



## Role of Folk Media in Rural Development

**Yathish.  
L.Kodavath**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Folk Media & Communication Karnataka Folklore University, Gottagodi, Shiggaon, Haveri dist. Karnataka State.

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### Introduction:

In a country like India, this is multi-lingual, diverse in character and where peasantry constitutes that largest segment of population, knowledge of folk institutions, their habits, customs, tradition and culture serve as significant tools in the process of motivating the rural masses towards development programmes launched by the government at the national, state and local levels. Folk media provide an important tool in the process of motivating rural masses towards accepting social change that are being introduced through various development agencies. They also prove a useful means for the upliftment of common people and national reconstruction programmes.

Folk media help in making the task of nation-building, socio-economic development and modernization easier and acceptable to rural masses. Developing countries all development should be geared to rural development. In India it is not so even when three fourths of the population lives in the village. India is conscious of its identity as a land of villages. Rural development as defined by the World Bank is simply a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a particular group of people the rural poor. Rural development has to be perceived as a process. It can also be measured as a product of a process. In our planning documents rural development is considered as the end product. Satisfaction of a set of minimum needs has been accepted as the cardinal indicator. The minimum needs include elementary education, rural health, rural water supply, rural electrocution and housing assistance to rural landless.

In 1952 the Community Development Program and National Extension Service were introduced in which the Block emerged as a unit of planning and development. The program was aimed to be a cooperative endeavor with government and people as equal partners for all round development of the village. However, the assumptions on which the program was based were not correct. People were not enthused about the program as they had no share in planning. Popular participation was minimal. The gain made under the program went largely to the rural elite. The attitudinal change among the people did not occur. The high expectations aroused could not be realized.

The top down kind of development planning excludes rather than invites participation of the poor in the development process. Tradition and development are not necessarily in conflict. Traditional social and cultural patterns can well be utilized to promote overall goals of development. Farmers may be encouraged to adopt modern agricultural practices so that they can use the additional income to meet family and kinship obligation. The authority of traditional leaders can be invoked in aid of development program. Popular participation in development is facilitated where there is strong tradition of local origination. It is also necessary that there should be complete transparency between the administration and the people. They should not be suspicious of each other intentions. Traditional values should not be used as an alibi for failure of government schemes.

### Role of Folk Media:-

Folk media play very important role on the rural citizens of our country. The rural people are mostly, illiterate, simple and ignorant as well, and this is why 'Folk Media' have come to be very suitable to them all. As the messages all, delivered by the folk media, are easy and understandable quickly as well, so, the villagers can enjoy its presented program as a whole. Very few common errors that take places in our daily life, folk media often try to point out those, as to aware through their presentation. Folk media carry a diverse message, of education,

political, social, healthcare and agricultural innovation, as to inform and educate the rural citizens. In the village life, where the medium of mass communication like radio, newspaper and television. Have not been profuse introduced, folk media have tried to compensate such wider in coverage as well as the communication gap.

Folk media, as it do not maintain any decorum and well any protected status like other mediums of mass communication have, that allows the rural audiences to come closer to such media considerably well.. On the other hand, the communicator presents the messages,, related to the facts that happen in village life every day. As the major messages in folk media, are delivered in the form of entertainment, to the audiences, who have no experience or any tastes for other types of amusement or entertainment at all like other urban citizens, tend come to closer with such easily available rural media of interests and get themselves stick to its presented programmes all with greater emphasis The predominant emphasis of rural people, has been mostly utilized by the folk media, through their presentation of varied programmes, that contribute to the development of rural sector significantly. it cater so many programmes on 'family welfare', 'adult & women education' 'uses of fertilizers to boost the crops production', 'polio vaccination'etc. So many other issues, with a view to aware and motivate the unwary rural people, as to impulse them to the right direction, in achieving the goals for the development of the nation as well. Although, folk media messages, are insufficient, lack of proper evidence or documentation and indecently catered to the audiences, it appear to be fruitful and exist up to the mark to the mark of the living standard of the rural villagers or people to pursuit their needs and demands as well.

### Rural Development Communication in India

To be effective, the communication must pass through the attitude and behavioral patterns of people and this, perhaps, is possible through the traditional media which are largely shaped by the cultural heritage and by common ties of existence of the people. Among the third world countries, India has the credit of being one of the first to have initiated systematic attempts to employ the traditional folk media in early 1950's when the Song and the Drama Division of ministry of information and broadcasting started using the folk performing arts to describe the developmental functions to the societies.

The Government of India (1953) emphasized the role of folk communication in development in the First Five Year Plan document thus: "A widespread understanding of the Plan is an essential stage in its fulfillment. An understanding of the priorities of the Plan will enable each person to relate his or her role to the larger purposes of the nation as a whole. All available methods of communication have to be developed and the people approached through the folk media, then after that written and spoken word no less than through radio, film, song and drama".

### Strength & Advantages of Traditional Folk Media:

Traditional folk media that cover the various performances that relates to express all events and facts, ideas & thoughts of the respective rural society through the presentation in the manner of pleasure & enjoyments. Although, traditional folk media, say what, are mostly come to us ridiculously or humorously as well. But, it does never mean that the traditional folk media has no effective message, which is incapable to influence or impact the rural audiences.

On the contrary, it could be stressfully said, that the traditional folk

media can mould or motivate the numerous unwary and illiterate villagers effectively. It cater what for the rural people, are mostly in easy and understandable manner. It applies very common and widely used languages of the respective society which make any presentation understandable quickly. The presentations as catered by the traditional folk media always come to the rural people in the form of entertainment and enjoyments as well. On the way of giving pleasure and enjoyment, traditional folk media educate the rural illiterates so many, by rendering useful information's regarding healthcare, child & women education, employment and other round about, as to make the rural people wary of the present life.

As the performers of the traditional folk media, are all concerned to the respective rural society, can present various facts, difficulties, applicable resources for better output and out of the society in better manner. So, messages evolved from such rural media naturally, would serve the purpose of numerous backward rural people definitely. Beside this, as there is minimal accessibility to the mass media like, newspaper, radio and television in the rural society, so, major people's interests and emphasis is naturally lying on such traditional folk media predominantly. As the Traditional folk media, cater its major programmes through 'face to face presentations to the audiences, it can command the 'confidence' of them as well. It can earn the 'credibility' through its live presentations easily from the audience. So, the Traditional folk media take the opportunity of 'molding' and 'motivating' the rural people, by delivering its' messages.

It is true, that the traditional folk media have significant contribution towards bringing the success of many developmental programmes like 'Family Welfare', 'Children Education' etc as undertaken by the government of the state. It also have inspired the rural people in adopting the latest techniques in cultivation as well. Traditional folk media thus, can claim to be the 'mentor' of unaware and backward rural society. Modern mass media today, pay more attention and emphasis on the various enchanting as well as humorous programmes all, as catered by the traditional folk media with a view to further presentation in their channels. Presently, the television medium cater off and on, the programmes from 'traditional folk media' lively. It can be considered as the 'reward' paid to the 'Traditional folk media' for their dedication to the rural society people. Traditional folk media have considerable flexibility in comparison to other mass media that have. It can introduce any messages instantly, according to its necessity for bet raising the presentation, which other mass medium cannot perform. Above all, it can impact the audience with an immediate effect through its catered programmes, in exchange of less expense that it can afford easily. At the same time, the rural people so, can enjoy all programmes that the traditional folk media provide in dedicative manner.

#### **Traditional Folk Media of India:**

Traditional folk media generally include the presentation of different types of programs like folk song & music, folk dance, yatra, drama & theatres, puppetry and street theatre etc. All programs have the individual criteria and attraction as well, that can render distinctive taste and flavor to the audiences well.

Here is few popular programs, those are widely accepted among the people, in different states or region for its' unique presentation of excellence.

**Tamasha:-** It is a commercial theatre like, widely popular in Maharashtra and in other part of western India. Female performer carries on the program of singing 'on demand' as proposed by the patrons among the audiences. Such program does not convey any message on religion or morals of life or social values. Only 'Dholki-baris', a refined form of 'Tamasha', delivers such effective messages.

**Powada (Powala):-** It is a folk ballad form, which is widely accepted by 'Maharastrian'. It appeared during the 16th century, and carries a dramatic form of nature. *Powada* is presented mostly, by telling the stories of history. By singing in accordance with the musical instruments, is its main feature.

**Keertana' (Harikeertan):-** It is a kind of 'monodrama', in which whole presentation is operated or performed by single actor. Such a single actor enters into the topic, by acting different characters lying

in it. Here, one actor performs various roles simultaneously, at a time to tell the stories of all characters concerned. That y evolves an environment both interests and attractive moods within the audience. The uniqueness of 'keertana' is, that the a single person carries the entire program, by holding charm of the program as well. Such '*Hari-keertana*', is widely popular in many states in India like, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bengal etc. *Keertana*, covers the stories in our 'epic' generally.

**Yakshagana:-** It is another type folk drama, that is widely popular in Karnataka. It is constituted basically on '*Bhagabata*', but presented in addition with local flavor, as to produce extra charm into it. Here, the narrator sings and explains then the theme to the audiences. It is indeed, a mass medium for educating as well as entertaining the people as well.

**Nautakin:-** It is the most popular folk drama form, can be seen in north India widely. It is generally, performed openly irrespective to any special arrangement as done in '*Jatra*'. It starts with the presence of a '*sutradhar*', who is narrator of the story, that taken from ancient epic or historical events. A small group or unit, take part in such drama '*nautakin*', as to perform other roles pertaining to the story chosen for this purpose. It renders messages through its presentation is, both educative and entertaining as well.

**Jatra:-** A popular folk drama that widely celebrated in east & north-east India like, West Bengal, Orissa, Tripura and Assam. It is an organized team works and performed by well set-up groups or units, who are professionally engaged for better presentation to the audiences, as to move forward this social & cultural form of folk media. In an well set-up stage outfit, equipped by light & sound system, The whole program creates an environment of charming and attractive moods for the audiences. It goes through a chosen story, taken from history, ancient epic, social or political matter, which is well written by script writer. The characters all pertaining to the story undertaken for *Jatra*, are performed by the other performers in the group concerned. *Jatra*, is really adductive as well as an entertaining form of rural folk media. It is also, adored in urban equally.

**Bhavai:-** A stylized medieval dramatic form, *Bhavai* is extensively adored in Gujarat. Basically it is being operated initially, by *Ranglo*' and *Naik* followed by other characters. *Ranglo* is considered to be a 'stock character' and jester at the same rime. *Naik* is here, a *sutradhar* who delivers the dialogues abundantly in attractive style. The program starts with devotional song which is dedicated to '*Amba*'. Then her son *Gonesh* enters into the stage to perform his role by hiding his appearance by a brass plate. At the end of his role, *Gonesh* faces to the audiences as usual form. The total program carries a lot of varieties like dialogs, music, songs, dances and acrobatics, that can not signify its excellence or improved quality rather than individual participant's uniqueness.

**Therukoothu:-** It is the most popular traditional folk media of Tamilnadu. *Therukoothu* includes a combination of different puppetry like, *Puravi Attam*, *Nizhal Attam*, *Kazhai Koothu*. *Kalachem and Villupattu*. It is a charming street theatre, composed in accordance with the music, drama and dances of classical flavored. The presentation, takes into account the characters like, *koothadi (clown)* and the god '*Ganesha*'. Currently, *Therukoothu* has significantly been changed from its origin of forms and shapes. It is now being presented on the well-arranged stage or screen, in the form of *sangeetha and natakan* in attractive form.

**Ramlia And Rashlila:-** Both of the programs, are widely adored and accepted in rural society of India. *Ramlila* specifically, celebrated in northern India. It presents, a series of stories on lord Rama. It includes the stories, starting from the birth of prince Rama, childhood of Rama, sworn in as the king of *Ayodhya*, marriage with *Sita* and so on, a long lasted dramatic play, hat can attract and entertain so many viewers easily. *Rashlila*, on the other hand, is also, could be seen to be celebrated widely in northern state of India, Maharashtra, Kerala and in other places in our country. *Rashlila* is an enchanting play, that presents the stories all about the relative matters between lord *Krishns* and *Radha*, taking with the '*goppies*'. The entire play is very interesting and flavored with juicy entertainment wrapped with religious feelings and motives.

**Street Theatre:** - During the decade between seventy and eighty, the street theatre appeared vigorously in Indian mass communication. Street theaters, which can be seen in different types and styles, involve the activities of different groups or organization who accomplish such dramatic play or show openly to render their messages to the public widely. Specially ,political parties, student unions ,religious groups, Women welfare organization and NGOs, are involved in presenting such attractive show or play, with a view to draw the public attention as well as generating the awareness when them through the delivered messages. Such street theater can be seen in different states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu in India. About six or seven thousand groups have been engaged in playing on such street theater in India.

In the year 1944, Bijan Bhattacharya did set up Indian people's Theatre Association (IPTA), a pioneer theatre group, that conducted first play on the street. Its objective was to highlight the exploitation were taking places within the innocent and ignorant peasants of Bengal. The street theatres generally, carry the social culture and education as well for the audiences a lot. it clouds local folk forms and styles to remain as one of the streangthful medium of mass communication.

**Puppetry:-** It is one of the most popular as well as adored folk medium, that can attract the children and adults equally. In India, *puppetry* can be seen in four types or forms. Puppetry is widely seen in Orissa, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, And Rajasthan and West Bengal. There are four types of *puppetry*. *Sutradharika*, *Rod Puppetry*, *Shadow puppetry* and *Hand Puppetry*.

#### Improve & Strengthen Folk Media:

It is needless to say, that the folk media have been appeared and stood as the most important as well as an indispensable medium for the rural society. It reflects the unwary life-style and in advanced living condition of rural people, with a view to open their eyes and developing their mind and attitude as well. The traditional folk media speak all about the village life with the aid of their insufficient ability and poor performances. In their presentations catered what, are conventional and lack many current or updated information's, that do not match to the present to other medium of mass communication can provide to the masses. Although, soon after the independence of India, in the year 1954, the government of India, established the 'song and drama division' with its own initiation and sponsorship, in this purpose. The objectivity of forming such organization was to facilitate necessary training and education with developed ideas and thoughts in this regard. Beyond this, the communicator, would require to perform an important role in enhancing the 'ideals and mission' of folk media, with a view to achieving the required progress and prosperity for the rural society of India. For this purpose, a communicator must be aware of these points, as mentioned below;

- He must maintain a balance between 'entertainment' and 'messages', by avoiding exaggerated content materials.
- He should be objective more, rather than descriptive unnecessarily.
- He should be well cautious and keep watch on the current happenings around him.  
He must try to improve the quality of messages, that would need to deliver to the audience and should be so, correctly.
- Selection of deliverable messages or contents to the audiences, that are available so many, is an important job of the communicator. So, the communicator would require performing the same very keenly and competently, with a view to making the applied efforts and time to such presentation, being successful as well.
- Communicator's delivered message should be concise, specific, objectful and understandable to the audiences over all.

#### Conclusions:

In bringing change to the rural society, folk media perform what, is conceded significantly. It can act as the mover of 'rural education & culture' in one hand, and act as the 'surveillant' of the rural society on the other hand. The folk media possess wider flexibility that determines the viability of this medium for rural communication. As have wider flexibility, the folk medium, can include any facts or event for delivering the same through their presentation, to the audiences immediately. The other medium of mass communication, have no such opportunity or way to execute the same. Beside this, a very quick or instant interaction between the audiences and the communicator is possible satisfactorily in an easy environment. Such inter-active part done satisfactorily, can command a successful communication which may lead in developing the rural society with the utilization of rendered ideas and thoughts as available from it. The only need, that the folk media , should be improved more its 'quality of 'messages', 'selection of latest issues' and 'presenting style & form' over all. Beside these, sense of decency and communicator's ability to maintain the balance between the message and entertainment, is necessary, as to make the folk media more upgraded and standardized. The communicator who leads the program here, would require the sense and awareness of presentable messages based on 'current interests' at least.

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