

Curriculum for Rural Communication Course



Rural Resilience Indian Excellence

National Council of Rural Institutes

Department of Higher Education

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Government of India

Curriculum for Rural Communication Course

Introduction

Students of communication/mass communication need a broader introduction to the socio-political and economic realities of rural India, in all its complexities, where they are provided inputs on the contemporary rural issues. Issues of rural society must be integrated across as many courses as possible, so that content related to Rural India is not ghettoized.

The core objectives of mass communication are to Inform people, Build public opinion, Persuade, Circulate government policies, Disseminate health and education programmes, Provide pleasure and entertainment, Establish social contact and linkage, Help in facing disaster and calamity, Highlight diplomatic role and Promote political ideologies. All these objectives are integrated to make the course curriculum a holistic one that enables the facilitation of rural engagement thereby subsequently paving a way for the progress of the rural communities involved as an outcome of the same.

There needs to be a reasonable balance between theory and practice in the communication curriculum, not for preparing grand theorists or abstract empiricists but for the real time implementation of the learnt curriculum. It has to provide possibilities for operationalizing the theory and concepts learnt by way of tangible communication products – a project report, a newspaper (even an e-newspaper), a radio show (Internet Radio), a short video documentary, a magazine, an internship (with a report attached to it). We have to ensure that everything gets proper weightage and credited.

Characteristics

The following core characteristics, which form the basic framework of the community based learning model as proposed were prime factors considered while developing the curriculum.

1. Large number of heterogeneous, scattered and unknown audience
2. Common message through the use of mechanical and electronic media
3. Rapid and continuous dissemination
4. Use of modern technology
5. Direct feedback not available
6. Influence society and in turn be influenced by the society

Curriculum Design

- Objectives
- Module Development
- Methodology
- Assessment
- Outcomes

Objectives

The following Objectives have been framed for the proposed curriculum.

1. Bring awareness among the students about the dynamics of rural communication.
2. Develop community based Learning for communicating socially relevant messages.
3. Help students to identify and accordingly respond to community-communication needs.
4. Give insights of broader social issues and its impact on the rural communication.
5. Value and inculcate multiple perspectives of problem solving through communication.
6. Foster students' intellectual capacities and development as responsible communicators.

Rationale

Community engagement can be a big game changer for rural communities. Though traditional extension and outreach programs are desperately trying to bring in the desired outcomes, they are just not sufficient to heal the rift between higher education and public life. What is required is an approach that extends beyond service and outreach to actual 'engagement'. By this, we mean that there is a need to move from a model of 'public service' where universities do things for 'passive & needy public', to one of 'public work' that taps, engages and develops the civic agency, talents and capacities of everyone, inside and outside the academy". Therefore, the requirement of today is an 'engaged model of university outreach' which is far more collaborative than the customary conventional approach. Hence, higher education which is generally organized into highly specialized disciplines requires a paradigm shift towards a more systemic perspective, emphasizing collaboration, cooperation and partnership (UNESCO Chair, 2015).

The various forms of community engagement are: (PRIA, 2014):

1. *Linking 'formal' learning and the local community*
2. *Researching with the community*
3. *Sharing knowledge with the community*
4. *Designing new curriculum and courses*
5. *Involving local practitioners as teachers*
6. *Social Innovation by students*

Proposed Model of Curriculum

The curriculum is for one semester with 4 credits with 2 credits for theory and 2 credits for field work. One day of field work would be equal to 6 classes.

S.N	Module Title	Module Content	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	No. of Classes
1.	Rural Community, Community Media, Participative Communication, and Communication Needs, Engagement	Theories & concepts of Community Media : Hebarmas, Paulo Freire, Ronald Robertson, Participative Communication, Civil Society and Public Sphere Theories, Communication Rights, Communicating Socio Economic Cultural Aspects, Folklore, Artisans, Agrarian Systems and Dynamics, Local Governance and Communicating Political Issues Regional and Local Factors influencing communication. Inclusion and participation and Rural Community Engagement	Lecture, Demonstration, Participation, Field visit Case Studies	4+12
2.	Documenting and Communicating Rural Social Change and Facilitating Community	Documentation and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Story of a village, b. Change and change in media c. Local culture and little traditions d. Crisis and Emergency Communication e. Transformation, Access to Media and f. Communication Channels, g. Path breaking initiatives in Education and Health h. Village Development Planning, Conceptualizing 'Community, Facilitating and Civil Society 	Lecture, Group discussion, Field Visit Case Studies	4+12
3.	Documenting Communicating Reforms, Policies and Programmes for Rural Communities	Approach Documenting Message and Media for Government Policies and Programmes, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Public Health, Self Help Groups, Education, Political, Grievance redressal. Conceptualizing Community Media, Rethinking, Public Sphere, Orienting Community	Case Studies Penetration, Participation, Field visit Case Studies	8+12
4	Communicating Rural Transformation aspects	Wage and Self Employment, Industry, Rural and Alternative Livelihoods, Identifying Community Challenges, Natural Resource Management, Human rights.	Observation. Interview, Participation , Field visits	8+12
5	Rural Communication, PRA and Research	Rural Media, Folk Media and Street Theatre, Ethnographic Research, Reporting Skills, Writing skills – News reporting, Feature documentation, Photo Journalism, Copy Editing, Media tools: Case study, Interview, FGD, Lay-out, Niche reporting, video recording, radio programming, Video editing, Script writing, qualitative, quantitative, Mixed methods, policy, action research, Participative Rural Appraisal, Group Project Work on Community Media Production	Case Studies Interview, Field Mapping , practice sessions	8+24

Practicum details

Every Saturday for 6 weeks or everyday continuously for a week, students will be engaged in addressing the rural community communication needs to take up the following activities:

1. Village case studies and documentation
2. Documentation of concerns of key players in the rural community
3. Communication, interaction and documentation work involving various interest groups
4. Community newspaper/e-newspaper on rural community concerns.
5. Specialized reporting and documentation training on certain aspects such as social and developmental concerns, agriculture and non-agricultural livelihoods and village governance.
6. Internships with CSOs/Newspapers/Radio-TV channels and village/rural administration
7. Participative Rural Appraisal
8. Study and Documentation of Village Development Plan and Reporting on it

Assessment

The curriculum is for one semester with six credits with a ratio of 60:40 in theory and field work. The emphasis is more on the practical orientation of the student.

Outcomes

After completion of the course the student will be able to

1. Understand the social, economic, political and cultural framework of the rural communication
2. Address the challenges with suitable responses for the identified rural communication
3. Engage in the management of the rural communication

Career Options

1. A career in the Rural Community media networks and documentation work
2. A career in the state media networks
3. A career as a rural nodal networking officer for rural and development communication and documentation programmes