HOW CAN COMMUNICATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO SELFDETERMINATION OF
RURAL WOMEN IN THE THIRD WORLD?

A Research Paper presented by

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. General background

The major proposition of my research paper is the need of selfdetermination by rural women in the Third World. The rationale is that:

1. women are the most marginalized, due to limited access to and control over resources and women's subordinated position in society at large.

   The analyses of the general problem of women's status arose from the basic premise, brought to the fore by women, that they contribute to development in various ways, but they do not always benefit from development equally or automatically with men. The U.N. Decade has given this an international focus and has led to specific policy approaches for women.

2. Selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World, in the sense that women can do something themselves to solve their problems, is based on the idea that many forms of communication do not include conscientisation in the communication processes. Often communications are imposed upon the women and do not include a creation of selfdetermination among women.

3. There is generally a lack of real communication, in the sense of interaction between the one with "influence" and the target group, in this case the rural women in the Third World.

My research question is: How can communications contribute to selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World. Hardly any information is available about the lives of rural women in the Third World. Generally they are portrayed, especially in the mass media, as passive victims and not as producers. The Western norms and values are dominating the structure of international communication. This has consequences for the process of development and often even hampers endogenous cultural development. Through the introduction of communications in development women tend to lose the ways in which they have always coped with their own environment. These development programmes are often based on models of economic growth and modernization, as proposed by the North. A question that arises
is, in whose interest are the communications in development. On the one hand women may have directly benefitted from information made available to them (e.g. growth in literacy rate, better health conditions) and on the other hand not many structural changes have occurred. The power is still in the hands of a minority, who controls the role of communications in development. Women can hardly participate in the production of messages, constructed for them. Women have less access to information than men. If information does reach them, it is generally along the sexual division of labour as perceived by men. In summary, rural women in the Third World get information through a variety of different forms of communication. This has implications for their self-determination.

1.2. Methodology

The research method which I have used is primarily secondary analysis of source materials about communications. Although a large percentage of the world's population, particularly rural women, is not reached at all by mass media, there is a growth in world communication facilities. My main focus is on mass media and communication through social and political institutions and less references are made to interpersonal forms of communication, due to the fact that within the literature on communications, more research is reported about these forms of communication. Within feminist literature I have not come across research about the relationship between communications and self-determination of rural women in the Third World. Little research has been done about women and communications and even less about rural women in the Third World and communications. Also within mainstream literature about participatory agricultural extension in the Third World, few references are made to women, though they are important agricultural producers in the Third World. I have used mainly critical studies on mass communication and on communications in development, because these are
the most useful within the framework of my research paper. Within these critical debates, gender so far has generally been ignored. This does not mean that these theories are irrelevant for feminists, however I see a connection with women's oppression and other inequities in society. The value of these theories for feminism can be if within these critical studies the scholars incorporate feminism into their arguments. I will try to relate my secondary analysis of source materials as much as possible to rural women in the Third World.

My experience of working with rural women in North-Yemen and my rural background have influenced this research paper, although no specific references are made to these experiences. Furthermore discussions with experts in communication, specially C. Hamelink from the I.S.S., have helped to shape this paper. Last but not least, I feel a strong commitment to rural women in the Third World which I think is a prerequisite to work with them.

1.3. Organisation of the paper

In the next chapter theories will be elaborated which are of importance in the framework of my research paper. The relationship between rural women in the Third World and communications will be examined in chapter three. After this I shall give a tentative answer to my research question: how communications can contribute to selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World. Based on this answer, conclusions and recommendations shall be given in the last chapter.
Chapter 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In the framework of this research paper I would like to elaborate four main concepts: communication, mass communication, extension and conscientisation. In this chapter I shall examine how these different concepts relate to conscientisation. In the process of selfdetermination, in the sense that people can do something to help themselves, conscientisation plays an important role.

With respect to mass communication, theories will be examined which give some possible answers to the relationship between mass communication and society. Two basic considerations are made: mass communication influencing society and society influencing media. I see these theories as important, because it shows a basic understanding of different approaches about what the media are doing.

All the theories and concepts mentioned in this chapter are important to elaborate before examining specifically the relationship between rural women in the Third World and communication.

2.1. Communication

Communication can be defined as social interaction by means of symbols. It is a process and the aim of communication is to transmit messages.

In the communication process five main elements can be distinguished: source, message, channel, receiver and effect. This is the SMCRE-model of Berlo (1962) as described in the literature about communication.

In the communication process there needs to be a source and a receiver. The source can be anything, but does not always lead to communication. If there is no receiver it is not possible to talk about transmitting information.

Information is transmitted in the form of signals and symbols. Signals are the soundwaves produced by ourselves or the electrical waves made by the radio. These are the carriers of
information, the channels through which messages are transmitted. Signals can become symbols, this means that on the base of a social system signals get meanings. Information says something about the reality in which people live. Words have cultural connotations and reflect many ideas of the social environment in which people live (1). This is called semantic information and it is of importance if one talks in another language or with people from a totally different social environment.

In the communication process selections are made: not everything does lead to communication. There is a whole series of variables which determine the selection, such as social, economical and psychological circumstances.

In order to send the intended message to one or more other persons, the sender encodes the message. The sender makes a choice of the codes and the channel, which can be human (including body language) or material (telephone, T.V.). The message will go to the receiver, who decodes the message, tries to understand and interprete the message.

The effect of the communication process functions as a source too. The message can be completely differently received by the recipient compared to what the sender intended to say. This can be so because of many reasons. Irrelevant information can disturb the communication process. Another reason may be selective perception of the message by the receiver. The choice of the channel plays an important role in the communication process too and there can be "defects" in the channel. The meanings of the codes and interpretations of the messages are also relevant. If the receiver mistrusts the sender, this will have implications for the interpretation of the message. Expectations need to be taken into account.

In summary there are many variables which determine the effect of communication. Figure 1 (2), shows a picture of diadic interpersonal communication, in which the communication process is illustrated. The above mentioned elements are coming back in this picture.
This illustration can be used to analyze communication processes, e.g. in extension, by using this model an evaluation can be made about what went wrong or well by sending the message to the people.

2.2. Mass Communication

Mass communication is one form of communication. Communication processes can take place in direct ways or indirect ways. Indirect means that communicator and receiver are physical and social separated in time and space and there is a medium in between. The processes can be public and personal and these can be informal and institutionalized. If we deal with mass communication the main characteristics of this form of communication are that it is public and indirect. There is rarely a possibility of reciprocity between the communicator and the recipient and it is institutionalized by means of technology.
There are many definitions of mass communication. I shall elaborate here only one definition of mass communication which is used in communication science (3): "to send messages, in which the sender conforms to everybody, at least does not make exceptions for the forthcoming receivers, in which he spreads the messages as such that no single other body can be excluded from being receiver, in which a channel is used to which everybody can be connected, in so far this depends on the sender" [my own translation].

I would like to make two footnotes regarding this definition.
1. It suggests that everybody can have access to information, because mass communication does not make exceptions for the forthcoming receivers. Throughout history we know that people all over the world do not have equal access to resources. This also applies to information.
2. In practice there are many forms of mass communication, from aiming at everybody to some receivers only. When we talk about mass communication, we are inclined to think about mass media such as newspapers, television and radio. Research has been carried out about this kind of media, while there are many other and new forms of (mass) communications like satelites and telecommunication which have impact on the lives of the people all over the world.

2.3. The Relationship between Media and Society

In the framework of this research paper I would like to emphasize the question of the relationship between mass communication and social change. The concern of the relationship between mass communication and society comes from the idea that mass media reflect and create social reality. In this section I shall elaborate how mass communication is influencing society and the other way around.
There are many possible answers and some theories which give different versions of this relationship. Those theories can not be applied universally, given the different historical circumstances. Sometimes the differences between the various theories are very small. Here an attempt will be made to explain some main theoretical approaches.

For this purpose I use the model proposed by Rosengren and described by D. McQuail (4). Rosengren has supplied labels as in Figure 2, and these serve as a classification of the main theoretical approaches. For the purpose to examine the relationship between media and society two basic propositions in the cross-tabulation are made: "social structure influences culture" and "culture influences social structure". Culture is seen as mass communication and social structure as social change.

![Figure 2 Types of relation between culture (media) and society](image)

- Social structure influences culture
  - YES
  - NO

- Culture influences social structure
  - YES
  - NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>YES Interdependence</td>
<td>Idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>NO Materialism</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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2.3.1. Interdependence explains that media can not exist without society. If people do not buy newspapers or televisionsets, these can not exist. There is a mutual cohesion and exchange between media and society. This interaction perspective can explain that the content serves the interest of the power holders in the economic and political sense. With respect to conscientisation this theory sees society as a passive mass society, with centralized control in the hands of institutions that exercise power. Those institutions deny the idea that individuals have the capacity to create alternatives according to their own interests. There is no space for change in this theory. One explanation for this is that people want to relax and be diverted from their problems like routine work and subjection to bureaucracies.
2.3.2. **Idealism**, related to the question of the relationship between mass communication and social change, proposes that media are primary moulders of society as well as reflectors of it. There are different uses of this theory, emphasizing either the technological aspects or the content. The first approach seems sometimes to be more "materialist" than "idealist". For developing countries the theory of idealism has been used many times. Media could help to "modernize" the people to better their lives. It has been used in development programmes to extend education, health care and agriculture. Together with these fields of social and economical development, advertising of new products also provides an example for the purpose to get these adapted by the people.

With respect to technological aspects, nowadays with the development of transnational companies, there are only a few companies which have the monopoly over the means of communication and the knowledge about it. This either withholds others from having this power or does lead to a competition with other forms of communication. After the "communication revolution" many new forms of communication became available which has led to a need for actions and explanations of information. There are theories (e.g. Frankfurt School) which see the power of mass communication shaping political and social reality and holding back structural change. In the mass media often images of the dominant class and way of behaviours in society are used to shape political and social reality. These common ways of seeing and understanding the world becomes the reality of the people. People get used to view the western values used in the media, while these are imposed upon them. According to this approach media can easily change society and can break down the traditional values and local structures.

2.3.3. **Materialism**, related to the question of the relationship between mass communication and social change, perceives the media as a reflection and a dependent variable of social structure. Media can not change society independently
and they reflect the material and social relations of the world.

To explain the materialist approach I would like to emphasize two main theories: structural marxism and hegemony.

Within the theory of **structural marxism** two bases are distinguished: the material base and the superstructure. The material base is constituted by the economic and the social relations of production. The superstructure covers law, religion, politics, social consciousness, bound together by state and ideology. The material base determines the existence of a particular form of state, ideology and social consciousness. Any change at the level of the material base will lead to the transformation of the superstructure. Ideology is seen in terms of ideas of the ruling class and reinforces the relations of domination over the workers by the ruling class (5). Consciousness is distinguished into real consciousness and false consciousness. Real consciousness is a form of social consciousness which does explain the process in which people become aware of their interests and the fundamental division within society. In this process people are willing to change the existing social and economic relations of production. False consciousness corresponds to the fact that people do not see their class interest and are not questioning the system.

Two considerations should be made with regard to this approach:

1. Consciousness is only used in the sense of relations of production. The key element is ownership and other forms of consciousness are not addressed. These can be issues like racism or sexism. A worker can be a racist in the street or a sexist at home.

2. It does not question the operation of ideology and its validity for people. For instance, religion can be very important at the level of human psychology and can have more value for people than ownership.

**Hegemony** is different from ideology as described above,
it does not express the ideas of the ruling class only, but also the acceptance of these ideas by the dominated class as "common sense". Hegemonic approaches emphasize the role of ruling ideas and ideologies in false consciousness. Gramsci (6) perceives hegemony not only as direct political control, but control through coercion, persuasion and oppression with consent. The domains of operation are: education, religion, mass media, trade unions, political parties and everyday life. Hegemonic control means the ideological control over the cultural, religious, political as well as economic domains. The concept of hegemony of Gramsci shows how ideology operates to maintain the relations of domination in society in order to change them. Politics are any activities which are intended to change the nature of the relations of domination, including "common sense", which has been built up through hegemony control. The politics of women's liberation tries to challenge the norms and values which have legitimized the position of women in all domains of society. Such politics can stimulate women to pay attention to the uncovering of hidden meaning and underlying structures of meaning in order to provide a new vision of society.

Both the theories of hegemony and the "superstructure" emphasize the influence of culture, even if within the culture itself many class, race and gender relations exist.

2.3.4. Autonomy
The view that culture and social structure can vary independently of each other is important to look at. The other theories try to connect media and social change, while the autonomy theory is more liberating and may be even intellectually proven to be correct. In tends to weaken those media approaches explained in the previous section which suggest that change is held back by dominant ideology and the view that countries need modern media on the western model in order to develop. There can
be variations in cultural forms, even mass mediated forms in societies with the same economic and political base. The idea of autonomy has a view of culture to protect the freedom of societies to make choices about their media and other cultural forms. This is a very important approach in which societies can resist modern media institutions and make their own decisions.

2.4. Extension

I shall give a general view about extension, although there are many forms of extension, with different approaches and aiming at different people. A definition of extension which is often used in the literature about extension is proposed by van den Ban (7):

"Extension is deliberate assistance to opinion- and decision making through communication" [my own translation]. Van Gent (8) describes extension as "an intentional and systematic attempt to be of use for somebody else in the field of knowledge and views, so that this person will be able to take a decision related to a specific case as independent and deliberate as possible and as much as possible corresponding his own interest" [my own translation].

I would like to make some footnotes regarding these definitions. The problem with the first definition is: who defines assistance here. According to van den Ban the client decides what his/her interest is. What the extensionist perceives as assistance does not necessarily correspond with what the client sees as assistance. In both definitions the client comes first and then the planned intervention. In the framework of this paper it is important to consider who is determining the interest of the people. Extension takes place in the tension field between the client and the planned intervention. Another important point of consideration is that extension alone may not induce change due to structural constraints. There are emancipatory forms of extension in which extension is seen as an instrument to change structural problems, e.g. empowerment of the poor.
Van den Ban (9) describes systematically what the activity of extension aims at [my own translation]:
- to help client(s) to analyse their situation now and what it will be in the expected future and
- to become aware of the problems which can arise, thereupon
- through extension of knowledge and experience
- to help these client(s) in respect to a certain problem
- to acquire knowledge and experience as well as to become aware
- in order for client(s) to better:
  - act upon the be considered alternatives
  - make a justifiable choice
  - accept this choice as the optimal in their situation
  - to be motivated to execute this choice
  - and help the client(s) with the evaluation of their decision making
  - in order to enrich their capacities to take justifiable decisions.

2.5. Conscientisation

Paulo Freire (10) perceives conscientisation as the learning process to understand social, political and economical contrasts and take actions against the oppressive relations of reality. The movement of reality has to do with the process of understanding the contradictions of reality, this means to touch problems of the interest of power. Conscientisation mobilizes people to become subjects of a historical process which they are part of, in stead of being objects of a world of top-down authority lines, funding and habits of thought.

The ideology of bottom-up empowerment through dialogue is very important in this theory. Freire define dialogue as: "an interactive process through which humans reflect and analyse, become able to name and understand their situation in the world and hence to act on it and to transform it". The problem many times is that those at the top do not want to dialogue, their interest is to keep the control over the people. People are made objects in their own reality, while they are subjects in the world and with
the world. Praxis is proposed as action and reflection. People do relate to the world in a critical way, they act, change, reflect and deal with problems. The integrated person is a person as subject and the adaptive person is a person as object, like an animal which adjusts to the environment. Freire uses humanism in the sense that people are subjects, can create, recreate and take decisions. If people are in a world in which they are denied as human being, imprisoned or stuck to the structure or its parts, than there is a need for a liberating struggle. People are often conscious about their live in their historical, social and cultural reality. They are conscious of their oppression, however the experience of a dialogue of participation with the top is often not present.. Another point may be that people have an attitude of distrust towards the top, so people feel it is better not to dialogue with the top. There are many reasons behind this of historical, cultural, sociological and structural nature (e.g. feudal structures, a pre-colonial structure).

In the next section I shall elaborate the concept of conscientisation and its relation to extension.

2.5.1. Extension vs. Communication

Freire (11) defines rural extension as "the educational and technical assistance efforts of outside agencies acting through extension agents or extension workers to "extend" or transmit to peasants knowledge that is designed to improve farming practices, etc.". Freire perceives the difference between communication and extension as follows. Within the concept of extension the extensionist is viewed as the one with knowledge and has to give contents into empty consciousness of people. This notion is related to the false conception of knowledge. Knowledge is seen as something neutral and in its imposed traditional sense, knowledge is perceived as being of more value than what people know already. Freire proposes the need for sharing knowledge with others as a condition for knowing, through dialogue and commitment. Everybody knows and is
prepared to know more. Knowledge is created and recreated by all human beings. The educators of knowledge prefer to control this knowledge, this shows that education is not a neutral act, but a political act. Many of these educators work in the name of science, and do not question people's reality. So people are viewed as passive receivers. The extensionists feel that it is wasting time to dialogue with peasants about a technical method which they do not know yet. Through this way of transmitting knowledge, people are placed in a position which domesticates rather than liberates. There is a need for a system of relationship between the peasant and the extensionist in which both technology and humanity are involved. Conscientisation can only operate through the relations of transformation human beings established between themselves and the world, it is not an individual act, but a social one. Consciousness-raising as a feminist method of empowerment has been used in some places in the World. In the next section I shall examine consciousness-raising groups in the West.

2.5.2. Consciousness-raising as a feminist method of empowerment has reached thousands of women in Northern America and Western Europe in the 1960s and 70s. This happened in small groups, women learned from each others experiences and personal life was seen as political. In those groups was no qualified leader, everybody could be a leader. Many women gained a lot in the area of consciousness. More knowledge emerged about the oppression of women. Women started to fight against their oppression and started to organize womenpower. Also at theoretical level a lot of progress has been made. It was expected that from the individual experiences of women, collective action could be established. This was not a goal in itself, because any aim depended on the group needs. Womenpower is still limited. Many of these groups did not make a link with the superstructure and the material base, while these are also important issues of women's oppression. Some of these
groups feel a need to put this method of consciousness raising in a wider perspective, to guard towards social action.

The difference between this feminist method and Freire's method is that the last method does lead to social action. The principle of the personal life as political, as used in these women groups is not present in Freire's method. Freire perceives the oppressed as one homogeneous group. In his method specific issues related to male-female relationships are not addressed. Important to mention is, that also women do not constitute a homogeneous group. There is a diversity of women with different class, race and age background. Many of these women consciousness raising groups were characterized by western middle class women who had difficulties in taking up issues like class and race, because women's oppression in society was seen as the main core of the problem rather than other forms of oppression.

2.6. Summary

I have analysed in the preceding sections communication, mass communication and extension and the relation of these concepts to conscientisation. The analysis has shown that generally conscientisation is not a part of communication processes. The sender transmits messages with the intention to get these adopted by the recipient. In mass communication there is hardly a possibility of reciprocity between communicator and recipient, while in interpersonal communication processes it is more possible to dialogue. The approaches about mass communication try to connect media and social change. Idealism emphasizes that media can change society, while materialism emphasizes that media can not change society independently. Within the approach of interdependence there is no space for change, because there is a denial of the view that people have the capacity to create alternatives according to their own needs and interests. The autonomy approach does not connect media and social change
and looks at what people themselves want and can do. This theory is important when we address the selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World.

Notes:
(7) A.W. van den Ban, *Inleiding tot de voorlichtingskunde*, Boom, Meppel, 1974, p-12
(8) B. van Gent, *Voorlichtingskunde, een overzicht*, Boom, Meppel, 1985, p-12
(10) P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Herder and Herder, 1971
CHAPTER 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RURAL WOMEN IN THE THIRD WORLD AND COMMUNICATION

Introduction

In the previous chapter I have examined communication at a theoretical level. In this chapter I shall elaborate the relationship between rural women in the Third World and communication. Given the fact of lack of research available about rural women and communication I perceive the following sections as important in the framework of my research paper.

In the beginning I examine the position of rural women in the Third World and a general picture shall be given about the communication environment in the rural Third World. A model will be examined of the process of bringing information to people. After this an analysis is made of information programmes for the rural poor, both women and men, and of the international dimension of communication.

3.1. Rural Women in the Third World

Women do play an important role in agrarian societies in the Third World. Research has shown that women represent half of the world's adult population and one-third of the labour force, they perform for nearly two-thirds of all working hours and receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one percent of the world's property (1). It has been estimated that women directly produce over 50% of the world's food supply. Women are the main family providers.

There are different kinds of agrarian production societies: societies with subsistence oriented production, commodity production or combinations of these two kinds of production. Rural women in the Third World are differentiated with respect to their activities, resources they can mobilize to pursue them and the incomes they derive from them.

In this paper I shall not go into detail about the differences, but I offer some general remarks about rural women in the
Third World which give an understanding about the position of women and the relations between men and women.

Women play different roles in different agrarian societies. The division of labour between men and women, the sexual division of labour, is socially constructed and assigns certain tasks to women and others to men. There is a wide variation in the sexual division of labour and this has changed over time. The sexual division of labour in capitalist countries implies a differential valuation of female and male tasks which tends generally value women's tasks less than men's tasks and this may be manifested in the differential access to and control over resources. The valuation of women's tasks, in ideological and material terms may explain women's subordination. It "appears to express, embody, and furthermore to perpetuate, female subordination" (2).

The fact that rural women in the Third World generally have limited access to and control over land, labour and capital is another indication of their subordinated position in society. A key determinant in agrarian societies is the access agrarians have to land as a means of production. There are more factors which determine their position in agrarian societies such as access to cultivation and employment opportunities and other production resources. The possibilities of both women and men of having access to and control over resources tend to be mostly to the disadvantage of women. Women generally have indirect access to resources, in relation to men. Women's status is often defined by that of their husbands and/or other male relatives. People who have and control production assets have a purpose of accumulation and a stronger bargaining position. The material and immaterial base for rural women in the Third World consists mainly of their children, husband and extended family.

The world of the family, the so called private world, is the domain of women. Women do have power in the private
sphere, but this is not translatable into social power or position in the larger society (3). Traditionally women are not used to "participate" in the so called public world. This is perceived as being the world of the men. Generally men prohibit their wives from the public world and women have to present their interests through their husband and/or male relatives. This lack of experience in the public sphere and lack of authority have implications for class consciousness or collective solidarity. Many women do depend on their husbands and on the other hand women themselves consider the household as private, which hinders the above mentioned actions.

The notion of the household as private is related to the concept of the household made by policy makers. The household is defined as a basic unit, all the household members will benefit equally and the man is considered the head of the household. Policy makers do not look at what happens inside the household, because that is the private world, and not public domain. This has an impact on planning, statistics and policy making.

There is in recent decades an increase of the number of rural households headed by women e.g. caused by wars and emigration. At present the number of these households is estimated to be one-third of the total. Due to limited access to and control over resources and women's subordinated position in society, many of the female headed households are among the poorer strata.

Rural women in the Third World do get information through different forms of communication. In the following section I shall examine the information background in the rural Third World.

3.2. The Rural Information Environment in the Third World

To give a picture of the communication environment in the rural Third World is not an easy task, because there are many
differences among Third World countries and also among different types of media. The countries can be different with respect to their governmental structure and levels of development. Also within countries there are differences. In general, the majority of people in the rural Third World lives under conditions of real poverty. Based on objective standards this means that they have less calorie intake, low productivity, high workburden and do have less access to and control over resources and services. Among them, the women are even more disadvantaged depending on their social and class position. Many Third World countries do depend upon advanced countries in the economic sense.

First of all I shall give a generalized picture of the different forms of communication in the rural Third World.

1. The interpersonal forms of communication:
The richest and largest form of communication is the interpersonal form of communication. This is a whole network of personal and informal contacts through which people give and receive information. This happens through the family, neighbourhoods, market places and washing places. Such networks serve the kinds of content that usually flow in each neighbourhood, such as news, cultural information reinforcing traditional values and price information on local goods (4).

My question is why this rich resource of informal mass communication is very seldom used in development information programmes. I refer here to the fact that the possibilities to dialogue and to exchange information, are still not used sufficiently.

2. The mediated forms of mass communication:
In general in the rural Third World are less mediated forms of mass communication available than in the urban areas and than in the developed countries. The mass medium that is often available is the radio. Other mass media that may be available are newspapers, pamphlets, posters or films. The function of these forms of communication is not
only to provide information, but also to offer entertainment. Sometimes a telephone or mail service is available. These can be seen as interpersonal communication, although there is a technical medium between sender and receiver. There may be also forms of communication available from and to local groups who use mass media, and/or group media like posters, exhibitions and wallpapers.

3. The social and political institutions:
Another source of information in the rural Third World is through social and political institutional networks, such as schools, churches, development projects and programmes. Usually the information given by these institutions serve to promote the continuation of the structure. There are some types of information that directly benefit people. For instance agricultural extension agents who offer new information and beside this information they may also offer material resources as credits and seeds. In the field of health primairy health care workers give information about health and may also provide medicines. The aim of these development programmes is to improve the lives of the rural people.

3.3. A Model of the Process of Information's Spread and Effect

In the process of bringing information to the people, different stages need to be distinguished. To explain this within the context of rural development, I use a figure compiled by Emile G. McAnany (5). To read this model you have to start from the outermost circle, each following stage is needed in order to have an impact. Access is a condition for achieving exposure and both are neccessary for achieving content, etc.
I shall now explain these five stages, to assist the understanding of how this model works.

In most rural areas, access in the sense of availability regarding mass media is primarily, to print and radio. This can be individual access, but it might also be a situation of a shared magazine or radio. Radio can be more accessible than print, because of the low literacy rate, which is among women in many Third World countries even lower than among men. Another point of consideration is the quality of the signals received. In some countries it is more difficult to send messages to the rural areas than in others due to infrastructural problems (mountains, lack of roads). As explained in section 3.1. people in the rural areas can also have access to political and social institutions. So far access is limited to the reception of messages, it is important to consider also the access to participation in the construction of the messages and the distribution. Many times the top-down approach, with the people viewed as passive receivers, is still used.

Exposure can be explained as hearing, seeing and experiencing. The meaning of the words is in this sense very important. Words have concepts on the base of a social system and these show the way of thought and functioning of the
related reality. So can certain words completely different be perceived in different localities. For instance, democracy in Nicaragua means something completely different than democracy in Sweden, while the same word is used. Signals can be transmitted differently in different situations (verbal, non-verbal and with the use of techniques), which can have different impact on people. The dialogue is also important when we adress the effect. If people can not feedback especially when the information is about a completely new subject, it will be more difficult to get the message adopted by the people.

About the content many studies have been made. Content can be separated into entertainment programmes, educational programmes, information, music and others. There are many different kind of programmes which can be offered by media through one channel. It is important to recognize specific images, norms and values in the different programmes. For instance, when a new product is offered through media, implicitly modern and progressive living is told or shown and according to these notions consequently better. Furthermore specific images about women are sent. Generally rural Third World women are not recognized as producers. Information regarding agricultural production is mainly made for men and is about men's reality.

The next step of the model is the information outcomes. This refers to what has been learned from the programmes, as a result of exposure. These outcomes can be a result from a single exposure and from exposures over a period of time. Exposure may happen at an individual or group level. The impact of the exposure can be affective, cognitive or attitudinal. About the effect of communications, studies have been made of which I want to elaborate two main models, which are also related to the last step of the model. These two main models are: Stimulus-Reaction model (S-R) and Stimulus-Organism-Reaction model (S-O-R). The S-R model is the first major theoretical model in communication
research and is still important. Mass communication in this model is proposed as a mechanical process, in which the mass media distribute contents which will be passively received by the public. This will all be along the lines intended by the communicator. Society is seen as a mass society. The only thing that mass media have to do is to send correct messages. Correct in the sense to reach their goals.

Within communication research questions were raised such as: Are people just passive receiver and do people have their believe systems, their norms and values regarding mass media? As a result another model has been established: the S-O-R model. This model proposes that between the message and the effect, are intervening variables, so called predispositions (6). The effect will not always be in the same line as the stimulus. The intervening variables can be distinguished in two categories according to Klandermans: communication dependent predispositions and communication independent predispositions. The first category refers to characteristics directly related to the messages e.g. if a message is believable the effect will be greater. The second category refers to personal, social and/or economic characteristics, e.g. higher educated people are more interested in news and newspapers than lower educated people, they are more directed towards entertainment.

Social outcome, is the final stage of the model. This means any social change resulting from the programmes. It includes both short- and long- term outcomes. The results can be changes in the level of health care and agriculture productivity.

In order to examine the relationship between communications and rural women in the Third World I analyse in the following section, information programmes for the rural poor, both women and men, in the Third World.
3.4. Development Information Programmes for the Rural Poor

The assumption in many development programmes is that information made available contributes towards the improvement of the lives of the people. Development programmes are often based on models of economic growth and modernization. Examples of these development information programmes are in the field of education, health, agriculture and family planning. Development policies based on economic growth are mainly originated in the North. A model of economic growth shows that for the increase in the per capita income, a raise in the production is required, which partly depends on capital accumulation. However in developing countries the surplus of the production of goods is low, because of the low per capita. Another important fact is that the surplus goes mainly to the classes who own the means of production (7). For developing countries it is not so easy to break out the vicious circle of poverty. Access to growth is generally kept for a special class. The role of information in the development process is seen as important by policy makers, in the sense that once information is made accessible, the position of people in the Third World will be better. The danger of this phenomenon is that the role of information may be overemphasized. There are many factors which determine the situation of the rural poor in the Third World. Information can not be seen as an independent variable. In this section I would like to mention some constraints on an information approach, constraints at macro and micro levels.

Often government's priority in the Third World is not the rural poor. These people are the most difficult to reach, high in numbers, are less educated and do have little material resources. The already existing conditions make it more difficult to communicate with the rural poor (8). The situation of the rural poor is determined by access to assets and distribution of assets, labour relations
and government intervention. The priority of the
government is generally not structural changes, such as
changes in land tenure. Among the rural poor is a growing
number of landless labourers, both men and women. For
them agricultural information is irrelevant. The knowledge
will go to the farmers with land and probably among them
the ones who can have more productivity on their land
(under circumstances as farms size, received credit or
supplementary income) and not to the ones whose productivity
is already at a maximum of efficiency. There is still a
tendency to see the failure of programmes and projects,
because the target group did not use the information
given to them. The people are blamed, while generally
within the given information social, economical and
political elements of the problem are not taken into
consideration (9). Another problem may be that rural poor
have a built-in bias against information from the government.
They may feel that the government is not really intent
on improving their lives. This is especially the case
where people are at the bottom of the social system,
unless the government has already taken some steps
in favour of them.

The problems described above are related to the macro
level. The following section will examine some constraints
on information programmes at the micro level.

Research about the lives of the target group is often not
sufficiently carried out in quality and quantity. Generally
programmes are made with assumed needs and concerns for the
rural people. This can have tremendous consequences for the
lives of the people. It is important to look at who is
determining the interests of the people concerned. Often the
interests are determined by other people, the target group
can hardly participate in the planning. This can lead to
situations that people get information, which they may not
understand because of the language used, in the broadest
sense, which can be alienated from their actual situation.
The information may not lead to agricultural productivity, because the productivity is already at a maximum of efficiency or resources needed are not available or accessible. In many developing countries the approach of "integration into development" is used. An important question which arises from this approach is what kind of development are people integrating into. Many programmes and projects are made for them and not with the people.

Another question which arises is who is benefitting from this development and information: men, women, which social classes? Generally the ones who are the most likely to take information or to give information to, are the relatively better off. This widens the gap between different social classes. Another consequence may be that information widens the gap between the position of men and women. Often agricultural information is given to men and the women do not get the information. Women's role as agricultural producer is hardly recognized. While in many situations in the Third World, women and not the men are the main family providers, even in areas where the norm is otherwise. Due to these kind of programmes women remain outside the mainstream of agricultural development.

The organisational structure of projects may have impact on results of the project. In general hierarchical structures limit the participation of rural people to bring to the fore their interests. In many projects and programmes in the rural areas, is a lack of trained people. A problem with training is that often people are trained outside (another country or in the town), were they generally learn alienated concepts, theories and practices. It is then difficult for the people being trained, to use these in the rural areas or it may not correspond with their culture at all. Often high value is given to this kind of training and as a consequence it may be that the trained people prefer to work in the city, e.g. at a ministry.
The role of information and communication in development is at international level a phenomenon. So far I have mainly focussed on information through social and political institutions and less on mass communication. In the next section I shall elaborate the international dimension of the role of information and communication in development in general.

3.5. The Role of Information and Communication in Development: The International Dimension

International communication refers to communication across borders. Communication has always existed throughout history, however since the last three decades more forms of communication exist due to technology, the development of transnational corporations and the international consumerist world.

The information industry became a phenomenon in the 1950s through the growth of transnational corporations. Only a few companies control most of the market, because these have the capital, the knowledge and the technology. Many developing countries felt that since they had missed already the "industrial revolution", they did not want to miss the "information revolution". The use of media is perceived by Third World countries as important to develop their countries. The assumption of information programmes is that information is easily accessible. Within mass communication a channel is used to which everybody can be connected. The sender does not make exceptions for the forthcoming receivers. It suggests that everybody can have access to information. We live now in a period which is called the "information society" (10). Access is not only limited to availability, it is important to consider also the access to participation in the construction of messages and the distribution. Most of the information is produced to meet the needs of those who own the communication systems. By analysing the power relations in historical perspective, we see
that fundamentally not many changes have occurred. In agricultural societies land is power, in industrial societies capital is power and in "information societies" information is power. Not everybody can have land or capital or information. Many Third World countries are still influenced and controlled by communication systems and messages from outside, especially from the metropolitan centres. Some alternatives have been established, like the Inter Press Service, the only professional press bureau from and about the Third World. And more alternatives are built up, but generally the West or Western values dominate the information world.

3.5.1. The International Debate

Since the establishment of the United Nations, after the second world war, information- and communication concerns are discussed at an international level. The period of 1973-1976, which is called the period of decolonization of communication, was an important time for developing countries. The governments of the non-aligned countries had analysed the situation and demanded a new International Information Order, the one which still existed reflected the colonial times. Many debates took place at international level during this period, especially about the view that governments of Third World countries were against the free flow of information across borders, as conceived by the North. Governments in the North are afraid to undermine their press freedom and do not want to have protectionist borders between countries, with respect to the flow of information (11). In 1978, in a meeting of UNESCO, a resolution was established for a more justifiable and effective world order for information and communication. The North dominated by highlighting the importance of bringing knowledge, technology and financial resources to the Third World.

In 1980 the New World Information and Communication Order has been established on paper in UNESCO. Although the non-aligned countries formed a block in this whole debate,
they gave up their political wishes in exchange for technical assistance and financial aid from the North. The governments of non-aligned countries wanted to have an exchange of technology and knowledge about e.g. journalism and filmmaking. Beside these, they wanted also a fundamental restructuring of flows and content of information, just like in economic sense, governments of Third World countries want restructuring. The non-aligned countries are now still users of a communication product of which the knowledge, technology and control is in the hands of a minority. The Third World is affected by cultural imperialism of the West and often information is alienated from their own reality. News in the West about the Third World gives a distorted reality, providing more sensational news than educational information (12). The New World Information and Communication Order as proposed by the North tries to obscure that this Order has to do with economy. There is no denial that the concern of information and communication is a structural political-economic problem.

3.5.2. Research about Women and the Media

UNESCO's programme of activities in the field of women and communication started two decades ago. Nevertheless there is still a lack of detailed analysis and systematic articulation of the women's question. The second Medium-Term Plan (1984-1989), adopted at UNESCO's 4th Extraordinary General Conference in 1982, reveals the analysis that it is not so easy to led women integrate into development, which is mainly determined by men, within the framework of existing social relations and the status traditionally reserved for women (13). Research available about the relationship between women and media is mainly done in North America and Western Europe, the analysis of the situation is originated there. This research has been dominated, especially in the seventies by a liberal perspective, focussing on the presence, absence and circumstances of women in media content and institutions.
Through solving these inequities within the existing system the problems could be solved, according to this analysis. There is a growing awareness that women's oppression can not be solved by focussing on gender alone and the notion of gender oppression as a simple reflection of capitalism seemed not to be fully applicable. Throughout the world it is needed to have more research about content analysis and audience effects. There is still little known about how audiences process and use portrayals of gender over time. Communication research about comparative studies of women's roles and representation in the communication systems of different nations, studies of gender with respect to new communication technology, and research at a variety of levels on gender considerations in development communication, is hardly available (14).

3.6. Summary

I have shown in the previous sections that rural women in the Third World form the most disadvantaged group in the world. They are important producers. Information about this fact is nearly never brought to the fore or perceived. I have examined the constraints on information programmes for the rural poor. On the one hand some information directly does benefit women and men and on the other hand information contributes to the continuation of the dominant structures. Many programmes are made for the people and not with the people. Generally the makers of the information and communication programmes prefer to keep the control over the people. At the international level, the role of information and communication is a recognized phenomenon. Within UNESCO and other international agencies debates take place about the relationship between the North and Third World countries. However the women's question is still not articulated sufficiently.
Notes:

(1) World Conference of the UN Decade for Women, Programme of Action for Second Half of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, New York, UN, 1980

(2) M. Mackintosh, in Of Marriage and the Market: women's subordination internationally and its lessons, eds. Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz and Roslyn McCullagh, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1984, p-4


(5) ibid, p-25


(7) M. Kunczik, Communication and Social Change, communication manual, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1984, p-48


(9) ibid, p-20


CHAPTER 4: HOW CAN COMMUNICATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO SELFDETERMINATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN THE THIRD WORLD

Introduction

So far a description has been given about the situation of rural women in the Third World with respect to communications. The major proposition of my research paper is the need of their selfdetermination. Selfdetermination is defined in the sense that women can do something to help themselves. Selfdetermination is a process and differs in each specific social, economical and political context. However an attempt will be made to answer my research question: how communications can contribute to selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World. I will examine some dimensions of importance in the process of selfdetermination. After this a model of participatory communication shall be elaborated which is of interest in order to give a tentative answer to my research question.

4.1. Interest Representation

An important dimension of selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World is that women can bring to the fore their own interests. The extent to which interest representation can be realized is determined by relations between men and women (gender relations) and relations among women (class, race, religion). Women's status is often defined by that of their husbands and/or male relatives. Generally women have to present their interest through their male relatives, which may effect interest representation of rural women in the Third World. Social differentiation contributes to the understanding of different interests among women. However within one class not all women shall perceive the same interests. For instance, women can aim at individual practical solutions or they can try to reach structural changes. Within feminist literature a number of different conceptions prevail about what women's interests are. These
rest implicitly or explicitly upon different theories of the causes of gender inequities (1).

In the framework of my research paper my emphasis, with respect to interest representation of rural women in the Third World, is on endogenous and exogenous interests. By endogenous interests I understand interest representation as, interests brought to the fore by women themselves and exogenous interests refers to interests proposed by others, for the women concerned.

4.2. Mobilisation

Mobilisation of rural women in the Third World is another dimension of importance in the process of selfdetermination. Mobilisation is the process of activating people to pursue their common interests. Here again the questions arise, who is activating the women and who is defining the common interests of the women.

The material and human resources are important in the process of mobilisation. Women will not risk their material and immaterial base. It is necessary to allow the understanding which claim upon resources are prioritized by the women themselves. Important claim upon resources of women can be: their relations with their husbands, kinship or patron, their material base and their religion.

Political (e.g. influence of the State), cultural and ideological (e.g. predominance of a patriarchal structure) aspects are important in respect to mobilisation processes. These all establish different social conditions for mobilisation. The problems faced by women in a certain structural and cultural situation are easily recognized as the same as confronted in another situation, but similar problems cannot always be solved with the same strategies (2).

First of all, before taking actions, it is important to have a high level of awareness or analyses, in order to identify the phenomena and to share these names. Not the leaders should define the phenomena seen from their theoretical perspective,
they should do this with the women concerned. Only then it is possible to speak of real mobilisation.

4.3. Alternative communication

The previous sections have shown that there is a need to transform the dominant communication structures. People are for a major part informed by professional communicators, while the public has the right to inform as a social and individual right.

My main argument is for an alternative to the present dominant structures. Within literature about alternative communication emphasis has been given to small-scale self-reliant projects which try to turn away from the existing society. In this section I shall elaborate a model of alternative communication which aims at a fundamental transformation of not only the dominant communication structure but of society as a whole (3).

The objective is participatory communication, not only in the communication process itself, but also within the overall socio-political structures. A reasonable and material participation of the public plays a very important role, which should be defined as the totality of all kind of social groups, from ecological movements to the church. Starting with the aim of making the public the subject of communication activities. A fundamental precondition for participation is a certain minimum level of education. The communication structure needs then to be characterized by a high degree of participation and to contribute directly and effectively to enlarge all forms of active participation in the whole society and particularly in the communication media. People have to participate in their own communication structures and which produce and distribute information for them. This has nothing to do with the choice between socialism or capitalism, but with real participation of people according to their needs. The communication structure has to be
flexible. It has to adapt easily and effectively to the change in the needs of the population resulting from the public evaluation of communication or from the society as a whole. Individual and collective appeal and accountability have to be created to guarantee equal participation. Everybody should bring to the fore their interest in a democratic way.

Stangelaar describes (4) the fundamental characteristics of this model of participatory communication [my own translation]:

1. Interaction between sender and receiver, through which mutual communication possibilities can be enlarged.
2. Production and distribution of messages, which pursue an interaction between the informational and cultural values of daily-life experiences of the public and the professional communicators.
3. Accessibility to form and content of these messages and the distribution activities to the public, for such a minimum educational level is required.
4. Access to production facilities and distribution channels for the public for control and rectification as well as for their own use.
5. Organisational participation of the people in the educational structures. These performing a task within and outside the media structures and in the governmental institutions, in which both the education- and the communication policy are formulated and implemented.
6. Organisation of the public in respect to a critical following and eventually changing of media activities and products, which many different people consume.
7. To establish representative and coordinating institutions, in which interests of society in its totality could be promoted. With delegation of the governments's right to inform to this level and with participation of the public and professional organisations.
8. Evaluation structures, which can guarantee and inform the public about the effects in terms of the level of activity and multidirectionality of social processes of communication.
4.3.1. The Origin of the Alternative

To arrive at an understanding of the relationship between alternative communication and the total alternative to the present society, the origin of the alternative will be examined in this section.

Stangelaar (5) analyses the origin of the total alternative to the present society with reference to J. Galtung (1979). If the assumption is that every development has two basic purposes: to satisfy fundamental human needs and that the satisfaction of the needs of one may not go at the cost of another, the problem is the interaction between the problems of underdevelopment and overdevelopment. These problems need to be perceived in the context of allocation of material and immaterial resources. This means that underdevelopment implies overdevelopment in other parts of the world. It is the instability of over- and underdevelopment which makes it impossible to solve these problems within the dominant structures and which will lead to alternatives.

To explain this a rather simple division is made: material welfare and immaterial poverty in the industrialized countries and immaterial welfare and material poverty in the Third World.

It are self-protection reactions of people which conflict with the dominant forms of living, promoted by the existing structure. Within this division, described above, an attempt has been made to find an equilibrium in material and immaterial consumption and production. Alternatives can be passive (minimum alternative) and active (maximum alternative). Passive alternatives will not lead to mobilisation and organisation in the first place, but these can become active. The soft forms of alternatives, which are relatively active, are formed through human self-protection reactions of people, against hard forms of alternatives and dominant forms of living. It is important to form a society in which people can have
these self-protection reactions and the public can decide on their own level of participation and activity. Only then is it possible to speak of selfdetermination of people.

With respect to alternative communication as part of the total alternative to the present society, the division of Galtung, is only partly of importance, especially regarding the view that economic development within capitalistic societies will lead to social, political and cultural underdevelopment. Galtung seems to suggest that economic stagnation will lead to social, political and cultural development. However it are the so called underdevelopment tendencies in economical, social, political and cultural live, which give resistance.

4.3.2. Some Examples

There is a growing interest for endogenous and self-reliant communication structures, organised by the government and non-governmental organisations, such as women's groups, political parties and grassroots groups. These are organised forms of alternative communication for the creation of the total alternative to the present society. While there are also marginal, creative and spontaneous actions. These are not yet forms of alternative communication, because these forms are not aiming at mobilisation and organisation in a broader sense. Such actions are important and may become durable alternative activities or projects, or can be absorbed by the dominant forms of communication. Through this it will lose its marginalized character. Many of the alternative communication projects started at a micro level and express the power of mobilisation and organisation. Alternative communication can aim at the active, the so called conscious people, or at the less conscious people. With respect to the last group, it is important that people participate in the communication processes, this means that media becomes social property.
In stead of giving people information about the reality and hindering them from informing themselves really about the reality, people generate information themselves through participation in the communication processes.

4.3.3. Participatory Communication, a Feminist Perspective

The model of participatory communication as part of the total alternative to the present society, as described in section 4.3., shows a possibility for equal participation of people in communication processes controlled by them. I feel not satisfied by merely saying that this holds both for men and women. Because this incorporating of women does not necessarily mean to changes in favour of women. The model of participatory communication can be useful for feminists, if within this model feminism will be incorporated. It is not easy to formulate a feminist perspective on this model and I alone can not accomplish this. The strength of the women's movement, although some consider this as a weakness, is that any woman who feels committed and has something to say can contribute to the formulation of the vision of a new society (6). I hope that my thoughts can contribute to this.

The analysis has shown that hierarchical structures and dualistic divisions have shaped our present reality and the society as a whole. The advanced people in the North are the symbol of progress for "backward" people, men became the symbol of progress for women and urban became the symbol of progress for rural. As long as there are also no equal relations between men and women, the model of participatory communication as part of the total alternative to the present society will not work.

One consideration is that the patriarchal sexual division of labour has to change. The sexual division of labour refers to the division of labour along gender lines, the social organisation of women's work. It assigns certain tasks to women and others to men. The concept of sexual
division of labour implies a different valuation of female and male tasks which tends to be mostly to the disadvantage of women. The valuation of women's tasks is one of the main causes for the unequal relations between men and women. The sexual division of labour may be manifested in the differential access to and control over resources and to a large extent gives an understanding to women's subordination. The emancipation of women has to go together with the emancipation of men. If men do not fight against women's subordination and still perceive themselves as the most important and progressive in society, not many changes will occur.

Men have to share work, which usually is done by women, on equal terms with women. Women are integrating in a world determined by men and men have to work too in the work usually done by women. There needs to be an equal relationship, in material and ideological terms, between men and women.

Another consideration is that may be women want first to have more autonomy, to develop their own alternative communication as described in the model of participatory communication. This needs then to be according to the interests of women.

4.4. Summary

In this chapter a tentative answer has been given to my research question: how communications can contribute to selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World. Selfdetermination is defined as a process. A model of participatory communication is examined for alternative communication as part of the process leading to a fundamental transformation of not only the dominant communication structure but of society as a whole. Within this model special emphasis should be given to women. The assumption can not merely be that this model holds both for men and women, because the integration
of women in a world determined by men has shown that still not many changes have occurred in the unequal power relations between men and women, in favour of men. However, I propose this model as important for feminists too, if feminism will be incorporated in this model. In the following chapter, the conclusion and recommendations for governmental and non-governmental development projects shall be given.

Notes:
(1) M. Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua" in Feminist Studies, vol.11, no.2, summer 1985, pp.227-254
(3) F. Stangelaar, Alternatieve Kommunikatie, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, Mexiko-Stad, 1982
(4) ibid, p-205
(5) ibid, pp. 207-210
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most often information through the different forms of communication is imposed on people and does not include the creation of selfdetermination. Generally the sender transmits messages with the intention to get these adopted by the recipient. The right to inform, as a social and individual right, is delegated for a major part to professional communicators. The creation of knowledge is in the hands of them. Hardly any information is available about the lives of rural women in the Third World. The information we have is partial and unbalanced. The analyses and interpretations which are accessible, mainly originate in the North and made by men. The situation which exist now, shows a gap between the awareness of a minority and the awareness of society as a whole.

The aim should be to transform the dominant communication structure. I argue for a fundamental transformation of not only the dominant communication structure but of society as a whole. Communication is one dimension within the process of selfdetermination: people doing something to help themselves, and my focus in this research paper is on the relationship between communication and selfdetermination of rural women in the Third World. The major proposition is the need of their selfdetermination.

The analysis in the preceding sections has shown that women in the rural Third World form the most marginalised group, due to limited access to and control over resources and women's subordinated position in society as a whole. The sexual division of labour implies a differential valuation, in ideological and material terms, of female and male tasks which tends generally value women's tasks less. The undervaluation of women's tasks is reflected in their possibilities of access to resources. The fact that they have only limited access to and control over resources is an indication of their subordinate and dependent status.
Equal valuation of both women's and men's tasks is necessary, together with equal access to and control over resources and services. Women should have no problems to assert their rights and to bring to the fore their interests and concerns. Rural women in the Third World do get information through a variety of different forms of communication. They are made objects in their own reality, while they need to be subjects of their communication processes. The traditional role division of those who have knowledge and those who are supposed to have not enough knowledge, should be demystified. Everybody knows and is prepared to know more. Cultural values of daily life experiences should be included in the communication processes. Accessibility of the messages by rural women in the Third World, should not only be defined in terms of access to, but also control over their messages in both form and content.

All social, cultural and political groups, including women should equally participate in and benefit from the communication processes which should produce and distribute information for themselves. This alternative should be characterized by forms and contents different from those of dominant communication, using technologies differently and organising themselves autonomously. Alternative communication should not only produce a content but also images and symbols which arise directly from daily life experiences of people, including women. Then this will show a confrontation with the dominant contents and forms. To achieve this, active and effective participation of the public and their organisations in communication production and distribution is necessary. Alternative communication should never aim at only a partial transformation of existing forms and contents of dominant communication alone (for instance, focusing on the use of female bodies in media, in order to transform only this usage), but these activities should take place within the struggle for transformation of
society as a whole. There must be created an infrastructure for cooperation and exchange of information and experiences between different (alternative communication) projects and other social, cultural and political organisations in order to maintain the relative autonomy of the projects in organisational, political and financial terms.

In the next section I shall give some recommendations particularly for governmental and non-governmental development projects and programmes, for alternative communication as part of the process leading to change the current society.

- Governmental and non-governmental development projects and programmes should aim at policies directed towards alternative communication as described above and in the previous chapter. On one hand an infrastructure of information technology should be build up and on the other hand Third World countries should have policies to protect themselves against foreign control and domination. Use should be made as much as possible of available resources within Third World countries.

- An analysis should be made about the role of communications in development projects and programmes and its implications especially for women, with the aim to bring to the fore their own interests.

- An attempt should be made to analyse the difficulties in equal participation in and benefitting from communication processes in all fields at different levels. It should be explored how this can be changed.

- Research should be carried out to take stock off the experiments in alternative communication by men and women, at local and national levels and the possible space for such alternatives for the creation of the total alternative to the present society. Networking should be established between those alternatives, with the aim to
exchange experiences and information and to promote solidarity between themselves.

- The experiences in working with women through projects and programmes needs to be documented and made accessible to other people and organisations. Most organisations still do have little experience with the implementations of programmes on (men and) women and are hardly aware of the initiatives and activities of other organisations at national and international levels. Networks should be established and developed in order to improve the quality of efforts now being made, in general in isolation.

- An analysis should be made of the situation of women in general, women's development programmes, women's informal and formal organisations and feminist organisations in order to assess the degree of involvement by women in the international movement for women's liberation.

- Special emphasis should be given to rural development. In many developing countries, the majority of the people live in the rural areas. Rural areas should be integrated in the process of development. Governments' priority is often not the rural poor, while they generally have the least access to resources and services.

- Among the rural poor, women form the most disadvantaged group. Within policies special effort should be made to incorporate women into their development process. To this end gender-aware approaches are necessary. As long as policy makers are not aware of the unequal power relations between men and women in favour of men, women's participation in development will be limited.

- The guideline in communication and information projects and programmes should be selfdetermination. People have always coped with the system they live in and they tend
to lose this coping system due to manipulative new influences.

- All governmental and non-governmental development projects and programmes should include communications in their programmes, in a way as described in chapter four. Within especially technical development programmes, communications is often not included. Programmes which are to the disadvantage of women should not be carried out.


Foundation, 1982.


