



COURSE CODE: MAMCD 404

COURSE NAME: COMMUNITY RADIO

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND  
ONLINE EDUCATION  
TEZPUR UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**MASS COMMUNICATION  
AND JOURNALISM**

**BLOCK II**



### **Vision**

**To grow to be a leading centre for human resource development through distance, open and universal learning system.**

### **Mission**

**To provide quality higher education at door step through barrier-less, flexible and open learning mode in conformity with national priority and societal need.**

### **Objective**

- **To offer degree, diploma, certificate level programme of study through distance learning in various emerging subjects across the disciplines.**
- **To offer job oriented and vocational programmes in flexible terms in the line of the national and regional level demand of manpower.**
- **To offer various programmes under lifelong learning contributing to the local and regional level requirements and as per the need of the society at large.**
- **To undertake various research and academic activities for furtherance of distance education in the region.**
- **To contribute to conserve and promote cultural heritage, literature, traditional knowledge and environment conducting short programmes, workshops, seminars and research in interdisciplinary field.**



## **MMC-404: COMMUNITY MEDIA**

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Dr. Joya Chakraborty	Professor & Head, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University
Dr. P. Anbarasan	Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University
Dr. Uttam Kumar Pegu	Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University
Ms. Madhusmita Boruah	Assistant Professor, Mass Communication, Centre for Open and Distance Learning, Tezpur University

### **CONTRIBUTOR**

<b>Module II &amp; III</b>	Ms Ananya Gogoi, Research Scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Gauhati
	Kumari Pallavi, Research Scholar, Dpt. of Mass Communication and Journalism Tezpur University
	Ms. Lohita Raulo, Research Scholar, Dpt. of Mass Communication and Journalism Tezpur University
	Ms. Tinam Borah, Assistant Professor, Delhi Metropolitan Education, Noida
	Ms Madhusmita Boruah, Assistant Professor, centre For Open and Distance Learning, Tezpur University
	Mr. Rajat Sen, Research Scholar, Dpt. of Mass Communication and Journalism Tezpur University

### **EDITOR**

Dr. Joya Chakraborty	Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Tezpur University
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# BLOCK II

**MODULE III: INITIATIVE IN UNIT 9: PARTICIPATORY VIDEO  
COMMUNITY MEDIA**

**UNIT 10 : COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MEGAZINES**

**UNIT 11: PUPPETRY**

**MODULE IV: THEATRE FOR  
SOCIAL CHANGE**

**UNIT 12: THEATRE**

**UNIT 13: CASE STUDY- I**

**UNIT 14: CASE STUDY -II**

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>MODULE II: INITIATIVE IN COMMUNITY MEDIA</b>	
<b>UNIT -9 : PARTICIPATORY VIDEO</b>	
<b>9.1 Introduction</b> <b>9.2 Objectives</b> <b>9.2 Concept of Participatory Video</b> <b>9.4 Definition of Participatory Video</b> <b>9.5 Characteristics of Participatory Video</b> <b>9.6 Origins of Participatory Video</b> <b>9.7 Setting Up Participatory Video Process</b> <b>9.8 Some Participatory Video Experiments</b> <b>9.9 Summing Up</b> <b>9.10 Questions</b> <b>9.11 References and Recommended Readings</b>	
<b>UNIT 10: COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MEGAZINES</b>	
<b>10.1 Introduction</b> <b>10.2 Objectives</b> <b>10.3 Meaning of Community Newspaper/Magazine</b> <b>10.4 Characteristics of Community Newspaper/Magazine</b> <b>10.5 Starting a Community Newspaper/Magazine</b> <b>10.6 Examples of Community Newspaper/Magazine</b> <b>10.7 Summing Up</b> <b>10.8 Questions</b> <b>10.9 References and Recommended Readings</b>	
<b>UNIT 11: PUPPETRY</b>	
<b>11.1 Introduction</b> <b>11.2 Objectives</b> <b>11.3 History of Puppetry</b> <b>11.4 Different types of Puppetry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>11.4 1 String Puppets</b></li> <li><b>11.4 2 Rod Puppets</b></li> <li><b>11.4 3 Gloves Puppets</b></li> <li><b>11.4 4 Shadow Puppets</b></li> </ul>	

11.5 Puppetry for Social Change in India 11.6 Summing Up 11.7 Questions 11.8 References and Recommended Reading	
<b>MODULE II: THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE</b>	
<b>UNIT 12: THEATRE</b>	
12.1 Introduction 12.2 Objectives 12.3 Concept of Theatre 12.4 Definition of Theatre 12.5 Origin of Theater in India 12.6 Theatre as a medium for social change and encouraging community participation 12.7 Theatre of the Oppressed 12.8 Street Theatre 12.9 Street Theatre and Social Activism in India 12.10 Summing Up 12.11 Questions 12.12 References and Recommended Readings	

# MODULE III: INITIATIVE IN COMMUNITY MEDIA





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## **UNIT 9: Participatory Video**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Objectives
- 9.2 Concept of Participatory Video
- 9.4 Definition of Participatory Video
- 9.5 Characteristics of Participatory Video
- 9.6 Origins of Participatory Video
- 9.7 Setting Up Participatory Video Process
- 9.8 Some Participatory Video Experiments
- 9.9 Summing Up
- 9.10 Questions
- 9.11 References and Recommended Readings

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### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In this Unit, the concept of Participatory Video has been discussed in detail. With this, the definition of Participatory Video is also mentioned and the characteristics of Participatory Video have explained. The history of Participatory Video as a tool has also discussed in this unit. Besides this, how Participatory Video has set up for the development of a community is explained with some Participatory Video experiments. So, by understanding the concept, characteristics, and usage of Participatory Video as a tool for development you will be prepared for using Participatory Video in the development of the community.

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### **9.2 OBJECTIVES**

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A thorough study of this unit shall enable you to

- Write about the concept and origin of Participatory Video.

- Explain the usage of Participatory Video as a tool of development.
- Assess the role of Participatory Video in community development.
- Analyze the Participatory Video experiments for further usage.

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### **9.3 CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO**

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The first thing which comes in our mind while listening to the word "Participatory video" is a set of techniques to associate a group or community in carving and composing their film. This form of media or art has dialogical characteristics and always to be community-based which fits into their needs and desires. Participatory Video is one such community based medium that supports the community to convey and disseminate their ideas, views, and opinion. This is the basic intention behind establishing any Participatory Video. Besides this, the community also tries to create a participatory video for bridging community members together to explore issues, voice involves or naturally to be creative and tell community-based stories.

The whole concept of Participatory Video (PV) is based on community and it is also established by the community itself that's why sometimes, commonly, it is also called "Community Video". It is used as a synonym for each other terms. The process of creation of PV is very empowering, it facilitates the group or community to take action to figure out the problems and its solution; also to communicate their requirements to decision-makers and other groups or communities. Fundamentally, Participatory Video is a highly effective tool for engaging and mobilizing marginalized people or communities and to help them to reinforce their ways of sustainable development based on their indigenous or local needs.

Sometimes, Participatory Video is also used as a participatory tool in research for development to engage community members in the process of creating their video while taking into account several aspects of their livelihoods and the essential approaches to accomplish necessary changes. It

also affects the dialectic two-way process of communication between the researcher and the community members. So, Participatory Video has the power to engage and involve the community with their development as well as help the researcher community to the power dynamics between the community and them.

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#### **9.4 DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO**

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Participatory Video is defined by various scholars and academicians differently. Some of the major definitions of Participatory Video are as follows:

**Johansson** (1999) defined Participatory Video (CV) as a “scripting video process, directed by a group of grassroots people, moving forward in iterative cycles of shooting and reviewing. He opined that the main objective of the process is to create video narratives which can communicate what those who participate in the process really want to communicate and in the way they think is appropriate.”

**Shaw and Robertson** (1997) defined “participatory video (PV) as a mediated process of decision-making involving rural people directly in discerning and prioritizing their own problems along with finding the information and resources needed to solve their problems. Community video can best be viewed as a participatory video process where people can process and control content of the video productions themselves.”

**White (2003)** approaches Participatory Video mainly as “a tool for individual and social transformation, prioritizing social change above the process of audiovisual production in itself.” Considering the primary intent of PV as a process, White mentions “promoting self/other respect, a sense of belonging, a feeling of importance, a claim to an identity, none of which have anything to do with actually making a film.”

However, there is no universally approved definition of Participatory Video. Demonstrating the diversity of existent participatory video processes one network of practitioners (PV-NET, 2008) has defined participatory video as, "a collaborative approach to working with a group or community in shaping and creating their own film, to open spaces for learning and communication and to enable positive change and transformation."

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## 9.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

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Participatory Video is a powerful medium for documenting experiences, needs, hopes of community members from their perspective. It helps to initiate a process of analysis and change that enhances the local knowledge and practices of a community. Participatory Video able to perform all these functions because of the following characterize. Some of the major characteristics Participatory Video has are as follows:

- a. **Engagement:** Participatory Video can engage its' users. While making any participatory video, the community members are highly engaged in the production and after production, this PV engaged the community members as its audience as it is not only manufactured by the community but its major target audience is also the community only.
- b. **Empower:** Participatory Video has also competent enough to empower the members of the community. A stringent but fun participatory video-making process also gives participants full control over the production process. Here, they have full power to create the video as per their requirements and wish.
- c. **Clarifies:** Participatory Video has the potential to clarify and resolve all issues and concerns of the community and its' members. They find an authoritative voice for focusing on the local issues of concern.
- d. **Accessible:** Participatory Video has an attribute of easy accessibility. Its' user and generator can find concerning living stories for capturing on video. They can also document and evaluate different projects and

policies in the form of a video which initiates a policy transformation and duplication.

- e. **Disseminate good practices:** Through Participatory Video, one can disseminate good practices among the community as various influential initiatives, policies and suggestions can be documented by those personally involved, reasonably and effectively, and shared across the country and even further abroad. The policymakers can be deeply affected by powerful stories and images captured in Participatory Video at, and by, the grassroots.

#### **ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Explain the concept and characteristics of Participatory Video\_\_\_\_\_

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## **9.6 ORIGINS OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO**

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The primal recorded examples of Participatory Video experiments were the work of Don Snowden and Colin Low of Fogo Island, Newfoundland. The pioneers have an idea of using participatory video as a media to enable a people-centered community development approach. The filmmakers' layout to exhibit that poverty could not merely be curtailed to economic deprivation and that aspect such as rural isolation and the inefficiency to access information and communication media also needed to be addressed. The Fogo Process started by shooting community members' opinions and showing them to members of other confined communities on the island. For this, they identified several crucial problems and issues of the concerned 3000 islanders (60% of the total population) and make a video related to it.



Then, they have seen them the participatory video through thirty-five screenings. This islander's Participatory Video was also shown to the Premier of Canada and the Minister of Fisheries. After this, Fogo with his associate recorded a filmed response of the Premier and the Minister. This reviewed video of them was then played back to the community and from this dialogue, an improved program of island development was conceded. The Fogo Participatory Video Process became a communication for development model in using media to advocate dialogue and social development and has since been utilizing in different locations around the globe.

The theory-practice of Paulo Freire (1970) and the community arts movement of the 1970s pointed out an Alternative wave for participatory video practice. A noted Scholars Shaw and Robertson indicate that the potential of Participatory Video as a tool for social change and development was observed early in the 1970s by various Community workers, Community arts workers, and Social workers. As a result of this, an active independent video-making sector in the United Kingdom and other countries comes into existence. The major concern of this uprising video sector was to use video as a tool for community groups to adversely analyze their social conditions and act collectively according to the situation. Freire's practice of consideration upon process can be seen as a way to decode the world, to improve hold on the operations of misery and dehumanization, and provide a better mechanism to the oppressed to understand and permutated their reality.

In 1990 the situation of Participatory Video as a facilitator for social change and development was got arguably compromised. In this era, the participatory video method was adopted by neoliberal agencies like World Bank and collateral participation was made accustom to financial aid by many international funders. The brutality of this top-down obligatory participation tends development participants to declare that all of their actions and participant-driven. The impact of this compulsory participation

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on the participation video process makes the transformative intent as a commissioning practice to regulate the top-down process.

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## **9.7 SETTING UP PARTICIPATORY VIDEO PROCESS**

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Participatory Video proposes community members different perspectives to see their own problems and to find a better solution for it. In this process of change and development, Participatory Video provides confidence and empowers them to stand up for them. For setting up a Participatory Video, a process of various steps has been taken by them. Some of the major steps are as follows:

- 1. Prepare for Participatory Video** – Before setting up any Participatory Video, some preparatory checks need to be checked. Like, why Participatory Video is needed for the community, what will be the method for preparing the Participatory Video, who will be the shareholders, when will the process begin and how will it going to be executed. The need for different types of equipment and settings also need to be finalized before starting any participatory video. After finalizing all these points, the maker has to decide about the approach of Participatory Video, if they are not convinced about the method then they may also discuss it with professionals or they may just hire them for their project.
  
- 2. Make an initial visit** - Before starting the participatory video project, an initial visit to the site is compulsory. In this visit, they may interact with the community members and discuss with them about the participatory video process and their logistics with the community members where attainable. The makers also need the permission of the community members for their visit and working with them as they are the key participants. For this, they need a trustful representative of the community as a community head or reputed community members. They can also employ any intermediary like any local

NGO to get connected with the community members. Getting connected with the local organization and community members is a vital part of planning any Participatory Video process. That's why before meeting the local NGO or community members, the makers have to finalize about the suited time of visit for the NGO people, whom they need to meet like, i.e. community leaders and elders, and whom to invite for the meeting, what will be the place of meeting and how long should they need to be there.

**3. Do some researches** – For making any Participatory Video, the video maker also needs to do some research about the community, community member, and the geographical location, basic ecological and anthological situation of the community. For this, they can search data from national and local biodiversity plans, governmental websites and reports of NGOs. But, sometimes the data available is not suitable and it may require rechecking as there may be biased information in the officially collected data. However, the best way to find about the community is by visiting and meeting the community members on the ground with an open mind using intuitions. The makers need to talk to different sections of the community on the ground and don't expect to know everything at the beginning itself. But, they need to be calm and patient while listening and talking with the community members.

**4. Set team objectives** – Before going to visit the field, the makers need to decide about the functioning of the whole team which comprises of director, facilitators, guides, translators, trainees, and other team members. For making a successful participatory video, the video maker also needs to strengthen the team by motivating them about their importance in the making process of participatory video. They need to discuss the ethics, intentions, and objectives of the project officially with their team members. The participation of every

member at different stages of the participatory video process gives a positive attitude and environment to team members which helps in enhancing the working spirit among the members.

- 5. Obtain Types of equipment** – For making a Participatory Video, the makers also need some professional equipment. So, before starting the shoot, they need to buy or hire equipment from local NGOs, universities, colleges, film training institutes, and film companies. If the budget for making a participatory video is sufficient then it is best to buy the required equipment rather than hiring. So, the makers may execute the shooting as per the suitability of the community and the crew. Every time, before planning about the shoot, they don't think about the equipment as in some cases the community members are not free as per the availability of the equipments.
- 6. Check equipment and other essentials** – Before leaving the base office for the shoot, the makers have to recheck every equipment and other essentials that they are working properly or not. They also need to check the batteries and back up facility.
- 7. Arrival on-site** – After the arrival on the site, the maker needs to arrange a meeting with some elderly and reputed members of the community for building a rapport, show respect and to build trust. In this meeting, the maker may also explain their role, give the step to step explanation of the whole process and the intention of the visit, and explain the agenda of the participatory video making. They may also discuss the consent about the community members participate in the Participatory Video. With this, they may also nominate some community members as their crew for the participatory video shoot.

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## 9.8 SOME PARTICIPATORY VIDEO EXPERIMENTS

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Participatory Videos are used by different development organizations, Non-governmental Organizations and the government itself to promote and protect communities' existence. The community also uses Participatory Video to tell their story and point of view in counter the media narratives. The mainstream media sometimes misjudge and dominate their opinion on the community members. In this case, the community also uses the participatory video for reaching to the policymakers. Some of the major Participatory Video Experiments did by NGO's and community is as follows:

1. **SEWA (Self Employed Women's Associations)** – This organization was established in 1984 which is situated in Ahmadabad, Gujarat. The main objective and goal of this organization are to employ women worker. With this, they started providing video training to the SEWA members. After getting training, the women members produce participatory videos which are overlooked and supported by the professionals, Later on; these videos are shown to the other women involved in various programs of SEWA for peer to peer learning. They also produce a video for other organizations for using their skills as a livelihood and rent out their services.
2. **Digital Green Project** – Digital Green is a global development organization that empowers small farmers to lift themselves out of poverty. For this, they commonly utilize digital collective technology and grass-root level partnership with the community members. For this, they initiated a Digital Green System which uses participatory video content as a mediated instruction to amplify the impact of agriculture extension. They produce video content by interviewing experts, NGO staff, and farmers. In these videos, the NGO staffs also convey farming practices to the farmers. These videos are shown to



other farmers regularly so that they may practice these techniques of farming in their day to day life. In this project, the makers also take special care regarding the content generation as they shoot the video in the community's local language and accent.

#### **ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Explain the process of Participatory Video?

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2. Discuss some Participatory Video experiments?

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### **9.9 SUMMING UP**

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This module explains the definition and characteristics of Participatory Video has been explained in detail. The module also discusses the Participatory Video Process for the development of a community that how Participatory Video has been utilizing by different shareholders for the overall development of the community, what are the process of setting up a participatory video and the different experiments of participatory Video. The main focus of this module is to create a basic understanding of the Participatory Video as a whole and the process specifically. This also gives another aspect about the participatory video not only as a medium but as a mode of development. And to understand the phenomenon of Participatory Video, here, some experiments related to it have been explained in detail.

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## 9.10 QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the concept and different characteristics of Participatory Video?
2. Discuss the history of Participatory Video?
3. Explain the setting up process of Participatory Video with example?
4. Discuss some Participatory Video experiments?

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## 9.11 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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## **UNIT 10: COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Objectives
- 10.3 Meaning of Community Newspaper/Magazine
- 10.4 Characteristics of Community Newspaper/Magazine
- 10.5 Starting a Community Newspaper/Magazine
- 10.6 Examples of Community Newspaper/Magazine
- 10.7 Summing Up
- 10.8 Questions
- 10.9 References and Recommended Readings

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### **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Like other forms of community media, community newspaper/magazine facilitate the democratisation of mass media by ensuring access to and participation of ordinary citizens in the production and dissemination of messages. It enables people, especially those at the margins and who otherwise remain ‘voiceless’, to tell their stories in their own words. In other words, community newspaper and magazines are the alternative media forms which facilitates that section of the society which are less privileged to make their voice heard in the mainstream mass media.

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### **10.2 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to

- Explain the meaning of community newspaper/magazine
- Describe the distinct characteristics of community newspaper/magazine

- Explain the activities involved in the setting up of a community newspaper/magazine

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### **10.3 MEANING OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE**

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Community Press is known by different names in different parts of the world. It is referred to as *Participatory Journalism*, *Street Journalism*, *Public Journalism*, *Guerrilla Journalism*, *Democratic Journalism*, *Grassroots Journalism* and so on. However irrespective of the name by which it is referred to, community press across the world involves ordinary citizens participating in the process of collection, analysis, reporting and disseminating news, views and information.

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### **10.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE**

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Following are some distinct characteristics of community newspapers/magazines which differentiate them from the mainstream commercial press-

- Community newspapers/magazines are operated by people who live and work in the concerned community;
- Community press respond to the needs of the communities they serve;
- Community newspapers/magazines are utilitarian in nature. Their primary aim is to facilitate the social change and development of the community;
- They seek to empower community members by promoting their self-expression through their participation in the production of the community newspaper/magazine;
- They primarily deal with local issues relevant to the community they serve in the pre-dominant local language and dialect;

- Outside news, events and information that are of interest to the community and its members also constitute the editorial content of community newspapers/magazines;
- They stimulate civic engagement by bringing community members together to hold issue-oriented discussions among themselves to collectively determine their problems, the causes behind those problems, and their possible solutions;
- Community newspapers/magazines also seek to enlighten policy makers and government functionaries at the local and national level as well as private organisations about events taking place at the grassroots level thus, laying the foundation for development initiatives;
- They motivate community members to involve themselves in public discussions on issues pertaining to the community;
- Besides informing and motivating public discussions among community members, community newspapers/magazines also provide entertainment that regenerates the collective soul of the community;
- By connecting community members to their heritage and history, they help in developing a sense of community consciousness;
- Like the mainstream press, community newspapers/magazines also acts as the watchdog of the government, particularly regarding local issues. On the one hand they keep voters informed, while on the other they hold local elected representatives accountable;
- Through their coverage of political issues, mostly local, they help community members in forming and making informed opinions and informed decisions respectively;
- Some community newspapers/magazines also cover local events and activities taking place in the community;



- They connect members with key community institutions like government agencies and functionaries, businesses, educational institutions, religious institutions and authorities and so on;
- Depending on the national legislations, community newspapers sometimes accept advertising from local businesses. Thus, they provide a platform for local business ventures to reach potential customers in the community. In the process they boost the local economy;
- Unlike the mainstream press, community press is driven by social objectives rather than commercial motives;
- Community press promotes and protects the interests, culture and linguistic diversity of minorities and repressed and marginalised groups within the communities they serve.

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## **10.5 STARTING A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE**

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According to Anaeto (2011), the steps involved in the establishment of a community newspaper/magazine include the following-

- Feasibility study
- Gaining the consent of the community
- Registration of the newspaper/magazine
- Drafting of the editorial policy
- Securing an office
- Recruitment of staff
- Funding

### **FEASIBILITY STUDY**

A feasibility study to determine the regulatory, financial, human and technical factors which can directly or indirectly affect the establishment of

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the community media and its future operation should be the first step in the setting up of a community newspaper/magazine (Anaeto, 2011).

First and foremost, extensive research should be undertaken to have a thorough understanding of the community where the newspaper/magazine would be based in. The existing communication structures and strategies in the community, including traditional communication structures and learning institutions, should be examined in terms of their ability to provide community access and sustain community participation. Drawing from any potential gaps in communication by the existing structures, strategies should be devised to fill these gaps. (Anaeto, 2011)

### **GAINING THE CONSENT OF THE COMMUNITY**

It is of utmost importance to gain the consent of the community members for whom the newspaper/magazine is being set up. The attitude of the community members towards the notion of setting up and managing a newspaper/magazine should be assessed along with their desire and enthusiasm for social change and development of the community.

All sectors of the community, particularly marginalised groups, religious minorities, cultural and linguistic groups and so on are the key stakeholders. These groups should be given special emphasis. The consultation process should also include discussions with the formal and informal leaders of the community i.e. elected representatives, religious authorities, educators and opinion leaders. Another key stakeholder group are the people and organisations which although external to the community have a bearing on the project such as commercial newspapers/magazines that reach into the community; NGO's and other not-for-profit organisations working for the development of the community; and local public functionaries involved in government services like health and sanitation, agriculture, education and so on. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

## **REGISTRATION OF THE NEWSPAPER**

Naturally the community newspaper/magazine should be formally registered with the registration body/authority drafted under the national legislations for the purpose.

## **DRAFTING OF THE EDITORIAL POLICY**

The editorial policy of the newspaper/magazine should be drafted to correspond with the specific development aims and corresponding information of the community members, with special emphasis on the marginalised and repressed groups (Anaeto, 2011).

## **SECURING AN OFFICE**

The office premised secured for the purpose of setting up the community newspaper/magazine should be in close proximity to the centre of the community's population so as to make it easily accessible. It should be located in a relatively noise-free area or at least in an area that is free from uncontrollable noise sources. The office premises should be either free of rent or should be low rented;

## **RECRUITMENT OF STAFF**

Community newspapers/magazine have a modest budget, surviving mostly on the voluntary work of their personnel as sub-editors, editors, reporters, copy writers, photographers and so on. These personnel are mostly members of the community.

## **FUNDING**

Most communities lack the funds, infrastructure and resources required to sustain community newspapers/magazines. However, there are many sources of revenue that community newspapers/magazines can rely on to cover their operating costs-

- National and international donors;

- Commercial advertising, if allowed under the community media policy of the concerned government;
- Sponsorship, again if allowed by the national community media legislation;
- Private donations;
- Membership/Subscription fee paid by readers.

Regarding advertising, being not-for-profit, community newspaper/magazine should restrict its advertising to local businesses and providers of good and services. Sponsorships too should be from community-based associations, development agencies and NGOs. The same goes for donations.

#### **ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS**

1. How can community newspaper/magazines prevent undue interference of external individuals and organization with vested interests in their day-to-day operation and programme?\_\_\_\_\_
2. Discuss some challenges which stand in the way of setting up of a community newspapers/magazines in North East India.\_\_\_\_\_

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### **10.6 EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE**

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This section will discuss in brief an example of a community newspaper in existence and in operation in India.

#### **KHABAR LAHARIYA**

Khabar Lahariya (meaning ‘News Waves’) is a local language Indian newspaper that was launched in 2002 by Nirantar, a New Delhi-based NGO

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focusing on gender and education as part of a movement to sustain literacy in rural communities. It is the only newspaper in India that is published in four dialects i.e. Bundeli, Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Bajjika (Dixit, 2016) .

Bundelkhand is a semi-arid region suffering from periodic droughts resulting in poor harvests. To make matters worse, around 60% of the region's population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood and sustenance. The pathetic state of affairs has earned the region the reputation of being 'the worst place in India to be a farmer'. The socio-cultural dynamic in the region is equally bleak. The region is deeply entrenched in caste-based dynamics which are strictly enforced. Low caste farmers are often landless and are forced to lease out fields from high caste land owners. There is wide spread gender disparity and gender-based violence. As per the 2011 Census data, the region has one of the worst figures of gender participation as well as female literacy. A survey conducted by Nirantar revealed that even women who were literate did not have any access to reading material or even the opportunity to read. The only widely available forms of reading material available to the region's population were either political manifestos or government advertisements. The region has been neglected by mainstream media for decades. Moreover, there was no local publication to fill the gap. Consequently the region and the problems faced by its population was neglected and remained unknown for decades. Keeping in mind the overall grim state of affairs of Bundelkhand, Khabar Lahariya was launched in the region. The primary aim of the publication was to bring women in the region, particularly those belonging to marginalised and repressed communities, into the sphere of journalism. The publication sought to provide women with a platform and train and equip them with the necessary tools and resources required to discuss their problems and talk about issues that they strongly believed in (Roy, 2015).

Initially Khabar Lahariya was started with one edition from Chitrakoot. It was exclusively managed by women and began covering local issues and news relevant to the region, particularly focusing the mass suicide of

farmers. Coming from the margins, the female staff of the newspaper had a rough start facing opposition from the male-dominated patriarchal society with the occasional threats to their life and honour. But the newspaper successfully overcame all the hurdles thrown in its way. It earned the trust and appreciation of the local population. Its work has also been appreciated at the national and international levels. (Roy, 2015)

The weekly publication covered local news that were largely side-lined and ignored by mainstream commercial media. The publication was exclusively written, edited, produced and distributed by women belonging to the Dalit, Muslim, Kahl and other oppressed and marginalised communities in the region. An interesting thing about the reporters associated with the publication was that they only used their first name in their write-ups since their surnames reflected the caste-based subjugation that they themselves and generations of their families had been victims of. All articles were written from a secular and feminist viewpoint. The publication which started as a “boutique feminist media house”, eventually became a formidable force in Bundelkhand (Dixit, 2016).

In 2016, Khabar Lahariya closed down its print editions and became digital. Infact it is the only women-run rural digital media network in India<sup>1</sup>.

### ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Citing examples, discuss the role played by community newspaper/magazines in bringing about social change and development of communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Kumar, Tanuj. (2018, April 27). Khabar Lahariya: rural voice that matter. *Livemint Web Site*. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/A3WLEMzC9vKJmfCao49bjL/Khabar-Lahariya-rural-voices-that-matter.html>

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## 10.7 SUMMING UP

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Across the world most mainstream commercial newspapers have the tendency to prioritise certain news and information over others. Primarily motivated by revenue and profit generation, these newspapers often end up becoming propaganda devices for the existing governments in power and publicity vehicles for commercial enterprises. As such, their editorial content is largely dominated by issues revolving around urban areas and other relatively developed parts of their respective countries. Their target audience too are the literate and relatively well-off sections of the population. Consequently, the rural and under-developed regions and the poor, repressed and marginalised sections of the population remain outside their purview. To top it off, even if mainstream newspapers do manage to reach such regions and societal sections, their generally high purchasing cost discourages their sale. In addition, such regions and populations are characterised by high levels of illiteracy. Since these newspapers are published in the dominant language, they fail to reach even the literate section, who are fluent mostly in the local languages/dialects, in these regions. Only a handful of mainstream show genuine interest and take initiatives in reaching all sections of society and representing everyone's interests and views equally. Unfortunately their limited number is insufficient in bringing marginalised perspectives to the forefront.

Community newspapers/magazine fill this communication gap left by the mainstream press. They restrict their audience to a limited geographical area or societal section. Because they are audience-oriented and not-for-profit, they are able to focus exclusively on the interests, needs, issues, experiences and perspectives of their target audience. They particularly focus on the repressed and marginalised sub-sections within the communities they serve. They do not treat their readers as passive, homogenous individuals, but rather involve them as active participants in the ownership, management and production of the newspaper/magazine. The fact that they are published in the local languages and dialects and are often free-of-cost or nominally

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charged also puts them in an advantageous position over the mainstream press. They nurture local knowledge rather than replacing it with standard solutions (ITU, 2003).

Besides playing a significant role in bringing about social change and development in the communities they serve, community newspapers/magazines also contribute to national development. By providing a platform for rural, poor and marginalised groups and communities to express their views, opinions and issues, they bring forth these groups/communities to the limelight. They act as channels of communication between such groups/communities and key stakeholders in society, including the government thereby, paving the way for development initiatives (Anaeto, 2011).

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## **10.9 QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the meaning of community newspaper/magazine.
2. Discuss the distinct characteristics of community newspaper/magazine.
3. Give an overview of some of the activities involved in the setting up of a community newspaper/magazine.
4. Discuss some examples of community newspaper/magazine.
5. According to you, how can community newspapers/magazines bring social change and development in North East India?

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## **10.10 RECOMMENDED READINGS**

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## **UNIT 11: Puppetry**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Objectives

11.3 History of Puppetry

11.4 Different types of Puppetry

11.4 1 String Puppets

11.4 2 Rod Puppets

11.4 3 Gloves Puppets

11.4 4 Shadow Puppets

11.5 Puppetry for Social Change in India

11.6 Summing Up

11.7 Questions

11.8 References and Recommended Reading

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### **11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Puppetry is a very old traditional art and craft form found in many countries. Puppetry is an indigenous theater form of India. Since time immemorial, it has been a popular form of entertainment in rural area. Puppetry has been present in different forms and has been used for various purposes since ancient ages. In India it carries a relevant message of social awareness, historical and traditional identity and moral value system. Its distinct style of improvising and reach has made it a powerful medium of mass communication. Not only in rural areas but also in urban places puppet

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shows are very popular and powerful tool of communication with the mass. Even in the modern medium of communication like television and films – puppet shows are quite popular.

Indian puppetry is a subject as varied as the cultural traditions of the Indian subcontinent and regional genres make puppetry one of the richest heritages of India. Though there is enormous diversity, there are common traits.

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## 11.2 OBJECTIVES

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After going through the Unit, you will be able to

- Enumerate different types of Puppetry seen in India.
- Explain how Puppetry helps in social development in India.
- Explain why continuity of Puppetry is important for social change.

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## 11.3 HISTORY OF PUPPETRY

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The origin of puppetry in India is provided by mythology. Two legends are known to be the origin of this art. According to one of the legends, the creator Brahma gave life to the *adi*, the first *nat* puppeteer, and created the first puppet for of his wife Saraswati. Not satisfied with his work, Brahma banished the puppeteer to earth who started the line of *nat bhatt* puppeteers. This legend applies most probably can be seen in Rajasthani tradition where *nat bhatt* is the name of the puppeteer caste from this region. Another legend says protagonist the god Shiva, patron of puppetry, and his wife Parvati. An artist manufactured two wooden dolls that captured the attention of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva. They entered the dolls and started an exquisite dance; and later when they abandoned the dolls the artisan felt dejected because his dolls were lifeless again. With the help and blessings of the gods, the artisan then invented a system of strings to move the dolls, and so puppetry was born (Chattopadhyay, 1995)

Divine origin of puppetry is mentioned in both the legends, hence emphasizing the importance of puppetry in India. In modern days puppetry is regarded as folk art limited to rural areas but in the past it was taken into high consideration by the nobles and elites. The evidence of puppetry linked with higher social group is in the attestation of word *Gombe* which means puppet and is usually used as surname for Brahmin families in the southern regions of India

Various other literary sources prove the existence of puppetry in ancient times for example in Mahabharata, in Panini's grammar and in Patanjali's texts. Tamil text from second century BCE also mention dolls moved by strings these data show that puppetry has been a living tradition in India and was passed down to the next generation. According to Baird, The sanskrit word *sutradhar* means director or main storyteller, literally meaning 'string holder'

Puppetry is a narrative theatre which lies between bardic storytelling and theatre plays including live music, narration and gesture.

In traditional puppetry the plots are mainly excerpts from Mahabharat, Ramayana and the Puranas. Puppetry allows the puppeteer to take up the role of teaching the masses about gods and ethical implications of the sacred stories.

Over the years puppetry has fulfilled two of its key functions, education and entertainment. Government initiatives have also been propagated by puppetry alongside religious education. For example, hygiene and family planning campaigns. The development angle of puppetry has enabled one to incorporate it in school education.

As noted by A K Coomaraswamy (1877-1945) the *Sutradhar* acts as Vishwakarma, manifestation of god who pulls the strings of human existence. Puppets may or may not follow human anatomy but may have a symbolic and stylised appearance.

In some genres, puppets speak through special language and devices. Mostly appearance somewhat resemble the iconography of gods and heroes in depicted texts but some may have exaggerated features. Yes, it becomes difficult to generalize the appearance due to diverse traditions across India.

Common trait in India and puppetry is the composition of the troupe usually puppetry is a family business where children start their training looking at their elders work in the community. Puppeteers work generally includes manufacturing and operating of puppets and also memorizing the texts. This tradition is passed down from generation to generation as family treasure. This type of transmission suggests little change in puppetry over the generations thus limiting the evolution of appearance in puppets.

Puppetry is strictly related to other traditions, for example, there is a strong connection between the theatre from the regional dance drama and with a visual tradition. Although local dialects and languages are peculiar to puppetry but some also highlight the connection of puppetry to classic Sanskrit drama. Puppet shows are text contextually linked to rituals like celebrations for marriages and childbirth. They also depict family and community occasions like harvesting seasons. Puppetry also deals with plays to ward off evil spirits and bad omens or to solicit rain in times of drought.

India's home to different types of puppetry some traditions have become extinct while others are surviving in the modern world besides traditional puppet genres India is home to many contemporary initiatives that renovate puppetry while preserving the heritage styles of older ones.

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## 11.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF PUPPETRY

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Different types of puppets are: string puppets, rod puppets, glove puppets, and shadow puppets. Although with regional diversity and distinct identities there are many common traits among the traditions such as the same literary sources, similar structure of the plays, comic skits with the intervention on current issues, the musical features shared with dance, and a moral content mostly linked to religious texts.

### 11.4 1 String puppets

String puppets are also known as marionettes, are made of different materials such as wood and terracotta; they are tri-dimensional in structure. They are moved through strings attached to the head and limbs. The number of strings can vary according to the region and troupes tradition; more strings enables for complex range of attainable movements.

Marionettes/String puppets are most common form which is reported across India. Various names have been given such as Rajasthan (*kathputli*), Maharashtra (*kalasutri bahulya*), West Bengal (*tarer putul nach*), Karnataka (*yakshagana gombeyata*), Odisha (*gopalila kundhei*), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (*koyya bommalata*, *keelu bommalata*, and *sutram bommalata*) Kerala (*nool pavakothu*), Tamil Nadu (*bommalattam*),

*Kathputli* marionettes from Rajasthan are known for their fine decoration, costumes and inspired by medieval Rajasthani styles. Kathputli narrate the stories of Rajput heroes, one of the few exceptions from the usual Mythological epic plots.

In Tamil Nadu, marionettes are known as *bommalattam* ('doll dance'); this style is reported from bordering areas of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The large marionettes are peculiar because they are moved

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by strings attached to a head ring worn by the puppeteers, and arms are moved by rods manipulated from above; bommalattam puppeteers move the marionettes with full body movements. This tradition has a noble ancestry for it was patronized by the Thanjavur court in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.



(Source- Hindustan Times)

#### 11.4.2 Rod puppets

Rod puppetry was traditionally practiced in Eastern India (Odisha and West Bengal), besides the mixed string-cum-rod bommalattam puppets from Tamil Nadu. Rod puppets are operated from below, with one or multiple sticks of different size.

In the southern regions of West Bengal rod puppetry is known in as *danger putul nach*. It depicts style with large dimensions of the puppets that can reach up to 1.5 metres and weigh up to ten kilograms. The lower part of the body is covered by large skirts; a rod passes through the body to support it, while other smaller rods allow movements of the head and arms. Puppets are finely decorated in the local painting style, and costumes are elegant elaborated. This



tradition includes epic and folk stories, but also plots from Bengali movies.

In Odisha rod puppetry, *kathi kundhei nacha* has been recently revived. Performances follow the classic pattern with invocation, introduction and epic stories taken from the Ramayana and the Puranas.

### **11.4. 3 Glove puppets**

In glove puppetry the puppeteer operate from below the puppet; usually the forefinger operates the head, while the thumb and third finger move the hands of the Puppet. Also known as hand puppets, glove puppets are widespread in Odisha (*sakhi kundhei*), Tamil Nadu (*pava koothu*), Kerala (*pavakathakali*), West Bengal (*benir putul*), and Uttar Pradesh (*Gulabo-Sitabo*).

In Kerala *pavakathakali*, meaning ‘glove puppet kathakali’ as the name suggests is a puppetry version of the famous dance-form Kathakali. This genre was developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was revived in 1982 by the Natana Kairali Research & Performing Centre for Traditional Arts. Both the appearance of the puppets and the stories mirrors Kathakali. An important part of this dance-drama genre is the expression of emotions through movements of the eyes. Since puppets have fixed expressions puppeteer, interprets emotions while sitting on the stage.

Most of the puppetry traditions from the South India narrate epic stories. In the north there are interesting exceptions such as the *Gulabo-Sitabo* glove puppetry from Uttar Pradesh which depicts a quarrel between the domineering Gulabo and the submissive Sitabo who are married to the same man. The representation of this folk story with glove puppets is based on true story in Lucknow date back to the

17<sup>th</sup> century.



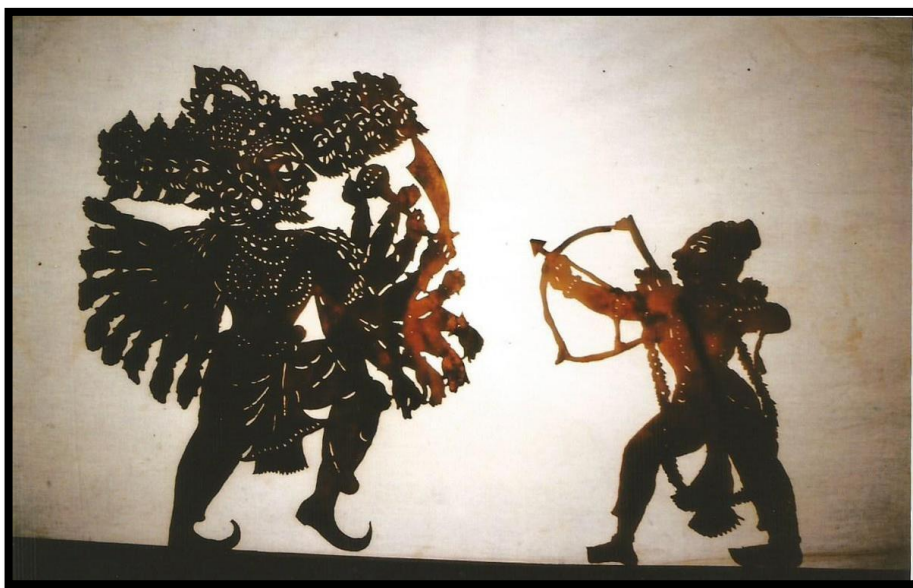
(Source- Outlook India)

#### 11.4.3) Shadow puppets

Shadow puppetry is widespread in South India and is believed to be the centre of origination of this art. This genre has different names for e.g. Odisha (*ravanachhaya*), Kerala (*tholpava koothu*), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (*tholu bommalatta*), Karnataka (*togalu gomme atta*), and Maharashtra (*charma bahuli natya*). Tamil Nadu (*thol bommalatta*). Shadow theatre is known in Sanskrit literature as *chaya nataka*. Despite the conflicting historical origins of puppetry, shadow theatre was likely to have existed in the second half of the first millennium of BCE, and was widespread in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. The oldest known script is Subhata's *Dutangada* dated to 1243 AD.

The manufacturing technique of shadow puppets reveals that leather is treated to obtain sheets of stiff parchment which is then used to make shadow puppets. Besides this, shadow puppets vary a lot from the different genres but they also vary at local level according to the family or village tradition. Puppets which are from the Andhra Pradesh

(tholu bommalata), they reach the height of two meters and have articulated limbs; while puppets such as those from Odisha (ravanachhaya, ranging from 20 to 60 centimeters) are in one piece and are much smaller. Ravanachhaya puppets retain the natural leather colour, while shadow puppets from AP are lively painted in tholu bommalatta, thol bommalattam, and togalu gombeyatta. Most of the present traditions use translucent puppets but tholpava koothu puppets from Kerala are opaque. They cast a black-and-white shadow on the white screen. In Tamil Nadu, AP and Karnataka, shadow puppetry share names which are similar hence highlighting a common origin. It is traditionally believed that shadow puppetry reached South India from Maharashtra when a nomadic group called Killekyatas moved to Karnataka and the fact that old puppeteers could speak Marathi still in the seventies confirms their origin.



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### 11.5 PUPPETRY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA

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In India the stylistic vocabulary of puppet theatre carries a relevant message of social awareness, historical and traditional identity and moral value system. Its relative isolation and distinct style of

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improvising has made it a powerful medium of mass communication. Not only in rural areas but also in urban places puppet shows are very popular and powerful tool of communication with the mass. Even in the modern medium of communication like television and films – puppet shows are quite popular.

With changing time, to retain its popularity use of elaborate music, change of style and settings, special lighting effects, smoke screens, magical appearance and disappearance, etc are being introduced in puppet shows. Surush Dutta in Kolkata, shri Ram Bharatiya Kala Kendra- Puppetry in Delhi are few names among others associated with puppetry in India who are trying to retain the puppetry culture. But to survive in today's competitive market more organizations like Centre for cultural resource and training is needed. How to popularize and survive- is a big question in world of puppetry today. The most relevant answer to it can be the convergence of the traditional media with the modern electronic media. As stated by Kamaladari Chattopadhyay (1995) in her book "handicrafts of India", "As a medium, however, puppetry has a few equals and scores many advantages over human performances in moving and holding audiences. It suggests rather than instructs because of an innate subtlety. IT can indulge in exaggerations or distortions without being coarse or vulgar". Doordharshan has been providing short educational puppet based stories for children and adults for their educational television. Glove puppetry is very much in demand for performing stand-up comedy. Another recent example is the use of shadow art similar to shadow hand puppetry in Madhya Pradesh Tourism Ad of Indian Government ([www.mptourism.com](http://www.mptourism.com)). Also some scholarly articles are written how puppets and puppetry can be used for psychological therapies. Puppets allow the patients to express his problems in a creative way. The educated audiences are aware of their social roles but audiences who don't have access are made aware of their roles in a community by educating them through puppets like sanitation, cleanliness, prevention from

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diseases and development. The social problems are addressed through entertainment and are perceived as the icons representatives of reality in puppet shows. The Great Russian puppet master Sergie A. Braztsov said that the puppet theatre is just as “human” as any other type of human. Such messages because of their social relevance have more effect than other form of communication tactics.

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## **11.6 CONCLUSION**

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There are several traditional puppet genres in India and this chapter has tried to cover here but it cannot be all-inclusive as the topic is wide and diverse, but the chapter has tried to convey the main features of this theatre form. This unit is covered different types of puppetry, which are known as Rod, String, Shadow and Glove Puppetry. We also read puppetry has been in India used as a means of entertainment and for cultural and religious dissemination. In the post-colonial period, the high-speed modernization wave that invested India put many of the puppetry traditions at risk of extinction but several government and private initiatives tried to save endangered styles. Puppetry is used on providing social skills and education to the communities by the means of educational performances to identify social attitudes and morals as a means of social intervention.

Besides than conventional puppetry, India is home to a vivacious contemporary scene. Independent India opened up to creative trade, and new structures and methods influenced puppetry, presenting new styles and offering cause to a refined urban theatre form. The modern troupes and the global scenario created new contexts for traditional puppetry to prosper. Several festivals organized in the last decades offer the stage to traditional troupes. So far modernity had undermined the very survival of traditional puppetry; however an increasingly cognizant utilization of contemporary methods and opportunities is actually the key to preserve this rich heritage of India.

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## 11.7 QUESTIONS

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- 1) Explain history of Puppetry in India?
- 2) What are the different types of Puppetry in India?
- 3) How Puppetry helped in Social Change in India?

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## 11.8 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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## **MODULE IV: THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

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## **UNIT 12: Theatre**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Objectives

12.3 Concept of Theatre

12.4 Definition of Theatre

12.5 Origin of Theater in India

12.6 Theatre as a medium for social change and encouraging community participation

12.7 Theatre of the Oppressed

12.8 Street Theatre

12.9 Street Theatre and Social Activism in India

12.10 Summing Up

12.11 Questions

12.12 References and Recommended Readings

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### **12.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Theater as a traditional form of communication can be used for social change and development. Using entertainment as an element in developing the message, theatre can easily reach the audience and can play an important role in effective communication. In this Unit, you will have a conceptual understanding of Theater and also will learn the history of Theater as a tool of communication. Besides this, how theatre is utilized as a medium for social change and encouraging community participation has been discussed with describing the terminology “Theater of the oppressed”. The concept of Street Theater and how street theatre has been used for social activism in India has also explained in detail. So, by understanding the concept, origin, and usage of Theater and street theatre as a tool for development you will be prepared for using theatre in the development of the community.



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## **12.2 OBJECTIVES**

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A thorough study of this unit shall enable you to

- Describe the concept and origin of Theatre.
- Explain the usage of Theatre as a tool of social change and community participation.
- Analyze the term Theatre of the Oppressed.
- Explain how Street Theatre can be set up for social activism.

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## **12.3 CONCEPT OF THEATRE**

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The term ‘theatre’ has originated by the Greek word theater on, which means as a ‘place for looking’. Thus, originally, theatre referred to both a place as well as to a particular form of sense perception. Generally, Theatre is an art and medium for disseminating information and society relevant messages. In this art form, people make scripts, act, direct and produce dramatic content. Its major objective is to inform, entertain and educate common people in an easy manner regarding the social problems of the society. The organizer or people associated with theater are determined to spread awareness and point out social issues and contention of the community. The theatre usually works as a mirror which shows the real and clear picture of the community and its conflict among the members and as well as with the outsiders. It is also helpful in showing the dissent of the community member.

The term “Theatre” is generally used as a synonym of “Drama”. This complexity in its terminology occurs due to the usage of the concept in multi-discipline and composed of various fields of inquiry and scholarly perspective.

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## 12.4 DEFINITION OF THEATRE

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A theatre is a form of art for persuading and informing the community regarding social problems. So, providing a proper account of Theatre in a form of definition is a debatable matter. As different scholars and academicians have defined the term "Theatre" from a different perspective. So, some of the definitions of Theatre given by prominent scholars are as following:

- **Cassady** (1984) defines theatre as ‘imagination emotions and intellects which embraces all the world cultures and perspective, answers questions, predicts our tomorrows and mirrors our today.
- **Shakespeare** defined as “theatre is a mirror for highlighting man’s humanity and also a tool for understanding why man also finds it so easy to transgress that same humanity”
- **Bernard Beckerman** offered a broader definition when he said that ‘theatre occurs when one or more persons, isolated in time and or space, present themselves to another or others.

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## 12.5 ORIGIN OF THEATRE IN INDIA

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Theatre is one of the ancient forms of communication and medium in India. Here, traces of theatre may be found from the era of "Natyashastra". As, for the first time in the history of Indian Drama, "Natyashastra" is a text which tried to illustrate the mind of the performers. Before this, many dramatists like Kalidas, Bhasa were present in ancient India. But, Natyashastra of Bharata Muni is very important for the existence of Indian theatre as it provides detailed information about every component of theatre. In this book, he suggested that people associated with any theatre group should have knowledge about seventeen types of works such as Bharata (a person who

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may work as a producer or manager or an actor), Vidusaka (who make fun), Tauripta ( who has skilled in music), Nata (who perform as an actor-Dancer), Sutradhara (who specialized in applying the songs and music during the performance) , Natyakara (one who in accordance with the *Natyasastra* expresses the various rasa-s ,bhava-s natural to the people though different character), Nandi (who praising in Sanskrit or Prakit), Nayaka (who engaged in directing dance during performance), Mukutakara (who make head-gears for every character), Abharanakara (who makes ornaments for a performance), Malyakara (who makes garlands for the characters of a performance), Vesakara (who makes costumes for a performance), Chitrakara (who makes painting for performance), Rajaka (who cleans the costumes), Karukara (who decorates hall with wooden idols or sculpture), Kusilava (who can dance and play musical instrument during performance). And all these types of work are still relevant in today's era of theatre.

The second phase of Indian Theatre was based on oral tradition which began in 1000AD onwards to 1700AD. This kind of Theatre is emerged from the roots and was more simple, immediate and closed to the rural milieu. It came into existence because of the changing political situation and with coming up of different regional languages in India. After this, in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century, folk theatre arouses in different regions based on their languages. This folk theatre further broadly divided into two types as Religion Theatre and Secular Theatre which has given birth to Ritual Theatre and Entertainment Theatre respectively. Mostly, Folk Theatre which is also called Traditional Theatre is performed in a form of narration and vocal such as signing and recitation. Some most famous Traditional or Folk Theatre of India are Kathakali and Krishnattam of Kerala, the Nacha of MP, the Nautanki of UP and Swang of Punjab, Jatra of Bengal, Tamasha of Maharashtra and Bhavai of Gujarat, etc.

In the period of the British Empire, Indian Theatre was reborn in a form of "Modern Theatre". This kind of theatre has emerged with the combination of

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Indian Traditional Theatre and exposure of British Dramatic Classics. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, many translations of English and other language plays in the Sanskrit language came into existence. However, after independence in 1947, directors like Habib Tanvir, Sombhu Mitra, B.V. Karanth, K.N. Panikkar, Kanailal and Ratan Thiyam took the lead to have a confrontation with the tradition and to match the passion with which the modern theatre had arisen with a violent rupture from the indigenous theatre. This encounter has given rise to 'new' contemporary theatre with some distinctive features. Till today, Theatre has not developed as a full-fledged literary genre in Indian languages.

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## **12.6 THEATRES AS A MEDIUM FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

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Theatre is not only an art form but it is also a medium for social change that encourages oppressed community members for active participation. It is also a method of communication for community construction and development. Theatre as a medium for social change can be generally defined as an inter-connectivity of theatre methodologies which are connected to social arbitration of one or more communities to prosper the quality of community member's life. This process generally opposes the elitist models of communication as it works to empower oppressed communities by providing the power to utilize their language and culture to outline solutions for their problems.

Theatre is used as an important tool for social change due to its nature of ease at accessibility to a range of people. It also has a combination of oral communication, physical expression, dance, image, music, and song which attract and maintain the attention of the target audience for a long time. It is also cheap in nature and dominated by oral communication which makes it popular among the oppressed and subaltern communities, who are always left out in developmental activities because of lack of education or

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understanding towards other languages. It also provides them a platform to participate at every level of this process.

Theatre works as a participatory tool as it invites the audience to participate in the play which makes it a two-way medium for disseminating information. For instance, Forum theatre or playback theatre alters the audience into actors and creators of the play. Audiences are stimulated to actively participate in the process, critically analyze, confront and deviates the structure of the play and emancipate different solutions. They are free to interfere in the performance at any point in time and propose different acts for the actors which give the spectators another prospect to come up with other solutions for a collective problem.

Theatre has been employed as an investigation tool by various development projects for engaging the community in dialogue and mobilizing communities to rally and support development activities. One example before planning any play, the makers may arrange any query session with the targeted community members. In this session, they may ask direct questions to the audience at critical points of story structure for the play and then consolidate their feedback with the plot. This will result, a larger picture of the community's social problems. This also provides every member of the community to participate and contribute to the dialogue. The theatre also aids as a democratizing tool for every member which provides them a free voice for presenting their opinion. Participation and self-expression, especially from those who often go unheard are encouraged.

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## **12.7 THEATRE OF OPPRESSED**

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The “Theatre of Oppressed” terminology is suggested by Augusto Boal is a kind of non- traditional style of theatre which is used to prompt dialogue and stimulate community-based problem-solving techniques. Boal, while being in exile from military dictatorship, begins this journey of "Theatre of

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Oppressed" from Brazil, and then it spread to Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, and France. He got the inspiration for this from some prominent scholars like Freire, Brecht, and Stanislavski. It is a participatory Theatre for stimulating awareness and encouraging democratic and collective forms of interactions. For performing theatre, the participants determine their concerned problems and develop storylines according to it by generating a scene for the theatre.

“Theatre of Oppressed” provides a powerful tool to the exploited people for exploring their problem and examines their history; then came up with an idea for solving these problems and presenting it to other people through theatre. This helps in experimenting with problems for the invention of a new future. It is a depository of theatre techniques and games that seek pursue to motivate people, strengthen dialogue, and provide a platform for the participants to rehearse before taking action. This is started with the idea to empower people by providing them a platform to act in the "theatre" of their own lives. Here, every participant is at once an actor and a spectator too. Boal termed them as "spect-actors".

Boal has suggested that when people are behaving like a passive audience, they generally desire to take action onto the characters they identify with, and then find that desire satisfied as the conflict resolves itself on stage. He also pointed out different forms of “Theatre of Oppressed”. These forms are explained below:

1. **Image Theatre** - It encourages spect-actors to formulate a statue that represents a time based oppressive situation. The image then assume as a source of critical reflection, promoted by various kinds of interventions: spect-actors may be asked to illustrate an ideal image of emancipation from that suffering, and then a series of transition images obligate to reach it or to reshape an image to show different perspectives.
2. **Forum Theatre** - In this form of theatre, a short play or scene has dramatized a situation with a dreadful ending which makes spect-

actors unsatisfied. After the initial scenes, it is shown again but this time the spectators became spect-actors and can able to freeze the protagonist of the play at any moment for taking the storyline in a different direction. Here, theatre works as a rehearsal for real-world action.

3. **Legislative Theatre** - It takes forum theatre to the regime and asks spect-actors to not only endeavor interventions on stage, but to note down the acknowledge interventions into a recommendation for legislation and hand over them to the elected officials in the room.
4. **Invisible theatre** – This type of theatre is performed in a public place by shows the reality in disguise form. The target is to commence critical dialogue and unsettle passive social relations among the spect-actors and make them believe that they are part of a play. Augusto Boal said of one invisible theatre intervention, “The actor became the spectator of the spectator who had become an actor, so the fiction and reality were overlapping.”

Since the introduction of "Theatre of Oppressed", it has become more specialized and institutionalized which implies a contradiction to the original thought of its origin. Even if, Theatre of the Oppressed has unfolded and was actually subjugated by some to follow objectives which were not in accordance with the original thoughts – the technique has now and then been used not to transform the society but to get used to people to it – the reality remains that, to this day, the nucleus of its practice endured mostly untouched for most of the activist-practitioners who see themselves as Boal's successors. As the most reminiscent examples of this practice since the 1990s are the Indian one – The Jana Sanskriti, founded by Sanjoy Ganguly and the Brazilian one – Rio de Janeiro C.T.O. used to work with the Landless Movement (M.S.T.).

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## **12.8 STREET THEATRE**

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Street Theatre is a mode of theatrical performance and demonstration in outdoor public spaces like street without a specific paid audience. It is a form of communication, where it works as a medium for propagating and persuading common people regarding social and political messages related to critical issues rampant in society. This kind of theatre is generally utilized for community organizing, education campaigns, and public health initiatives throughout the world. With time, the Street Theatre has been also started to used for capitalism, peasant and labor movement, environment, communalism, sexual harassment of women, domestic violence, issues related to child rights, child abuse, HIV/AIDS, corruption, etc. Street Theatre has been developed as an art form to represent the feelings of general people, that's why it called a "Theatre by the people and Theatre for the people".

Generally, Street Theatre can be seen in public places like the market, parks, playgrounds but nowadays it becomes popular among the students; so, it is now also has been performed in office areas and colleges. People are also coming up with different clubs of Street Theatre like JANAM of Safdar Hashmi. Street Theatre has also changed with time as in the present scenario it is not performed for the general people but for politicizing the everyday popular happenings. This form of art fulfills the gap of the formal barriers and connected the people directly with society. Street theatre is generally performed in a situation where people are needs to send some message about any social or political issue to everyone.

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## **12.9 STREET THEATRE AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM IN INDIA**

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Street Theatre is a combination of theatre and activism, performed in an open space such as street, open lot, slum, in front of a factory, temples, church, tent, exhibition site, parks, campuses and railway station where actors

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interact directly with the audiences. As many Social Activists of India utilizes Street Theatre as a tool for social and political movements. Especially in metro cities and popular cities of the country, Street Theatre is used for political agitation and protest. Such as after the Nirbhaya case, at many places Street Theatre on the theme of women's safety has been demonstrated all over the country. On one side where Street Theatre is used for political and social agitation on the other side in rural areas, it is used for awareness and spreading information. In villages, people make many Social Action Groups as an association for performing Street Theatre. These social groups not only focuses on the social awareness program but they also perform Street Theatre on their cultural issues. For them, they are a means of reaching people of all strata to educate them and call them to change the social ailments.

Some famous street theatre of India is Safdar Hashmi, the Third Theatre of Badal Sircar, the revolutionary Jatra theatre of Utpal Dutt and the theatre of Habib Tanvir. These theatre groups are one of those groups which not only strengthen the Street Theatre in India but they also work as pioneers of social activism. They utilize the Street Theatre as an important medium for informing the public in various states like Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar to appraise the rural population of the social conflict. At a time when there has been rampant growth in broadcast media and means of transport and travel are within the range of the common man; the theatre emerged as perhaps one of the few successful channels to inform the rural people of the various aspects of the conflicts present in society. The plays were equally successful in instilling a feeling of commonness and brotherhood.

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## **12.10 SUMMING UP**

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Theatre is an art and medium for disseminating information and society relevant messages. In this art form, people make scripts, act, direct and produce dramatic content. Different Scholars and academicians have defined

the term "Theatre" indifferent manner. For some scholars, it is a form of medium for dissemination of information whereas for others, it is an art form.

Theatre is also called as a medium for social change which encourages oppressed community members for active participation. That's why Augusto Boal has come up with the term "Theatre of Oppressed" which meant as a Theatre for the people and Theatre by the people. Another form of Theatre, Street Theatre is also used as a powerful tool for political agitation and protest about any social problem of the society. This medium has also used for social activism in a different part of the country on various sensationalized issues.

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### **12.11 QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the concept “Theatre” with its definition?
2. How Theatre is used as a medium for social change and encourages community participation?
3. Explain the term “Theatre of Oppressed” with example.
4. Explain the concept “Street Theatre” and how it is used by Social Activist in India.

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### **12.12 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS**

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## **UNIT 13: CASE STUDIES- I**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Objectives

13.3 The current status of community radio in India

13.4 Case Studies of Community radio stations in India

13.5 Summing Up

13.6 Questions

13.7 References and Recommended Readings

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### **13.1 INTRODUCTION**

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This unit will give you an idea about how the community radio stations in India are functioning and what are the different activities they are taking for social change. Different Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are taking initiatives of establishing community radio stations especially at the grassroots. Such initiatives always empower the community people to raise their voices on different issues of their everyday life in order to uplift their welfare. In India, this promising channel of empowering people came late as only educational institutions were allowed to set up campus radio stations until the year 2006. These campus radio stations were allowed having a transmission range of 10-15km. However, it was expanded to the NGOs and other agencies to set up community radio stations involving local communities in the content production process.

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### **13.2 OBJECTIVES**

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This unit is based on the following objectives-

- To explain the current status of community radio in India
- To describe different activities of the community radio station in India

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### **13.3 CUURENT STATUS OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN INDIA**

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The journey of community radio in India started when The Supreme Court of India has held that airwaves are public property and every Indian citizen has the fundamental right to communicate as well as receive information. It has also held that Indian citizen must have access to broadcasting for exercising this fundamental right. This judgment was delivered by Justice P.B. Sawant and Justice S. Mohan in 1995 (discussed in Unit 6). The community radio concept in India got popularised specially after the introduction of the Government of India's policy to grant licenses to well-established educational institutions, including IITs/IIMs, for setting up of Community Radio Stations. Apart from educational institutions, the Community Radio Guidelines (2006)<sup>4</sup>, permitted the non-governmental organizations and community-based groups to set up Community Radio Stations (CRS) in India. As per this policy, 50% of the content must be developed by local community along with an ownership and management structure that is reflective of the community. At present, as per the report of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2019, there are 251 operational community radio stations in India.

However, despite of steady increase in the number of community radio stations in the country, lack of adequate revenue along with the restrictive government policies around coverage area has been challenging them to sustain. Regulation regarding advertisement and limited coverage, it becomes difficult for a community radio station to earn optimum revenues to sustain its operations. For instance, as per the policy, community radio

station can air an advertisement for 5 minutes per hour. Such a restriction in advertisement limits revenue earning. On the other hand, many a times the technologies used by community radio station in different parts of India are quite basic which works as an obstacle for growth of community radio in the country.

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## **13.4 CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS IN INDIA**

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### **13.4.1 Community Radio Stations in Assam:**

#### **13.4.1.1 Jnan Taranga**

In the entire North East region, ‘Jnan Taranga’ is the first community radio established by Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Assam in 28th of January, 2009. The regular broadcasting of the Jnan Taranga community radio station on 90.4 MHz was formally started on 20th of November, 2010. It was supported by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi. The content of this radio station is based on both educational as well as community based issues. For instance, Weekly staples included “Mohila Chora” (Women’s Programme), “Mahanagarit Mur Jiwan” (My Life in the City), “Sankalpa-Samajik Dayabaddhata” (Resolve – Taking Social Responsibility). There were special programmes for the differently abled and for children. There were programmes devoted to skill development and educational counselling. Community development programmes are based on the issues like health and hygiene women empowerment, rights of the children, environment, bio diversity, career counselling, sports, legal issues governance, youth programmes, agriculture and allied subjects, entrepreneurship, live presentation by the communities, live issues, TB features etc. A few programme aired in this radio station are discussed below-

**Manar Khabar:** It is a Live Phone-in programme. A topic is given to the audience for discussion and the audience can share their views and opinion on the concerned topic of the day.

**Amar Kobologia Ekashar:** It is a field based programme in which the radio reporter goes to the community level and talks with the people regarding environmental topics. The views and opinions of the people are aired directly from the field.

**Puwar Kiran:** This programme includes contents related to current affairs, health and beauty tips. Apart from that a regular phone-in open quiz is organised and a winner is selected every day.

**Angana:** This programme is based on the objective of empowering women focusing on broadcasting stories of successful women from different fields such as successful women entrepreneurs, social workers, sports women, awardees in different sectors etc.

**Sasthya Charcha:** This programme is to create health awareness and a physician is interviewed regarding a particular disease, symptoms, preventive measures etc. At least once a month through this phone-in programme people can ask their queries on health issues.

**13.4.1.2 Radio Luit:** Radio Luit, 90.8 FM is a community radio initiative established at the premise of Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) under Gauhati University (GU). It is the first campus based community radio in North-East India which started on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 after obtaining the license from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. It not only gives voice to the people of Gauhati University but also the people living around the university. It involves community people in various aspects including content development, programming and decision making of the radio stations. The Radio Luit operates 12 hours daily between 8 A.M to 8 P.M. and it covers an area of approximately 15 k.m radius from the premise of GU IDOL. Radio Luit creates contents with the participation mostly of students and common people of its coverage area in various themes i.e. Educational, Health, Environment, Cultural and Community development as priority areas. One of the popular programme aired by Radio Luit is “Bandhobi”

which is a project called “Science for women’s health and nutrition” catalyzed by the NCSTC, DST, Govt. of India.

**13.4.1.3 Radio Brahmaputra:** Supported by UNICEF the Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research started this community radio in Dibrugarh, Assam with an aim to empower the marginalised communities. It is located in Borsaikia Gaon, Hilodhari, Dibrugarh, Assam. Different communities with different languages including Shadri (dialect of the tea tribe community), Assamese, Bhojpuri, Bodo and Mishing residing around this area are the prime participants of this community radio. Moreover, the reach of this station covers around fourteen islands and thirty tea plantations and more than 180 villages in Dibrugarh district. On FM 90.4, Brahmaputra Community Radio broadcasts for eight hours every day giving a platform to the marginalised communities to discuss and share opinions on diverse issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, sanitation, safe drinking water, nutrition for children, sustained health care and girls’ education, etc. It also broadcasts phone in programmes as well as music shows by local artistes and discussions recorded in the studio. Apart from giving voice to the marginalised, this community radio station is also emphasising on generating employment to the locals.

Generating awareness on government’s schemes particularly providing information pertaining to National Health Mission is a significant part of contributing to the uplift of the community people. Another important aspect is that it is trying to promote traditional art forms that are facing a slow death by inviting local artists from the regions to take part in different cultural programmes.

### **13.4.2 Some other Community Radio Stations in India**

**13.4.2.1 Anna Community Radio:** Established in February 2004, Anna Community Radio is the first of a kind in India located in the premise of Anna University, Tamil Nadu. The radio station was set up under the guidance of Dr. R. Sreedher, an eminent radio professional and then Head



of the Department of Media Sciences. This community radio has been working for creating awareness on different aspects such as healthcare, education, female literacy, self-employment, clean environment, etc. The operating area of this station is within the radius up to 15 K.M. The broadcasting time starts from 9 A.M to 9 P.M. at 90.4 MHz. Out of this 12 hours programme a day, 6 hours is of original programme and 6 hours is repeat programme.

Different programmes in the fields of education, folk literature, fine arts, philosophy, science, engineering, medicine, pollution control, etc. are aired involving the community people in content development. Eminent personalities, scholars and intellectuals are invited giving a platform to the community people where they can learn subjects related to community social awareness. Anna community radio is always aiming at women empowerment encouraging women to participate in content development. For instance, women are trained in audio production and broadcasting from selecting the topic, preparing script, recording and editing, etc. One of the notable programme focusing on women's welfare is Magalir Neeram which won an award from the Information & Broadcasting Ministry in 2014.

**13.4.2.2 Sangham Radio:** Another pioneer of community radio in India is the Sangham Radio which was launched in Telengana on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. It was the World Rural Women's Day, the NGO called Deccan Development Society started this community radio working with 100 groups of the economically poorest Dalit Women. This radio station is exclusively owned, managed and operated by women which specifically from the Dalit community. This radio broadcasts to a radius of 25 k.m. giving a platform for empowering women from the marginalised section of that area covering about 100 villages and a population close to 50, 000. The Sangham Radio runs programme from 7 pm to 9 pm which emphasise themes such as seed sovereignty and women; food sovereignty and women; women and biodiversity; women and land; ownership; women and ecological agriculture; ecological enterprises for rural women; healthcare and plant medicines; herbal care for animal diseases; making children's

education relevant to rural milieu; violence against women; legal education for women, etc.

**13.4.2.3 Pudukai Vaani:** On 27 December 2008, this community radio was established by Pondicherry University, Puducherry, with the support of University Grants Commission, New Delhi. It runs at FM 107.8 MHz which covers the area of 20 –km radius from the university campus. Inaugurated by Shri.V. Narayanasamy, the then Union Minister of State for Planning & Parliamentary Affairs on 27 December 2008, it started its full-time transmission on 1 January, 2009. This community radio is continuously working for women empowerment, communal harmony, health, and education. Apart from these, this community radio is also focusing on generating awareness on topics including students empowerment, youth development and motivation, fishermen community empowerment, communal harmony, literature, agriculture, environment, health, folk music, languages learning, General Knowledge, etc. Pudukai Vaani is the first Community Radio Station (CRS) in India started with 9 hours transmission, without repeat programmes.

**13.4.2.4 Radio Namaskar:** It is the first community radio in Orissa with a vision to make the villages under its project sustainable, collective, participatory, non-violent, self-ruled, self-sufficient, peaceful and eco-friendly, free from exploitation, inequality and discrimination. It was established by Young India, a civil society organisation formed by some National Youth Awardees, Indira Gandhi NSS Awardees & Ex- NSS volunteers with a commitment to bring social transformation & development. The focus areas of this station are- Local Self Governance, Human Rights/ Minority & Dalit Rights, Right to Food/Information/Education, Disaster Management, Gender Equity, Societal Peace, Survival of indigenous trade & culture. A few programmes by Radio Namaskar are discussed below-

**Chasa Basa Katha:** It is based on the agriculture related themes facilitating the local farmers to interact with experts. The farmers can ask about different agricultural issues they face.

**Jana Soochana:** This programme is to create awareness on information about Govt. Welfare schemes / program/Act/ Citizen Entitlements etc.

**Ajira Nari:** This programme focuses on women empowerment covering issues related to women rights, gender concerns & day to day information on women in society.

**Yuba Barta:** Youth based program basing upon carrier, sports, voluntarism, better citizenship etc.

**Angya Namaskar:** Interview with noted personalities/citizens from community on different issue based topics.

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### 13.5 SUMMING UP

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The community radio movement in India is giving us hope by providing an alternative public sphere. The above mentioned community radio stations are instances which are continuously working for giving voice to the voiceless. As we know how the concept of marginalisation diverts the key principles of democracy specifically in India, community media bridges this gap of mainstreaming in media. Although, we have discussed a few examples of community radio stations in India, there are many others you need to study which will give you wider perspectives on understanding the scopes and contribution of such kinds of media in India.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT

1. Discuss the current status of community radio in Assam. Do you think community radio stations in Assam are successful in giving a platform for alternative representation? Explain your argument. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **13.6 QUESTIONS**

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1. Discuss the scopes and contribution of community radio in the process of social change. Give examples of some community radio stations in India and discuss its contribution to the specific regions.
2. Discuss the current growth and challenges of community radio stations in North-East India.

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### **13.7 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS**

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## **UNIT 14: CASE STUDIES II- COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER CASE STUDIES / PUPPETRY /THEATRE CASE STUDIES**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Objectives

14.3 Community Newspapers

14.3.1 Community newspapers in India

14.4 Puppetry in India

14.5 Theatre for social change in India

14.6 Summing Up

14.7 Questions

14.8 References and Recommended Readings

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## **14.1 INTRODUCTION**

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This last unit of Community Media course will give you an understanding of the scenario of community newspapers as well as different puppetry and theatre initiatives in India for social change. Such initiatives are to bring up the issues not covered in the mainstream media. Moreover, puppetry and theatre are basically to mobilise people at the grassroots highlighting on different issues including behavioral change strategies. From this unit you will get to know about different community media initiatives in India. However, there are many other examples which are not included in this study material.

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## **14.2 OBJECTIVES**

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This unit is based on the following objectives-

- To explain the current status of community newspaper in India
- To discuss puppetry as a medium of communication for social change in India
- To describe case studies of theatre in India

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## **14.3 COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: CASE STUDIES**

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The history of community newspapers can be traced back to its first publication in Boston, America on Sept. 25, 1690, with the name Publick Occurrences: Both Foreign and Domestic by Benjamin Harris. Unfortunately, the local authorities considered this publication of a dubious nature. As a result, an immediate ban on publication was issued and a second edition was never produced. It was not until 1704 that a second, more successful, newspaper appeared.

Today, the distinguishing characteristic of a community newspaper throughout the world is its commitment to serving the information needs of a particular community. The community is defined by the community's members and a shared sense of belonging. A community may be geographic, political, social or religious. A community newspaper may be published once a week or daily. Some community newspapers exist only in cyberspace. Any newspaper that defines itself as committed to serving a particular community may be defined as a "community newspaper."

Despite the emergence of new information technologies such as the Internet, community newspapers continue to play an important role in the Information Age. Millions of people are informed, educated and entertained by a community newspaper every week. Moreover, the value of community newspapers continues to grow as they seek new ways to serve their readers and strengthen their communities.

#### **14.3.1 Community newspapers in India**

Community newspapers focusing specifically on the news pertaining to a specific locality or community have always been an area of interest of publication houses in India. Ironically, there have been several local and small players in various markets that have made failed attempts to establish themselves as community newspapers settling nothing but as periodical classifieds.

Let us now discuss in brief about some community newspapers in India.

**Mahila Dakiya:** Mahila Dakiya, the community newspaper in India first started as an initiative by a group of marginalized women from Uttar Pradesh. It was the first community newspaper that paved the path of empowering women as well as giving voice to the marginalized community. Launched in 1993, this was initially handwritten by women themselves with the idea that it would bridge the gap between the writer and the reader. It started life as a bimonthly production but went on to become a monthly edition. This initiative was under the Mahila Samakhya

program which started a literacy campaign called Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK) aimed at marginalized communities in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, which was probably one of the most important achievements of the feminist movement in India. It was launched in three states of India in 1989 and women were given critical hands-on training which helped them become self-reliant. Literacy campaigns for women were adopted and a residential school called Mahila Shikshan Kendra (MSK) was established where rural women came to acquire critical literacy during six-month training sessions. These Mahila Shikshan Kendras (women learning centers) received help from the Delhi-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), Nirantar. Mahila Dakiya closed down around 2002 after it suffered a gradual closure due to lack of funding.

### **Khabar Lahariya**

Apart from Mahila Dakiya, Khabar Lahariya has been very successful women's initiatives that could also be considered as the pioneers to the community media boom in India. While Community Radio policy developed in 2006, these two Dalit women-run newspapers were established much earlier with community participation.

The second wave of community newspapers in India could be considered to emerge from the direct fallout of the Mahila Dakiya experience. A team of eight members started this community newspaper, Khabar Lahariya in association with Nirantar, the NGO which was associated with Mahila Dakiya in Chitrakoot for the interest of the marginalized sections of the society. Chitrakoot is among the poorest 200 districts of India, and Khabar Lahariya concerns itself mostly with issues concerning the Kols, Scheduled Castes, and Muslim communities. It publishes news in local dialects, such as Bundeli, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, and so on. In 2006 a second edition of Khabar Lahariya was launched from the Banda district.

A feature of Khabar Lahariya was the production of news in the Bundeli dialect, a locally spoken dialect which was easily understood by all. Nirantar provided continuous support to this initiative, training women in

journalism skills. The survival of most newspapers depends on advertisements, agreement with which the women involved eventually agreed, but who laid down strict criteria. For instance, the newspaper does not accept advertisements which promote casteism, fundamentalism, sexism, violence, or superstition. One of the challenges the reporters of this community newspapers faced is the discrimination of being women as well as being from lower castes that make the journalists highly vulnerable to abuse. But their determination have managed to come a long way, from being a community newspaper of women to now being recognized as a newspaper of substance which is read by both men and women.

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#### **14.4 PUPPETRY IN INDIA**

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Puppetry is the indigenous theatre of India. From times immemorial it has been the most popular and well appreciated form of entertainment available to the village people. Puppetry throughout the ages has held an important place in traditional entertainment. It is an ancient art, originated about 3000 years ago. It is a least expensive source of entertainment which imbibes the all creative expression like painting, sculpture, music, literature, dance and drama etc. It has been most popular form of entertainment for the village people. Almost all types of puppets are found in India. From different parts of the country they have their own identity. Regional variations of style and theme are reflected in them. The stylized vocabulary of puppetry carries local myths and legends usually with the message of social awareness, moral values, historical and traditional subjects. Like traditional theatre, themes for puppet theatre are mostly based on epics and legends. In India the history of puppetry is possibly dates back to 4000 years ago.

In Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta, Iswar is represented as a string holder, the strings are the three Guna – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which moves the man in between and manipulate all beings of the universe. In many Sanskrit drama the word Sutradhar ‘string holder’ denotes evidences and the identity of puppetry later this word has taken for the director or principal actor who holds the control and connection between the audience, artist and



theme in the theatre. In Bengal the puppet, doll, mask, are also known as Sutradhar. In India many types of puppets are found.

Four of them are commonly used the different way of manipulation becomes their identity. String, rod, shadow and glove are prominent among them.

- 1) The String puppets of Rajasthan,
- 2) The Rod puppets of Bengal
- 3) String and Rod Puppets of the South India,
- 4) Shadow puppets of Orissa, Kerala, Andhra and Karnataka and Glove puppets of Tamilnadu and Kerala are remarkable. These puppets are like large dolls that are colorfully dressed.

**Kathputli:** The Puppets of Rajasthan Puppets from different part of India have their own identity. The traditional puppets of Rajasthan are known as Kathputli having two words ‘kath’ (wood) and ‘puttali’ (doll) which is the feminine gender of Puttala. The word Puttala is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Puttara’ meaning ‘a son.’ These motivated mobile wooden dolls are carved from a single piece of wood; they are bright in colour and beautifully dressed. The Kathputli is accompanied by a highly dramatized version of the regional music. The music that accompanies is dramatic and beautifully blends folk and classical elements. One group has 80-90 puppets of different characters.

**Putul of Bengal:** The popular show West Bengal is known as Putul Natch. The specific types of rod puppets are made from clay and rice husk. These rod puppets are fixed to heavy bamboo sticks which are tied to the puppeteer’s waist. These are three dimensional moving figures that are manipulated with the help of rods. 1.5 meter height of puppets is built over 2.5 meter long bamboo. Hands are manipulated by strings. Rod puppets are extension of glove puppets According to the subject, the puppets are

decorated, for the Puppet Shows. The puppeteers' ties the marionettes properly into their waist –band in front to make their hand free for manipulating the puppets.

**Sakhi Kundhi:** In Orissa various social and cotemporary themes are being performed in towns and villages. The puppeteers, decorates their marionettes according to the themes. Earlier the custody and protection of these puppets was taken by the royal families. Ramayan and Mahishasur mardini is popular narrative theme of puppet shows of Bengal & Orissa. Kundehi are made of light wood with more joints to make them easy to manipulation. The absence of legs is covered with long trailing skirts flowing from the waist. Music is based on regional tunes. Today the troops are performed all kinds of themes as classic, romance and fantasies. They are styled and designed like the traditional, Jatra theatre actors.

**Rod puppets** of Orissa are similar to puppets of West Bengal. These puppets are manipulated by five to seven strings tied to a prop; manipulation is similar to Rajasthani puppets. They are styled and designed like the characters of Yakshagana, the traditional theatre form of the region. Some of the more complicated movements of the puppet are manipulated by two to three puppeteers at a time. The Gombeyatta puppet figures are highly stylized and have joints at the legs, shoulders, elbows, hips and knees.

**Bomalattam:** The Bomalattam of Tamil Nadu is associated with religious festivals. Vinayak Puja, Komali, Amanattam and Pusenkanattam are four parts of Bomalattam theatre. The marionettes are artistically designed on wood. They are the heaviest and largest marionettes of India with Ten kilograms of weight and 4.5 feet in height. The rods and strings are used to manipulate the hands and head. Two rods are fixed in the hands and strings are attached to an iron ring.

**Kalasurti Bahulya:** Kalasurti Bahulya originated in 1600 A.D. in Maharashtra. These are the small wooden string puppets with movable arms and shoulders. Kal is known as a forefinger of man, sutri means

thread and Bahulya denotes for Puppets. Rulers of Sawantwadi were the patron of Kalasutri Puppetry. The Theme of Ramayana and Mahabharat as well as Dashavtar and Bhagwad Gita are also performed.

**Shadow Puppets:** Shadow Puppets in India has specialized forms. Tholapavakuttu of Kerala is performed during the temple festival. The puppets of Togalu Gombeyatta are generally small sized shadow puppets of Karnataka. The Tholu Bommalata represents the rich tradition of shadow theatre puppetry of Andhra. They are the largest shadow puppets of India. Ravanacharya is the traditional local shadow of Orissa presents the legends of Ramayana. The puppets are small in size.

**Glove Puppets:** The Uttar Pradesh has the rich tradition of Glove Puppets. Social themes are usually presents in plays. West Bengal, Orissa and Kerala are also popular for glove puppetry. Kathakali texts accompanied with music are performing in Kerala. Radha-Krishna themes are the popular themes of Orissa and West Bengal.

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#### **14.5 THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA**

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Theatre is a very effective & responsive tool for fostering the development procedure. In India, theatre worked as a weapon against political exploitation in British rule. After independence, theatre remains relevant for its participative & flexible nature. In India, theatre emphasizes the themes such as agriculture, literacy campaign, social harmony, girl trafficking, child labour, gender discrimination, religious tolerance, women empowerment, prevention of HIV-AIDS, family planning, pulse polio, nutrition, environment pollution, etc.

Theatre has its root from the ancient time of human communication. From the early days of theatre it caters to preliterate community member's information, education, entertainment, socialization & also creates the platform of debate & discussion. Theatre has been an effective element for social change as well as behavioral change especially in developing countries. The necessity of traditional media for communication purpose in

a complex social system because traditional media have a deep rooted entity in every culture.

Diffusing message on development through folk media is more approachable to the rural people who are the real target of the development communication and it encourages them to participate in the communication process & ensure the two way process in communication.

Over the decades, theatre emphasizes the themes related with the agriculture, literacy campaign, social harmony, peace building, national integration, girl trafficking, child labour, child abusing, gender discrimination, religious tolerance, women empowerment, right of sex-worker, prevention of HIV-AIDS, family planning, pulse polio, nutrition, environment pollution etc. Community theatre (CT), theatre for integrated rural development (THIRD), street theatre (ST), guerilla theatre (GT), prison theatre for development (PTFD), campaign theatre, protest theatre, oppositional theatre are the new avenue with new conception transpire in the world of theatre.

Below we have two case studies of Nazariya and Kolkata Creative Art Performer to give us a detailed account on how theatre disseminates developmental idea in different parts of India.

**Nazariya:** It is an initiative in Gujrat which focuses on using theater as a mechanism of giving power to create question, debate and discussion among audience. Nazariya deals with different socio-cultural and political issues such as gender equality, communal tolerance and religious expression, etc. in schools, colleges in order to bring social change especially among the youths. Among the different forms of theatre, most successful was 'Forum Theater', which gives the audience much more than just being a spectator. The most significant part of this is that it initiates communication based on dialogue between the artists. For instance, a question is raised on different issues for the audience and helps in drawing solutions from the audience themselves. In this form of theater; the play stops in a crucial moment and asks audience, 'have you been there, what

would have been your reaction?’ People from the audience come to the stage and enacts tentative solutions on behalf of the community.

**Kolkata Creative Art Performer:** A group of young students started the journey of using theatre for social change in the year 2000. They have started their venture of street theatre for creating health awareness. As a health communication strategy they took initiatives to create awareness on Pulse Polio immunization program by Govt. of India. During the initial years in many parts of Bengal, people were not ready to take vaccination of Pulse Polio. With the help of UNICEF Kolkata, Creative Art Performer started campaigning for Pulse Polio. They performed street theatre in Suti I, Suti II, Samsherganj & other blocks of Murshidabad. The impact was huge. Their performance gained highest level of mass acceptance and the situation changed dramatically. These groups also effectively use street theatre for instigating awareness against the disease like Leprosy, Tuberculosis, Malaria, HIV AIDS etc. In every district of West Bengal they perform theatre for the prevention of HIV AIDS & create awareness of birth control, family planning, women trafficking, etc.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT

1. Find out some community media initiatives in your district/state and discuss their strategies adopted for different social change programmes. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Trace the history of community newspaper in India and discuss its growth as an alternative media. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## 14.6 SUMMING UP

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Community media as a tool for community mobilization have been playing a significant role in India specifically as a strategy for social change. From

this unit you have learned some examples of community media initiatives in India which are continuously working for giving voice to the unheard voices as well as creating awareness on different issues at the grass root level. Being a developing country, India needs more such initiatives for fostering the bottom-up development.

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## 14.7 QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the need of theatre as a means of social change in context to India.
2. Discuss different types of puppetry in India and their importance in creating awareness on different social issues.
3. Discuss the current status of community newspaper in India.

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## 14.9 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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