

An Ethnographical Study on the Impact of Mass Media on the Culture and Tradition of Badagar Community in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. Rajesh. R

Associate Professor, Department of Visual Communication,
Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology,
Kattankulathur- 603 203, Chengalpattu Dist., Tamil Nadu, INDIA, Email: rajeshr@srmist.edu.in

ABSTRACT:

Advancements in mass communication structures have distinguished the understanding of culture. Being the resident of situations and things like the surroundings, family, friends, school, work, neighborhood, and so on shapes one's identity. The development of communication technology over the past 50 years, from the telegraph to the high-speed internet, has led to a rapid expansion of the influence of mass media. However, the understanding and use of various media has broadened the outlook of Badagar in the Nilgiris region. Mass media plays a crucial role in the construction of modern civilization, intertwining media production, media texts, and media reception, much like a series of interconnected courses within any society. This article aims to examine the influence of mass media on the culture and tradition of the Badaga community in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Mass Media, Badagar, Culture, Tradition, Community.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Mass media includes written, broadcast, or spoken communication that reaches a vast audience. The principal types of mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema, movies, and the Internet. Mass media plays a crucial role in shaping culture, particularly in the Indian nation, which sociologists refer to as a mediated culture, where the press both reflects and shapes the culture. Mass media floods communities and people with messages from diverse sources such as newspapers, TV, and the Internet, not only promoting products but also influencing moods, attitudes, and determining what is essential and unnecessary.

In other words, mass media refers to communication with a vast audience. Mass media significantly contributes to daily life by providing updates and information. Every aspect of society, such as social, political, and economic, is impacted differently. Now, socially, we can connect with others through social media. In my personal life, I've noticed a predictable attachment to mass media. In each moment, we have a necessity and affinity towards the mass media that makes life easy, like newspapers for information, TV for entertainment, social media for browsing, and much more.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The article's primary goal is to examine the following studies on mass media, tradition, and cultural. They are;

- The goal is to understand the traditional form of communication of a community known as Badagar.
- The goal is to understand the culture of a community known as Badagar.
- The aim is to comprehend the level of media exposure and technological expertise within the Badagar community.
- The aim is to comprehend the impact of mass media on the daily activities of the Badagar community.

1.3 METHODOLOGY:

The study primarily employed in-depth interviews with community leaders, native people, and immigrants. The central question that the study aimed to answer was a reformulation of the study's objective, namely: What are the mass media utilized by the Badagas, and what is the impact level of mass media on the Badaga community?

The study primarily aims to comprehend the culture and traditions of the Badagar community, incorporating the standard anthropological technique of participant observation and random cluster research design. This study utilizes cluster sampling to gather data through field visits and employs ethnographic methods for observation and in-depth interviews, which are conducted according to a set interview schedule.

1.4 MASS MEDIA:

The mass media implies that technology aims to achieve success with a large audience. Its initials suggest that communication reaches most of the public. The first common platform for mass media includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the web. Usually, the public depends on the mass media to provide information about political problems, social problems, entertainment, and news in popular culture.

The mass media has evolved considerably over time. Newspapers served as the initial platform for mass media. For an extended period, the public relied on writers and journalists in the vernacular newspapers to provide them with the latest news on current events. Centuries later, during the first, the 1890s. The radio would soon surpass the newspaper because it is the most adaptable mass media source.

The invention of the television was a significant milestone. Television soon replaced radio as the most effective platform for success among the public. Today, the net is the most relevant type of mass media, and it has become a vital tool for news sources. Since the evolution of the internet, the common public is ready to access those same news sources at a rapid speed with a single click of a mouse rather than attending regular programs.

1.5 INFLUENCE OF MASS MEDIA:

Over the years, mass media has deeply impacted Indian society, its culture, and the people exposed to the media. Mass media is a kind of socialization that has long affected every member of the Indian community. Mass media targets individuals at short intervals, establishing a general

influence as the client transitions from one impressionable age class to another. Evaluating the role of mass media in India reveals its distinct long- or short-term effects. Due to varying amounts of exposure and formats, mass media influence people differently.

Mass media serves a socialization function in Indian society, both within the culture and among individuals. Over the years, mass media has played a vital role in socialisation in the Indian community. Socialization may be an extended format that each person undergoes as they become a functioning member of society. As people mature through each stage of the life cycle, socialization involves internalizing all the approved or expected behaviours from various sources.

The mass media instructs its audience on how to think and behave, conditioning them to conform to what the media depicts as suitable reactions and actions to events in Indian society. Over the years, the media has shaped this extended format by gradually exposing impressionable age groups to explicit messages. Mass media targets distinct age client groups, with short-term consequences and long-term refined impressions.

1.6 THE NILGIRIS:

Tamil Nadu, situated in the southern part of India, covers a 1,30,000 sq. km. geographical area, representing nearly four percent of India. The landscape of Tamil Nadu consists of broad coastal plains in the east, with moorland and hills proceeding westward, and the tables providing half the state's area.

The Western Ghats run southward along the entire length of Tamil Nadu's western border and end at the state's Cape of Corner. The Eastern Ghats begin in Orissa, pass through Andhra Pradesh State, enter Tamil Nadu through North Arcot, Salem, and Coimbatore districts, and finally join the Western Ghats to form the world-famous Nilgiris plateau.

The Badagar, Kotas, and Todas are the province's principal tribal groups among the 15 Nilgiris. Similarly, there are other tribal groups like Irulas and Kurumbas, who are also found in other parts like Coimbatore, Malabar, and Mysore with similar names. The Todas and Kotas represent pastoral and blacksmithing, respectively, while the Badagas represent the art of agriculture.

1.7 BADAGAR:

The Badagas of the Nilgiris are among the largest native tribes, possessing rich ethnicities and unique rituals that set them apart from other hilly land tribes. This resulted in the Badaga community establishing extensive settlements throughout the Nilgiris. Later, over a century of connectivity with Europeans made the Badaga community a dominant indigenous group of the Nilgiris. Other tribal groups occupying the Nilgiris, however, maintained a balanced structure of public relations with the Badagas (Hockings, 1989). The agricultural methods and lifestyle of the Badagas reflect their socialization.

Despite the dilution of the Badaga culture due to progressive attitudes, education, and upgrading, the core heritages remain dynamic. Some of the detailed ceremonies practiced by the Badagas demonstrate their complete loyalty to cultural ethics and customs. According to the 1812 census, there were approximately 2,207 Badaga people. However, the 2011 census projects the population of the Badagas to be approximately 3,00,000. The Badagas are a sustained community

of Nilgiris that adapts and enhances the attracting cash crop cultivation and performs its exhaustive cultural structure.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

1.8.1 Song Albums:

It is challenging to pinpoint the origin of Badaga music. As many types of research demonstrated, the origin of music was rooted in a mother and her child's loving bond. Music is an integral part of Badaga culture, both in the past and the present, after a significant transformation from time immemorial. Music is an essential part of the Badaga people's lives. The changeover in Badaga music with the advent of modern musical instruments and influence from other cultures is happening at a rapid pace, but still, Badaga music is unique.

Recently, there has been a significant transformation in Badaga music in the form of album songs by famous Badaga people. People create Badaga audio records to reminisce about their past and maintain strong connections with their culture and community. To date, there are nearly 50 Badaga song albums with more than 600 Badaga songs, including Badaga devotional songs, Badaga melody songs, Badaga beat songs, and Badaga sad songs.

Regardless of age and gender, the Badagas continue to follow their age-old tradition in the 'hatties' (villages). Music is an integral part of Badaga culture, both in the past and the present, after a significant transformation from time immemorial. Music is an essential part of the Badaga people's lives. The Badaga ancestor understood the importance of music and developed a simple rhythm, 'ye haa how... ye haa how...' which was mainly used for almost all occasions ranging from 'habba' (festivals), 'madhuve' (marriage), and 'saavu' (funeral) ceremonies. The Badaga people used to ignite the spiritual spark through music called 'bhajanai' (Bhajan). People used to gather every weekend and worship God through music. Later, the Badaga people began using drums in their music to create social awareness among people through storytelling. The changeover in Badaga music with the advent of modern musical instruments and influence from other cultures is happening rapidly, but Badaga music is still unique.

1.8.2 Radio:

Doordarshan, India's national television, is the world's largest television network, with 23 channels and 1314 transmitters. Apart from the Doordarshan, private Tamil channels like 'Sun TV,' 'Vijay TV,' 'Jaya TV,' 'Raj TV' and so on are top-ranked among the people of Nilgiris district. Keeping this in mind, Nakkubetta TV started in 2015 under the guidance of the 'Nakkubetta Foundation', which engaged in social welfare and human-interest activities. Nakkubetta TV highlights the Badaga community's cultural richness, awareness, and information. Through the local cable connection, Nakkubetta TV reaches critical areas of the Nilgiris district, such as Ooty, Coonoor, Kotagiri, and Kundah. Recently, Nakkubetta TV has expanded its reach to nearby areas such as Mettupalayam, Annur, Karamadai, and Periyanaickenpalayam in the Coimbatore district via cable connection, as these regions have seen a significant migration of Badagas from the Nilgiris district.

1.8.3 Television:

Doordarshan, India's National television, is the world's largest television network with 23 channels and 1314 transmitters. In Nilgiris district, apart from the Doordarshan, private Tamil channels like 'Sun TV,' 'Vijay TV,' 'Jaya TV,' 'Raj TV' and so on are top-ranked among the people of Nilgiris. Keeping this in mind, Nakkubetta TV started in 2015 under the guidance of the 'Nakkubetta Foundation', which engaged in social welfare and Human-interest activities. Nakkubetta TV highlights the Badaga community's cultural richness, awareness, and information by sharing mutual understanding among the people. The Nakkubetta TV reaches the critical areas of the Nilgiris district, like Ooty, Coonoor, Kotagiri, and Kundah, through the local cable connection. In recent times, Nakkubetta TV has been extended to nearby areas like Mettupalayam, Annur, Karamadai, and Periyanaickenpalayam in the Coimbatore district through cable connection because the maximum number of Badagas have migrated to these regions from the Nilgiris district.

1.8.4 World Wide Web:

The World Wide Web (WWW) has emerged to assemble the information needs of researchers in the high-energy community. The task of Badaga websites is to provide information for Badagas living in different parts of the world. This site is an effort by Badaga volunteers with a common interest in serving the community. The majority of Badaga websites focus on discussion forums, articles, jobs, picture galleries, Badaga songs, and matrimonial information. In addition, numerous blogs feature content about the Badagas, encompassing their history, lifestyle, villages, festivals, rituals, recipes, dress code, and various other aspects of their community.

1.8.5 Social Media:

Social media is one of the most recent developments in the media field. Social networking is an online service enabling users to create virtual networks with like-minded people. The Badagas, a considerable chunk of the population, use social media, including Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. Recently, the Badagas have established numerous Facebook groups, and the Badaga youth actively participate in social media platforms such as Facebook.

1.9 CONCLUSION:

In recent years, Badaga music has undergone a significant transformation in the form of album songs. The development of Badaga audio albums had a considerable impact on the Badagas not only within India but also throughout the world. Since the AIR Ooty station is in a hilly area, there is always a signal problem. Since no programs related to the Badagas existed, they did not impact the Badaga people. The radio only distracted them from practicing their folklore songs by playing Tamil movie songs.

In addition to Doordarshan, the Badagas of Nilgiri District are also familiar with the Tamil satellite channels. However, Nakkubetta TV, a local cable television network, significantly influences the Badaga community and culture through all its programs. The task of Badaga websites is to provide information for Badagas living in different parts of the world. However, we find that most Badaga websites repeat and carry the same information, necessitating long-term updates. A significant portion of the Badaga population utilizes Facebook. Recently, the Badagas have created numerous groups on Facebook. The popularity of social networks like Facebook became a hotspot among the Badagas, particularly the youth.

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