should not hide the real similarities. All three reject the idea that communication is only entertainment or commercial advertising; all three give priority to the problems of the common people, especially the rural poor; all three prefer relevant, understandable and local content over imported and sensational content; and all three

recognise that mass media alone cannot develop a country, so they value interpersonal and community channels. In practice they also need one another. A DSC campaign on sanitation achieves far more if development journalists are independently covering sanitation and holding local government to account, and both operate inside the wider national environment that development communication seeks to create. The difference is therefore one of role and scope, not of ultimate goal.

Key Differences in Practice

Three practical differences deserve emphasis. First, accountability: a development journalist answers to professional ethics and the public, a DSC officer answers also to programme objectives and donors, while DC as a field answers to the long-term development of society. Second, freedom to criticise: DJ must retain the right to criticise the very programmes that DSC is employed to support, and a healthy development system protects that difference instead of confusing it. Third, method: DSC is the most research-driven and planned of the three, with baseline studies, audience segmentation, pre-testing and evaluation built into its routine, whereas DJ works to news deadlines and DC works through broad policy and institutions. Confusing DSC with publicity is a common error in government departments: publicity announces decisions, but DSC begins before decisions are finalised, listens to the audience and can change the design of the programme itself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Development Communication is the wide field, Development Journalism is the journalistic expression of the development idea, and Development Support Communication is

the planned, project-level application of communication to achieve defined development results. DC asks how communication can transform a society; DJ asks how journalism can inform the public and watch over development; DSC asks what communication, with which audience, through which channels and at what cost, will make this particular programme succeed. A student who keeps scope, practitioner, audience, accountability and criterion of success in mind will never confuse the three, and a country that uses all three together — broad development communication, independent development journalism and professional DSC — gives its development efforts the strongest communication support.

Question 3: Factors Helpful in the Comprehension of Development Support Communication (20 Marks)

Q.3 Enlist different factors that prove helpful in comprehension of Development Support Communication (DSC).

Introduction

Comprehension means that the receiver not only receives a message but understands it as the sender intended, remembers it and can connect it with action. In DSC this is the decisive step, because a beautifully produced poster, radio spot or video that the audience misunderstands is a total waste of public money. Field studies repeatedly show that development messages fail less often because people refuse to listen and more often because the message was in the wrong language, used unknown words and pictures, assumed knowledge the audience did not have, or was delivered by a source the audience did not trust. Comprehension is therefore not a

matter of luck; it depends on identifiable factors relating to the message, the source, the channel, the audience and the environment. The main factors are enlisted and explained below.

Factors Relating to the Message

- **Simplicity of language.** Messages written in simple, short sentences and in the everyday spoken language of the audience are understood immediately, while technical terms, official jargon, long sentences and foreign words block comprehension. “Boil the water before drinking” is understood by everyone; “decontaminate potable water through thermal treatment” is understood by almost nobody
- **Use of the mother tongue and local dialect.** People comprehend fastest and most accurately in the language they think and dream in. DSC materials in Pakistan, for example, are far better understood in Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Saraiki or the local dialect of the district than in formal Urdu or English alone
- **One main idea at a time.** A message that tries to teach five practices at once is remembered as none. Effective DSC gives one clear central idea per message or material, repeats it, and adds the next idea later
- **Clarity and concreteness.** Abstract advice such as “keep your surroundings clean” is vague; concrete, visible instructions such as “cover the water pot, wash hands with soap before eating and after using the latrine” can be pictured, remembered and performed
- **Relevance to felt needs.** People comprehend and retain what connects with a problem they already feel — a sick child, a failing crop, the price of fertiliser. Messages linked to the

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audience's own priorities receive attention, and attention is the first condition of comprehension

- **Repetition and reinforcement.** A single exposure rarely produces understanding of a new practice. Planned repetition across time and across channels — radio, poster, field worker and community meeting saying the same thing in the same words — fixes the message in memory
- **Correct use of visuals.** Pictures, symbols and demonstrations help low-literate audiences greatly, but only when the images are familiar and pre-tested. Unknown symbols, foreign dress, crowded posters and pictures read in the wrong direction can create serious misunderstanding, which is why DSC insists on pre-testing every visual with the real audience

Factors Relating to the Source and the Channel

- **Credibility of the source.** A message is understood and accepted more readily when the source is believed to be knowledgeable and honest. A trusted local health worker, agricultural graduate, teacher or religious leader explaining a practice carries more weight than an unknown official voice from the capital
- **Homophily — similarity between source and receiver.** People comprehend best those who speak, dress and live like them and who share their problems. This is why DSC uses local change agents, satisfied adopters from the same village and community volunteers as communicators

- **Appropriate channel for the content.** Demonstration is best for skills, radio is strong for timely reminders and reaching scattered audiences, print suits literate audiences and record-keeping, and interpersonal communication is best where doubts must be answered. Matching the channel to the message removes a major barrier to understanding
- **Two-way communication and feedback.** Comprehension rises sharply when the audience can ask questions, seek clarification and try the practice under guidance. Group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, helplines and community meetings turn passive hearing into active understanding
- **Timing and setting.** A message delivered when the audience is free, relaxed and concerned with the topic — farmers before sowing, mothers at a health session — is understood far better than the same message delivered at a busy, noisy or unsuitable moment

Factors Relating to the Audience and the Environment

- **Education and literacy level.** Literate audiences can use print and written instructions, while low-literate audiences need spoken, visual and demonstration-based communication. The DSC planner must know the actual literacy of the audience and design for it, not for the literacy he wishes they had
- **Previous knowledge and experience.** New information is comprehended by connecting it with what the person already knows. Good DSC starts from the audience's existing beliefs and practices, corrects them gently and builds the new practice step by step on that foundation

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- **Socio-cultural compatibility.** Messages that respect religion, customs, gender norms and local values are listened to with an open mind, while messages that appear to attack the culture are rejected before they are even understood. Cultural compatibility is therefore a condition of comprehension, not a decoration
- **Socio-economic situation.** A very poor family may fully understand advice about a balanced diet, a sanitary latrine or a new seed and still be unable to act, and repeated inability turns into inattention. Comprehension improves when the recommended practice is affordable and the supporting services are actually available
- **Physical and social environment.** Noise, distance from the radio or screen, poor print quality, a crowded meeting place and the presence of persons before whom the audience cannot speak freely all reduce comprehension, while a quiet setting, clear reception and social permission to attend and ask questions increase it
- **Audience segmentation and research.** Finally, comprehension is helped most of all by doing research before communication: audience analysis, baseline studies and pre-testing reveal in advance what words, pictures, sources and channels this particular audience will understand, so that the campaign is designed for real people rather than imagined ones

How These Factors Work Together

These factors do not operate separately; they form a chain, and comprehension fails at its weakest link. A simple message in the mother tongue will still fail if the source is distrusted; a credible source will still fail if the channel cannot show a skill that must be demonstrated; and both will fail if the recommended practice is beyond the audience's means. The professional

DSC approach is therefore to check every link before and during a campaign: research the audience, draft the message, pre-test it with a small sample of the real audience, revise whatever was misunderstood, deliver it through trusted sources and suitable channels, repeat it, and then verify through feedback and evaluation whether comprehension actually occurred. Pre-testing in particular deserves emphasis, because it is inexpensive and it converts guesswork about comprehension into evidence: if nine out of ten mothers in a pre-test cannot explain a poster correctly, the poster, not the mothers, must be changed.

Conclusion

To conclude, comprehension of DSC is helped by simple language and the mother tongue, one clear and concrete idea at a time, relevance to felt needs, repetition, familiar and pre-tested visuals, credible and similar sources, channels matched to the content, two-way feedback, suitable timing, respect for literacy, prior knowledge, culture and economic reality, and, above all, audience research and pre-testing. DSC is a science as much as an art precisely because these factors can be studied and managed. The communicator who manages them produces messages that people understand; the one who ignores them produces materials that offices admire and villages ignore.

Question 4: Obstacles to Change and How They Can Be Minimised (20 Marks)

Q.4 How does change face different obstacles? How can these obstacles be minimised? Write suggestions.

Introduction

Every DSC programme is, in the end, an attempt to produce change: a change in knowledge, in attitude and finally in practice — a farmer adopting a new seed, a family accepting a smaller family size, a village giving up open defecation, a mother taking her child for the full course of immunisation. Yet change is never automatic. Human beings and societies naturally defend the familiar, because the familiar is safe, has been tested by their forefathers and fits the rest of their lives. Rogers and other scholars of diffusion showed that resistance is a normal part of the change process, not a sign of backwardness or stubbornness. The task of the DSC practitioner is to identify the obstacles in advance, understand the reasons behind them and reduce them by planned communication and by sensible programme design. This answer first describes the main obstacles and then gives suggestions for minimising them.

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Obstacles to Change

1. Psychological Obstacles

At the individual level, fear of the unknown is the first obstacle: a new practice carries an untested risk, while the old practice at least guarantees a known result. Habit is the second: behaviour repeated for years becomes automatic and comfortable, and every change demands effort, attention and learning. Fatalism — the belief that health, harvest and fortune are entirely decreed and cannot be improved by human action — quietly kills motivation. Selective exposure and perception also work against change: people attend to messages that agree with their existing beliefs and avoid or reinterpret those that challenge them. Finally, a change may threaten a person's self-image or status; an elder who has farmed in one way for forty years

hears the new advice as an accusation that he has been wrong for forty years, and defends himself by rejecting the advice and the adviser.

2. Socio-Cultural Obstacles

Society protects its patterns. Customs, traditions, religious interpretations, caste and biradari expectations, and gender norms all prescribe what a respectable person may do, and an innovation that violates them meets collective resistance even when individuals privately agree with it. In many communities a young mother cannot adopt a health practice if her mother-in-law and husband disapprove, so the real decision-maker is not the person the campaign addressed. Rumours and misinformation are powerful social obstacles, as vaccine and family-planning programmes have repeatedly discovered: a single frightening story, spread by word of mouth or social media, can undo months of official communication. Where the change benefits one group and appears to threaten another — for example, landowners fearing labour organisation — the threatened group may actively oppose and discredit it.

3. Economic and Practical Obstacles

Many obstacles are neither psychological nor cultural but plainly material. The new practice may cost money the family does not have, require labour at the busiest season, or depend on supplies and services that are irregular: a farmer cannot adopt a seed that is not in the market, and a mother cannot complete immunisation if the health centre is closed or the vaccinator absent. Risk is an economic obstacle too, because a poor household living at subsistence level cannot gamble its food on an experiment that might fail; what looks like conservatism is often

rational self-protection. Distance, poor roads, lack of transport and lack of time — especially the time of women, who carry the heaviest daily workload — complete this group of obstacles.

4. Communication and Institutional Obstacles

Change is also obstructed by the way programmes communicate and are organised. Messages in the wrong language, technical jargon, contradictory advice from different departments, one-way communication with no chance to ask questions, and sources that the community distrusts because of past false promises all obstruct change. Frequent transfers of field staff break the personal trust on which adoption depends. Targets imposed from above, without consulting the community, produce formal compliance and quiet sabotage. Corruption and the diversion of benefits to the influential destroy faith in the programme itself, after which even good communication is disbelieved, because people judge the message by the messenger's record.

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Suggestions: How These Obstacles Can Be Minimised

- **Begin with research, not with messages.** Study the community's felt needs, beliefs, decision-making patterns and past experience before designing the change, so that real obstacles are addressed instead of imagined ones
- **Ensure participation from the start.** Involve the community, including women and the poor, in selecting the problem, the solution and the method. People rarely resist a change they have helped to design
- **Use trusted and local change agents.** Work through opinion leaders, religious leaders, teachers, satisfied adopters and community volunteers whose credibility transfers to the innovation

- **Demonstrate, do not only tell.** Result demonstrations, field days, model plots, sample latrines and trial by respected local adopters reduce fear and risk more effectively than any lecture, because people believe what they can see working under their own conditions
- **Introduce change gradually and in small, trialable steps.** Divide the innovation into parts that can be tried on a small scale without disaster if they fail. Trialability and observability, as Rogers showed, are among the strongest promoters of adoption
- **Reduce the cost and risk of trying.** Subsidies, credit, free first trials, guaranteed supply of inputs and functioning services must accompany communication; persuasion without practical support produces frustration and cynicism
- **Address the real decision-makers.** Design communication for the whole decision unit — husband, mother-in-law, village elders, landlords — and not only for the person who will physically perform the new practice
- **Answer rumours quickly and honestly.** Monitor rumours and misinformation continuously, respond fast through trusted local voices with facts, admit genuine problems openly and never issue denials that later prove false
- **Make communication two-way and continuous.** Provide meetings, visits, helplines and feedback channels through which people can ask, complain and report difficulties, and visibly act on what they say, so that the programme learns and trust grows
- **Respect culture and religion while promoting change.** Present the innovation as compatible with the community's values wherever it honestly is, use its language, symbols and media, and engage religious and cultural leaders as partners rather than treating culture only as an enemy

- **Train and stabilise field staff.** Keep trained, motivated field workers in one area long enough to build relationships, coordinate all departments to give one consistent message, and remove corruption and favouritism that destroy programme credibility
- **Reinforce and reward early adopters.** Public recognition, follow-up visits and visible success stories convert individual adoption into a new social norm, after which the same social pressure that once resisted the change begins to sustain it

Conclusion

In conclusion, change faces psychological obstacles such as fear, habit and fatalism; socio-cultural obstacles such as custom, gender norms, decision-making structures and rumours; economic and practical obstacles such as cost, risk and missing services; and communication and institutional obstacles such as distrust, jargon, one-way messages and corruption. None of these can be removed by louder propaganda. They are minimised by research, participation, trusted local agents, demonstration, gradual and trialable steps, practical support that lowers cost and risk, communication with the real decision-makers, honest and rapid handling of rumours, two-way feedback and cultural respect. The central lesson of DSC is hidden in this list: most resistance to change is reasonable from the community's point of view, and the programme that understands the reasons for resistance is the programme that overcomes it.

Question 5: Notes — Dominant Paradigm of Development; Historical Background of the Alternative Paradigm (20 Marks)

Q.5 Write notes on the following: (i) Dominant Paradigm of Development: Salient Features; (ii) Historical Background of the Alternative Paradigm of Development.

Introduction

Development thinking after the Second World War was dominated for almost three decades by one set of assumptions, which scholars later named the dominant paradigm of development. When its promises failed to materialise for the majority of the people in Asia, Africa and Latin America, critics constructed an alternative paradigm with different assumptions about what development is, who it is for and how communication should serve it. Both paradigms must be understood together, because DSC as it is taught today is largely a product of the alternative paradigm's criticism of the dominant one.

(i) Dominant Paradigm of Development: Salient Features

The dominant paradigm took shape in the 1950s, mainly in the United States and Western Europe, and was transferred to the newly independent countries through aid programmes, universities and international agencies. Its intellectual sources were modernisation theory, classical and neo-classical economics and the early communication theories of Lerner, Schramm and Rogers. Its salient features are the following.

- **Development equated with economic growth.** Development meant a rising GNP, industrialisation, urbanisation and rising per capita income. It was assumed that the benefits of growth would automatically "trickle down" to the poor
- **The West as the model.** Developed Western societies were presented as the finished picture of the developing countries' future. Development meant passing, step by step, from a "traditional" society to a "modern" one on the Western pattern, as in Rostow's stages of growth
- **Tradition blamed for backwardness.** Traditional values, family structures, religion and fatalism were treated as obstacles to be removed. The causes of underdevelopment were located inside the developing countries and inside the minds of their people, not in international economic relations
- **Capital and technology transfer as the solution.** Since the poor countries were assumed to lack only capital, technology and know-how, development was to be achieved by transferring these from the developed countries through aid, loans, foreign investment and experts
- **Top-down, centralised planning.** Development was designed by central governments, foreign experts and large agencies and delivered downward to passive beneficiaries. Participation of the people in deciding their own development was not considered necessary
- **Large-scale and urban bias.** Priority went to big industry, big dams, big cities and large commercial farms, while small farmers, the informal sector and rural communities received

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secondary attention, producing growth often accompanied by rising inequality and rural neglect

- **Communication as one-way persuasion.** In communication, the paradigm produced a vertical model: modern messages flowed from knowledgeable senders through mass media to ignorant receivers, and the media were treated as magic multipliers that could by themselves create modern attitudes, aspirations and adoption of innovations
- **Quantitative measures of success.** Success was counted in tons of steel, miles of road, radios sold, messages broadcast and audience size, rather than in the distribution of benefits, the quality of life or the fulfilment of basic human needs

The achievements of the dominant paradigm were real: infrastructure was built, production rose in several countries, literacy and life expectancy improved and modern institutions were created. But by the late 1960s its failures were equally visible. Growth in many countries was accompanied by greater inequality, unemployment, rural stagnation, cultural disruption and dependence on foreign aid, technology and markets. The poor often became poorer while national income statistics improved, which raised the fundamental question whether growth of this kind deserved the name of development at all.

(ii) Historical Background of the Alternative Paradigm of Development

The alternative paradigm was not invented in a single book or year; it grew out of two decades of disappointing experience and intellectual criticism. Its historical background can be traced through several connected developments. First came the evidence of failure in the field during the first UN Development Decade of the 1960s: targets of growth were often met while

poverty, illiteracy and disease remained almost untouched, and practitioners began to say openly that the benefits were not trickling down. Second, the dependency school of Latin American and other scholars — including Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and the earlier structuralist work associated with Raul Prebisch — argued historically that underdevelopment was not an original condition but a product of the way the colonies and later the independent states had been integrated into the world economy as suppliers of raw materials and markets for manufactures. If underdevelopment was created by unequal relations, it could not be cured simply by copying the West and importing its capital.

Third, the political atmosphere of the 1970s carried these ideas into international institutions. The demand of the developing countries for a New International Economic Order (1974) and, in the communication field, for a New World Information and Communication Order challenged the one-way flows of trade, news and culture. The MacBride Commission's report Many Voices, One World (1980) gave this demand a communication form: democratisation of communication, respect for cultural identity and many voices instead of one dominant voice. Fourth, alternative ideas of development were formulated positively: the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation's report What Now: Another Development (1975) proposed development that is need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on structural transformation and participation. The basic-needs approach adopted by the ILO and the World Bank in the later 1970s, the popularity of Freire's dialogical pedagogy, the growth of participatory action research, and the visible success of some self-reliant experiments, such as China's rural health system and Tanzania's Ujamaa experiment in its early promise, all fed the same current.

Out of this background the alternative paradigm took its mature shape in the late 1970s and 1980s. It redefined development as the fulfilment of basic human needs, social justice, equality, self-reliance, cultural identity and participation, with growth treated as a means and not the end. It located the causes of underdevelopment in both internal structures and external relations, valued indigenous knowledge and appropriate, small-scale technology, and insisted that the people themselves must be the authors of their development. For communication, its consequences were decisive: communication had to become horizontal, dialogical and participatory; the audience became a partner; community and traditional media gained respect; feedback became as important as message transmission; and it was within this rethinking that Development Support Communication emerged, replacing the idea of persuading passive receivers with the idea of supporting people's own development efforts through planned two-way communication.

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Conclusion

To conclude, the dominant paradigm identified development with Western-style economic growth, blamed tradition for backwardness, relied on transferred capital and technology, planned from above and used communication as one-way persuasion, measuring success by quantity. The alternative paradigm arose historically from the failure of trickle-down growth in the 1960s, from dependency criticism, from the demands for a new economic and information order in the 1970s, and from positive formulations such as another development and basic needs. It redefined development around human needs, equity, self-reliance, culture and participation, and it permanently changed development communication, giving us the participatory philosophy on which modern DSC rests.