
UNIT 3 INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC)

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Communications and Rural Development
- 3.3 Process of Communication
 - 3.3.1 Definitions
 - 3.3.2 Concept of Process
 - 3.3.3 Characteristics of the Communication Process
- 3.4 Types of Communication
- 3.5 Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.1. Physical Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.2. Social and Cultural Barriers to Communication
 - 3.5.3. Psychological Barriers to Communication
- 3.6 Functions of Communication
- 3.7 Objectives of Communication
- 3.8 Process of Behavior-change
- 3.9 Communications and Change
- 3.10 Preparing IEC Strategy
 - 3.10.1 Inventory of Communication Resources
- 3.11 Selection of Media
 - 3.11.1 Folk Media
 - 3.11.2 Visual Aids
 - 3.11.3 Demonstrations
 - 3.11.4 Radio
 - 3.11.5 Television
 - 3.11.6 Video and Film Shows
 - 3.11.7 Print and Publicity Material
 - 3.11.8 Outdoor Publicity, Hoardings and Wall-writings
- 3.12 Message Design
- 3.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.14 Key Words
- 3.15 References and Suggested Readings
- 3.16 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the process of information sharing, communication and development in the rural context;
- describe the various channels of and barriers to communication;
- explain the importance and the role of information, education and communication (IEC) in behavior-change and rural development; and
- explain the process of preparing appropriate IEC strategies and IEC materials.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We all communicate all the time; there is not a single moment when we are not communicating. Communication plays a vital role in our day-to-day life. Communication has been central to all the progress that human beings have made. As a matter of fact no organised social life and progress would have been possible in the absence of communication.

An important purpose of communicating with people is to enable the members of the community to understand their problems and take appropriate action to solve them collectively. This process of informing, educating and communicating with the people empowers them to take decisions and actions leading to their progress and development. The thrust of this unit is on the proper understanding of and the proactive use of information, education and communication resources so as to facilitate the process of rural development and cost-effective implementation of various development programmes and schemes that are being carried out by the various government and non-governmental organisations. This unit is an attempt to describe clearly the role of IEC in rural development and also discuss how to use communication resources in support of rural development cost-effectively. After a brief discussion on the close relationship between communication and rural development, we will explain in detail the concept and the process of communication, types of communication, barriers to communication and functions of communication. This will be followed by a discussion on the process of behavior-change and the role of communication therein. After that, we discuss and explain the need for an appropriate IEC strategy for rural development and the process of preparing IEC media materials.

3.2 COMMUNICATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a close association between communication and development. Communication creates awareness about new things and a desire for change leading to development. In India, the significance of communication in equipping people with new information and skills and mobilising them for their willing participation in various development programmes has been well recognised and emphasised in all the Five Year Plans, the blueprint of the country's development strategies. In the First Five Year Plan itself, the need for understanding and appreciating the various development programmes and schemes by the people, especially in the rural areas, was clearly underlined. In the subsequent Plans, the concern about reaching out to the people even in remote villages has been voiced with increasingly greater emphasis and force. Consequently, all available methods of communication have been developed and strengthened many fold over the years.

Right from the start after independence, the Government provided for special broadcasts on radio to facilitate rural development. Radio played an important role in creating awareness about many new methods and techniques of agricultural practices, thereby contributing to Green Revolution in many parts of the country. So much so, in many areas the new High Yielding Variety of seeds came to be known as *radio seeds* and fertilizers as the *radio khad*.

When the television was first introduced in India in 1959, the stated objective was to facilitate the process of education and development in rural areas. Again when colour television was introduced in 1970s, the justification was that our farmers would be able to see better the demonstrations of agricultural practices if shown in colour. The SITE experiment was also primarily for rural development.

In order to effectively use the power of mass media, the government provided for community radio and television in the initial stages. With the coming of transistor

sets, the costs came down substantially making them affordable. In recent years the costs of black & white TV sets have also come down and you can notice the rapid penetration of television in rural areas. In many areas the TV has become a common dowry item in marriages, thereby further giving a push to the reach of television in villages.

Noticing the limited reach of mass media in rural areas, the Government planned and provided for extensive network of extension services by various development departments and agencies to harness the power of interpersonal communication. The mass media and the extension services are intended to complement and supplement each other in promoting development in rural India. The extension services use a variety of audio–visual aids in their efforts to communicate various development messages to the rural people.

With the coming of satellite cable television, IGNOU has launched a couple of special channels (Krishi and Vigyan) to meet the information and development needs of the vast multitude of people through out the country including the remote tribal and rural villages.

Notwithstanding the phenomenal expansion of mass media facilities in the country as a whole, the actual reach of various mass media in rural areas still continue to be rather limited. This is mainly due to four mutually reinforcing factors. These are:

- Low literacy, about 64 per cent, comparatively lower still in rural and remote areas. Effective literacy is even less.
- Low purchasing power, about 27 per cent people live below poverty line. They cannot afford having a radio/ TV set or access to newspapers.
- Poor means of transportation that hamper timely delivery of newspapers or repairs and maintenance of radio/television sets in rural areas. Irregular supply of electricity makes television operations problematic.
- Lack of relevant information, if purposive and development communication are the aims of the mass media.

As such, it is often argued that the mass media are essentially the class media and serve more the commercial interests rather than as development agents.

Therefore, in order to optimize the power of communication as a facilitator of development processes, it is necessary to plan and strategise the use of communication resources. It is in this context that the concept of *Information, Education and Communication (IEC)* has been used in development literature. It is a strategy of careful planning for and using communication resources in support of specific development programmes and activities. Of late, the concept of (BCC) Behaviour Communication Change is also being used to emphasise the importance of changing the behaviour of the target audience for bringing about development and change in any society or group.

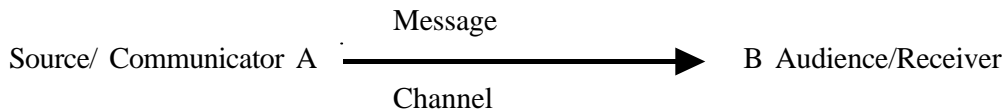
3.3 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Let us first understand the communication process. How does it work? What does it do/ achieve? Proper understanding of the communication process would help in a better appreciation of the role of Information, Education and Communication in rural development.

Communication is a dynamic process of the exchange of information and ideas. Communication comes from the Latin word “communis” which means common. Whenever two or more people come together, they communicate through words,

signs, symbols, gestures and body language. Communication and human interaction go together. Even silence is communication. When we communicate, we are trying to establish commonness among ourselves. When we communicate, we are trying to share information, ideas, feelings and attitudes with other people.

The various elements involved in the communication process become apparent when one asks questions like who says what, how or through what channel(s), to whom and with what effects. In the communication process the person(s) who is saying something is the *communicator* or *source*; what he is saying is the *message* and how or through which means is the *channel*; to whom he is saying constitute the *audience* and to what affect or impact means the *result*. One can simply show the communication process as follows:



3.3.1 Definitions

Here are some representative definitions:

Communication – the imparting, conveying or exchange of ideas, knowledge, etc. (whether by speech, writing or signs). *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Communication – the transfer of thoughts and messages, as contrasted with transportation, the transfer of goods and persons. The basic forms of communication are by signs (sight) and by sounds (hearing). *Columbia Encyclopedia*.

Communication is the *process* of exchanging information, ideas, attitude and values between two or more human beings through *shared* signs and symbols. *J. S. Yadav*

In the most general sense, we have communication whenever one system, a source, influences another the destination, by manipulation of alternative signals, which can be transmitted over the channel connecting them.

The word communication can be used in a very broad sense to include all the procedures by which one mind may influence another. This, of course, involves not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballot, and in fact all human behaviour.

In some connections, it may be desirable to use a still broader definition of communication, namely one that would include the procedures by means of which one mechanism (say automatic equipment to track an airplane and to compute its probable future positions) affects another mechanism (say a guided missile chasing this airplane). *Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication*.

The mechanism through which human relations exist and develop – all the symbols of the mind together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. *Charles Cooley*.

Harold Lasswell's (1948) classic description of communication is: who says what in which channel to whom and with what effect. This brings out clearly the different elements involved in the communication process. Subsequent studies of communication were greatly influenced by this postulation of communication. The scientific study of the process of communication tends to concentrate upon one or another of these questions. The results of various studies emanating from this perspective have helped in reviewing our understanding and conceptualisation of the communication process.

Each of these definitions has its own strength and its own usefulness. The first two are based on the idea of transfer of information; they distinguish between the transfer of ideas, knowledge, thoughts or messages and the transfer of more material things. The third and the fourth definitions rest on the idea of influence or effect, rather than a transfer of anything. Notice that they do not limit the nature of the message to anything, but ‘signals’. The fifth definition is noteworthy for its emphasis on human relationship.

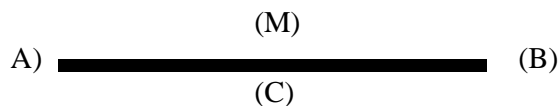
For our purpose, it will be more appropriate to conceptualise communication as a process of sharing information, ideas and values through shared signs and symbols. It is the sharing of an orientation towards a set of informational signs.

3.3.2 Concept of Process

Let us briefly discuss the *concept of process* to understand the process of communication more clearly.

Process: is on going activity to achieve certain specific objectives/results. For carrying out any process we have to have a system. Actually process and system are two sides of the same reality. In one (system), we emphasise or focus attention on structural aspects ,while in the other case (process) the attention is on functional dimension of the same organised activity. Any system will have a set of elements, which are mutually interacting, influencing and producing results. The four basic elements of communication are:

- Source (A)
- Message (M)
- Channel (C)
- Receiver (B)



The source may also be called the communicator, speaker or sender, who tries to communicate messages to some one who is referred to as the receiver or the audience. It is the source that decides what message to send, how to formulate it, what channel or medium to use and which audience to reach.

The message is the information package or the communiqué. It may relate to improved farm practices and skills, health, safe drinking water or environmental sanitation. It should be so formulated by the source that it is easy for the receiver to comprehend and is relevant to his/her needs.

Used in this sense, *information* must be defined quite broadly. Obviously, it is not limited to news or ‘facts’ or what is taught in the classroom or contained in reference books. It is any content that reduces uncertainty or the number of alternative possibilities in a situation. It may include emotions. It may include facts, opinions, guidance or persuasion. It does not have to be in words, or even explicitly stated; the latent meanings, “the silent language,” are important information.

The channel is the medium of communication. It could be your own voice and gestures as is the case in interpersonal communication. It could also be mass media like radio, television, newspapers, internet, etc. The message cannot get through to the intended audience without the use of a proper channel. For bringing about change and development, it has been found that simultaneous use of a combination of channels often works better.

The receiver or the audience may be a single person or a group of persons or a large number of people spread over a vast area, i.e. the masses. A proper understanding of the intended target audience is very important, as otherwise the message may fall flat on them. It must be remembered that it is the target audience, which actively decides as to how to respond to a message from the source; whether or not to accept the message or be influenced by it.

In the context of rural development programmes, the development agent like the extension worker is the source, the new information, skills and practices which he/she shares with the farmers is the message, the farmers constitute the targeted audience or the receiver and the medium of sharing the message (extension worker's own voice, printed material, posters, audio-visual aids, radio & TV, etc.) is the medium.

The important thing to remember is that as elements of the communication process, none of these has independent existence so to say. The efficiency of each element affects (positively or negatively) the efficiency of the other elements as functional units of the same process, i.e. communication.

3.3.3 Characteristics of the Communication Process

For further clarity in our understanding of the communication process, let us discuss the main characteristics of the communication process.

Communication is a two-way process:

Unlike other processes, the communication process is essentially a two-way process. While the communicator may be the main source, the receiver also acts as a source in the communication process. As a matter of fact the source and the receiver are interchangeable in actual communication. The receiver not only communicates back to the source as feedback, but also actively acts on the message exchanged as much as the message acts on the receiver.

(A) _____ (M) _____ (B)

Communication is a selective process and selection takes place at three levels:

- Selective exposure
- Selective interpretation
- Selective use

What we read, see or hear, we do that selectively. We select a newspaper to read, and in the newspaper we select certain news and leave out most others. Having exposed ourselves to the newspaper, no two of us interpret the messages/news in the same way. Also, not all of us put the received information to the same use necessarily. Selection in communication is influenced or affected by three factors, viz.

- Experience (past)
- Needs (future)
- Mood (present)

Take the example of a simple word “DOG”. You read it, but the image it invokes in your mind may vary from person to person depending on your/their experience with dogs. You see many advertisements in a newspaper but your response ‘to’ and ‘use’ of the advertisement will depend upon your need for the product or service advertised. Similarly, mood influences the communication process, a good communicator will try his/her best to create a proper environment/mood for effective communication. It requires professional approach in terms of message formulation, layout, design and packaging to make communication effective so as to ensure not only exposure, but also its correct interpretation and use as well. A number of points should be kept in mind for this, the most important ones being:

- Relevance of the message
- Credibility of the source
- Proper presentation in terms of language, design, packing, etc.
- Feedback and corrective measures and reinforcement.

Communication is a complex process

The communication process is essentially a function of brain, but we know little about the functioning of brain. Furthermore, a human being is complex entity, he/she is not the same at all times, rather he/she keeps changing depending on a variety of factors and influences. In group situations and mass audiences, communication is manifold more complex.

Check Your Progress I

Note: i) Write your answer in the space provided.
ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define the communication process and list its unique features.

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2) Describe any communication act you were engaged in today. Examine as to how selectivity influenced it?

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3.4 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can take different forms, but may be broadly considered under four major categories, namely, Interpersonal communication, Group communication, Mass communication and Folk/Traditional form of communication. Let us discuss each one of them briefly.

- Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication between two persons or a very small number of persons. It is the most effective method of communication as you are virtually face-to-face with the person with whom you are communicating. You almost instantly get the feedback and based upon the reaction or the feedback you can further explain the point not clearly understood earlier.

- Group Communication

When the number of people involved in the communication process is small, you know each other well and are in direct contact.

- Mass Communication

When with the mediation of technologies you are able to communicate, disseminate information or sets of messages simultaneously to a large number of people spread over a large area, you are involved in mass communication. The source, instead of being a person as in case of interpersonal communication, is a complex institutional setup for information gathering, processing, producing and disseminating contents or messages. The contents/messages are also a complex assortment of a large variety of messages or contents intended to meet the diverse needs of the diverse audiences. Through the medium of technologies, the contents are disseminated simultaneously to a large number of people, mass audiences spread over different places or even countries. With satellite facilities, mass communication has become global in nature.

You are all well familiar with the major mass media like radio, television, newspapers, magazines and even Internet. Telephone is both a medium of interpersonal and mass communication. Posters, hoardings, billboards, kiosks, etc. are other important media of out door publicity and mass communication. In mass communication the feedback mechanism is weak. In the case of newspapers, radio and television, letters to the editor are the feedback. Drop in circulation or listener-ship or viewer-ship surveys constitute an indirect way of the audiences to give their reactions

- Folk/Traditional form of Communication

Folk/Traditional Forms of Communication are an important vehicle of community level entertainment and mass communication through various performing arts popular in the different parts of Indian society, especially in rural and tribal areas. It has been seen that some of these traditional forms, such as puppet shows, have been effectively used for communicating modern ideas and disseminating development messages among the rural and tribal population.

3.5 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

As we communicate, it is not unusual to be faced with difficulties in our communications. As a communicator, you should be aware of these difficulties or the barriers to communication, which could interfere with the reception and the response to your message. If you can recognize the difficulties in getting your message across to your intended audience, you can take the remedial action accordingly. The barriers to communication could be physical, social or psychological in nature.

3.5.1 Physical Barriers to Communication

Language: The communicator should use the language and idioms with which the audience is well familiar. The communicator's job is to communicate and not to impress his/her audience by using difficult or unfamiliar words. Use the language the audience can easily comprehend.

Voice: Voice should be clear. If your voice is too low, unclear, too loud, high pitched and irritating to the receiver, it is likely to create problems in interaction and the reception of your message.

Eye Contact: Communication is more effective if you are able to look into the eyes of the audience while delivering your message. It helps you to keep the attention of listeners and also provide some opportunity to get their feedback to your communication as you are proceeding with the delivery of your message.

Physical Discomfort: If your audience is uncomfortable for reasons such as the seating arrangements, poor lighting, weather, or ill health, they are not likely to be very attentive to your message.

3.5.2 Social and Cultural Barriers to Communication

You all know pretty well as to how the factors like caste and religion at times influence social interaction and communication in our village communities; so do socio-economic background, education, income, etc. Members of higher castes may not like to participate in a programme or meeting just because the members of the lower castes and socio-economic strata are also participating in that programme. In a highly hierarchical society, marked asymmetrical social relations become barriers to the flow of communication.

3.5.3 Psychological Barriers to Communication

Verbalism: If the speaker talks monotonously and continuously without making attempts to involve the audience by inviting questions or clarifications, they are likely to be bored and distracted sooner than later.

Referent Confusion: As you know each one of us have different life experiences and accordingly we develop our frame of references in our minds. We have already discussed *selectivity in communication*; it is often based upon our past experience. Not unusually, the speaker and the audience have different frames of reference and hence may respond differently to any given message. We interpret and make use of any message depending upon our past experience and future needs. So, due to *referent confusion* different persons may derive different meanings from the same message.

Daydreaming: Some members of the audience may be thinking about something else, maybe about their families or some other issues, while the speaker is talking about a new variety of seeds. In such a situation, these members are not paying the required attention to the message the communicator is trying to give to the audience.

Lack of Motivation: Motivation of the target audience is the key to the success of the programmes for bringing about behavioural changes. Lack of motivation among the audience makes communication of your messages a difficult task. So, first try to motivate your audience in favour of the programme you are communicating about or advocating and then take up the theme proper.

Emotional Disturbance: Emotionally disturbed members of the audience find it difficult to concentrate on what the speaker is saying and hence fail to receive the messages being conveyed to them, whatever the theme.

3.6 FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

If communication is considered in its *broadcast* sense, not only as the exchange of news and messages, but also as an individual and collective activity embracing all transmission and sharing of ideas, facts and data, then its main functions in any social system may be related to **information**—the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures and facts and also the expression of knowledgeable reactions to personal, environmental, national and international conditions/issues as well as suggestions and decisions regarding these issues.

Broadly, we can consider the functions of communication under the following categories:

Socialisation: the provision of the common fund of knowledge which enables people to operate as effective members of the society in which they live and which fosters social awareness thereby permitting active involvement in public life.

Motivation: the promotion of the immediate and ultimate aims of each society, and the stimulation of personal choices, aspirations and the fostering of individual or community activities geared to the pursuit of agreed aims.

Debate and discussion: the provision for and exchange of facts needed to facilitate agreement, clarification on differing viewpoints on public issues and the supply of relevant evidence needed to foster greater popular interest and involvement in all local, national and international matters of common concern.

Education: the transmission of knowledge so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all the stages of life.

Cultural promotion: the dissemination of cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the heritage, the development of culture by widening the individual's horizons, awakening his/her imagination and stimulating his/her aesthetic needs and creativity.

Entertainment: the diffusion, through signs, symbols, sounds and images in the form of drama, dance, art, literature, music, comedy, sports, games, etc. for personal and collective recreation and enjoyment.

Integration: the provision of access to the variety of messages, required by individuals, groups and nations, in order to know and understand each other and to appreciate others' living conditions, viewpoints and aspirations.

Besides these functions, which are seen essentially from an individual's stand point, emphasis should also be laid on new phenomena, or at least the one, the importance of which is rapidly increasing: communication has become a vital need for collective entities and communities. Societies of the world cannot survive today if they are not properly informed about political affairs, international and local events, or weather conditions, etc. Governments need varied information (from all the corners of their respective countries as well as from every quarter of the earth) about the trends in population growth, harvest results, water supplies, etc. if they are to be able to plan dynamically for the future.

3.7 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

Broadly speaking, the functions/objectives of communication are to inform, educate, entertain, relate and influence. Interaction and communication go hand in hand. Communication helps in maintaining the 'status-quo' as well as in bringing about 'change' and hence development. It is through communication and the socialisation process that we learn many things and practices from our parents and peer groups and keep doing things as they have been to maintain traditions so to say. Equally true is that we come to many a new idea and practice through communication and adopt some of them, thereby bringing about change and development.

In the context of rural development, we (as effective communicators) use communication to 'influence' and persuade others to do things as we wish/want or consider 'proper'. We select only those pieces of information or communication, which support our own ideas and attitude. We tend to 'keep out' all that goes against our views or ways of doing things and behaviour patterns. However, people generally do not want to be influenced by others. In other words every body resists change.

Therefore, we have to be very careful in organising our messages for mass communication. Only then can we influence the masses and bring about changes.

3.8 PROCESS OF BEHAVIOR-CHANGE

The process OF behavior-change involves the following:

i) *Awareness*

Initially a person may not be know whethr a particular behaviour is not good or is not in his own best interest or may be harmful or even dangerous. Take the case of the usual practice of not washing hands properly before meals. Though people in rural areas wash their hands ritually and not properly before their meals, often they are not clear about the links between eating meals with unhygienic hands and many a disease caused by contamination of food by their own dirty hands. Take another example of AIDS. Many people may not be aware of the links between unsafe sex and AIDS or the dangers of sharing syringes. The first step in a behaviour-change programme is to make people aware of the issue at hand through various channels, both mass media and interpersonal communication. Generally the mass media play an important role in creating awareness about various issues and problems among the masses.

ii) *Concern*

To bring about behaviour-change the information must be given in a way that the audience feels it applies to them, i.e. the audience becomes concerned and they are motivated to evaluate their own behaviour. Mass media aimed at the general population are less likely to be effective in creating a concern of this type. Targeted approach and interpersonal communication are likely to be more effective and useful in creating it and thus motivating the people for positive action.

iii) *Knowledge and Skills*

Once aware and concerned, individuals may seek more information and knowledge by talking to friends and peers, social workers, extension workers or other experts for advise and about the specific steps they may take to address their concern or problem. In the process they may also acquire new skills that are necessary to handle their concerns. At this stage some skills training sessions may be very useful.

iv) *Motivation and Ready to Change*

Individuals might now seriously begin to think about the need to change their behaviour and try out the new suggested practices. At this stage they may be ready for a change. They may visit some demonstration farms to see for themselves if the suggested methods and practices have yielded better results. This will reinforce their motivation for change.

v) *Trial Change*

Now they may be ready for the actual trial of new methods and practices. At this stage enabling environment should be available for them to try out new methods and practices. For instance, if some new variety of seeds is recommended, it should be available easily and at an affordable price. The result of any trial will be evaluated. If the experience is satisfactory they may firmly continue with the changed behaviour leading to behaviour- change and development in the society.

3.9 COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

So change is difficult and it is here that professionalism of a good communicator is at test as to how communication could facilitate change or development. The suggested changes/developments should be so presented that the receiver of communication perceives these changes in her/his own interest. In this lies the success of communication.

The effectiveness of communication is influenced by many factors like the communicator's experience and knowledge, need of the audience and the urgency of the situation. So to be effective as a communicator it is important to understand as to how the communication process works/functions, where and what can lead to failure, that is what are the barriers to communication, and what can be done to improve the effectiveness of the communication process. In the whole process audience is of supreme importance. So to be effective as a communicator, 'know your audience'.

For making the best use of communication for development, it is necessary to first clearly define the development objectives and then accordingly also define clearly the communication objectives and specific communication tasks and inputs to achieve the development objectives in the most cost effective manner.

In order to achieve the desired impact of communication, clear understanding and segmenting of the audience is necessary for you to appropriately target your message.

In rural development, information, education and communication efforts generally aim towards:

- making people aware of their conditions and problems;
- informing people of the different programmes and schemes;
- motivating them to take advantage and derive benefits from the relevant schemes;
- facilitating the process of acquiring the necessary skills and building organisations to find solutions to their problems; and
- enabling them to be self-reliant and to make development sustainable.

Communication is essentially the facilitator of rural development. It is a means and not an end in itself.

Check Your Progress II

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space provided.
ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.

1) Briefly discuss the purpose of communication in rural development.

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2) Discuss in brief the steps involved in the process of behavior-change.

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3.10 PREPARING IEC STRATEGY

By now you understand fairly well that communication helps in creating awareness about new ideas, products, practices and skills. It empowers and enables people to take action leading to behavioural change and rural development. It is the facilitator of development and change in a society. You also know that it is not easy to bring about a change, as people generally resist it and find more comfort in sticking to age-old established norms and practices. As such, to bring about behavioural changes and rural development, you need to plan a strategy to use your communication resources properly, so as to achieve your development objectives in a cost effective manner.

Like in any other field, preparing the IEC strategy involves your making an action plan (keeping in view the communication resources at your command) to achieve your development objectives. For this you should be absolutely clear about:

- a) The specific development objectives that are to be achieved.
- b) The target audience to be covered under the development programme.
- c) The specific communication objectives and the behavioural changes that are to be brought about for development.
- d) The various communication resources you can mobilize, their access and relevance to the target audience for communicating the development messages.

The first step in planning a communication strategy is to know the intended audience and the responses sought. A communication method, technique or material that may be effective with one set of people/audience may not be effective with other audience. Two people may attend to the same talk by say a village level worker, hear the same radio broadcast or see the same poster or hoarding and yet interpret these communications quite differently. As explained earlier, people selectively expose themselves to various communication stimuli that may be available to them at any given time. Not only do they see or hear selectively, they also selectively interpret and use the information or message they receive depending upon their own experience, needs and even mood at that particular time. This makes communication, apparently a simple task, quite a difficult and challenging one. The source of communication, here the development agent, must be skillful enough in encoding messages that take into account how his target audience usually decodes the messages

For a message to be effective it is important that the coding process of the source/sender greatly matches that of the receiver/decoder. It should be as far as possible simple and straightforward in the language and the idiom that the receiver is familiar with. Further, the message and its contents should be relevant to the needs of the receiver/audience. More over, it is important that the source is perceived to be credible. People are exposed to communications from different sources and are

more likely to believe a communication from a person or organisation they respect and trust. As such, every effort should be made by the individuals, agencies and organisations engaged in development work to build and maintain rapport with and credibility among the target audience.

3.10.1 Inventory of Communication Resources

To prepare any meaningful IEC strategy, the IEC planner/manager must have a clear understanding of the communication resources at his/her command and their relevance to the intended audience for bringing about the desired change. For this it is necessary to have a clear idea about the nature of access that the target audience has to various channels and sources of information. The basic data about the availability of different media of communication need to be collected and collated. These may include: newspapers and magazines, their readership pattern among the target audience; reach and access to radio and television programmes and listening and viewing pattern; prevalence of different folk forms of entertainment and communication in the region and other sources of information especially about the issues having a bearing upon the development objectives. The data about the audience information needs also should be gathered through secondary sources or if need be through a sample survey. Such an understanding helps in better focusing on the information needs and tackling of information gaps for bringing about awareness and change in the target audience.

Based upon the audience profile, the development tasks and the objectives of communication, an effective communication strategy would usually use a combination of mass media and channels of interpersonal communication. Working out a judicious combination of mass media and interpersonal channels is the key to the success of IEC strategy.

3.11 SELECTION OF MEDIA

As you would have understood by now, the basic purpose of communicating with people is to inform, educate, and motivate them to act towards some specified goal. Under rural development programmes this goal could be improved yield in crops by adopting new agricultural practices, improved health of the members of the family by taking nutritious food, or protection from disease by undergoing immunization at the right time.

Interpersonal communication, though most effective, is time consuming and often not enough for communicating ideas and skills for adopting change and effect development. Experience shows that other media also become necessary as they help in making the spoken words clearer. Messages are put across through more than one channel/media so as to appeal to more than one sense. The use of more than one media helps in holding attention, creating interest and retention of new learning, thereby facilitating the whole process of communication, especially in the context of rural people. You also know that each medium of communication has its strengths and weaknesses. It is important that the communicator recognizes this and assesses the usefulness of each medium in relation to his/her target audience. Based upon such an understanding, the selection/choice of media should be made for communicating development messages.

In any development programme, actually a combination of media comprising mass media, folk media and interpersonal channels are used.

3.11.1 Folk Media

Take the case of Folk/traditional Media. India has a rich heritage of folk forms of communication and entertainment. Some of the prominent forms are: puppetry, folk

dramas, folk songs, and folk dances with regional variations. These have been in existence for time immemorial and continue to be popular in rural and tribal areas even today. You will notice a number of folk media in any region you may visit. As these folk forms use local language and dialects, costumes and situations, these are easy to comprehend for the local people. These may be recreational, devotional or maybe about folklore or folk heroes. As these continue to be popular forms of entertainment in rural and tribal India, these have a great potential for being used as powerful vehicles of development communication. It is for the development communicator to identify which of the prevalent folk forms is suitable for communicating the development messages.

Once such a folk form is identified for use, the performers/presenters of these folk media should be thoroughly briefed about the development programme and more specifically the development messages that are to be communicated to the target audience so that the artists can creatively incorporate the development messages in their presentations.

3.11.2 Visual Aids

To make interpersonal communication in small groups more effective, it is usually advisable to use some simple audio-visual aids such as flash cards, flip charts, and flannel graphs. These are particularly helpful in explaining the new ideas and concepts with the help of visuals.

3.11.3 Demonstrations

Seeing is believing. As such, a live demonstration often proves a very effective mode of communication. A demonstration is a good way to show how to do something. It provides stimuli to all the senses of the learners— seeing, hearing, touching, and maybe tasting and even smelling. People learn best when all their sense are used in the process. Demonstration may also include role-play to make it even more real. Some member of the group may volunteer to act out a real life situation or a problem on the basis of a given description. It enables the group to understand better the cause of a problem or the result/consequences of an action.

3.11.4 Radio

Radio is truly a mass medium. A large segment of population can be reached through radio. It has the advantage of being affordable, portable and convenient. In rural areas where frequent power failure is normal, radio has the tremendous advantage, as it is generally battery operated. There are a number of radio programmes which have a bearing upon issues of rural development. You can monitor the radio broadcasts in your area to have a more clear idea about the various rural development programmes that are currently being aired and are popular with the local audience.

Radio can be very effective not only in creating mass awareness and interest in new innovations or practices but also in motivating and initiating action. Research findings have shown that systematic and serialised radio programmes covering a given theme or topic and organised group listening are far more effective in bringing about changes and development than the normal general radio broadcasts. This way you combine the strength of the mass media and interpersonal communication as well as of organized learning.

3.11.5 Television

The television is a very powerful and effective medium as it uses both audio and visual signals. It is increasingly becoming more popular even in rural areas. But, frequent power failures inhibit its uses in most parts of India. Further, this medium

has come to be associated with news and entertainment primarily. More over it is an expensive medium. As such its use for development purposes should made be with great care. But certainly for creating mass awareness TV can play an important role for its being a very visible and popular medium of mass communication.

3.11.6 Video and Film Shows

Film and video shows are very effective in rural communication as these have visual appeal and the audience can see exactly what you are talking about, e.g. farming techniques, sanitation and health, low cost housing using locally available material, immunization, etc. Video can be used to produce development programmes for TV at a much smaller cost than that of films and as such is quite often favoured as the medium for development purposes. Making video programmes is comparatively simple and easy. You can produce video programmes to incorporate local details, costumes, language and the dialects to make it a more effective tool of communication with any given target audience.

3.11.7 Print and Publicity Material

The language newspapers and magazines are now reaching rural communities as well. Village people reading newspapers at a village teashop or other convenient points is a common sight these days. Like other mass media newspapers/magazines also serve the purpose of creating awareness among the masses about various issues. But literacy being still low in rural areas the utility of print media in communicating development messages is limited. However, the print and publicity material produced to include specific development messages for the rural audiences and distributed among the target audience can serve the purpose of development.

3.11.8 Outdoor Publicity, Hoarding and Wall-writings

The wall writings and hoardings giving briefs of development messages on various development programmes are a common sight now in most villages. These may be on immunization, family planning, water and sanitation or AIDS. These are usually very effective as these use written words as well as some visuals. The messages are put in short and simple phrases in the form of slogans that are easy to comprehend and remember. And these stay for long periods serving as reminders and repeated exposures for the local people.

Thus, there is a wide range of possible choices of media. It should not be difficult to select an effective combination of media for communication that suits your needs and the target audience.

3.12 MESSAGE DESIGN

Keeping in view the available choices of mass media, interpersonal channels of communication and the extent of their possible uses for meeting the communication and development objectives, it is necessary to design appropriate messages to make full use of the strength of each of these media and channels. Both the channel and the purpose of communicating development information influence message design. Messages may be designed to convey facts, alter attitudes, change behaviour or encourage participation in decision making. Often these purposes overlap and are sequential and progressive. For bringing about behaviour-change and development, people must receive information, understand it, believe it, agree with it and then act upon it. Messages must be designed and developed with the desired change and development in view. Some of the factors that need to be kept in mind in designing proper and appropriate messages are:

i) Audience interest

For a message to be accepted by the intended audience it should address their information need. The message should be based on what they perceive as important, what they want to know and not what is most interesting or important for you as the sender of the message.

ii) Draw and retain attention

Messages should be so designed as to draw and retain attention of the target audience. In this age of information glut there are numerous messages competing for attention at the same time. Hence, messages should be so creatively designed, packaged and placed as to assure attention of the audience, failing which messages will be lost altogether.

iii) Clarity

A message must be simple and short. It should be in a language and idiom, which the intended audience can easily comprehend. It must clearly convey the required information. It should assure a understanding of the information being sent across and reduce the chances of misunderstanding to the minimum. It should not lead to any inappropriate action. It should avoid difficult scientific/technical terms as far as possible. It should not carry information that is not needed by the audience for making decisions.

iv) Consistency

You should maintain consistency in the messages you design for different media and channels of communication. This would help in avoiding confusion, facilitating understanding, reinforcing learning and retaining the theme of your messages among your audience.

v) Main points

The main points of your messages (put across through different media and channels of communication) should be stressed, repeated and never be hidden within less strategically important information.

vi) Tone and appeal

A message should be straightforward and reassuring. It should be truthful, honest and as complete as possible.

vii) Pretest message design

It is always a good strategy to pretest your message design (in the context of the audience you intend to address) to know as to how far it is effective in communicating the essence of the theme and contents of your intended message. Time and resources spent on protesting are worth the effort, as they help in improving the efficacy of the message.

<p>Check Your Progress III</p> <p>Note: i) Write your answer in the space provided.</p> <p>ii) Check your answer with the possible answer provided at the end of the unit.</p> <p>1) Define in brief the IEC strategy and list the main considerations to be kept in mind while preparing it for any rural development programme.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

2) Write the main points that are to be kept in mind while preparing IEC media material for rural audiences.

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3.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt that communication is an essential component of both continuity and change in our society. There is a close association between communication and development. Through communication people become aware of new developments in various fields and also of the resultant new opportunities.

You have also learnt that communication stimulates a desire for change and facilitates the process of change and development. Change is not easy to bring about, as people resist it. It is only through professional communication that the objectives of behavioural change and rural development can be achieved.

We have also described and discussed the process of communication, its functions and objectives in brief so as to help you understand the role of communication in rural development more clearly.

To achieve the objectives of rural development a well thought out Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy is required. Keeping in view the objectives of the development programme, the specific communication objectives need to be clearly spelt out. Then, depending upon the media reach and the exposure pattern among the different sections of the target audience, a suitable media mix should be selected to send the message across. Cost effective utilisation of the available communication resources should be the guiding principle throughout the process.

We have also discussed in brief the process of media design and the preparation of appropriate media materials.

3.14 KEY WORDS

- Communication** : Communication is a process of interaction or exchange of information and ideas.
- BCC** : *Behavior change communication* is now in currency in the context of developmental communication, as the emphasis is on behavior-change leading to development.
- IEC** : Information, education and communication inputs for facilitating development and change.
- IEC Strategy** : IEC strategy is the approach or a well thought out design to make the most cost effective use of communication resources in support of development.

3.15 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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3.16 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Communication is a process of interaction or exchange of information, ideas and values between two or more human beings through shared signs and symbols.
Its unique features: It is; 1) a two way process, 2) a selective process, and 3) a complex process.
- 2) Reading a newspaper. You select a newspaper that you read. You select the news items you read. You selectively interpret and use the news items or other matter like the advertisements that you have read.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Broadly speaking, the functions/objectives of communication are to inform, educate, entertain, relate and influence. Interaction and communication go hand in hand. Communication helps in maintaining the 'status- quo' and also in bringing about 'change' and hence development. It is through the communication and the socialisation processes that we learn many things and practices from our parents and peer groups and keep doing things as they have been to maintain the traditions so to say. Equally true is that we come to many a new idea and practices through communication and adopt some of them, thereby bringing change and development.
- 2) Behavior-change is difficult as people generally resist any change, as it causes some discomfort. Even so, the basic function of communication in the process of rural development is to bring about behavior-change. Through IEC efforts are made to bring about behavior-change by creating awareness, providing necessary knowledge and skills and motivating the target audience so that they are ready for the trial and the final adoption of the suggested changes leading to development and progress.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Preparing the IEC strategy involves making your action plan to achieve your development objectives. While making the plan, you have to keep the communication resources at your command in view. For this you should be absolutely clear about:

- The specific development objectives that are to be achieved.
 - The target audience to be covered under the development programme.
 - The specific communication objectives and the behavioral changes that are to be brought about for development.
 - The various communication resources you can mobilize, their access and relevance to the target audience for communicating the development messages.
- 2) The main points to be kept in mind while designing messages for rural audiences are: Audience interest, Drawing and Retention of Attention, Clarity, Consistency, Main Points, Tone and Appeal and Pretesting of the Message Design