

IEC in Jalswarjya- A guiding light for WSSD, Govt. of Maharashtra

(An article Based on vibrant experience of Jalswarajya Project)

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Introduction

Whenever we are working on development front we need to put communication at heart place. Worldwide past experience suggest that modernization approach of development communication fail to sustain impact on stakeholders due to its vertical one way format based on prejudice which fix responsibility of being backward on under develop class. Till end of 20th century mostly communication in development sector was argument and advocacy based. Also efforts initiated with expectation of switch effect behavioral change, that outcast trust from communication.

Last decade observe substantial shift in paradigm of development communication. Now days participative, both way and horizontal communication is gaining acceptance worldwide. Saga of Jalswarajya project is a milestone in participative approach toward development communication, which is also recognized by World Bank by awarding People first award. Information Education and communication (IEC) in Jalswarajya intend to create sustainable behavioral change, not just to facilitate project implementation, but to ensure long term successful water supply scheme run by village itself and hygiene practice in village.

Participative approach of development communication is more democratic, logical and scientific than modernization model. Conversation, discussion, and exploration of audience from initial stage make communication process more reliable and effective.



Voluntary sustainable change in behavior can only be obtained by active participation of audience during communication. Audience cannot be treated as passive recipient of message. Their feedback and perception need to be considered for success of communication process.

IEC in Jalswarajy

IEC in Jalswarajy project is land mark to show a path to other such initiatives. Past experience of vicious failure of water supply and sanitation sector result in adoption of new demand driven and public contribution base system. Also first time due emphasis was given to social processing. IEC and capacity building activities were recognized as foundation for sustainability. But it is just first step toward a long journey ahead.



In Jalswarajya IEC include developing strategies, approaches, campaign and methods that enable individual, families, groups, organization and community to play active role in achieving sustainable development. On the basis of experience of Jalswaajya project it can be said that IEC have very wide perspective and Need of communication is vast and multi dimensional for water supply and sanitation department.

Dimension of IEC in WSSD

- Behavioral change communication
- Public relation.

- Publicity-
- Advocacy communication
- Documentation
- Advertising
- Event management
- Literature development
- Communication research

There is need of IEC strategy to cover all dimensions efficiently to compliment organizational objective.

Fundamental concepts

In development communication field there are varieties of literature available making contradictory claims about basic concepts of fundamental. It is almost impossible to generalize one experience to world at large. For WSSD following conceptual guidelines can be draw on the basis of vibrant experience of Jalswarajya project.

How does behavior change occur?

This question probably has as many answers as there are diverse populations and cultures. Some key factors are as below.

- ✓ Feeling need to change, perceived threat or benefit.
- ✓ Self efficacy – belief in self execution capability and surety about outcome and consequences.
- ✓ Adoption from environment- by observing what others do.
- ✓ Public opinion or social pressure.
- ✓ Logical convenience to change.

What lead IEC to behavioral change?

- **Information-** Proactive awareness campaign and social marketing.
- **Education-** How to do, What to do, Why to do.
- **Communication-** Persuasive communication to build trust and facilitate convenience.

- Social, political and cultural diagnosis is necessary before planning IEC strategy.
- Communication strategy should be integrated with operational targets and implementation plan.
- Awareness of issue is not guarantee of behavioral reflection.

Prerequisite for behavioral change:

- ✓ Building trust and understanding.
- ✓ Engaging community member in communication process.
- ✓ Use local language with relevant example.
- ✓ Two way communication.
- ✓ Proper answer to feedback (responding to misconception)
- ✓ Correlate message drafting with audience interest.
- ✓ Use media having localized impact.



Findings of IEC in Jalswarajya

- Need base local micro IEC plan is more effective then unique centralize macro plan.
- Participative model of development communication is adoptable. (eg. Community audit and cross learning, Jalmitr)
- Free hand at local level to determine media, tools and contain of message according to environmental factor produce better result.
- Patience should be kept for behavior change induced voluntarily. Fear of punishment or attraction to perk can invite desired behavior but can't sustain it.

Some suggestions

To make an effective IEC strategy for water supply and sanitation sector following measures are suggested.

- Structure strengthening
- Perception repairing
- Independent Web portal for IEC.
- Correlating effort- avoid duplication
- Human resource development
- Research cell

Structure strengthening

Present institutional structure for IEC in WSSD is a simple two step structure. In TSC, Jalswarajya and other such projects there is one coordinator at state level and an IEC specialist at district level. But if we

want to keep visionary approach about IEC, then introduction of Divisional structure and strengthening of state structure is needed.

Following infrastructural addition may prove useful in state IEC cell.

- IEC warehouse (audio, visual. Literature and statistics data record of all activity)
- Production Studio (Equipped with minimum video and audio production equipment)
- Research and study center (for Independent and non bias need and impact analysis)
- Cross learning and development tourism sub cell.

Divisional IEC hub

Cultural, environmental and political diversity of different region of Maharashtra need variety of communication pattern. To coordinating decentralize micro communication initiatives a Divisional IEC hub should be there. A divisional IEC coordinator with an assistant content editor will be sufficient to channelize the district level efforts. Even such structure will be helpful in campaigning, research activity, cross learning and high qualities centralize documentation.

Perception development

There is a popular myth about IEC, that it is wide publicity through mass media for creating hype. Sometime IEC concept oversimplified as video shooting, photography and press note writing. It is more shocking when some senior officers

and political representative show such perception. Still perspective of operational authorities at grass root level is influenced by popular beliefs and prejudice base misconception. This approach affects gravity of IEC plan. It is needed to make key persons in public system familiar with true concept of IEC for achieving organization objectives. It require following efforts.

- Independent study on popular belief and perception.
- Define IEC concept, need, objective and scope.
- Study material, case studies and data base to be provided on regular basis.
- Cross learning, training workshops and exhibitions periodically.

Independent Web portal

There is variety of IEC material available in WSSD, but it is not easily accessible to public at large. IEC need an independent web portal with administration software support at district and divisional level. Such portal can be used as IEC warehouse. Also it will prove effective mean of cross learning among IEC professionals from different locality and different projects. It should have following contents.

- Interactive development tourism map of Maharashtra.
- Video, photo and document gallery.
- Directory of technical and social resource persons.
- Sub portal to district and regional hub with administration software support.

Coordination to Avoid duplication

There are number of projects and activities carried by WSSD. Every project has its own structure, so there are more than one IEC professional at state and district level. These people and their experience are complementary. A coordination cell is needed to correlate their efforts, knowledge and produced material. It will reduce efforts duplication and time and energy could be optimized. Coordination meetings should be organized at state and district level on frequent interval.

IEC professionals in WSSD have different level of skills and personality traits. They can complement each other by Specialization of skills. Efforts should be made to promote versatile specialization.

Human resource Development

World is moving ahead on information super highway. Every day there are update in technology and skills. In this competitive environment if we want to match pace, we need to keep our work force equipped with latest knowledge and skills. Following efforts are suggested for HRD.

- Training on communication skill, crisis management, learning theories.

- Practical workshops on Video production, graphical designing, data presentation skill.
- Frequent experience sharing and cross learning. (study tour, seminar, group discussion)

Research and study cell

Impact assessment and feedback analysis is very important in development communication. But in regular course of operational work load, research work not gets due importance and justice. There is need of an independent cell for research and study. It will be helpful in monitoring communication strategy and rectify it according to practical need.

Conclusion

In last seven year Jalswarjya project have redefined IEC activities in water supply and sanitation context. Outcomes of project are self explanatory. Government need to adopt the fundamental finding of the projects experience for betterment of other initiatives of department.

Existing infrastructure of WSSD, of government of Maharashtra is in need of a comprehensive and complementary IEC strategy.

