

a study of the diffusion of innovation amongst the beneficiaries about the asmita scheme in the palghar district of maharashtra.

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## **A Study Of The Diffusion of Innovation Amongst The Beneficiaries About The Asmita Scheme In The Palghar District of Maharashtra.**

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**Abstract:** Asmita Yojana, an initiative by the government of Maharashtra was launched on International Women's Day, 8th March, 2018. Under the scheme, sanitary napkins to Zilla Parishad school girls across all divisions of the state would be provided at a subsidised rate through an Asmita card and app by the self-help groups. This study will explore the diffusion of innovation that is availing of subsidised sanitary napkins through the Asmita scheme. The beneficiaries of the scheme are the young girls and women of the ZP Schools with the eventual objective of empowering them. The author focuses on three factors- knowledge of the process to avail the napkins, effectiveness of the communication channel used and the responsiveness of the implementing agencies on the innovation. The scheme is targeted towards both the students and their parents and teachers. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire from the parents and teachers of the girl students from 5 ZP schools in the Palghar district. It was then analysed and findings reported.

**Keywords:** Asmita Yojana, diffusion of innovation, communication channel, Zilla Parishad schools, implementing agencies, government schemes.

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### **1. Introduction**

The study strives to understand the diffusion of innovation and its influencing factors in the implementation of Asmita Yojana in the Palghar district of Maharashtra. The diffusion of innovation framework is applied and the adoption of the scheme by the beneficiaries by way of interpersonal communication or mass media channels is studied. It is an area of study whether the government schemes are communicated to the target audience, in particular Asmita Yojana which is one of several schemes launched by the government for empowerment of girls & young women. Various communication channels such as radio, television, Posters etc. were used in spreading awareness about Asmita Yojana. Receptivity to information is also influenced by its content and source, as well as the method and timing of its delivery. The Government of Maharashtra has been spreading awareness about Asmita Yojana so that the potential beneficiaries could adopt the innovation. **Nutbeam (2000)** emphasizes the role of mass media and insists that the mass media are a proactive and effective tool in dispensing the information, the media, especially with the advent of 24-hour television programming, actively seek health news...it is clearly demonstrated that "health sells." - The population is looking for information on health that presents clear ideas of what can be done to maintain, improve, and reclaim healthy individual and collective lifestyles. Some of the newspaper

content related to the Asmita Yojana has been as following: According to the Loksatta newspaper, one needs to look closely into the lack of public awareness communication lapse in the implementation of the Yojana. The Hindu newspaper reports that The Asmita Yojana's aim was to get young girls and women use hygienic products but ironical that the villagers don't seem to be aware of the scheme. An earlier report in The Hindu also mentions that women from Palghar district are yet to benefit and avail from the scheme but the claims made by the officials are on the contrary. A news report in the Indian Express also talks about improving the quality of the napkins but there doesn't seem to be any initiative on the public officials part to communicate the same to the people.

## **2. Significance Of The Study**

The various government schemes are launched by much fanfare by the government officials. However, it remains to be seen that their benefits are availed by the people they are meant for. The government disseminates information regarding the schemes depending upon communication objectives, audience segmentation, and approaches to be adopted for achieving those objectives and using appropriate communication channels for disseminating information. The scheme's monitoring and evaluation as a follow up is pertinent to the process. The Government disseminates information but it is the opposite of dialogue. Communication is interactive, reciprocal & exchange oriented in nature in nature but dissemination is haphazard, unplanned, one way & unequal dispersion of information. Dissemination shies away from dedicatedly communicating with the masses. The defining characteristics of dissemination possesses, in a nutshell, are simply an observance of standardized communication approaches. They are supposed to be able to spread messages across a wide range of people, and to ensure that those messages will be heard and understood by more than just one person. Policy diffusion studies reflect that a government scheme's faster adoption by the beneficiaries or the social group depends upon both the factors. An examination of the communication and implementation of the innovation is pertinent because it can show the way and orient the players towards adoption of future innovations. The effectiveness of the innovation is intricately linked to the adoption and the implementers to communicate in a way those schemes are administered in a way that matches the beneficiaries' preferences

## **3. Review Of Related Studies**

The theoretical perspective used to understand the process of diffusion of an innovation which in this case is availing of a subsidised sanitary napkin. Diffusion is a process by which a new or innovative idea or product is disseminated among the individuals of a community using certain channels over a period of time. There are several factors which influence the likelihood of adoption of an innovation. The process of communication, the channels used and the extent of diffusion of the innovation which leads to development itself is pertinent to development. The literature review thus will connect the process of communication, the strategies implemented in the communication, which must be convergent in order to be successful, the process of diffusion of the innovation which in this case is the sanitary napkin being made available to a certain group of individuals through a process. Since the product is related to sanitation and health, communication related to health must be discussed. As discussed above, the theoretical framework applied in the study which has led to the broad research objectives include the concepts of convergence of communication, the models of communication for development proposed by researchers and the diffusion of innovation. Development occurs in a

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society when a change for betterment happens. Hence Development communication entails bringing about a change for the better in society, economically and socially through communication. According to **Everett M. Roger (1981)**, it refers to the use to which communication is put in order to further development. If communication is used this way and masse's mass media exposure is increased, it will inevitably create a conducive atmosphere for development, or to support a specific definite program or project. Technology and mass media should be used broadly and strategically in order to aid in the process of development.

**F. Rosario Braid (1999)** opined that development communication is “an element of the management process in the overall planning and implementation of the developmental programs” Thus, development communication also involves an identification and optimum implementation of appropriate tools as well as expertise in the development process. It would then lead to an increase in the participation of the people for whom it is meant, even if it is at the grass root level. The process of diffusion involves spreading or dissemination of information, innovation or an idea to the members of a social group. The purpose of diffusion of innovation is the adoption of that innovation, idea or product by the potential beneficiaries. The product or innovation as stated earlier is not the sanitary napkin itself but its availability through an app named the Asmita app at subsidised rates through the Self Help Groups or the SHGs. The process of diffusion is intricately linked to the communication activities, strategies and channels employed by the implementing agencies. **Moseley (2004)** puts forth that a new product or innovation, in order for it to be adopted by the targeted social group or the potential beneficiaries, it must be communicated to them effectively otherwise it might not be understood and eventually accepted by them. The process of adoption of new innovation or product goes through five steps of decision making, viz. knowledge or information about the innovation itself, forming an attitude towards the innovation, accepting or rejecting the innovation, implementation of the innovation and lastly confirmation of the innovation or the product.

Applying it to the present study, the information regarding the Asmita scheme is to be disseminated to the potential beneficiaries or the targeted social group. The confirmation for the same is then carried out by the beneficiaries, parents and teachers looking for a reason to adopt this innovation. After this, the individuals in the social group take the decision and use the innovation. **Natera et al (2020)** propose that the four analytical components clearly emerge which contribute to the diffusion of innovation: actors (beneficiaries), interactions (communication strategies), processes (mass media channels and interpersonal communication) and institutional framework (scheme or the policy).

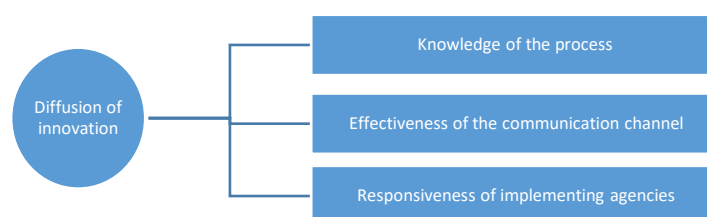
The relative benefits of an innovation, its compatibility with existing values and norms, its observability or its visibility of benefits, the complexity of the process to avail the innovation, trial ability which the product or innovation is able to go through are mandatory components when it comes to the adoption of any innovation. According to **Makse & Volden (2011)**, schemes with high relative benefits, high compatibility, low complexity, high observability, and high trialability cause a diffusion of the innovation and lead to its adoption amongst the social group. According to **Rogers (1981)**, the process of diffusion entails the communication of an innovation through certain channels which takes place over a period of time among the individuals of a social group. In this type of communication, the message is concerning new ideas or innovations.

In the process of communication, individuals construct and share messages with one another so that they understand each other. Thus communication is a two way process of convergence.

Diffusion is a type of communication where the messages are about a new idea. The idea being new is the characteristic feature of diffusion. Since the idea is new, some degree of uncertainty is inevitable. After an innovation has been launched or announced, the process of communication must take place so that it can spread or diffuse. As discussed earlier, communication is a process of mutual understanding between the participants. Diffusion is a specific type of communication where information or messages shared are concerned with new ideas or innovations. **Rogers and Shoemaker (1971)** explain the process with four steps viz , an innovation, an individual who has adopted the innovation, another individual who doesn't yet have any knowledge or information about the innovation and lastly, a communication channel which will facilitate the connection or flow of information between the two individuals. **Lazarsfeld and Menzel,(1963)** propose that the communication channel can be a person or interpersonal conveying information or mass media channels also which can be a swift and efficient means of diffusing or spreading information amongst the beneficiaries or intended adopters. Interpersonal channels involve face-to-face interaction between individuals. **Pandey, & Yadama (1992)** opine that in diffusion of policies, there are three variables which have an effect: the pros and cons of an innovation, the characteristics of the intended or potential adopters, opinion leader's influence on them and the social and political context related to the innovation itself. According to **Nicholson & Carley (2016)**, diffusion studies can greatly help in gauging the dissemination and implementation of public policy or a government scheme. Talking about government policies as innovations, mass media channels as well as interpersonal communication can play a pivotal role in disseminating the same. Policy diffusion studies reflect that a government scheme's faster adoption by the beneficiaries or the social group depends upon both the factors. An examination of the communication and implementation of the innovation is pertinent because it can show the way and orient the players towards adoption of future innovations. The effectiveness of the innovation is intricately linked to the adoption and the implementers to communicate in a way those schemes are administered in a way that matches the beneficiaries' preferences.

#### 4.Objectives Of The Study

- To find out the level of the knowledge of the process to avail the subsidised sanitary napkins.
- To find out the effectiveness of communication channel.
- To find out whether the responsiveness of the implementing agencies has caused diffusion of the innovation.



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## 5.Hypotheses Of The Study

- The knowledge of the process to avail the subsidised sanitary napkins is positively correlated to the diffusion of innovation.
- The higher effectiveness of communication channel causes higher diffusion of innovation.
- The greater responsiveness of the implementing agencies causes higher diffusion of innovation.

## 6.Population And Sample

For this study, the data has been collected by structured questionnaire and survey method was used. The researcher for convenience chose the Palghar district and the ZP Schools located there were chosen were also chosen for convenience. The primary data was hence collected from 5 Zilla Parishad schools which were chosen in the Palghar district. The schools which were at least up-to class V & either co-educational or girls only were chosen. The data was collected from the girl student's parents and teachers' total 80 in number.

### 6.1.Statistical Techniques Used in the Present Study

The Random Sampling Technique was used to ensure that each teacher and parent in the selected 5 schools had an equal chance of getting selected for the survey. The 5-Point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire. Depending on the three hypotheses & variables, the scale was as followed:

1= completely unaware, 2= somewhat aware, 3=no opinion, 4= mostly aware, 5= completely aware.  
1= not enough at all, 2= somewhat enough, 3=no opinion, 4= mostly enough, 5= all the information is given.

1= completely unresponsive, 2= somewhat responsive, 3=no opinion, 4= mostly responsive, 5= completely responsive

Data was analysed using Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regressions Analysis method were used for analysis of data. Correlation analysis is a statistical tool used to measure the strength and direction of relationship between two variables.

The hypotheses were tested for establishing the relationships between the Diffusion of Innovation (Dependent variable) and the three factors that determine its success (Independent variables). The tables below show the correlation & the regression statistics.

### 6.2.Data Analysis and Interpretation

Correlation Among All			
	<i>How aware are you of the process under the scheme Asmita Yojana? (KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS)</i>	<i>Is the information given through mass media enough regarding the communication (EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL)</i>	<i>How responsive are the implementing agencies regarding the queries related to the scheme? (REPONSIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES)</i>
<i>How aware are you of the process under the scheme Asmita Yojana? (KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS)</i>	1		
<i>Is the information given through mass media enough regarding the communication (EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL)</i>	0.834984559	1	
<i>How responsive are the implementing agencies regarding the queries related to the scheme? (REPONSIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES)</i>	0.735609375	0.946185129	1

\* The correlation is significant amongst variables.

Table 1.1: The Correlation amongst variables.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.851761379
R Square	0.725497447
Adjusted R Square	<b>0.71836751</b>
Standard Error	0.551121849
Observations	80

Table 1.2: Diffusion of innovation dependent on the knowledge of the process to avail.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.946185129
R Square	0.895266299
Adjusted R Square	<b>0.893923559</b>
Standard Error	0.445013853
Observations	80

Table 1.3: Diffusion of innovation dependent on the effectiveness of the communication channel.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.946185129
R Square	0.895266299
Adjusted R Square	<b>0.893923559</b>
Standard Error	0.362658736
Observations	80

Table 1.4: Diffusion of innovation dependent on the responsiveness of the implementing agencies.

Findings: After analysing the data, it was found that:

1. The knowledge of the process to avail subsidized sanitary napkins is *\*positively\** correlated to diffusion on innovation according to correlation matrix on the data.
2. Effectiveness of communication channel is *\*positively and highly\** correlated to diffusion on innovation as per the correlation matrix on the data.
3. The greater responsiveness of the implementing agencies the *\*higher\** is diffusion of innovation referencing the adjusted R and multiple R values in as dependable variable in data set ( Tables 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4)

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## 8. Conclusion

As is understood from the results of the data analysis, it can be concluded that the beneficiaries of the scheme must know the process or have access to information on how to avail the benefit in order for it to be adopted by the targeted population. The communication channel plays a crucial role in dissemination of information regarding a scheme. The more effective the channel is higher is the diffusion. In the similar vein, the higher or better responsiveness of implementing agencies like the government officials and local self-help groups also leads to more diffusion.

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