
UNIT 3 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Contents

- 3.0 Aims and Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Definition
- 3.3 Process and Elements of Interpersonal Communication
- 3.4 Culture and Interpersonal Communication
- 3.5 Identity and Interpersonal Communication
- 3.6 Language in Interpersonal Communication
- 3.7 Functions of Interpersonal Communication
 - 3.7.1 Functions
- 3.8 Interpersonal Communication and Opinion Leaders
- 3.9 Interpersonal Communication and Mass Communication: The Marriage of the Two
- 3.10 Interpersonal Strategies to Rural Development
 - 3.10.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal
 - 3.10.2 Integrated Communication Strategy
- 3.11 Case Studies
 - 3.11.1 National Farm Radio Forum
 - 3.11.2 Controlling AIDS
 - 3.11.3 Defending Dignity/Fighting Poverty
 - 3.11.4 Mewat Community Radio
- 3.12 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.13 Key Words
- 3.14 Suggested Readings

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Define interpersonal communication;
- Understand the process and elements of interpersonal communication;
- Understand the space of culture, identity and language in interpersonal communication;
- Identify the functions of interpersonal communication; and
- Discuss interpersonal strategies to rural development.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses about definition, process and elements of interpersonal communication, culture and interpersonal communication, identity and interpersonal communication, language in interpersonal communication, functions of interpersonal communication, marriage of interpersonal communication and mass communication, interpersonal strategies to rural development and case studies on interpersonal communication.

3.2 DEFINITION

Needless to say, interpersonal communication is a unique nature of communication. Keval J. Kumar (2011, p. 11) defines interpersonal communication as “direct face-to-face communication between two persons. In other words, it is a dialogue or a conversation without the interventions of another person or a machine like the telephone or a two-way radio or television set up. It is personal, direct, and intimate, allowing for maximum interaction and exchange in word and gesture.”

Interpersonal communication builds the connection between people. Such communication tends to affect people’s action and reflect the other. There are three stages of interpersonal communication — phatic stage, personal stage and intimate stage. The phatic stage is all about the initial course of conversation in which people tend to greet each other. This phase of interpersonal communication is a warm up time enables the process of communication. The next stage, the personal stage of interpersonal communication occurs when the participants pour more personal elements to the conversation. It does not refer to always making private topics inpublic. The last state i.e., the intimate stage of interpersonal communication occurs when the participants are engrossed in communication by breaking the social barriers.

Interpersonal communication has undergone massive changes with the advancements in information and communication technologies. For example, mobile phones and email communication have radically changed the interpersonal communication pattern. Since interpersonal communication is connected with various dimensions, it can be understood in varied contexts. Firstly, interpersonal communication is dynamic in nature. It is in constant motion and often changes keeping the location, climate and atmosphere in mind. Secondly, interpersonal communication is transactional as the participations in the process of communication are engaged in interaction. Thirdly, interpersonal communication is dyadic in nature. You may chat with another or mail to another person who resides in a distant location. Fourthly, interpersonal communication creates and leaves with impact. It tends to change and persuade participants’ behaviour and relationship. These dimensions are pervasive while strategizing interpersonal communication for rural development.

3.3 PROCESS AND ELEMENTS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication enjoys certain kind of features or elements. Interpersonal communication is continuous in nature. It is a dynamic process as the meanings are subjected to change based on the previous messages communicated between the participants. Interpersonal communication happens to be consequential. Such form of communication is goal-oriented and has indeed outcomes. Interpersonal communication occurs in irreversible manner as one cannot take back the messages what has been communicated or transpired. Last not the least, interpersonal communication happens to be imperfect. In such form of communication, one's thoughts can never be fully disseminated to another (Solomon & Theiss, 2012).

The messages in the process of interpersonal communication are unique in nature. In the process of interpersonal communication, there are two types of messages — content and relational — are disseminated. The message is the bedrock of communication. Content messages can be direct or indirect. On the other hand, relational messages lay stress on relationship that occurs between the partners in the process of communication. The relational messages in interpersonal communication attempts to prioritize one person's effort to modify the relationship, maybe for better or worse.

In the context of rural development, if the government wants to send some health related information to a village person through an ASHA worker, then ASHA worker/government is the source/sender, message is on health, face to face communication is the medium, that village person is the receiver; the response/reaction is the feedback. Overall, this is a process of interpersonal communication for rural development.

3.4 CULTURE AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

There are certain characteristics of culture. Culture is shared among the members of society. Culture tends to change over a period of time. Culture covers every aspects of life including the way we take food, talk, walk, sleep and our societal relationship. Most interestingly, these get reflected while we communicate with other. In this context, the importance and priority of interpersonal communication experience occupies the most prominence. Culture and interpersonal communication are related to each other. The communication one makes is influenced by one's culture. Cultural norms tend to form and shape your interpersonal experience. The role of cultural behaviour plays an important role in interpersonal communication. Culture moulds the mode of communication. Similarly, communication reflects culture. For example, speech codes are very much part of communication. Usually, the speech codes stem from culture and often reveal one's culture. Therefore, the pattern of interpersonal communication covers the mark of

culture including one's way of behaviour, traditions and rituals. By the virtue of interpersonal skills, traditions and rituals are recognized in a cultural set up. Primarily the space of interpersonal communication elevates and strengthens the cultural norms of a society. At the same time, like any other forms of communication including interpersonal communication, varied forms of traditions and rituals foster or reinforce societal and cultural beliefs.

The central role of culture in shaping interpersonal communication experiences remains significant. When one creates the space for interpersonal communication, one's culture provides ample instructions and guidelines. When there are cultural differences, intercultural communication arises. In this circumstance, people attempt to accommodate their communication in terms of showing solidarity or difference in the process of communication. In this juncture, the role of interpersonal communication or intercultural communication remains pivotal for a harmonized society. Intercultural communication can do its best when the barriers of communication — ethnocentrism, uncertainty and anxiety and marginalization — are kept in mind to overcome these barriers. However, there are ethical issues that tend to influence culture and interpersonal communication. By overcoming the barriers will pave the way for better experience with intercultural communication.

3.5 IDENTITY AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

The nature of identity and interpersonal communication are interconnected. Identity shapes up interpersonal communication and vice versa. In course of interpersonal communication, usually a person articulates or reveals his/her personality, objectives and value system to another person. Such type of articulation tends to enrich the essence and form of interpersonal communication. In this context, discussing various layers of identify is of utmost importance. Michael Hecht opines that there are four layers — personal layer, enactment layer, relational layer and communal layer — to identity (Solomon & Theiss, 2012). The personal layer of identity means the perception the people carry about themselves that they tend to communicate with others. The personal layer of identity includes one's self-concept, self-knowledge and perceptions which further decide the topic and future course of interpersonal communication. The enactment layer of identity refers to one's qualities that are articulated in terms of verbal or non-verbal form of communication with another person. The relational layer of identity refers to the characteristics of one person that are essential to build relationship with other people. It tends to influence and shape up the course of interpersonal communication. The communal layer of identity refers to the characteristics of one person that are essential to build his/her group membership. These four layers of identity keep on influencing the process of interpersonal communication.

3.6 LANGUAGE IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Language is a tool of interpersonal communication. Usually language is abstract, arbitrary, culturally driven and determined and consequential in manner. It could be verbal or non-verbal communication in nature. Language enables the individuals to share ideas, plan and future course of action which are essential for effective interpersonal communication. Factors like gender, power and intimacy and social contexts influence the level of interpersonal communication. Communication has the dimensions of gender where usually men are factual and prioritize their choice of words and women are emotional in conversation. Studies found that men and women do communicate differently. Power and intimacy come to play in course of interpersonal communication. These two aspects of communication affect the space of conversation between two participants. The interpersonal communication is different in upward communication and horizontal communication in an office because of power relations. It is also the intimacy which decides the kind of language. If the interpersonal relationship is intimacy in nature, then the language becomes informal. Social contexts also influence the language to be used in interpersonal communication. Language is situation bound. When we employ the language in interpersonal communication, we need to follow certain approved norms of language of that particular society.

3.7 FUNCTIONS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication articulates both content and relationship information. It can be intentional or unintentional. It is irreversible in nature. It is dynamic in nature. Such type of communication is intertwined with ethics. The function of interpersonal communication is immense in fostering communication for change and development. It has number of functions like gaining information. It facilitates to gain the relevant information; creates a context or situation of understanding; creates an identity; and satisfying the interpersonal needs.

To William Schutz, there are three needs — inclusion, control, and affection — required for interpersonal communication (Em Griffin, 1977). These three needs have different functions. The function or needs of inclusion is to create and maintain identity with other. The need of control is to bring forth leadership qualities which also act as testimonies. Affection enables the individuals to build the appropriate relationship with other individuals. All these needs are required while employing interpersonal communication to frame and execute rural development strategies.

3.7.1 Functions

The dimensions of social interaction pertaining to interpersonal communication

are immense. Social interaction has bearings on influencing individuals for social change and development. Social interaction has the power to influence individuals for social change and rural development. Influence, intimacy, and communicating support and comfort or integration are the key components through which interpersonal communication helps to bring changes and mobilizes overall development in rural regions. The developmental agencies tend to keep these key components in mind while strategizing communication plans for rural development. The face-to-face interaction involves the idea of continuity (Sigman, 1991). Kendon and Ferber (1973) assert that face-to-face communication mobilizes the initiation and termination points. Sometimes it is known as greeting and leave-taking behaviour. Sigman's understanding of face-to-face communication has created an insignificant space in interpersonal communication which can be instrumental for development in particular and rural development in particular.

Interpersonal Influence

Usually goals in terms of knowledge, expectations, and desires motivate or influence interpersonal communication. Moreover, goals tend to enable a communicator to be an effective communicator. Interpersonal influence remains an important factor to achieve interpersonal goals. Interpersonal influence happens anytime when one participant employs messages to influence the other participant's attitude, behavior and action. There are two types of interpersonal goals — primary goals and secondary goals. Based on the primary goals, secondary goals may or may not be required because of interventions of interpersonal influence or communication. Diverse influence goals require diverse amount of interpersonal communication. Based on the goals — primary goals or secondary goals, the required amount of interpersonal communication is warranted. Managing multiple interpersonal goals is often challenged by individuals. Prioritizing the goals is essential. Sometimes it is required to pursue goals in sequential manner. Sometimes it is also required to pursue all the goals simultaneously. Identification of goals required for interpersonal communication remains essential. One should recognize when one experiences the influential goal of one's interpersonal communication.

To derive maximum interpersonal influence, communication pattern needs to be tailored made and contextualized. In this context, crafting the influence messages is vital as it tends to influence the interpersonal behaviour of participants. Planning for interpersonal influence communication is a must. It is better to plan something pragmatic approach in well advance for get harvest maximum communication effectiveness. Overcoming the obstacles in interpersonal influence communication is of paramount importance.

Interpersonal Intimacy

Interpersonal intimacy is one of the functions of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal intimacy is understood as the bond between

two persons, covering the aspects of psychological, emotional, and behavioural ties. As a result, Intimacy is able to provide companionship, entertainment, and support to the individuals. Nature of intimacy determines the level of interpersonal communication. The interpersonal relationship or communication differs from one's friend to mentor. Closeness, openness, trust, affection and mutuality are the integral components of interpersonal intimacy. Intimate friendships or romantic relationships are some of the instances of interpersonal intimacy.

The communication in interpersonal communication or intimate relationships remains dynamic in nature and it keeps on changing. With help of interpersonal communication, intimate relationship helps one to provide and receive help, revitalize one's routine life by managing the stress level. Interpersonal communication is used to maintain intimacy relationship by controlling the relational tensions. In general, such form of communication is able to immensely perform in the direction of maintaining intimacy, strategic maintenance and routine maintenance. People maintain interpersonal relationship through various forms of communication like showing love and commitment, positive, co-enjoying the social networks and managing the tensions or conflicts.

In order to cope with the tension or mitigate the stress and to achieve the state of interpersonal intimacy, it is important to establish close relationships or interpersonal relationships. Some of the coping mechanism are such as ignoring the tension, disorienting the state of helplessness, limited dialogue and spiraling alteration. Pursing a different segmentation of tensions and balancing between the tension and seeking for the stage of compromise, it is essential to calibrate the two sides of the conflict and reaffirmation for the relationship which are vital for building or retaining an interpersonal relationship.

Communicating Support and Comfort or Integration

Communicating support and comfort or integration is one of the functions of interpersonal communication. People have different integration or comforting communication. It could be because of varying contexts and personal traits. Nonverbal support messages and verbal support messages are a lot to do in providing comfort to the participants in interpersonal communication or interpersonal relationships. Participants in communication process can resort to nonverbal behaviour as these are beneficial to distress a situation. Empathy is instrumental in mobilizing nonverbal behaviour. Similarly, verbal messages provide tone, content, and orientation which attempts to provide communication support and comfort to the participants. Here, the messages could be person-centered messages or topics of support messages or mixed of these two. Overall, to provide comforts in interpersonal relationship remains an important function of interpersonal communication.

When it comes to rural development, the space and function of interpersonal communication cannot be replaced with mass communication channels. Interpersonal communication equipped with sheer amount of persuasiveness and credibility is to disseminate the developmental messages and convince the rural audience towards the path of development. Such type of communication has the power which acts as an agent of communication and empowerment through extension activities. Training required for extension workers is much to do with interpersonal communication. It facilitates the participatory nature of involvement among the farmers. Moreover, individual learning among the farmers' communities is also taken care of. Furthermore, UNICEF (2017) has approved the practical utility of interpersonal communication for rural development pertaining to the organizational and policy level. Several developmental initiatives including advocacy and social mobilization are managed by interpersonal communication.

Developmental initiatives are deeply connected with development communication. Whenever there is a discussion on development communication, the role of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials come to the fore. IEC is a planned effort to meet the defined aims and objectives which mobilize community development including rural development. IEC for rural development can navigate the areas of health, education, occupational structure and overall community participation. For the purpose of development, the governmental bodies like Directorate of Field Publicity, Song & Drama division, State Institutes of Panchayat and Rural Development attempt to maximize interpersonal communication activities. They bank on the power of interpersonal communication for the maximum utility of special campaigns, traditional and folk media and other interactive media.

3.8 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND OPINION LEADERS

Opinion leaders are possessed with number of traits. They have the influence on people's opinions, actions, and behaviours comparatively more than media. They are trusted by the community people. They are better educated than the community people. They have better access to mass media than the community people. They are non-partisans and non-purposive. They have the power to convince and persuade the people. They have the leadership qualities so that community people can follow them. These traits and qualities are important as these parameters have bearings on the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

The importance of opinion leaders in the age of social media is gaining momentum. Since social media is an open platform, it fosters the sense of communication among the participants. Furthermore, since the opinion leaders are keen to influence others, social networking sites as venues provide fodder for interpersonal communication. Opinion leaders tend to

send personalized messages to particular members of social networking sites in a private form of communication.

When it comes to the use of interpersonal communication for rural development in social networking sites, it can be from individuals, governmental or non-governmental agencies. Opinion leaders who are specialized in various areas of development — health, education, employment — can initiate the interpersonal communication with the relevant stakeholders. Since interpersonal communication is intimate in nature, the opinion leaders can bring empowerment and development for rural development through the discourse of communication. However, the fake conversations or malicious conversation have to be avoided.

3.9 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND MASS COMMUNICATION: THE MARRIAGE OF THE TWO

Every form of communication has its own advantages and disadvantages. Mass communication, as a means of communication, has number of advantages. They communicate for information, education and entertainment. They tend to transmit the cultural norms from a generation to generation. This form of communication can be accomplished to a wide and varied class of audience at a single time with low cost of production per unit. The communication is rapid and on a continuous basis. However, it is suitable in certain circumstances. In certain communication planning, interpersonal communication enjoys certain advantages, especially in the areas of community development focusing on rural development. It enables and facilitates to build and retain the interpersonal relationship which is required for the process of development. It is not possible in case of mass communication process.

Interpersonal communication has the facility of face to face communication which is not possible in case of mass communication channels. When you want to personalize message which is essential in development communication, it can only be possible in case of interpersonal communication, not in mass communication. The messages can be the adoption of newer technologies or hygienic health practice or using high-yielding seeds or choosing an alternative path to occupation.

Interpersonal communication and mass communication have their own advantages and disadvantages. They need to be situationally employed to have the best benefit of communication meant for development. There should be the marriage of interpersonal communication with mass communication. In fact, interpersonal communication and mass communication should be used in a complimentary manner to make the communication strategy effective for rural development.

3.10 INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A communication strategy is designed to communicate the messages effectively and meet the desired objectives. Communication strategy for rural development focuses on objectives, target audience, message, medium of communication/communication channels, timeline, resources and evaluation.

The objectives of communication strategy drive the developmental goals. In case of rural development, it could be communicating on primary healthcare, education or government welfare programmes. Usually, communication strategy attempts to identify the target audience and address their issues or goals. Meeting target audience's requirements is to meet the objectives of the communication strategy. In case of rural development, target audience could be the village communities. Message is the idea or courses of action that a communication strategy intends to disseminate to the target audience. Identifying the stakeholders is of utmost importance.

In case of rural development, message could be on development oriented messages like improving health in rural regions or enhancing the quality of primary education in villages or convincing the villagers for the adoption of newer method of agriculture. Medium or channel of communication entails the routes to which the message can be disseminated from the source to the target audience. Channel of communication could be one or integration of more than one channels. Broadly, the channel of communication could be the print, electronic and digital in nature. It depends upon the nature of target audience and message. Sometimes to disseminate a single message, there could be integration of media channels. Interpersonal communication has its distinctive position and enjoys a privileged position in the communication strategy. In case of rural development, communication strategy may involve interpersonal communication as it tends to personalize the message meant for the rural audience. Illiteracy still persists in rural regions, so the need to integrate interpersonal communication with audio-visual communication becomes effective to reach out to the target audience in rural areas.

Timeline is an important dimension in a communication strategy. The planning, execution and assessment of communication strategy is time bound. If a rural region suffer from waterborne diseases in monsoon season, the communication strategy to sort out the issue in the monsoon season only. Resources or funding remain pivotal in communication strategy. Starting from planning to evaluation, an adequate amount of resources is required for the proper functioning of strategy. The evaluation enables to critically understand the effectiveness of the communication strategy. Based on the evaluation, communication strategy will take its own course. In case of communication for rural development, if the mass communication fails to foster the sense of women empowerment and development, probably

interpersonal communication may be executed for personalized communication from individuals to individuals.

3.10.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is an approach which enables the developmental agencies for achieving rural development. The method behind the PRA is to employ the stock of knowledge and opinion of rural people in framing, planning and managing the developmental programmes. The techniques used for PRA include understanding and applying the group dynamics; surveying and sampling; interviewing; and community mapping. In the technique of interviewing, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and triangulation have been used. In semi-structured interviews, interpersonal communication occurs in which a rural person tends to unravel the stock of local stock of knowledge and has his/her opinion on developmental project or issues. The face to face interaction occurs, intensifying and navigating several issues to be resolved. This approach enjoys pragmatism, showing a unique way of deliberating on developmental dimensions.

3.10.2 Integrated Communication Strategy

Achieving rural development is tailor-made, not readymade. Each problem in rural areas needs specific communication strategy for redressal mechanism and amicable solutions. Needless to say, there are three types of communication channels – print media, electronic media and digital media. Based on objectives, nature of target audience and developmental issues, medium of communication can be chosen and applied. Sometimes developmental agencies employ more than one medium to make the communication more effective which ultimately fosters development in rural regions. It is called integrated communication strategy. Integrated communication seems more relevant today.

In the context of rural development, integrated communication is more relevant and needs expertise to execute the communication strategy. Understanding the rural areas, rural population, rural issues and rural mindset are important. The level of illiteracy, unemployment and social taboos is still grave. Therefore, deliberation and achievement of rural development still remains a delicate affair. The space of interpersonal communication in integrated communication strategy is immense which fosters positivity in mobilizing behavioural changes and social participation of rural people. Based on the developmental projects, interpersonal communication can be used along with audio-visual communication in order to harvest the maximum utility of communication strategy for rural development.

UNICEF (2017) claims that framing and implementing diverse communication strategies including advocacy, interpersonal communication, infotainment and mass communication have been fruitful for rural development. The diverse communication strategies tend to influence and

mould the community behaviour in rural regions for their active participation in the developmental projects. UNICEF also observes that the role of interpersonal communication in communication for development is ineffective.

Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is one of the aspects of communication strategy in which potentials of interpersonal communication can be maximally tapped. BCC refers to the strategic use of communication to promote the sectors of health, education and the like through its tailored messages. Integrated communication strategy also fosters social change communication which is multi-dimensional. Mobilizing social change communication requires an appropriate communication strategy in which the use of interpersonal communication is there. In communication strategy, message designing remains crucial. Again, message design for the utilization of interpersonal communication is of utmost importance. Needless to say, the dissemination of message information should be appropriate for rural development. The strategy of planning, implementation and evaluation keep on alert of the message design part.

McCornack (2004) argues a message design could be expressive, conventional and rhetorical in manner. Expressive messages are those which are conveyed by the information source with the other participants. For example, a healthcare developmental professional may convey a message on healthy practice to a citizen through the process of interpersonal communication. The conventional messages lay stress on the achievement of goals. For example, a healthcare developmental professional may brief on the success of governmental health campaign to a citizen. This influences the other participant who is in the process of interpersonal communication. This might lead to the amplification of message to other citizens from a single citizen. So, the conventional messages gain importance in strategizing rural development plans and programmes. Rhetorical messages through interpersonal communication signal the proficiency of communication appropriateness, effectiveness, and ethics. This form of message not only ensures the effectiveness but also directs the moral compass of the communication.

Since there is a huge proliferation of digital communication, communication strategy is undergoing continuous changes. In a similar fashion, the use of interpersonal communication has been changed in a digitalized communication strategy. Since interpersonal communication also happens through technologies, understanding of varied dimensions is of utmost importance for rural development. Digital communication has enabled the human being to communicate with easy and with much faster pace. However, the communication process may get distorted and the desired communication may get derailed. So, many precautionary and preparatory efforts need to be taken.

Firstly, one needs to measure the gravity of the message to the medium of communication. One should know when to use online and which message

should go online or offline. This brings the argument when to make the message online for more effectiveness of the message. Secondly, do not assume or take it granted that mass communications in digital forms are better than offline communication all the time. Thirdly, when you communicate through online, presume that you have larger audience to address and communicate. Fourthly, be cautious of the emotionally features of online interaction. Fifthly, when you are interacting with others through online, communications needs to be careful. Precautionary measures need to be taken to make the communication effective. All these measures can be logical when one intends to do interpersonal communication in digital platforms for rural development.

3.11 CASE STUDIES

3.11.1 National Farm Radio Forum

The National Farm Radio Forum, a weekly radio programme from CBC from 1941 to 1965 to reinforce adult education and community improvements in Canada. Communication was participatory in nature in which rural community was involved in the process of content production. Interpersonal communication was grossly used in this project which was later experimented in India, Ghana and France with the recommendation from UNESCO.

3.11.2 Controlling AIDS

India has been fully committed to 'Ending the AIDS' by 2030 as part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governmental bodies, National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and other developmental agencies have been attempting to control AIDS and educate the public on AIDS in India. Information Education and Communication (IEC) has been proved fruitful for controlling the infection. NACO has been resorting to the strategy of media mix in which print, electronic and digital form of communication are part of communication strategy. In the communication strategy, interpersonal communication is also part and partial of communication strategy. Under National Rural Health Mission (NHM), Link Worker Scheme (LWS) is addressing the rural HIV infection through interpersonal communication. The tools of interpersonal communication are getting used to develop the target specific Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) package for Targeted Interventions for High Risk Groups (HRGs).

3.11.3 Defending Dignity/Fighting Poverty

With the slogan 'Defending Dignity/Fighting Poverty', CARE Bangladesh project was launched in 1993 to address several developmental issues in rural regions of Bangladesh by using communication strategies. CARE Bangladesh has addressed the issues in the areas of food, nutrition security; climate change and resilience; life free from violence; humanitarian;

women's economic empowerment, inclusive governance; and sexual reproductive and maternal health through strategic communication. These areas have significant bearings on rural development. The adoption of interpersonal tools is a part of strategic communication for attaining the state of rural development in Bangladesh (Bateman, 1995). Intensive interpersonal communication, a part of communication strategies has used innovative games, stories and songs. These innovative mechanisms were developed by the village people themselves. At the completion of the project, the cases of diarrhea had significantly dropped and health conditions of the villagers were substantially improved.

3.11.4 Mewat Community Radio

Mewat Community Radio station situated in Nuh, Haryana attempts to bring social change and development of the rural communities. Its programmes are participatory in nature. In order to communicate effectively to the community people, the community radio has resorted to two-step flow model of communication which accommodates the space of interpersonal communication. It has associated opinion leaders — *panchayat*, *maulvi* and *teachers* — to influence the community people through behaviour change communication. Interpersonal communication infuses community participation which further brings change and development in the community.

3.12 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the concept of interpersonal communication and its use in communication strategy for rural development. Interpersonal communication is direct face-to-face communication between two persons. It intends to personalize the message and the acceptance of the message is high. There are three stages of interpersonal communication — phatic stage, personal stage and intimate stage. The space of interpersonal communication in development communication is of utmost significance.

The elements of interpersonal communication comprise sender, receiver, message, channel, noise and feedback. The functions of interpersonal communication are varied in fostering rural development. Theoretical deliberations on interpersonal communication have signaled the linear model of communication and two-step flow of communication model. There is no need to compare interpersonal communication with mass communication, rather to complement with each other in a communication strategy.

Communication strategy is designed to communicate the messages effectively and to meet the desired objectives. Participatory rural appraisal and integrated communication strategy, as part of communication strategy have their own advantages in which interpersonal communication plays an important role. The case studies highlighted reveal that interpersonal communication employed for the rural audience have a positive impact in rural society.

The current unit restricts itself in describing the definition and functions of interpersonal communication, its use for rural development and a part of communication strategy by employing certain case studies.

3.13 KEY WORDS

Interpersonal Communication: This term is used to denote face to face communication. Interpersonal communication has undergone massive changes with the advancements in information and communication technologies. There are three stages of interpersonal communication — phatic stage, personal stage and intimate stage. It tends to change and persuade participants' behaviour and relationships. These dimensions are pervasive while strategizing interpersonal communication for rural development.

Opinion Leaders: This term is used for the dissemination the information with their interpretation of information in addition to the actual facts in the media contents. The public follow the opinion leaders are known as opinion followers. These opinion leaders are positioned as opposed to the so-called mainstream mass media which have enormous power and influence on the public. Usually developmental agencies employ opinion leaders in disseminating messages in rural societies.

Communication Strategy: This term is used for communicating the message effectively and to meet the desired objectives. The objectives of communication strategy drive the developmental goals. They tend to ensure communication strategy. In case of rural development, it could be communicating on primary healthcare, education or government welfare programmes or the adoption of improved method of farming.

Culture: The term is used to mention various facet of culture. Culture is shared among the members of society. Culture tends to change over a period of time. Culture covers every aspects of life including the way we take food, talk, walk, sleep and our societal relationship. Most interestingly, these get reflected while we communicate with other.

Identity: The term is used to describe the meaning of identity in the context of culture and interpersonal communication. The nature of identity and interpersonal communication are interconnected. Identity shapes up interpersonal communication and vice versa.

Interpersonal Influence: The term is used as an important factor to achieve interpersonal goals. Interpersonal influence happens anytime when one participant employs messages to influence the other participant's attitude, behaviour and action. One should recognize when one experiences the influential goal of one's interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal Intimacy: The term is used as one of the functions of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal intimacy is understood as the

bond between two persons, covering the aspects of psychological, emotional, and behavioural ties.

Communicating Support: The term is used as one of the functions of interpersonal communication. People have different integration or comforting communication. It could be because of varying contexts and personal traits. Nonverbal support messages and verbal support messages are a lot to do in providing comfort to the participants in interpersonal communication or interpersonal relationships.

3.14 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

Bateman, M. 1995. *Sanitation & Family Education (SAFE) Pilot Project. Report on the final surveys.* Care Bangladesh, Dhaka.

EmGriffin.(1977). FIRO theory of needs of William Schutz, A First Look at Communication Theory, 93-101. Retrieved from <https://www.afirstlook.com/docs/firo.pdf>

Kendon, A., & Ferber, A. (1973). A description of some human greetings. In R. P. Michael & J. H. Crook (Eds.), *Comparative Ecology and Behavior of Primates* (pp. 591-668). London: Academic Press.

Kumar, K. J. (2011). *Mass Communication in India.* Mumbai: Jaico.

McCornack, S. (2010). *Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication.* Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Sigman, S. J. (1991). Handling the discontinuous aspects of continuous social relationships: Toward research on the persistence of social forms. *Communication Theory, 1*(2), 106-127.

Solomon, D., & Theiss, J. (2012). *Interpersonal Communication: Putting Theory into Practice.* New York, London: Routledge.

Thayer, L. O. (1961). *Administrative Communication.* Illinois: Richard D.Unwin.

UNICEF (2017). UNICEF 2017 Report on Communication for Development (C4D): Global Progress and Country Level Highlights. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/reports/communication-development-c4d-2017>