

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS ON:

**Development Communication: A Study Of Role Of
Communication In Women's Development Programme
In A Block Of Ghaziabad District, U.P**

The present study on “**Development Communication: A Study Of Role Of Communication In Women's Development Programme In A Block Of Ghaziabad District, U.P**” was undertaken in the context of realisation of importance of communication in development especially in relation to women and the dearth of micro level research studies on this issue. From the perspective of women, the study has tried to answer the questions related to perceptions about development, participation in the development processes and identifying areas for their participation. It also focuses on understanding the strengths and limitations of the women in order to participate in the communication processes.

The present study views communication as a participatory process, for achieving development for the people and by the people themselves. In this context, participation is understood as developing the human, organizational and management capacities of the people to address the issues, as they arise, in order to sustain the process of change and development.

The existing models of communication have been inadequate to understand women in the sense that its processes and agencies did not deal adequately with gender issues within the communication framework. Gender was hardly ever considered as a determining factor while communicating development to the larger society. Gender blindness in development communication is also the result of gender bias in development discourse.

The study has two fold objectives. The primary objectives are to:

⇒ understand the impact and perception about communication in women's development programme;

⇒ outline the role of women and the scope of their participation in the communication process both as producer as well as receiver of the programme.

The secondary objectives are:

- to know about the ongoing development programmes for women in Dhaulana block, organised by various agencies, Government / non-Government, and their scope and coverage;
- to explore the existing forms and nature of communication and the obstacles faced in the process.

The study is exploratory and participatory in nature. It is based on the perceptions of the respondents on the various related issues.

The study was confined to Dhaulana block of Ghaziabad District. It was selected taking into consideration its size, neither small nor big, presence of personal contact and accessibility. It covered 250 women including panchayat members and sar panchs and recipients of programme and along with them 50 socio-political leaders were contacted.

The study involved the process of analysing available material to develop the theoretical perspective. Emphasis was laid on collecting relevant data from the field. While no specific schedules were used for the interviews, all the meetings and discussions were based on few parameters in keeping with the need and the basic essence of the study. These parameters formed the basic guideline of the study and enabled the researcher to draw the observations. Importance was given on developing inter personal relationship with individuals and groups and involving them in the discussions to share information and get their perceptions.

Conducting an exploratory study of such nature was not an easy task since it was difficult to gather the corresponding information, as required. Similarly extracting the required response from the broader views given by the women

took up a considerable time due to their inability to comprehend and articulate their replies.

Some of the main findings of the study are:

Awareness about the Development Programmes:

- Government is the primary development Agency. Its development programmes are for village development, family development and individual welfare. Programmes of the voluntary organizations focus on women in relation to their family and they are given a role in planning and organizing the programmes apart from being the beneficiaries.
- The impact of the development programmes have been felt in different ways: in increasing knowledge and information, in providing employment thereby increasing income, in improving the standard and quality of life and living and in forming groups to deal with various problems. The programmes have also enhanced their positions in the family by making them contributing members in economic development of the family, besides instilling an element of self confidence among them.
- There exist differential levels of awareness and understanding of the development programmes. Almost all women reflected some element of understanding about the programmes however, nearly 70% showed a focused understanding about the number and nature of programmes under implementation in the block, particularly those programmes which are in operation for more than 10 years.
- Multiple sources have contributed to this awareness, most common ones are radio, television and use of the services of social mobilizers/villages development workers: There are differences with regard to sources of information between government and voluntary organizations programmes. Information about voluntary organizations

programmes have been invariably through personal contact based on meetings and discussions, whereas information about governmental programmes were gathered through mass media and individual contact. Women give greater preference for personal contacts meetings and discussions as these provide opportunities to clarify ideas, besides providing information at the level of their family/locality.

Communication Processes: Medium (Forms), Nature And Methods

- Use of medium of communication varies according to the agency organizing the programme. Oral communication through peer group is used by NGOs. Use of these mediums and emphasis on a particular medium depends on the nature of agency organising the programme and the nature of the programme. Programmes meant for development of villages primarily use mass mediums such as pamphlets. Family development programmes combine both personal contact, print media and indigenous mediums and peer group discussions.
- Development communication is more often a linear process in both government / non government organizations: Development communication processes focusing on rural people specially women are more often than not a one way communication though both the agencies believe that communication to be successful has to be two way. It is more pronounced in the Government programmes because of the attitude of the people working and their pattern of working. Voluntary organisations working in the area though have better mechanisms for promoting two way communication but in actual field situation despite their best efforts, it sometimes becomes a one way process.
- Communication is not a regular process, it is adopted as required: Both the government and voluntary agencies talk about maintaining a regular system of communication process, but the programmes and

concerned paraphernalia including personnel requirement do not create much space for it. Consequently communication which is meant to be regular becomes occasional. And even within this the pattern of communication is varied in terms of time and individual ways of communicating.

- Communication is both focused and vague depending on the nature of medium used. In print media it is more focused but the villagers do not easily comprehend the language. Print media also becomes ineffective in situation where there are high number of illiterate people. This quite often becomes the reason for the Government programmes not reaching the people.
- Multiple methods have to be used in the communication process. It begins with developing community contact, building relationship and organizing discussion and meeting during leisure time, training in using audio, visual aids, developing communication team and training them. The effective methods are those, which involve the community in the process and involve two-way flow of information and feedback.
- Effectiveness of the use of the medium is dependent on gender of the communicator among other factors.

Communication Process: Perceptions, Impact, Role and Participation

- Self Perception of women are determined by the socialization process and the preconceived notions about their role in family and society. Analysis of self perception becomes important because how women perceive themselves will determine their perception of development and how it can change their lives.
- Women perceive development as a positive process aiming at change and progress for betterment through self participation in the process: Though the expressions for development are varied but there is an universal acceptance of development as a positive process and also

as something which will bring about change in their day to day living. It is perceived in terms of their day to day life components such as greater financial resources, job security, better facilities of living, better education and health facilities, peaceful coexistence and equality among people cutting through the barriers of caste, class, gender and religion. It is heavily loaded towards economic well being since in their context of village life, economic resources are the primary concern and their living depends on it.

- Participation is integral to development but its form varies: Women perceive their participation as a must in the process of their development. And they perceive this participation in various manners, right from being a beneficiary to planning for development. They emphasised on knowledge, exposure and information as critical links in the process of participation. The fragmented understanding on participation, which when taken together reflects the essential elements of participation in terms of its form and nature.
- Impact of development communication is felt at three levels – self, family and society. At individual level, they benefit in terms of increased awareness and better thinking which contributes to development of their personality besides enabling them to take initiative in availing the benefits of the programme. The benefits at the individual level then percolate down to the family and social level.
- Women's role as producer and receiver of messages depends on the following factors:

As producer :

- the authority to decide and plan the programme
- scope of deciding the reason for the communication
- facilities and resources available
- family and environment support
- mechanisms adopted

As receiver:

- the nature of the programme
 - scope and thrust of communication
 - abilities to comprehend and use the communication messages
 - family and environment support
 - ability to relate to the communicator and the message
- Participation of women in the communication process should be a participatory process with women determining the issues and also the process to be undertaken.