

Importance of Need Assessment for Development of Prog. for Rural Community

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Abstract

The community media is the media that gives the communities a voice, provides the communities with information on issues that they are interested to know. It is the media that discusses community issues using examples that are familiar to the general local community. Hence, it is the media that provides “spaces for people to discuss and debate issues” that their community is interested. Past researches revealed that before development of any kind of community programme need assessment is necessary. Present paper aim is to discuss the importance of need assessment for the development of community programme.

Keywords: Need assessment; Programme; Community; Rural.

INTRODUCTION

According to **Rodriguez (2001)** reported that Community media referred as ‘alternative media’, ‘radical media’, ‘citizen’s media’, ‘grassroots media’, ‘participatory media’ ‘tactical media’ or ‘community based media.’ **Rennie (2006)** said that community media is easily access and

participate in the media and this medium is used to express their own views, concerns and interests. The Bolivian miners’ radio station is one of the world’s earliest examples of community radios and as **Dagron** reported in 2007. Community access and community participation are therefore heart and soul of community media. **Atton (2002)** points out that alternative and radical media hardly appear in the dominant theoretical traditions of media research and highlights that this was surprising, since some theoretical accounts seem to have space for them. **Rodriguez (2001)** notes two distinctive types of researches available on alternative media. One type of research is descriptive where a case of alternative media is explained in detail, from its origin, to its funding sources, and its types of programming and the another type of research is develops a theoretical analysis that endeavours to capture the essence of alternative media to explain the importance as processes of communication and democracy. A large amount of the available research on community media is focused on ‘success stories’,

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and “failures, vulnerability and their uniqueness in communicating with grassroots” or on the attempts to counter the “imbalances in communication” between the mediapowerful (powerful media companies) and the media powerless (powerless countries whose media environment is dominated by the media powerful) by filling in as the alternative media that reaches and addresses the interests of everyone.

NGOs and Community Radio

Malik (2007) reported that Government has given priority to NGOs to own and operate community radio. Indian Government also permits NGOs to establish community radio stations for the purpose of achieving their developmental objectives. Community radio is open for the community to access and participate for their community communication purposes. **(Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2008)**. Community radio should be accessible for the local communities to access and participate to produce programmes that matter to them and that are of interest to them. **Rodriguez (2001)** describes the emergence of NWICO (New World Information and Communication Order) as the main inspiration that led to an “explosion” of media research. According to **Jallov (2012)** Community radio is two way communication where the community can directly influence and be involved with content production and organization. This is not for profit radio station and uses local languages; promotes local music, and is owned by the community. Radio of this kind is in essence participatory and functions as a community communication mechanism and a platform for local development, which is defined by the community itself. According to **Rodriguez (2001)** most of the researches focused on success stories failures, vulnerability and their uniqueness in communicating with grassroots, works by media scholars such as Downing. **Bosch (2014)** reported that the notion of *community* as defined by the radio stations changes as the audience becomes less organized around identity politics or communal relations, but rather on their networked sociality.

Community Media

According to **Rennie (2006)** Community media are known by a range of varied terms. For example, in Denmark, it is local television while for many other European countries, it is simply local media. In the US, community media is the country’s micro radio and public access television. For the women

of Bengal, it is their local newspaper and for many cities around the world, community media is the Indymedia which is available on the Internet and used by over 70 cities around the World. Other terms by which community media is known as include, ‘free radio’, ‘participatory video’ and ‘street newspapers’ (**Downing, 2001**).

ALTERNATE MEDIA

According to **Downing (2001)** Community media can best be understood within the broad spectrum of alternativemedia. Hence, defining community media also means defining alternative media and understanding how and why forms of alternate communication mediums are set up by different communities to conduct communication processes within and between their communities. **McQuail (1983)** suggests “alternative approach to media grew out of ordinary citizens’ dissatisfaction with existing mainstream media models that were seen to have ‘broken faith’ with people”. The community media was thus born out of the desire to have an alternative media access because of the inability of the mainstream public service media and the commercial media to accommodate the interests of the diverse communities. This was due to the existence of too many communities of interests and on the other hand, too few mainstream media to accommodate those interests.

Importance of need assessment for community radio programmes

Need assessment is necessary for development of community radio programme. **Rouda and Kusy (1996)** suggested a four step model for conducting need assessment. *Step 1*: Performing a gap analysis. It is done in order to check the actual performance of organization and people against existing standard or to set new standard. *Step 2*: Prioritizing the needs according to their importance from a large list of needs. *Step 3*: Identification of causes of problem and/ or opportunities. *Step 4*: Identification of possible solution and growth opportunities. Needs are determined by comparing performance on the tests with existing norms that is the performance of the population upon which the test to be standardized. Other purposes used to determine needs are desires or wants. Perceptions of what should be the status of performance and requirements. The first two are determined by public or professional opinion. Requirements are found in existing laws, policies and regulating

procedures. According to **Stuflebeam, et. al. (2000)**, a common purpose of Need Assessment is the determination of goal prior to the assessment of needs. When goals have been determined, the need assessment is then conducted to determine if there are discrepancies between identified goals and current status. Need Assessment for planning may result in the identification of goals. The determination of the extent to which desired goals are being achieved or the specification of areas in which efforts and resources should be placed. Such assessment may be used to develop plans for immediate action or to develop long range plans for the future. The diagnosis or identification of problems and weaknesses is another common purpose of need assessment. Need Assessment for this purpose focus on identifying the areas in which the educational process or system is ineffective so that remedial actions may be taken. (**Mishra, 2002**). According to **Raghava (2003)**, Need assessment is the process of identifying and analyzing specific causes of problems within an organization in order to suggest an appropriate solution. **Verma (2006)** concluded that need assessment is the component of several evaluation models. These assessments are part of the evaluation process. It may have as their purpose determining areas of weakness prior to the implementation of a given form of instruction or treatment, determining gaps in implementation or determining the status of performance at intervals during the development or implementation of a treatment. Need Assessment is also conducted to hold educational institutions accountable of their efforts. Need assessment forms the foundation of any programme. The main purpose of an assessment or analysis is to perform a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be. The difference is called the gap. Needs are identified in terms of knowledge required, skills to be acquired and attitude to be changed. The determination of needs is such a broad concept applicable in so many situations that a common conceptual model and set of needs assessment procedures have not emerged. Instead, the literature describes a number of conceptual and procedural approaches, some are drawn from definitional and philosophic differences while others seem based on the task at hand. Major variations in need assessment appear in: (a) The definition used for the term "need". (b) The purpose for which need assessments are conducted. (c) The standards by which needs are identified and (d) the strategies and procedures used in the process. The most widely used

definition of "need" for need assessment is that of a discrepancy. (**Dwivedi and Purang, 2007**). **Vitkin (2007)** reported that need are relative to point in time, reference groups and context and thus cannot be described without consideration of the views, preferences and value of the individuals whose needs are concern. Need assessment is defined as 'the systematic identification of the needs and problems of a specific target group, tend to be an overlooked part of the rural development project planning process (**Somasekharappa and Gangadharappa, 2007**). Need assessment is considered to be the integral part of well designed programme. **Phillips and Phillips (2007)** rightly named this 'training needs' as 'performance intervention need'. That is through the training need assessment, the type of performance intervention which would actually bridge the performance gap is determined. Needs are closely linked to learning: the target population is looked at more closely to determine the actual content, context and delivery method of performance intervention. Among the information based processes which emerged during that time was the systematic determination of needs as a basic for programme planning and development. This process was called "Need Assessment". Need assessment require procedures for selecting or determining targeted status gathering information to determine current status relative to the target status and comparing the two to discover discrepancies. **Dwivedi and Purang (2007)** identified the following types of need analysis. (1) Context analysis: an analysis of business needs or other reasons the training is desired. (2) User analysis: analysis dealing with potential participants and instructors involved in the process. (3) Work analysis: analysis of the tasks being performed. (4) Costs benefit analysis: analysis of the Returns on Investment (ROI) of training. However it can be concluded that need assessment is an information gathering and analysis process which results in the identification of the needs of individuals, groups, institutions, communities or societies. It may be defined as difference between existing and desired performance of person. In other words, it is a gap between job requirement and job performance. That means it is gap between existing and desired level of competency. For present research study need assessment refers to the process whereby social, economic and psychological needs of rural women is identified, prioritized and selected for specific action as part of a community radio programmes.

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