

ROLE OF FOLK MEDIA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT:

This study is an attempt to provide lucid and perhaps comprehensive information on the role of traditional media on rural development is the cumulative social heritage in the form of habit, custom, attitude and the way of life is transmitted from generation to generation either through written words or words of mouth. It was planned to focus the study on stakeholders of rural development and folk media persons, so that their experience, difficulties, suggestion etc. could be collected to make the study realistic and feasible. Folk media is one of the most important vehicles of social change and nation building. While a lot of modification may be needed to convey social messages, folk media will easily carry social issues related to rural development. Therefore, we need to keep our traditional media alive by continuously and cautiously safeguarding and preserving from the adverse effects of globalization. This paper will discuss the use of folk media, either in their traditional rural settings or when adapted to mass media to bring about social awareness of national development plans.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Folk Media, rural development, Traditional Media, awareness and mobilization campaign

FOLK MEDIA:

The role of traditional folk media has been very significant in rural development since the turn of this century, and with the advent of new media, the forms and ways of communication have become more specialized. Every human society has developed its traditional modes and channels of communication which characterize its existence, organization and development. These communication modes and channels form the basis upon which the communities, especially the rural community, policy makers, planners and administrators, desirous to effect functional economic and social changes, must first identify such community communication modes and channels and utilize them to provide the people with maximum information about such changes. Folk media are the vehicles the common people or rural farmers employ for the delivery of their messages such as folk scripture, folk music, folk dance or folk painting. Generally folk media represents those arts which are inherited by a homogenous segment of the society through oral transmission. Wang and Dissanayke define folk media as 'a communication system embedded in the culture which existed before the arrival of mass media, and still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world, presenting, a certain degree of continuity, despite changes. Folk media are cultural institutions transmitting values, thoughts, norms, beliefs and experiences in the society and it has been carrying on this function of transmission for ages with impeccable effect. Further, being a veritable storehouse of human experiences, folk media portray a realistic depiction of mass culture, therefore forming an integral part of the development process.

TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA:

Traditional folk-media has been produced by the rural community with their prevalent social needs and issues. The folk-media has been coming from the past period of time. In other hands traditional folk-media can be defined as the ways of transferring the knowledge and the wisdom to new generation from the past generation. Traditional folk-media have some peculiar characteristic features over the electronic and print mass media. Even in the technology and the expansion of the traditional folk-media covers the less, its potentials in effective communication have been more widespread and propounded.

TYPES OF TRADITIONAL FOLK-MEDIA:

1. Chattering, gossips, riddles, proverbs
2. Folk lyrics and songs and singing styles
3. Folk dramas, skits and role plays
4. Storytelling, folk tales, riddles, idioms.
5. Drumming and folk-music
6. Mask dance and puppet dance
7. Folk dances
8. Ceremonial occasions
9. Rites and rituals

OBJECTIVES OF THIS COMMUNICATION MODEL:

1. To coordinate the overall communication of the community governance project.
2. To convey the current messages of the development project for community.
3. To disseminate the real understanding of the project and escape from misinterpretations and doubts.
4. To widen the ability of entertaining of the various social groups as a way of entertainment.
5. To motivate for the community development.
6. To make more participation and cooperation for the community development.

POTENTIAL OF TRADITIONAL FOLK AS RURAL MEDIA:

Traditional folk forms in India can be effectively utilized for social developmental communication. The communication potential of India traditional performing art has been proved time and again by many instances of national importance. In fact, as Badal Sirckar, the noted Bengali play writer admits rather candidly, He borrows elements from the folk dreams as a matter of “expediency”.

Realizing the importance and powerfulness of this medium, the first five-year plan projected that people in the rural areas should be approached through traditional forms in addition to electronic media for publicity purpose. In later years, the UNESCO picked it up. The traditional forms of communication constitute a potential source for conveying messages for economic and social development. Communities and individuals have utilized a wide range of media local fares, puppet shows, street theatre folk songs and ballads for social purposes and as a support to local development schemes for health and family welfare campaigns, for creating political awareness. The traditional media are close to the hearts and minds of the people, so there appeal is a personal, intimate level, further familiar format and content, as also the colloquial dialects used. Make the clarity in communication cross-cultural communication hurdles are not encountered here. The numerous groups and different forms available for specific homogenous groups and for specific purposes can be exploited to cater to people of different region. Rapport is immediate and directs the barriers to communication non-existent. “AHLA”, the popular ballad of Uttar Pradesh and its counter parts like “LAAVANI” of Maharashtra, “GEE-GEE” of Karnataka, “VILLUPAATTU” of Tamil Nadu and “KAVIGAN” of Bengal which changed their content and focus depending on the contemporary needs and

were effective in arousing the conscience of the people against the colonial rule of the British. The traditional media became effective in many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi. Likewise, the eminent Tamil poet “Subramanya Bharti” started using folk music to invoke patriotic feelings. Folk tunes were used to popularize songs on glories of spinning wheels need to boycott British goods. After the independence the union government continued to utilize these traditional performing arts to convey the message and to generate awareness of development in the rural areas. In 1940’s, IPTA (Indian People Theatre Association), successfully handled some of the popular regional theatre forms like “Jaatra” of Bengal, “Bhavai” of Gujrat, “Tamasha” of Maharashtra and “Burkatha” of Andhra Pradesh to increase social awareness and political education. Mukunde Das and UtpalDutt used the medium of Jaatra for inculcating the spirit of patriotism and political awareness among the masses of Bengal. Shahir Sable, P.L. Deshpande, Habib Tanveer, Balwant Gargi, Gurusaran Singh, Rattan Thiyam used it as technique of generating national identity and social awareness among the Indian masses.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL FOLK AS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

Traditional folk-media have particular aspects in effective Communication which is different to the mainstream Mass Media.

1. Folk-media has created from the rural surrounding. So they denote the rural socio cultural milieu other than the Mass Media. Folk-media express the needs and the socio-economic dimension of the same society. Folk-media has the proximity with the community in both structure and content of the folk-media. This proximity would be more needed in preparing the receiver’s place for a profound communication.
2. The signs and the symbols of the folk-media have not been alienated from their village. They are very closer to the rural community. This helps to understand the media and its process correctly. On the other hand the signs and the symbols denote the mass consciousness of the same society. The indigenous knowledge and the traditional wisdom pass through that of signs and symbols from one generation to another future generation
3. Folk-media needs only fewer media Literacy to understand it well than the mainstream Mass Media. This is very important in use of the traditional folk-media. The community can maintain better participation with folk-media as a result of this situation. There are some characteristics in folk-media literacy. They are the simplicity, devotion, religious worship, respectfulness, use for a many years, loyalty or commitment, familiar signs and symbols. These aspects have caused to understand the traditional folk-media very perspicuously.
4. The proximity between the community and the traditional folk-media. There is a critical issue regarding that the mainstream Mass Media express only urban centered ideas, thought, opinions, and social needs. It does not consider the rural community and their social situation well. In contrary to this critique folk-media always involves with the rural community and its positions. As an example when it happens to a disease to a rural member they convert it into as a devil’s donation or to any other superficial creature.
5. Folk-media having with Interactive Communication skills. They are the participation, cooperativeness, enthusiasms, Interactive activities. These things caused to put it into a small-group working together rather than that of single activities. Even the presentation shows the small-group works. Folk-Media helps to re-establish those skills such as community participation, group working, encouragement, enthusiasms, working unity, in order to log on the development process well. As for example, there are some occasions which denote the same situations such as Attama, Kaiya, Pinkama and Funeral occasions.

6. Changeable, creativity and liveliness of the traditional folk-media. Folk-media has not distanced with the community. It can be interactive communicated with signs, symbols, verbs, gestures, postures....
It
7. consists of several procedures of reactions, responses and feedback. This caused to edit the message with good feedback in the same time. This would be treated to produce a most creative way of communication.

CONCLUSION:

The indigenous equivalent of exogenous mass media are the folk media which facilitates communication among the rural mass for socioeconomic growth and development and on the same token we too observed the powerful performance and wonderful message delivery with utmost accuracy and precision through electronic and printed mass media. Both traditional media as well as electronic and printed mass media are unique in their own way. Though they can do marvelous work independently, together they can make communication more effective and authentic when employed for developmental activities of the society. Thus, the planner and the policy maker and media buyers should not hesitate to make a perfect blend of this two different types of media while addressing the need and interest of lot many people across the country, who by and large are considerably heterogeneous with regard to their taste language, culture and comfort. Finally, it was also found that the role of traditional folk media on rural development is still viable, that traditional channels of communication such as drums, songs, village crier and folktales are still effective way of communicating development programmes. Messages are packaged and presented in performance. This is exemplified by different project initiated by the state and local governments. The communication potentials of indigenous media have been proven time and again in the history of development in various communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The government through the ministry of information and culture should improve the role of indigenous folk media by organizing regular workshops and seminar for the training of stakeholders in indigenous media operations.
2. A number of guiding principles should be generated by the government on how to use indigenous media for motivational purposes and promoting development programmers.
3. Not all folk forms can be used for development communication purposes; thus they should be carefully studied from the point of view of content and characterization for the possible adaptation for development purpose.
4. Indigenous media productions should be consistent with the needs of the social context and related to the customs and belief of the local communities.
5. Traditional media makes communication among the rural people more effective and authentic when employed for development activities of the society, therefore, the government should encourage the development of traditional communications in all its ramifications.

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