

Chapter 3

MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

Making communication effective has always been the main concern of communication scholars. As an extension worker one would always wish to be effective communicator. This is because extension cannot be effective without effective communication. Before getting into the discussion of how to make communication effective, a logical approach is to discuss first what we mean by effective communication. At this point I would like to make distinction between two concepts i.e. accurate communication and effective communication. By accurate communication we mean that if the feelings or ideas a source intends to communicate are received by the receiver in the same way the source wants to be received and the receiver gets the same meaning as intended by the source. Such a communication can be regarded as accurate communication.

As far as effective communication is concerned, it is something different, an accurate communication may not be effective at all. Effectiveness relates to the intended purpose of communication. Communication can be regarded as effective if it serves the intended purpose. For example, if the purpose of communication is simply to create awareness about a new variety of wheat among farmers, the communication will be effective if they become aware of the new variety. However, if the purpose is to promote action, the communication will not be effective unless the desired action is taken in the form of adoption by them. Another criterion for effective communication may be the audience's support and action. Communication will be effective if it gains maximum support and action by the audience. For example, if an extension worker wishes to promote an idea that an organized group approach has many advantages over the individual approach, if maximum people favour the extension worker's view and start to get them organized, the communication act can be regarded as effective. No support and action by the audience will make

communication effective no matter how accurately the message is communicated. Effective communication involves achieving one's goals in a manner that, ideally, maintains or enhances the relationship in which it occurs. One key to successful communication is to share an adequate amount of information in a skilful manner (Adler and Rodman, 2003).

There are many basic essentials for making communication effective. Generally we can regard communication as effective if a skilful and competent communicator sending a useful message through the most suitable channels to an appropriate audience that responds as desired. The essentials of effective communication mentioned by Raman and Sharma (2004) include a common communication environment, cooperation between the sender and the receiver, selection of an appropriate channel, correct encoding and decoding of the message, and receipt of the desired response and feedback. Ingale (2006) argues that successful communication involves six key elements a skilful communicator, sending useful message, through proper channels, effectively treated messages to an appropriate audience to evolve the desired response. Successful communication is accomplished when the marketer selects and appropriate source, develops an effective message or appeal that is encoded properly, and then selects the channels or media that will best reach the target audience so that the message can be effectively decoded and delivered (Belch and Belch, 2004). In this context Ray (2003) argued that communication to be successful must be target oriented. The communicator must know the target, their needs, interests, resources, facilities constraints and even their approximate number and location.

3.1 Persuasive Communication

In most communication situations, the intension of the communicator is to persuade the communicatee(s). persuasion is basically a psychological process which inspires people to action. It occurs in a situation where two or more points of view exist. These points of view may differ completely

or partially whichever the case, there must be disagreement between the interactants. In extreme cases, persuasion becomes very difficult and challenging. No matter how experts you are in the topic, no matter how skilfully you prepare and deliver the message, some receivers will not agree with you. There might be certain areas for example religious belief where it becomes difficult to foster a change. However, you may enter into a persuasive communication with a realistic sense of what you can accomplish. If the receivers are not strongly committed to a certain belief or view point, you can expect that your communication will move them toward your view point. In case of strong commitments of the receivers with certain beliefs, you can consider your communication persuasive if it leads even a few to accept your view point. How successful you are in any particular persuasive communication, will depend on how well you tailor your message to the values, attitudes, beliefs, needs, and interests of your receivers. Much of the success of persuasive communication depends on a persuasive message.

3.1.1 A persuasive message

A persuasive message is one, which is used to motivate a receiver to accept an idea or a particular course of action advocated by the communication. Not all messages are persuasive. A message becomes persuasive when it provides sufficient ground/logic for the receiver to get himself convinced and behave accordingly. According to Burgoon (1974) most persuasive messages comprise three parts: i) Claim, ii) Warrant, and iii) Data. *خطابہ / مانا طلب / مانا حق جتنا مانا در خواست / مانا*

A claim is any statement which a communicator wants his receivers to accept or agree to. The claim may be a policy claim or a fact claim or a value claim (ibid). A statement by an extension worker "fertilizer should be made available by the fertilizer companies to the farmers at affordable price and in sufficient quantity" is an example of a policy claim. The extension worker can make a fact claim "farmers all over the Punjab are not getting urea fertilizer at fixed price and in required quantity". He may make a value claim "the availability

of fertilizer to farmers in the central Punjab is much better than to the southern Punjab”.

In persuasive communication the communicator needs to support his claim with what we call ‘a warrant’. Burgoon (1974) argued that a warrant must be implicitly accepted by the audience, otherwise it remains just another claim. For example an extension worker may say “the farmers should not apply fertilizer to their crops blindly. It is simply a claim. In support of this claim he may say “fertilizer requirements are different for different crops and also for different soils. Thus blind application of fertilizer would be mere wastage of resources”. Such a statement would be a warrant.

To persuade the audience, the communicator may use data or facts. The data are specific evidence produced by the communicator in support of his claim. For example, the extension worker can make a claim “the farmers who use balanced fertilizer at proper time in an appropriate manner, get higher crop yields”. In support of this claim he may say “during last Rabi season 20% farmers in the Punjab applied fertilizer to their wheat crop at the right time, in the right way and according to the recommended dose. Resultantly they got 50% increase in their yield besides saving 30% fertilizer expenses”. This would be an example of data used by the extension worker in support of his claim to persuade farmers for proper application of fertilizer for maximum gain.

3.1.2 Persuasive message appeals

A communicator involved in persuasive communication may use different persuasive message appeals. Burgoon (1974) reported three basis appeals identified by Aristotle i.e. using logical argument (logos), an emotional argument (pathos) or an argument based on credibility (ethos). A logical appeal is one which presents logic or evidence in support of a message for its acceptance by the receiver. For example an extension worker may say to the farmers “if you use hybrid seed in maize, you will get four times more yield than the traditional varieties”. This statement provides sufficient logic to the maize growers to persuade them for the adoption of hybrid seed. An

emotional appeal focuses on the consequences which will result if someone accepts or rejects a certain message. For example, an extension worker will be using an emotional appeal when he says "the farmer who will be at the top at district level in wheat competition, he will get a tractor free of cost". You might have observed different TV advertisements highlighting the use of a particular fertilizer or pesticide leading toward bumper crop with more yield and high income ultimately leading to the overall uplift of family with all amenities of life. There are in fact the emotional appeals used by different advertising companies just to enhance the sale of a particular product. The third type of persuasive appeal relates to credibility either of the message or the communicator. There is no doubt in it that a message received from a credible source is most likely to be treated as trustworthy by the receiver and is accepted by him. A source with a very high credibility with his receivers need not to use logical or emotional appeals for persuasion.

Using evidence to persuade: Evidence or data in support of a claim can be highly persuasive. It varies from person to person or message to message or situation to situation. As mentioned earlier that a communicator with high credibility need not to use evidence or data in support of his claim as a means of persuasion. Similarly certain messages are more logical or more emotional than others, thus need less support of evidence or data. There might be situations, for example, under emergency, people are likely to be persuaded more easily for help than under normal conditions. However, for achieving high level of persuasion, the extension workers must present their message supported with sufficient evidence/data instead of giving simple messages. Burgoon (1974) argued that evidence must be delivered clearly if it is to have maximum persuasive effect. A poor delivery will not only make evidence useless for persuading an audience but also reduce the speaker's credibility for future messages.

Using incentives to persuade: It is always good to use incentives to motivate or persuade the intended receivers for

the acceptance of a particular message or technology. Skilful communicators generally use this technique as a persuasive message appeal. People tend to be persuaded easily if they are sure that they will get some benefit from what is being advocated. In farming, for example, the farmers are motivated to adopt improved agricultural technologies, and best management practices simply by giving some incentives in the form of tractors, implements, cash prizes, certificates etc. given through various competitions. Agricultural TV advertisements depicting a farmer's wife full of jewellery, his kids studying in top class schools and all enjoying a good living as a result of using a particular agricultural input/product, are examples of using incentives as persuasive appeals.

Using fear appeals to persuade: As against incentives, the communicators may use fear appeals to persuade the intended audience. It is because people do react strongly to fear appeals. Burgoon (1974) identified three types of fear appeals: i) strong fear appeals, ii) moderate fear appeals and iii) low fear appeals. A strong fear appeal is high in intensity. A film intended to make people stop smoking which shows cancerous lungs of a smoker being removed, is an example of high fear appeal. A moderate fear appeal presents the same message moderately, as in a case of film which shows people smoking and then coughing. A low fear appeal is depicted in a message that scientists have established a link between smoking and lung cancer (ibid). In agricultural context a documentary showing non-use of proper plant protection manners leading to complete or partial destruction of cotton crop due to insect/pest diseases, can be treated as a common example of using fear appeal to persuade cotton growers for effective coverage of plant protection to their crops.

Using intense language to persuade: It is the intensity of the language used by the communicator, that matters considerably in persuading people for a particular action or decision. For example, the claim "water is becoming a problem for our agriculture in the years to come" may have less intensity than the claim "water shortage will be serious threat

to our future agriculture". Both claims will vary in their effect on the audience. Similarly when an extension worker says to the farmers "if you use this particular variety, you will definitely get double yield", he may get different results, when he says "if you use this particular variety, you might get double yield". Thus it is the intensity of the language that affects the persuasion process. However, it may not be true that use of intense language produces the same results in all situations. It varies from situation to situation, speaker to speaker, and audience to audience. The speakers should be wise enough to decide when and where to use intense language.

Using humour to persuade: The communicator involving a source with a sense of humour may be more persuasive than a source without such sense. Burgoon (1974) argued that there is no evidence that humour affects persuasion. According to him the questions about the importance of humour in persuasive communication remain to be answered by researchers. However, it is quite evident that a source having a high sense of humour is liked by the audience. By using sense of humour, he may keep his audience active and fresh. It may also enhance audience's perception of the source's sociability, which is an important dimension of source's credibility. Therefore, humorous communication is expected to persuade the audience directly or indirectly.