

ASSESSING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR WATER HARVESTING ACTIVITIES OF SANGAREDDY DISTRICT, TELANGANA

V. SUDHAKAR and P.L. VISHWESHWARA RAO

¹ AI & CC and PJTAU PRESS, ARI, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad

² Department of Communication & Journalism, Osmania University, Hyderabad

Date of Receipt: 18-12-2024

Date of Acceptance: 27-12-2024

ABSTRACT

A comparative study was carried out between two villages (Malchalma and Gotigarally) in Sangareddy District of Telangana state, India, with the objective to establish the impact and peoples participation in water conservation programs in the district. In effective implementation water conservation programs of recent Mission Kakatiya to Neeru – Meeru program (during 1999-2004) traditional folk media & modern electronic media had played an influential role to bringing peoples participation in developmental programs. This present study had revealed that, the traditional form of communication (37.5%) found to be more effective in bringing people together, where literacy rate was very low. Exposure visits (75%) were sensitized the people towards taken up the activity in their own field voluntarily. Mode of training impart to the beneficiaries found to be more adequate as explained through posters (35%), PRA exercise (62.5%), demonstrations (72.5%), Audio – Visuals (47.5%) are more effective. Kalajathas are found to be one of the effective modes of communication about 37.5% of the respondents felt satisfactory. Political intervention was found to be the hurdle in implementation of water conservation or mission kaktiya/Neeru-Meeru. Due to high influence political intervention about 22.5% of the farmers are away from participation in the program. Further, this study revealed that, for any information regarding the water conservation activities was only available with landlords (12.5%), and some of the respondents (10%) are expressed that the information was also kept in public domain(kept secret). Majority of respondents about 77.5% are aware of water conservation programs like mission kakatiya and Neeru – Meeru programs through various means of mass communication tools and sources. Only 17% of respondents expressed that they are not aware of the activity. Due to lack of proper communication spread through mass media channels, there are few instances that of people are confused (20%) in differentiating of various water conservation activities taken up by the government functionaries. About 62.5% of the respondents are clearly know the difference between Watershed, Neeru – Meeru and Mission Kakatiya programs and respondents are aware of the objectives of these programs. Group communication is also plays an important role in molding people's participation. About 12.5% of the respondents getting the information through their gossip group (peer group).

Key Words: Communication role, mission kakatiya, watershed, neeru-meeru, water conservation traditional media, folk media.

Community based media ensures media pluralism, diversity of content and the represents of society's different groups and interests. Community media encourages open dialogue and transparency of administration at local level and offer a voice to the voice less. The success of any rural developmental scheme depends upon proper formulation of the communication policy. The nature and character of the state must be reflected through mass media. In a contemporary rural society media must bring about policy changes when and if necessary, so that there is an effective use of the communication channel in popularizing rural developmental programs.

Unlike earlier, the water conservation mission kakatiya/Neeru-Meeru program is different, concept of new initiative. It is used different methods of communication tools used to create awareness among the farmers / beneficiaries. The impact of mode of communication, effectiveness of communicational tools and awareness of the

conservation of water programs have to be understand and there is a need to undertake keen study into various elements concern with this programme. The scarcity of water is increasing day by day. The precipitation of rain water only 9 per cent of that rain water is infiltrated into ground water. There is a lot of need & scope to improved water percolation into the ground and improve the groundwater levels for sustainable use. It requires different activities and community participation is very much essential. In this present study, need of people's participation, accessibility of information related to water conservation activities for improvement of groundwater in the rural areas as well as in urban areas had discussed in detailed.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The field work was carried out in Gotigarally, Malchelma villages in sangareddy district (erstwhile medak) of Telangana state has been chosen for the comparative study. The selective random sampling

method was adopted to conduct survey in both the villages. Structured interview schedule was prepared with closed and open ended questions. In each village about 50 respondents were identified for taking responses on water conservation activities and its impact. About 100 respondents were interviewed. The main reason for selecting two villages is to obtain a comprehensive data about the water conservation activities, people's participation, and political intervention in implementing of the program was compared with each other village. Based on the secondary data available with the water conservation mission headquarters at Hyderabad, the sangareddy (part of Medak) district was selected for in depth study. The then Project Director for District Water Conservation Mission Sri P. Venkatram Reddy was advised the villages for selecting for the purpose of the study. Through the help of local non-governmental organization (NGO) named CWS based at Zahirabad, which is involved in watershed and water conservation programs had helped to entered into the villages of Gotigarpally and Malchelma for conducted the survey and collected the primary data from the farmers. Before entering in the village lot of secondary data regarding water conservation, watershed management, and Neeru – Meeru activities had been collected through several agencies involved in these particular programs. Researcher has made half a dozen visits to the selected villages and built rapport with the farmers, village administration and advocacy groups in the village. Several meetings were organized with the user groups, self help groups, and farmer groups, those who are involved and actively participating in the programs in both the villages. Finally people agreed to give information to the researcher in voluntarily.

For the purpose of collection of data for this study, a questionnaire was prepared with open and closed ended questions to get the best possible field level data related to this study from the respondents of different social groups. Prior to conduct the survey, a pilot survey had been administered through the interview schedule to know about the area and people's perception about the program. The primary data was collected by using structured interview schedule among the beneficiaries.

During the data collection, door to door survey has been taken up with the help of CWAS NGO representatives Shri Ahemed and his

colleagues. Interviews are prepared and organized a watershed committee, among them selective samples were chosen for structured interview. Before collecting the structured interview data, the researcher was approached respondents in their residents and explained the purpose of the survey and revealed to them the importance of the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study had indicates that, Malchalma village is socially&politically well advanced and exposed with state and national levels happenings in time to time. But, Gotigarpally village is far remote village, which could not have proper road facility, and other communication networks. Even though This village is located on the Zahirabad – Tandur stretch but, it is away from the main road with a 3 KMs kacha metal road. Socially & politically the village is not much forwarded with compared to Malchelma.

Due to political intervention into the Neeru-Meeru programme, achievements were not upto the mark in Malchalma. Malchalma is politically congress stronghold village. Former Medak M.P. late Baga Reddy belongs to this village. Lakshmana Rao used development to represent “the complicated pattern of economic, social and political changes that take place in a community as it progresses from traditional to a modern status. These changes include political consciousness, urbanization, mobility, illiteracy, media consumption and a broad general participation in nation building activities” (Rao, 2005). Ninety per cent of respondents (**Table 1**) are involved in water conservation activities. Ten per cent of the respondents were not take part in the programme.

Table 1: Involvement of respondents in water conservation activities

N = 100 (%)

1.	Yes	90 (%)
2.	No	10 (%)

57.5 per cent of the respondents (**Table 2**) are involved in watershed, 20 per cent of the respondents are involved in Neeru – Meeru, 17.5 per cent expressed that Neeru-Meeru and watershed are implementing with same objective. 87.5 per cent of the respondents (**Table 3**) had the knowledge about the water conservation activities. Only 12.5 per cent of the people doesn't have the knowledge on water conservation programmes.

Table 2: Programs for conservation of water by respondents
N = 100 (%)

A.	Neeru-Meeru	20 (%)
B.	Watershed	57.5 (%)
C.	Watershed + Neeru-Meeru	17.5 (%)

Table 3: Knowledge on water conservation activities
N = 100 (%)

1.	Yes	87.5 (%)
2.	No	12.5 (%)

Effective communication source for the beneficiaries in water conservation is video films (**Table 4**) (80%), the results indicates that video films followed by Television (60%), newspapers (60%) are more effective tools, demonstrations (55%) are also effective communicational tool with IIIrd rank. Field visits (47.5%) are also influence the beneficiaries (IVth rank), radio (45%), Kalajathas (37.5%), wallposters (20%), Rallies (17.5%), wall writing (15%), audio (7.5%), films (5%) plays a vital role in creating awareness as well as getting information. The major source of information gets from non governmental organization (NGOs) (**Table 5**) (70%), though governmental institutions and officers (27.5%), radio, TV, Newspapers (32.5%) plays important role in transfer of technology, gossip groups (12.5%). Media

habits of Malchalma village were watching television and chitchat with newspapers. Landlords and employees of the village were regular subscribers of Eenadu, Vaartha, Andhra Bhoomi, Andhra Prabha, Andhra Jyothi. Few TV sets which are available with landlords and employees. In the process of transmission of farm technology, the rural press is more significant. The written word enjoys more credibility than the spoken words on the electronic media and endures longer (**Jain, 1980**). Hence, the print medium is to be considered more popular among the educated, serious and busy people. Most of the villagers are depended on opinion leaders like teachers, big farmers, government officials (27.5%), non – governmental organizations (70%) for any information regarding developmental programmes in the village. When there are more radio sets, and newspapers in the society, the per capita income, literacy, and urbanization also are found to increase proportionately (**Schramm and Ruggeh, 1967**). Forward castes (Reddy's) domination more in the village. Decisions on any developmental activity in the village had taken at the higher level i.e., forward caste landlords. According to Echeverria, development must be considered as the break-up of the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance, over population, poor nutrition, diseases and external dependencies (**Echeverria, 1981**).

Table 4: Source of communication channels to the respondents

N = 100 (%)

		%	Rank
A.	Radio	45 (45%)	5
B.	Television	60 (60%)	2
C.	Newspapers	60 (60%)	2
D.	Wall posters	20 (20%)	7
E.	Films	5 (5%)	11
F.	Demonstrations	55 (55%)	3
G.	Video films	80 (80%)	1
H.	Audio cassettes	7.5 (7.5%)	10
I.	Kalajathas	37.5 (37.5%)	6
J.	Rallies	17.5 (17.5%)	8
K.	Wall writings	15 (15%)	9
L.	Field visits	47.5 (47.5%)	4

Table 5: Source of information on watershed or / mission kakatiya/Neeru-Meeru, utilized by Respondents N = 100 (%)

A.	Government Institutions	27.5 (%)
B.	NGO's	70 (%)
C.	Gossip groups	12.5 (%)
D.	Radio, TV, Newspapers	32.5 (%)

The results (**Table 6**) indicated that the available information on water conservation activities creates interest (65%), available information is sufficient (65%), 22.5% of the respondents doing works on their own knowledge, 2.5% of the respondents expressed that it is a irrelevant information. Results (**Table 7**) indicated that participatory rural appraisal (62.5%) is more effective tool to motivate farmers. Video presentations (55%) are also effective tool in water conservation activity to mold beneficiaries to take up the activity. Pamphlets (50%), explained through posters (35%). Field visits, training and non-governmental organizations representatives and state government officers were the main source of communication in the village (70%). As Chatterjee (1991) observed in

Table 6: Information utility in water conservation works N = 100 (%)

A.	Creates interest	65 (%)
B.	Sufficient information on activities	65 (%)
C.	Beneficiaries doing works on their own knowledge	22.5 (%)
D.	Irrelevant information	2.5 (%)

Table 7: Nature of Communication tools

N = 100 (%)

A.	Explained through posters	35 (%)
B.	PRA exercise	62.5 (%)
C.	Video presentations	55 (%)
D.	Pamphlets	50 (%)

Table 8: Levels of understandability of information

N = 100 (%)

A.	It is educative	12.5 (%)	IV
B.	Lay man can understand	32.5(%)	III
C.	Audio-visual is more effective	47.5 (%)	II
D.	Information given through demonstrations more effective	72.5 (%)	I

the global context mass media have more role to play in bringing about environmental awareness. At the national and regional levels also mass media have a vital role to play in creating awareness. At local levels various governmental, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) institutions and interpersonal channels have a great role in creating awareness among people. And also communication has a potential role to play in conservation of water and the Neeru – Meeru programme by educating peoples providing more details and explaining complexities. Media has a proactive role. With the suggestions of the project implementing agency's watershed development team had execute the civil works for conservation of rainwater. During 1996-2000, project implementing agency (PIA's) used VCR technology for creating awareness on watershed programmes in many districts in the state. Success stories on watershed activities showed to the villagers during the night time. It helped the implementing agencies to mould their attitudes towards the programme and many people voluntarily accepted to participate and gave acceptance to execute the works in their fields.

The results (**Table 8**) indicated that information given through demonstrations (72.5%) were more useful, 47.5 per cent of the respondents expressed audio visual mode of information is more effective. 32.5 per cent of the respondents felt that the given information can understand a lay man, 12.5 per cent information given on water conservation is more informative and educative. Majority of the respondents (**Table 9**) complains that the information is not reached to all the beneficiaries in the villages, 27.5% of the respondents felt unsatisfaction. Fifteen per cent of the respondents expressed that it is reaches to only big farmers, 12.5 percent of the respondents reacted that for information depending on big farmers in the villages. Ten per cent of the beneficiaries expressed most of the details regarding the water conservation and other information kept secret by some groups.

Coming to this Neeru-Meeru programme, the details about the programme mainly discussed at

Table 9: Reachability of information to the respondents
N = 100 (%)

A.	It is reaches only big farmers	15 (%)
B.	Not reached to every one	22.5 (%)
C.	Information keeping secrete	10 (%)
D.	Depending on big farmers	12.5 (%)

gramasabha, which is organized by the project implementing agency (PIA). Main source of information (70%) regarding Neeru-Meeru to the Malchalma was provided by the PIA, all the activities, execution of various works discussed and convinced the beneficiaries by the watershed committee (WC) in the grama sabha meetings, farmer-wise execution of works were identified and prepared a detailed action plan. Thus the communication flow was expert oriented and top to down nature.

57.5 per cent of the respondents (**Table 10**) felt that the given information is not effective, works executing under this programme on our own knowledge. Fifteen per cent says it is irrelevant, 7.5 per cent expressed not useful, 5 per cent expressed information provided by the authorities is understandable by the farmers. Lack of consensus among the villagers, Neeru-Meeru activity was not much succeeded in Malchalma. Clear cut division

Table 10: Utility of the information among the respondents
N = 100 (%)

A.	Information is not useful	7.5 (%)
B.	Can not understand	5 (%)
C.	Irrelevant information	15 (%)
D.	Works were doing on our own skills	57.5 (%)

Table 11: Uses of exposure visits with regard to water conservation
N = 100 (%)

A.	Can understand works done at the place	67.5 (%)
B.	Helps to construct, in our own fields	75 (%)
C.	Because providing free transport, going visits	20 (%)
D.	Not much useful	20 (%)

in politics was one of the hurdle for implementing the project. Whereas, Gotigarpally is less influenced by external forces in comparison with Malchalma.. Gotigarpally is backward castes, scheduled castes dominated village. People participation in the Neeru-

Meeru was self motivated by the villagers. Even though the village was located Nook end corner of the district, but people are very much interested towards the developmental programmes. Consensus among the villagers and beneficiaries of the Neeru-Meeru was only mantra for success in the village. Beneficiaries voluntarily come forward to take up the conservation of water works in their fields. Varghese asserted that the transfer of technology for development depends closely on communication. If development societies are to be moved along the path of modernization, they need more sophisticated and effective communication for social and political mobilization, national integration, learning, social education and extension (Anuradha Kumar, 2002).

Seeing is believing is proven in this aspect of survey. Most of the beneficiaries in water conservation works are felt that exposure visits were more useful to taken up works in their fields, 75 per cent of the respondents (**Table 11**) reacted positively. 67.5 per cent of the respondents expressed that it can be worked out for knowing the works, for unknown people. Twenty per cent of the respondents dissatisfied about the exposure visits. In many instances communication flow is top to bottom. All the policy decisions taken at the district and state level were implemented through the PIA, with the support of watershed committee (WC). Information regarding to this had been generated at state level and implemented at the grass root level. all the information comes through the water conservation mission (WCM). The information comes from the WCM is in the form of documents, brochures, pamphlets, video cassettes, News letters, to the concerned PIA. The PIA which involved watershed

development and its team members made it available to the watershed committee (WC), finally reaches to the beneficiaries. In this process verbal and horizontal mode of communication flow was taken place.

Watershed Development team (WDT) is the primary source to communicate about the various programmes under water conservation / Neeru-Meeru to the beneficiaries. The concept of Neeru-Meeru programme envisages creation of awareness amongst people, for ensuring their participation in the land and water conservation. Emphasizing the role of communication in development, Dube remarked that a well-drawn project is sure to fail unless it is supported by an imaginative communication programme (**Dube, 1967**).

It can be concluded that the mode of communication flow in the Neeru - Meeru programme to the beneficiaries found to be adequate. One-to-one mode of communication is satisfactory. But top-to-down mode of communication was not reflects the beneficiaries requirements, and not given much weightage to the beneficiaries opinions.

REFERENCES

- Anuradha Kumar.2002. A law for water conservation. India's National Magazine from Hindu, Frontline. 19(2): 8-21.
- Chatterjee, P.C. 1991, Broadcasting in India, SAGE, New Delhi, Pp.51-130.
- Dube, S.C.1967. "A note on communication in economic development" in Lerner.
- Jain, G.P.1980. "Need for Rural Press Emphasized", Communicator, 15: 3.
- Rao, P.L.V., 2005. "Principles of Communication, Professor of Journalism, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Feb., 2005.
- Schramm and Rugge 1967. Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries, Stanford University Press, California.