

Briefing paper

Locating the 'third voice': participatory film making and the everyday in rural India.

Sudbury, S., 2016. *Journal of Media Practice*, 17(2-3), pp. 213-231.

As part of an Indian government research project, 11 women from villages across Andhra Pradesh in India were trained as video reporters. The intention of the Sneha Praja Video Project was to empower village women to make video reports on issues that were of concern to them; the films were then screened across the state. This research aimed to present new knowledge about everyday life in rural India by asking four of these women if they would use the project's cameras to film their everyday lives. The research combined participatory filmmaking with traditional observational documentary techniques in order to create an engaging narrative and new perspectives on life in rural India.

Outline of research

- The women were divided into 4 teams, each lead by a participant. These lead participant's experiences contributed to the main body of the film consisting of the following themes:
 1. Escape from domestic violence
 2. Grief over the death of a son
 3. Irritation at messy teenagers
 4. Hierarchies – relationships between husbands and children.
- A translator was employed in order to make the communication between the participants and the filmmaker easier.
- Each woman was given three 60' tapes to record with. The participants collaborated by self-shooting.
- The filmmaker also filmed the women's filming activity using a Sony PD150 and radio microphones.
- The women used their cameras to interview their family members. Sometimes during this time the filmmaker was absent.
- The 23 hours were divided up into the following 5 categories:
 1. Video diaries shot by the 4 women (leader of each team).
 2. Self-shot actuality by the 4 women.
 3. Film of the 4 women shot by other women in the group or their relatives.
 4. Film of the 4 women, actuality sequences and general views.
 5. Sneha Praja video project film about child marriage. This was shown in recording frame.



Read the full paper here:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14682753.2016.1248191>

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Key findings and impact

The use of video diary interviews and participatory film making encapsulated the feelings of the 4 women and the 'reality' of their lives was discovered. The film highlighted the problem of domestic violence in rural India, where participants revealed that their husbands would 'harass' them after coming home drunk. The tours of the women's homes and snapshots of family life hinted at hierarchies of domestic relationships. The Sneja Praja video project had an impact on these women's lives, one participant even claimed that she was treated with more respect in her village.

Conclusion

To conclude, the research investigated the concept of the third voice by blending the produced footage in order to tell the story of rural life in India through new perspectives. The film gives voice to the women, yet is still authored by the filmmaker. The two parties complement each other, combining to tell a story through a third voice. This project will impact future projects by highlighting how the fusion of these methods creates a unique result of reality within 'other' communities.



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