
UNIT 4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT—MEDIA MIX

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4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will take a closer look at the communication strategies for Rural Development. After reading this unit, you should be able to :

- explain the meaning and scope of communication strategies and draw up a management plan,
- describe the process of planning, producing and pre-testing media and material production plan in support of management plan; and
- outline the mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of communication activities.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication has an important role in the total development process. Communication planning therefore, becomes an indispensable requirement and an integral part of any planning process, as it is assumed to be capable of compressing the time required for change and multiplying the impact of development planning. In our system we find that there are scientists, development administrators and functionaries at various levels who serve as communicators and plan their roles through expression, interpretation and response. If the expression is not clear, the accurate interpretation becomes difficult and one cannot expect a proper response. As a result, development messages do not always reach the intended clientele group in a way that they can gain a common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of such messages. It is therefore necessary that you as a student of rural development are exposed to the process of planning Communication - Extension Support for rural development.

In the previous three units of this block you have learnt about planning; preparation and implementation of communication support; extension management and organizational communication. In this unit, we shall now discuss communication strategies for rural development. The discussion would cover apart from defining communication strategy, describing the prerequisites of the management plan; Media and Material production plan and Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

4.2 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

4.2.1 Meaning and Scope

What is a communication strategy? (A communication strategy is) "a particular combination of channels and messages, designed to reach certain audiences in order to achieve certain goals" (Middleton 1980 in AMRIC Singapore-1985)

or

"communication strategy is a combination of methods, messages and approaches by which the planner seeks to achieve the communication objectives" (Assifi French DTCP-1985).

Let us now analyse the above two definitions. We find that there are two important aspects which are essential to describe Communication Strategy (C.S.). These are that a communication strategy is :

- i) a combination of approaches, messages, methods and channels, and
- ii) directed towards the achievement of a particular communication goal or objective.

If we try to illustrate this, it takes following shape (Fig. 4)

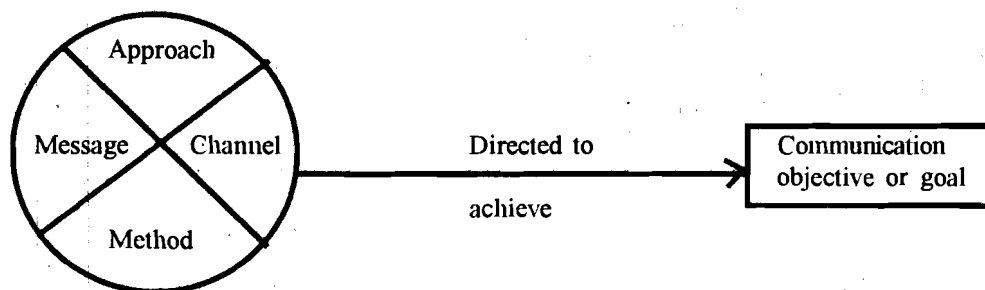


Fig. 4 Communication Strategy

There are four things we need to know for developing a communication strategy.

- the need/problem for which communication support is needed.
- the audience (Through Audience Analysis).
- how to set the communication objective or goal.
- how to design a strategy.

We shall discuss all these under Management Plan a little later. Here we will confine our discussion to the choice of communication approaches/methods and selection of communication methods.

4.2.2 Choice of Communication Approaches/Methods

There are basically four communication approaches mostly used either independently or in combination with each other. These include :




- informing
- educating
- persuading and
- entertaining.

If we take an example of spread of disease expected to destroy the rice crop, we can select an approach of "informing" the farmers about the spread of disease. We can go a bit further by selecting a combination of approach by not only informing but also "educating" the farmers about the possible damage which the disease can cause and "persuade" them to select

and use appropriate pesticides. The choice of approach or combination of approaches depends upon the communication objective or goal set.

Similarly, there are various types of communication methods available which are broadly classified into three main categories. These include Individual, Group and Mass Communication methods as shown in Box-I.

Box - I

Types of Communication Methods		
Individual	Group	Mass
		
Home visits	Meetings	Pamphlets
Office calls	Study tours	Posters
Personal letters	Role playing	Newsletters
Technical manuals	Group discussion	Radio
Tutorials	OHT	Cinema slides
Self-learning	Slides	Stickers
	Demonstrations	Stamps
	Flip charts	Calenders
	Flannel boards	Newspapers
	Models	Coins
	Blackboards	Banners
	Wall charts	Billboards
	Drama groups	Slogans
		Booklets

Source : Guidelines for 'Planning Communication Support for Rural Development Campaign' compiled by N.M. Assifi & J.M. French UNDP/DTCP, Bangkok, 1985.

Since most of these methods are synonymous with the methods used in extension, you might well recollect a descriptive statement in respect of some of these methods under Unit-4 of Block-2 of this course.

4.2.3 Selection of Communication Methods

The selection of communication methods is closely linked with the audiences, approach and message(s) to be communicated. For example, if the audience is young productive couples and approach is 'informing and educating' and the message is 'advantages and use of family planning measures', the methods to be selected can in a combination of Individual, Group and Mass communication methods. The selection of methods (s) largely depend upon.

- The nature of audience :** whether the audience is literate or illiterate and the geographical spread of audience;
- The nature of message :** is it only to inform them or educate them as well ? and
- Practicality of various methods :** for example, if we suggest mass media is it practical or easily available to the audience ?

Selection of Communication Methods

The following five principles can help the planner in selecting communication methods:

1. List all available communication methods and then strike out those which are not appropriate or feasible.
2. Evaluate each method in terms of the approach and style of message selected.
3. Collect data on the practicality of various methods.
4. Determine comparative cost-effectiveness of each method.
5. Use a combination of methods whenever possible.

Source : Guidelines for 'Planning Communication Support for Rural Development Campaign' compiled by N.M. Assifi & J.M. French UNDP/DTCP, Bangkok, 1985.

You will find in Box-2 five principles derived out of long experience which can help a communication planner in selecting appropriate communication method (s).

Check Your Progress 1

Notes : a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) In the light of our discussion in 4.2, why is communication strategy necessary and how can you distinguish between four basic communication approaches:

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- 2) Suppose in village "A", diarrhoea has spread and taken heavy infant toll and we have to develop a communication strategy. We know the audience, approach and message. Suggest what suitable methods can be used in the following table under methods.

Table - 1

Audience	Approach	Message	Methods
Mothers	Information & Education	- Importance of boiling water - Personal sanitation - Oral - dehydration - Breast feeding	- - - -

4.3 MANAGEMENT PLAN

The preparation of Management Plan involves three basic steps :

- Audience Analysis
- Objective Setting
- Designing Strategy

4.3.1 Audience Analysis

What makes up audiences? In the present case the answer of course is people. To adapt to your audiences, you need to know few things about them so that you can anticipate how they will decode the message. You perhaps need to know as to how much they know about the subject. What are their attitudes and feelings? *The process of knowing the audiences in terms of knowledge about the subject matter, attitudes and feelings is called "Audience Analysis"* (emphasis mine). For effective communication it is necessary that you know your audience. It is not feasible to conduct extensive research to cover the entire audience/target group before any communication strategy is designed. One can take a sample after the identification of audience (target group), and collect base line information, covering knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of the target audience about the information message intended to be communicated. Another approach could be to divide target group in small sub-groups like students, women and officials depending upon the communication goal expected to be achieved and then collect baseline information from the concerned sub-target group. The analysis of this baseline information thus collected along with other information available from secondary sources should enable a person to draw up communication objectives which can be used as basis for developing strategies. A sample schedule/checklist for collecting information can take the following shape.

Schedule / Checklist

1)	Name of the respondent :	
2)	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Age group	Percentage
	a) Below 15	.....
	b) 16-30	.....
	c) 31-45	.....
	d) 46-60	.....
	e) 61 and above	.....
4)	Occupation :	
	Type of occupation	Percentage
	1) .....	.....
	2) .....	.....
	3) .....	.....
	4) .....	.....
5)	Education Level	
	Level	Percentage
	1) Illiterate : .....	.....
	2) Primary : .....	.....
	3) Secondary : .....	.....
	4) Graduation : .....	.....
	5) Others (Specify) : .....	.....
6)	Who takes most of the decisions in the family?	
	Who	Percentage
	1) Elders .....	.....
	2) Those who earn .....	.....
	3) Mutual consent .....	.....

7)	Access to Communication Media		
	Media		Percentage
	1) .....		.....
	2) .....		.....
	3) .....		.....
8)	Language used		
	Language		Percentage
	1) .....		.....
	2) .....		.....
	3) .....		.....
9)	Source of Information/Advice		
	Source	Subject matter	Percentage
	1) .....	.....	.....
	2) .....	.....	.....
	3) .....	.....	.....
10)	Extent of knowledge about the problem for which Communication Strategy is to be devised.		
			Percentage
	Great Extent : .....		.....
	Some Extent : .....		.....
	Hardly Any : .....		.....
11)	Importance of problem (from target group point of view)		
	Degree of importance		Percentage
	1) Very important		.....
	2) Important		.....
	3) Important to some extent		.....
	4) Not important at all		.....
12)	Existing arrangement for tackling the problem		
	Arrangement		Percentage
	1) .....		.....
	2) .....		.....
	3) .....		.....

Explanatory Note

The above checklist/schedule will have a two-fold purpose. In case you are interested in using it as interview schedule, you have to overlook percentage column and proceed. Once you have completed interviewing say 100 persons/respondents, you can prepare a consolidated statement about all the persons interviewed by using percentage column of one of the interview schedules. For example, let us take one column of the schedule say column-6 which relates to decision making in the family. As on the interview schedule for individual respondent you may tick mark either 1 (elder) or 2 (those who earn) or 3 (mutual consent). Now if you are using the same for preparing a consolidated report of 100 respondents, you will have to use percentage column and the hypothetical picture will be:

6.Q.) Who takes most of the decisions in the family

	Who	Percentage
1)	Elders	20% of the total respondents
2)	Those who earn	65% of the total respondents
3)	Mutual consent	15% of the total respondents

4.3.2 Objective Setting

An objective is the goal or target or aim set to be achieved before commencing a work. It underlines the purpose behind taking a course of action. The audience analysis report helps to a great extent to determine communication objectives. The determination of objectives can also be guided by the information collected through secondary sources— study of existing documentation and reports and other methods like group discussion, consultation with knowledgeable persons, observation etc. The objectives are mostly concerned with expected changes through a particular activity up to a particular degree of success. Since we are here concerned with communication objectives, let us see how it has been defined and then how it can be analysed.

"A communication objective is a target which specifies the intended audiences, the type of change that is expected, when and where the communication activity is to take place and finally, what criteria will be used to measure its degree of success." (UNDP/DTCP-1984). You will see from this definition that four main steps have involved in preparing an objective. These include :

- Identifying the problem
- Knowing the audience
- Specifying the intervention
- Preparing an objective(s)

The objectives should state specifically the improvements/changes that are expected to occur through a particular communication intervention. As discussed in WHO Educational Handbook (1984), the objective should be:

- **Relevant** : to the "audience" (trainees job)
- **Logical** : in accordance with the need
- **Unequivocal** : should be beyond controversy or argument
- **Feasible** : within limits or means
- **Observable** : the net result can be seen or observed
- **Measurable** : the changes expected to occur should be measurable
(the rise in performance should be measurable)

The above set of criteria is equally relevant and important in setting communication objectives. If we set objectives beforehand, we know in which direction we are heading. It helps us to save time; to narrow down the focus of communication package to the specific needs; to refrain from straying from the subject matter or making it too dilute for effective impact on the audience and setting up objectives also help us to measure the results of the communication package.

Box – 3

An example : In District A, it has been reported that water borne diseases are taking heavy toll of life. (problem identification). Through audience analysis we have come to know that common people have very little knowledge about measures which can be taken for purification of water. At the same time their attitude towards measures to be recommended is positive (Audience Analysis). There is a need for development of simple messages which can be communicated through media for preventive measures to be taken for purifying the water (specifying the intervention). Once this process is completed we can prepare a communication objective like "Majority of the households in District A (above 75%) should be able to describe/take appropriate measures for prevention of water borne diseases after 2-3 months of communication activities".

4.3.3 Designing Strategy

We have defined communication strategy at the beginning of this unit. We found that a communication strategy is a combination of approaches, messages, methods and channels, and directed towards the achievement of a particular communication goal or objective. Let us now take an example of a selected area where a pest disease has spread and is expected to destroy the crops, unless some immediate measures are taken. How to develop a communication strategy? We have the problem before us. Our audience is farmers from the target area. The audience analysis should be able to provide us an insight into the level of knowledge, attitude of the audience as well as audience access to communication media. This should help us to set a communication objective through which we may expect farmers to identify the diseases and select and use appropriate pesticides. Simultaneously, we may have to decide approach, message, method and channel. Our strategy may look like this (Fig. 5).

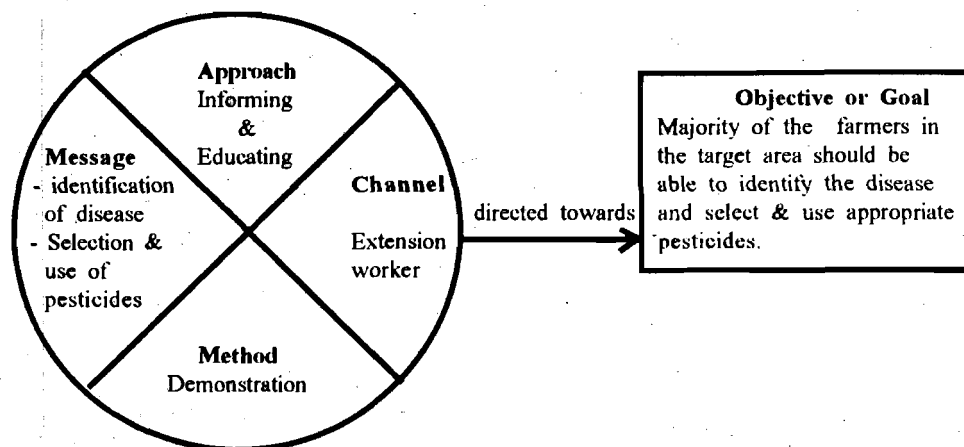


Fig. 5 Communication Strategy

Once you have identified the problem, known the audience, and developed a communication strategy, you should be able to draw up a detailed management plan which will also specify activities, responsibilities and time frame. This management plan should be used as tool for effective implementation of communication package. Let us see how it looks.

Table – 2
Management Plan

S.No.	Activities	Time Frame	Responsibilities*
1.	Audience Analysis (including prep. of schedules)	Three weeks (February)	Communication Planner, Investigators
2.	Objective Setting	One week (March)	Communication Planner
3.	Designing Strategy	Three weeks (March)	Communication Planner
4.	Prep. & Dev. of Messages	Four weeks (April)	Subject Matter Specialist
5.	Preparation of Media/materials	Eight weeks (May/June)	Media Specialist
6.	Pre-testing & Revision	Four weeks (July)	Subject Matter/Media Specialist
7.	Training of Staff	Two weeks (July)	Training Specialist
8.	Implementation	32 weeks (Aug.-March.)	Extension Worker/Field Staff
9.	Evaluation of Effectiveness of Communication Packages	Two weeks (April next)	Communication Researcher

*Hypothetical designations

Notes : a) Space is given below for your answers

b) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) How is audience analysis important for preparing a communication plan?

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2) What are the essential factors which help to determine communication objectives?

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4.4 MEDIA AND MATERIAL PRODUCTION PLAN

You have already been exposed to the preparation and selection of communication media/material in unit - 1 of this block, we will confine our discussion to the media/material production plan and pre-testing in support of activities 5 & 6 of our management plan discussed above (4.3.3)

4.4.1 Media-Material Production Plan

Once you have selected appropriate communication media/material, you may take the following steps :

Step-1 : Try to develop an objective for the media/material. Here the objective means as to what the selected media/materials is expected to achieve. Let us take an example. Suppose you have selected Flipcharts as your media for communicating a message about family planning measures to be adopted by the villagers. Your media objective will be *"By using the flipcharts majority of the family planning workers will be able to more effectively describe various methods than they could without the media.*

Step-2 : You will have to identify as to who will be using the media and when. For example if we continue above example, you can say that family planning workers will be using it during their home visits.

Step-3 : You will have to decide about the time frame. Here a time frame is needed for three main activities :

- i) preparation of prototype
- ii) pre-testing
- iii) preparation/production of final version(s).

Step-4 : It includes identification of persons responsible for each activity under media/material production.

Step-5 : You may have to estimate cost(s) for media/material production, wherever applicable. The main areas to be taken into account while working out the cost include cost for :

- a) Developing prototype
- b) Pre-testing
- c) Modification and production and
- d) Distribution

4.4.2 Pre-testing

Once you have prepared proto-type media/material, it is necessary that you pre-test it with a sample of your intended audience. One of the ways to pre-test your media/material is to interview the target group. There are two sets of questions which need to be developed/addressed. One set of questions can be addressed to the target group after the introduction of proto-type media/material. This may include questions related to the reactions of the target group; understanding of media/material; sequence of contents; quality of production; length of material and clarity of components of the material. The second set of questions can be developed to be addressed to the person(s) conducting the pre-test exercise. These may include questions related to overall effectiveness of the materials as perceived by them and so on. We will now attempt here to develop two sets of questions—one for the intended target group and another for those conducting the pre-test exercise.

A. Pre-testing Schedule/Checklist for Target Group

- 1) Name of the Respondent
- 2) Sex: Male
- Female
- 3) Taken as a group, to what extent were the objectives of communication package achieved? (objectives to be explained.)
 - Not at all To satisfactory extent
 - Very little To a great extent
 - To some extent
- 4) Rate the communication package for the following aspects.

Item	Very poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good
a) Continuity and integration of content					
b) Balance of time given to different topics					
c) Logic of sequence					
d) Relevance to the objectives					
e) Practical value					
f) Language					
g) Level of comprehension					

5) Did you encounter any difficulty in understanding the pictures and narration ?

Yes / No

If yes, please elaborate

6) Did you find any ambiguous words, pictures or ideas?

Yes / No

If yes, please mention

7) What about quality of production?

Very poor

Poor

Satisfactory

Good

Very good

8) Have you any suggestions to improve the Communication Package?

B. Schedule/Checklist for investigators

1) What was the overall reaction of the audience?

2) Are the objectives of the communication package clear to the audience?

3) How useful do you think would this communication package be to the target audience ?

4) What are those content areas in the package which you think were not found very useful by the audience and why ?

5) Is there any aspect which you feel should have been given more emphasis?

6) Have you got any suggestions for the designers in terms of improvements which can be incorporated during the revision ?

- Contents

- Language

- Presentation

- Structure

4.4.3 Plan for Utilization

Now under the plan for utilization, we will attempt to draw Media/Material Production and Pre-testing plans. Both these sub-plans are expected to serve as tools for effective implementation of activities related to Media/Material Production and pre-testing under the overall frame work of the management plan. For example, if we have identified wall posters as media/material to be used to explain to the village community, the procedure and extent of their involvement in the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY), the production plan may take the following shape:

Table – 3

Media/Material Production Plan

Media/ Material to be produced	Objective for the Media/ Material	User of Material/ Media	Time frame			Responsibility	Estimated costs (wherever applicable)
			Prep. of prototype	Pre- testing	Prep/Prod of final version		
Wall charts	The Extension worker will be in a better position to explain the procedure and extent of involvement of rural people in JGSY.	Extension worker during the Group meetings.	Jan. 1-20	Jan. 25-26	Feb. 1-25	Block technical staff	Govt. proposal no estimate of cost necessary

Similarly we can have a similar plan for pre-testing media/material. Since we know now that the material to be pre-tested is wall charts on JGSY and location for pre-testing can be a village "A". The method of pre-testing may be say presentation of material by panchayat/village level worker to a group of villagers. We can then decide the time frame and the person who will be overall responsible for this activity. If this is done, the pre-testing plan may take following shape.

Table – 4

Pre-testing Plan

Material to be pretested	Location	Methods to be used and sample	Time fram	Responsibility	Estimated cost
Wall charts on JGSY	Village "A"	Presentation to a group of villagers/potential beneficiaries by the Extension Worker	January 25-26	Block Technical staff	Not applicable

Check Your Progress 3

- Note : a) Space is given below for your answers.
b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

- 1) How is a general communication objective (4.3.2) different from an objective for the media/material (4.4.1)?

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- 2) Briefly list the advantages of pretesting communication material.

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4.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) PLAN

4.5.1 Meaning and Scope of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are critical processes in determining the progress and effects of development programmes and projects. Monitoring of communication programmes and projects is a recent innovation for systematizing reporting on the progress of activities. Evaluation on the other hand is a process to measure achievement of objectives and to draw lessons for future planning. Both these concepts are now being increasingly used in communication programmes and projects. Let us take a look at the meaning and scope of Monitoring & Evaluation in general and in relation to communication programmes in particular.

At the very outset you will have to be clear about the fact that monitoring and evaluation are two closely related but distinct activities. In the development literature we have been using them together so frequently, that at times it seems that both are performing same functions. Let us try to discuss this aspect in a little more detail before we touch upon meaning and scope of monitoring and evaluation. For effective implementation and completion of any programme or project, one would like to :

- keep track of the on-going activities so that one can take immediate corrective action for any deviation or shortfall.
- systematically determine achievement of objectives and impact of communication activities on the audience, and
- draw lessons for future planning.

When we talk of keeping track of on-going activities for taking immediate corrective action, we are talking of **monitoring**. When we talk of determining achievement of objectives, impact lessons drawn for future planning, we are in effect talking about **evaluation**. Therefore monitoring and evaluation are two related but distinct concepts. Let us now try to define each one of them and discuss the scope.

Monitoring : The main purpose of monitoring is to indicate as early as possible any shortcomings with regard to delivery of inputs, execution of activities or production of outputs, in order that corrective measures can be taken in time. Here inputs refer to services, funds, goods, manpower resources and technology and output refers to specific services or products which an activity is expected to produce from its inputs towards the achievement of its objectives.

The scope of Monitoring is restricted to watching and overseeing to facilitate corrective action (if any needed) and does not question the programme objectives. This view is also supported by the ACC Task Force of the United Nations (M&E, Guiding Principles, 1986) which defines monitoring "*as the continuous or periodic review and surveillance (over seeing) by management at every level of the hierarchy of the implementation of an activity to ensure that input deliveries, work schedules, targeted outputs and other required actions are proceeding according to plan.*"

A World Bank publication on Monitoring and Evaluation emphasizes on the information component of monitoring and defines it as "*The provision of information and the use of that*

information to enable management to assess progress of implementation and take timely decisions to ensure that progress is maintained according to schedule (Casley and Lury, 1985)".

The analysis of the above definitions reveal that monitoring is an analytical process of control, which is expected to provide relevant feedback through the provision of information for taking timely corrective action.

In Communication-Extension programmes and projects, the concept of monitoring can be used as an effective tool in keeping track of various activities envisaged under management plan and making mid-course corrections within the framework of the objectives set for the programme or project. Monitoring being a management function should therefore be an internal activity but decision oriented. It would ensure regular feedback to decision making points.

Evaluation : Evaluation is "a process for determining systematically and objectively, the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives". (ACC Task Force M&E Guiding Principles-1986). Evaluation is also expected to "assess the overall project effects, both intentional and un-intentional and their impact". (Casley and Lury - 1985). We have seen that monitoring is particularly useful in providing immediate data for project managers to facilitate corrective action by them for problems or bottlenecks encountered in the process of implementation. Evaluation in turn, is more comprehensive in scope than monitoring as it entails assessment of effects of the project activities on targeted audiences, both immediate and long term as well it aids in future planning. Again, where as *monitoring* is carried out only during implementation, evaluation carried out during implementation is called '*ongoing evaluation*'; at completion it is called '*terminal evaluation*' and some years after the completion it is called '*impact evaluation*'. Although, all the three types of evaluation may not have relevance to communication packages, we will still discuss them very briefly to enable you to distinguish one from the other.

On-going evaluation examines validity of assumption or hypothesis made during the project formulation to ensure that overall project objectives will be achieved. **Terminal evaluation** is the most common type, generally referred to as evaluation. It is concerned with the assessment of overall effects and drawing lessons for future. It is carried out at the completion of the project. *The impact evaluation* is mostly concerned with assessment of impact of the project activities on the target group. It is carried out when full benefits and impact of the project are expected to have been realized.

In a communication Media-Mix package for rural development, the scope of undertaking all the activities envisaged above under monitoring and evaluation may be limited. The idea of presenting these two concepts in a little more detail is to make the learners aware about the total process of monitoring and evaluation. Before we attempt to develop a simple "Monitoring/Evaluation Plan" for a given communication package, let us have a look at the methods and tools available with special focus on indicators.

4.5.2 Methods and Tools

There are various methods and tools being used nowadays in monitoring and evaluating rural development projects and programmes. These have limited application to the monitoring and evaluating of small communication packages for rural development. However we will have a brief discussion about the selected methods and tools being used mainly to make you aware about these methods. We will then focus on indicators which serve as variables and help to measure the changes in a given situation.

- a) **Network Analysis (CPM/PERT) :** Network analysis (PERT/CPM), a management tool developed in Operations Research and widely used in large scale industrial and irrigation projects for effective control of time, cost and risk elements is being increasingly tried in the field of rural development with mixed results. The scattered nature of organizations, activities and beneficiaries and the intangible quality of some extension services to be made available renders the application of this technique a bit difficult.
- b) **Sample Surveys :** Surveys based on probability or purposive samples are adaptable and powerful tools in M&E studies. The number of respondents being greater than case studies; the sample to a great extent reflect representiveness of the population

thus help in making generalizations. The method suits mostly to study sociological dimensions of extension projects like institution building, communication and behavioural change and extension impact.

- c) **Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)** : The main purpose is to have a rapid assessment. The rationale for its application in rural development can be summed up from Robert Chamber's (1980) Rapid Rural Appraisal, "*The rationale for RRA is the need in rural development for information that is relevant, timely, accurate and useable. Methods of gathering information are often insufficient, either 'quick or dirty' as with much rural development tourism, or 'long and dirty' as with much conventional social sciences research. Methods involving trade offs between relevance, accuracy and timeliness tend not to be academically respectable but have the rigour of greater cost effectiveness. The Key to successful RRA is not avoiding superficiality and error but rather controlling them to achieve cost effectiveness through optimal ignorance and proportionate accuracy. Time is the most critical factor. Through its sparing demands, RRA has potential for releasing time and resources to enable rural appraisers to devote more attention for the rural poor.*" It may be added that here proposal is used in a very broad sense and covers monitoring as well as evaluation at all stages.
- d) **Scaling Techniques** : Quantification of attributes or qualitative characteristics is done through adoption of scaling techniques. Changes in socio-economic status attitudes, adoption, preferences etc. on the part of the beneficiaries, officials and others concerned can be measured with the help of these methods. Method of paired comparison, thrustone scale, Gutmans scale, Likert scale are some of the well known methods. The scope of application of these methods in monitoring and evaluation system needs to be further examined.

Indicators : When we address the question as to what will be accepted as evidence of success, we are in effect talking about indicators. They are derived from project/programme objectives. *Indicators are defined as, "specific (explicit) and objectively verifiable measures of changes or results brought about by an activity".* In other words, indicators are designed to provide a standard against which to measure, or assess, or show, the progress of an activity against stated targets, towards delivering its inputs (input indicators), producing its outputs (output indicators) and achieving its objectives (effect and impact indicators)". (UNACC Task Force M&E Guiding Principles 1986). Since indicators are derived from objectives, to be operational, objectives must be clear, unambiguous (specific) and measurable. Say for example, "to increase per hectare rice production to at least 10 tonnes within the next two years". You should remember that "indicators are not targets and neither indicators nor targets should be confused with objectives. Targets are specified results in terms of quality or time or both.

It has been agreed that the choice of indicators is a matter of common sense or of experience and knowledge. The Monitoring and Evaluation—Guiding Principles of the UN ACC Task Force on Rural Development has provided certain rules of thumb which can be applied in making choice of indicators. According to these rules, ideally, indicators should be:

- Valid** : They should actually measure what they are supposed to measure.
- Reliable** : i.e., verifiable or objective - conclusions based on them should be the same if measured by different people at different times and under different circumstances.
- Relevant** : They should be relevant to project objectives.
- Sensitive** : They should be sensitive to changes in the situation being observed.
- Specific** : They should be based on available data.
- Cost effective** : The results should be worth the time and money it costs to apply them, and
- Timely** : It should be possible to collect the data reasonably quickly.

4.5.3 Design of M & E Plan

The designing of M & E plan will largely depend upon the nature of the activity to be monitored or evaluated. It also depends upon the extent a communication planner can formulate unambiguous and clear objectives to be followed by identification of indicators, methods and tools. There are a few ways of looking at it :

- 1) If we want to monitor and evaluate our management plan described in sub-unit 4.3.3 above, we can do that against the time frame given in the plan. Additionally what is needed is to identify indicators, data requirements, persons responsible for monitoring and persons responsible to take corrective action (if any), in other words the receiver of the feedback of monitoring and evaluation.
- 2) If we want to monitor and evaluate an Agricultural Extension Project, the steps we have to take include identification of inputs, output and effects along with indicators for each one of them. We can illustrate this by an example. We will start with final objectives/effects and come down to inputs like this:

Item	Indicators
Final objective: Increase in production and income	- Change in production - Change in income - Loan repayment rate
Outputs :	
- Area irrigated	- Area covered by irrigation
- Farmer-adopters	- No. of farmers adopting technology
- Area covered under improved technology	- Area covered by improved technology
- Average yield/hectare	- Average yield/hectare covered by improved technology
Inputs :	
- Extension	- Extension workers/farmers ratio
- Seeds, fertilizers etc.	- Quantities supplied
- Funds	- Funds supplied (budget)
- Water	- No. of irrigation sources
- Road	- Areas connected by road
- Manpower	- Staffing levels
- Credit	- Amount of credit supplied/used.

After we have identified indicators, we can collect information and monitor the activities against a given time frame. In this case when inputs are turned into outputs, we are concerned with monitoring. When we are assessing increase in production and income, we are concerned with evaluation.

- 3) There is yet another way of looking at it. In this case, a few steps have been followed in an extension project which include:
 - a) Identification of M&E indicators
 - b) M&E methods
 - c) M&E tools
 - d) Training for M&E staff
 - e) Responsibility and
 - f) Estimated cost.

Table – 5

MONITORING/EVALUATION PLAN

Monitoring/ Evaluation Indicators	Monitoring/ Evaluation Methods	Monitoring/ Evaluation Tools	Training of Monitoring/ Evaluation Staff	Responsible Persons	Estimated Costs
Monitoring 1. Number of farmers participating in demonstrations in province "A" 2. Number of field visits by extension workers	1. Weekly reports by extension workers 2. Spot checks by district extension officer	Reporting form District officer's record book	Weekly during campaign Continuous throughout campaign. Report monthly	Communication Co-ordinator District Extension Officer	None (routine) Travel Allowance (TA) and Daily Subsistence Allowance(DSA) of District Officer (Say Rs. 1000/-)
Evaluation 1. Ability of farmers who participated in demonstrations, to identify brown plant hopper and describe action to take 2. Ability of farmers who have been visited by extension workers to describe action which should be taken in their own fields	Sample survey conducted by District Extension Officer	Interview guideline	Immediately following campaign	Communication Co-ordinator	- TA & DSA of interviewers - Printing reports (Say Rs. 2000/-)

Note : The results of this evaluation should be compared with the communication support objectives, to determine the degree of success of the campaign.

Source : Guidelines for 'Planning Communication Support for Rural Development Campaign' compiled by N.M. Assifi & J.M. French 'UNDP/DTCP, Bangkok, 1985.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes : a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

1) 'Monitoring and Evaluation are two closely related but distinct activities'—please discuss.

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- 2) What is the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation in communication planning?

4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed Communication Strategy, Management Plan, Media and Material Production Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. We focussed on defining and analysing Communication Strategy theoretically and then with the help of practical examples. Since approach, message, method, audience analysis and objective are various components which constitute Communication Strategy, we discussed each one of them. The four communication methods which include informing, educating, persuading and entertaining can be used independently or in combination with each other. Similarly three main types of communication methods viz. individual, group and mass communication methods or their combination can be selected based on nature of audience and message and practicality of various methods.

We discussed the importance of audience analysis which is a process of knowing the audience in terms of knowledge about the subject matter, attitudes and feeling. We also developed a checklist/schedule as an instrument for conducting audience analysis. The objective setting supported by examples helped us to design a strategy based on practical problem, which in turn helped us to develop a management plan. We then identified various steps involved in preparing a Media-Material Production Plan including a check list for pre-testing proto-type media-material.

Finally the last sub-unit of this unit was devoted to a detailed discussion on monitoring and evaluation. Apart from meaning and scope, we discussed methods and tools and attempted to design a monitoring and evaluation plan in support of management plan. One thing which we emphasized again and again related to the fact that monitoring and evaluation are two closely related but distinct activities.

4.7 SUGGESTED READINGS/REFERENCES

- 1) Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, (AMCRIC), 1985. *Development Communication : A Resource Manual for Teaching*. AMCRIC, Singapore.
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- 5) CIRDAP, 1985. *Monitoring and Evaluation—Arrangements & Techniques in Rural Development*. Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), Dhaka.
- 6) Hunt G.T. 1985. *Effective Communication*. Prentice-Hall, USA.
- 7) Rogers, W. 1984. *Communication in Action*. Holt/Rinehart/Winston, USA.
- 8) UN-ACC Task Force : 1986. *Monitoring and Evaluation—Guiding Principles*. IFAD, Rome.

4.8 MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The Communication Strategy is necessary in the process of communication planning not only because it calls for creative thinking but also because it gives direction and meaning to the communication planning. In the process of developing communication strategy, we have to know the problem, the audience, approach, message and methods apart from the objectives, only then can a communication strategy be developed.

The four basic communication approaches can be distinguished from one another as follows. When 'new idea' is introduced and made familiar, we are "informing" the audience. In case we are explaining 'new idea' including its strength and weaknesses, we are "educating" the audience. If we appeal audience to accept new idea, we are 'persuading'. Once we are drawing the attention of audience through entertaining to a new idea, we are "entertaining".

- 2) The methods which can be used in the given situation may include:
 - Visits by Health Workers' (Explain importance of boiling water and clean sanitation).
 - Demonstration (how to prepare rehydration mixture)
 - Radio/TV broadcast.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) An effective communication strategy is one which is adapted to the audience. Understanding the audience is the backbone of successful communication. The audience analysis helps planning communication support in following ways.
 - a) The planner feels a responsibility for the audience understanding.
 - b) The communication support plan reflects the felt needs of audience.
 - c) It helps to understand audience's predispositions towards intended communication messages.
- 2) Some of the essential factors which help determination of communication objectives are:
 - a) Outcome of audience analysis.
 - b) Information collected through secondary source—study of existing documentation, and reports, and
 - c) Group discussion with potential clientele group and consultation with professional experts.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) The communication objective specifies the types of changes that are expected to take place as a result of communication activity and the criteria which can be used to evaluate the activity. On the other hand the objective for the media/material is limited to mean as to what the selected media/material is expected to achieve.
- 2) The pre-testing of the communication material helps to know:
 - i) Audiences' overall reaction about the material.
 - ii) Whether audience can answer the questions related to the concepts presented.
 - iii) Level of understanding of the audience.
 - iv) Logical sequence of the content.
 - v) Short comings that can be corrected.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Why do we say that monitoring and evaluation are two closely related but distinct activities?

On the one hand we find that during project implementation these two distinct activities do run concurrently, but on the other hand they have different purposes. For example, we have on-going evaluation and monitoring activities going on side by side, during the project implementation. The on-going evaluation provides information about any needed adjustment of objectives, policies, implementation strategies as well as for future planning. It examines whether the assumptions made during the project formulation are still valid or some adjustment is required. The purpose of monitoring on the other hand is to serve as a device to achieve efficient and effective project performance by providing feedback to project management at all levels to facilitate them to take timely corrective action. It is restricted to watching and overseeing and does not question the project objectives.

- 2) As far as importance of Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication Planning is concerned, in most of the development activities, monitoring and evaluation did not receive desired attention and this got reflected through the success or failure of various development activities. Its importance as a tool of effective management of development activities is being increasingly realized now. In communication activities, the relevance of these two concepts becomes all the more essential in view of the free flow of information/feed back needed for its effective management. While as the concept of monitoring can be used as an effective tool in keeping track of various activities envisaged under management plan, the application of evaluation concept will help in determining systematically the relevance, effectiveness and impact of project activities in the light of objectives.