

Role and responsibilities of Mass Media in disease outbreak and health promotion intervention



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Donovan in 1990 identified the role of mass media as informing or educating people about the ill effects of various unhealthy practices. Reminding people of the ill effects of which they are already aware and maintaining the salience of this knowledge. Increasing people's motivations to adopt various healthy lifestyle practices, biosecurity measures either directly or indirectly by sensitizing or predisposing individuals to other contributory influences.

Providing self-help information on how to get help or how to help oneself. Providing social support by showing some evidence that society disapproves of unhealthy lifestyle practices in question like poultry farmer littering their dead birds suspected to disease that was threaten public health or supplying suspicious birds to poultry meat market in Bhaktapur area during recent bird flu outbreak was declared. Providing a context within which regulatory change can be introduced it was media's regular alertness which made government to declare Bhaktapur, Kritipur and some parts of Kathmandu for emergency bird flu control activities.

According to DeFleur Media can influence and shape societal/cultural norms by reinforcing existing patterns which can lead people to believe that given social norms and government policies are maintained by society. Media can create new shared convictions with respect to topics with which the public has had little experience. Media can also change existing norms and due to which convert people from one form of behavior to another.

Mass media are the channel through which large numbers of people are addressed. More often than not the target group makes little or no effort to receive a message. There are two major communication media channels in health and disease outbreak related program. These are interpersonal and mass media. Mass media strategies are also

said to be more intrusive as programs are imposed as a whole package to the entire population/community rather than being developed because of individual need. Mass media include print and electronic media such as newspaper, radio, television, film, and video. Dissemination of messages is from a single source and reaches a large number of people and places. Various formats that are appropriate for different target audiences and messages are offered by different type of media. These format include documentaries, news, spot/plug, drama, talk shows, short feature, educational program, forum, jingle, posters, leaflets, brochures, newsletter.

The strength of mass media is their ability to reach very large audiences. Their weakness lies in that the audience reached by mass media are diverse and largely undifferentiated. This weakness is somewhat reduced by developing messages designed specifically for particular audiences. In mass media there is also little control over the audience's exposure to the message. Repetition of the message through various formats increases the chance of reaching more of the target audience. Another weakness of mass media is their inability to obtain immediate feedback most of time. The user of medium should be able to develop feedback mechanisms such as viewers groups reactions.

Roles of Mass Media for health promotion and disease outbreak control program: Media as educator in this role mass media is the primary change agent and is the sole means of achieving health promotion and diseases outbreak control program objectives. Experiences have shown that media can effectively change behaviors as well as some deterrent of behavior like attitudes and knowledge. Media can also play role as supporter this function of media is important for problems of behavioral relapse. Media is shown to have reinforce previous message, support existing beliefs and health changes and encourage maintenance of the change undertaken. Media can also play role as promoter this function is the most common role of mass media. For any disease outbreak as well as health promotion activities carried out during such period effort made by television and newspaper advertisements, fliers, brochures, posters like media tool is being considered as common source of information.

Media can also play role as supplement in this function

media supplements the effects of health promotion interventions as well as control and containment of disease outbreaks. Media can play a supplementary role by being integrated into the program which will help to achieve more effective outcome. Which have proved the information disseminated by media during the containment and control of unexpected outbreak of bird flu in around valley in recent time? Which period was also a difficult time to mass media too? The role played by different media need to be complemented. Has not so a havoc might have created in general public.

Lazarsfeld and Merton have identified for several conditions for effective use of mass media for communicating propaganda for social values. These includes monopolization a condition where there is little or no communication of opposing values, policies or public image so that the absence of counter propaganda may contribute to meeting the desired effect of the disseminated message. Canalization this condition suggests that communication may be effective if the desired effect is simply the channelling of existing attitudes or behavior in a different but similar direction. This condition requires that desired effect is not the creation of new attitudes or behaviors that are in conflict with existing ones. Supplementation requires that mass media be supplemented by interpersonal contact since attitude and behavior changes require personalized communication.

The media are all powerful and have untapped potential which was developed in the early 1970s as a result of the tremendous impact of broadcast media especially commercial advertizing commercial goods and services. The media may be effective under some circumstances if the appropriate conditions are met.

For this following factors influence the effectiveness of mass media. Credibility the source must be trusted and reliable. But some times in competition to scoop the news disseminate news like death due to bird flu in Chitwan or swine flu in bird flu outbreak area in Bhaktapur by some media person which latter on turnout to be false. Which nearly created a psychological fear to public in general. Message should be relevant and meaningful to the receiver and able to understand. Media professionals should be involved to determine how best to use the media.

FARMERS MEET PM DEMANDING COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES

Kathmandu : Nepal Revolutionary Farmers' Federation has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, demanding compensation for damages incurred due to use of low-quality rice seeds. The Federation called on the Prime Minister today at his official residence Baluwatar. Farmers of Bhaktapur and Kavre who planted the rice seeds of DY-69 variety supplied to them by the Kasthamandap Trade Point Kathmandu suffered huge loss as the rice saplings yielded no fruit. The seeds were later reportedly outdated.

Paddy plants cultivated on a large scale (thousands of ropanis of land) in these districts turned unproductive, Federation President Dilli Prasad Kafle said. This is the second time the Federation met the PM and submitted a memorandum, seeking compensation to the victims who bore loss equivalent to over Rs 900 million due to negligence of government authorized seeds suppliers. It may be noted that earlier an all-party investigation committee was formed to look after farmers' problems and the same committee decided to take initiative for compensation. It has been almost a year that the victim farmers have been running from post to pillar for the compensation.

YOUTHS START LIVESTOCK FARMING DISCARDING US PR

Pathari : Two brothers of Shanishchare in Morang district have undertaken livestock farming by discarding American PR, at a time when youths are increasingly opting for foreign employment. Gyanendra Bhitrikoti and Yogendra of Shanishchare Municipality- 5, Pathari who returned from their jobs in Washington DC for four years, have started livestock farming in Shanishchare. They said they were not given works other than porter and laborer. Both had been working in a Washington DC hotel and had been cleaning plates. They started the farming in the third week of August in two bighas of land.

They have now kept ducks, chickens, goats, cows in the farm and fish in the ponds. Bhitrikoti said they returned to Nepal for doing something rather than work in a foreign land. They have 20 milking cows in their farm, and sell milk in Pathari Bazaar. We make Rs. 15,000 from the cows, said Bhitrikoti. They also plan to keep pigs and wild boars in the farm. In foreign countries, there is opportunity for work and money, but there is no social life as in Nepal, he said. Bhitrikoti brothers are now an example among unemployed youths that one can make great economic benefit if we undertake agriculture with modern technology, said a local Paras Paudel.

NEXT CAMPAIGN ORGANIC AGRO REVOLUTION

Falebas, Parbat,: The All Nepal Peasant Federation has started organic farming revolution in agriculture. Acting Chairman of the All Nepal Peasants Federation, a sister organization of CPN-UML, Keshav Lal Shrestha said organic agro-revolution has been started with an eight-year action plan to make the country's economy stronger. At the federation's zonal meeting, he said organic farming was stressed as there was decrease in productivity due to use of chemical fertilizers.

He said there were five packages for it, including organic agro-farm, college and university, bio-fertilizer factory, and target is to produce 3,700,000 metric tonnes of organic fertilizer. Shrestha also informed of plans of generating hydro power and establishing elderly home in the participation of farmers. An agro cooperative will be established for it, he said. On the occasion, UML Parbat Acting Chairman Raju Prasad Paudel said the campaign should be result-oriented.

AGITATION PARALYSES AGRO UNIVERSITY

Ratnanagar (Chitwan),: The Agriculture and Forestry Science University based in Rampur of Chitwan has been in sorry state due to strike for a couple of months. Regular operation of classes here has been completely halted after the university teachers and staffs have enforced strike objecting to the appointment of teachers and employees. The regular operation of the university came to a halt when the disgruntled side padlocked the Dean Office and initiated indefinite sit-in citing dissatisfaction over the ignorance to the due process in appointments.

University Registrar Surya Kanta Ghimire said the teaching and learning has been disrupted due to agitation by a section of university teachers. He is hopeful of outlet to the problem as dialogue is on with dissenting side. Nepal National University Teachers Organization and employees had launched agitation alleging the university administration of appointing teachers and employees against the statute of the university, said Organization's Member Ananta Subedi.

