



Folk Media as a Mode of Communication in the Development of Rural Areas

Yathish.L.
Kodavath

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

ABSTRACT

Folk media have been recognized as Grass root media. The effectiveness of traditional media in changing negative social and reproductive health behaviors in rural India is clear. Rural India is endowed with rich, popular means of communication, including traditional or folk songs, proverbs, storytelling, dancing, drama, poetry recital, arts and crafts. These popular media are used for such purposes as recreation, entertainment, ritual, ceremonies, communication (information), and religion. Furthermore, we believe that traditional media can be accommodated by contemporary theories of communication, education, and behavior change. The flexibility and participatory nature of folk media render any predetermined evaluation strategies almost inapplicable.

KEYWORDS : folk Media (performing arts), oral media, development communication, Participatory rural development.

Introduction:

Folk art is practical, functional, natural and spontaneous. The folk performing art is changing its structure continuously over centuries modifying it to the needs of the changing situations. It is making itself functionally relevant to the society. In traditional societies art is an integral part of the life of the people. In primitive societies, there is no real distinction between art and life. Folk art is considered as part and parcel of their daily lives. It touches the core of their being.

The folk media will be taken to mean the vehicle through which messages are carried from one end to another. Folk media will therefore refer to the vehicle the common people or rural folk employ for the delivery of their messages. Folk dance, folk music, folklore, should therefore of necessity be immense value as communication tools, collectively called folk media, to anyone involved in the dissemination of information to the rural community.

Some sociologists, educationists, psychologists and anthropologists have described the process of communication through various models. Aristotle says that all these three elements, i.e., speaker, speech and audience are essential for communication. These can be organized to study the process through the person who speaks, the speech he produces and the person/audience who listens. Such communication takes place in a face-to-face manner in folk media.

Nature and Scope of Folk Media

Folk media are the indigenous means of communication. The folk performing art forms are used for moral, religious, and socio-political ends from the time they originated. It is erroneous to categorize them as only tools for pure amusement. They are not merely outdated forms of entertainment. But at the same time they too have some entertainment ingredient in them. The folk media is alive and receptive to new ideas.

They have no language rules or literature, yet they are fostered through oral and functional sources. The nature of folk media is that these forms are personal, familiar, and more credible. The people could easily identify themselves as part of the folk art forms. Folk media endowed with the channels for expressing socio-ritual, moral and emotional needs of the language-culture groups to which they belong.

The Advantages of Folk Media

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.

Folk media have various descriptors. The terms "oral media," "traditional media," and "informal media" have often been used interchangeably in referring to folk media. The folk media appeal is universal, personal and intimate. Folk media are often used for personal as well as group information sharing and discussion and draw their popularity from their entertaining nature. Types of folk media include storytelling, puppetry, proverbs, visual art, folk drama, songs, drumming, and dancing. They are popular regardless of the educational, social and financial standing of any community. They use the colloquial dialects, which are familiar to the people and so it makes the communication clear and distinct. The greatest advantage of the folk media is that they are flexible in accommodating new themes. The impact of the folk media on the people is at a much deeper level. The folk media satisfies the inner need for self-expression in which all can participate. The folk art forms preserve and disseminate the wisdom, tradition and culture of our ancestors.

During the freedom struggle and now days, central & state governments are using the very folk performing art forms to convey ideas of family welfare, banking, education, awareness of HIV/AIDS, health and prohibition. Along with that central & state governments are using folk art to give publicity of plans.

Use of Folk Media in Behavior Change Strategies

Contemporary theories of cognition and communication can be used to explain the role of folk media as complex, nonformal methods of educating people and changing behaviors. The function of folk media is consistent with Bandura's social learning (cognition) theory, which states that most behaviors are learned through modeling. This theory explains that vicarious learning from others is a powerful teacher of attitudes and behavior. Bandura believed that individuals learn not only in classrooms but also by observing role models in everyday life, including characters in movies and television programs.

Accordingly, folk media performers are role models from whom people learn. The various types of folk media are used as primers that provide the basis for residents of rural communities to discuss and diagnose their socio cultural and health situations and that enable them to take steps to find solutions to those problems. The role of folk media further subscribes to Rogers's communication and innovations theory, which explains how an innovation can be sustained within communities or groups of people after it has been adopted by the leadership of that community or group.

Developmental Communication

Many development planners in the Third World now appreciate the use of folk media as a mode of communication to explain development programmes. This may be because of the ineffectiveness of the mass media in reaching those at whom the messages are targeted. Therefore, decision makers have started to take a second look at the use of folk media to generate local participation in development projects.

UNESCO discussions focused specially on the potentiality of the various forms of traditional media and the technique of their production as well as integration with the mass media for motivational purposes. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) must be cited for taking interest in folk media to carry across to various audiences, the UNEP message of the need for a better environment for mankind.

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".

Conclusion

In India, peasants, agricultural labourers, women, tribals, bonded labourers and other oppressed groups are rediscovering the potential of traditional arts and media as a weapon in their struggle for land, water, forest better working and living conditions, human rights. Folk arts are used for peace education and conflict resolution on a wide

scale in India. Increasing number of people are turning to theatre by the people for the people and of the people as a means of mobilizing people for action for achieving social justice, peace and harmony.

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.

REFERENCES

1. Kumar, Arvind. Encyclopaedia of Mass Media and Communication, Vol. 2. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1998. | 2. Kumar, Keval J. Mass Communication: A Critical Analysis. Mumbai: Vipul Prakashan, 1994. | 3. Rajan, R.V, (1991). The Use of Folk Media in Advertising and Development Communication, AMIC, India. | 4. Vijaya., N. (1988). The Role of Traditional Folk Media in Rural Areas, Gian Publication House, Delhi. |