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<th>Communication research needs and priorities in Asia : Pulau Pinang 22-24 September 1983 : [workshop grouping reports]</th>
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Workshop Grouping Reports
WORKSHOP GROUPINGS

Friday 23 September 1983

11.00 - 12.00 noon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP A</th>
<th>GROUP B</th>
<th>GROUP C</th>
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<td>(Research)</td>
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VENUE: Humanities Conference Room

CHAIRMAN: Dr. Harald Von Gottberg

RAPPORTERS: Mr. Mustapha Anuar
Dr. Y.S. Yadava
Mr. Brajesh Bhatia
Dr. Harry Brietrose
Dr. Vincent Lowe
Dr. Samsukdi Xuto

Educational Technology Unit Seminar Room

Educational Technology Unit Media Room

Mr. S.M. Ali
Ms. Khor Yoke Lim
Mr. Mustapha Anuar
Ms. Khor Yoke Lim
Mr. Brajesh Bhatia
Dr. Harry Brietrose
Dr. Vincent Lowe
Dr. Samsukdi Xuto

Mr. Mohamad Yusuf
Mr. Mohamad Yusuf
Dr. Eddie Kuo
Dr. Eddie Kuo
Mr. Haroon Awang
Mr. Haroon Awang
Dr. Crispin Maslog
Dr. Crispin Maslog
Dr. Noordin Sopiee
Dr. Noordin Sopiee

Datin Sharifah Mariam Ghazali
Datin Sharifah Mariam Ghazali
Mr. Shawaluddin Anis
Mr. Shawaluddin Anis
Mr. Mohamad Yusuf
Mr. Mohamad Yusuf
Dr. Sulaiman Yassin
Dr. Sulaiman Yassin
Dr. Ralph Kiesch
Dr. Ralph Kiesch
Ms. Sujiah Salleh
Ms. Sujiah Salleh
Dr. Alwi Dahlan
Dr. Alwi Dahlan
Dr. Abdullah Hassan
Dr. Abdullah Hassan

Please feel free to change your groups.
Observers please join any of the groups above.
AMIC-UNESCO-USM SEMINAR ON
"COMMUNICATION RESEARCH NEEDS & PRIORITIES IN ASIA"
September 22-24, 1983, Penang, Malaysia

GROUP A:

1. It was felt that there is a need for a more intensive information exchange between researchers of the region. It would be useful to establish a data base so that researchers can identify certain deficiencies and later try to fill these needs.

2. It was suggested that scholars should not remain in ivory towers but see themselves as actors in society. Freedom of expression in press and broadcasting was regarded as of interest in order to maintain a diversity of opinion in society, which in itself, would serve the interest of that society. National leaders in Asia would need to be impressed on the utility of freedom of expression.

3. Communication research should be fully aware of each nation's development needs. It was felt that the need to talk about research requirements at national level was high. It was also noted that there was a deficiency of data in many Asian Universities.

4. It was questioned whether Governments should be involved in the coordination of research.

5. Individual and press freedom was seen as a self-explanatory right that is universally acceptable.

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However, the importance of press freedom is not seen as being self-evident in many developing countries and hence, there was seen to be a need to work out a rationale for this concept. Research into the credibility of the press and the importance of this issue was seen as necessary and it was emphasised that the right to express oneself and the idea of self respect and dignity are seen as universal.

6. A need was felt for AMIC to publish research data in its function as a documentation and information centre. The question of new technologies and research focusing on their utilisation and impact was one of the main topics.
The session began with a summary of the highlights of the discussion on the paper "New Communication Technologies" by J.S. Yadava, namely,

1. There are varying views both optimistic and pessimistic, of the capability and impact of new communication technology in developing societies. Some technologies as threats to some societies and while this need not necessarily happen in others.

2. Whether we like it or not, the coming of new communication technologies is inevitable. The consequences on society, however, will vary with different socio-cultural contexts.

The following recommendations for research studies were made:

1. There is a need for research on the "state of the art" of technological usage in Asian countries. The term "Asian Countries" comprises of countries of varying degrees of socio-economic status and hence a technology that is applicable and suitable to one may not be so for another.

These research findings will provide basic benchmark data for further studies on communication technology.
2. The need to research and document the growth and development of "old" and current communication technology from a historical perspective.

Such data will help communicators learn from past experiences, how new communication technologies were adopted and adapted.

3. There is a need to study the impact of new communication technologies on society. The group discussed and agreed that such impact studies should consider, not only the "dangers", but also the benefits these technology can bring about. Several examples were discussed, in particular, the use of video and audio cassette technology.

Other types of impact studies cited included the impact of technology on cultural identity and presentation, on social development and national unity.

Question was also posed on how the new communication technology affect indigenous communication industries such as the manufacture of radio which many Asian countries have now the capacity to produce for their own consumption. Will the new technology make these industries, which some Asian countries are just beginning to develop, obsolete?

Finally, the group agreed that most of these studies are interdisciplinary in nature so that cooperation from researchers from other field of specialization is necessary.

KYL/occe
23 September 1983
The dawning of the information society, characterised by the merging of computers, telephones, electronics (computronics) will result in significant changes in manpower requirements in all areas, particularly in communication. Institutions engaged in teaching and training at all levels must reorientate themselves in preparation for the new technologies. Just as the mass media have resulted in mass consumption, the new technologies will further accelerate this process. The concept of universities are also likely to change from being elitist institutions to the more massine ones. Distant learning such as universities of the air, and others, appear prominent as development of the new information age. University structures, organisation and administration, curricula, modes of teaching, roles and functions in terms of teaching, research and community service will change consonant to the demands of the new information society.

The group recommends the following:

1. The eight research priorities which had been identified by AMIC seminar 1982, in Singapore, be carried out, in order to determine the present and future needs.
The curricula therefore should reflect the needs which have been identified by the above research. The eight areas should include Instructional Communication, Media Economics, Communication Technology, Institutional Studies, Communication for Development, Impact Studies, Sociology of Knowledge in the Field of Communications, and Communication and Culture.

2. Projection of the future scenario assisted by research findings, will help us to identify the manpower needs in the field of communications.

3. Communication Training Programmes should take into account the changing structures, roles, functions and instructional methods required both the short and long term needs.

4. The contents of the curricula should include the following components:
   (a) Skill training with emphasis on creativity relevant to new technology.
   (b) Relevant research using new technology.
   (c) Management information as a resource.
   (d) Communication areas relevant to society such as inter-personal, inter-racial and inter-cultural.
A more extensive exchange of information among the research conducting institutions in Asia was one of the key suggestions made during a three-day seminar jointly organised by AMIC, UNESCO and the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang from the 22 to 24 September, 1983.

The purpose of the seminar which was attended by communication experts from all over Asia, was to identify Mass Communication Research Needs and Priorities in Asia. The Hon'ble Datuk Seri Mohd. Adib Adam, Minister for Information, Malaysia, formally opened the seminar. There were welcoming addresses by the UNESCO Regional Communications Adviser, Mr. S.M. Ali and AMIC Secretary-General, Mr. Vijay Menon. Dr. Crispin Maslog of the Department of Development Communications at the University of the Philippines, in his keynote paper, gave a detailed overview of the state of the art and future directions of communications research in Asia. Dr. J.S. Yadava, Head of Communications Research at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, spoke at some length on new communications technology and developing societies, paying special attention to the New World Information and Communication Order. During a third session, those assembled listened with great interest to the presentation on "Planning Curricula Towards an Information Society", which was presented by Dr. Vincent Lowe from the Universiti Sains Malaysia. He warned that the commercial exploitation of new communications technology could turn Third World countries

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into passive markets and thwart their efforts to develop socially and politically interactive communications networks. He warned about over-optimistic assessments of the microchip technology especially in relation to employment figures. Increased leisure might in many cases be forced on those who come under its influence.

As an example of an effort to make the information age more beneficial to mankind, he outlined the new curriculum for communication undergraduates at USM which includes Science Communication, Management Communication, Film and Video Communications, Film-Making, Development Communications and Educational Technology, thereby bringing many fresh new aspects to the traditional composition of communication courses throughout the world.

The discussion on the possible impact of new communications technology and the necessary research required to assess its impact centred on the identification of the direction which technological development would take and the need to make use of such media in order to further develop the free and balanced flow of information throughout the world.

In the various working groups, the need for coordination and information exchange between various research institutions of Asia was agreed upon. It was suggested that an attempt be made to establish an Asian logic and philosophy for such concepts as press freedom, freedom of opinion and speech, etc. Also, a deficiency of data in many research institutions was noted and it was stressed that each research undertaking should attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge in Asia.
A regional approach to research needs connected with new technologies was found to be too imprecise to be applicable to the different socio-economic situations in the countries of Asia. The differences in technical standards throughout Asia would have to be assessed before any evaluation of possible long-term consequences could be made. Impact studies would need to consider both dangers and benefits of new technologies as the two would, in many cases, have to be seen as inseparable. Any research in connection with this would have to be of an inter-disciplinary nature with the fullest cooperation of various fields of research.

In the field of curricula composition and research, eight areas were named which were felt to be vital for the training and qualification of future communicators. These were: Instructional Communication, Media Economics, Communication Technology, Institutional Studies, Communication for Development, Impact Studies, Sociology of Knowledge in the field of Communications and Communication and Culture. The curricula should contain such components as skills, training, relevant research using new technology, management information and interpersonal, inter-racial and inter-cultural communication.