



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IS A VIADUCT BETWEEN COMMON MASSES AND THE ADMINISTRATION. A CASE STUDY OF HAMIRPUR DISTRICT

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Introduction

The revolution in communication has created a whole new pattern of human dynamics. The current changes in society are basically because of shifts in public attitudes. It is because of this that Public Relations is rapidly gaining attention worldwide. The significance and dynamism of the concept of public relations is likely to increase in scope and effect.

The purpose of Public Relations practice is to establish a two way communication to resolve conflicts of interest by seeking common ground or areas of mutual interest, and to establish understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information.

This is a very helpful and practical definition. First of all, it introduces the need for research, to audit or assess the situation, and to consider the implications of what is discovered. Second, it stresses the advisory role of Public Relations, its service to management. Third, it shows that Public Relations programmes must be planned. Finally, it states that PR action must not only benefit its sponsors, but must also be in public interest, that is it should be socially responsible.

Public relation as a management discipline is a twentieth century phenomenon. It is closely linked with the spurt in technology specially relating to the mass media. Its genesis, however, can be found in the ancient world.

Efforts at persuading other and influencing public opinion date back to antiquity. The Greeks, though they did not use the word public opinion, recognized the value of such opinion when they coined the expression “vox populi vox Dei” the voice of the people is the voice of God.

History of Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is located between 30°22' to 33°12' North latitude and 75°47' to 79°4' East longitude. To the East, it forms India's border with Tibet, to the North lies state of Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh in the South East, Haryana on the South and Punjab on the West. The entire territory of Himachal Pradesh is mountainous with altitude varying from 350 to 7000 meters above the mean sea level. Himachal Pradesh is a hilly and mountainous tract. Geographically, it forms part of Punjab Himalayas and thus presents an intricate pattern of mountain ranges, hills and valleys. There is general increase in elevation from west to east and from south to north. Topographically, Himachal's territory from South to North can be divided into three zones. The Shivaliks or outer Himalaya, inner Himalaya or mid-mountain, and Alpine Zone or the greater Himalaya.

According to Surveyor General of India the total area of Himachal Pradesh is 55673 square Kilometers which is divided into twelve administrative districts. Out of this total area 32271 square kms (58%) is measured area according to revenue records of the Pradesh. Area wise, Hamirpur is the smallest district of the Pradesh which covers an area of 1118 sq kms (2.01%) and Lahaul Spiti covers the largest area of 13835 sq. kms (24.85%).

Himachal Pradesh came into being as a Chief Commissioner province of the Indian Union on 15th April 1948 as a result of merger of 30 erstwhile princely state of Punjab and Shimla hills. These states were Bhagat, Bhajji, Baghal Bejar, Balsun, Chamba, Darboti, Delath, Dhadi, Dhami, Ghund, Jubbal, Khaneti, Koti, Kumarsain, Kunihor, Kuthar, Mandi, Machhan, Mahlog, Mangal, Ratets, Keonthal, Rawingarh, Sangri, Sirmaury, Suket, Tharoch and Tklog. All these areas at that time constituted into four districts viz. Chamba, Mahasu, Mandi, and Sirmaur with an area of 27169 sq. kms. In 1951 it was made a part 'C' state.

On 1st July 1954 the neighbouring part 'C' state of Bilaspur was integrated with Himachal Pradesh, there by adding on more district with an area of 1068 square kilometers.

Hamirpur District As Per 2011 Census of India

Total population	: 4,54,293
Geographical Area	: 1118 Sq. Kms
Density	: 406 Per/Sq.Kilometer
Males	: 1,95,971
Females	: 2,16,038



Sex Ratio	: 1000/1096 Male/Female
Overall literacy rate	: 89.01%
Male literacy	: 95.28%
Female literacy	: 83.44%
Administrative divisions	: Harmirpur, Nadaun, Barsar, Bhorang
No. of Tehsils	: Harmirpur, Nadaun, Barsar, Sujanpur, Bhorang, Bamson (at Toni Devi).
No. of Sub- Tehsils	: Dhatwal (at Bijhari), Galore.
Development Blocks	: Harmirpur, Nadaun, Bhorang, Sujanpur, Bijhari, Toni Devi.
Total number of villages	: 1694
Panchayats	: 229
Local Urban Bodies	: M.C Harmirpur, NP Bhota, NP Nadaun, NP Sujanpur.
Assembly Segments	: Bhoranj, Sujanpur, Harmirpur, Barsar, Nadaun.
Parliamentary Constituency	: Harmirpur
Distance From State Capital Shimla	: 170 Kms
Nearest Airport	: Gaggal [Kangra] 83 Kms
Major River	: Beas River
Culture	: Pahari
Traditions	: Pahari
Economy	: Agriculture Based
Languages spoken	: Pahari, Punjabi, Hindi

(Source of the map is www.mapsofindia.com)

In 1995 Hamirpur has been declared the first district of the state to achieve the target of 100% literacy (fully literate). Hamirpur district is situated between 76°18' to 76°44' east longitude and 31°05'23" north latitudes. The tract is hilly covered by the Shivalik range. The elevation varies from 400 metres to 1100 metres having the configuration ranging from the almost flat-land that border the portion of river Beas to the lofty heights of cliffs, crags and precipitous slopes of hill-ranges. There are three principal ranges which run in a South-easterly direction.

History

The history of Hamirpur is closely associated with the Katoch dynasty which ruled the area between the Ravi and Satluj rivers in the olden days. It is evident from the Puran and Paninis "Ashladhyi" that during; evident the large number of people from the region is in Indian defense it is believed that in the ancient period, the rulers of Gupta dynasty set up their sovereignty over this part of the land. During the middle presumably the area fell under the control of Mohammad Gaznavi, Tini Mughal Nawabs and later Sultans. But with the passage of time, aforesaid rulers faded away and at the time of I-lamir Chand a Katoci the area was under the control of Ranas (feudal hill chiefs). Some prominent Ranas were, Ranas of Mewa, Ranas of Mehalia and Dhatwal.

It was only the Katoch dynasty which put these Ranas under it to ensure an orderly society. The Katoch dynasty became predominant in the period of Hamir Chand who ruled from 1700 AD to 1740. He was the ruler who built the fort at Hamirpur and the present Hamirpur derives its name from this ruler. He made Suj Tira his capital and erected palaces and temples at this place. Raja Sansar Chand ruled from 1775 A.D. to 1823 A.D. He dreamt of establishing old empire of Jallandar Trigart his ancestors had held at one time and perhaps according to some historians he tried twice unsuccessfully.

The rise of Raja Ranjit Singh a great hurdle for his ambitions. That he diverted his attention Towards the local hill chiefs. He attached and made Raja Ishwari Sen a prisoner for 12 years at Nadaun.

He obliged the ruler to pay an annual tribute and annexed parts of state on the right bank of the Satluj. Becoming alarmed by the advancement of Sansar Chand, all the hill chiefs joined hands and invited the Gorhas to stop the uncontrolled might of the Katoch ruler.

They combined fought against San Chand's army at Mahal Morian in Hamirpur Sansar Chand's army forced a crushing defeat on the combined and compelled them to retreat on the left banks of river Satluj. By the Raja Sansar Chand, on the advice of his General Gulam Mohamin to affect economy in the army by replacing the existing ones. This proved a self-defeating folly on his part. On hearing about the Katoch's army, the combined forces again attacked the forces at Mahal Morian in the second battle and forced a crushing defeat. Raja Sansar Chand along with his family took shelter in the fort.



The Gorkhas seized the Kangra fort and ruthlessly looted between the fort of Kangra and Mahal Morian and virtually destroyed villages. Ishwari Sen was liberated by the Gorkhas from the Nadaun jail.

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 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.

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.

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, unemployed, house wife laborers, businessman, shopkeepers, farmer etc. Which are the taken for study? all these respondent have given their 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 from Hamirpur districts and the data was interpreted and discussed and follows. There were 70% of male respondents, whereas 30% of respondents were female for the study area of Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh).

Which reveals an education wise distribution of respondents, there were 3 % of the respondents, who have studied up to 8th standard. On the other hand, there were 13 % of the respondents, who have studied up to 10th class. On the contrary, there were 13 % of respondents, who had studied up to 12th class. There were 35 % of the respondents who were either graduate. There were 19% % of the respondents who were either postgraduate or had acquired Doctorate degree.

Study shows the distribution aspects of occupational structure of the respondents, taken for the study. The tabulated figures indicate that there were 11 % students, whereas 26 % of the respondents were servicemen. The employment figure of the unemployed respondents was 19 %. The housewives were 7 %. There were 4 % of the respondents, who belonged to ex-servicemen category. There were 10 % of the respondents who, belonged to various categories of farmers. Lastly, there were 23 % respondents which were businessmen.

Keeping in view the tabulated figure of possession of the Radio/FM facility, there were 72 % of the respondents, who were having radio sets in their house. On the other hand, there were 28 % of the respondents, who do not have any radio/FM facility at all. In this context, there were 33 % of the respondents, who do not take any newspaper. On the other hand, there were 55 % of the respondents, who read the news from one newspaper even. Lastly, 12 % of the respondents who read the news from two or more than two newspapers.

Study shows a distribution of internet connection, installed by the respondents. In this table, it is indicated that there were 28 % of the respondents, who were having the internet connection. On the other hand, there were sizeable % of the respondents, which accounts for 72 %, who do not have any internet connection at all. There were 44 % of the respondents, belonging to different categories, who have indicated their views as 'Relationship with Public', whereas there were 15% of the respondents who have observed that the meaning of 'Public Relation' was 'Publicity', where as 17 % of the respondents, who think the Public Relation are aimed at, both relationship and publicity. On the other hand, there were only 1 % of the respondents, who have formed their views about public relation as mode of image making, whereas the 20 % of the respondents have treated the public relation, as a source of 'entertainment. On the contrary, there were only 3 % of respondents, who have not formed any opinion in this regard.

In order to know the kind of duty performed by the 'Public Relation' department, shows the views of the respondents viewed out of these 40 % of the respondents who have considered the public relation's function as 'establishing a good relationship between the government and the public', whereas 25 % of the respondents who have considered the public relation's function as 'Publicity of the Government Policies'. Further, there were 9% of the respondents, who have considered the 'Public Relation' as a source of entertainment for the public. On the other hand, there were 22 % of the respondents have considered these views as 'Publicity for the political party and their associated leaders.' However, there were 4% of the respondents, belonging to different categories, who agreed with the option "all of these".

Hence, it is obvious from the tabulated figures that there was considerable subjectivity in their views regarding the performance of the duty of Public Relation Department.

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 41 % 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 46 % of the respondents, who have denied any visit by personnel belonging to Public Relation Department. Lastly, 13 % of the respondents failed to form any opinion in this regard.

In order to know the 'Frequency of Visit' paid by the personnel of public relation department, the tabulated figures indicate that there were 32 % of the respondents, who have informed that the personnel pay their regular visit to their respective areas monthly. On the other hand, there were 3 % of the respondents who have pointed out that they usually pay their visit once in a year, whereas 26 % of the respondents, who have told that the personnel, belonging to Public Relation Department, usually pay their visit once in six months. Lastly, 39 % of the respondents did not respond anything in this regard.

In order to know the 'Kind of Officers' visiting the areas of respondent, it has been observed from the tabulated figures, that there were 16 % of the respondents who have appreciated the use of 'Vernacular Theatre Groups' for their significant role in accomplishing this task in their respective areas. On the other hand, there were 30 % of the respondents who have appreciated the role of 'Bhajan Mandali' for performing this task. On the other hand, there were 20 % of the respondents who have



appreciated the role of 'Health' for performing this task. It is obvious from the tabulated figures, that the 30 % of the respondents have appreciated the role of 'Regional Publicity Officer' in this regard. Lastly, there were (4 %) of the respondents who have failed to form any opinion. In order to know the target group discussed by the public relation officials, it has been observed that the 19 % of the respondents told that the officers usually discussed the matter as an individual, whereas there were 22 % of the respondents who discussed the matter with the 'group people' too. On the other hand, there were 28 % of the respondents who have pointed out that the public relation officials organize a 'Group-talk' too. Lastly, 31 % of the respondents discussed about the other sources.

Regarding the Television connection, there were 2 % of the households, who do not have any T.V. sets. On the other hand, there were 24 % of the respondents, who have installed D.D. connection. Lastly, there were 33 % of the respondents, who have installed the cable connection. whereas there were 41 % of the households who have installed the 'Dish' Services for their Television Program. The 'Dish' which includes Tata Sky, Videocon, Sun, Air, Airtel, etc. Regarding the visit to the public relation department there were 19 % of the respondents who gave their answers in affirmative, whereas 81% of the respondents have denied visiting the public relation department.

In the context of satisfaction levels, it has been observed from the tabulated figures, that 46 % of the respondents have shown their attitude as 'satisfactory'. In the context of the maximum mode of media, used by the department for publicity, it has been observed that the 58 % of the respondent have advocated for 'press'. It is followed by 'Radio' as told by 32 % of the respondents. On the other hand, only 3 % of the respondents have highlighted the role of 'Natak Mandali'. Lastly, 2 % of the respondents have highlighted the role of exhibitions as a mode of publicity for government program in the study areas. At least, 5 % of the respondents have highlighted the 'others' role as a mode of publicity for government program in the study areas. With regard to taking the preference wise views from the respondents, it has been observed that the 58 % of the respondents have favored the print media, whereas, 32% of respondents have been highlighted the significance of 'Electronic Media' which include radio and T.V. etc. Lastly, there were 10 % of the respondents, who have preferred the role of theatre, cinema, exhibition, cable network and other miscellaneous sources for performing this task for 'Public Relations.

With regard to 'Level of Satisfaction' on using the different mode of media for publicity, it has been observed that the 76 % of the respondents have shown their attitude as 'Satisfied' with different mass media, used by the department. On the other hand, the 24 % respondents have denied the rendering of satisfactory services by the department. Lastly, only 1 % of the respondents have shown indifferent approach in this regard. which indicates that the 73 % of the respondents have admitted that they were well acquainted with the development programmes, On the other hand, 27 % of the respondents were found to be well acquainted with MNREGA, Ambulance 108, etc.

It has been observed that the 60 % of the respondent have admitted of taking benefits from the development oriented program. On the other hand, 11 % of the respondents have denied any benefiting services, rendered by the department. Lastly, a considerable number of respondents (29%) have failed to form any opinion in this regard.

Study shows 'mode of distribution of publicity material without the assistance of public relation department. In this context, 63 % of the respondents, have given their answers in affirmative. On the other hand 18 % of the respondents have denied taking any help, given by the department in this regard. Lastly, 19% 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 55 % of the respondents have shown a full credibility in the public official derived information; On the other hand, 28 % 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, 17 % 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 66 % of the respondents have given affirmative views on scope of improvement in the functioning of public relation department. However, 34 % of the respondents have shown their indifferent attitude on this issue. Reviewing the benefits of the schemes it has been observed that 34% of the respondents have been benefitted with the educational services. On the other hand, 46 % of the respondents have been financially helped by the government department, whereas 7 % of the respondents have been benefitted with the health services rendered by the government health department. On the other hand, the services, which include family welfare, children and women welfare and other miscellaneous services, rendered by the state health department have proved helpful to 13% beneficiaries in their respective areas.

Conclusion

Hence, it would be pertinent to make conclusions from the examination of the various tabulated figures, which indicate a considerable subjective view on functioning of 'Public Relation' department and the responsiveness of the people, belonging



to different strata of society. According to some of respondents, the functioning of public relation department is up to the mark; whereas a considerable number of respondents have pointed out some of the 'pit-falls' in the functioning of the department for 'publicity services rendered' for the state sponsored schemes and development programs periodically executed in their respective areas. It also includes some of rating measures which may prove as corrective measures for further improvement in the functioning of 'Public Relations' Department in accordance with the changing scenario in Himachal Pradesh.

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 of the people the P.R. Deptt can modify and discharge its effectively.

Suggestions

- Assessing the various dimensions of the research it is felt that certain areas and issues demand objectives suggestions of the scholar, which are appended below:
- Upgradation of technology should be undertaken as P.R. Deptt with respect to the changing scenario.
- Vehicles paucity along with the drivers should be removed. With more purchase & recruitment respectively.
- The various 'Mandalis' of the P.R. Deptt must reach the far-flung areas which have remained uncovered so far. Importantly they must repeat their visits for effective results. This will consolidate the Govt. Policies in the minds of the rural public.
- Similarly P.R. Deptt should deliver the services in the urban areas. Although from time to time Govt. advertises through hoardings, banners & rallies, yet many urban people are devoid of the knowledge of Govt. Policies & plans.
- The department of information, Public relation and culture should fill up the vacant post for its proper functioning.
- The Government must give sufficient funding for the Public Relations departments to disseminate about the policies of the government.
- The government must expand the Department of Information and Public Relations department and in each panchayat/division and taluq there should be Public Relations cell.
- Proper tools should be used for campaign to spread the messages about the policies of the government.
- 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.
- Data should be collected from the public how far the policies of the government are beneficial.

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