

Contribution 1:

Hello and greetings to all of you from Bulgaria!

According to our ground rules I'll briefly present myself first: student of medicine in Sofia, Bulgaria; member of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations - IFMSA, and till march 2007 one of the participants in the International Peer Education training, organized by IFMSA and UNFPA. For those of you not keen on long association names and numerous abbreviations ;), I'll just say that my interests extent from medicine to HIV prevention and peer education as a whole. Enough on me, if there are any other questions, please ask.

So let's go on to the discussion:

1. The whole idea of communication is conveying information. With some hint of perfectionism and help from a dictionary: "communication = exchange of information: the exchange of information between people, e.g. by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behavior"

So I only partially agree with the statement that media is the only way of conveying info, in fact it is just one alternative way. We may also add the face-to-face communication, the body language, off course our beloved peer methods and numerous others apart from the media. Probably the only reason to usually state media as THE way of conveying information is its coverage of great audience. Nevertheless that big audience is covered upon various subjects and in the end only a small percent of the info given is actually remembered by the audience. Just a small example: Do all of you recollect every single part of the news bulletin an hour ago?

2. As mentioned before the media has a great coverage which may be used as a powerful instrument in the fight against STDs, including HIV/AIDS. But as any other way of educating people it should be used in the proper manner and to a certain extent. We cannot, for example, expect that after a tv information campaign on HIV, all our work in prevention is done. Again media should only be part of the process of conveying information, or as in the case of making a prevention campaign. Media has a great potential in influencing attitudes and behaviors: the "social animals" we are just leads to following the current trends and fashions. Another small example: how many of us drink Coca Cola, stay on a diet to be as slim as models, or buy the products in advertisements. No matter we want it or not, the media has the power to build up a huge part of our social behavior - a fact which should, even must be used in prevention and health campaigns. Which just reminds me of that MTV advert of the extremely sexy girl in red with a red condom - a "must see" advert and in my humble opinion one of the best targeted clips ever.

What could we do to enforce the role of media in such vitally important issues as our health? Lots of things! The mere fact we are watching and liking adverts on condoms or health programs, not the latest Procter&Gamble detergent, is a step further. Wouldn't it be a good idea to allow our children watch the MTV staying alive prevention clips in

stead of leaving them be couch potatoes in front of the latest series of some kids soap opera? We cannot pretend be fighting HIV and in the same time saying our teenage kids are too small for real sexual matters discussion; does it sound familiar ;)?

In brief: the preventive attitude begins from ourselves, from our own family and spreads out to reach the society as a whole. Nobody could ever be 100% safe, nobody is totally immune, the media is just one of the ways of conveying that information to people.

After that mindnumbling e-mail, I really feel I have lots of things more to say, but as I'm pretty much sure nobody is still following me, I'll just put a stop for today. :)

I am really looking forward to hearing from you and your opinions on the subject - as far as I remember we have representatives in the discussion from more than 20 countries. Come on, where are the loads of e-mails?

Believe me, as a person who receives round 50e-mails a day, I'd really love to have 50more on an interesting topic as sexual education ;)

Best wishes,

Kamelia Stanoeva

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Contribution 2:

My name is Maurice Ocquaye, Advocacy Officer with JHU/CCP in Ghana.

I think we also need to be considering the Indigenous Folk Media which is deeply rooted in people's culture, traditions and art forms. The school of Performing Arts of the University of Ghana, Legon for example, makes use of this traditional media a lot and have personally seen it perform " Magic " in terms of getting people(especially, the masses) to change their behavior and adopt certain recommended actions for the good of the entire community. The drama/skit have always been performed using the people's art forms,medium of expression, local dialect, etc. to communicate messages of change to them.

Ocquaye Maurice [Mocquaye@gmail.com]

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Contribution 3:

Hi,

My name is Randa Wilkinson and I currently live in Jakarta, Indonesia. I was recently hired by The Manoff Group as the nutrition advisor for the USAID funded Health Services Project (HSP) in Indonesia. I have lived here almost 5 years and previously was with Save the Children as their Positive Deviance Program Manager.

In Indonesia, text messages are the number one way to communicate, and I am exploring ways to use this wide coverage to promote immediate breastfeeding and other health messages. I would like to suggest this as another form of media.

Randa Wilkinson [rwilkinson@jsi.or.id]

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Contribution 4:

I agree that media defines what we are looking at - of course media's definition will continue to expand. The Internet has opened doors for Podcasts, blogs and Vlogs that are also media outlets for messages. I think that we can always seek to do a better job at sending messages that promote sexual health. I think that we have come a long way, but there is still resistance to sharing truth related to sexuality. This is still a taboo subject for many American households.

I'm a doctoral student at Teachers College in Cognitive Studies with a concentration in Intelligent Technologies. I also work at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I am interested in social networking and Web based media as a means of sharing media messages.

Deborah Elzie [dbe2102@columbia.edu]

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Contribution 5:

Hi Everyone,

My Name is Elif ELCI from UNFPA Turkey (Programme and Resources Associate) and Y-Peer Focal Point for Turkey. My interest area is Advocacy. I'm working on Advocating for youth SRH and mobilizing all parties for that. Turkey is going to launch its first ever Youth SRH Advocacy Campaign (called 'A Youth Story') on 12 April 2007 so I have high expectations from this list in order to share the experiences, to open new paths .here are my comments on two questions of Tim.

- Definition of Media: The other media forms that we should be discussing would be newspapers, journals, magazines and web pages. I think written media would be added to mentioned visual media channels.

- Promotion of SRH in media: First of all health issues are not in media agenda unless there is a dramatic background story. Besides sex issues are always in their agenda regardless of health points. Whenever we try to integrate SRH issues to media we watch or read the concept/issue in the way that they would like to reflect which we can call

'popular' (for them). This can be understandable if we take into consideration that it's a specific area. To overcome this we organized media seminars for media staff about dealing with RH and gender issues which helped a bit. We've organized workshops to give briefing about topics and how to write/produce news/programmes about those issues. But as we all know upper level managers are critical in this respect. There should be some methods developed in order to include them to the SRH topic. Maybe during the following days and discussions we can share or create such systems.

Here is a question came up to my mind that: I there any institution that measured the impact of media (itself) on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours?

There is one additional point that I would like to pay your attention. In some of the Y-Peer countries, governments still own some media institutions like tv channels, radios ...etc. May be we should also take that into consideration. Role of media or nature of media? commercial benefit +? public benefit +?etc

thanks in advance

Elif ELCI

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Contribution 6:

Hola!

My name is Brenna Ruiz Gordon, I'm a journalist and communications strategist from Costa Rica, I work for WWF, The World Wildlife Fund, and I'm an occasional writer for several national publications. I've covered sexual and reproductive health issues in Costa Rica such as HIV-Aids among adolescents and college students, breast cancer, and others.

1. Media Forms: I believe advertisement in all its forms (banners, pamphlets, media campaigns, etc) blogs are an increasing and apparently very efficient type of media, are among the media forms of relevance in this century, specially in a country like mine where the influence of conservative political and religious groups limit the accessibility of more open, direct and specific sexual and reproductive health messages in traditional media (major TV channels, radio stations and newspapers)

2. Definitely unsatisfied with media coverage and ways of engaging this topic. In Costa Rica local media haven't found or haven't been interested enough in finding creative-interactive ways of conveying efficient messages. From personal experience and analysis, global, international or transnational media (cable TV or internet, for example) tend to create and distribute general messages made for all of Latin America as if it were made of one single culture and the reality is although the 26 countries share many historic aspects, each one has a particular set of cultural, political, religious and social values. Hence, one single mass oriented message produced by MTV Latin America based in Mexico or

Argentina cannot and will not reach the youth of countries such as Panama or Peru or Brazil efficiently.

Each issue and communication objective should be addressed based on a conscious knowledge of the target audience, although we talk about global communications, target segmentation is key to effective message delivering.

That would be my contribution for today. Thank you for the opportunity, I'm very excited to continue to participate in the Forum.

Brenna Ruiz Gordon
Journalist and Communications Strategist Costa Rica

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Contribution 7:

Hi!

This is Yogesh Raj Gurung (age 37). I'm currently working as a BCC Manager at Population Services International Nepal (PSI/Nepal) since the last 4 years. PSI is an international social marketing organization working in the health sector in about 70 countries globally. Prior to PSI I was in commercial advertising working as an Associate Account Director in J Walter Thompson Nepal.

Below are my comments on the 2 points of today's discussion.

1. I agree that the term 'media' defines any means of conveying information. Any medium that channels a communication message can be termed as a 'media vehicle'. I would be interested if we could include 'Point-of-Purchase (POP)' and outdoor media 'Billboards & Signage' in the discussion. A couple of years back I attended a POP conference in Mumbai, India and was very intrigued by some research data that was presented by a 'retail visual merchandising expert' from UK. He said that research has shown that 70% purchase decision happen at the retail level! Considering this research data, I think it is very important for social marketing organizations like PSI that markets condoms, to know how we can better use 'POP' as an effective media vehicle in our BCC strategies.

2. With 'media' playing a vital role in a BCC campaign, I think that it has been engaged a lot in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health issues. Mass media with Inter-personal communication is often termed as the essential mix for an effective BCC campaign. In campaigns we have developed and implemented, we have had successful measurable health impact through this mix.

But one area of media I feel that has immense potential and we have not engaged enough is 'diagnosing' media as a value addition tool in a BCC campaign. We often use a certain media because of its reach and place messages in between popular programs so that we get high viewer ship.

But have we thought whether these popular programs can add further value to our messages besides only guaranteeing high viewership? For example let us take television operas. Television operas are immensely popular in most countries. Audiences often form a bond with the characters and relate to them as members of their families. What better spokespersons can we be getting than these artists? Wouldn't it be great if we can get these characters to say a few lines about sexual and reproductive health in their acts? I think this will add value to the message by 10 folds in comparison to communicating the same message, in the same TV station, in the same program as just a commercial or PSA. As communication planners we need to strategically leverage on this popularity and piggy bank on the empathy levels of the audience with these opera characters. My point is we need to engage media not just as a medium of communication but look at media as a value addition tool.

Yogesh Raj Gurung
BCC Manager
PSI/Nepal

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Contribution 8:

Hi Megan,

To begin with I live in South Sudan where radio, TV, Newsletter and other forms of electronic media is lacking but people still communicate;

To question one, we have got to consider games, fashions of dresses and Billboards and signposts.

To question two, the media has not done enough for two reasons:

1. Semi informed media presenters on sexual and reproductive health issues-we need individuals who handle these issues objectively I suggest that media presenters undergo some training to update them with the latest facts on health of quality service.

2. Knowledge, attitude and behaviors change can not fully for the majority of population be achieved in such venues as media. I suggest that sexual and reproductive health be integrated in the curricula of the education system of a Country and Media reinforces. This never happened because sex and reproductive health is being seen as an issue between a patient and a doctor. If we can advocate for such integration, we are likely to achieve our objectives wholesome.

Thanks
Malish Martin

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Contribution 9:

Hi Stakic,
Thanks a lot for accepting me.
best regards,
Myo Min

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Contribution 10:

Hi ,

I'm Mona from UNFPA Country office in Egypt and I'm the communication and HIV focal point. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to learn and share thoughts from/with all participants in this forum.

In replay to your first question; I believe that yes media is any form of communication that covey messages and information starting from very basic approaches to the most complicated technology based media.

Q2: Media is a key player in shaping and influencing public perceptions. There is much more to be done with the media especially for young people not only through meetings, radio, TV, web based etc... I wonder if health messages and information are adopted by the private business and mainstreamed in their plans and strategies... to give an example; restaurants and cafes can play a significant role in drawing the attention of young people to certain issues...

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Contribution 11:

Hi O'Brien and everyone!
Thank you for giving me a chance to share my opinion and view. Please see my opinion.
1. Yes, I agree media means anything that can transmit information from source to receiver. We have SMCRE model. That is Source, Message, Channel(Media), Receiver and Effect or Impact. Media may be printed or electronic. As you all know, role of

electronic medias is expanding all over the world.However e-media cannot be accessible for all especially in developing country like Myanmar. Therefore we should discuss more on printed media.

2. No I am not satisfied yet. There are still restriction on media especially on sensitive and cultural issues like reproductive and sexual health education. Actually media fulfills one of the importants factors, knowledge to change behavior. In my opinion we should do more desensitization of those issues to overcome cultural and political barriers to gain more impact from media campaign.

Regards,
Myo Min, Dr
MPA student
LKYSPP

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Contribution 12:

Hi everyone,
Don't worry with my English, I'm a French speaker.

1. Do we all agree that the term 'media' defines any means of conveying information? Just the list of this forum's facilitators shows a range of 'media' expertise. We have professionals who use film, television, radio, theater, concerts, and one-on-one interactions to convey their messages. What are the other media forms that we should be discussing?

Yes I agree for the term 'media' meaning.

In Africa, for me the other media form will be certainly 'the black African poet and musician' which are commonly call: 'GRIOT' in French and 'DJELY' in Bambara(Mali) where it is too developed. The advantage of this 'GRIOT' is that, they are too close to the population and have a large audience.

2. Are we satisfied that the media is engaged enough in promotion of sexual and reproductive health (and related issues) to have measurable impacts on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors? If not, what more can/should be done and why isn't it happening?

What the media do in promotion of sexual and reproductive health is good but not enough, more have to be done to reach more people absolutely rural population.

IBRAHIM Hamsatou
Country Representative PMC, Niger

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Contribution 13:

Hi,

My names are Alli Aminat Ajoke, from Lagos Nigeria, will be 27 on APRIL 24TH 2007, presently I work as a GIPA Workplace Adviser at the Nigerian Business Coalition Against AIDS (NIBUCAA), although I have a pet project Positive Youth Initiative Nigeria (PYIN). I love impacting positively on teenagers and youths life by organizing programmes that will change their thinking and orientation and help them give themselves a meaningful life.

Response to question 1

Yes I personally agree that any means of conveying information is media. The other forms of media that we should be discussing should include bill board, moving vans, and flyers. Taking into consideration that information can be pass at any time.

Response to question 2

Personally, am not satisfied with the engagement of the media in promotion of sexual and reproductive health and other related issues to have impacts on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The fact still remains that even some parents and guardian do not want to talk to their kids about Reproductive health issue and the only way the children can hear or learn about it is through the various means of the media. The media should include more programmes that promote sexual and reproductive health and other related issues, real life issues of what is happening negatively if this kind of information is not passed across. For example, am a young person living with HIV, so any time I have the privilege to pass an information, I emphasize on the fact that my parent did not tell me a lot of things, thinking I don't know but by the time they felt I had to know it was too late, for the fact that am living openly about my HIV status does not mean that am happy that I am HIV positive but I want other teenagers and youths to learn from my negative experience and learn about their reproductive health and other issues as it relate to them. And I have come to realize that having HIV had made me change my behaviours positively and also learn new and positive attitude.

Amina Alli [amino4life2004@yahoo.com]

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Contribution 14:

Dear Megan,

My name is Pauline Kisanga. My address also appears at the bottom of this e-mail. I am delighted to be accepted to this forum. First of all I thank the UNFPA and John Hopkins University for sponsoring this important forum and secondly the facilitators who will guide us along well, what with their exceptional experiences. Thank you all, nice to be

working with you in the coming 6 weeks. There are times I will be away in villages and may not be able to be in touch but will let you know about it in advance if I do. ** I introduced one youth into this. I hope he has been accepted. We will be talking about youth. I wonder how many among us are youth?? Shall we know what they want?

Responding to the two Questions of Day One:

1. Do we all agree that the term 'media' defines any means of conveying information? Yes I agree. I would like to add print media-newspapers. Can we also include books and other printed matter and post and telecommunications.

2. Are we satisfied? No, I am not satisfied that the media is engaged enough. What more can be done?

a. Sensationalism of the media houses on critical issues on the different subjects. I believe if every media house staff had deep understanding of some of the key health/life saving messages, they would use their opportunity to bring those messages to the youth. I have attended many meetings, organized many, and in all only a handful if any media personnel were present. We do not deal very well with the media. We have not made them our partners/allies.

b. Access to media personnel of user friendly, easy to read messages. I feel if these were handy at all times, they would be disseminated.

c. We need more research in different countries about what kind of behaviour needs to be addressed. Generalized messages are often not behaviour changers.

d. In correct packaging. You will notice, the major factor in the life of youth is entertainment-music, games, dances, etc. We need to do more in getting the right messages there.

Thank you

Pauline

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The International Baby Food Action Network, IBFAN, is recipient of "THE RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD" An "Alternative Nobel Prize"

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Contribution 15:

Hi folks. Greetings from balmy Delhi.

By way of background, I'm a 3rd year PhD candidate at Hopkins currently on a Fulbright looking at youth media exposure and HIV/AIDS related stigma. I also *just* about fit into the category of youth, having hit the quarter century mark, so I'm hoping to contribute some 'experiential' knowledge as well. :)

My 2 comments:

1. Do we all agree that the term 'media' defines any means of conveying information? Just the list of this forum's facilitators shows a range of 'media' expertise. We have professionals who use film, television, radio, theater, concerts, and one-on-one interactions to convey their messages. What are the other media forms that we should be discussing?

We should definitely discuss online social networks (facebook, friendster, etc.) as well as new media. what i am less clear about how one-on-one interactions are media...it seems to be that information that is mediated - i.e. passed through a medium is media, and it is a bit of a stretch to call all language and communication media. i haven't made up my mind on this - would welcome thoughts.

I have found though, that among the most effective ways to get messages across is through interpersonal communication. So if we "claim" that as media, we certainly have a lot more clout in terms of our effectiveness!

2. Are we satisfied that the media is engaged enough in promotion of sexual and reproductive health (and related issues) to have measurable impacts on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors? If not, what more can/should be done and why isn't it happening?

I don't know how to answer that. Being in research, I can attest to the fact that the tools we have right aren't sufficient to tell. On the one hand many of these topics are taboo and social desirability affects responses. Second, the rate at which media influences anything is SO variable, that on the one hand one outfit worn by Gwen Steffani changes fashion across a city, but some 100 condom ads have not made only minimal statistical difference - at least relative to the money that was spent on it. Maybe it's a saturation issue or maybe there are some topics (fashion and music) that are mediate differently than others (sexual behavior). Third, it totally depends on what outcome we measure and often, research is not intellectually or financially flexible enough to look at the broader modica by which change occurs (rather than just looking at - did you use a condom in the last 3 mo)...I'm complaining, but I shouldn't be, because I don't have solutions just yet.

Some thoughts to kick us off. I promise I'll post something more productive soon!

Devaki Nambiar [devaki_nambiar@yahoo.com]

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Contribution 16:

I am in Zambia and I am involved in training for the health sector.
A nurse by profession, aged over 50 and female.

Q1. Others are: News papers, Fliers, Books, posters and billboards, internet, telephone, mobile communication (use of loud speakers and a moving vehicle).

Q2. In resource limited places not all those that need the information the most get it. I suggest tailoring make the methods used to disseminate information. Take time to find out from the communities themselves what form of communication would be most effective prior to using any.

Lastina Lwatula [lastinal@hssp.org.zm]

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Contribution 17:

Hello,

I am Roli Mahajan, who is a student of an Indian University studying mass communication and video production along with two other humanities subjects - English literature and Sociology.

I would like to thank the organizers for allowing me to participate in this forum and for giving me an opportunity to conference and learn from such a good team of professionals and participants <alike>.

My take at the two questions put forth yesterday.....

Two questions to get the discussion going:

1. Do we all agree that the term 'media' defines any means of conveying information? Just the list of this forum's facilitators shows a range of 'media' expertise. We have professionals who use film, television, radio, theater, concerts, and one-on-one interactions to convey their messages. What are the other media forms that we should be discussing?

Yes media is any medium through which we can convey information. We can try and use the regional and traditional mediums of communication. By regional or traditional i mean puppetry and ballet and street plays also known as "nukkad natak" in India. Games and books as well as small scale seminars are also some mediums which can be tapped for converting information to more people and maybe even more effectively. For example- a child will be interested in a game which boggles his brain and makes him think and unconsciously absorb the message we wish to convey than a television serial which states everything blandly.

We cannot underestimate the reach of computer games and other electronic games because playstations and computers have invaded all the arenas of our life.

Thanks....

Roli

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Contribution 18:

Hello Tim,

*With electronic media, I firstly get stuck before going ahead. To my opinion, bias to electronic media, apart from radio, the inclination seems to fall to urban settings than rural settings. Taking into consideration the fact that the hardest-hit sphere of this globe regarding HIV and AIDS is sub-Saharan Africa where most population are living in rural areas, we better think of alternative media rather than electronic. I am therefore in an opinion that if Theatre can be given much consideration like 'modern' electronic media, this sphere of the world is likely to benefit a lot from the media perspective as a preventive means. When these theatre pieces become quality acceptable, electronic media are likely to pick up from there for utility. Other form of electronic media, which can be used for the purpose of HIV prevention and women & girls reproductive rights, is the use of short messages services (SMS) through cellphones.

*Since we are discussing tools (channels, if not mixed-up), we better concentrate on the intended aspect instead of bringing others on board. I tend to agree that communication is a process of which these tools (media) are used to enable the deliverance of the intended message/information and responses. What we have to consider here is the level of interaction a tool offers to constitute the communication aspect in it; since the fact is that 'informing alone does not constitute communicating, just thinking aloud!

*I agree with this notion. Firstly because adults need to learn and adapt new orientation, while for young people it is part of their current lifestyles. As adults struggle, youth are enjoying popular media deliverables. They tend to decode the messages much faster than those in older generations due to a fast-growing youth-culture with own languages geographically. Because they are somehow allergic to ordinary media, it is proper and ideal to pass life serving messages through popular media in order to capture them much easily than in a contrary.

Kind Regards,

Tumaini Mbibo
Media Technical Advisor
ADRA-ABY Project (Kenya & Tanzania)

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Contribution 19:

1) We should focus more on radio and one on one interactions because most of the remote areas do not have access to some of the other media forms of communication eg internet access

2) There should be more done on the impact of media to focus on sexual reproductive health because it is one of the most significant ways of change.

Jeff Malmangrou [jeffmals@gmail.com]

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Contribution 20:

* Young people use and understand the media better than older generations, and they are more likely to learn life-saving SRH messages from popular media than elsewhere. Do you agree?

Yes I agree and I also stand corrected and agree that "Media are *tools* that enable that information exchange..."

M. SLAEEM ULLAH
DHAKA, BANGLADESH

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Contribution 21:

Yes, we love to welcome the two additional facilitators – Kris Barker, Vice President for International Programs, Population Media Center (PMC) and Katie Elmore, Development and Communications Manager with PMC.

M. SALEEM ULLAH
DHAKA, BANGLADESH.

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