

This document is downloaded from DR-NTU, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore.

Title	AMIC-SIDA Seminar on the Role of the Media in a National Crisis : Colombo, May 15-17, 1991 : [workshop report]
Author(s)	
Citation	
Date	1991
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10220/1705
Rights	

Workshop Report

ROLE OF MEDIA

1. The media as the term suggests are the means by which society keeps itself informed and aware of its environment.
2. The media must perform its role truthfully, objectively and comprehensibly to enable the society to be fully informed of affairs and events, thus contributing to understanding, peace and harmony among people and countries.
3. Media are part of the milieu in which they operate. Therefore, the media professionals are exposed to pressures stemming from requirements of crisis management and crisis resolution.
4. However, the role of the media is to act responsibly without bias or fears.
5. The media should be aware that their credibility is often in question during this situation and should take steps to ensure it.

Strategies for media in a National Crisis

The meeting elected Mr Mahindapala as Chairman of the group.

1. Definition

A crisis is a series of events that create disruption of balance in a society to challenge the capabilities of the system and necessitates other than normal procedures to establish an equilibrium. The media need to be vigilant and sensitive to all types of vibrations in society and should help in anticipating and identifying crisis system. The term refers to national crisis in social, economic, political and environmental fields.

2. While fulfilling this function, the media should take care that they do not become a precipitative element.
3. Every effort should be made by media proprietors and practitioners to maintain and promote a holistic approach towards improving and enhancing knowledge capacity of all training institutions, and media professionals.
4. There is need for legalising the right of the media having access to information, withholding of information can lead

to aggravation of crises. The media must exercise care that their access to information is used in the public interest and without discriminating against any section of society.

5. State control over and intervention in media is not desirable as it acts as a counter-productive factor. In situations of grave national crisis, the need to exercise to this is important. Any temporary restrictions if unavoidable is to be in consultation with the media.
6. Various social and political groups may use the media as sources of information, as indicators of reactions of the public to events, and as a device for creating awareness, defining problems. Media performance in times of crisis may tend to become part of the controversy. Media need to be vigilant and sensitive to these developments in the interest of the public.
7. In times of national crisis, where there is plurality and diversity in social power, news media need to reflect the viewpoint of all segments of society.
8. Maximum organisational support should be given to media practitioners to cover national, regional and international crisis which would result in better perception of the crisis and help in their resolution.

In pursuance of this, it is imperative that working conditions of the media personnel be improved.

9. Maintaining professional principle standards and integrity are cardinal features of media performance and are vital in all crises.
10. It is important that regional co-operation in the fields of mass communication and media should be co-ordinated, promoted and developed for a greater understanding among the people of the region leading to a better appreciation and awareness of the national and regional crisis. To achieve this, all barriers that limit and impede inter-country linkages among media and media practitioners should be removed.
11. In accordance with the Male declaration to promote regional understanding, it is necessary to initiate an exchange of newspapers, periodicals, videos and magazines to facilitate exchange of news. This may be implemented, i.a., by adopting a concessionary flat rate of exchange of news persons and easing restrictions on travel of media professionals in the region and developing media training networks.

12. A review of the existing curriculum for the training of journalists with a view of enhancing their professional skills and standards should be undertaken. This review should also improve teaching facilities.
13. A SAARC organisation of media professionals be established as an instrument of promoting professional relations to achieve better understanding for the resolution of crisis within the region.
14. The media in the region, as a professional community, should promote regional harmony, peace and preservation of human rights.
15. The media should increase their interaction with other professions and segments of society.

The following were the members of the group:

1. Mr H L D Mahindapala Chairman
2. Mr Javed Jabbar
3. Mr Abdur Rahim
4. Mr Syed Malbach Alan Chandh
5. Ms Prabha Thacker
6. Mr Rajib Upadhya
7. Mr K S Sivakumaran
8. Mr Gamini Vijaytunge
