Title	AMIC-WACC Consultation on the Development of a Curriculum and Textbook for the Teaching of Communication Ethics in South Asia : March 15-17, 1995, Colombo : [report]
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Citation	
Date	1995
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10220/3021
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Paper No. 1

AMIC-WACC Consultation on the Development of a Curriculum and Textbook for the Teaching of Communication Ethics in South Asia

March 15 - 17, 1995
Colombo, Sri Lanka

AMIC
Documentation Unit

2 3 AUG 1995

Prepared by

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Summary Report on the Consultation on the
Development of a Curriculum and Textbook for the
Teaching of Communication Ethics in South Asia
Colombo, Sri Lanka
March 15-17, 1995

Background

In November, 1993, AMIC in cooperation with the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) organised a seminar on "South Asian Perspectives in Communication Ethics." The seminar, attended by twenty senior journalists, media professionals and academics from five South Asian countries, resulted in fruitful discussions on South Asian parameters in communication ethics and formulated actionable recommendations to increase awareness of communication ethics among mass media professionals. Among the recommendations of the seminar was to draft a curriculum and textbook on communication ethics from the South Asian perspective.

Taking action on one of the key recommendations of the seminar, AMIC together with the WACC and the support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)-Colombo, organised a follow-up meeting in March, 1995, in Colombo with the specific objective of developing a curriculum and textbook on communication ethics from the South Asian perspective.

Objectives of the Consultation

The three-day consultation, held from March 15-17, 1995 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was primarily aimed at forming a core working group of media professionals and scholars to develop a curriculum and textbook on communication ethics from the South Asian perspective. Specifically, the consultation had the following objectives:

1) to develop an outline of a curriculum on communication ethics for South Asian tertiary educational institutions;

2) to develop an outline of a textbook on communication ethics for South Asian tertiary educational institutions;

3) to agree on the stylistic parameters of the textbook and the time schedule for submission of completed drafts.

Methodology

AMIC contracted the services of a professional editor, Mr. Nalaka Gunawardene to serve as a consultant for the project. Mr. Gunawardene has extensive editing experience in books dealing with the mass media. One of his most recent publications include collaboration on a book on "The Press as Promoter," published by the FES-Colombo. Mr. Gunawardene was to oversee the drafting of the textbook, provide inputs in the development of the topics and comment on the draft chapters submitted by the respective authors. Assisting Mr.

Gunawardene was Mr. Virgilio Labrador, the Head, Seminars and Institutional Development Programme, AMIC, who coordinated the meeting.

Five authors were invited to present draft papers at the meeting on a mutually agreed topic. The topics assigned to each author were envisioned to form individual chapters/ or modules of the textbook (see attached programme). After presenting the main points of their respective papers, the group openly discussed and commented on the papers. As a result of the discussions, a topical outline was developed that will form the content of the textbook (see attached outline). After agreeing on the general style of the textbook, A timetable for the revision of the papers was agreed upon.

The textbook was envisioned to be a very readable, general introduction to communication ethics from a South Asian perspective. It was aimed at filling a gap as a result of a lack of a textbook for tertiary communication students on communication ethics from the South Asian perspective. It will have chapters on an overview of communication ethics; ethical dilemmas in communications; social and cultural dimensions; policy and legal dimensions; communication ethics and media practitioners; and communication ethics and the role of the state. Each individual chapters will have short boxed articles on a specific aspect of ethics.

During the consultation, a suggested outline of curriculum for an introductory course in communication ethics was drafted (see attached copy). In drafting the curriculum, the topics covered in the textbook were taken into account in order that the textbook could be used a reference for the course.

Timetable

After the discussions resulting from the meeting, the authors were given three months to revise their respective papers. The following timetable for the project was agreed upon:

Submission of revised chapters	end-June, 1995
Editing of draft chapters	July-end August, 1995
Final revision of manuscripts	September, 1995
Despatch of manuscript to press	October, 1995

Summary

The consultation generated a very vibrant exchange of ideas and experiences among the authors. The discussions opened up new vistas to the problem of communication ethics in South Asia. The immediate result was the expansion of the scope of the draft papers presented. A core working group was formed that will facilitate exchange of information on a regional basis. The mechanics of the development of the textbook was agreed upon as well as a timetable for the project.

Annexes

Annex I   Consultation Programme
Annex II Outline of Textbook
Annex III Suggested Curriculum

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