



DEVELOPMENTAL COMMUNICATION AND VARIOUS APPROACHES FOR RURAL AND TRIBAL EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

It is a fact that most of the people resides in rural area. The development of the country depends on the rural development and empowerment of the people residing in the villages. As mass media plays a vital role in the development process, therefore it requires communication literacy among the people. Hence, communication literacy which entails understanding of various tools of available communication modes and the ability to use these has to be an important feature of today's society. Limited access to knowledge and most importantly inability to use it differently hampers growth and development of people.

KEYWORDS: Development support communication (DSC), Paradigm, Localized, Approach, Social Advertisement.

INTRODUCTION

Only a communication literate citizenry can make optimal use of the available knowledge for sustainable development. The planning commission search for new approaches to meet the strategy challenges perhaps underlines the importance of communication literacy education for the rural people especially the disadvantaged. The empowering function of communication literacy is captured by Ratna Kumari. Way back in 2007, when Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi (The National Memorial of Mahatma Gandhi) was running a Gandhi Media Literacy program in Bettiah, Champaran, Bihar for under privileged girls of the area. Some girls like Ratna Kumari expressed the interest to contest the local panchayat elections. They observed that with training in media and how to use information gave them the knowledge to contribute to the democratic process. They felt that enhanced communication skills were important to take up the social conscience with a more concrete approach.

OBJECTIVE

To find out various approaches relating to rural-development with the help of Development Communication.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The scholar has adopted doctrinal researches by referring various journals, text books, news papers and other secondary data through internet.

VARIOUS APPROACHES OF EMPOWERMENT

Various Approaches Various approaches have

been adopted for development communication. The major ones are discussed here. Diffusion of Innovation Approach This approach is based on the need assessment of the target groups and helping people to fulfill their needs by adoption of innovations. This approach was also based on the belief that development of societies is based on adoption of innovations. The process of adoption of innovations passes through the stages of creation of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. Communication has to play the role of facilitator in disseminating innovations to the target groups. This approach was criticized for creating knowledge of gaps among different sections of the audience, due to varying media exposure, having pro-technology, source biases and one way communication.

Richer could gain more due to their access to media. Mass Media and Modernization Approach This approach is based on the idea that mass media are magic multipliers and are agents of social change. They are used to create awareness regarding innovations and developing positive attitude for adoption. They educate people about the importance and adoption of innovations. The development support communicator facilitates information sharing on coequal basis. The information is shared with common meaning and understanding breaking the language, educational and cultural barriers. Thus he becomes a key person in implementing the participatory approach in decision making and planning development strategies. Development support communication should focus on linking the planners' and peoples' agenda for development, where people are clear about their needs and suitability of development programs and strategies. This also requires supportive administration, appropriate selection of communication strategies and peoples' participation.

Wilber Schramm strongly believed that mass media had the potential to inform, to widen horizons, to raise peoples' aspirations and create necessary psychological and social climate for change and development. They multiply the modern information contributing to the national development. Mass media have served as agents of modernization social change in developing countries. Mass media has potential of blowing the winds of modernization into isolated traditional communities and replacing the structure of life, values and behaviour there with ones seen in modern western society (1964). Development Support Communication Approach Development support communication is based on the objectives of the programmes of the development agency, participatory approach focusing on basic needs on knowledge sharing on co-equal basis. It focuses on grassroots level development and participation using small media such as flashcards, slides, video, folk media, personal contacts, talks, meetings, discussions and so on. Thus it creates understanding between the communicator and receiver which provides scope of interchanging of the roles whereas, development communication is university based, with more of top-down and authoritarian approach using mass media at national and international level to create a climate of acceptance of innovations by the target groups. The realization that target groups of development programmes should participate in development process, starting from message selection to evaluation of the programme, has provided new dimensions to development communication. Ashcroft and Mesilla (1989) pointed out that there is a shift from 'the concept of development communication (DC) with its emphasis on top-down, big-media centred government-to-people communication to development support communication (DSC) focused on co-equal, little-media-centred government-with- people communication (Melkote: 262).

Thus, the role of the communicator in DSC is of mediator between the technical experts and their target groups. He is a facilitator of communication between all those involved in the development process. The variables of parameter for development communication for development communication and development support communication, are source, paradigm, approach, level, media and impact. Narula discussed the following two approaches also to development communication. Localised approach The development programmes must be local to meet the local needs which vary widely in different regions and sub regions in a large country like India due to the plurality of climate, cultures and languages. Localized approach would enable communicators to design messages which will be relevant in terms of utility, timeliness, applicability, specificity etc. The localized media approach helps to plan messages specially designed for various local groups. This facilitates two way communication by allowing greater involvement

and participation of the audience in the communication process. Planned Strategy for Development Communication This approach is based on the idea that the success of development communication depends on team approach, i.e. the coordination between the communication agencies such as extension agents, mass media channels, communication and development experts. Thus it emphasizes multi-channel approach for development communication. All the individual agencies should consult, collaborate and coordinate with each other in developing community based communication system which ensures greater participation of local people in planning and production of community based communication messages. Localized approach can be called micro level approach to development planning and communication. National level planning was made for many programmes and schemes for development but their benefits did not trickle down to the local level or grassroots level groups. Therefore, micro level planning was introduced so that maximum benefits of development efforts could reach at grass roots level. Micro level planning is planning at the lowest level of development i.e. village level. Micro level planning helps in bridging the gap between the needs of the people and planning for development. Every small area gets chance of being included in planning. This contributes to the integrated area development. There is ample scope for providing attention to the specific needs of the specific areas or groups. This motivates people to participate equally in planning and implementation of development programmes. Social Marketing Development Communication Model This approach is used in media based information campaigns, aiming at attitudinal change. It is also known as 'non-product advertising' or 'social advertising' or 'public-service advertising'. It means advertising ideas which are not directly for the promotion or sell of the products or commercial services. It deals with the messages of public interest such as social change, political ideas, economic policies, development programmes etc. Advertising has become an important medium of mass education and marketing and therefore the role it plays should be taken seriously. Social marketing is an important part of Indian public policy whether that policy is related to communication, family welfare, education, health, environment or national integration. Various forms of persuasion are employed to educate people and create awareness among them regarding the prime issues concerning the country. Advertising and marketing campaigns through mass media are also given prime importance in this task so as to help masses understand development messages and participate in development programmes with favourable attitude. Social marketing focuses on messages like anti-smoking, anti-drugs, girls' education, marriage age, family welfare, health, environment, conservation of natural resources literacy and so on through mass media. Thus, the beginning of social marketing has been made in India. However, some campaigns have been very successful, such as the one on vaccination. This model of message design is based on the principles that change is controlled and the change effort has a socially significant goal. In this approach, the target group is identified, messages are developed media are selected and support structures are created by the group of people who are engaged in or assigned the task of developing socially relevant messages. This approach can best be used for nations pursuing a more controlled development approach and where new and somewhat complex information has to be transferred. Many development economists, since they see development in nonhuman, economic terms and since this approach attempts to maximize the efficient use of scarce resources. (Nair and White: 184) The advantages of this approach are that the audience can be reached faster, reinforcement of idea through a single medium or combination of media and better message control on part of the source. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is an approach to localised or micro level planning. In this approach development communicator tries to develop understanding about the target groups or villages by interacting, establishing rapport with them through the use of various methods and media such as discussions, talks, personal contacts, maps, charts, games, films and so on. This helps the groups/villagers to express their needs and opinions about various issues related to development in their areas. The development practitioner or communicator collects necessary data, identifies various groups and leadership patterns at local level, mobilises them and seeks their participation in decision making for planning development programmes. Son pal says that PRA has an inbuilt mechanism to encourage participation of local people in the process of development, by investigating local insights gained and by interfering with the common man resulting in

more effective information being generated (101). Unnati, one the leading NGOs in Gujarat, exercised PRA in the process of need assessment. Data revealed that education, health and irrigation were the pressing problems of the region. PRA was found to be an effective tool for developing micro plans in vital sectors like irrigation. A PRA exercise on the issue of irrigation was conducted at all the villages of the panchayats. During the exercise the villagers drew resource maps citing the available sources of irrigation along with the existing condition of these resources and actions that need to be carried out for developing an effective system of irrigation. The villagers also cited the probable sites for drilling a bore for irrigation. The idea behind conducting such an exercise was to develop a consolidated plan for irrigating by the panchayats, taking into account the popular knowledge of the villagers (Son pal :75, 76). Development communication can be effective only when it is fully supportive of the development strategy adopted by the country. Adnan stressed that development communication and development support communication must be treated as multi-dimensional concepts with multiple objectives in multiple contexts. By fully understanding the potential of all the factors involved in a development strategy a development communicator might be able to come up with development messages that would bring about the desired result (68).

CONCLUSION

In developing countries various combinations of development strategies may prove useful. The thrust of the development policy may differ depending on the strategy chosen. In practice, the approaches may overlap or combine elements from two or more approaches mentioned. Conclusion: Development communicator is a link between the source-experts, scientists and bureaucrats and the receivers at the grass root level. Therefore, he has to play important role in facilitating communication process for development. He is like a catalytic agent in the development process. In the last few years, development communication has become a subject of academic study. It has its own body of knowledge. So, the development communicator should have academic training and field based experiences. Apart from theoretical knowledge, he must have commitment to his role. He works in a human laboratory where different perspectives are required for working with people. He has to develop people centred vision of development and act as development facilitator bringing people together in order to do any development programme. He has to create an environment for transactional communication and constructive interaction. Thus, he has to stimulate people at grass root level to work and take initiatives for their own development. As far as the competencies and characteristics are concerned, development communicator needs to have good communication, training and counselling skills. He must be socially, culturally and environmentally sensitive and democratic in communication relationships. He has to understand the community, groups and people with whom he is going to work. If required, he has to help them in identifying the leader and forming groups. He is responsible for creating the environment in which critical appraisal and group action is possible. Thus he has to play a key role in initiating and preparing people for participation in development programmes. He has to recognise micro-level needs and problems of the people with whom he is working, know various linkages affecting communication and development process.

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