

Title : The Relationship of Media Use and Madernization
in Rural Thailand

Researcher : Malee Boonsiripunth
Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication
Thammasat University

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Thammasat University

Abstract

This study is aimed to find out how media access in rural Thailand is related to the modernization of the people. Two different villages in the Northern region are selected for the study. One is characterized as more traditional while the other is more modernized in the way of living standard. The objectives are a) to study the actual use of mass media in the rural people, b) to study the education level and socio-economic status and their relationship to access and use of mass media, c) to study the effects of media use on the rural development, d) to facilitate the organizations concerned in searching for better use of appropriate mass media as tools for proper development plan.

The highlight of this study remains in the fact that mass media do have significant roles in intellectual development or modernization in rural people, specifically, in creating new attitude and worldviews. The modernization is somehow related to the frequency of mass media use. The more the media

access and usage, the higher the possibility to be modernized. Educational and economic status are important variables to media access, while community infrastructure and geographical environment can be obstacle to somekinds of mass media access, ie. television, etc.

The analysis further shows that, by frequent use of mass media, rural Thai people do proceed intellectual modernization and to accept attitude change. But it doesn't significantly show that they would actually practice new ideas unless some efficient examples would have been widely demonstrated. Traditional social values are also important factors to stimulate behavioral change.

It, therefore, can be concluded that mass media have significant role in stimulating certain level of change and motivating internal modernization. However mass media doesn't, by itself, initiate actual development atmosphere.

To use mass media as necessary means of development should be done along with other traditional communication pattern, interpersonal communication, as well.

Further study should be emphasized on mass media contents related to development objectives and how they serve local needs as well as rural development plan.

The findings should be utilized by involved development planners for appropriate media selection in actual rural development process. These would also encourage more comprehensive study in this field.