



Notes

26

## TYPES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

You have learnt that traditional media is a very useful form of communication. Traditional media however, exists in various forms as seen and practised in different parts of India. Some of the forms still exist in some places but may not be in its original form and content. They have been reinvented according to the modern environment. There are many such forms which play a vital role in our daily lives.

In this lesson, you will learn about the different forms of traditional media in detail, their form and structure as well as their use in Indian society.



### OBJECTIVES

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

- list the various forms of traditional media;
- explain the form and structure of different forms of traditional media;
- describe the use of these media forms in society.

### 26.1 TYPES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Can you recall the different forms of traditional media, that you learnt in your previous lesson. Let us list them.

- drama
- street theatre
- puppetry
- dance
- story telling
- song
- music
- painting
- motifs and symbols

We shall discuss each one of them in detail



## Notes

**rugged : rough, rocky**

**aesthetic : artistic**

## 26.2 DRAMA

Most of you may have heard of the term ‘drama’. Have you ever seen a drama being performed in your neighbourhood or in a theatre ?

Drama is one of the most popular forms of traditional media. Let us understand this form by using an example from the rural areas. After completing the work in the fields, you very often find that farmers celebrate their joy of leisure. They use different types of art forms for this. They use natural colours for makeup. Performance themes are from their own sufferings, daily work, future dreams and mythology. Here the viewers can also participate as and when they feel like.

Let us study about some of these forms of drama performed in different states.

**Tamasha:** If you happen to watch a tamasha performance in Maharashtra, you will come to know more about their ancient rulers, Maratha heroism, their rugged landscape, their music etc.

The philosophical and aesthetic scheme of tamasha incorporates three basic elements: the entertainment tradition, the more serious propagandist tradition & the devotional tradition. Have you ever watched a Tamasha performance?

**Nautanki:** The Nautanki form found in northern India entertain their audiences with often vulgar and disrespectful stories. Rooted in the peasant society of pre-modern India, this theatre vibrates with lively dancing, pulsating drumbeats & full throated singing. Unlike other styles of Indian theatre, the nautanki does not depend on Indian religious epics such as Ramayana or Mahabharata for its subject.

**Khayal:** Khayal is mainly performed in Rajasthan. It is a combination of song, dance and drama. Music is an important aspect in this form of folk theatre. It is performed not only for entertainment purpose but it is used mainly as an essential means of communication between actors. There is an immense variety in the use of singing—sometimes by the characters individually or in the chorus. Instrumental music is also used in the beginning of the performance to create a favourable atmosphere for the play.

## 26.3 STREET THEATRE

This is a performance medium drawing its techniques from traditional drama forms in India. They are performed in any nukkad (street corner), street, market place etc.



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Fig. 26.1 street theatre performance

In such a situation, the audience and the performers are on the same level, emphasizing the fact that the performers are not different from the audience themselves. This also leads to the establishment of a rapport between the performers and the audience. Close eye-contact with the audience is an important element in street theatre which keeps them busy with the action of the play. Even an actor is under the eagle eye of the audience who surround him on all sides. So together they feel a sense of belonging and responsibility to each other. Sometimes the audience is invited to join the chorus for the singing.

The sole purpose of street theatre is to motivate the audience to take a quick and required action on a particular issue. In India, waysides, streets, village markets, open-air grounds, fair-sites, country yards and other public areas have remained the ideal spaces to perform street plays.

A majority of street plays in India are based on socio-political issues. Some of these are based on current events, others are on subjects like communalism, terrorism, police atrocities, bride burning, dowry system, caste inequalities, elections, industrial and agricultural exploitation, alcoholism, illiteracy, drug addition and female feoticide.

In India, where there is a high degree of illiteracy, poverty and diversity of language and dialects, a theatre form of this sort, versatile and adaptable, cheap and mobile becomes more important and relevant. Do you know why street theatre is called a mobile theature medium?

The mobile form of street theatre helps it to reach people who normally do not go to the theatre. This suits the type of audience it tries to reach who are mostly the poorer section for whom theatre is a luxury. The total absence of a proper stage, lights, properties, costumes and make-up makes it even more flexible.



## Notes

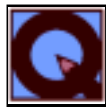
Some of the best street theatre artists from India include Safdar Hashmi, Utpal Dutt, Sheela Bhatia, Habib Tanvir, Shombu Mitra, Bijon Bhattacharya and many more.

Street theatre artists try to spread positive messages in the society. For example in Punjab, Gursharan Singh through street theatre is spreading a message of understanding, patience and tolerance. He took to the streets to use plays as a means of awakening the people to their fundamental and political rights. In the early eighties, when Punjab was swept by terror waves, Singh went out into the streets with his classic street plays such as 'Baba Bolda Hai', 'Sadharan Log' and 'Main Ugarvadi Nahi Hu'.

For Safdar Hashmi, a world renowned street theatre performer the art form was basically a political theatre of protest. Its function is to motivate the people and to mobilize them behind organizations which fight for social changes. With his Jan theatre group called Natya Manch, he presented plays like 'Machine', 'Hatyarey', 'DTC Ki Dandli', 'Aurat' and 'Gaon se shahar tak'.

How many street plays have you seen till now? Is it comparable to the number of television shows that you have seen? Television is certainly very popular and is accessible to many households. But at the same time, art forms like street theatre are also, seeing a revival at the community level in large gatherings.

In India commitment to political causes is quite high among the members of street theatre groups. Most of the groups like Janam, Nishant, Chitra, Shatabi, Amritsar School Drama, Chandigarh, Jan Sanskrit-Manch, IPTA Patna, IPTA Punjab and Little Theatre Group come forward when an important issue of social and political concern emerges. They attempt to provide an alternative explanation and a different point of view from government controlled media. For example, in the days of the Bhopal gas tragedy, while the official media were content with providing statistics on the extent of damage, it was the street theatre groups who drew the attention of the people on the wider aspects of exploitation by multinationals and the continuing horrors of the tragedy. So street theatre can be a powerful social and cultural expression as it has the potential to actively involve a wide range of physical, emotional and imaginative capacities.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.1**

1. Choose the correct answer :
  - i) Tamasha is performed in :
    - a) Tamilnadu
    - b) Kerala
    - c) West Bengal
    - d) Maharashtra

**Notes**

- ii) Nautanki is popular in :
- a) South India
  - b) Western India
  - c) Eastern India
  - d) Northern India
- iii) Khayal is a form of :
- a) dance
  - b) music
  - c) folk theatre
  - d) street theatre
- iv) Habib Tanvir is a popular name in :
- a) tamasha
  - b) nautanki
  - c) khayal
  - d) street theatre
- v) Street theatre is also called :
- a) an expensive medium
  - b) a rigid medium
  - c) irrelevant medium
  - d) mobile theatre medium

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**Puppetry**

Have you seen puppets or even wondered what they are ?

The word puppet comes from the French 'Poupee' or the Latin 'Pupa', both meaning 'dolls'. In Sanskrit, puppets are termed 'Putraka', 'Putrika' or 'Puttalika', all of which are derived from the root Putta equivalent to Putra (son). It is derived from ancient Indian thoughts that puppets have life.

Puppet theatre is a form of entertainment found practically in all parts of the world. In puppet theatre, various forms known as puppets, are used to illustrate the narratives. Let us find out more about them.

There are four basic kinds of puppets :

- glove puppets
- string puppets
- rod puppets

**ingenious – creative**



## Notes

- shadow puppets

**Glove puppets :**

Glove puppets are mostly found in Orissa, Kerala and Tamilnadu. Puppeteers wear them on the hand and manipulate their heads and arms with their fingers. The puppeteer narrates his story in verse or prose, while the puppets provide, the visual thread. With a little effort and imagination, you can make your own glove puppet.

Glove puppets are also known as sleeve puppets, hand puppets or palm puppets.



Fig 26.2 Glove puppet

The glove puppet in Orissa is called *Kundahei Nach*. The glove puppets of Kerala are more ornate, colourful and resemble the actors on the Kathakali stage in their make-up and costume. Their performance is known as *Pava Koothu* or *Pawa Kathakali*. The stories of this theatre are mainly based on Radha and Krishna and the Ramayana.

**String puppets :**

The string puppet (or marionetter) is a figure with multiple joints and suspended by a string which is controlled.

ornate : elaborate



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Fig. 26.3 string puppets

String puppets are found in Rajasthan, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. In this, the stress is more on the manipulative skills of the puppeteer. Have you ever seen a string puppet?

Examples :

- Katputali shows of Rajasthan
- Sakhi Kundhei of Orissa
- Putla Nach of Assam
- Malasutri Bhaulya of Maharashtra,
- Bommalattam of Tamilnadu
- Gombeyatta of Karnataka

### Rod puppets :

Rod puppets are an extension of glove puppets but often much larger.

They are fixed to heavy bamboo sticks which are tied to the puppeteer's waist. These are three-dimensional moving figures that are manipulated with the help of rods.



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Fig. 26.4 Rod puppet

The traditional rod puppet form of West Bengal is known as Putul Nauch.

Here are a few other examples:

- Yampuri of Bihar
- Kathi Kundhei of Orissa

#### **Shadow puppets :**

In this form, shadows of puppets are used in black and white or in colour. The flat figures, usually made of leather, are lightly pressed on a transparent screen with a strong source of light behind. The screen thus forms the barrier between the audience and the puppet, creating the projection of image. The impact on the audience, surrounded by darkness all around, is quite dramatic. The screen in India is a simple sheet stretched on an adjustable frame.

Shadow puppets are mostly found in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Orissa.

Examples include:

- Togulu gombeyatta from Karnataka
- Tholu bommalata from Andhra Pradesh



**26.4 MUSIC AND DANCE***Traditional media*

You may have all heard to some form of music or the other and also seen a dance being performed on the stage or on television.

Music and dance in India are among the oldest forms of classical arts with a tradition that dates back to several centuries. These traditions are fundamentally similar but they have different names and are also performed in different styles.

Dance puts the rhythm and movement in the play and continuously captures audience attention.

Ours is possibly the only country in which music, more than any other art, is so intimately interwoven with the life of people. It would not be an overstatement to say that music in India has played a crucial part in everyday life from time immemorial. It has been an integral part of marriages, festivals and celebrations of every hue and character. No religious ceremony has been complete without music.

There are songs to celebrate the seasonal rhythms in nature, songs of the ploughman and boatman, of the shepherd and camel driver. There are even songs of villages and of the forests. It is music which has always lent harmony to the pulse of human activity in India.

India's musical culture has its source in the tradition of the masses.

Traditional music of India is the most natural representation of the emotions of the masses. Songs are associated with every event of life. Be it festivals, advent of new seasons, marriages, births or even every day affairs like attracting a loved one or admiring nature. Can you recall a few such songs that you may have heard?

Although folk music originated within small regions, it has reached out to touch the hearts of masses across India.

Let us study a few examples.

**Examples :**

- Marathi Bhajans which are generally based on traditional ragas.
- Mand is a Rajasthani folk tune
- The Ghazal is a form of Urdu poetry that is sung. Eloquent 'shayari' (poetry), gentle 'mausiqui' (music) and fragile 'jazbaat' (emotions) combine to create the ghazal. The music for the Ghazal is slow paced and lyrics are often repeated twice or thrice. The first couplet of a ghazal is area 'matla' and the finishing couplet is called 'makta'. The remaining couplets are called 'misra' and 'antara'.
- Qawwali is a high-pitched and fast paced style of singing that was developed in the thirteenth century. During that period, Sufism was becoming popular in

**Notes****hue : colour****eloquent : well-expressed**



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India and Qawwali emerged from the mystical sayings of sufi saints. The followers of Khawaja Moinuddin Chisti Garib Nawaz, the famous Sufi saint of Ajmer (Rajasthan) adopted and improvised Hindustani classical music into what is called qawwali. Despite originally having developed from mystical music, it later also began to include romantic themes.



Fig. 26.5 qawwali

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.2**

1. Match the following :

- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| i) glove puppet   | a) urdu poetry            |
| ii) rod puppet    | b) figure made of leather |
| iii) ghazal       | c) pava koothu            |
| iv) string puppet | d) Putual Nach            |
| v) shadow puppet  | e) katputli               |

**26.5 TRADITIONAL MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS**

Have you observed patterns of rangoli made out of coloured powder outside homes on festive occasions ? These are nothing but symbols which are a part of everyday life. These beautiful patterns which are made on the threshold of the house is believed to uplift the spirit, ward off evil energies and give protection.

In India, people revere many symbols, ranging from those which are simple to the most complex ones. Indians believe in symbols which are entirely different from the rest of the world, though traces of similarities can be seen. The symbols in India are the outcomes of mythology, religious beliefs, traditions and philosophy.

revere : respect, admire



India is a country of motifs and symbols where traditional art forms, figures and ritual drawings have existed for many centuries. These art forms include symbols, floor motifs, folk murals, traditional textile designs, scroll paintings etc.

It is interesting to note that several figures that we see today seem to be based on man's primary activities.

### 26.6 PAINTINGS

Primitive man was unaware of words, but he was able to draw a picture of an animal with a tail, a head and four legs or a human figure with a pin head and four lines for hands and feet.

Throughout different periods of history, we find a definite established tradition of painting on various objects, particularly on intimate objects of everyday use, floors and walls; and in almost every instance, the depiction being associated with some ritual.



Fig. 26.6 wall paintings

Traditional paintings of Madhya Pradesh, specially the wall paintings of Bundelkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gondwana, Nimar and Malwa are living expressions of people, closely linked with the socio-cultural environment of the area. They are not mere decorations but also expressions of religious devotion.

Let us try and understand some of the examples.

- In Bundelkhand, painting is usually done by a caste of professional painters called *Chiteras*.
- In the paintings of Chhattisgarh, mud plaster base is used, over which linear patterns are etched with fingers: the process is called '*Lipai*'. The women of the Rajwar community are specialists in '*Lipai*', whereas Pando and Satnami communities make linear designs similar to a woven fabric.



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Chhatisgarh is also the home of the art of '*tattoo*' which is done by women of Badi community. The tattoo patterns are complex and beautiful and have immense potential of being further modified and incorporated into designer prints.

- The Bhils and Bhilala tribes of Madhya Pradesh paint myths related to creation called *pithora* paintings. Horses, elephants, tigers, birds, gods, men and objects of daily life are painted in bright multicoloured hues.
- In the Gondwana region, unmatched creative vision has been shown by the Gond and the Pardhan tribes who have impressed audiences at exhibitions in Japan, France, Australia and other countries.
- The Malwa, Nimar and Tanwarghar regions of Madhya Pradesh are known for their *mandana wall and floor painting traditions*. Red clay and cow dung mixture is used as base material to plaster the surface against which white drawings stand out in contrast. Peacocks, cats, lions, goojari, bawari, swastik and chowk are some motifs of this style.

**26.7 STORY TELLING**

“Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me a truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever” says an Indian proverb. Don’t you also like to listen to stories.

But what is a story? A story connects us with our humanness and links the past, present, and future by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of our actions.

What is story telling? “. Telling” involves direct contact between the teller and the listener. It permits the direct presentation of the story by the teller.

There are stories like the Panchatantra and stories from mythology like Ramayana and Mahabharata where local heroes have always travelled from one generation to another by word of mouth. This is an effective way of motivating children.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.3**

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/s :
  - i) Symbols and motifs are examples of \_\_\_\_\_ art forms.
  - ii) Bundelkhand paintings are done by professional painters called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - iii) Women of the \_\_\_\_\_ community in Chattisgarh are specialists in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - iv) Paintings of the Gondwana region are done by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ tribes.

- v) \_\_\_\_\_ is a popular Indian story which has travelled through several generations.



**26.8 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- > Drama
  - tamasha
  - nautanki
  - khayal
- > Street Theatre
- > Puppetry
  - glove puppet
  - string puppet
  - rod puppet
  - shadow puppet
- > Music and Dance
  - bhajans
  - folk songs
  - ghazal
  - qawwali
- > Traditional motifs
  - rangoli
  - folk murals
  - textile designs
  - floor motifs
  - scroll paintings
- > Paintings
  - lipai
  - tattoo
  - pithora paintings
  - mandana wall and floor paintings



Notes



Notes

- Story telling
- panchatantra
  - Ramayana
  - Mahabharata



### 26.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Discuss how different forms of traditional media serve the purpose of communication ?
2. Explain the different forms of puppetry with suitable examples.
3. Write short notes on the following :
  - i) Traditional symbols and motifs
  - ii) Paintings
  - iii) Story telling



### 26.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 26.1** 1. i) (d) ii) (d) iii) c) iv) (d) (v) (d)
- 26.2** 1. i) (c) ii) (d) iii) (a) iv) (e) v) (b)
- 26.3** 1. i) traditional
- ii) Chiteras
  - iii) Rajwar, Lipai
  - iv) Gond, Pardhan
  - v) Panchatantra