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<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Anwar Bey</td>
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The Role Of Mass Media In Educating The People
In The Process Of General Election In Republic of Indonesia

By

Anwar Bey
The period of 1950-1957 was the time of liberalism within the party system of the community, the press and the government of Indonesia. At that time the press or mass media was mainly controlled or owned by the parties, thus were always obeying the parties' interest.

Even the government at that time was based on liberalism, meaning it was a liberal government, where the Executive side was responsible to Parliament. Whereas the Parliament itself was controlled by the big parties, which in 1955-1956 came up as winners in the liberal system of general election.

The rise and the fall of a government (administration) at that time was strongly decided by the huge parties' interest in Parliament. So generally, during the time of liberal system, averagely there was not a single Government of the Republic of Indonesia that could reach one year time, it was only around 7 months.

General Election in 1955 for DPR RI (House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia) was won by 4 parties, i.e. PNI (Indonesian National Party), Masyumi or Majelis Asyura Indonesia (Indonesian Asyura Assembly), NU or Nahdlatul Ulama' and PKI (Indonesian Communist Party).

And based on the result of General Election in 1955, Bung Karno wanted the forming of a Four Party Government, or with a popular term at that time as "Kabinet Empat Kaki" or Four Leg Cabinet. However many smaller parties, including PSI or Indonesian Socialist Party opposed to Bung Karno's idea. Even the big party, Masyumi itself resisted the idea.

ABRI or the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia was also against the setting up of Four Leg Cabinet, since in that way, it meant Bung Karno gave a chance or gave a way to PKI to increase its influence in Indonesia, which later on could head towards a rebellion, which was proven by the communists with their abortive coup on September 30, 1965.

At that time too, the "Konstituante", a sort of People's Deliberatives Assembly, did not succeed in creating a Constitution to replace the Provisional Constitution 1950, during its protracted sessions in Bandung. The "Konstituante", resulted by 1956 General Election was finally dissolved based on the
Presidential Decree, followed by the return of Indonesia to 1945 Constitution.

The system of guided democracy, with "Nasakom" (Nationalism, religion, communism) as the nucleus in the end was not successful either, because it was controversial to Pancasila as the State's principle since 1945, and Constitution.

In 1965, there was a one-scene drama, played by Bung Karno and PKI, reaching its peak with the abortive coup of G30S/PKI or September 30 Movement/PKI. The drama ended, as ABRI and the people succeeded in crushing the rebellion, followed by the dissolving and the banning of PKI from our country.

The press during the guided democracy period was also the press that gave full support to the government. However not all the elements of the Indonesian press gave up to the communist terrorism. The greater part of the press even opposed to PKI and set up a body called BPS or Sukarnoism Supporting Body. But, not long after that, BPS was also dissolved by Bung Karno, based on the instigation and slander launched by PKI.

After PKI's rebellion was crushed in 1965, Indonesia's mass media returned back to the system of Pancasila Press, i.e. free and responsible press. It was during the New Order under the leadership of President Suharto, the press could be re-ordered, then they were no more the voice of the political parties and the political organizations, but they became the press that voiced Pancasila Democracy, and became free and responsible.

And how about the role of the press during general elections, that have been held 4 times, in the period of New Order where Golkar, or the functional Group always came up as the winner in collecting majority votes? The period of New Order (1962 up to and including now), that is during the Suharto administration, who was elected as President by MPR or People's Deliberatives Assembly, was and is extremely positive. During general elections, mass media did not just cover the process of general elections, but also educate the people to use their right as Indonesian citizens, who were free to determine their own choice.

The press covered everything in a balanced way in line with rules of Pancasila Press, i.e. mass media should not take any side of whatever socio-political force. Cover-both sides had become the guidelines of mass media during the New Order Government. The Press was not anymore carried away by general elections' issues, by
launching news that were slandering certain contestants or candidates. On the contrary the press informed the people about objective, informative and educative facts, to be used by either the voters or the social-political powers in campaigning, and also for the government as very important inputs.

It is this which is called as positive inter-action between the press, the government and the community, where the press has played the role as a bridge that connect the interest of the people and the government as well. On the other hand the press also funnels the government’s information that need to be known by the Indonesian people during the time of national development based on GBHN (Broad Lines of the State’s Course), to develop intact Indonesian humans, heading towards spiritually and physically, worldly or ecclesiastically (ukhrowi) just and prosperous community. The Indonesian press also becomes stimulating power for modernization.

Every country has its own press system. And we do not say, that it is our press system that is the best in the world. But we have experienced liberal and authoritarian press systems. Now the Indonesian press is based on Pancasila Democracy, that is a free and responsible press.
Press' role in educating the people to participate in national decision making

What national decisions that need to be supported by the people? They are among other things general elections and the law and justice upholding for the sake of the entire people.

General elections constitute a democratic means to channel the people's aspirations; that should be given attention by the executives who are managing/implementing the administration. The Government, after the completion of the process of general elections is a government resulted by the people's choice (votes which should carry out national general development programme for the people's prosperity, entirely, not just for the interest of a group or a handful of people.

In Indonesia, general elections are carried out once in five years. The latest one took place in 1987/1988 to elect the members of MPR or the People's Deliberatives Assembly. In Article I of 1945 Constitution, the Form and the Sovereignty are mentioned in Chapter 1 as follows:(1) The State of Indonesia is a Union State in the form of Republic. (2) Sovereignty is in the hands of the people, and is fully carried out by the People's Deliberatives Assembly- MPR. The President and the Vice President are elected by the People's Deliberatives Assembly with majority votes (Article III about the Government's Authority : Chapter 6 paragraph ?.)

In educating the people to implement their right in General Elections and before General Elections as the process in voting the people's representatives, the role of mass media is extremely dominant, apart from that of the campaigners of the parties which fight in General Elections to obtain the biggest possible number of seats in Parliament. Mass media is free to give response or analysis on every phenomenon in General Elections. Either concerning the programmes of the parties and Golkar (Functional Group) and for the candidates proposed by each political party and Golkar as well, so that they are voted by the people.

Indeed in Indonesia, voting is done by pinning picture-signs. And it is in this case too, mass media's role is extremely prominent. Because without information and participation of mass media, many would-be voters would not know exactly about the general elections' system. Although the main information is given
by the Government through the General Elections Institute (IPU) in which the representatives of the Government, the political parties and Golkar sit with balanced and democratic voice.

The people's participation through the contribution of mass media in educating the people is extremely decisive for any state following general elections' democracy anywhere in the world. Because without mass media participation, certainly the people's participation will never be channeled very well, which is based on Indonesia's general elections' principle, popularly abbreviated as "Luber" or direct, publicly, free and secret, meaning without any middlemen. At the time when the people vote, they do it directly without being influenced by anyone else. It is here democracy is lying, which is really going on in my country, which is based on Pancasila philosophy, which presently is obviously more superior than Western philosophy of liberal democracy or socialist/communist system in East Europe.

It is this matter that is intended as the direct people's participation in national decision making, i.e. general elections, election for the People's Deliberative Assembly and the election for the President and the Vice President in a democratic way. Every decision made by MPR as the Highest State Institution reflects the decision/aspiration of the people, because MPR represents or as the materialisation of the people's voice in general elections. These are the specific characteristics of democracy, which basically is none other than the people's voice, represented by MPR which is established by the people themselves through democratic general elections.
INFORMATION AND MASS MEDIA

The Guidelines of State Policy among other things state that to succeed in the national development, information activities and the role of the mass media need to be enhanced. In this scheme, information and the mass media serve to arouse the spirit of devotion and struggle of the nation, to strengthen national unity and integrity, to popularise the Indonesian culture and identity, and also to encourage the participation of the community in development activities. Information and the mass media, as national development means, should be able to fortify Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution in all aspects of community life, and to enhance the national awareness of the entire Indonesian people. In this context the role of information and the mass media to socialise the Guide for the Comprehension and Practical Application of Pancasila (P4 – Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila), needs to be intensified.

The activities of Foreign Information Services are aimed at increasing the volume and quality of information materials through inter-governmental co-operation.

Information policies are emphasised on the equitable spread of information to cover the remotest places through the information and communication media like face-to-face communications, exhibitions, socio-dramas, radio, television, films, the implementation of the programme of the circulation of "newspapers in villages" and through other available media such as the Public Information Centres. In this context, attention is given to border, rural areas and transmigration sites.

The role played by the Indonesian Press is in disseminating objective information, exerting constructive social control, channeling people's aspirations, bridging communication gaps between the Government and the public at large and mobilising the community's participation in the process of nation building.

The Press in Indonesia is a free-and-responsible press based on Pancasila. This national Press has now grown toward a stage where it has gained weight and importance in its role in the midst of the nation's life.

To develop the Press, the Government has taken the following steps:

a. A harmonious relation between the Press, the Government and the community will be enhanced.

b. In securing the right of the community to get information and to convey messages and information, information services for the community will be improved.

c. In the context of the equitable distribution of information through the Press, newspapers/magazines, their circulation will be increased.

d. The quality of the editorial staff and the press management will be promoted through various education and trainings.

e. The programme of Newspapers Circulation in Villages will also be continued.

f. Development policies, legislations and cabinet decisions, will be disseminated.
The role of news agencies will be further improved. The objectives of this association are among other things to safeguard and develop the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia to defend and uphold the freedom of the press which is based on Pancasila and the 194 Constitution.

Indonesian journalists in carrying out their work, are holding to the principles of a free-and-responsible Press and the 1968 Code of Ethics for Journalists. The Indonesian Journalists' Association (Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia – PWI) is a member of the Asian African Journalists Association established in 1955, and also of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists set up in March 1975.

The Press Council which was set up in 1967 constitutes the link between the free press and the Government. The council is to see to it that on the one hand the free press is not to abuse Indonesia's national interest while on the other, the Government is to assist the free press in developing its quality and technical know-how.

The National News Agency of Indonesia is ANTARA. It was founded by Mr. Adam Malik, Mr. Pandoe Kartawiguna, Mr. Soemanang and Mr. Albert M. Sipahoe in 1937 and has its local offices in all 27 provinces of Indonesia and 3 agencies abroad namely in Hamburg, Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo. 2 other principal news agencies besides Antara are the PAB (Armed Forces News Agency) and the Independent KNI (National News Agency).

In the framework of the operation of the integrated information in regions, various upgradings and workshops have been carried out in the provinces. In 1986/87, activities in the form of upgradings and workshops had been held 27 times covering themes of population and family planning, General Election and the General Session of the People's Consultative Assembly, the role of village women in development, preventive and eradication of drug abuse, employment, compulsory education programme, popularising of domestic products, the people's awareness to pay taxes and so on.

There are several development exhibitions continuously organised in Indonesia, namely: (1) Development Exhibition in the framework of the National Re-awakening Day on May 20, held in the capital city of Jakarta; (2) Development Exhibition in the framework of the Independence Day on August 17, held in all provinces; (3) Development Exhibition in the framework of the Pancasila Sanctity Day on October 1, held in all districts and municipalities; (4) Mobile Exhibitions are provided in all sub-districts.

Efforts for foreign information services are directed to increase the volume and to improve the quality of information materials in cooperation with other governmental departments. In 1986/87, 25,000 copies of publications in the English, French and Arabic editions had been issued. Other information materials such as photos, films and video cassettes are also provided.

In support of the information activities in the regions during 1986/87, 390 copies of development information films and a number of video cassettes.
slides and other equipment for audio-visual information had been produced.

In the framework of the development of information activities in regions, up to 1986/87, 48 buildings of the Public Information Centres had been rehabilitated. The number of the Public Information Centres throughout Indonesia is 275 or 90% of the whole number of districts and municipalities in the country.

In the context of the equitable distribution of information to villages 54,000 public television sets have been placed in village areas within the reach of the Indonesia's Television telecast.

In the meantime, the rural press programme, popularly called "Koran Masuk Desa" (KMD) — Newspapers Circulating in Villages — and "Surat Kabar Untuk Desa (SKUD) — Newspapers for Villages — is being introduced and encouraged by the Government. In 1986/87, the total number of newspapers reached 10,000,000 copies or compared to that in the previous year showed an increase of 1,411,000 copies.

The circulation of press publications in 1986/87 reached 7,879,966 copies for each issuance, of which 2,732,898 copies were of daily newspapers, 58,200 copies of newspapers published thrice a week, 143,250 copies of newspapers published twice a week, 2,133,401 copies of weekly newspapers and 14,000 copies of bi-weekly newspapers.

The use of newsprint for national press publications in 1986/87 stood at 123,626,484 kg comprising 104,484,960 kg of roll newsprint, 6,916,632 kg of sheet newsprint, 3,007,896 kg of mechanical paper and 9,219,996 kg of other types of paper.

Press publication companies operating in Indonesia in 1986/87 were registered at 252 units. These units operated with 3,263 newsmen and 12,392 non-journalist personnel.

Several Indonesia's newspapers are among others: Kompas, Merdeka, Neraca, Suara Karya, Suara Pembaruan, the English edition Jakarta Post, the Indonesia Times, and Indonesian Observer (Jakarta), Waspada, Analisa, Suara Indonesia Baru (North Sumatra); Haluan, Singgalang (West Sumatra), Pikiran Rakyat (West Java); Suara Merdeka (Central Java), Kedaulatan Rakyat (Yogyakarta); Jawa Post and Surabaya Post (East Java); Banjarmasin Post (South Kalimantan); Pedoman Rakyat (South Sulawesi); Bali Post (Bali); Manado Post, Cahaya Siang (North Sulawesi).

There are several magazines in the country comprising News magazines: Editor, Jakarta-Jakarta, Tempo; general magazines: Intisari, Warnasari; female magazines: Femina, Gadis, Kartini, Sarinah; male magazines: Matra; literature magazine: Horison; science magazines: Prisma, Teknologi; health magazines: Sartika, Hygiena; tourism magazines: Suasana, and Rona.

The state-owned "Radio Republic Indonesia" (RRI) is the largest radio network in the country. It was founded on the 11th of September 1945, only within one month following the proclamation of independence
Whereas the Department of Information was established on August 19, 1945 or two days after the Independence Proclamation.

The policy pursued by the Indonesian Radio Services (RRI) is directed to the improvement of the broadcasting quality and is still steadily oriented to rural communities, particularly to upgrade the quality of the Groups of the Rural Broadcasting Listeners, which constitute a part of the Groups of Listeners, Viewers and Readers. The total number of the Groups of Listeners, Viewers and Readers rose from 43,340 in 1985/86 to 54,000 in 1986/87. The groups concerned have a vitally important role to play in the overall information strategy of the nation, which aims at creating equity and a balanced flow of information, while fully committed to the cause of developing the intellectual life of the people. In addition, it is also designed to improve the general comprehension of the rural media audience and at the same time, to get a feedback which could give indications of the audience’s wishes and their real needs.

Up to 1986/87, RRI has 49 broadcasting stations consisting of five “Nusantara” co-ordinating stations located in the cities of Medan (Sumatra), Yogyakarta (Java), Banjarmasin (Kalimantan), Ujungpandang (Sulawesi) and Jayapura in Irian Jaya, next to the 27 stations in the provinces and 17 stations in the districts.

The Overseas Radio Service of RRI broadcasts 11.5 hours daily consisting of Japanese, Thai, German, Spanish, the English, French, Arabic, Chinese and Malay language broadcast.

The number of transmitters of RRI up to 1986/87 was 324 powered with 2,998.9 kw transmitters. The average hour of the national broadcasting services is 69 hours per day. RRI also had provided 468,547 technical cassette recordings pursuant to the information on agriculture, mass guidance, cooperatives, health, family planning and environment.

As of September 11, 1983, 36 of 49 RRI broadcasting stations have launched a 24-hour broadcasting programme.

Educational broadcasting by RRI which started in 1969 in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Semarang has been extended with educational programmes directed to Junior High Schools which later on was followed suit by 5 additional radio stations in Tanjungkarang (Sumatra), Cirebon, Tegal, Jember (Java) and Mataram/Lombok (West Nusatenggara) based on the pattern of open schools. As of December 1984, RRI and TVRI also transmit programmes of the Open University.

Whereas broadcasting on Family Planning and the role of women in Development is continuously held.

Co-operation in the field of broadcasting between RRI and TVRI with overseas broadcasting organisations, particularly those from ASEAN countries, in 1985/86 continued such as the exchange of cultural programmes such as the “Pilihan Pendengar” (Listeners’ Selection) and “Berbalas Pantun” (Quatrain Responses) between Indonesia and Malaysia, Indonesia also cooperates with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Broadcasting Organisation of Non-Aligned Countries (BONAC), the ASEAN Committee
on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI), the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and with foreign broadcasting companies such as RTM (Malaysia), NHK (Japan), SBC (Singapore), and BBC (London).

"Televisi Republik Indonesia" (TVRI) the state-owned television service was introduced in 1962 and came into full operation as of the 17th of August 1962. Development of television as a medium of information, education and entertainment, besides its part in mobilising development activities in all sectors, has been directed to extend its transmission radius.

The number of television transmitters grew from 204 in 1965/66 to 236 in 1986/87. Transmitters have been placed in various provinces and are able to reach the population at the border areas, transmigration settlements and remote places.

The fast development in the construction of TV Transmitting stations outside Java was made possible with the existence of the Domestic Satellite Communication System (SKSD). National television programmes can now be viewed in all the capitals of Indonesia's 27 provinces as well as in almost all district capitals. And now, according to the Decision of the Information Minister dated August 20, 1966, the people may use parabola antennas in their houses. In case of using it as a distribution system they should have the permission from the Department of Information and the Department of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications.

In an effort to evenly spread information through the country, particularly to the villages, the Indonesian Government has since 1962 made efforts to expand its TV broadcasting network by placing 10 mobile units in 11 provinces, namely Aceh, West Sumatra, West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, Maluku, East Nusatenggara, Central Java and West Java, while East Java and Bali received only one mobile unit.

Meanwhile, development in the production of television programme was stepped up and produced in the following 10 television stations namely Medan, Palembang, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, Balikpapan, Ujungpandang, Manado and Bandung.

A total of 115.00 million people in 1986/87 were able to watch television programmes and 6,393,399 TV sets had been registered. To spread information evenly to the rural areas, in 1986, 54,000 public TV sets were placed in the villages within the reach of TVRI telecast.

The programme of TVRI national broadcasting service is on the air for about 8 hours per day while the regional broadcasting services as a complement programme, is on the air for an average of 2 hours per day.

Besides news, programmes of education, religion and entertainment, TVRI also provides some programme packages such as village broadcasting service, sport, development fragments among other things on women in development. Guidance on law, population and environment, co-operatives, tourism, taxation, economy development, Indonesia's serial films such as "Losmen" (Hostel), ACI - Aku Cinta Indonesia (I Love Indonesia), "Pondokan" (Lodging), serial films for children "Si Unyil" and films on Indonesia's struggle and history.
Since January 1, 1983, a programme in English has been introduced from 18:30 to 19:00 P.M. Western Indonesia Time daily on channel eight which could only be viewed by viewers in Jakarta and its surroundings. Besides, the Denpasar TVRI station has carried out the English news programme as of August 24, 1986.

The total number of the TVRI broadcasting hours in 1986/87 was 26,674. The comparison of domestic products programmes and foreign products was 80% and 20%. Meanwhile the division in percentage of TVRI broadcasting programmes in 1986/87 was as follows: 28% of the programmes consisted of news and information; 26% of education and religion; 44% entertainment, arts and culture; 2% other subjects.

The development and improvement of films and video recordings in Indonesia is directed to increase the quality and quantity of the national film production, and to smooth their domestic and overseas marketing.

Efforts are continuously made to improve the national film production and to up-grade the skill of film crews. During 1986/87, 58 film titles were produced by National Film Companies including those produced by the State Film Production Centre (PFPN – Pusat Produksi Film Negara).

In addition, the production of films is directed to educate the younger generation to be more aware of the national struggle of the Indonesian Nation with the production of heroic feature films. There were 94 information films that had been produced in 1986/87, with titles such as “Jenderal Sudirman” (animation film) “To Preserve the Environment” (puppet film), Films on history film strips, Documentary Films such as the Trisula Mopping-up Operation in South Buitar, the Indonesian Communist Rebellion in Madiun, the 1987 General Election and the serial puppet films, “Si Unyil”.

Video tapes and video discs which do not differ much from films in their role as mass media may exert positive as well as negative influence upon the way of life and culture of the society and nation.

For this purpose, the Government has enacted Presidential Decision No. 13 of 1983 concerning the guidance for video cassette recordings, the essence of which is to control the imports of video cassette recordings, the production and reproduction of video cassette recordings.

Furthermore, the afore-mentioned guidance is also aimed at enhancing the capability of Indonesia’s national production of video cassette recordings and doing by so reducing the imports of video cassette recordings.

In order to overcome negative influence of video cassette recording, the Government has taken the necessary steps such as: selective censorship, repressive action towards the illegal influx of video cassettes be it by individuals or by organised bodies.

There are three companies in charge of the reproduction of video cassette recordings, namely TVRI, the State Film Production Centre (PFPN) and the Lokaananta State-owned Recording Company.
Multi Media Training Centre

In accordance with the development of technology in communication, the Department of Information established an integrated Multi Media Training Centre in Yogyakarta, which is aimed at improving the capability of the software in handling electronic media equipment of RRI and TVRI and the State Film Production Centre.

In 1986/87, MMTC had conducted training and education for Masters degrees on the techniques of Radio, Television and Film participated by 40 students.

National Information Centre

To provide instant information on national development efforts, the Department of Information has on May 20, 1983, set up a National Information Centre (PIN – Pusat Informasi Nasional).

By quenching the people's thirst of information, the centre is expected to help develop an information-oriented community. PIN is to collect, edit and disseminate information materials making it to become the Information Department's front porch while in first level regions it serves as the front porch of regional Information Services in the provinces.

Islamic Village College Information Centre

The Islamic Village College (Pondok Pesantren) constitutes an Islamic educational, social and cultural centre. In order to broaden the horizon of its students Islamic Village Colleges have requested the Government to set-up information centres in their campuses. For this purpose, the Government has supplied technical books, brochures, magazines, other printed materials, public television sets and radio cassette recorders. Face-to-face communications in the form of lectures and discussions are conducted regularly.

In the frame of supporting the development in transmigration areas, the Government established transmigration information centres in every transmigration areas. These centres are equipped with technical books and other printed materials. For this purpose the Government appoints information officers which have obtained special skills.

Transmigration Information Centre

The PRO Co-ordinating Body co-ordinates various information officers of Government Departments as well as non-departmental institutions with the purpose of assisting the Government to smooth communications between the Government and the community and thereby smooth the co-ordination between the Government and the people. This PRO Co-ordinating Body has so far proved its efficiency in the districts by passing on information education and technical know-how on various problems to the rural community. This was made possible by the integration within this body of extension workers from different disciplines and professionals of various Government services. PRO Co-ordinating Bodies have been set upon gradually in the district areas and towns.

Public Relations Officers

Policies pursued by the Department of Information in the framework of development information and information development as operated through its information mechanism are directed to the rural community without
diminishing urban information activities. One of the means to realise these policies is the establishment of Public Information Centres. The operational tasks of these Centres are:

- to disseminate various types of development information to be further disseminated by Sub-district Information Officers to village communities;
- to disseminate Central Government as well Regional Government's development information by using vernacular means of communication easily to be digested by the village community;
- to collect rural communities opinions and aspirations to be communicated as feedbacks to the executives of departments of both regional and central level.

To establish a two-way communication system with the community mobile show stages were provided to every town so that information on development can be extended to the community through various means such as socio-dramas, art festivals and exhibitions.

In support of the operation, the Department of Information use some social organisations such as Village Development Councils (Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa), Groups of Radio Listeners, TV Viewers, Newspaper Readers and Farmers, and Non-Governmental Broadcasting services Youth Centres, Family Welfare Movements, Programme on Enhancing the Role of Women in Fostering a Healthy and Prosperous Family, Religious Centres, Scout Movements, Indonesian Volunteers organisations etc. Other efforts to step up the equal flow of information to reach the audience target who mostly live in villages were also made. The cultural traditional media have also potential means to contribute in these endeavours. There are about 35 types of popular cultural traditional media in Indonesia.

The number of Public Information Centres throughout the country rose from 89 at the end of the Second Development Plan period (1978/79) to 275 units in 1986/87.

The Listeners' Viewers' and Readers' Group

The purpose of the setting-up of this (LVR) Group was to develop the listening, television viewing and reading habits among members of village communities through the broadcasting programmes of RRI and TVRI, and the rural press programme, called Newspapers Circulating in Villages and Newspapers for Villages.

With the introduction of the "Palapa" communication satellite in Indonesia in 1976, the coverage of the electronic media, both radio and television has been greatly enhanced. By now, radio coverage reaches 80% and TV reaches more than 65% of Indonesia's population. There are 54,000 LV Groups throughout Indonesia.