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Integrating Traditional Media And Community Radio
For Development Communication

By

M J R David,
Victor T Valbuena
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SEMINAR- WORKSHOP ON USING ENTERTAINMENT AND ADVERTISING FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION, SINGAPORE, 21-24 JANUARY 1991
INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND COMMUNITY RADIO FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

by

M.J.R. David 2) and Victor T. Valbuena 3)

The enthusiastic development communicator is always in search of new tools that will enable to carry out his or her task more effectively and efficiently. To such development communicator traditional folk media and community radio are fields that have much to offer.

This paper will focus on how these two community radio and folk media could be used as tools of development communication more. Specifically attention will be focused on the folk media adaptations of Mahaweli Community radio of Sri-Lanka.

Background: Community Radio and Folk Media.

In the recent past there has been considerable interest in using community radio as a tool to reach the grass roots. These

1) This paper is based on the study "Integration of folk media with mass media"; A study on Mahaweli Community Radio Folk Media Adaptations, Sri-Lanka, which was carried out with a research grant from the Natural Resources Energy and Scientific Authority of Sri-Lanka.

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Community radios are usually characterized by their low power and restricted audience. From the point of view of the development communicator community radio has many merits. It brings its listeners to close geographical and social proximity which in turn contributes towards close interaction between the source and the receiver. Cost-effectiveness is another advantage of community radio. It has been estimated that a typical community radio would cost something about US$ 200 to 2,000. (Stephens, 1989). A small staff who receive the support of local volunteers are sufficient to run the station. For the programme producer community radio provides an atmosphere where he or she could be spontaneous and flexible to the needs of the listeners.

Access and participation are the foundations of community radio and a community radio which is well integrated with the community becomes a forum where the community as well as the various development workers could have a two-way dialogue.

All these qualities provide the potential for community radio to achieve much more than national broadcast systems and makes community radio a tool which could make a significant and valuable contribution towards grass root development communication.

Putting the message across in an understandable and acceptable manner to the listener is a challenge which any community broadcaster has to face. In meeting this challenge the community broadcaster who is based in a rural setting could hardly afford to ignore the importance of folk media because folk media are
forms or channels of communication created by the folk and express folk idea, beliefs, values, aspirations and their life experiences. They are an integral part of the indigenous communication network. As Lent (1982) has pointed out.

"The media' experts have discovered what the peasants have known for centuries - the valuable contributions that grass root media are capable of making"

Community radio and folk media are very compatible because both of them are grass root media which could supplement and complement each other.

There are a number of characteristics which make folk media an immensely powerful tool of communication and a tool appropriate to the development communicator. First of all folk media is intimate with the masses. This closeness or familiarity creates positive feelings in what the audience heare when a message is conveyed in a folk media format.

Another advantage of folk media is that it is rich in variety and the development communicator has opportunity to select from a wide range.

Folk media is also cheap and readily available. When folk media is performed in the traditional setting there is an opportunity for face to face interaction and this interaction which allows the audience to provide instant feedback and evaluate the message is of significant importance in influencing change among a rural audience.

3
Folk media has the potential of reaching areas where modern mass media cannot reach sufficiently.

Considering mass media as elitist, urban oriented, alien and a tool of the powerful is a common feature of most Third World rural societies. This feeling among peasants results in a lack of credibility and the peasants in the rural peripheries are passive to the messages disseminated via mass media from the urban-elitist centers. This passiveness has a negative impact on the whole national development process and keeps the rural sector in isolation. If national development goals are to be achieved, the rural masses should be reached effectively and the communication gap between the urban elite oriented mass media and the rural sector has to be bridged - if not eliminated. In finding ways and means to bridge this gap and wiping out the stigma of being urban and elite oriented, mass media has much to draw from folk media.

The integration of folk media with mass media is important because folk media has existed for ages among the peasantry and it has become a trustworthy medium to the rural peasant. It is their own medium of expressing their deeply felt and communal joys and sorrows, triumphs and defeats, and the symbols presented are readily intelligible to them (Dissanayake, 1977).

Dissanayake (1977) further points out that:

"It is important to remind ourselves that they (folk media) are not mere quaint relics of the past but vigorously active and highly functional cultural institutions performing functions vital to the wellbeing of society. They provide entertainment, disseminate information, inculcate socially accepted norms and values and perform a general socializing function".

It is clear that folk media is not to be a museum showpiece,
but it is enduring and a dynamic tool which could be put to the use to facilitating development. As Coseteng and Nemenzo (1975; 19) point out:

"It is this dynamic element of folk media which could be preferably harnessed through proper research, management and understanding for social change and development."

It should be cautioned that folk media has its limitations and it becomes a powerful tool of communication when only handled with sympathy and care (Rangnath, 1975). Neither is it a cure all. Folk media can be effective as a tool of development communication only if the structural and institutional context stays favourable for development.

Not all folk media could be adapted for development communication purposes. Neither is every form fit to be adopted to mass media. The development communicator should be able to select the correct form that would fit the message he has to put across. Anyone venturing to make use of the folk media for communication should guard against overloading a folk media form with messages. If a folk media form is overloaded, it would lose meaning.

In the integration of folk media with mass media the producer should be careful of the technical aspects of media. For instance, a visual folk media form may be unsuitable for radio as radio is an oral medium.

As any other medium of communication, folk media has its limitations. To a certain extent these limitations could be overcome by careful thought but in the case of certain limitations the development communicator will have to accept a given
form of folk media with its limitations. Identifying these limitations and acting accordingly is most appropriate.

Mahaweli Community Radio (MCR)

The Mahaweli community radio is a component of the Sri-Lanka Broadcasting cooperation and it was set up with the assistance of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Danish International Development Authority (DANIDA). Its prime objective was:

"To produce and broadcast radio programmes for the new settlers under the Accelerated Mahaweli Development scheme and other villages in the area to speed up the socio-economic development of these communities" (MCR, 1986).

The MCR presently feeds programmes to three regional stations in Kandy Anuradapura and Matara. It has two local community radio stations located at Mahaweli system 'c' at Girandurukotte and in the upper Mahaweli area at Kotmale.

The Study: Folk Media Adaptations of Mahaweli Community Radio

Finding out how efficient and effective is folk media when integrated with radio to carry development oriented message to the rural masses is the main research problem. Several research problems associated with this problem were dealt with. The other research problems were the following:

Rural people may prefer folk media as a form of entertainment, but would they prefer folk media forms being used as instruments for facilitating development?
When folk media forms are adapted for radio, could they make a considerable impact? In other words, is the exercise of integrating folk media with mass media worthwhile?

What are the correlations between responsiveness to folk media adaptations on radio and the socio-demographic characteristics of the audience?

What folk media forms could be adapted for radio? Once a folk media form is selected, how could it be adapted to radio? What are the problems faced with doing so?

Objectives

The prime objective of this research is to study Sri-Lankan folk media and its adaptability for development communication purpose. Specifically the study aims at:

(i) Evaluating and analyzing the impact of folk media adaptations produced and broadcast by the community radio service of the Sri-Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

(ii) Developing folk media adaptation formats suitable for development communication purposes.

Scope and Field of Study

This study was carried out within the period of January 1988 to December 1989. Three community radio folk media adaptation programmes were studied. They are the "Thovil" folk ritual adaptation which was adapted as "Kankariya" and broadcast over the community radio programmes of the regional radio station of Kandy, the adaptation of "Kavikolaya" and the "Sokari" folk drama...
adaptation which were broadcast over Girandurukotte community radio.

The "Kankariya" adaptation was studied in eight villages close to Kandy. All villages had clear reception of the programmes broadcast by the Kandy regional radio station. The villages could be classified as traditional Kandyan villages. All villages were within the ten miles radius of Kandy town. Although the villages were close to the town, symbols of traditional life style such as close kinship ties, and strong caste affiliations could be observed.

The "Kavikolaya" and the "Sokari" folk drama adoptions were studied at Mahaweli System 'C' - a newly developing human settlement which comes under the Mahaweli Development programme. In fact, the study of the "Kavikolaya" was part of another study which was carried out within the same period by the researcher (David, 1988). The questions relevant to the "Kavikolaya" were added to the questionnaire of this study which also focused on the impact of Girandurukotte Community Radio (Please see map in appendix).

2.3. Methodology

This study used a combination of research methods and took a multi method approach.

The response to the "Kankariya" was studied through a structured questionnaire. In addition to this, the programme scripts
and letters received by the programme were analyzed. Within the period of study requests were made on radio for the listeners to send in their responses to the "Kankariya" programme. In certain cases the researcher had the opportunity of interviewing the script writers of the programme. Performers of the "Thovil" ritual were interviewed and observations were made by witnessing the performance of the ritual.

The "Kavikolaya" was studied through the survey design and by analyzing the content of the programme. In the course of the study the persons who wrote the "Kavikolaya" as well as those who were affected by it were interviewed.

The response to the "sokari" adaptation was studied through the focused group interview technique. As this adaptation was mainly carried out for this study, data was collected from the initial stages. The base line data was collected through a questionnaire. In the course of production, formative research methods were used to evaluate the programme. Part of this formative research techniques were interactions with key informants such as traditional "Sokari" performers, extension workers, subject matter specialist, and radio programme producers.

The experience gained as a producer engaged in producing the "Thovil" adaption of "Kankariya", the "Sokari" adaption, and that of the "Kavikolaya" also served as a source of data.
Sample

The sample for the study on the "Thovil" adaption of the "Kankariya" comprised of one hundred respondents. The study locations and respondents were selected at random.

In the case of the "Kavikolaya" a sample of two hundred respondents was studied. The study locations had been studied earlier for other community radio studies (Dayaratna, 1985; David, 1986). The respondents were selected at random.

The survey for the study on the "Sokari" adaption was carried out at similar locations where the "Kavikolaya" was studied, but the sample differed. At the preliminary investigation stage, fifty respondents were studied, and later, once the programme was produced, another sample of fifty respondents was studied. In both instances respondents were selected at random.

Adaptation of "Thovil" for Radio

The "Thovil" ritual is mainly performed in the Southern part of Sri Lanka. It is a traditional ritual which is performed to chase away the demons who have harmful effects on people. In the course of the "Thovil" ritual there is cross talk between the "Gurunansay" (Master of ceremonies who conducts the ritual) and the drummer. The main feature of the radio adaption is this cross talk.

The "Thovil" has several characters which makes it suitable for adaption. First of all it is well known all through out the...
country. Although the "Thovil" ritual is related to religious beliefs there is opportunity to introduce new content because in its original form itself there is room for flexibility.

It also seems that when a folk media is connected to demons and people it is much more flexible rather than when it is directly connected with the Gods.

2.5.1. Mode of adaptation of "Tovil"

The prime objective of the "Tovil" adaptation is to highlight the various social ills and weakness that prevail in rural society. In the adaptation social evils have been symbolized as demons.

The usual plot is that the "Gurunansay" is getting ready for a performance with his drummer (Golaya) and just before getting into performing the ritual proper they get engaged in a dialogue. This dialogue revolves around a specific weakness found in the rural society. The "Gurunansay" is a knowledgeable person and he is aware of the steps that should be taken to eradicate the problem. In most instances, the drummer represents the popular thinking of the rural mass. The drummer accepts the words or advice given by the "Gurunansay". However, the drummer does not accept all the advice uncritically. At times he has heated arguments with the "Gurunansay".

In most instances the present situation of a problem is brought into discussion from the drummer's (rural mass) point of
view and the desired situation is brought into the discussion from the "Gurunansay"'s (Producer/script writer) point of view. However, at the end of the discussion both of them arrive at a mutual understanding through continuous interaction. On the basis of this mutual understanding they come to a mutual agreement and they propose ways and means as to how the gap between the desired situation and the existing situation could be bridged.

The scripts for the programme are sent in by the listeners themselves.

"Kankariya" Content

In the course of present study all the thirty nine "Kankary" programme scripts used for broadcast in the year 1988 at the regional service of Kandy was analyzed.

The programmes covered a wide range of themes. The majority (fifteen percent) highlighted social evils. The number of programmes that tried to transfer new knowledge and practices were less in number.

The programme scripts were sent in by the listeners and the scripts had been used without much editing or censoring. The programme received an average of two to four scripts per week. In some instances, folk verse, folk stories, and proverbs had been used. In all programmes had used double meaning words and words popular among urban cliques. As a whole, the language used was a blend between the traditional village usage and contemporary urban usage. English words such as "support", "upset" and "prob-
"Problem" were used frequently.

Discussing a theme from several viewpoints was a common feature. In most cases, the main performer "Gurunansay" speaks for the ideal situation, while the drummer speaks about the actual situation. The discussion revolves around the causes that create this gap and steps that could be taken to bridge the gap. For instance, the programme that discussed the weakness of borrowing something and not returning it on time stressed the importance of returning what is borrowed on time, as well as the need to compensate for errors that could happen due to human nature.

It is evident from the scripts that the programme had been of a satirical nature, the message is couched in humor. This enables the producers to deal with controversial issues in a manner that would not cause much friction.

All programmes had received letters in response to an earlier week's programme. The listeners had given reasons for their response. A programme had received an average of five to fifteen letters. In certain cases, the listeners responded by writing a "Kankariya" script in reply to a "Kankariya" broadcast the previous week. For instance, the "Kankariya" which criticized school teachers had been answered in the form of a "Kankariya" written by a school teacher.
The impact of the "Kankariya" Programme

The programme received a high rating in regard to listenership. All respondents listened to the programme. However, frequency of listening differed, only twenty six percent listened to it on weekly basis. There were thirty seven percent who listened once a month while the rest listened at random.

The respondents were requested to respond to ten questions which related to the acceptability and impact of "Kankariya" programme. The responses were rated according to a score system in which a respondent with a very positive response could get a maximum score of forty and a respondent with a very negative response could get a zero. The average score of the sample was 29.76 as a percentage this is 74.8. This evidence supports the hypothesis that folk media adaptations on radio are popular among rural listeners and that they could have a significant impact on the listeners.

In respect to programme preference half of the sample (fifty-one percent) liked the programme very much. They were in favour of all programmes. There were thirty nine percent who preferred certain programmes, five percent were not certain, and there were another five percent who disliked the programme.

The main reason given for liking the programme was the critical nature of the programme. Many described the programme as "Asaadaranayata hondatata pahara gahana vada satahanak" (A programme that cracks the whip at social injustice). As broadcasting is a state monopoly in Sri-Lanka, there are very few programmes
that deal with controversial matters from a critical point of view. The popularity of "Kankariya" proves that when the social forces related to an issue are critically discussed, the possibility of such programme being popular is higher than merely advising the listener on what to do and what not to.

The majority of the respondents agreed that rituals such as "Thovil" could not only be used for ritualistic purposes but they could also be used to discuss themes of contemporary importance.

There was diversity of opinion on what should be integrated into the programme. There were two main suggestions. One group said that the "Kankariya" should be used to reinforce traditional values. The others were of the opinion that the programme should be used to highlight instances of social injustice and issues of a more contemporary nature. For the success of the programme a balance between these suggestions has to be struck.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (at the significance level of 0.5 percent) was used to find the correlations between the scores and age, income and education. It became evident that there was no significant correlation between the scores and these variables. It indicates that the "Kankariya" programme can be both efficient and effective regardless of the socio-demographic back ground of the respondent.

In a nutshell the "Kankariya" has been able to take an alternative approach by way of format and content endorse that this alternative approach is effective and efficient in reaching the rural masses and influencing their way of thinking.
Adaptation of the "Kavikolaya" to Radio

The "Kavikolaya" (verse sheet) was adapted to radio and has been broadcast over Girandurukotte Community Radio since 1986.

The "Kavikolaya" (verse sheet) which is a presentation of events in verse has been in existence among the rural folk for a long time. The "Kavikolaya" is printed in to a pamphlet and it is recited in a loud voice. Once the interest of the audience is aroused people tend to buy a "Kavikolaya" most compositions feature sensational issues such as suicide, homicide, theft, rape, etc.

All aspects of the Girandurukotte community radio, "Kavikolaya" are mainly handled by the settlers themselves. It is written and presented by the settlers. Some settlers send the "Kavikolaya" in the finished form - verse - while the others call at the radio station and tell their story to the producer or mail their story in prose form. The majority of the "Kavikolayas" were in verse, and they were written by the listeners themselves.

The "Kavikolaya" refers to actual incidents and characters, but fictitious names are used. In most cases the listeners in close vicinity could guess and figure out to whom the "Kavikolaya" is referring to.

The "Kavikolaya" is a very flexible folk media. Almost any subject matter could be incorporated. the "Kavikolaya" is also a folk media which the majority could participate in because it does not require a high level of vocal or writing skills. Most of
the listeners are able to write and present a "Kavikolaya".

At G.C.R. the "Kavikolaya" was the most appropriate folk medium to be adopted to report events in a manner that would lead to social control. First, traditionally the "kavikolaya" has been a folk medium that has been used to report social deviance. At G.C.R. the "kavikolaya" was used for the same purpose. Secondly, as the writing and presentation of "Kavikolaya" did not require sophisticated skills the audience with a comparatively low level of education could participate in the programme actively. Thirdly, there was a need for such programmes because as a local community radio, it is the responsibility of G.C.R. to open up channels for listeners to voice their opinion and contribute towards social justice. The "kavikolaya" was a most appropriate tool of achieving this objective. Everyone could be provided with an equal opportunity to write a "Kavikolaya" and on the other hand censorship could be minimized because fictitious names of people and places were used; and this helped to reduce any friction that could be caused within the community.

Mode of Adaptation of "Kavikolaya"

The adaptation of the "Kavikolaya" is an example where certain folk media could be used in mass media in its original form. The only difference between traditional "Kavikolaya" and the "Kavikolaya" presented at G.C.R. is the medium of presentation. In the first instance interpersonal and print media was used, and in the second radio has been used.
The Content of "Kavikolaya"

The "Kavikolaya" broadcast from 1986 April to December 1988 were analyzed. Within this period of thirty-two months, over five hundred "Kavikolayas" had been broadcasted. A twenty-five percent sample was selected at random and analyzed. The content of the sample was as follows:

Table 1. Content of the Kavikolaya (1986-1988)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Deviant behavior of officers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Deviant sexual behavior</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family problems</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lack of common facilities in the villages</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unfavorable side of liquor consumption</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ingratitude of parents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Theft</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Shortcomings of neighbours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Killing of animals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Advice in common</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Destruction of forest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Non use of toilets</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Criticism on &quot;Kavikolaya&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most number of "Kavikolaya" has been on the deviant behavior of the official. The Mahaweli officials exercise a fair degree of power over the settlers. As land and water which are the main resources of the area are directly controlled by the Mahaweli official the settlers have to depend to a great extent on the services of the official. It seems that the "kavikolaya" has been used to maintain a balance of power between the settlers and official.

In an environment where the people are from different geographical areas and with diverse cultural and social backgrounds there is always the possibility of social disorganization. Anomaly could be defined as a situation in which a large number of persons lack integration with stable institutions to the extent that they are left rootless and normless (Durkheim, 1951). Such anomie situation has been identified in the study area: Mahaweli System 'C' (Silva and Pushpakumar, 1989). As a result of this anomie situation the suicide rate is very high in the area. According to the above mentioned study the prime reason for suicide is sexual anomie. As the study further pointed out that there was a high degree of promiscuity, and that this leads to problems such as unwanted pregnancies, unmarried mothers and disintegration of families. This situation is very clearly reflected in the "Kavikolaya". In fact, the most number of "Kavikolaya" received have been on sexual deviances. Most of these have not been broadcast due to their very intimate nature.
The Impact of the "Kavikolaya"

The "Kavikolaya" was the most popular programme of G.C.R. It was ranked first among fifteen other G.C.R. programmes. A similar situation existed at the time of the study of 1986 (David). The popularity of the "Kavikolaya" is further proved by thirty two percent of the sample naming it as their first preference.

All respondents were aware that the programme was being broadcast and that they had access to it.

A majority of the respondents (Eighty four percent) perceived the "kavikolaya" as an useful programme. The reasons given for perceiving it as an useful programme is as follows:

Table 2. Reasons for Perceiving the Kavikolaya as an useful programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It controls deviants</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It provides information</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It provides an opportunity to speak about injustice</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It promotes values</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a useful programme</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that the "Kavikolaya" has become popular because of its impact on the community as an informal device of social control and the sensational nature of information which it provides. The social power which the programme bestows on the listeners is also a reason for its popularity.

The sixteen percent who thought that the "Kavikolaya" was not useful were mainly with the idea that this programme arouses animosities among the settlers. Certain respondents commented that the "Kavikolaya" has become a forum for people to take revenge from each other and as a result, the programme has done more harm than good.

The findings reveal that the majority treat the "Kavikolaya" as an impartial programme. About sixty percent of the respondents stated that deviant behavior is pointed out without a bias of factors such as status, power, or social class. About eleven percent were of the opinion that the "Kavikolaya" was presented with a bias. The majority within this sixteen percent were of the idea that when the officers of the Mahaweli administration are concerned, the G.C.R. safeguards them. However, this is not very correct, because the content of the "Kavikolaya" proves that most (sixteen percent) number of "Kavikolaya" has been on the deviant behavior of the official.

The respondents were aware of the limitations of the "kavikolaya" as a device of informal social control. In other words, they were aware that the "Kavikolaya" could not be used at all times. Asked "if a person in your unit is utilizing water in an
illegal manner, what course of action would you take?", only three percent said that they would write a "Kavikolaya" as the first course of action. Informing the unit manager was mentioned as the first course of action by seventy percent, while nine percent said that they would first speak to the deviant and try to convince him not to do so.

In comparison to the role of the authorities and interpersonal interactions an informal device of social control on mass media such as the "Kavikolaya" has a limited role to play. The respondents have been able to understand this limitation and realistically assess the impact of the "kavikolaya". That is why only three percent mentioned it as the first course of action they would take. This dismisses the allegation that the "kavikolaya" is reason for arousing animosities among settlers. The respondents do not identify the "Kavikolaya" as a channel which should be used to settle differences among individuals, rather, they perceived the "kavikolaya" as a channel that discusses topics of common interest. This sentiment is confirmed by the letters addressed to the "Kavikola Karaya" (Host).

The Impact of the Kavikolaya

The possible impact as well as the actual impact of the "Kavikolaya" was studied. The possible impact was studied by asking the respond about an hypothetical situation, They were asked.

"If an influential person in your unit utilizes water illegally, do you think that he will stop this practice after it is
highlighted by the "Kavikolaya?"

The response could be categorized in the following manner:

A. **Positive** (forty percent)
   
   **Yes** - The deviant will stop his deviant behavior because he will be put the same.

B. **Neutral** (thirty eight percent)
   
   **Maybe** - If the deviant is a person who is very sensitive to collective conscience he may stop. However, the significant factor which controls deviant behavior is not the "Kavikolaya" but the characteristics of the deviant.

C. **Negative** (twenty two percent)
   
   **No** - A "Kavikolaya" is not capable of controlling such deviant behavior. Formal social control devices such as law enforcement is needed to stop such acts.

It is evident from the above data that the "Kavikolaya" has been perceived as a programme with the potential of controlling and influencing social behavior.

In relevance to actual impact it was not possible to find out what was the end result of every "Kavikolaya". Neither was it possible to study a methodically selected sample. However, within the period of study several cases that had an actual impact were reported. According to these reports the degree of impact ranges from completely stopping the deviant behavior to just ignoring the "Kavikolaya". The various cases reported could be categorized as follows (Names of people and places have been withheld).
A. Deviant Behavior Completely Stops

As a result of the "Kavikolaya" deviant behavior could completely stop because of the pressure brought on the deviant from the "Kavikolaya". A father of four children had an illicit love affair with a woman in a neighboring village. When his wife came to know about this she quarreled with her husband and accused him of not looking after her and the children. A few weeks later there was a "Kavikolaya" on G.C.R. The "Kavikolaya" was sent by a relative of the woman with whom the man was having an illicit affair. The "Kavikolaya" stressed the point that supporting the wife and children was the prime responsibility of a father. Once the "Kavikolaya" was broadcast, an elderly relative of the man advised him that if he continues his illicit affair it would cause further problems for himself as well as for his family. The man accepted the advice and completely stopped the affair.

B. Deviant Behavior Stops Temporarily

There are instances where the "Kavikolaya" makes an immediate impact and after a certain time the effect fades away and the deviant behavior continues. There was a "Kavikolaya" on the shortcomings of the teachers of a certain school. Once the "Kavikolaya" was broadcast, the Principal summoned a meeting and steps were taken to remedy the shortcomings such as teachers not reporting for work on time, but as time passed by there were "kavikolaya" complaining that the teachers' attendance was not adequate.

C. Charges are Investigated

The allegations against the deviant are investigated into. Especially in the case of government officials the heads of the institutions have carried out investigations on the charges made against their employees.

There was a "Kavikolaya" that a Grama Sevaka (village level administration officer) was not distributing government welfare and to the villagers who should receive them and that he was selling this welfare aid to the traders in the village. On hearing the "Kavikolaya" the Assistant Government Agent of the area requested for further information from G.C.R. and an inquiry was held.

D. The Accused Persons Defended Themselves

Although fictitious names of people and places are
used, in certain instances people have come up and said that the "Kavikolaya" has been referring to them and what has been said about them is not correct.

In the "Kavikolaya" a son was accused of not looking after his aged father. The son wrote back saying that this was not correct and what really happened was that the father refused to take any help from the son.

In certain instances where the accused defended themselves, the G.C.R. has had to apologize.

E. The "Kavikolaya" Has Brought Pressure on the Authorities Concerned

Once the "Kavikolaya" highlights deviant behavior, the listeners write back to G.C.R. blaming the authorities for not enforcing the formal devices of social control such as enforcement of the law. This often happens when illicit brewing of alcoholic beverages in the villages is highlighted through the "Kavikolaya". The listeners blame the police for not taking appropriate action. On the other hand, the widespread illicit brewing of alcohol indicates the inefficiency of the police.

F. The "Kavikolaya" is Completely Ignored

There are instances where the "Kavikolaya" has been completely ignored by the deviant. In most cases where the deviant is very powerful, this could happen.

In a certain unit a farmer wrote a "Kavikolaya" that the Mahaweli Unit Manager was up to certain corrupt practices and did not provide him with adequate irrigation facilities. Once the "kavikolaya" was broadcast, the officer told the farmers of that unit that he does not care for such criticisms and he continued with his corrupt practices.

It is evident from the above instances that the impact each "Kavikolaya" could make differs from case to case. There are a number of interrelated factors. The attitude of the deviant, the social, economic and political power the deviant has, the nature of the problem, the degree a "Kavikolaya" could be identified with a certain person or institution are among the factors that significantly influence the actual impact of the "Kavikolaya".
It is evident from the above data that the "Kavikolaya" has been successful as an informal device of social control. The important point is that the "Kavikolaya" has been able to provide a settlers device of social control which they themselves could operate. The "Kavikolaya" has been a programme that has generated a two way communication process, rather than merely providing advice on radio. However, it should be noted that sustaining a programme such as the "Kavikolaya" is no easy task. It was observed that at certain instances the "Kavikolaya" has been temporarily suspended due to pressure from the various groups and for other reasons which are not very clear.

Generating a dialogue which is close to the realities of the listenership is a challenging task for any local community radio.

Adaptation of "Sokari" for Radio

"Sokari" is one of the most famous folk drama styles of Sri-Lanka. It is widely practiced in the Central, North Central and Uva Provinces.

As a result of the preliminary investigations made in this study it was decided to produce a series of radio dramas based on the "Sokari" drama style.

The objective of this production was to gain an understanding on how a folk media form should be adopted for radio for development communication purpose. Studying the impact and acceptability of the production was another objective.
The Sokari plot evolves around a couple and their attendant who migrated from India to Sri-Lanka to seek help of a God (Katharagama) to have a child as well as to make a living. Sokari is a beautiful women with questionable character. Gurunamy is portrayed as a lovable husband and Paraya is the mishivious comedian. The ups and downs in family life are discussed in a very witty manner and finally now Sokari is blessed with a child is enacted in this play.

There were several reasons to select the Sokari adaptation. It was a very simple and flexible which could be performed without sophisticated skills.

As "Sokari" is a flexible drama style, there was much opportunity to interpret the original story in a manner that would accommodate contemporary themes.

Another reason to select "Sokari" for adaptation was its familiarity with the audience. It was hypothesized that when a folk media form familiar to the audience is used to carry new messages, there is a possibility of the impact being higher than when an unfamiliar folk media form is used. As the production was to be carried out at the local community radio station at Girandurukotte and the artists were to be selected from the area itself, the audience being familiar to "Sokari" was an advantage. Otherwise, there would have been problems in finding artists.

Mode of Adaptation of "Sokari"

Once it was found out that the "Sokari" drama style is
flexible, familiar to the audience, and easy to produce, several other aspects were investigated. These aspects were investigated with the objective of finding out what messages could be incorporated into the programme.

Data needed for message formulation was collected through a structured questionnaire. Respondents were selected at random. Most of these respondents were artists who called in at the community radio station for other purposes and settlers who were met at field visits by the researcher. The questionnaire was administered to fifty respondents, and in addition to this, interviews were made with "Sokari" performers of the area.

The main findings of the investigations were the following:

A. Everyone was familiar with the "Sokari" folk drama.
   Thirty eight percent of the sample had watched a "Sokari" performance once or more than once.

B. A majority were in favor of adapting "Sokari" into a new drama format to carry development oriented message. However, twelve percent resisted the idea. All these respondents were from the upper age group (40-60). Some of them had participated in performing "Sokari". The ones who resisted the idea of adoption were of the opinion that such an act would annoy the deities. However, it was not difficult to convince these people of the advantages of adaptation of "Sokari". Some of them even volunteered to give the scripts they had with them.
C. Most of the respondents were willing to participate in this project by writing scripts, performing, and organizing field recordings in their units.

D. It was evident that most of the respondents perceived the "Sokari" adaptation on radio could have a ritualistic effect on the audience as an actual "Sokari" performance.

E. The respondents were requested to suggest themes that should be incorporated in the "Sokari" adaptation. The main themes suggested by the respondents in provisional order is as follows:

   (i) Land and irrigation problems
   (ii) Social ills e.g. Alcoholism, deviant sexual behavior etc.
   (iii) Shortcomings of officials and government institutions.
   (iv) Agricultural practices
   (v) Health problems e.g. Malaria, malnutrition.

It is evident that the respondents thought that a variety of subjects could be introduced to the adoption. It is also clear from the suggested themes and interviews conducted that the listeners wanted a drama which would be a social commentary. They needed a forum where their problems could be discussed. On the basis of the findings of this investigation it was decided that the drama should attempt to disseminate new knowledge with due consideration to the surrounding socio-economic realities. The
social forces underlying the subject discussed were to be highlighted.

It was decided that while attempting to inform the settlers of improved ways and means of uplifting their standard of life, they should have an opportunity to tell their side of the story.

In order to ensure that all topics are discussed from a broad perspective, when subject matters for the scripts were collected, all parties concerned were consulted. For instance, for the programme on mortgaging the paddy field to the money lender, several parties were consulted. They included the Agricultural officer, money lenders who take the paddy fields on lease, housewives and farmers who mortgage their land, as well as those who do not. One important finding was that a patron-client relationship existed among the money lenders and the farmers who mortgaged their paddy fields. In certain cases the farmers benefited from this patron-client relationship. It was decided not to be harsh on the money lenders. Criticizing the money lenders was pointless. It was decided not to point out the disadvantages of mortgaging the paddy fields and discuss ways and means by which the farmer could avoid such a situation.

Prior to preparing the scripts the prevailing situation of services available to the listeners was also looked into. For instance, before producing the programme on Malaria, it was verified whether the tablets given for Malaria were available at the local hospital. Once it was confirmed that the tablets were available, the message that you should be regular in taking the
malaria prevention tablets was added to the programme. As Ranganath (1980: 21) says:

"A communication programme using folk entertainment, like every other development oriented communication programme must function in close co-ordination with actual development services, possibilities and institutions."

After discussion with the script writers and fellow media practitioners there emerged three options on how to develop the new plot.

A. The traditional “Sokari” story could be narrated in drama form and the messages could be introduced in between the narration. New situations would have to be created to accommodate the messages.

B. The traditional “Sokari” drama could be mixed with other folk media forms. The characters of the “Sokari” folk drama could discuss the message with other characters in folk lore. For example, the “Sokari” characters could interact with the characters such as “Mahadana Muttha” and “Andare”, who are characters in Sinnala folk lore.

C. Only the essence of the traditional “Sokari” could be taken and a new plot could be created. For instance, two or three characters and certain selected incidents of the traditional “Sokari” drama could set the agenda to discuss the message.

The third option of taking only the essence of “Sokari” and developing a new plot was selected because it was thought that this method would bring about more flexibility and provide an opportunity to introduce a variety of message. On the other hand
if there were to be any resistance from the audience; because a traditional ritualistic folk drama has been used for other purposes, this resistance could be minimized, as the original form would be referred to only indirectly.

The next problem encountered was how to create a new plot. It was decided that Paraya the servant of Sokari should play a key role. As Paraya is considered a clown, there was a high level of flexibility in this character. Paraya's role was developed in a manner that he could comment on issues of contemporary relevance and give advice on subject matter. However, as earlier experience had proved, that if the clown was too much of a joker, the audience would miss the message, or not take it seriously. It is obvious that a listener will be reluctant to take serious advice from a clown. This has been proved by an experiment carried out in India. Ranganath (1976) says that in the Indian folk drama "Yakshgana" the jester enjoys freedom to pass comments on issues of contemporary relevance. Although the people enjoyed the performance, they missed the jester's message, or took a negative attitude to the message, because it came from a joking jester. After years of experiments, the project was a success when the jester assumed the role of a critic of unyielding ideas. To the "Sokari" adoption Paraya was portrayed as a humorous character but who was knowledgeable and critical. The character in the adoption was named as Paraya junior (Punchi Paraya).

The other leading character was a newly created one. This character was named as "Dukgannarala" (Caretaker). This character
was develop as a character who is interested in the welfare of the settlers. He is a wise and mature person who is sympathetic towards the settler. Dukgannarala is impartial and he moderates the discussions. This character is well versed with the traditional "Sokari" narrative and refers to it when needed.

Active participation is a prerequisite for development communication programmes which aim to transfer knowledge, bring about new attitudes and practices. In this instance there were several options. The audience was requested to write scripts, participate as radio artists and send in feedback by way of letters and cassettes. However, if not for the disturbed situation prevailing in the area at the time of production, the recordings could have been carried out in the field, and there could have been opportunities for the audience to actively participate to a greater extent. It was planned to have a street drama group which comprised of the settlers themselves.

Response and impact to the Sokari Adaptation

The main objective of assessing the impact of the programme was to find out whether the respondents got the message or not, and whether they agreed with it. As the programme did not emphasize transferring subject knowledge a pre-test and post-test to determine knowledge gain was not made. Instead, an interview schedule with open-ended questions were used to find out the response to the messages.

At the stage of preliminary investigation it was found out that the respondents had sufficient knowledge on related subject
matter. The main problem was the gap between knowledge and practice. As the programme series attempted to proposed a course of action that would bridge this gap between knowledge and practice, it was important to find out whether the respondents agreed with the programme on Malaria.

The main message in the programme on Malaria was that Malaria is dangerous and that it should be prevented. The need for taking the dose of Malaria tablets continuously was stressed. In addition to this, the measures listeners could take to control Malaria were mentioned.

All respondents liked the programme. The reasons for liking the programme differed. The main reasons for liking the programme were as follows:

Table 3. Reason for Liking the Programme on Malaria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (N=50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message/Information</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment and message</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sokari style being used</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed relevant theme</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
is evident from the above that the respondents liked the drama mainly for its message. The message being sandwiched in a familiar format has also contributed to the popularity of the programme. The respondents have not treated the programme as a drama episode that merely brings entertainment. Except for the eighteen percent who have liked the programme for its entertainment value, the rest have been interested in the message.

Except for the two respondents every one else had learnt more than one message. The message learnt and the programme frequencies mentioned are as follows:

Table 4. Messages Learnt from Programme on Malaria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MESSAGES LEARNT</th>
<th>FREQUENCY MENTIONED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Anopheles Mosquito spreads Malaria by sucking blood</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Malaria tablets should be taken continuously as prescribed</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. People should get their homes sprayed with Insecticide to control Malaria</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. People should get their compounds cleaned to control Malaria</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>124</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above data the programme has been successful in getting the message across.

There was a high degree of agreement on the point that
Malaria tablets should be taken continuously as prescribed. The majority of the respondents believed in the Hot-Cold classification of food and medicine as heaty. This is the main reason for them to discontinue taking the Malaria tablets without taking the prescribed course completely. It was believed that as Malaria tablets are heaty, they have harmful side effects. The programme explained that this is not true, and that Malaria tablets have been medically tested for the side effects and prescribed safe to take. Sixty percent of the respondents agreed with this argument, twenty six percent wanted further clarification and fourteen percent totally disagreed.

Almost everyone agreed that keeping the household and compound free of places where mosquitoes could breed was important.

A majority of the respondents were critical about the proposal that they should assist the officers of the Anti Malaria Campaign who visit the houses to spray Malaria control insecticides. About fifty two percent had various complaints. The most frequent complaint was that the smell of this insecticide could not be tolerated. There were others who complained that the officials of the Anti Malaria Campaign did not visit their houses for spraying frequently. It seems that there is a need for an information campaign that would create a further dialogue on the role of the Anti Malaria Campaign.

The degree of self involvement with this programme was high. The majority of the respondents had suggestions that would be useful to control and prevent Malaria. Some respondents suggested
various indigenous methods to control mosquitoes. One respondent suggested that the Mahaweli Authority should take steps to provide the settlers with mosquito net at an affordable price. (In the neighbouring Mahaweli System 'B' mosquito net sewing has been introduced as a cottage industry).

In comparison with other messages the message on how Malaria develops within the human body was a bit complicated. Only two respondents were able to grasp this message completely. Both of them were students. However, thirty percent were able to vaguely describe the process. The majority of the sample were not able to remember the message.

This programme has been successful in two aspects. Firstly it has been able to get across the main message to the audience. Secondly it has been able to generate a discussion among the audience. A majority of the respondents have agreed to the proposals made by the programme to control and prevent Malaria. Although the respondents did not unanimously agree with all the proposals made by the programme, they were willing to further discuss them.

Programme on Water Distribution

The programme on water distribution focussed on the misuse of irrigated water. The main causes cited for the misuse of water were the illicit utilization of water by farmers, inadequacies of knowledge on how to use water efficiently, and the lack of co-operation among farmers. Forming an active farmer organization
which would take care of the distribution of irrigated water was proposed as a solution to the problem.

Except for ten percent of the sample, the rest liked the programme. The ten percent who did not like the programme were farmers who were of the opinion that farmer organizations were not a solution to the problem. Three of them (six percent) were farmers who were at the tail end of the canal and they had serious water shortages. They were of the opinion that being a member of a farmer organization was no solution to the problem. The reasons for liking the programme were given as follows:

Table 5. Reasons for Liking the Programme on Distribution of Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (N=50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message/Information</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment &amp; message</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because Sokari style was used</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed relevant theme</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disliked the programme</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in the case of the programme on Malaria, the listeners have been more interested in the message.
Most respondents were able to mention more than one message. The majority of the farmers agreed with the idea that there should be efficient farmer organizations to distribute water. About seventy-two percent were of the opinion that farmer organizations could solve many problems in regard to distribution of water. There were another eighteen percent who were doubtful whether farmer organizations could make a valuable contribution towards solving problems relevant to water distribution. Ten percent of the respondents were very critical on the proposal of forming farmer organizations. Most of the respondents who were opposed to the idea of farmer organizations were of the opinion that the influential farmers would take a hold of such organization, and they would enjoy undue advantages. They cited earlier experiences where farmer organizations had failed. However, there were several respondents who made suggestions how farmer organizations could function effectively.

The used for more information on water management could be identified. Asked whether "Would you like more information on water management?" the majority of the respondents (sixty percent) were willing to learn more about water management. Most of those who were willing to do so were males.

Although there was reluctance among the females to learn more about water management, they participated enthusiastically in both listening and responding to the programme. It was evident that the self involvement in this programme was very high. Except for the ten percent of the respondents who were not interested in
farmer organizations, the rest were willing to play an active role in forming farmer organizations.

The exercise of adaptation Sokari for community radio demonstrates that narrow casting channels such as community radio could successfully adapt folk media to radio in a manner that would generate a lively dialogue among its listeners. As the audience zone of a community radio is small, it could deal with a specific topic in depth. In other words, the minute details and the finer dynamics which are often missed or ignored could be discussed in these folk media programmes. Discussing these finer points creates a greater opportunity to disseminate knowledge more effectively and efficiently, as well as to solve problems of a community in a manner that the members think is most appropriate.

The Sokari format provides an appropriate format for a two-way communication exercise. Such two-way communication may be a starting point for a process that would bridge the gap between the actual situation and a desired situation.

3. Concluding Considerations

As a whole, all three folk media adaptations have been effective and efficient. They have been able to attract the attention of the rural listenership, the messages presented have been accepted; or even if not totally accepted, they have been able to generate a dialogue. The level of self-involvement is high. These programmes have provided the listeners an opportunity
to actively have access and participate in community radio programming.

In the light of the above it could be recommended that the community radio folk media adaptations should be further sustained, developed and extended.

List of References


