

# **Analysis on Communication & Participatory Culture of the Tea Garden Community with Special Reference to Barak Valley in Assam.**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Communication forms and methods have become more specialized as science and technology have advanced. In a country as vast and diverse as India, modern mass media does not represent the entirety of communication channels. The participative culture, as a distinct culture, aims to motivate people to think positively about the community's economic and social development through effective and efficient communication. The tea industry in Barak Valley is currently in a state of crisis. Improving productivity through participatory communication has become increasingly important for the industry's survival. Since the tea industry is seen as a participative industry, the adoption of contemporary methods for increasing worker productivity will not be successful until it is implemented within this participative culture. The research examines the value of participatory culture as a medium for communication in the community of tea gardens' vocational mobility. The information is gathered through participant observation as well as an interview schedule at a tea garden of the Barak Valley in Southern Assam. Union leaders, executives, and employees who were chosen at random for the survey and personally contacted on a first-met-first response basis served as the respondents. The primary goal of this paper is to assist the tea garden community of Assam's Barak Valley in improving their productivity and standard of living through the concept of participative culture from a communication standpoint.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Assam, Barak Valley, Culture, Gardens, Participation, Tea, Workers.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

It is common knowledge that effective communication is crucial for motivating people and enlisting their willing assistance in a nation's progress. In India, the consecutive five-year plans that serve as the road map for the country's intended development have repeatedly emphasized the importance of reaching out to people, interacting with them, and giving them new skills. The ensuing processes of communication and development have been bolstering and assisting one another, advancing the nation. A different culture called participatory culture aims to inspire people to think positively about the economic and social advancement of their society through effective and efficient communication. Participatory culture, which goes by a variety of labels, is acknowledged as a key tool for fostering a society's economic growth. In India's indigenous and participatory communities, communication modes and channels differ from one cultural region or ethnic group to the next. Each community's social structure is reflected in the modes and channels. This social structure is similarly determined by the sum of the people's historical and economic experiences. Message relay-running, festivals, drama, music/songs, dance styles and steps, bush or wood fire, smoke ashes, tales and proverbs, gun shots, animals, birds and insects, grass knots, fresh leaves, knots, have looks, tribal marks, body language, talking drums, weather, pottery and wood carvings, legends and myths, and so on are some of these modes. All of these are the results of human interactions, agreements, and disagreements.

The indigenous and participatory channels of interpersonal and group communication, which are primarily based on age, kinship, gender inheritance, marital status, and with authority patterns embedded in the social structure and organization of the society, make them norms, give them values, and make them mysterious. Face-to-face, interpersonal, and group communication channels are normal, real, and unavoidable in a community's planned and unplanned growth. They operate both vertically and horizontally. Participatory communication refers to the active involvement of all parties in the process of problem-solving as well as the repeated emphasis on the relationship between life and survival. A dominating society no longer controls communication in a one-way street.

Currently, the tea industry in Barak Valley is in a state of crisis, and improving worker productivity through this culture is critical to the industry's survival. Because this is a traditional industry, introducing modern methods of increasing worker productivity will not be successful unless they are implemented through this culture. Nobody is motivated by participation culture on its own. All it does is create an environment in which an individual's innate motivation can be expressed in the form of effective work. This culture could be described as a positive environment creator.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The key objectives of this study are:

- i. To study the different types and forms of participatory media those are common in the tea gardens of Barak Valley.
- ii. To examine the effects of different development campaigns that makes use of participatory media of communication.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The primary data was collected using the participant observation and interview method from three tea estates: Dewan Tea Estate, Isabil Tea Estate, and Anailkhal Tea Estate, which are located in three districts which are Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi in the Barak valley in

Assam. The sample respondents were union leaders, executives, and workers who were chosen at random and personally met on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## **FINDINGS:**

### **i. PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL PERFORMANCES IN THE TEA GARDENS**

- a) Jhumur dance was recognized by more than 90% of the sample respondents from the three tea gardens recognizes this dance as part of their cultural performances in tea gardens. Overall, it can be concluded that the level of liking for the Jhumur dance as part of their cultural performance is very high in the selected tea gardens.
- b) Dhamail Dance was liked by more than 85% of the sample respondents from the three tea gardens and mentions that it is a part of their cultural performances in tea gardens because it has a high involvement in the socio-cultural gathering.
- c) According to the sample respondents from the three tea gardens, Monosha Puja plays a significant role in their cultural performances in tea gardens. Overall, it can be deduced that the extent of likeness and devotion to the Monosha Puja as part of their cultural performances is significantly very high in selected tea gardens under study.
- d) Respondents from the three tea gardens who were asked about their opinions on Karam puja says that 40% of them are neutral and considers Karam Puja as a component of their cultural displays in tea gardens. Overall, it can be concluded that 60% of respondents had a favorable opinion of the Karam puja as part of their cultural performances, while 40% had a neutral opinion.
- e) The sample respondents from the three tea gardens reveal that 40% of the respondents were neutral about Tusu puja. Overall, it can be deduced that 60% of respondents liked the Tusu puja as part of their cultural performances in selected tea gardens, while the remaining 40% were neutral.
- f) 70% of the sample respondents from the three tea gardens mentioned that Bhadu Puja is a component of their cultural displays in tea gardens. It can be concluded that the degree of connection toward the Bhadu puja as a component of their cultural displays is extremely high in a few tea gardens were studied.
- g) When comparing the extent of likeness of Jitiya among the sample respondents from the three tea gardens, Aienakhal tea garden shows that more than 90% of the respondents recognized Jitiya as a part of their tea garden cultural performances, while the other two tea gardens show 70% likeness towards Jitiya as a part of their tea garden cultural performances. Overall, it can be deduced that the average degree of likeness towards the Jitiya as part of their cultural performances differs between the three tea gardens chosen for the study.
- h) According to the sample of respondents from the three tea gardens, 20% of the respondents have no preference for Chat Puja while 80% of the respondents recognized it as a component of tea garden cultural events. On the whole, it can be concluded that the study's chosen tea gardens had a very high degree of similarity to the Chat Puja as a component of their cultural acts.

### **ii. PARTICIPATORY FOLK MEDIA**

- a) 78% of respondents consider tea garden dance to be the most popular medium for communicating messages for rural development, while 69% consider folk songs to be the most popular medium. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that tea garden dance and folk song were far more popular than puppetry show and street theatre.
- b) The use of participatory and folk media was perceived as being significant by about 62% of the respondents in the health sector, followed by 57% and 44% in each of the next two

sectors: education and infrastructure. 38 percent of people express this kind of sentiment towards environmental protection, 33 percent regarding cleanliness, and finally 27.66 percent regarding energy conservation. This might be because people tend to pay rapid attention to messages about health since they have come to understand that education is also valued in the same way as health, according to the proverb -health is wealth.

- c) Some of the parameters like employment generation, environmental protection, sanitation, and energy conservation did not enjoy the same status as health, education, and infrastructure due to a lack of focus on folk media by those in positions to make such decisions. It is also worth noting that approximately 30% of respondents did not witness any evidence when it comes to the use of folk media in job creation and environmental protection, and the percentage is only slightly higher when it comes to sanitation and energy conservation. This could be due to the fact that people in rural Assam are not aware of the benefits of sanitation, energy conservation, and environmental protection.
- d) 58.51% of respondents believed that folk media played a significant role in delivering health-related messages on a monthly basis, while 20% and 21% believed that message delivery through these media occurred on a half-yearly and yearly basis, respectively.
- e) Entertainment is one of the purposes of communication that is completely fulfilled whether it is communicated either through folk or participatory media.
- f) When comparing the frequency of non-governmental organizations organizing participatory events in their location, the sample respondents from the first two tea gardens demonstrates that more than 75% of the nongovernmental organization do not organize participatory media in their location, but the Isabhal tea estate which is nearby and according to the sample respondents, 55% mentions that nongovernmental organizations organizes participatory media in their geographical location.
- g) When the status of government agencies in organizing participatory media in their location is compared among the sample respondents from the three tea gardens, it is found that approximately 55% of the respondents said that government agencies were organizes participatory media in their location.
- h) 60% of respondents claimed that messages about culture and tradition, social issues, and health and hygiene awareness were delivered through government agencies' developmental programmes, while 40% claimed that messages regarding education, rights and responsibilities, scientific knowledge, and "No to Child Labor" awareness were delivered through these same programmes.
- i) About 26% of respondents had a very favorable opinion of participatory media, while the same number have a negative opinion. However, 53% of the respondents have a positive outlook. The outcomes may be explained by the fact that through cultural assimilation, rural people's minds gradually became less capable of understanding the fundamental purpose of participatory media, where they are exposed to all contemporary printed and electronic mass media in order to receive messages pertaining to their welfare. However, some people who are typically interested in participation and who identify with their respective cultures do favorably value folk and participatory media. When compared to non-participatory media, it is also acceptable to say that participatory media does have a certain flavor of amusement of its own.

## CONCLUSION:

Participatory communication is deeply rooted in ethnic and tribal societies, reflecting mythological, philosophical, and mystical systems and beliefs. This association provides them with unparalleled connectivity and acceptance in such societies, and even in the age of digital and instant communication, they remain primary and dominant media. Societies are

also undergoing socioeconomic changes, which are characterized by the adoption of new religions, educational systems, settlement systems, economic activities, and migration. Participatory communication is under threat all over the world due to the ever-changing and globalizing environment. Socioeconomic modernization, as well as the facilitation of modern information and transportation facilities, has resulted in internationalized popular culture, which has replaced various folk forms and presentations in social communication.

Local societies and cultures have long used participatory communication. Previously, it was kept in the memories of society members. It is now everyone's responsibility to protect these beautiful, natural ways of communicating prosperity, identity, and culture.

Finally, to summaries, it is necessary to consider some points that reveal Participatory culture as a communication tool, namely, the selection of folk media on the basis of popularity with concerned folk artists who were well acquainted with local language, dialects, culture, and traditions, systematically organizing campaign at village places with the help of interested village people by following all the steps and theme related to social development, patriotic as well as resentment.

Utilizing locally available resources, such as the skill of folk artists, media's appeal, socially acceptable idioms, and riddles through participatory media, will be very engaging and effective as a vehicle for communication for rural development and technology based on natural resources. Therefore, it is determined that the participatory culture's potential can be used effectively and methodically for both development and agricultural goals. They have been used by civilization for a very long time as an indigenous means of communication between individuals, groups, and villages.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

The following are some of the recommendations:

- i. To guarantee folk art and culture's commercial viability, strategic interventions should be designed. From a socioeconomic standpoint, this is one of the key methods to give the tribal/folk artists more influence.
- ii. All efforts should be made to preserve tribal art and cultural forms' inherent beauty, inherent quality, and core ideology. This is necessary to ensure their unique identity.
- iii. It is important to educate the general public about the principles, aesthetics, and forms of various folk performing arts. Positive public sentiment and opinion toward folk art and culture will be crystallized by effective campaigning and publicity of these factors.
- iv. There is a need to increase the level of direct involvement of the workers in the Bichars in order to address both their personal and professional issues.
- v. Creating more efficient participatory communication channels in the tea estates of Barak Valley will enable modern management concepts, such as "Quality Circles," "Total Quality Management," "Workers' Participation in Management," and others, to be implemented through forums like the Bichars.
- vi. Special allowances for economically disadvantaged folk performers and artisans may be arranged as part of rural development planning.

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