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DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

In your earlier lesson, you have learnt that effective communication is a two way process. So far, we have seen that the term ‘communication’ suggests the use of different forms of media such as printed materials, radio, television and so on.

You must also know that communication is used as an empowerment tool. In other words, communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in development activities.

Knowledge and information are essential for people to successfully respond to the opportunities and challenges of social, economic and technological changes. But to be useful, knowledge and information must be effectively communicated to people.

Millions of people in developing countries are excluded from a wide range of information and knowledge, with the rural poor in particular remaining isolated from both traditional media and new information and communication technologies which would improve their life.

In this lesson, you will learn about the use of communication to promote development activities.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- define development communication;
- explain how different forms of media are used for development communication;
- enlist some of the core areas of development;
- explain development campaigns.



Notes

4.1 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION : DEFINITION

Here, in ‘development communication’, you see that there are two words- ‘development’ and ‘communication’. By now, you know what communication means. You have also learnt that communication is a message understood or sharing of experience. When we refer to communication, in the context of development, we refer to various types of communication like interpersonal, group and mass communication.

Now let’s try and understand the term ‘development’. It is not easy to define this as it depends on the context. Development is about change. It is about changing for the better. It could be about social or economic change for improvement or progress.

When we refer to development communication, it is about such communication that can be used for development. It is about using communication to change or improve something. Here we use different types of messages to change the socio-economic condition of people. These messages are designed to transform the behaviour of people or for improving their quality of life.

Therefore, development communication can be defined as the use of communication to promote development. Those who write or produce programmes on issues related to development are called development communicators.

Role of a development communicator

The development communicator plays a very significant role in explaining the development process to the common people in such a way that it finds acceptance.

In order to achieve this objective a development communicator:

- has to understand the process of development and communication;
- should possess knowledge in professional techniques and should know the audience;
- prepare and distribute development messages to millions of people in such a way that they are received and understood, accepted and applied.

If they accept this challenge they will be able to get the people to identify themselves as part of a society and a nation. This identity will help in bringing human resources together for the total welfare of the individual and the community at large.



Notes

4.2 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION USING VARIOUS MEDIA

The history of development communication in India can be traced to rural radio broadcasts in the 1940s in different languages.

Have you ever heard a rural programme on radio? If you come from a rural area, you probably would have heard. People who present these programmes speak in a language or dialect that the people in your area speak. The programmes may be about farming and related subjects. The programme may comprise of interviews with experts, officials and farmers, folk songs and information about weather, market rates, availability of improved seeds and implements. There would also be programmes on related fields.

During the 1950s, the government started huge developmental programmes throughout the country. In fact, when Doordarshan started on 15th September 1959, it was concentrating only on programmes on agriculture. Many of you might have seen the 'Krishi Darshan' programme on Doordarshan.

Later in 1975, when India used satellites for telecasting television programmes in what is known as SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment), the programmes on education and development were made available to 2400 villages in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan.

As far as the print media is concerned, after Independence when the Five Year Plans were initiated by the government for planned development, it was the newspapers which gave great importance to development themes. They wrote on various government development programmes and how the people could make use of them.

If the print media have contributed to development communication, the electronic media – radio and television especially All India Radio and Doordarshan have spread messages on development as the main part of their broadcasts.

However, amongst all the media that are used for development communication, traditional media are the closest to people who need messages of development like the farmers and workers. Such forms of media are participatory and effective.

You may have seen construction workers cooking their meal of dal and rice over open fires in front of their tents set up temporarily on the roadside. They need to be educated about the values of balanced nutrition, cleanliness, hygiene and water and sanitation.

Have you wondered how messages on such issues are communicated ?



In various parts of India, groups of volunteers use street theatre as a medium for development communication. This is done through humorous skits and plays through which the importance of literacy, hygiene etc. are enacted.

The content for the skits is drawn from the audience's life. For example, they are told about "balanced nutrition". This means supplementing their staple diet of dal and rice with green leafy vegetables known to cure night blindness, an ailment common among construction workers.

Similarly, female construction workers and their children are taught how to read and write.

However, problems in communicating a message in an effective way has been a matter of concern to development workers. How can people be taught new skills at a low cost? What would be a good way to deal with sensitive topics such as health issues? How can complicated new research, like that in agriculture for example, be simplified so that ordinary people can benefit?

One option has been the use of comics. But, in order to achieve the desired results, these comics should be created locally.

But what are 'comics'? You must have all at some point of time read a comic.

Comics involve story telling using visuals which must follow local ideas and culture in order to be understood correctly by people.

The important thing about comics is that they are made by people on their own issues in their own language. So, readers find them closer to their day-to-day lives.

Programmes are organized in the remote areas of Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, and the North East to provide training to rural communicators to enable them to use comics in development communication.

Information on sensitive health issues such as HIV/AIDS has been communicated through the medium of comics in several states.

However, you must understand that development communication using various media is possible only with the active involvement of the following:

- (i) Development agencies like departments of agriculture.
- (ii) Voluntary organizations
- (iii) Concerned citizens
- (iv) Non governmental organizations (NGOs)

Notes

Humorous : funny, amusing

**Notes**

Whenever we speak about development, the contribution of voluntary groups, concerned citizens and non governmental organizations cannot be ignored. Actually these groups help the government in implementing development programmes. Of course the government, both central and state have various departments to reach out to people on various issues. The NGOs undertake studies, conduct research and develop appropriate messages for spreading awareness on various issues pertaining to development.

**Activity 4.1**

You may visit an NGO in your locality and find out the activities which they carry out for development.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1**

1. Define the term 'Development Communication'.
2. List the different forms of media used for development communication.
3. Name three groups which are actively involved in development communication activities.

4.3 CORE AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

You must know that the basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices and create an environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. Let us list some of the core areas of development.

- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Animal Husbandry
- Food Security
- Communication
- Irrigation
- Public Works
- Employment
- Environment
- Ecology
- Income generation activities
- Education



- Health and Sanitation
- Family welfare

If you are involved in development communication, you need expert guidance and relevant information to inform people. You may seek that expertise from the following:

- Agricultural schools and colleges
- State agriculture department
- State Horticulture Department
- Universities and Colleges
- State Fisheries Department
- Registrar of Co-operative Societies
- Soil Testing Laboratories
- Poultry Farms run by the Government
- Krishi Bhawans and Model Farms
- Community Development Blocks
- Primary Health Centers
- Animal Husbandry Department
- Government Financial & Banking Agencies
- Local NGOs
- Sericulture Farms

4.4 DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGNS

You may be familiar with the term ‘election campaign’. During elections we use communication to change the way people vote – from one party to another or from one candidate to another. For this, we use public meetings, print material, advertising on radio and television etc. The campaign kicks off before the election process starts and ends with the announcement of results. It’s purpose is to see that a particular individual or group of people vote for a particular candidate or party.

Similarly for development communication we may use the print media, radio and television. Sometimes they are time bound programmes for a certain period. Let us consider an example. A particular Sunday in a month is identified for polio immunization. There are also weekly, fortnightly and monthly campaigns on development themes. Let us take another example of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for all programme) in our country.

Notes



This is an effort to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010 with the active participation of the community in the management of schools.

People interested in development communication should understand their audience i.e, readers, listeners or viewers. They should also know the needs of their audience so that whatever medium is used, the messages are relevant. The messages then have to be passed on in the most attractive manner.

The need for development communication continues since a large population of India lives in rural areas and they need government support. Therefore, communication from the government remains highly significant.

New forms of communication such as Public Information campaigns are held in villages to disseminate information. Participation of the local community is also encouraged.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2**

1. List any five core areas of development.
2. Give three examples of development campaigns that you have recently come across in any form of media.

**4.5 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Definition of development communication
- Development communication using various media
- Core areas of development communication
- Development campaigns and examples

**4.6 TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Explain the term 'development communication' using examples.
2. Discuss the use of different forms of mass media in development communication.
3. Read any newspaper for a period of at least ten days and list out the development campaigns that you come across during that period.



4.7 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 4.1** 1. Development communication can be defined as the use of communication to promote development.
2. i) Refer to section 4.2.
3. i) voluntary organisation
ii) concerned citizens
iii) Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
iv) any other
- 4.2** 1. i) agriculture
ii) fisheries
iii) animal husbandry
iv) food security
v) communication
vi) any other
2. example : polio immunisation campaign



Notes