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Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net



## FOLK MEDIA WITH GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

**BASAPPA Y. BANGARI**

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICE CHANCELLOR  
KARNATAKA JANAPADA VISHWAVIDYALAYA, GOTAGODI

### **Abstract:**

*India is facing numerous problems like separatism, communalism, castism, debt burden, corruption, pollution etc, so the government has to mobilize opinion in support to the national integration and prosperity.*

*Karnataka has the ninth largest population in India with 52,733,958 (2001) accounting 5.13 percent of India's total. Karnataka is also a melting pot of various religions. The Vedic religion, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity and the Lingayat cult and philosophies of Dvaita, Advaita and Vishistadvaita have existed harmoniously. It has a rich cultural heritage having given birth too many thinkers, writers, poets, exponents of music including a rich folklore. Karnataka has also had its noteworthy contribution in the nationalist movement.*

*Government of Karnataka has been trying to eradicate social evils and provide better opportunities and facilities to the citizens. Policies and programmes like child immunization, family planning, national savings, protection of environment, drug abuse, literacy, awareness of HIV/AIDS etc, are to be highlighted. In achieving this goal, the government has to communicate to the people. The media, that too traditional (folk) media, in this context, can play a vital role in generating a positive and conducive environment in our society.*

### **KEYWORDS:**

Folk Media, Government, Karnataka, Traditional Folk.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Karnataka the land of Kannadigas is also called as 'shreegandada naadu' (the land of sandalwood). The princely state of Mysore was among the earliest of the native states to introduce representative institutions. As far back as in 1881, it had its first representative assembly. Later in 1939, the system was restructured to consist of two bodies – the old Representative Assembly and a second body called legislative council. With the coming of Indian Independence and the integration of the native status, a struggle for responsible government was waged in old Mysore. After 1952 the present system as stipulated in the Indian Constitution was installed.

Kannada speaking areas were regrouped in 1956 along with the princely state of Mysore which was a unilingual Kannada speaking and by far the largest unit. The group was named Mysore as though it was an enlargement of one unit rather than an amalgamation. This was obviously a ploy to win over the die-hard "Mysorians" who might have been jealous about their own distinction which would have been lost if the new grouping was called Karnataka. Political unity among the Kannada speaking population was thus achieved on 1st November 1956, but other diversities among them remained.

Government of Karnataka has been announcing many programmes and implementing other

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programmes launched by the Central Government in order to raise economic productivity and having standards of the people by providing proper educational, health, socio-cultural and economic facilities. Still there is nearly 35% of people in Karnataka do not know to read and write but they can understand if we communicate in their dialect.

Such people are not aware of various programmes and projects which are meant for them due to ignorance and illiteracy. But, we can communicate to the people by using folk media which is their life and blood, from which they can be able to understand the messages.

Government of Karnataka has Department of Information (Vaartha Ilakhe) which is also serving to the folk to feed information and messages of other programmes etc. Apart from this there are Janapada mattu Yakshagana Academi, Sangeeta Mattu Nataka Academic etc. The Directorate of field publicity and the song and Drama Division of Central Government and the Department of Information are reaching the mass with the help of folk media without which it is very difficult to communicate to the rural folk in our state.

#### ACTIVITIES, DEPARTMENTS AND ACADEMIES:

Folk media has been using by Government to advertise and create awareness among the folk about various programmes and projects which are helpful to the public to lead their life better.

'The importance of folk media and its potentialities prompts one to examine the role of government departments engaged in the use of folk media in support of development activities in the predominately rural sectors of the country'.

The directorate of field Publicity established in 1953, comes under direct control of the ministry of information and broadcasting (Prasar Bharati). It seeks to gather people's reactions to various programmes and policies of the government and their implementation down to the village level and provide feed back for appropriate action by the government. The Directorate also maintains liaison with the state governments and other agencies engaged in Mass Communication.

Karnataka has eleven field publicity offices located at Bengalooru, Belagavi, Bellary, Bijapur, Chitradurga, Dharwad, Gulbarga, Hassan, Mysore, Mangalore and Shimoga. Feeding information and creating awareness among the folk who are in rural areas is the main objective of the Dept. of Field Publicity. Further it is trying to achieve national development by involving the folk in the programmes.

It is noteworthy that field publicity is one of the largest users of folk media to promote rural development in the country. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that these field units have not been able to ensure highest professional standards in folk media programmes despite decades spent in experimenting with traditional performing arts.

'The song and Drama Division is one of the foremost users of traditional media in the country to meet the contemporary needs of society. The Division was established in 1954 as an inbuilt cell of All India Radio to use traditional media to popularize Five Year Plans'.

"It works in collaboration with its sister organization the Directorate of Field Publicity and with other state units such as Block Development Office, village level workers – 'Gramasevakas' and the extension officials in this regard."

Government is using folk artists to propagate the messages. Folk songs, ballads, Yakshagana, puppetry, Sri Krishna Parijata, Dollu Kunita, Gee Gee Pada, etc are the perfect media of communication.

Rural folk are unable to catch the messages which are published in newspapers, broadcast on Radio and telecast on T.V. in a sophisticated high and literary language. But, the same folk can understand the same message if given through the folk media i.e. folk song, tale theatre, picture, art etc. definitely reach them. Because of the folk media make magic here. The folk do involve in the folk art forms and automatically follow the messages. Therefore Government realized the power and importance of folk media long back.

But there is another challenge to the Government due to a strong competition of modern mass media like Press, Radio, T.V., Internet etc. Although experts have prepared strategies to use the modern mass media including traditional folk media are to communicate to the rural folk. Modern mass media are also aware of the situation. They have to reach every village and every corner of our state also. Anyway most of the viewers are residing in rural areas who do not know how to read and write. Folk media are touching the heart of the people in rural area but not modern pop and rap etc.

Rural folk do love their own culture, tradition, rituals and follow the same. If they turn towards western it is temporary and effect will be considerably less. When we use folk media the result is 100%. Messages reach the minds in their language, style and mode directly without any hurdle and ambiguity.

Government of Karnataka is using Gee Gee Pada, Yakshagana, Puppetry to advertise and create awareness of HIV/AIDS, cleanliness, conservation of forests, health, family planning, polio enumeration,

education etc.

Today people including rural folk are enjoying modern mass media but, they have not rejected their traditional media which are the valuable gifts given by their ancestors. Some sort of affection is there on the folk media. This truth made the government to select folk media to communicate to the mass especially rural folk and educating them regarding various plans, projects and facilities launched for welfare of the people.

The state government announced many programmes under rural development scheme to encourage rural youths to take-up self employment and serve community. Banks, both nationalized and rural development are providing financial assistance in order to start and carry on the village industries. Banks also supporting such entrepreneurs are getting additional facilities if they are going to export the products.

Home made products are reaching the mass with Government's intervention. Government has been providing facilities to the women under many schemes viz. Mahila Sabaleekarana, Stree Shakti etc. Women are involving in self help groups and improving their standard of living. They are leading a contented and happy life. Here interpersonal communication plays a vital role. A person who directly communicates to a group in their regional language which is colloquial so, that to the illiterate women could be easily understood the subject.

A person is training a group of folks on a particular subject to achieve a goal. Training should change the attitude of the folks of a group strengthen social relationship and standard of living. They should realize there are various employment opportunities in rural area. This will reduce the migration rate of village folks to the urban areas.

Janapada mattu Yakshagana Academi is actively working in Karnataka. Academi is conducting Janapada and Yakshagana melas regularly in Karnataka. It is also identifying the folk artists, folklorists and giving away state-level awards for their distinguished contributions to the field.

By announcing such state level awards, academi is spreading light on the area of contribution. The award winners get further inspiration to do better in the field and serve community in a better way.

The Department of Information is regularly conducting programmes mostly in the villages to show developmental activities of the state government. Before conducting such programmes, Information officer do approach leader of the village and convince him in his language and style. Afterwards the leader communicates to other persons of the village. Here interpersonal communication plays a prominent role. The whole programme runs with the co-operation of villagers. Any task whether it is presentation or a movie show should be in simple and native language of the region, then only that communicates better otherwise it is waste of time and energy. Therefore government authorities plan in a systematic way to achieve the goal i.e. educate and pass on the messages to the rural folk.

The department of Information is one of the major departments of Karnataka government which is considered as one of the active department, without which news that too government news does not flow and reach the mass. It is using both traditional and modern media in order to reach the people of Karnataka and communicating to them.

In a developing country like India, with large resources and manpower, to get optimum results from development efforts, the skills, attitudes and knowledge of manpower has to be developed and utilised. In the background of limited capital and other resources available for investment in the rural areas, the only potent instrument for ushering in development seems to be Adult Education. No doubt it can also help in removing the inequalities in the social, cultural and economic fields.

#### **TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS AS A VITAL TOOL OF COMMUNICATION:**

India is a deep sea of traditional art forms which is rooted in its culture. Of late, it has been realised by media experts and scholars that the traditional art forms should be used for development communication because they are close to the hearts of the rural people and it is a form acceptable to rural population. There is a growing need for communication support for development in the rural areas to preserve, adopt and utilise traditional media in the spread of literacy.

One of the basic problems before the implementing, agencies concerning literacy is the low motivation of the intended learners because the learners scarcely understand the need for education. Also the communication pattern used by the rural folk is holistic oral model with folk rhetoric which is just the opposite in urban areas where atomistic model with a disjointed rhetoric is used.

The communication matrix employed by the rural folk ranges from face-to-face communication to group communication through established traditional forms of folk songs, drama, puppetry, theater, harikatha, Yakshagana (theatre). These acquire a special status as media of social interaction, information exchange and cohesion. These art forms derive importance due to the fact that the villagers trust and derive



values and directions from the content of the theme. So the technology mission can make best use of traditional art forms in spread of literacy.

The folk composers and singers should be encouraged to compose songs on importance of literacy in their lives. The misconception about education should be removed from the minds of the rural people and make them understand the intricacies involved if they do not educate themselves. It is possible to uncover things in which the importance of the programme might be communicated to the people for whom the technology mission is intended. The oneness of Indian ethos should become a reality depicting social concern or event by identifying the actual problem of that particular village as to why they are not interested in educating themselves.

In literacy scheme, the medium of communication is very important. With the launching of technology mission, communication media has assumed greater significance, relevance and importance. Folklore has always played an important role in education of the rural communities. They constitute the most popular and widespread media of communication.

Folk artistes should be given a chance to express themselves to the rural masses on television and radio because they are the masters who know their people and can be identified as one among them. They need to visit the learning centres to speak to the rural people and make them aware of the importance of literacy. The folk artists must be motivated to work for the technology mission. They should be encouraged to conduct training camps, workshops, seminars because they have always been nearer to the masses.

#### RECENT TRENDS IN KARNATAKA :

No doubt, Karnataka state is rediscovering the folk knowledge in these days. Earlier there was top most importance to the folk media but today it is gaining importance with the strong competitions of modern mass media viz. Radio, T.V. and Cinema.

Government is conducting folk meals in the name of Janapada Utsava, Janapada Jatre, Zilla Utsav, Gadinadu Utsava, Karavali Utsava, Hampi Utsava, Chalukya Utsava, Kadambotsava etc., to show our heritage to the mass. In these Utsavas folk media is getting lions share and performing well. With the regional and local folk media government has been providing opportunity to learn and understand folk arts of other states viz. Odissy dance, Kathakkali etc.

Local folk artists are coming on the stage and performing well. These folks are revoking our indigenous knowledge and continuing the tradition to the next generation. Students especially those who are learning at primary and secondary levels are getting inspiration and trying to imitate the folk forms. These children are less exposed to such folk media viz, folk song, folk dance, folk theatre etc. In these days children are showing their wonderness towards our folk forms as if they are new. After interacting with their parents, teachers and friends only they are learning that these are our own folk forms performed by our ancestors. Now they are disappearing due to modern mass media. Folk artists are not getting sufficient encouragement and support. They have been loosing their interest in their arts. Therefore government of Karnataka is organizing such utsavas at least to support and conserve the native folk art forms in state.

Folk media viz., folk song, sobane pada, hanti hadu, sampradayada pada, maduve hadu, mangalarati hadu, folk tale, folk dance, folk theatre sannata, doddata, radhantha, Yakshagana, Sri Krishna Parijata, dollina kaipettu, halage vadana, odapugalu etc are still alive in rural areas of Karnataka. But, for these arts numbers of audiences are less and its effect is also low. To avoid such situation government planned to provide a platform for the folk artists in association with Department of Tourism and Department of Kannada and Culture in our state. They are conducting many programmes throughout the year and maintaining our age old tradition which are reflecting through folk media.

We can have a glance over the activities conducted by government of Karnataka in this regard. In the 1940s, the Communist Party of India used popular forms of folk theatre like Jatra of Bengal, Tamaasha of Maharashtra, Bhavai of Gujarat, and Burrakatha of Andhra Pradesh to influence people of India. Drama was effectively used by government agencies in mid-fifties to tell the story of Independence and make them aware of five year plans.

During 1960s and 1970s there was greater resurgence of interest in traditional media and it was applied to mass communication programmes. The central and state governments utilised ancient arts as vehicle of developmental communication.

Mass media has capacity to convey or transmit technology, information or news quickly and traditional media can supplement these efforts having better impact on motivational, behavioural and attitudinal aspect of rural people.

Traditional media should support the mass media as extension arms. In India, the Government has been the biggest user of traditional media. The Directorate of Field Publicity and its State counterparts have employed these media to the maximum. The Song and Drama Division supplemented modern

communication efforts by offering live stage performance like puppet shows, plays, dances dramas, ballads, Harikathas, sound and light shows. These programmes have been organised through departmental troupes and private parties registered with the Division. The Division presents these programmes for the masses, which include rural and urban people, as also tribal people in interior areas. These programmes create an awareness of the social, economic and democratic ideas cherished by the nation. Realising the potential of folk media, some State Governments and non-official organisations have also made use of programmes of these media.

Finally the Indian experience reveals the possibility of cross fertilisation of some of the easy but effective performing arts of one region to another. In this respect song styles like Gee-Gee, Laavani, performances like Bhavai and Burrakatha and some indigenous visual aids like Kavad and Bhad are more prone to this, process. These formats are convenient and easy to manipulate and can be powerful carriers of developmental messages.

Scientific and pragmatic attempts should be made to contemporise the folk forms in order to make them as relevant to today's realities as possible within the framework of the medium's culture and format. In the hands of deft communicators, experimentation knows no bound in the realm of mass communication through modern cum traditional media.

#### **HIV/AIDS AWARENESS THROUGH FOLK ARTS :**

Bangalore Folk artistes are performing in villages and towns, subtly promoting awareness about AIDS/HIV.

The Song and Drama Division (SDD) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is holding workshops for folk troupes to train them to include understated messages about the disease in order to prevent its further spread. Street play actors, for example, will bring up the issue of AIDS in their performances by skillfully weaving it into the storyline instead of an in-your-face manner.

Yakshagana, puppetry and Srikrishna Parijatha troupes in Karnataka and katha prasangam, kalaripayattu, and vilpaattu troupes in Kerala are being used to achieve the goal, according to SDD's Regional Centre Manager Jitendra Panpatil.

The country has 12.5 lakh people with AIDS as on August 31, 2006, according to the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) attached to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. SDD sources said that the troupes would perform in districts identified as worst hit by NACO.

In Karnataka, for example, it has identified 25 of the 27 districts and two in Kerala. Six other districts in Kerala are in the second category. The regional centre of the SDD organized a two-day interface between artistes and experts in Bangalore during August-2007.

As many as 92 artistes belonging to 14 folk art forms from different districts participated. They attempted to make their performances effective in order to inspire people to take precaution to prevent the spread of AIDS.

#### **Technique of Presentation:**

A team from the Karnataka State Aids Prevention Society including Additional Project Director of B.S. Premaleela, Joint Director S.G. Ravindra and Deputy Director G.B. Meti helped them achieve accuracy of the messages included in performances. SDD Director H.V. Krishnamurthy guided them on maintaining the format unique style of presentation of different folk arts. The city-based Yakshadegula that specialises in Yakshagana and Lalitakala Ranga of Mariyammanahalli in Bellary district that specialises in street plays are among the troupes participating. Barring Shimoga and Chickmagalur, all the districts have been identified by the centre as "A-grade" districts as regards the spread of AIDS/HIV infection, according to SDD sources.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Folk media have been able to help and guide the cause of the development of the state for a long time. These media can carry modern messages very effectively by employing folk songs, local idioms and proverbs, through folk dances, folk theatre and ballads, which can be easily understood by the people in their native colloquial language.

Government of Karnataka is trying to establish a strong rapport with folk media and the people who are living in villages and urban areas.

It is some sort of revival in country side and age old knowledge to be learnt and understood in the towns. Any way the object is one i.e. the folk media of Karnataka should enjoy the status and have a wide

acclaim as they gained several decades ago.

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