

# Content Analysis of Post Graduate Theses in Development Communication<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to find out the pattern of post-graduate research studies, the research design, the tools and the techniques used, the geographical distribution and the contents of 26 post-graduate theses. All the theses of Development Communication were taken for the study. The theses were categorized into fourteen areas of research. Majority of them were on educational technology followed by development journalism. Most of the theses had four objectives and had institutions as a locale of the study. Purposive sampling pattern was largely adopted. Majority of them had 101 to 150 respondents, dominated by students and rural women. Descriptive research design was used by the maximum respondents. Many of them used primary data. Maximum researchers used combination of schedules and questionnaires. Majority of them used original scale. Estimation (percentage) was used by majority of the researchers for analysis of data. Almost all theses had informative titles and majority of them had informative abstracts. Many of the theses contained 101-150 pages. Effective table of contents and standard format were used by the thesis writers. Majority of theses had 21-40 illustrations. All the theses had review presentations in chronological order and bibliography in alphabetical order. Many of them had 1-3 appendices and attached instruments used.

**Key words:** Content analysis, development communication, post graduate thesis

## INTRODUCTION

The Development Communication is a recent academic field in Nepal, though the use of communication system has tremendously been increased during the past decade to bring about changes in rural livelihood. Most of the communication systems have been targeted to uplift the rural livelihood by covering the developmental messages in their media, although the content is not very much compatible to cope up with their need (Narula 1987). It is important to know the need of the development messages of our clients. Most of the researchers did not focus on the development of theoretical concepts, models, research methodologies that were appropriate to South Asian way of life and social

systems. Rather, they blindly followed western models, methodologies and concepts (Sharma and Chand 1998). Bhagat and Ramachandran (1993) reported that communication problems were not understood in the right perspective, if researched through the western tools. Though this research was conducted at Pantnagar, India, its implication would be equally important in Nepal. We have very much similar development communication issues and very similar social system and structure. Such kinds of research have not been carried out as of now in Nepal. Hence, Trikha (1986) reported that maximum studies were on the content analysis of newspaper and the magazine (56%) followed by readability (35%), evaluatory (5%) and production of publications (4%) during 1961-1985 on agriculture journalism. A periodical review of the researches done in any field of the study is useful in gaining insights into the general direction of research and ascertaining the future needs in the

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context of changing perspectives of a particular discipline.

We are in need of an indigenous approach to research practices particularly in the development communication research (Singh 1999). With a view to know the development communication research status, this study was carried out with the objectives: to analyze the major areas of research of the post-graduate theses of the Development Communication, to study the research methodology used in the theses and to study the format of presentation of the theses.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted during 2001/02 at the GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, India. All the Post-Graduate (MSc and PhD) theses of the Development Communication submitted during the period of 1996 – 2001 were chosen for the study and analysed in three broad categories viz., area of research covered, research methodology adopted and format undertaken. The areas of research undertaken by the researchers were broadly categorized into the consultation of a panel of judges of the Department of Agricultural Communication, Pantnagar. The fourteen areas viz. communication pattern, development journalism, development studies, educational technology, evaluation, information source, instructional technology, management, mass media, motivation, speech communication, technology transfer, training and video for development were categorized,

The research methodology covered locale of the study, sampling methods, research design, types of data, tools, techniques of data collection and analysis of data. The format of the theses was analysed based on the number of pages, manuscript typing, table of contents, chapter distribution, number of illustrations, presentation of review, bibliography, number of appendices and attachment of tools and their uses. The content analysis technique was used to analyse the area of research covered, research methodology adopted and format of the theses

adopted. The salient research findings of the theses in development communication were also analysed qualitatively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Area of research covered

The distribution of theses according to the area of research is presented in Table 1. Fourteen areas of research were covered in which the maximum number (15.38 %) of theses was on Educational Technology followed by Communication Pattern (11.54 %), Development Journalism (11.54%) and Evaluation Studies (11.54%). The least (3.84%) focused areas were on Development Studies, Information Sources, Instructional Technology, Mass Media, Motivation, Technology Transfer and Video for Development. Singh (1985) reported that the most of communication researches during 1960s and 1970s were in the field of interpersonal communication. Similarly, Jain and Babu (1987) reported that during the period of 1965-84 the major areas of communication research were on multimedia, mass communication, radio, farm journalism, sources of information, television, audio-visual aids, interpersonal communication, group contacts, source credibility, communication skills, communication behavior of extension personnel and communication behavior of farmers. Now with the changing pattern of communication research, new areas have been added.

**Table 1. Distribution of theses according to areas of research**

SN	Area	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Communication Pattern	3	11.54
2.	Development Journalism	3	11.54
3.	Development Studies	1	3.84
4.	Educational Technology	4	15.38
5.	Evaluation	3	11.54
6.	Information Source	1	3.84
7.	Instructional Technology	1	3.84
8.	Management	2	7.69
9.	Mass Media	1	3.84
10.	Motivation	1	3.84
11.	Speech Communication	2	7.69
12.	Technology Transfer	1	3.84
13.	Training	2	7.69
14.	Video for Development	1	3.84

**Research methodology adopted**

The data in Table 2 shows that the maximum number of theses (42.31%) have taken institution / organization, which comprised of Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Aaganwadi Centers, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Regional Institute of Rural Development, and Women Dairy Development Project as locale of the study followed by villages (23.07%) and block (19.23%), respectively. A total of five states and fifty-seven villages were covered in all the research studies.

**Table 2. Distribution of theses according to locale of study**

SN	Locale of the study	Frequency	Percentage
1.	State	1	3.85
2.	Region	2	7.69
3.	District	1	3.85
4.	Block	5	19.23
5.	Village	6	23.07
6.	Institution/Organization	11	42.31

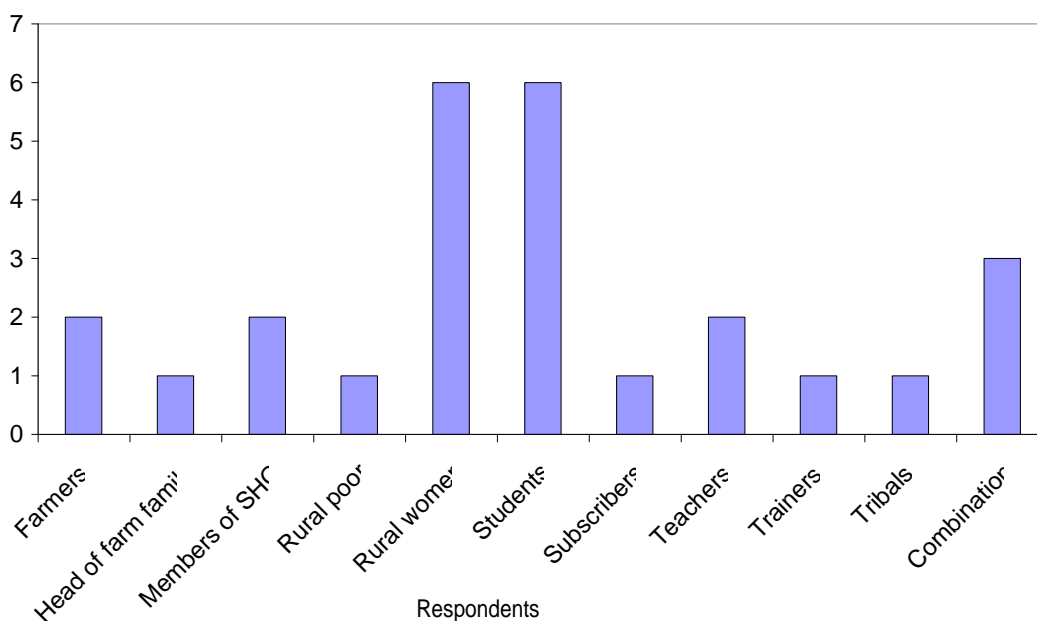
Majority of theses used purposive sampling method for the selection of locale, while random sampling was used by majority of the researchers

for the selection of respondents (Table 3). In most of the theses 101-150 respondents were involved. The maximum and the minimum number of respondents were 256 and 32, respectively. Yadava (1987) reported that out of 889 methods of researches in research methodology-wise studies based upon the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) bibliography on mass communication in India during 1975-84, the sample survey was by far the most common research methods followed.

**Table 3. Distribution of theses according to sampling methods for the selection of respondents**

SN	Sampling method	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Random sampling	10	38.46
2.	Census	7	26.92
3.	Purposive sampling	6	23.08
4.	Probability sampling	1	3.85
5.	Not mentioned	2	7.69

Majority of the respondents were rural women and students followed by combination of two or more respondents (Figure 1). The least focused respondents were head of farm family, rural poor, subscribers, trainers and tribes.



**Figure 1. Distribution of theses according to the types of respondents**

The descriptive research design (50.00%) was followed by majority of the respondents. Overwhelming majority (96.15%) used a single research design. Primary data was used by majority (57.69%) of the researchers followed by combination of primary and secondary data (42.31%). One researcher used explanatory research design and 12 used experimental research design.

The maximum number of theses (65.38%) used combination of schedule and questionnaire for data collection (Figure 2). Variables ranging from 16-20 were used by majority (30.77%) of the researchers. The maximum number of variables used by the researchers was 36 and the minimum was eight. Most of the researchers (65.38%) used original scale.

For the analysis of data, all the respondents (100%) used percentage method of statistical analysis (Table 4). Similarly, majority (61.54%) of the researchers used estimation. Many abstracts and titles were of informative type. Fifty per cent of the theses had four objectives.

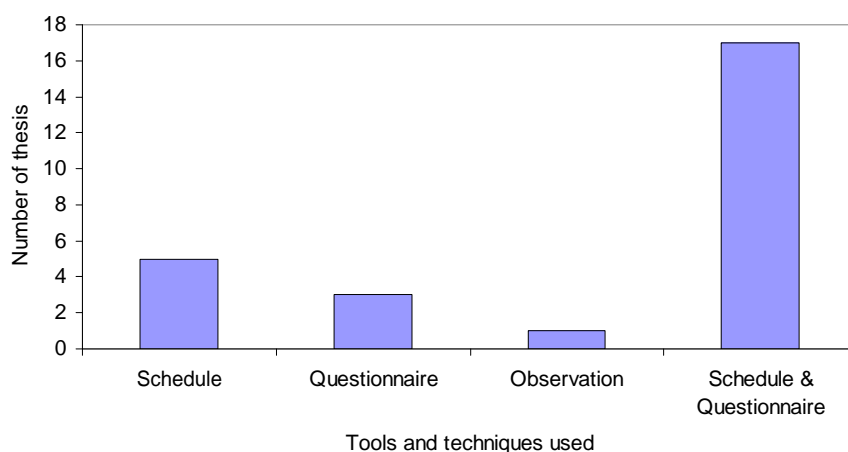
#### Format adopted

Most of the theses (50.00%) had pages ranging from 101 to 150. Seven types of page sizes were used in all the theses. In majority of the theses

flush left typing was done, keeping more than 3.5 cm margin in the left side. In 88.46% theses a standard of not more than 25 lines per page was maintained. Effective type of table of contents was used in 65.38% of the theses. Majority of the theses (84.62%) followed standard chapter distribution. The findings and the discussion chapter had the maximum number of pages followed by research methodology chapter. The number of illustrations varied from 9 to 103. Regarding the number of tables used, 23.08 % of the theses used 31-40 tables. Similarly, 34.62% of the theses used one to 10 figures. Only 26.92% of theses attached photographs in which 82.27% of the photographs were with captions.

**Table 4. Distribution of theses according to techniques used for analysis of data (Multiple analysis)**

SN	Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Percentage	26	100
2.	Frequency	22	84.62
3.	Mean	15	57.69
4.	Standard deviation	14	53.84
5.	Coefficient of correlation	14	53.84
6.	Weighted mean score	10	38.46
7.	T-test	8	30.77
8.	Analysis of variance	2	7.69
9.	Ranking	1	3.85
10.	Cumulative frequency distribution	1	3.85
11.	Multiple regression	1	3.85
12.	Factor analysis varimax rotation	1	3.85
13.	Z-test	1	3.85
14.	Chi-square test	1	3.85



**Figure 2. Distribution of theses according to tools and techniques**

The presentation of review was in a chronological order. The maximum number of reviews incorporated in the theses was 137 and the minimum of 35, with an average of 75. Regarding the presentation of review, 46.15% of the theses had review according to the objective. The maximum number of references was 156 while the minimum number was 50. All the theses had the appendices with varying number, which ranged from one to seven. Research tools used in all the theses were attached.

To sum up, fourteen areas of research were covered. The more emphasized area of research was on the educational technology followed by the development journalism, communication pattern and evaluation studies. The institutions/organizations like University, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Aaganwadi Centres, District Rural Development Agency and other governmental and non-governmental organizations were the locale for most of the studies. The purposive sampling method was the dominant pattern. Students and rural women were the target audience in majority of the research studies. A descriptive research design was used in most of the research studies. Majority of researchers used primary data. All the researchers used percentage for the analysis of data. Schedules and questionnaires were used for data collection by majority of the respondents. Most of the researchers used original scale. Majority had informative type of abstract and title. Many of the theses had pages ranging from 101 to 150. Graphic aids were discriminately used in all the theses. The standard

format for chapter distribution was followed by most of the theses.

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