

Concept of Folk

Traditional folk media have no grammar or literature but they are surviving through oral and functional sources. It provides channels for expressing social, cultural, regular, moral, religious and emotional needs of a particular society or community; hence, they are the media of people unlike the modern media that are for the people. Folk media channels are powerful tools of communication, which play a crucial role in the dissemination of information in the rural areas catalysing socioeconomic development, say the authors. These folk forms of media have proved to be the agents of change in rural societies. They are passed from generation to generation by word of mouth or orally. Now they are dying in developing countries. Traditional folk media are mostly used during religious or festive occasions. They are very specific in nature. These low cost media besides being credible in rural areas have potential for persuasive communication and get instant feedback.

Scope and Importance of Traditional Folk Media

The folk art forms innate desire for self-expression and also satisfy man's need for moral instruction combined with entertainment as well as for dramatic and the lyrical. In contrast with the electronic media, it preserves and disseminates in a lively manner the traditions and culture of our forefathers. Indian folk forms have a generous mix of dialogue, dance, songs, clowning, etc. So it is a very important method for communicating agriculture technology to the farmers and for the benefit of rural development programmes.

Experiences of researchers on traditional folk media proved that there is a great scope for imaginative use of traditional reforms. There is a need to narrow the gap that exists between the source and the receiver. This gap can be bridgeable by a coordinating agency at regional level with intended messages in their existing folk forms without disturbing the important characters and structures of traditional folk media. The agency should be composed of traditional folk artists, scriptwriters possessing essential knowledge of target audience, the traditional media and competency to transform the intended messages. People who are involved in this should be aware of folkways, dialect, mores and taboos of our rural and tribal communities for desired results.

The traditional media has always been used for moral, religious, agricultural and also for rural development and rarely for pure entertainment. It played an important role in many cultures. Some forms are dying out for lack of support and the onslaught of the modern mass media or as a result of disruptions in the society. The traditional media is personal, familiar and more credible with which the majority of literate and illiterate people in the villages identify easily. However, these forms need to be used with understanding and sensitivity.

Folk entertainments can provide fresh and interesting programme material for the mass media making them, more acceptable to both the rural and urban audiences. The folk media can be usefully employed to educate the non-school masses. In sum, the role of the traditional media in a country like ours is of paramount importance in enriching our culture and tradition as also disseminating information and educating our rural folk.

Communication behaviour of Traditional folk media:

Communication behaviour of traditional folk media is specific and limited. It is not always common to different ethno-linguistic groups and peasants. The old-age songs, dances, music and presentation styles will present the desired theme effecting the audience on psychological emotions, religious and regional sentiments. Hence they create good impact in transfer of technology through sincere adoption of innovations. The traditional folk media through religious customs, festivals and ceremonies will force the people to accept and adopt the message of innovations blindly. They need not have convincing and confirming measures separately. All the stages of adoption will be followed simultaneously without question.

The folk arts as communicators will play definite and specified roles with traditional skills obtained through generations on practice and experience under the guidance of elder artists.

Sl.No.	Traditional folk media	Modern electronic media
1.	Homogenous audience	Heterogenous audience
2.	Communicates through - vocal, verbal, musical, visual folk forms	Communication through electronic and print media
3.	Assimilated with social and cultural functions	Difficult to assimilate in the society
4.	Oral transmission from generation to generation	Diversified means
5.	Indigenously developed with experience and without grammar	Modern modes developed scientifically through experiments
6.	Usually for illiterates	Usually literates
7.	Low cost channels	Very high cost media
8.	More credibility	Less credibility
9.	Limited applicability but more acceptance	Wide applicability but less acceptance
10.	Instant feed back	Delayed feed back

Threats to Traditional Folk Media

The traditional folk media is fading away gradually if not, disappearing due to modern electronic media such as film industry, radio, television, video, computers etc.

- At present, the attention of planners is much focused on modern media
- Direction of change from oral communication to technology based electronic media
- Change in social system such as urbanization and increase in literacy rate
- Expanding sources of financial and Human resources
- Considering the traditional folk media as out dated and irrelevant by present generations
- Invasion of commercial organizations on consumer appetites through exaggerated advertisements
- Lack of encouragement to talented folk artists
- Lack of proper understanding of traditional folk media and its nature by the present generations

Advantages of Folk Media

The folk and traditional media have their routes in the tradition and experience of a large majority of the population and also that they have a reach much more extensive than any of the modern technological media. The folk media have certain clear-cut advantages.

- Personal contact: The appeal of folk media is quite personal and at an intimate level because it has got direct influence on people.

- Language Familiarity: As in the case of colloquial dialects the familiar format and content of mass media gives much clarity in communication.
- Rapport building: The different forms of mass media can be exploited to cater to the needs of the people for immediate and direct rapport.
- Flexibility: The folk media is so flexible that new themes can be accommodated in them.
- Mixture: Indian folk forms are a mixture of dialogue, dance, song, humour, moralising and prayer.
- Impact: Though the folk media attracts a small audience, the impact on them is at a much deeper level inviting the audience participation.
- Self expression: Being dramatic and lyrical, it satisfies innate need for self expression.
- Cultural Heritage: The tradition and culture of ancestors are preserved and disseminated by the folk media in a lively manner

Disadvantages/Limitations of Traditional Folk Media

- Threat to traditional folk media is a regular with the development of film industry, radio, television and video, the Indian traditional media gradually disappearing.
- Focus of attention of planners on modern media.
- Scale of reach to masses is very less unlike as in case of technology based electronic media.
- Changes in social system such as urbanization and literacy rate leading to more individual listening or viewing rather people are preferring community listening or viewing
- Considering the traditional media as out dated and irrelevant by the present generation.
- Traditional folk media is functioning mostly as unorganized sector.
- Even to revive traditional folk forms identification and selection of good artists is very difficult.
- Lack of encouragement to talented artists in traditional media leading to decline of folk media.
- Lack of proper understanding of traditional media and its nature.
- Range of choice of forms is very low.

Folk Forms in India – Different States

The forms of folk media are many. Un-official estimate of folk media existing in India runs around 6000 in number. With a little variation, all these forms can be included in to various groups such as – puppetry, drama, harikatha (story of god), story telling, folklore, tales, ballad, singing, pad recital (story box), folkdance, folk songs, street play, riddles, proverbs etc. however, a glance through the table below further state-wise forms of folk media.

Andhra Pradesh: Vasthi Natakam (Veedi bhagawatham), Yakshagan-Beval Natakam, Kuchipudi.

Assam: Anky Nat (Bahwanas), Kirtania Natak, Ojapalli.

Bihar: Bidasia, Saraikala Chhau, Jat-Jatini, Bidapad (north-east) Ramkalia (Ram Leela in Cruda style-north Bihar)

Gujarat: bhavani

Haryana: song (sangetaka), naogal (mono performance)

Himachal Pradesh: karivala, bhagat, ras, jhanki, narnatra, haran or harin (mask dance)

Jammu and Kashmir: bhand pathar or bhand jashna (festival bhands), vatal dhamali (sword-play)

Karnataka: Yakshagan (north Karnataka), sannata (belaum and dharwad dist), doddate-bavalata, tala maddle or prasanag (indoor form, doesn't use costume, dasrata, radhana (closely resembles the tamasha of maharashtra)).

Kerala: Koodiyattam, mudiattam, or mudiyattu, tyattu, tharayattam, chavittu, natakam (christen rural drama) chavika kooth (thullal) kathakalli manch.

Madya Pradesh: maanch, nacha.

Maharashtra: tamasha, lalit, bharud, gondhal, dashavataar.

Orissa: fala jatra, daskamthai, chhau mayurbhanj, mangal ras, sowang.

Punjab: nautanki, naqqaal, swang (east Punjab)

Tamilnadu: therkoothu, veethi, veethi, natakam, bhagawat mela nataka, kurvanji (kuram or kulluve (dance drama)).

Uttar Pradesh: ramleela, rasleela, nautanki, bhagat, sang-swang or sangeetaka, janki, naqqal and bhand (different from bhand or Kashmir).

West Bengal: jatra, puruliya, chhau, pala, cambhira, kbigan.

Goa, daman & diu: dashavatar, tiyatra.

Puppetry

It is one of the important traditional media for communicating technology to the farmers in the villages. Puppetry is believed to be the oldest form of popular theatre in India. The term, sutradhar (string holder) was used for the director or the stage manager in the live, classical (sanskrit) theatre of ancient India (AD 100-1000). Experts reason that this use of the terminology derived from the puppet theatre is an evidence that puppetry preceded the live theatre in India.

In ancient India, especially in the South, the puppeteers were respected as intellectuals. They were usually patronized by kings and wealthy families and enjoyed immense prestige. The art of puppetry was popular both as pure entertainment and as an educational medium.

Puppetry is especially suitable for villages. It is an inexpensive activity. It is an easily acquired art and even crudely made puppets when played with a lively sense of drama can hold an audience. The puppet play can impart lessons on health, literacy, agriculture, home-making; education, employment, rural youth activities, recreation, etc. There are many types of puppets:

String puppets (originated in Rajasthan), Glove puppets (source unknown), Rod puppets (Orissa and Tamil Nadu) and Shadow puppets (Kerala and Orissa).

Puppets can make an impact, if properly used with the active participation of the local people. Local dialect should be used if at all a foreigner wants to stage a performance in a village. Puppetry attracts all age-groups.