

## TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION FOR AGRICULTURAL RELATED LIVELIHOOD IN RURAL SRI LANKA

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### Abstract

According to the Annual report of Agricultural Statistics in 2019, 25.5% of agricultural labour force is engaged in the various agricultural related professions in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the traditional forms of communication can be used to empower the agricultural related livelihood. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to examine the use of traditional forms of communication in developing agricultural related livelihood in rural Sri Lanka. Development communication is the main conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. The geographical location is Pelwatta in Buttala Divisional Secretariat in Monaragala district, Uva Province. Therefore, the FGDs were conducted with 25 people who are aware and use these folk media in Pelwatta (purposive sampling). In depth interviews were conducted with four key people from the same community. The qualitative data were analysed thematically. The results show that the majority of people are into agricultural related professions such as cane farming, banana cultivation, dairy farming, chena cultivation, paddy cultivation and working for Pelwatta Sugar Company and Dairy company which are currently government owned companies. The people use various traditional forms of communication to fulfill their socio-cultural, economics needs and issues in the day to day lives. Moreover, these traditional forms of communication are used to get rid of diseases and epidemics, for the protection of agricultural crops, maintain the uniqueness of their food culture, protect the cultural and religious values, heritages etc. The responsible authorities should support these communities to protect and promote the cultural, socio-economic values, traditions, communications, believes, heritages and resources unique to this area.

**Keywords:** *traditional forms of communication, rural communities, agricultural related livelihood, Sri Lanka*

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### Introduction

Traditional forms of communication can play a significant role in the development process. Apart from the contemporary media and new media, traditional folk media contribute to the development process at the local and international levels. Padmanabha & Sathish note that traditional folk media can be used for the development of a country, especially for the agricultural development. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has also emphasised that traditional forms of communication are effectively used to empower the rural famers in the developing countries.

According to the Department of Census and Statistics, 81% of people are rural people in Sri Lanka. This shows that the majority of people are rural communities in Sri Lanka. According to the Report of Agricultural Statistics 2019 published by the Department of Agriculture, 25.5% of agriculture labour force is engaged in the agricultural related professions in Sri Lanka. This shows that quarter of the population in Sri Lanka are attached to the agricultural sector, mainly the rural communities are engaged in farming. The agricultural sector has made 7% of contribution to the GDP rate of Sri Lanka according to the Report of Social Economic Statistics of Sri Lanka in 2020 published by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

Therefore, there is a high possibility of using the traditional forms of communication in empowering livelihood of farming communities in Sri Lanka. Dissanayake (1985) notes that the traditional forms of communication such as folk songs, drama, ritual performances, drumming and all the other folk communications have created from the rural surrounding through the creativity, cultural beliefs and practices of rural communities. Therefore, these traditional forms of communication can be

used to educate and motivate people, provide information and entertainment to make rural communities stronger in facing their day-to-day struggles, needs and issues.

In this context, the main problem of this study is how to use traditional forms of communication to empower agricultural related livelihood in rural Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the use of traditional forms of communication in empowering agricultural related livelihood in the rural settings in Sri Lanka.

## **Literature review**

### **Traditional forms of communication in the rural setting**

Traditional forms of communication are defined in different ways. “Traditional folk media is any form of endogenous communication system which by virtue of its origin from, and integration into a specific culture, serves as a channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilisation of the values, symbols, institutions, and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes” (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1998:P 3). “Folk media are the indigenous means of communication. The folk performing art forms are used for moral, religious, and socio-political ends from the time they originated” (Kodavath, 2015: P:1). This shows that various traditional forms of communication are the symbols of cultural practices, beliefs, values, customs, norms etc. of a particular culture.

There are different forms of traditional communication depending on socio- cultural, economic situations of different rural communities. Dissanayake (1985) notes that there are different forms of traditional communication in Sri Lanka such as folk songs, folk dance, folk tales and riddles, proverbs, rites and rituals, chattering, gossips, ‘Kavikola’ (a form of traditional poem paper), ‘Kelapaththara’ (a kind of informal notice), Pethsam (petitions), ceremonial occasions, idioms etc. Jinadasa (2011) identifies several characteristics of different forms of traditional communication as follows.

- a) Traditional folk-media have created from the rural surrounding
- b) The signs and the symbols of the folk-media have not been alienated from their village
- c) Traditional folk media need only fewer media literacy to understand it well than the mainstream mass media.
- d) The proximity between the community and the traditional folk-media
- e) Traditional folk -media having with interactive communication skills
- f) Changeable, creativity and liveliness of the traditional folk-media.
- g) Folk-media have not distanced with the community

As far as these characteristics are concerned, the traditional forms of communication emerge from the rural surroundings based on the available resources, socio-cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Compared to the mainstream media such as TV, radio, newspaper, social media etc. people can use any form of traditional media in a simple and effective manner even without having literacy. The most important thing is that rural communities use these media to find solutions for the issues connected to their livelihood. Padmanabha & Sathish (2020) note that, for sustainable development of agriculture, there should be effective traditional forms of communication based on socio-cultural, religious beliefs and practices unique to the community.

Therefore, it is important to identify the use of traditional forms of communication for agricultural related livelihood at the local and international levels. “Livelihood is defined as adequate stock and flow of food and cash with an individual or a family to meet its basic needs. A large proportion of the small and marginal farmers gain livelihoods through production on small pieces of land” (Acharya, 2005:06). In this context, the traditional forms of communication also play an effective role in empowering agricultural related livelihood in the rural context.

The traditional forms of communication are also used to educate and motivate people as well as provide information and entertainment on different phenomenon related to their farming related livelihood. Daudu & Anyanwu (2010) note that the primary occupation of these people in the Benue State of the region of Nigeria is farming. The farmers at the village level use traditional folk media for dissemination of information, entertainment and promotion of their cultural heritage. The traditional forms of communication such as folk songs, town crier, folk dances, friends/ relation and group/association are mainly connected with livelihood of the farming community.

Panford et al (2001) note that Mexico, Philippines, Nigeria, as well as Ghana use folk drama to educate rural communities about various health issues, social issues, and agricultural related activities. In rural Ghana, these folk dramas and songs are used to educate people about a wide range of health and social issues. These folk media are useful in educating and motivating people about specific issues and updates such as healthy and effective practices and methods of farming, update farmers with new innovations with creativity and entertainment.

India, being a multi religious and multi-cultural country in the South Asian region, it has different forms of traditional folk media. "The potential of the traditional media can be utilised wisely and systematically for agricultural as well as for the rural development in the Nagpur district of Maharashtra state of India. Five most popular traditional media were used viz. Tamasha, Bhajan, Kirtan, Dhandhar and Quawaly by the people. Most preferred themes by the viewers through these media were, on social development including agriculture and patriotic songs" (Chapke & Bhagat, 2006:123).

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the people in various parts of the country use different traditional forms of communication for their day-to-day needs. The main purpose of using these media to find solutions for the issues connected to their livelihood. In other words, the solutions are found for the socio-cultural, spiritual, economic and political needs and issues connected to their livelihood using different forms of traditional communication. Several researches have been conducted in Sri Lanka specialising traditional forms of communication. Pasquel (2015) notes that 'Natyamaya Pelapali' which is a traditional dramatic performance in the 'ceremonial dance' in Sabaragamuwa region such as 'Pahan Maduwa', 'Kiri Maduwa' and 'kumara Samayama' mainly conducts to bring the prosperity to the people and great hope of development in Sabaragamuwa province. Kumari and Sadamali (2013) also state that "Kirimaduwa" ceremonial dance is a specific folk-dance confine to Sabaragamuwa province which has unique traditions and rituals. The main purpose of having this ceremonial dance is to get rid of diseases and epidemics and for the protection of agricultural crops.

The literature review shows that no field research has been conducted to examine the use of different forms of traditional communication for the agricultural related livelihood in Sri Lanka though some researches done on traditional forms of communication in empowering rural communities in Sri Lanka. In other words, no research has not been specialised on the agricultural related livelihood in the rural context, in terms of traditional communications. In order to fill in this gap and achieve the purpose of the study, this research was conducted in a rural village in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, development communication can be considered as the main conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. In simple term, development communication is, use of communications for the development purposes. "Development communication is the science of human communication linked to the transitioning of communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic, overall growth that fosters equity and the unfolding of the individual potential" Quebral (1971, P:1). Gupta (2015) notes that 70% of rural communities live in the developing countries and almost 80% of India's population are from rural areas. Thus, folk media can play a vital role for community empowerment, since folk media are based on ceremonial rituals, beliefs, religious and social values of the society. The folk media communications help in taking people from poverty to prosperity culturally, socially, politically, economically and spiritually. It's obvious that, traditional forms of communication can also play a vital role in empowering agricultural related livelihood in the rural setting culturally, socially, politically, economically and spiritually. Therefore, this study is also carried out in a rural village in Monaragala district to examine the use of traditional forms of communication in empowering agricultural related livelihood in the rural setting.

## **Research Method**

The geographical location of this study is Pelwatta in Buttala Divisional Secretariat in Monaragala district, Uva Province. Pelwatta is rural in geographical sense, which is known as one of the Wew gama (a tank-based village) or a Kele gama (a jungle-based village). The North Central province and the Uva province have the highest rural population (96%) in Sri Lanka compared to the other nine provinces according to the population statistics of Department of Census and Statistics in 2011. The same report emphasises that in Sri Lankan context, Municipal Council, Urban Council and Town Council areas are "urban", while Village Councils are "rural".

Dissanayake (1985) notes that Gama in a rural setting (Rural village) is defined as a small settlement having between 1000- 3000 inhabitants which is smaller than a town and larger than hamlet. Pelwatta has 2782 of population according to the Department of Census and Statistics in 2011. The Department of Archaeology has found that Pelwatta also has a historical background and value with a number of historical places like “Yudaganawa Rajamaha Viharaya” (ancient temple) and “Yudaganawa Wewa” (tank) and “Hadapanagala Wewa” (tank) etc. It’s also reported by the Archaeology Department that the rural communities in this area use folk media based on their cultural practices, beliefs, values etc. The primary occupation of this community is farming such as cane farming, banana cultivation, dairy farming, chena and paddy cultivation. Pelwatta Lanka Sugar Company (PVT) Limited, Pelwatta Dairy Industries LTD are mainly based on the cane, banana and dairy farming in Pelwatta area. The most of the people in this area work in these companies apart from farming. According to the population statistics of Department of Census and Statistics in 2011, 89% of people in Pelwatta are into agricultural and food related professions. The location and the samples of this study were selected based on the above-mentioned criteria, statistics, facts and justifications.

This study used a qualitative approach to obtain data using Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and interview method. FGD is a structured discussion used to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data-insight) from a group of people about a particular topic (Omar, 2018). Therefore, 25 people were randomly selected who are engaged in agricultural and food related professions for the FGDs. The purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. The in-depth interviews were personally conducted with the agricultural officer, Grama Sewa officer (the government officer appointed for a specific village) in this area and the 2-management level officers in Pelwatta Lanka Sugar Company (PVT) Limited and Pelwatta Dairy Industries LTD. The data were collected in January 2021 with support of three research assistances. The qualitative data were analysed thematically.

## **Results and Discussion**

As far as the results/ findings are concerned, the purpose was achieved, and problem was answered in this study. In other words, the use of traditional forms of communication for agricultural related livelihood in rural setting in Sri Lanka were examined. Before presenting the original findings of this study, it’s important to identify the socio- economic, cultural livelihood of the people in Pelwatta. The majority of people in Pelwatta are Sinhala Buddhist. The majority of them are attached to “Govigama” cast (mainly farming community) which is considered as the highest cast in Sri Lanka. This also shows that the main occupation of this community is agricultural related professions. Apart from that, “Badahala” (Kumbal- mainly into clay productions), “Rada” (mainly washer men and women), and “Karava” (originally from coastal area and mainly into fisheries) are also live in this area. A 55-year-old farmer states that “People from the different parts of the country migrated and resettled in Pelwatta area in the mid 90’s. People attached to the “Kubal” cast and “Karava” cast migrated from the Southern province. Apart from the “Govigama” cast, “Kubal” cast people are the second majority in this area. These people live in a separate area called “Kubulewela” in Pelwatta. Likewise, the areas are mostly separated in Pelwatta according to their occupations/ professions. The surveyors who came from the other areas for the constructions/development projects were also settled down in Pelwatta. This area is called “Minindoru Kolaniya”. The people who migrated from Welimada area to Pelwatta live in “Welimada ara” in Pelwatta. But currently more than 85% of people in Pelwatta engage in cane farming, banana cultivation, dairy farming, chena and paddy cultivation”.

The results show that the cast and the area are mainly based on the occupations or professions of these communities. This shows that occupation plays a vital role in the livelihood of these communities in Pelwatta. “The structure of caste among the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka was regulated in the past according to the occupation of each caste, which is known as “Rajakariya” (services to the king). Each caste was bound to a principal occupation, which was associated with the concept of pollution. That is, caste is expressed as *pirisudu* (pure) and *honda* (good) as opposed to *apirisudu* (impure) and *naraka* (bad)” (Ryan, 1953:3). The findings also show that majority of people in Pelwatta are into agricultural related professions. As far as the name of this area is concerned, two folk tales are explained the background of emerging the name of this area. Some people believe that there was a plant nursery in this area and “Pala Tawana” word (Plant Nursery) gradually transferred to “Pelwatta”. The other

believe is that a large scale of paddy fields were located in this area and there was a “Pela” (hut) for famers to rest in each individual paddy field (Hut for each paddy). The majority of people in this area believe that this is how the name of this area emerged. The demographic details of the randomly selected respondents are presented in the following table.

**Table 1- Demographic details of respondents**

Demographic factors	Details (25 respondents)	
Age	a) 20-30	1
	b) 30-40	4
	c) 40-50	9
	d) 50-60	8
	e) 60-70	3
Gender	a) Male	16
	b) Female	9
Occupation	a) Cane farming	16
	b) Banana farming	11
	c) Paddy cultivation	20
	d) Chena cultivation	20
	e) Cattle farming	06
	f) Working in Lanka Sugar Company	20
	g) Working in Dairy Industries	05
Monthly Income	a) Below 20,000	-
	b) 20,000- 30,000	5
	c) 30,000-40,000	15
	d) 40,000 -50,000	4
	e) Above 50,000	1
Educational level	a) Below G.C.E O/L	5
	b) G.C.E O/L	5
	c) G.C.E A/L	9
	d) Diploma	3
	e) Degree Level	2
	f) Postgraduate degree Level 1	

This table shows that all the randomly selected respondents are engaged in agricultural related professions such as cane farming, banana cultivation, dairy farming, chena, paddy cultivation and work for Pelwatta Sugar Company and Dairy company which are currently government owned companies. These communities are engaged in different types of agricultural related professions rather than into one particular job as mentioned in the table. Mostly people are into farming while working in these two companies. The most interesting finding is that both men and women are engaged in these occupations. The contribution of the women in cane farming and production is vital in terms of house hold income of their families. “Emergent gender reconfigurations and associated dis-courses dismiss the contributions women make to household income through their work on the cane fields, contrary to pre-existing gender constructs that assigned a high value to women’s roles and labor contributions” (Gunawardena,2021:23).

The results show that the majority of these communities earn middle level income per month. Though some are having considerable educational level, still they are into agricultural related professions. It’s emphasised by the 4 interviewees in Pewlatta mostly people work in these two companies, but the majority of them also into cane, banana, paddy, chena cultivations. Some people in “Welimada Ara” and “Minidoru Kolaniya” are engaged in cattle farming.

In terms of the media usage of these people, mostly television and radio media are used compared to print media and new media. Due to the low coverage of internet, new media such as social media usage is limited among these rural communities. There are also some problems of using mobile phones due to the signal issues. “A majority of rural communities are lagging behind in internet facilities in Sri Lanka. The old media such as television, radio and print media still play an important role in public sector development. The new media such as internet and the other wireless media have potential to bridge the digital divide among urban and rural communities. Public bodies have introduced some ICT innovations and programmes, but the problem is that the internet is still an innovation in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, public sector organisations must address the issues hampering internet adoption among the rural communities in Sri Lanka” (Galagedarage, 2015: 16).

As far as the traditional forms of communication are concerned, these communication forms are directly connected with their agricultural related livelihood. When the government decided to give a large area of lands in Pelwatta for cane farming for a multinational company in 1980’s, the people in this area started to use different types of folk media such as petitions, leaflets, protest, etc. to protect their lands from this multinational company. A 70-year-old farmer mentioned that “A lot of petitions were written to the responsible authorities to stop this unhealthy and stupid decision. Several awareness programmes were conducted to make the people and responsible authorities aware of this matter. Finally, a big protest was conducted in the Buttala Kachcheriya (divisional secretariat) to force the government to revise this decision”. A famous Sinhala lyrics writer, Ratnath Sri Wijesinghe has written a song based on this Pelwatta struggle, “Bimabarak Senaga” song was originated in that context to show the braveness and strength of the people in this area toward injustice. Pelwatta sugar factory was not earned expected profits many years due to poor management, but in early 2021 this company was able to achieve the expected profits. There are still some issues connected to the cane farming and sugar production. Some people cut cane harvest as daily paid workers since the cutting harvest limited to a few months of the year and during the rest of the months, these workers are jobless. Even some permanent workers were not paid during the previous management. It’s found that some traditional forms of communication such as petition and Kelapathatara (a kind of informal notice) were used against the poor management to find the solutions for the issues connected to their occupations.

Apart from these issues, people in Pelwatta have to face some problems in their day to day lives due to some socio-economic, cultural, political factors. These specific issues such as elephant- human conflict, a lack of clean water, low income, childhood marriages, illegal marriages and extra marital affairs etc. are directly connected with their livelihood. These problems are also badly affected on their agricultural related professions. Gunawardena (2010) notes that the soil has become weak and unhealthy due to use of a large amount of fertilizer and pesticides for cane farming in this area. The people in this area are struggling to find clean water for drinking as well as water for farming during the dry season. These communities have to buy clean water from bowsers for the daily usage since some health issues are occurred due to use of unclean water available in this area.

The tank is the direct translation of Sinhala word “Wewa”. The water is collected in the tanks for paddy and chena cultivations in rural areas in Sri Lanka (Bandara 1985). People in the Pelwatta also consider “Hadapanagala Wewa” and “Yudaganawa wewa” (water tank) are God gifted properties in their village as these two tanks mainly supply water for their agricultural needs. People mostly use “Wahi Piritha” (a kind of Buddhist Suttas) to get blessings from Buddhism to have rain on time to sustain their agricultural related activities.

This shows that the people use various traditional forms of communication to fulfill their needs in the day to day lives. Several traditional folk songs and poems are also written based on the socio-economic, cultural issues connected to this community. For instance, “Boralu Annena Paya Ridawana” song written by Rathnath Sri Wijethunga, explains the difficult and hard livelihood of the people in this area. In this song, a seller of Belimal (A healthy drink prepared by dry flowers of Bael fruit) invites visitors to have this healthy drink and pay a reasonable amount to survive their challenging lives in the village. Moreover, this particular song explains the above-mentioned issues connected with their livelihood in a sensitive and creative manner.

Likewise, the different traditional forms of communication are used to find solutions for the problems and needs of these people Gombrick & Obeysekara (1988) also note that the beliefs on gods and rituals in Hinduism influenced the Buddhism and created a new religious tradition in the society. The people in this area visit “Yudaganawa” and “Unawatuna” Buddhist temples for the religious activities. Though the majority of people in Pelwatta are Sinhala Buddhists, these people have a high respect and believe on God “Kataragama” who is a god in Hinduism. Therefore, these people wish to obtain blessings of God Kataragama to get rid of diseases and epidemics and for the protection of agricultural crops etc. The people regularly visit “Kataragama” Develaya (temple) situated in Kataragama area in the same district and participate in “Kataragama” annual perahera (parade) doing “Monara Natuma” (peacock dance) which is unique to this area. The peacock is respected by these people as the vehicle of God Kataragama is peacock. It’s believed that God Kataragama is alive in this area and “Mahasiyabalawa” a big Tamarind tree situated in this area is the place where God Kataragama

permanently stays. “A 42-year-old cattle farmer states that “Many people in this area wish to seek blessings from God Kataragama for their issues connected to the livelihood. When one of my cattle was stolen, I visited “Mahasiyabalawa” and obtained blessings from God Kataragama. After two days, the cattle was returned to home by the robber and it’s unbelievable. The blessings can be obtained from the god if a person visits there without having non vegetarian food. Otherwise, the elephant who lives nearby “Mahasiyabalawa” attacks the people.”. Though the “Dewol Madu” ceremony which is a traditional low country Sinhalese dance that is practiced to propitiate Devol deity, still the people in Pelwatta conduct this dancing ceremony after taking the first agricultural harvest to obtain the blessings from Goodness Paththini and God Kataragama. As far as all the above practices and beliefs are concerned, the different traditional forms of communication are used by the people in this area to sustain the agricultural related livelihood.

In the paddy and chena cultivations, some traditional folk beliefs and practices are used to find the solutions for some of the issues faced by communities. Using “Ali Mantara” (a traditional kind of mantra for protecting from elephants), thunder flashes (Ali Wedi) and “Kem krama” (kind of ritual treatments) are some of the cultural practices and beliefs to prevent the issues created by animals for their farming. “Pel Kavi” is one of the effective and creative folk songs which are used by the farmers in the night to reduce their tiredness while protecting the chena (Hena). This becomes more interactive when other farmers also reply to these folk songs.

Riswan (2014) notes that, the cultural differences, variances and uniqueness of a particular society or a group can be identified based on the slangs and jargons of a language. Likewise, language and its jargons, slangs etc. can vary from community to community and region to region. For instance, the people in Pelwatta also have their unique jargons and slang connected to their agricultural related livelihood such as “Liyabara” for “Pipinya” (cucumber), “Sakalaya” for “Kurullan” (birds), “Gaigata” for “puwak” (areca nut), “Sakkulaya” for “Niyagaya” (drought), “Biran” for “Wahiwala” (cloudy) etc.

There is a rich food culture connected to their livelihood in Pelwatta. Fried and boiled “Bada Irigu” (Maize -Corn) is a popular food among the communities and corn flour is used to prepare some traditional varieties of food such as “roti” (a kind of traditional bread), “Pittu” (a kind of traditional breakfast item), “Aggala” (traditional sweet). A 35-year-old female farmer stated that “The people from the other parts of country do not regularly eat “Wanjanaya” (curry) or “Malluma” (a type of leaves curry) prepared using “Maiyokka kola” (manioc leaves) or Ala kola (Colocasia leaves) like the people in Pelwatta. People regularly take these two specific curries and “Kollu” (horse gram) which is basically unique food for Tamils”. Apart from the unique food culture, these people have some “Athbeheth” which are traditional home remedies and treatments unique to this area for various types of diseases. For example, apply grinded mustard seeds with rice water for the back pain and steam with dried coconut leaves for “Wisa gedi” (abscess). Likewise, people use different traditional forms of communication to find solutions for the issues connected to their agricultural related livelihood.

## **Conclusion**

The development communication as the main theoretical framework of this study supports to examine the use of traditional forms of communication in empowering agricultural related livelihood of rural communities. In other words, the findings show that the livelihood of these communities are directly connected with the various traditional forms of communication within the community. Moreover, the traditional forms of communication play a vital role in finding solutions for the issues connected with their livelihood. This shows that the purpose and the problem of this study are answered based on the results and findings.

According to the findings of the study, the majority of people in Pelwatta are into agricultural related professions such as cane farming, banana cultivation, dairy farming, chena cultivation, paddy cultivation and work for Pelwatta Sugar Company and Dairy company which are currently government owned companies. The people use various traditional forms of communication to fulfill their socio-cultural, economics needs and issues in the day to day lives. Moreover, these traditional forms of communication are used by the rural communities for get rid of diseases, epidemics, crisis and struggles,

for the protection of agricultural crops, maintain the uniqueness of their food culture, protect the cultural and religious values, heritages etc.

The responsible authorities should support these communities to protect and promote the cultural, socio-economic values, heritages and resources unique to this area. Pelwatta Sugar Company and Diary company are government owned companies which are completely based on the cane, banana and milk production of this area. These companies provide the job opportunities for the communities as well as promotes the agriculture in this area. Therefore, it's a responsibility of the responsible authorities to develop the infrastructure facilities and facilitate people to make more agricultural production by finding solutions for elephant-human conflict, a lack of clean water, low income, childhood marriages, illegal marriages and extra marital affairs etc. It's also found that there is no internet and mobile signal coverage in this area. Therefore, responsible authorities should expand the signal coverage in this area. Combining traditional media with mainstream media and new media is another alternative solution to empower these rural communities. Chapke (2003) notes that combining folk media and the other media is the best way of empowering the rural communities. The responsible authorities can take some actions to use Uva community radio which is one of the provincial radio channels unique to this area to protect and promote the socio-cultural and economic heritage, resources and different traditional forms of communication unique to this community.

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