

Received : 28.05.2022 | Accepted : 24.07.2022 | Online published : 01.10.2022

[https://doi.org/10.54986/irjee/2022/oct\\_dec/22-26](https://doi.org/10.54986/irjee/2022/oct_dec/22-26)I  
R  
J  
ESOCIETY OF  
EXTENSION  
EDUCATION

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Effectiveness and Suitability of Traditional Folk Media for Agriculture among different Ethnic Groups in Dhemaji District of Assam

Bidyut P. Gogoi<sup>1</sup>, M.N. Ansari<sup>2</sup>, Ashok K. Sharma<sup>3</sup>,  
Manisha Barman<sup>4</sup> and Dipankar Saikia<sup>5</sup>

1,4&5. Sr. Res. Fellow, ICAR-DRMR-APART.

2.Asstt. Prof., Department of Extension Education, Dr. RPCAU, Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar, India

3.Pr.Scientist, ICAR-DRMR, Sewar, Bharatpur (321303), Rajasthan, India.

Corresponding author e-mail : [bidyut.p98@gmail.com](mailto:bidyut.p98@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

*Traditional Folk media holds a true position in the field of media communications because of its uniqueness and practical existence. The present study was undertaken with an aim to assess the effectiveness and suitability of the existed folk media for agriculture among four different ethnic groups in Dhemaji district of Assam. A descriptive research design was followed for the study taking 100 respondents belonging to the ethnic groups of Ahoms, Mising, Deoris and Sonowal kacharis. The data was collected by personal interview technique following an interview schedule that included both structured and open-ended questions. The findings of the study reveal that majority of the respondents found folk songs, folk dances, proverbs, festivals, traditional fairs effective and suitable for agricultural communication. The findings of the study will be a great potential in the field of communication research as well as for planning and dissemination of need-based information among rural families for agricultural and rural development.*

**Key words:** Folk Media; Agriculture; Indigenous communication channels; Ethnic groups; Rural development.

Traditional wealth is the cultural heritage, which is passed down from generation to generation and peculiar to a particular locality. Traditional media is one of the dimensions of traditional wealth. This wealth is mainly expressed through folk lore, folk songs, storytelling, poem reciting etc. Traditional media can be observed in any field such as health, nutrition, meteorology, agriculture etc. Agriculture is a huge reservoir of traditional media (Bhalerao et al. 2016). Farmers have a wealth of information that does not become extinct with time, but rather passes along from generation to generation based on its own strength and effect (Lenka and Satpathy, 2020). Folklore, folk tales, dance, songs, drama puppetry, folk art rituals, ceremonies, celebrations and festivals are some traditional media which are sound, picture and sign languages-based indigenous media (Hmar, 2018). Folk media holds a true position in the field of media communications because of its uniqueness and practical existence. It has the power to overcome socio-economic disparities,

connect people and cultures, break down barriers and retain strong cultural value. Indigenous traditional folk media serve various social needs of the community (Namdeo, 2005). Traditional folk media in this context continue to exist and dominate the rural areas (Chauhan and Singh, 2001). The local festivals are the most effective medium for developing extension programmes aimed at integrated pest management, natural resource conservation, organizing activities for rural poor and women to motivate them for participating in development programmes and also for maintaining an interactive communication process between development agents and the rural poor (Nooripoor et al. 2008). The traditional forms and channels of communication are as old as human being. For both literate and illiterate rural masses, they are personal and familiar reliable means of communication. In agricultural communication, particularly in extension efforts, folk media plays a critical role (Padmanabha and Kumar, 2020). Farmers are more likely to comprehend agricultural

knowledge if it is transmitted by conventional media. Since he is accustomed to receiving information in that manner, the message becomes more accurate. There is a need to protect and preserve this marvelous means of communication as an Intangible heritage art and find out its varied possibilities in terms of utility and usage for unfolding other aspects related to social, spiritual, religious and political life of the people of the region (*Singh, 2015*).

Despite India's recent agricultural progress, there is a notable gap between research and implementation in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and home sciences. This gap must be filled by successful information dissemination. Folk arts in rural India are basically concern with appeal to people's emotions and has powerful dimensions for communication (*Kanwar and Maheshwari, 2017*). While modern communication channels are open, their use is mostly restricted to the urban population, upper class and only the educated audience has benefited from modern media. Researches in rural areas have shown that rural communities need to be properly developed in order to create the basic awareness for appreciation and participation in any communication process. Among the various communication sources that play an important role in providing information support to the women farmers, interpersonal sources and channels are more important for every cultivation operation (*Devi and Verma, 2016*). No communication strategies would be complete unless it includes the traditional folk media, which must rank alongside the more commonly accepted channel of communication. The importance of the study of indigenous communication system is to search the scientific view behind the various traditional communication channels which are not measured easily. Folk Media has a key part in the construction of the identity of various ethnic communities in Assam and also bears the socio-political consequences. Folk media and various styles of folk songs sung in Assam represent the overall picture of Indian society. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness and suitability of the existed folk media for agriculture among four different ethnic groups in Dhemaji district of Assam.

## **METHODOLOGY**

There is a scarcity of data on empirical studies carried out to assess, characterize and validate the preferences, usage of folk media for agricultural

communication in Assam. This study was designed to study the folk media which farmers generally prefer for agricultural information dissemination, their effectiveness and suitability. A descriptive research design was employed. The study was carried out in Dhemaji district of Assam. Out of the 5 blocks in the district two blocks viz. "Machkhowa" and "Bordoloni" were selected based on cultural diversities. The two selected blocks comprised 51 and 201 inhabited villages respectively and only two villages were chosen from each of the two blocks resulting in 4 villages total. The selected villages with ethnic groups were Gohain Bilotia (Ahoms), Begenegora (Misings), Borbam Deori (Deoris) and Borbam Gaon (Sonowal Kacharis). A list of 25 farmers including both male and female was compiled from each village based on farming and usage of folk media making in a total sample size of 100 for the study. For data collection, an interview schedule was prepared in English and Assamese that included both structured and open-ended questions. The information was collected through personal interview technique. The quantitative data was analyzed with statistical technique like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient. To determine the degree of effectiveness and degree of suitability respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which they used traditional folk media on a three-point scale giving a score for very much (3), somewhat (2) and not at all (1).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Effectiveness of different Traditional Folk Media:* It is evident from Table 1 that majority of female respondents (84%) and male respondents (78%) found folk songs very much effective for agricultural purposes. The reason being folk songs are vibrant, linked with festivals, primarily agrarian and simple in nature. They are near and dear to their hearts, and they can be quite useful in conveying developmental ideas. Folk songs in relation of agriculture are one of the traditional assets for this region. These songs describe the different aspects of nature in general and agriculture in particular for understanding them in a comprehensive way. It simply shows the close liaison of the native people with the natural phenomenon. It was found somewhat effective by 14 per cent of male respondents and 12 per cent of female respondents whereas 8 per cent of the male respondents and 4 per cent of the female respondents did not find it effective at all.

**Table 1. Effectiveness of Traditional folk media**

Traditional folk media	Effectiveness					
	Very much		Somewhat		Not at all	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Folk Song	39 (78)	42 (84)	7 (14)	6 (12)	4 (8)	2 (4)
Folk Dance	21 (42)	15 (30)	11 (22)	13 (26)	18 (36)	22 (44)
Proverb	39 (78)	41 (82)	8 (16)	7 (14)	3 (6)	2 (4)
Idiom	32 (64)	38 (76)	15 (30)	8 (16)	3 (6)	4 (8)
Riddle	9 (18)	14 (28)	13 (26)	11 (22)	28 (56)	25 (50)
Theatre	37 (74)	33 (66)	8 (16)	14 (28)	5 (10)	3 (6)
Festival	31 (62)	34 (68)	13 (26)	12 (24)	6 (12)	4 (8)
Traditional fair	32 (64)	23 (46)	13 (26)	19 (38)	5 (10)	8 (16)

\*Values in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective score.

Traditional folk dance was found very much effective by majority of male respondents (42%) and female respondents (30%). Folk dances have colourful style of presentation, good dance steps and are compatible with audience culture. Some of the popular dance forms of selected ethnic groups of Assam are Gumrag, Bihu dance, Log bihu, Husori, jengbihi, leseri, Biscula, Soman. It was found it somewhat effective by 26 per cent of the female respondents and 22 per cent of the male respondents whereas 44 per cent of the female and 36 per cent of the male respondents did not find it effective at all respectively. Proverbs have been the store house of wisdom of different races and play an essential role in providing informal education to both literate and illiterate people. Proverbs were found very much effective among majority of female (82%) and male (78%) respondents. It was found somewhat effective by 16 per cent of male and 14 per cent of female respondents while only 6 per cent of male respondents and 4 per cent of female respondents did not find it effective at all for agricultural communication. Idioms were found very much effective among majority of female respondents (76%) and male respondents (64%). It was found somewhat effective by 30 per cent of the male respondents and 16 per cent of the female respondents whereas 8 per cent of the female respondents and 6 per cent of the male respondents did not find it effective in their situation for

disseminating agricultural messages. Riddles were not at all effective among majority of male respondents (56%) and female respondents (50%). whereas 22 per cent of the female respondents and 26 per cent of the male respondents found it somewhat effective. Only, 28 per cent of the female respondents and 18 per cent of the male respondents found it very much effective. Riddle contains humorous contents and is culture bound like other types of folk oral tradition. Theatre is the prime source of entertainment in the rural areas and a way of expressing their views in visual format. It was found very much effective among majority of male respondents (74%) and female respondents (66%). It was somewhat effective among 28 per cent of the female respondents and 16 per cent of the male respondents. This is something to keep in mind while using traditional media for agricultural growth. To get the most involvement and impact, such concerts should be held in the village itself. However, 10 per cent of the male respondents and 6 per cent of the female respondents did not find it effective at all. The majority of female respondents (68%) and male respondents (62%) found festival as very much effective whereas 26 per cent of male respondents and 24 per cent of female respondents found it somewhat effective. Festivals are the part and parcel of a society. In Assam, festivals are largely based on agriculture that provides scope for performing songs, dance and to celebrate with great ease. Some of the popular agricultural festivals among the selected ethnic groups of Assam are Bihu, Ali-Aye-Ligang, Porag, Bisu. However, 12 percent of male and 8 percent of female respondents did not find it effective at all. Most of male respondents (64%) and female respondents (46%) found traditional fairs very much effective while it was found somewhat effective by 38 per cent of the female respondents and 26 per cent of the male respondents. However, 16 per cent of the female respondents and 10 per cent of the male respondents did not find it effective at all for agricultural purposes. This shows that traditional channel of communication is still very effective in disseminating messages of local importance in the rural areas. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of *Singh (1985)*, *Nooripoor et al. (2008)*, *Namdeo and Mishra (2005)*, *Mishra and Newme (2015)* and *Bilal (2018)*.

*Suitability of traditional folk media* : It is evident from Table 2 that folk songs were found very much suitable for information dissemination among majority of female respondents (66%) and male respondents

**Table 2. Suitability of Traditional folk media**

Traditional folk media	Suitability					
	Very much		Somewhat		Not at all	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Folk Song	32 (64)	33 (66)	14 (28)	12 (24)	4 (8)	5 (10)
Folk Dance	15 (30)	19 (38)	11 (22)	13 (26)	24 (48)	18 (36)
Proverb	36 (72)	39 (78)	11 (22)	9 (18)	3 (6)	2 (4)
Idiom	37 (74)	43 (86)	11 (22)	4 (8)	2 (4)	3 (6)
Riddle	10 (20)	17 (34)	16 (32)	12 (24)	24 (48)	21 (42)
Theatre	34 (68)	31 (62)	12 (24)	8 (16)	4 (8)	11 (22)
Festival	34 (68)	31 (62)	11 (22)	13 (26)	5 (10)	6 (12)
Traditional Fair	36 (72)	29 (58)	12 (24)	17 (34)	2 (4)	4 (8)

\*Values in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective score

(64%). Folk songs represent the social heritage, climate and way of life of the people who live in a given territory. People typically make it for their own entertainment, pleasure or emotional release.

However, 28 per cent of male respondents and 24 per cent of the female respondents found it somewhat suitable in their situation for dissemination of agricultural information whereas 10 per cent of female and 8 per cent of male respondents did not find it suitable at all. Traditional dance forms were found very much suitable by 30 per cent of the male and 38 per cent of the female respondents while 26 per cent of the female and 22 per cent of the male respondents found it somewhat suitable. However, majority of the male respondents (48%) and female respondents (36%) did not find it suitable at all in their situation for agricultural communication. Proverbs are short, commonly understood folk sentences that embody knowledge, truth, values and traditional ideas in memorable form which are handed over generation to generation. Proverbs were found very much suitable among majority of female (78%) and male (72%) respondents. It was found somewhat suitable by 8 per cent of the female respondents and 22 per cent of the male respondents whereas only 6 per cent of the male and 4 per cent of the female respondents did not find it suitable at all.

Idioms were found very much suitable among majority of female respondents (86%) and male respondents (74%). 22 per cent of the male respondents and 8 per cent of the female respondents found it somewhat suitable whereas 6 per cent of the female respondents and 4 per cent of the male respondents did not find it suitable at all.

Majority of the male respondents (48%) and female respondents (42%) did not found riddle suitable at all. Only 20 per cent of the male respondents and 34 per cent of the female respondents found it very much suitable whereas 32 per cent of the male respondents and 24 per cent of the female respondents found it somewhat suitable. Theatre, was found very much suitable among majority of male respondents (68%) and female respondents (62%). It was found somewhat suitable by 24 per cent of the male respondents and 22 per cent of the female respondents. However, 16 per cent of female respondents and 8 per cent of male respondents did not find it suitable at all. Majority of the male (68%) and female (62%) respondents found festival very much suitable whereas 26 per cent of the female respondents and 22 per cent of the male respondents found it somewhat suitable. However, 12 per cent of the female respondents and 10 per cent of the male respondents did not find it suitable at all. Most of the male respondents (72%) and female respondents (58%) found it very much suitable. It was found somewhat suitable by 34 per cent of female and 24 per cent of male respondents. However, 8 per cent of the female respondents and 4 per cent of the male respondents did not find it suitable in their situation for agricultural purposes. This shows that if development messages are disseminated through aforesaid traditional sources of information it (agricultural messages) will be used and adopted by the villagers. The finding of the study supports the findings of *Siddarth et.al (2001)*, *Das (2013)*, *Devi and Verma, (2016)* and *Kanwar and Maheshwari, (2017)*.

*Relationship of selected socio-economic and personal characteristics with effectiveness of indigenous media* : It is clear from that Table 3 that age, education and mass media exposure are positively correlated with the effectiveness of Indigenous media at 5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. It was found that occupation, size of land holding, type of house and sources of income are positively non-significant while gender, caste and actual family income are negatively non-significant.

**Table 3. Correlation among the independent variables and effectiveness of indigenous media**

Independent variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
Age	0.208*
Gender	-0.152
Caste	-0.156
Occupation	0.053
Education	0.243*
Land Holding	0.024
Type of House	0.168
Actual family Income	-0.110
Sources of Income	0.032
Mass Media Exposure	0.271**

\*\* = Significant at the 0.01 level probability (1%)

\* = Significant at the 0.05 level probability (5%)

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents found folk songs, folk dances, proverbs, festivals, fairs effective and suitable in their situation for dissemination of agricultural information. The findings above confirm the reality and value of indigenous communication to the local people. The role of traditional folk media on rural development is still viable, that traditional channels of communication such as drums, songs, dances, proverbs, and folktales are still effective in communicating agricultural messages. The findings have the potential to be highly useful to policymakers and development workers in bringing about desirable development in the rural areas. Thus, if the locally available resources are used wisely, traditional media can be extremely engaging and effective for agricultural extension work.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Bhalerao A.K.; Kumar, B.; Singha, A.K.; Jat, P.C.; Pasweth, A.M. and Deka, B.C. (2016). Agricultural folk songs of Assam, e-publication, ICAR-ATARI, Umiam, Meghalaya, India.
- Bilal (2018). Effectiveness of dramatization for creating awareness regarding safe use of pesticides, M.Sc. Thesis, Punjab Agril. University, Ludhiana, Punjab.
- Borgohain, P.N. (2011). Female dance tradition of Assam, Guwahati: *Purbanchal Prakash*, Guwahati.
- Chapke, R. and Rekha, B. (2006). Traditional folk media: A

Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu. 22 (4), October-December, 2022

potentially effective communication tool in rural areas. In *Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conf. of the Asso. of Intl. Agril. Ext. and Edu.. Florida. USA*, 123-133.

- Chauhan, J. and Singh, A.K. (2001). Use of communication sources by tribal dairy farmers—A study. *Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu*, 1(1) : 8-10.
- Das, S. (2013). Folk theatre- Its relevance in development communication in India. *Global Media J.-Indian Edition*, 4 (2) :1-10.
- Devi, U. and Verma, S. (2016). Farm women preferences of communication sources for farm information. *Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu*, 11(2), 15-19.
- Hmar, E.L. (2018). Traditional folk media: Its importance, awareness and attitude towards drug abuse among Hmar youth in DimaHasao district of Assam. *J. Global Commu.*, 11(1): 33-37.
- Kanwar, K. and Maheshwari, A. (2017). Utilization of folk art as involving theatre in communication programme in India. In *Proceeding of Intl. Conference on Communication, Culture and Media Studies (CCCMS)*, 2(2): 1-6.
- Lenka, S. and Satpathy, A. (2020). A study on indigenous technical knowledge of tribal farmers in agriculture and livestock sectors of Koraput district. *Indian J. Ext. Edu*, 56 (2): 66-69.
- Mishra, R. and Newme, K. (2015). Social communication and traditional folk media of the Zeme Naga society. *Global Media J.: Indian Edition*, 6 (1&2) : 1-15.
- Namdeo, M and Mishra O.P. (2005). Indigenous and Exogenous channels of communication in a tribal village. *Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu*, 5 (2&3): 59-61.
- Nooripoor, M.; Shahvali, M. and Zarafshani, K. (2008). Integration of communication media for horticultural sustainability: The application of multiple criteria decision making (MCDM), *American-Eurasian J. Agric. & Environ. Sci.*, 3 (1): 137-147.
- Padmanabha, K.V. and Kumar, S. (2020). Folk media for agricultural extension: A study of Yakshagana—A south Indian folk theatre. *Intl. J Advances in Social Sci. and Humanities*, 8(7):1-8.
- Siddarth, D.; Mukhopadhyaya, L. and Ramudurai, D. (2001). Farmers perception about the credibility of different channels for communicating farm information's. *Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu*, 1 (1) : 11-20.
- Singh, H. (2015). The folk drums of north-east: A versatile medium of socio-cultural communication of tribal and non-tribal communities. *Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu*, 15 (3) : 80-84.
- Singh, R. (1985). A study of effectiveness of traditional media for tribal development in Udaipur district. Ph.D. Thesis, Sukhadia University, Udaipur.