

COMMUNICATION OF DEVELOPMENT MESSAGES

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INTRODUCTION

People use communication sources to articulate their grievances on local problems. There are several development issues facing the rural poor. The development messages have not necessarily produced the desired results. Solution of poverty alleviation lies in raising the capacities of people through education and resource transfers, social and physical infrastructure and removing a multitude of social barriers. All these development activities need appropriate communication support. Though there has been a reduction in the magnitude of the problem, has not been commensurate with the resources deployed and magnitude of the problem, thus, indicating flaws in delivery mechanism. The delivery mechanism's pre-eminent concern being physical and financial achievement, it failed to motivate people and they were not taken in as partners consequently afflicting the quality and effectiveness of the programme. It is this aspect of development that calls for understanding how development programmes are communication among the people and made use of, how do people view their problems. Development is viewed as a process of change to be set in motion and guided towards the objectives of eradicating the hunger, disease, injustice, exploitation and related ills that affect vast population of the rural poor. Poverty is a worldwide phenomenon. More so, it is a problem of the developing nations. However, poverty is no more perceived as destiny or God-given problem. Rather, it is a consequence of the man made development process. Beginning from Community Development programme in 1952 till restructured face of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) i.e. Swarn Jyanti Gram Swarajagar Yojna (SGSY) since April 1999, the nation had varied experiences towards development of rural poor. But still by the year 1993-94, 37.3 per cent people i.e. 244 million are living below poverty line (Indian Economic Survey 1993-94). In a recent Rural Development Report published by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) Hyderabad, nearly 320 million people are below poverty line.

This goes against our goal of rural development efforts. Many of the studies have shown that communication component was missing in the rural development efforts (Lerner 1958; Pandey 1997). But there has been lack of studies dealing with communication of development messages among rural poor. So that positive change in every aspect of their lives can be achieved. Thus, keeping in view the dearth of relevant studies in this crucial and critical area, the present study was carried out to find out as to how communication actually operates in the village.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh. A village namely Rajapur*, of Rudrapur block, having largest population below poverty line (BPL) individuals, was selected purposively. Out of total 273 BPL individuals, 155 respondents were interviewed with the help of structured interview schedule developed for the purpose. Observation was also taken during the entire field work. The data, so collected, were coded and analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques and triangulation method.

Research Findings : The major findings are presented below :

Socio-Economic Profile :

- * Most of the respondents were in general caste category, illiterates, with age group between 21-35 years and were engaged in agriculture.
- * About half (49.03%) of the respondents were member of one organization.
- * All the respondents were acquainted with the name of a political leader at block level. None was member of any political party but every respondent had participated in local/national election through voting.
- * Caste and money were the most important factors perceived by the respondents responsible for affecting local election.
- * Gram pradhan was the most preferred source of information in case of any general problem concerning neighbourhood conflict/land problem.

2. Information Sources and Their Use

- * Almost all the respondents had used relatives and family members as a source of information on different subjects. Among the personal cosmopolite sources lawyer was used as a source of information by fifty percent of the respondents.
- * T.V. was the most used mass media followed by radio. Majority of the respondents had possessed T.V. followed by radio. Respondents were more frequently exposed to radio followed by T.V.
- * Majority of the respondents had contacted extension workers, now and then, for getting financial support or program details at their offices it self. Extension workers usually had contacted pradhan.

3. People's Reactions About Development Issues

- * Crop disease, insect-pest, weeds and their control were the most serious agricultural problem, as expressed by the respondents. Majority of the respondents perceived lack of improved seeds, lack of knowledge of fertilizer/pesticide application lack of storage structure, inadequate irrigation facility, poor marketing infrastructure and indifferent attitude of government officials as the most common agricultural problems. Majority of the respondents were aware about the issue of subsidy on agricultural inputs. Respondents could name only three of the development programme. Maximum awareness of the respondents was in case of Flower Cultivation Scheme. Majority of the respondents had come to know about these development programme through their friends.
- * Only twenty respondents had been benefited from these programme during the last three years. Programme beneficiaries had received pump sets, Dunlop gari (cart), loan for parchoon shop, tonga and pucca house.
- * Lack of follow-up measures and supervision were perceived as the main problems of rural development programme. Corruption among officials was perceived as the most serious problem existing in the rural area.
- * Establishment of a bank, mandi, hospital in the village, open meeting, discussion with general farmers, inspection by higher authority, giving responsibility to district magistrate (DM) of additional district magistrate (ADM), were some of the ways to overcome the problem prevalent in the village.

CONCLUSION

- * Rural poor mostly preferred Gram pradhan as a source of information regarding any general problem concerning neighbourhood conflict/land problem. Relative and family members were the mostly used personal locality information sources while lawyer was among the personal cosmopolite sources. In mass media T.V. was the major source of information. Poor people were more frequently exposed to radio and majority of them had possessed it. Thus, it is implied that communication with rural poor must have interpersonal communication as the central element supported by mass media.
- * The rural poor were neither acquainted with the extension workers nor contacted by them. People themselves contact the extension workers for getting loans or details of the process. Extension workers were the most preferred sources of information for development programmes. Thus, it is implied that the extension system should be rejuvenated through dedicated workers and their activities regularly supervised. Thereby, ensuring their regular interaction with the local people.
- * Poor farmers perceive crop disease, insect-pest, weed and their control as the most serious agricultural problem followed by lack of improved seeds. These problems are commonly found in the village. Majority of the respondents were aware about the issue of subsidy on agricultural inputs followed by environmental pollution. Thus, it is clear these agricultural problems should be solved through proper means. Supply and demand side of the agriculture problems should be dealt at local level with peoples' participation.
- * The poor people had known about three of the development programmes viz. Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) and Flower Cultivation Scheme. Awareness was maximum in case of Flower Cultivation Scheme. Friends were the major source of information concerning development programmes details, benefits, procedure etc. The numbers of beneficiaries were very few, mostly benefited from IRDP and IAY. Lack of follow-up measures and supervision was perceived as the main problems of rural development programmes. Corruption was at the top among the most serious problems of rural area. Thus, it is obvious that rural poor are still ignorant about various programme and their benefits. Personal localite sources are most commonly used. Lack of follow-up measures and supervision together with corruption among officials has further added to their misery. Therefore, there is an urgent need to draw an effective communication approach that could enable poor to know and utilise the benefit of various development programmes. This will made the extension system more transparent and prompt in its work.

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