

P.R. Approach in Good Governance : A Prelude to Action Frame of Reference

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In the background of people centered, participatory and demand driven models of development, the techniques of 'Information Transaction' & corresponding Public Relation (IT & PR) strategy is very crucial for realization of Good Governance. "Good Governance", as described by World Bank, is "epitomized by predictable and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos; an executive arm of Govt. accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under Rule of the Law". "One of the basic doctrines of Good Governance is achieving desired results in right way and with a sense of justice and fairness.....". The realization of these objectives lies in peoples' acceptance of and participation in public policies. Lack of understanding of public policy is an obstacle to public acceptance. If poverty reduction and other development strategies have not yielded desired level of result it is mainly because of the lack of wider 'societal ownership' of the schemes and projects. Weak ownership is often rooted in lack of public understanding and public debate of the issues and policies.² Appropriate 'information transaction' works as a remedy to the gap. It keeps people aware & alert about the developmental tracks and governmental interventions. It provides access to information

that enhances public understanding, as well as space for public debate which ultimately opens up the potential for new forms of decision making and participation. It can be said that an aware and alert citizenry forms the seed bed on which grows the canopy of peoples' empowerment and participation.

Best Practices in Other States

Many theoretical analysis, evaluation reports and successful strategies of project implementation have shown that appropriate public relation and motivational exercise are golden routes for ensuring and sustaining peoples' participation. The lessons learnt from implementation of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, 2006 in Madhya Pradesh has shown that raising awareness level through old and new public relation platforms and using appropriate communication media is key to success in implementing such legislation.³ The experience regarding involvement of community under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Naxalite areas of Madhya Pradesh also shows that Information Education & Communication (IEC) enabled people to access their rights under the Act.⁴ To start with, a multi-pronged awareness campaign was launched which included generation of awareness of the statutory rights of

the workers, how to register, demand, get work allotted, receive proper and timely wages, understand their obligation to work out put and even to lodge complaints and grievances. For wider publicity of the provisions and activities of the scheme media cells were constituted at different levels. Additional Officers were appointed as Media In-charge in all *Janpad Panchayats*. A Radio programme named *Namanskar Balghat* was conceived and implemented from the beginning to keep the villagers and other stake-holders updated, well informed and also collect the feedback. Collector of Belghat district of Madhya Pradesh writes that “this radio programme is broadcasted in mornings and now it is one of the favorite programmes of villagers”. Attempt for Communitization of Public Institutions and Services in Nagaland was made through intensive awareness campaigns at all levels-political, bureaucratic, civil society and village communities along with actions for developing partnership between the Government and Community.⁵ BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) experience of Tribal Development programmes in Southern Gujrat, Western Maharashtra, Southern Rajsthan and Southern Karnataka also gives similar learning. Sri Girish G. Sohani, Executive Vice-President of BAIF writes improvement in the quality of life was achieved “not only through the development of physical resources and assets but also through increased awareness, knowledge and management capacity which empowered the community to take up its own development further.”⁶

The scholarly works of academicians and professionals have also lighted upon the role of media and public relation service in planning and execution of developmental projects. The scholars like O.P.Agrawal and T.V.Swaminathan have suggested that among other things more

engagement with media and civil society at policy formulation level can remove much difficulty in formulating the right policy and sticking to it.⁷ Recent dynamisms of developmental interventions require a proactive and effective PR (Public Relation) Strategy to keep people informed, empowered and prepared for acceptance of and adaptability to Governmental interventions.

The Action Frame of PR strategy has to be based on **developmental dynamics** like-

1. Diffusion & Maintenance of the values of high Growth momentum and faster poverty reduction.
2. Catalyzing implementation of Public Service Delivery.
3. Organizing and conducting Need Assessment studies of local communities through interpersonal relationship with one and all in the community.
4. Developing a near real time data base of ‘skill maps’ of the communities vis-a-vis their need and aspirations.
5. Mobilization of targeted groups for enhancement of their employable skills and productive capacity.
6. Mobilization of farming community for raising farm productivity through adoption of scientific methods, mechanization of agricultural operations and adoption of new technologies.
7. Mobilization of newly formed Organs of Peoples’ Participation (OPP) like SHGs, Gaon Kalyan Samities (GKS), Vana Samrakshana Samities (VSS), Vigilance Committees, Joint Forest Management Committees (JFM), Parents Committees, Users’ Groups, Mothers’ Committees, Common Interest Groups etc. and ensuring their participation in human development indicators particularly in fields of functional literacy, public health, total sanitation, IT literacy,

renewable sources of energy, environmental regeneration, maintenance of sex ratio, reduction of IMR, MMR and morbidity rate etc.

8. Making people aware to utilize available opportunities for creation of new means of livelihood.

9. Disseminating reliable and specific information on venturing micro-level entrepreneurship in the field of agro-industries, mechanization of agricultural operations and downstream industries.

10. Mobilizing people for Community management and appropriate utilization of natural resources: Fostering of micro-level Public Private Partnership (PPP) and People Government Partnership (PGP), Community and Government Partnership (CGP) in maintenance and development of community assets.

11. Developing a robust model for lodging and tracking of public grievances and facilitate the process of their redressal.

OUTLETS OF PR STRATEGY

The success of PR strategy lies in ensuring **Accurate Communication, Appropriate Motivation & Adequate Counseling** which can be achieved through two principal outlets (1) Reaching People Directly (RPD) and (2) Reaching People through Media (RPM). Of course, these two outlets are not separable to water tight compartments and there are marked continuum between the two. Both these outlets have their utility and limitations. The areas and degree of their effectiveness also varies. At times an integrated approach involving both these outlets yields greater and quicker results.

Reaching People Directly (RPD) involves the Outlets like-

i. Interpersonal Communication.

- ii. Intra-group and Inter-group Meetings
- iii. Organization of Public Debates & Conducting street corner meetings
- iv. Carrying Feed-back from beneficiaries, stake holders and molders of public opinion.
- v. Organization of Exhibitions both static and mobile.
- vi. Conduct of Road shows.
- vii. Arrangement of Exposure Visits.
- viii. Organization of Meets & Get- Together Camps.
- ix. Organization of Orientation Camps/ Training Camps/ Refresher Meets
- x. Organization of infotainment programmes like street plays, play shows, and cultural evenings.
- xi. Establishment and management of ICT Kiosks like *e-Chaupel*.
- xii. Organization of regular *Janpad Bicharmadali*
- xiii. Establishment and management of Citizen Facilitation Centers.
- xiv. Organization of seminars, workshops and stakeholder meets.

Reaching People through Media (RPM) involves the outlets of outdoor and intermediary media instruments of which the major ones are:

- i. Print Media like Newspapers/weeklies,/ periodicals
- ii. Electronics Media like TV Channels
- iii. Signature and opinion boards
- iv. Leaflets & handouts
- v. e- Social Media like, Info-Content modules, Face books Google, Twitter, My-space
- vi. Cinema and video shows.

- vii. Organization of webinars.
- viii. Hoardings
- ix. Unipoles
- x. Digital Board
- xi. Toll Plaza
- xii. Mobile Vans
- xiii. Illuminated Kiosks
- xiv. Public Bus Back Panels
- xv. Bus Bays & Waiting Places.
- xvi. Projections in Foot Over bridges, Railway Over Bridges & Fly-Overs
- xvii. Glowing Boards at Railway Stations and Air Ports.
- xviii. Conspicuous Places in Public Utilities.
- xix. Traffic Stands & Booths
- xx. Signage
- xxi. LCD displays
- xxii. Decorative Poles
- xxiii. Market Places
- xxiv. Shopping Malls & Multiplexes.
- xxv. Hoardings
- xxvi. Standees/ Gantries
- xxvii. Public Galleries
- xxviii. Traditional Media like *Palla / Daskathia/ Ghodanacha/* folk-dances / folk songs etc.

Comparative Advantage of Two PR outlets.

Both these outlets have their applicability and limitations. In RPD outlets the communicator himself is present and has many advantages of explaining or redesigning the message as per the requirement of the audience. In this outlet PR personnel and the communicator have the chance

to identify the socio-cultural factors at the level of ground reality which motivate or refrain people to participate in or from participating the projected schemes. They have the chance to judge the perception of the people and carry the feedback accordingly to the appropriate quarter. In peoples' participation individual perception of a developmental intervention plays the determining role. What individual perceives as the consequence of an action is far more important than what the developmental executive believes the individual should perceive. In RPD the communicator has the scope for assessing individual perception and adopting more effective techniques of communication. RPD becomes more effective in case of people having lower literacy, low awareness, low level of skill expertise and the people operating mostly in unorganized sectors. It is more effective when people are to be explained a comparatively longer message with examples and demonstration. The awareness programmes for health, sanitation, child care, maternal care, adoption of alternative livelihood, motivating youth towards skill development, making people to choose a career etc. can be better performed through RPD outlets.

Reaching People through Media (RPM) is an indirect outlet where the communicator is absent. As such, the mechanism of communication needs to be neatly worked out in this case. The conceptualization & contextualization of the message, the channel of communication, reception and interpretation of the communication at destination matter a lot in this outlet. Attracting and engaging a person in a message till it is understood properly is a complex matter. Attraction and engagement is an individualized equation. To engage an individual, the theme of message should be satisfying his immediate need. The urgency of the need is to be assessed from the view point of the individual not the planner.

For example, the message about small family norm may be important for the planner but it may not have that much necessity for an individual from his point of perception. What might attract and engage one might be of very less interest for another individual. The language of the message needs to be simple, straight and short. The coinage of the message must be as per the comprehension level of the target group. Proper institutions need to be placed where people can lodge their queries, reactions and opinions about the message communicated to them. The use of RPM becomes more effective where the target audience is educated, highly skilled, professionalized and organized. The people operating in organized sectors can be easily communicated through this outlet more quickly and with less cost involvement.

NECESSARY POLICY INTERVENTION

The department of Information & Public Relations has already created a brand of officers and employees from the state to sub-divisional level with expertise of working as a bridge between the people and the Govt. The department has been effectively discharging its duties in perfect harmony with administration and the people. Recent dynamisms of faster development need comprehensive policies for more sharpened PR service. The Public Relation & Media Management (PR & MM) has to be inbuilt in to any developmental project. P.R & MM is to be regarded as necessary partners not foot notes in any developmental efforts. The IEC and awareness components of different programmes and projects need to be pulled together; and, complementary projects need to be clubbed together in proper sequence. The IEC and awareness activities need to be prioritized and viewed as essential statutory parts not as an additional or obligatory service. Realizing the need

for more professionalized public relation service in present days Chief Secretary, Govt. of Odisha Sri Bijaya Kumar Patnaik has given directions for In-House Capacity Building in I & P R Dept. Sri Patnaik has often emphasized that capacity and ability of PR Officers need to be enhanced and sharpened with updated trainings and exposures. They need to be provided with logistics and equipments that enable them to match the need of faster, accurate and strategic communication. A PR personnel needs to be exposed to the strategies, achievements, limitations and visions of various departments so that he can make the best combination of what to communicate and when to communicate and how to communicate.

Developing In-house expertise

In a democratic and welfare form of governance Public Relation Exercise as a matter of fact has a wider and inarching boundary touching different Governmental activities. The role and responsibilities of PR Officers are directly influenced and shaped by developmental policies and initiatives. However, the board areas of expertise among other things can be-

1. Concept Building.
2. Contextualization of concepts & messages.
3. Script writing.
4. Content Development- interactive content & Performance Content.
5. Event organization, management and wrapping up.
6. Print media advertising.
7. Electronics media advertising.
8. Wall painting and Board designing.
9. Web- media messaging.
10. Social media handling.

11. Outdoor advertising through various outlets.
 12. Designing Development Communication, Plan Communication and Governance Communication.
 13. Planning & displaying Curtain Raiser Programmes.
 14. Preparation and presentation of Annual Reports, Evaluation Reports and findings of Assessment Studies.
 15. Designing and disseminating disaster management messages.
 16. Motivating people and providing handholding support to them in the programmes like mechanization of agricultural operations, starting up horticultural activities, skill development works etc.
 17. Designing the format and theme of Information brochures.
 18. Right To Information Act and learning the techniques of handling the RTI matters so as to cater to need of the information seeker.
 19. Provisions of Public Service Delivery Act, well acquaintance with service delivery mechanism at different levels for providing handholding support to people and facilitating the whole process. Developing micro-level data base of the demand and supply of Public Services for effective delivery and convergence with other complementary schemes.
 20. Conducting Need Assessment Studies and Skill Mapping Exercises at Community level and developing real time data base of the findings with regular updating.
 21. Public consultations and counseling for resolution of many crowd behavior, mob activities, protests, communal tensions and other law & order situations.
 22. Expertise in lodging, handling and following up Public Grievances to the point logical conclusion.
- The list of required expertise is a dynamic one and goes on changing with changes in context and levels of development. The Public Relation personnel need to be kept in a competitive status and role with that of his counterparts in Public and Private and Government sectors. They need to appropriately fitted into the administrative structure with clear-cut role, responsibilities, logistics and enabling policies to be devised, authenticated and put in place by appropriate normative arrangements.
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