**NPTEL**
**NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE**

**Course Name**
**Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development**

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**Lecture 02: Models for Public Participation in Sustainable Development**

Welcome back to the class on strategic communication for sustainable development. My name is Aradhna Malaik, I am helping you with this course.

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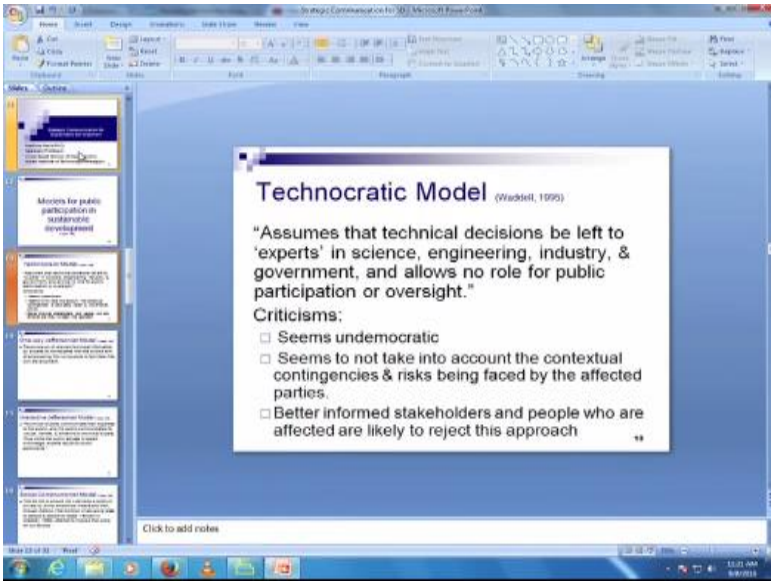


So today in this session we will talk about the models for public participation in sustainable development.

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In the last lecture we discussed what sustainability means, what sustainable development means, what development means, in this particular lecture we will discuss what the different approaches are to public participation in sustainable development which is the building block of sustainable development.

We cannot talk about sustainability, we cannot talk about development, we cannot talk about sustainable development till we take the community into account, till we discuss the, till we understand the community until we become sensitive to the needs of the community that we are talking about, till we understand what the community wants till we establish a wrapper with the community, till we engage with the community, till we assimilate what the community is trying to tell us. So that is something that we will be talking about in this class.

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The first model is the technocratic model. Now we talked about the different ways in which development has been perceived over the years, over centuries this series of models that we will talk about today is similar to that, but this is something that is not rooted in history, this is something that is still going on. So according to the technocratic approach the experts feel that they know what is best for the community.

This approach proposes or this approach assumes that the technical decisions regarding the development, regarding what is to be done for the community to improve its life be left to the experts in science engineering industry and government and allows no role for public participation or oversight.

Let us think about it, we are essentially saying that somebody from outside will come, somebody who is not a part of the community that we are talking about will come will go through the community and then we will take a decision on what is required by the community, and because of his or her expertise in that area will come and implement something and will ask the community to trust him or her.

Now when I talk about it like that it seems very uncomfortable does not it. We are talking about what the community would be able to use, we are talking about doing something for people, we are talking about helping people improve their lives we may know what we are doing as experts, but unless we understand what the community needs, unless we have their participation, unless we understand what is what they want and how they will implement our ideas can we really go into the community and implement our ideas, no we cannot.

And that is one of the biggest criticisms of this approach, it seems undemocratic, it seems autocratic, it seems like somebody is trying to control too many things and we do not want that okay. It also seems to not take into account the contextual contingencies and risks being faced by the affected parties. You may have the best interest of the community at heart, but unless you lived in that community unless you have been a part of that community, how can you implement something without knowing what the community might face okay.

So we do not take the unpredicted events into account we just say this is good for you take it or leave it, you must learn to adapt to it. In some cases that may even be true educating the masses for example, literacy is important for everybody in this world. So having a technocratic approach towards implementing literacy or towards encouraging people to go to schools and learn a language may be the right way to go about it.

But forcing people to learn only English or Hindi may not be the way to go about it. Hindi yes, within India because it is a national language, it connects people English again we have, I am telling you we have everybody's best interests at heart. So it is not about any language, but forcing them to learn English or Hindi before their own regional language maybe stressing it too far. If a community has no schools, if a village has never had schools everybody in the village is illiterate.

We first explain, we just tell them that okay you need to send your children to school and here is a school, and here are the teachers, and they need to start learning something. The only way to get it accepted would be to start teaching them in the local language. So some bit of their context

has to be a part of whatever we are trying to do for them even if we are adopting the technocratic approach.

But the typical traditional, you know classic technocratic approach does not take that into account I will put computers in a school and the school people need to either learn to use them or they can do whatever they want with them. And in many cases we found that technological devices that have been put in places where their benefit has not been explained to the people concerned or where the people concerned have not been trained to use them, these things they are just lying and they get wasted, okay.

Better informed stakeholders and people who are affected are likely to reject this approach, literacy is important, but literacy in a particular language maybe not, okay. So or the use of computers very essential in today's world, it is only because of computers that I am able to reach you and I do not know who you are, I do not know who I am talking to when I am when I am using this portal to share what I know about sustainable development and communication with you the listeners I do not know who I am talking to.

You could be sitting in some far-flung area of India or even another country and listening to what I am saying, so this is possible only through computers, okay. So technology is very important, but then again if I try to impose this kind of technology on someone then, you know a person who is informed who understands what technology is, a person from the community who understands what technology is, may not like this imposition, okay.

So these are the biggest criticisms, the community needs to be respected as a thinking intelligent unit and that is the biggest criticism of this approach that it does not take the communities intelligence and the communities capable capability to understand its own needs into account, while designing development practices.

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The next a little more open or a little more participative model is the one way Jeffersonian model, where relevant technical information is transmitted to the community by experts to non-experts with the explicit aim of empowering the non-experts to facilitate their own development. So experts come and give you the training, they impart the training to people who want to take the training.

So some bit of community participation still there, but there is a clear divide between people who know something and people who do not know something, okay. So it is still, you know one way so the experts come and they say this is what the what we can give you and some people in the community say okay we can use 60, 50 or 60% of what you are giving us and we say okay we will give you 60%.

And you take whatever we are giving you and you, if you want to use it you can take it otherwise just tell us. So it is one way, so the information is transmitted to the willing parties and people take that information and then the experts move out and the non-experts take that information and then they use it in whichever way they can, that is the one way Jeffersonian Model.

The relevant technical information, we emphasis here is on the word relevant, so the community is needs are still taken into account, the acceptability by the community is still taken into account. But it is not participatory, okay. But it is focused on empowering the community, helping the community, understand and use whatever is given to them to enhance their quality of life.

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The interactive Jeffersonian Model is a model in which the technical experts communicate their expertise to the public and the public communicates its values, beliefs, and emotions to the technical experts. So here the interaction, the participation is more the community says this is where we are coming from, the community informs the experts of its context and the experts then say, okay within this context, within the confines of this context, within the limitations of this context I will do or we will do this for you.

So the public adjusts to the expert knowledge and the experts adjust to the public sentiments. So the experts say, okay we understand from the way we understand your context, this is how we can help you and the public says, okay this is what you have to give for us or this is what you

have for us, so within this, this is how we feel about what you are giving us, and the partnership is established and this is a little bit more participatory.

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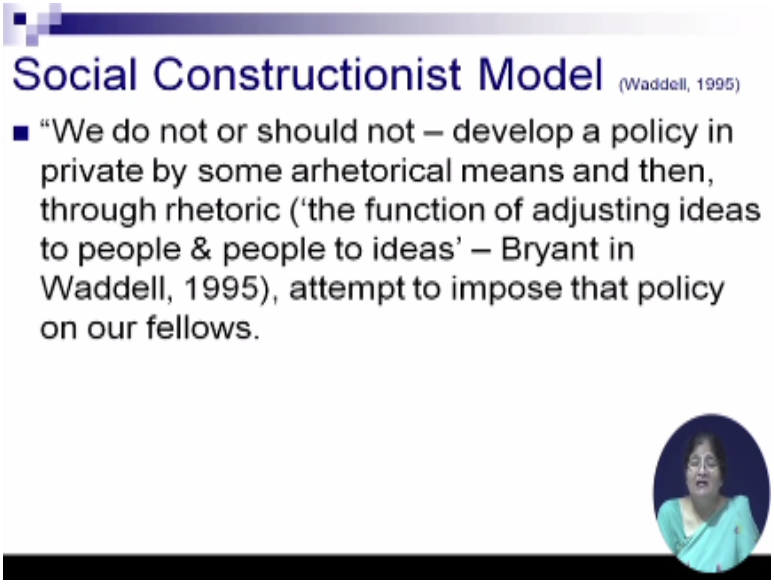


And my personal favorite here is the Social Constructionist Model which is totally democratic. The experts there is no clear divide between the experts and the non-experts everybody sort of mingles. I cannot call myself an expert till I know who I am dealing with, that is my take on the situation. I may know how to design a particular piece of technology or a policy. But I may not know how to implement it till I actually take that policy into the community that I have made it for.

So my expertise ends there, the implementation experts is are the community themselves. So part of the expertise in using what I have for them lies with the community itself and together when these two sets of experts come together they create a new definition of what it is they are trying to do, they create a shared definition of what it is that is being built together and that is the social constructionist approach we get together with the other party and we come upon or we design a mutually understood a new type of knowledge for the community that is going to be most

beneficial for the community and this type of approach is the most helpful it is the most democratic.

And to talk everything this is the most acceptable because the community is heavily invested in it and the community is heavily involved in it. The community without the communities involvement, without their understanding, without their commitment this approach cannot work. And they also know it, that in order for the experts for the technical experts to do their work the social experts from the community have to helped okay. So this is we do not or should not develop a policy in private by some arhetorical means.

And then through rhetoric, rhetoric is the function of adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas. So with through rhetoric attempt to impose that policy on our fellows we cannot design something and then try and justify whatever we have designed. And then say that okay, you know whatever we have done is for your benefit so you must accept it, no, that is not the approach that is taken in this model we say we will design something for your benefit and the community says this is what we want.

So you design something this is how we will implement it and this is how we can implement it and we say okay if you are going to implement it in such a way then we have to design things a little differently. And through going back and forth with each other, exchanging ideas we develop a shared understanding, a shared idea about what it is that we are going to create and that idea is not unique to the experts or to the implementers okay. And that is the social constructionist model. So we have discussed four models this is a short lecture we have discussed for models.

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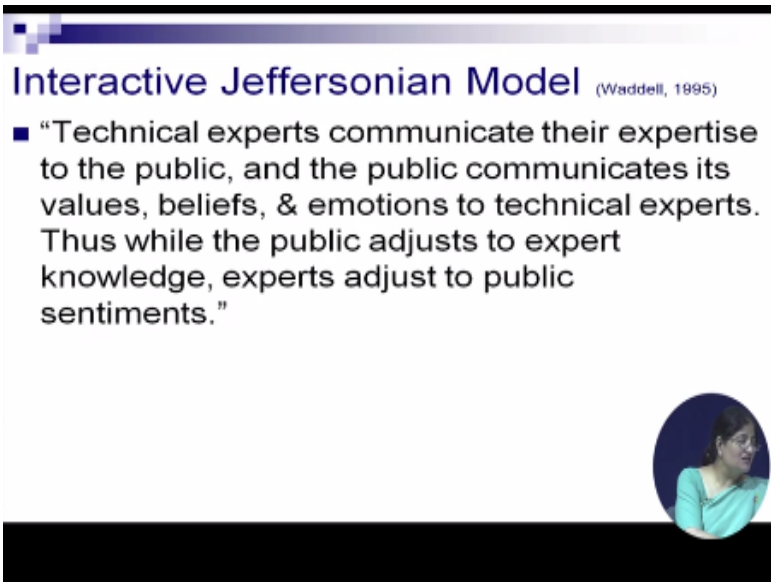

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The technocratic model which is a totally one-way approach where the experts are different from the non-experts the experts know or design something and the non-experts are supposed to take whatever the experts have designed and without asking questions or without saying anything.

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The one way Jeffersonian model is a little more participative where the experts take into account what is required by the community and design something and then teach the community how to use it, and then come out. So the emphasis here is on empowerment, not on imposition of something new it is to help the community, to facilitate their own development.

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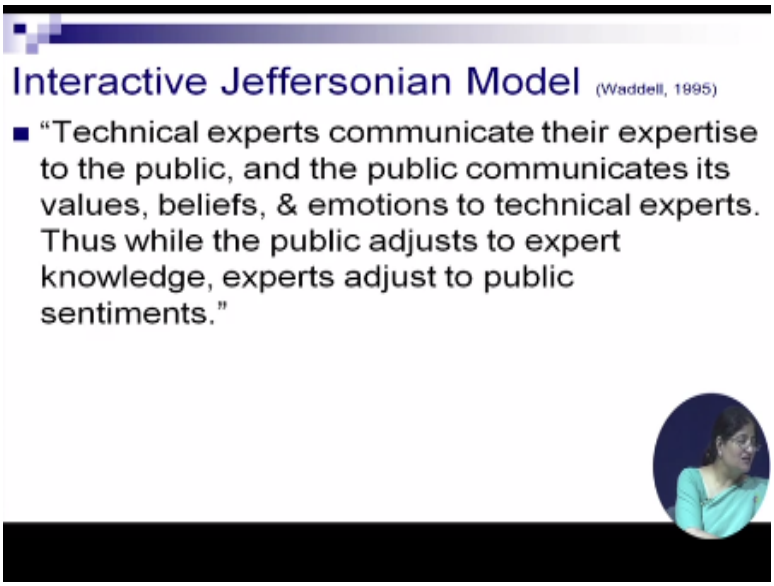


The third step in this direction a little bit more participative than the one way Jeffersonian model is the interactive Jeffersonian model where there is communication of the technical expertise by the experts and the feedback in terms of how or whether whatever they have done, whatever they have done is going to be acceptable by the community or not. But still there is a distinction between experts and non-experts.

So the community does not tell the experts what it is that they will be able to use they say this is how we feel about it, this gels with our social fabric, this gels with our culture, this does not and the experts then modify whatever it is they are giving.

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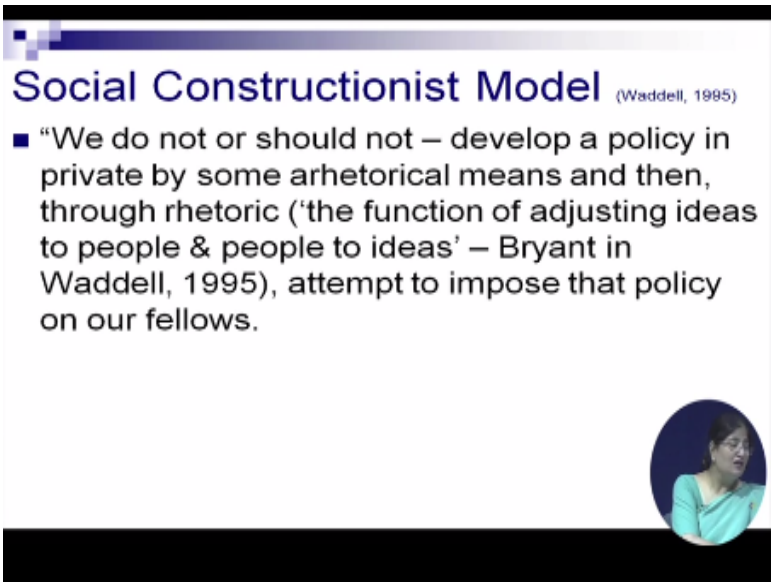


And the last one is the social constructionist model which is totally participative and democratic. And that is where we will end our lecture today. So thank you very much for listening.