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**DISCOURSE-CENTRIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO POPULAR THEATRE:  
A CASE IN BANGLADESH**

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**Abstract**

Popular theatre belongs to the duplex form of communication the purpose of which is information dissemination packed in people's discourse aiming consciousness building required for social and institutional change. It is a participatory endeavor using communication devices to

unearth the mind—information processing—of a community through advancing community’s own discourse. It contrasts the economy-centric growth model of development reproducing a distant discourse. Popular theatre is practiced by various development organizations in Bangladesh including BRAC. This article presents the findings of a study of BRAC’s popular theatre showing how grassroots people identify its distinctiveness in portraying their community discourse, and popular theatre engages people in action required for change.

**Keywords:** Discourse-centric development, communication artifacts, popular theatre, knowledge grounding, language, message, top-down information flow.

### *1. Introduction*

Culture as broadly defined as “a network of representations—texts, images, talk, codes of behaviour, and the narrative structures organizing these—which shape every aspect of social life” (Haggis and Schech, 2002) is pathetically ignored in the main stream economy-centric growth model of development unable to account for the reality of complex relations of power and governance, nor the social struggles enacted at the individual and community level (Dankoff, 2011). On the cultural front, which can sometime be invisible but largely felt through the use of communication artifacts—verbal and non-verbal—, such struggles resides in communicative acts packed and pronounced in the practicing discourse. Overemphasis on growth model constantly ignores such struggles that reside in the psyche of the people for whom development is addressed. Therefore, growing emphasis is now given on the cultural and communication aspects of development, a noteworthy approach of which is discourse-centric understanding of development.

Understanding discourse is the understanding of the practices of knowledge and meanings in concrete contexts and institutions (Talja, 2005). Discourse analysis explores meaning behind text or discourse. It came to the attention of scholars in the humanities and social sciences in the late 1960s and 1970s. Communication and Information science began adopting this approach in the first half of the 1990s. The new theoretical discourses, which emphasize the user’s perspective, necessitate the exploration of meaning resident in the discourse uttered and constructed by the individuals. Communicative events such as writing and conversation, all of which have form, are known as discourse. Discourse analysis works on a huge range of variables, including intonation,

gesture, syntax, style, lexicon, rhetoric, meaning, speech act, moves, strategies, turn taking, and other aspects of interactions. It also analyses the relations between text and context, discourse and interaction, and cognition and memory. In other words, discourse analysis serves an encompassing arena of action, interaction, and construction of meaning.

Discourse in Foucauldian understanding is the human action architected by the knowledge system that is the production of a larger institution marked by a dominant ideology. Therefore, it is argued that, human communication—its form, content, and above all the consumption of media and construction of meaning of media material—represents the discourse in practice. How a community adapt to a medium of communication and how meanings are constructed from this communicative act is unfolded when discourse is used as the point of reference.

Popular theatre is widely used as a means for rising awareness among the people for whom development is addressed. It is a communication approach aligned to discourse-centric understanding of development. BRAC, besides several NGOs in Bangladesh, has been enthusiastically using popular theatre in disseminating development messages among ultra-poor. We carried out an investigation to develop an understanding about how people view popular theatre judged from their own discourse. This article presents the findings, which, we believe, may contribute in the discourse-centric understanding of development.

## *2. Methodology*

The study used a triangulation method, respectively a combination of quantitative—survey—and qualitative—focus group discussion (FGD) and case study—method of investigation for knowledge grounding and functional value of message. The study drew on the technique of stratified sampling. Primarily four stratum were selected on the basis of population and topographical differences. Within each stratum, which is the study population, three villages, where similar theme based popular theatre was staged, was chosen for survey. Everyone who watched a theatre during data collection period formed the sampling frame, and enumerators surveyed every spectator. Audiences were surveyed within a week after a drama was performed to measure their immediate understanding. Through facilitated discussions community members

reported on the effects of theatres that were performed a year ago. Survey data was analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics, the purpose of which was to get an overview about the demographics of the population, media behavior, and above all to what extent the knowledge purported through popular theatre was grounded, i.e., the degree of understanding of the messages conveyed through different dramas. Transcriptions of FGDs—both speech and non-verbal cues—were interpreted by using a discourse analysis technique.

### *3. Development as discourse*

Development as discourse contrasts with the economic-centric growth model of development (Dankoff, 2011) emphasizing only tangible changes viewed on the façade which is measurable. Such model does not address people's mind processing information and generating meaning necessary for any sustainable change in behavior, and as such it is fallacious of upholding a one-eyed incomplete understanding of development. On the contrary, development as discourse undoes the façade and aims for unveiling people's mind and meaning and as such power relations. It is a communication perspective that examines human's behavioral expressions encoded in texts channeled through medium. In other words, development as discourse is a communication perspective that examines language and all other human expressions as both medium for representing the world and an inherent part of human thinking generating meaning constituting human group behavior and the dynamics of change.

Therefore, language in its wider sense comes to the forefront of viewing development as discourse. Language is both a system and also a social event that is practiced. As stated by Piliang (2012, p.2), "Language is an (sic) 'hegemonic apparatus' in the relation between 'the ruler' and 'the ruled': it controls consciousness, shapes minds, models opinions and orients behavior. In other words, language is an extension of power, through which dominant idea or ideology is socially reproduced." Viewing in this way, language—linguistic and semiotic externalization of human mind—needs to be investigated to demystify what causes underdevelopment and as well what measures are to be taken to overcome such hindrance.

Language in its wider understanding is also an integral part of human nature as it is the component of the human mind characterizing human nature defined in a biological setting (Chomsky, 2002) nurtured in a given cultural context. Biological setting is almost similar across

different groups and nations, whereas cultural context obviously differs that makes people, their language and nature different and distinctive. Distinction is visible in people's music and other cultural artifacts—theatre, film, literature, sculpture etc.—that constitutes our identity (Pervez, 2012) by marking boundary (Dunkaff, 2011), i.e. what to chose to produce and consume, leading to inclusion and exclusion of people and their ideas and language. Distinction of cultural artifacts creates distance between people and also generates difference of power; some have power to dominate other with the strength of their cultural artifacts while others are submissive to such dominance. Such domination produces and reproduces a dominant discourse hindering people's true development by immerging them into a dominant but distant discourse at the cost of abandoning their own into a subconscious.

Subconscious has the potential of transforming back to the conscious when a subversive discourse comes into being. In other words, a counter discourse is necessary in order to resist the domination of an elite discourse that constantly ignores the mind—the cradle of information processing—and meaning of the people for whom development is addressed. Seeing in this way, a discourse-centric understanding of development urges for a communication approach to use the communication resources of a community in their own discourse aligned to their linguistic and semiotic identity molded in their own cognitive device. Popular theatre, as we found through our empirical investigation, is one of the ways that facilitates a counter discourse by undoing the dominant one.

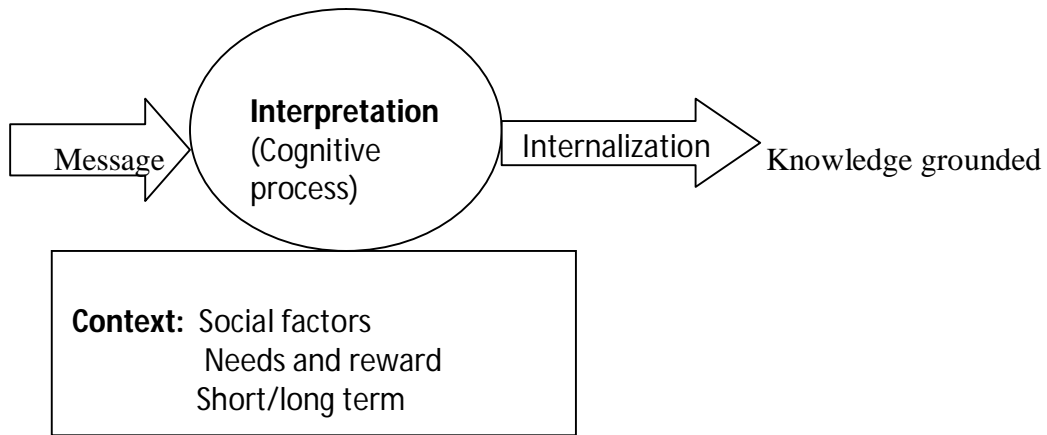
#### *4. Communication, media and theatre*

Some communication scholars, for example, Fiske (1982), have a restrictive definition of media, viewing a medium as a physical artifact or channel of communication. This is an artifact-centric projection of media. Focusing on how people make meaning out of a mediated process provides a receptor perspective on how communication generates meaning (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). The receptor perspective on media is a phenomenological approach that understands media, not as texts or structures of production, but as practice (Couldry, 2004). Hansen (2006) conceives of a medium as an environment for life. His understanding of media is divided into two dimensions: the technical dimension deals with the materiality of medium and the experiential dimension focuses on its phenomenality. The second, experiential, dimension sees

the medium as an operation of mediation between a living being and the environment. Artifacts work as communication media only when coupled with the human. It is a common gossip among anthropologists that a group of Micronesians who had no concept of “photograph” could not figure out what they were seeing when shown a family picture of a European anthropologist. They stared at the picture for quite a long time and said, “Your family members are so small and flat.” Through structural coupling an artifact becomes a part of our experiential domain and only then does that artifact qualify as a medium we can use to communicate.

Media are context-dependent and are located at a crossroad of individual biography, institutional settings, and socio-cultural context. Littlejohn (2004) examined different theories and perspectives on media and graphically showed how artifacts, society, and individuals are all important in understanding media as an integrated process of communication. Media as an integrated process is a product of a given socio-technical setting consumed by people who are also a construct of a given socio-institutional context. This integrated process suggests that media mediate between people and their environments. Taking this view of communication, one may argue that media provide the mediation through which we make distinctions about our environment. From these distinctions meaning emerges and the emergent meaning may also become form when expressed to communicate in a community. It is also further argued that the practicing discourse in a community shapes the way people make distinction of their environment, endorse meaning to the message received and alters their behavior.

Emergence of meaning fundamentally depends on knowledge grounding. Knowledge grounding is prerequisite for a message to have an effect—an immediate outcome, i.e., understanding the message advancing towards consciousness building—and impact, i.e., sustained change in behavior. Message becomes information when interpreted; else it remains a data (Pervez, 2009) without having able to make any outcome. Information is phenomenological as its meaning may vary due to different interpretation on the basis of an interpreter’s socio-economic and existential context. The very context may obscure the functional and pragmatic value of a message and therefore it will remain improperly grounded; in other word the message will not attain the status of information capable of producing effect and impact. The following model illustrates the mechanism of knowledge grounding.



Knowledge grounding model

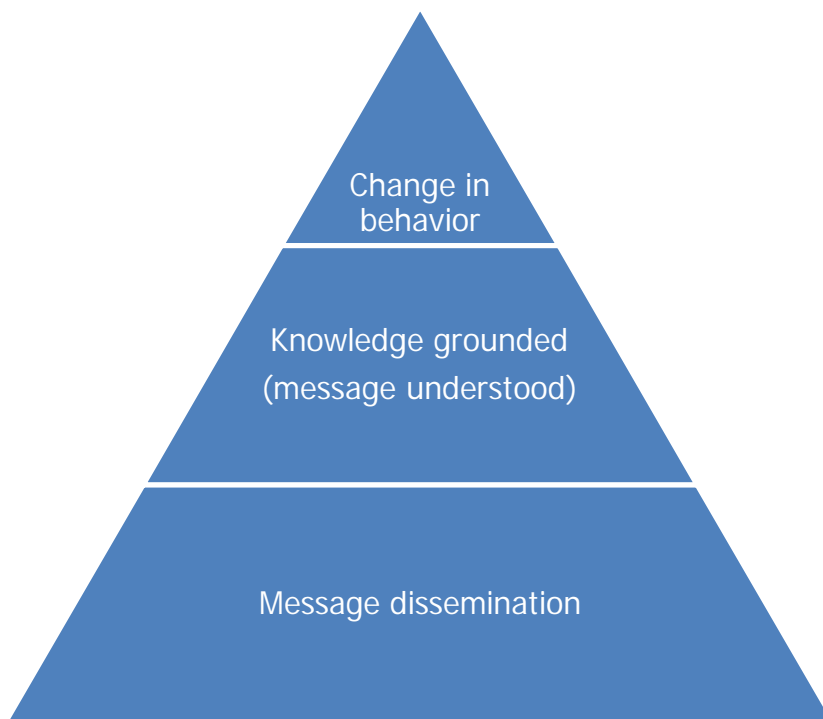
A message needs to be interpreted and internalized in order for knowledge grounding. Interpretation is a cognitive act determined by socio-psychological factors—positive or enabling and negative or defiant factors—, needs and reward, and short or long term significance. Notable that short-term but immediate needs fulfillers tend to work as stronger enabling contextual factors for interpretation and internalization of a message with higher potential for knowledge grounding. Reverse is the case for long-term but distant needs. This is often the prime reason for people’s not being able to cut on consumption required for protection of environment.

Theatre is a communication medium the prime purpose of which is entertainment with a scope for education. The main-stream theatre is a *simplex* (one-way) communication offering no interactivity, and it is inherently narrowcasting. In course of development theatre has also taken a *duplex* (two-way) form of communication that allows not only audience’s expression of applause but also expression of opinion in a form of dialogue between audience and actors during performance. Popular theatre belongs to the duplex form of communication the purpose of which is information dissemination packed in people’s discourse aiming consciousness building required for social and institutional change.

### 5. Popular theatre

Popular theatre, also known as theatre for development (Kalipeni, 1996), is a communication medium to construct, disseminate and interpret messages for raising consciousness required for

social development. As practiced, popular theatre involves participation of community members in three stages: pre-production, performance, and post-production. Through discussion among the community members a theme or topic is selected that has community significance, a story is developed and performed by the community members who generally do not have any acting experience. Often audiences spontaneously intervene—by raising questions or offering verbal support—during a performance when audience is emotionally or intellectually triggered. It is also usual to convene a postproduction dialogue with the audience where messages of the drama performed are discussed, interpreted, and contextualized. All these are done with a purpose to increase people’s awareness required for social development, and the core spirit here is people’s participation. Therefore, one may call popular theatre a participatory awareness building communication medium. The success of such an awareness generating endeavor primarily depends on effective *knowledge grounding*, i.e., to the extent messages are understood by the addressed audience necessary for bringing change in behavior to positively reshape social institutions. Function and effect of any media, seen from a communication perspective, can be operationalized as the following pyramid.



Operationalizing media effect



Message, from dissemination to making effects through optimal knowledge grounding, is discourse grounded in culture that, if effective channels are adopted, is likely to be reproduced as a subversive power to oppose the dominant discourse upholding underdevelopment. The whole process is a communication act involving human and their communication artifacts of various kinds including performance like popular theatre.

For three decades popular theatre has been used in processes of development communication as part of adult education programs (Mugira, 2008; Ali, 2009), primary health program (Kalipeni and Kamlongera, 1986), raising people's awareness (Mugira, 2008), human rights (Sganga and Visser, 2006), conflict transformation (Slachmijlder and Tashibanda, 2009). Popular theatre is essentially a people centric entereducation medium where through workshop and training an inventory of local problems is made for later use in the plays packed in the language of the locals (Eyoh, 2002). In each play one problem theme is explored by and for the local community. At the other end of the scale is television, still to be regarded as a powerful and far-reaching medium for information and entertainment in developing countries. Unlike popular theatre, television provides a continuous flow of information from the top-down, from the city to the countryside, from the rulers to the people. This top-down flow is produced by the broadcasting organizations.

#### *6. Popular theatre in Bangladesh*

Though never known as popular theatre, the same genre of performing medium existed in Bengal for centuries (Murshid, 2006, Nygren, 2009). Bengal is known to have different forms of performing arts—Kobi Gan, Panchali, Gajir Gan, Pot Song—the purpose of which was to make people conscious about social, political, environmental and spiritual phenomenon mainly in an entertaining form sometime with a scope for duplex communication. During the resistance movement against the British in the beginning of 20th century, roaming theatre groups performed street theatre to make people conscious about the need for independence (Mukhopadhyay, 2007). The tradition is not totally extinct, though gradually fading, the trace of which is still found in the performance of Pot Song, Gombhira and Gazir Gan in different places of Bangladesh (Seely, 2010; Nygren, 2010).

During the 1980s some NGOs, being influenced by the pedagogy of the oppressed as theorized by Paulo Freire (Freire, 1972) and Boal's (1985) concept of theatre for the oppressed, introduced popular theatre for developmental use in Bangladesh. The pioneer was Proshika and Gono Shahajjo Shongstha (GSS). Since then, there developed three different models of popular theatre. The first model, as adopted by Proshika, work in collaboration with the theatre groups in the locality whereas the second model works with trained volunteer theatre workers. Third model, as developed by Rupantar, employ a group of fulltime theater staff travelling around their work area performing fully developed script. BRAC follows the second model and work with the local people who are basically volunteers receives a small honorarium for every performance.

## *7. Findings*

With the progressive development of communication technology—faster spread of cable TV and cell phone—people are obviously changing their media behavior; getting more homebound in this case. Yet, popular theatre is distinctively making its voice; people actively attend the performances, react emotionally and intellectually to the messages delivered, and find it as a medium of their own. Below is a sequential report on the significant findings.

### *7.1. Popular theatre: making a distinction:*

Data collected through survey and case studies confirms that the audiences in the midst of consuming various mass media are remarkably aware of the distinctiveness of popular theatre. They recognize the uniqueness of popular theatre as a strong medium for disseminating message, packed in a mix of entertainment and education, enabling the transformation of consciousness towards a positive direction. FGD provides an in-depth report that confirms audiences' confidence in the strength of popular theatre.

TV, which is a hugely popular medium with its illusive power, cannot be an alternative to popular theatre in the way it depicts problems that people seamlessly identify as their own local problem. Interactivity in the form of dialogue between audience and actors during the show and

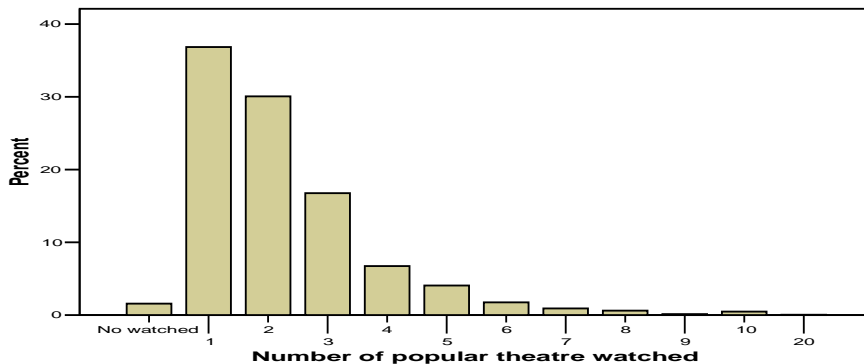
follow-up discussions on the theme of the drama staged is pivotal in identifying popular theatre as an entereducating medium. In their language:

*“What we see in popular theatre gets straight into our head and soul and we immediately see ourselves in what is performed.”*

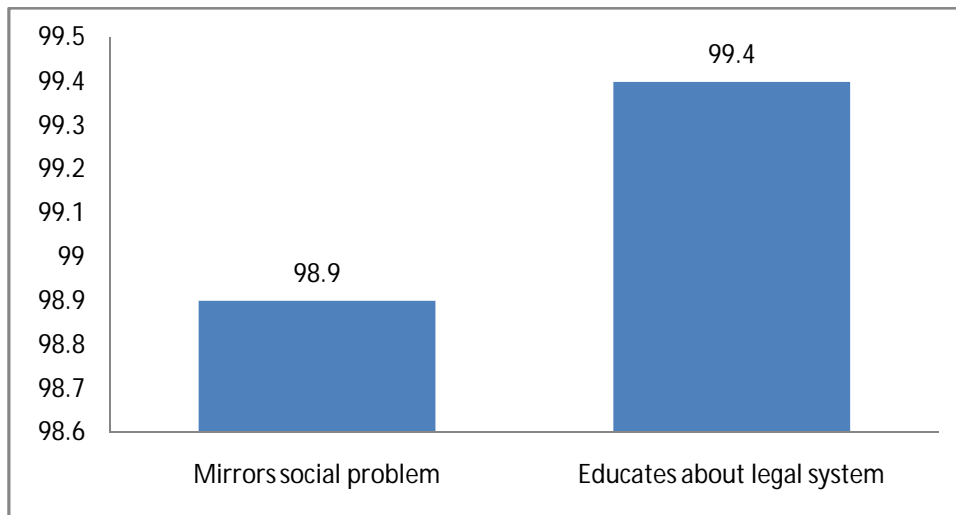
*“TV is a distant medium which creates an illusion with its glamour causing us alienated from the problem, whereas popular theatre mirrors what we have in our unconscious mind.”*

*“Popular theatre makes us critical required for solving our problem.”*

People in general are very appreciative to popular theatre and they in general do not miss an opportunity of watching a performance. 36.8% have seen at least one popular theatre and 59.6% have seen more than one performance. Following is a graphical illustration of the rate of popular theatre seen as calculated from a population (N) of 2241.



People strongly believe popular theatre’s strength in depicting social problems and especially educating about the legal right and procedure available to mitigate social problems. Following graph is how they expressed popular theatre’s strength



Popular theatre's strength (in %, N=2239)

When it comes to source for information gathering and consciousness building, popular theatre is highly valued, respectively 9.7 and 9.9 in a scale of 10. 17.1% have been to neighboring villages to watch popular theatre, which is an indication of the popularity of popular theatre. 7.9% people have watched other forms of theatre—jatra, street theatre, etc.—out of which 95.2% found popular theatre to be a better source for information gathering. It is mainly because popular theatre's themes reflect reality that is not the case with jatra and other types of performances.

Case studies confirm how people positively reflect on the depiction of their life in popular theatre. In many cases popular theatre brings positive changes to their life and attitude, they feel spirited and demands justice that otherwise they would not have done. Following is such a case study.

Rahima is an unmarried poor young girl living in a remote village in Durgapur. She hardly talks and stays in a constant gloomy mood. Her mother worries about her. One evening, local BRAC popular theatre group performs a play entitled “*The Imposter*” that Rahima’s mother watches with her daughter. The drama shows how a young girl was raped by a village man and upon her complaint the village community forced the young man to marry her. Watching this drama brings significant change in Rahima; she tells her mother that she has experienced the same fate as she was raped by Ripon, a married man. Rahima’s family, now spirited with the lesson learnt from the drama, complains to the elderly of the village. Upon investigation it is found that Rahima is pregnant of three months. Village community, with the consent of Ripon’s wife, arranges marriage between Ripon and Rahima. Now Rahima lives with honor and financial security.

Observation of various popular theatres confirms that spectators spontaneously immerse in emotional and intellectual dialogue among themselves during the show. With loud speech they confirm their recognition of the characters acting in the show with the real characters in their locality. They also recognize how unaware they have been about these social problems and as well as their rights. Often the spectators start debating about the issues played in the theatre when the show is still in performance. Some even expressed the blankness of their consciousness by loudly uttering “*When will the people rise up?*” or “*How long can we afford staying unconscious about our right?*”

#### 7.2. Knowledge grounding:

Knowledge is grounded at a 95.55, which is high moderate. According to the semantic approach to information processing, which combines the concepts of human cognition with the theory of information transfer, for strong knowledge grounding the optimum score should be >98 when test is carried within a week after a message is given. Messages that are structurally grounded, like “*Poverty can not be an excuse for taking dowry*” and “*Bride’s opinion is not necessary*”, scored low, respectively 88.5 and 94.8. In general, messages relating to structurally embedded problem have weaker grounding compared to the messages that calls for behavior change with an immediate positive outcome. This was evident in the drama advocating for drinking hygienic water. Findings from FGDs reconfirm this. On the contrary, taking dowry is a problem caused

and maintained by a number of interrelated phenomenon for which a larger social transformation is required, which inherently poses restriction in an individual's cognitive domain and as a result obscures knowledge grounding. Society dominated by patriarchal mode of discourse also weakens knowledge grounding for a message advocating equal right of women in expressing their opinion. However, compared to other channels—TV, cinema, newspaper etc.—used on the same theme, knowledge grounding is stronger for the information disseminated through popular theatre.

### *7.3. Feelings of the ultra poor:*

Findings that we have just described in the preceding section unfold how ultra poor generally feel about popular theatre. But they cannot confidently hope that popular theatre can make an effective mark on the mind of the rich people towards changing their attitude and action towards the poor. In other words, popular theatre may not be a means to lessen the gap between these two groups as the rich people will inherently uphold their attitude irrespective of what messages are disseminated through popular theatre. Nevertheless, the poor feel spirited as an outcome of watching popular theatre that educates them about their rights and especially about what they should not do by unfolding the social reasons for their being vulnerable and victim of social injustice and disparity. In their language, *“We were blind, popular theatre has given us a new sight.”*

The ultra poor believes popular theatre does not merely mirror the reality that they are in, rather it transcends their knowledge, which is a top-down construction of false consciousness dominated by an elite discourse reproducing their poverty, over to a more dynamic positive direction.

### *7.4. Drama group: the change-making agent:*

As change-maker, drama group functions at two levels: inspiring people through their performance and communicating between people in need and different organs of BRAC like *Polly Shomaj*, HRLS etc. Drama group enjoys the respect that they receive especially from the poor people. People in their impoverished condition contact drama group members for counseling. The most significant with the drama artists is their being able to inspire people for

change, both through performance and through counseling; therefore, one can call them change-maker. Following are two examples about how performance of drama brought changes.

There is a pond in a village of Mollarhat where people cultivated fish that they no longer have any right to consume as the rich people won't allow the poor a share. Mollarhat drama group composed a drama depicting the situation and staged it in the village. The drama not only showed the reality, it also showed protest against such injustice. This inflamed people's mind and they demanded their right for fish and actually they were successful in achieving their right.

Drama effect, social mobilization

After watching a drama about domestic violence, a woman came to the drama group and shared her problem with them. She is married to a meson who has married another girl without her consent. Moreover, she is constantly beaten by her husband. She asked if the drama group could help her. Drama group took the women to BRAC's Legal Aid department who resolved the problem

Drama effect, bridging with BRAC

#### *7.5. Youth: extension education:*

Youth, across both the sexes, are highly attracted to popular theatre. They find it significantly educative that teaches them what is not taught in their school and TV dramas and cinemas. Therefore, popular theatre to them is a means for extension education. It supplements institutional and traditional knowledge. Besides, popular theatre trains them to become a good human being.

#### *8. Unfolding the discourse*

As described in a preceding section, the communication practice of Bangladesh has always had a context for people to adapt to popular theatre. For centuries performing art of similar genres existed in this country and people are cognitively tuned in identifying the purpose—which is information dissemination in an entertaining form—of this kind of media. Most of the folkloric media in Bangladesh use performance both for entertainment and education. Therefore, it was

not accidental that popular theatre is not only popular but it is also recognized as mirroring the social ills, unraveling the causes for poverty in their own discourse, and it is also a medium for extension education.

Any performing art is inherently an entertaining means, no art alone can bring revolutionary change in a society. What it can do is to complement other organized attempts for a change. Maxim Gorky's novels did not revolutionize Russia; rather it inspired people when Bolsheviks underwent a political upheaval leading to people's revolution. Revolutionary literature could work as quiver in the reader's consciousness and thus pave a ground for other change-makers to accomplish their task. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to expect popular theatre to be catalytic in bringing institutional change despite its being so popular. However, there is example of popularizing oral saline with the help of media commercials in Bangladesh. Media played a significant role, for which there is no denial, but one must not forget BRAC's field level interpersonal communication and campaign that played the major role when media was a supplementary force.

Changes that bring immediate reward and not constrained by deeper social factors seem to be easy to achieve. Use of oral saline to cure from diarrhea is an example of such change, and therefore media had experienced such a phenomenal success. Our findings reconfirm this as we find the positive effect of popular theatre disseminating the messages of drinking hygienic water is significantly successful. On the contrary, messages about problems that are deeply embedded into a social structure have difficulties to mark a significant effect. Taking dowry is an example in this case. A poor feels obliged to give dowry for her daughter though he is aware that dowry is not a positive social act. Without dowry it is still difficult in the rural Bangladesh to marry off a daughter. That is why it does not make a huge positive effect on social practice even dozens of theatre is staged advocating against dowry. Nevertheless, advocating against dowry in this way strengthens other means of fighting against dowry and such problems.

In a society that have been, and perhaps still is, governed by the poverty of ignorance, popular theatre as a means for extension education is a significant step towards making people educated about their rights to legal system when there is a need. Legal system is also a product of a society's dominant discourse. More truly, the dominant discourse often blocks people's access to



use the benefit of the system. The language of legal system in general is cumbersome and the procedure is complex. Therefore, people generally are not confident to access the legal system. The dominant class exploits this by making the discourse even more distant. Popular theatre, as we have found in our study, makes people aware about the legal system by translating the cumbersome legal discourse into a comprehensible speech of people. Such a linguistic transfer is an important tool in order to ensure people's access to a complex system.

Such a linguistic transfer is required to make people get rid of the dominant discourse that shapes an institution. Linguistic transfer needs social capital and other organized support else it remains an unsuccessful endeavor. It is positive that the drama groups are on the way to develop a certain social capital. They are respected, recognized as knowledgeable and above all a bridge between BRAC and the people. People in crisis often come to drama artists who in turn take them to respective BRAC office for support. It often happens that in rural problem mitigation meetings the drama group members are invited to join the adjudicators. This is an indication that popular theatre is making a small but important way in the rural power nexus.

Seen from the discourse-centric development approach, popular theatre is performed about local problems in local language, which people feel easy and spontaneous to link with. It contrasts with the mass media that is packed in an elite language speaking a distant voice. Such distant voice has a boundary that the poor people cannot access. Even accessed, such discourse, as it is the case in the developing countries, will inevitably generate a knowledge system alienating people from their actual situation. Furthermore, such distant but powerful discourse will mesmerize them by the dazzles of a false consciousness. Such false consciousness hinders development, makes people dependent on an unknown discourse, and as such maintains the trap of underdevelopment. Popular theatre in this respect possesses the merits to unfold grassroots discourse capable of undoing the distant but dominant one.

## *9. Conclusion*

Popular theatre used for development, as we have seen in Bangladesh, mirrors grassroots problem packed in local discourse. It draws on local legends, humor and communication materials that are largely folkloric in nature. In other words, popular theatre is aligned to the

grassroots cognitive competence. Furthermore, as a form it advances on the performance tradition of the locality. All of these give popular theatre strength that other development communication acts practiced in development work—poster, simplex documentary, etc.—generally do not hold. Show time interactivity and post-dialogue are especial merit of popular theatre that makes audiences feel part of the act and as such it helps brainstorming necessary for strengthening community's own discourse towards serving the interest of the community. It is a participatory endeavor using communication devices to unearth the unconscious of a community through advancing community's own discourse. It contrasts the economy-centric growth model of development which reproduces a distant discourse.

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