

ANALYSING THE LEARNINGS FROM THE PACKAGE OF PRACTICE

Hearing People on the Receiving End

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INTRODUCTION

Digital Green is a not-for-profit international organisation that uses an innovative digital platform for community engagement across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa empowering smallholder farmers to lift themselves out of poverty by harnessing the collective power of technology and grassroots-level partnerships. Since our inception we have been producing participatory videos on isolated steps of growing a crop/vegetable that were shown to small holder farmers. However, we wanted to assess the impact on

agriculture productivity if farmers saw a series of videos on a given crop, covering all the topics and the critical steps. We called this a PoP.

Our first structured attempt at making a PoP was with chilli crop in the Indian state of Bihar, where we developed a series of eight videos on its cultivation.

This was followed by

series of sequential videos for two other crops, namely pigeon pea and potato, developed in the Indian state of Jharkhand. We made these series of sequential videos for the above mentioned three crops over a period of one year. To understand the style of the videos, the interest level, and the usefulness of watching these videos, we conducted a study with various women self-help groups (SHGs) and front-line workers (FLWs) in three districts of Jharkhand, namely Latehar, Giridih and Pakur where our



SHG members watching a PoP video

sequential videos are being disseminated by the FLWs in their respective SHGs.

BACKGROUND

Defining Package of Practice PoP

Digital Green has been using video based extension approach to help farmers increase their productivity and output from their crops. In 2017, the training team planned to produce videos that will be in a sequence or can be called a PoP- where a certain crop would be selected and a sequence of videos would be made on that particular crop covering the life cycle of that crop, it would include all the important practices that a farmer should carry out for better yield. These sequential videos would include all the important practice pertaining to that crop from pre-harvesting, harvesting and post-harvesting.

Phases of producing a PoP

These sequential videos have been made in Hindi language and included four important phases. These phases include-

Scripting: In this phase, the content is divided into sections or videos. While dividing the content into videos we ensure that the steps which are to happen together for instance, within a couple of days' gap, are clubbed together. The length of the video is also kept into consideration, ensuring that it does not get longer than 12 minutes and covers about 5 key points of the practice. Once the sections have been decided, all the points under that section of the video

are written and non-negotiable (NN) points are decided. A script is then prepared having elements that would gauge the audience's attention and would link one PoP video to another once our script is ready it is finally vetted by an expert before beginning the shoot.

Pre-Shooting: Selection of an appropriate site is very important. Ideally one farm should be used throughout the shoot. Visit to the farm is required before the production actually happens. It needs to be ensured that the farmer who has given his farm for video production has not completed any particular step that needs to be shot. Apart from that, at least a day is kept in hand so that we have enough time for any sort of eventuality.

Shooting: All the detailed steps for a particular practice should be clearly shown and every shot should be cross-verified with the script. Different shots can be utilized to show the practice from different angles. After every few shots, check the audio and its clarity. Use of local words, local music and folk songs can go a long way in developing a better understanding amongst the rural audience. Recapping the video and non-negotiable (NN) points is a must.

Post-Shooting and Screening: While editing the video voice-overs should be given at appropriate place including the correct insertion of pictures and words to complement the video. It makes the video more understandable to the audience and at the same time easier for the mediator to disseminate it. Stress on sequencing the video is a must.

It is very important to screen the video at the correct time, in terms of season pertaining to that particular step. The mediator needs to get a proper training in that particular PoP before s/he



Discussions with SHG members after screening of PoP videos

starts the dissemination in their respective village. Introducing the video for a mediator is very important and making sure that the women SHG members are told that they would be seeing a series of videos on the same crop over a period of certain months and it is very important for them to attend all the disseminations.

OBJECTIVES

In Jharkhand, the PoP sequential videos were produced for the pigeon pea crop and potato crop with the help of the regional team and JSLPS. The areas where these PoP videos were screened are under Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran

Pariyojana (MKSP) as a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) that ensures enhancing the productive participation of women in agriculture. To collate the learnings from the past one year, training team decided to conduct a qualitative study with the farmers and FLWs in Jharkhand. The objective of this study was to understand:

- what style of video was liked most by the audience?
- what aspects of the videos engaged and interested the audience?
- how useful did the audience find the videos?
- what was the level of interest in adopting the practices shown in the videos?

METHODOLOGY

Exploratory qualitative techniques were used as the methodology for the study. Relevant information was collected using focused group discussions (FGDs) with women farmers from various SHGs and with FLW, who were involved in Digital Green's intervention and were disseminating the PoP videos. We observed six video disseminations. After each dissemination, we conducted FGDs. There were six FGDs held with seven SHGs, involving 182 SHG members. We also conducted one FGD with 15 FLWS. Each discussion lasted for about one hour.

A detailed questionnaire was prepared to conduct FGDs with the SHG members and the FLWs. Two disseminations were planned in Latehar district, one in Giridih district and two in Pakur district in Jharkhand. It helped us

explore the issues in a systematic manner. Detailed notes were taken to record the responses of the SHG members and the front-line workers (FLW's).

Traditional Digital Green Videos Vs. PoP videos

Earlier, stand-alone videos, on one particular practice of a crop or vegetable, were produced at Digital Green. These videos were produced in various districts of the same state, in different dialects. The content of practices shown also varied from district to district. These videos were not in a sequence and did not cover all the steps or practices that related to a particular crop.

On the other hand, the PoP videos are a series of sequential videos that are produced covering all the steps in a crop from start till end. It is a package of videos made in one region and one language. These sequential videos are produced in different styles may it be voiceover, anchor based or documentary form. These videos have a very strong emphasis on linking one video to another. The mediators or the front-line workers (FLW's) were give formal knowledge or training on each PoP before they went on for the screening of these videos in their respective villages.

Various styles of the PoP Videos

Chilli PoP

The sequential videos for the PoP for chilli crop were produced using the voice over based style to make it interesting and to introduce novelty. It also helped those members of the group who were illiterate. With voice over they could hear the content and understand about the practice. Chilli itself was narrating

her story, i.e. how she grows. It was in the form of a voice over and the practices during the different stages were being shown by the farmer and VRP. The VRP explained to the farmers how the particular practice had to be done for better yield. The chilli package of practice videos started from seed treatment and nursery bed preparation and ended on harvesting. In these videos all the practices were shown with a voice over at the same time.

Pigeon Pea PoP

The sequential videos for the PoP for the pigeon pea crop were produced using an anchor based style. In the video, an anchor explained the benefits of each practice of that particular crop and why doing that particular practice was important for a better productivity.



Pigeon Pea field that had not adopted the PoPs shown in the videos



Pigeon Pea field that had adopted the PoPs shown in the videos

A model farmer used to explain the particular practice to her counterpart. At the same time the pigeon pea PoP videos also had elements where at the end of the video a health tip was given pertaining to the particular crop. These health tips were easy to follow and could be utilised using the products available locally.

Potato PoP

The sequential videos for the PoP for the potato crop were produced using a documentary style. Here the whole process for each practice was covered in a voice over.

With the voice over, the practice was being done by the potato farmers. The farmers did not narrate the whole process, but they were doing the practice in the background



A farm where the Potato PoPs were adopted.

and the voice over was explaining the process that was been done. Expert interviews were also used throughout the videos in form of small clips of the expert. The expert explained the benefits of the practices and how these practices could help the farmers get better yield. Here, elements of folk songs and local music were being used in the videos, these local music and folk songs were recorded and shot in the villages itself by the local musicians and singers.

ANALYSIS

Style of the PoP Videos

During the FGDs the members said that they had earlier watched Digital Green videos on paddy and some vegetables and at the same time they were now watching the PoP videos on pigeon pea and potato. They found these sequential videos to be more engaging. The previous videos were compared to these ones and they said that they would prefer if the actors in the videos did the practices while explaining and talking to each other. They even liked the anchor's explanation and that the expert bytes were also helpful for adopting the practices. According to them the expert is an external person and would tell them something useful. Elements like local music and local folk songs added to a lot of interest in the sequential videos to be watched by the SHG members. Apart from that the use of health tips at the end of the videos for both pigeon pea and potato PoP videos were appreciated by all the members who come for video dissemination, the members found these health tips useful and some of them even used these tips and said it helped them.

As we already know that all the three PoP videos had different style like voiceover, anchor and documentary style so after the discussions the members of the groups said that they like the videos as a whole but, clubbing elements from anchor based style of videos that has an external person as an anchor coming in the video and re-enforcing some important points that one should follow in the video and documentary style where all the agricultural practices were shown on a voice over and at the same time it had local songs and music would make a perfect one. The voice overs at pause points and over the non-negotiable (NN) points was also very helpful for those farmers that were not able to read what was written on the screen.

Interest in the PoP Videos

After having discussions with various SHG members it was found out that they learnt something new from all the videos. It was



SHG members watching the PoP video on Potato

found out that all the practices/steps shown had something new to offer to the farmers. For instance, video on nipping from pigeon pea PoP and

selection of potato seeds from the potato PoP were absolutely new for the farmers.

A lot of them said that such music and songs make them feel connected to the videos and at the same time it also helped in catching their attention. They pointed the fact that we could use such health tips in the near future as it would only do good to us.

Sequencing of Videos

The sequencing of the PoP videos was easy to understand. During the FGDs the farmers said that they found all the steps accurately falling on each other and there is no change that is required in the sequencing of these series of PoP videos. The SHG members as well as the FLWs who were disseminating these PoP videos said that there was no information that was missing from the videos and everything was very well covered.

Many women farmers present for the dissemination said that these series of sequential videos had something new to offer that they did not know and they believed that by practicing them they would benefit from the same in terms of their crop output. The mediators who were also the first one to adopt the practices were an inspiration for other community members to adopt the field and to show them visible change in their crops after practicing steps shown in the PoP videos.

Retention of Information

After the discussions, it was found that the retention was poor at some places while at other places it was fairly well, in the tribal belts the retention was poor as they were less exposed to newer ways of farming, but on the other hand this was not the same in non-tribal belts. Despite pause points, anchor and expert bytes the farmers would need the support of the FLWs if they need to practically adopt the practices shown in the PoP videos because there were some ingredients that were difficult for them to get hold on and the same time to even pronounce their names.

The members said that even after watching the video and things being explained to them by the mediator they need some support in the field while practicing the same since they tend to forget some of the steps. In Pakur district, which is a Bangla speaking belt, the mediators were translating majority of the content that was in Hindi into the local language for the SHG members. Since the mediators were more educated they could very easily read and speak Hindi and hence it was easy for the rural women to retain the content that was being shown in the video.

While asking the SHG members about the steps of the sequential PoP videos they were not able to name the exact step that was shown as a title in the video, but were able to tell the process in bits and pieces one after the other. The women farmers said that they used to forget the steps shown in the PoP

videos while they were actually doing the same on their field and during those times the FLWs used to come to their fields to explain and help them out with these practices.

Technical Qualities

After having discussions with the SHG groups members and various FLWs it was found out that technically all the videos were sound and technically good across all the the three districts of Jharkhand, they had clear audio, clearly visible visuals and readable text. After observing 6 video disseminations it was seen that the videos were audible even without speakers. On probing and trying to dig deeper into the technical qualities the SHG members said that they found the messages given in the videos to be clear. Hindi as a language was clear to them they did not find the language, sentences and words to be complicated. From a distance the pictures used, and the fonts were clear too.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE THEORY - DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

Diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory is one of the oldest theories in social science that developed over time to explain how an idea or a new product gains a momentum and diffuses or spreads through a specific social system or population. The end product of this diffusion of a new idea or a product is that the people, as a part of that population of social system move to adopt that new idea, product or even a specific behaviour. Diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory,

developed by E.M. Rogers states that the key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, product or behaviour as a new innovation and it is through this that



diffusion is possible making the people to adopt the same.

This theory states that the adoption of the new idea, product or behaviour or in simple terms if we say that the adoption of the “innovation” does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather it is a process whereby some

people are more open to adopt the innovation than others. It is found out that people who adopt the innovation early have different characteristics than people who adopt the innovation later and hence, there are five established adopter categories. Here, we have tried to blend our analysis with this very theory, our sequential videos are the new idea, product or simply the “innovation” and our farmers who are adopting the practices shown in these videos will be divided into the five adopter categories.

Innovators: These are the people who want to be the first one to try the innovation, they are the ones willing to take risks and very little is needed to convince them to adopt the new innovation. In our case the FLWs are the innovators. After their training on the PoP they were the one to adopt them first and practically utilise the same on their fields.

Early Adopters: These are the people who generally represent opinion leaders, they are the SHG leaders who embrace change and opportunities. They are already aware of the need to change and thus, are very comfortable in adopting such innovations. They do not need much information to adopt they themselves are aware of the benefits to change and adopting the new innovation.

Early Majority: These people are not leaders but, they adopt the innovations before the average person. These people typically need to see the evidence of success of the innovation or maybe few success stories and then they adopt

the innovation. In our group, there were farmers who saw the group leaders of their SHG and the front-line workers (FLW's) adopting the practices that are been shown in the PoP videos.

Late Majority: These people are sceptical to change and they only adopt the new practices or innovations after the majority of people have adopted the innovation. They see how many other people have successfully adopted the innovation and only then they would adopt the same. There were farmers in our group who said that they would adopt the new practices shown in the PoP sequential videos next season when they see how many farmers have successfully adopted the same and how much they have benefitted in terms of crop output and monetary benefit.

Laggards: These are the people who are bound by tradition and are very conservative. They are sceptical to change and are the hardest group to bring on board. Pressure from people is given if need be for them to adopt a certain new innovation. In our group, some farmers were resistant to change and did not want to adopt the practices shown in the PoP sequential videos. This could be attributed to other reasons as well as some said that they had no land of their own, while the others said that they were working on the land given by other people and had no rights to practices their autonomy and there were few who said the main decision maker at their home was not very open to change who generally happened to be their husband.

LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

1. The SHG members told that in every sequential video of the PoP they learnt something new about the particular crop, they said that thought few of the practices were not new but the way they were being done were different. For instance, the learning/outcome is that if each video in the sequence offers something new, farmers appreciate videos on the entire sequence, and try to watch as many videos as possible.
2. The SHG members said that they like the style of the PoP videos but, they would prefer the video where the farmers are explaining the practices.
3. While narrating to each other and the use of local folk song and music was really great and caught attention of the farmers. One suggestion that came from them was that if these songs could be based on agriculture.
4. The FLWs said that the pause points in the videos were of great help as they guide them to stop and explain the farmers about the practices at the appropriate places. They even said that the voice over on these pause points enabled the farmers who could not read and write understand the questions.

5. After discussions with various FLWs what it was found out that only disseminating the PoP videos was not enough to make sure that the farmers would adopt the practices shown. They had to prepare inputs, for instance jeevamrit, for the farmers. Apart from that, some of the front-line workers (FLW's) prepared the list of all the inputs that would be used to prepare some natural pesticide and handed over the same to the farmers.

They even had to follow up with them at all the stages if they are utilising the same. They visited the farmers at their farms and spoke to them over the phone if they needed any sort of help.

6. The structuring and sequencing of all the PoP videos was very easy and helpful for the front-line workers to explain them to the farmers in much easier way. While recapping the non-negotiable points recapped by the farmer in the video was a plus point for them and made it easy for the FLWs to emphasise these points again to the farmers before starting a new video and without forgetting them.

7. The demo plot that were used to make these PoP sequential videos were very helpful for the other farmers to see the growth of the crop and a way to differentiate the PoP and non-PoP farms. Such demo plots were a medium for the front-line workers to practically show the results

of the new agricultural practices to the farmers and motivating them to adopt the same.

8. It was found that the SHG members could not remember the names of the ingredients used for potato seed treatment and land preparation like acetobactor, hydro-gel etc. but, they could very well remember the colour of these ingredients. We could focus more on the colours while we develop new videos on such practices.
9. It was observed in a dissemination that the pace of the voice over was a little fast and the content that was supporting the graphics was more which could be taken care from the next time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An important point that came from the audience was that videos based on the monetary benefits could be made on the crop yield would be an added advantage to adopt the practice. Comparative videos on yield calculations and success stories based of the farmers based on the same would be lucrative for the non-adopters' to adopt the practices shown in these PoP videos.
2. As already mentioned the series of sequential PoP videos were liked and appreciated by the SHG members but the farmers attending these video disseminations suggested and recommended that if some short videos

could be added on how and where to sell their produce in the market would be really helpful.

CHALLENGES

There were few challenges that were realised and came up during the course of FGDs with the SHG members and the FLWs so as to show that despite proper dissemination of the PoP videos some farmers were not adopting or could not adopt the practices shown and explained to them.

- Time is often a constraint, as the farmers cultivate paddy that is their major crop that gives them higher compensation. For instance, pigeon pea is cultivated at the same time so it gets difficult for the farmers to look after the same crops simultaneously and give more time to pigeon pea which they feel is less important than paddy.
- Weather is another major factor that hampers adoptions. Since the farms are rain fed, excess or less rainfall affects the cropping cycle.
- Often times female farmers find it difficult to convince their husbands or other household heads of adoption of a new practice that they see during the video disseminations.
- Many FLWs expressed that there were trust issues from the side of farmers and they blame them for making money in the name of promoting new agricultural practices. They requested that if anyone from

the partner organisation or Digital Green could go and explain the importance of such good practices during the video dissemination time it will make more impact on the farmers and they would adopt more and listen to them.

CONCLUSIONS

The series of sequential videos in the PoP were creative and had strong dialogue that made the farmers retain a lot of important things. The FLWs played a very important role in helping the farmers adopt the new practices shown in these videos. The narrative styles of the video may it be voice over, anchor based or documentary it had a lot of clarity and the engaging story of these sequential videos helped the farmers remember things better.

The pause points and non-negotiable points with a voice over in all these videos helped and guided the front-line workers to pause and discuss the videos at right intervals of time. Use of folk and music and the insertion of health tips at the end of these sequential PoP videos helped in gauging more attention of the SHG members and was appreciated by all of them.

Many farmers said that they could see visible change in their crop for good after they followed the practices that were told in these PoP sequential videos. Farmers who did not adopt these practices said that now they were visually seeing the crops to be healthier and stronger and that they would definitely these practices in the next cropping cycle. Overall this assessment was a successful exercise in understanding if there is any utility in producing these PoP

videos and that if changing the style of the video would be liked by the audience and would help in more adoption thus, resulting in more output and increased of these marginal farmers.

These creative narratives used in the PoP series of sequential videos have definitely created more interest amongst the audience and the structuring of the content in a way that explains the topics very easily is a great advantage for the front-line workers FLWs to disseminate these videos.

ANNEXURES:

Links to the Chilli PoP Videos:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-WsPIITgj_4GICFln6oHwdBPLbqamqr-

Links to Potato PoP Videos:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-WsPIITgj_7Lbqh9hKGBezA3d2u2ymT3

Links to Pigeon Pea PoP Videos:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-WsPIITgj_511JtamQeOxNDIf72scuU3