



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS REDUCING INFORMATION DIVIDE IN SOLAN DISTRICT. A CASE STUDY OF SOLAN DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Introduction

Public Relations in communication to bridge the gap between what the 'sender' means, and what the receiver thinks he means both being not necessarily the same. Communication being a "two-way" process, the sender cannot possibly put across his ideas unless he knows what ideas are already in the mind of the receiver between Arjuna and Bhagvan Krishna.

In the context of the complex conditions to which we human beings have to accommodate ourselves, and the number of conflicting ideas from which we are compelled to choose, any effort to rush us into decisions would naturally antagonize us and rouse our opposition. That is why successful communication for good Public Relations is essentially the outcome of a complicated interplay of the principles of communication and virtues of public relations. Public relations that the fundamental purpose of public relations is to establish two way flow, mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information.

Democracy cannot function properly without good public relations. Democracy has been defined as government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The electorate requires knowledge on how the government functions and education in order to take full advantage of the facilities and services provided. There is clearly a need for public relation activities to help citizens understand their privileges and responsibilities under a democratic form of government. Public relations are everything from an attitude of mind, to a minute detail in the successful implementation of a programme. Democracy cannot function properly without good public relations. Democracy has been defined as government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The electorate requires knowledge on how the government functions and education in order to take full advantage of the facilities and services provided. There is clearly a need for public relation activities to help citizens understand their privileges and responsibilities under a democratic form of government. Public relations are everything from an attitude of mind, to a minute detail in the successful implementation of a programme.

Public relations are 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 to 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.

Solan District As Per 2011 Census of India

Total population	: 5,76,670
Geographical Area	: 1936 Sq. Kms
Density	: 298 Per/Sq.Kilometer
Males	: 2,70,291
Females	: 2,30,266
Sex Ratio	: 1000/884 Male/Female
Overall literacy rate	: 85.02%
Male literacy	: 91.19%
Female literacy	: 78.02%
Administrative divisions	: Arki, Kandaghat, Nalagarh, Solan.
No. of Tehsils	: Arki, Baddi, Kandaghat, Kasauli, Nalagarh, Solan.
No. of Sub- Tehsil	: Darla, Kuthar, Ramshehar.
Development Blocks	: Arki, Kandaghat, Nalagarh, Dharampur, Solan
Total number of Villages	: 2536
Panchayats	: 211
Local Urban Bodies	: Arki, Baddi, Dagshai, Kasauli, Nalagarh, Parwanoo, Subathu, Solan.
Assembly Segments	: Arki, Doon, Kasauli, Nalagarh, Solan.
Parliamentary Constituency	: Shimla
Distance From State Capital Shimla	: 45 Kms
Nearest Airport	: Shimla 50 Kms



Major River : Giri River
Culture : Punjabi,Pahari,Baghathi & Others
Traditions : Mixed
Economy : Agriculture Based
Languages spoken : Hindi, Punjabi,Pahari,Baghathi & Others
(Source of the map is www.mapsofindia.com)

Solan is located between the longitudes 76.42° and 77.20° and latitude 30.05° and 31.15° north. This district is bounded by Shimla district in north and by Ropar district of Punjab and Ambala district of Haryana in South, by Sirmaur district in the east and Bilaspur district in the west. District touches the boundary of Solan district in the north-east. The elevation of the district ranges between 300 to 3,000 metres above mean sea level. The terrains are mostly mountainous except 'valleys of Saproom' in Solan tehsil, 'Doon' in Nalagarh tehsil and 'Kunihar' in Arki tehsil. Doon valley is the most fertile area of the district.

History

The district in its present form comprises of the erstwhile princely states of Bhagal, Bhagat, Kunihar, Kuthar, Mango, Beja, Mehiog, Nalagarh and parts of Keonthal and Koti and hilly areas of composite Punjab state which were merged in Himachal Pradesh on 1st November 1966 on the reorganization of the composite Punjab on the linguistic basis. Most of these princely states, as per history, were subjected to onslaught of Gorkhas invasion from 1803 to 1815 A.D. It was in the year 1815 after losing to the Britishers, these states were need and restored to the respective rulers.

To know fully about the state, it is indispensable to understand and study the history of princely states given below:

Bhagat: The name is popularly derived from 'Bau' or 'Bahu' said to be hilly word meaning many, and 'Ghat' meaning pass. There are certainly many places in the erstwhile Bhagat state, which were known as 'Ghat'. The founder of the ruling family is said to be 'Basant Pal' or 'Hari Chand Pal' a Panwar Rajput from 'Dharana Girl' in the Deccan. He settled at a place which he named Basantpur and at present called Bassi', is in the close vicinity of the temple of 'Jiaonaji'.

He took Keonthal Pargana from Mawi by force of arm. His son Baksh Pal annexed the parganas of Basal, Bhuchali Gharoli. Rana Bhavani Pal added Pargana of Bachharang of then the Pati state and the territory of Rana of Kasauli. Rana Inder Pal added the Parga of Basal (Bhagat), Ghar and Taksal (Patiala). The state was named Bha by Inder Pal and it continued so till its merger with H.P. in 1948. R Janmai Pal, the 68th from Basant Pal, is stated to be very great man. He was presented 'Khillat' by emperor of Delhi.

It is not known how and when Bhawana detached from Bhagat. Rana Sarandhar Pal, grandson of Janmai fought with Singhpuria to whom he lost 'Ghar' and Taksat, subsequent recovered both the places. Rana Raghunath Pal was the ruler who was succeeded by Rana Dalel Singh. The state regained independence from its feudatory Bilaspur state sometime in the year 1790 A.D. During Gorkha war, Rana Mohinder Singh was unfriendly Towards the British. He died issueless in 1839 and the state was 'treated as lapse'. In 1842, limerd Singh of Dhiraj Singh, the younger brother of Rana Dalel Singh represented the Britishers and the state was restored to Vijay Singh, brother of Mohi Singh, who also died issueless in 1849. Lord Dalhousie annexed 'Bhagat' then under the principle of lapse. In 1862, it was restored to Dilip Singh whose heir continued to rule it till 1948. The last ruler of Bhagat was 'Raja Durga Singh'.

Public Relations of Govt. 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 Govt. 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.

Whereas the people living in rural areas are more often than not guided or tutored by their collective unconscious (sanskars) stored at the back of their minds especially in the near absence of print and electronic media. Apart from this, they also depend upon the teachers or any other official posted in the village to know what is happening beyond the periphery of their village. That is how the ruralites form their opinion about the activities in vogue or being initiated for their welfare. And the people living in still the remotest areas bank highly upon the traditional media where the reach of print electronic media is a far cry.

This necessitated the department of Information and Public Relations to devise different strategies. Accordingly it has done its best to equip itself with the kinds of publicity tools which suited these different strategies and thus realise the objectives it has set for itself and also contribute in the expected way.

During the year 2005-2006, the Information and Public Relations Department functioned with full potential in fruitful way and ensured effective dissemination of policies and programmes of the Government down to grass root level.

The Department regularly organise workshops for its officers from time to time. One such workshop was held on 29th October, 2005 in SuchnaAvam Jan Sampark Bhawan. The experts of this workshop included Dr.Jaishree Jethwaney, IIMC, New Delhi, Prof VepaRao, H.P. University and Miss Shalini Shetty, Media Consultant, New Delhi. The faculty gave detailed presentation on various topics such as Modern Approach in Social campaigning and its Planning and Execution, PR Strategy and Strategic Marketing.

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 how the Directorate of Information and Public Relations reducing Information divide.
- 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 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.
- There were 59% of male respondents, whereas 41% respondents were female for the study area of Solan (Himachal Pardesh).

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, employees, un-employed, house wife laborers, 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.

The data has been collected form Solan district and the data was interpreted and discuss and follows which reveals an education wise distribution of respondents, there were 9 % of the respondents, who have studied up to 8th standard On the other hand, there were 10 % of the respondents, who have studied up to 10th class. On the contrary, there were 39 % of respondents, who had studied up to 12th class. There were 28 % of the respondents who were either graduate. There were 14% % of the respondents who were either postgraduate or had acquired Doctorate degree.



The tabulated figures indicate that there were 19 % students, whereas 30 % of the respondents were servicemen. The employment figure of the unemployed respondents was 18 %. The housewives were 13 %. There were 2 % of the respondents, who belonged to ex-servicemen category. There were 18 % of the respondents who, belonged to various categories of farmers. Lastly, there were 0 % respondents which were businessmen.

Keeping in view the tabulated figure of possession of the Radio/FM facility, there were 88 % of the respondents, who were having radio sets in their house. On the other hand, there were 12 % of the respondents, who do not have any radio/FM facility at all. There were 40 % of the respondents, belonging to different categories, who have indicated their views as 'Relationship with Public', whereas there were 11 % of the respondents who have observed that the meaning of 'Public Relation' was 'Publicity', whereas 40 % age of the respondents, who think the Public Relation are aimed at, both relationship and publicity. On the other hand, there were only 0 % of the respondents, who have formed their views about public relation as mode of image making, whereas the 36% of the respondents have treated the public relation, as a source of 'entertainment. On the contrary, there were only 1 % of respondents, who have not formed any opinion in this regard.

In order to know the 'Visiting the Area' by the personnel belonging to 'Public Relation' department in a particular area varied responses have been given by the respondents, belonging to different categories. In this context, there were 36 % of the respondents, who have admitted that the personnel belonging to Public Relation Department usually pay their regular visit to their areas. On the other hand, there were 43 % of the respondents, who have denied any visit by personnel belonging to Public Relation Department. Lastly, 21 % of the respondents failed to form any opinion in this regard.

Regarding the visit to the public relation department there were 13 % of the respondents who gave their answers in affirmative, whereas 87 % of the respondents have denied visiting the public relation department, With regard to 'Level of Satisfaction' on using the different mode of media for publicity, it has been observed that the 67 % of the respondents have shown their attitude as 'Satisfied' with different mass media, used by the department. On the other hand, the 330 % respondents have denied the rendering of satisfactory services by the department. Lastly, only 0 % of the respondents have shown indifferent approach in this regard.

Public Relation's role for making people aware of the development schemes, sponsored by government. It has been observed that the 36 % of the respondent have admitted of taking benefits from the development oriented program. On the other hand, 30 % of the respondents have denied any benefiting services, rendered by the department. Lastly, a considerable number of respondents (34 %) have failed to form any opinion in this regard. On the other hand, there were only 6% of the respondents who have favoured the 'pardhan' for using them, as a source of material distribution for publicity material. Lastly, 20% of the respondents have considered all the above mentioned sources of distribution for publicity material in their respective areas. On the other hand 28 % of the respondents have denied taking any help, given by the department in this regard. Lastly, 11 % of the respondents have shown their indifferent approach in this context.

Study shows the different levels of credibility on the information supplied by the 'Public Relation Officers' it has been observed that 40 % of the respondents have shown a full credibility in the public official derived information; On the other hand, 35 % of the respondents have just agreed on this mode of information, supplied by the public relation officers, but they did not strongly agree on this view point. Lastly, 25 % of the respondents have failed to form any opinion on this 'Credibility views'.

Study shows the varied views for ameliorating the performance of 'Public Relation Department'. It has been observed that the 54 % of the respondents have given affirmative views on scope of improvement in the functioning of public relation department. However, 46 % of the respondents have shown their indifferent attitude on this issue.

Conclusion

In this way the Directorate of Information and Public Relations is reducing the Information divide in Solan District. Before undertaking any research project, priority is the clarity of the objectives of the research. That is when the research is completed the conclusions have to be looked into keeping in new the objectives. Pursuing this context, the conclusions drawn in the light of the research objectives are appended below:

The role of public relation for the implementation of development projects, in Una, Hamirpur, Solan & Bilaspur has been lendable. On the context several region-based studies have proven that, how the public relations, directly or indirectly, play a positive role in the changing the perceptions of the people regarding developmental projects? The question is whether the point of view of public is positive or narrow minded with regard to the officials association with the development work. Largely this perception is determined by the official of the public relation department. This study reveals to what extent the



development projects reach the rural an urban population through the agencies of the P.R Deptt. P.R Deptt acts as a powerful link between the Govt and the people. It gives priority to the social media instruments for the propagation of Govt plans. How aware are the public regarding the methodologies of the P.R Deptt? It will not be an exaggeration to say that P.R Deptt is the meter road of the functional relations between the Govt & the Public.

During the research the people have given both objectives, subjective answers to the questions regarding the plan implementation of the Govt plans which shows that their opinions are diverse. This difference in the opinions of the public is due to their level of education, income, social & economic status. Suggestions have been given as to how the P.R. Dept can improve of functioning with respect to rural an urban development. It can also, through its healthy requests, create an atmosphere of transparency, answerability, between the Govt & the Public.

Regional studies have clarified that the Govt utilizes the medium of rallies for rapid& effective connection with public. In these rallies the Govt distribute pamphlets and other material of the developmental activities along with addressing the rallies. Media is also engaged for this purpose .For 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 P.R is on the decline.

In the changing scenario, the functioning of P.R. Deptt needs to be refurbished so that with the changing attitudes if the people the P.R. Deptt can modify and discharge it's effectively.

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