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## EXTENSION METHODS

### **Mass media**

**Mass communication techniques** involve using the mass media – newspapers, magazines, radio, television and printed material – to reach large numbers of people quickly. Newspapers, radio and television can be the least expensive way to reach many people (Van den Ban and Hawkins, 1988). The mass media can also alert a large number of people to a sudden emergency, such as, *FOR EXAMPLE, radio broadcasts of storm warnings to coastal dwellers and craft at sea.*

Media make people aware of innovations and stimulate their interest. But **media have little influence when it actually comes changing behaviour.** At that stage, the judgement of known or trusted people is of more value. Therefore, it is **very important that the FEA understands the details of the extension messages that are propagated in the mass media**, so that he or she can further explain the message to the client groups.

To meet the set extension aims, mass communication techniques should be used

- in combination with group or individual extension methods,  
or
- with other mass communication techniques, or
- in one medium alone.

The most common mass communication techniques, may be grouped into **printed media** and **audio-visual media**, are discussed below.

## Printed media

### NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers vary according to the type of people that read the paper and according to the type of news that is printed. It is therefore very important to find out whether

- any newspapers are available at all,
- the client groups in a certain area read a paper, and
- if so, which papers are read by them.

Different papers may be read within a single community and even within a single household. *FOR EXAMPLE, the fisherwomen may prefer to read papers the men are not interested in.* But which paper is used, it is very important that **the language and the style used in the newspaper is UNDERSTANDABLE to the client groups**, what appears in it is written for them.

Newspapers generally prefer to carry articles with news in them, though different newspapers may have different views on the news and different styles of presenting it. But most newspapers do not appear to consider common day-to-day issues as news. The more sensational the news the better, is their viewpoint generally, and negative issues often appear to have more news value than positive messages.

However, there are still many ways national extension experts or FEAs individually could use newspapers as extension methods (Behrens and Evans, 1984). For instance:

- Announcements of events, such as a fisheries credit programme, an extension meeting, a fisheries survey or a field extension workshop, could be made in brief reports. The person or organization to be contacted for further information or for enrolment, the starting date and time, the

location, and a description of the event could all be included in the report.

- Follow-up reports to inform readers about the results of programmes, meetings or study-tours. These reports should give such information as date, purpose, location etc. of the event and should detail the outcome. The outcome can be reported in various ways: quotes from speeches, comparing the different views of the participants and listing the decisions made.
- Informative articles on any subject or message that is part of the extension programme, including statistics on fish prices, research findings, experiences of innovative fisherfolk. *FOR EXAMPLE, the article could elaborate on the advantages and disadvantages of a new type of outboard motor.* Such articles should not emphasize only the scientific; they should incorporate human interest as well as any entertaining aspects.

## POSTERS OR WALL NEWSPAPERS

Posters or wall newspapers can be used the same way as newspapers: to provide information on events or particular topics. However, posters or wall newspapers leave more room for drawings, pictures or text.

Usually, posters or wall newspapers are printed by a central office and distributed through mail or hand-delivered through people attached to the organization. Depending on the purpose of the poster, mailings can be made to village leaders, school teachers, religious leaders, island chiefs etc.

## NOTICEBOARD OR BLACKBOARD NEWS

The noticeboard or blackboard can be used to disseminate news to a local audience. The FEA can design a written message for a centrally located (public) noticeboard or scribble it with chalk in a publicly exhibited blackboard.

## BOOKS

Many books have been written on fisheries and fisheries-related topics. However, few of them are of relevance to fisherfolk and hardly any of them have been written in, or translated into, local languages.

For extension purposes, it is important to acknowledge that books are likely to be too expensive for the clients and that they presuppose an interest in reading and the ability to read in the language used in the book. If a book is decided on, the following will also have to be done:

- A careful client and problem analysis made to decide on the contents.
- An affordable price for fisherfolk fixed. If it is too highly priced, few would be able to buy it, no matter how relevant it is. The extension service, on the other hand, may not have the financial resources to distribute books to all, or even a part of, the people employed in the fisheries sector.
- Discussions made on how the book is to be distributed and whether a subsidized rate is necessary.

It must also be remembered that, although people may be literate, this does not mean that they actually like to, or want to, read books. Often, writing and reading capabilities diminish when people do not use them regularly. In these circumstances, the client group may prefer to read short information stories with many illustrations, such as, *FOR EXAMPLE, comic books*. Information pamphlets or folders should also be considered as alternatives.

## MAGAZINES AND NEWSLETTERS

In a number of countries, magazines play an important role as an agricultural extension method. Farmfolk genuinely interested in the information published in the magazines pay all or a large part of, the costs involved in producing such magazines. The quality of the information offered in these magazines is high, and results from an effective linkage between farmers, the extension service

and research organizations. Even agricultural FEAs often obtain much of their information from these magazines.

Magazines on fisheries are, however, few. Fisheries extension services are as yet unable to regularly generate high quality information of interest to their client groups. And when they do, the diverse interests that exist among fisherfolk makes it difficult to sell a magazine to a large enough client group to make it viable.

While magazines are usually sold to anyone interested, newsletters often contain information for certain organized groups of people. *FOR EXAMPLE, local or national level farmers clubs may issue newsletters.*

Newsletters are often of lower cost than magazines and can, therefore, be produced in larger numbers to reach more people. But they are not often used as a national extension method, for it would require too many copies to reach all, or even a part of, the persons employed in the fisheries sector and would, consequently, prove too costly. Government departments, therefore, prefer to produce folders or pamphlets on specific topics that can be mailed to persons who request the department concerned for a particular folder.

## FOLDERS AND PAMPHLETS

Folders and pamphlets can be used in many ways in extension programmes. They have the advantages of

- being low cost,
- needing a short preparation time, and
- taking a limited time to get their message across.

However, because the explanation on each topic is brief, extra attention should be paid to ensure that the message is relevant and clear to the reader.

It is of little use to produce pamphlets on subjects that are well known to the fisherfolk or to produce pamphlets in such a way that they give too little information on how to do the activity

propagated. The assessment of the exact information needed on a certain topic by certain client groups may well be the most time consuming part of the production of a good pamphlet. This study should be conducted before the pamphlet is produced. The pamphlet should then be written in a single language that is easily understandable to the client group. Therefore, it is recommended that extensive field testing of the draft pamphlet be conducted with the various client groups before it is finally printed.

Folders and pamphlets are often more effective when appropriate illustrations are included. For some purposes, the illustrations could even dominate the text, as in the case of **comic books**.



*A comic book used as a fisheries extension method in India*