



Research Paper

Importance of Traditional Communication in Rural Development

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a great way to communicate with the development process. In rural area it is important to combine traditional communication with development process. Traditional communication born in traditional society and it created with indigenous knowledge. Traditional communication methods the mediums through which the cultural traits passed from generation to generation. Keeping in view their intimacy, as they are very close to the heart of the people, the traditional communication is available to all and enjoyed by persons different age groups generally at very low cost. So, this study is about the importance of traditional communication in rural development. Therefore, the main objective was how could use traditional communication in Rural Development. Quantitative research methodology was used for scientific method in this research. Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain primary data collections. Data has been analysed by SPSS software package. According to the statistical sampling, 88% of the rural villagers confirmed that they are in favour of traditional communication. And they believe content of traditional communication more familiar, clear and trustful than modern communication methods. In conclusion, traditional communication could play a vital role in enhancing the community participation for rural development. As a suggestion, practicing traditional communication methods to advertising development concepts with the interference of government is necessary.

KEYWORDS: Community Participation, Development, Rural Development, Traditional Communication

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I. Introduction

Development is multi-dimension approach. So, it can not explain in one definition. But here it simply can define as 'Development is qualitative and quantitative growth of social, economic, political and cultural factors in a society. Western nations later use development concept as a measurement. Measurement that can use to measure each country's development / level of growth and status. According to this measurement concept, world's country divided into several categories. Mainly division of countries can recognize as, developed country, developing country and underdeveloped county. (Karunathilake,2007). Two anthropologists Katy Gardner and David Lewis explain regarding this manner in the book 'Anthropology, Development and the post-modern challenge' as follows; "The North is advanced and trapped in the static tradition in the South, but the development of a state is the progress and change that shows that this situation can only be changed through the capitalist relations of modern technology and production."

Development specialist and world's leaders identified that it is more important to pay attention on the category of under-development. So, they developed lot of new approaches to reach under-developed countries. In general mostly once colonial counties can identify as a under-developed country in these days. The speciality in under developed countries is that, they have geographically more rural areas than urban areas. So, then it is important to develop the rural area as well as the other sectors of a country. Meanwhile rural development concept came into discussion. From 1967 rural development approach was in the practice.

When we talk about rural development programs, we talk about agricultural development in particular. In addition, the focus is on literacy development, rural expansion and other social and economic conditions. Accordingly, rural development programs are committed to the development of the rural areas and the development of the villagers. later governments and organizations spend large sums of money on rural development projects. But, they failed to reap the long-term results from that. It can be believed that they failed due to the lack of expertise of indigenous knowledge in the rural areas, which is unique to those areas. In view of this, it was imperative to get the participation of the village community for later rural programs. Therefore, it

is important to reach development programs to the field level. Communication is the tool that can use to reach rural areas in the development programs. Accordingly, it is timely to study the topic of communication in development.

Giving a message from one person to another can be simply called communication. Language can be used to communicate in a variety of ways, including signs, symbols, colors, and gestures. As the nature of communication expands, various media patterns are used to do. New Media, Social Media, electronic media and traditional media are the some of the media approaches used for communication.

Especially when it comes to Sri Lankan society, there are more rural areas in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the development programs leading Sri Lanka towards a developed country needs to focus on rural development. Therefore, in order to acquire the traditional knowledge required for rural development programs and knowledge in the field of programming, the rural people must be mobilized for development programs. Communication is essential for this. Communication is essential to introduce the development program, to discuss the content of the program, to get their views on the development program as well as to gain the knowledge of the villagers about the relevant field. In addition, it is advisable to use a medium of communication which is close to the rural community, in the communication process with the rural people. Thus for this study is about Importance of Traditional Communication in Rural Development.

Research Problem

Sri Lanka has been a developing country since the beginning of the development concept. Therefore, in order for the Sri Lankan society to bring about development in the field, to make development efficient and to achieve development outcomes, various related studies need to be done. Sri Lankan society as a developing country Geographically, Sri Lanka has a large percentage of rural areas. Accordingly, more attention should be paid to involving the participation of the people in development programs and the use of communication strategies in identifying areas that can lead to the success of development work in the field of rural development. Especially with the advancement of technology, the communication media is at the forefront of creating different ideologies in the society than anyone else. By considering the above factors the research problem in this research is “Can traditional communication is used to bring about rural development?”

Research Objectives

- Identify the development concept.
- Identifying what the concept of rural development is.
- Study of traditional communication
- Studying the Importance of Traditional Communication Media for the Advancement of Rural Development
- Identify what traditional communication methods can be used in rural development

II. Research Methodology

The research methodology explains how to do any research. It is also known as the research plan. Research methodology can be changed by subject vice or a researcher vice. The research methodology can also be different from the subject and the researcher. The methodology is the method used to adapt the data to the desired. Research methodology plays a very important role in the fundamentals of research.

In social science research, in generally researchers are mostly involved in qualitative research. This is a key feature of an in-depth study of a given event. The focus here is not on the width but on the depth of the selected event. Qualitative research is carried out in the most sensitive areas. Thus, the qualitative research method was used for this research.

To correct the research, accurate data should be collected. The success of the research depends on accurate data. Mainly there are two types of data. That is, primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the data that was empirically selected from the social event. Accordingly, they are some of the primary data collection methods. The questionnaire technique, the interview system, and the monitoring system can be used. To conduct this research, an interview, Case studies was used as a data collection technique. an interview was conducted.

The secondary data is a collection of information about a person, a problem or an event. Records such as magazines, research reports, charters, and daybooks. These can be identified as publications and corporate publications. (Same) In this study of child labourers in Sri Lanka, basic knowledge was obtained through secondary data.

Data analysis was done using descriptive methods. Furthermore, data analysis was done using computer software. In this process of analysing data tables and charts were also used.

Development

Development is a multidimensional concept. It can simply define as a, quantitative and qualitative development in all spheres like, social, economic, political and cultural. But, it is important to understand the complexity as well as the challenging nature of development. If so, it can be concluded by on focusing definitions and different views and theories that have been presented so far. There are many interpretations of development. Economists define "development" in relation to their subject and sociologists in their subject. Dudley Sears, a scientist, pointed out that the term development is an imaginary network and therefore difficult to define properly. Accordingly, he further emphasized that "development" is considered as a synonymous term for "progress" as a whole. Economist Gunnar Myrdal defined development as an advancement or revolutionary change in the whole social order from an economic perspective. However, this view was later criticized by many as not just economic development (Karunathilake,2007).

Geologists have pointed out that this is a broad concept in developmental geography and has both quantitative as well as qualitative values. Therefore, it has been pointed out that in order for development to take place, human beings must have economic as well as social, cultural and educational aspirations. Prof. Wimal Dissanayake says that development is the wise utilization of the natural resources as well as human resources of a country to uplift the living standards of its people. Professor Wilbur Shram presents the change that needs to be made in a country through development in four parts.

1. It is better to have some knowledge than to be ignorant.
2. Staying healthy is better than being sick.
3. Living with something is better than not having it.
4. Participation is better than isolation.

He states that the development process should take place through these sectors (Dissanayake,2006).

According to the Human development report 2003, ' development is a process of create more opportunities to human for their selection '. Former Pakistan minister Dr. Mahbud ul Haq described the similar definition to Human development report 2003's about development. In there, Dr. Mahbud ul Haq define ' The main goal of the development is to create more opportunities for human in their selection ' (Karunathilake,2007).

In this way, the concept of development is defined in various aspects such as economic, social, political, communication and cultural, but it is a concept that has evolved over time. Various concepts have been incorporated to nurture this subject, especially from the beginning of economics until recently.

In the beginning, development meant the growth of a country's total output, and it had to happen quantitatively. Economically it was believed that the continuing growth of per capita GDP would improve the living standards of the people. Early economist Adam Smith (1776) elaborated on how a country's gross domestic product can be increased in his book 'The Wealth of Nations and Its Distribution'. In particular, the division of labour, the specialization of labour, large-scale production, the availability of goods in the country, the surplus value, the export, and thus the acquisition of additional resources to the country, etc. were pointed out as the initial steps. Through it, exports in particular were seen as the mechanism of economic growth. However, until World War II, most countries in the world defined development as this economic development (Karunathilake,2007).

After World War II, there were different views on the concept of development. Especially in post-colonial countries that who gained political independence, searched various strategies to achieve development. Meanwhile, the United States introduced the Marshall Plan to rebuild and developed European states. As a result, Europe received a large amount of financial aid. Through this, other less developed countries also gained the confidence that the country could be developed if it received a large amount of foreign exchange. Therefore, even in the early 1950s, it was pointed out that increasing investment was an essential element of developing a country.

By the 1970s, the negative effects of development were evident. Environmental pollution, Resource scarcity, Poverty and Malnutrition were the some of negative effects of development at time. Along with this, various scientists explored other perspectives on the concept of development. At the same time, they concluded that a country must achieve social, educational, cultural and environmental development at the same time as economic development. Accordingly, after the 1970s, many other dimensions were added to the concept of development. A number of concepts such as rural development, bottom-up development planning, participatory development and etc. have been identified as alternative development strategies. As a developing country, the Sri Lankan social structure is more rural. Therefore, it is timely to focus on the concept of rural development which is essential for its development.

Rural Development

Rural development concept introduced in 1967 in Europe. When the world was searching for the new development approaches the concept was introduced. The rural development concept was introduced in ' Arusha

Declaration ' in 1967 which was published in Tanzania. There in Arusha Declaration introduced new explanation on development. That is ' development need to achieve through the prosperous rural development '. This can also identify as a concept of rural socialism. In Tanzania this concept called as 'Ujaamaa' in their pronunciation (Karunathilake,2007).

Rural development is the enhancement of resources required to improve the quality of life of the rural population. It can be considered that the development of the rural people is to provide the space to meet the basic necessities of daily life without any problem. There should also be rural development as individual needs become more complex. Otherwise will have to face various social problems. In order to solve these social problems, rural development must take place.

By comparison with development, rural development is a much newer term. It is an alternative to existing theories of development. Also it can simply refer to development that carried out in rural areas. At present, nearly half of the population in the world and nearly two-thirds in the developing countries live in rural areas.

There are certain key indicators of development such as, poverty ratio, literacy rate, nutritional status, housing condition and access to basic amenities are still poor in rural areas. Therefore, rural development concept being implementing in world to improve the living conditions of rural people.

There are different definitions for the rural areas accordingly to the countries. In the Sri Lankan context, according to the Census and Statistics Department, all Municipal Councils (MC) and Urban Councils (UC) are considered as 'urban' and the 'estate' sector is defined as areas with plantations where there are 20 or more acres and 10 or more resident labourers. All the other areas which do not fall into the above two categories are considered as 'rural'. Accordingly, 77 percent of the population in Sri Lanka resides in rural areas.

Attempts should be made to use communication in a new dimension in order to develop human labour more efficiently in development and to absorb it to the maximum national development. Here we move on to the discussion of the use of traditional communication in the concept of development communication for the effective use of human labour in rural development.

Traditional communication

Traditional communication is the simplest form of communication used by the members of a society to maintain that society in a traditional or rural social context. Traditional communication is characterized by simplicity, creativity, flexibility and cultureless. Because traditional communication is a part of society itself, its credibility is high, feedback and comments can be obtained at the same time and clients can be reached through a flexible and creative methodology. Moreover, it has the ability to share a message at a very low cost. Accordingly, it is advisable to use traditional communication methods to get the participation of the rural people in the rural development process. This is because the process of gaining public participation should focus not only on areas such as development, but especially on areas such as people's interests, enjoyment, leisure, personal freedom and the cultivation of spiritual virtues. Community participation must emerge from within them and emerge as a result of cognition. Especially in a rural society, if there is one method of communication that can speak to the heart of so many people, it is traditional communication (<file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/ILSHS-20-2014-46-55.pdf>).

III. Discussion

According to the study, the literacy rate of the people in the rural areas is very low. There are also those who cannot read a printed copy in particular. Thus, the rural community cannot be made aware of development programs through posters, banners or handouts. Traditional media can be used instead. Also the rural people in this field do not like innovations. Accordingly, they are lagging behind in introducing new programs. In this situation it is very important to use a medium of communication that is close to the villagers so that they can win their trust. The majority of the villagers used to practice to take information from, village leaders and gatherings, and so on. Rural development programs can be made successful by replacing situations such as rumours and informal meetings. In addition, the rural people are very proud of the fields of folk tales, folk history and folk drama. The study confirmed that they have a sense of nationality in it. Accordingly, the traditional medium of communication, folk dramas and folk tales, will be used to further enhance the attitude of the rural people towards development goals and guide them towards development goals. According to the statistical sampling, 88% of the rural villagers confirmed that they are in favour of traditional communication. And they believe content of traditional communication more familiar, clear and trustful than modern communication methods. Content and project reports of many development programs currently in operation are submitted on the websites of the relevant Ministries. There is no awareness among the rural people about such reports or websites. According to the study, there are no one visited such websites and gained an understanding of development programs. Therefore, it is useless to advertise rural development programs through such new media. Further, in examining the knowledge of electronic media among the rural people, they have a minimum level of literacy in

the use of electronic media. Under such circumstances, successful outcomes of awareness programs on development programs using new media or electronic media in rural areas cannot be achieved. According to the study, the villagers believe that traditional communication media have the following characteristics.

- Simplicity
- Proximity
- Easy to understand
- Clear content
- Motivational

There is a tendency among the villagers for traditional communication based on such features. Villagers have following kind of idea about the credibility of new media and electronic media.

“we are much believe what our honourable thero of the temple or the Grama Sevaka saying, more than the radio or TV.”

Accordingly to above statement it is clear that they are not care about what in new media like television says. More than that, they believe the messages that comes from their there or grama niladhari. Accordingly, it is clear that more effective results can be achieved by communicating the message of development through a village headman to the villagers through traditional means of communication rather than electronic media, new media or social media.

The traditional means of communication like gossips or unorganized meetings are however able to get-together the messenger and receiver at same time. Also, in traditional communication messenger and receiver are doing face to face communication in the same place. If there is a dilemma in the message, the receiver can ask the questions from the messenger at the same time. That factor may much important in communication such in rural areas. The views of the rural people were, villagers say that they are not so knowledgeable and educated to get direct knowledge from mass communication. And there are many more misunderstandings in the messages which received from the electronic media. In such cases, they have to make a separate effort to retrieve the information. Most of the time, the villagers said that, they would ask from the person who have good knowledge and education about the misunderstood things. However, they said that because it was a very troublesome situation for them to retrieve the messages, the rural people would not look for information on development programs or those messages again and again. If so, the propaganda of the new media or any other electronic media about the rural development programs will not have an impact on the field of rural development programs. The efforts made to communicate these development programs are not successful in the field of rural development. One more thing that villagers confirm about importance of traditional communication was that mostly from the traditional communication receiver can see the face and the receiver's body language. Through that they are more interesting to hear and they can judge the messenger at the movement of delivering. Also, from traditional communication can do the communication with minor errors. Also, with discussion points they clear that if one choose traditional way of communication methods it is so valuable to villagers. It proofs from following dialog:

“ Because if some people put effort to make us comfort how can we ignore that ? Meanwhile if they are trying to do something to do for our village again. “

Questionnaires on the participation of villagers in rural development programs are made this clear. That is, if any kind of development program is implemented in their village, they will be very careful about it. The villagers also stated that, they will give their contribution as much as possible in such development programs. They also presented facts about the several development programs carried out with the participation of such villagers. These include with; clearing the temple grounds in the village, building the temple pavilion, developing programs for community water projects, as well as providing facilities to technicians who working on roads in rural areas in various ways. These are the ways that they / villagers given their contribution for such development programs. Participation in the development programs of the rural people is in the above manner and it is important for them to find out about it and find out how they were motivated about it. The villagers set up a separate society for the community water project, through which they received awareness and information about the rural project. For other projects, the villagers have received information and awareness through the Village Funeral Society, from the Gramasewa officer and from the thero of the Village Temple. They also answered the question of how they participated in the above programs and said that the labor contribution of the rural people was contributed to each of these programs as discussed at the union sessions. In addition to those decisions villagers explained in the interviews that, If the Venerable Thero invites or give message to participate such event, as soon as possible they would definitely contribute for that and would continue to do so. Therefore, it is clear that participation in development programs among the rural people is mandatory and that the rural people can contribute to the rural development programs by adopting the strategies that they are accustomed to rather than adopting modern strategies. Also in addition villagers shared about few past development programs. Villagers explained about the way implemented development programs / projects gone in vain without community participation in rural areas. They also believe that it is important to do good communication with

villagers for the development projects in rural area. Then only both the parties can engage with the developing programs. Also, It helps to mitigate the issues that specialist face in the field level.

In conclusion, traditional communication could play a vital role in enhancing the community participation for rural development. As a suggestion, practicing traditional communication methods to advertising development concepts with the interference of government is necessary.

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