



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

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**Abstract**

*As the communication technology is fast changing in the modern era and people are highly connected to information there is every need to disseminate the information about the policies of the government to the public by using these technologies. For better e-governance and to reach the information quickly what are the measures used by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations dept of the government of Himachal Pradesh. As the role of Public relations is to have a two way communication with its public which includes its internal public and external public and the scope is very large which consists of rural and urban masses there is every need to have an effective communication system. This paper discuss about the role of Directorate of Public Relations government of Himachal Pradesh. It also discusses about the different polices of the government of Himachal Pradesh.*

The purpose of Public Relations practice is to establish a two way communication for resolving conflicts of interest by means of seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest, and to establish understanding of socio-economic and political activities among masses taking place within and outside of the nation.

The mass media will be of great help in metamorphosing the social as well as economic aspects of the community. The youth is being exposed to the electronic and printing media and social networking which has reduced the gap of rural and urban population of any country of the World. The media has acquainted the youth with new development worldwide along with the cultural and ethical values of their families. The youth has been getting knowledge regarding universal events happening around the world since their childhood as the influence of all kind of media is increasing very rapidly among them. Thus the media inculcates the new ways of thinking among different aged-groups that helps bring changes in their attitudes to face various kinds of problems and resolve them in harmony for their own and overall development of the World irrespective of their creed and caste. The positive attitudes of the masses helps bring about economic development, social and economic equality, perfect mobility of labour worldwide and political maturity to maintain peace and prosperity in the world. Public relations of the people don't depend upon media rather it enables them to accomplish their goal.

The enrichment of communication among people which develops their public relations largely hinge upon 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 delivered by different people and organizations regarding their friends and rivals in their respective spheres of life. It is the same with radio, television, and even with the Internet. The one of the misconceptions of different tools of public Relations is that it is a unilateral objective of different institutions and individuals to communicate with the public. However, the good practice of public Relations involves two-way communication among people and institutions. Public Relations affect every person who has any kind of connection with other human beings. All of us practice public Relations daily in one or another way. 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.

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**

### **Introduction**

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- 2016-2017**

#### **List of Twenty Points**

1. GaribiHatao [Poverty Eradication]
2. Jan Shakti [Power to People]



3. KisanMitra [Support to Farmers]
4. ShramikKalyan [LabourWelfare ]
5. KhadyaSuraksha [Food Security]
6. SubkeLiyeAawas [Housing for All]
7. ShudhPeyaJal [Clean Drinking Water]
8. Jan JanKaSwasthya [Health for All]
9. SabkeLiyeShiksha [Education for All]
10. AnusuchitJaati, Jan Jaati, Alp-sankhyakevam Anya Pichhra VargKalyan [Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and OBCs]
11. MahilaKalyan [Women Welfare ]
12. BalKalyan [Child Welfare]
13. YuvaVikas [Youth Development]
14. BastiSudhar [Improvement of Slums]
15. ParyavaranSanrakshanevam Van Vridhi [Environment Protection and Afforestation]
16. SamajikSuraksha [Social Security]
17. GrameenSadak [Rural Roads ]
18. GrameenOorja [Energization of Rural Area]
19. PichharaKshetraVikas [Development of Backward Areas]
20. e- Shasan [IT enabled e-Governance ](Source : Planning Commission

#### **Data Collection was made on Satisfied Random Sampling Method**

Survey: 100 respondent have been approached in each segment of the sample. the data for observation has been taken form the respondent in including the students,employess,unepemplyed,housewifelaborers,businessman,shopkeepers,farmer etc. Which are the taken for study? all these respondent have given there objective and subjective views on various problematic area of Public Relation, Keeping in views the various levels of 'Responsiveness' and their varied responses have been interpreted.

In this context, there were 6.7% of the respondents who have studied up to 10th. On the other hand, the respondent who have studied up to 12th class, were 43.30 %, whereas 33% were graduates Lastly the post graduates were 16.70%.Keeping in view, various tabulated figures which indicate that there were 90% males, whereas only 10% were females. Regarding the income groups of the respondent, which indicate that 10.30% of the respondents belong to the income group, below Rs. 10000. 3.30% of the respondents belong to the income group from Rs. 11000 to 20000. On the other hand there were 16.70% of the respondents, who lie in the income group of Rs.21000 to 30000 . Whereas the respondents belonging to the income group of 31000to 50000, which accounts 53.30%. Lastly, the respondents belonging to income above Rs.51000, account for 13.40%. clearly indicates all the employees of Public Relation Department have started their career with the same department and continue to be with the department till date.

The establishment branch accounts for 30 %; 6.7 % each to advertisement and cultural department. The respondents in respect of Technical Printing and Production and other category is 33.30%, 6.70% and 16.7%, respectively.

Keeping in view the varied functions of Public Relation Department, there were 46.70 % of the respondents who have viewed the function as, "establishing a better relationship between public and the government". On the other hand, 10 % of the respondents have highlighted the functions of the department as 'Publicity of Public policies'. Whereas 13.30 % of the respondents have been considered as 'Entertainers'. Lastly, 30 % of the respondents have considered all above mentioned 'functions' performed by the public relation department. Keeping in view the response of , which indicates a formulation of different development plans, it has been observed that the 23.30 % of the respondents, have considered it as 'campaigning for different schemes' whereas 6.70 % of the respondents have considered it as better public relations. 70 % of the respondents have not specified any of the two responses.

Keeping in view the response of the respondents which indicate an 'Affirmative view' on acquaintance with various development schemes/ programme, account 76.70 %. On the other hand, there were 23.30 % of the respondents who have not committed to any response. As is evident from the table, there are 93.30 % of the respondents who believe that all information is disseminated convincingly. 6.7 % of the respondents have failed to form any opinion on this perception. Regarding conducting the survey for knowing the effects of 'public relation' on the masses, it has been observed that the 60 % of the respondents have replied in affirmative, whereas 6.9 % of the respondents have responded in negative; 33% believe that the effect is 'occasionally' As regards assessing the strong and weak points of public relation department 53% have



responded in positive, there were 10 % of the respondents, who have refused to say anything in this regard, whereas 36.70 % of the respondents have admitted that the evaluation is done 'occasionally'.

Regarding the efforts for improving the credibility of public relations, it has been observed that the 93.30 % of the respondents have given their answer in 'Affirmative' whereas 6.70 % of the respondents have responded as 'Occasionally.'

Regarding the view 'effect of political leaders on the development oriented functioning of schemes, it is obvious from the tabulated figures, that 93.30 % of the respondents, have given their views as 'yes' whereas, 6.70 % of the respondents have answered in negative. Regarding the view 'acknowledging the drawbacks pointed by the public to the higher officials', 80 % of the respondents said yes, 16.70 % of the respondents have given their answers in negative, whereas 3.30 % of the respondents responded as 'occasionally'.

Regarding the view on the efforts for improving the credibility of public relations, it has been observed that the 93.30 % of the respondents have given their answer in 'Affirmative' whereas 6.70 % of the respondents, have responded as 'Occasionally.' Regarding the view 'The role of public relation personnel in policy formulation; it has been observed that the 80% of the respondents have agreed with this perception, whereas, 16.70 % of the respondents have disagreed with this view point. Lastly, there were 3.30 % of the respondents, who have admitted this view as 'Occasionally'.

Regarding the view, that there is considerable difference between 'saying and doing' it has been observed that the 86.70 % of the respondent have responded as 'yes', whereas, 10 % of the respondents have responded as 'No', and Lastly, 3.3 % of the respondents have responded as 'Occasionally'.

Regarding the view establishing the public relation on the basis of fact based information; it is obvious from the tabulated figures that the 90% of the respondents have agreed with this view point. On the other hand, only 10% of respondents have denied and disagreed with this 'view point'. Regarding the view the cooperation with other departments, for publicity, it has been observed that the 100 % of the respondents have agreed on this perception.

Regarding the view on the government using modern mode of media for publicity it has been observed that the 100 % of the respondents have agreed on this perception. Regarding the view, whether the financial sources are adequate, 100 % of the respondents have admitted that there is no dearth of any financial resources with the department.

Hence, it is obvious that the close and open discussion with the personnel, working in various capacities with public relation department, have thrown an adequate light on various personnel, institutional and policy related problematic areas. They have also suggested some ameliorating suggestions for reforming the functioning of the department, so that the public relation department may become more responsive and responsible for the public as well as with in relation to other departments too.

### **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**

1. The Government must give sufficient funding for the Public Relations departments to disseminate about the policies of the government.
2. 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.
3. Proper tools should be used for campaign to spread the messages about the policies of the government.
4. 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.
5. Data should be collected from the public how far the policies of the government are beneficial.
6. Information should be collected about the hurdles and challenges in the channels of distribution of the policies.
7. Research should be conducted to know about the channels of Information and whether the information is reaching to the remote areas of the state.
8. Awareness campaign should be taken about the Department of Public Relations Department by campaigning in Radio/TV/News Papers.
9. Beneficiaries of the government policies should be interviewed and broadcasted as they are the real messengers.
10. Literature/Folk media/puppetry/ local story telling/ local folklore and other methods of traditional communication should also be used along with electronic media for dissemination of information.

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