

Health Communication Strategies of Princely Mysore

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Abstract- Communication plays a significant role in bringing public welfare and development. Selection of media is crucial to further the cause of bringing awareness among the subjects of the society. Communication strategies in matters related to public health percolate from interpersonal to mass communication. This paper focuses on the health communication strategies of Princely Mysore State of twentieth century.

Index Terms- Ayurveda = ancient Indian indigenous system of medicine, Unani = the medical practice of the local Islam community, Vaidays = Sanskrit term meaning medical practitioners/Doctors, Dasara = World famous annual state festival of Mysore conducted during October. Dasara also signifies ten day long celebrations of navarathri (nine nights), Akashavani = State owned radio centre

I. INTRODUCTION

Publicity sections with the intervention of mass media transmit messages to the remotest corners of the society. Changing human behavior towards effective maintenance and sustenance of public health is a continuous task being undertaken by the state even today. Planning and effective implementation of the same brings success. The present paper aims at highlighting the health communication strategies adopted by Princely Mysore State. Intervention of the mass media and publicity wing to further the cause of public health during the reigns of Princely State of Mysore is indeed attention-grabbing.

The bureau of health education was established in the year 1930. The primary function of the health education is to provide scientific knowledge or information to people about health problems and to bring about changes in life styles and risk factors of disease. An effective health education programme for the whole community The government introduced propaganda of issuing printed posters, pamphlets, books, periodicals and news papers to create awareness among people about the diseases. They also started broadcasting with new dimension of the radio. They come close to the motivational effect of inter-personal communication. They have become part of the fabric of modern civilization. Mass media became useful in transmitting messages to people even in the remotest areas and are generally inadequate in changing human behavior.

A publicity section was formed in connection with this bureau. American Rockefeller Foundation offered a contribution of money for two years for the furtherance of the work of this bureau. It was the most effective intervention of health promotion, and it was defined as a process aimed at encouraging people to be healthy, to know how to stay healthy, to do what they can individually and collectively to maintain health, and to seek help when needed. A number of health education models

were developed and it has relied on knowledge transfer to achieve behavior changes.

The health educations based on scientific facts offered awareness or getting general information about the subject and create awareness of health needs and problems through a programme of public information.

Bureau of health education organized a large number of Cinema shows on health related subjects and over one lakh of people witnessing them, large numbers of posters and leaf lets on plague, smallpox, soil pollution and bore-hole latrines were printed and distributed among people.¹ During the year 1930-31 the bureau of health education conducted 87 lectures accompanied by cinema shows to approximately 36555 people witnessed.² The bureau printed leaflets and pictorial posters on small-pox, plague, soil pollution and bore-hole latrines in Kannada, Urdu and English and distributed it freely all over the State through the departments of the revenue and education authorities, district Boards Municipalities and local Panchayats.

The Officers of the bureau actively co-coordinated in health and baby weeks and special films relating to mother craft were exhibited during the same year. 162 cinema shows on general health subjects were given to a total audience of about 1,244,85 persons.³ Over 120 cinemas shows accompanied by health talks on subjects dealing with public health and sanitation, maternity and child welfare, precautions during the epidemics, etc., were organized and witnessed by about 75,000 persons. Articles on health subjects, written in English and Kannada, were sent to the local news papers for publication, about 15,000 copies of the several issues of the Mysore Arogya in English and Kannada were distributed among the public. The bureau at Mysore Dasara exhibition set up a health and sanitation stall. It attracted much interest among the visitors.⁴

Bureau of health education organized a large number of cinema shows on health subjects with the large numbers of posters and leaf lets on plague, small-pox, soil pollution and bore-hole latrines were printed and distributed among people.⁵ It attracted much intelligent interest among the visitor, 190 cinemas show accompanied by talks on subjects dealing with the public witnessed by 1.14.000 persons. Health exhibition were arranged at the exhibition buildings and a health section was organized at Hassan in connection with the State Women's Conference.⁶ With a view to educating the public and keeping them informed about municipal affairs, a series of lectures were arranged to be broad

¹ Sharma Rao M, modern Mysore, Vol-II, P. 419-420

² Mysore Administrative Report, 1930-31, p. 63

³ Mysore Administrative Report, 1932-33 p. 140

⁴ Mysore Administrative Report, 1935 p. 137

⁵ Sharma Rao M, Modern Mysore, Vol-II. P. 419-420

⁶ Mysore Administrative Report, 1938 p. 153

cast over the Akashavani.⁷ Cinema shows on health subjects were arranged all over the state by the cinema staff, which traveled with the equipment in the Department Van.⁸ One hundred and seventy-three shows on subjects dealing with public health and sanitation, maternity and child welfare and precaution during the epidemics were organized at 103 places and were witnessed by one lakh and five thousand persons. Three films were purchased from the Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi, for the use of the cinema staff to screening.⁹ To improve the health education among public, Cinema shows were organized in 72 places before an audience of 40,000. Thirteen of these cinema shows were also held for the benefit of the military troops. A number of students were trained as Sanitary Inspectors.¹⁰

With a view to educating the people in matters of health, 29 cinema shows were organized and shown to the public. The quarterly journal, "Mysore Arogya" on health problems, was issued. Weekly health bulletins were also issued regularly. A new portable cinema projector and eight films on public health were purchased from U.S.A. Arrangements were made to equip the Bureau with photo enlarging, photo printing and sound recording equipments. In 1945-46 a batch of 41 candidates were in session for six months, out of those 20 candidates were trained in the subjects regarding health education.¹¹

II. HEALTH EXHIBITION

The bureau at Mysore Dasara exhibition set up a health and sanitation stall. It attracted much intelligent interest among the visitors. Health exhibitions were arranged at the Exhibition building at Mysore, at Bangalore city and at Kolar Gold Field on the occasion of the anniversary celebrations of the Red Cross Society.¹² The permanent Health Museum was kept open for the public. Two models of the bore-hole latrine and the well were added and another of the rat-proof house was under progress in Health exhibitions.¹³

The Public Health Department introduced a new scheme for creating awareness among public through cinema shows and were screening on special health education films in a movable working Motor Van, and covered 714 miles in the year 1940.¹⁴

III. CONCLUSION

Princely Mysore State strategy to counter health related issues began after Bureau of health education was established in the year 1930. The bureau provided scientific knowledge or information to people about health problems and brought about changes in life styles and risk factors of disease. A sister wing of

⁷ Ibid Mysore Administrative Report, 1940, P. 9

⁸ Ibid, 1940, P.21

⁹ Mysore Administrative Report, 1947 p. 154

¹⁰ Mysore Administrative Report, 1945 p. 143

¹¹ Mysore Administrative Report, 1947 p. 143

¹² Mysore Administrative Report, 1934-35 p. 137

¹³ Mysore Administrative Report, 1940 p. 154

¹⁴ Mysore Information Bulletin July 1940

the bureau 'publicity section' played an important role in disseminating public health literature. The state took financial assistance for two years from the foreign agencies i.e. Rockefeller Foundation for the furtherance of the work of the bureau. The state also took technical assistance from the Indian Red Cross Society, for the use of the cinema staff to screen public health educational cinemas.

The lectures conducted besides screening of educational cinemas brought in awareness on small-pox, plague, soil pollution and bore-hole. Extensive use of print materials in multiple languages viz, Kannada, Urdu and English also brought in awareness throughout the state. Use of other governmental departments to further the public health cause depicts the success of the health communication strategy adopted. Exhibitions during the special occasions particularly Dasara was an important health strategy. News paper and quarterly journal are other significant health communication strategy of Princely Mysore State.