



Uses and Gratifications of New Media for Natural Disaster Management and Agricultural Development: A Case Study of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre

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ABSTRACT

The present study evaluates the application of new media by the KSNDMC for natural disaster management and agricultural promotion purposes in Karnataka state. The study emphasized that KSNDMC had rendered useful services for agricultural production and productivity in times of natural disaster management. The respondents have also derived considerable gratification from the services rendered by the KSNDMC. Timely, adequate and relevant media services are required to facilitate appropriate individual and community action for better agricultural production and productivity in times of natural disasters.

KEYWORDS :

Preamble

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) provides natural disaster and agricultural development related information through 'Help Desk', General Packet Radio Service, Very Small Aperture Terminal and other means. The present study evaluates the application of new media by the KSNDMC for natural disaster management and agricultural promotion purposes in Karnataka state.

Natural Disaster Management in India

Drabek (1979:11) observed that disaster management has to be a multi-disciplinary and pro-active approach. The Government of India has enacted the Disaster Management Act, 2005. Consequently, the Government of India has brought about a paradigm shift in the approach to natural disaster management. Sinha and Verma (2006:20) noted that the disaster management occupies an important place in this country's policy framework as it is the poor and the under-privileged who are worst victims of natural disasters. A National Contingency Action Plan (CAP) has been formulated by the Government of India to identify the initiatives required to be taken by various Central Ministries/Departments in the wake of natural calamities. Kalam (1998:16) the former President of India has given a vision that facilitates effective natural disaster management in the country on the basis of better management techniques for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, relief-rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Review of Literature

Few researchers in India have also examined the role of media in the processes of agricultural development and natural disaster management. Prominent among them include –Wilkinson (1999:22), Devraj and Chaturvedi (2003:10), Chakravarthy (2004:08), Goel (2006:13), Annor et.al (2006:03), Ashlinand and Landle (2007:04), Agena (2009:01), Asimakopoulou and Bessis (2010:05), Cate (2010:07), Gorey (2011:14), Loveland (2011:18), Banjo (2012:06), Fraustino et.al. (2012:12), Raju et.al. (2012:19), Ivgin (2013:15), Knight (2013:17), Torres (2013:21), Ahmed (2013:02) and Chavali et.al. (2013:09).

Significance of the Study

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre disseminates the information to alert the officers and farmers in order to take timely and appropriate decisions and actions to manage the natural dis-

asters and promote agricultural sector. The center covers all the 30 districts of Karnataka State since natural disasters confront the agricultural sector of the state. It serves as a common platform to the various response players in the field of natural disaster management by providing proactive science and technological inputs for agricultural development. The role of the regional centre has not been scientifically examined by the researchers in the processes of natural disaster management and agricultural development. Hence, the present study assumes profound academic significance in the present times.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the relationship among new media, natural disaster management and agricultural development.
- To assess the role of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre in the processes of natural disaster management and agricultural development.
- To analyze the new media initiatives of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre in the processes of natural disaster management and agricultural development.
- To examine the strengths and limitations of new media initiatives of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre in the processes of natural disaster management and agricultural development; and
- To suggest appropriate measures for the improvement of delivery system with respect to new media initiatives of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre in the processes of natural disaster management and agricultural development.

Research Design

The present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method which fits into the context of the present investigation.

Table. Distribution of Study Area and Sample

Sl. No	Name of the Study Areas	Number of Stakeholders	Number of Farmers
1.	Malnad Region	43	152
2.	Coastal Region	41	136

3.	Hyderabad Karnataka Region	47	156
4.	Old Mysore Region	51	168
Total		182	612

n = 794

Findings of the Study

Utility of KSNDMC based New Media for Natural Disaster Management

- A majority of the officials (80.22%) and farmers (67.25%) have stated that the KSNDMC based new media were an important component of natural disaster management.
- A majority of the officials (73.63%) and farmers (66.34%) have stated that the KSNDMC based 'Help desk' facilities were offered on 24 hours basis to the farmers in Karnataka state.
- A majority of the officials (67.03%) and farmers (64.38%) have stated that the KSNDMC based web enabled information dissemination took place through help desk on demand.
- A majority of the officials (71.43%) and farmers (65.69%) have stated that the KSNDMC based database management provided timely information to various stakeholders of natural disaster management.
- A majority of the officials (74.73%) and farmers (66.67%) have stated that the KSNDMC based web enabled new media services provided relevant information on round the clock basis.

Gratifications of KSNDMC based New Media for Natural Disaster Management

- A majority of the officials (78.02%) and farmers (68.30%) have stated that the inputs for planning and execution of developmental activities in times of natural disaster management provided by the KSNDMC were satisfactory.
- A majority of the officials (73.63%) and farmers (65.03%) have stated that the new media services for cultivation of positive attitude about natural disaster management among the farmers given by the KSNDMC were satisfactory.
- A majority of the officials (83.52%) and farmers (67.97%) have stated that the creation of better linkage between farmers and other stakeholders of natural disaster management by the KSNDMC was satisfactory.
- A majority of the officials (72.53%) and farmers (67.32%) have stated that the new media services for persuading the farmers to manage the natural disasters confidently given by the KSNDMC were satisfactory.
- A majority of the officials (65.93%) and farmers (62.75%) have stated that the new media services provided by the KSNDMC were not satisfying component of agricultural development in times of natural disaster management.

Testing of Hypotheses

The data analysis confirms that the services offered by the KSNDMC were absolutely useful and satisfactory. Hence the two hypotheses stand disproved according to the data analysis.

Implications of the Study

Agriculture is indeed the backbone of national development in India. The investigation reveals that it is imperative to formulate a National Policy on Natural Disaster Management in the new millennium. Public-Private-Partnership is essential for the development of agriculture and rural development sectors in times of peace and disasters. The Government of Karnataka should develop the KSNDMC to function independently and effectively on the basis of adequate funds and facilities. Close collaboration between agriculture department and is essential to improve agricultural productivity in times of natural disaster management in Karnataka state. The media institutions are required to play a responsible role in times of natural disaster management on the basis of corporate social responsibility. The non-government organizations should also sensitize the various stakeholders of natural disaster management and facilitate proper implementation of developmental activities in times of natural disasters. The corporate houses have a great social responsibility in the process of natural disaster management. The KSNDMC should provide participatory and interactive communication services to the officials and farmers in times of natural disasters.

Conclusion

Communication strategy should be considered as a sub-system of integrated development of the country in general and natural disaster management process in particular. The media institutions are required to sensitize the various stakeholders of natural disaster management. The media and disaster mitigation organizations should take advantage of opportunities to work together and provide need-based services to the mankind to enhance disaster preparedness, mitigation and relief efforts. The disaster mitigation organizations and the media should identify and communicate to the public specific measures that have either succeeded or failed to reduce the impact of natural hazards in modern times. Timely, adequate and relevant media services are required to facilitate appropriate individual and community action for better agricultural production and productivity in times of natural disasters. The present study reveals that Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre has made a good beginning in extending advanced services for agricultural promotion in times of natural disasters. The institution has to go a long way in fulfilling the aspirations of the founders and people of Karnataka through better strategies, technologies and services.

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