Chapter I

The Framework of the Study

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The mass media play an important role in bringing changes in the life styles of the people in any society. Through communication people establish social relationship, get knowledge and improve their living condition. It is one of the means for development and change. It is the process through which people know about the things happening around them. Moreover, communication is needed in a human society to improve knowledge and for knowing the new innovations and modern technology.

The communication system particularly in the village areas had been very poor. As a result of it, the socio-cultural life of the villages has been traditionally oriented and has been fused with folk culture of the society and for years it has been free from the influence of the outside cultures. But in recent years, rapid expansion of modern mass media and new communication technologies give rise to new patterns of communication and culture and have great impact on the life style of the rural masses. Among the modern mass media, radio, television, cinema and newspapers, are important forms of media. These media not only brings the society towards development but also helps in reviving old and out of practice customs and traditions. Moreover, along with modern media, traditional media have also been serving the society as indigenous channels of interpersonal, inter-group and inter-village communication, as traditional media are close to the hearts and minds of the people. Due to the settlement in isolated groups in rural areas particularly those settled in Assam, the customs and traditions of Manipuri (Meity) community are bounded by a strong and comparatively conservative instinct that passes through generation to generation. In recent times flexibility in such social rigidity has been observed which may be contributed due to their exposure to modern communication systems and smooth flow of information. Therefore, it proposes to study the present

communication system and changes taking place in Manipuri society as a result of the exposure to modern communication systems in two Manipuri Villages, namely Jarultala and Chandpur, located in Cachar district of Assam. The review of the existing literature on the theme may now be reviewed.

Review of Literature

As the communication has a vast role in developing and bringing change in the society, social scientists have been attracted towards the study of the communication process since the early part of the 20th century. Attempts to develop a general approach to social theory that emphasized the role of communication in social life were initially made by some social scientists under Chicago School (Cooley 1902, 1909; Dewey 1927; Mead 1934). The Chicago sociologists influenced the development of communication studies in several important ways. The focal concern of Chicago sociology and social psychology by 1920's was the effects of urbanization in everyday life and the urban ecology of the city, in which communication was given due attention. Park (1922, 1925, 1923, and 1940) contributed much in social analysis on the role of communications like transportation, newspapers, and foreign language, immigrant, press etc. in social life. The studies of Lynd and Lynd (1929, 1937), Desmond (1937), Lee (1937), Rosten (1937,1941) and Thorpe (1939) suggested that mass communication was having brought impact on patterns of everyday life and the creation of national culture. Inversely, the influence of society on the communication media was also recognized (Harris, 1933). Most of the research on the social impact of communication grew out of concern with the effect of mass communication particularly on children and youths (Healey; 1915, Phelan; 1919; Jowett; 1976, Young; 1922). Efforts were also made by some researchers (Young, 1922; Mott, 1938, 1941; Hamton, 1931; Jecobs, 1939; Archer, 1938,1939) to establish the historical understanding of developing media communication.

In the second stage, from 1940s to early 1960s, mass media were believed to be largely important to initiate opinion and attitude change. This period is strongly shaped by growth of mass communication research in the United States. The earliest studies of presidential elections

in 1940 and 1948 conducted by Lazarsfield (1944) and Berelson (1954) respectively and the programme of research on the use of films for training of American service men undertaken by Carl Hovland (1949) can be noted as the example of it. Their studies concluded that the exposure to mass media primarily press, radio, film or television were unlikely to be major contributors to direct change of individual opinions attitudes or behavior or to be a direct cause of crime, aggression or other disapproved social phenomenon.

Some researchers also stated about the attitudinal change brought about by mass media. Thurstone and Peterson (1933) conducted a study on the attitudes of a group of people before and after exposing them to a film. The results indicated that in the case of children there were measurable changes in the attitudes and the direction indicated by the film. Rosenthal (1934) also suggested that pictures, with certain types of contents, produce measurable effects on the socio-economic attitudes. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) have suggested that news reports can expose a discrepancy between private attitude and behavior and public morality, thereby forcing the public to a decision.

During 1930's to 1960's, audience research studies were conducted by some researchers (the works of Allport, 1935; Bogart, 1956; Merton, 1957; Steiner, 1963; Belson, 1967 can be cited as example). In the findings of the audience research, Allport (1935) showed that there had been an average daily radio listening of around 2-3 hours. The arrival of television has since prompted a new crop of studies in the radio research tradition (Bogart, 1956; Steiner, 1963; Belson, 1967). Merton (1957) studied the patterns of influence in small community, where the flow of communication has been considered in relation to the existing structure of personal relationship. Mc Quail (1969) identified three major areas of inquiry in the field of mass communication research. These are (i) the research concerned with behavior, interest, and structure of audience; (ii) researches on effectiveness on persuasive power of the media and (iii) researcher concerned with general social effects of the mass media.

Moreover, a number of very useful reviews of the research findings on mass media effects have been attempted by Berelson (1948), Hovland (1953,1954), Klapper (1960), Cox

(1961) Berelson and Steiner (1964), Halloran (1965), Belson (1967). Klapper (1960) pointed out that the effects of mass media, most frequently, take the form of reinforcement of existing attitudes and opinions. Hovland (1954) stated that the effects of mass media vary according to the prestige on evolutions attaching to the communication source.

In 1950-51, Daniel Lerner studied six Middle-Eastern countries namely Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. In these countries he saw the history of modernization as a process occurring in three phases. He said that urbanization, in which skills and resources, which characterize modern industrial economy, are developed first. Within this matrix, the development of the attributes of literacy and media growth comes next. In the third phase, institutions of participation get developed. (Jain Rashmi 2003: 39).

Holmberg (1960), opined that communication with the outside world is also desirable so that emulation of good things can take place. He pointed out that while radio, newspapers and films may play a leading role in the process of accelerated modernization, the establishment of regional newspapers and radio stations would be a major step forward. He also mentioned that face-to-face communication system could provide effective channels of communication in early stages.

Doob (1961) , studied the conditions at the birth of mass communication in Africa and the variables involved in understanding and using communication at that stage of development. His study was mainly concerned with the conditions, which exists due to the confrontation of new and old communication systems. On the one side is the potency of new media while on the other is the need to be aware of local culture and symbol systems in using the media.

Pye (1963), formulated three models of communications: traditional communication system, modern communication system and transitional communication system. He made a clear-cut distinction between these models at theoretical levels and discussed at a length the problems of transformation of traditional societies into modern one.

The contributions of Lerner (1964), Schramn (1964), and Roger (1962, 1969) have emphasized on the role of communication in development. Lerner saw lack of empathy as the

reason for slower transformation of traditional societies into modern societies. According to him, development fails to occur because peasants were unable to 'empathize or imaginatively identify with new roles and a changed and a better way of life, and so remained fatalistic, unambitious, and resistant to change. He explained that there is requirement of providing some means to such people so that they can think as what the better things in life might be. He saw the media as the means of filling this need and of promoting empathy which endows a person with capacity to imagine himself as proprietor of a bigger grocery store in a city, to wear nice cloths and live in a nice house, and to be interested in "what is going on in the world" etc.

Schramm (1964) speaks of communication and economy as the means of development process. He said that the development of mass media enable the people to get the necessary information and make them to participate in the national system. Rogers (1962) saw the diffusion of new ideas as a crucial component of modernization process. He pointed out that the main function of mass communication is to create awareness of a possible innovation among the audience, which leads to adoption and diffusion to other segments of the population.

A large number of empirical researches on communication appear to have been conducted in the Western countries particularly in the U.S.A. Read (1962), Bruce, et al (1964), Alferd Vogal (1967), Anderson (1980) conducted research in the field of upward and downward communication system in the industrial areas of the U.S.A. Moreover, American Management Association has conducted study on "Superior Subordinate Communication in Management". The contributors in this research study were Norman, R. Maier, Richard H. Hoffmon, John J. Hooven and William H. Read.

Golding (1974), expressed the theories of exogenously induced change relevant to media theory, and suggested that static societies are brought to life by outside influences, technical aid, knowledge, resources and financial assistance and by the diffusion of ideas.

Rogers et al (1981) recognized two types of information diffusion system in social context; the horizontal diffusion networks that flow between peers and vertical diffusion networks where the information flows from top to down. These different networks suit the

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movement of different type of information. Horizontal diffusion networks are especially useful for information exchange about innovations that serve local ends.

Narula and Pearce(1986), mentioned about the mass media and social change. She said that processes of social change are far from straight forward. She expressed that mass of the failure, frustrations and disappointment in the area of communication and development has resulted from an attachment to models of change that are too simple, too neat, to correspond to reality and too limited in their scope.

Rienseh and Lewis (1984) carried out a study on "Communication Apprehension as a Determinant of Channel Preference". The study revealed that the effects of communication apprehension on channel (face to face, telephone, written) choices were investigated in a population of 68 educators. Results indicated that various measures of communication apprehension, telephone apprehension, and writing apprehension can account for a small, significant percentage of the variance in channel performance.

Roger et al (1981) explained that the communication network hass a number of interconnected individuals who are linked by patterned information flows. Stork (1991) mentioned about the pattern of using communication as different groups may need different types of communications. She more emphasized on oral communication, as it is especially effective for the processing of complex information.

Andrews (1995) recommends regional communications planning that emphasize joint fact-finding, information sharing, and consensus building. Hibberd (1997) says that the most valuable information in a workplace comes from tips employees pick up in the course of their work.

Hellweg (1997) says that informal networks supplement formal networks and they are people oriented rather than issue oriented. Heterick and Kavanaugh (1999) reported that new information technologies offers great opportunity to enhance the delivery of needed information services to local populaces and to structurally empower populations that have been greatly unreserved in the information age.

Denise Grey-Felder (2003) emphasized that radio can be used as the mass media for its ability to give voice to local concerns. Radio can work as the first appropriate point of focus and can then be linked into national outlets.

One of the few effects of the new communication technology is the trend towards internationalization of mass communication. In recent years, there has been a shift in communication studies focusing on modern communication technologies particularly the Internet. Singhal and Rogers (2001) acknowledged the Internet as serving as an invaluable resource in researching, writing and illustrating. Elizabeth Alexander (2002) studied on impact of Internet in the lives of people of India. Sheehan (2002) examines online users to determine whether types of privacy concern online mirror the offline environment. She found that the vast majority of online users are pragmatic when it comes to privacy. She also revealed that persons with higher level of education are more concerned about their privacy online than persons with less education.

Livraghi and Monti (2002) examined the growth of Italian Internet use in International perspective. They show the relatively rapid growth on Italian Internet use in the late 1990's with data from 1996-2000, displayed in eight charts. They view Internet availability to be a critical infra structure for important social practices in advanced industrial societies.

Marc Boulay *et.al.* (2002), carried out a study in several villages in the Dung district of Nepal to examine the dispersion and strength of indirect exposure to mass media in relation to family planning (FP) campaigns. From this study they suggested that indirect exposure to a mass media campaign's messages can be extensive and the effect is substantial. They said that interpersonal communication can have a positive and reinforcing effect on mass media messages. They brought a conclusion that this study reinforces the need to view and develop communication campaigns as an integrated set of processes occurring at several levels.

Studies on Sociology of Communication in India

In India, the sociological research in the field of mass communication has begun to become popular in the late 50's and early 60's. Y.B. Damle's article entitled 'Communication of Modern Ideas: Knowledge in Indian villages' published in the Public Opinion Quarterly (1956-57) can be regarded as the first major work in the field of the sociology of communication in India. He carried out a research on the diffusion of modern ideas and knowledge in seven villages near Pune, Maharastra and revealed that it was not merely the distance from the city that facilitated or hindered communication of ideas and knowledge. He also found out that it was equally affected by the social structure of the community, which determined the qualitative and quantitative contents of communications. He came to the conclusion that information relevant to the needs and interest of the people is more widespread than awareness of less functioning matters.

Dube (1958) argued that the use of mass media in education, public health programmes, agriculture and others helps a lot to the Indian people. He cited that mass media generates a greater awareness of national issues and problems and promotes nationalism among the people by putting across the message of national integration.

Dube(1964), conducted a survey on the perception of the emergency after the Chinese attack. He observed that in a sample of 3,168 persons, 83.3 percent were aware of Chinese aggression. He also observed that even in states far removed from the area of conflict, the level of awareness was fairly high. The findings of the survey revealed that the traditional media, involving mostly face-to-face communication, disseminate all significant information on a fair wide scale.

Lakshmana Rao (1966), conducted a study in two villages in South India to find out the role of communication in national development. The findings of the study reveal that communication helps a person to find alternative ways of making a living, helps to raise the family's socio-economic status, broadens the entrepreneurial base, helps the people in changing from ascribed status to achieved status and also make the people aware of

governmental plans. He came to the conclusion that the development of communication is followed by the development in other areas.

Patel (1968) studied on the effectiveness of Radio as a medium of communication, and revealed that the respondents did not feel the necessity of listening to radio for information on family planning since the interpersonal communication serves their purpose.

Prodipto Roy et al (1969) conducted a comparative study of two countries – Costa Rica and India. The study was centered on how various channels of communication can bring about increase in knowledge and greater adoption of innovations in the rural setting. The findings of the study came to the conclusion that the overall use of mass media in diffusing innovations and knowledge can bring about desired changes.

Rao and Rao (1976) studied the village communication channels in three villages of Andhra Pradesh. They did survey on 209 farmers who were under the age of 50 years and having more than 2.5 acres of land. They considered three communication channels viz. urban contact, contact with extension agencies and exposure to mass media as dependent variable of the study. The findings of the study reveal that urban contact promoted contact with extension workers which in turn linked to exposure to mass media.

Agrawal (1978) suggests that television can play a contributory role in changing attitudes. He studied the effectiveness of differential exposure to television on Indian rural people and found the respondents who desired a small family increased but television did not increase the adoption of family planning methods.

George Gerbner (1984) studied the effects of daily television viewing on the political self-designations. The study has shown that those who watch more television are significantly more likely to call themselves moderates and avoid levels like liberals and conservatives.

Paul Hartmann et al. (1989), carefully documented the role of mass media on the lives of rural people in India.

Dube(1990) discussed the role of traditional media in the process of social change and development. He argued that communication can play a powerful role in nation building and

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development and contribute significantly to bring about social change in desired direction. He said that the traditional media, as have been the principal instruments for the transmission of cultural heritage and provider of entertainment, occupy an important place in Indian society in the form of dance, drama, narration etc., though modern education and the inroads made by the mass media have diminished their power. He also mentioned the importance of interpersonal communication in bringing change as " *transmission of new images and ideas through face to face communication and mass media can prepare a climate that is propitious for the acceleration of change in the desired direction".* He added that face-to-face communication carries a considerable volume of messages. (Dube 1990: 256-259).

Dharamvir (1990) carried out a study among urban locality of Uttar Pradesh to describe the role of mass media in determining political awareness , sense of political efficacy, and political participation among perspective voters and found the affective ness of mass media exposure to one's label of awareness and sense of efficacy. He also reported the negative effect as a result of higher exposure to mass media on political participation.

In a dissertation, Kakoli Bora (1994) opined that in Assam, 63 percent of rural population were radio listeners. Since the literacy rate of rural population of Assam is still very low, the AIR and Doordarshan have an important role in providing education as well as information.

Singh (1995) investigated the impact of Satellite Television on urban middle class youth in terms of shift in their relative exposure to other media of mass communication like radio, newspapers, magazines, cinema, VCR and national television network, the study was conducted in Bhopal city. He found a significant decrease in the frequency of radio listening and cinema going which is an indication of change on the media habits of middle class youth. However, radio now fulfills very specific needs of the urban middle class to audio-visual media has been tremendously increased in the recent past. But the advent of Satellite Television provided the scope of selecting a channel of one's own choice in his TV set. A free choice of channels of foreign and indigenous origin may have its own impact on the middle class of

India, as the programme of foreign origin have an edge over the endogenous programme of Doordarshan.

Dahiya (1997) analysed the role of communication as, "through the use of communication mankind has been able to record past history and transmit its culture from one generation to the next".

Madon and Sahay (2002) conducted a case study of Jana Sahayog, an NGO operating in the slums of Bangalore and employed an information initiative that Jana Sahayog has undertaken to open up channels of communication between citizens and the government. Jana Sahayog's experience offers valuable lesions for NGOs operating in other part of the world.

Khanka(2002) argued that in spite of much hoopla and hype, e-commerce could not take off so far in the North-East Region of India mainly due to the problems of infrastructure and digital illiteracy. Hence, it is imperative that the government takes all the steps to put require infrastructure in place in place and also create digital literacy in the North East Region to make e-commerce take place and succeed.

Singh (2004) argued that mobile phone is another medium, which has been adopted very widely by the Indian masses. It has great potential to break the bottlenecks of communication in remote areas as this is based on wireless technology. The number of cell users has crossed the number of fixed line subscribers for the first time in India. The most important feature of the cell phone users is that it has not only adopted by the urban elites but also by the self employed artisans such as carpenters, blacksmiths, petty businessmen etc. He also cited that new media technologies will have a great impact on the socio-cultural life of this section of society by integrating them in the wider process of globalization in the coming years.

Mishra (2005) analyzed the pattern of development communication and social change of Baiga Tribes in Madhya pradesh. He pointed out that Channels of communication for development and inflow of information are still going through interpersonal communication rather than institutionalized set up made for this purpose.

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Singh, (2006) studied the social background and patterns of using Internet covering 50 Internet users through purposive sampling from Ramnagar area of Silchar town of Assam. From this study he found that the Internet has become popular in small towns as well and attracted mainly the youths. He pointed out that Internet users are multilingual and highly educated and have solid social background in the sense that majority of the Internet users are educated people having high level of mass media exposure. His study also revealed the reduction of time in watching T.V. among the youths as the impact of Internet on daily life but has no much impact on other spheres of routine life.

Pandey (2006) analyzed that traditional media have played a very important role in solving several emotional problems and channelizing the destructive forces into constructive ones. In India, music, dance, and drama have always played an important role in combating destructive elements and in harmonizing emotional outbursts relating to caste, creed, religion, and language issues. He also pointed out that modern communication technologies such as amplifiers, VCD players, and tape recorders are found to be integrated in the ritualistic occasions both in rural and urban areas. With the integration of these form of technologies the traditional form communication have become more effective and attract the people, particularly youths to participate in these activities. However, in urban situation, modern mass media are playing more dominant role in socio-cultural life of the people.

Subramanyam and Rama Mohan (2006) pointed out that cultural anthropologists are trying to examine the levels of development and change in the lives of different human groups due to acculturation, innovation and diffusion of new ideas through the process of communication. They conducted a study on role of mass media in tribal lives of Visakha Agency area of Andhra Pradesh. The findings of the study reveal that the role of mass media in Tribal Development process has been very low. Only those tribes who reside near by mandal headquarter area are access to modern mass media and majority of the tribes are still ignorant about the government development programmes because of the lack of information and proper

motivation. They pointed out that the film media has mach effect on the life of the tribal people of these areas when compared to other modern media items.

The development of new communication technologies has affected the socio-cultural life of the Indian people. According to Singh (2006), recent advancement in the communication technologies have affected the functioning of cultural industry in India and are shaping the style of life of people.

From the foregoing review of literature it is clear that mass media plays an important role in bringing socio-cultural changes and to understand the pattern of changes taking place in a society with the advancement of modern communication technologies. It is required to understand the pattern of use of traditional as well modern mass media. Moreover, no such study has been conducted to understand the village communication system and socio-cultural changes taking place in the Manipuri society of South Assam. Therefore, it proposes to carry out a comparative study of village communication system in order to understand the processes of social change in two distinct Manipuri villages: one traditional and the other transitional representing two different types of communication systems (Pye 1963).

Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the pattern of using modern mass media in Manipuri villages.

2. To understand the pattern of traditional communication system in Manipuri villages.

3. To study the socio-cultural changes brought about by the modern media in Manipuri Society.

Methodology

  The study is located in two distinct Manipuri villages of Cachar district of Assam namely, "Jarultola" (a traditional typical village) and "Chandpur" (a transitional typical village). The rationale of selecting these two villages is that the Jarultola is located in an isolated reserve forest having poor road communication system and having poor access of modern mass media like Newspaper, Telephone, and Television etc. Most of traditional media are still practiced in this village. The village is located under Dholai constituency at about 35 kms away from the district head quarter, Silchar and surrounded by reserved forests. Other modern mass media are yet to reach the village. In regards to educational facilities, there are four Lower Primay schools in the village but other educational institutions are located far away: one multipurpose school is located at a distance of 10km and one middle school at about 1.5 km.

  On the other hand, the village "Chandpur" is having access to all modern mass media. This village is located under Sonai constituency at about 22 km from district head quarter, Silchar. The village has all the educational facilities. There are two Lower Primay schools, two Middle Schools and One High School in the village. Moreover, there are two colleges located near the village. The village also has a market having PCO, DTP Center etc. The literacy rate of this village is quite high and people are much exposed to the modern mass media. Hence the selection of these two distinct villages will provide better understanding of the impact of both the traditional and modern mass media in Manipuri villages and the processes of social changes taking place in Manipuri society of South Assam.

Technique of Data Collection:

  The data is collected by using a highly structured household interview schedule for each of the two villages. For collecting data about traditional media both participant observation and interview schedule technique are used. The study covered both individual and

institution/organization related to both traditional and modern communication system in these two villages.

Variables of the study

The variable of the study are as follows:

Social background

The social background of the respondents will be studied in terms of their age groups, sex, occupation, education and marital status of the respondents and of their family members, pattern of household consumption and land ownership, health and sanitation and religious life.

Traditional Mass media

For understanding the pattern of using traditional media, variable of the study will include pattern of inter personal communication or pattern of message passing, bazaar, lai-harauba (festivity of Gods), cheirauba(vaishakhi shankranti), yaushang(dol-jatra), Kang chingba(ratha –jatra), ningol chak-kauba(bhatri-ditiya), Hiyang tanaba (boat –race),jhulan jatra, diwali,krishna janmastami,Radhaastami, sumang lila,khubaishei,khonjom parva,Thabal chongba, Raas-lila, kang shanaba, likol shanaba, mukna kangjei shanaba,and durga puja.

Modern mass media

For understanding the pattern of using modern mass media, variable of the study will include letter sent/ received by post in a week/month, radio (programs listen, frequency of radio listening, ownership), television (programs watched, time spend on watching television, ownership, channels watched, place of watching), cinema (frequency of cinema going, types of film preferred, language of the film), VCD player, DVD player, newspaper (number of newspaper read, language of newspaper read, time spent on newspaper reading, sections of the newspaper read, subscription of newspaper) magazine(type of the magazine, language of the magazine),number of member using mobile phone in a household, number of sms received or sent in a day/week, number of call received in a day/week, facility of telephone, duration of using mobile/telephone, average bill of mobile/land line telephone in last six month, purpose of using mobile, impact of mobile/ telephone on their communication patterns with their family

members, relatives, neighbors, workmates, and other persons, number of members having access to computer and internet in a household, number of visit to internet café in a week/month.