GJMC S3 02 (M)

Traditional Folk Media

SEMESTER - III

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

BLOCK - 2



KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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DETAILED SYLLABUS

BACHELOR OF ARTS

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

SEMESTER - III

BLOCK - 2

TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA

Unit – 8: STUDIES IN FOLKLORE **Pages : 115-132**

Folklore Research in India- Indian folklore scenario, Research work in India, Importance of Folklore Research – Components of folklore, folklore research- how it helps?, Review of studies on folklore – significance of the studies of the different folklores-review works, Significance of the reviews of folklore

Unit – 9 : POPULAR FORMS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ASSAM **Pages : 133-149**

Traditional folk forms in Assam – Bihu, Ainaam, Lullabies, Ojapali, Sattriya, Bhaona, Borgeet, Lokageet

Unit – 10: DR. BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOLK MEDIA **Pages : 150-160**

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as Mass Communicator, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's contribution to folk media

Unit- 11: FOLK MEDIA AND SCIENTIFIC TEMPERAMENT **Pages : 161-173**

Folk media and scientific temperament, Problems in folk media communication, Use of folk media by cultural organizations and state governments

Unit- 12: FOLK MEDIA AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION **Pages : 174-189**

Folk media and health communication : need and scope, case studies, the utilitarian aspects

Unit – 13: ROLE OF UNESCO IN SUSTAINING FOLK MEDIA **Pages : 190-207**

UNESCO's efforts to sustain folk media in developing countries, Folk media in South Asia

Unit – 14: CONTRIBUTION OF EMINENT PERSONS TO FOLK MEDIA COMMUNICATION **Pages : 208-221**

Contribution of eminent persons to folk media communication : Gloria Feliciano, Vimal Dissanayake, Shyam Parmar, H.K Ranganath

Unit – 15: FOLK MEDIA Vs MASS MEDIA **Pages : 222-233**

Folk media Vs mass media, Future of folk media in India and Assam – suggested measures

BLOCK INTRODUCTION:

This is the second block of the course on 'Traditional Folk Media'. A brief over view of the eight units of the first block has been given below-

Unit – 8: STUDIES IN FOLKLORE

This is the eight unit of the course on 'Traditional Folk Media'. In this unit, you will be given a brief overview of the Indian folklore scenario with special focus on tales from Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jataka and Kathasaritasagara. The unit will also talk about the amount of research work conducted during different periods of time as well as the different components of folklore. In other words, you will get an idea of review of studies on folklore and their significance.

Unit – 9: POPULAR FORMS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ASSAM

In this unit, you will know in detail about the different traditional folk forms in Assam like Bihu, Ainaam, Lullabies, Ojapali, Sattriya, Bhaona, Borgeet and Lokageet. By going through the folk forms you will be able to appreciate the role of folk media in preserving the cultural identity of Assam.

Unit – 10: DR. BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOLK MEDIA

This is the tenth unit of the course. In this unit, you will be able to explain the role of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as a mass communicator and analyse his contribution towards the growth of folk media in Assam.

Unit- 11 : FOLK MEDIA AND SCIENTIFIC TEMPERAMENT

This unit will discuss on how folk media helps in enhancing scientific temperament, problems usually encountered in folk media communication, use of folk media bu cultural organizations and state governments

Unit- 12 : FOLK MEDIA AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

This unit will throw light on how traditional folk media serves as a medium for promotion of health communication. A few case studies have been highlighted in order to substantiate the fact that folk media is used on a wide scale the world over for health communication.

Unit – 13 : ROLE OF UNESCO IN SUSTAINING FOLK MEDIA

In this unit, emphasis has been given on the role of UNESCO in sustaining folk media in developing countries of the world. A brief overview of some of the different folk forms of South Asian countries have been analysed in order to understand what role the different forms of folk media play in the society.

Unit – 14: CONTRIBUTION OF EMINENT PERSONS TO FOLK MEDIA COMMUNICATION

This unit will concentrate on the contribution of eminent persons like Gloria Feliciano, Wimal Dissanayake, Shyam Parmar and H.K Ranganath to folk media communication. In fact, this unit will focus on how their contributions have enriched the value of traditional folk media in the society.

Unit -15 : FOLK MEDIA Vs MASS MEDIA

This particular unit will look into the advantages and disadvantages of folk media over mass media and vice versa. We shall also discuss about what steps should be taken to revive some of the important folk forms of India in general and of Assam in particular.

While going through this course, you will come across some along-side boxes, which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will explain to you the meaning of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions which have been included under 'Activity' and 'Check Your Progress' section in every unit. 'Activities' will increase your thinking capacity because questions put under 'Activity' section are not directly derived from text. Answers to the short questions have been put under section 'Answers to Check Your Progress'. Besides, a few text-related questions have been put under the section 'Model Questions'. These questions will help to draw your attention on the probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

UNIT 8 : STUDIES IN FOLKLORE

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Folklore Research in India

- 8.3.1 Indian folklore scenario
- 8.3.2 Research work in India

8.4 Importance of Folklore Research

- 8.4.1 Components of Folklore
- 8.4.2 Folklore Research- how it helps?

8.5 Review of studies on Folklore- significance of the studies of the different folklores

- 8.5.1 Review works
- 8.5.2 Significance of the reviews of folklore

8.6 Let us Sum up

8.7 Further Reading

8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to-

- discuss about folklore research in India
- understand the importance of folklore research
- get an idea of review of studies on folklore and their significance

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Folklore studies is an interesting field that not only gives us a glimpse of our culture and its diversity, but also takes us into a world of indisputable wisdom and diverse forms of creative arts and literature both oral and written, which reflect human life and its amazing facets. This makes research in Folklore all the more essential. The review of works on Folklore also holds a strong place in understanding the forms better. The unit gives an idea of the above mentioned areas.

8.3 FOLKLORE RESEARCH IN INDIA

8.3.1 Indian folklore scenario

Folklore encompasses entire body of social traditions that is transmitted either orally or symbolically through various forms like folktales, proverbs, riddles, songs, ballads or fine arts. The treasure of folktales is found both, in local languages and in Sanskrit.

Tales from Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jataka or Kathasaritasagara have remained in our culture through generations till date and have also gained popularity abroad as translations. Oral traditions still flourish in the Indian subcontinent and India leads the world in folklore heritage attracting many western scholars even today for study and research.

The **Jataka Tales** are one of the greatest instances of folk literature in India from 300 BC, originally created in Pali. These stories are associated with teachings of Lord Buddha. He told these in story form in his different incarnations both as human and animals. These tales are of secular nature and give vivid picture of Indian culture, imbibe values of self sacrifice and honesty and give knowledge.

Panchatantra, a collection of traditional tales by Vishnu Sharma in the second century BC, were written to impart moral values and governing skills to sons of Kings in Sanskrit using verse and prose. These included fables and animal stories.

Hitopadesha by Narayan Pandit is again a compilation of stories written in verse and prose thousand years ago for common people to understand lessons in life.

Similar role is played by Somdeva's **Kathasaritasagara**.

Many British and Indian scholars during colonial era, studied folktales from across the country, and the likes of Rudyard Kipling were instrumental in giving a fresh life to Indian folklore. Kipling closely observed the Indian rural life and its folklores, and was proficient in Hindi. His 'Jungle Book' reflects different facets of Indian Folklore.

While in art, Mughal school, Rajasthani paintings, Madhubani art of Bihar, Warli of Maharashtra, Tanjore paintings etc. all reflect folk culture of the communities through the centuries. Tanjore paintings from South India incorporate real gold into their paintings. Local fairs, festivals, deities and heroes (warriors) play a vital role in this art form.



Fig: Madhubani art

The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, has played a major role in promoting folklore studies and research in India. Also National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai, in the last one decade has given young researchers a much needed platform through its portal, to obtain peer review and constructive criticism on folklore writings and studies.



Fig: Tanjore Painting



LET US KNOW

National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, registered in Chennai dedicated to the promotion of Indian folklore research, education, training, networking and publications. The Centre tries to integrate scholarship with activism, aesthetic appreciation with community development, comparative folklore studies with cultural diversities and identities, dissemination of information with multi-disciplinary dialogues, folklore fieldwork with developmental issues and folklore advocacy with public programming events. Ford Foundation and Tata Education Trust provide grants to the Centre for proper functioning.

Indian folklorists like Ram Gharib Chaube worked tirelessly in the colonial era to revive many folktales from remote villages. AK Ramanujan was also one of the noted folklorists to analyse folklore from Indian context. His books 'Where Morrors are Windows" and 'Three Hundred Ramayanas' explore 'intertexual' nature of Indian literature and folklore.

Folklore scholars like Krishnadev Upadhyay, Devendra Satyarthi, Kunja Bihari Dash, Prafulla Dutta Goswami, have made substantial contribution in the study and research of Indian Folklore. And in recent years, folklorists like Birendranath Dutta, Jawaharlal Handoo, B. Reddy, PC Patnaik, Sadhana Naithiani, Chitrasen Pasayat, Vivek Rai, MD Muthukumarswamy, Molly Kaushal, P Subachary, Shyam Sundar Mahapatra or Babagrahi Mishra have been working towards promoting study and research of folklore as people's culture.

A Definition of Folklore used by UNESCO:

Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality of tradition based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are among others, languages, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts and other arts.

8.3.2 Research work in India

Through folklore research, it has been observed that scholars of Indian folklore worked in three phases and the three major periods of folklore studies in India involve:

The missionary period of colonial era: During this period, British civil servants studied Indian folklore closely to understand their new subjects better and practice good colonial administration. While the missionaries came here with an intention of spreading Christianity, they were motivated to study Indian folklore. They recorded all kinds of information on – habits, customs, manners, oral traditions, rituals etc. of rural people and used these to develop their messages on Christianity more effectively. Hence, the works of the missionaries in folklore also contributed to folklore research.

The Nationalistic period: The works of the missionaries and the civil servants, made Indian scholars aware of their own rich cultural

heritage and they began a more serious study of Indian folklore. This generated a strong sense of nationalism and the desire to obtain cultural and political freedom. They realized that nationalistic sentiments can be revived through native languages, epics, food, customs, ancient thoughts and wisdom and literature preserved as folklore.

The Academic period: This phase began right after independence. Folklorists and researchers began a more systematic and scientific study of folklore with lot of research done. The studies of folklore gained importance as an academic discipline in universities and research institutes. Interdisciplinary studies among folklorists and academicians also began giving new dimensions to folklore research in India. Many Universities in southern India and eventually all over the country started their folklore studies departments.

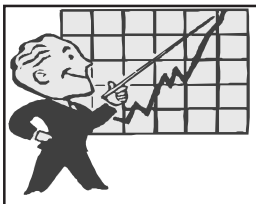
In recent years many young scholars have shown lot of interest in studying Indian folklore, which is helping to understand Indian culture in a holistic manner. Folklore research in India has contributed to the theoretical and methodological issues concerning Indian folklore itself. Folklorists study Indian Folklore with a mindset that India has over the centuries developed a diverse cultural and linguistic heritage with many cultures of its own and many coming with invaders and new rulers. The folklore traditions evolved simultaneously and with every age incorporated new characteristics.

India remains one of the richest sources of folktales and has a rich folklore of aphorisms, anecdotes, songs, proverbs and more much of which has been contributed by the tribal communities found across the country, in hills, coasts, plains and forests. Folktales from Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kashmir, West Bengal, Southern States or Northeastern India, reflect upon the diversity. There are tales of lovers, brides, grooms, epic heroes, children, loving mothers, and brave fathers, cunning Brahmans and mythological figures or even animals.

Some of the Folklore in Rajasthan (Dhola Maru), or Punjab (Heer Ranjha) are so popular even among the young generation forcing wide research on their origin for possibilities of being true, and also being used by filmmakers to create good cinema.

In Northeast India, a treasure house of folklore, Naga or Manipuri folktales are very rich in documenting the heritage of their various tribes and communities. In Assam, apart from the folklore of the Tribals, Vaishnavite and neo Vaishnavite written and oral tradition with mythological and epic tales used in storytelling through dance, music and theatre, form the rich classical folk tradition of our country. One of the most respected litteratuers of Assam, Lakshminath Bezbaruah was instrumental in promoting folklore. He not only visited villagers in different parts but also came up with a compilation of folktales in 1911. Titled 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' (Grandmother's tales), it has thirty folktales of Assam that are loved by all generations.

The oral tradition of peasant communities across India includes ballads, riddles, proverbs, folk songs, legends and myths that have been explored by folk researchers to understand the communities and their ways of working and behaving better. Research of Indian folklore in different parts of India, tell how folklore depicts everyday life, social structure, religious beliefs and customs of common people along with the ambiguities of life.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Name two important institutions that have played a major role in promoting folklore research and studies in India.

_____

_____

Q.2: Name some senior folklorists of India.

_____

_____

Q.3: Name three significant periods in Indian folklore studies and research.

_____

_____

8.4 IMPORTANCE OF FOLKLORE RESEARCH

Folklore research, whether in India or any part of the world covers a vast area of studies and many a times manage to connect the missing links in folk traditions to establish regularities. Folklorists, during their research, need to go and live among common people in villages to learn and understand the folk forms in the true sense; this helps them understand the connection between scriptural theories and actual village life systems.

8.4.1 Components of Folklore:

Folk Literature, in tribal communities is an artistic expression of tribal thoughts, emotions, of dancing, of hunting, merry making or crying, mostly in oral forms like folk tales, myths, legends, proverbs etc.

While **folktales** are composed of a mixture of actuality and fantasy, a **myth** is a traditional or legendary story and are considered a form of sacred narrative because it holds religious or spiritual significance for those who tell it .Myths usually centre around spirits, Gods and goddesses, or mythological characters. On the other hand, legends are believed to be tales historically true. Riddle is a question directly challenging the listener and proverbs contain the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of ages.

Some legends are interwoven with history and epics. Only through proper research, a clear picture can be drawn and also interpretation of folk art forms that includes clay modeling, carving, engraving, paintings etc. becomes easier once proper research is done. Folk songs and folk dances remain crucial to every culture

and their significance in the culture and traditions can be determined only through research.

Many anthropologists are also applying structuralism to mythology and oral tradition studies for interpreting cultural information. Social dimensions of folklore in many tribal communities, or how these folklores are being used to convey development messages, or folk forms are being intertwined into mass media like cinema. This is something understood better by Folklore research. Folklore research can also determine the characteristics of a race or community. Like a study on Chinese and American proverbs in America a few years ago, reflected how Chinese were more open to taking risks than Americans.

Some researchers also talk of how folklore is important to sociolinguistic research. Interdependence of language and folk forms is studied through research to understand the social life of a community. Folklore research can be also combined with the study of religion, mythology, anthropology and other disciplines to go deeper into findings. Like research in Folklore has found that many folktales of India have traces of Rig Veda.

Folklores are sometimes collected from the elderly in the villages, from some nomadic storytellers, or senior school teachers in villages. Further, research on these reveals how these undergo transformation in the process of documentation and translation.

A folklorist must have knowledge of the language used in the folklore he or she is studying or researching, and must be able to study not just the folk form but the overall cultural environment surrounding an event of folklore communication for the research to be more fruitful.

8.4.2 Folklore Research- how it helps?

A thorough research in the field of folklore helps in the following ways-

- Folklore research document everyday practices of local communities.
- Gives insight into cultural dynamics.
- Anthropological variations of communities are understood.
- Research enhances scope for social science studies.
- Understanding Folklore as a living tradition gets better.
- Enables to understand what values and messages are imparted through children's folklore.
- Aspirations of the youth of a community are reflected through study of folklore.
- What wisdom is left behind by the elderly is looked into with more clarity through research.
- The researcher gets to move beyond books and gets a glimpse of the real life in communities and compares this to values imparted by folklore.
- In the process of research, the researcher observes the environment around the respective communities or tribes, which nurtures their folklore.
- Understanding of oral history is better.
- Interviews throw light on new aspects of the same old folklore tradition.
- Helps to understand how the teachings from folklore are being adjusted into the changing times.
- Changing roles of men and women in tribal and rural society can be determined through folklore research.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: What qualities help folklorists to carry out a good research?

_____

_____

Q.5: State in five points as to how folklore research helps?

_____

_____

Q.6: What are the three basic forms of narratives in folklore?

_____

_____

8.5 REVIEW OF STUDIES ON FOLKLORE – SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDIES OF DIFFERENT FOLKLORE

The role of folklore and importance of studies in the area have been recognized by international organizations as well. **UNESCO's** recommendations on safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore in 1989, in Paris is given below-

UNESCO stated:

Considering that Folklore forms part of the universal heritage of humanity and that it is a powerful means of bringing together different peoples and social groups and of asserting their cultural identity,

Noting its social, economic, cultural and political importance, its role in the history of people, and its place in contemporary culture,

Underlining the specific nature and importance of folklore as an integral part of cultural heritage,

Recognizing the extreme fragility of the traditional forms of folklore, particularly those aspects relating to oral tradition and the risk that they might be lost,

Stressing the need in all countries for recognition of the role of Folklore and the danger it faces from multiple factors,

Judging that the governments should play a decisive role in the safeguarding of folklore and that they should act as quickly as possible,

Having decided at its twenty fourth session that the safeguarding of folklore should be the subject of a recommendation to member states within meaning of article IV, paragraph 4 of the constitution,

Adopts the present recommendation this fifteenth day of November 1989.

8.5.1 Review works

Myths, legends and folktales are the basic three forms of narratives in folklore forms, many of which have been reviewed in recent times. Story telling has been an integral ingredient of the cultures of all societies throughout human history. Narratives recounting unusual happenings, sometimes accepted as truth or faith, or incidents believed to have taken place and stories purely fictitious, or created using old wisdom to teach moral lessons, have been told and retold through centuries using the above mentioned forms.

Like in Assam, one of the most renowned scholars and writers, Lakshminath Bezbaruah, made a significant contribution in compiling folklore of the state. He travelled across villages, meeting village elders, listened to their folklore, and then compiled about thirty folktales that contained wisdom, humour, morality and entertainment all at the same time. The book titled 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' was published in 1911. His work rolled down through generations even in urban areas. This work, after almost hundred years was reviewed, and then revised to accommodate to changing times.

A senior local journalist Samudragupta Kashyap and senior member of Sahitya Sabha, Nagen Saikia, in 2011, worked on a revised version of the book by Lakshminath Bezbaruah and came up with an edition that did away with caste- indicative references and abusive words found in the original writings.

On the other hand, renowned contemporary folklorist Birendranath Dutta has also reviewed many tribal folklores, and has observed how the mythical and epical traditions of tribal people of Northeast India are preserved and developed even in modern cultural and political settings.

'Folklore in Modern India', edited by Jawaharlal Handoo and reviewed by Estonian scholar Ulo Valk is a good review work. Valk

observes that Handoo, in his introduction to this compilation of works of folklore from different parts of the country, has interpreted the roles of oral tradition in modern India from a historical perspective. He states that colonial era had both positive and negative impact of study of Indian folklore. He also stresses on the importance of folkloric patterns in modern mass media.

Scholar Lee Hering's review of a book 'The meaning of folklore: The analytical essays of Alan Dundes', edited by Simon Bronner, reinstates that the hero of American folklore studies is Alan Dunde, as he made great discoveries in the field by constantly enlarging his territory of work. Hering also observes that Dunde's insight into folkloristics gave enduring answers to the question, "what is Folklore and why study it?" Hering informs that Dunde said, "Folklorists must actively seek to elicit meaning of folklore from the folk."

Folklore studies have been reviewed all across the globe right from Africa to the far-east, from Northern and Southern America to Australia and New Zealand, also in the middle-east, giving new insights into the various folklore forms. For e.g. Researcher William Bascon did research on folklore of Africa. He reviewed a collection of African verbal art and found it to be exhaustive, with inputs from various ethnic and linguistic groups. He stated in his studies that legends, aphorisms, proverbs, tales; all present ethnographic and historical details of a culture.

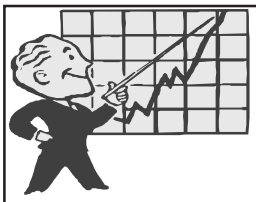
Maria Kalimbou's review of Sadhana Naithani's book, 'In quest for Indian Folktales: Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube and William Crooke', she finds Naithiani offers intellectual stimulation in terms of colonialism versus post-colonialism discourse and ethnographic writings. Naithiani discovers how prominent British administrator William Crooke, took help from Indian scholar and folklorist Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube, for his works of Indian folklore, but did not acknowledge this anywhere.

The book tells how Naithiani found some works of Crooke and Chaube in an archive in London, with documents signed by Chaube who helped Crooke in collecting folk tales. Cahube travelled across villages collecting folklores and translating them into English for Crooke. Kalimbou observes, Naithiani re-introduces Chaube, decades after his death, as an Indian folklore scholar of colonial times who went anonymous during his lifetime.

The book explores how colonialism in India tried to revive Indian folklores, yet some renowned Indian scholars never received their due, in spite of their huge contribution to the research and compilation works on Indian folklore initiated by the British.

8.5.2 Significance of the reviews of folklore:

- In India, when researched and reviewed, folklore studies provide an account of historical and social change undergone by Indian society as a British colony and then as newly independent.
- Review of folklore studies across the globe gives an insight into the political identities and hegemonic, and their hierarchical social orders.
- The studies help preserve the tradition of storytelling, and also open new ways of experimenting with the forms.
- Review of folklore studies helps to understand the interpretation of various scholars on the same form.
- This also helps in discovering new ways of communicating cultural ethos.
- And finally it helps us understand a community better.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: Mention a case of review of studies in folklore in Assam and what did it result in?

_____

_____

Q.8: State the significance of review of folklore studies.



8.6 LET US SUM UP

We can summarise this unit by highlighting on the following points-

- Folklore encompasses entire body of social traditions transmitted either orally or symbolically.
- Oral traditions still flourish in the Indian subcontinent and India remains a treasure house of folklore.
- The colonial era in India helped revive folklore and encourage folklore studies.
- The Central Institute of Indian Languages has played a major role in promoting folklore studies and research.
- Indian scholars like Ram Gharib Chaube, during the colonial era and also the likes of AK Ramanujan and many more have left behind significant works in folklore studies and review.
- Folklore research in India has helped understand our diverse culture in a holistic manner.
- The three major periods of folklore studies in India include - Colonial and Missionary period, Nationalistic period, Academic period.
- In Assam, litterateur Lakshminath Bezbaruah was a pioneer in compiling and publishing Assamese folktales and helping preserve folklore of the region.
- Oral traditions of the peasants have been studied by folklorists across India to understand the functioning of village communities.
- In the process of research, the researcher gets a glimpse into the real life of communities and the environment nurturing their folklore.
- Review of folklore studies and their research also helps understand the changing roles of men and women in tribal societies.

- Review opens new avenues for using folklore to preserve culture.
- Research helps adapt folklore into new forms of media with time and experimenting with the forms.



8.7 FURTHER READING

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4. Patnaik, Nityanand, (2002) *Folklore of Tribal Communities*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House
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8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q.No 1 : The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, has played a crucial role in folklore studies and research in India for many years now. Similarly, National Folklore Support Center, Chennai, gives a platform to young researchers and folklorists to get peer reviews on their works and work towards preservation of folk culture.

Ans to Q.No 2: Indian folklorists like Ram Gharib Chaube worked tirelessly in the colonial era to compile folktales from different parts of Northern India. AK Ramanujan was one of the noted poets and folklorists who analysed folklore from the context of Indian History. His books 'Where

Morrors are Windows" and 'Three Hundred Ramayanas' explore 'intertexual' nature of Indian literature and folklore.

Folklore scholars like Krishnadev Upadhyay, Devendra Satyarthi, Kunja Bihari Dash, Prafulla Dutta Goswami, have substantial contribution in the study and research of Indian Folklore. And in recent years, folklorists like Birendranath Dutta, Jawaharlal Handoo, B. Reddy, PC Patnaik, Sadhana Naithiani, Chitrasen Pasayat, Vivek Rai, MD Muthukumarswamy, Molly Kaushal, P Subachary, Shyam Sundar Mahapatra or Babagrahi Mishra have been working towards promoting the study and research of folklore as people's culture.

Ans to Q.No 3 : The three important phases of folklore studies in India are, the **missionary period of colonial era** when British civil servants studied Indian folklore closely to understand their new subjects better and practice good colonial administration. While the missionaries, who came here with an intention of spreading Christianity recorded all kinds of information on – habits, customs, manners, oral traditions, rituals etc. of rural people and used these to develop their messages on Christianity more effectively.

In the **Nationalistic period,** the works of the missionaries and the civil servants, made Indian scholars aware of their own rich cultural heritage and they began a more serious study of Indian folklore. Finally, in the **academic period,** right after independence, folklorists and researchers began a more systematic and scientific study of folklore with lot of research being done. The studies of folklore gained importance as an academic discipline in universities and research institutes.

Ans to Q. No 4 : Folklorists, during their research, need to go and live among common people in villages to learn and understand the folk forms in the true sense, this helps them understand the connection between scriptural theories and actual village life systems. Moreover, they have to be very observant of the natural environment that has nurtured the folklore in the particular region.

Ans to Q.No 5 : Research helps in,

- Giving insight into cultural dynamics.
- Understanding anthropological variations of communities.
- Research enhances scope for social science studies.
- Helps understand how the teachings from folklore are being adjusted into the changing times.
- Research documents everyday practices of local communities.

Ans to Q.No 6 : Myths, legends and folktales are the basic three forms of narratives in folklore forms. As story telling has been an integral ingredient of the cultures of all societies throughout human history, narratives recounting unusual happenings, sometimes accepted as truth or faith, or incidents believed to have taken place and stories purely fictitious, or created using old wisdom to teach moral lessons, have been told and retold through centuries using any of these forms.

Ans to Q.No 7 : Lakshminath Bezbaruah, made a significant contribution in compiling folklore of the state. He travelled across villages, meeting village elders, listened to their folklore, and then compiled about thirty folktales into the book titled 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' published in 1911. His work rolled down generations even in urban areas.

Almost hundred years down the line, senior local journalist and a senior member of Sahitya Sabha worked on a revised version by reviewing 'Burhi Aair Sadhu', and came up with an edition in 2011, that did away with caste- indicative references and any abusive words found in the original 'Burhi Aair Sadhu'.

Ans to Q.No 8 : Significance of review of folklore works can be stated as,

- In India, when researched and reviewed, folklore studies provide an account of historical and social change undergone by Indian society as a British colony and then as newly independent.
- Review of folklore studies across the globe gives an insight into the political identities and hegemonic, and their hierarchical social orders.
- Review of Folklore studies, help preserve the tradition of storytelling, and also opens new ways of approaching folklore and experimenting with the forms.

- Review of folklore studies helps to understand the interpretation of various scholars on the same form.
- Review of works on folklore also helps discover new ways of communicating cultural ethos.



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: What are the Jataka tales associated with?

Q.2: What is folklore? What are its different forms?

Q.3: Is there any difference between folktales and myths?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Discuss the three important periods of folklore studies in India.

Q.2: Explain the significance of folklore research with the help of examples.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: How do the reviews on folklore studies helps in preserving the tradition of storytelling? Explain in your own words.

Q.2: What are the components of folklore? Has folklore lost its originality with the use of modern methods of storytelling? What steps can be implemented for the protection of traditional culture and folklore?

Q.3: 'Folklore functions as social cement to help maintain cultural identity and cohesion'- Discuss with examples.

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UNIT 9 : POPULAR FORMS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS IN ASSAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Traditional folk forms in Assam

- 9.3.1 Bihu
- 9.3.2 Ainaam
- 9.3.3 Lullabies
- 9.3.4 Ojapali
- 9.3.5 Sattriya
- 9.3.6 Bhaona
- 9.3.7 Borgeet
- 9.3.8 Lokageet

9.4 Let us Sum up

9.5 Further Reading

9.6 Answers to check your progress

9.7 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to –

- list the popular traditional folk forms of Assam
- understand the development of the various folk forms in Assam
- appreciate the role of folk media in preserving the cultural identity of Assam

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you got an idea of review of studies on folklore and their significance . In this unit, you will be able to get an idea of the popular forms of traditional media found in Assam, very briefly study their history as well as its uses in the Assamese society.

9.3 TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS IN ASSAM

Assam, situated along the bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra, is one of the eight states in the North Easter region of India. The state is home to many diverse ethnic groups and cultures with agriculture being the main source of livelihood; producing mainly paddy, jute and tea. Religiously it is a confluence of many beliefs – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. On the whole the Assamese community society is an amalgamation of the ethnic tribes (hills and plains), the non-tribal population of the plains along with the people from the different religious groups. The diversity of culture, groups and sub-groups is manifested in the various folk forms of the state. The traditional folk forms are not confined to a particular group or community. They have been playing a vital role in forming community identity among the different groups of people in the state. Some of the popular forms of traditional media of Assam are:

9.3.1 Bihu songs

Bihu is one of the most important festivals of Assam. It is related to seasonal change, cultivation and raising livestock. There are three types of bihu celebrated in a year, each coinciding with a distinctive phase in the farming calendar. *Rongali* or *Bohag* bihu is celebrated in mid-April at the onset of spring. It marks the beginning of the Assamese New Year and also the beginning of the agricultural seasons. *Bohag* bihu is celebrated with much fun and frolic by all sections of the society and the young and old alike. Kongali or *Kati bihu* is observed in the month of October. There is not much merriment as the crops are in the growing stage and the farmers pray for a rich harvest. *Bhogali* or *Magh bihu* is celebrated in mid-January and marks the end of the harvesting season. People gather together and feast as a community during this festival.

Bihu also has many variations as given below-

a. Jeng Bihu: It is an ancient form of Bihu dance from Upper Assam. This form of Bihu dance is performed exclusively by

women. Typically, it is performed on a moonlit night in a place where they cannot be seen or accessed easily. The word Jeng Bihu is believed to have been inspired from the Assamese word *Jeng* which means an obstructive barrier, indicating a barrier between the performers and the audience.

b. **Mukoli Bihu:** Mukoli Bihu is performed in the open fields. Young boys sing Bihu songs accompanied by the beating of drums and the playing of the hornpipe and invite the girls to join them in the field. The atmosphere that builds up is that of love and romance. They express their love for their beloved through the Bihu songs and dance to their heart's content.

c. **Moran Bihu:** Moran Bihu is a typical form of Bihu Dance practiced by the Moran tribe of Assam. In some place which is far away from the din and bustle of the city, Moran boys make a bamboo-house known as the Bihu-Ghar which is divided into two sections – one for the boys and the other for the girls. They sing and dance throughout the night. Their songs and dances are woven around the theme of love and longing.

d. **Mishing Bihu:** Mishing Bihu is a form which is associated with the Ali-Ai Ligang festival of the Mishing tribe which is a seed sowing festival. The dance is structured in such a way as to depict the stages in the process of cultivation beginning from sowing to reaping. The spirit that gets reflected in the Mishing Bihu is that of Spring, of fertility, of the kopou flower, of love, longing and romance.

e. **Deori Bihu:** This Bihu is celebrated by the Deoris of Assam who are a riverine tribe who originally belonged to the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. Their style of Bihu presentation is distinctly different from other forms of Bihu.

Bihu songs, generally accompanied by dance, are performed during the bihu festival; especially at the time of *Bohag* bihu. Bihu songs are one of the most popular forms of ceremonial songs of Assam. They are one of the richest treasures of the

Assamese oral literature. Bihu songs reflect the life of the local people in the rural settings. Through the ages they have retained this trait and maintained a secular status without any form of discrimination. The songs are an expression of youthfulness, freshness, spirit, love and courtship; in other words the expression of the 'carnival of life'. They also describe the season in which the festival is held by referencing to the flora and fauna of the particular season like *nahor phool*, *bokul phool*, *kopou phool*, *togor phool*, *dhekia, singora maas* etc. Moreover, a very authentic description of the social life, environment and religious beliefs of the Assamese people are projected in the bihu songs. Apart from that various forms of livelihood of the rural people like fishing, farming, weaving and hunting also find mention in these songs. Thus, bihu songs are the cultural identity of the Assamese people at large.

Structurally most of the bihu songs are quatrain in nature. In most of the songs the first two lines projects a picture of the nature that complements the human sentiment expressed in the second two lines. An example of a bihu song –

Aeibeli bihuti romoke jomoke
Nahor phool phulibor botor |
Nahor phulor gundho pai Lohorir tat nai
Gosoki bhangile jotor |

The origin of bihu songs is ambiguous. There is no particular time period in which they were composed. Some songs have indicated to a certain period in history, like the Ahom rulers, but those are very few in numbers. However, the Ahom rulers helped in the popularisation of bihu by giving it public recognition.

9.3.2 Ainaam

Ainaam is a popular form of devotional song of Assam. *Ainaam* is sung only by women folks, men are not part of the performance. *Ai* refers to Goddess *Sheetala*, the Divine Mother, who along with her

seven sisters is considered as the Goddess of pox. It is a common practice in an Assamese household which is affected by pox to hold a congregational prayer session in which the women sing *Ainaam* with a sense of submission and deep humility to propitiate the Divine Mother so that the Goddess leaves the stricken household and proceed elsewhere. These songs are simple yet highly devotional. In fact, simplicity of language and sincerity of feelings are the hallmarks of *Ainaam*. They are the part of the rich oral tradition of Assam. An example of *Ainaam*:

Je bostu diu Matri xkhe bostu sua |

Apunar namei Matri apuni sontush hua ||

Other ceremonial songs such as *Subosonir geet*, *Lakhimi Sobahor geet* and *Opeswarir geet* are similar to *Ainaam*. *Lakhimi Sobahor geet* is sung on the day of *Lakshmi* Puja to seek blessings from Goddess Lakshmi for prosperity and good fortune. If a child lags behind its age in terms of physical development; women from the neighbourhood hold a congregational prayer session in the courtyard of the house singing *Opeswarir geet*. It is believed that doing so helps the child to attain full physical development. Likewise, *Subosonir geet* is sung to plead the Goddess *Subosoni* to bless the family with good health and well-being.

9.3.3 Lullabies

Lullabies or Cradle songs are commonly known as *Nisukoni* geet (Nisukoni means to lull) in Assam. They are also known by a variety of other names such as *Nindali geet* in Goalpara district, *Soli Bhurkoa geet* in Nalbari district, *Koh Nih Nam* among the Misings, *Phutu*-Methai among the Bodos etc. Lullabies make use of simple, crisp and repetitive words that are borrowed from the daily lives of the rural people that have an essence of the land. The soft and sweet melody of the songs helps children to develop their imaginative skills by carrying them to a world of imagination. A magical world where the sun and the moon can converse with the children, where

flowers can bloom on the forehead of a fox, where the moon offers needle to a child for stitching bag, where sparrows can peel betel nuts etc. Lullabies may not actually make much sense for the grown-ups; however they amuse the children by creating an entertaining atmosphere. The mood and message of the lullaby is evoked by the narrator. Apart from singing or humming; the narrator also plays with his/her fingers by caressing or rocking the back of the baby till it falls asleep. Following are two well-known lullabies of Assam:

(1) *Junbai ae beji eti diya*
Beji nu kelei
Muna xiboloi
Muna nu kelei
Dhon bhoraboloi
Dhon nu kelei
Hati kiniboloi
Hati nu kelei
Uthi phuriboloi...

(2) *Rodali ae, rod de*
Ali kati jali dim
Bor pirha pari dim
Tate bohi bohi rod de
Rodalir makor tinidal suli
Rodali palegoi birinar guri

9.3.4 Ojapali

Ojapali is a classical dance form; considered to be one of the oldest art form of Assam. The Hindu epics Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas are the main source for the story in Ojapali. Recitation, singing, dancing gestures and dramatic dialogues play a pivotal part in Ojapali performance. *Khutitaal*, a small pair of cymbal is the sole musical instrument used during the performance. Ojapali consists of a band of four or five men, the chief of which is called *oja* and the

rest of the associates are called *pali* (meaning assistants). Among the *palis*, the *daina-pali*, who stands on the right hand side of the *Oja*, is the chief aide. He makes the performance more interesting by providing comic relief. The *oja* recites themes from the mythological stories with accompanying music, mudras and dance. The *palis* take up the refrain and repeat the song while playing the *khutitaal*. Based on the theme and performing style Ojapali can be categorized into two major forms: Epic-based Ojapali and Non-epic based Ojapali.

- **Epic based Ojapali:** Epic-based Ojapali is also known as *Vaishnav* Ojapali as it finds its use in the *Vaishnavite* rituals. The themes for this type of *Ojapali* are drawn from the epics the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. It is further divided into seven sub-categories:

a) *Biyahar Ojapali/Vyasa Ojapali/Biyah-Gowa Ojapali* is the oldest form of Ojapali in Assam. The themes are taken from the epics and the Puranas. The stories are sung in pure classical style based on the ragas; while the dancing movements are based on the various mudras. Interestingly, the Ojha in this form should belong to the Brahmin caste and must be proficient in the Vyasa sangeet. It is generally accepted that Biyahar Ojapali originated in ancient Kamrupa and was handed down through the ages. Today it is largely confined to Darrang district.

b) *Ramayani Ojapali or Ramayan-Gowa Ojapali* takes its theme from the poetic version of the Assamese Ramayana by Madhab Kandali, Ananta Kandali, Durgabar Kayastha etc. It does not involve any theme from the Mahabharata or the Puranas. Although this form of Ojapali is still found in Darrang and Kamrup, it has dwindled to some extent.

c) *Bhaora or Bhaoria Ojapali* involves the enactment of the various characters of the Ramayana in its performance. The Bhaoria Ojapali gives emphasis to the humour element in narrating the different episodes of Ramayana. A very distinguishing feature of

this type of Ojapali is that it 'represents social satire viewing the contemporary society in the midst of the main performance.'

d) *Durgavari Ojapali* draws its theme from the Giti-Ramayana of Durgabar Kayastha. Although widely popular at one time in Kamrup and Darrang; it is today restricted to Hajo area of Kamrup district.

e) *Sattriya Ojapali* is confined to the different *Sattras* (monasteries) of Assam. It was introduced by the great saint Srimanta Sankardeva to preach ideal of neo-Vaishnavism to the masses. The Sattriya Ojapali draws many aspects of its performance from the Biyahar Ojapali. The performance of Sattriya Ojapali is must in the day-to-day ceremonials of all the *Sattras*.

f) *Pancali Ojapali* is prevalent in the Dakshinapat *Sattra* and Auniati *Sattra* of Assam. This form of Ojapali involves five different types of feet movement. The Puranas form the basis of the themes in Pancali Ojapali. The *oja* does the recitation while simultaneously playing the *khutitaal* and the *chamara* (fly-whisk) while the *palis* play the *mridanga* (two-sided drum found in eastern India). The Pancali Ojapali also involves a prompter (*Smaraka*) which is unique to this form of Ojapali.

g) *Duladi Ojapali* is similar to Pancali Ojapali; it is performed in the Dakshinapat *Sattra* and the Auniati *Sattra*. The themes for the performance are drawn from the Assamese version of the Puranas. A Duladi Ojapali troupe consists of an *oja*, a *duheriya* and a few *palis*. The *khutitaal* is the only musical instrument accompanying this performance. Although Pancali Ojapali and Duladi Ojapali are confined to the *Sattras* nevertheless they are not categorised under Sattriya Ojapali. Unlike Sattriya Ojapali, the Pancali Ojapali and the Duladi Ojapali are only performed on special ceremonies like bihu, ekadasi, sankranti etc.

- **Non-epic based Ojapali:** This form of Ojapali is associated with the worshipping of the Serpent Goddess - Goddess *Manasa*; also reffered to as *Bisahari*, *Padma* or *Brahmoni* and as such

the content, structure and context varies from the Epic-based Ojapali. The usual custom is that this category of Ojapali should be performed at the time of *Manasa Puja*. The ritualistic songs sung by the Ojapali performers are known as *Manasa-Sangita*. The Non-epic based Ojapali is divided into four sub-categories:

a) *Suknanni Ojapali or Rang-gowa Ojapali* performs ritualistic dance and songs on the occasion of *Manasa Puja*. The songs used here are based on the Serpent Goddess composed by Sukavi Narayandeva, a poet of the Manasa saga (17th century). Suknani Ojapali is confined to Darrang and a few places of eastern and middle Kamrup. The art form in Darrang is influenced by the musical style of the Biyahar Ojapali and indicates both the Biyahar form and the Manasa form whereas in Kamrup it indicates only the Manasa form.

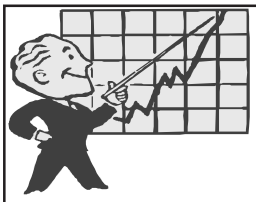
b) *Bisaharir Gaan* is widely prevalent in Kamakhya and Sualkuchi area of Assam. The songs recited in Bisaharir Gaan bears no resemblance to Suknani Ojapali, in fact it differs in certain areas in terms of theme, structure and style of music. The songs recited in this form of Ojapali are composed by Mankar and Durgabar. The musical style is simple compared to Suknani Ojapali and Biyahar Ojapali. The *oja* is referred to as *gitali* or *pathak* and the *pali* as *juri*.

c) *Mare Pujar Gaan or Mare Gaan* is prevalent in the South Goalpara region of Assam. The songs used in the performance are neither borrowed from the writings of Mankar and Durgabar nor Sukavi Narayandeva. These songs have been traditionally handed down to invoke the Goddess of Serpent. A Mare Gaan troupe consists of an *oja* and a few *palis*; but without any *diana-pali* (right hand side aide of the oja). *Deodhani* (female shaman) is an integral part of Mare Gaan performance who 'dances in harmony with the recitation of the Ojapali.'

d) *Padma-Puranar Gaan* means the story about the Goddess *Padma*, another name for Goddess *Manasa*. This form of Ojapali

is found in North and West Goalpara region of Assam. The troupe consists of an o*ja* who is referred to as the *mul-gayaka*, *gital* or *gidal*; *palis* (assistants) referred to as *gayaks* and *bails* (plays the khol and cymbal). Generally boys accompany the main performers as dancers in girls' attire.

Traditionally Ojapali have been performed by the male members of the society; women are not part of any of the performances. However two modern forms known as *Api Ojapali* and the *Ligiri Ojapali* are performed exclusively by women. Both these forms are based on the traditional Ojapali. The performers recite from the Epics and the Puranas. The *Api Ojapali* is found in Kamrup while *Ligiri* or *Likiri Ojapali* is found in Darrang.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Magh Bihu is also known as _____.

Q.2: Which bihu is associated with the Ali-Ai Ligang festival of the Mishing tribe?

_____

_____

Q.3: A Congregational prayer session held in a household affected by pox is known as_____.

Q.4: What are lullabies?

_____

_____

Q.5: State any two basic features of Ojapali.

_____

_____

Q.6: The _____ makes an Ojapali performance interesting by providing comic-relief.

Q.7: The two main categories of Ojapali are _____ and _____

9.3.5 Sattriya

The Sattriya dance form was introduced in the 15th century A.D by the great Vaishnava saint and reformer of Assam Mahapurusha Sankaradeva as a powerful medium for propagation of the Vaishnava faith. The dance form evolved and expanded as a distinctive style of dance later on. This neo-Vaishnava treasure of Assamese dance and drama has been, for centuries nurtured and preserved with great commitment by the *Sattras* i.e. *Vaishnava maths* or monasteries. Because of its religious character and association with the *Sattras*, this dance style has been aptly named Sattriya.

Srimanta Sankaradeva introduced this dance form by incorporating different elements from various treatises, local folk dances with his own rare outlook. There were two dance forms prevalent in Assam before the neo-*Vaishnava* movement - *Ojapali* and *Devadasi* with many classical elements. Sankaradeva included Biyah-Gowa Ojapali into his daily rituals in *Sattra*. Till today Biyah-Gowa Ojapali is a part of rituals of the *Sattras* of Assam. The dancers in an Ojapali chorus not only sing and dance but also explain the narration by gestures and stylized movements. As far as *Devadasi* dance is concerned, resemblance of a good number of rhythmic syllables and dance postures along with footwork with Sattriya dance is a clear indication of the influence of the former on the latter. Other visible influences on Sattriya dance are those from Assamese folk dances like bihu. Many hand gestures and rhythmic syllables are strikingly similar in these dance forms.

Sattriya dance tradition is governed by strictly laid down principles in respect of *hastamudras*, *footworks*, *aharyas*, music etc. This tradition, has two distinctly separate streams - the Bhaona-related repertoire starting from the *Gayan-Bhayanar Nach* to the *Kharmanar Nach*, secondly the dance numbers which are independent such as *Chali*; *Rajagharia Chali*; *Jhumura*; *Nadu Bhangi*

etc. Among them the *Chali* is characterized by gracefulness and elegance, while the *Jhumura* is marked by vigor and majestic beauty. *(Source: Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, ccrtindia.gov.in)*

9.3.6 Bhaona

Bhaona is a presentation of the *Ankia Naat* (One-act play) of Assam introduced by the great *Vaishnava* saint Srimanta Sankardeva to preach *Vaishnavite* religion to the masses. Before its introduction by Srimanta Sankardeva there was no evidence of theatre in Assam. However, certain dramatic elements were present in the ancient art forms of *Ojapali* and *Putla Nach*. In its simplest form Bhaona depicts the victory of good over evil, generally drawing its themes from the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Purana. The troupe consists of *gayans* (singers), *bayans* (instrumentalists), actors and a *sutradhar* (narrator). The performers enter through an archway of light which is known as *agni garh*. The *sutradhar* starts the play by narrating the story accompanied by the *gayan-bayan*. It has been traditionally performed in the precinct of *Namghars* (congregational hall-cum-cultural space), usually in open spaces. In Bhaona, cultural glimpses of Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Mathura and Brindavan can be seen. Bhaona is celebrated in a grand scale in the Sonitpur and Nagaon districts of Assam. Jamuguri area in Sonitpur district is very famous for the Bare Saharia Bhaona. It is a huge fair of Bhaona where several troupes of Bhaona performers come together from across the state. More than hundred temporary stages are erected in an open field for the performance.

9.3.7 Borgeet

Borgeet (Noble numbers or Celestial songs) are *Vaishnava* devotional songs first composed by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva. They are yet another noble contribution of the great *Vaishnava* Saint to the cultural landscape of Assam. Sankardeva's

first Borgeet composition is believed to be '*Mana meri Ram charanahi lagu'*; which he penned while at *Badrikashram* during his first pilgrimage around 1490. He later went on to compose 240 Borgeet of which only around 30 exists today. The rest were all lost in a fire after which he stopped writing further. Instead Sankardeva asked his favourite disciple Madhavdeva to compose Borgeet.

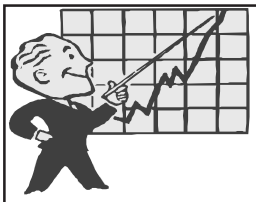
Borgeet were written in *Brajawali* language, a literary language which is a blend of Maithali with the Assamese language, giving the lyrics of the songs a rhythmic flow and an overall sweetness. The use of Sanskrit language is also seen in these songs, as well as elements of *Kamrupa* and *Goalpariya* languages. The songs, based on *ragas,* eloquently expresses the lives of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, principles of *Vaishnavism*, salvation etc.

9.3.8 Lokageet

Assamese lokageet can be mainly classified into three types:

- **Ceremonial songs** like Bihu songs; Ainaam; Biyanaam etc,
- **Ballads** like Monikonwaror geet; Borphukanor geet; Shaanti Baromahir geet etc,
- **Miscellaneous theme songs** like Lullabies; Mohoho geet; Sotoka geet; Gorokhia geet etc.

Lokageet covers a wide range of themes such as devotional, social, philosophical, love, youth etc. They are the manifestation of the collective hope, desire, needs and activities of the people at large. As with other forms of traditional media lokageet are characterized by the use of everyday language, local expressions and simple belief; as well as manifestation of 'elemental passion'.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.8: Srimanta Sankardeva is the doyen of _____, _____ and _____ to preach *Vaishnavite* religion to the masses.

Q.9: The two main influences on Sattriya are _____ and _____

Q.10: Bhaona is the presentation of _____ of Assam.

Q.11: The first Borgeet of Sankardeva is _____ that was composed around 1490.

Q.12: What are the different types of Assamese lokageet?

_____

_____



9.4 LET US SUM UP

- Traditional media plays a vital role in forming community identity among the different groups of people in Assam.
- There are three types of Bihu celebrated in a year, each coinciding with a distinctive phase in the farming calendar – Rongali or Bohag Bihu, Kongali or Kati Bihu and Bhogali or Magh Bihu.
- Bihu songs project a very authentic description of the social life, environment and religious beliefs of the Assamese people.
- Ainaam is a popular form of devotional song of Assam sung only by the women folks. Other ceremonial songs such as Subosonir geet, Lakhimi Sobahor geet and Opeswarir geet are similar to Ainaam.
- Lullabies or Cradle songs are commonly known as Nisukoni geet in Assam. The soft and sweet melody of the songs helps children to develop their imaginative skills by carrying them to a world of imagination.
- Ojapali is a classical dance form; considered to be one of the oldest art form of Assam. The Hindu epics Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas are the main source for the story in Ojapali.
- Based on the theme and performing style Ojapali can be categorized into two major forms: Epic-based Ojapali and Non-epic based Ojapali. Epic-based Ojapali is further divided into seven types, while Non-epic based Ojapali is further divided into four types.

- Biyah-Gowa Ojapali is the oldest form of Ojapali in Assam.
- Api Ojapali and the Ligiri Ojapali are performed exclusively by women.
- Srimanta Sankaradeva introduced Sattriya dance form by incorporating different elements from various treatises, local folk dances with his own rare outlook.
- Bhaona is a presentation of the Ankia Naat (One-act play) of Assam introduced by the great Vaishnava saint Srimanta Sankardeva to preach Vaishnavite religion to the masses.
- Borgeet are Vaishnava devotional songs first composed by Srimanta Sankardeva. The songs, based on ragas, eloquently express the lives of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, principles of Vaishnavism, salvation etc.
- Assamese lokageet can be mainly classified into three types – ceremonial songs, ballads and miscellaneous theme songs.



9.5 FURTHER READING

1. Bandyopadhyay, P.K.(2005) *The North East Saga*. New Delhi : Publication Division.
2. Barkataki, S.N.(1970) *Tribal Folktales of Assam*. Guwahati : Publication Board.
3. Sharma, Dr. Satyendranath. *Axomiya Sahityor Samikhyatmok Itibritto*. Guwahati: Soumar Publications.
4. Nath, Dr. Nabin Chandra Ed. *Axamar Sanskriti-Samiksa*. Guwahati: Chandra Prakash.
5. Gogoi, Dr.Lila (1986) *Axomor Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Banalata.



9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q No.1: Bhogali Bihu

Ans to Q. No 2 : Mishing Bihu

Ans. to Q No.3: Ainaam

Ans to Q.No 4 : Lullabies or Cradle songs are commonly known as *Nisukoni* geet (Nisukoni means to lull) in Assam. They are also known by a variety of other names such as *Nindali geet* in Goalpara district, *Soli Bhurkoa geet* in Nalbari district, *Koh Nih Nam* among the Misings, *Phutu*-Methai among the Bodos etc. Lullabies make use of simple, crisp and repetitive words that are borrowed from the daily lives of the rural people that have an essence of the land.

Ans to Q.No 5 : Two important features of Ojapali are-

- The Hindu epics Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas are the main source for the story in Ojapali.
- Recitation, singing, dancing gestures and dramatic dialogues play a pivotal part in Ojapali performance. *Khutitaal*, a small pair of cymbal is the sole musical instrument used during the performance.

Ans. to Q No.6: Daina-pali (right hand side aide of the *oja*)

Ans. to Q No.7: Epic-based Ojapali and Non-epic based Ojapali

Ans. to Q No.8: Sattriya, Bhaona and Borgeet

Ans. to Q No.9: Biyahar Ojapali and Devadasi

Ans. to Q No.10: Ankia Naat

Ans. to Q No.11: *Mana meri Ram charanahi lagu*

Ans to Q. No 12 : Assamese lokageet can be mainly classified into three types:

- **Ceremonial songs** like Bihu songs, Ainaam, Biyanaam etc,
- **Ballads** like Monikonwaror geet, Borphukanor geet, Shaanti Baromahir geet etc,
- **Miscellaneous theme songs** like Lullabies, Mohoho geet, Sotoka geet, Gorokhia geet etc.

9.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q.1: What is Opeswarir geet?

Q.2: What are the three different types of lokageet of Assam?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write short notes on-

a) Bhaona

b) Lullabies

c) Bihu songs

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Discuss in details the different forms of Ojapali.

Q.2: Explain, using any two folk forms of Assam, how traditional media can help to protect the cultural identity of the people.

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UNIT 10 : DR. BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOLK MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as Mass Communicator

10.4 Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's Contribution to Folk Media

10.5 Let us Sum up

10.6 Further Reading

10.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.8 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- define the legacy of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as a multi-faceted scholar
- explain the role of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika as a Mass Communicator
- elucidate the contribution of Dr. Hazarika in upholding folk media of North East India

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Traditional folk media originated as a consequence of people's need to express themselves and the innate urge of human beings to communicate and share something beautiful with their fellowmen in the society. In the previous units, we have discussed the basic concepts on traditional folk media.

This unit is on Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's contribution to this field. The multi-faceted genius, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was a poet, music composer, singer, actor, journalist, author and film-maker. He pioneered Assam's film industry and has been hailed as the uncrowned king of the Northeast's cultural world. He continued to reverberate the nation with his balladic voice coupled with the themes of social consciousness. Dr. Hazarika has been

able to establish the identity of Assamese community on the global platform. It is undoubtedly true that only his endeavour could bridge the communication gap between the mainstream India and the North East which is still considered culturally, historically, economically, socially and politically detached from the rest of the country. He rendered music, had written lyrics and sung for numerous Assamese, Bengali and Hindi films from the 1930s to the 1990s. He worked as playback singer in about 16 films, as composer in 13 films, as director in 14 films. Not only that he produced or acted, but also wrote scripts in various films.

10.3 DR. BHUPEN HAZARIKA AS MASS COMMUNICATOR

Communication with the masses is considered as Mass Communication. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the legendary cultural icon was master of every field like the world of music, promotion of folk culture, literature, journalism, film, education and many more. Indeed, a true figure of Mass Communication, Dada Saheb Phalke Awardee Dr Hazarika was born on 8 September 1926. After his MA, he joined the Guwahati All India Radio station before embarking on his doctoral studies at Columbia University. He did his doctorate on Education from Columbia University of the United States in 1952 in the field of Mass Communication.

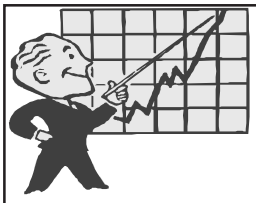
In his doctoral thesis entitled 'India's basic educators to use audio visual techniques in adult education', Dr Hazarika stressed on the methods and techniques for adult education- the disadvantageous group of the society. This great educator's vision is depicted in his thesis, 'the modern educator believes that the quality of educational process depends greatly upon that of learning activities. The traditional teaching method was mainly instructional material. Instructional materials are important because they shape, direct and influence the learner's experience.' Explaining the great importance of the audio-visual format of education, Dr Hazarika comments, 'Among all the audio-visual materials, motion picture perhaps can claim special mention because it has proved to be the most powerful maker of

action patterns and modifier of opinions. Participation in and listening to well produced broadcasters are undoubtedly stimulating experiences. Radio is an effective means of presenting new ideas in mass education technique as it has no traditions of formalism usually attached to bookish teaching.' What was felt by him about sixty years ago, we are now considering the mammoth need of use of electronic gadgets in education field in our country. Along with conventional mode of education, in distance education it is already proved that electronic format can make the teaching learning method easy as well as it can reach the unreached in a very smooth manner. But it cannot be also denied that we did not achieve our goal and still we are struggling within our tight periphery.

Besides all these, Dr Hazarika was a great scholar. In a convocation address at Odisha on 'Mass Communication Media Vis-a-vis Folk Culture' in 1994, he explains the term 'mass' as- 'the connotation of the term 'mass' needs to be analysed. To an ivory tower intellectual 'mass' is used in a derogatory manner at times, to a leftist 'mass' means ever campaigning, representing the arrogant have not's. To a religious teacher 'mass' meditation is a devotional communication for a particular welfare programme and to a communicator 'mass' simply represents the audience. This audience was unknown prior to the age of electronics. I consider McQuail's explanation appropriate.'

In his speech, he suggests that the mass communication institutes must incorporate the traditional and folk communication part in their curriculum captioned 'Mass Communication Media vis-a-vis Folk Culture'. 'Since 1960, all over the world; issues have been raised against the ever growing influence of mass media that did not take into account the cultural information, interests, and requirements of local rural folk cultural groups. This is an area where our institutes of mass communication and media should be academically attached. There should be opportunities for students, to encourage their participation in local, rural, folk, cultural groups in form of field trips. Curriculum development is an ongoing process and it should be aesthetically nurtured', he said.

Dr Bhupen Hazarika is one of the greatest mass communicators or traditional folk media educators not only in modern Assam but also in our country. Being an active member of Dr. P.C Joshi Committee, the great mass communicationist submitted a report captioned 'An Indian Personality' where he suggested, 'we exactly meant the best of traditional folk culture of the people, its own capacity to communicate, as well as TV's sacred duty to take folk culture of this vast country in order to offer an Indian personality to this gigantic power which is taking India 'to the 21st century' as our Prime Minister puts it. We should not accept a carbon copy of US, UK, USSR, Japan or China's TV content and pattern- instead give the roots of our folk culture back to our own people.'



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Give an introduction of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika.

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Q.2: Why is Dr. Bhupen Hazarika commemorated as a mass communicator?

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Q.3: Name some of the national awards conferred on Dr. Hazarika.

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10.4 DR. BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S CONTRIBUTION TO FOLK MEDIA

It is already mentioned that Dr Hazarika tried to communicate with the masses through his songs, films and poetry. He was very much attached with the root of Assamese culture and tradition. He had a great contribution

to the traditional media of Assam. He became successful in upholding the flag of Assamese tradition at the global platform. He sang his first song in the second Assamese film, Agarwala's *Indramalati* (*Biswa Bijoy Naujawan*), in 1939 when he was 12 years old. The eldest of ten children, Bhupen Hazarika (as also his siblings) was exposed to the musical influence of his mother, who exposed him to lullabies and traditional music of Assam.

Bhupen Hazarika, at the age of ten was discovered by Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the noted Assamese lyricist, playwright and the first Assamese filmmaker and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, renowned Assamese artist and revolutionary poet. In 1936, Bhupen Hazarika accompanied them to Kolkata where he recorded his first song at the Aurora Studio for the Selona Company. His association with the icons of Assamese Culture at Tezpur was the beginning of his artistic growth and credentials. Subsequently, Hazarika sang two songs in Agarwala's film *Indramalati* (1939): *Kaxote Kolosi Loi* and *Biswo Bijoyi Naujawan* at the age of 12. He wrote his first song, *Agnijugor Firingoti Moi* at the age of 13 and he was well on his way to become a lyricist, composer and singer.

As a singer, Hazarika was known for his baritone voice and diction; as a lyricist, he was known for poetic compositions and parables which touched on themes ranging from romance to social and political commentary; and as a composer, for his use of folk music. He was considered the last of the great mass singers and one of the great Indian ballad singers. Involved in the Indian movement from his very childhood till his death, he wrote and composed masterpieces teeming with social consciousness which are in striking contrast to his famous love songs. Besides being associated with films, Padma Shri and Padma Bibhushan, Dr. Hazarika has won the hearts of the entire Indian people through his finest compositions. For Bhupen Hazarika, music has always been his first love. He met Paul Robson with whom he became closely associated between 1949 and 1955 in USA. It was during this period that he was awarded a Gold Medallion in New York as the best interpreter of India's folk songs by Eleanor Roosevelt.

Bhupen Hazarika used to sing in numerous languages. Dr. Hazarika has rightly been hailed as India's Cultural Ambassador abroad for placing the folk music of Eastern India on the map of world folk music. His songs, based on the themes of communal amity, universal justice and empathy have become very popular. He is also acknowledged to have introduced the culture and folk music of Assam and Northeast India to Hindi cinema at the national level. He was not only the part of traditional media, but he also presented a few research papers on the link between mass communication and folk culture. In his paper 'Folk Music and Mass Communication' presented in an international seminar of mass communication at Lativa, Russia in 1988, he starts his paper with 'This deals with the arts- particularly Folk Music as a means of communication which culminates in social change communication through folk songs, folk dances, and folk plays, the interaction between them and the modern mores of life.' We are now considering the immense impact of folk media particularly in development communication which was felt by him three decades ago. He held the opinion that it is one of the most significant and relevant vehicles of information in our country. 'Folk music has a directness and simplicity in narration; it deals with a local specific subject and the music is simple and therefore easy to learn and easy to sing. These are the characteristics that make folk music an ideal vehicle for mass communication, which could also become an ideal channel for educational messages,' he said.

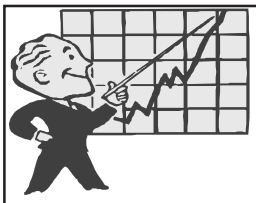
He opined, 'One cannot ignore the remark of H.G. Wells who said 'Human history becomes more and more a race between communication and catastrophe. Full use of communication in all its varied strands is vital to assume that humanity has more than a history that our children are ensured a future.' This means one has to go on communicating if one has to live purposefully, and grow well and if one stops communicating one is obliterated and then one can only contribute darkness to the future generation for no one can flourish in isolation.' He always stressed on the importance of mass culture and folk culture. That is why he mentioned, 'In order to give an Indian personality to mass communication, we must see its relation to India's traditional folk culture patterns. The reach of mass communication

through the electronic media is still limited. In the urban areas, folk media continue to provide the principal source of entertainment of information and educational in religious, socio-economic and political problems. India is a great treasure house storing folk culture, through its folk songs, folk pantomime, folk dances, folk theatre and puppet theatre. These are the avenues of mass media for the people of rural India'. He has given a wide example in this respect-'The Yakshagana in Karnataka, the Keertana, Bhatiali, Baul, Kabir Gaan and Jatra from Bengal. The folk ballad, Powada is famous in Maharashtra and the Dashavatar of South Konkan is almost similar to the Yakshagana of Karnataka. The Dangi Tamasha of the Dangi tribals of Gujarat is as popular as the Bhavai which is the foremost folk theatre from Gujarat. The Nautanki form is very predominant in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In Assam there exist different forms of Bihu, Ojapali, Kamrupi and Goalparia Lokageet. The Bhaona is the famous folk theatre form in Assam, along with the Ankiya Naat the one act plays written by the great Vaishnava poet Srimanta Shankardeva. Along with it, there also exist Baisakhu of the Bodos and Meches. Arunachal Pradesh boasts of the Mopin Utsav and Tamil Nadu is well known for its Therukoothu, a form of street theatre. Similarly, several innumerable folk forms comprising of interpersonal communications exist all over India'.

According to Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, 'with the advent of the film and television media, a tendency to distort sophisticated folk art form, under the label of 'Glamour' threatens the very roots of India's culture by creating a peculiar kind of 'mass culture', by transmitting a hotch-potch menu of distorted vulgarized elements which the communicators feel have more commercial and popular appeal. Such examples are flooding the nation today especially through our mainstream cinema that do not realize the harm they are actually causing. This distortion of culture has pervaded in both song and dance. It is high time India's Song and Drama Division, which deal with live 'mass culture' of the rural folk make a strong basis of interpersonal and intergroup mass communication by allowing mass participation and correct interpretation. All these activities should be recorded, photographed and filmed for preservation, with an archival value

and a band of workers expert in dealing with folk culture should act as liaisons between the new electronic mass communication and the living rural mass culture which exists at the grassroot level.'

Focusing the folk media in the media convergence, he expressed his views, 'it is about the theory of communication and knowledge, achieved from folk music. In India, radio and television are entirely government organisations. Films made by private producers are mostly commercial. They vulgarise traditions. Real traditions in the villages are afraid of this commercialisation. Many sociologists including Murdock and Golding would disagree with the proposition that 'models of communication determine what kind of society we are going to have'. Since TV is becoming the most potent medium of mass communication, the world over, including the third world countries- some comments on Indian Television vis'-a-vis' folk culture and traditional media will be in order here. 'Criticising the government policy, he says 'Annual Report 1982-83 mentioned that in the context of rapid technological developments as well as extension of the TV network to various parts of the country with various socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics, the software aspects of television acquire a very special significance.'



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: What is folk media? Name some folk forms of Assam.

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Q.5: Elucidate how Dr. Bhupen Hazarika initiated his artistic career.

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Q.6: Name some existing and popular folk culture of our country.

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10.5 LET US SUM UP

From the above discussions, it has become clear that Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was a multifaceted genius who has left unparallel contribution in the field of art and culture. Being a poet, music composer, singer, actor, journalist, author and film-maker; Dr. Hazarika has upheld the culture and tradition of Assam in the global platform. He always stressed on the importance of mass culture and folk culture. His songs based on the themes of communal amity, universal justice and empathy are very popular among the general masses. According to him, the distortion of culture and tradition as pervaded by film and television media can be reformed by the folk culture which enthral and can send positive messages to the masses. Since the reach of electronic media is still limited, folk media can act as a medium of interpersonal and intergroup mass communication. In the urban areas, folk media continue to provide the principal source of entertainment of information and educational in religious, socio-economic and political problems. According to him, the activities of folk media should be recorded, photographed and filmed for archival value and the experts of folk media can act as liaisons between electronic media tools and the local and rural masses at the grassroots level.

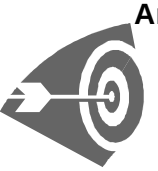


10.6 FURTHER READING

1. Dr Bhupen Hazarika Rachanawali (2nd Volume), (2008) S H Educational Trust.

10.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Dr. Bhupen Hazarika was a famous poet, music composer, singer, actor, journalist, author and film-maker. He has established the identity of Assamese community on the global platform. He has been to promote national integration, positivity and goodwill by his compositions based on the themes of communal amity, universal justice and empathy.



Ans to Q No 2: Dr. Bhupen Hazarika is one of the greatest mass communicators or traditional folk media educators of India. Apart from doing his doctorate in the field of Mass Communication, Dr. Hazarika has practically excelled in different forms of mass media. He was a poet, music composer, singer, actor, journalist, author and a successful film-maker.

Ans to Q No 3: Dr. Bhupen Hazarika has been conferred with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Dada Saheb Phalke Award, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship and Padma Vibhushan.

Ans to Q No 4: Folk media is the medium through which the local people can participate as well as have artistic fulfilment interspersed with entertainment. It is different from contemporary art forms in its content and outlook. Ojapali, Mobile theatre, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Lokageet, Borgeet, Bongeet, Bihu are some of the popular folk forms of Assam.

Ans to Q No 5: Dr. Bhupen Hazarika sang his first two songs in Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's film *Indramalati* (1939): *Kaxote Kolosi Loi* and *Biswo Bijoyi Naujawan* at the age of 12. He wrote his first song, *Agnijugor*

Firingoti Moi at the age of 13 and thus started his career to become a lyricist, composer and singer.

Ans to Q No 6: Some of the popular folk forms in India are 'Ahla', the popular ballad of Uttar Pradesh and its counterparts like 'Laavani' and 'Powada' of Maharashtra, the Dashavatar of South Konkan, 'Gee-Gee' of Karnataka, 'Villupattu' and 'Therukoothu' in Tamil Nadu and 'Yakshagana' in Karnataka, the 'Keertana', 'Bhatiali', 'Baul', 'Kabir Gaan' and 'Jatra' from Bengal, 'Bhavai' and 'Dangi Tamasha' in Gujarat, 'Tamasha' in Maharashtra, Ojapali, Kamrupi and Goalparia Lokageet, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Lokageet, Borgeet, Bongeet, Bihu in Assam and Burrakatha in Andhra Pradesh.



10.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : When did Bhupen Hazarika complete his doctoral thesis? What did he focus on in his thesis?

Q.2 : Which was the first song that was sung by Bhupen Hazarika? In which film was this song sung?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : "Bhupen Hazarika was known for poetic compositions and parables which touched on themes ranging from romance to social and political commentary" – Discuss.

Q.2 : Define the significance of folk media in India.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 : Discuss the contribution of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in the field of art and culture.

Q.2 : Discuss how Dr. Bhupen Hazarika promoted north eastern culture on the global platform.

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UNIT 11: FOLK MEDIA AND SCIENTIFIC TEMPERAMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Folk media and scientific temperament

11.4 Problems in folk media communication

11.5 Use of folk media by cultural organizations and state governments

11.6 Let us Sum up

11.7 Further Reading

11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.9 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- trace the association between folk media and scientific temperament
- understand problems in folk media communication
- know the use of folk media by cultural and state governments

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have discussed about the contribution of Bhupen Hazarika to folk media. In this unit, we shall trace the association between folk media and scientific temperament.

11.3 FOLK MEDIA AND SCIENTIFIC TEMPERAMENT

Folk Media is the creative dissemination of information through cultural and performing arts. In traditional societies, folk media that include drama, skits, poems, stories, riddles, songs and dance have been popularly and successfully used to disseminate messages and to pass on wisdom of older generations to the youth. Folk media in different cultures is seen in

different life stages of a person e.g. betrothal,birth ceremony, funeral rites and in all forms of entertainment and festivals. Today the same media can be used for community motivation, mobilizing support and participation in developmental programmes and at the same time for entertainment.

Folk and traditional media have some salient features which advocate their effectiveness and importance.

- Their appeal is at personal and intimate level.
- Cross cultural communication hurdles can be overcome
- Rapport is immediate and direct.
- Folk media are available to all and appreciated by persons of different age groups
- Folk communication is inexpensive.
- Its impact is more widespread
- Useful for community development;
- The folk media belong to the community and not to individuals, state or private industry;
- There is no threat of cultural colonialism and foreign ideological domination.
- Local talent and localized message would have more credibility than those centralized ones.
- Advantages of folk communication include acceptability, cultural relevance, entertainment value, use of local language, legitimacy, flexibility, message repetition ability, instant 'two-way communication among others.

Scientific temper has been defined as an individual and social process of thinking and acting which uses the scientific method and which may, consequently, include questioning, observing physical reality, testing, hypothesizing, analyzing, and communicating. It can be described as an attitude which involves the application of logic through discussion, argument and analysis. Jawaharlal Nehru(1946) in The Discovery of India mentioned, "What is needed is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change

previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on pre-conceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind—all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems."

Today, developing countries like India need to meet a broad range of essential requirements, from secure food supplies and resources to cheap and effective medication.Nehru wrote that the scientific temper goes beyond the domains to which science is conventionally understood to be limited to, and deals also with the consideration of ultimate purposes, beauty, goodness and truth. Nehru also contended that the scientific temper is the opposite of the method of religion, which relies on emotion and intuition and is (mis)applied "to everything in life, even to those things which are capable of intellectual inquiry and observation." While religion tends to close the mind and produce "intolerance, credulity and superstition, emotionalism and irrationalism", and "a temper of a dependent,unfree person", a scientific temper "is the temper of a free man". He also indicated that the scientific temper goes beyond objectivity and fosters creativity and progress. He envisioned that the spread of scientific temper would be accompanied by a shrinking of the domain of religion, and "the exciting adventure of fresh and never ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out and new ways of living, adding to [life's] fullness and ever making it richer and more complete." To understand this, people require knowledge of science and technology, though of a slightly different nature.

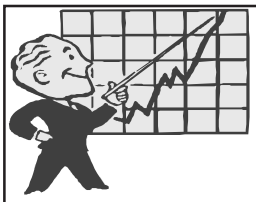
The creation of scientific temper is not merely to master science and technology, but to make people more rational and objective. In other words, it is a humanizing process.

It is appropriate to quote the late president APJ Abdul Kalam here: "The purpose of science is to understand the nature where we lie and continuously we have to give more than what we take from the earth and above all science is intended to improve the quality of life of the people."

Through the advancement of information communication technologies, people can form opinions and ideas on emerging science and technology as new knowledge is easily accessible. Unfortunately, in

rural India the development is flawed by the poor access to education, lack of awareness and poor socio-economic conditions. This has considerably slowed down development.With a large percentage of the population being illiterates and with the media's reach largely restricted to urban areas, the information and education contents of the media do not reach a large majority of the people. It is here that the folk media due to their earlier mentioned advantages can play a major role in promoting scientific temperament. They have greater reach and impact because of their suitableexpressions in the local context, practical implication and entertainment component. They can be used as an excellent medium to promote scientific temperament as it can overcome the difficulty of language, speech,words and other barriers of communication like, interest, understanding,interpretation, attitude and perception. Puppet shows,street plays and stage dramas can easily carry the issues related to promote scientific temperament. Folk media also reflect and resemble the day to-day life pattern of the rural masses. Education and information can be imparted to people through entertainment forms of communication using the folk media.

Folk media used for science communication are not only entertaining, but also offer two-way communication and are cost effective. Folk media are an important tool in the process of inspiring rural masses towards accepting social changes, which also establish a constructive means for the overall development of the common people and can build scientific temperament among the masses. Folk media also promote people's participation and spontaneity. The knowledge of science and technology information related to agriculture, health and environment is needed for development, and effective communication through the tools of folk media can play a major role in contributing to this. This can lead to a knowledge based community with improvement in the agricultural field,awareness of disease, personal hygiene, and healthier nutrition, better social and economic growth.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define folk media.

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Q.2: What is scientific temperament?

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11.4 PROBLEMS IN FOLK MEDIA COMMUNICATION

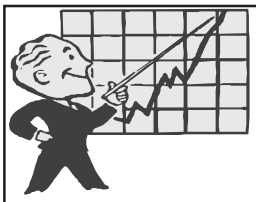
1. With the advent of electronic modes of communication and entertainment, the traditional art forms have suffered due to the shift of choice of the new generation and steadily decreasing customers. One way to address this problem would be to combine the association between the two forms of communication without disrupting either the traditional roots or the essential movement towards modernity. Such art forms are not seen as a viable mode of profession due to the similar cheaper machine-made products being available in the market. Increasing migration has further decreased the number of people who used to practice such arts. The traditional puppetry has been replaced by the social media and television, as a form of entertainment.Lack of market for their art in the present economy has pushed many out of business. Similarly,absence of infrastructure and facilities to showcase and market their art and want of incentive to push their art to future generations have led to slow death of this art form.

To most artists, traditional art form has given little else other than satisfaction. Artists are no longer able to lead a dignified life from their meagre earning. This forces many of them to migrate and/or take up other forms of employment. Patrons of traditional art forms are countable few. Given these dreary prospects, most from the newer generations, shun these art forms in favour of more profitable avenues.Moreover, most of these art forms

have not been able to repackage themselves given the changed times. For example one of the primary reasons for the dying Kodiyattam theatre form, is its strict grammar that allows for no experimentation. Growing demand for modern art forms rather than traditional indigenous work due to presence of variety and cheap cost especially among the youths and subsequent negligence and reducing political will to revive the old system have added to the loss of this traditional art form.

Government support in the form of grants/scholarships to artists can boost the drive of the practitioners of these art forms. Popularizing these art forms on national/international platforms such as cultural meets/ exhibitions/festivals can further help solve the problems highlighted above. Educating children on different art forms in schools, besides introducing more professional courses on these art forms will help.Proper policy and implementation in this regard would be required to address the problems faced by folk media. Globalization in a way is also creating cultural homogenization which has had its direct/indirect effect. These folk media are not only the reflection of the culture; they are the indigenous intelligence passed through generations. With the loss of the art form and practitioners, the entire knowledge is lost.

Hence, steps need to be taken to prevent their downward spiral. Policies should be in place to encourage folk media practitioners to leverage the growth of tourism industry and showcase their art through exhibitions and museums setup by the government. The artists should also be encouraged to form cooperatives and associations to check imitation of their art and prevent intermediaries from reaping windfall profits. They should be capacitated to setup workshops where not only their children but anyone interested can learn the craft. These can further serve as exhibitions and showrooms for their artform.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: List reasons for decline in the popularity of folk media as a profession.

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Q.4: Suggest a solution to address the problems faced by folk media.

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11.5 USE OF FOLK MEDIA BY CULTURAL ORGANISTIONS AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

Efforts have been made from both governmental and non-governmental platforms to enhance the public understanding of science through various activities.Several voluntary agencies, such as Kerala's Shastra Sahitya Parishad (People's Science Movement), are actively involved in taking science to the people, especially through folk forms. Where print and electronic media have limits rooted in literacy levels and accessibility, folk media can play a crucial role.

India has a rich heritage of folk arts, folk dance, folk tales, epics, ballads and plays that can be used for development work.The traditional media have been able to aid in national development for a longtime. Baishakhi Nag mentions how it has been found that Alha, the popular ballad of Uttar Pradesh, and its counterparts like Laavani of Maharashtra, Gee-Gee of Karnataka, Villupattu of Tamil Nadu and Kabigaan of Bengal were effective in arousing the conscience of the people against the colonial rule of the British; traditional media became effective in the many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi; and, after independence, the Union government continued to utilize these traditional performing arts to convey messages and generate awareness of development programmes in the rural areas. Many development planners in the third world have appreciated the value of using traditional or folk media, of which theatre is a

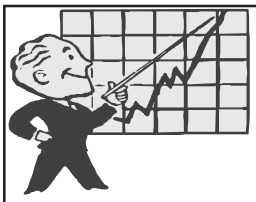
part, as an alternative communication strategy in development programmes. With newer notions of development supported themes becoming popular; as native involvement and incorporation of indigenous media have been opted, folk media have been readapted. The central and state governments have used the folk-art forms like Harikatha to educate the common people on family planning, developmental activities, democratic values and national integration (Kumar, 1981).Tiwari and Singh mention how traditional media as a means of development and educational communication have been discovered about 45 years ago in India. They are a significant tool in the process of motivating people in desired direction. They help the rural mass to accept social changes because the content is familiar to audience.

The communication potential of Indian traditional performing arts has been proven time and again throughout history. The first significant international recognition of the traditional media in the communication and development strategies of the developing countries came in the year 1972 when the International Parenthood Federation and UNESCO organized a series of meetings in London relating to integrated use of folk and traditional media in family planning communication programmes. Folk media like theatre and street plays have often been used in the communication and advancement of new concepts and the modification to a new social or political order, apart from their traditional role of preserving and teaching established values. Puppetry has also been used for spreading relevant messages of social awareness, historical and traditional identity and moral value systems.

While folk way of communication is prominent in rural areas, they have their presence in urban spaces too. Many developing countries have realized their importance and have used them for promoting issues related to political and social life. In the developed countries, remnants of folk communication exist in varying degrees. There is a mixture of traditional and modern communication in folk art form in developing countries where there is a continuous interaction and mutual impact between them. This mutual symbiosis between traditional and modern communication is essential for the folk media to innovate and adapt to the changing forms of

communication. Restoration of folk art forms is essential as it can be a very effective communication tool for modernization and development. Folk media are most effective in changing the unscientific attitudes, superstitions, etc. inherited as a part of tradition by the people in rural areas.Baishakhi Nag further mentions how realizing the potentialities of folk media, some State Directorate of Public Relations and non-official organizations make imaginative use of the folk art, and live entertainment movements have made several experiments by employing many of these forms for dissemination of ideas and innovations. Therefore, these folk forms should be kept up.Folk art form has been facing issues and challenges for survival as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs. Unfortunately, sometimes the villages in India receive neither the general mass media nor the folk media as communication vehicles, thereby resulting in a serious communication and knowledge gap. In certain cases, the folk media of some rural areas are on the verge of extenction and in certain cases people are unaware on how to use them effectively for development. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to revive and make good use of the folk media with proper blend of electronic mass media to build the gap in communication for development. The Indian government has been providing funds to various museums to save the vanishing traditional arts. Besides,the government and various cultural organizations should help in linking the folk art form with the mass media so that this field serve as a viable avenue for profession. Annual art festivals can be conducted by state governments, where such traditional art forms of entertainment can be promoted among the youth. These efforts should further help in maximizing the potential of folk media as a strong tool for development.

True, the folk media have a rigid content and presentation format and often found unsuitable for science and scientific communication. Yet several attempts have been made in several states to adopt and alter the content for conveying the messages to promote scientific temper. In Karnataka, the folk dance- drama art of Yakshagana has been used for campaigns against social evils and AIDS, despite opposition from conventionalists.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: Mention one folk art form which has been used in promoting people's science movement.

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Q.6: Identify some of the traditional media which have aided in national development.

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11.6 LET US SUM UP

- Folk media in different cultures are seen in different life stages of a person e.g. betrothal, birth ceremony, funeral rites and in all forms of entertainment and festivals. Today the same media can be used for community motivation, mobilizing support and participation in programmes and at the same time for entertainment.
- Folk media used for science communication are not only entertaining, but also offer two-way communication and are cost effective. Folk media are an important medium in the process of inspiring rural masses towards accepting social changes, which also establish a constructive means for the overall development of the common people and can build a scientific temperament among the masses.
- With the advent of electronic methods of communication and entertainment, the traditional art forms have suffered due to the shift of the new generation and steadily decreasing customers.
- Globalization in a way is also creating cultural homogenization which has had its direct and indirect effects. These folk media are not only the reflection of the culture; they are the indigenous intelligence passed through generations. With the loss of the art form and practitioners, the entire knowledge is lost.

- India has a rich heritage of folk arts, folk dance, folk tales, epics, ballads and plays that can be used for development work.
- While folk media as a medium of communication is prominent in rural areas, they have their presence in urban spaces too. Many developing countries have realized their importance and have used them for promoting issues related to political and social life.



11.7 FURTHER READING

1. Kumar, Keval J. (2010) Mass Communication in India. Third Completely Revised and Updated Edition.Mumbai: Jaico Publication House.
2. Madhusudhan, K. (2006) Traditional Media and Development Communication. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.



11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No 1: Folk Media are the tools of creative dissemination of information through cultural and performing arts. In traditional societies, folk media: drama, skits, poems, stories, riddles, songs and dance have been popularly and successfully used to disseminate messages and to pass on wisdom of older generations to the youth.

Ans. to Q. No 2: Scientific temper has been defined as an individual and social process of thinking and acting which uses the scientific method and which may, consequently, include questioning, observing physical reality, testing, hypothesizing, analyzing, and communicating. It can be described as an attitude which involves the application of logic through discussion, argument and analysis.

Ans. to Q. No 3: Such art forms are not seen as a viable mode of profession due to the similar cheaper machine-made products being available in market. Increasing migration has further decreased the number of people who used to practice such arts. The traditional medium of

puppetry has been replaced by the social media and television, as a form of entertainment.Lack of market for their art in the present day economy has pushed many out of business. Similarly,absence of infrastructure and facilities to showcase and market their art and want of incentive to push their art to future generations has led to a slow death of the art form.

Ans. to Q. No 4: Government support in the form of grants/scholarships to artists can boost the drive of the practitioners of these art forms. Popularizing these art forms on national/international platforms such as cultural meets/exhibitions/festivals can further help solve the problems highlighted above. Educating children on different art forms in schools, besides introducing more professional courses on these art forms will help. Proper policy and implementation in this regard would be required to address the problems faced by folk media.

Ans. to Q. No 5: Efforts have been made from both governmental and non-governmental platforms to enhance public understanding of science through various activities.Several voluntary agencies, such as Kerala's Shastra Sahitya Parishad (People's Science Movement), are actively involved in taking science to the people, especially through folk forms.

Ans. to Q. No 6: Alha, the popular ballad of Uttar Pradesh, and its counterparts like Laavani of Maharashtra, Gee-Gee of Karnataka, Villupattu of Tamil Nadu and Kabigaan of Bengal were effective in arousing the conscience of the people against the colonial rule of the British; traditional media became effective in the many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi; and, after independence, the Union Government continued to utilize these traditional performing arts to convey messages and generate awareness of development programmes in the rural areas.



11.9: MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: What are the advantages of folk media?

Q.2: What role does proper policy implementation play in promoting folk media?

Q.3: Is folk media a lucrative profession for young people?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What are the salient features of folk and traditional media?

Q.2: How folk media can be used for community development?

Q.3: What are the challenges faced by folk media?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: How folk media can be used for promoting scientific temperament?

Q.2: Write an essay on the usage of folk media by government and cultural agencies.

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UNIT 12: FOLK MEDIA AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Folk media and health communication: need and scope

12.4 Folk media and health communication: case studies

12.5 Folk media and health communication: the utilitarian aspects

12.6 Let us Sum Up

12.7 Further Reading

12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.9 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the need and scope of folk media in health communication
- analyse the role of folk media in health communication with case studies
- comprehend the utilitarian aspects of folk media vis/-a-vis/ health communication

12.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed about the relationship between folk media and scientific temperament. In this unit, we shall discuss the relation of folk media and health communication, its need and scope as well as an analysis of different case studies.

Recent years have seen tremendous advances in the innovative use of communication to address public health problems. Many studies have been undertaken to understand the role played by mass media in the field of health promotion and risk communication. Among the different forms

of mass media, the role played by folk media cannot be downplayed. In fact, people can relate to folk media more as it speaks the language of the people. Thus, use of folk media for public health communication has gained tremendous importance in the last decade or so.

12.3 FOLK MEDIA AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION : NEED AND SCOPE

Health communication is the study and practice of communicating and promotional health information. It includes public health campaigns and health education for disseminating health information to influence personal health choices by improving health literacy. To be effective, health communication must be personalized for the audience and the situation. Research into health communication seeks to refine communication strategies to inform people about ways to enhance health or to avoid specific health risks. Health communication seeks to increase audience knowledge and awareness of a health issue, influence behaviours and attitudes towards a health issue, demonstrate healthy practices, demonstrate the benefits of behaviour changes to public health outcomes, advocate a position on a health issue or policy, increase demand or support for health services and argue against misconceptions about health.

Folk media can be effectively used in health communication as they appeal to people at a personal and intimate level. They establish immediate and direct rapport with the audiences. They are available to all at a very low cost and since the format is familiar and everyday dialect is used, it is easily understood and makes for clarity in health communication. The retention of knowledge is more because of its edutainment format and also because it involves and often invites audience participation. Health communication plays a vital role in public health campaigns designed to prevent infectious diseases in the developing world. Folk media through their interpersonal form of communication has contributed to the success of government-sponsored public health campaigns in many developing countries. It has also been observed that low level or lack of awareness

has led to wide spread problem in health issues. Effective health communication can play a very important role in this aspect.

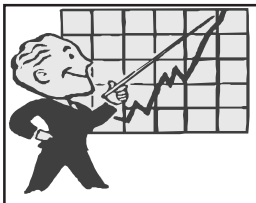
Wilbur Schramm (1963), in his work, 'The Science of Human Communication' ,states that "communication science seeks to understand these diverse processes and effects, including how different channels and types of information can be mobilized instrumentally and strategically in domains such as public health. Communication scientists recognize that communication occurs at multiple levels of a social ecological system, namely, intrapersonal (the realm of emotion, cognition, and decision making), interpersonal (the realm of social relationships), networks and organizations (the realm of norms and social structures), and macro societal (the realm of large social systems and culture)". Health communication models through folk media when tactically designed can concurrently address several psychosocial and behavioural factors to bring about necessary awareness; this could involve stigma reduction as in the case of AIDS. They could also generate support from community/opinion leaders and messages could be reinforced when delivered through multiple channels.

National Prevention Information Network mentions that all strategic communication planning involves some variation on these steps:

1. Identify the health problem and determine whether communication should be part of the intervention.
2. Identify the audience for the communication programme and determine the best ways to reach them.
3. Develop and test communication concepts, messages, and materials with representatives of the target audiences.
4. Implement the health communication programme based on results of the testing.
5. Assess how effectively the messages reached the target audience and modify the communication program if necessary.

Folk media are a medium of communication which is rich in variability and is economically viable. People of different age groups enjoy them. Since they are local and live in cultural context they are more popular with rural

masses. Folk media are interpersonal and can create 'face to face situation' between the communicator and the receiver of the message



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define health communication.

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Q.2: How can health communication be effective?

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12.4 FOLK MEDIA AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION : CASE STUDIES

Many government and cultural organizations in developing countries are using folk media for spreading awareness on health, environment and other social issues among masses. The Government of India has established bodies like the Song and Drama Division, Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity and others at the national, state and district levels for revival and survival of folk media. Science and health communication through folk media has been used widely by several organisations. For instance, Heart Care Foundation of India, New Delhi, is running a country wide campaign for science and health communication especially on nutrition under a nationally coordinated project, using various folk forms for taking messages of nutrition related issues to the people at large. The campaign includes training and orientation of performing groups in different states, folk performances in various states, and performances at national level in Delhi. This 10- month campaign involves street plays, puppetry and folk songs, among others as tools for communication. The programme was implemented in association with Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

***Case studies of health communication**:* Health communication efforts in India drew much of their strength from agriculture extension work. Programmes such as family planning, and later, leprosy used the integration of folk media in spreading awareness. The leprosy programme based its strategy on SET or survey, education and treatment. The World Bank assisted the union government's health, nutrition and population programmes like the National Leprosy Elimination Projects, the Woman and Child Development Project, the State Health Systems Projects, the Cataract Blindness Project and the National AIDS Control Project. The leprosy programme sought to bring about behavioural change in its communication strategies. This involved treatment compliance and completion and later the behavioural change shifted to early voluntary treatment. Interpersonal communication helped to increase information and awareness and reduce stigma through one-on-one interaction. This strategy showed a gradual but significant decrease in the numbers of cases detected, indicating that awareness about the disease, and reduction of fear and stigma, have stimulated voluntary reporting. In addition, the training and focus on the programme in the district during the campaign period motivated service providers at all levels. It also offered opportunities for local level advocacy since the campaign involved the district administration, and political, religious and social leaders. Local folk entertainment using song, dance and drama were used along with radio as a communication medium.

In another study done by Manashi Mohanty and Pritishri Parhi (2011) in Odisha, it was found that folk media are an effective way of building community participation and imparting health and nutrition education. According to the study, about 85% of the respondents could sense the use of traditional and folk media as very much prevalent in health sector. India was officially recognized as being polio free by the World Health Organization in 2014. The effort started in 1995 as the Intensive Pulse Polio Immunization programme. Administrators realized that communication about immunization only from the public-sector immunization teams was yielding poor results. Hence, social mobilization was adopted which included inter-personal communication. D Gupta and A Agarwal reported that folk media

were very useful in increasing community awareness and enhanced attendance. Mass media campaigns were also used. There is documented evidence to suggest that puppet and theatre shows, folk media and video vans, which travelled to more than 3,500 villages in Uttar Pradesh, contributed to a 20 per cent increase in booth attendance. D Gupta and A Agarwal states that it showed the power of synergistic communication activities. Integrated social mobilization, interpersonal communication, gender and culturally-sensitive interventions, mass/folk media and political advocacy together greatly contributed to the overall success of the polio programme. Clearly, such a model could also be adopted for other public health programmes and initiatives.



Gambhira : It is a type of deveotional dance that is performed with a paticulaly distinctive rhythm and dance with two performers. This song personifies a man and his maternal grandfather, thereby discussing a topic to raise social awarness. It is quite population in Malda district of West Bengal.

Panford, Nyaney, Amoahand Aidoo (2001) emphasized the importance of folk media as these are channels that use communication methods already in place in certain villages to discuss pertinent issues, including health education and disease prevention and care. Since this type of communication is embedded in the culture of a community, it increases the audience's belief and trust in it and thereby increases the likelihood of its effectiveness. Reshmi Naskar (2001) made a study of combating child marriage through participatory communication using folk media in Malda, West Bengal. In her study, 30 villages of Malda district were selected. The work was done in close co-ordination with the District Social Welfare Department of Malda, UNICEF and a reputed NGO of Kolkata, Bangla natak.com. Folk forms of media viz. the Domini and Gambhira were chosen as the communication tool for creating the awareness and mobilization campaign which included regular workshops to train the Domini and Gambhira teams, interactive theatre shows, meetings with the adolescent girls, parents, SHG women, Aganwadi workers, ASHAs, Moulavis, panchayat members, teachers, local NGO's and stakeholders at block and panchayat level. Theatre based awareness campaigns with the integration of Gambhira and Domini folk dance theatres were used as communication tools to sensitize villagers on legal age of the marriage, problems of early marriage, severe health problems like anaemia, early pregnancy affecting the health of newborn and increased risks of mortality, vicious increase in poverty,

domestic violence/sexual violence and others. Folding exhibitions were put up at the site of the street theatre show, depicting ill effects of child marriage and disseminating names and contact numbers of different agencies who may be contacted for preventing child marriage. The street theatres would be followed with audience interactions where villagers would be asked questions based on messages disseminated.

The study reported that altogether there were more than 173 girls who were mobilized to build awareness among their peers in the village on child rights and ill effects of child marriage. Following the workshop, it was observed that the girls were seen to meet their peers in the village and share information on laws for protection of their rights on problems of early marriage, trafficking, rights of girl child and skill development. In at least four cases, villagers were able to stop early marriage of girls in their village. Village girls, PRI members, SHG members were provided leadership. In some cases, villagers took care to check credentials before marrying off their daughters.

Some other case studies focusing on the use of popular folk forms in different countries for communicating issues related to health and hygiene

Using folk media for the eradication of polio in India

Since 1988, the world has come very close to eradicating polio through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a programme in which communication interventions have played a consistently central role. This large public health initiative is organised by WHO, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the UNICEF. In India too, polio eradication efforts have been underway since 2000.Obregon et al (2009) in a research report have examined the polio eradication efforts between 2000 and 2007. The different communication approaches used in the polio eradication campaigns were evaluated against surveillance and campaign data, and reviewed periodically by independent bodies including the Technical Advisory Group, the India Expert Advisory Group and technical communication review groups. A combination of social mobilization, interpersonal communication, mass and local media and advocacy were used to disseminate information about OPV (oral poliomyelitis vaccine) and

the steps necessary to mitigate the disease. A careful analysis of the data revealed that mass and folk media have together led to an increased awareness about the deadly disease. In Uttar Pradesh itself, puppet/theatre shows, video vans and other folk media activities were held in more than 3500 villages. This had contributed to a 20% increase in booth attendance (vaccination booths). All the hard work behind the campaigns paid off as India was declared polio free in 2014. The WHO continues to monitor the progress the country has made in its fight against polio.

Community-based health education programme for bio-environmental control of malaria through folk theatre (Kalajatha) in rural India

This particular study was carried out under the primary health care system involving the local community and various potential partners. The National Institute of Malaria Research (NIMR) and Community Health Cell (CHC), Bengaluru jointly initiated the programme. Kalajatha is a popular traditional art form of folk theatre depicting various life processes of a local socio-cultural setting. Accordingly, in December 2001, the Kalajatha events were performed in the evening hours for two weeks in a malaria affected district in Karnataka. This form of folk theatre conveyed the important messages on malaria control and prevention to the rural community. Thirty local artists including ten governmental and non-governmental organisations participated. The impact of the programme was assessed after two months. The respondents who were exposed to the programme had significant increase in knowledge and change in attitude about malaria and the different strategies to control it. They were able to associate clean water with anopheline breeding and the role of larvivorous fish in malaria control.

Shadow puppets and family planning: The Indonesian experience

The use of shadow play for communication programmes has been used in Indinesia for the past five hundred years or so. Initially this folk form was used to promote the Hindu religion.



Wayang (shadow puppets) from Central Java

In the living tradition of Java, wayang has always played and is still playing an important part. It is a unique form of puppet theatre in which the shadows of the beautifully carved leather puppets are the featured characters. The wayang, due to its high cultural value, is considered very difficult to adapt to the needs of population programmes. On the other hand, the classical wayang shadow play is highly appreciated and revered by the Javanese – the form is considered as a mirror of their feelings and of their ethical and social attitudes.

Use of socio-drama approach in Mexico to propagate effective health communication

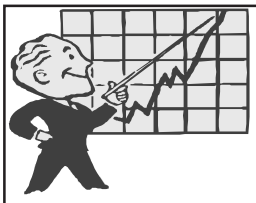
In order to ensure greater involvement of the masses in the national population programme, Mexico undertook in the 1970's a number of small-scale experiments to make use of folk media for raising the consciousness of participants and audiences not only about population matters , but also about the broader, interrelated social and economic factors affecting development. One such massive projects was funded by the representatives of United Nations Fund for Population Activities and UNESCO's Family Planning Division of Mexico where a bottom-up approach was developed to make family planning more acceptable. This particular project was undertaken in Santa Cecilia, a working class suburb of Guadalajara as well as in rural districts of Hidalgo and Morelos Provinces of Mexico. The group approached local working class communities and encouraged their members to participate in theatre plays that dealt with the problems they were experiencing in day to day lives. The family planners adjusted their development efforts to the realities of Mexican life and

challenged the top-down paradigm that had characterized modernization theory.

Puppet shows on family planning were also used on a wide scale in Mexico during the 1970s. Small hand puppets, combined with actual people-puppets and featuring a tape recorded script were showed in busy squares of Mexico city.

Using folk media for prevention of HIV/AIDS in rural Ghana :

The pandemic of HIV/AIDS continues to pose a serious threat to the population of sub-Saharan Africa, despite ongoing public health efforts to control the spread of infection. Given the important role of oral tradition in indigenous settings throughout rural Africa, folk media has been put to use in order to educate the masses regarding the harmful effects of HIV/AIDS and the steps that must be followed to reduce the spread of this deadly virus. Some of the common types of folk media that are widely used in this regard include storytelling, puppetry, proverbs, visual art, drama, role-play, concerts, gong beating, dirges, songs, drumming, and dancing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: Name some of the bodies established by the Government of India to promote folk media.

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Q.4: What is SET strategy in health communication?

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12.5 ROLE OF FOLK MEDIA IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION: THE UTILITARIAN ASPECTS

Folk media are utilitarian in nature as these offer health programme facilitators a potentially powerful method of reaching rural villagers. Modern mass media have their limitation as sometimes their reach is limited to

urban areas and do not meet local situations and audience needs in rural areas. Folk media on the other hand use local language and symbols in a format which is familiar, credible and accessible to villagers. A proper blend of folk and mass media can be used in effective communication of health information. Folk media like live drama, puppetry, song and dance, storytelling and proverbs, and pictures are based on the socio-religious life of the people. It is an important means of communicating real situations, morals and others relevant to the people. Boeren (1992) notes that "theatre is based on village situations. It exploits social realities, encourages audience participation, it is expressed in local idioms and is accessible to the community at large. This is based on the fact that it builds on the people's cultural heritage, using traditional channels and knowledge".

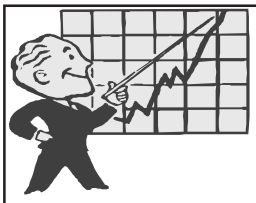
Folk media in the form of drama can be beneficial in promoting health information as Moyo (1997) highlights their utilitarian nature as folk communication involves inter-personal communication; it is inherently dialogic; it allows the target community to participate; it is easy to assimilate and it can impart greater legitimacy to topics originating from the community or fuse a totally new concept with local culture.

A. John in his application of J Deane's study mentions the following strategies which can be used in health communication:

1. Advocacy: It is defined as a range of strategies designed to make people participate in decision-making at the organizational, local, national and international levels, usually involving strategic planning, community mobilization, coalition building, policy promotion and environmental change.
2. Social Mobilisation: According to UNICEF (2005), social mobilization is defined as "a broad-scale movement to engage the people's participation in achieving specific development goals through self-reliant efforts".
3. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC): This is an interactive process with communities that uses various communication channels to develop tailored messages and approaches meant to

build positive behaviours, promote and sustain individual community and societal behaviour change, and maintain appropriate behaviours.

Folk media integration in health communication adopting participatory approach will have greater impact as it is democratic in nature. This approach is suitable as interpersonal communication often involves information to be diffused from the opinion leaders and the opinion followers. Some states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have used the folk media for effective health communication. Most state health departments have their own communication wings.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: How are folk media utilitarian?

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Q.6: Define advocacy.

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_____



12.6 LET US SUM UP

- Health communication seeks to increase audience knowledge and awareness of a health issue, influence behaviours and attitudes towards a health issue, demonstrate healthy practices, demonstrate the benefits of behavioural changes to public health outcomes, advocate a position on a health issue or policy, increase demand or support for health services and argue against misconceptions about health.
- Folk media can be effectively used in health communication as they appeal to people at a personal and intimate level, they establish immediate and direct rapport with the audiences, folk communication is available to all at a very low cost and since the format is familiar

and everyday dialect is used, it is easily understood and makes for clarity in health communication.

- Folk media through their interpersonal form of communication have contributed to the success of government-sponsored public health campaigns in many developing countries. It has also been observed that low level or lack of awareness has led to wide spread problems regarding health issues. Effective health communication can play a very important role in this aspect.
- Folk media communication in the form of drama can be beneficial in promoting health information as it involves inter-personal communication; it is inherently dialogic; it allows the target community to participate; it is easy to assimilate and it can impart greater legitimacy to topics originating from the community or fuse a totally new concept with local culture.
- According to UNICEF, social mobilization is a broad-scale movement to engage the people's participation in achieving specific development goals through self-reliant efforts.
- Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is an interactive process with communities that use various communication channels to develop tailored messages and approaches meant to build positive behaviours, promote and sustain individual community and societal behavioural change, and maintain appropriate behaviours.
- Wilbur Schramm states that science communication seeks to understand these diverse processes and effects, including how different channels and types of information can be mobilized instrumentally and strategically in domains such as public health. Communication scientists recognize that communication occurs at multiple levels of a social ecological system, namely, intrapersonal (the realm of emotion, cognition, and decision making), interpersonal (the realm of social relationships), networks and organizations (the realm of norms and social structures), and macro societal (the realm of large social systems and culture).



12.7 FURTHER READING

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12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No1: Health communication is the study and practice of communicating promotional health information, such as public health campaigns, health education for disseminating health information to influence personal health choices by improving health literacy.

Ans to Q No 2: To be effective health communication must be personalized for the audience and the situation, research into health communication seeks to refine communication strategies to inform people about ways to enhance health or to avoid specific health risks.

Ans to Q No3: The Government of India has established bodies like the Song and Drama division, Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity among others at the national, state and district levels for revival and survival of folk media.

Ans to Q No 4: SET stands for survey, education and treatment. The anti-leprosy programme was based on this strategy. The anti-leprosy program sought to bring about behavioural change in its communication strategies. This involved treatment compliance and completion and later the behavioural change shifted to early voluntary treatment. Interpersonal communication helped to increase information and awareness and reduce stigma through one-on-one interaction. This strategy showed a gradual but significant decrease in the numbers of cases detected, indicating that awareness about the disease, and reduction of fear and stigma, have stimulated voluntary reporting.

Ans to Q No 5: Folk media are utilitarian in nature as they offer health programme facilitators a potentially powerful method of reaching rural villagers. Modern mass media have their own limitation as sometimes their reach is limited to urban areas and do not fit into local situations and audience needs in rural areas. Folk media on the other hand use local language and symbols in a format which is familiar, credible and accessible to rural villagers.

Answer to Q No 6: Advocacy is defined as a range of strategies designed to make people participate in decision-making at the organizational, local, national and international levels, usually involving strategic planning, community mobilization, coalition building, policy promotion and environmental change.



12.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1: What are the advantages of using folk media in health communication?

Q.2: How can interpersonal communication through folk media help reduce stigma?

Q.3: How can folk media help in advocacy and social mobilization?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What is the scope and need of health communication?

Q.2: Mention the strategic communication planning involved in health communication.

Q.3: Give examples of participatory health communication using folk media.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Present a case study where folk media has been successfully used for health communication.

Q.2: Write an essay on the utilitarianism aspects of folk media as regards health communication.

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UNIT 13: ROLE OF UNESCO IN SUSTAINING FOLK MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.2 UNESCO's efforts to sustain folk media in developing countries

13.3 Folk media in South Asia

13.4 Let us sum up

13.5 Further reading

13.6 Answers to check your progress

13.7 Model questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand UNESCO's efforts to sustain folk media in developing countries
- comprehend the types and role of folk media in South Asia

13.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed about how folk media serves as a platform for propagating health communication . In this unit, we shall look into the role played by UNESCO in sustaining folk media in developing countries particularly South Asia. The international community, including United Nations organizations, has recognized the importance of meeting the information and communication needs of marginalized and vulnerable people. It has understood the role that folk media can play in empowering people to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

13.2 UNESCO'S EFFORTS TO SUSTAIN FOLK MEDIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

UNESCO places strong emphasis on sustenance of folk media as it believes that these form part of the universal heritage of humanity and that

folk communication is a powerful means of bringing together different peoples and social groups and of asserting their cultural identity. UNESCO places importance on the social, economic, cultural and political importance of folk media and their role in the history of the people, and their place in contemporary culture. The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting held in Paris in 1989 at its twenty-fifth session, underlining the specific nature and importance of folklore as an integral part of cultural heritage and living culture and recognizing the extreme fragility of the traditional forms of folklore adopted the recommendation that the member states should apply the provisions concerning the safeguarding of folklore by taking whatever legislative measures or other steps may be required in conformity with the constitutional practice of each state. It also wanted them to bring these to the attention of the authorities, departments or bodies responsible for matters relating to the safeguarding of folklore and to the attention of the various organizations or institutions concerned with folklore, and encourage their contacts with appropriate international organizations dealing with the safeguarding of folklore. The general conference also recommended that member states submit to the Organization reports on the action they have taken.

The UNESCO document on Communication and Society divides the folk media forms into the following groups as follows-

(i) Folk theatre
(ii) Folksongs,
(iii) Predominantly narrative forms, including ballads, folktales and other story-telling forms
(iv) Religious discourses
(v) Puppet shows

UNESCO (1998) defined folklore as the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally,

by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts. Folklore, as a form of cultural expression, must be safeguarded by and for the group (familial, occupational, national, regional, religious, ethnic, etc.) whose identity it expresses. Hence, the following recommendations were given to the member states:

(a) Develop a national inventory of institutions concerned with folklore with a view to its inclusion in regional and global registers of folklore, institutions;

(b) Create identification and recording systems (collection, cataloguing, transcription) or develop those that already exist by way of handbooks, collecting guides, model catalogues, etc., in view of the need to coordinate the classification systems used by different institutions;

(c) Stimulate the creation of a standard typology of folklore by way of:

(i) A general outline of folklore for global use;

(ii) A comprehensive register of folklore; and

(iii) Regional classification of folklore, especially field-work pilot projects.

UNESCO is also involved in conservation, preservation, dissemination and protection of folklore. Conservation is concerned with documentation regarding folk traditions and its object is, in the event of the non-utilization or evolution' of such traditions, to give researchers and tradition-bearers access to data enabling them to understand the process through which tradition changes. Preservation is concerned with protection of folk traditions and those who are the transmitters, having regard to the fact that each people has a right to its own culture and that its adherence to that culture is often eroded by the impact of the industrialized culture purveyed by the mass media. It further stated that "In so far as folklore constitutes manifestations of intellectual creativity whether it be individual or collective, it deserves to be protected in a manner inspired by the protection provided for intellectual productions. Such protection of folklore has become indispensable as a means of promoting further development, maintenance and dissemination of those expressions, - both within and outside the country, without prejudice to related legitimate interests. Leaving aside the

`intellectual property aspects of the protection of expressions of folklore, there are various categories of rights which are already protected and should continue' to enjoy protection in the future in folklore documentation centres and archives".

UNESCO promotes international co-operation in view of the need to intensify cultural co-operation and exchanges, through the pooling of human and material resources, to carry out folklore development and revitalization programmes as well as research made by specialists who are the nationals of one Member State or the territory of another Member State. The 1999 Regional Seminar for Cultural Personnel in Asia and the Pacific by Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) further recommend governments to:

1. Maintain strong co-operative relations with UNESCO, other UNESCO Member States and ACCU in the cause of preservation and promotionof the intangible cultural heritage and facilitate a mechanism for more effective co-operation;
2. Provide moral and economic support to cultural organizations, researchers and scholars for research, training, and organizing performing art festivals;
3. Consider the establishment of a National Apex body, where it does not exist, to make policy,co-ordinate activities, co-operate with othercountries in the field of culture;
4. Encourage experts and researchers and specialists to participate in international workshops and seminars and thereby allow the exchange of ideas, views and work being conducted in this field in different countries;
5. Try to disseminate the significance and the on-going process and results of regional co-operation in the field of preservation of traditional/folk performing arts under the aegis of UNESCO and ACCU; and
6. Establish a central documentation centre and a comprehensive data bank of the national cultural heritage.

It was also recommended that UNESCO should:

1. Strengthen regional co-operation for the preservation and promotion of traditional/folk performing arts and work more closely and effectively with cultural institutions of the Member States;
2. Organise workshops and provide training to the concerned personnel.
3. Extend support for identification, compilation and recording and documentation of endangered folk traditions in the Member States;
4. Assist, support and co-ordinate activities between ACCU and the governments of the Member States, which include making suggestions to ACCU for its programme activities by identifying the needs of the Member States; and
5. Assist ACCU in the effective dissemination of materials and information on the intangible cultural heritage.

Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) was recommended to:

1. Strengthen and enhance the joint development programme of the Data Bank on Traditional/Folk performing arts in Asia and the Pacific

   - by forming an advisory committee to ensure advice for realization of the full potential of the programme,

   - by inviting as many countries as possible to participate in this programme and thereby collecting more items of performing arts and related institutions,

   - by taking necessary steps to establish in each country focal points - institutions and/or individuals

   - to facilitate the production and enhance the utilization/dissemination of theData Bank,

   - by incorporating the plan for up-dating and for application on the Internet and

   - by eventually spreading the sphere of the data bank to cover all aspects of culture.
2. Continue and develop its programmes such as training, production of audio-visual materials and networking in the field of the intangible cultural heritage in a more systematic and integrated way;

3. Strengthen its programme of national workshop for documentation to give experts in each country hands-on experience;
4. Consider organising new programmes in this field such as seminar on the relationship between economic development/tourism and the intangible cultural heritage and comparative lecture-demonstration series of traditional/folk performing arts in different Asian/Pacific countries;
5. Support short/long term research/training programmes for cultural managers; and
6. Facilitate effective means of dissemination of the cultural information, ACCU's on-going activities and future plans among those concerned including the governmental decision makers.

UNESCO is also involved in developing a platform for the enhancement of research, exchange, education and professional networking for the performing arts in Asia-Pacific region. The Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Network (APPAN) is one such establishment wherein membership in this network serves the following purpose:

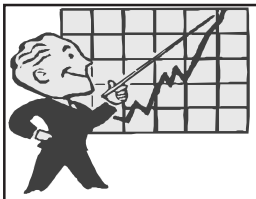
- Increase public awareness of the cultural and spiritual identity of the Asia-Pacific region to a worldwide audience;
- Promote the use of traditional performing arts as a creative base for contemporary performing arts;
- Link performing artists, organization, choreographers, producers, critics, authors, scholars and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to enhance artistic cross fertilisation as well as the exchange of artists, performers and training opportunities.

The activities of the network would comprise of research, training and workshop, documentation, performance and consultation. In other words, it will:

- Provide recognition of important artists as national and international "living treasures";
- Promote an inter-regional exchange of performing artists through workshops, master classes, and exchange residencies;

- Promote opportunities for the exchange of intercultural performances of regional music, dance and theatre companies and artists;
- Act as clearing house for the regional training and scholarship opportunities in the performing arts;
- Serve as vehicle for advertising employment opportunities for performing arts and related professionals in theatre and other performing arts;
- Act as vehicle for the exchange and development of education materials relating to the traditional and contemporary performing arts of the Asia-Pacific region with particular emphasis on introducing these materials into secondary school curriculum and general public as well as print and broadcast media;
- Provide linkage for performing artists of the region to the global networks such as UNESCO CULURELINK network, etc.

UNESCO has been involved in preserving and promoting folk media in developing countries. For example, in China it was involved in documentation, through audio-visual media, the oral tradition of the Han nationality. The project consisted of: selecting and recording performances by storytellers; collecting and organizing the audio-visual recordings and archival services; and developing a methodology for selection, recording and preservation of non-physical cultural heritage. UNESCO is also involved in the project on the Preservation of the Chinese Minority Nationalities' Intangible Cultural Heritage; protection and promotion of the Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage. In India, it was involved in documentation of India's cultural resources, including performing arts; the works of the famed Gita Govinda has been documented and made available on the hypermedia; a book on "Mughal Art" has been published with the support of UNESCO. In Cambodia, it has been involved in research and documentation of Khmer dance.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define folklore.

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Q.2: What do you understand by conservation of folk media?

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Q.3: What do you mean by dissemination of folk media?

_____

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LET US KNOW

International Organization of Folk Art (IOV World) : International Organization of Folk Art is an international organization aiming to protect the folk art and cultural heritage across the world through the organization of festivals and other cultural events, thereby contributing to international understanding and world peace. The main objectives of this organization are-

i. Organizes conferences, meetings, scientific symposia, international events like lectures, exhibitions and tours.

ii. Organizes and promotes international exchanges between folk art groups and ensembles worldwide

iii. Schedules and supports international folklore festivals, with emphasis on dancing, folk music, folk songs and folk art.

iv. Produces scientific publications and publications on experience of practical work in the field.

.

Country Presence: The organization is mostly active in countries like Afghanistan, Macao (China), Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and South Sudan.

International Organization of Folk Art defines the folk art in five categories following the 2003 UNESCO Convention Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage-

1. Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;

2. Performing arts;
3. Social practices, rituals and festive events;
4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
5. Traditional craftsmanship

13.3 FOLK MEDIA IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia or Southern Asia is a term used to represent the southern region of the Asian continent, which comprises the sub-Himalayan SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries. The countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In this section , we shall discuss about the prevalence of folk media in these countries.

Folk media in Afghanistan: Afghanistan is popular for its folklore, poetry and folk music. H.L. Sakata (1983)mentions that the music of southern Afghanistan is dominated by the music culture of the Pashtuns, who have a rich history of national pride and independence expressed in poetry composed by prominent Pashtun poets and warriors. Many of their songs are patriotic in nature, urging bravery and resistance against foreign domination. A major form of Pashtun folksongs is the landay, consisting of improvised couplets with a nine-syllable line and a thirteen-syllable line. The musical instrument most closely associated with the Pashtuns is the rabab, which is recognized and celebrated in Pashtun folk literature as a noble folk instrument. Folklore may be defined as roughly comprising the oral-traditional component of culture. Afghanistan has a predominantly oral environment where the domain of “folklore” becomes nearly coextensive with “culture” or “knowledge” itself. Folklore has long mingled with an established, elaborate literary tradition, both religious and secular, including prose and verse forms of verbal art.

Folk media in Bangladesh : In Bangladesh music is the most popular folk form and the various types of folk music include mystic songs (baul, marfati, murshidi, bisched), devotional songs (hamd, nat, shyama sangeet, kirtan), ballad (palagan, puthipath), community songs (jari, sari, bhawaya) and snake-charmer’s song. The traditional melodies and lyrics of these

songs were enriched by kabials (lyricist and composer of folk songs), gayens (singers), dohars (co-singers) and musicians. The bayatis (bards) of Bangladesh still sing about the gore, the glory and the agony of the Liberation War. *Gambhira,* especially is one performance folk narrative that has assimilated the episodes of struggle for independence into its repertoire.

Among the spiritual or mystic songs of Bangladesh, the most well known and well loved are the bauls. The baul songs cut across religious boundaries, showing Sufi influence as well as that of Vaishnava and Bhakti literature. *Bisched* songs are similar in their mystical longing, but they use the symbolism of Radha and Krishna and the sorrow of their separation to reflect the sorrow of the human soul in its distance from the spiritual. Among the religious folk music of Bangladesh are the *kavi* and *jari* songs. The jari songs are a kind of dirge sung in memory of the deaths of Hazrat Imam Hassan and Hussein. These days, kavi songs are performed for popular entertainment. They are extempore and resemble a dialogue in verse between two contesting poets.

In the *jhumur* songs, the Santhal tribesmen use the love of Radha and Krishna to depict earthly fervor which is similar to the *Ghatus.* The ghatus are riverside people, and their songs are sung in autumn and during the rainy season on boats at the riverbanks. Folk musical form like *bhawaya* and *jag* are prevalent in the northern districts of Bangladesh.

Kabigan, a sort of musical debate on a particular topic between two kabials is very popular all over Bangladesh. Folktales of Bangladesh include *rupkatha* or *parikahini* (fairy tales), complete with the story of prince and princesses, heroic deeds, supernatural aid ad magical powers. Legends built around historical characters are known as *romancha-katha.Birkathas* (tales of heroism) also sometimes fall into this category. Folk dances can be categorised into the following categories- religious (jarinach, jakirnach and kirtannach), social (gambhirnach, dhalinach, lathinach and roybenshenach), ceremonial (ghatunach, khemtanach, sarinach and bolinach) and musical (baulnach, jarinach and gambhirnach). Jatra performances are also occasionally held in most parts of Bangladesh. It is basically a folk drama form that is characterised by exaggerated delivery

and stylized oration.Folk motifs are increasingly used in essential goods like pots and plates. Pottery is traditionally the preserve of people called the kumars.

Folk media in Bhutan : Tibetologist Francoise cited Bhutanese traditional masked dances as a medium for the culturally and politically unifying messages imparted to the public. Bhutan is also known for its elaborate dances, telling stories of Buddhist heroes for the monks and lamas. In traditional Bhutanese theatre, theatrical performance is conducted through religious masked dances or cham performed in the open courtyards of dzongs and monasteries. *Cham* is one of the grandest spectacles in Bhutanese performing tradition. It is a meditation in movement, the dancer conceiving himself as the deity he is representing, with every gesture that is not only symbolic but imbued with power as well. This particular dance is accompanied by Buddhist chants, music and customs. Some dances are re-enactments of episodes from namthars, spiritual biographies of holy people.

Folktales are traditionally shared in the evenings in rural villages across Bhutan. These folktales are passed on from one generation to another generation and they serve as an important tool of communication.

An important folk literary genre of Bhutan is the *lozey.* Literally translated as an 'ornament of speech', it is a rich source of information on Bhutanese culture, customs, dress habits and literature. Lozey is composed and recited in colloquial language. Tsangmo is another popular folk literary genre on Bhutan. Consisting of four lines or a quatrain with two couplets, it is a well structured piece of poetry. The tsangmo is not recited but sung to a particular tune.

Folksongs are also an integral part of Bhutanese culture. Bhutanese folksongs can be categorised into two categories- *Zhungdra* (melody of the center), and *boedra.*

Folk media in Maldives :

Folk dance and music have been an intricate part of the Maldivian culture and society. This is evident in the current boom of young people engaged in traditional drum and music of 'Boduberu'; where goat skin

(sometimes stingray skins as well) drums are beaten and accompanied by harmonized singing and the most fun and hypnotic dance moves one could ever find themselves moving to. *Thaara* music is performed by about 22 people seated in two rows opposite each other. It is performed only by men, and is somewhat religious in nature. Like *boduberu*, *thaara* songs begin slowly and come to a peak. *Thaara* is said to have arrived with Arabs who came from the Persian Gulf in the middle of the 17th century.

Gaa odi lava is a special type of song performed after the completion of manual labour. It was said to have been invented during the reign of Sultan Mohamed Imadudeen I (1620–1648), for the workers who built defenses for the city of Malé.

There are numerous other cultural performances such as that of women's 'Bandiya Dance'; where they dance with traditional water collecting metal containers, beating a tune on them, as they sing in wonderful harmony, dancing to the beats. The Eid Celebration (a celebration after the end of the Muslim month of fasting as well as at the end of the yearly Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca), showcases traditional parades on the streets of the islands, with giant fishes woven out of coconut palm leaves, called 'Bodumas' and 'Maali' which are mythical creatures that people dress up as. These parades are accompanied by various games where the whole island folk come together and enjoy and have heaps of fun. Poetry recital ('Raivaru') and games such as 'Koadi Kendun' (where the men and women of the island play against one another) are also widely popular in Maldives.

Maldive folk tales, however, are largely unknown to the outside world. Despite the existence of a large quantity of stories in the Maldivian oral tradition, no compilation in print has ever been undertaken. Usually folk tales were told by storytellers who were invited to entertain the audience of an island household, where several generations were living together under one roof. Storytellers used to be men, save a few exceptions, like the late Gônahijje Fatma Didi of Fua Mulaku. However, there was no effort to preserve and popularize the native stories in their original form. Only some old legends that had been printed in the Maldivian language, such as 'Don Mohonu and the Shark', 'DoE Hiyalâ and Alifu7u' or 'HaG

i DoE Kamanâ' managed to survive, albeit in a modified form.

The tales of the oral tradition of the Maldives may be categorized as (i) tales of spirits or monsters (ii) long fairy-tale style myths (iii) stories involving humorous characters (iv) fables with local animals (v) seafaring stories; and (vi) chronicles of semi-historical events.

Folk media in Nepal :

In Nepal, Katuwal Karaune (Chants of messenger), Jhyali Pitne, Damaha Bajaune (drum beating), bugle blowing, conch blowing, and others are in practice to inform people about important happenings in and around their locations. The tradition of Katuwal Karaune (chants of messenger) is still in place in some rural settlements of Nepal. Other common forms of folk media in Nepal are fairs (mela/jatra), religious functions (Satya Narayan Katha, Saptaha,.), customary ceremonies (birth, marriages and others), folk songs, drama, ballads, riddling, and storytelling. Gandavas are the occupational caste of singing. In the past, Gandarvas were very influential communicators. They had occupied the place of the modern mass media in rural areas. That is why they are known as "living newspapers". In the past, they used to roam from village to village to collect money and food grains for their livelihood by singing Karkha (an eventful song) and some popular folk songs. Karkha is yet another story-driven song concentrating on current affairs, social, political and cultural milieu of the country. Karkha is considered as one the important aspects of oral tradition. Hence, it is called 'the living history'.

There has been a decline on the number of folk art forms in Nepal. A well developed tradition of wood carving flourished in the medieval Newari kingdoms, as did a sophisticated technique of lost-wax bronze casting of sacred images. One folk tradition that has managed to survive the onslaught of mass production of goods in the Tarai is the vibrantly coloured wall murals painted by Maitali and Tahru women though many of them now paint on paper in order to cater to the International market.

Folk media in India :

Folk media in India include folk theatre, folk songs, ballads, folk tales, puppet shows and others. Some of the popular folk theatres in India are

Tamasha, Powada or Powala, Keertana, Yakshganga, Dashavatar, Nautanki, Ramlila and Raslila, Jatra, Bhavai, Therookuthu, Puppetry, street theatre. The government has also set up several bodies like the Song and Drama Division as an arm of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to translate the capital of folk media to developmental communication functions. Even All India Radio has used folk media in the form of a daily program narrated by conventional characters that convey the typical life and folklore of the rural areas. (A detailed description of the various forms of folk media in India have been provided in Unit – 1)

Folk media in Pakistan : Pakistan is known for its folk music which has been influenced by music from various parts of South Asia as well as Central Asian countries. Qawwali and Ghazal Gayakiare are the most popular musical narrative. Popular folk dances of Pakistan are Bhangra, Luddi, Dhammal (performed at Sufi shrines/ dargahs in Punjab and Sindh), Attan, Khattak, Jhumar, HoJamalo Sindhi dance and Lewa. Folk music of Pakistan includes the traditional forms of Balochi, Pashto, Punjabi, Brahui and Sindhi folk songs and music. Pakistani folk songs include “Abeeti” (a love song sung by young women), “Allah Hoo” (a Muslim lullaby) “Ashoor Jan” (a patriotic love song) and Jugni folk songs. Folktales include the epic love stories of lovers like Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal, Sassui Punnhun and Mirza Sahiban. Then, over the years as time went by, folk songs and folk music were developed by the people based on these folktales. Badala (or Sandara) is a historically significant form of Pashto folk music that focuses on local romance, epics, folktales, fables, local heroes and historical events. Badala also includes Pashto translations of epics and romances from Arabic and Persian cultures.

Folk media in Sri Lanka : Folk rituals are common in most parts of Sri Lanka. Ritual games like adilla (pulling of horns), pol keliya (coconut game) and dodam keliya (game of oranges) are still performed as part of the goddess Pattini. Folk games associated with the secular New Year festivities such as climbing a greased pole, tug of war and chak gudu are played in villages. Many folk rituals and practices associated with rice cultivation have survived for many generations because of the positive role

they play in agricultural production and in fostering village solidarity. One such ritual is the Vap magula (Festival of the Plow) that is collectively performed at the beginning of the cultivation season. Another ritual known as attam kayya (labour exchange) provides cooperation for activities that need several hands while pin kayya (merit exchange) occurs when labour is performed as a simple act of charity to help a sick or disabled fellow villager.

With the coming of Buddhism in the third century B.C.E, folk literature in the form of legends, stories of historical events, poems, songs and dramatic performances began to circulate quite early, both in written and oral forms. For instance, the Jataka Tales (Birth stories of the Bodhisattva) from the Pali textual tradition were related by monks in sermons to villagers and then took on a life as orally circulating folk stories.

Songs were not also sung and handed down orally but were also written in palm leaf manuscripts that were preserved by the families of ritual specialists. Examples include folk compositions such as the poems about events (vitti kavi), battle poems (hatan kavi) or narrative poems (Yasodaravata- story of Yasodara).

Painting frescoes on temple walls was very much a folk tradition, the roots of which can be traced back to early Buddhism. However, in the present day, such paintings have lost its sheen and lack the aesthetic sense of its predecessors. Sculpting the image of the Buddha was another form of folk art that was popularised and sponsored by the kings and noblemen.

Thus, each of these different forms of folk media have different cultural and social role to perform in the society and is used to provide cultural continuity and transmission.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Name some of the popular folk music of Bangladesh.

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_____

Q.5: What do you mean by lozey?

_____

_____



13.4 LET US SUM UP

- UNESCO places strong emphasis on sustenance of folk media as it believes that these form part of the universal heritage of humanity and that these are a powerful means of bringing together different peoples and social groups and of asserting their cultural identity.
- UNESCO is also involved in developing a platform for the enhancement of research, exchange, education and professional networking for the performing arts in Asia-Pacific region and to promote preservation of cultural heritage.
- South Asia which comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka has rich folk heritage where folk media are integrated in the cultural milieu of each country..



13.5 FURTHER READING

1. Madhusudhan, K. (2006). Traditional Media and Development Communication, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
2. Sakata, Hiromi Loraine (1983). *Music in the mind : Concepts of Music and Musicians in Afghanistan.* Kent State University Press.
3. UNESCO (1999) Preservation and Promotion of Traditional/Folk Performing Arts. Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), by Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: UNESCO (1998) defined Folklore as the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means.

Ans to Q No 2: Conservation is concerned with documentation regarding folk traditions and its object is, in the event of the non-utilization or evolution of such traditions, to give researchers and tradition-bearers access to data enabling them to understand the process through which tradition changes.

Ans to Q No 3: Dissemination of folk media would involve measures to ensure the spread of folk media as a cultural heritage to be widely spread so that the value of folk media and the need to preserve them can be recognized.

Ans to Q No 4: Some of the popular folk songs of Bangladesh are mystic songs (baul, marfati, murshidi), devotional songs (hamd, nat, shyamasangeet, kirtan), ballad (palagan, puthipath), community songs (jari, sari, bhawaya) and snake-charmer's song.

Ans to Q No 5: An important folk literary genre of Bhutan is the *lozey.* Literally translated as an 'ornament of speech', it is a rich source of information on Bhutanese culture, customs, dress habits and literature. Lozey is composed and recited in colloquial language.



13.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: Identify the different folk theatres of India.

Q 2: What is the purpose of Asia-Pacific Performing Arts Network?

Q 3: What is the special feature of Nepal's Gandavas?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What is the role of Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO in preservation of cultural heritage?

Q 2: What were the recommendations given by General Conference of the UNESCO 1989 to member states for the preservation of folklore?

Q 3: Detail the different categories of folk media in Sri Lanka.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Describe how India is a Mecca of folk media.

Q 2: Write an account of UNESCO's effort to preserve and sustain folk media.

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UNIT 14: CONTRIBUTION OF EMINENT PERSONS TO FOLK MEDIA COMMUNICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Contribution of eminent persons to folk media communication

- 14.3.1 Gloria Feliciano
- 14.3.2 Wimal Dissanayake
- 14.3.3 Shyam Parmar
- 14.3.4 H. K Ranganath

14.4 Let us Sum up

14.5 Further Reading

14.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.7 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to learn about the contribution of eminent persons to folk media communication viz.

- Gloria Feliciano
- Wimal Dissanayake
- Shyam Parmar, and
- H.K Ranganath

14.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed about the role of UNESCO in sustaining folk media in developing countries particularly South Asia. In this unit, we shall analyse the contribution of eminent persons to folk media communication.

14.3 CONTRIBUTION OF EMINENT PERSONS TO FOLK MEDIA COMMUNICATION

The study of traditional folk media has developed over a period of time with the contribution of several scholars and theorists worldwide. The following section will discuss the contribution of some of the eminent communication scholars to this academic discourse.

14.3.1 GLORIA FELICIANO

Gloria Feliciano is an academician who has contributed substantially towards the approach of development and integration of folk media with mass media involving field-level communication strategies. She highlights the study in the Philippines where folk media served as a potential vehicle for developmental messages. Her study contributed to supporting the use of folk media not only in support of family planning programs but also in the broader task of total development communication. The more significant findings of her work were:

(l) The presence of a wealth of folk media in rural areas of the country; (2) the existence of many forms, structures, and techniques, affording a wider selection of media most appropriate for achieving specific communication objectives as well as a wider choice for integration with the modern media; (3) the nature of both techniques and structure of the mass media, which makes adaptation for development communication more feasible; (4) the high value placed on them by the rural people, which increases credibility as message channels and balances the impersonal character of the mass media, and (5) the existence of efforts to revive folk media, which of late have been dwindling in popularity and falling into disuse.

Feliciano expressed that mass media has not been successful in developmental efforts in rural areas because mass media had ineffective communication messages due to an

inadequate knowledge of rural audiences, lack of instructional and educational-type programmes, and multi-language set-up and lack of a popular, functional and practical medium (language)of communication to and for the rural masses. According to her, communication messages were considered ineffective if they did not fall within the level of understanding of the intended readers or listeners and also if they did not bring about a greater understanding of rural development goals or objectives and if they did not effect change in the intended audiences- a change either in attitudes or in behaviour. Rural development programmes and projects that way did not find adequate support from mass communication. Instead of being change-oriented,mass media presentations were mostly "escapist" in nature.

Her contribution is in the line of analysis of the problems of communication research, where she mentions the difficulties faced such as the slow growth of the field because of lack of professionally trained researchers, lack of financial, human and physical facilities to support research programmes and delayed recognition of the value of communication research to development by the public and private sectors and the mass media themselves. She highlighted the importance of media infrastructure studies; studies of communicators and receivers of message; and development studies. Feliciano stressed on the importance of folk media in addressing developmental issues and suggested the pivotal tasks in harnessing the potential of the folk media for communication through a build-up of knowledge, studies on the feasibility of their use for specific development communication, extended through, and integrated with, the mass media, and the training of communicators in their use for development communication.

14.3.2 WIMAL DISSANAYAKE

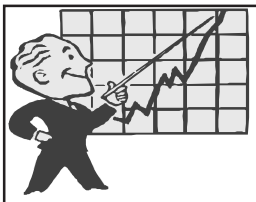
Wimal Dissanayake, a communications scholar, contributed to the study of using indigenous communication channels such as

folk media and meeting places for development communication. Wang and Dissanayake (1984) defined folk media as a communication system embedded in culture which existed much before the arrival of mass media and which still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world presenting a certain degree of continuity, despite changes. Dissanayake observed that these folk media are not mere relics of the past, but active and highly functional cultural institutions performing functions vital to the well-being of society. They provide entertainment, disseminate information, inculcate socially accepted norms and values and perform a general socializing function. Thus, through his study he proved that folk arts are a part and parcel of the society.

Dissanayake also listed the advantages folk media have over mass media in social development in poorer countries as the former are more credible, "having existed among the rural folk for a long time, express(ing) their deeply felt and communal joys and sorrows,triumph and defeat." In his study, he also mentioned that the peasants consider mass media to be elitist and alien and identified with centres of power. Dissanayake added that traditional media employ the idiom of the people and the symbols which are readily intelligible to them, reach a part of the population that is impervious to the influence of mass media and demand active participation in the process of communication. When discussing folk media, according to him, it is important to remind ourselves that they are not mere quaint relics of the past, but vigorously active and highly functional cultural institutions performing functions vital to the well-being of society: they provide entertainment, disseminate information, inculcate socially accepted norms and values, and perform a general socializing function.

Dissanayake emphasised practicing carefulness concerning the adaptability of folk media to express messages of modern society based on his field study in countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia. He mentioned that in trying to adapt

traditional media to suit modern conditions a question that is likely to prove troublesome is the concept of performance. His study showed a wide and deep gap between the concepts of performance adhered to by traditional artists and modern communicators. He said, “The intimate personal relationship between the parties in communication and the absence of the tyranny of time are two concepts,which, counter to modern communication, are central to folk media performers. Also, in traditional societies, the products of these media have not become commodities as in modern, urban societies”. His observation is based on instances where in India and Sri Lanka the audiences were hostile and walked away during performances of folk plays whose content had been modernized and the structure tailored to suit modern messages. Dissanayake through his studies has contributed to better understanding of folk media in different contexts. Wimal Dissanayake was a senior fellow at the East-West Centre, Hawaii and his main focus was on cultural studies.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What were the major contributions of Gloria Feliciano?

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Q.2: What is Dissanayake’s understanding of folk media?

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14.3.3 SHYAM PARMAR

Shyam Parmar contributed to the theory of coalition of folk media with mass media in the context of the combination of modern mass media with that of traditional media of communication, leading to the concept ‘Coalition’. According to Parmar, the coalition of

modern mass media and existing traditional media creates a process of interaction. He observed that "the communication needs in India are much greater than the resources we have to meet them today. While the mass media have been constantly expanding, the traditional media have been playing an important role in this field due to our peculiar needs. Apart from these live programmes with face-to-face communication the traditional folk forms have been used in programmes over the electronic media. India's role in identifying folk media for communication purposes has been quite positive. The experience can certainly be of comparative use of both the developing and under developed countries if proper results of these efforts became available through scientific surveys".

Folk performance is a composite art in India. It is a total art with fusion elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic ballad recitation, religion and festival peasantry. It imbibes ceremonials, rituals, belief and social system. It has deep religious and ritualistic overtones and it can surely project social life, secular themes and universal values. According to Shyam Parmar (1975) the advantages of folk media from development point of view are:

1. Traditional folk media are most intimate with the masses in all the regions of the country.Their primary appeal is to the emotions rather than the intellect.
2. They command an immense variety of forms and themes to suit the communication requirements of the masses.
3. They are local and live and can establish direct rapport with the audiences.
4. They are easily available to their customers.
5. They are flexible to accommodate new themes.
6. They are enjoyed and approved by all the people from different age groups.
7. They are low-cost media as compared to the sophisticated mass media.

Shyam Parmar describes, “For rural communication, the traditional folk media are therefore of paramount importance. The mass media face certain disadvantages in the use of folk forms. The live programmes of folk media cannot outlive their utility even with the full expansion of mass media. Parmar stressed on the coordination of technology based mass media and traditional modes of communication for effective bridging of gap which exists between the new technology and its use by the farmers and dissemination of socio-political and cultural information. Shyam Parmar was for the integrated use of folk and mass media for national development.

14.3.4 H. K RANGANATH

Ranganath, based on his experimental research with folk media described folk media as being intimate with the masses, rich in variety, readily available at low cost, relished by different age groups and genders; the theme being carried traditionally, it has greater potential for persuasive communication and gives wider scope for face-to-face communication and instant feedback. He believes some folk media can carry modern messages effectively and stresses on these traits of traditional media for bringing about social change in developing nations.

According to Ranganath, “These media are comparatively cheap. They do not have to be imported and, therefore, involve no foreign exchange, a scarce commodity except for oil kingdoms. They belong to the community and not to individuals, state or private/ public industry. Many of the developmental efforts, anyway, have to be aimed at the community as a whole rather than at atomised individuals if behavioural change is to occur. There is no threat of cultural colonialism and foreign ideological domination. Also, local talent and localized message would have more credibility than those centralised ones emanating now from state capitals. “

According to Ranganath, folk media are egalitarian and may prove better outlet for egalitarian messages than the present elite

press, film or radio-TV.There is a commonality about them. Acceptability, cultural relevance,entertainment value, localized language, legitimacy, flexibility, message repetition ability, instant two-way communication among others. Folk form may be better carriers of the 'total' message—welfare of the whole society in the many-sidedness of cultural, economic and social development—for up-lifting the quality of rural life in its entirety rather than bifurcated and narrow message beams such as those of family planning. Ranganath reported on several South Indian experiments to make folk media better carriers of modern messages. At the Bangalore Center, for example, the traditional art forms experimented with were categorized as flexible, such as puppet, Katha and song varieties; rigid, such as ritual dances which rejected new messages but remained highly popular with sections of the masses for religious and ritualistic reasons and rigid with flexible elements, such as some of the characters or thematic situations.

Ranganath's argument is like Bascom's view, which holds that folklore is a part of culture. Sense folklore is a part of humanity's learned traditions and customs, it also formed as a part of its social heritage.Both the theorists propound that folk media have essential specific functions viz. amusement; validating culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them ;in educating the masses particularly in the non-literate societies; and some forms of folklore are important as a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control. More importantly the folk media present many alternatives in form and theme for experimentation in communication. Ranganath described folk media as continuously evolving and living expressions of the lifestyle and culture of a people. His opinion on folk songs may be used to discuss the role played by different folk media as well:

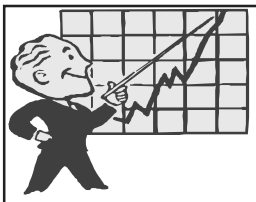
"…they have successfully played decisive roles in attuning the rural mind to the importance of a social or political theme like national unity, social welfare and even family planning. They have

thus become the most persuasive communicators on any given theme. In the effort of making them loveable communicators, the original content is squeezed out and a new message is integrated to suit the needs of time and place. This process has given them a sense of contemporarily and functional relevance". In his book *'Using Folk Entertainments to Promote National Development'* he deals with the concept of the potentials of folk entertainments, identifying and characterizing folk entertainment forms, designing a communication programme using folk entertainment the folk artist as communications collaborators, integrating message and entertainment, carrying out the folk entertainment programme ,and evaluation.

Ranganath states that folk entertainment will not magically solve development and social issues, but it can help in raising consciousness in hard-to-reach rural areas, and at best it may sometimes turn out to be the beginning of a long process of change.He argues, that it would be a mistake for governments of the less developed countries to expect that they would achieve success in national development without mounting an assault on the communicative problems of bringing into the mainstream of development effort most of their populations now wallowing in abject poverty, ignorance, and disease in the urban slums and the rural areas. Also, it would not be a wise strategy to carry on development communication campaigns through the modern mass media channels, such as radio, television, and newspapers, while neglecting the use of folk media which reaches the rural populace more. He further warns against equating propaganda (i.e., attempts to get people to accept a point of view they would not reach themselves, using only their own reason and considering their own interests. Development communication according to him should seek to help the rural and urban poor to define the problems in their everyday lives, to see the possibilities open to them for attacking these problems, and to make intelligent and informed choices about

what actions to undertake. For this to materialize, a genuine communication programme using folk entertainment must function in close coordination with actual development services, possibilities, and institutions. Ranganath places a great deal of emphasis on local participation and authenticity and legitimacy of folk entertainment programmes for national development. For example, he urges that folk artists and other performers should be recruited from the communities at which the programmes are aimed, that the support of local opinion leaders for the programmes should be sought and maintained, that in the process of communicating development messages the familiar forms of folk entertainment should never be tampered with, and that publicity and coordination should be carried out through local agencies and functionaries. These precautions should be observed, the author recommends, regardless of whether the folk entertainment activities are carried out in local community theatres or through the urban-based media. Ranganath feels that development communication on issues ranging from family planning practices to the use of health clinics could be carried on more effectively through familiar folk entertainment forms rather than through the usual information campaign programmes on the regular mass media channels. He feels that many of these strategies are already being applied in countries like India, Indonesia and Botswana. His work serves as a good reference point in the context of folk media for international, intercultural, and development communication scholars, as well as for others interested in the communication problems of national development in the Third World.

H.K. Ranganth was a UNESCO fellow on folk media and has written a book, *Using Folk Entertainment to Promote National Development (Population communication manuals*) that was published in 1980.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What is media coalition according to Shyam Parmar?

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_____

Q.4: What are the advantages of folk media as listed by Ranganath?

_____

_____



14.4 LET US SUM UP

- Gloria Feliciano's contribution is in the line of analysis of the problems of communication research. She mentions the difficulties faced like the slow growth of the field because of lack of professionally trained researchers, lack of financial, human and physical facilities to support research programmes, and delayed recognition of the value of communication research to development by the public and private sectors and the mass media themselves.
- Wimal Dissanayake, another communications scholar, contributed to the study of using indigenous communication channels such as folk media and meeting places for development communication.
- Shyam Parmar contributed to the theory of coalition of folk media with mass media in the context of the combination of modern mass media with that of traditional media of communication, leading to the concept 'Coalition'
- According to Ranganath, folk media are egalitarian and may prove a better outlet for egalitarian messages than the present elite press, film or radio-TV. There is a commonality about them. Acceptability, cultural relevance, entertainment value, localized language, legitimacy, flexibility, message repetition ability and instant two-way communication.



14.5 FURTHER READING

1. Dissanayake, Wimal (1979) Development communication. Colombo: Indika.
2. Dissanayake, Wimal (1977) "New Wine in Old Bottles: Can Folk Media Convey Modern Messages?" Journal of Communication, Spring, pp. 122-124
3. Parmar, Shyam (1975) Traditional Folk Media in India. New Delhi : Geka Books
4. Ranganath, H.K (1976) ''A Probe into the Traditional Media: Telling the People Tell Themselvesÿ'' Media Asiaÿ3:1
5. Ranganath, H.K. Folk Media and Communication. Mysore : Chintana Prakashana

14.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. Q. No 1: Feliciano stressed on the importance of folk media in addressing development issues and suggested the pivotal tasks in harnessing the potential of the folk media for communication through a build-up of knowledge, studies on the feasibility of their use for specific development communication, extended through, and integrated with, the mass media, and the training of communicators in their use for development communication.

Ans. Q. No 2: Dissanayake defined folk media as a communication system embedded in culture which existed much before the arrival of mass media and which still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world presenting a certain degree of continuity, despite changes. Dissanayake observed that these folk media are not mere relics of the past,but active and highly functional cultural institutions performing functions vital to the well-being of society. They provide entertainment, disseminate information,inculcate socially accepted

norms and values and perform a general socializing function. Thus, through his study he proved that folk arts are part and parcel of society.

Ans. Q. No 3: Shyam Parmar contributed to the theory of coalition of folk media with mass media in the context of the combination of modern mass media with that of traditional media of communication, leading to the concept 'Coalition'. According to Parmar, the coalition of modern mass media and existing traditional media creates a process of interaction. He observed that "the communication needs in India are much greater than the resources we have to meet them today".

Ans. Q. No 4: Ranganath, based on his experimental research with folk media, described folk media as being intimate with the masses, rich in variety, readily available at low cost, relished by different age groups and genders; the theme being carried traditionally, it has greater potential for persuasive communication and gives wider scope for face-to-face communication and instant feedback. He believes some folk media can carry modern messages effectively and stresses on these traits of traditional media for bringing about social change in developing nations.



14.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q .1: Who is Gloria Feliciano?

Q 2: How can 'Coalition' help in creating development messages?

Q 3: Why should we be careful as regards the adaptability of folk media to express messages of modern society?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1 : What according to Feliciano are the reasons that have led to a lack of success of mass media in rural development communication?

Q.2: List the most significant findings of Dissanayake.

Q .3 : What according to Shyam Parmar are the advantages of folk media from the viewpoint of development?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Explain why did Dissanayake feel that there is a 'deep gap between the concepts of performance adhered to by traditional artists and modern communicators'.

Q.2: Write an essay on the contribution of H.K. Ranganath to the study of folk media.

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UNIT 15: FOLK MEDIA VS MASS MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Folk media vs. mass media

15.4 Future of folk media in India and Assam - suggested measures

15.5 Let us Sum up

15.6 Further Reading

15.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.8 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to learn about:

- folk media vs. mass media
- future of folk media in India and Assam with suggested measures

15.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we discussed about the contribution of eminent personalities towards the growth and development of folk media. In this unit, we shall look into the advantages and disadvantages of folk media over mass media and vice versa. We shall also discuss the future of folk media in India with special reference to Assam.

15.3 FOLK MEDIA Vs MASS MEDIA

Both Mass media and folk media are powerful means of communicating messages which can be used for development and for forming people's opinion. The amalgamation of both the forms of media can be used for powerful dissemination of information as both the media have their own strengths and weaknesses. Audience for these media include both the beneficiaries and the functionaries. The functionaries help design the developmental programmes and the beneficiaries accept and adopt

the outcome of developmental programmes. Folk media have been used for development and informative communication as these are the most appropriate media for bringing about changes in attitude as they are informal in nature and are most effective amongst the rural masses. They can easily disseminate information among people who cannot read and write or do not understand the language of modern communication. The folk media can relate to the socio-cultural, religious, moral and emotional needs of the people of society to which they belong. As elements of folk media constitute an integral part of their culture, the audience can identify themselves easily with the messages communicated. Mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, and internet provide for quick and effective dissemination of information to a large number of people in a short duration. There is no delay in their reception. Mass media due to their advantages in reaching a large number of people, have a crucial role to play in transfer of information, education, culture, health, politics among others. Access to media, a basic understanding of the spoken language and very little training are enough to use many of the services offered by mass media. With the advancement in technology, it has become very easy and economical to cover vast geographical areas through mass media.

Folk media though comparatively cater to a smaller section of audiences, have greater impact as they involve audience participation. Mass media have been found lagging in this aspect. Following are the advantages and disadvantages of both traditional media and mass media.

Advantages of folk media are:

- Most useful in community level communication
- Does not require special training or technology
- Rooted in local culture and tradition.
- Audiences can identify and relate with the messages
- Feedback is instant and spontaneous
- Fluid form and content based on social need.
- Folk media are cost effective
- Messages are easy to remember and can quickly attract the masses.

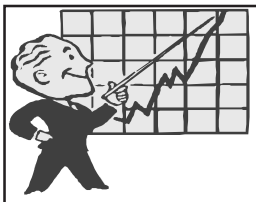
- Masses can relate and connect to the messages.
- Primary appeal is to the emotions rather than the intellect.
- It has a variety of forms and themes to suit the communication requirements of the masses. Since these are local and live, they can establish direct rapport with the audience.

Advantages of mass media:

- They reach heterogeneous masses.
- Messages can be communicated within no time.
- Messages can be communicated to a large number of people at a particular time.
- Usage of multimedia makes content more interesting.
- Great possibility of recording and archiving the content for future use.
- Mass media use of internet is interactive.

Folk media have the disadvantages of being restricted to the place of performance with limited reach. The scope for archiving the performance is also restricted without the use of electronic media. It can cater only to a limited audience. Mass media have disadvantages as they are less intimate. Television, radio and newspaper have slow feedback mechanisms, creating content in these media is expensive and a special training is required to make messages for mass media. They also have limited access in rural areas. Most of the folk media experts have also pointed out the advantages that would accrue from a fusion of the two media as mass communication media could greatly amplify, augment and intensify the effect usually created by traditional media.

Mass media cannot substitute live performances of folk media. However, extensive rural reach can be achieved only when many local radio and local TV stations are established at the district level with adequate provision for community access. Mass media have played a role in preservation of folk media as a large chunk of their programmes. For instance, Doordarshan and All India Radio are dedicated to promoting folk art and folk artists.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the advantages of folk media?

_____

_____

Q.2: Mention the disadvantages of mass media.

_____

_____

15.4 FUTURE OF FOLK MEDIA IN INDIA AND ASSAM - SUGGESTED MEASURES

India is popular for its diverse and rich folk media. Traditional media such as puppets, nautanki, Katha, are all combinations of fine arts, music, sculpture, painting, acting, and poetry. Folk forms from different regions vary depending upon the region. This variation results in an inconsistency of rules under which these forms are created or presented. Balwant Gargi rightly said “Folk media represents the people in their natural habitat, with all their contradictions and multifarious activities. It gives a glimpse of their style of speech, music, dance, dress and wisdom. It consists of rich store of mythological heroes, medieval romances, chivalric tales, social customs, beliefs, and legends. To understand the colourful diversity and unity of India, it is important to see the folk theatre in its natural settings”.

Indian theatrical tradition is as old as the Rig Veda. In the Upanishads as well, the theatrical tradition is continued. The two epics Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the basic sources of folk theatre in India. The Jataka Kathas, the Natya Shasthra of Bharata Muni, Kalidasa and others made folk theatre flourish in ancient India. Indian folk music and folk songs have been used for communicating messages for ages. Folk music includes the tribal as well as the non-tribal music traditions which showcase the diversity of cultural heritage of India. Folk music is learned in a quite spontaneous way by people. While these are performed in the society and one gets these from the very childhood, the folk music simply enters the

framework of mind and feelings. The community activities where folk instruments are played and folk music are performed and such activities like festivals, rituals and other occasions are part of social life. On occasions like birth and death, marriage, harvesting, plantations and celebrations to give social education, folk music and songs are used in any traditional society.

Jatra is the folk theatrical performance of Bengal. However, Jatra performance is also seen among the Assamese people in Assam and among the Bengali people in Bihar, Tripura, Odisha and other states. Jatra has originated from the Indian Vaishnavite movement and it was started in Bengal by Saint Chaityanya Prabhu. Jatra theatrical form is accompanied with music. Along with the religious themes, secular themes are also adopted in Jatra performances. Assam is known for its folk forms Ojapali, mobile theatre, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Lokageet, Borgeet, Bongeet, and Bihu. Puppetry and street theatre are also quite popular. Bhaona has the tradition of more than five hundred years. The form of Bhaona was systematically started by Srimanta Sankaradeva, which aimed to integrate the masses through the folk theatre. Bhaona is performed in the premises of Namghar, centre of workship of Vaishnavite tradition of Assam, accompanied by dancing, folk music and songs, dialogue, mask culture among others. Folk instruments like khol,doba, tal, bhurtal and negera. are used in the performance of the folk dramatic form of Bhaona. Bhaona carries the themes of Puranas, Mahabharata, Ramayana and the themes of legends and myths with regional flavour and adaptation. Bihu dance in Assam carries the joy, merriment and festivity with the themes of love and youthfulness. Bihu dance is accompanied with Bihu songs and the rhythm of Bihu Dhol, Tal, Taka, Gagana, Sutuli, Pepa, Banhi and others. Bagarumba dance is the rhythmic dance of the Bodo community in Assam performed during the Baisakhu festival. Deodhani is the dance associated with the Shakti cult in Assam performed especially during Manasha puja and in Kamakhya. Ojapali is a form of dramatic dance performance that are of two types - Biyahar and Sukannani Ojapali. Dhepa Dhuliya, Jhumur and Somangkan are some other folk dances in Assam.

Folk media in India reach more to the Indian rural populace and mass media are mostly limited to the urban population. Folk media in India are our cultural heritage. These were utilized during the conception and inception of the First Five Year Plan, having been considered even earlier by economists, social scientists, and communication experts. Both leaders and researchers in social and communication sciences are making ceaseless efforts to find more effective communication media for faster development. Incorporating folk media is an important aspect of these efforts. The communication potential of traditional performing art has been proved time and again by many instances of national importance. Realizing the importance and powerfulness of this medium, the first five-year plan projected that people in the rural areas should be approached through traditional forms in addition to electronic media for publicity purpose. Communities and individuals have utilized a wide range of media local fares, puppet shows, street theatre, folk songs and ballads for social purposes and as a support to local development schemes for health and family welfare campaigns, and also for creating political awareness.

Folk media expert Shyam Parmar observes that the communication needs in India are much greater than the resources we have to meet them today. While the mass media have been constantly expanding, the traditional media have been playing an important role in this field due to our peculiar needs. Apart from these live programmes with face-to-face communication the traditional folk forms have been used in programmes in the electronic media. India's role in identifying folk media for communication purposes has been quite positive. The experience can certainly be of comparative use in both the developing and underdeveloped countries if proper results are available through scientific surveys. One of the important recommendations of MacBride Commission established by UNESCO regarding the traditional folk forms is: "Even when modern media have penetrated isolated areas, the older forms maintain their validity, particularly when used to influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change. Extensive experience shows that traditional forms of communication can be effective in dispelling the superstitions, archaic perceptions and

unscientific notions that people have inherited as part of traditions and which are difficult to modify if the benefits of change are hard to demonstrate. Practitioners of the traditional media use a subtle form of persuasion by presenting the required message in locally popular artistic forms. This cannot be rivalled by any other means of communication."

With the government and international bodies placing a lot of emphasis on revival, preservation and usage of folk media, the medium has a lot of prospect in the future. The folk media forms are one of the major goals of the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, formed in 1954. Likewise, India's Field Publicity programmes uses folk media for field publicity. Since the 1980s, folk media are increasingly prioritized for their communicative value. From that time onwards, the integration of folk media with the mass media focuses to use the communicative qualities of folk media through mass media. The integration of folk media with mass media for mass communication is an international activity initiated and patronized by UNESCO. The international approval and the legitimization of folk media as mass communication media is another important initiative of the UNESCO. The Song and Drama Division of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and others propagate the initiatives of UNESCO in India resulting in proving the mass communication power of folk media as highly effective and participatory. Prasad (2013) mentions the three requirements for folk media in the Indian context as:

- The preservation of folk media and the presentation of these forms through mass media agencies.
- The use of folk media to convey development messages through live performances,
- The use of folk media to convey development messages through mass media agencies.

As suggested by different scholars, mass mediation of folk media i.e. production of folk media through mass media technologies is a suitable way to protect and preserve the folk media forms. Therefore, adoptability of themes and adoptability to other mass media forms can be utilized along

with folk media. Folk media can be entwined in the mass mediation process where folk media performance through mass media agencies can carry development messages for the society. Aikat stated "Both traditional and modern media could help promote improved levels of communication, and shared information that enables sustainable development on a global scale. In sum, a sustainable society must be an information community." Folk media and new media technologies can be further used in the future for entertainment, education and information. The mediation of folk media by mass media technology can be used to achieve the following :

(i) Folk media can reach larger audiences.

(ii) Technology can be used for conservation and transmission of folk media.

(iii) The advantages of folk media and mass media can be merged for more effective developmental communication.

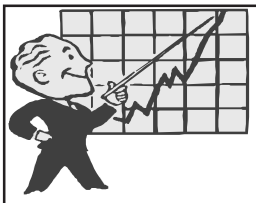
(iv) Convergent media technologies give more variation as media of folk media messages.

(v) Folk media can also reach global audiences and in the process, promote the sustenance of the cultural heritage.

The cultural affinity that folk media has in a societal context, can be used to develop it as a strong communication tool because it carries the ethos of the rural life and shares the same social coding between the sender and receiver of messages. Folk media is also a transmitter of Indigenous knowledge which comprises of information created and diffused in an indigenous society across generations. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has rightly stated that "Traditional folk media are cultural resources that accumulate indigenous knowledge, experiences and expressions passed down from generation to generation. Woven into proverbs and poems, songs and dances, puppet plays and stories, rhythms and beats, they are embedded with a strong sense of cultural identity which can be a potent force for development. In many cases, these media are the traditional conduits of indigenous knowledge, experience and culture. Creative use of these cultural resources in communities where they are popular and well entrenched can be a subtle and effective way of introducing development

ideas and messages. The cultural expressions in the folk media can thus be used to spread knowledge and information through entertaining packaging of social and developmental messages in each cultural context.

When it comes to the preservation of folk media, radio and television can play a vital role. Television in particular can retransmit the performances to the audiences in urban areas also. However, modern electronic media in a commercial environment cannot do justice to folk performances. These media suffer from time constraints. Critics feel that any type of abridged version of presentation will affect the original character and spirit of folk performance. The effort of Doordarshan in promoting folk performances has to be appreciated. When it comes to Lok Sangeet, AIR is way ahead compared to private channels that revel in film music only.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What do you mean by Jatra?

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Q.4: Can mediation of folk media by mass media technology help in achieving it?

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15.5 LET US SUM UP

- Both mass media and folk media are powerful means of communicating messages which can be used for development and for forming people's opinion.
- Audience for these media include both the beneficiaries and the functionaries. The functionaries help design the developmental programmes and the beneficiaries accept and adopt the outcome of developmental programmes.

- Folk media though comparatively cater to a smaller section of audiences, they have greater impact as these involve audience participation. Mass media have been found lagging behind in this aspect.
- Folk media have the disadvantages of being restricted to the place of performance with limited reach. The scope for archiving the performance is also restricted without the use of electronic media. They can cater only to a limited audience.
- Folk media represent the people in their natural habitat, with all their contradictions and multifarious activities. They give a glimpse of their style of speech, music, dance, dress and wisdom. They contain a rich store of mythological heroes, medieval romances, chivalric tales, social customs, beliefs, and legends. To understand the colourful diversity and unity of India, it is important to see the folk theatre in its natural settings.
- Indian theatrical tradition is as old as the Rig Veda. In the Upanishads as well , the theatrical tradition is continued. The two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the basic sources of folk theatre in India.
- Assam is known for its folk forms- Ojapali, mobile theatre, Bhaona, Sattriya dance, Lokageet, Borgeet, Bongeet, Bihu.
- Mass mediation of folk media i.e. production of folk media through mass media technologies is a suitable way to protect and preserve the folk media forms. Therefore, adoptability of themes and adoptability to other mass media forms can be utilized with folk media.



15.6 FURTHER READING

1. Aikat, Debashis Deb. Traditional and Modern Media. In Journalism and Mass Communication-Vol.I.www.eolss.net/sample-chapter/c04/e6-33-02- .pdf

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15.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No. 1 : Advantages of folk media are that they are most useful in community level communication, they do not require special training or technology; they are rooted in local culture and tradition, audiences can identify and relate with the messages, feedback is instant and spontaneous, there is fluidity of form and content based on social need, they are cost effective; messages are easy to remember and can quickly attract the masses; masses can relate and connect to the messages, primary appeal is to the emotions rather than the intellect. Moreover, it has variety of forms and themes to suit the communication requirements of the masses. Since its local and live, they can establish direct rapport with the audience.

Ans to Q No. 2 : Mass media have disadvantages as they are less intimate. Television, radio and newspaper have slow feedback mechanisms. Creating content in these media is expensive and special training is required to make messages for mass media. They also have limited access in rural areas. Khanna pointed out the advantages that would accrue from a fusion of the two media as mass communication media could greatly amplify, augment and intensify the effect usually created by traditional media. Mass media cannot substitute live performances of folk media.

Ans to Q No. 3: Jatra is the folk theatrical performance of Bengal. However, Jatra performance is seen among the Assamese people in Assam and among the Bengali people in Bihar, Tripura, Odisha and other states. Jatra has originated from the Indian Vaishnavite movement and started in Bengal by Chaityanya Prabhu. Jatra theatrical form is accompanied by music. Along with the religious themes, secular themes are also adopted in Jatra performances.

Ans to Q No. 4: The mediation of folk media by mass media technology can be used to achieve the greater reach to larger audiences; technology can be used for conservation and transmission of folk media; the advantages of folk media and mass media can be merged for more effective development communication; convergent media technologies give more variation as mediums of folk media messages; folk media can also reach global audiences and in the process, promote the sustenance of the cultural heritage.



15.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: How can amalgamation of folk and mass media be beneficial?

Q.2: How did the mobile theatres of Assam used to communicate messages?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: List the differences between folk media and mass media.

Q 2: What are the challenges faced by folk media in India?

Q 3: What do you mean by mass mediation of folk media?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Write a short essay on the future scope of folk media in India.

Q 2: Write an essay on folk media in Assam.

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