



Notes

25

INTRODUCTION TO TRADITIONAL MEDIA

In your earlier lessons, you have learnt a lot about communication, various media forms used for communication as well as the use of communication in our day to day life. But it is also important to understand that communication is not only confined to print, television, radio, photography, internet etc. There are other ways of communication which exist in different forms in and around you.

Can you recall having seen a dance performance, a magic show or a festival mela? Do you realize that all these forms communicate some messages of entertainment, education or information through them?

Have you ever thought of how people used to share or exchange their joy, sorrow or information with each other before the existence of electronic media. What were the mediums that helped them to communicate with each other? In this lesson, you will learn about some of these mediums of communication.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- define traditional media;
- identify different forms of traditional media;
- differentiate between traditional media and electronic media;
- discuss the use of traditional media in communication.

25.1 DEFINITION OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Even today you will find villages where there is no proper electricity. People in such places might not be able to view television or access the internet. Similarly illiterate people will not be able to read newspapers or magazines. However, this does not mean they do not communicate. They have also developed different ways of communication depending upon the local language and culture.



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You may have heard many stories from your parents or grand parents about the Ramayana, Mahabharata, about kings and queens who ruled the country several years ago. Similarly there are stories about festivals and rituals and how to become good human beings. Information in this way has been handed over from one generation to another and constitute different forms of traditional media.

So, let us now define traditional media.

The non electronic mediums which works as part of our culture and as vehicles of transmitting tradition from one generation to another generation is called traditional media.

**Activity 25.1**

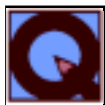
Before we move on to the next section on various forms of traditional media, now can you name a few forms of traditional media around you.

Traditional media comes in different forms and is known by different names in different regions of the country. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, 'Janapadam' indicates a village and 'Janapadulu' means villagers. The folk art forms of villages, on the whole are known as 'Janapada Kalalu'. Similarly Lok Natya or Lok Geet means 'people's dance' or 'people's song'. There are many other forms of folk arts in other states of India. These are used as 'Jan Madhyamas' i.e 'people's media'. These forms represent the conurned people by giving a glimpse of their style, speech, music, dance, dress, behaviour, etc.

Traditional tools of communication are developed from the beliefs, customs, and rituals practised by the people. These are very old and deep-rooted.

Traditional media thus represents a form of communication employing vocal, verbal, musical and visual folk art forms, transmitted to a society or group of societies from one generation to another. They are indigenous modes and have served the society as tools/medium of communication for ages.

Do these traditional forms of communication exist today? Yes, they do. The context, culture and form may be different but the purpose is served. Some common examples are **Rangoli** (the art of making designs using coloured powder), **story telling, drama and puppetry**.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.1**

1. Define traditional media
2. Name any three traditional forms that exist today.
 - i) _____
 - ii) _____
 - iii) _____



Notes

2.5.1 Different forms of traditional media

A traditional media form can be anything which does the purpose of communication in your family, friends and as a whole in society. All the forms may not be popular but they help to communicate. You have already seen that these forms are different in different regions and communities. But for your understanding, these can be divided into the following:

- traditional dance
- drama
- painting
- sculpture
- song
- music
- motifs and symbols

It will be interesting to note that in some forms of traditional media, all the above can be used. For example 'Ramleela' which is a folk play telling the story of Lord Rama in a traditional style is popular in north India and uses all the above traditional mediums.



Fig. 25.1 (a) : Announcement



Notes

- One of the popular traditional forms of communication is the announcement made by beating a 'Nagada' or drum with a stick and used for communicating messages from one village to another through its beats.



Fig. 25.1 (b) : Nagada

- **Puppetry** is a popular form of traditional media which exists in rural areas of India. Shadow puppetry and string puppetry are popular forms.
- **Patachitra katha** refers to stories that have been told through the medium of palm leaf paintings.
- **Story telling** is another interesting format of traditional media which existed at a time when advanced forms of communication such as the written word did not exist. For example historical stories of various local heroes who fought battles and participated in the freedom struggle were performed through song and drama. These were not written or documented. Instead they were orally communicated from one house to another or one village to another. They kept the stories alive. Can you recall any such stories from your region?

Story-telling forms such as 'Harikatha' and 'Kabigan' played a vital role in communicating historical and epic stories. Story telling is also practised in traditional youth clubs like the Ghotul of the tribal murias of Bastar or the Dhumkuria of the Oraons of Bihar.



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- **Nautanki** is a famous form of folk arts involving a mix of music and dance and popular in northern India. It was the most popular form of entertainment before the advent of cinema.
- **Fairs and festivals** including social, ritual and ceremonial gatherings created a platform to meet and exchange views among people.
- **Folk dances** vary from one place to another. For example, you will find a variety of tribal dances in the north eastern region, Orissa and Gujarat. Every tribe has a different dance form and dress, accessories, symbols and motifs.
- **Traditional paintings, wall paintings, inscriptions, statues and stupas** played a vital role in communicating ideas and culture from one generation to another.
- Forms of traditional media also include the *house barn* and *fence types*. Ven the **traditional conventional sounds** used to summon animals or give them commands are considered as different modes of communication.

You must understand that these are only broad categorizations. There are many regional variations.

Table 25.1: Other traditional media forms

- *myths* • *legends* • *folktales* • *jokes* • *crafts* • *ballads* • *charms*
- *proverbs* • *riddles* • *chants* • *customs* • *tales* • *places*
- *blessings* • *curses* • *oaths* • *insults* • *names*, • *superstitions*
- *retorts* • *taints* • *games* • *gestures* • *witchcraft* • *folk medicine*
- *symbols* • *prayers* • *practical* • *jokes* • *gestures* • *festivals* • *rhymes*
- *folk etymologies* • *food-recipes* • *literary artistic expressions*
- *embroidery designs* • *costumes* • *tales* • *fables* • *beliefs* • *dance*
- *medicine* • *instrumental music* • *metaphors* • *names*



Activity 25.2

From the above table, identify and make a list of traditional media forms in your every day life.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.2

1. Choose the correct option :
 - i) Communication is a _____
 - a) late process b) continuous process c) active process d) inactive process
 - ii) Which of the following is not a form of traditional media
 - a) traditional games b) ballads c) chat shows d) puppetry



Notes

- iii) What does the term Jan Madhyam mean ?
 a) traditional media b) people's media c) print media d) broadcast media
2. List any three old forms of traditional communication .
- i) _____
 ii) _____
 iii) _____

25.2 TRADITIONAL MEDIA VS TELEVISION

Have you found any difference between watching a television programme and watching Ramleela or listening to stories from your grandmother?

Let us list out some of the differences between traditional media and electronic media.

Table 25.2: Differences between Traditional Media and Television

| Traditional media | Electronic media |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● non-technological in nature ● flexible in nature but culturally rigid ● less expensive medium ● messages are presented before a live audience ● reach is limited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technological in nature ● flexible but enjoys cultural freedom ● expensive medium which needs high monetary investment ● messages are transmitted or broadcast ● reaches out to a large number of people |



Fig. 25.3 : (a) Street Theatre performance



(b) Watching television



Notes

In traditional media forms like story telling, theatre, dance, singing etc, your body is your media. You can create messages and communicate without using any form of mass media. You can create your own media.

For example in street theatre, social or political messages are presented before the public with a performance by a group of performers. You do not need any special piece of equipment unlike in television or radio.

Likewise, ballad singing is a popular form where a single person sings on issues related to the public. It will be very simple to understand. But at the same time, it contains several critical comments about society. Here also, there is no need for instruments, chorus or a stage. A singer with a creative thought and awareness of issues and loud vocal strength can turn himself into a powerful people's (traditional) medium.

On the other hand, for the electronic media, you need a certain style, dress code, diction, literacy etc. They generally do not involve active audience participation. But traditional media is inclusive in nature. They are highly intimate and local specific and deeply connected to one's own lives.

25.3 USE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATION

Traditional media have been in existence in India for long and have been used as a medium of communication in rural areas. Over the years, rural masses have been using the folk media for expressing their social, ritual, moral and emotional needs. Traditional media has a crucial role to perform in the process of socio-economic development in India. It helps in convincing and influencing people in a very effective way.

For example during the freedom struggle, folk media played a great role in spreading the message of patriotism. Utpal Dutt who was a popular actor is said to have used *Jatra*, a traditional theatre form in Bengal during the freedom struggle.

Paala, a traditional form of ballad singing is used for spreading awareness on various social issues by the government of Orissa.

The Song and Drama Division of the government of India uses various forms of traditional media to spread awareness on a number of social issues like AIDS, polio immunization etc.

You all know that during festivals, we exchange sweets, greet each other and decorate our houses. This communicates our friendship and love for others. This is also an example of the traditional form of communication. Today we use modern ways of communication such as the mobile phone and internet to send messages of friendship and greetings. Communication through traditional media thus helps in building good relations.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.3

1. Choose the correct option:
 - i) Traditional media is a _____ medium.



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- a) technological b) mechanical c) passive d) non technological
- ii) In traditional media your body is your _____
 a) source b) power c) media d) mind
- iii) Which form of traditional media did Utpal Dutt use during the freedom struggle?
 a) ballad b) jatra c) painting d) puppetry
- iv) Ballad singing of Orissa is called _____
 a) jatra b) patachitra katha c) katputhli d) paala

25.4 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

→ Definition

Different forms of traditional media

- traditional Dance
- painting
- song
- motifs and symbols
- drama
- sculpture
- music

Differences between traditional media and electronic media

Use of traditional media in communication

- played a great role during the freedom struggle
- used for spreading awareness on various social issues
- used for communicating friendship and love



25.5 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Explain with examples different forms of traditional media.
2. Discuss the differences between traditional media and television.
3. Describe the use of traditional media in communication.



25.6 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 25.1** 1. The non electronic mediums which works as part of our culture and as vehicles of transmitting tradition from one generation to another generation is called traditional media.
2. i) story telling ii) rangoli iii) puppetry iv) any other
- 25.2** 1. i) (b) ii) (c) iii) (b)
2. i) nagada used to make announcements ii) patachitra katha iii) nautanki iv) any other
- 25.3** 1. i) (b) ii) (c) iii) (b) iv) (d)