

A Study on the Impact of Drama on Moborn Economy

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Abstract

Development has been synonymous with directed, purposeful progress equated with economic growth with including all the dimensions. As such, communication for development has been largely understood as persuading people to adopt cut and dried messages which direct progress, hence the concept of mass communication. Unfortunately, this gives communication an apparatus for manipulation and propaganda dissemination. The widespread failure of development projects may be attributed to this understanding and practice of communication in development as communication becomes a way of forcing receivers to adjust and adapt to ideologically mediated messages and the midst of economic collapse, we are compelled to seek wiser systems of commerce and more equitable economic relationships. While it is imperative that we understand the history of our economic structures and what went wrong, it is equally important that we experience the outstanding examples of collaborative business practices that are changing the economic landscape today.. This paper proposes to study the impact of Drama in Moborn Economy which support communication. Drama incorporates aspects of lived realities, supports progress in peoples' lives and effectively grips the audience's attention and commitment. Drama conscientises people on aspects of life such as environmental conservation assists people in spreading and using technological advancement assists in health, educational and other social efforts and programmes. In this way, drama provides a viable tool in development support communication and, as the paper shows, drama is natural communication which can ensure high impact yet low cost effects.

Keywords: *Drama, Economic Growth, Human Behavior.*

Introduction

Educational drama is defined as “drama in which there is no external audience, no prepared script, and in which the teacher frequently takes on roles with students” (Wihelm, Edmiston, 1998, p.4). Educational drama utilizes skills across the range of dramatic activity, everything from teacher-in-role to normal theatrical conventions of audience and spectator¹.

The word 'development' has become synonymous with directed, purposive progress that results in economic growth. Developmentalists seem happy when material outputs increase—what more could anybody expect of them? The word 'communication' has the hidden prefix "mass" always attached to it whenever it is perceived. This gives it the stigma of an apparatus of persuasion and manipulation and therefore something to view with suspicion, something to avoid and something unfriendly. Unfortunately, government, institutions and even humanitarian organisations use mass communication to beam propaganda, persuasion and coercion or at least some cut and dried messages which force perceivers of the messages to adjust to the messages².

Drama identifies with concepts like entertainment, education, social comment (e.g. political, religious, cultural, inter alia). Drama has been and continues to be ignored as trivial by some, believed as reality by others, feared as too critical, admired as courageous, hated as too threatening, trusted as effective in effecting change and revered as balanced, neutral, fair and ideal³.

Drama is a make-believe controlled experiment which, because its events and outcomes are deliberately created by the playwright, can be used to depict any and every human aspect for specific objectives. Drama is communication par-excellence because of its ability to grip its perceivers as it unfolds and rolls at a predetermined pace in a predetermined direction. Drama supports⁴, all that is progress in our lives—it is development. This then makes drama a most appropriate tool in development support communication.

Definition of economic impact by Drama

The Everyman Theatre makes a contribution to the worth of the local economy in two ways: direct and indirect. Its direct impact is made up of straight local spending; for example, the

¹ https://www.academia.edu/1787353/Drama_as_a_Form_of_Critical_Pedagogy_Empowerment_of_Justice

² <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2FBF02310582#page-1>

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/drama>

⁴ <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/africa%20media%20review/vol11no1/jamr011001008.pdf>

amount spent on purchasing supplies locally, or the amount spent on resident staff wages, which is then spent on items such as accommodation, food, and clothes locally⁵.

The indirect impact takes into account the 'knock-on' effect which is generated by the direct impact, where money spent results in more money being spent. An example of this includes the purchase of supplies from a local company, which results in that company spending on their staff wages and purchasing other supplies. This expenditure is constantly circulating around the local economy, helping to preserve jobs, and boost economic growth.

Why Drama?

Drama is not the only medium of effecting change for development and Drama and theatre have their origins in the cultural settings of the past and the vicissitudes of the present. The theatre tradition has been part of the ritual and social life of the people embracing the totality of their way of life, habits, attitudes and propensities. Although looked at as a form of entertainment, theatrical activities and performances are regarded as informal ways by which the quality of lives of people can be inculcated and enriched⁶. Drama and theatre are tools used to sensitise the general public on matters that affect them on daily basis. These include matters of family planning/child-spacing, conduction of census, campaign against sale and distribution of fake and illegal drugs, HIV/AIDS and other STDs, abortions, child abuse/neglect etc. A perfect example is the TV series, I need to know, which focuses on the enlightenment of the youthful generation on the dangers of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, STDs and teenage pregnancies and the need to abstain from such vice's in order to protect their future. Drama, as one of the core genres of literature, is the mirror of any society because it documents what is happening and throws it back at the same society⁷. But I consider it a most appropriate tool because:

- (a) Drama removes the stigma of "mass" from the concept of communication because real humans carry messages in their own flesh and blood and communicate almost at interpersonal level with perceivers. Where the perceivers do not directly participate because they have not enough money, they at least seem to observe immediate

⁵https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=9&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CFQQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.arts council.org.uk%2Fmedia%2Fuploads%2Fdocuments%2Fpublications%2FphpuSGWg5.doc&ei=Yf5JVeGON8-puQT3tIFQ&usg=AFQjCNFWwEIUuYdLfFO5CgYl2J_skfS5cw&bvm=bv.92291466,d.c2E

⁶ <http://thenationonlineng.net/new/dramatheatre-and-society-what-relevance/>

⁷ <http://www.usu.edu/markdamen/ClasDram/chapters/021origins.htm>

neighbors as the neighbors thrash the issues and messages loaded onto the script—on stage, on the screen or on air (radio). Communication then ceases to appear as "organised" manipulation but rather takes the form of spontaneous, natural interaction.

- (b) Drama can also be used as a means of self-expression and empowerment by people facing hostile political or social circumstances. For example, the Tivs used the traditional Kwagh-Hir puppet and masquerade theatre to voice opposition to political victimization during the 1960s.
- (c) Drama broadens the meaning of the word 'development' to include concepts like education, conscientisation of the people, empowerment of the indigenous communities, insistence on good governance, moral purification of society, condemnation of crime and corruption and above all, drama ushers in participation by the communities—a very crucial element.
- (d) Using drama as a teaching and learning tool, for personal development, social awareness and equal educational access to dramatic arts. Rooted in the theatrical form of improvisation, along with group theater games, ensemble-building and student-generated performance showcase we impact lives by showing youth options of behavior, ways of being and behaving through theater that can carry over into everyday life. With our use of props and costumes we help awaken imagination and guide students to feel what it might be like in someone else's shoes, creating empathy that we also hope transfers to real life. We also improve capacity for literacy and communication skills by introducing theater vocabulary. IDEAS offers a direct experience where youth are encouraged to "act out" creatively, something they are often reprimanded for doing. Many of the students we work with have never had the opportunity to be part of theatrical presentation before⁸.
- (e) According to Thomas in Servaes et al (1996:21) drama challenges the "taken for granted assumptions and pries open the gaps between ideological promise and institutional performance". Promise with no performance is no development. Those who give the promises always have the means to broadcast the promise and yet usually, there is no platform to question the unfulfilment of the promises. However, in a manner subtle or bold, drama exposes the gap between promise and performance.

⁸ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/interactive-drama-for-education-and-awareness-in-the-schools-inc.-i.d.e.a.s.->

Drama directs the spotlight onto those responsible or is it irresponsible! Drama demands accountability and suggests remedies. Drama evaluates the totality of performance by all organs within a community be they political, social, economic, ideological, moral, philosophical etc. This evaluation is not a question and answer session the gate keeping method. It is a no holds barred, unstoppable exposition. This way, those charged with developmental assignments dare not rest on their laurels⁹.

Hence the banning and condemnation by some authorities, of certain plays (e.g. by Churches, pressure groups and governments). Hence the persecution and even execution of playwrights by some governments. All this happens because drama, as a true tool in development support communication, will be at work not only to communicate development but to insist on development. The icing on this case is that no matter how serious the message contained, drama will always be loaded with entertainment (e.g. humour, comical blunders and misplaced trusts).

(d) Drama exploits the politics of possibility. Over the centuries, drama has been used to criticise, suggest ideals and propose solutions to problems. It uses humans to suggest how all its proposals could be implemented. From rural Afghanistan to urban Nigeria BBC World Service audiences have been tuning-in to mass mediated drama with 'instructive' messages for many years. Each 'drama for development' reflects the interweaving of development goals, donor objectives, processes of cross-cultural translation, creative dialogue and debate between local and expatriate dramatists and, not least, the responses and interpretations of dramatic narratives by audiences. From such a perspective, organizations such as the BBC World Service Trust, the BBC World Service's charitable arm, can be seen to be actively engaged in crafting complex development concepts and issues into local frames by applying specific cultural, social and political filters to render these concepts and narratives intelligible¹⁰. The playwright creates ideal communication situations with actors who interact to fulfil the playwright's purpose. Implementation of suggested proposals develops society and yet through drama, nobody feels "exposed" as the ring leader in criticizing lack of development—sometimes not even the playwright! The development support messages seem to come from this huge powerful but anonymous bulldozer called drama. The message becomes a collective effort of the playwright, the depicted, the actors, the criticized, the

⁹ http://catalog.ucmerced.edu/preview_course_nopop.php?catoid=2&coid=1413

¹⁰ <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/diasporas/core-research/drama-for-development>

critics— in fact, the whole community not only feels part of the issues raised by the drama but feels it OWNS the issues and is therefore OWED restitutions.

(e) Drama is dialogue and according to Paulo Freire (1972:136) "dialogue does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate, does not sloganize". (Development messages are imposed when brought by carriers or researchers who are outsiders not only in terms of community membership but culturally and politically as well. However, a play tailored to suit a specific situation, carrying that specific development message and acted by members of the target community will belong to the people in its entirety, will be owned by the people and so will the development message it carries. This is dialogue. This is drama. Paulo Freire's notion of cultural action for liberation stresses the importance of evolving culture-based development strategies and the use of popular theatre as a medium for social transformation.

(f) Drama provides as opportunity for the target community to participate. I know that the mass media have cheapened the word participation to refer to the rhetoric of apologetic mass messages from politicians and even developmentalists. Participation is a democratic process. Drama is real participation. In drama, the word participation has not yet lost its critical edge. In drama, participation is context-based, is tradition based and is therefore wholly cultural. The people are involved in the construction and interpretation of the message¹¹.

At exposition, they see Mr Khumalo—a member of their community— taking a wrong course of action and Mr Dube— another member of their community—taking the correct course. At conflict, Mr Khumalo seems to have it all easy, rosy and comfortable (e.g. wining, dining and highly promiscuous). Mr Dube seems miserable in his self-imposed life of sanction and denial. At Resolution, Mr Khumalo's irreversible misery sets in and he exits in agony —even in death—while Mr Dube has the last laugh as he enjoys good health and prosperity. (Consequences and rewards)

Use of culturally foreign humor misleads the people to concentrate on the wrong details (e.g. clothing, symbols) and explain away the results on these strange symbols. This way, the target community needs little motivation to implement the lessons derived from the drama thus the role of the drama It achieves its goals by developing new conceptual frameworks to define peacefulness; providing metrics for measurement; uncovering the relationship between peace, business and prosperity, and by promoting a better understanding of the cultural,

¹¹ <http://www.sprucegrove.org/business/tourism/events/festivals.htm>

economic and political factors that drive peacefulness¹². It becomes their project. The use of drama as a tool in development support communication then becomes true generosity which empowers the target communities to be independent to desire development, to propel them to develop. According to Freire (1972:21-22), "Real generosity lies in striving so that those hands —whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, by working, transform the world". Desired transformation is development.

(g) Drama is easy to assimilate. Perceivers participate or they sit, watch and listen. Reading is heavy and too demanding. Instructions are not always the best method of communicating.

However, drama constructs the story/ message and real human beings bring it to the perceivers.

(g) Drama has access to any medium, leaving it to the playwright and the owners of a development message to select the most appropriate medium between the State, Television/ Film and the Radio. Two or more of these media can be used simultaneously or one after the other to carry the same development message. This makes drama a very convenient tool in development support communication.

Drama provide us mental Peace, The economics of peace should be seen as an intermediate period between the economics of war, where the underground economy dominates, and the economics of development, which focuses on medium- and long-term objectives of economic growth and structural improvements. There are a number of ways in which the economics of peace must differ from the normal development agenda.

Policies during the economics of peace may need to be short term and emergency in nature, so as to ensure that the country does not revert to conflict, even if this means that these policies are less than optimal in the long run. Former combatants and other war-affected groups need to be reintegrated into productive activities as soon as possible, so that they have a stake in the peace process. The traditional development principle that all groups with the same need should be treated equally may need to be put aside. In some cases it will be necessary for special attention to be given to those most affected by the conflict, or those most likely to revert to it.

¹² <http://economicsandpeace.org/>

Aid always presents opportunities for corruption, and the extraordinarily high levels of aid received by post-conflict countries, which often ranges from 50-100 per cent of GDP, considerably exacerbates this problem. In order to avoid this, greater attention must be paid to how aid is utilized during this the economics of peace to ensure that it supports, rather than weaken the process.

Policies during the economics of peace must be focused on the speedy creation of an economy that is inclusive and self-sustainable. Post-conflict societies receive a large amount of humanitarian aid to save lives and ensure minimum levels of consumption. If prolonged, however, this aid would discourage production and labor supply. By contrast, reconstruction aid is key to create investment and employment, to make life worth living and to ensure that the country can stand on its own feet¹³.

Conclusion

Drama is natural communication that can be a very effective tool in development support communication. It entertains, counsels, informs, stimulates debate and educates. About conferences and symposia, people complain that after all is said and done, there is more said than done. Not so with drama. In drama there is more done than said. In the process, human happiness is maximized through the resultant development, in the true principles of the utility theory. A belief in drama as a vital tool in development support communication is not a mistaken belief, is not a misplaced trust, but a guarantee that those communities will adopt development projects as their own and therefore an investment in the future.

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¹³ <http://recom.wider.unu.edu/article/how-achieve-economics-peace>

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