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## EXTENSION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OF AN NGO: A CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** Present study was conducted as case study considering New Delhi based National NGO implementing its rural women empowerment project in the villages of central Uttar Pradesh. Technology selection and put to use was observed as ever first component in transfer of technology process operated at project site. Information generated by various non-government agencies was rapidly exchanged within the voluntary sectors. These agencies used to publish regular bulletins, leaflets, posters based on their own experiences of success in specific field or related work done by other NGOs. NGO headquarters at New Delhi received such publications in large amount. Some of these publications or their photo copies were reposted or personally sent to the project offices by some visitors/staff members. Telecasting or broadcasting of these productions were made on Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR). NGO headquarter also purchased some selected audio-visual recordings from private firms and voluntary agencies. Project staff members were trained at project site by experts coming from headquarter to handle these audio-visual aids skillfully and make the teaching environment more effective by the teaching-learning process more learners friendly and learners centered. Information generated at NGO headquarter and from other prestigious social research and development organizations meant for field projects have been documented, validated and tested in light of end users, socio-economic and socio-cultural environment and then meaningful information is communicated to the change agents for actual diffusion with intended purpose.

**Keywords:** NGO, Case study, Technology development and Transfer, rural communication.

**Introduction:** A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization that is neither a part of a government nor a conventional for-profit business. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons. Some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers. NGOs are highly diverse groups of organizations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world. Some may have charitable status, while others may be registered for tax exemption based on recognition of social purposes. Others may be fronts for political, religious, or other interests<sup>[1]</sup>.

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been potential partners in all sphere of development globally and particularly in India. Several thousands of NGOs are functioning in the area of rural development. NGO covered under

present study works for rural women empowerment in 12 villages of Central Uttar Pradesh with its head office in New Delhi. The present case study was conducted with the objective to explore the extension components adopted by grassroot volunteers engaged with rural women empowerment project.

**Research methodology:** Research methodology adopted for the study was scientific observational methods focusing on space and time sampling. Time slots were allocated for project office campus as well as head office and data were collected through both non-participant and participant observation methods<sup>[2]</sup> whereas content analysis<sup>[3]</sup> was done using secondary data as and when needed.

Case study method of social research was used in this study. According to Thomas (2011)<sup>[4]</sup>, "Case

studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more method. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame—an object—within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates."

**Results and Discussion:** Data collected were analyzed with using appropriate statistical tools and following inferences were made.

**Technology Localization:** Technology selection and put to use was observed as ever first component in transfer of technology process operated at project site. Technology studied were mostly in soft in nature as suggested by Roger (1983) [5]. Technology selection and its application in a project area were solely controlled by the local staff members and they were found independent in dealing with this process. Before diffusing the selected technology, the district coordinator overview the content first then he communicated the use and application of a particular technology to the several field organizers of the project. Considering the socio-cultural and other factors as studied by Dwivedi (1994) affecting their communication effectiveness which they experiences during communication with beneficiaries in villages, field organizers were observed to suggest modification to the district coordinator in order to make the message (technology) more meaningful, understandable, realistic and adoptable. These modifications include replacement of complex technical words with locally popular terms, complex sentences into simple sentences, inducing motivational inputs etc.

Information generated by various non-government agencies was rapidly exchanged within the voluntary sectors. These agencies used to publish regular bulletins, leaflets, posters based on their own experiences of success in specific field or related work

done by other NGOs. Through publication they also used to inform the fellow agencies about events to be organized in near future such as seminar, conferences, workshops and exhibition etc on developmental themes. Addresses and objectives of numerous national and international NGOs and funding agencies also motivated the budding NGOs to subscribe these publications for strengthening their networking in development sector.

NGO headquarters at New Delhi received such publications in large amount. Some of these publications or their photo copies were reposted or personally sent to the project offices by some visitors/staff members. However, published materials in regional and local languages were also received directly at project office. Besides receiving this learning material from other agencies, NGO itself published a series of gender and empowerment related materials including poster, cards and some of its regular publications i.e. newsletter etc. NGO headquarter also developed audio-visual cassettes based on gender related issues. Telecasting or broadcasting of these productions were made on Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR). NGO headquarter also purchased some selected audio-visual recordings from private firms and voluntary agencies. Audio-visual services at project site were regularly updated by performing video shows in project villages. Table-1 depicts the number of such publications and audio-visual materials as per their content received at project site from various agencies and headquarter. Table-1 further indicates that publication and audio-visual materials related to women mobilization, legal counseling to women and health care were received frequently i.e. 82, 50 and 38, respectively, whereas leaflets and bulletins containing information about social forestry and rural micro-enterprises were also received in considerable number.

**Table 1: Distribution of published and audio-visual materials as per its content**

S.N.	Contents	Book	Bulletin	Leaflets/ folder	Poster	Audio cassette	Video cassette	Total
1.	Mobilization	2	36	27	5	3	9	82
2.	Legal	-	15	21	4	5	5	50
3.	Health	1	11	17	8	-	1	38
4.	Goatery	-	7	2	-	-	-	9
5.	Poultry	-	3	2	1	-	-	6
6.	Fishery	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
7.	Social forestry	-	8	11	-	-	1	20
8.	Small savings	1	2	-	2	-	-	5
9.	Rural enterprises	1	6	10	2	-	1	20
10.	Spiritual	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
11.	General	-	10	-	-	-	2	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>249</b>

This phenomenon can be attributed to the flow of financial aids from national and international agencies towards launching the development project by NGOs and Government on some burning themes like women empowerment, health care, environment and micro-enterprises.

Analysis of Table-2 further supports this vision. Letterheads analysis revealed that maximum letters received from national level NGOs who were specialized in their specific fields such as women empowerment, health care, environment and micro-enterprises.

Project staff members were trained at project site by experts coming from headquarter to handle these audio-visual aids skillfully and make the teaching environment more effective by the teaching-learning process more learners friendly and learners centered. Sometimes District Coordinator (DC) also used to organize short i.e. one or two days training programmes for field workers and volunteers. Nurse (NR), (Field Organiser One) FO<sub>1</sub>, (Field Organiser Two) FO<sub>2</sub> and (Community Level Volunteers) CLVs had attended weekly training programmes at Delhi three or four times whereas DC and (Field Organiser Three)FO<sub>3</sub> attended more numbers of training programmes on effective communication, group dynamics and gender sensitivity etc.

Besides, bulk of literature and teaching materials from various development organizations were received at project office. Team members, during their spare time, consulted and discussed over these printed teaching materials. It was observed that personal and circular letters play major role in organizational networking.

Extent of correspondence indicates the inter-organizational strength in dealing with the various components of TOT system. Effective technology-transfer system emphasizes the coordination and multilevel networking with each and every step of TOT process. In order to understand this unidentified or hidden way of networking, letterheads received at project office were analyzed. Data from this analysis is depicted in Table-2.

Interestingly, except (Accountant) AC, all other staff members were directly involved in transfer of technology process by minimizing load of office formalities on them. These staff members were repeatedly instructed by headquarters to extensively participate in field extension activities. Bunch of letters were also received at project office exclusively from NGO head office. Analysis of these letters helped in having better understanding of the specific interest of project team at head office in managing this project. TOT related management was given priority by head quarter team.

**Table.2: Distribution of official letters received from various institutions/agencies as per their content**

S.N.	Contents	Institution								Total
		Foreign			Indian				Local	
		Govt.	NGO	GOI	State	Dist.	Block	NGO	NGOs	
1.	Mobilization	2	7	3	-	4	3	53	6	78
2.	Legal	-	-	-	-	"	"	31	-	31
3.	Health	-	3	5	2	3	-	18	-	31
4.	Goatery	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	5
5.	Poultry	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	5
6.	Fishery	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	4
7.	Social forestry	-	2	3	2	-	-	8	-	15
8.	Small savings	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
9.	Rural enterprises	-	-	1	1	8	-	7	-	17
10.	Spiritual	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
	Total	2	12	14	8	23	7	117	8	191

Table-3 reveals that out of total 39 letters posted from head office, 24 letters including 4 fax messages were exclusively bearing the instructions and suggestions about effective TOT management. This denies the facts significantly that NGOs focused its most attention on their financial management rather its actual development work at field level. In order to make the local staff advanced in their approach, they were allowed

to visit various change agencies and were encouraged to discuss with new change agents about their successful experiences. Staff members were advised to have better public relations with other players in the field of social development. In response to frequent approaches followed by NGO, experts and field level development workers from several organizations also visited project area.

**Table.3: Distribution of official letters as per contents dispatched by NGO headquarters through various mode of postal communication**

S.N.	Contents	Mode of post				Total
		Simple Post	Regd. Post	Fax	By Hand	
1.	TOT process management	13	2	4	5	24
2.	Personnel management	3	-	-	1	4
3.	Financial management	-	4	2	1	7
4.	Miscellaneous	2	-	-	2	4
	Total	18	6	6	9	39

**Postal and Tele-communication:** Out of total 9 team members, 5 members were found to exchange the information with headquarters team members on telephone. The average time spent on telephone conversation was 3.75 minutes or 255 seconds during office hours. Findings indicate that the highest number of telephone calls including local, STD and ISD were made by DC followed by FO<sub>3</sub>, NR, FO<sub>2</sub> and FO<sub>1</sub>, who made local telephone calls as an essential requirement to accomplish their job. However, rarely they made STD calls to headquarter with prior permission from DC. For making STD calls to headquarter or to some other agencies FO<sub>3</sub> also sought prior permission from DC. However, she was allowed by DC (as per the requests made by headquarter team members) for making STD calls as and when needed without seeking prior permission. Once Director, NGO had gone to ILO headquarter, Switzerland for one year on deputation. DC and FO<sub>3</sub> made ISD calls during that period to discuss some policy matters with Director.

STD calls by DC and FO<sub>3</sub> were directed towards NGO headquarter and other NGO's district projects i.e. Kanpur, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Delhi along with some calls to State Health Ministry and NGOs.

Local calls by DC were made for appointment from district development officers, local welfare organizations, resource persons' residences, business outlets and hotels whereas FO<sub>3</sub>, NR, FO<sub>2</sub> and

**Box .1: Criteria for information evaluation in the NGO**

- Appropriateness of information/technology as per the socio-economic and socio-cultural environment of the clientele
- Bottlenecks or obstacles in information delivery amongst local community
- Simplicity-complexity of information
- Usefulness of information in terms of monetary gains, enhancing production or productivity or improvement in quality of life
- Creating awareness and helpful in enhancing technical competency
- Present status of functional knowledge and nature of job to be performed
- Credibility of information sources

Information storage pattern of project team was different at office and field site. After evaluating the received information while following the above mentioned indicators DC, FO<sub>1</sub>, and FO<sub>3</sub> stored the evaluated information after having agreement

FO<sub>1</sub>, made their local calls related to their work at district headquarter. When comparing with telephone calls, frequency of writing the personal letters to officials was very low. Members assumed that writing the letter to Government Authority means we delayed our work by 15-20 days as compared to telephonic way of doing work.

**Information Processing:** Information generated at NGO headquarter and from other prestigious social research and development organizations meant for field projects have been documented, validated and tested in light of end users, socio-economic and socio-cultural environment and then meaningful information is communicated to the change agents for actual diffusion with intended purpose.

However, before passing it to the actual end users, local change agents were often found processing this information. Their information processing comprises of re-evaluation, re-testing and finally storage of information for further use.

During the course of observation, researcher recorded several events of information evaluation and storage especially at the time of staff-meet or staff-client meet at campus. Evaluation of received information was done following several criteria by staff members. These criteria or indicators of evaluation were identified; however, the same could not be quantified by the researcher. Main criteria or indicators adopted by project team members to evaluate the information have been presented in Box 1.

and consensus of all team members at office site whereas during field meetings and visits, information was stored mainly by FO<sub>3</sub>, FO<sub>1</sub> and CLVs. Table 4 reveals four mode of information storage with the description of place where information was received,

evaluated and stored by the team members. It was interesting to note that field workers were also

storing the information by memorizing only without documenting their future field task.

**Table.4: Distribution of various mode of information storage at office and field site**

S.N.	Mode of storage	Venue		Total
		Office	Field	
1.	Files/registers	18	7	25
2.	Personal notes	2	13	15
3.	Preserving leaflets/ handouts/bulletins	10	-	10
4.	By memorizing	-	6	6
	Total	30	26	56

**Information Use:** Information evaluated by project team members was stored in different mode for further use. Change agents in organization firstly used this information for staff development at 2-3 levels then gradually they approached some selected clientele to be developed as key clientele and finally information was disseminated to the end users through different indigenous and modern channels of communication. Following illustration may explain information use pattern followed by project team at district level project of NGO.

*By DC, FO1 and FO2 during their field visits and village meetings volunteers were chosen carefully from progressive and innovative beneficiaries. These volunteers were included some times in staff development activities such as field trips and visits to the change agencies. Essential support and incentives were also made available to these volunteers for their wholeheartedly involvement and participation as well as to encourage them for undertaking small organizational responsibility such as collection of feed-back and monitoring of input management status among beneficiaries in the villages. They were also sent to participate in Delhi based small training programme, if their work was found satisfactory by DC. Similarly, they were also recommended by NGO to attend one or two day training programmes conducted by block office or district development departments. Gradually, they became the active members of NGO's team work at field level. Staff members quite often were found seeking their advice and help in selecting intended beneficiaries and also in implementing field programmes.*

Volunteers, besides handling routine community level management, were observed quite active and cooperative during special event like mahila mela, empowerment campaign and other celebrations. When evaluation and impact studies were conducted by external agencies, these volunteers performed key role in highlighting the NGO's

performance in their area/communities by revealing the extended benefits to rural women and other beneficiaries. Whenever evaluation team or outsiders desired to talk with beneficiaries these volunteers skillfully presented the case of appropriate beneficiaries. These beneficiaries picked up by volunteers, were found conscious about NGO's prestige and credibility. Volunteers and selected beneficiaries were found skillful in convincing the visitors and were aware about return or output that might affect the NGO as a whole and themselves in particular.

**Conclusion:** Observational study can be concluded that technology generation, processing and utilization are not merely technical steps of large scientific and industrial organization rather these complicated steps are also being followed by the community level organization. There is a need to train the grassroots staff in more scientific manner for strengthening field level extension strategies among NGO sector.

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