

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Module Details

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Content Outline

1. Introduction
2. Objectives
3. Development Communication: Concept and Meaning
4. Steps of Development Communication Strategies
5. Strategies and Determinants of Behaviour Change Communication
6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Development communication in recent years has been recognized as one of the important arms of the strategies of development in the developing countries. It was found that the developing countries are launching sundry of development programmes and the benefits of many of them are not reaching to the real beneficiaries. The beneficiaries those who are belonging to the rural areas and are illiterate are largely ignored. The development communication aims at to educate people in a systematic way about various development programmes so that they are benefited out of it. Ultimately their quality of life is raised. Wibur Schramm (1964) recognized that communication could play an important role in the national development of the Third World countries. The WCCD has recognized that communication for development is an essential ingredient

for meeting today's most pressing development challenges and as such, should be more fully integrated in development policy and practice.

2. Objectives

After reading this module, you would be able to:

- Define development communication
- Delineate various components of development communication strategies
- Identify some of the critical areas of development communication strategies and strengthen them

3. Development Communication: Concept and Meaning

Development communication is a communication process the objectives of which are to communicate and educate the clientele about the various aspects of development projects and programmes. For example communicating and educating villagers about the MGNREGA by the village development officer is an illustrious example of development communication. A detail and frank communication between the village development officer and villagers regarding various components of MGNREGA such as availability of work, preparation of job card, reservation for SCs, STs and women, wage rate, etc. will ensure employment to rural poor. The main objective of development communication is to impart knowledge, change the attitude and behavior of the clientele by adopting suitable communication methods. World Bank has remarked that development communication is the integration of strategic communication in development projects. To Nora Quebral development communication as the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of growth and makes possible greater economic and social equality and larger fulfillment of human potential. Rogers has defined development communication is a "process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behaviour. Usually the source wants to alter the receiver's knowledge of some idea, create or change his attitude towards the idea or persuade him to adopt the idea as part of his regular behaviour".

Communicating about MGNREGA to Village Panchayat

Some of the highlighting points are:

- At least 100 days employment to one abled-person of every household
- Ensuring payment of minimum wage rate
- A minimum of 33 percent of reservation to be made for women
- The task under the scheme shall be performed by using manual labour and not machines
- Gram panchayats are the main implementing agencies
- Gram Sabha is the main work identifying body
- Equal wage to both male and female workers employed in MGNREGA
- Gram Sabha will conduct social audits of all work done within the panchayat
- The cost of MGNREGA will be shared by both central and state government
- Some of the work identified under the MGNREGA are: digging of ponds, di-silting of ponds, construction of minor irrigation projects, afforestation in common and waste land areas, small check dam/other harvesting structure, di-silting of old canal, di-silting of traditional open well, construction of embankment for flood control, etc.

Prepare an audio video material on MGNREGA

4. Steps of Development Communication Strategy

Development communication strategies are important for the effective transaction of messages on development to the stakeholders and beneficiaries of development. Development organization has to follow appropriate development communication strategy. Application of System Approach to Development Communication (SADC) is a way forward for an effective communication strategy. The seven steps of SADC are: (i) Formulation of development communication team ;(ii) Development Communication Need Assessment ; (iii) Identification of development communication methods; (iv) Development of development communication materials; (v) Implementation of development communication programme; and (vi) Monitoring/Evaluation of development communication programme.

- (i) **Constitution of Development Communication Team (DTC)**– At the outset, for the formulation of development communication strategies a Development Communication Team (DCT) has to be formulated. This will start initiating any action on development communication. The composition of DCT needs to be multi-disciplinary. It should consists experts from various disciplines i.e. media, sociology, economics, rural development, anthropology, development studies, women studies, extension education, journalism and media studies, etc. The experience in handling developmental projects on various sectors i.e. education, health, rural development, sanitation, drinking water, etc. may be given preference.
- (ii) **Development Communication Need Assessment**– Development communication need assessment is an important component of development communication strategies. The DCNA is the identification of needs and problems relating to any specific development aspect and it is preferable that one issue may be covered at one go. During the need assessment the development communication team should analyze the problem areas and formulate appropriate questionnaire for data collection. If the development issues are relating to basic needs, then information regarding housing, sanitation, drinking water, food, energy for cooking and other essential household requirements is to be collected either through survey or through focus group discussion

Box-1

Guidelines for Problem Analysis

- Describe the key problem identified and its causes and effects.
- Discuss who are affected by the problems.
- Delineate how these problems affect the target group.
- Explain how addressing the causes will lead to the eradication of the key problem.
- The description should be clear, concise and convincing.

- (iii) **Setting of Development Communication Goals/Objectives**– Development communication is a learning process. Therefore, it is essential to know the process of formulation of learning goal and objectives. Goal is a general statement aims at stating what the programme intends to aim at. However, learning objectives are statements in specific and measurable terms. The learning objective needs to have three essential characteristics i.e. an action verb, content and criteria. Besides the learning objective should be 'SMART' as described in the Box-2 guidelines for objectives formulation.

Box-2

Guidelines for Objectives Formulation

The 'SMART' objectives narrates:

S – Simple: It should be simple and covering one point at a time.

M – Measurable: It must be measurable so that a conclusion can be drawn.

A – Attainable: It can be handled within the limit imposed by the time.

R – Realistic: It must not be unrealistic which can not be achieved.

T – Time bound: It must be so framed that it is achieved within the set time.

- (iv) **Identification of Methods/Strategy of Development Communication** - The second step in formulation of strategy for development communication is the identification of various communication methods fitting to different topics of developmental problems. The communication method may vary from one problem to that of the other, *per se* in one problem inter-personal communication may be suitable and in case of other group and mass communication method can be more appropriate. The strategy of effective development communication method has to be problem and issue specific. The task at this stage are as follows : (i) define the specific means of communication for each programme; (ii) specify target audience; (iii) develop the key messages to be portrayed; (iv) identify communication channels and activities; (v) spell out the targeted outreach; and (vi) stick to the time line.
- (v) **Development of Development Communication Materials (DCM)** – Once the team is constituted and methods are being identified for various problems those require support of development communication, the duty of the team is to prepare, procure and pretest these DCMs before its final application to large audience. Necessary precautions has to be taken that good quality DCMs must be clear, accurate, interesting and relevant to the target audience; and appealing and appeasing to the specific caste, ethnicity, gender, religious, caste groups, etc. for whom these materials aimed at.

Development of specific communication support materials should be based on decisions made about channels and activities. They can include:

- ☐ ☐ Print materials for peer educators, such as flip charts and picture codes
- ☐ ☐ Print materials to support the peer educators on specific issues development
- ☐ ☐ Television spots for general broadcast on the said development issue

- ☐ ☐ Promotional materials about the project, for advocacy
 - ☐ ☐ Scripts for theater and street theater
 - ☐ ☐ Radio or television soap opera scripts
 - ☐ ☐ Poster, charts, and other print materials for the individual and group communication
- <http://www.hivpolicy.org/Library/HPP000533.pdf>(accessed on 24/05/2017)

- (vi) **Implementation of Development Communication Programme**– The implementation process starts after the development of DCMs. The development communication team (DCT) has to involve a group of stakeholders who ultimately can mobilize audiences and target group of people for administration of development communication messages. The team has to take appropriate measures with regards to giving prior information to the target audience, place of organization of development communication programme and suitable time of display of development communication programmes in consultation with stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- (vii) **Monitoring / Evaluation of Development Communication Programme**– Successful monitoring and evaluation will be used to improve the development communication process in the project. It will be helpful for facilitating mid-term review and corrections. Monitoring is the regular gathering, analysis and reporting of information that is needed for evaluation and/or effective project management. On the other hand, evaluation is a selective and periodic exercise that attempts to objectively assess the overall progress and worth of the project. During the time of implementation of development communication programme, the DCT can administer pre and post-test before and after the conduction of the programme, in case, it is a small audience on a sample basis for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the programme. Besides, a question answer session after the end of the programme will also be helpful to clear doubt among the target audience.
- (viii) **Follow up Action** – The final step of the development communication strategy is the conduction of an impact assessment study preferably after six months of the conduction of the development communication programme; this may include knowledge, attitude, change in behaviour and quantitative change in action related to various development issues. Then attempt has to be made for the dissemination of results before partners, key stakeholders, the news media, and funding agencies. The key findings and impacts of the project and lesson learned report may be prepared during the impact assessment. During impact assessment, gaps if any are identified, then if required a follow up development communication programme (DCP) is conducted.

It is pertinent to mention here that there is no fixed development communication strategy and the good development communication strategy must be flexible and participatory in nature.

Prepare an audio programme on Development Communication Strategies

5. Strategies and Determinants of Behavioral Change Communication (BCC)

4.1 Strategies of Behavioral Change Communication (BCC)

Change in behavior of the people is vital to the formulation and effective implementation of any development programme. The BCC strategies are followed to effectively motivate the people adopt development projects and programmes in order to change the quality of life. The role of BCC is as follows:

- (i) **Increase knowledge:** One of the important aims of the BCC is to enhance knowledge about the various components of development projects and programmes launched by the government. It is knowledge which is an enabling indicator for developing attitude towards adoption of development programmes. Most of the programme in the countryside is not being successfully implemented because the people lack complete knowledge about the programme such as its objectives, activities, modus operandi, procedures, benefits, etc.
- (ii) **Stimulate Community Dialogue:** Effective BCC strategy will stimulate dialogue in the community. People will talk about the benefit of the programme in their respective community cluster and also initiative discussion and arguments in the village assembly (Gram Sabha).
- (iii) **Promote Essential Attitude Change:** Changing the attitude of the people towards the development projects and programmes will lead to effective implementation at the grassroots level. It will also promote peoples' participation. The BCC materials and methodology must be so designed that it effectively changes attitude of the beneficiaries toward the development projects and programmes.
- (iv) **Promotion of Participation and Reduction of Discrimination:** Participatory development is considered as one of the best development strategies. It promotes inclusion and reduces the changes of exclusion. The developmental benefit must reach to all section of the society. The BCC materials should be so designed that it does not hurt the sentiment of any one section of the society.
- (v) **Create Demand for Information Services:** BCC materials and methodology must be the client and learner friendly. So that the more are more client demand them, study them and understand and adopt them.
- (vi) **Increase the Use:** The ultimate goal of any BCC strategy is to increase the use of BCC material and methods. More the use the changes of its adoption also increase.

4.2 Determinants of Behavioral Change Communication (BCC)

A few important determinants of BCC are as follows:

- (i) **Barrier or Drivers:** Identification of barriers to communication is critical to the effective implementation of development communication strategies. Barriers are impediments and drivers are energizers of communication.
- (ii) **Knowledge and Skills:** The deficiency of subject knowledge and communication skills is useful determinant of behavior change. A knowledgeable and skill communicator can better change the behavior of the clientele than their counterpart.
- (iii) **Social Norms and Values:** Social norms and values are social determinants of behavior. For example it is very difficult to change behavior of the tribal people as tribal society is bounded by the social norms and values.
- (iv) **Enforcement:** The use of force by the authority to adopt certain methods and programmes can forcibly change the behavior of the clientele. For example the imposing of one child family norm in China, change the behavior of the eligible couple towards the population issues in the populous country of China.

6. Conclusion

Development communication strategy is one of the important components of development communication. The effective implementation of development communication strategies will enable the programme implementers to effectively implement development activities. The development communicators have to adopt suitable strategies to effectively communicate various developmental aspects to the desired clientele. Communication processes are central to broader empowerment practices through which people are able to arrive at their own understanding of issues, to consider and discuss ideas, to negotiate, and to engage in public debates at community and national levels (UNDP, 2011).