<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Communication policymaking and implementation for rural development in Thailand: problems and perspectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Kaviya, Somkuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/984">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/984</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Policymaking And Implementation
For Rural Development In Thailand:
Problems And Perspectives

By

Somkuan Kaviya
Introduction

The Government of Thailand, under the leadership of General Prem Tinsulanonda, had declared 1981 onward, the "Decade of Rural Development" after which a policy working group published a Report of Rural Development and the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) has produced, in January 1981, a draft operation plan to be included in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1982-1986). It may be looked upon as a late action if compared with the progress the neighboring Malaysia has made in this field through its New Economic Policy launched a decade ago and implemented via two five-year plans. But, taking an ideological decision of this kind is a meaningful start for any developing country like Thailand, where rural poverty rate is still high and imbalanced (see Table 1). Quickly enough, this historical event would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Rate ( )</th>
<th>Number of Rural Population (1979)</th>
<th>Number of Poor Rural Population (1979)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13,372,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7,911,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4,719,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8,339,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole country</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>34,342,615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

particularly change national direction from a path of failure to another one which is more promising. The first time to seriously and concentratively think of eradicating poverty from rural areas, this Fifth Five-Year Plan has laid down principles, goals, and operations which might result in solving the rural problems as well as the urban ones. The government, its advisers, the NESDB, and particularly the working group, have finally found out the way to solve national problems like shaking politics and security, energy and natural resources crises, social injustice or even urban poverty is not only to implement the national development plan, but also to specially focus on rural development ideas and actions. Two hundred and seventeen Amphoes (Districts) as well as 29 King-Amphoes (Smaller Districts) in 37 provinces, 16 in both the North and the Northeast, have been particularly classified as "target" poverty zones. In these zones, various projects will be worked out in order to achieve the following major goals:

(a) Providing each of those villages which are short of main food with a rice-storage center, (Rice Bank).

(b) Providing each of those zones which are in need of working water buffaloes with a buffalo-rent center (Buffalo Bank).

(c) Improving the capability to produce protein food.

(d) Improving basic economic potentials (elements), such as water, fuel, fertilizers.

(e) Improving basic health care services from village level up to district level (public health correspondents, village health volunteers, village medical fund, district hospitals).

(f) Providing more loan and credit to replace middlemen services, as well as agricultural courts and legal services.
(g) Improving local education by producing relevant textbooks and sending in more graduate volunteers to work in poor areas.

A first glance would be enough to give us a picture of who or what sectors will be involved in what manner in this crucial part of the rural development plan. Economics, Agriculture, Food and Health, Social Justice and Education will go here and there in a seemingly old fashion with an unsufficient overall view and integrated actions. The education sector will put emphasis only on textbook and organized interpersonal communication through a graduate volunteer system.\(^1\) The trend to use young educated manpower as rural educator-communicator seems to be a good sign. At least one communication sub-sector, including those health correspondents and volunteers, will participate in the development work of rural communities. But where are the other communication sub-sectors? Are we poor in this kind of resources? No, we are not poor, but rather rich. Do we believe that these resources can function interactively as one of the most important components in rural development? Yes, we think that they are very important, if not major, as counterparts in rural change. They could be planned in such an economic and worthy way to motivate people toward self-education, self-confidence and self-reliance—the most effective approach ever found in Thailand.\(^2\) But why don’t we put them in the form of a functional sector in the holistic approach plan of rural

---

\(^1\) From 1970 until now, the Graduate Volunteer Centre is under responsibility of the Thammasat University. It is being developed from the status of a university faculty to become a national centre of inter-university volunteers. This organization is assigned by the plan to train 500 volunteers a year to be sent to remote villages all around the country.


development and get the best out of it?

As far as mass media and manpower in the field are concerned, Thailand is evidently one of the richest countries. Just how abundant the mass media are is shown in Table 2. They could in turn become more accessible and more efficient with supports from the telecommunication system which is being rapidly developed by a fairly

Table 2

Mass communication resources as distributed by regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Central (including East)</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio Stations</td>
<td>17 + 72 (Bangkok)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Receivers</td>
<td>1,996,595</td>
<td>587,886</td>
<td>-1,270,626</td>
<td>1,505,648</td>
<td>5,360,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema Houses</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Newspapers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Periodical Newspapers</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television Stations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television Receivers</td>
<td>598,811</td>
<td>40,014</td>
<td>57,575</td>
<td>64,615</td>
<td>761,015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(2) Only number of receivers obtained from the 1975 statistics available at the National Statistics Office.
new state enterprise called the Communication Authority of Thailand (CAT). Still, the relationship between mass media and telecommunication seems to be too much commercial rather than cooperative. We only hope that the atmosphere would be improved if the state included these two communication sub-sectors into the rural development plan.

Also, could the manpower resources be better channelled and managed, since communication faculties in the universities (Thammasat, Chulalongkorn, Chiangmai and private Bangkok College) have been producing more than 300 graduates a year. This number does not include numerous trainees being put out by the CAT and the Public Relations School belonging to the Prime Minister's Office's Public Relations Department (PRD). The potentiality of human resources will be much greater if it is empowered by such appropriate methods like well-organized interpersonal communication and traditional communicative arts.

Now that we had a glance into the communication resources and the emergence of rural development, which even alerts the planning authorities and the stability-occupied government, we come back to wonder why the gap still exists between resources and needs. Communication and rural development should have been input and output of each other in order to improve media contents in general, as well as information services and rural change.

The ideal is too far from the real. The answer should be looked for in the area of policymaking and its implementation. But, since these would be related to the genesis and evolution, we will also shed light on current status, causes of the problems and organizational efforts while bearing in mind policy issues and targeting at policy solutions.
Current Status

To have a panoramic, horizontal view of what is going on in the communication field of Thailand, we should divide it into two main sub-sectors namely, mass communication and organized interpersonal communication. Then to get an overall vertical look of both sub-sectors, we should try to visualize their stages of development during which they have gradually grown up.

The first one may be called "infrastructure," meaning those supporting agencies like telecommunication and transportation. The second one may be named "structure," which means systems and organizations of mass media and interpersonal media themselves. The third may be called "ultrastructure," where sub-sectors coordinate to function at maximum capacity for the benefit of the society from which they develop.

Chart I
Development Stages of Sub-Sectors

Stage 3
Ultrastructure

Stage 2
Structure

Stage 1
Infrastructure

Communication for national development

Mass media

Interpersonal media agencies

Telecommunication

Transportation
We see that telecommunication and transportation, which are communication sub-sectors by themselves, come to support both media so indispensably that they could be, at least in this paper, included in the media sub-sectors. It is then somewhat surprising to realize that the stage 1 of the media, which is most technological, has been planned and implemented in a satisfactory way. Thailand has a fairly good post and telecommunication system, as well as a good highway network linked to all administrative and commercial centers around the country. Satellites have also started servicing telephone organizations and television programmes.

But stage 2 is less brilliant. In spite of technico-physical progress, media systems have not yet been able to give a good impression. Most newspapers are famous for their sensationalism and politization. Two-thirds of the radio stations, all state-owned, are heavily loaded with advertisements and non-qualified entertainment programmes and, more often now, can become violently political during crucial periods or critical events. Meanwhile, national networks of Radio-Thailand, operated by PRD, regularly broadcasts official-style news programmes and various types of information aiming at promoting national stability and security. On the other hand, television has built an image of foreign-representing advertisers, as submerged with luxury product advertising and imported entertainment contents ill-adapted to economic situation. Film production, without exception, is a kind of commercialized sensationalism mostly filled up with tears, blood, and laughter. Each year, about one hundred films are dedicated to entertainment purposes and there is no place for documentaries except some less attractive materials from

---

3 Radio broadcasting was directly and largely used as a mass-mobilization machine during at least three major political turmoil: October Six Event, in 1976, Abortive Coup of March 1977, and Abortive Coup of April 1981.
agricultural and health departments. Since media ownership is shared in a complex manner among big business or financial power and government, in form of military official authorities, state enterprise or concessionary business (open or deviative), hope is minimal to change media characteristics or even to make them more democratic through any of participatory models.

Stage 2 of organized interpersonal communication is more complicated. For the sake of clarity, its structure should be sliced into four categories as follows:

(1) Political and security-oriented groups which cover those organized on national and local levels by border patrol police, military divisions, civil administrations, and so on. It actually includes many nationalist groups like, Village Scouts and National Defense Volunteers.

(2) Public relations-based groups ranging from political-oriented para-groups to business-oriented ones among private sector people. Most of them get training and grouping through Public Relations School and Public Relations Society.

(3) Various official departments dealing with different development activities, such as agriculture, health, education, cooperatives and community development. Some may be trying with a most recent model of interpersonal contact, but bureaucracy is still a big problem to most of them.

---

4 From own experience of the author, after four years of being film jury for the annual awards, both in the field of entertainment and documentary films.


(4) Various unofficial organizations divided into two types: volunteer-type and business-type. The first one may include Thammasat University Graduate Volunteer Centre, Chulalongkorn University Volunteer Project for Society, Girl's Guide Guild, Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement, and about a dozen more. The second type is mostly concerned with family planning, e.g., the Community-Based Family Planning Services.

The structure of this interpersonal media sub-sector might be more difficult to analyze than the mass media sub-sector is, but it tends to develop itself toward stage 3 in a more rapid and liberal way. Particularly, the third and fourth categories have shown that they have made some progress in the path of development theory. In spite of bureaucracy problems of the third and the political problem of the fourth, they have tried their best to communicate with rural people through face-to-face channel or group dynamics. To some extent, they have already reached the sphere of ultrastructure ahead of the mass media.

The survey of media habits among Thai villagers conducted in 1975-77 by the author indicated how significant is the extent to which the rural folks have been exposed to mass media (see Table 3).

---

6 Report was published by the Thammasat University, Thai Khadi Research Institute in 198x (in Thai).
Table 3

Use of mass media in rural Thailand
(Survey of six villages consisting of 520 households)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Users</th>
<th>Frequency of use</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Three Times a Week</th>
<th>Twice a Week</th>
<th>Once a Week</th>
<th>Not Very Often</th>
<th>Not Certain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio 454</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films 368</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines 229</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV 130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only if these media be developed up to the level of ultrastructure, being concerned with and beneficial to development, the country would have spared an important part of budget usually spent on educational and administrative systems. But the current situation is rather a negative one. Radio broadcasting, the most accessible medium, is a chaotic empire in which there is little coordination to support national development. The popular and hopeful transistor essentially serves as an entertainment tool. Both metropolitan and provincial newspapers, with minimum rural concern, cannot however, reach the peasants because of their limited circulations and cost-profit factor. A new model of newspapers, "rural press," although its success proved by
experimentation and evaluation has not yet been put into practice on a large scale. Regarding the exciting film industry, it is certain that only a small proportion of its production, greatly attractive to the rural audience, has some substance that tend to contribute to economic and social development. This is also true in the case of television. It is now reaching out to larger rural zones via satellite, but its content, no doubt, has not much to do with the real needs of the people. The satellite-borne channel has even come, with its profit-drive, to advantageously compete with the provincial PRD channels which, however, has shown some development-oriented programmes.

One can now make a conclusion that the communication sector, as a whole, is yet far behind other sectors in the current stream of all-for-development. While the infrastructure is solid enough, the structure is rather weak and the ultrastructure very small and shaky, according to our schematic and descriptive analysis.

The existing policies and the decision-making to change them, of course, may be the area where we should have a closer look. Nevertheless, causes of the problematic current status would apriori give us a clearer picture of why decisions have not been made to improve policies on the communication sector, how and in what way, if necessary, we could gear to a more effective and useful direction.

Causes of the Problems

Political factor

It is generally understood that Thailand is a liberal country where people are free to do anything within legal limitations.

---

7 This newspaper was launched on an experimental basis as part of the communication project under the Mekong Integrated Rural Development Program, 1973-76.
This political philosophy is, of course, paradoxical both in theory and practice. It depends on the fact that who or what regime has the political power to influence the legislative body, to govern the country and to control social behavior. Theoretically, as mentioned in most constitutions (we have the thirteenth now), people seem to have the power through democratic principle and process while the King assumes supra-legal duties as head of state. In practice, the political power is shared by the royal family, the military system and big businessmen in the form of a power triangle, a triangle of diamond, iron and gold, if you would like to compare. People, in fact, are indirectly and weakly involved through their representatives functioning in the parliament already nearly half-filled with appointed senators. This status is well-known as "half-leaf democracy" which reflects on the political situation as a whole. To simplify, freedom of expression as promised by the liberal philosophy, is limited by half, or to only one side of the coin. It is controlled not only by the law, but also by political power which is occasionally paternalistic, but principally authoritarian.

For those practically joined in the triangle of political power, communication has become their sub-power. Mass media and organized interpersonal media are their power tools. The formula of use may be either propaganda type, advertising techniques, publicity art, public relations strategy, information services, or whatsoever. But the objectives, explicit or not, are to keep up law and order as well as the status quo structure of power and interest.

Economic and social development on the national level, of course, without major political change, is acceptable. Rural development, particularly the integrated model, even the one of the Ministry of Interior Community Development Department, is yet reluctantly recognized. So how about communication for rural development? If it is basically one-way, there is no objection. But the question arises when it is


two-way or multi-dimensional, which means a complete cycle of communication process that interactively motivates and ferments liberal changes at the majority grass-root level.

The political reality is therefore one important factor that has affected the way in which communication macro-policy would have been formulated.

Economic factor

Economics is inter-locked with politics. If politics is the story of power structure, economics would be the one of interest structure. Power and interest are like Siamese twins.

Probably more than many capital cities can be, Bangkok has become the center of power and interest structure which, long age, has absorbed rural economic surplus for its own physical and financial growth. According to the study group report on rural development policy, Bangkok and also a few cities have too quickly grown up, them widened the economic and social gap between them and the rural zones. Policy decision-making on administration, education, as well as health services and industrial complexes are centralized in Bangkok to the detriment of rural life. Market structure, banking and financial systems, in a similar manner, are much more profitable to metropolitan investments and industrial products than rural enterprises and agricultural output, particularly from farther farmer.

Willing to improve the situation seems to be hard to materialize, because the power and interest structure has been so complicately interwoven and strongly controlled by the central political and financial power. Even the Fifth Five-Year Plan will have a long way to go. With a well-thought and well-planned communication component, it would do better. This component would help develop self-reliance villages and make everybody understand that the country cannot stand and develop unless the up-country joins.
But would the power admit that? As mentioned before, communication is merely the power tool. How they could admit any different concept is a matter of time.

International factor

The politico-economic situation on the international level is quite comparable to the country case. This means the power/interest structure between Thailand and industrialized countries vis-a-vis the one between rural Thailand and Bangkok. All belong to the so-called "old economic order" and, to visualize, jointly flow up and down between commercial department stores and village farms. Internationally current practices help keep on the national power/interest structure.

Looking closer into the economic order in the field of mass media is even more confusing, but very interesting to our factor analysis.

Thailand sells raw materials and some modest industrial products to industrialized countries. In terms of trade, Thailand is in a disadvantageous position. Moreover, this country has no media support in those foreign lands since it cannot afford even to pay for commercial publicity or, if it could pay, most probably it would not be allowed to do it in the same convenient manner as it is allowing the other countries.

Actually, these industrialized nations not only have media support in the form of advertisements as equally treated as local producers, but also indirectly possess communication facilities systems in many special ways. For instance, some countries are also selling, on many preferential bases, hardware and software for either radio, television, film, or newspaper which in turn are financially handed and obliged to hurriedly accept any advertisement from anywhere in order to cope with their investments. Thailand is, therefore, not so well placed in the international area. Its communication resources are not worthily used for its own development or even for its very simple interests.
Socio-cultural factor

Society and individuals, particularly those in rural zones, are somewhat encircled by more or less negative political and economic situations as well as some discouraging socio-cultural environments. By this, it would mean individual personality (e.g., heredity, beliefs, attitudes) or social order (e.g., norms, values, tradition). Theoretically, educational systems can and should bring individuals out of their socio-cultural nutshells and build up good, strong personalities. At the same time, mass communication help pull out that same individual and his society in the same direction. Socio-cultural problems should be carefully and holistically treated by a coordinative organization of education and communication.

But in the case of Thailand, we are asking two big questions to ourselves, or to anybody whenever a related issue is raised. Is our educational system good enough to push individuals toward a good direction? If not yet, is the mass communication system helping to pull him out? The answer for both questions is rather a negative one. We cannot therefore do anything much about those socio-cultural factors.

Accumulative impact on communication status

It is certain that all those factors-political, economic, international, and socio-cultural—have an immense impact on communication role, system and status. The political power structure has made it a power tool or a propaganda machine; the economic interest structure, both national and international, has used it as a salesman. The socio-cultural environment has not been much motivated to change and to improve the role and the social responsibility of the media. It is hence true that the communication status is at the mercy of those influential users and not at the services of the general public.
It looks like there are two spheres. The upper one is the empire of political and economic power owning and controlling sources and channels. The lower one is the receivers' domain where the silent majority is being given selected and persuasive information. Between these two spheres, there is a greenhouse-type coated borderline. Selected and persuasive information can flow down from the power domain much more fluidly than rural feedback can come up. We do not exactly know that would be the long-term effect, except that one day this communication dysfunction, juxtaposed with political and economic failures would most possibly be fatal to the rational equilibrium.

Macro-Policies and Planning

The eighties was the decade where theories and ideologies concerning communication policies and planning appeared and made a successful pace in the history of third world social sciences. Many scholars and experts have demonstrated until now the utility and indispensability of the art. Three main themes convincingly stated can be picked up from their works.

"A national communication policy is an integrated, explicit and durable set of partial communication policies harmonized into a consistent body of principles and norms addressed to guiding the behavior of the institutions specializing in handling the overall communication process in a country."

8 Like Wilbur Schramm, Daniel Lerner, Alan Hancock, Syed Rahim, John Middleton, and Luis Ramiro Beltran.
Partial communication policies are sets of isolated behavioral prescriptions concerned only with given parts or aspects of the system and process of social communication. These policies are formulated, fragmentarily and independently, by owners of communication media, by communication professionals, and by government authorities, each naturally responding to their respective interests. As such, they often come in conflict with one another. 9

That is the first theme to which very few persons could say the contrary, in particular, when placing it in the context of developing countries.

The second theme expresses that such national communication policies must be followed by an overall, integrated, long-term, and cost-benefit approach planning studied and operated on a democratic, feedback-open principle by a coordinating and monitoring body consisting of qualified planners and decision-makers.

The third theme tries to prove that well-formulated policy and well-planned implementation would be in capacity to help solve problems of communication and many related areas as well as to respond to primary and psychological needs of the population. They could also be oriented to aid the national development plan in which they are suitably sectoralized (or integrated).

With all those problems, either concerning communication itself or the causes found in many factors, Thailand should have had a national communication policy from which a communications plan would have been worked out in order to be integrated in the existing development plan.

Particularly, when the rural development plan is now going to function, the need is more to mobilize available resources and channel them to action in a most effective and economical way. But still only little movements have been done in the field of interpersonal media.

In fact, we have nothing worth to call national policy and planning as such, except (a) cluster media behavior control guidelines, (b) fragmented sub-sector policies and planning, (c) para-service assignments in national plans, and (d) short-life government public relations policy.

(a) Cluster media behavior control guidelines

As categorized, this type of policy is stated guidelines, with mostly negative attitudes, aiming to control behaviors of different groups of media by means of law, both generalized and specialized, and regulations as well as resolutions.

Looking into all these legalized guidelines, we will see one set of basic political norms applied to all media and any other way of expression. These norms are mostly concerned with national security (peace, order, unity, solidarity), anti-communism, national sovereignty (traditions, culture), morality, constitutional monarchy and governmental stability and activities. Major orientation is certainly for security purposes.

As for the press, the control is effected through two main legal instruments, namely the Publication Act of 1941 and the National Reform Party Order No. 42 (1942). They are strongly authoritarian but arbitrarily paternalistic, hence become two of the most controversial laws. Content, personnel affairs, and business are supervised through a registration process and post-censorship.

Radio and television are particularly under the control of the National Radio and Television Administrative Board (NRTAB) which is given full authority
by a Prime Minister's Office Regulation of 1975. The NRTAB, composed of 17 members, half of which are security people, monitors ownership which is theoretically monopolized by government agencies and state enterprises and prevents any station tie with a political party. It also allocates frequencies, promotes technological improvements, wider reception, and, to some extent, qualified programmes, but never focuses on economic and social development support. The only two positive principles to which it is attached, are however, to promote better understanding of democracy and to support a national education system.

Regarding films, policy guidelines can be traced out of the resolutions made by national level joint committees of officials and professionals. Promoting movie industry and good relations among countries are among positive tones. Contrarily, high and rigid tax as well as strict import of foreign films are rather problematic.

(b) Fragmented sub-sector development policies and planning

This looks like micro-level thing, but most of the time, it touches more than one organization in sub-sectoral groups. For instance, telecommunication policy covers both the Communication Authority of Thailand and Telephone Organization. Both of them have to improve techniques (precision, proficiency, safety, efficiency) and expand communication facilities (telephone expansion, long-distance calls).

But they do not assume any direct assignment and involvement with the task of economic and social development plan, in particular, the new rural development project, nor with the national mass communication systems. Their relationship with mass media and users, as we mentioned before, is based upon the self-support principle and commercial negotiations. Nevertheless, they are equipped with a good planning unit, qualified planners and advanced methodology.
Another sub-sectoral group, the Public Relations Department (PRD) and Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT), deals with government public relations, news and information services, as well as some radio and television stations. As a matter of fact, the bureaucratic and old-aged PRD would have been fully authorized to operate national mass communication systems. But since too many commercial radio stations and all free-style television stations in Bangkok have been booming up under political, military and commercial pressures, the PRD has automatically lost the would-be authority, then again has to compete with the new MCOT which possesses a fairly big news service, but only one television station and one radio station in Bangkok. That is why the MCOT is also trying to gain more control in the PRD five television stations in the provinces. In spite of this struggle, both of them have to follow the same policy guidelines set by the NRTAB and the government. Planning can be made up from their own organizations, but the quality is not up to standard, since they have no specialized unit and less-qualified staff to deal with even on the ad hoc basis. They cannot hence dream of gearing themselves to best support the national development plan.

Now we come to the next sub-sectoral group which is concerned with communication education. Universities, PRD schools and CAT posts and telecommunication institutes have made tremendous progress with courses ranging from certificate level up to a master's degree. They have no direct policies down from above except when they first started the projects. Most of them, however, have gone far in academic and professional boundaries. The PRD school, for example, is more and more interested in macro and micro planning. The Thammasat University, followed by Chiangmai and Chulalongkorn, is teaching rural communication, development communication,
and communication policies and planning. These three institutions are really spearheading and always push efforts to convince national policymakers and development planners.

One of the most exciting stories related to policies and planning is the education policy which tries, since 1978 through the authority of the National Education Committee and the support of the Cabinet, to bring in the use of mass media for education. The communication policy guidelines, worked out by the Education Reform Subcommittee on Media Use, have systematically covered the largest areas in view to develop communication networks for education. But the exhaustive guidelines are very difficult for implementing bodies to follow since they cannot get adequate support from those abundant media resources which are mostly commercialized and practically independent of the national development plan of any kind. The Ministry of Education itself has to come back to the PRD, the only non-military and non-commercial network, for technical assistance. They are now building up a new radio network called "Third Programme" to be specialized for educational support. At the same time, the Ministry of Education is developing its own Non-formal Education Department to cope with multi-media use. The big problem they are going to confront is the chaotic competition, both technical and psychological, from nearly two hundred radio stations which are not much interested in either education nor development policies.

(c) Para-sectoral service assignment in the development plan

In the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1920-1924), most innovative to many, one can distinguish three sectors more of less integrally involved in an explicit way, namely, economic sector, social sector and national security sector. Under the economic sector there are many sub-sectors like industry, urbanization, national resources, export-import, rural
production, and finance. Under the social sector there are population, labor, social services (education, health) and culture.

For all sub-sectors mentioned above, except finance, communication is assigned to play a supporting role in form of telecommunication, public relations, and labor relations. It is merely a para-sectoral service even without clear budget allocation. Only telecommunication investment is valued at two percent of the entire budget expenditure in the Fourth Plan.

While the Fourth Plan directly benefits rural population only in the rural production promotion and radio health services, the Fifth Plan (1982-1986) for the first time, is proud to have the proper Rural Development Plan. But again, the communication system will not take a significant role other than the one of organized interpersonal communication system specifically assigned to the Thammasat University Graduate Volunteer Centre as described in the introduction.

(g) Short-life government public relations policy

On February 6, 1980, the then Prime Minister General Kriangsak Chomanan spelled out the first holistic government public relations policy. Its guidelines consisted of five principles such as: perfect two-way communication between the State and the people, all employees having to be public relations people, clear academic and professional specification, more available tools and channels for planning and implementation, and lastly, need to adjust policies, regulations and attitudes to the working of the new PR model. Although strongly supported by the PR professional and the PR society, this government policy could not even be started to be implemented, since the government itself was pressured to resign a month later.

In conclusion, one can assess what is now happening in Thailand and how communication policy and planning is doing here. The real national one, with macro status, one can say, is not yet there. A wide gap still
exists between communication resources and needs as well as between the national development plan and the communication system.

But in front of this situation, many organizations are not waiting inactively. They are searching, while working, for a better model of development communication. Some have even reached the realm of, to us, the most important area, that is rural development communication.

Micro-Policy and Implementation: A Case Study

Although the NESDB, though informal contact, has shown a certain degree of interest to inject communication in the Fifth Five-Year Plan, we could say that Thailand has not yet a national policy and planning as such. The attitude of "no-policy is the best policy" would remain for how long we just do not know. But on the micro-level, many organizations and some institutions have adopted a certain concept of problem-solving communication and development communication. Some of them have even gone far in combining communication with rural development as input-output components of each other. It is hence interesting to know how far and in what way they are doing professionally in the environment of haphazard and negative politics. A case study might be useful for future development of policy-making and planning concepts in both organizational and national levels. That is the main reason why we conducted this study and inserted its report in this article.

The objectives are: (1) to survey how much the sample organizations have relatively appreciated communication or rural development values as expressed in their communication structure or their rural development concern; (2) to briefly evaluate degrees of recognition and combination of communication-rural development components as would be seen in their policy, planning and operations; and (3) to visualize, for further study, different models of such integration.
Twenty-eight organizations were picked up to represent important institutions that, by nature, ought to be involved in communication or rural development activities. The method of selection was mainly the brainstorming discussion among communication lecturers of the Thammasat University, who also participated in questionnaire drafting and interviewing during January 1981.

The final list happens to cover various types of organizations, such as intergovernmental, governmental, state enterprise, and private sectors (as in Table 4).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Sample Organization</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Agricultural Extension Department Ministry of Agriculture &amp; Cooperatives (AED)</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Accelerated Rural Development Office, Office of the Prime Minister (ARDO)</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Bank for Agriculture &amp; Agricultural Cooperative (BAC)</td>
<td>State Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Ban Muang Daily (BMD)</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Communication Arts (CU)</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Extension &amp; Communication Division Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior (ECD)</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Food &amp; Agricultural Organization Regional Office in Thailand (PFO)</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Family Health Division, Ministry of Health (FHD)</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Graduate Volunteer Centre, Thammasat University (GVC)</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Public Relations Unit, Irrigation Department, Ministry of Agriculture &amp; Cooperatives (FRID)</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(11) Ko Ro Po Radio Station, Ministry of Defense (KRP) Governmental
(12) Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) State Enterprise
(13) Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education (NFED) Governmental
(14) Population & Community Development Association (PCDA) Private Sector
(15) Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) Private Sector
(16) Policy & Planning Office, Ministry of Interior (PPO) Governmental
(17) Public Relations Department, Sankok Bank (PRBB) Private Sector
(18) Public Relations Department, Office of the Prime Minister (PRD) Governmental
(19) Public Relations Division, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (PR EGAT) State Enterprise
(20) Provincial Waterwork Authority of Thailand (PWA) State Enterprise
(21) Public Welfare Department (PWD) Governmental
(22) Siam Motorwork Company (SMC) Private Sector
(23) Thai Cement Company (TCC) Private Sector
(24) Thai Farmers Bank (TFB) Private Sector
(25) Thai Rath Daily (TR) Private Sector
(26) Thammasat University, Faculty of Journalism & Mass Communication (TU) State Enterprise
(27) Television Station Channel 7 (TV 7) Private Sector
(28) United Nations Development Programmes—Development Training & Communication Planning Unit (UNDP/DTCP) Intergovernmental

(English names and abbreviations here are only translated versions)
Majority of sample organizations are governmental: six departments, two divisions two units, as well as three university faculties. We had originally aimed at department or faculty level only, but it happened that the communication scope in a few organizations is rather limited both in concept and structure. That is why we finally got two divisions and two units from the public sector.

The second largest group are those six mass media organizations: BMD, KRP, MCOT, PRD, TR and TV 7. The KRT and the PRD are both governmental and media, hence double-categorized. Additionally, we have three major state enterprises responsible for public utilities like water and electricity; three major banks; three big private and two intergovernmental organizations.

One of our difficult questions had been not who should represent each organization as respondent to this study, but rather, whom he would delegate to give data and opinions. It finally came out that the interviewees in both categories, are well-qualified both in the position held and in education. Eleven of them were from top levels like general managers, director-generals, secretary-generals, and deans. The rest were those assuming significant responsibilities, such as division chiefs, unit heads and senior officers. All of them, except one, are holders of university degrees in various disciplines, like journalism and communication (8 persons); economics and commerce (6); education (2); development administration (2); law (2); and others (1each). It is as well worthy to note that 18 interviewees got their highest education from abroad (USA: 12, Europe: 3, Australia: 2) and 10 from Thailand.

Only two organizations were first reluctant to answer all questions due to their difficult situation caused by competition. But as a whole,
knowledgeable and experienced personalities were quite cooperative in frankly giving all data which are here considered valid and treated as such.

Communication status in organizational hierarchy

All sample organizations except the PPO, have established their own communication units, but in many different ways. From the interviews, we got to know that the communication part can be placed very high or very low in the whole organization, which can be easily seen from the structural chart and from the conceptual view of each respondent. From six media organizations and communication faculties set apart, we clearly see the EGAT (Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand) and the Bangkok Bank with their public relations "departments" at highest level. The status of "division" has yet been given to public relations work in the ARDO, BACG, ECD, and TFB, and the "section" in the AED, PWD, PEA, and PWA. Conceptually speaking, the communication component seems to be very important in the PCDA, UNDP, GVC, FHD, and NFED, since their interviewees strongly considered that all their personnel must be themselves communicators in spite of indirect involvement from some of them. The F4O communication officer as well plays an important role as communication consultant and practitioner in all development projects, even without a significant unit for himself. The other organizations not mentioned above, although very big in manpower and investment, have very small public relations units with a rather low status.

Communication status as seen from services rendered, staff number and training

Ten organizations appear to be getting high-level communication services which include professional consultation, participatory function, and initiative activities. Meanwhile, seven others are still content with
the old concepts of the public relations machines which may mean publicity, political propaganda or commercial promotion. The media organizations and communication faculties are not here analyzed, although few or them might be servicing or even serve their own upper hierarchy in about the same manner.

Most of the first category have a large-size communication personnel, whose proportion to the whole staff ranging down from 1:40 to 1:100. Bangkok Bank, for example, employs 114 people in its public relations department, while the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives has 29. The entire staff of each is more than 5000.

It is interesting to learn that all persons interviewed confirmed the importance of training in communication. The large majority train staff or send them out to be trained regularly.

Degree of rural development concern

By organization objectives stated by the respondents, we can see that nine organizations are specifically assigned and structured to work for a certain kind of development in rural areas. They are VED, ARDO, BAAC, ECD, FAO, PRID, PEA, FWA, and UNDP.

In order to know how rural development has been taken as additional input and/or output in normal functions of any non-rural development organization, one should examine its activities and staffing for such activities. After doing that, we learned that nine of them are more concerned with rural development, e.g., CU, FHR, GVC, KRF, NFED, PREGAT, PWD, and TV. Five are less concerned, and four, very little. All media organizations except KTP apparently do not express much concern beyond their political and commercial goals. The television seems to be farthest behind the scene, even though it has already reached most parts of the country. The SMC, spreading the sale of modern musical instruments to
many provinces, show no sign of rural concern.

Communication policy for rural development

We are now coming to an important part of the study. Whether directly assigned to rural change or not, all samples, except the PPO, have a certain kind of communication unit. Then, do they have any kind of communication policy set up for rural development or, in other words, how serious are they in using communication to support rural development or vice versa?

Answers to the questions of whether they have such a policy or not, and in what manner, have given us criteria to separate the samples into five groups:

(1) Clearly-stated overall policy group consisting of nine organizations (AED, BCD, FAO, FMD, KRP, NFED, PEA, PREGAT, and UNDP). This group according to their delegates, has formulated an overall policy determining the inclusion of communication in the task of rural development.

(2) Less clearly-stated overall policy group comprised of BAC, BND, TD, PRGB, PPD, TCC, TR, and TV. They said they have a stated overall policy. Their descriptive contents, however, do not clearly indicate the willingness to directly use communication for rural development. Most of them are rather oriented to public relations or even commercial publicity goals.

(3) Project-wise policy group. There is only one in our study: the PCBA. They told us that they always set up a specific policy for any new project. They do not call it "strategy," but "policy," literally.

(4) Activity-policy group which, of course, does not have explicitly stated policies, but whose activities are obviously concerned with the rural development communication. University faculties, for instance, are
teaching subjects like Rural Communication or Development Communication, and conducting research projects and community services up country. The PWA and PWD are as well included in this group since they are applying rural communication strategies without any stated policy.

(5) Non-policy groups whose four members (MCOT, PPO, SMC, and TFB) frankly told us that they do not have a policy as such. They are not thinking of their activities in terms of communication for rural development.

The ARDO (Accelerated Rural Development Office) cannot be indentified with this group. It has no policy, but sooner or later is going to have one after finishing the policy survey.

**Policy characteristics**

The contents of organizational policies expressed during the interview vary from one organization to another. In order to trace the general trend, we have tried to sense the main approach or orientation of each organizational policy, then group them into less rigid categories which can give us a holistic view.

The first category is what we call the system-approach policy. The FAO and NFED, for instance, put emphasis on utilization of media resources in accordance with people's needs, local identity and a specific goal.

The second one, goal-oriented policy, includes the PCDA and UNDP which clearly determine themselves to reach an ideal goal like self-reliance development basically through interpersonal communication processes. They are also open for their own specialized print media and other innovative techniques.

The third group puts stress upon maximum media-use policy. They are keen on training to produce more communicators of their own as well as on using all available facilities like mass media and dynamic groups. In this group are the AED, BAAC and the FHD.
The last category comprises the largest number of the samples. In the policy framework of the whole organization, communication in ten samples takes the role of service unit assigned to promote public relations or publicity through direct or indirect persuasive communication.

Apart from the above categories, the Thai Rath Daily (TR) and the Channel Seven (TV7) appear to show another approach of policy. Both of them aim at commercial expansion to rural sphere, but the newspaper expresses more concern about democratic ideology and better living of rural population than the television does.

Communication planning for rural development

In theory, policy is interlinked with planning. But it is not always true in practice. We found that few samples, with a certain kind of explicit policy, have no planning to fulfill the policy goal at all. On the reverse, all those having plans actually have a policy, which corresponds more to the rule.

We were told by only one interviewee that his organization, the KNF military-owned radio station, has long-term planning with monthly revision and half-year evaluation. This station, based in Bangkok, is one of the five stations within the network set up by the Defense Ministry Supreme Command Headquarters. This radio network—the only non-commercial among military-owned—and twenty-eight development mobile units are campaigning for nation, religion and monarchy.

Another organization, the Provincial Electricity Authority (PFA), is applying a kind of system planning, which for them means the building up of communication systems inside and outside the organization after having conducted a survey of combination factors, like needs, locality and distance.

The rest of the planning samples are equally divided into two groups of nine members each. The first one has adopted a sort of project planning. Most of them (BAAC, FHD, PCDA, PREGAT, PWI and WDP) prefer to first survey
local needs and problems concurred to the project, then bring in media resources and train communicators to use them in order to help attain the project goal more effectively. Meanwhile, the UNDP plans each project upon consultation between project manager and communication officer. The Thai Rath Daily also conducts a survey, but just to plan the construction of village schools which respond both the the local needs and the newspaper circulation policy. The Television Channel 7 as well has planning for its country-wide expansion project, but mainly set upon cost-benefit calculation.

The second group is attached to a traditional style of planning. Like all other government agencies of the country, they are practicing an annual planning based upon last year's budget and aimed at a better allocation for the next coming years. Each of them also has to draft a five-year plan to be compiled up at the ministry level. But this is merely a broad guideline to be loosely controlled by the upper authorities. According to the respondents, the AED, CU, PCD, GVC, NED, PRD and the TU are included in this official type. The Bangkok Bank Public Relations Department (PRDB) and the Thai Cement Company (TCC) said they also have an annual budget planning, but did not give more details about it.

Model or theory applied in the planning

Models or theories for rural development communication planning, like policy characteristics, vary a good deal among the users. For a better view, we upt them into three groups.

First, we call advanced-model group which includes the ones applying systematic models, integrated development models, communication or innovation theories down to organizational communication and multiple models. The PCDA has a most definite and systematic design which is shown on Chart 2. The UNDP and the CU have almost similar ones. The integrated and live-in models of the GVC and the PRD are among those of the most grass-root oriented.
For districts with motivational input only.
The Everett Rogers model, the adoption of innovation, is even overtly used by the ECD. Meanwhile, communication theory (to whom it belongs, we do not know) is applied by the PEA and the organizational communication paradigm by the PWA.

The rest of the group are multiple models selectors, e.g., the FAC, KRP, PREGAT and the TU.

In the second group there are those preferring the modernized public relations models: the PRBB and the PRID which are always developing better information services and more equitable relations with the clientele.

The last group is more or less traditional. The NFED, PRD and the TV 7, for example, are stuck to the principle of maximum information flow downward, while the others frankly told our interviewers that they have no model at all and just use common sense.

Evaluation and feedback

If we consider that operation evaluation and feedback utilization are two of the most important parts in the process of policy-making, planning and implementation, we should admit that most samples, some even without any policy or planning, have demonstrated a fairly good performance in this field. Twenty of them have at least evaluated their communication work for rural development and 21 mentioned they have utilized feedback from the evaluation outcome to adjust their behaviors or improve their performances.

Since the evaluations have been conducted on a different basis, and with different methods, it may not be valid to compare their results. Nevertheless, it is interesting to know them globally and to sound attitudes or even feelings of the respondents. Here are the results of all evaluations:
### Table 5

#### Evaluation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Satisfaction</th>
<th>Sample Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on Project</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**                    **20**
The global outcomes seem to be more positive than negative (14:3). But this cannot count much without a parameter chase-cheek. For instance, we happened to know that one of the negative results came from the PREGAT, which is generally known as a well-organized and well-done communication unit in the country. The degree of expectation often affects the degree of satisfaction.

Do you need communication planners and researchers?

This question surprised only seven interviewees who did not know yet what communication planning and research really are. They preferred not to answer it. But the majority said "yes." Sixteen as opposed to five expressed the desired need to have planners and researchers working with them.

Problems related to policy-making, planning and implementation

Problems perceived and explained by people on the spot are realistic and therefore more significant to this kind of study. It is more interesting to see whether their views are close to ours when we first started the study than to have already come to some conclusions in mind.

It is a little bit surprising but more comfortable to see, after analysis, that the problems expressed are all related to communication policy and planning, whether directly or not. Moreover, the questions used to investigate the problems and opinion had not been specified to channel the interviewees in this area at all.

Table 6 will show you classified issues and frequency of problems stated, but Chart 3 will give you an idea of how the problems are linked to each other, as well as to policy and planning areas, and how important they are among themselves. Afterward we will elaborate the meaning.
Table 6

Classified Issues of Various Problems and Number of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classified Issues of Problems</th>
<th>Frequency of Problems Stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National overall policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National communication policy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural development at national level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational communication; policy, organization, management, and manpower</td>
<td>(6), (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational communication planning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems and budget</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Policy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience-research-feedback</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total problems stated</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 3

Problems link up among themselves
and with policy and planning

- National overall policy
- National communication policy
- Media policy
- Finance and budget
- Organizational communication policy
- Organization and management
- Manpower
- Training
- Audience research feedback

---

Attention: The Singapore Copyright Act applies to the use of this document. Nanyang Technological University Library
By national overall policy, it means, from various points of view, complex political problems, shaky political policy and no clear policy in anything on the national level. Rural development, as well, has not got a clear and consistent policy. There is no marketing and industrial planning to support the rural development. Moreover, too many organizations have been created or oriented to focus on rural change without coordination or even an integrated approach.

On the other hand, national communication policy has never been as it should be. The governments or even the U.K., according to intergovernmental officers, have never really understood the meaning of development communication beyond public information services. That is why there is not enough government support and cooperation, both in public and private sectors in spite of needs and demands. It is then necessary to change attitudes toward communication for all those concerned down from the top level.

The media policy is also to be revised. The press law, for instance, is of an authoritarian character. The actual relationship between the media and the government departments have always caused problems. Worst of all, it is now difficult for development agencies to get radio frequencies for rural broadcasts because of ill-operated allocation.

The above-mentioned problems most probably are indicative of the microlevel policies and their implementations. A lot of problems are pointed out concerning organization, management, and particularly, manpower. Communication units in many organizations are, in fact, too small in space, equipment and staff, while assuming vast areas of responsibility. But the most serious concern for the organization is, of course, focused on inadequate and unqualified personnel. They are in need of communication professionals like technicians, researchers and planners. At the same time, they demand committed staff and not the secondarily-assigned and self-publicized persons.
In the field of planning, there are complaints about poor planning, lack of research-based long-term planning, lack of planners, as well as the continuing financial support for far-sighted projections. Budget is also one of the most raised problems, from private and international sectors and particularly from government agencies.

But the climax of them all is reached when we come to look at operational problems. Experiences had already given them many lessons and realizations in this specialized field of rural development communication. Their working concerns consequently touched the presumably most sensitive heart of the problem, that is, the audience or the receivers. For instance, some felt the difficulty of determining priority order of the target audience, there being so many people and communities under their responsibilities. Language is, for a few, a drawback factor found in some places. Many of the interviewees confessed they are almost blind-working, since they do not really know rural needs and media habits of the people. They do need feedback and data, therefore survey and research. But who could conduct qualified scientific works if they are not regularly and properly trained in methodology.

The need of training and seminar is also felt for specific skills, management know-hows, equipment uses, and especially for evaluation and planning techniques.

The Agricultural Extension Department (AED) even expressed demand for a national training center for rural development. It had been worried about excessive quantity without coordination for quality.

Conclusion of the case study

The findings are globally close to our hypothesis. Most organizations specialized in communication or rural development have more or less combined the two components, though in different manners,
which we will elaborate more later on. On the one hand, all samples, excluding media and media institutions of course, have a communication unit. Sixteen (or 72.78%) of these non-media ranked communication units as an important status from "section" level up to "department" one. Ten of them (45.46%) consider communication as a prestige component rendering professional services beyond the traditional public relations. On the other hand, 14 organizations, other than those directly assigned, realized the significance of the rural development and have taken some meaningful actions to support it. Nine of them (47.36% of all indirect concerned samples) have even put strong emphasis on the rural ideology.

The study has further confirmed the fact that, within the more advanced macro-level, most organizations (17 examples or 60.71%) have explicit and overall communication policies to support their rural development activities. Although the majority of them (ten samples) are being guided by publicity-type policy, some have gone forward to look into the future through system approaches or ultimate goal-oriented concepts.

Regarding the micro-planning, we are not much disappointed by the findings either, since 20 organizations (71.42%) actually have a certain kind of planning to materialize their development communication objectives. Their plans, however, are mainly either project-based or budgeting procedure-attached. Only few are practicing long-term or system planning. But the essential is that most are planning and they more or less know it needs improvements.

The models they use in the planning are more sophisticated than traditional. Fourteen samples (70% of planning ones) already went ahead to use some advanced theories in communication, information services and public relations. Only three are still backward in the bureaucratic tradition. Another three have no model and just use common sense.
Among the 20 self-evaluated organizations, 14 were again satisfied with their performances.

What is of more interest to us is that 16 of all samples (57.14%) felt the need to acquire specialists in communication planning and research. And seven (25%) seemingly needed sometimes to learn or think about it. The rest said "no."

Last, but not least, the problems they perceived seem to us never free from the centrifugal force of the policy, but going around in different ways because of different views and experiences. In brief, it is somewhat like what has been said by James Lyons:

"There is no one correct approach to system analysis. There are some fundamental aspects that must be adhered to, but the specific methodology should be at the organization concerned." 10

Nevertheless, the case study has given answers, particularly to one of our fundamental questions. Organizations are, as expected, ahead of their collectivity in policy and planning.

**Joint Efforts toward Training and Practices**

It is true that organizations have made more progress than their collectivity, as being told by the case study. But this fault would belong to the decision-makers at the national level rather than the one at the organizational level. Particularly during the last five years (1976–1980), many organizations had tried their best to improve their collective activities and to give better services to the nation and people as a whole. They have found that the only effective way to make use of public communication is to base it upon an overall and clear policy and to do it by planning. They have been motivating governments as well as organizing themselves to set policies and planning up together at certain possible levels.

---

The first international seminar ever held in Thailand to focus on the print media for development was organized in 1976 by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information centre (AMIC) and the Thammasat University School of Journalism and Mass Communication. It has laid an important foundation from which communication people have been conscientized to make themselves more useful to rural development. In fact, the Meklong Integrated Rural Development Program, experienced by a seminar coorganizer, had been giving a clearer idea for discussions. The seminar outcome finally went up to the then Prime Minister who afterward requested the AMIC and the Thammasat University to help construct the national communication system. The planning failed because of government change, leaving some structural concept in the fairly new MCOT News Agency.

The following years have been however marked by many seminars aimed to further push up the philosophy of national communication policy and planning. To be brief, but all seen, we put here a list of major seminar events in Thailand:

(1) National Seminar on Rural Newspapers by the Thammasat University and the AMIC in 1977.

(2) National Seminar on National Communication Policy held in May 1978 by the Public Relations Department of Government in cooperation with the communication faculties and Unesco.

(3) National Seminar on Information System for Rural Development jointly organized in August 1978 by the PRD, the MCOT, the Thammasat University, the AMIC and the Journalists Association of Thailand. This seminar, and the second one mentioned above, were more or less directly preparations for the Thai delegation to participate in the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania at Kuala Lumpur in February 1979.
(4) National Seminar on National Public Relations System in June 1979 by the PPD and the Public Relations Society of Thailand.

(5) National Seminar on National Communication Development in December 1979 by the Post and Telegraph Department, Ministry of Communications.

(6) Workshop on Developing a Curriculum for the Training of Extension Workers in Communication Skills, organized between August and December 1980 in Bangladesh and in Thailand by the AMIC, the Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Bangladesh Ministry of Information and the Thammasat University.

(7) Within the AMIC-EMCI series of the Seminar Project on Communication Policies and Planning, a Seminar on Communication Policies for Rural Development was held in Thailand as well in March 1981, again with the collaboration of the Thammasat University.

On the other side, rural development people also have joined hands to organize some important seminars and workshops to try to improve their methodology and their interaction as well as to convince political decisionmakers about how to peacefully and effectively solve national problems. One of their most updated workshops was held in June 1981 to work out a training methodology for the NGO resident development officers who would be assigned to work in the Towards Self-Reliance Project, in Northeast Thailand. The project is funded by the Canadian University Services Organization (CUSO) and jointly run by many official departments. The workshop outcome seemed to accentuate the communication role of village development workers and the need for far-sighted and democratic-approach policy from the governmental authorities at all levels. Whether these wishes would come true or not will be known only
after 1985, the last year of the project. But hope may not be too dull, as many professional development workers have started to put themselves together in some forms of association. They will probably target at the same democratic and self-reliance goal although they come from different organizations like the Population and Community Development Association (PCDA), the Education for Life and Society Foundation, the Girls Guild, the Thammasat GVC Alumni Group, and so on.

The role of educational institutions

More than just organizing or assisting those governmental and international organizations to hold seminars and workshops, all communication institutes are also busy with their own proper activities. They are teaching various disciplines of communication and producing about 300 graduates a year. But their works appear to be more and more oriented toward a societal development philosophy and reality. Curricula have been evolved from media-oriented (theory and practice) to area-specialized (e.g., public relations, advertising, information services) and now to a holistic approach with more accent on communication policies and planning for development. For instance, the Chulalongkorn University Faculty of Communication Arts has already been teaching Development Communication on a master’s degree level. The Chiang Mai University Mass Communication Department is committedly improving its course on rural communication. Meanwhile, policy, planning and research will be specifically dominant in the graduate curriculum to be implemented in 1982 at the Thammasat University.

These three communication institutions will most probably be coorganizing a workshop in February 1982 on developing a Thai communication education consortium. They would altogether be stronger in both academic
and community services. It can be hence hoped that their contributions will be more fruitful to the development of the communication functions in the Thai society.

In spite of uncertain national policy and heavy size of its own administration, the Ministry of Education, as mentioned before, is taking almost similar actions. Its fairly new Non-formal Education Department, in particular, is trying to use all media possible to promote adult literacy and functional education among rural population. Although equipped with the already cabinet-approved policy for educational reform, their mass media use on a national scale has never been accepted and implemented as such.

The role of professional associations

It is well-known that communication profession in Thailand is not yet as promising as law, medicine or engineering. The degrees of social responsibility are however comparable, but during the last five years, many media associations have come up to join the communication institutes in the path of national responsibility. They have definitely become more and more concerned with their influential role as change catalysts.

Again, the NICE-Thammasat Development Communication Seminar in 1976 seems to be landmark-type beginning. Among the many journalists who participated in that event were those from the Provincial Journalists Association of Thailand (PJAT) which will demonstrate more public interest later on. At least twice in 1978 and 1980, it organized, with Thammasat University, training courses in journalism and development communication for totally 100 working newspapermen from around the country. It is reasonable to hope that more than 200 provincial newspapers would become, in the near future, nation-wide, input-output components in a rural development plan. The response now depends on the government side.
Macro-Policy Needed for a New Communication System

Individual organizations and their joint actions have shown us a willingness to make communication more useful to each community as well as the society as a whole. The most important counterpart is still waited for to make it more effective, more economical and more equitable. That counterpart is any ruling government with a holistic view and future-approach policy.

There are of course the Press Law, the National Radio and Television Administrative Board, and some other policies and regulations. But it never means that any government has abandoned the old, negative view of communication and adopted the new positive one. Many reasons are obvious:

Firstly, at least during the last decade during 1970-1980, there has been little political stability. Eight governments are swiftly in power, each not long and strong enough to plan up any long-term perspectives other than the traditional Five-Year Plans.

Secondly, all governments are painfully criticized by the Press, so often that they must have a certain permanent kind of paradoxical attitude—or a love-hate emotion. They probably just do not want to do anything much in this field if not necessary.

Thirdly, political instability plus bureaucratic information machinery has easily made any government simply security and publicity-oriented. Probably like in Bangladesh, the government information agencies here can "only function as image-builders for the regime—and fail to develop as fountainhead for communication policy."¹¹

Another active group which has as well played a prominent role is the Journalists Association of Thailand, which used to coorganize many seminars on development topics.

Apart from the press associations, there is a list of many others:

First, the Public Relations Society which many times went up to persuade various governments to plan national information services. As mentioned before, it only succeeded to make the government declare a short-life state public relations policy during the last days of Kriangsak's regime.

Second, the Entertainment Correspondents Association, which for the first time, has introduced an award for prominent development television programmes in the series of Lekhala Annual Television Awards.

Third is the Thai Movie Producers Association. It as well starts presenting an annual award to the Best Film for Society of the Year.

The fourth association is the one dualy involved in musical professional promotion but apparently concerned with patriotism. It also tries to influence the highest authorities in the field of national policy.

Briefly, it can be concluded here that not only most organizations, but also almost every association in the field of communication and rural development have voluntarily done certain good things to assist in the nation building. They are having a clearer panoramic view of the relationship between them and the society. The only question is whether or not somebody, government or someone else, is looking at them with the same sort of panoramic sight. They simply need a counterpart who thoroughly understands them and know how to make collective works a mix-up of success pride and happy freedom.
It is obviously the most comfortable way for both government and its public relations department to attach to this old rule of one-way communication and to forget any innovative methodology which arises from either universities, professional associations or even their own updated institutions.

And, may it be also the safest way, since researchers or even laymen have found out that about half of the radio and televisions stations in the country belong to the interest complex of military ownership and business sponsorship. They are, therefore, one of the most important political bases, which any government would never dare to disturb. As a matter of fact, most governments are themselves military and business-based.

Now that the governments are not yet adopting and starting a macro-policy concept, do we need to go on insisting on them? We should quickly say "yes," because not only would various organizations concerned otherwise be stuck in old-fashioned individualism, but also the national development itself would fail.

In the field of communication, a holistic approach is necessary even though we desire to keep on the pluralistic character of the society. Disparate micro-policies and excessive commercialization cannot go far in less-developed nations, as these cannot yet produce their own hardware and it is evidently more economical to apply media on a larger scale. Only macro-policy and planning can give resource-optimizing solutions within the national framework of development objectives set by socio-economic parameters. It can as well create a communication system that could provide all people, urban and rural, with opportunities to make use of the media in improving the quality of their lives.

From this point of view, based particularly on our study, we should finally like to propose to the authorities—or anybody concerned the following recommendation-guidelines.
Concluding recommendations on policy and planning

First of all, it is necessary and urgent that the government, through a participatory-type policy committee and secretariat, formulate and monitor the functioning of an overall and explicit national communication policy.

This policy, based on socio-economic-cultural reality, should clearly present basic political guidelines for all organizations concerned with communication and/or national development with respect to their professional independence, technicality and capability.

This policy should, at its best, demand that all such organizations, including the government itself, while always improving their main duties, cooperate and coordinate in utilizing as much communication as possible to support national development with emphasis upon rural significance.

It should, at the same time, mention the necessity to include in every national development five-year plan, a sectoral plan to develop a national communication system as well as its appropriate and efficient participation in all other sectors in need of communication support.

Then, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), which is responsible for the national development five-year plans, should set up a planning committee and secretariat to specifically study and plan in detail the long-term development of a national communication system in response to the above-mentioned government policy and in accordance with the operational function of the general plan.

For the sake of success, the national communication policy committee as well as the NESDB communication planning committee, in their own structural composition and their works, should be borne with certain fundamental principles needed for communication administration in less-industrialized countries. These principles are public interest, unity, economy and
efficiency, democracy, professional independence, and national sovereignty. A study of broadcasting systems in France, Japan, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and West Germany has proved that more or less of these principles have been applied for communication structures and functions which have been working quite well without any major disturbances to libertarian philosophy.

In Thailand, the first tasks of the planners should be not only to learn lessons from those comparable countries, but to re-examine national and local needs that need to be responded to by the general and organizational development plans. Then, they should have to once again survey all communication resources, particularly the existing ones, in order to adjust, or even re-adjust, them into the plans, bearing in mind that communication is a sector to develop in itself and a sub-sector in many other sectors as well. It must be best enabled to serve the needs both directly and indirectly.

On the other hand, the rural development plan, already a sector in the fifth plan, should be so much improved in the sixth plan that it could better provide opportunities for all individuals and communities to properly develop themselves on the basis of self-reliance.

Here communication, as sector and sub-sector, can play an important catalyst role and can save much money and manpower if well-planned and accordingly applied. The authorities concerned should even try to insert it in the present plan as soon as possible instead of waiting for the sixth one to come in 1987.

12 Kaviya, Somkuan, "Broadcasting problems can only be solved by macro-planning," in Journalism 25 Years, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 1979 (in Thai).
To maximize, or even only to optimize, the utility of communication systems, it is inevitable to change its current status and form a new macro-structure. How it should be successfully done is a matter of research planning and implementation, of course, but we would like to suggest here a framework which is based on studies so far done and would hopefully serve as a base for eventual planning.

For the first stage, since we cannot drastically change things that have been deep-rooted for so many years, we should just link up the existing organizations concerned, while keeping their status quo, with some small by endurable bridges. This is what we might call operation coordination, the one that aims to maximize the outcome of sharing actions for the national goal. The media may be asked to coordinate with development agencies in order to bring about more development news, articles, programs, or documentaries. At the same time, the development agencies should adjust their communication attitudes and policies and put more investments in their communication works.

Radio and television, most state-owned and already under the NRTAB regulations, should be cooperative in arranging time and programming in such a manner that brings more choices of good and useful programs to the people. They might fix up time schedules for each type of program so that all stations could compete with each other by improving quality of the same type rather than dumping with any type. Or they might try to agree upon which stations would be specialized in which type of programs: news and music, music and culture, culture and news, etc. At least there should be a core specialization in all stations and an exchange of specializations among them.
For the second stage, planning should focus on system coordination. It should not take much time to start on this stage, because the system here does not yet mean a new one, but the existing one hundred and fifty broadcasting systems plus so many organizations involved in media and development. The task of the planners would be to build up stronger bridges or coordination between them.

We do not know yet what the linkages between the media and the development agencies should look like. No study has been done from our side and it should be left to the planners to figure out.

But in the areas of communication, studies have given us an overall idea of the system linkages which we would like to briefly describe. Most of all, we should not, if not so necessary, create any new organization, but develop the existing ones to be able to assume the coordination functions. These existing potential organizations are the National Radio and Television Administrative Board (NRTAB), the IICOT News Agency, the PRD Information Services, the Programme Production Centre, the Educational Technology Centre, the communication schools, and some professional associations. They can be developed as horizontal linkages not only to coordinate those vertically separated systems, but to solve many old-aged and painful problems resulting from non-coordination. For instance, many broadcasting conflicts of objectives and interests could be compromised and new sources of professional independence could be accepted through a more democratic NRTAB newly-made authentic national policy-maker. Production inadequacy could be recovered by a stronger national production center built up from various state-owned production and technology centers. Communication faculties would further cooperate to improve their degree courses while the PRD
school would become a prestigious national training center, concentrating on short courses, with an efficient budget, space and manpower.

Professional standards, both ethics and welfare, could as well be better attained by understanding support from the authorities based upon a new realistic policy. Some kinds of communication cooperatives might have to come to life, due to the necessity of better dealing with imported hardware suppliers.

The third stage would be the most crucial one, as it would restructure the existing systems and, from them, make a new national system. To us, this system organization should be in the long-range planning but accomplished in no longer than five years. Technology has rapidly become more and more preponderant and the country must learn and appropriately use it for the goodness of the whole. Satellite, for example, has started its communication functions, but we do not believe in its role as a development supporter unless guided and controlled by a properly-operated national communication system. This system would not be difficult to materialize if we started building it up from the existing PRD which, through its conscientious professionals, has long tried to become a ministry of information or public communication.

But this would-be ministry would not work, anyway, if those numerous systems would not be oriented to reduce their excessive independence and commercialization and to cooperate meaningfully. The national system must be a development communication center surrounded by semi-independent sub-systems which could be, to some extent, commercialized but must follow the democratic policy and the planned guidelines.
Once communication is well-organized, it is easier to improve its relationship with rural development. But those rural development organizations should simultaneously reorganize or restructure themselves in such a way that they can work better both individually and collectively. Then they would be able to coordinate well with the communication system, setting up and implementing together a combined policy and planning of communication for rural development in a most successful way.