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Seminar on Media and Human Rights
November 24-26, 1999
Bangkok, Thailand

PROGRAMME
As a research center, AMIC initiates and organizes research projects that contribute to a better understanding of the role of communication in Asian societies. Some of these are:
- Culture and Identity: ethnic Co-Existence in Asia
- The Emerging Culture of Transborder Broadcasting in Asia
- Children in the News: A Study of the Portrayal of Children in the Media
- A comparative Analysis of Telecommunication Policies in Western Europe and South East Asia
- Survey of TV and Video Penetration in Rural Asia

AMIC Seminars & Conferences
As a center for institutional development, AMIC organizes conferences, seminars and workshops on current issues in the field of print, radio and television broadcasting, film, satellite communications and new media. Some of these focus on:
- The Impact of the Multimedia Environment on News papers and Magazines
- Press Freedom and Professional Standards in Asia
- Asian Communications: The next 25 Years
- New Media and Learning Technologies
- Economic Affairs Reporting on TV
- Radio Programming in the Multimedia Age
- Editorial Management for Senior Women Journalists
- Environmental Television Programmes for Children
- Media and Good Governance
- TV Content: The Asian Way
- Media Regulations in New Times
The impact of the recent financial crisis and deepening poverty in Asia have both predicted and unforeseen consequences in terms of human rights. Macro-economic policies, food shortfalls, continuing community-related violence and abuses linked to a conflict and civil strife are but a few of these consequences. The rural poor in the region are most vulnerable. They are powerless to safeguard and pursue their human rights due to poverty, exploitation and remoteness. Many have neither knowledge nor awareness of their legal rights. Access to legal remedies is hard to come by, thus their difficulty to protect their rights.

Mass media have a critical role to play in addressing human rights issues that affect the rural poor. It is a difficult role in the context of the Asian concept of human rights of seeking a correct balance between the right of the individual to exercise his free will and the good of the community. By gathering, analyzing and transmitting information using text and audio-visuals, mass media can assist in safeguarding their human rights, educating them about these rights, reporting violations and facilitating legal remedies, and assisting the rural poor assert their human rights.

UNESCO has recognized this vital link between media and human rights in its Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. The UN-affiliated agency declared that the promotion of human rights demands a free flow and a wider and better balanced dissemination of information, and to this end, mass media have a leading contribution to make.

The proposed conference is a follow-up activity to the AMIC-organized seminar on Communication Development and Human Rights in Asia held in Bangalore, India on May 9-11, 1998. This was supported by the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Netherlands, Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Onderwijs en Ontwikkeling (NOVIB).

**Objectives**

- To increase journalists’ awareness and understanding of human rights issues that impact on the rural poor of Asia
- To examine how media practitioners and institutions can meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities arising out of developments on human rights in the region
- To identify guidelines and measures that can assist media in improving coverage of human rights issues affecting the rural poor in Asia
- To provide a forum for knowledge sharing and networking among communication professionals, human rights activists and media activists

**Who Will Attend?**

Senior media practitioners, human rights activists, civil rights attorneys and academics from 10 Asian countries, namely, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Vietnam

**Format**

The three-day conference features country presentations of the state of Media and Human Rights in Asian countries, discussions among participants and resource persons of the various issues involved in media and human rights and the generation of a list of recommendations on how media can effectively assist in human rights.