

Bridging the gap: Experts to non-experts

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Climate change is complex and is affecting people's lives and culture everywhere; especially those living in rural areas of developing countries and dependent on seasonal resources for their livelihood. Most of the time, people tend to ignore the issues related to climate change due to its complexities.

Research on climate communication had already shown that, though both cognitive engagement and emotional engagement are the necessary conditions to transfer the climate knowledges; emotional engagement seems to be more affective.

Folk art can be a useful way to establish this emotional engagement among the non-experts, especially among a non-literate crowd. Folk culture is deeply rooted in one's individual and social life and is transmitted from one generation to the next and hence folk art-based participatory performing art can be used as a direct communicating tool with the audience. Participatory performance is also useful for communicating complex information (like the scientific information about climate change) to groups comprising of members with heterogeneous levels of knowledge. Hence, this emotional engagement through participatory involvement will help people to understand and visualize the complex scientific concepts easily, learn from the peers, and increase their critical thinking skills.

The objective of this study is to test this hypothesis in Assam, India using participatory Traditional Folk Theater (TFT) to communicate climate change with the non-experts and tests the efficacy of interventions using TFT as a medium of climate change communication.

Participatory performative arts result in longer-lasting learning gains and increased climate literacy among non-experts. Such an empowered community would be more confident to engage in constructive climate change discussion and contribute significantly to 'scientize' climate change policies. Engagement of the local public in evaluating the problems in their surrounding will help in increasing their knowledge about the problems and, as a result to smooth the adaptation policies.

This study will serve as a template for a nation-wide training program to communicate the complex scientific knowledges to the non-experts without any scientific background by equipping people with confidence to converse about climate change without getting misinformed.