

Information Communication of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Programmes in a Particular Ao Naga Village

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Abstract

The necessity for information communication on development programmes need no emphasis. Unless the villagers have access to relevant information on development programmes, any attempt to successful implementation of such programmes will be a remote possibility. This study was done in order to find out how much the rural masses know about the different DRDA programme, their sources and benefits from the programmes. It was found that even though most of villagers know about the different programmes, very few were benefited and their sources of information were through other informal sources than the concerned department and the Village Council/VDBs.

1 Introduction

Information is a vital resource that affects every sphere of human activity of the present-day society. It is the major resource for policy-makers, planners, decision-makers, scientists, R & D organizations, technologists, economists, executives, researchers, professionals, business houses, and the general masses. The advancements in information and communication technologies have accelerated the processes of generating, organizing and transmission of the world over. Access to the right type of information at the right time and proper utilization of the same constitutes a major feature of today's world. Every country today thrives for collection, organization and dissemination of information to the end-users for the overall national development. In fact, every development process and contemporary human conditions depend greatly on the access to information that is precise, relevant, accurate, adequate, expeditious and timely available. In other words, progress of a modern society greatly depends on the access to right type of information at the right time.

The most spectacular events in the course of human civilization had been witnessed during the 20th century which ushered in rapid progress in all fields of human endeavor. Such global changes had been possible largely due to the advancements in the generation, dissemination, and utilization of information through highly efficient and sophisticated methods and media. In other words, mankind's new-found capability to communicate and exchange ideas and information across geographical, political and cultural boundaries can be greatly attributed to the

accomplishments in the areas of information and communication technologies. Application of modern technology to communication and transmission of information has greatly enhanced the speed of generation, storage, processing, retrieval and dissemination of information. From the ancient papyrus rolls and stone engravings to the modern printed and digital forms, the modes of information communication have undergone complete transformation. This can be greatly attributed to a very great extent to the emergence of modern technology capable of handling millions of bits of information in audio, video, textual as well as graphic form. This has enhanced the value and significance of "knowing something" up to par with any other resource.

The role and importance of information in modern society has become multi-dimensional as its impact on individual and the society as a whole is felt in an increasing measure and in diverse ways. In fact, there is no field of human activity in which information is not an essential ingredient. Today, importance of information in bringing about changes and development in society is the major emphasis of information for scientists, researchers, administrators, academicians, social scientists and others.

2 Information in Rural Development

An inevitable trend in every society today is change and progress in which information plays an indispensable role. A society can only be considered developed when its members are well-equipped with information pertaining to all spheres of life. The multi-dimensional role and value of information in modern society is not only apparent in urban settings in order to bring about an all-round development. The non-availability of relevant information through appropriate media for relevant purposes remains a major obstacle to any attempt at reaching the benefits of development to the rural masses. In the present-day information-intensive society, there is an overwhelming proliferation of information flow and access in the urban areas. However, most of the rural populace, particularly in a developing country such as India, is yet to enjoy the benefits of modern advancements in formation and communication technologies. The rural masses too have information needs like their counterparts in the urban areas. It is, therefore, this uneven geographical spread in information flow and access that has become a major area of concern today for researchers, information professionals, policy makers and others. Since time immemorial, India has been, still continues to be and will remain in the foreseeable future, a land of village communities (Singh, 1999). In India, particularly in North East India, most of the rural populace

is being deprived from accessing information pertaining to various spheres of life – education, health care, economics, politics, agriculture and farming, environment and many developmental benefits extended by the Government as well as non-governmental organizations. It is, therefore, essential to revitalize rural people by providing them essential information.

3 DRDA Programmes

The following DRDA Programmes were selected for the present study. The programmes mentioned are those programmes that are being implemented by the DRDA. A brief description of the programmes is given below:

1. **Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY):** This Programme is given by the department through the bank on 50:50 basis as loans and subsidies. Here beneficiaries are both group based and individuals. Group based beneficiaries get up to 1 lac and individual gets up to Rs. 20,000.
2. **Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY):** This is Housing Scheme where the department gives housing material for constructing houses. In Nagaland, the Government gives 1 unit of CGI Sheets i.e. 5 bundles but it depends on the BDO and VDB when they distribute. Also it may not be strictly CGI Sheets but may include others also. The total amount of the materials should be Rs. 75,000.
3. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** Under this programme those who have Job Cards are supposed to get 100 days of work wages. The works should be all community based. But in Nagaland, particularly Mokokchung District, hardly anyone knows about Job Cards and how much they are supposed to get and the VDBs just give a lump-sum of Rs.500 to Rs.3,000 per household.
4. **Micro Financing:** This programme is done with the initiatives of the VDBs in collaboration with the banks. Here money is given to the villagers on loan with interest rate of not more than 15% per annum.

4 Methodology

The methodology used for this present study was through interview schedule. The respondents were selected randomly.

5 Findings

At first, the following tables describe the randomly selected respondents in our context. Their age distribution, educational level and the reach of mass media is tabulated.

Age: Table 1 indicates that out of the sample done, 60% were in the age group of 40 and above while 40% belong to the age group of 30 – 40 years.

Table 1: Age Distribution

Frequency N = 20	20 – 30 Years	30 – 40 years	40 and above
	-	08	12

Educational Level:

Table 2: Educational Level

Frequency N = 20	Illiterate	Under Matric	Matriculate	Graduate
	02	10	05	03

Table 2 shows that 90% are literate. Out of the 90% literate 55.5% are under matric, 27.7% are matriculate while only 16.6% are graduates.

Mass Media:

Table 3: Television, Radio and Newspaper

Frequency N = 20		Television	Radio	Newspaper
No of Subscribers		20	10	20
Type of Programmes in TV/Radio	News	05	05	
	Local Stations	00	00	
	Entertainment	18		

Table 3 shows that all had television sets and subscribe to newspapers but only 50% of the households have a radio. While 90% of the sample watch entertainment channels only 25% watch news channels. Of those who have radios, only 25% listen to news.

Members of Different Organizations:

Villagers are usually more socially connected as compared to cities. In our respondent group, table 4 shows that only 10% of our respondents were members of Village Council while 25% were members of different committees in the church.

Table 4: Members of Different Organisations

Name of Organisation	Number
Village Council	02
Village Development Board	00
Church	05
NGOs	00

6. DRDA Programmes Awareness:

Table 5.1: Awareness of the DRDA Programmes

Frequency	SGSY		IAY		MGNREGA		MICROFINANCING	
N = 20		%		%		%		%
Yes	10	50%	15	75%	20	100%	0	0
No	10	50%	05	25%	0	0	20	100%

The above table shows the awareness of the different DRDA programmes that are being implemented. It shows that most of the villagers were aware of the programmes except Microfinancing. This maybe because the Department did not impart the information to the VDB members or the VDBs do not take interest.

Sources of Information:

From the table 5.2, we can make out that those who knew about the programme learnt it from friends, relatives and neighbours, while only 20% each learnt from Village Council members and Department Personnel in the case of SGSY. Their sources of information being friends, relatives and neighbours probably because in villages everyone knows each other and lives like one big family.

Table 5.2: Sources of Information

Sources	SGSY (%) Freq. N=10	IAY (%) Freq. N = 15	MGNREGA (%) Freq. N = 20
Friends	100%	100%	100%
Relatives	100%	100%	100%
Neighbours	100%	100%	100%
Village Council Members	20%		100%
VDBMembers			100%
Department Personnel	20%		100%
Poster/Wall Writings, etc.			
Public Announcements			
NGOs			
Local Church			
Mass Media			
Others			

Benefits from the Programmes:

As shown on the above table, only a few were benefited from SGSY and IAY programmes. Those who were benefited could do some of their needful works. Those who did not benefit were mostly due to lack of known persons in the VDB, Village Council and concerned department. Regarding MGNREGA, it is seen that all were benefited from the programme. This is because all households in the village were given some kind of lump sum every year irrespective of whether they had Job Cards or not. Interestingly, even Government servants were allotted this lump sum.

Table 5.3: Benefits from the programmes

Name of the Programme	No of applicants	How they benefited	No of Non-applicants	Reasons for not availing the benefits of the Programmes
SGSY	05	03 beneficiary did some business and 02 beneficiary invested in piggery, poultry and farming	05	They found the process to apply for it to be difficult.
IAY	08	06 beneficiaries renovated their house and 02 beneficiaries build sheds - for farms, storage sheds, etc.	07	They did not know how to approach the department.
MGNREGA	20	10 beneficiaries could clear their debts, 05 on children's education, 03 on business and 02 on house renovation.	0	

7 Conclusion

It can be concluded that most of the programmes the respondents knew were through friends, relatives and neighbours. This may be because in villages all the families are like one big family. In reality the department should be the one informing the rural masses about the programmes and who are eligible and how to apply for it. In case of MGNREGA, many did not even know about Job Cards and money received under this programme were distributed evenly amongst the households which actually is not supposed to be, but should be given as per work done by the job card holders and the entries in their cards. In the case of Microfinancing, none of the respondents were aware of it. This maybe because the VDBs were not taking enough initiative to implement it. The DRDA Office/Block Development Officers should give awareness about the different schemes available in the Department to the Village Council and VDB members from time to time. The Village Council and VDB also should play vital role in communicating and implementing the programmes launched by the Government for the villagers. Appropriate information media including mass media should be employed to create awareness about the different development programmes amongst the rural masses.

The role of communication in development is not only to inform and create awareness among the public or society but to implement the new ideas which cause change. The better the communication the faster the development of the society (Rani & Malaviya 1991).

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