

Human Communication in Digital Age: A Study on Rural Setting in Bangladesh

Dr. Jillur Rahaman Paul
Associate Professor
Dept. of Film and Media Studies



ত্রিশাল, ময়মনসিংহ

Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University
Trishal, Mymensingh
June 2023

Abstract

Human communication is the core of human life to lead. Without communication people can't survive. So, it is important to study in the academic arena of media and communication. In Bangladesh, the society has been changing due to different factors like free market economy, ICTs intervention, education, globalization, urbanization etc. People's interaction with technology has been affecting human communication process. Internet, social media, convergence of mass media with digital media all these things make a big influence upon the human communication. Therefore, it is logical to examine the total situation of human communication in the digital age particularly in the rural setting of Bangladesh. In this connection, the study had been taken.

The general objective of the study was to analyze comprehensively the pros and cons of human communication in digital era in the rural setting of Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study were to analyze the present situation of human communication in a selected village of Bangladesh; identify the effective communication media for the rural people and its causes; understand social media and ICTs penetration and its usages and gratification by the rural people; and explore co-relations among different factors affects human communication in digital era.

The study has conducted connected partially with Elihu Katz's idea of Uses and Gratifications of mass media. This theory explains how the audiences use mass media for their own demands. Some of the variables have been illustrated according to the Uses and Gratification theory.

The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Therefore a social survey and content analysis both methods have been applied for the study.

The study area was Laxmipur of 6 No. Char Ishwardia Union of Sadar of Mymensingh district. Social survey method was applied where a total of 280 respondents were interviewed. The respondents were taken from different types of profession such as service holder, business, home maker, student, unemployed, agriculture and others having educational background of MA degree to illiterate. Both male and female respondents were taken for interview.

The findings of the study indicated that people in village level still rely on interpersonal communication more than dyadic and small group communication. The degree of moderate, much and very high in combine 96.8% of the respondents showed

upper trend in interpersonal communication. In the digital era of present time, mobile phone especially smart phone has been reducing interactive time with parents and family members, which is not strongly established in the study village on the basis of findings. For example, 70.7% of the respondents had direct interaction with parents ranging from moderate to very high. Mass media enjoyed by the 82.1% of the respondents as a whole, but except TV, other forms of media such as newspaper, radio and film were found almost absent in village level. In village, people are still relying on interpersonal sources like relatives, neighbor, roadside tea stall etc. to have information. Neighbor was considered the strongest source of information still now at rural area which scored 95% of the respondent in combine moderate, much and high rank. It is clear from the findings that in the digital era of social media and ICT, TV medium (64.6%, ranging from moderate to very much) is still more powerful media and information source compare to mobile phone and social media like Facebook.

In regard to measure effectiveness of communication and social media, majority of the respondents (66.8% in combine moderate, high and very high ranked) mentioned that TV was effective more. The results explored that social media like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and others were not effective by all classes of people. The study findings indicate that 67.1% of the respondents did not use social media. Those who used social media, Facebook is the most popular media since 57.6% of the respondents connected with Facebook with very high. In combine of moderate, high and very high rank of opinion, 75% of the respondents used YouTube for video purpose. The findings indicate that mass media is more satisfactory than social media. 70% of the respondents mentioned that they were satisfied with mass media in combine of moderate, high and very high satisfaction rank while only 30.7% of the respondents opined the satisfaction on social media like Facebook.

The study examined the interpersonal communication affecting factors and how much relationship is existed between and among the variables. The factors were social media, individual's changed thinking, availability of mobile phone, availability of internet, changed behavior, changed attitude, self-motivated thinking, changed mentality and changed era. All these factors except self-motivated thinking have the significant low negative relationship with interpersonal communication.

On the basis of the findings it can be said that interpersonal communication channels and TV could be given priority to disseminate of messages and information especially for the rural areas of Bangladesh.