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“Development communication”

Student’s Name:

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Development communication

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Development communication is defined as knowledge sharing and using communication to promote development through formulation of strategy and policies. Development communication also means a systematic collaboration and exchange of information leading to the mutual benefits of all the parties. Communication (knowledge sharing and transfer of ideas), of any kind, plays an important role in development of nations now days. Development communication consists of various media, interfaces and activities that aim at transferring the knowledge and experience from developed nations (organisations / companies) to underdeveloped nations (organisations / companies) for the purpose of progress. Effective communication for development plays an important role in the advancement and progress of the individuals, society and a nation as a whole. It aims at eradicating the social evils and introducing a standard set of principles and policies ultimately leading to the social, economical and technological development of an underdeveloped nation / economy. The paper below highlights different facets of development communication and presents an argument as to how these help in the growth and advancement of the underdeveloped nations (or entities or products). Inagaki (2007) is of the view that 'development strategies can be made more measurable by the help of development communication'.

2.1 Mercado (1992) has defined development communication as 'a process of providing disadvantaged people the opportunities to realise and improve their knowledge, attitude, and skill to utilise, sustain, and improve their productivity of available resources within their environment in order to improve the quality of their

life and the society where they belong'. Further as per the Rockefeller Foundation (2000), it is defined as 'a process of dialogue, information sharing, mutual understanding and agreement, and collective action'.

It is quite evident from the recent wave of development and modernisation that media and communication play an important role in the development of any nation. Most of the developed countries have become an information society, gathering and spreading information via use of different information channels and making the underdeveloped countries use that for their strategy formulation and development.

As knowledge and information, in today's fast moving world, are essential for people to grow, move ahead, learn and advance and to successfully respond and adapt to the changes (whether technological, economical or social). But to be effective this knowledge needs to be communicated to users in an efficient and effective manner.

Development communication revolves around imparting of such knowledge and information for the purpose of development; it is about communication that can be used for advancement, change and improvisation and depends upon the use of different types of messages and media to change and improvise the social, economical and technological infrastructure of underdeveloped countries and is designed to transform (towards betterment) the quality of life in such nations.

2.2 Following things play an important role in designing and transferring communication for development: a) the nature of the issue; b) the target audience (users of the information); c) the nature of the communication media to be used; and d) the socio – economic and political factors of the environment surrounding the users of the communication for development. Therefore, it can be said that before imparting the knowledge or conducting a campaign, the transferors of the

development communication should conduct proper study and research so as to gather information regarding the problem, the target audience and the environment of these audiences, further to determine the most effective channel for transmission of communication and the type of message to be delivered. Research and study should be ongoing is critical at every stage.

Issue: identification of the issue is the first and the most important facet of the communication for development since gathering of the information and organising the same as per the needs of the users revolve around the issue in hand. Identification of the issue sets out the aim that a specific communication campaign has to achieve. Kumar (2011) suggests that 'one of the major differences between communication and development communication is that development communication is led by a purpose or aim'.

Users / Audiences: Communication for development revolves around people, the generators of information / communication being the developed / trained and literate people while the users being the underdeveloped, rural and illiterate people. As set forward by Kumar (2011) that 'development communication has a sense of right and wrong and is about humans'. No matter what, it is quite clear the creators, organizers and users of the information for the communication for development are people and this information and communication aims at promoting and developing the users' standard and quality of living. As set out by Kumar (2011), 'development communication has two types of users or audiences, the communicators and the audiences (whether literate or illiterate)'. Communication for development is aimed at a large set of audiences, including the government, policy makers, media, industrialists, economists, educationalists, general public etc. Each set of users have their own needs and requirements and uses the provided information for the

achievement of their set goals and standards. As put forward by Kumar (2011) 'the development communication efforts and strategies should be altered as per the needs and psyche of the people using it'. Therefore, it can be said that communication for development aims at imparting a wide variety of knowledge to the people, created by the people and organised by another set of people. Communication for development, therefore, aims at the development and advancement of the society (a group of people) by transmitting the knowledge gathered from the developed society (another group /set of people).

Media: It can be seen that media is playing an important role in the development of the mankind as well as in the improvisation of the quality of life. Choudhry (2011) explains that 'media plays an important role in development communication by being the means of transmitting information, knowledge, skills and ideas to the users'. It is evident that media these days addresses a lot of social issues like illiteracy, corruption, bureaucracy etc and aims at making the society a better place to live by eradicating these social evils, through proper knowledge and awareness on these issues. Mass media, however, is not the only source used for the transmission of communication for development, other modes like door to door campaigns, theatre, training and development sessions etc can also be used as effectively as mass media. It can also be said that the mass media can facilitate the process of development via effective transmission of knowledge and information, therefore, the proper application of media for the purpose of imparting the knowledge and communicating to the masses with an underlying aim of development of mankind is essential for development communication. Kumar (2011) suggest that 'use of diverse medium of communication for development imparts the said information a wide range of users and the effects are lasting'.

Environment: The socio – economic and political environment surrounding the users of the communication for development is the most crucial facet for the communication. Unless the environment plays its part in imparting information to all sets of users, make the said information accessible and helps in the development of people and society through proper training and awareness of the users, the communication for development may fail to achieve all its goals.

Further, for the effective communication for development it is essential to identify the users of information and effectively synchronise the users with the issue, the media used and the socio – economical and political context within which the media campaign is to be made. Messages and communication is directed at a specific set of audiences and is designed and presented in a way so as to effectively gain the objectives (that is the development of those individuals leading to the development of the society as a whole). Kumar (2011) discussed that ‘that the aim or goal of development communication in a society is affected by the norms and values of that society’.

2.3 Communication structures and processes lead towards the achievement of better, more transparent and accountable government and law structure and the creation of a developed and aware society. Inagaki (2007, P.2) suggests that ‘communication can create a positive environment for development programs by assisting in making connections between economically, politically and culturally disconnected groups’.

Knowledge and information are necessary for the people to react to the opportunities and challenges of social, economic and technological changes, including those that help to improve the economic structures, literacy rates, technological and industrial

development and awareness of the social evil. Kumar (2011) explains that 'development communication has a transformation role that aims at changing the values a society towards betterment by creating an atmosphere for change and providing innovations which may lead a society to change'.

This knowledge and awareness also give poor and rural people a right to speak and access the facilities and convenience of the technological world and an equal opportunity to grow and take part in the growth of the society and nation as a whole. The transfer of knowledge, experience and research from the developed nations to the underdeveloped nations plays a pivotal role in their (underdeveloped nations) development. This also makes the underdeveloped nations learn from the experiences and mistakes of the developed countries. Arenas of growth and prosperity that are already identified by these developed countries are explored into and experimented with. Kaul (2011) describes that 'there are three different types of development communication techniques / campaigns leading to different outcome: 1. Education, which aims at changing the social values and ethics; 2. Persuasion, which aims at changing the actions of the people; and 3. Informing, which aims at creating awareness in the people that may lead to change ultimately'.

As communication is always a two way process, therefore underdeveloped nations and rural people also have equal chances to communicate their fears, queries and expectations and their problems are looked into and answered by the communication developers and transferors.

Communication for development has improvised the outcome of a number of sectors and countries. For example the use of ERPs and other technologies, the atomization of data and the linkage and networking between different government bodies and agencies, and many more developments as adapted by the underdeveloped nations

like Asia and Africa from the developed western countries was made possible because of effective development communication, whether by Information Technology, internet research, training and development of professionals or by mass media, but communication for development has played its role.

Communication for development has also played a vital role in identifying lots of social evils like gender biasness, corruption, bribery, gambling, street crimes etc. The causes and effects are identified and detailed awareness campaigns are made so as to eradicate these evils from root.

In addition, development communication also addresses the major challenges faced by the nations for development and highlights the problems these nations face while moving towards prosperity. Development communication also lays down the ways to face these problems and challenges.

It can be said that development communication is a two way flow of knowledge, information and experience which changes the attitudes, behaviour, life style, opinions and knowledge curve of the users and makes the society a better and developed place to live in. As Kaul (2011) argues that 'development communication is not just about transmitting information regarding the betterment of the society / individuals it is also about exchange of knowledge, teaching of new skills, learning the art of empathy and encouraging more two way participation'.

2.4 As discussed above in the impact of development communication, it is quite evident that development communication plays an important role in the development of nations through transfer of knowledge. Development communication plays the following key roles:

a. Development of people, society and knowledge;

- b. Free accessibility of information and maintaining two way flow of knowledge, as suggested by Kumar (2011) 'access to communication ensures participation by the users and the communicators';
- c. Creating an open culture for the transfer of information;
- d. Improvising the governance and legal structures;
- e. Creating and maintaining and equitable society;
- f. Reduction of poverty and illiteracy;
- g. Eradication of social evils;
- h. Creation of general awareness of the existing technologies and diseases and the researches and developments therein.

CONCLUSION

Development communication is all about using communication for the development of individuals or society as a whole, but, this is not the only function of development communication. It also aims at improving the standard of living and changing the society and individuals towards betterment. Development communications plays a pivotal role in transmitting the knowledge base of developed and successful countries to the underdeveloped countries that lead to the training and development of the third world (underdeveloped) countries and an improved society overall.

Development communication has affected the society in a better way and has different roles to play which not only consist of imparting of knowledge but also include the organisation of the said information according to the needs of the users, society and problem at hand. Development communication, if effectively utilised and departed can make society a better place to live in be the driving force of change in the underdeveloped nations towards development and advancement.

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