

## BROADCASTING-III

## Improving the quality of information flow

Continuous flow of any thing hinges on four basic conditions — a perennial source, a flawless communication channel, a bottomless pit for deposit or discharge and an efficient organisational net work acriding on the entire system from source to point of discharge. In terms of broadcasting materials it denotes gathering of materials from field, their despatch and eventual broadcast in an unending cyclic order.

Development of a mechanism ensuring flow of news and information programmes from field to the studios and radiating the same across the country or beyond has been aspired by many but achieved by few. There was no dearth by enthusiasm or even efforts to see news and news-worthy stories flowing in endlessly and many organizations in the developed world have succeeded in feeding people with news and informative programmes round the clock. Their success could be traced in the grass-root organizational set-up which moves almost in an unending cyclic order. The external and auxiliary service organizations — the communication network — serve the system with as much efficiency as the system demands.

But the same is not true about those countries where broadcasting is still a toddler, communication is undeveloped and socio-psychological gap between the urban and rural people is too wide. The urban areas, constituting a small percentage of the population are in the mainstream of national activity. It, therefore, enjoys bigger and deeper focus from the media. The rural areas, in contrast, accommodate a larger number of the population without adequate attention from the administra-

tion or the media. These sleeping hamlets may become sources of endless materials of revealing interest.

Development of continuous flow of news and information programmes pre-supposes existence of a coordinated well-knit organisational framework ranging from orientation of the news-gatherers in the peculiar needs of the job down to presentation of the finished materials and their preservation for reference and record.

Radio seems to have yielding its coveted place to television so far as coverage of news is concerned. Television has its intrinsic appeal because sight does not need further elucidation. In only one area radio still can effectively in a tch or even outpace television — that is by speed, because radio equipment are petit and portable more mobile and easily communicable to otherwise inaccessible areas where television can negotiate only with difficulty. Radio can effectively intrude upon this virgin region to its full advantage by fielding its own correspondents in remote rural areas and developing exclusive service of its own. Appointment of field correspondents all vantage points of national activity particularly in the unexplored regions with briefs to cover areas far away from public focus will lend radio its exclusiveness in news coverage with assured flow and feed of news. Voice-cast reports through telephone lines in absence of radio's own wire service, will yield more authenticity and depth to radio news. Field correspondents will work as veritable arteries to feed the central news or programme headquarters.

Secondly, few mobile teams equipped with on-the-spot recording gears and, where possible, with jeep-mounted transmitters to send message from remote areas with built-in arrangement to record the same at headquarters will give further opportunity to cover events instantly. Projection of live voiced-news from remote spot recorded in the studio through radio's own micro-wave link will not only reduce radio's present dependence on agency reports or wire service, but will also add authenticity and depth to its news besides projecting radio's omnipresence in any place of occurrence. Thirdly radio will continue to depend on news agencies which are good sources for international news. Dependence on them could only be reduced after broadcasting organisations field their own correspondents. But financial and other constraints may not see it materialised sooner.

Too much dependence on rented wire services by radio restricts coverage of local news, retards development of radio's own news-gathering and finally radio cannot plan its own programme in semantics appropriate to the profession. Since radio's writing and editing is for the ear, journalists of print medium are not expected to serve the peculiar needs of two media simultaneously. In order to ensure constant flow of information and programme, radio is to breed a new generation of air personality with extra-sensitive nose to smell out which story suits radio best and in what shape.

This apart, documentaries based on actuality recordings may bolster stock of materials. These, being in-depth stories, different from matter-

## The Bangladesh Times

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M. N. MUSTAFA

of-fact news stories, may lend more flesh to the programme and provide not only relief to the listeners but may yield space for manoeuvrability to the editors in their hustling between the news desk and studio-on-air. While news-stories are time-barred, documentaries are not and may be preserved for long to repeat if necessary. Durnig lean periods, these documentaries are of immense help as a substitute feed to the microphone. A good story is immortal and needs to be preserved as such.

It may as well appear that more emphasis has been given on the collection of materials, the fodder to the broadcasting microphone. The reason is simple. No potter can give a better shape to the pot in the event of paucity of appropriate clay. Development of continuous flow of news and information programme greatly depends on the source of materials; ability to tap them and human skilfulness to chisel out an even shape out of them.

The human issue involved with this, first is orientational and second, organisational. The radio news gatherers must be aware of the peculiar needs of the profession and therefore should not walk along the trodden path of banality or common place mode of news gathering. To elicit information from people not accustomed to speak for others needs tact, tenacity and ability to create an atmosphere of intimacy. To pose as one whom divinity has entrusted with the honourable task of collecting news from mortals may make their mouth open, but not mind. The main weapon with which they may cause their rival to fall is the speed with

which the story is covered, despatched and put across and secondly establishment of the location of the place of event with introduction and actuality recording.

The organisational requirements for continuous flow of information are equally relevant. Beginning from the broadcast studios down to remote rural hamlet where the radio correspondent plods his weary way in search of a professionally wholesome story, it needs an integrated well-knit and coordinated organisational set-up. Dependence on services from other departments such as telephone has to be reduced or replaced by evolving or installing radio's own network of telecommunication system. Ideas however robust or wholesome are bound to founder if technical facilities are found not equally matching.

News and information programmes collected and prepared by national broadcasting organisations may be profitably shaped and exchanged in similar continuous manner. In that event, the items need pre-editing. A good story for the originating station may not carry the same appeal or value for the neighbouring country or beyond. The basis for this pre-selection should be the story's topicality the common-ness of the theme or the universal appeal the story contains or some aspect of improving bilateral or regional relations. To effect this continuous flow of exchange, exclusive attention with built-in system is necessary. With the development of satellite communication and round the clock air service, the opportunities are much better today. (To Be Continued).