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Prosocial Television
for Development in India

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> *Hum Log* is entertaining, socially relevant, and highly educative. It brings us face to face with the social realities of present-day India. (from one of the 400,000 *Hum Log* viewers who wrote to the Indian television system)

For 18 months in 1984-1985, the Indian television network broadcast *Hum Log* (*We People*), a soap opera designed to promote such socially desirable behaviors as a more equal status for women and smaller family size. The *Hum Log* television series displayed certain qualities typical of communication campaigns. A *communication campaign* (1) intends to generate specific outcomes or effects, (2) in a relatively large number of individuals, (3) within a specified period of time, and (4) through an organized set of communication activities (Rogers & Storey, 1987, p. 821; see also the Preface to this volume). Each of the messages in a campaign should ideally be interrelated and should contribute toward the campaign objectives. *Hum Log* (1) was intended to generate such specific effects as a more equal status for women, (2) among its approximately 60 million viewers, (3) during, and after, the 18 months of its television broadcast, and (4) through an organized set of communication messages transmitted by Doordarshan, the Indian government television system.

Our research on *Hum Log* provided a unique opportunity for a better understanding of such human communication theories as social learn-

ing (Bandura, 1977b) and parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Our study is also unique in that the main component of the communication campaign was a television soap opera, one of the most popular genres of television programming in the United States, Latin America, and many other nations (Rogers & Antola, 1985; Whetmore & Kielwasser, 1983).

Our research on *Hum Log* centered on seven research questions:

(1) To what extent did the television series reach a large audience of viewers?

(2) To what extent did the content of the television series actually feature socially desirable norms?

(3) To what extent did viewers identify with prosocial models of behavior from the soap opera?

(4) To what extent did viewers' letters provide useful feedback about the television series?

(5) To what extent did parasocial interaction take place between the viewers and the characters in the soap opera?

(6) To what extent were the intended effects of *Hum Log* achieved, such as increased awareness and change in attitudes and behaviors about the status of women, and promotion of smaller family size norms?

(7) What are some of the indirect impacts of *Hum Log*?

We also compare our findings from the study of *Hum Log* to parallel experiences with entertainment-education messages in the United States and in Spanish-speaking Latin America, where in 1986 a rock music song was utilized to promote sexual abstinence among teenagers.

Entertainment Versus Educational Television

The U.S. mass media generally separate entertainment messages from educational messages. The commercial television networks broadcast predominantly entertainment programs because this content achieves higher audience ratings, in order to maximize advertising incomes.

On a few occasions, U.S. television networks broadcast programs to raise public consciousness and to inform the audience about a social issue, usually a liberal cause (Breed & DeFoe, 1982; Cantor, 1979; McGhee, 1980; Montgomery, 1981, 1989). For example, the highly

viewed 1977 ABC miniseries *Roots*, and its sequel *Roots: The Next Generation*, focused on Black people's struggle for freedom from slavery and for equality with whites. Norman Lear's popular CBS television program in the 1970s, *All in the Family*, called attention to ethnic prejudice through a highly bigoted character, Archie Bunker. Lear, by mixing humor with bigotry, intended to parody ethnic prejudice. Presumably, to the extent that viewers recognized the ridiculous nature of Archie's prejudices, they realized their own prejudices, and changed them due to the uncomfortable self-confrontation. However, the prosocial objectives of *Roots* and *All in the Family* were by-products of television shows primarily designed to attract large audiences. Studies of the audience effects of *Roots* and *Roots: The Next Generation* as well as *All in the Family* showed that these American television programs increased audience awareness of racial and ethnic issues (Ball-Rokeach, Grube, & Rokeach, 1981; Tate & Surlin, 1976; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974; Wander, 1977). Some already-prejudiced viewers, however, were reinforced in their prejudice (Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974).

Certain mass media organizations in Third World countries recently have questioned the division of entertainment versus educational content, and have utilized television soap operas to promote development goals. (The development of Third World countries consists of activities, mainly by governments, to advance the socioeconomic well-being of a nation's people.) In the 1980s, television systems expanded tremendously in such Third World nations as China, India, Mexico, and Indonesia. The Third World countries' share of the world population of TV sets has increased steadily, from 5% in 1965, to 10% in 1975, to 20% in 1984, to 35% in 1987.[1] During the eight-year period from 1980 to 1987, the number of television sets in China increased 15 times; in India, the number increased 10 times.[2] Television now reaches an audience of at least 550 million of China's population (50%), about 80 million in India (10%), and about 70 million in Mexico (87%). These millions of new television viewers provide a tremendous potential for development communication.

However, neither private-commercial nor government television has been utilized effectively to promote literacy, improve nutrition, limit family size, or increase productivity, because television content in the Third World is dominated by entertainment programs, including imported reruns from the United States, such as *I Love Lucy*, *Kojak*, and *Dallas*. These entertainment programs contribute little toward the development goals of Third World nations in Latin America, Africa, and

Asia. Much television content is potentially antidevelopment, such as advertising and entertainment programs that encourage consumerism, thus creating frustration among poor and disadvantaged viewers in reaching material goals (Singhal & Rogers, 1988a; Wallack, chap. 16, this volume). Also, television advertisements and entertainment programs generally depict urban life as attractive and desirable, thus inadvertently promoting rural-urban migration to Third World cities that cannot cope with their rate of growth. Even government-operated educational television systems do not contribute effectively toward national development goals, because their programs are perceived as dull and attract only very small audiences.

Prodevelopment Soap Operas: The Example of *Hum Log*

Prodevelopment Soap Operas

Prodevelopment soap operas are an exception to the division of contemporary television programming into entertainment versus education. A *prodevelopment soap opera* is a melodramatic television serial that is broadcast in order to entertain and to convey subtly an educational or development theme (Singhal & Rogers, 1988b).

An early large-scale example of such prodevelopment programs was a series of Mexican soap operas (called *telenovelas*) that capitalized on a lesson learned accidentally from a 1969 Peruvian soap opera, *Simplemente María*. This television series told the rags-to-riches story of a migrant girl, María, and addressed educational-development themes such as the liberation of women, class conflict, and intermarriage between the urban rich and the migrant poor. María achieved socioeconomic success through her proficiency with a Singer sewing machine. *Simplemente María* achieved very high television ratings in Peru and throughout Latin America (when it was exported in the early 1970s). The sales of Singer sewing machines increased sharply wherever the series was broadcast in Latin America, as did the number of young women who began to sew.

Inspired by lessons drawn from the audience effects of *Simplemente María*, Miguel Sabido of Televisa (the private Mexican television network) designed six prodevelopment soap operas that were broadcast in Mexico from 1975 to 1981. *Ven Conmigo (Come with Me)*, in 1975-76, promoted adult literacy by motivating audience members to

enroll in adult literacy classes, and achieved average audience ratings of 33 (much higher than the ratings for other soap operas on Televisa). *Ven Conmigo* was one influence leading to the enrollment of about a million illiterates in adult education classes, an increase of 63% over the previous year (Berructa, 1986). Another prodevelopment soap opera, *Acompáñame* (*Come Along with Me*), designed to promote family planning, was broadcast in Mexico during 1977-78 (Rogers & Antola, 1985). This highly rated series helped convince half a million Mexicans to visit government family planning health clinics in order to adopt contraceptives, an increase of 32% over the previous year (Televisa's Institute of Communication Research, 1981).[3] Other prodevelopment soap operas in Mexico dealt with child rearing, female equality, and national history.

A somewhat similar approach to the Mexican soap operas, that of combining educational and entertainment objectives, has occurred in Jamaica, where Elaine Perkins has produced several radio soap operas, including *Naseberry Street*, which has promoted family planning since 1985. This program reaches an audience of about 40% of Jamaica's population (approximately a million people), and audience surveys indicate the soap opera is affecting family planning adoption (Hazzard & Cambridge, 1988).

Hum Log

The Indian soap opera *Hum Log* represented an extension of the hybrid combination of education and entertainment-style content inspired by the Mexican experience with prodevelopment soap operas.

The Center for Population Communications-International, headquartered in New York City, played a key role in the diffusion of the Mexican soap opera experience to India in the form of *Hum Log*. The series was broadcast by Doordarshan, the government television system in India, for 17 months in 1984-85. The 156 episodes were broadcast in Hindi; each lasted 22 minutes. This television series was an attempt to blend Doordarshan's stated objective of providing entertainment to its audience with promotion of such socially desirable behaviors as a more equal status for women, family harmony, and smaller family size.

At the close of each episode, a famous actor in Hindi films, Ashok Kumar, briefly summarized the main concepts, providing viewers with appropriate guides to action.[4] Each epilogue of approximately 30 to 50 seconds was a concentrated educational message, drawing out the key

lessons for behavior change. The epilogues were very attractive to viewers, and our survey respondents indicated that most of them stayed tuned. The idea of explicitly stating the educational lessons from entertainment episodes originated in the Mexican soap operas in the late 1970s.

Such summarization, as well as the dramatic depictions in the soap operas, is consistent with Bandura's (1977b) social learning theory, which provided one basis for designing the educational soap operas in Mexico and in India. Bandura developed a social psychological theory about the ways in which humans learn social behaviors from models through the process of observational learning. He claims real-life and television models do not differ in influencing the learning of new behaviors. Models presented in televised forms are so effective in holding attention that viewers easily learn the models' behaviors (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1966). Bandura's theory explains how television viewers can learn to imitate certain behaviors by observing positive and negative models depicted in a soap opera (Bandura, 1986).

Methods and Hypothesized Effects

Our conclusions about the effects of *Hum Log* are based upon (1) a content analysis of 149 episodes of *Hum Log* (we could not obtain 7 *Hum Log* scripts) conducted to identify the prodevelopment themes that were portrayed and to evaluate the prosocial versus antisocial behavior of the ten main *Hum Log* characters, (2) an audience survey of 1,170 adult respondents who were mainly viewers (83% of the respondents had watched at least one episode of *Hum Log*) residing in and around Delhi (a Hindi-speaking area in North India), in and around Pune (a Marathi-speaking area in western India near Bombay), and in and around Madras (a Tamil-speaking area in South India),[5] and (3) a content analysis of a random sample of 500 viewers' letters and a mailed questionnaire returned by 287 of 321 letter writers for whom adequate addresses were available (a response rate of 90%).[6] Mass media communication is usually one-way, from one source to many audience individuals, but *Hum Log* was unusual in that audience feedback via viewers' letters was used in writing and rewriting the story line, suggesting new twists to the plot and new characterizations. For example, the series' scriptwriter, Manohar Shyam Joshi, received numerous viewers' letters pleading that Grandmother be cured of cancer

(she dies in the final episode of the series anyway, but at least Joshi delayed her death).

Results

The Audience

Question 1 asked: To what extent did *Hum Log* reach a large audience of viewers? *Hum Log* achieved audience ratings from 65% to 90% in North India (a predominantly Hindi-speaking area), and between 20% and 45% in the main cities of South India, where Hindi-language programs cannot be understood by most television viewers. An audience of 50 million people watched the average *Hum Log* broadcast. At the time (1984-85), this audience was the largest for a television program in India.[7]

Results from our 1987 survey of 1,170 Indian adults showed that 96% of our respondents who had seen at least one episode of *Hum Log* liked it.[8] Some 94% thought it was entertaining, 83% said it was educational, and 91% said that it addressed social problems. In Madras, a South India Tamil-speaking area, only 48% of our respondents had seen at least one episode of *Hum Log* (not only was *Hum Log* broadcast in the North Indian language of Hindi, but it also mainly displayed North Indian culture, which is very different from South Indian culture). However, the individuals who did view *Hum Log* in Madras liked the program (93%) about as much as did the Hindi-speaking viewers in North India. Many Madras viewers had some degree of Hindi fluency from having lived in North India or from having studied Hindi.

Why was *Hum Log* so popular with Indian viewers? Timing and audience involvement appear to be the primary factors. *Hum Log* was broadcast at a time when Doordarshan, the government national television network, was experiencing an unparalleled expansion. Black-and-white television had previously changed to color, and the launch of the Indian National Satellite (INSAT-1B) in 1983 resulted in a large-scale expansion of television access in rural, remote areas of India. The television viewing audience increased in India from 30 million in 1983, to 60 million in 1985, to 80 million in 1987.

For many Indian viewers, *Hum Log* seemed to blur the line between image and reality, allowing for increased audience involvement. The series centered on three generations of a lower-middle-class family who lived together in one house. These characters seemed true to life.

and millions of Indian viewers identified with them. *Hum Log* emphasized the family relationships between parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, grandparents and grandchildren, and mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and many viewers became vicariously involved in the family's daily affairs (see the results for question 5, below).

Prosocial Themes

Question 2 asked: To what extent did the content of *Hum Log* actually feature socially desirable norms? Our content analysis of 149 episodes indicates that the television series addressed many of the important social issues confronting Indian society: family disharmony, unequal status of women, lack of national integration, unsuccessful family planning and health programs, problems of urban life, and the lack of national welfare programs (Table 15.1). So the stated objectives of *Hum Log* seem to have been carried out in the content that was broadcast.

Hum Log began as primarily a family planning soap opera. Pressures from audiences, sponsors, and debates in the Indian Parliament resulted in toning down the family planning theme (only 6% of the total series content emphasized family planning). After the first 13 episodes, scriptwriter Joshi emphasized such closely related themes as the status of women, family harmony, and family welfare, and decreased the prior "hard sell" approach to family planning.

Television Characters as Models

Question 3 asked: To what extent did viewers identify with prosocial models of behavior from the soap opera? Our 1987 survey of 1,170 adults showed that 37% of the respondents believed Grandfather (intended by the designers of *Hum Log* to be a positive role model in that he is hardworking, highly moral, and a strict disciplinarian) was the best exemplar to copy in real life, while 18% of our respondents chose to emulate Bhagwanti (a stereotype of the traditional Indian wife/mother and hence a negative role model for gender equality). Some 11% believed Badki (a positive role model for female equality in that she is self-sufficient and, although rather plain, marries a handsome medical doctor) to be the best exemplar, and 5% chose Chutki (a career-oriented young girl). Only 1% of our respondents believed Majhli (a negative female role model with loose morals and a warped

TABLE 15.1   Extent to Which Socially Desirable Themes Were Emphasized
on *Hum Log*

Theme (Example)	Percentage of Subthemes in 149 Episodes
	(N = 10, 668)
Family harmony (family is close-knit despite individual differences among family members)	38
Status of women (Badki's efforts to fight for the status of women at a women's welfare organization)	26
Character and moral development (Grandfather's commentary on behaviors that are right and wrong)	12
National integration (marriage of a North Indian girl to a South Indian boy)	7
Family planning (Rajjo's determination to undergo tubectomy after giving birth to her fourth daughter)	6
Health (ill effects of alcohol on Basesar Ram's health)	5
Problems of urbanization (Lalloo's retreat to his village in order to cope with the high cost of urban life)	4
National welfare programs (eye-donation drive for Inspector Samdar)	2
Total	100

NOTE: Each percentage here is the portion of the total number of subthemes (10,668) identified in 149 episodes of *Hum Log*. The subthemes identified in each episode could fall under any of the eight mutually exclusive thematic categories. An average *Hum Log* episode had about 70 subthemes that we identified. The intercoder reliability coefficient is .78.

sense of modernity) to be the best exemplar, and 4% chose to emulate Basesar Ram (a negative male role model depicted as a drunken, chauvinistic father). The remaining 24% of our respondents chose generally neutral characters (that is, neutral in terms of the stated purpose of the educational soap opera) such as Nanhe, Grandmother, Lalloo, and others as best models. So our respondents believed in copying the positive role models in the TV program (53% in total) more than in imitating the negative role models (a total of 23%).

When *Hum Log* was planned, Bhagwanti was conceived as a negative (in the sense of the educational purpose of the soap opera) role model for female equality. She quietly let her husband and mother-in-law berate her for her inadequate family lineage, her lack of culinary skills, and so forth. However, some viewers sympathized with Bhagwanti's character and perceived her as a positive role model of tolerance, compromise, and patience. One 75-year-old woman wrote: "Bhagwanti is an epitome of tolerance. She suffers, but quietly. Young

Indian women should learn a lesson in patience from Bhagwanti."
Results from our 1987 survey show that 80% of viewers who chose
Bhagwanti as a positive role model were women; 76% of housewives
compared to 7% of the employed women chose to emulate Bhagwanti.
This differential identification with Bhagwanti's role suggests that
Hum Log's modeling effects were mediated by the viewers' prior atti-
tudes and experiences. As in the previously cited study by Vidmar and
Rokeach (1974) of Archie Bunker's viewers, televised behavior that is
ironic or satirical can reinforce negative behavior by viewers.

Viewers' Letters

Question 4 asked: To what extent did viewers' letters provide useful
feedback about the television series? The Doordarshan television net-
work received an average of 400 letters a day from viewers during the
17 months of *Hum Log*'s broadcast, a total of about 200,000 letters (an
additional 200,000 letters were sent by viewers to the series actors and
actresses). Such an outpouring from viewers is unprecedented in the
history of worldwide television (for example, the 150,000 letters
received by NBC when *Star Trek* was canceled was thought to be the
previous record in the United States). The viewers' letters stressed the
importance of family harmony and family solidarity, and voiced con-
cern about such social ills as dowry and alcoholism. Many letters
pleaded for more women's welfare organizations, encouraged eye
donations, and demanded improved treatment for cancer patients (an
eye transplant operation and a death due to cancer were part of the *Hum
Log* story). So most viewers' letters suggested that the planned objec-
tives of the television series were being fulfilled. A content analysis of
our sample of 500 letters written to Doordarshan showed that 76%
expressed an opinion about the behavior of a program character, 66%
showed identification with one of the characters, 39% expressed an
opinion about a social issue raised by the soap opera, and 36%
responded to one of Ashok Kumar's epilogues.

Parasocial Interaction

Question 5 asked: To what extent did parasocial interaction take
place between the viewers and the characters in the soap opera?
Parasocial interaction refers to the seemingly face-to-face inter-

TABLE 15.2   Degree of Parasocial Interaction in Letters from *Hum Log*
           Viewers

Indicators of Parasocial Interaction	Percentage of Letters That Indicate Parasocial Interaction
Viewer indicates a strong involvement with *Hum Log* characters.	93
Viewer likes and respects Ashok Kumar, who delivers the epilogue at the end of each episode.	83
Viewer compares his or her ideas with those of *Hum Log* characters.	65
Viewer perceives a character as a down-to-earth, good person.	43
Viewer talks to his or her favorite character while watching the program.	39
Viewer feels that Ashok Kumar helps him or her to make various decisions, and looks to him for guidance.	39
Viewer adjusts his or her schedule to watch *Hum Log* so as to have a regular relationship with a television character.	30

personal relationships between a television viewer and a television performer (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Viewers can perceive their relationship with a television character as real, as if it were a face-to-face encounter. Many *Hum Log* viewers felt that they knew the television characters, even though they never actually met them. For example, many young women wrote to Badki to tell her that she should resolve her indecision about marrying her boyfriend Ashwini. The day that Badki and Ashwini got married on television, some shops and bazaars in North India closed early for the celebration. Doordarshan received many telegrams and handmade cards wishing the couple a happy married life (Jain, 1985). To many viewers Badki was not just a television character played by an actress, but a real person.

Past research has suggested that television viewers can exhibit parasocial interaction in at least seven ways (Guthrie, 1987; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979; Nordlund, 1978; Perse & Rubin, 1987). Table 15.2 shows the degree of parasocial interaction, in the form of these seven indicators, exhibited by our sample of 500 letter writers. It should be remembered that only .5% of all *Hum Log* viewers wrote letters to Doordarshan. The letter writers are highly untypical of the total viewing audience, and thus represent extreme responses to parasocial interaction. Nevertheless, their uniqueness also informs us in certain ways about the impacts of *Hum Log*.

Intended Effects

Question 6 asked: To what extent were the intended effects of *Hum Log* achieved, such as increasing awareness and changing attitudes and behaviors about the status of women, and promoting smaller family size norms? A substantial number of our 1,170 survey respondents said they learned prosocial attitudes and behaviors from *Hum Log*, including that women should have equal opportunities (70%), women should have the freedom to make their personal decisions in life (68%), family size should be limited (71%), family harmony should be promoted (75%), cultural diversity should be respected (68%), and women's welfare programs should be encouraged (64%).

Of our 500 viewers' letters, 92% show that *Hum Log* influenced the letter writer in a prosocial direction. Some 47% of the letters indicated that the program affected the letter writer's awareness of social issues, 33% showed that it influenced the letter writer's attitudes regarding these social issues, and 7% showed that it resulted in behavioral change on the letter writer's part. For example, a member of a Delhi youth club wrote to Ashok Kumar to say: "Inspired by *Hum Log*, our club has enrolled 892 people for eye donations. We hope to enroll 5,000 people by next month." Such behavior, while very uncharacteristic of the average viewer, suggests that the program achieved certain effects on overt behavior. Behavior change is the bottom line in the hierarchy of media effects (see chap. 2), and one would expect it to occur only rarely as the result of a television soap opera.

Unintended Impacts

Question 7 asked: What were some of the unintended impacts of *Hum Log*? Several unintended impacts occurred. *Hum Log* launched the era of commercially sponsored programs on Doordarshan. A sponsored television program is one in which an advertiser pays the production costs of the program, in return for several minutes of spot advertisements, just before, during, or immediately following broadcast of the program. Maggi 2 Minute Noodles, a product marketed by a Nestle subsidiary in India called Food Specialties Limited, were heavily advertised on *Hum Log*. Noodles were previously unknown in India (they were perceived as Chinese), as was the more general idea of quick-preparation foods. So Maggi 2 Minute Noodles was a radical consumer innovation in India. The successful experience of Food

Specialties Limited in advertising this new product on *Hum Log* convinced many other advertisers in India that television program sponsorship was a promising investment. Before long, advertisers were lined up at Doordarshan, eager to buy advertising. So *Hum Log* was the key turning point in the commercialization of Doordarshan.[9]

Hum Log's commercial success led to a proliferation of domestically produced television serials on Doordarshan. When *Hum Log* went on the air in 1984, it was the first long-running indigenous television serial broadcast on national television. Three years later, in 1987, over 40 such domestically produced series were being broadcast on Doordarshan: soap operas, detective serials, situation comedies, educational serials, quiz shows, and biographies of Indian leaders. These Indian-produced television programs are consistently more popular than are foreign (imported) serials, which is the main reason Doordarshan broadcasts so much less imported programming than most Third World countries (Rogers & Antola, 1985). Our 1987 survey showed that 88% of the respondents said they liked Hindi television serials, and 55% of our respondents said they did not like imported, foreign serials. One reason for this strong preference for Indian-made television programs is the audience's favorable initial experience with *Hum Log*. This TV series demonstrated that domestically produced TV shows could be very attractive to the Indian audience, even more attractive than *I Love Lucy* and *Diff'rent Strokes*.

The proliferation of domestically produced programs on Doordarshan happened thanks to important inputs from the Bombay film industry (which produces more feature films annually than any other nation except the Soviet Union). Bombay film moguls, once apprehensive about sponsored television serials like *Hum Log*, soon rushed to Delhi to get their programs approved or their story lines cleared by Doordarshan authorities. Television's expansion created a need for the film industry's equipment, studio facilities, and creative talent. Harish Khanna, former director-general of Doordarshan, said, "It is a marriage of convenience between Bombay and Delhi." In India in the 1980s, as in the United States in the 1950s, the film industry at first fought the rise of television, and then joined it with enthusiasm. Following the commercial success of *Hum Log*, most Indian television production moved from Delhi (which remains the headquarters for Doordarshan) to Bombay, where film production facilities and talent were converted to television production.

Conclusion

Our seven questions have been answered as follows:

(1) *Hum Log* was highly popular among Hindi-speaking viewers in North India, and it was relatively less popular in South India.

(2) The themes emphasized in the soap opera series were family harmony, more equal status for women, and proper character and morals. Family planning, national integration, health, problems of urbanization, and national welfare themes were also emphasized, but less heavily.

(3) Viewers reported copying the positive role models in the television soap opera more than they imitated the negative role models.

(4) Viewers' letters expressed like/dislike for the television series, suggested new plots, responded to issues raised by Ashok Kumar in his epilogues, and expressed opinions about the behavior of the show's characters.

(5) Viewers indicated strong involvement with the characters: They perceived the program's characters as down-to-earth, good people, they adjusted their schedules to watch *Hum Log*, they talked to their favorite characters, and they compared their ideas with those of the series' characters.

(6) Most viewers reported learning positive attitudes and behaviors about family harmony, equal status for women, and smaller family size norms.

(7) *Hum Log* helped commercialize Indian television, led to a proliferation of domestically produced television programs, and encouraged the Bombay film industry to become heavily involved in television.

A three-year gap occurred after the sixth prodevelopment soap opera in Mexico and the first adaptation of this concept in India. During this hiatus, David Poindexter and other individuals were promoting the idea of prodevelopment soap operas to various nations, but the typical reaction was: "Okay, Mexico did it, but they have a genius in Miguel Sabido. Without Sabido, we cannot produce a successful family planning soap opera." The *Hum Log* experience in India in 1984-85 showed that another nation could successfully follow Mexico's lead, even without the unique talents of Miguel Sabido. *Hum Log* has been off the air since late 1985, but its effects continue.[10]

Hum Log demonstrated that India could effectively adapt the Mexican strategy of prodevelopment soap operas to India's specific sociocultural conditions. This successful experience persuaded several other Third World countries to launch television programs patterned after *Hum Log*. Kenya went on the air with its first family planning

television soap opera, *Tushauriani* (*Let's Discuss*), in 1987. *Tushauriani* is broadcast in Swahili, the lingua franca of Kenya, and is scheduled to run for 197 episodes. It has received very high television ratings in Kenya. Nigeria has a prodevelopment soap opera on the drawing board. Mexico's Televisa is producing another family planning soap opera, to be broadcast in seven Latin American nations. The epilogue at the end of each episode will be delivered by a well-known national figure in each country, an individual equivalent to Ashok Kumar. J.R.D. Tata, a leading Indian industrialist, pledged financial support for a successor to *Hum Log*, which is being produced in Bombay. Several other Third World nations plan to produce television soap operas for family planning in the near future.

Hum Log ushered in a new era on Indian television, which was aided by the simultaneous expansion of the television audience in India via satellite transmission. *Hum Log* was a success with both its audience and its advertisers, but was somewhat of a mixed success in achieving its educational-development goals. Table 15.3 presents the pros and cons of the *Hum Log* experience in India, suggesting some of the main lessons learned. The effects of *Hum Log* were mediated by its language (and culture) of broadcast and by the preexisting attitudes and experiences of its viewers (as is illustrated by viewers who interpreted Bhagwanti's character as a positive role model).

While *Hum Log* was not manifestly designed as a communication campaign, it displayed several qualities that are typical of communication campaigns (such as that it was intended to achieve specific effects). *Hum Log* displayed one additional quality that is not typical of communication campaigns, in that it centered on an entertainment format: the television soap opera. However, the television soap opera is only one of several mass media entertainment formats used in Third World countries to deliver educational-development messages, as the following section illustrates.

Rock Music for Teenage Sexual Abstinence in Latin America

Early pregnancy is a major social problem in many Third World nations, and especially in Latin America. The main targets for contraceptive messages—preteens and teenagers—are especially difficult to reach through conventional development communication channels. In 1986, a unique communication project was launched in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries: a rock song and video that

TABLE 15.3 Pros and Cons of *Hum Log*

Pros	Cons
Full government support (initially)	Some government support lost over time
Intended to promote development	Intentions not fully carried out (e.g., the family planning content was considerably deemphasized after the first 13 episodes)
Highly popular in Northern India, as it used the rustic language spoken by an average North Indian	Less popular in South India because of language and culture differences
High audience involvement, illustrated by the 400,000 letters written by viewers	Little follow-up by Doordarshan with viewers' letters; many were not opened
Family drama based on an understanding of the Indian ethos	Major cops-and-robbers underworld subplot with little educational relevance
Very effective television script-writing	Written under great time pressure, with writer trying to serve two masters (Doordarshan and the commercial sponsors)
Major commercial success	Content influenced by advertising sponsors; promoted consumerism
Tripartite arrangement among Doordarshan, the advertising sponsor, and the scriptwriter	Constant struggle over control of episodes
First Indian TV soap opera	Mistakes made were not attended to as useful lessons for the benefit of later TV series in India
Low-cost production	Relatively poor production quality due to the lack of adequate prior experience and television production equipment
Liked by middle and lower-middle class	Less well-liked by skeptical urban elites

promoted sexual abstinence, titled "Cuando Estemos Juntos" ("When We Are Together"). This song was number one on the pop music charts within six weeks of its release in Mexico, and soon was also the top-rated song in 11 other Latin American countries. The success of this music video resulted from the joint efforts of communication researchers, funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the assistance of entertainment industry executives and rock musicians.

Patrick Coleman, director of Population Communication Services at Johns Hopkins University, provided the impetus for this entertainment-education project. His organization conducted formative evaluation research that indicated that the common denominator for young people

throughout Latin America is music. Coleman contacted organizations that work with young people to develop a message that could be communicated by a rock music video, but that would be acceptable to the government and to the religious institutions of Latin American countries. Coleman conducted focus groups with a sample of teenagers to determine message content acceptable to them. Having refined the message, Coleman involved the EMI Capitol recording company, who hired Tatiana, a 16-year-old singer from Mexico, and Johnny, a 17-year-old Puerto Rican singer. A competition among 20 professional composers created the music and lyrics for the song. The lyrics argued for sexual abstinence: "You will see that I'm right when I say no, even though my heart is burning." Finally, Coleman contracted for marketing the song through a commercial marketing firm in Mexico City. (See Alcalay & Taplin, chap. 5, and Atkin & Freimuth, chap. 6, this volume. for more detailed discussions of formative evaluation and media planning, and Solomon, chap. 4, this volume, for a discussion of social marketing.)

The song was launched on *Siempre de Domingo*, the most popular television show in Latin America, which reached a viewing audience of 130 million people. The music video was advertised through public service announcements on television and radio, and in newspapers. Broadcasting stations could play the song without paying a broadcast fee if they agreed to accompany the music with an announcement about where teenagers could visit a local family planning clinic for contraceptive services. Once the audio and video versions of the song became popular, both Tatiana and Johnny made numerous media and personal appearances to promote their song, the issue of teenage sexual abstinence, and contraception. Further, ads promoting abstinence and contraception were widely disseminated that utilized the song as background music in order to attract attention. An estimated one million hours of free radio and television time were provided by broadcasting stations in Latin America for playing and discussing the song (Coleman, 1988).

In Mexico alone, Tatiana's album featuring "Cuando Estemos Juntos" sold over 500,000 copies. Evaluation research in Mexico by the Institute for Communication Research (1987) showed that the song did more than sell videos and audiotapes and records. It encouraged teenagers to talk more freely about teenage sex, reinforced teenagers who already had decided to use restraint, sensitized younger viewers to the importance of the topic, and disseminated information about contraception.

For a second rock song about sexual abstinence in 1988, data were gathered from a sample of Latin American teenagers coming to family planning clinics for the first time. Such point-of-referral monitoring, which provides relatively hard data about behavior change (the bottom line in the hierarchy of effects), could not be gathered for "Cuando Estemos Juntos" or for *Hum Log* in India, because communication research on the messages' effects could not be conducted until after the broadcasts had ended—six months later in the case of the first rock song in Latin America, and more than a year for the Indian soap opera.[11]

For the second teenage music video in Latin America on sexual abstinence, a second family planning soap opera in India, and the next Mexican family planning soap opera (all three of which are now in production), the investigation of effects will be launched prior to the first broadcast, thus resulting in a more rigorous research design.

Two key lessons have been learned from the recent experiences with the entertainment-education mass communication strategy utilized by the creators of *Hum Log* and "Cuando Estemos Juntos." First, the mixture of entertainment and educational content represented by the Indian soap opera and the Latin American music video attracted large audiences and earned high profits from advertising or sales. The entertainment component of such messages helps break down audience barriers and resistances to the educational content (such as the perception that educational messages are usually dull), and moves the messages farther along the hierarchy of effects. The large audiences achieved by entertainment-educational messages make them popular with commercial advertisers. While educational efforts are usually a budget expense to a government treasury, entertainment-education communication is often very profitable. So the entertainment-education strategy represents a win-win situation.

Second, entertainment-education communication cannot make the educational content too blatant or hard sell, because a mass audience will not be attracted to such messages. An example of this point is the first 13 episodes of *Hum Log* that were broadcast in India in 1984; these episodes attracted low audience ratings because they hammered on the family planning issue, which was unpopular with the Indian television audience. Formative evaluation, facilitated by the exceptional audience feedback in the form of letter writing, helped identify the nature of this problem. When the family planning theme was less heavily emphasized, and such other issues as female equality and family harmony were stressed, television ratings of *Hum Log* jumped to record levels.

Notes

1. Third World countries include all Middle Eastern countries, all African countries except South Africa, all Asian countries except Japan, and all of the countries in Latin America.

2. Data on the worldwide diffusion of TV sets are compiled from the BBC's *World Radio and Television Receivers* (1987).

3. Televisa created as well as evaluated its prodevelopment soap operas in Mexico, and thus its claims of very strong effects might be questioned by some critics. Our evaluation of *Hum Log* was conducted by researchers outside of Indian television.

4. Ashok Kumar is the doyen of the Indian film industry, with an image somewhat akin to that of Burt Lancaster in Hollywood.

5. Marathi is a close derivative of Hindi, with many cognates between the two languages. Tamil is a Dravidian language, quite different from Hindi, with a completely different script and grammar. We selected Delhi, Pune, and Madras as sample areas for our audience survey in order to determine the effects of language differences on our respondents' viewing behavior.

6. These letters were sampled from a nonrandom sample of the estimated 400,000 letters written to Doordarshan and to the actors and actresses in response to *Hum Log*.

7. It should be noted that *Hum Log*'s average audience of 50 million individuals, while representing a rating of 65 (that is, 65% of the 80 million television viewers in India), is only 6% of the total population of 800 million. Further, only one television channel can be received in most areas in India, so a rating of 65, which would be unbelievably high in the United States, must be viewed in context.

8. Viewers' liking of the soap opera was measured by asking them "To what extent did you like the *Hum Log* television series?" Responses were measured on a three-point scale—not at all, somewhat, and a lot. Positive scale values of "somewhat" and "a lot" were collapsed to measure liking.

9. McQuail (1986) provides a detailed discussion of positive and negative consequences of the commercialization of broadcast media. He argues that advertising can help move products and services, and that this can contribute to economic growth. In Third World countries, however, commercialization can upset the balance between the sociocultural goals of the mass media and the mass consumer goals of the national economy. *Hum Log*'s impact in promoting sales of Maggi noodles could be viewed as an indirect prodevelopment outcome if one accepts the argument that individual-level adoption of Maggi noodles freed Indian women from the stove.

10. Given that *Hum Log* was so successful, why did it go off the air after 18 months? Unlike soap operas in the United States, which often continue for many years, in most other nations (including Mexico, whose soap operas directly influenced *Hum Log*) a soap opera ends after one, or at most two, years. Further, the producer, Ms. Shobha Doctor, claimed that she was losing money during the final episodes because costs, such as the actors' salaries, had risen, but she was locked into a fixed contract with Doordarshan for the series. So the program was brought to a climax (Grandmother's death due to cancer), and ended. A more detailed discussion on why *Hum Log* ended is provided in Singhal and Rogers (1988a).

11. Such point-of-referral monitoring was successfully conducted for a family planning variety show on television, *In a Lighter Mood*, broadcast in Enugu, Nigeria, in 1986-1987 (Winnard, Rimon, & Convisser, 1987). The point-of-referral data were

gathered at the only family planning clinic in Enugu. A 147% increase occurred in the number of adopters of family planning over the 14 months since the broadcasts began, and 60% of all adopters reported the television program as their source of referral to the clinic.