International Journal of Applied Home Science **REVIEW PAPER**
(An International Double Blind Peer Reviewed / Refereed Research Journal of Home Science) ISSN : 2394-1413 (Print)
Volume 13 (9 & 10), September & October (2026) : 571-581 ***Website :*** www.scientificresearchjournal.com
Received : 21.08.2026; Revised : 07.09.2026; Accepted : 21.09.2026 **DOI:** https://doi-ds.org/doilink/11.2026-31614843/IJAHS/13.9&10/571-581

Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Behavioural Transformation and Social Development: A Review Paper

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ABSTRACT

Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) has emerged as an important strategic approach for promoting positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, social norms and behaviours at individual, community and societal levels. Unlike conventional information dissemination approaches, SBCC adopts a systematic, interactive, theory-based and research-driven process that considers the social, cultural, environmental and institutional factors influencing behaviour. This review examines the evolution of communication approaches from Information, Education and Communication (IEC) to Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) and subsequently to Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC). The review discusses the core elements, principles, importance and strategic approaches of SBCC, along with the major steps involved in designing and implementing an SBCC strategy. It also examines the role of social marketing, health education, entertainment-education, advocacy, social mobilisation, institutional capacity building and media communication in facilitating behavioural and social change. Different communication tools, including visual aids, storytelling, songs, role play, village drama and digital communication, can support knowledge acquisition, community dialogue, motivation and skill development. Evidence and examples discussed in the reviewed literature indicate that participatory and context-specific communication approaches can contribute to sustained behavioural change when combined with supportive social and institutional environments. The review highlights the potential of SBCC as a cross-sectoral approach applicable not only to health and nutrition but also to agriculture, gender, education, livelihood development and other areas of social development.

Keywords: Social and Behaviour Change Communication, Behaviour Change Communication, Information Education and Communication, Behavioural Change, Social Change, Communication Strategy, Social Mobilisation

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental component of social and development processes because people acquire knowledge, interpret information, negotiate social meanings and make behavioural decisions through communication. Earlier development communication approaches frequently emphasised the transmission of information from experts to audiences. Over time, increasing recognition of the social and contextual determinants of behaviour contributed to a transition from Information, Education and Communication (IEC) towards Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) and subsequently Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC).

SBCC is generally understood as a systematic, research-driven and interactive process that uses communication to influence knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, social norms and the wider conditions that shape behaviour. The earlier seminar material underlying this review similarly conceptualised SBCC as operating at individual, community and societal levels and emphasised situation analysis, strategy development, intervention implementation and evaluation.

How to cite this Article: Kashyap, Meghna and Borah, Sayanika (2026). Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Behavioural Transformation and Social Development: A Review Paper. *Internat. J. Appl. Home Sci.,* **13** (9 & 10) : 571-581.

The evolution of SBCC reflects an important conceptual shift: behaviour is not simply a consequence of receiving information. Individuals make decisions within social, cultural, economic, institutional and environmental contexts. Consequently, communication interventions increasingly seek to understand why a behaviour occurs, who influences it, what barriers prevent change, and what conditions are necessary for a new behaviour to become feasible and sustainable.

The socio-ecological orientation of SBCC is particularly important because individual behaviour can be influenced simultaneously by interpersonal relationships, community structures, social norms, services, institutions and policies (McKee *et al.,* 2014). Contemporary behavioural science further emphasises the interaction between capability, opportunity and motivation in producing behaviour (Michie *et al.*, 2011).

The relevance of SBCC has expanded beyond traditional health communication. It is now applied to nutrition, gender equality, environmental sustainability, climate action, agriculture, sanitation, vaccination, disease prevention, livelihoods and other areas of development. Recent literature also highlights the growing role of digital platforms while drawing attention to misinformation, unequal digital access and the need for culturally appropriate communication (Chatterjee *et al.*, 2024).

Therefore, this review examines how SBCC has evolved, what theoretical and strategic foundations underpin it, how communication approaches are being applied across sectors, and what evidence and research gaps remain relevant for future development programmes.

The review was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the conceptual evolution of communication approaches from IEC to BCC and SBCC.
2. To review the major behavioural, social and communication theories relevant to SBCC.
3. To examine strategic and participatory approaches used to promote behavioural and social change.
4. To synthesise evidence concerning social norms, gender, nutrition, agriculture and digital communication.
5. To examine approaches for SBCC implementation, capacity strengthening, monitoring and evaluation.
6. To identify major evidence gaps and propose a conceptual framework for sustainable SBCC interventions.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Review design

An integrative narrative review design was adopted. The approach was selected because the objective was not limited to estimating the effectiveness of one intervention type but was to integrate conceptual, theoretical, empirical and programme-oriented evidence concerning SBCC.

The author's earlier seminar report on SBCC served as the initial conceptual source. It provided material on the evolution from IEC to BCC to SBCC, principles, strategic approaches, programme design and communication tools.

Inclusion criteria

Sources were considered when they:

- addressed SBCC, BCC, development communication or closely related behavioural-change approaches;
- examined behavioural, social, normative or communication determinants;
- presented theoretical or conceptual frameworks;
- reported empirical evidence or systematic/ scoping reviews;
- addressed implementation, capacity building or evaluation; or
- provided authoritative institutional guidance relevant to SBCC.

Priority was given to recent literature published between 2020 and 2026 while retaining seminal theoretical and conceptual publications necessary to explain the development of SBCC.

Exclusion criteria

Materials were excluded when they:

- had no substantive relationship to behaviour or social change;
- were purely promotional materials without methodological or conceptual relevance;
- duplicated information already represented by stronger sources; or
- lacked sufficient information to establish their relevance to the review.

Data synthesis

The identified literature was organised thematically rather than statistically pooled. Six major themes emerged:

1. Evolution and conceptual foundations of SBCC;
2. Behavioural theories and determinants;
3. Participatory, multi-level and community communication;
4. Social norms, gender and equity;
5. Digital and multi-platform communication; and
6. Implementation, capacity strengthening and evaluation.

Thematic synthesis was used to identify areas of convergence, emerging developments and evidence gaps.

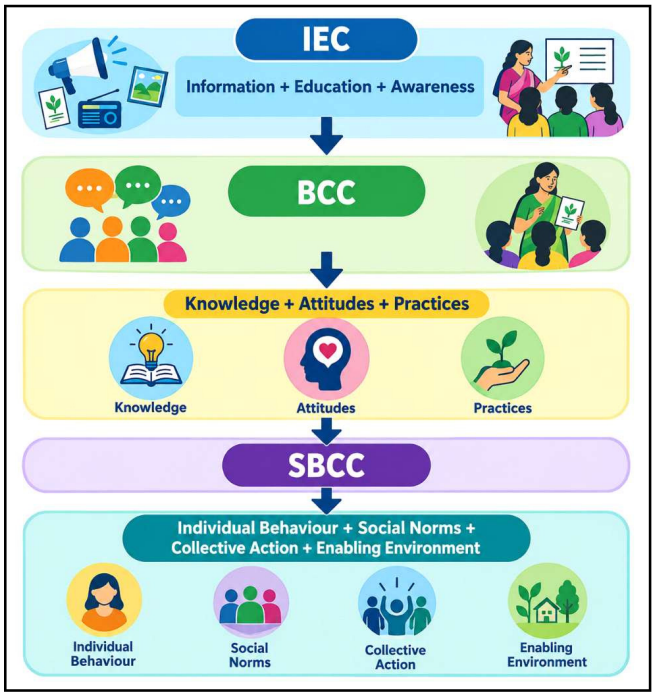
Conceptual Evolution pf IEC, BCC and SBCC

From information dissemination to behaviour change

IEC traditionally emphasised information, education and awareness generation. The audience was frequently positioned as a recipient of information, and communication materials such as posters, leaflets, radio programmes and campaigns were major intervention components.

BCC subsequently expanded the focus towards knowledge, attitudes and practices. Behaviour was treated as a specific outcome requiring analysis of its determinants rather than simply an assumed consequence of information exposure.

SBCC extends this logic further by considering the social and structural conditions surrounding behaviour. McKee *et al.* (2014) described SBCC through a socio-ecological perspective in which behaviour and social change emerge from multiple overlapping levels of influence.



The evolution may therefore be represented as:

This transition does not imply that information is unimportant. Rather, information becomes one component of a broader process involving motivation, skills, opportunity, social influence and institutional support.

Theoretical Foundations of SBCC

SBCC does not depend on a single behavioural theory. Different behaviours may be influenced by different combinations of individual, interpersonal, social and environmental factors.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasises reciprocal interactions among personal factors, behaviour and environment. Concepts such as observational learning, self-efficacy and reinforcement are particularly relevant to communication interventions.

Demonstrations, role models, peer learning and opportunities to practise a behaviour can therefore complement information-based communication.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour proposes that behavioural intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). It has also been widely applied to agricultural behaviour.

A systematic review of 124 applications of the theory to farmer behaviour demonstrated the importance of carefully assessing theoretical constructs and methodological approaches when studying farmers' behavioural decisions (Sok *et al.*, 2021).

Behaviour Change Wheel and COM-B

The Behaviour Change Wheel provides a systematic framework for diagnosing behaviour and selecting intervention functions. Its central COM-B system proposes that behaviour results from interactions among. (Michie *et al.*, 2011)

- Capability
- Opportunity

- Motivation
- Behaviour

This model provides a useful bridge between behavioural diagnosis and SBCC programme design.

Socio-ecological Perspective

The socio-ecological perspective recognises that behaviour operates within multiple levels:

Individual → Interpersonal → Community → Institutional → Policy/Environment

SBCC therefore needs to combine individual communication with community mobilisation, institutional strengthening and policy or advocacy approaches when the determinants of behaviour extend beyond the individual.

Social Norms Perspective

Social norms are important because individuals may act according to perceived expectations of reference groups. Recent research highlights that norms can encourage conformity but can also produce unintended effects if messages are poorly designed or if normative information conflicts with personal values or group identity (Wenzel and Woodyatt, 2025).

Consequently, SBCC interventions should distinguish between individual attitudes, perceived norms, collective expectations and actual behaviour.

Thematic Review of SBCC Literature

Table 1 : Major themes emerging from the reviewed literature

Theme	Major focus	Key evidence/insight	Implication for SBCC
Evolution of communication	IEC → BCC → SBCC	Communication has shifted from information transfer towards multi-level behaviour and social change	Communication materials should be embedded within a broader change process
Behavioural diagnosis	Capability, opportunity, motivation	Behaviour depends on interacting individual and contextual factors	Conduct behavioural diagnosis before selecting communication interventions
Socio-ecological communication	Individual to policy level	Behaviour is influenced by multiple social and structural levels	Combine interpersonal, community, institutional and policy approaches
Participatory communication	Dialogue, participation, local ownership	Participatory processes can improve relevance and ownership	Involve intended audiences in formative research and intervention design
Social norms	Expectations, reference groups and collective behaviour	Norms can facilitate or constrain behaviour	Identify reference groups and perceived expectations
Gender and equity	Power, roles and access	Communication can contribute to changes in gender attitudes and social relations	Use gender-responsive and equity-sensitive approaches
Nutrition	Knowledge, practices and food environments	SBCC can improve dietary and feeding outcomes when integrated into broader programmes	Combine communication with food access, services and enabling conditions
Agriculture	Adoption of farming practices	Farmer behaviour is influenced by information, trust, markets, attitudes and institutional factors	Combine technical information with practical learning, social influence and market/institutional support
Digital communication	Social media, mobile platforms and digital tools	Digital technologies can extend reach but introduce misinformation and access challenges	Use integrated and context-appropriate digital strategies
Capacity strengthening	Skills and organisational capacity	Capacity is necessary for sustainable SBCC delivery	Strengthen communication competencies at individual and institutional levels
Monitoring and evaluation	Outcomes, implementation and impact	Attribution and long-term assessment remain challenging	Integrate M&E from programme design
Ethics	Participation, autonomy and equity	Communication can become manipulative if ethical safeguards are absent	Apply transparency, respect, inclusion and accountability
Sustainability	Maintenance and institutionalisation	Long-term effects are less frequently documented	Measure maintenance of behaviour and institutional change

Participatory and Multi-Level Communication

Contemporary SBCC increasingly emphasises participation rather than one-way message delivery. Participatory communication allows communities to contribute to problem identification, message development, implementation and evaluation.

This approach is particularly relevant when behavioural barriers are associated with cultural practices, social expectations or limited trust in external institutions.

In agricultural development, for example, farmers may be more responsive to practical demonstrations, peer learning and trusted local actors than to technical messages delivered through one-way channels. Recent research involving agricultural stakeholders found that direct interaction, practical learning, audio-visual materials, personalised communication, coordination and continuous learning were important components of communication systems designed to support farmer behaviour change.

A 2023 conceptual study on participatory development communication in sustainable agriculture in India similarly argued for moving agricultural extension towards dialogue and participatory communication rather than relying exclusively on technology dissemination.

Participation therefore represents both a communication strategy and a mechanism for strengthening local ownership.

Social Norms, Gender and Equity

Social norms are increasingly recognised as important determinants of behaviour. Communication strategies that ignore normative expectations may have limited effects even when individuals possess adequate knowledge.

Gender norms are especially relevant because decisions relating to health, nutrition, agriculture, household expenditure, mobility and access to resources can be shaped by gendered expectations.

A systematic review of interventions addressing gendered stereotypes and norms identified a wide range of approaches, including direct participation, community mobilisation, communication, social marketing, social media, advocacy and policy interventions (Marcus *et al*., 2021).

More recent work has highlighted the importance of examining the mechanisms through which social norms are formed and changed rather than treating "norms" as a generic intervention target. This includes understanding reference groups, social approval, sanctions, identity and perceived expectations.

For SBCC, this suggests that interventions should ask:

- Who influences the target behaviour?
- What behaviour is perceived as socially acceptable?
- What behaviour is perceived as expected?
- What happens when individuals deviate from the norm?
- Which individuals or groups can act as trusted reference points?
- Are women and marginalised groups able to participate meaningfully in communication processes?

SBCC and Nutrition

Nutrition represents one of the areas in which SBCC has accumulated substantial evidence.

Nutrition-related behaviours are influenced by knowledge, food availability, household resources, cultural practices, gender roles, food preferences and social expectations. Therefore, nutrition communication is unlikely to be effective if it focuses exclusively on knowledge without addressing access and environmental constraints.

A systematic review and meta-analysis by Mahumud *et al*. (2022) examined nutrition SBCC interventions during the first 1,000 days and reported evidence concerning infant and young child feeding practices and nutritional outcomes.

More recent evidence further supports the integration of SBCC into nutrition-sensitive programmes. A 2026 systematic review identified 15 studies—including randomised and cluster-randomised trials—and reported improvements in several dietary and feeding-related outcomes when SBCC was integrated with nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes.

A 2024 scoping review of interventions addressing women's diets found that social and behavioural interventions increasingly recognise the influence of social norms on dietary behaviour.

These findings support a broader conceptualisation:

Nutrition information

- Food availability
- Household decision-making
- Social norms

- Skills and self-efficacy
- Supportive services

→ Improved nutrition behaviour

→ Improved dietary outcomes

SBCC and Agricultural Development

Agricultural technology adoption is fundamentally a behavioural process. Farmers decide whether to adopt, modify, reject or discontinue practices based on perceived benefits, costs, risks, social influence, available resources and experience.

Sok *et al*. (2021), through a review of 124 applications of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to farmer behaviour, demonstrated the breadth of behavioural research in agriculture.

Rundle-Thiele *et al.* (2022) identified 26 barriers and enablers across seven dimensions influencing farming practice change. These included financial and market forces, information dissemination, farmer and farm characteristics, institutional settings and regulations, stakeholder interactions, farming practices, and beliefs, attitudes and individual capabilities.

These findings indicate that agricultural SBCC should not be reduced to "farmer awareness". Instead, an agricultural SBCC strategy may include:

1. Behavioural diagnosis;
2. Farmer segmentation;
3. Participatory technology assessment;
4. Demonstrations and experiential learning;
5. Farmer-to-farmer communication;
6. Trusted extension and local messengers;
7. Digital and mobile communication;
8. Market and institutional linkages;
9. Community mobilisation; and
10. Monitoring of actual practice adoption.

This is particularly relevant to climate-resilient agriculture, where adoption decisions may involve uncertainty, investment, risk perception and the availability of complementary resources.

Digital and Multi-Platform SBCC

Digital communication has expanded the range of channels available to SBCC practitioners. Mobile phones, social media, messaging applications, online videos and interactive platforms can facilitate rapid communication, repeated exposure and two-way engagement.

A randomized pilot study in rural India demonstrated the feasibility of combining face-to-face SBCC with mobile-phone communication for vaccination and child health interventions.

However, digital communication does not automatically produce behaviour change. Access, literacy, language, trust, platform use, misinformation and digital inequalities can influence outcomes.

Chatterjee *et al.* (2024), reviewing communication and behaviour-change interventions related to climate mitigation, highlighted both the potential of digital media and the challenges associated with misinformation and the need to understand longer-term behavioural effects.

The future of SBCC is therefore likely to involve hybrid communication ecosystems, rather than complete replacement of interpersonal or community communication by digital platforms.

SBCC, Equity and Social Inclusion

SBCC has increasingly been linked to health and social inequities. Communication interventions can either reduce or reproduce inequalities depending on whose knowledge is valued, who has access to communication channels and whose voices are included in programme design.

Storey and Obregon (2023) highlighted equity and disparity as important considerations for contemporary SBCC.

An equity-oriented SBCC approach should therefore consider:

- gender;
- socioeconomic status;
- literacy;
- disability;
- geography;
- language;
- age;
- digital access;
- cultural identity; and
- access to services and resources.

Messages should not place responsibility for change entirely on individuals when structural constraints prevent them from acting.

Ethics in SBCC

The growing sophistication of behavioural communication also creates ethical responsibilities. Communication designed to influence behaviour can become problematic if it relies on manipulation, fear, misinformation or exploitation of vulnerabilities.

Jacobson and Lemire Garlic (2024) argued for greater attention to ethical principles within SBCC and connected communication ethics with concepts such as capabilities, dialogue and communicative action.

Ethical SBCC should therefore emphasise:

- Informed participation;
- Transparency;
- Respect for autonomy;
- Accuracy;
- Cultural sensitivity;
- Inclusion;
- Avoidance of stigma;
- Protection of vulnerable populations; and
- Accountability.

The objective should be to enable people to make informed and feasible choices rather than merely to secure compliance.

Capacity Strengthening

Effective SBCC requires capable institutions and practitioners. Communication planning may involve formative research, audience segmentation, behavioural analysis, message development, creative design, interpersonal communication, digital communication, community mobilisation and evaluation.

A systematic review by Awantang *et al.* (2022) examined capacity-strengthening activities in SBCC programmes and highlighted the importance of assessing whether capacity-building activities actually strengthen programme performance.

Capacity strengthening should therefore extend beyond one-time training. It may involve:

Training → Practice → Mentoring → Supervision → Feedback → Institutionalisation

This is especially important for extension systems, community organisations, health workers and local development institutions that are responsible for sustained communication.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SBCC

Evaluation remains one of the most important and challenging areas of SBCC.

A comprehensive evaluation should distinguish between:

Inputs

Resources, staff, training, materials and funding.

Activities

Communication sessions, demonstrations, campaigns, digital messages and community meetings.

Outputs

Reach, exposure, participation, message recall and engagement.

Intermediate outcomes

Knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, perceived norms, skills and intentions.

Behavioural outcomes

Adoption, continuation, discontinuation or modification of behaviour.

Social outcomes

Changes in norms, relationships, collective action, institutional practices and community capacity.

Longer-term impact

Health, nutrition, livelihood, environmental or broader development outcomes.

A useful evaluation pathway is:

Inputs → Activities → Exposure → Knowledge/ Beliefs → Motivation/Self-efficacy → Behaviour → Social Reinforcement → Sustained Behaviour → Development Outcomes

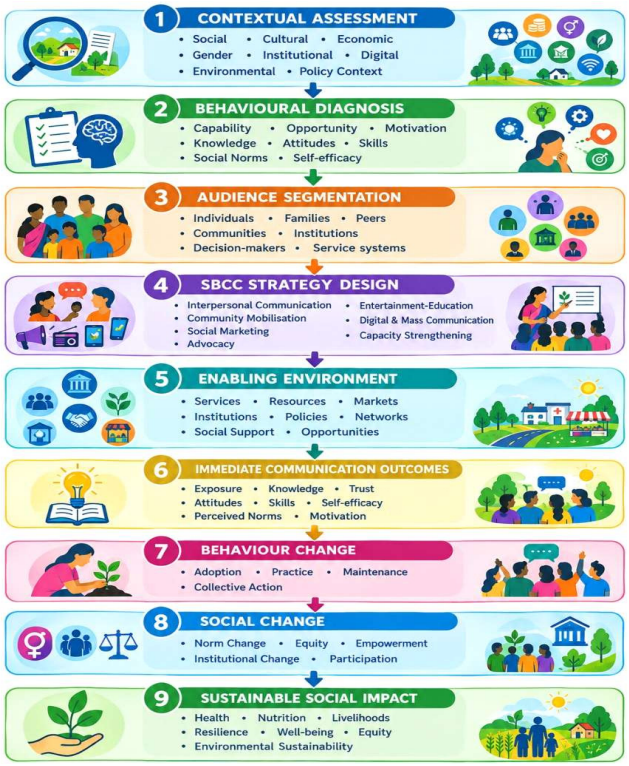
WHO's recent communication guidance similarly emphasises understanding, planning, development, testing, implementation and evaluation/learning as interconnected stages rather than isolated activities.

Recent evidence also indicates that SBCC evaluation needs to improve its ability to establish causal pathways, measure long-term maintenance and document contextual influences.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework places contextual and behavioural diagnosis before communication strategy selection. It recognises that communication operates alongside enabling resources and institutional conditions. Behavioural outcomes may subsequently contribute to social change when behaviours are reinforced through social norms, collective action and supportive institutions.

The framework also incorporates a continuous feedback loop. Monitoring and evaluation are not positioned only at the end of the programme but operate



Source: Conceptual framework developed from the reviewed literature, integrating the socio-ecological SBCC perspective of McKee *et al.* (2014), the COM-B model of Michie *et al.* (2011), contemporary behavioural-science approaches, and the conceptual material of the author's seminar review.

Fig. 1 : Integrated conceptual framework for SBCC and sustainable social change

throughout implementation to identify what is working, for whom, under which conditions and why.

Thematic Synthesis of Selected Recent Evidence (Table 2)

Emerging Trends in SBCC

The reviewed literature indicates several important shifts in the field.

From message-centred to behaviour-centred design

The central question is increasingly shifting from:

"What message should be delivered?"

to:

"What behaviour needs to change, why is it occurring, and what conditions are required for change?"

From individual behaviour to systems thinking

SBCC increasingly considers behaviour within wider systems involving families, communities, institutions, markets, policies and environments.

From communication campaigns to communication ecosystems

Modern SBCC increasingly combines interpersonal communication, community mobilisation, mass media, social media and digital platforms.

From awareness to capability and opportunity

Behavioural science increasingly emphasises that knowledge is insufficient when individuals lack capability, opportunity, resources or supportive environments.

From standardised messages to audience segmentation

Communication is becoming more tailored according to audience characteristics, behavioural barriers, social norms, language, culture and communication preferences.

From short-term outputs to sustained outcomes

There is increasing attention to behaviour maintenance, institutionalisation, social norms and long-term impact rather than only measuring message reach.

From technological optimism to responsible digital communication

Digital platforms provide opportunities for reach and interaction, but misinformation, unequal access, privacy, trust and algorithmic environments require greater attention

Research Gaps

Despite considerable progress, several gaps remain.

Long-term sustainability

Many interventions measure outcomes shortly after implementation. More longitudinal evidence is required to establish whether behavioural and normative changes persist.

Attribution

Because SBCC often operates as part of multi-component programmes, determining the independent contribution of communication remains difficult.

Table 2 : Selected evidence and implications for SBCC

Study/Source	Area	Approach	Major contribution to SBCC understanding
Sok *et al*. (2021)	Agriculture	Review of 124 TPB applications	Demonstrates importance of behavioural theory in understanding farmer decisions
Awantang *et al* (2022)	SBCC capacity	Systematic review	Highlights need to evaluate capacity-strengthening activities
Mahumud *et al* (2022)	Nutrition	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Provides evidence on nutrition SBCC and child feeding/nutritional outcomes
Rundle-Thiele *et al* (2022)	Agriculture	Evidence review	Identifies multiple financial, informational, institutional and behavioural barriers/enablers
Mutyala (2023)	Sustainable agriculture, India	Conceptual review	Supports participatory development communication in agricultural transformation
Storey and Obregon (2023)	Public health equity	Expert/summit synthesis	Highlights equity and disparities as contemporary SBCC concerns
Jacobson and Lemire Garlic (2024)	SBCC ethics	Conceptual analysis	Calls for stronger ethical foundations for SBCC
Chatterjee *et al* (2024)	Climate behaviour	Review	Highlights message design, digital media and misinformation challenges
Litvin *et al.* (2024)	Women's nutrition	Scoping review	Demonstrates importance of social norms in dietary interventions
Gonah and Nomatshila (2024)	Public health emergencies	Scoping review	Identifies technology, infodemic management and behavioural data as emerging priorities
Thapliyal *et al*. (2024)	India, nutrition policy	Scoping review	Links policy environments with SBCC requirements
Shafique *et al.* (2026)	Nutrition/social protection	Systematic review	Finds evidence of improved dietary and feeding outcomes when SBCC is integrated into broader programmes
UNICEF (2026)	Behavioural science	REACH framework	Emphasises recognition, engagement, action, context and habit
WHO (2026)	Health communication	Planning framework	Promotes understand–plan–develop–test–implement–evaluate/learn cycle
WHO Europe (2024)	Behavioural interventions	Evaluation guidance	Emphasises rigorous assessment of behavioural interventions
Farmer biosecurity study (2025)	Agriculture	Stakeholder qualitative research	Highlights trust, direct interaction, practical learning and coordinated communication

Cost-effectiveness

Evidence concerning the costs of different communication channels and strategies remains comparatively limited.

Measurement of social norms

Norm change is more difficult to measure than knowledge or individual attitudes. Future studies should distinguish actual norms, perceived norms, personal attitudes and reference-group expectations.

Digital inequalities

Digital SBCC requires greater attention to connectivity, digital literacy, language, gender differences in access and the needs of marginalised groups.

Agricultural applications

Compared with health, the empirical SBCC evidence base in agriculture remains less developed. More studies should explicitly connect behavioural theory with agricultural extension and adoption outcomes.

Climate and resilience communication

Climate-resilient practices require sustained behavioural change under conditions of uncertainty. More evidence is needed on communication approaches that influence long-term adaptation and resilience.

Ethics and power

Future research should examine the ethical boundaries between persuasion, empowerment and manipulation, particularly when behavioural interventions use emotional or normative appeals.

Implications for Development Practice

The review suggests that future development programmes should consider the following principles:

1. Start with behavioural diagnosis rather than message production.
2. Conduct formative research before designing interventions.
3. Segment audiences according to behavioural and contextual characteristics.
4. Use trusted messengers and locally relevant communication channels.
5. Combine interpersonal, community and digital communication.
6. Integrate communication with services, resources and institutional support.
7. Address gender and social norms explicitly where relevant.
8. Provide opportunities for people to practise desired behaviours.
9. Strengthen the capacity of frontline communication actors.
10. Integrate monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme cycle.
11. Measure behaviour and social outcomes, not only knowledge and message exposure.
12. Use evidence and feedback to adapt interventions continuously.

For agricultural extension and rural development, these principles suggest that SBCC can complement conventional technology-transfer approaches by connecting technical knowledge with motivation, social learning, farmer agency, institutional support and market opportunities.

Conclusion

SBCC has evolved from information-centred communication into a comprehensive approach that recognises the interaction between individual behaviour, social norms, community processes, institutional systems and the broader environment. The review demonstrates that contemporary SBCC is increasingly grounded in behavioural science, participatory communication, socio-ecological thinking, digital communication and evidence-based evaluation.

The literature indicates that information remains necessary but is rarely sufficient for sustained behavioural change. Capability, motivation, opportunity, social influence, trust, resources and institutional support can determine whether people are able to translate information into practice.

Evidence from nutrition demonstrates the value of integrating SBCC with broader programme interventions, while agricultural research indicates that farmer behaviour is shaped by economic, informational, institutional and psychological factors. Emerging evidence additionally highlights the importance of social norms, gender, equity, ethical practice and digital communication.

The conceptual framework proposed in this review positions SBCC as a continuous change process beginning with contextual and behavioural diagnosis and moving through audience segmentation, strategic communication, enabling conditions, behavioural outcomes and social impact. Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation operate throughout this process.

Future SBCC research should therefore move beyond measuring communication exposure and short-term knowledge gains towards examining behavioural maintenance, social norm transformation, institutional change, equity, cost-effectiveness and long-term development outcomes. Such an approach can strengthen the contribution of communication to sustainable health, nutrition, agricultural, environmental and livelihood outcomes.

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