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ENTERTAINMENT TELENOVelas FOR DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS LEARNED

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During the past decade or so, television audiences have expanded rapidly in many developing countries. During the past twelve years (from 1980 to 1992), television sets increased by about 32 times in the People's Republic of China and by about 20 times in India. Television now reaches an estimated 750 million of China's 1.3 billion people, and 300 million of India's 850 million people. As television audiences rapidly expand in developing countries, the content of television programming becomes a crucial factor in determining whether broadcasting will advance national development, or simply be used for entertainment purposes.

National governments of such countries as China and India, where television broadcasting is state-controlled, often feel obligated to broadcast educational-development programs (on such topics as agriculture, nutrition, public health, and family planning). Such educational television programs usually require a heavy investment, are perceived by most audiences as "dull", and are unpopular with commercial advertisers. However, in the same countries, entertainment programs like feature films, sitcoms, serials, and game shows usually obtain high audience ratings, are perceived by audience as "interesting", and are popular with advertisers. Naturally, broadcasting officials worry about the popularity and dominance of entertainment programs which tends to drive out educational television.

In recent years, broadcasters in certain countries realized that entertainment and educational television need *not* be at odds with one another. Increasingly, entertainment formats such as television serial, rock music videos, and game shows are being utilized to convey educational-development messages to audience. This innovative media strategy is referred to as *entertainment-education*, defined as the process of putting educational content in entertainment messages in order to increase to knowledge about an issue, create favorable attitudes, and change over behavior concerning the educational issue or topic (Singhal, in press). The *telenovela* (literally "television novel" or "soap opera") genre has emerged as one of the major carriers of entertainment-education in developing countries.

The purpose of the present paper is to examine the role of entertainment-education *telenovelas* in national development, and to identify the necessary conditions in a

country to successfully design and implement the entertainment-education strategy. We begin by discussing the rise of *telenovelas* as an entertainment genre in Latin America, and the subsequent development of entertainment-education *telenovela* in Mexico. The diffusion process of Mexico's entertainment-education *telenovela* "technology" to India, Kenya, and other countries is analysed. The main lessons learned to date about the conditions needed in a country to successfully design and implement entertainment-education *telenovelas* are derived.

THE RISE OF THE TELENOVELA

A direct predecessor of the *telenovela* is the *feuilleton* ("chapbook") of nineteenth-century Europe (Rogers & Antola, 1985, p.26). Written by authors such as Balzac and Dickens, *feuilletons* appeared one chapter per week and had a devoted audience. During the 1930's in Europe, photographs replaced print in telling a continuing story in *fotonovelas*. Radio soap operas began in the U.S. in the 1930's developed by multinational companies to sell their products, especially soaps and detergents. In the 1940's the *radionovela* spread throughout Latin America (Caparelli, 1982). During the 1950's and 1960's, television soap operas (*telenovelas*) became a highly popular genre in Latin America.

In comparison to U.S. television soap operas, *telenovelas* exhibit different themes (for example, upward mobility), contrasting purposes (for example, educational and other goals in addition to entertainment), and a shorter duration (usually, a *telenovela* ends in a year or so) (Rogers & Antola, 1985). In the U.S., daytime soap operas attract a 90 percent female audience (Modleski, 1984, p.85), and the several successful nighttime serials (like "Dallas") are still a minority in prime-time broadcasting. But in Latin America, *telenovelas* are the dominant and most popular television genre for mass audience. Within Latin America, *telenovelas* differ considerably from one country to another. For instance, Colombian *telenovelas* started as literary adaptations of classic texts (instead of television translations of *radionovelas*, as was the case in most other Latin American countries (Lozano & Singhal, 1992).

Like their U.S. counterparts, the predominant purpose of Latin American *telenovelas* is to attract large audiences, hold their attention through entertaining content, and to sell commercial products advertised on these shows. However, in 1969, the broadcast of a highly popular Peruvian *telenovela*, *Simplemente María*, led to a recognition that *telenovelas* could entertain and educate viewers.

Simplemente María

Simplemente María enacted the classic Cinderella-type rags-to-riches folk story of a migrant girl, María, who succeeds in achieving higher socio-economic status because of her sewing skills with a Singer sewing machine. María, a rural-urban migrant to Lima, was depicted in the *telenovela* as hardworking, idealistic, and able to succeed socially by personal effort. For instance, María asked her employers for free time in the evening to enroll in an adult literacy class. Wherever the *telenovela* was broadcast (it was exported to several Latin American countries), young maids showed a sudden interest in learning how to sew, and requested time in the evenings

to participate in adult literacy classes. The sales of Singer sewing machines boomed in Latin America. While the "educational" effect of *Simplemente María* was unplanned and unintentional, it demonstrated that entertainment *telenovelas* could convey educational-development messages.

FORMULATING THE ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR TELENOVELAS

Inspired by the audience and educational success of *Simplemente María*, Miguel Sabido, a creative writer-producer-director at Televisa (the Mexican national television system), created a methodology to produce entertainment-education *telenovelas*. This methodology included a formal, reproducible set of design and production techniques for the construction of persuasive messages.

I took Sabido eight years (from 1967 to 1975) to hone his methodology of producing entertainment-educational *telenovelas*. Between 1967 and 1970, Sabido created four historical-cultural soap operas for Televisa, each designed to promote and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Mexico (Berrueta, 1986). The audience success of these historical-cultural soap operas convinced Sabido that *telenovelas* were ideally suited for educating Mexican viewers about various development topics: *Telenovelas* were highly popular in Mexico, achieved spectacular audience ratings, could be produced on relatively low budgets, and commercial sponsors were willing to underwrite production costs. Further, *telenovelas* reached millions of viewers for half-an-hour daily, five times a week, for about one year, representing massive exposure to an educational messages. The melodrama in a *telenovela* represents a natural confrontation of "good" role models against "bad" ones, providing a unique opportunity to promote "socially desirable" behaviors and dissuade "socially undesirable" behaviors (Sabido, 1989).

Sabido realized the importance of preserving the basic characteristics of *telenovelas*, for instance, its melodramatic content, central and secondary plots, low production costs, commercial sponsorship, and high ratings. His challenges was to subtly incorporate educational messages in entertainment content (without making them too blatant) in order to produce a value-based, morally coherent, and a realistic *telenovela*, with believable characters and locales (Brown, Singhal, & Rogers, 1988). His methodology to produce entertainment-educational *telenovelas*, was based on (1) the determination of a central educational value which all involved parties could agree on, (2) an integrated multidisciplinary theoretical framework which, among other perspectives, drew upon Bandura's social learning theory, and (3) a well-defined *telenovela* production system.

DECIDING ON A CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL VALUE

In designing an entertainment-education *telenovela*, first, a central value is decided upon (for example, family planning). Based upon a needs assessment survey of the target audience (as part of the formative evaluation process), a grid of related values are derived that interact with the central value (for example, status of women, family harmony, spousal communication, and child development). These values are defended by characters and situations. Determination and agreement on the

central value is extremely important. In Sabido's soap operas, central values which are defended in Mexico's Constitution were agreed to in writing by mass media officials, public health officials, policy-makers, religious leaders, commercial sponsors, and others. Such an agreement represents consensus among key officials, and inter-institutional coordination in providing the infrastructure (for example, family planning clinics) to implement the central value promoted in the soap opera (Singhal, in press).

THEORY-BASED MESSAGE DESIGN

Sabido's entertainment-education *telenovelas* represent an unusual type of media message in that their design is based on human communication theories. Bandura's social learning theory is central to Sabido's multi-disciplinary theoretical framework (which also draws upon Bentley's (1967) dramatic theory, Jung's (1959) theory about the archetypes of the collective unconscious, and others) (1). *Social learning theory* explains how humans learn social behaviors as a result of modeling their behavior after that of others with whom they interact, or that they observe in the same mass media (Bandura, 1977). Viewers learn socially desirable behaviors from models depicted in the television series (Bandura, 1986).

Each of Sabido's entertainment-educational soap opera begins with three sets of characters: (1) those who support the value (positive role models), (2) those who reject the value (negative role models), and (3) those who are somewhere in-between (the doubters). Each soap opera has at least four positive role models and four negative counterparts: A character who approves of the value and one who disapproves, one who promotes the value and one who does not, one who exercises the value and one who does not, and one who socially validates the value and one who does not (Figure 1).

In addition, there are at least three doubters, who represent various demographic groups within the target audience. One of the doubters adopts the value about one-third of the way through the soap opera, the second adopts the value about two-thirds of the way, and the third doubter keeps doubting all the way through the soap opera and is seriously punished (often killed) toward the end of the soap opera. When the first and the second doubter gradually change their attitudes and behaviors toward the value, their transformation is reinforced and explained in the epilogues. The epilogue is in essence a 30 to 40 second "advertising spot" for the educational content of the soap opera, usually delivered by a highly-respected national figure, who relates the content of that episode with the daily lives of audience members. Each time a positive role model or a doubter performs a socially desirable behavior, they are rewarded immediately. Each time a negative role model performs a socially undesirable behavior (relative to the value that is being promoted), he/she is immediately punished.

(1) Sabido's integrated multi-disciplinary theoretical framework is discussed in detail in Televisa's Institute for Communication Research (1981); Singhal (1990; in press); and Nariman (in press).

Sequence of Episodes in a Miguel Sabido Television Soap Opera

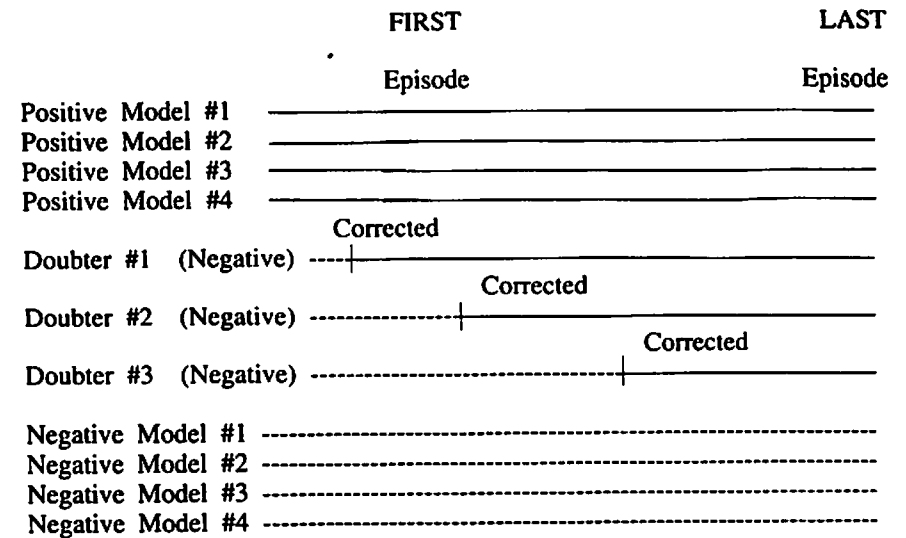


Figure 1. Positive Role Models, Negative Role Models, and Doubters in Miguel Sabido's Entertainment-Education Television Soap Operas.

A TELENOVELA PRODUCTION SYSTEM

Sabido created a specific production system for an entertainment-education *telenovela*. The *telenovela* format has many production elements that can be organized to create a desired response from the viewer: Melodrama, characters, actors, dialogues, location, staging, props, music, costumes, make-up, pacing, camera-shots, broadcasting time and frequency, editing, and so on. Sabido's methodology provides numerous strategies to orchestrate the various production elements of a *telenovela*. For instance, the anecdote is stretched over several episodes, so that a television viewer who does not watch every single episode, can still follow the plot-line. The scriptwriter adapts real-life problems and events to television melodrama, placing characters in crisis situations, thus building suspense. Characters, sets, costumes, and locales should fit the conditions of the target audience.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SABIDO'S METHODOLOGY IN MEXICO AND ITS DIFFUSION TO OTHER COUNTRIES

Based on his methodology, Sabido created seven one-year-long *telenovelas*. Broadcast on Televisa from 1975 to 1982, these *telenovelas* pioneered the entertainment-education strategy. Sabido's *telenovelas* addressed such social issues as adult literacy, family planning, female equality, and child development (see table 1).

They all achieved high audience ratings, and seemed to have strong "educational" effects (reflected in the increases in adult literacy enrollments, the number of people visiting family planning clinics, etc.). The Mexican *telenovelas* were accompanied by supplementary multi-media messages to form an integrated communication campaign, a possible reason for their apparently "strong" educational effects (Singhal, in press).

Table 1. Miguel Sabido's Pedagogical Melodramatic Television Serials in Mexico.

YEAR	TITLE	THEME
1. 1967	"La Tormenta" (The Storm)	The French Invasion of Mexico
2. 1968	"Los Caudillos" (The Leaders)	The Mexican struggle for independence
3. 1969	"La Constitución" (The Constitution)	Principles underlying the drafting of Mexico's constitution
4. 1970	"El Carruaje" (The Carriage)	Story of Benito Juarez, a hero of Mexico's freedom struggle
5. 1975-1976	"Ven Conmigo" (Come With Me)	Adult education
6. 1977-1978	"Acompañame" (Come Along With Me)	Family planning
7. 1979-1980	Vamos Juntos (When We Are Together)	Responsible parenthood
8. 1980	"El Combate" (The Battle)	Adult education literacy
9. 1980-1981	"Caminemos" Let's Walk Together	Sexual responsibility among teenagers
10. 1981	"Nosotras las Mujeres" (We the Women)	Status-of-women
11. 1981-1982	Por Amor (For Love)	Family planning

Source: Based in part on Televisa's Institute for Communication Research (1981).

With the assistance of David Poindexter, the President of Population Communication International, a non-profit organization in New York, the "technology" of entertainment-education *telenovelas* spread to India in 1984 (where a soap opera called *Hum Log* [We People] was broadcast) and then to Kenya in 1987 (where a radio and television soap opera were broadcast). In 1992, a second Sabido-style entertainment-education television soap-opera, *Hum Raahi* (Co-Travelers), was broadcast in India. The Sabido strategy of entertainment-education has been adapted and reinvented by Population Communication Services of Johns Hopkins

University (JHU/PCS): they created a wide variety of family planning communication messages, ranging from popular songs in Mexico, the Philippines, and Nigeria, to television soap operas in Nigeria, Turkey, and Pakistan (Kincaid, Jara, Coleman, & Segura, 1988).

In addition to meeting government officials of Mexico, India, and Kenya, Poindexter convinced national leaders of many other countries (for instance, Brazil, China, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria) to adapt Sabido's "technology". His efforts have met with some limited success to date. The difficulty in transferring the "technology" of entertainment-education soap operas is reflected in 9-year gap between 1976, when the first of Sabido's seven *telenovelas* was broadcast in Mexico, and 1984, when the broadcasting of *Hum Log* began in India. Why this gap? Many nations' policy-makers were favorably impressed with the apparent success Sabido's television soap operas in Mexico, but they held back for one or more of the following reasons:

1. No external evaluation research was conducted on the effects of the seven Mexican *telenovelas*, so policy-makers in other nations were not entirely convinced of the strong effects that were claimed for the Mexican broadcasts (for example, that the second *telenovela*, *Acompañame* led to adoption of family planning by half a million Mexican couples).
2. Specific details about how to design and produce on entertainment-education television soap opera were not easily available. Some information was available in a paper (Sabido, 1981) presented at the 1981 conference of the International Institute of Communication, in Strasbourg, France. This paper, accompanied by videotaped highlights of Sabido's Mexican soap operas, was important in conveying the idea of entertainment-education *telenovelas* to Manohar Shyam Joshi, the scriptwriter for the Indian soap opera, *Hum Log*, broadcast in 1984-85.
3. Other nation's policy-makers, particularly population program officials and broadcasting officials, were not convinced that they could produce an effective entertainment-education soap opera without Miguel Sabido and his team of creative professionals. They doubted that the software technology would be transferred and implanted successfully.
4. Many policy-makers were not convinced that the advantages of using the "entertainment-education" strategy could outweigh its relatively high start-up costs and start-up time. What if commercial advertisers were reluctant to associate their products with such sensitive topics as "family planning" and "gender equality"?

So how did the entertainment-education strategy spread from Mexico to India, Kenya, and to other nations? How was the "technology adapted and modified as it diffused from nation to nation?"

Hum Log in India

Hum Log (We People), a particularly popular television soap opera, was broadcast in India from 1984 to 1985. *Hum Log* featured educational messages about

women's status, family harmony, and smaller family size norms. About 26 percent of thematic content of the 156 episodes of the opera dealt with female status and about 6 percent with smaller family size norms, but this educational content varied widely over the 17 months of broadcasts (for example, family planning was "hard-sold" in the episodes broadcast during the first 13 weeks, but then almost ignored in later broadcasts).(2)

Hum Log attracted a very large-sized audiences, setting a record for television ratings in India, and getting through to the mass population of India as no television series had ever done before. We found that the *Hum Log* broadcasts had particularly important impacts on certain audience segments. For example, many young women in the audience identified with Badki, a positive role model for female equality, who modeled her rejection of the tradition role for Indian young women by seeking a professional job outside the home, selecting her own husband, etc. (Singhal & Rogers, 1989a; 1989b). However, we also found that many older women in the audience identified with Bhagwanti, a negative role model for female equality, who portrayed the role of a stereotypical India wife-mother. This latter effect, which was unintended, demonstrates the difficulty in predicting all of the audience effects of an entertainment-education program.

Both Miguel Sabido and David Poindexter, Presidente of Population Communication International, played key roles in transferring the "technology" of entertainment-education *telenovelas* from Mexico to India. Their efforts were aided by an India government's initiative to expand public access to television via communication satellites, and the government's realization that attractive educational programming was needed to justify this investment in television hardware. A great deal of personal contact (over several years) was needed between Poindexter and India government officials to eventually transfer the idea of entertainment-education *telenovela* to India (Singhal, 1990).

Despite the best efforts of Poindexter and Sabido, the transfer of the entertainment-education *telenovela* methodology from Mexico to India was, at best, incomplete. Joshi, the scriptwriter for *Hung Log*, did not have the opportunity to personally meet Sabido. Joshi's understanding of Sabido's *telenovela* methodology was solely based on the paper presented by Sabido at the International Institute of Communication Conference in Strasbourg, in 1981. Little or no formative research was conducted to assess audience needs in India. Also missing from the Sabido methodology in Joshi's creation of *Hung Log* was a committee of social scientists, family planning officials, and media officials to decide on the positive and negative social values to be presented in the television program. In designing the soap opera, Joshi relied more on his creative intuition than on the multi-disciplinary theoretical framework proposed by Sabido. The infrastructure resources needed to support *Hum Log*'s educational messages were inadequately mobilized. Also, inter-institutional coordination between media, public health agencies, voluntary organizations, religious groups, etc. was lacking.

Despite its possible shortcomings, *Hum Log* was a spectacular audience success. Audience members strongly identified with the soap opera characters, and for the most part were successful in distinguishing the positive role models from the negative ones (in terms of the "educational-development" purpose of the soap opera). The epilogues

(2) The main findings from our research on the effects of *Hum Log* were published in a series of journal articles and two books: Singhal & Rogers (1989a; 1989b; 1988), and Singhal (in press).

helped engender a phenomenal volume of viewer mail (estimated at about 400,000 viewer letters), providing a national forum for discussing educational-development topics. *Hum Log*, represented a turning point in the international diffusion of the entertainment-education *telenovela* technology.

TELEVISION AND RADIO SOAP OPERAS IN KENYA

Once the broadcasting of *Hum Log* in India showed that Miguel Sabido's entertainment-education strategy could be transferred from Mexico to another nation, David Poindexter began to work with broadcasting officials in Kenya in designing both a radio and a television soap opera utilizing the entertainment-education communication strategy. A great deal of personal contact between Poindexter and Kenyan government officials was required before the idea was adapted in Kenya. Radio and television producers from the Kenyan broadcasting network were trained by Miguel Sabido in his design and production techniques for creating entertainment-education soap operas, and both a radio soap opera, *Ushikwapo Shikimana* (When Given Advice, Take It), and a television soap opera, *Tushauriane* (Let's Discuss), were broadcast in Kenya in the late 1980's. Eventually, the broadcasts of both series were halted due to various political reasons, despite their high audience ratings. Some evaluation research data were gathered in Kenya that showed the radio and the television soap operas reached large audience with a family planning, population message. The radio broadcasts reached a much larger audience, especially of less-educated and lower-income individuals (who typically have a larger family size) than did television. Broadcast of the radio and television soap opera may begin again soon in Kenya.

Sangre Joven in Mexico

In 1989, a Mexican *telenovela*, *Sangre Joven* (Young Blood), was created by Sabido for broadcast in Spanish-speaking nations in Latin America and in the U.S. *Sangre Joven* was to stress teenage contraception, with a sub-plot on drug-abuse prevention and another on AIDS-prevention. As its name implies, *Sangre Joven* was aimed at a younger-age audience from about 15 to 25. It would be broadcast in Spanish.

Then a series of unexpected delays occurred, including a reorganization of Televisi the Mexican network, Miguel Sabido's resignation from Televisa (after he had written the script for *Sangre Joven*, and a lack of agreement among Mexico's television officials about the proposed broadcasts. At present, Mexican television officials are revising the *Sangre Joven* script, and broadcasts may begin within the next year.

Hum Raahi in India

The planning for *Hum Raahi* (Co-Travellers) began in India in 1986, almost as soon as the broadcasts of *Hum Log* ended. Roger Pereira, a media executive in Bombay with considerable expertise in family planning communication, headed a production team that began work on the new India soap opera that emphasizes

female status. Thanks to the efforts of David Poindexter, the Indian team traveled to Mexico City in 1986 for one-week training seminar with Miguel Sabido, founder of the entertainment-education strategy.

Formative evaluation research was conducted, as an input to planning *Hum Raahi*. Over five years (1986 to 1991) were required to plan the series. During this time, some half-dozen scriptwriters tried in vain to create messages which subtly combined entertainment content with education. Finally, in 1991, Manohar Shyam Joshi (the scriptwriter for *Hum Log* was commissioned to write the scripts for *Hum Raahi*. Joshi rewrote the *Hum Raahi* story-line to the producer's satisfaction, demonstrating the crucial need for an adept scriptwriter in an entertainment-education effort. In late 1991, Doordarshan, the India national television network, approved broadcast of the soap-opera's first 26 episodes (that is, for six months), starting on January 14, 1992. The broadcast occurs at a particularly choice prime-time slot each week, 9:00 on Tuesday evenings.

In contrast to *Hum Log*, the design of *Hum Raahi* more closely follows the entertainment-education strategy pioneered by Miguel Sabido. *Hum Raahi* provides an attractive entertainment message that appeals to the same mass audience of India, in which educational content about the issue of female equality is subtly transmitted through the main characters that are portrayed. There are (1) both positive roles models for the desired educational behavior (for example, a young village woman who teaches about female equality in a woman's organization, a male expert on female equality, etc.), and (2) negative role models (for example, a personable young servant girl whose marriage is arranged and who dies in childbirth as a teenager, and an older male parent who will not allow his daughter to continue her formal education, even though she has won a merit fellowship). According to the Miguel Sabido-type entertainment-education strategy, audience members are expected to identify with one or more of the main characters in *Hum Raahi*, usually with a same-sex, same-age character. In later episodes of the soap opera, the negative role models change their behavior, and become converted to represent positive roles regarding the educational theme of the soap opera.

Each half-hour episode of *Hum Raahi* costs between \$12,000 to \$16,000 to produce, and it is sold to a commercial sponsor (in this case, Tata Steel and Tata Oil Mines) at a profit. The sponsor, in return for providing the production costs of each episode, gets two 30-second advertising spots before and after the soap opera's broadcasts. So an entertainment-education television soap opera represents a kind of "win-win" situation in that education of the public, which usually is expensive in most cases, actually is a profit-making activity.

By its seventh episode, *Hum Raahi* was commanding audience ratings of up to 78 percent in four cities in the North India Hindi-speaking belt (which includes about 40 percent of the nation's population) (3). Like *Hum Log*, *Hum Raahi* is broadcast in Hindi, and thus earns lower audience ratings in South India where Hindi is not the mother tongue. The 78 rating in North India represents a Hindi audience of about 100 million for each broadcast of *Hum Raahi*.

After the 13th episode, in early April, 1992, each *Hum Raahi* episode closed with a brief epilogue, delivered by Tanuja, a very popular India movie star in

(3) Television ratings in India are not directly comparable to those in the United States because the government-supported television network, Doordarshan, has relatively little competition.

the 1960's, and who is now a highly respected member of the Indian film community. Our research on *Hum Log* found that the epilogues were particularly important in bringing about the educational effects on the part of audience individuals. Each epilogue seeks to relate the content of that episode with the daily lives of the audience members. Each epilogue usually ends with an invitation for viewers to write to the epilogue-giver at Doordarshan headquarters. An amazing 400,000 viewers' letters were received in response to the *Hum Log* epilogues.

At the same time that broadcasts of the epilogues began (in early April, 1992) on *Hum Raahi*, a special post office box was established by Doordarshan in Bombay for viewers' letters. Each epilogue closes with an on-air slide of this post office box number. A similar technique was utilized in Sabido's Mexican *telenovelas* and in *Hum Log*.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION TELENOVELAS

The effective creation and diffusion of the entertainment-education strategy from one nation to another depends upon several important factors. One set of factors represents the necessary infrastructure that must be present in a nation wishing to produce entertainment-education media programs. Both Mexico and India provided adequate human resource systems and hardware technology to enable them to implement the entertainment-education strategy. A second set of factors critical to the effective creation and implementation of entertainment-education media programs involves the socio-cultural environment. The interaction of people, social systems, and culture in Mexico and India reveal why the effects of Mexico's series of *telenovelas* and India's *Hum Log* were not the same. First, we address the importance of a nation's infrastructure on the creation and implementation of the entertainment-education strategy; and second, we discuss the effects of the socio-cultural environment.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION STRATEGY

Before a successful entertainment-education strategy can be implemented, a key question that must be addressed is this: Are the necessary resources available to effectively produce and implement the entertainment-education strategy? Two of the major components of a nation's infrastructure that we will consider are (1) its physical resources and (2) its human resources. Without adequate people and production systems for creating entertainment-education soap operas, the Mexican, Indian, and Kenyan efforts would not have been possible.

Physical Resources

Financial support must be generated in order to finance development of entertainment-education media programs. Working capital may come from many sources, including government funds, private funds, or commercial sponsors. Initially, both Mexico's

and India's entertainment-education soap opera were supported with government monies, but were later supported by commercial sponsors. An entertainment-education soap opera currently being broadcast in India, *Hum Raahi* is supported by the funds of the Tata Group of Companies, with personal backing of its chief, J.R.D. Tata. After *Hum Log's* popularity with audience became apparent, the Nestlé company became a sponsor of the program in order to advertise "Maggi 2-Minute Noodles", a new product that had not been mass marketed in India at that time. Nestlé reaped enormous profits through its new Indian noodle consumers (Singhal & Rogers, 1989b). The commercial success of *Hum Log* helped spur the rapid commercialization of Indian television, a change with both positive and negative consequences that are hotly debated (Singhal, 1990). Despite this controversy, *Hum Log* demonstrated that an entertainment-education media program can attract external funding sources so that government funding can be reduced or eliminated. Commercial success may also encourage wealthy individuals to privately support the production of entertainment-education media programs.

A second physical resource that was needed in Mexico and India to utilize the entertainment-education strategy was appropriate hardware technology. Both Televisa in Mexico and Doordarshan in India operated nation-wide television systems and production facilities for producing television programs. A capacity to domestically produce media programs is an important factor in determining the success or failure of the entertainment-education strategy (an issue that we will discuss later).

A third physical resource that must be considered when designing an entertainment-education media program is the network of social service organizations needed to support the behavioral changes promoted by the program's prodevelopment messages. For example, after an episode of the Mexican telenovela *Ven Comigo* in 1976, a huge traffic jam was created in Mexico City due to unexpectedly large numbers of viewers who attempted to reach a warehouse in order to obtain free literacy booklets (Brown & Singhal, 1990). Request for the booklets far exceeded the supply, creating frustration among viewers unable to obtain a booklet.

One episode of *Hum Log* encouraged Indian viewers to consider arranging the donation of their body organs for critically-ill patients in need of organ transplants. However, many viewers were not sure how to secure arrangements for the donation of specific organs. One audience member who belonged to the Chandigarh Youth Club decided to start a private eye-donation campaign in response to the program, and within a short time period arranged over 5,000 eye donation agreements (Singhal & Rogers, 1989a). If several existing organizations had planned organ-donation campaigns prior to the broadcast of the television program, the viewers who arranged for organ donations probably would have been larger in number. The promotion of adult literacy by *Ven Comigo* and the promotion of family planning by *Acompañame* in Mexico would not have been successful without the existence of a large network of adult literacy classes and government health clinics were couples could receive counseling, respectively. Although *Hum Log* promoted better treatment of women in India (Brown & Cody, 1992), the infrastructure of organizations that could assist mistreated women and abusive husbands was not in place to support the behavioral changes promoted by *Hum Log*. The impact of the program on women status would have been much more powerful with

the support of pro-women's organizations. Likewise, publicizing harsher penalties for wife abusers and providing toll-free telephone numbers for reporting wife-beating and dowry deaths would have increased the impact of *Hum Log* prosocial messages designed to help women.

A more basic infrastructure need that should not be over-looked is the transportation systems that are necessary for people to access the development resources promoted by an entertainment-education program. A media user who is encouraged to use family planning methods but who does have the ability to travel to a medical facility cannot implement the required behavior change to control family growth. Nigeria's entertainment-education television serial *In a Lighter Mood* successfully promoted family planning because the program referred viewers to a specific clinic in Enugu that had prepared for an influx of people (Winnard, Rimon, & Convisser, 1987). In contrast, the effectiveness of the Kenyan entertainment-education soap opera *Tushauriani (Let's Discuss)* is not well understood because the program producers did not coordinate its prosocial strategies with specific family planning clinics.

Human Resources

A second important dimension of infrastructure that will determine a nation's ability to effectively develop entertainment-education media is the human resources available. In many developing countries, the first necessary human resources is government officials who will support the production of entertainment-education programs. Almost every nation that has employed the entertainment-education communication strategy for development has done so with government leadership, approval, and patronage. In India, for example, it is hard to conceive of the production and broadcast of an innovative program like *Hum Log* without government involvement. One reason Indian government officials supported the creation of *Hum Log* was because they traveled to Mexico to meet with Mexican researchers at Televisa and to learn how to use the entertainment-education communication strategy.

A second important human resource is a pool of trained communication scientists who were competent communication theorists and researchers. The entertainment-education communication strategy is built on several important theories of social science (Brown, Singhal, & Rogers, 1988; Brown, 1992a). The entertainment education soap opera produced in Mexico were developed by a collaborative effort of media professionals and communication scientists. Such collaboration was missing in the case of Indian and Kenyan soap operas.

Third, entertainment-education are difficult to produce without the existence of an entertainment industry. Professional writers, directors, producers, musicians, actors, actresses, and media technicians were needed in both Mexico and India in order to produce popular entertainment-education soap operas. Mexico already had a large television industry prior to the broadcasts of its *entertainment-education telenovelas*. In India, a large film industry provides professional expertise for the production of indigenous soap operas (Singhal & Rogers, 1989b). Without competently trained media professionals, the domestic production of high quality entertainment-education media programs would, at best, be difficult.

A fourth human resource need that will determine the effectiveness of the entertainment-education communication strategy are trained social workers and other local professionals. An infrastructure to support the implementation of development messages requires organizations of skilled professionals such as family counselors, literacy, teachers, agricultural agents, health workers, and so forth. For example, in Mexico, professionals who could teach people literacy and family planning were already organized and prepared to work with people who responded to the entertainment-education messages provided by *telenovelas* that promoted adult literacy and family planning. An effective entertainment-education development program should include the training of key local workers.

SOCIAL-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION

Another important set of factors that determines the effectiveness of an entertainment-education media programs is the socio-cultural environment. The cultural values and beliefs that guide social interaction in a society can either enhance entertainment-education messages or oppose them. For example, *Hum Log* attacked the dowry system of marriage and challenged traditional beliefs about the subservience of women in India society. However, many viewers did not realize the program was presenting a no-traditional view of women. Audience members had strong identification with Bhagwanti, one of the negative role models for female equality, the stereotypical Indian wife-mother (Brown, 1992b).

Failure to anticipate the cultural and social impacts of a media program can result in surprising consequences. When the Japanese soap opera *Oshin* (a Japanese name) was imported into Iran and dubbed in Farsi, few people anticipated the program's great popularity among Iranians. The values promoted by *Oshin* did not conflict with Islamic values and the program was a non-Western production; it was easily approved for broadcast (Mowlana, 1988). However, *Oshin* became so popular in Iran that many women began naming their new-born babies Oshin, after the name of the poverty-stricken laundry woman who was the hero of the series. The Ayatollah Khomeini became very angry when he heard one woman on a radio talk show admit that Oshin was a more important role model than Fatemeh Zahra, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter. To the dismay of Iranian media officials, Khomeini imprisoned the head of radio and sentenced the director of Iran's broadcasting agency's ideological group to 50 lashes (Tehrani, 1992).

Sometimes the potentially powerful effects of soap operas on the social attitudes and beliefs of an audience are difficult to predict. Even the success of a program can produce negative social consequences unexpectedly. Based on the experiences of those in Mexico, India, and Kenya, numerous lessons have been learned regarding the design, production, implementation and socio-cultural effects of entertainment-education media programs. We summarize these lessons as follows:

1. *The entertainment media are highly popular with audiences.* Multinational corporations promote consumerism through entertainment, and governments of the world promote political and economic ideologies through entertainment. So why not education?

2. *By combining entertainment with education content, the entertainment-education strategy can appeal to the emotions (thus influencing attitudes and perhaps overt behavior) of audience members, as well as to their intellects.*

3. *The mixture of entertainment and educational content can serve to attract large audiences to the media, and thus earn high profits from advertising and/or sales.* High profits can have both desirable and undesirable effects. A desirable outcome would be that more funding is given by private corporations to develop education programs.

4. *Entertainment-education media campaigns employ principles of commercial and social marketing for increasing their effectiveness.*

5. *The effects of using the entertainment-education strategy are increased when the entertainment-education strategy is accompanied by supplementary multi-media messages to form an integrated communication campaign.*

6. *Entertainment-education communication cannot make the educational content too blatant or hard-sell, or the audience will reject such messages.* Research of family planning media messages provides a good example of this lesson. When an audience perceives an entertainment message is intended to produce a change in attitudes and behavior, a counter-attitudinal effect can occur, creating resistance to the persuasion.

7. *Repetition of the educational content in an entertainment-education message is important in achieving its desired education effects* (Singhal & Rogers, 1989b). Compared to the results of most communication research on a single message (which typically finds only minimal effects), studies of the effects of entertainment-educational messages show they have considerable effects. Why? One main reason is repetition. A television soap opera that is broadcast for one hour per day, five days a week, for a year or more, represents massive exposure on the part of a regular viewer of the program. Unlike a single-shot message, which, if once missed, is lost forever, a soap opera provides several opportunities for the message to "connect" with its target audience. The effects produced by a single-shot message are vastly different (usually less) from the effects produced by repeated persuasive messages (Bradac, Hopper, & Wiemann, 1989).

8. *Use of the entertainment-education strategy can "fail" if an adequate infrastructure for providing services does not accompany the mass media messages.* An entertainment-education strategy which combines mass media messages with community, small group, and individual action options is likely to be effective.

9. *The use of formative evaluation to assess audience needs and design entertainment-educational messages contributes to the soap opera's increased effectiveness.*

10. *Collaboration between creative professionals and social science researchers is essential for a successful entertainment-education strategy.*

11. *Entertainment-education communication strategies are most successful when public health official, broadcast media officials, development planners, religious organizations, commercial sponsors, and other involved parties work collaboratively.*

12. *Start-up costs for entertainment-educational programs are usually very high, and considerable start-up time is required.* However, entertainment-

educational television programs offer tremendous economies of scale in delivering messages to target audiences. For example, the cost of reaching one audience member per episode of *Hum Log* came to only 0.02 cents (U.S.).

13. *Several champions in a nation, key power figures or groups, must become interested in an entertainment-education mass medium, and put the weight of their position behind the idea, for it to be carried forward into action.*

In summary, from the experience of Mexico, India, and Kenya we have learned that a complex set of factors contribute to the success or failure of specific entertainment-education media messages.

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