

## **DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS – AN IMPORTANT INSTRUMENT IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO RURAL AND URBAN MASSES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

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The revolution in communication has created a whole new pattern of human dynamics. The current changes in society are basically because of shifts in public attitudes. It is because of this that Public Relations is rapidly gaining attention worldwide. The significance and dynamism of the concept of public Relations is likely to increase in scope and effect. The purpose of Public Relations practice is to establish a two way communication to resolve conflicts of interest by seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest, and to establish understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information.

The mass media will be a great help in the whole process of change in socialization as well as in education. The child today is being exposed to the radio and the cinema; very- soon these experiences from the mass media will become more vivid when the television comes throughout the country. The messages from the mass media will expose the child to experiences beyond the family caste and the village. When he leaves the secondary school he will be equipped to go through newspapers and magazines. In this manner, the mass media will expose the children, the youth and the adults to new ways of thinking so that they can develop new attitudes. It must be recognized that unless the attitudes are developed there is little hope of economic development, social equality, social mobility, social mobilization participation and political maturity.

Public Relations is not a mass medium itself, but PR uses the media as tools to accomplish its goals. The number of people in most of the public with each public Relations practitioners need to communicate is so large that it can be reached only

through mass media. The influence of public Relations on the mass media is extensive. Half of the news in many newspapers originates with the formal statements or news releases from organizations that want something in the paper. It is the same with radio, television, and even with the Internet. Misconceptions about public Relations include the idea that it is a one-way object for institutions and individuals to communicate with the public. But the good practice of public Relations seeks two-way communication between and among all the people and institutions concerned with an issue. Public Relations affect almost everyone who has contact with other human beings. All of us in one way or another practice public Relations daily. For an organization, every phone call, every letter, every e-mail, and every face-to-face encounter is a public Relations event. Unfortunately, Public Relations are not yet a profession like law, accounting or medicine, in which all practitioners are trained, licensed and supervised. Nothing prevents someone with little or no formal training from hanging out as a public Relations specialist. Such quacks embarrass professionals in the field and bring bad name to the profession. Public Relations is not a mass medium itself, but PR uses the media as tools to accomplish its goals. The number of people in most of the public with each public Relations practitioners need to communicate is so large that it can be reached only through mass media. The influence of public Relations on the mass media is extensive. Half of the news in many newspapers originates with the formal statements or news releases from organizations that want something in the paper. It is the same with radio, television, and even with the

Internet. Misconceptions about public Relations include the idea that it is a one-way object for institutions and individuals to communicate with the public. But the good practice of public Relations seeks two-way communication between and among all the people and institutions concerned with an issue. Public Relations affect almost everyone who has contact with other human beings.

Today, society having learned something from the past, the terms of reference of communication have largely changed. The audience is better educated and more people are equipped and willing to make objective judgments on the messages they receive. At the same time, the forelock-touching meekness of previous centuries has long been left behind by the average western man and there is everywhere an impassioned belief in the right to be told what is going on and why. The objectives of those who communicate are constantly and rightly questioned; there is much healthy skepticism and the mealy-mouthed can expect no mercy. The checks and balances of what is known as civilized society have brought about a situation in which it is rash to contemplate a course of action without at the same time weighing its effects on others and its acceptability to them as groups or as individuals.

Communications is a current catchword, both as a problem and as solution. It is worried over by managers and trade union leaders as much as by priests and politicians and with reason. Failure of communication can be identified as part of the cause of many industrial, commercial, and social troubles but only as part of cause. Public Relations is by no means universal but specific for every situation, it is at least a concept of analysis, action and communication which can do a great deal to help.

Communication with the citizens is necessary in any society and in any form of Government. It is more so in a democracy where the Government depends on popular backing. The citizen must be told of the Governmental plans, programmes, policies activities, successes, achievements, etc. so as to involve them and to get their willing

participation in the governance of the country. Also, communication from her citizens, their reaction to the policies and programmes must reach the policy makers and administrators to enable them to modify or change the programmes accordingly. In the context of large-scale economic development in agricultural sectors, the communication with the people through different media has assumed great importance.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH**

The Department of Information and Public Relations since its Inception in 1954 has passed through various stages and has done its best to equip itself with what was essentially required to meet the challenges of times and thus make its presence felt through the optimum use of its potential. The main function of department is to disseminate the policies and programmes of the Government in the right perspective and to gauge and assess the reactions of the quarter concerned and keep informed the Government about their impact amongst the masses. Besides it also educates the people about various programmes launched for the welfare of the people by the Centre and State Government from time to time. This task is indeed a challenging one due to difficult terrain, remoteness of areas, and the inadequate reach of communication. With the advancement and in the wake of day-today new addition of latest technology in the field of communication and Information this task has become all the more challenging. The Department of Information and Public Relations keeping pace with the times has emerged as a substantially dependable organisation which can undoubtedly deliver the goods and as such cope with the growing publicity demands and can ensure the uninterrupted flow of information to the beneficiaries of the State. Although the publicity cannot be measured in terms of money and goods, yet the department continues to perform from behind the curtain without the least intention to come on the forefront just to make other see the services it renders.

The Department of Information and Public Relations has adopted different strategies for different strata of society so that the objective they have assigned to themselves could be achieved in true earnest. For instance, the tools of publicity that are generally use in the urban areas are different than that of the tools that are used in the rural areas. The people of urban areas are comparatively more educated, more aware about the happenings on regional, national and international level because of the easy access to the print and electronic media. Their dialogue with each other is more subtle, analytical and the opinion they form after a thorough scan of events taking place in the information loaded world is too strong to waver whether it is in favour or against.

## OBJECTIVES

Public Relations to a great extent is an advocacy based on the intelligent use of media of communication to promote mutual understanding and to enable the public to have an informed opinion. Mainly department works on following objectives:-

- To find out the impact and to know the flow of information to the public on the policies, programmes and developmental activities initiated for the people of the State at large.
- To assess the reactions of the people and to take the feedback from different quarters and apprise the Government about the same.
- To identify the sources from where the information emanates and arrange to gather such information.
- To identify the targeted audiences whom such messages and information must reach.
- To initiate required and positive steps which could earn goodwill for the Government?
- To study about the Action to safeguard the image of the Government and raise its level to the expectations.
- To critically examine the Internal Relationship?
- To explain the concept of a democratic Government and its functions.
- To organise and coordinate the Public Relations

activities of Government in various sectors and at various levels.

- To identify the factors, which necessitate the practice of public Relations keeping in view the requirements of the Government.
- To understand the media and methods that are used for disseminating the information and to equip the department with latest technology to keep abreast with the fast changing scenario of the media world.
- To identify the steps, how to maintain close liaison with the media and keep on feeding the media with developmental and constructive stories in order to fill in the blanks, generally seems to be covered with anti-stories, in the absence of such truly deserving stories.

## TWENTY POINT PROGRAMME- 2013-2014

### *List of Twenty Points*

1. Garibi Hatao [Poverty Eradication]
2. Jan Shakti [Power to People]
3. Kisan Mitra [Support to Farmers]
4. Shramik Kalyan [Labour Welfare]
5. Khadya Suraksha [Food Security]
6. Subke Liye Aawas [Housing for All]
7. Shudh Peya Jal [Clean Drinking Water]
8. Jan Jan Ka Swasthya [Health for All]
9. Sabke Liye Shiksha [Education for All]
10. Anusuchit Jaati, Jan Jaati, Alp-sankhyakevam Anya Pichhra Varg Kalyan [Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and OBCs]
11. Mahila Kalyan [Women Welfare]
12. Bal Kalyan [Child Welfare]
13. Yuva Vikas [Youth Development]
14. Basti Sudhar [Improvement of Slums]
15. Paryavaran Sanrakshanevam Van Vridhi [Environment Protection and Afforestation]
16. Samajik Suraksha [Social Security]
17. Grameen Sadak [Rural Roads]
18. Grameen Oorja [Energization of Rural Area]
19. Pichhara KshetraVikas [Development of Backward Areas]
20. e- Shasan [IT enabled e-Governance] (Source : Planning Commission of Himachal Pradesh.)

## CONCLUSION

The role of Department of Public Relations in the State of Himachal Pradesh in implementation of development projects, in Una, Hamirpur, Solan & Bilaspur are laudable. In this context several region-based studies have proven that the department of Public Relations directly or indirectly plays a positive role in the changing the perceptions of the people regarding developmental projects. Whether the public is positive or narrow minded with regard to officials' association with the developmental work of the State is determined by the official of the Department of Public Relations. This study reveals that Department of Public Relations acts as a powerful link between the Government and the people, both rural and urban through its agencies in regard to the development projects.

It gives priority to the social media instruments for the propagation of Government plans. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the Department of Public Relations is the meter road of the functional Relations between the Government and the Public.

The respondents have given both objectives, subjective answers to the questions regarding the implementation of the Government plans which show that their opinions are diverse. This difference in the opinions of the public is due to their level of education, income, social and economic status. Suggestions have been given as to how the Department of Public Relations can improve of functioning with respect to rural and urban development. It can also through its healthy requests, create an atmosphere of transparency, accountability, between the Government and the Public. Regional studies have clarified that the Government utilizes the medium of rallies for rapid and effective connection with public. In these rallies the Government distribute pamphlets and other material of the developmental activities and also address the rallies. Media also is engaged for this purpose from quite some time the leaders of all levels have started utilizing the electronic social media which is broadly very impressive for one to one contact. Social media is especially, effective in

urban area where as in rural areas it is less effective. However, means for the improvement of social media are being developed. As a result the popularity of the conventional instruments of Public Relations is on the declining.

In the changing scenario, the functioning of the Department of Public Relations needs to be refurbished so that with the changing attitudes of people the Department of Public Relations can be modified and discharge duties effectively.

## SUGGESTIONS

Assessing the various dimensions of the research it is felt that certain areas and issues demand objective suggestions of the researcher, which are appended below:

1. Upgradation of technology should be undertaken as Public Relations Department with respect to the changing scenario.
2. Vehicles paucity along with the drivers should be removed. With more purchases and recruitment respectively.
3. The various 'Mandalis' of the Public Relations Department must reach the far-flung areas which have remained uncovered so far. Importantly they must repeat their visits for effective results. This will consolidate the Government Policies in the minds of the rural public.
4. Similarly Public Relations Department should deliver the services in the urban areas. Although from time to time Government advertises through hoardings, banners and rallies, yet many urban people are devoid of the knowledge of Government policies & plans.
5. The department of Information, Public Relations and culture should fill up the vacant post for its proper functioning.
6. The Government must give sufficient funding for the Public Relations departments to disseminate about the policies of the Government.
7. The Government must expand the Department of Information and Public

Relations department and in each panchayat/division and taluqa there should be Public Relations cell.

8. Proper tools should be used for campaign to spread the messages about the policies of the Government.
9. Frequent feedback should be taken at regular intervals from the public across the state and special attention should be given to those suggestions given by the public.
10. Data should be collected from the public how far the policies of the Government are beneficial.
11. Information should be collected about the hurdles and challenges in the channels of distribution of the policies.
12. Research should be conducted to know about the channels of Information and whether the information is reaching to the remote areas of the state.
13. Awareness campaign should be taken about the Department of Public Relations Department by campaigning in Radio/TV/ NewsPapers.
14. Beneficiaries of the Government policies should be interviewed and broadcasted as they are the real messengers.
15. Literature/Folk media/puppetry/ local story telling/ local folkore and other methods of traditional communication should also be used along with electronic media for dissemination of information.

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