International Journal Of Scientific And University Research Publication

ISSN No 14848

Listed & Index with
ISSN Directory. Paris

Multi-Subject Journal

Volum : 9 | Issue : 2 |

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC AND UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PUBLICATION

Research Paper

RURAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT **India is land of villages. Around 60% of the population lives in villages. Still, people living in villages are either illiterate or semi-literate. Rural population living in remote areas have less per capita income. Rural publics do have worldly wisdom on par with people living in towns and cities. So, they don't believe or accept information received by them from various sources. Interpersonal communication and Group communication are more effective than mass communication in rural areas. Weekly markets play key role in remote rural areas in spreading communication. If any important information has to be spread far and wide, then weekly markets can be used effectively as a large number of public from different villages congregate at one place. Two-step flow of communication is effective in rural areas. Opinion leaders get information from mass media; they in turn would share information among the masses. Opinion leaders are trusted by masses in rural areas. So, whatever they say people blindly follow. Rural public needs communication on many aspects of their lives. Without proper communication, rural public cannot prosper or develop. Traditional media can play an important role in communicating development and welfare messages in rural areas. The Bureau of outreach and communication disseminates information pertaining to Government welfare and development programmes. It was formed after merging Song and Drama Division, DAVP and DFP. Rural communication principles have to be followed in developing content for rural masses to accept. Rural public's attitude, values, socio-economic background, political understanding and culture has to be studied thoroughly to communicate to them successfully.**

KEYWORDS :Opinion leaders, Two-Step flow of communication, Interpersonal

INTRODUCTION

Rural communication is an exchange of information, knowledge and skills among the rural public through mass media, ICT, traditional folk media and interpersonal communication. The main objective of rural communication is to empower people with required information and knowledge, so that they would make an informed decision. Rural communication takes place in a non-linear process by providing information to the public. Communication plays a key role in contributing development to rural communities and individuals. Because of receiving communication, rural people will be able to realize their potential through training and education, and succeed in personal lives through the profession they practice. Exposure to communication is not equal to different sections of the society. By and large, rural population hails from socio-economically disadvantaged sections of the society. In rural areas, oral tradition and traditional knowledge are vital part of their cultural identity. Rural traditions have to be preserved for future generations to know their inheritance.

Communication needs of rural India are different from urban India. People in rural India are illiterate, semi-literate or have functional literacy only. So, communicating to them, needs empathy and understanding their world view subtly. If a stranger communicates about a well- crafted welfare and development programme to them, they may not be taken seriously, despite understanding the programmes. On the contrary, if the welfare and development programmes are explained to them by an opinion leader whom they trust, then it is accepted without much hesitation. Hence, it is concluded that interpersonal communication is more effective in rural areas than mass communication. No doubt, mass communication brings awareness on welfare and development programmes needed for rural communication.

Social structure in rural India is based on caste. Each caste has unique rituals, customs and rites. So, sometimes traditional communication and folk forms have to be used to drive home the message. Now-a-days, television antennas are found in remote areas be it tribal hamlets or villages. Audio-visual communication is also effective in communicating important messages. It can bring awareness among the target public on an issue campaigned. Central and state governments use their information and communication infrastructure to publicize their welfare and development programmes.

Earlier, Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP), Song and Drama Division (SSD) and Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) were actively propagating Central Government programmes to the masses and also used to take feedback on the Government functioning. Now the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) is delivering duties and functions of DAVP, Song and Drama Division and Directorate of Field Publicity, as three departments are merged in 2017. BOC is disseminating information at grass—root level too. By exposing to appropriate communication-- knowledge and skills can be acquired through which people live happily in the community.

Communication Needs of Rural India: Major part of the Indian population lives in villages. India has over 5,00,000 villages spread over 28 states and 8 union territories. Few villages are closely connected to nearby cities and towns; others are in very remote areas without any proper road connectivity. In the last 75 years after independence, India made progress socially, economically and politically too. Of course, there are few states, whose development indicators are far behind sub-Saharan countries. Indicators of rural India in health, education, employment opportunities, law and order, women empowerment, environment, malnutrition, female infanticide and birth rate are not very appreciable and uniform. Probably it could be due to lack of awareness and low exposure to mass media or no aspirations to improve the conditions of their lives. World view of villagers is embedded with superstitions, mores, rigid customs and traditions. Generally, mass media increases aspirations of the viewers. But, the attitude of villagers is not progressive, as they don't adopt latest innovations without persuasion and remain happily in status quo. During "Green Revolution", "Pulse Polio Campaign" and "COVID—19" vaccination drive, there was lethargy and inaction from the villagers due to social stigma, superstitions and misleading apprehensions initially.

During "Green Revolution", Radio clubs were established in villages to discuss farm related content broadcasted in Radio programmes. Mass media will not be alone helpful in bringing social change in rural India. Mass media and folk media can compliment interpersonal and group communication. If socio-economic and political change has to be brought, apart from policy initiatives, communication has to be effectively crafted and used to motivate the public to adopt them. Governments from time to time have formulated and initiated several rural development projects. Mass media, traditional, interpersonal and group communication are used to bring awareness among beneficiaries.

Communication needs of rural India varies from region to region and socio-economic conditions of the family. Communication is exchanging of messages and Aboyade (1987) provided a useful categorization of information needs of the rural population:

Information for increased productivity and income growth, e.g. when, where, and how to obtain seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, mechanical equipment, and other farm inputs; price quotations, suppliers; credit facilities, clear information about the procedures to follow for application, the amount that can be borrowed, the nearest offices for processing application, information about how to voice a complaint, legal advice; current prices of farm products and the marketing situation. Information on rural non-farm economic activities, e.g. food processing and baking; textiles, services such as barbing, hair-dressing, shoe-making and repair; woodwork; metalwork; repair services for radio, television, vehicles; masonry, plumbing, painting and fittings; art and crafts; miscellaneous activities such as soap making and herb processing. This also included information about the requirements for engaging in these activities, e.g. capital, equipment, training systems, processes involved, including new and improved techniques, standards and designs, and availability of appropriate technology. Information for social amenities, e.g. sources of safe drinking water, the prevention of common diseases, nutrition, health, pre- and post-natal care; education facilities, adult literacy programmes, schools and examinations. Information for social participation and political involvement, e.g. public institutions which have a bearing on their lives, political processes and systems of government, good governance, their political rights and the advocacy of such rights, social organizations like farmer cooperatives and unions.

Many welfare and development programmes have failed due to improper communication planning and implementation. Only when awareness is brought on the welfare and development programmes and motivated to utilize them, then only real development can take place. Communication can motivate the common man. For this to attain, thorough diagnostic study has to be done to find communication needs of rural India. Later appropriate planning has to be evolved and implemented to realize the objective of development. SITE, Kheda and Jabhua communication projects were successfully conducted and summative research has established differences in awareness levels of the targeted audiences.

Challenges for Rural Communication (Framework for Effective Rural Communication and Development, FAO, UN and GTZ (GmBH).

The situation concerning communication in rural areas of developing countries is characterized by:

1. A dearth of information (absence of providers and of local communication content);
2. Conflicting messages (difficult to know what is relevant/correct information);

3 .A fragmented market for information with many individual clients or client groups;

4. Relatively few clients scattered over a large area;
5. Structural transformations leading to constantly changing channels and content
6. Lack of the necessary skills for communication; and
7. A lack of well-developed ICT infrastructure and low levels of ICT skills.

In rural areas, public's communication requirements and available channels are transforming structural changes. Farmers must be market oriented to sell their produce. Farmers need to cultivate their farming scientifically to get best yield at acceptable cost. Now-a-days, farming is not economically viable. So, alternative livelihoods have to be found to change their profession.

Patterns of Rural Communication

People in rural areas use mass communication tools: newspapers, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, television, radio, inter—personal communication, neighbours, extension agents and information communication technology etc. Information pertaining to new agricultural practices, weather reports, entertainment, local news, national news, general community problems, farm market prices, social activities, community development and welfare programmes etc. is gathered from various sources.

Mass Communication: Generally, mass media is used by people living in rural areas for information, entertainment, education and socialization. Rural people read newspapers, listen to radio, watch television for edutainment and use information communication technology for exchanging information and also gathering it. Now-a-days, social media is also used for information, education and entertainment. Social media has crossed the illiteracy barrier in rural areas and has become popular due to its content. Due to cheap internet availability, people in rural areas are also able to use social media. And also because of the penetration of the internet, the digital divide is reduced drastically.

Newspapers, Magazines and Booklets: Literate people in rural areas read newspapers for education, information and entertainment. Newspapers like "Dinamalar", "Dinamani", "Eenadu", "Mathrubhoomi" and "Malayala Manorama" etc have simplified language for easy reading and understanding by common man. Magazines in vernacular languages are used by farmers and villagers for information pertaining to farming, health and other issues. Noted social activist Bharath Dogra distributes "The Leaflets" on several important issues dealing with welfare and development. Pamphlets are used by many social organizations to bring awareness on many societal issues and mobilize the public for a cause.

Television: Television was used as a tool to communicate development messages in SITE, Jabhua, Kheda and Krishidarshan programmes. All these experiments were successful in realizing their objectives. Television is very popular among the rural people. In almost all houses with electricity, television is found in rural and tribal areas. Television programmes are avidly watched in rural areas. Impact of Television programmes on rural lives is found in many research studies. Women empowerment is seen especially in our society. In post— liberalization era, women empowerment has succeeded because of the media. Television through its programmes has brought revolution in rural India. Television is a powerful medium to influence the public, if we compare it with other media platforms. "Hum Log", "Buniyaad" "Mahabharat" "Ramayan" "Kandan" "Nukkad" "Udaan""Krishidarshan" and "Chanakya" etc were popular programmes, which made an impact on the society. Television played a key role in the national pulse polio programme's success as well. Television lifted the imagination of viewers and stirred their emotions to aspire for a better life.

Radio: Radio crosses literacy and geographical barriers. Many people use the radio for information and edutainment. In remote areas, people use radio as their primary source of

information and edutainment, as it is affordable to own and use. Community Radio stations have also influenced within the narrowcasting area, because the content is related to local issues. Deccan Development Society's "Sangham" community radio and

Radio Mewat are few examples of successful community radio stations. “Padi Pantalu” is a successful radio programme for the past several decades broadcasted on All India Radio. Radio is inexpensive and is made of simple technology. It is economical and production cost is less. Generally, Radio’s content is intimate and personal. There are limitations to radio. Radio is an audio medium. Content invokes imagination of the listener. Radio programmes are broadcasted on a fixed schedule. It is one-way medium. There is no flexibility in broadcasting of the programmes. Rarely, programmes are repeated. So, listeners have to remember the content, if it is important for their use’s on today, radio has listenership in both cities and villages. Before advent of television, radio was popular media to gather information.

Interpersonal Communication: People in rural areas don’t have broad world view, as they are not highly educated and literate. Information gathering, analyzing, absorbing and implementing is very less compared to urban areas by rural public. They are dependent on opinion leaders to get wise advice. People can be informed, persuaded and convinced with the help of interpersonal relationship easily. Change agents and family members play very important role in accepting latest changes and propagating information among the rural public. Opinion leaders get information from mass media and they in turn pass the information to fewer active members of the society. Interpersonal communication is effective, specific, instant, personal and intimate. Agriculture extension workers and health workers use interpersonal communication to communicate relevant information. Interpersonal communication is also an art in itself, as it needs personal rapport with the people and also is time consuming.

Traditional and Folk media: In remote rural areas, where access to mass media is not available, people use traditional and folk media for religious and edutainment purposes. Governments also embed developmental messages in traditional and folk media, as it is popular among rural people. This form of communication is more acceptable to the older generation than the younger generation. Traditional and folk media themes emerge from tradition, culture, customs, mores, religion and rituals. As on today, the rural populace celebrates local festivals with much religious fervor.

Communication in Weekly Markets: Weekly markets are called by different names at different places like haats, shanties, and santa **etc.** People from different villages throng weekly market for buying and selling of goods. Group communication and interpersonal communication takes place in the weekly market. Relatives’ exchange information about family members’ well-being living in different villages. Governments and business organizations use weekly markets to drive home their respective messages, as huge population congregate at one place. It is very economical and time saving for organizations to utilize weekly markets to communicate important messages. Generally, villages are sparsely populated and scattered far and wide. Communication is challenging to the people residing in those areas. Marriage alliances, sometimes family re-unions and conflict resolutions take place in weekly markets. Group and interpersonal communication takes place in the weekly market.

Information Communication Technology (ICT): After 2016, due to availability of cheap data and interesting content on social media, android phones usage has increased. Android phones with many features have also become cheap and became affordable to common man. With 4G data, its applications have also increased. Irrespective of literacy levels and socio- economic status, content on social media has become popular. Rural public is also using e- commerce platforms, Banking apps and other mobile applications. Mobile apps meant for different purposes have become very popular. In Robin Jeffery’s book, “Cell phone nation”, authors have documented the mobile revolution in rural areas. The book contains several illustrations of socio-economic empowerment through mobiles and apps. Due to availability of digital technologies, passing of information and communication has become cheaper, quicker and easily accessible. Because of behavioral change communication, change is visible in public attitudes, preferences and behavior. Multi-media usage has enriched the content of the videos on the internet. Even illiterate people are consuming “YouTube” and other social media content.

Participatory Communication: According to 73rd Amendment Act, devolution of powers was done to local panchayats. More than 50% of the panchayat wards are reserved for weaker sections of the society to elect their representatives. Elected members of the panchayat meet regularly to decide welfare and development activities to be undertaken in the village. All the villagers too participate in the meeting to discuss the needs of the villages. Government’s rules and regulations encourage participatory communication in rural areas.

Interpersonal Communication: Interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication. It is also “word of mouth” communication. It is interaction among two or more people. The following are characteristics of interpersonal communication:

1) Two-way flow of communication

2) Feedback can be taken immediately

3) Through persuasion behavior, attitude can be changed

In olden days, neither transportation facilities nor mass communication tools were available; the majority of the people lived in villages or tribal hamlets. The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems in its report, *“Many Voices, One World”— Communication and Society: Today and Tomorrow,* mentions that “Such interpersonal communication has been ever present, unceasing and especially within a small community, unrivalled in its importance. In the past, it must have served to strengthen the values of comradeship and cooperation to counterbalance the fragmentation imposed by subjection to external authority. “Since time immemorial interpersonal communication has been the way of communication of all human beings. It encourages harmonious living among the group.

There is credibility and flexibility in interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication happens among social contacts and it is a two-way form of communication. People involved can discuss and convince each other. With the help of interpersonal communication, attitude and behavior can be changed. Influence of mass media is passive on the audience, whereas interpersonal communication is active. Interpersonal communication is more effective in bringing behavioral change or attitude change than other forms of communication in rural areas. Feedback can be ascertained through interpersonal communication. Reach of mass media is large. But Its effectiveness cannot be immediately ascertained. On the contrary, interpersonal communication is limited to few people.

According to Wilbur Schramm: “Only when communication is built into social structure, it can show visible and extensive results. Only when media channels mix with interpersonal channels and organization in the village, expected development will be seen”.

If rural development has to be brought, then a combination of interpersonal, group and mass media channels must be used. Mass media helps in disseminating information to the public and bringing awareness, while interpersonal communication helps in making people understand, pursue and adopt necessary behavioral and

attitude change. To bring social change among the masses, the communication strategist must have knowledge of local culture. So, that developmental message can be embedded into communication and media channels. Always local traditions, customs, rituals and social norms must always be taken into account while planning interpersonal communication strategy. Change-agents should get identified with people; they want to bring change in.

Generally, people living in rural areas are not educated, ignorant or illiterate. Their world view could be narrow. So, to communicate to them and bring necessary social change needs effective interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication can be modulated depending on the targeted audience mindset and is trusted by the rural public. Extension communication is interpersonal communication. Agricultural reforms, awareness on education issues and health communication are done through inter—personal communication in rural areas.

Traditional and Folk Forms

"Even where modern media have penetrated isolated areas, the older forms maintain their validity, particularly when used to influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change. Extensive experience shows that traditional forms of communication can be effective in dispelling the superstitions, archaic perceptions and unscientific attitudes that people have inherited as part of tradition, and which are difficult to modify if the benefits of change are hard to demonstrate. Practitioners of the traditional media use a subtle form of persuasion by presenting the required message in local popular artistic forms. This cannot be rivaled by any other means of communication."
----------*Many Voices, One World*

Wang and Dissanayke define "folk media as "a communication system embedded in the culture which existed before the arrival of mass media, and still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world, presenting, a certain degree of continuity, despite changes. Folk media are cultural institutions transmitting values, thoughts, norms, beliefs and experiences in the society and it has been carrying on this function of transmission for ages with impeccable effect. Further, being a veritable storehouse of human experiences, folk media portray a realistic depiction of mass culture, therefore, forming an integral part of the development process".

Generally, folk forms are spontaneous, natural, imaginative, and have creative expressions of artists. Among villagers and tribes, folk forms are inherited from one generation to the next.

Folk forms are changing their expression from time to time. Folk forms are integral to village and tribal life. Folk forms are losing their relevance in today's society, due to the impact of technology. Despite that, folk forms did not lose their popularity in village and tribal life.

Folk media includes folklore, folk dance and folk music. Folk media is used to entertain and also carry welfare and developmental messages to the targeted audience. Folk media provides platform and expression to socio-ritual, emotional needs, culture, customs and mores of the society. Folk forms don't have rules, written literature, personal in nature and are indigenous in nature. Folk forms emerge from the public aspirations to purge human emotions. Generally, rural society doesn't have access to mass media tools, so they are dependent on traditional and folk media for entertainment, religious and social purposes. Traditional and folk media are flexible to embed themes suitable to bring change in the society. Folk media is very intimate and connects to the audience. Rural folk preserve ancient traditional wisdom and culture in the form of art, music, tales and folklore etc.

Traditional and folk media were used during the freedom struggle and also, now-a-days by the State and Central government. Earlier, Song and Drama Division, Directorate of Field Publicity used traditional and folk media to communicate welfare and development messages to the beneficiaries

Folk Media is Effective in Behavioral Change Communication: Themes of behavioral change communication can be effectively crafted into the folk media. In rural and tribal areas, folk forms can be easily connected. Messages can be effectively planted into minds of the public to bring transformation in thinking and behavior. Traditional media is interactive in nature and messages can be moderated depending on the needs of the public. Health and Family issues, Education, HIV &AIDS, Women empowerment and Prohibition etc. are effectively communicated to the audience to bring behavioral change. Through traditional media, the targeted public can be motivated to participate in the development programmes. Whether normal communication is understood or not, it can be easily understood in Folk Media Communication and necessary changes can be brought in the content.

Use of Folk Media in Development Communication: Generally, it is concluded that mass media is ineffective in conveying welfare and developmental messages to the masses, as content of mass media cannot be identified with rural masses. Content of mass media is targeted at the general public and not to a specific population. Traditional media's content is specific, so easily identified, accepted and adopted. In third world countries, literacy levels of the public are not high and also the public's world view is not very developed and progressive. Therefore, traditional media can be effectively applied to communicate developmental messages. UNESCO promoted integration of traditional media in mass media to communicate developmental messages effectively. Government of India in it's first five- year plan, discussed the importance of folk media in development communication: *"A widespread understanding of the Plan is an essential stage in its fulfilment. An understanding of the priorities of the Plan will enable each person to relate his or her role to the larger purposes of the nation as a whole. All available methods of communication have to be developed and the people approached through the folk media, then after the written and spoken word no less than through radio, film, song and drama."*
The traditional media in developing countries and rural areas is close to the heart and the minds of the public. It's appeal is stronger to the emotions of the public. Rapport with the target audience can be easily established and barriers of communication can be overcome.

Welfare and developmental messages can be professionally communicated using traditional folk media to the rural and tribal audience. Various Governments, NGOs and social activists have been using traditional folk forms like puppet shows, folk tales, religious discourses, local fairs, street theatres, folk songs, folk theatres, ballards. Government uses combinations of various traditional folk forms to disseminate information to the public. India has innumerable traditional folk forms. Each state has more than one popular traditional folk forms. During the freedom struggle, various folk forms were used to communicate the importance of freedom. Political messages were communicated through traditional folk forms.

In India, oppressed classes have found the potential of traditional and folk forms to bring awareness among the masses to assert their fundamental human rights. They are using folk forms as a weapon in their fight for basic livelihood, respect for human rights, protection of land, water and forest etc. Hence, folk media is used to educate the masses, bring awareness, mobilize the public: to attain socio-political and economic justice.

Popular forms of traditional and folk forms are:

1) Burrakatha----------Andhra Pradesh

2) Bavai----------Gujarat

3) Jatra----------West Bengal

4) Alha----------Uttar Pradesh

5) Gee—Gee----------Karnataka

6) Yakshagan----------Karnataka

7) Tamasha----------Maharashtra

8) Villapatu----------Tamilnadu

9) Laavani----------Maharashtra

10) Kavigan----------West Bengal

Mass Media

Mass media can share information relating to skill improvement, innovations, technologies,

practices and farm knowledge. Mass media disseminates information to the rural public and helps them in making informed decisions in their life. Mass Media can enhance information absorption among the rural masses and impact their behavior. Newspapers, Radio, Television, Mobile phone; Internet and computer come under mass media. In third world countries, people depend on newspapers, television and radio for information. But, in countries like India, due to the penetration of the internet, information communication and technology is also used to gather information. Information pertaining to health, agriculture, education, marketing and finance etc are sourced from media.

Each type of media has certain advantages and disadvantages as a tool to disseminate information to the masses. In rural areas, illiteracy is usually high. So, newspapers to be read need literacy. As a consequence, newspapers have limitations. It can't overcome the literacy barrier. Newspapers facilitate dissemination of information more constructively than other forms of mass communication. Shelf life and accessibility of newspapers for information is more flexible than other forms of mass communication. Information can be published with diagrams, illustration and graphics. Explanation of the subject can be done in simple language. It can be referred till content is understood.

Content in newspapers can be accessed time and again. Newspapers can be distributed to distant places too. Quality production of newspapers can keep it hooked. Usage of print

media is very effective in disseminating development messages among the public. Newspapers like Eenadu, Malayala Manorama, The Hindu and Mathrubhoomi etc. Tabloids like "Grassroots" also cover development messages as well as agriculture related content. "Annadata", "Yojana" and "Kurukshetra" etc are magazines covering development issues. Several issues pertaining to rural life are published in newspapers and farm magazines. Issues and challenges for urban and rural areas are different. So, through print media, information is disseminated to the masses. Production and distribution of print media is easy. Booklets, pamphlets, brochures, magazines and newspapers are various forms of print media.

Content of the Radio can cross literacy barrier. A radio signal crosses improper road facilities, distance, topography, socio-political problems and time. Radio programmes can be understood easily. Complex issues can be explained in simple language and make them understandable to the common man. Radio can be broadcasted to larger and remote areas. Radio can be efficiently used to communicate welfare and developmental programmes.

Awareness and empowerment of public can be done through radio programmes. Radio programmes can be heard even while working. Listeners need not just focus only on the content of the radio programme. Content of the radio programme can be made interesting and expressed in simple language. But, how far listeners will benefit from the programmes has to be ascertained by conducting feedback research.

Television as a mass media is very effective in disseminating information to the public. It is an audio-visual medium. Television programmes were used as a tool in "SITE" Jabhu Communication Project, Kheda Communication Project and "Krishidarshan" programmes and were successful in realizing their objectives.

Radio and Television are used as tools to educate masses. The messages can be taped and replayed any number of times at our convenience. Electronic media has become an effective tool in the internet era for edutainment. Through Mobiles, accessibility has increased. Rural populace living in remote areas too can get information from anywhere, any time. Help lines help in getting information to people in times of need through toll—free numbers. Mobile phones have improved accessibility, interaction, fast timely information sharing. Mobiles phones help in exchanging information. MMS facility can be used by rural public to get advice from experts on agriculture and health issues from remote areas too. For internet accessibility, in rural areas there are challenges like electricity, illiteracy, connectivity and infrastructure. Computer illiteracy and interest in operating technological devices are also reasons for poor usage of internet facilities in rural areas.

New media has reduced distance between cities and villages in sharing information. Rich multi-media content can be exchanged over internet platforms. It is cheap. The Internet is interactive in nature. Appealing and interesting messages can be broadcasted over radio and television several times. Infotainment and behavioral change communication can be played over radio through various types of programmes. TV has an advantage over radio. Messages requiring demonstrations can be shown through television and social media to make rural public understandable. Now-a-days, social media is also used as a communication platform by the rural public too. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube and Twitter are used as platforms by therural public. There are many popular Websites and YouTube channels promoting content useful for the rural public too.

Two-Step Flow of Communication in Rural India

Two-step flow of Communication is put forth in The People's Choice (1948) by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet (1944) Erie County, New York. The researchers accidentally found two-step flow of communication, while testing whether mass media messages from newspapers and radio would affect voting behavior. The study was

doneusing Panel method and Unit of Effect (Random sample of individuals). The Two-Step Flow of Communication is further developed by Elihu Katz, Paul Lazarsfeld and their colleagues. In Two-Step flow of communication theory: Good messages flow from radio and newspapers to opinion leaders and in turn messages will be communicated to people with less awareness. First step: Messages reach opinion leaders from mass media. Second step: Messages and interpretations will be conveyed to the people, whom the opinion leaders want to influence. People are active participants and

heterogeneous in nature. They are part of the society. Social networking process communication would facilitate two-step flow of communication.

The central objective of the theory is opinion leaders and interpersonal communication as part of mass media influence. Empirical research has substantiated in advertising and diffusion of technological diffusion. Opinion leaders are part of any society. Generally, Opinion leaders are more exposed to mass media than the public they influence. According to Elihu Katz, personal influence's impact, personal influence flow, opinion leaders, and mass media are the main components of the theory. If historically seen, two-step flow of communication is a new finding against the foremost belief that mass media has direct, powerful and uniform effect on people. It is known as magic bullet theory. There was a popular belief and perception that people lived an isolated life, lack of social network, social base would not be able to resist the powerful influence of media messages. There was a belief among the public that they are powerless and would get under the influence of propaganda by modern media. However, the two-step flow of mass communication has disrupted the perception and reinforced the usefulness of the social mind and the importance of social networks in modern mass communication. It reinforces and stresses power of personal influence and ability of opinion leaders to filter mass media messages. People with low awareness would turn to opinion leaders for information.

Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC)

Directorate of Field Publicity was formed to supervise and control field units functioning around our country in 1959. Objective of the Directorate of Field Publicity is to publicize Government policies and programmes through 268 field units monitored by 22 Regional

offices. Field publicity was started in 1953 with 32 Field units. Initially, there were 4 regional offices to monitor their work. "Five-year plan publicity organization" was created under the integrated publicity organization. Units and regional offices are supervised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The important functions of Directorate are education, information, publicity and communication in rural areas about Government programmes and its policies. Generally, print and electronic media are not in reach of rural areas. The Field Units exhibit film shows, photo exhibitions, integrative programmers, oral communication programmes and song and drama programmes on themes like communal harmony, national integration, health and

family welfare, secularism, empowering democracy, eradication of untouchability, child marriage and dowry etc.

On the recommendation of ministries, new themes will be added to existing themes for publicity. The Directorate of Field Publicity was merged with the Song and Drama Division, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity and formed the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) on 8th December, 2017 by the Central Government. BOC is empowered to provide 360-degree communication services to Ministries/ Public Sector Undertakings/ Departments and Autonomous institutions. It provides advisory services to the Government on media strategy. It has 23 Regional Outreach Bureaus and 148 field outreach bureaus.

BOC engages urban and rural public to participate in Central Government programmes and policies. BOC uses multiple platforms like Print media advertising, New media, Audio Visual Campaigns, Exhibitions and Outdoor campaigns etc. BOC brands Government programmes meant for development and welfare are done. Folk media is used to carry interpersonal communication. Various media platforms are used to perform arts like Dance—drama, Composite programmes, Puppetry, Ballets, Operas, Folk forms, Mythological recitals. The main function of BOC is bringing awareness, emotional empathy, ownership and belongingness. Integration of Song and Drama Division, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity and Directorate of Field Publicity were done for creating awareness and bring necessary behavioral change. BOC is a nodal Government agency.

According to davp.nic.in, BOC's primary functions are:

1) Working towards creating informed citizenry. 2) People Centric Communication approach.3) Disseminate information on schemes and programmes of Government of India,

using different media vehicles.4) Formulate communication strategy for the Government.5) Put in place appropriate policy framework for use of different media vehicles and determine

rates for the same.6) Conducting Integrated Communication and Outreach Programmes at Central, Regional and Rural levels.7) Disseminating Information on Schemes and programmes of the Government of India through Folk Art.

Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) set-up: 1) Advertising wing: Advertising using Print, Audio- Visual, Outdoor, and Personal Media to take schemes to the people. 2) Campaign wing 3) Outdoor wing 4) Print Wing: Fliers, Posters and Brochures 5) Audio Visual Wing 6) New Media Wing: Communication through Social Media, Websites, Mobile apps and other digital platforms owned, earned and shared.7) Outreach Wing: Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme 8) Song and Drama Wing: Engaging people with Dance, Drama and Music programme. 9) Exhibition Wing: Putting up exhibition of themes of public welfare. 10) Administrative Wing 11) Accounting Wing.

How Communication Operates in Rural Society?

Rural society is a group of people living together for a long time, believing in common

values, having similar interests and behaving as a social unit. Rural society represents villages. In rural areas, the majority of the population's occupation is agriculture. Population is relatively homogenous. Density of the population is less. In rural areas, social interaction is less and people live individually. Social mobility is rigid. Infrastructure is developed from

low to moderate. Social stratification is fixed in rural areas. Caste plays a crucial role in rural areas: Socially, Politically, Culturally and Economically.

Caste System: Kroeber (1948) defined caste as an endogamous and hereditary sub-division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison to other such sub-division. In spite of great variation, caste normally conforms to the following criteria: 1) Marriage generally takes place within the caste.2) Members of different castes have restrictions on eating together.3) There is hierarchical grading of castes from high to low.4) The member of a high caste is likely to be "polluted" by either direct or indirect contact with a member of the low caste.5) Caste commonly associates with traditional occupations.6) A person's caste status is determined by one's birth.

According to Ghurye (1957), the social and religious privileges and disabilities born of caste

are no longer recognized in law and only partially in custom. Caste no

longer rigidly determines an individuals' occupation, but continues to prescribe almost in its old rigour the circle into which one has to marry. One has still to depend very largely on one's caste for help at critical periods of life, like marriage and death. One's closest companions and friends are mainly delimited by the circle of one's caste. Caste as a unit is taken to communicate important messages by society and Government officials.

Rural Poverty: People living in poverty are not in a position to procure minimum food requirements for their family and themselves for sustenance. 2250 k.cal per day is needed for sustenance. Poverty is always seen in the economic dimension. Poverty is concerned with food, shelter and clothing. Saur (1993), put forth "socio-cultural" dimension of poverty i.e., lacks self-confidence, low self—esteem, self-denial, dependent proneness on people, and they stay alienated from others from the mainstream of development. From "intellectual poverty" perspective people feel themselves as worthlessness and believe that they are useless. From an "institutional poverty" perspective, the public are unorganized and show no solidarity among them for well-being.

Financial Inclusion: Many Central and State Governments are implementing financial inclusion schemes for the downtrodden. Jan Dhan Yojana, Mudra Yojana and DWACRA are few examples. Banks use mass, interpersonal and group communication to communicate important information pertaining to financial inclusions.

Poor Infrastructure: Rural areas have poor infrastructure. In the past 75 years of independence, Central and State Governments have implemented innumerable infrastructure schemes to develop rural areas. But still rural areas need thrust in establishing basic infrastructure like potable drinking water, sanitation facilities, educational facilities, health facilities, communication facilities and employment facilities etc.

Opinion Leaders: (Rogers, 1995) Opinion leadership is the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency. This informal leadership is not a function of the individual's formal position or status in the system. Opinion is earned and maintained by the individual's technical competence, social accessibility and conformity to the system's norms. When the social system is oriented to change, the opinion leaders are quite innovative; but when the system's norms are opposed to change, the behavior of the leaders also reflect this norm. By their close conformity to the system's norms, opinion leaders serve as a model for the

innovation behavior of their followers. Keeping these in view channels of communication must be planned.

Role of Interpersonal Communication: Interpersonal communication plays an important role in the selection, attention, perception, and retention of mass media messages. (Dey,

1993a) presented the following: 1) Selection of media messages: Receivers of mass communication belong to one or many social groups. They are in a state of constant

interaction with group members and work for maintaining group norms and value systems. A message challenging the group norms and going against the value system is not likely to be selected for receipt.2) Influence of opinion leaders on attention to media message: Opinion leaders often focus attention of group members on important and relevant ideas being highlighted by the media system at any given time. The role of opinion leaders should be duly recognized while planning the total communication strategy.3) Influence of group on perception of media message: Receivers usually seek the help of group members and opinion leaders in interpreting, comprehending and evaluating the media message. Media should, therefore, propagate to satisfy group interest through attending to individual interest. Message should be comprehensible to group members.4) Sanction for acceptance of media message: Receivers have to obtain sanction of group members and opinion leaders on their acceptance of the media message. The acceptance of media messages should not adversely affect the group interest.5) Influence on adoption: Quite often messages influence the receivers to adopt innovations. The actual adoption, however, needs personal influence of group members and sanction of opinion leaders.

Communication Fidelity: According to K.N.Singh (1989), in "Recent Researches in Agricultural Communication", wrote about communication Fidelity (amount of knowledge gained, kind of attitude formed and extent of adoption) depends significantly and positively on six factors:1) Language compatibility of communication with receiver2) Communication's degree of contact with receiver3) Profitability of message4) Frequency of channel use5) Socio-economic status of recipient6) Receiver's past experience with communicator's message.

A successful communication must be target orientated. The communicator must know to whom he is targeting, their location, needs, resources, facilities, interests and constraints. **According to (Dey, 1993b)** The attitude of the audience towards the messages largely depends upon who gives what message through which channel; to what extent the content of the message satisfies their needs and intentions; to what measures the suggestions contained in the message are in line with their pre—held experiences and pre-existing preferences; and, how far the messages are in line compatible with group norms and value system to which the audience belongs. In case, the audience members feel that the communicator is trustworthy, dependable and find the person communicating the message through the medium of their choice, they are likely to receive the message, provided the presentation of the content appears to the audience as interesting and comprehensive.

The communicator must modulate by carefully selecting the message depending on relevant audience, choosing appropriate channels compatible to targeted audience, cultural patterns and treating the message as per the understanding and interest.

Principles of Rural Communication: 1) Language used must be simple.2) Arguments must be arranged in a logical structure.3) Important points must be put forth briefly.4) Write-up must be arranged in an inverted—pyramid style. Important information must be put at the top.5) Pictures and photographs must look real.6) Presentation of information must be accurate, brief with clarity. Write up must be able to connect, interesting, inspiring and personal. 7) Communication should be seen by the target audience receives it. 8) Communication is well received when it is needed.9) Communication must reach on time.

10) More than one—channel of communication must be used. They should be trustworthy and competent.11) Information must be comprehensive and complete.12) Message must be understandable.13) Message must not be distorted.14) To drive home the message, it must be repeated several times. 15) Innovative ideas must be created to sustain audience interest.16) Simple technology must be used.17) Before communicating, communicators must empathize with the receiver. 18) Communication must be planned based on socio-economic status of the public, diversity of the people, stage of development, income, education level, objective of the campaign etc.

According to G.L. Ray, "Extension Communication and Management", Principles to be kept

in view while communicating to rural public are:

1) Communication channels established by the social organization

2) The system of values held by the audience what they think is important

3) Forces influencing group conformity—custom, tradition etc

4) Individual personality factors—change proneness etc

5) Native and acquired abilities

6) Educational, economic and social levels

7) Pressure of occupational responsibility---how busy or concerned they are;

8) People's needs as they see them, and as the professional communicators see them;

9) Why the audience is in need of changed ways of thinking, feeling and doing and

10) How the audience views the situation?

Generally, audiences don't receive messages passively. The audience would be selective in receiving, processing and interpreting messages:

Selective Exposure: Klapper (1960) expressed that people expose themselves to messages selectively. There is tendency for individuals to expose themselves relatively more to those items of communication that are in agreement with their ideas, beliefs and values etc.

Selective Perception: Regardless of exposure to communication, an individual's perceptions of a certain event, issue, person or place could be influenced by one's latent beliefs, attitudes, wants, needs or other factors. Thus, two individuals exposed to the same message could go away with different perceptions about it.

Selective Retention: All information is not retained by the individuals. Generally, people tend to retain that information in which they have some interest and which they consider to be important. Research showed that even recall of information is influenced by factors such as an individual's needs, wants, moods, perceptions and so on. The social categories to which people belong, their individual characteristics, and social relationships greatly influence their acquisition and utilization of information. Thus, communication in rural areas operates depending on caste, social status, financial strength, literacy level, and profession etc.

Political Communication in rural areas is generally done by adopting interpersonal, group, mass and social media communication. Politics in rural areas is intense. Caste as a group is significant in elections. Sometimes, geography and religion too is important in elections. Opinion leaders do have influence over public in elections. So, group and interpersonal communication are effective in communicating political messages.

Religious Communication: Rural people are deeply religious. Religious congregations are common in rural areas. Apart from little tradition festivals, great tradition festivals are celebrated. "Jatras and Thirunals" are conducted in temples of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Religious festivals use group and mass communication.

Conflict Resolution: Conflicts are common among the people. Usually, caste elders, opinion leaders, and elders from the society resort to resolve conflicts. People congregate at "Racha Banda" to resolve conflicts in a village in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.Interpersonal and Group communication are used to resolve conflicts. Arguments by two opposing groups are heard by the panchayat elders and decision is given by the elders based on facts, evidence and justice.

Cultural Communication: Rural public follow local traditions, customs, mores, rituals and culture. Verbal and non-verbal communications promote cultural communication. Interpersonal interaction among members of various groups facilitates cultural communication. Symbols are also used in cultural communication. Rituals are conducted following group and interpersonal communication.

Case Study: 1 Information Dissemination Practices of Department of Veterinary and

Animal Husbandry, Telangana State at Field Level to Farmers

---- Dr A. Yeshwanth, M.VSc. Veterinary Assistant Surgeon

"Since no single method can achieve 100% result in information dissemination to the targeted farmers by Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry, several methods are adopted simultaneously to realize objectives. The whole exercise is done to bring awareness and motivate as many farmers as possible to utilize various activities under taken by the Department. At State and District levels, concerned Highest Official of the Department gives press release to the media to cover the news in public interest about the programmes initiated. Videos of the activities to be undertaken are also prepared and shared on social media explaining the importance of the activities for instance: 1) Livestock Deworming---Sheep, Goat and Buffalos or cattle,2) Livestock Vaccination against many diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease, PPR, Sheep Pox, ET, HS, DQ etc are widely given publicity on multiple media platforms. At the field level due care is taken, so that all the categories of farmers receive information and avail programmes initiated.

The following methods/ modes of information dissemination are adopted: --

Public Representatives, Local media, Group leaders, Caste leaders, Societies President

(Sheep Cooperative Society), etc. are informed in advance about the importance and the schedule of the programmes. Further, this helps in publicizing all Departmental activities.

Information to various villages is sent through active WhatsApp groups. Written messages and Voice messages are repeatedly sent just a day before the actual commencement of

programmes and also on the day of the programme commencement to remind, alert and motivate the farmers. Educational Videos pertaining to the programmes initiated are also posted in advance in WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms to target the farmers.

The concerned Village Sarpanch is requested to arrange "Tom—Tom" about the availability of Animal Husbandry personnel in the village to deliver the service on the day of the programme. Sometimes, vehicles like autos are hired for the purpose and asked to

go round the village with a flexi and mic to remind farmers about the commencement of the programme in their village/ Habitation. Help of local youth and voluntaries are also taken by the Department in information dissemination and programme implementation".

Case Study: 2 Rural Communication in Gramasabhas

----- S. Manoj, Former Panchayat Secretary, Telangana State

Different forms of communication are used to interact with the public by the Panchayat Secretaries in a village to administer and implement rural development schemes. Panchayat Secretaries coordinate with Sarpanches to organize Gramasabhas to get ascent of the policies

to be implemented in the village. Elected committee members under the Chairmanship of Sarpanch discuss the policies to be implemented and give their ascent on the basis of majority. Gramasabhas have legislative powers; therefore policies have to be accepted by the elected members to implement in their village.

To organize a Gramasabha, a Panchayat Secretary will prepare an agenda for discussion in written format. Agenda will be put in a register and a person designate will do a "DAPPU CHATIMPU" or "Tom Tom" (Beating the drum and announcement indicates that there is some notice to the public) to spread information regarding meeting. On the specific day and time, all villagers will assemble at a specific place under the chairmanship of Sarpanch to discuss the agenda. Panchayat secretary will read out the agenda and the Sarpanch will preside the Gramsabha. A group discussion will be followed and a resolution will be adopted through consensus or majority.

Separate Gramasabha sessions in a village are conducted for resolving children issues, women issues, deprived classes, implementing Central and State Government schemes, Budget and financial planning for a village. In village level administration, written communication is preferred and seen as authentic source. Now-a-days, e-mail and e-office tools are used as to communicate to higher authorities.

Awareness on various social, economic, political and cultural issues is brought through banners, posters, street plays and other forms of communication. Now in digital age, Panchayat's are using WhatsApp, YouTube and other social media platforms to communicate. Important information is disseminated through WhatsApp groups.

In village culture, women visit each family in their houses to invite for village family gatherings and events with a "Kumkum Bharani". It is an intimate verbal and interpersonal communication for invitation. During harvesting crops, villagers sing local songs for relieving stress. It is a group communication

CONCLUSION

Rural public needs communication on many important aspects of daily life. Rural masses use

various patterns of communication from mass media: Newspaper, Radio and Television, interpersonal communication, participatory communication, Information and Communication Technology, Weekly markets, traditional and folk media. Two-Step flow of communication is very successful in imparting information to the masses in rural areas. Various principles of rural communication have to be followed to impart information to the public. Opinion leaders play critical role in imparting information to the masses. Political, religious, cultural and conflict resolution follow mass communication, group communication, and interpersonal communication. Bureau of outreach and communication (BOC) disseminates information to the citizens of this country. Particularly, it disseminates information on government welfare and development programmes. Now-a-days, social media is used widely to share information even in rural areas. Without proper planning and implementing rural communication, awareness about welfare and development schemes cannot be spread among the rural masses and motivate them to utilise them. Rural communication has to take local language, culture, mores and customs into view. So, that communication could be identified with the local people. When people own and identify communication, they accept it and implement it. In rural communication, all types of communication patterns play significant role in imparting information to the rural public. Still traditional communication, can perform critical role in remote rural areas, where they don't have access to modern communication facilities. Therefore, rural communication experts have to take various aspects and principles of rural communication into account to encourage participatory communication to make understand and implement various Gzovernment welfare and development schemes.

Plan

Communication Needs of Rural India
Challenges for Rural Communication (Framework for Effective Rural Communication and Development, FAO, UN and GTZ (GmBH).
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Patterns of Rural Communication
Patterns of Rural Communication
Mass Communication
Newspapers, Magazines and BookCommunication Needs of Rural India
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Patterns of Rural Communication
Patterns of Rural Communication
Mass Communication
Traditional and Folk Forms
Mass Media
Two-Step Flow of Communication in Rural India
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