MFC-006

FOLKLORE: CANON, MULTIMEDIALITY, INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

School of Inter-Disciplinary and Trans-Disciplinary Studies (SOITS)

Indira Gandhi National Open University
New Delhi

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PROGRAMME & COURSE DESIGNED BY

Prof. Nandini Sahu
Professor of English
School of Humanities, IGNOU

COURSE PREPARATION

- Dr. Sudhakar Reddy
- Dr. Mrinalini Atrey
- Dr. Durbadal Bhattacharjee
- Dr. Neena Gupta Vij
- Dr. Somingam Mawon
- Dr. Dinesh Mali
- Dr. Dhurjjati Sarma
- Dr. Nilza Angmo
- Dr. Yahiya Ibrahim
- Dr. Rabindranath Sarma
- Dr. Rukshana Zaman
- Dr. Sanjay Kumar Bag
- Dr. Gouri Nilakanthan
- Dr. Vipin Jung
- Dr. Pavitra Kumari

COURSE EDITORS

Prof. Nandini Sahu
Professor of English, IGNOU
&
Dr. Dhurjjati Sarma
Assistant Professor
MIL&LS Deptt, Gauhati University

Secretarial Assistance:
Ms. Sunita, PS, SOH

Print Production

Mr. Kulwant Singh
Asst. Registrar
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Course VI of **M.A. in Folklore and Culture Studies**. It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate you on the successful completion of the five courses of the 1st year of MAFCS (64 credits for two years MA programme), which is also considered as PG Diploma in Folklore and Culture Studies (32 credits). This programme, as you know, has a modular approach, as per the University policy.

Folklore is one of the upcoming areas of research and pedagogy. The modular MAFCS Programme aims at creating a pool of specialized folklorists who can create a niche for themselves in teaching and research departments in colleges and universities, libraries, museums, archives, historical associations, cultural councils, national centres of arts, publishing houses, funding agencies, as well as in the central and state government institutions of agriculture, rural sociology, extension, medicine and nursing, and also in areas of study likewomen's studies, African-American studies, popular culture, English and foreign language/literature departments as translators, interpreters, curators, musicologists, teachers,artists, performers, and many more. Film industry and TV channels also have a high demand for folklorists. Folk entrepreneurs are coming up in a big way as job creators/providers, and this programme aims at creating self-reliant scholars of folklore.

A significant trend that emerges from the review of folklore is that, in any period of human history, knowledge about theory, data, and method is insured by the socio-cultural conditions specific to that period. India is a country with incredible cultural diversity. Each culture has its own traditional knowledge system. We are right when we say that people in the new millennium, the denizens of the digital societies, have a notoriously short span of attention and memory, and most folk traditions are a part of endangered and dying cultures. Given such a situation, folklorists and folklore researchers are vulnerable to multiple challenges with regard to archiving, documentation, and dissemination of the folk materials. MAFCS sincerely aims at filling that gap and is dedicated towards the preservation of a dying/endangered traditional knowledge system. India's National Education Policy(NEP) and the University Grants Commission(UGC) pay a lot of importance to cultures, languages, and folklores; and MAFCS maintains a fine balance with the points accentuated by the NEP and UGC.

This course, titled **Folklore: Canon, Multimediality, Interdisciplinarity and Social Epistemology**,deals with contemporary issues, historicizing folklore as a discipline, its thematic concerns, pedagogy, epistemology of folklore, and social models of archiving and documentation of folk materials.

In literature, 'canon' is the material accepted officially as a part of the story in an individual universe of that story. It is often contrasted with, or used as the basis for, works of fiction. The alternative terms like mythology, timeline, universe, and continuity are often used, with the first of these being used specially to refer to a richly detailed fictional canon requiring a large degree of suspension of disbelief (e.g., an entire imaginary world and history), while the latter ones typically refer to a single arc where all events are directly connected chronologically. The word canon can mean "to be acknowledged by the creator".

It is a general question in our mind, is folklore documented as it is such an integral part of human existence? Opportunities to observe, elicit, and document it are limitless. One need not travel to exotic places, seek out some preselected segment of the human population or wait until some specific time to discover folklore. Folklore can be documented in numerous ways. The oldest and most fundamental way is simply remembering what one has experienced. It is a part of our culture of memory. Jokes, riddles, jargons, gestures, rhymes, simple songs and melodies can be readily committed to memory. When recollected, these examples can easily be characterized, either orally or in writing. Secondly, folklorists make written records. The lyrics a singer sings or a storyteller speaks can be represented fairly accurately in writing. Whether they are verbatim transcriptions of riddles or myths, summaries of epics or ballads, or sketches of house plans or body decorations, written records are more permanent than human recollections, hence the need and birth of folk literature. It has served as the folklorists' primary document since the inception of folklore as a discipline in the early 19th century. This course introduces you to folk narrative poems and folk songs, myths, legends and tales, proverbs, riddles and speech.

This course will also acquaint you with case studies of orality from many directions and also tribals, discourses of orality, oral narratives as well astextual or non-textual orality. We know that multimediality is the characteristic of contemporary media that mostly affects the users' ability to convey social presence and an information-rich message. It combines the development of technological convergence and digitization as it makes it possible to merge the ability to transfer sound, pictures, and the written word with the capability to do all that simultaneously. In fact, verbal communication and data transmission have now become inseparable in modern mobile networks. The verbal communication is also known as orality.

In India, the oral forms are based on wide-ranging themes like birth, death, love, marriage, misery and tragedy of human life, the concepts of time, eternity, spirituality, various rites, rituals and celebrations that are different from clan to clan, village to village. It reflects the socio-cultural, religious, and economic life-pattern of the communities, and thus its documentation is an authentic source of knowledge. Orality, as is obvious from the nomenclature, is passed from generation to generation vocally and is rich in meanings, allusions, references, images, symbols, and metaphors.

This course is replete with case studies of contemporary legendary Sambalpuri poet Haldhar Nag, research work on Indian tribals by Sitakant Mahapatra, folktales of Kumayun, timeless tales from Marwar as well as oral narratives and discourses. In this course, you will read about the historical perspectives of folklore and its relationship with other allied disciplines such as gender studies, anthropology, subaltern studies in addition to a separate chapter on folklore as a part of our performative and visual cultures.

Folklore concerns itself with the life, habits, behaviours, cultural and social conditions of communities or individuals. It is found everywhere be it in our everyday speech, customs, rites and rituals, festivals, tales and stories, jokes, jests and parables, and artistic performances of dance, music and theatre. Hence, this subject is very broad-based and is a highly interdisciplinary and integrated discipline. Until about 4000 BC, all literatures were basically folk literatures. Writ developed in the years between 4000 and 3000 BC, in both Egypt and

the Mesopotamian civilizations at Sumer. Thereafter, the written literature spread rapidly from Asia, North Africa and the Mediterranean lands to rest of the world. This subject cannot be understood without keeping in mind other fields of study and expertise such as anthropology, gender studies, ethnomusicology, linguistics, psychology and also performance studies. One needs to deeply understand and study the links of folklore to the other allied disciplines.

The topics covered in this course such as folklore and caste, folklore and gender, folklore and tribe as well as folklore and religion encompass a broad set of approaches that can be adopted in epistemology (the study of knowledge) that construes human knowledge as a collective achievement, evaluation of the social dimensions of knowledge or information, analytical philosophy for examination of the social justification of belief. Folklore is an expression of our existence, with folk paintings, narratives, languages, culture and literature, whereas epistemology is a social dimension in a number of ways, and it has been so for a long time, at least since Plato. In recent years, the social aspects of epistemology have been the subject of increasing philosophical attention. Social epistemology is a blooming discipline, full of exciting work on topics old and new. This course brings a few central parts of this work together in one place, making them accessible to students and researchers. In this course, you will read various aspects of social epistemology connected with disciplines of humanities, social sciences, philosophy, philology, sociology, science and technology studies.

MAFCS argues that all our classical art and literary forms have a folk background. Starting from our universities' syllabi to our coffee tables, classical literature always asserts its position, though we have failed to pay due credit to folk literature.A literature, the product of and a representation of mass culture, is definitely authentic and full-fledged. Since there is this aspect of faithful representation of the ways of life of communities at the core of folk literature, MAFCS considers folk literature as autonomous. Folk is not something out there in a museum; it is a part and parcel of our lives, and, thus, fit enough to be our mainstream research. The modern texts that have made explicit use of the folk traditions to make it available to the readers today are also treated at par with the folk texts that have only the oral tradition, called the 'pure folk'. MAFCS experiments with that idea. The key idea of the MAFCS Programme is—folklore is flexible.

Wish you a happy reading and learning experience!

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Folklore: Canon, Multimediality, Interdisciplinarity and Social Epistemology

Block

1

FOLKLORE AS CANON

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BLOCK 1 : FOLKLORE AS CANON

Dear students,

Welcome to the Block 1 of the Course VI of the M.A. programme in Folklore and Culture Studies (MAFCS). This block is entitled "Folklore as Canon," and it comprises five units respectively on the contemporary issues and concerns of folklore, historicizing folklore, thematic concerns and pedagogy with respect to folklore research, epistemology of folklore, and finally, documentation and archiving of folklore materials. As you can see, these units are basically dealing with certain significant aspects related to the growth and development of folklore as an academic discipline. In this block, therefore, you will be able to acquaint yourselves with the phase-wise historical development of folklore studies as it came into contact with the larger world of humanities and social sciences. Furthermore, you shall also read about the manner in which folklore as a subject has been taught and researched across various countries, including those in Europe and Asia. Folklore is not only about collecting and documenting tangible and intangible resources; the discipline is also involved in preservation and interpretation of the data collected for future research. In this block, you will learn about folklore as a site and repository of various dimensions of knowledge regarding the individual and the society he/she lives in. In the course of its development as a canon and a discipline, folklore came into contact with other disciplines like anthropology, philology, and psychology, and also with various schools/movements like romanticism and nationalism. You will get to know about folklore's interface with traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, which will enable you to gain insights into the former's position both as a global and a highly localized form of academic engagement. Finally, you will be exposed to the all-important task of documentation and archiving which has assumed vital importance in the face of alarming disappearance of indigenous linguistic and other modes of cultural expressions from the present-day world. The archive then becomes a significant site for record and revival of such resources for the posterity. The following chapters will offer you a detailed assessment of the aspects and issues noted above; it is hoped that you will benefit immensely from the journey you are about to undertake. Happy reading once again!

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UNIT 1 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF FOLKLORE

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to

- get introduced to the current concepts in the discipline of Folklore.
- develop a historiographical critique towards the trends which are emerging in Folklore Studies in the contemporary times.
- bring in the cultural and historical milieu to the contemporary trends and development in Folkloristics.
- enable the students to evolve their own perspectives in the study of Folklore.
- get insights into the nuances of some concerns in the development of Folklore as a discipline.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 What Is a Discipline?

The Academic Disciplines characterize recognised forms of knowledge and thought modes in varied areas associated with the studies on nature and culture. The perceptions on disciplines are diverse and confront the very knowledge construction outside and within the disciplines. A disciplinary perspective is related

with specializations within the material sciences, life sciences, humanities, arts and social sciences.

Folklore as an emerging independent discipline is still trying its best to have its unifying theory. It appears that the difficulty lies in the very subject matter with which folklore deals. The study materials of the scholars of Folklore are commonly accepted to be connected with traditionally accepted wisdom based on practices and beliefs.The subject matter of Folklore/Folkloristics/Folklife Studies in its formative stage was much probed by the scholars belonging to Literature and Anthropology backgrounds and therefore approached the issue respectively from 'lore' and 'folk' standpoint. The Literary approach stressed on 'text' as the point of reference and thus came up with 'genres' to categorize folklore. Those anthropologists emphasised on 'folk' as the makers of the 'lore' (expressive traditions) and studied much on material culture.This broad division in the study resulted in the lack of unity among different theoretical perspectives in modern folkloristics which eventually led to a considerable difficulty in grasping the theoretical issues of the discipline.Disciplinary division of theory which are currently popular are shared by many disciplines. For example, literary, linguistic and communication approach to folklore pursue the matters of structure and style having the 'text' as praxis, while anthropology, sociology and psychology investigate the issue of function based on cultural behavioural codes. The water-tight compartmentalisation of culture theories in terms of disciplines may result in exclusion of theoretical pursuits from certain disciplines and narrow the boundaries of investigation.

1.1.2 Two Broad Disciplinary Divisions in Folklore

Every discipline will have two dimensions i.e., an epistemic dimension and a societal dimension. In pursuit of knowledge, an academic discipline practices distinct concepts, analyticaltechniques, methods and interpretations. It applies diverse vocabularies, taxonomy, nomenclature and argots. An academic discipline also encompasses a set of 'disciples' who practice its procedures, methods and tools. Disciplinarians share collective and determinative skills in the areas of study, the lab, or the broader society and trial common standard of theoretic and scholastic works within the discipline and sometimes even borrowed from other disciplines. As said by some critical theoreticians, 'disciplining' thought is established through disciplinary course requirements and academic practices. In the process of development of the disciple of Folklore, we can notice trends as epistemological paradigm shifts, and one such cotemporary trend known as performance approach in folkloristics has currently gained popularity and attention from the scholars belonging to both Humanities and Social Sciences as explained below.

1.2 CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND ISSUES

1.2.1 New Ethnography – A Paradigm Shift

In the late 1980s,'new ethnography'was introduced in the disciplines of SocialSciences and Humanities. This new approach removed the barricades between 'folk community' and the scholars working with them and shattered the hierarchical alignment between them. James Clifford considered 'new

ethnography' as a "dialogical enterprise in which both researcher and natives are active creators or… authors of cultural representations" (Clifford 1986: p. 84). This gave a boost to folklore as not only an academic discipline but also as a tool to represent properly folk cultures which are otherwise marginalized by the onslaught of Modernity. The moral and ethical base of folklore studies is rooted on the coreprinciple, "give back to the people what we have taken from them and what rightfully belong to them". Researchers started to focus on folk material in terms of their social setting, temporality and mode of transmission which eventually led to new method known as 'Performance approach' (Reddy 2006).

1.2.2 Cultural Milieu for the Emergence of the Contemporary Trends

Evidently, there are historical, political and other factors which operated behind this new thinking by the scholars involved in folk studies. During the late 1970s in the United States of America, the political parties, both Republicans and Democrats, brought several ethnic communities into their fold in order to enlarge their vote bank. The new immigrants as well as the ethnic communities already residing in the Unites States right from its formation days wanted their identity to be protected and respected. With the advent of new technology, the US in general threw its markets open to the world which brought forth severe challenges to the people of America especially in the cultural front. Under these circumstances, the political leaders with the advice of the scholars in the field of culture studies encouraged a cultural policy which would preserve the 'identities' of the ethnic groups. Several research programmes were sponsored both by the governmental bodies and the philanthropic institutions run by the industrial or business households. Some of the ethnic communities such as, Blacks and Hispanics were recognised as marginalized groups and given minority status (Abrahams 1992). AmericoParedes (1958), Richard Bauman (1981) and Roger Abrahams (1981) are some of the noted scholars who took immense interest in some of the ethnic communities' cultural traits and engaged in the collection, preservations and dissemination of the data. The methodology they followed was totally different from that of the previous scholars. They adopted performance approach as a tool to study cultural traits in their 'original' and 'changing'contexts. The technological advancement in the collection, preservation and dissemination methods came handy for them and gave life to the performance studies. The video-equipment, the audio equipment etc. were immensely used to capture the cultural material, both, verbal and non-verbal cultural products. As a result, the ethnic groups which were already striving for 'identity' happily welcomed the new cultural policy and gave a supporting hand to the researcher community. A number of culturally distinct people and their traditions were brought to light for mutual benefit, on the one hand, of the ethnic community and the researcher, and, on the other, of one ethnic community for another ethnic community. This atmosphere changed even the very definition of culture. A culture, according to the performance theoreticians, is a group of individuals who asserted their own sense of groupness through their own cultural manifestations. This process of assertion and self-education is worthy of being recorded and used as a basis of a theory-building analysis. Thus, the sense of groupness which was produced through a conformation with other culture dramatised the usefulness of analyzing folklore in its political, social and cultural contexts.

Another important reason for the shift to performance approach is philosophical, epistemological and academic outlook which changed considerably the relative position of a researcher and the material with which he was dealing. Till 1970, American Folkloristics was involved in 'mentalistic structuralism' or 'the mentalist's approach' wherein humans were conceived of as language- and symbol-producing machines, and hence, culture was depicted as dynamic information-bearing system in which individuals demonstrated their humanity through an ability to understand and produce meaningful utterances (Abrahams1992: p. 34). The mentalists-structuralists confined therefore to textual interpretations from an etic point of view. Consequently, this approach in the initial phases of Formalism mainly concentrated on the analysis on narratives to cognate plot, character, and genre. The mentalists argued for gender-based divisions of the cultural products of the human beings.

1.2.3 Performance Studies

The Performance studies opened up new vistas in the study of folklore by combining 'text' and 'context' in their performative situation. This gave altogether a new approach to folklore and made it a live and dynamic one rather than a static, frozen and dead entity of the past. The past-present continuum, both in spatial and temporal deployments, gained new meanings and vocabularies in the dynamics of culture. What is interesting in the performance approach is that it combines in itself both the literary and anthropological scholarships and harmoniously blends the generic forms and behavioural modes of a culture group on the onehand and art and science disciplines on the other.

Performance theory is more an 'approach' rather than a 'theory' to study an artistic action and event involving performer, art form, audience and setting of a given cultural milieu. This approach has given altogether a new scope and definition to folklore studies. The discipline of folklore, prior to this approach, confined itself largely to the traditional remnants of earlier periods still found in those sections of society which do not come under the influence of dominant culture. In other words, what Raymond Williams (1958) considered folklore as the study of experiences, meanings and values of residual cultures remained by and large the broad area of study of folklore. This premise almost threatened the very existence of folklore as a discipline in the academic circles because, when the traditions of residue cultures or residue cultural trails of an emergent culture either die out or undergo change, the discipline loses its relevance and hence, invites its own demise. Therefore, to create a socially relevant and utilitarian basis, performance studies strived hard and almost gave a new life to the discipline itself.

From the performance studies point of view, folklore and expressive forms of different cultural strands can be distinguished based on performer-audience continuum. Essentially, one can separate folklore and popular culture on the basis of dissemination method, i.e., performance mode. According to Roger Abrahams, folklore exists in face-to-face encounter that leads purely to oral transmission. In other words, expressive forms in folklore are grounded on the maxim of performer-audience interrelationships. The manner and level of relationship between the two forms the crux of the 'structure of the context'.

As a product of this discourse, scholars brought forth new dimensions in the studies of performance during the early nineties. Hitherto scholars viewed structure of the performance based on 'textual' movement i.e., the way text is textured and

knitted the audience and performer through a storyline with meaningful and communicable modes of expression. Therefore, structures are essentially 'textual', and hence contexts are basically referential in function. However, the idea of context and structure as independent units both affecting the text of performance is gradually being undermined by the scholars practicing new ethnography. The field data collected not as a participant observer but as a researcher, whose presence as a researcher is neither concealed nor disguised but informed to the community, made the performance approach more democratic than ever. In other words, acceptance of observer as an outsider made him to realize his own position and limitations and allowed him to look for 'polyphonic' and dialogical way of collecting and representing the data.

This new premise in methodology of postmodern or new ethnography negated the idea of sequencing events through narrative and paved way for looking for contexts, which has the potential to create structure of a given performance. Therefore, 'structure of context' rather than 'context' and 'structure' became the centri-focal to the performance studies. It is 'context' that has its own structure that determines the level of performance. So, to say, structure of both text and performance emerge within a structure of 'context' rather than a mere 'context'. Here I wish to clarify that the early performance theoreticians used the term 'context' as a temporal phenomenon, which situates the 'event'. It is presently viewed as one that reflects the interpersonal relations between performers and audience. The concept of 'performance' in this sense has the potential to reorganize the structure of social relations within the act of performance and perhaps beyond it. The structure of social roles, relations and interaction emerged as the casual variants in the performances and their communicative meanings.

1.2.4 Performance-Centred Approach – Narratology

In due course when structuralism came under the influence of narratology, performance-centred approach is impelled to study cultural expressive behaviours in a given phenomenon. Accordingly, Structural theories squabbled that every narrative has two parts;'story'(content) and 'discourse' (exposition) i.e., the way the content is conveyed. It posits the existence of two self-governingplanes of narrative structure. One is at the foundational level that underlies every narrative andknown as 'deep structure' or 'basic story'; the other is the 'narrative discourse' where the story is actualised, articulated, realised, and manifested in some form or the other in style and content (Chatman 1978: p. 19-21). This indispensable perceptive led to the realisation of 'version' and 'variation' as one of the basic features to distinguish a folklore item from those of the others. Claude Bremond maintained that every narrative encompasses "a layer of autonomous significance endowed with a structure that can be isolated from the whole of the message and this basic autonomous structure can be transposed from one to the other medium without losing its essential properties" (Bremond 1964: p. 4). For this reason, the content of a story may become a theme for a ballad, an epic or a myth. This innate quality of *transposability* in the story makes narrative structures independent of any medium. When stories get transformed into discourse (or performance), dualism occurs at two levels. Firstly, it occurs in timelines of narrative structures as 'discourse time' and 'story time'; the discourse time is the actual span of the time that takes to perform the narrative and the story time is related to the length of the time in the events referred to in it. Secondly, it happens in special dimensions i.e., the set of events told in one order can be retold in

another order in a non-linear sequence. The folklorists who followed performance-centred approach, contrary to the genre-based analytical categories, argued for 'ethnic genre' which cannot be seen in isolation or compartmentalised as this would affect the very meaning and function of the genre itself. They took the lead from sociolinguists and ethnographers of communication and argued for analysing text in the context of a large culture specific system of communication. Dell Hymes (1973), Tedlock (1972), were some of the scholars who were the force behind 'ethnography of speaking approach', which apparently became the starting point for performance studies.

The performance theory viewed performance as an art of communication (Bauman 1977). Most performance traditions are verbal expressive and found 'in action'. The performance study basically is the study of events and all that related to event — a setting, a social context, the performer and the audience. Hence, any performance study should logically be based on live presentations rather than 'dead' or 'patricide' texts which speaks only when the researcher wants them to speak. All the more, no performance is identical to that of any previous ones as every performance acted in a given context and has its own version and variation. In that sense, every performance is unique.

Thus, the performance approach advocates for holistic ethnographic accounts to understand any given folk genre. The major shift in folkloristic practices at this point in the post-World War II period was collecting and theorising the data by the same persons. Theoretical observations were constantly tempered by the field experience. Theories began to insist on reporting not only on the performer in that community, the power attributed to the performer but also such other situating factors. Until this step, the study of text formerly had been centred on the keyword variation, a term useful primarily for the comparison of the text. As field work and theory came together, two kinds of repertoire analysis were constructed. The one on the individual performer and the other on the aesthetic and moral choices involved the part of the individual performer. Folklorists then needed to discover the range of possible items from which the choices are made i.e., the repertory of the community. This drift towards the repertory analysis is encouraged by parallel developments in the ethnography of communication which calls for the understanding of the expressive resources of the groups and an observation of the native genres.

1.2.5 Folklore Research inPost-ModernandPost-Structural Con text

Folklore research in Post-modern and Post-structural context became ethnographic sensitive. Also, writing culture is no longer a monologue, and observer (researcher) dominated, but a dialogue between the observers and observed. The line of distinction between the two almost became invisible. The interaction between the two produces 'cultural texts' that are of 'self-articulation' and 'self-expressive'. Therefore, the performance theoreticians considered folklore as one that exists due to interaction between the performer and the audience. Post-modern ethnography, unlike the traditional method wherein the text is more privileged, monologic and dominated by ideology of the transcendental observer, is a discourse that foregrounds dialogue and emphasizes co-operative and collaborative nature of the ethnographic situation. It is a dialogical production of discourse by mutual and reciprocal cooperation of ethnographer and the participant in an ethnographic situation.

Hence, the 'ethnographic context' is a story-making milieu which produces 'polyphonic text', and none of its participants would have a final word on framing a story. It is just a dialogue and juxtaposition of shared experiences in ethnographic situation. Whereas, in traditional story-collection setting, the ethnographer focusses on monophonic performance of a lead teller or singer and other participants are excluded. The data is polyphonic in the sense different voices of the participants in the form of a 'discourse' on a tale or song are recorded in data collection. The text that emerged is the joint work of the ethnographer as well as the native participants. Post-modern ethnography is participatory and emergent, and henceforth cannot have a predetermined form. The text stresses sonorant (resonant) relativity between text ant community, i.e., cultural relativity and within the text itself.

Post-modern ethnography is fragmentary as life in the field is fragmentary and cannot be organized on par with the ethnic categorization of kinship, economy etc. Postmodernism is a return to the aesthetic integration. The holistic movement of textuality is based on'text-author-reader' and privileges no single entity. This dialogical method is neither a theoretical object nor an object of theoretical knowledge.It is not evolved [inspired] by any explicit method or by any derivational source of practices. It is not a dialectical synthesis of data but a dialogical process of construction.

The Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin in his work, *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), used the concepts, 'dialogic' and 'dialogism'. Bakhtin makes a distinction between the 'dialogic' and the 'monologic' worksin literature. The concept of 'monologic' is related to the idea that knowledge emanates from a single and authoritative source. Monologic worksare also produced to establish a set of disciplinary institutions, practices, and discourses to legitimate its modes of domination and control.The concept of 'dialogic' clinches the idea that knowledge is produced as collective, dynamicand relational enterprise.The dialogic work carries on a continual dialogue with other works of literature and other authors. The term 'dialogic', however, does not just apply to literature. For Bakhtin, all language - indeed, all thought - appeared dialogic. This means that everything anybody ever says always exists in response to things that have been said before and in anticipation of things that will be said in response. As a result, all language is dynamic and engaged in a process of endless re-descriptions of the world.

According to Bakhtin, dialogical process proliferates in a discursive space. Numerous voices appeal for expression thus making the textual production as 'polyvocal representation'. Hitherto, the ethnographer pursued monistic representations and gave them the authorial power and to the others the position of source, i.e., 'informant' whose voice is confined as quotation or paraphrased. Once 'dialogism' and 'polyphony' are recognized as modes of textual production, monophonic authority became questionable. This scenario too raised critical issues of informants and ethnographers to co-authors and scribe/archivist respectively throwing open several hermeneutical problems concerned with the process of textualisation and its authenticity. Once the position of the researcher is shifted from the ethnographer to that of scribe/archivist, the nature of folklore data also got affected. Whatever may be the method of elucidating the data by the ethnographer, it subverted the autonomy of the informant and produced the 'cultural texts' that the ethnographer perceives than what they mean to the participant of the culture. This phase of folklore studies further led to another

interesting hermeneutic discourse in textualisation in terms of sign-signifier relationship. Sign need not necessarily be representing a signified but instead generating multiple signifiers in a signification continuum. Ethnographic discourse is neither an object to be represented nor a representation of an object. It has moved beyond the representational function of signs.

This posed a new problem in locating meanings based on a single textual production. In fact, such texts are only a version of a larger whole of a cultural text so to say it is 'a text', but not 'the text'. This argument further led to probe critically into folklore matters as discursive elements but not as end products because they are not the sole identifiers of folk groups, but a viewpoint of that group. This again gave rise to another set of issues concerning the ideas of representation, power and authority. Who represents what and how, become the nodal points of discourse in culture studies, particularly in folklore studies?This postmodern scholarship advocated for fragmentation and segmentation of power and cultural groups and questioned the universality of traits or norms of behavioural patterns. This segmentation or fragmentation of cultures inevitably resulted in hegemonising tendency by the dominant culture quite often than not by coercive power. This being the situation, the dominant culture claims not only authority but also exercised power in representing the subdued cultures. Edward Said's work *Orientalism* is a classical example, which critiqued the modes of representation of the colonial regimes of the 'Occident' (West) over the 'Orient' (East). According to him, 'orientalism' is not a reality in the East but exists in the minds of the West which has perceived orient from an ethnocentric archetype. This is also true with studies in folklore, wherein the elite and the literate exercise power to represent the non-literate. In the process of representation, the group, which is represented, is quite often undermined and schematically presented in the 'rhetorics' of elite traditions. Ethno-poetics of elite often played 'power politics' and superimposed their styles over the subject material. In such case, folklore is neither an object to be described nor a unified corpse of symbols and meanings that can be interpreted. It is contested and discursive in temporal frame and diffusive in spatial domain. Therefore, representation and explanation, both by insiders and outsiders, is a must in emerging folkloristics in present day context. Therefore, the study of folklore in contemporary post-modern epistemological, hermeneutical discourse would mean to negate the distinctions between folk and lore, subject and object, informant and ethnographer, observer and observed, representation and represented and all such polarities and seek meanings to identify a folk group and to understand how they relate themselves with each other and how they relate with others. Both the esoteric and exoteric viewpoints and exigencies must comprehensively locate the folk in relation to its 'representative power' in order to critically evaluate the dynamics in projections and manifestations of folklore in temporal and spatial moves.

Folklore studies in contemporary context would mean realisation of the field as an object of study, which exists only in its subjective ideological and interpretative manner of the representative power, rather than as an objective reality. In other words, folklore is to be contested as a matter of conflicts that arise between the observer and observed the former as an embodiment of 'knowledge' and the latter as a representative of an ideology. Knowledge is power, which hierarchically structures the folk groups internally, whereas ideology externally subjugates and controls such powers and relegates authorial position to representing authority on one hand, and on the other creates new contexts to expose cultural traits of

subjugated folk groups. This trend altogether brought a new branch in folklore previously known as folklorism or folklorismus and currently debated as public folklore with all the issues related to copyright, patent right and other ethical viewpoints(Reddy 2004). Public sphere of folklore is the representation and application of folk traditions in new contours and contexts within and beyond the communities in which they originated, often through the collaborative efforts of tradition bearers, folklorists or other agencies involved in promoting folk and their lore. This innately incorporate enquires into mass culture, emergent culture, folk culture, and media culture and populous products of everyday life as well as elite cultural representations of emergent events. The dynamic characteristics of the populous products, i.e., how, why, and to what effect do these material products move from one cultural form to another, is worth noting to intelligible oneself of the very nature of popular culture.

1.3 CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS OF FOLKLORE

According to Richard Dorson (1973), any subject in order to grow as a discipline needs a pragmatic and a philosophical sagaciousness. Pragmatically, the discipline can exist if it canreach to an intellectual audience with scholarly works; earn a place in the accepted fields of learning; create its own domain knowledge; preserve and enlarge its area of knowledge; attract young disciples and perpetuate itself tonext generation. Philosophically, the discipline can exist if it can lay claim to distinctive theoretical concepts based on empirical data. In other words, Folklore and Folkloristics, in order to survive and be established as a discipline, require two foundations or supporting systems: (i) Philosophical Foundation, and (ii) Pragmatic Foundation.

1.3.1 Philosophical Foundation

Folklorists will have to justify their survival on intellectual grounds to claim folklore as a discipline. The well-established subjects no longer have to explain their purposes. The discipline of history attempts to study man's past; the discipline of economics studies the process of production, distribution and consumption of limited resources to satisfy maximum needs. But what does the discipline of folklore aspire to do? Without some larger philosophic purpose, the business of folklore becomes a mere matter of collecting, recording, transcribing, and archiving materials. The intellectual concern is to cognate human behaviour and his worldview which need to have a broad vision of the field as a whole. A discourse and a common vocabulary bind the practitioners of a discipline to formulate standards for the discipline.

Yet another feature of an academic discipline lies in its capacity to set and define standards. As folklore deals with man and his world as he perceived in everyday life, the subject matter itself problematizes the discipline and therefore the subject matter is prone to attenuation, misrepresentation, and commercialisation. Folklore, as a discipline, should have its own specialized terminologies and forms of communication. By borrowing disciplinary theoriesand methods from others would add to its epistemic values.

1.3.2 Pragmatic Foundation

Folklore, like any field of learning, needs pragmatic foundation or supportive

system to establish itself as a discipline. The supportive systems may include a strong and dynamic learned society or association of scholars; a professorial body such as Folklore Survey of India, a research institute like Institute for Indian Folklore, a national folk museum or a national folk archive with field staff, a national folk academy, a chair and seminar, a university department. All these will help in creating employment and other livelihood opportunities. The support of governmental agencies and funding bodies is an essential pragmatic legitimation for the survival of the discipline of folklore.

1.4 LET US SUM UP

To surmise from the above discussion, any subject in the process of emerging as a discipline has two dimensions: (i) boundaries to determine its scope and identity (ii) incorporative and integrative porosity of its realm. Like any other disciplines, folklore has disciplinary boundaries that privilege orality over literacy, but accept oral-literal inter-phase and continuum into its realm. Folklore is a tradition-based creation of the people, by the people and for the people in verbal and nonverbal expressive forms, transmitted orally across generations; it is highly dynamic and encompasses changing perspectives in the worldviews of those who had produced them. Tradition is not static but ever growing. The process of change and continuity in any tradition can only be observed in no other discipline than in folklore. It pervades every aspect of human life reflecting in their mundane lives. The crux of folklore is experiential expressions manifested in different realms of folk life. Hence, study of folklore in its entirety means understanding and interpreting folk groups in their respective contexts giving scope to the subdued voices that were being hitherto ignored in traditional disciplines and methodologies. Folklore is an object, subject and method of studying human groups in their respective milieus. It is the subject that has disciplinary boundaries which are porous as well as elastic giving scope to incorporate the dynamics of folk life and folklore process as a discourse; thus,they contribute towards the emergence of the folklore discipline as a holistic and all-pervasive knowledge system so as to empower the learners to understand and interpret one's own culture successfully.

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1.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. New Ethnography as a paradigm shift – Discuss.

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2. Explain ‘cultural milieu’in the context of emergent contemporary trends.

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3. Write on the significance of Performance studies in folklore

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4. What is ‘Performance-centred approach’?

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5. What are the significant units in Narratology?

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6. Write a note on folklore research in post-modern and post-structural context.

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7. Explain the concepts of Mikhail Bakhtin.

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8. Explain the concept of Folklorism.

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9. What constitutes the philosophical foundation in the making of a discipline?

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10. What constitutes the pragmatic foundation in the making of a discipline?

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UNIT 2 HISTORICIZING FOLKLORE

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to

- comprehend folklore through its genres
- gain insight into the growth of folklore studies abroad
- understand its developmental stages in India

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 What Is Folklore?

Folklore is both what folklorist study and the name of the discipline they work within. Since the coining of the term 'folklore', the concept has travelled a long way and has evolved into a way of thinking about how people learn, share knowledge and form their identity. It is an 'artistic communication in small groups' (Dan Ben Amos).

The term, folklore, coming from the old English *folc* and *lar* (that is, wisdom of the folk) was first introduced into British academic discourse by William Thoms

in 1846 to replace the term 'popular antiquities' which was being used till that point. Thoms defined folklore as the "traditional beliefs, legends and customs current among the common people".

However, since its origins, the term has been used differently by diverse people in different countries. Historical circumstances, personal motivations and socio-cultural factors have played a great role in defining it. In Meso-America, Hispanic scholars preferred 'popular antiquities' against 'folklore' because of its associations with colonial imperialism. In Europe, within France, 'culture popularie' and 'vie popularie' is used, while Germans under Hitler used 'volkskunde'. However, being ashamed of the way it was used by Hitler for political motives, many academic institutes in Germany use 'regional ethnology', a term commonly used in Scandinavia.

Moreover folklore, as a concept we perceive it today, has developed over a period of time through contributions from many thinkers. This has also resulted in varied definitions of folklore. The German *volkskunde*, the Swedish *folkminne*, and Indian *lok sahitya* all imply slightly different meanings that the English term 'folklore' cannot syncretise completely. Anthropologists and students of literature have projected their own bias into their definitions of folklore. Even the folklorists have resorted to enumerative intuitive and operational definitions. While all these certainly contributed to the clarification of the nature of folklore, at the same time they circumvented the main issue, namely, the isolation of the unifying thread that joins jokes and myths, gestures and legends, costumes and music into a single category of knowledge. The difficulties experienced in defining folklore were genuine and real. They resulted from the nature of folklore itself and were rooted in the historical developments of the concept.

In this unit, we will look into these historical developments that have gone into the making of the concept as we perceive it today both in abroad and India. Along with historical developments, we will also try to understand folklore through its genres.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING FOLKLORE THROUGH ITS GENRES

2.2.1 What Is Genre?

Genre in simple language is a method to classify. Any kind of category based on criterion or a set of criteria can be called genre.The different kinds of cultural productions are distinguished from each other based on certain methods or distinguishing elements. Genre has been used in various medias, such as, literature, folklore, cinema, music, dance, craft, painting and many others. Thus, genre is either invented or is attributed to a given cultural form. "Just as doctors do not talk about the body without knowing all principal parts, just as a linguist cannot talk about language without a vocabulary of terms that describe words, sounds, and meaning, so folklorist does not discuss folklore without a sound knowledge of its genres.... Without a generic terminology, we would have little hope of understanding each other."(Tolkien)

2.2.2 Why Do We Need Genre in Folklore?

As folklorists study new and evolving folklore, they need to have ways to talk

about those new types. The loose classifications of genre provide a foundation for identifying, discussing and analysing qualities of items of folklore. Another reason is that folklorists sometime focus their career in the study of one particular type of folklore, and the genre labels help them to locate and communicate with others studying the same kinds of folklore. Moreover, having a name or label gives us a place to start in understanding the artists and performer's work. It also gives us a common language so that we can share and discuss ideas and interpretations (Sims and Stephens). In folklore, generic labelling is based on the particular characteristics that an item shows and how it is expressed.

2.2.3 MainGenres in Folklore

Three broad genres are used to describe folklore: verbal, material and customary. Within these genres also,there are numerous types and subtypes of lore.

Verbal folklore includes any kind of lore involving words, whether set to music; organised in chronological, story form; or simply labelling an activity or expressing a belief in a word or phrase. Some of the most recognisable forms of verbal lore studied by folklorists are folk songs, myths, and folk tales. Along same lines are contemporary or urban legends. There are numerous other verbal expressions of folklore also such as jokes, jump-rope rhymes, proverbs and riddles, even individuals' own stories about their lives, their personal narratives are considered to be folklore. All these variant forms of verbal lore express beliefs and values of the society in which they exist. Many a times, they become a medium to educate members of the folk group among whom it is performed.

Material folklore takes a number of forms,some of it permanent such as architectural structures or functional tools and some of it ephemeral such as food, body painting or paper ornaments. It corresponds to techniques, skills, recipes and formulas transmitted across the generations and subject to same forces of conservative tradition and individual variations as verbal art (Dorson). How men and women in tradition-oriented societies, build their homes, make their clothes, prepare their food, farm and fish, process the earth's bounty, fashion their tools and implements and design their furniture and utensils (Dorson).

Customary lore is what lies in between oral literature and material culture, the areas of traditional life facing in both directions. Known as social folk customs as well, here the emphasis is on group interaction rather than on individual skills and performances. It includes rituals, festivals and celebrations, music, dance, mode of worship outside established church, folk religion and folk medicine.

However, these genres are not watertight compartments, and they do not exist in isolation to each other. Many elements of all the three genres of verbal, material and customary may appear together. Often, celebrations include folklore from each of genre and frequently the many forms of texts present in a celebration express important group values and beliefs (Sims and Stephens). For example, marriage celebrations not only include verbal texts, but also playing of traditional music and instruments. Brides, grooms and their families often rely on customary practices to express belief in the marriage vows (Sims and Stephens). There are many other significant, sometimes, symbolic texts of material culture which take place (Sims and Stephens). Therefore, most of the folklorists feel that, in addition to the fact that items of folklore may bridge many categories, the whole idea of genre can be relative. So, there is the problem of absolute genre. The genre into

which we place an item depends on which elements we emphasise when we analyse it. So, when one wants to study marriage customs in a particular group, then it depends on which area one wants to study — rituals, verbal, vows, music played therein and that will also decide the genre in which we place marriage custom (Sims and Stephens).

2.2.4 There Is a Need to Look Beyond Genre Classification

This relativism has made folklorists to look beyond genre classification as folklore has developed as a complex, interconnected act of communication. As such 'text' and 'context' of an item becomes the focus of folklore research. Etymological meaning of text is much broader. It means 'to weave' (Sims and Stephens). This aspect of definition suggests that text is like a cloth, a material object, a woven of many different threads, all combined to create a coherent whole (Sims and Stephens). Herein, text not only refers to written words, but also includes other things such as performances, objects and rituals. This leads to mean that words, objects, ideas and behaviour and content of particular item of folklore are equally important. The context of the performance includes the physical settings and social situations in which members of folk groups share folklore as well as the relationships among audience members and performers**.** So, analysis of both the text and the context of a folklore item can help us to understand it as an artistic communication.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF FOLKLORE STUDIES ABROAD

In this section,we would trace the major developments in the discipline that have influenced the ways we currently approach folklore studies. These developments did not take place in a linear chronology but sometimes overlapped as many of the movements and developments were taking place simultaneously. This has not only brought fluidity to the field, but also made it multidisciplinary in nature. As a result, scholars from interrelated fields, across the world have contributed to the development of folklore study. These developments may be referred to as approaches.

2.3.1 Different Approaches to Folklore

Romantic Approach: In the beginning, the folklore study was guided by romantic interpretations. It grew, in the 18th century, out of the understanding that civilisation had separated man from his natural environment losing pure and spiritual in the process. For romantic scholars, the rural area looked attractive as pure life and they travelled to rural to collect remaining segments of pristine folk culture. This also resulted in us/them divide between the scholars from civilised world, who studied folklore and the rural folk who created and maintained it.

Nationalistic Approach was developed by German scholars who believed that the rural, lower-class communities held knowledge of the country's Teutonic past, which they feared was vanishing as these groups were being gentrified or educated. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* by Jacob and Wilhelm, a collection of stories, is the earliest work where attempt was made to document the Germany's cultural history. At this stage, folklore came to be considered as cultural trappings of the country — its stories, beliefs, traditions, and rituals — and not the wars won.

This nationalistic approach placed emphasis on examining the dying cultures — lost to civilisation — to enforce a sense of shared identity.

This German method of collecting lore was a forerunner of folklore collection and interpretation in other nations as well. It sought to find the essence of the stories, beliefs, customs, and traditions that connected all the people of a given country to a common cultural past. In England, the scholars from literature and history focussed on collecting material and verbal texts and customary behaviours of the people in the British countryside.

From the latter part of 1800s, American scholars also started considering folklore as a means of preserving the history of rural pre-industrial people. Thus, indicating that these scholars had started recognising that the lore they had studied, had relevance in people's daily lives, and that it was more than merely old-fashioned historical objects (Bronner1986).

Historic-Geographic approach emerged due to the work on regional differences in folk texts and objects. It started with a search for the original text or the definitive, most accurate version against which to compare all the later variants. The scholars looked for references to traditions and beliefs in order to locate folklore within a particular cultural or social framework and trace the migration of the texts as people moved from one geographic region to another and transmitted texts within or and across generations or social groups.

Solar Mythology approach was another a 19th century approach linked to search for origins of folk narratives and beliefs. Its proponents saw connection between the myths and the mythological characters as expressions of beliefs about sun and moon. Max Mueller, who developed this theory, held that all European folktales are derived from the solar myths and contain similar symbols related to night and day. But this approach did not help folklorists look at the things other than myths or how folklore changed and adapted to the groups of people who used it.

Diffusion Approach appeared at the turn of 20th century when the scholars across US and Europe became interested in *how people shared* and *learned folklore*. Scholars started looking at the way *text moved* and *changed* from culture to culture. Associated to this approach was the emphasis laid on fieldwork with Franz Boas being the main pioneer in the field. He was of the belief that whatever the influences, each cultural group is complete in and of itself, a phenomenon; he and his associates refer to as *cultural relativism.*This emphasis on culture and the ways culture shapes groups and individual's views of the world encouraged the later understanding of folklore as something that expresses, reinforces and sometimes challenges people's values and beliefs.

At about the same time period, scholars like Stith Thompson and Antti Aarne were working on categorisation of tales on their narrative elements or thematic features like types of Characters, recurring motifs and plotlines. Aarne and Thompson's *The Types of Folktales*(1987) and Thompson's *Motif Index*(1955)are the major works which are still being used by historic-geographic scholars working on structure and narrative similarities.

Equally significant was the study of how texts are *organised* and *created*. Many scholars focussed on syntactic features that grew out of orally constructed narratives, like epic poems and oratorical forms. Building on the work of Milman

Parry, Albert B. Lord developed a system to detail folklore the features of narrative folklore, called *Oral Formulaic theory*, often referred to as Parry-Lord analysis. The principles of formal text analysis developed by Parry and Lord were employed by the scholars in the study of structure and organisation of texts — folk tales, ballads, and sermons.

Interviewing individuals and *recording* details of settings, situations and cultural features also influenced the direction of folklore study especially under the leadership of Botkin and John Lomas. The Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration which brought in thousands of unemployed writers in US together, to collect life stories, tales, songs, and verbal expressions of the ordinary Americans in 1930s gave impetus to this approach.

The 20th century also saw the folklorists involving themselves with in-depth studies within specific genres that laid the foundations of future theoretical research. D.K. Wilgus's studies of folk songs, George Korson's collection of occupational folklore and recorded song collection of the Lomaxes (John and Alan) are important reference works in this area.

Functionalism approach rose when scholars enquired into how people interacted with the texts — what does it mean to the group? Not only this but another approach, *structuralism*, broke the text down into parts and analysed how those parts related to the whole in order to discover what was important about the item or text to the group. Though these two approaches have gone in and out of favour with the scholars but the focus on groups and people rather than texts and items have remained.

Performance Approach emerged with the developments in linguistics that led to a kind of a convergence of folklore scholarship and linguistic scholarship about performance in verbal art. Dan Ben-Amos, Roger Abrahams, and Richard Bauman took interest in the events and the texts of spoken communication to the situations in which speech took place. They looked at *how* we communicate — at language as something we participate in, within clearly defined settings and situations (Kapchan 1995). These developments encouraged a move away from a primary focus on 'product' or texts towards a focus on the performance of texts in context. The aim was to look at the interaction between and among those involved in acts of communications as well as the occasions and settings in which those acts take place. This led to looking at performance as an artistic act.

This approach led to context, that is, the physical, cultural and group settings in which folklore occurs as central in understanding any expression in folklore. These theoretical discussions were extended to customary and material expressions as well. It also enabled the scholars to comprehend that sharing folklore is a lively activity that teaches individuals about the beliefs and values of the group and maintain identity through repeated enactments of ideas that are important to the group.

At the same time, scholars like Limon and Young (1986) pointed out that performance studies of 1970s and folklore studies in general had neglected women's folklore and non-verbal texts. For them, structuralism and semiotics, psychological and political perspectives, women folklore and gender studies, material culture and urban contexts are the areas where performance studies need to extend itself.

2.3.2 Emergence of Women's Folklore

Several women folklorists in the 1970s had started movement for a new approach to folklore collection and study, one that focussed on the expressive culture of women. Prior to this, women were part of folklore research but in relationship to men. *The Journal of American Folklore* was the first to bring in a special issue in 1975 focussed on women. Edited by Claire Farrer, it included a number of articles that brought attention to the need for focussed research on the folklore of women, calling for approaches to study such lore that werenot grounded in the male perspective. Scholars like Joan N. Radner and Susan Lanser (1987), Elaine lawless (1991) and Jeannie B. Thomas (2003) have continued the study of women and folklore, and their work has moved the study of performance and folklore in general, towards a more integrated approach to understanding the concepts of identity, group dynamics and the wider contextual factors that influence performance situations.

2.3.3 Current Approaches

Recognising that interpretations of meanings without inputs from those expressing these texts was essentially an outsider-imposed interpretations, the folklorist have started consulting the group members to have their views into the analyses. This emphasis on collaborative interpretation, or reciprocal ethnography, continues to be relevant as folklorists strive to avoid elitist, ethnocentric interpretations of folklore that leaves out the people who express and share the lore (Sims and Stephens).

Therefore, the above survey of the history of the discipline helps us to understand that folklore has developed to centre on people and actions, rather than static textual artefacts. Groups of people have an expressive life they learn and share informally that helps them identify themselves as a group. In order to understand the value that a particular folklore performance holds for a group, it is essential to involve members of the group in the fieldwork and interpretations. These assumptions underlie current approaches to the study of folklore. The fluid nature of the field and the fact that it is built from so many influences, folklore continues to evolve and change.

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF FOLKLORE STUDIES IN INDIA

2.4.1 Phases of Development —Initial Phase to Fifth Phase

A characteristic feature of Indian culture and civilisation has been the continuity of some of the oldest oral and written traditions of the world. The *Vedas,* great epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the *Upanishads* and the *Puranas,* and bulky anthologies of folktales such as *Hitopadesa, Brihatkatha, Kathasaritsagara, Betal-Pancavamisatika,* and *Jatakas* do exemplify the vibrancy of oral and written traditional creativity in India since ancient times. These folklore traditions caught the attention of many anthropologists and folklorists abroad since the beginnings of the international discipline itself. As such, it is difficult to separate the early stages of Indian folklore from the international developments.

First Phase: The fact that J. Grimm(1835) had postulated a connection between Indian and European mythology, and M. Muller had detailed it, the study of

Indian Folklore became essential to the development of folklore theory in the latter half of 19th century. India came to be regarded by some scholars as the origin of nearly all European folk narrative (Benfey1859; Clouston 1886). In the 19th century, the mythical image of India was a major source for European, particularly German, romanticism (Wilson 1964).

Indian tales and myths also provided the supporting evidence for two more enduring theories: that narratives (not just people) migrate and that literary versions are important links in the chain of transmission. While diffusion is no longer a central issue in folklore research, the interplay between oral and written versions continues to have special significance for complex cultures like India where oral and written traditions are symbiotic.

Coming to the developmental phases, we can say that in the *initial phase*, Indian folklore research was dominated by philologists and linguists working in Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic with little direct knowledge of India.

Second Phase: The Christian missionaries appeared on the stage as the first batch of collectors and publishers of the first-hand resources of the Indian traditional cultural lives in various regions. Though guided by their interest of spreading Christianity, they ventured into remote regions and collected information on rural traditional settings. "These Anglo-Saxon fathers recorded all kinds of information — habits, customs, oral traditions, rituals etc. — about their subjects." It is no denying the fact that most of these published writings form a part of the great treasures of folklore that we as Indians possess about our own past. Though most of these missionaries' writings lacked theoretical analysis, they remain valuable due to highly informative contents. Mary Frere's *Old Deccan Days* or *Hindoo Fairy Legends Current in Southern India*(1886), A.J. Dubois's *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*(1897), J. Hinton Knowel's *Folk Tales of Kashmir*(1893), Aurel Stein's *Hatim's Tales* (1937), Charles E. Grover's *The Folk Songs of Southern India* (1894) are some of the important works.

Some Orientalists also took the initiative of setting up academic societies and important periodicals that contributed immensely in the scholarly attention which Indian cultural resources were receiving at this time. The Asiatic Society, founded by William Jones in 1784 and journals like *Indian Antiquary* and *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* carried brief articles on oral narratives and other genres of Folklore (Handoo 1989).

In this period, many of the British civil servants in India also engaged themselves in collection and study of Indian folklore to understand natives in a better way for effective administration. Here two men were primarily responsible for leading the study of Indian folklore into international academic circles. William Crooke's two volume study of folklore in North India, *Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1894) is still unmatched in scope and depth. The other was R.C. Temple who published three volumes of legends from the Punjab (1884-1900) that set high standards. Temple collected oral texts, published the originals and included an exhaustive description and imaginative classification of their motifs.

Third Phase: The third phase of Indian folklore research joined the methods of the preceding two: *philology and field collection*. In the early decades of 20th century, a series of studies on themes culled from the classical tale collections —

Jatakas, Panchatantra, Hitopadesa, and *Kathasaritasagar*— was brought out by American Sanskrit scholars under guidance of Maurice Bloomfield. Another important work was W.N. Brown's study of the relationship between Sanskrit story material and modern Indian folk tales (Brown 1919). He found that half of the 3000 tales had parallels in the Sanskrit literature and thus concluded that the former were derived from the latter. Thus, he pointed towards a practice of borrowing between folk and classical traditions, but did not indicate anything about its direction. However, Brown did consider the possibility that literary versions might be taken from oral sources, but only in a pre-literate past.

However, Brown's article had a shortcoming as he did not realise that oral and written traditions often coexist, borrowing from one to the other has never ceased, and that modern folktales are, in most cases, as old as their parallels in classical literature (Blackburn & Ramanujan 1986). Also, that mode of origin and (or composition) and mode of transmission need to be differentiated. As like the poems of medieval Indian *Bhakti* saints (such as Basavanna), were most probably composed orally, written down later by disciples and then disseminated orally once again. Despite the shortcomings of Brown's work, its importance lies in the fact that it stimulated interest in folklore among Indologists.

After several years, a linguist, M.B. Emeneau went to the field (1935-38) to make the first systematic collection of Indian oral traditions. Emeneau's research on tribes in south India advanced the study of Indian folklore primarily as he was the first person to treat it as valuable in itself and not as a derivation from classical models. More than this, his attention to social context, compositional techniques, and stylistics in oral literature placed his work in a dialogue with contemporary research.

Emeneau's work was surpassed by another student of tribal lore, Verrier Elwin. Elwin brought out five major works on songs, tales and myths from tribes in central and northeast India, and several others on tribal art, custom and religion. The contributions of both Emeneau and Elwin are extremely useful as, unlike most of the works on Indian folklore, they present a comprehensive picture of the oral traditions in one region and are keyed to the Aarne-Thompson motif index (Blackburn & Ramanujan). Equally important is the contributions of Sarat Chandra Mitra in this period. From before the turn of the century until approximately 1940, Mitra had published numerous articles presenting new types of tales, discussing international parallels and championing diffusionist explanations.

Fourth Phase: The field collection of oral traditions was not much pursued again until 1950s, which marks the fourth phase of Indian folklore study. In this phase, anthropologists and language specialists began to record the major genres of verbal folklore in most regions of India (Ramanujan 1956a, 1956b; Singer 1959; Vatuk 1966; Vatuk and Vatuk 1967). However, the portion of all research on India devoted to folklore during this period was small and was usually subordinated to the larger purposes of ethnography or literary studies. The extensive collections and descriptions of the preceding periods had, apparently, become a thing of the past.

After the primary role in the study of India passed from Britain to America in about 1950, priorities shifted and folklore research suffered. Admittedly, this shift represented in part a realisation that mere collection and piecemeal

descriptions were of limited use; but even theory and method were not seriously brought to bear on the study of Indian folklore (Blackburn & Ramanujan).

Within India, folklore studies developed considerably in this fourth phase following the World War II. In particular, the nationalist movement stimulated new respect for and interest in folk traditions. The search for ancient origins and the desire to present pure heritage cast this research in decidedly antiquarian and chauvinistic mold. Still, the total amount of work accomplished in this period placed the study of Indian folklore on a more solid descriptive foundation. Termed as nationalist period by Jawaharlal Handoo, the major works are Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Sati* (1917) and *The Folk literature of Bengal* (1920), Devendra Satyarthi's *Bela Phule Adhi Rat* (1948), *Dhart Gatt Hai* (1948) and *Dhire Baho Ganga*. Besides, many creative writers brought literary productions in the form of novel, drama poetry and short stories that were either based on or highlighted local folklore themes.

Post 1960s, Indian scholars turned to intensive first-hand field research. Folklore journals appeared in local languages and in English, research institutes and societies focussed on folk were established and folklore became part of curriculum in several universities. Due to this institutional support, Indian scholars were able to amass a collection of folklore that is largest of its kind in the world, much of which has been published. Blackburn and Ramanujan give credit to Indiana University as well in the development of Indian folklore, especially a motif index (Thompson and Balys 1958), a tale index (Thompson and Roberts 1960), and a bibliography (Kirkland 1966) are major contributions. Moreover, many of the Indian scholars received their doctoral degrees in linguistics from there like Islam 1970; Siddique 1967; and Haque 1967.

Fifth Phase: The last decade of the 20th century witnessed the fifth phase of Indianfolklore. It was marked by extensive field research which resulted in a growing body of publications (J.D. Smith 1977; Wadley 1978; Claus 1979; Blackburn 1981; Beck 1982; Roghair 1982; Beck and Claus 1986). The result of this work is that new materials were being studied from new perspectives. Many previously unknown traditions have been recorded and some previously collected in textual forms have been re-collected in their performance contexts as well. In this phase, scholars started interpreting those, using concepts like ethnography of speaking, performance analysis and semiotics. Consequently, the conceptual basis of the field started shifting; ethnographic and linguistic skills in South Asian research have now been enriched by the comparative reach and specialised focus of folklore studies (Blackburn & Ramanujan). This combination of new material and new approaches is giving new meanings to Indian folklore in the present time.

2.4.2 Role of Regional Folklore Centres

The regional folklore centres have also played their part in its development. The *National Folklore Support Centre* in Chennai has been promoting folklore in public domain and bridging the gap of academic domain and community domain. The *Central Institute of Indian Languages* has played a major role in promoting folklore studies in India to explore another reality of Indian culture. There is no doubt that regional concerns are and will remain paramount in the development of folklore studies. However, regional concerns of oral traditions are more often

understood in terms of regional languages. This needs to be reconsidered and perhaps redefined as the folklore themes and motifs in India do not seem to remain within the confines of the regional.

2.4.3 Present Scholars

In recent times, scholars such as Jawaharlal Handoo, Chitrasen Pasayat, M.D. Muthukumaraswamy, Vivek Rai, Birendranath Dutta, P.C. Pattanaik, B. Reddy, Sadhana Naithani, P. Subachary, T.S. Satyanath, Molly Kaushal, Shyam Sundar Mahapatra, Bhabagrahi Mishra, Nandini Sahu, and many new folklorists have contributed in their respective field for shaping folklore study as a strong discipline in representing the people's memory and people's voice. They are committed to understanding folklore from an Indian point of view rather than to see the whole subjects from the Western model. Dr. Raghavan Payyanad is another major name in Indian folklore studies. His large extent of work has earnedthe title as the international face of Indian folkloristic discipline both in English and Malayalam.

2.4.4 Developments in the 21st Century

The 21st century is considered as Asian century of folklore scholarship. As against the 20th century focus on performance-centred approach, the 21st century is a public sphere approach to folklore. It looks at the ways the folklore performances raise and discuss issues and at the interactions between the performance and the societies around them. Presently, three themes dominate Asian folklore and especially the Indian.

Firstly, the need felt by the Indian folklorist to see the data from the point of view of the people who have produced it in the first place.

Secondly, the need to be open to new paradigms, models, tools, and theories that might emerge in the course of working with local data and social conditions.

Thirdly, to use the folklore scholarship for the benefit of the community that produces it. This would eventually lead to the benefit of the Indian society as well. Thus, applying knowledge for folklore (activity) and folklore(discipline) to development projects. This theme of social responsibility of the scholar to apply scholarship in practical ways for the benefit of the people has been a prominent theme in various conferences and seminars held at recent times in India.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

Through this unit, we have tried to look into the term 'folklore' as an activity and as an academic discipline. We have understood folklore and its three broad genres. At the same time, we have also discussed in detail the various approaches which have contributed to the making of the folklore discipline as it exists today at the global level. We have looked into the contributions of the scholars from different countries since the coining of the term in 1846.

Through this chapter, we came to know how India, a country with rich heritage since ancient times, developed the discipline of folklore studies. We have analysed its developmental phases from Max Mueller to new approaches that Indian scholars have adopted in the 21st century, the century of Asian Folklore.

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2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What are the different terms used to refer to folklore in different cultures?

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2. Why do we need genres in folklore?

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3. Which are the three broad genres in folklore?

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4. What do you know about the romantic approach in folklore studies?

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5. Describe the historic-geographic approach.

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6. What do you know about the emergence of women'sfolklore?

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7. Comment on the current approaches to folklore as a discipline.

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8. Describe briefly the developments during the second phase of folklore studies in India.

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9. What has been the role of regional folklore centres in the development of folklore studies in India?

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10. The 21st century is considered as Asian century of folklore scholarship. Comment.

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UNIT 3 THEMATIC CONCERNS & PEDAGOGY

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to learn

- about storytelling as a pedagogical method
- use of folk in teaching of English
- about the use of technology in teaching of Folklore
- about Folk as an alternative epistemology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Alan Dundes, in his discussion of folklore, said that "folk" can refer to any group of people which shares at least one common factor. The common factor creates a sense of collective identity, so that any population with such a sense could be considered folk. The question is why such perceptions prevail amongst the larger section of the society. The reason might be that we as children grew up with most of these stories that our father, mother or grandmother narrated to us at different points of time in our life. That the stories can have larger implications in life than just preoccupying the child's imagination, is sometimes beyond the scope and understanding of common masses. Further the conception of "folk" as a genre or canon is clouded with many other misconceptions – it is often understood to be primarily oral in nature, a product of non-urban, ancient world, which is fast disappearing from the face of the world. Though one can never dismiss all of the above conceptions out rightly, yet there are not completely true. The word folklore was coined by William Thoms in 1846 to substitute the terms "popular antiquities" and "popular literature". However, the criterion of oral transmission is sometimes understood to be sufficient to distinguish folklore from non-folklore. Judith E. Haut, in her article "Folklore in the Classroom: 19th-Century Roots, 20th-Century Perspectives", discusses these prevalent misconceptions not only amongst

students, but also amongst teachers. She argues that folk is primarily categorised as an element of entertainment, trivial and unworthy of serious academic rigour. It is also understood to be a product of antiquity, which as such has no such relation with our current period. Folk is also sometimes equated with falsehood, fantastical elements, with hardly any connection with the practical aspects of life. However, like in real world, in the world of folk, economics, religion, science, aesthetics, ethics is moulded and expressed here.

The worldview of the child is chiselled and nurtured in his childhood through his verbal and non-verbal environments. In the words of Ramanujan, we, irrespective of our socio-economic status and profession, carry inside us "a large non-literate subcontinent" (533). Rarely, in popular imaginations, folk is understood to be a part of anthropological study explaining the origin of a culture and its significance to the present times; the act of telling a tale has deeper psychological and formative significance than being a distractive tool. As Salman Rushdie puts it, "Before there were books, there were stories. At first the stories weren't written down. Sometimes they were even sung. Children were born, and before they could speak, their parents sang them songs, a song about an egg that fell off a wall, perhaps, or about a boy and a girl who went up a hill and fell down it. As the children grew older, they asked for stories almost as often as they asked for food. The children fell in love with these stories and wanted to hear them over and over again .... The act of falling in love with stories awakened something in the children that wouldnourish them all their lives: their imagination." (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/24/opinion/sunday/salman-rushdie-world-literature.html)

3.2 STORYTELLING AS A PEDAGOGICAL METHOD

Story telling is an art, a science & a way of life. To define storytelling or storyteller is to try to make concrete that which is abstract. Suffice it to say that storytelling is among the oldest form of communication. It exists in every culture. Storytelling is the commonality of all human beings, in all places, in all times. It is used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain, to transmit cultural mores (Collins & Cooper 1).

A.K. Ramanujan, in his essay "Telling Tales", opines that the version of the stories depends upon its audience, narrator and its place of narration. He demonstrates it through the story of "Sister Crow and Sister Sparrow", which is quite popular among children of 3-5 years, sometimes even among the older ones. The story presents a contrastive picture of the sparrow and the crow. The crow lives in a house of a dung, which is unkempt and is eventually blown away by a storm, whereas the house of a sparrow is made up of stone, organized and tidy. The sparrow on the one hand is organized, disciplined, and a successful housewife, whereas the crow is disorganized, untidy, incontinent, and unable to control her impulses and urges. However, the sparrow is not a generous host and keeps her guest waiting in her time of need. Ramanujan writes that children enjoy this a lot and laugh their heart out on the account of the crow filling the sack of chickpeas with her excrement or the act of branding of the crow's bottom with an iron spatula. The story does poetic justice to both the sparrow and the crow on account of their improper behaviour. The story not only narrates the victory of a smaller and comparatively weak animal in front of a bigger one, but

is also preoccupied with urination and defecation, thus imparting toilet training to toddlers. These stories thus play a formative role in the development of the child psychology, demonstrating the significance of some of the life skills and personality development through a monolithic and linear tale. Similar patterns can be traced in the stories like "The Fox and Sour Grapes", "The Crow and the Pitcher" from Aesop's Fables or "The Loyal Mongoose", "The Brahmin's Dream" from the Panchatantra.

In his article "Some Uses of Folklore in Teaching English", T.J. Farr looks at some of the advantages of using folk elements in the teaching:

I. Folk elements kindle the imagination of the students

II. It develops their ability of critical thinking

III. It provides the students with the room to express themselves creatively

IV. Most importantly it establishes a spirit of friendly cooperation between students and teachers

"Folktales are not only a story, but also a spiritual existence, a lively history" (Huiyu 758). Folk tales, riddles, songs and jokes thus is vital tool in the cultural inheritance and value education. Induction of Folk as a part of the curriculum inculcates the values of love, kindness, gratitude, patriotism, obedience among the children in their formative years. The concrete visual images, lucid and simple sentence structures aid the child to identify himself/herself with the situations and characters of the folk. Unlike the adult, the child looks at the world with a different set of eyes, the world of magic, mystery, adventure, marvel, beast tales are real and living. They never cease to imagine through the lens of her/his mind; this element of visualization triggers the faculty of imagination amongst them. In the classic work, *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976), the renowned child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim describes in detail the value that fairy tales have forchildren and how they assist children to navigate the treacherous path to maturity. Bettelheim states that the fairy tale should be told rather than read because telling creates an "interpersonal event into which adult and child enter as equal partners" (152). The world of *Cinderella, Robin Hood, Birbal, Tenali Rama*, *Thakumar Jhuli* gradually but surely introduces them to the cultural tropes and elements of the human world. They learn to differentiate between jealousy and gratitude, good and vile, love and hatred, and most importantly the concept of poetic justice. Honesty, kindness, courage, sane judgment, presence of mind, selfless love and service are always requited in the world of the folk, whereas treachery, jealousy, hatred, cowardice and selfishness never go unpunished. Unlike the adult world, the weak is protected and emerge victorious in its fight against much superior and stronger opponent. Hence, the incorporation of folk elements in kindergarten and school curriculum establishes the moral codes among the children. Further, the act of storytelling reconstitutes the hierarchical order in a classroom and suddenly we see the narrator and the listener, the teacher and the taught, the performer and the audience is on the same plane.

3.3 USE OF FOLK INTEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In *Teaching as Storytelling,* Egan (1986) presents the concept of story as a fundamental component of our human nature. "The story form is a cultural

universal: everyone everywhere enjoys stories. The story, then, is not just some casual entertainment; it reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experiences" (2). Folk as a form and genre has over the past few decades proved to be a great tool of teaching English to the non-native speakers. Folk songs, ballads, tales is characterized by distinct qualities of composition and sentiment. Their simplicity and directness, their treatment of heroic themes, and their repetitive patterns appeal to students and help them to learn the language. As discussed earlier, inclusion of folktales, riddles and jokes as pedagogical tool makes the second language acquisition process entertaining both for the teachers as well as for the students. Simple rhythmic patterns, alliterations, repetitions, interesting rhymes, rich word repertoire make folk such a popular resource for teaching foreign languages. Translated version of the stories of Birbal, Gopalbhar, Tenali Rama, to the students in the Indian classroom, helps them to identify with cultural tropes, thus rendering this entire exercise of learning the foreign language entertaining and effective. Storytelling in a classroom promotes the receptive and expressive language development; it helps in the development of the four key skills of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. When the teacher performs the role of a *kathak* or teller/ narrator, she/he helps in the development of effective listening and critical thinking. The student is not only riveted to the tale but also follows the facial expressions, physical gestures, intonation and narrative technique of the teacher. It extends the desire of simple retellings by imitating the pitch, volume, along with the use of silence and gesture, On the other hand, if the teacher is replaced by the student as the narrator, he/she learns the oral and written expressions of narrating a tale. Students learn to judge critically and interpret the stories; both on personal taste and literary merit. They try to relate to values articulated in the text.

Folktales attract the students towards their simple storylines with clear demarcation of good and bad which holds the attention of the student; if the narrative used is the translated version of the learner's cultural background, the learner feel an emotive connect to the story, which improves his understanding of the language. "Our stories are as deeply embedded as our bones, and they begin to form with our bones as the foetus is imprinted in utero with the rhythms, tones, and patterns of the mother's voice" (Hearne 40). The shared cultural tropes help the learner to be empathetic towards the character of the stories. Most importantly, the thematic and structural characteristics of folktale make it suitable as a learning aid in an English communicative class. Ahmed Sayeef in his article, "Teaching English Language Using Popular Folk Tales in Bangladesh", makes some interesting observations:

i) A folktale uses simple sentence structure using simple present or past tense.

ii) Repetitive patterns help the students to learn the functioning of language

iii) Use of onomatopoeic words and expression helps the student to understand the story effectively

iv) A folktale generally employs coordinate connectors like 'and', 'for', 'so', 'or'.

One of the primary reason folktales can be used as study material in a language-learning classroom is its universality. The tales deal with issues like love, death,

hatred, greed, jealousy. Hence the learners can quickly identify with the plot and the characters of the story.They are extremely interesting and have the ability to capture the attention of the learners. The fantastical and magical elements intrigue them. The elements of variety and ambiguity in folk make the learning experience enriching and interesting. Folktales are generally short in length and suggestive in nature. The economy of expressions and suggestiveness of tales creates room for debates and discussions among the learners. These scope of spontaneous debates and discussions not only makes the class interesting and dialogic in nature, but it also helps the learner to overcome the element of hesitation, shyness, and acute self-consciousness. However, other than folktales, jokes, riddles and proverb are also vital resources in the ESL (English Second Language) classroom. Like folk narrative, jokes can also be a part of the language-learning process. In her interesting article, "Joke telling as a Tool in ESL", Susan Trachtenberg enlists certain reasons for inclusion of jokes in the teaching of ESL; they are as mentioned below :

1. Jokes are short and can be told or taught within a space of few minutes. They are like mini lessons in grammar, vocabulary and speech patterns.
2. Like any speech act, they are governed by rules. There are rules of sequencing to be learned. These rules change from culture to culture.
3. There is a wide range of possible speech patterns within a single genre of joke – they can take the form of question and answer, or narrative.
4. Jokes are common to all cultures, so we can confidently elicit from our students.
5. Jokes embody a culture and as such are a means of transmitting the spirit of our own culture to our students.
6. Speech behaviour which is learned by listening to and telling jokes can be generalised to speech acts other than the joke, namely narrative and conversation.
7. Most importantly jokes are funny. (90)

The element of humour inherent in a joke makes learning of language entertaining. Moreover, the direct tone and the pithiness of the joke make them suitable candidate of ESL learning. The use of puns, syntactic shift of a part of speech makes joke/riddles funny. Let us consider the famous Oedipus and the Sphinx riddle as an example, the riddle was: "What walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon and three at night?" Oedipus answered, "Man: as an infant, he crawls on all fours; as an adult, he walks on two legs and; in old age, he uses a walking stick". The riddle is interrogative in form and obscure in meaning. Other than the adjective, four, two and three, here the key to the riddle lies in the words morning, afternoon and night; these three words are adverb as they refer to different timeframes in a day. When the answer of Oedipus is analysed, we find a syntactic shift in the sentence, the adverbs are substituted by nouns; morning is replaced by childhood, afternoon by adulthood and evening by senility. No animal walks on three legs in its senility other than man, hence logically the answer to this riddle has to be man. In Indian context, the riddles of Vikram and Betal, Birbal and the Emperor, Gopalbhar are part of popular imagination. However, specifically in the case of Vikram and Betal, the answer to the riddles

of Betal are primarily concerned with ethics. In both the cases, the inclusion of riddles not only help the students in developing the structural knowledge of the language, but in advanced cases like that of Vikram and Betal, they also contribute to analytical and critical thinking. In her article on inclusion of folktale in teaching of English as a language, Anastasiya V. Fakhrutdinova *et al* categorises the methodology of language into three groups:

1) Structural and logical methods: These are designed for the beginners and are easier in nature.

2) Training methods: Theseare intermediary in nature and can have exercises involving grammar and specialised vocabulary.

3) Research methods: These constitute the advanced stage, and students are taught to find necessary information, and to learn analytical thinking. (122)

In the final stage, students can be delegated with tasks of finding equivalent versions of the narrative taught in the classroom from other cultures. Most importantly, they can be asked to express their opinion in writing.

3.4 FOLK AND CULTURAL STUDIES

During the past few decades, the importance of cultural studies in study of language, literature and social sciences have acquired prominence. In the hegemonical space of the Indian classrooms, texts like *Lakshmi Purana* can play a disruptive role. *Lakshmi Purana* is a 15th century text written by Balaram Das, a medieval Odia poet. The text foregrounds a counter narrative to the patriarchal, Brahminical authority and advocates both feminism and caste equality. It challenges the hypocrisy and stubbornness of patriarchy through the female goddess of wealth, who contrary to her counterparts from opposite sex, decides to reward her devotees on lieu of their virtues and actions. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and the protector of the poor and weak, on her regular visit of the temple town in the disguise of an old brahmin women, finds the women of the rich and the powerful family unmindful of their daily duty; however, at the outskirts of the city, she finds an outcaste woman observing her daily rituals with devotion and dedication. Pleased at her devotion, she blesses her and grants her boon. On her return to the temple, at the insistence of Balaram, Lord Jagannath asks her to leave. Before leaving the temple premises, Lakshmi reminds the Lord of the promise he had made to allow her to go on sojourns out into the world, and feed everyone from the lowliest insect to the supreme brahman. On her departure, the temple immerses into darkness, the stock of grains, pulses, vegetables and milk dries up. Being abandoned by the goddess of wealth, the mightiest Lord learns the lesson of hunger, ostracization and poverty. Pressed by hunger, the male deities of Lord Jagannath and Balavadra has to give in to the conditions of Lakshmi and eat the food cooked by the goddess in the disguise of a *chandalini* (a social outcaste). When the goddess reveals her true identity, Jagannath and Balavadra plead her to forgive them and return to the temple, to which Lakshmi demands her to treat the brahman and the *chandal*s equally, not only in the outside world, but also within the precincts of the temple. Thus, this text is not only a feminist text, which foregrounds the goddess and her individuality to counter her male counterparts, but is also a text that undermines European modernity. Prof. Satya

P. Mohanty, in his article, "Alternative Modernities and Medieval Indian Literature: The Oriya "Lakshmi Purana" as Radical Pedagogy", writes:

> we need to reread medieval Indian vernacular literature through new lenses, looking in particular at the way traditional religious idioms are being deployed for novel explorations. New questions are being asked during this transitional period, from new perspectives, and new social values are being explored. Medieval Indian literatures reveal a picture of a dynamic society in flux, a very different image from the one we have inherited from James Mill. And the view of modernity that emerges in them is at odds with the capitalist modernity that dominates in the European context. (19)

Prof. Velchuru Narayan Rao, also argues in favour of a pre-colonial modernity present in the vibrant and dynamic oral traditions of our vernacular literature, which is dialectical and radical in nature. Folk elements, like many other cultural elements, are autotelic in nature; they travel by themselves without any actual movement of population. A similar version of this text was found in the form of a marriage song in Bhojpuri, sung by the women of the house in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. The Bhojpuri marriage song substitutes Lord Jagannath, Balavadra and Lakshmi with their north Indian counterparts: Krishna, Balavadra and Rukmini. The rest of the narrative is almost similar, except the ending, where the Dalit outcaste women compel Krishna to remarry Rukmini as a daughter of her house. The Bhojpuri marriage song is more radical and subversive in nature than its Odia counterpart. The concept of *karma* and its consequent reward cut along the dominant, stringent and hierarchical caste system. The case presented above is a wonderful illustration of the alternative epistemology, presented by the indigenous folk form. In his insightful essay, "Towards a Counter-system", Ramanujan argues about the presence of a second alternate world, which is women-centric; and he voices the secret, tabooed desires, and harbours the doubts and imperfections of a hero they represent, " a dialogic response of one tradition to another; the co-presence of several of them in one space, parodying, inverting, facing and defacing each other, sharing and taking over characters, themes, motifs, and other signifiers, but making them signify new and even opposite things" (447). In a patriarchal culture, these versions are often discouraged to be a part of the popular imagination; they are seldom part of the mainstream communitarian life. These texts can serve to be excellent pedagogical tools that can counter the dominance of Western pedagogical approach in the Indian classroom.

3.5 DIGITIZATION OF FOLKLORE

Digital Humanities bring computational method to the traditional scholarship of humanities. It uses the computational technique to preserve, investigate and analyse texts, paintings, maps, artifacts and other art forms. Digital Humanities or "text technologies" combines the history of the book and digital humanities to investigate the long history of "text" from the earliest period of human communication to the present. Digital scholarship is thoughtful, theoretical and ethical in nature. It is an informed use of digital evidence, methods of enquiry, research, publication and preservation to achieve scholarly and research goals. It uses computational tools to integrate knowledge with interdisciplinary, collaborative frameworks that require multidisciplinary teams. Digital methods

are an ongoing process and have potential to transform research and teaching landscape.

In 2006, a report commissioned by the American Council of Learned Societies offered the framework for understanding the digital scholarship:

A. Building a digital collection of information for further study and analysis

B. Creating appropriate tools for collection-building

C. Creating appropriate tools for the analysis and study of collections

D. Using digital collections and analytical tools to generate new intellectual products

E. Creating authoring tools for these new intellectual products, either in traditional forms or in digital form. (Courant *et al* 7)

Digital Humanities (DH) or Digital Scholarship (DS) is an emerging field of study, which is primarily interdisciplinary in nature. Using the computational technique and with the intervention of other disciplines, the study of humanities has assumed a quintessential character. In folklore, DH can be used to create archives of folk arts, paintings, music, dance and narratives; thus, creating a library on the cloud and preventing it from extinction. These online libraries like the academic archives (Jstor.org, Ebsco host, Project muse etc.) can make academic research and dissemination of knowledge easier. Popular folk-art forms like *Patachitra* (Scroll painting and narrative performance) of Bengal, *Madhubani painting* of Bihar, *Chou dance* of Purulia, West Bengal, *Pattachitra* of Odisha can be archived and preserved digitally. There can be many other examples like those cited above from Kashmir to Kerala. Many of them are either on the verge of extinction or are survived by a closed community. These valuable folk-art forms are not only aesthetically rich, but they carry within them a rich polyphonic and dialectical tradition. If texts like *Lakshmi Purana* or its equivalent Bhojpuri marriage song of Ghazipur could be brought under Digital Humanities, then not only we can think of creating a repository of such radical texts, but we can also try to trace the movement of such texts from medieval Odia to the north Indian Hindi-speaking belt.

Technological interventions in the world of folk have often been brought under severe criticism; it has been often argued that technological projects have often trivialized the spirit of folk and supplemented it with elements of popular culture. It is also alleged that reduction or elimination of the human participation has mechanicalized the content of folk. Though these criticisms are not entirely unfounded and false, but if one develops a holistic view of this symbiotic relationship between folk and technology, it can be argued that in the present age intervention of technology has become all pervasive. Moreover, without the use of technology, it is nearly impossible to transform folk elements into pedagogical tools on a larger scale. Printing of texts, use of diagrammatic illustrations, audio–video clippings, use of animations have altered the way folk was archived, disseminated and reproduced. Use of technology is inevitable in conservation and "renewal of humanistic scholarship" of folk as a genre. Similarly, on the other hand, as a counter argument we can argue that simply installing computers and digital interactive boards does not justify the inclusion of technology as a pedagogical tool. In order to achieve the benefits of digital technologies, educators

need to adopt a reflexive stance. "The creation of an engaged pedagogy incorporating digital storytelling is an experimental process, and the resulting freedom should be a source of joy, not anxiety" (Tennant 152). Recreation, production and broadcasting of the digitized version of folk/mythological narratives of *Neel Kamal* and *Lal Kamal* from the collection of folk stories (*Thakumar Jhuli)* or *Bal Ganesh, Bal Hanuman, The Adventures of Tenali Raman, Krishna* and many others through the DTH channels emphasise the significance of the digitization of folk materials. On many occasions, these figures transcend their mythic or legendary past and participate in the contemporary crisis or challenges, which may include issues like deforestation, wildlife poaching, bullying at school. In this process, they no more remain idealized figure of distant past, rather they become close associates of everyday life. In an age of nuclear family, when the amiable, warm figure of grandmother and grandfather is either absent or less pronounced, the tales survive, entertain educate and inform these children of metropolis through these digitized versions.

The scope and contours of Digital Humanities is immense. It has the potentiality to break the boundaries of discipline and can bring folk, computational technology, physical sciences and bio sciences on one single platform. The article "The Biomechanics of Character Types in Javanese Dance" by Miguel Escobar Varela*et al* is such an example. It contributes to the scientific analysis of the Javanese dance form and the application of bio-mechanics to the study of the dance form. Biomechanics is a technical discipline which explains body motion through physical concepts including angles, moments, energy consumption, power and ground reaction forces. Its application includes fields such as sports, rehabilitation, and analysis of daily activities. However, recently potential applications have included dance and other forms of artistic expressions. These studies are usually aimed at improving teaching, skill enhancement, and injury prevention.Study of similar kind is possible in the study and analysis of Indian marital dance forms like *Chhau*, *Thang-taa*, *Chholia* and *Kalaripayattu.* To speak of some other possibilities of DH or Digital Humanities, one can cite the example of *Giza Project* at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with the goal of digitizing all of the archaeological documentation from the museum, and make information available freely on the internet. The project was started in the year 2000, and later in 2011, it was taken up by the Harvard University. Since 2011, the project has widened its scope and has tried to partner with all those institutions around the world that have carried out excavation projects at Giza, thus bringing in a lot of data about the complex project. It has tried to recreate the Giza Plateau through a virtual 3D model, providing valuable insights and information about the monument. In folklore, similar archiving projects can be carried out at our national libraries through an academic collaboration that successfully cuts along diverse disciplines and domains. Digital Humanities thus can bring in revolutionary changes in the way folk forms are appreciated, understood and taught.

3.6 FOLKLORE AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF EPISTEMOLOGY

"Not only the oral narratives, butfolk beliefs and folk medicine also find respectable places in thisform of mass media. So, in this setup, clove and turmeric areshown as essential ingredients of the tooth pastes and facial creams respectively.

In the same manner the traditional folk designs or ritual drawings also find place in thesekinds of T.V. productions whether commercial or otherwise." (105) These insightful words of Jawaharlal Handoo,penned around thirty years ago, when television still was a luxurious household item, an object of desire, is problematic. Though the benefits of folk elements were accepted, it was never espoused or sanctioned officially. For an example, the fact that twigs of neem are immensely beneficial for dental health, is widely accepted, added to that they are extremely cheap and affordable; yet they are not a part of a majority of the Indian household. Rather, the ubiquitous presence of Colgate, Pepsodent, and Sensodyne only hint at dual attitude of the masses towards folk medicine. Recently, during the first wave of Covid-19 pandemic, when the entire country witnessed nationwide lockdown and people started falling prey to this viral flu, the household remedy of flu, better known as *kadha* (concoction), was formally recognized by the Government as a preventive medicine against this deadly flu. Preparation of this concoction was broadcasted live on national channel. Such an official sanction to folk potion, which for ages was part and parcel of millions of households, leads us to some interesting observations. During this point of time, the world was traumatized, confounded – mayhem in the most developed countries have sent waves of shock across the world. The modern medicine was dumbstruck and answerless in front of this viral epidemic. Many other non-sanctioned practices like potions of *giloy* (a natural household herb) made its way into the lives of the people. The failure of the modern medicine in the face of an epidemic onslaught across the globe raises serious question on the empirical efficacy of modern medicine. Paul Farmer argues that 'old' infections like cholera, tuberculosis, malaria and dengue despite being treatable and preventable, still kill millions each year. Why the official recognition of folk medicines such as concoctions made up of spices and basil leaves, quite popular in Indian household, took so much of time? Why modern medicine despite its fiasco in the face of such unwarranted disasters, remains skeptical towards alternative form of medicines, rather dismissing them with impertinent impatience? May be the narratives of miraculous recovery, intervention of faith, rituals, rumours, and absence of clinical trials, categorise folk medicine as unsophisticated, rustic and superstitious. Though folk medicine has never been relegated to marginal or existential space, as it is accepted and practiced by the masses. In case of many ailments, specifically in relation to fertility problems, joint pains, cervical pains and skin diseases, patients have often turned to alternative medicine. Moreover, not only in developing or third world countries, but also in European countries and America, lot of people turn to alternative medicine, because they find it affordable, effective, and bereft of the side effects of modern antibiotics. Hence, reconstitution of traditional medicine or folk medicine through clinical trial, scientifically documented recovery narratives, creation of proper archives of diseases along with their remedies is the only way forward to dispel the ambiguity around healing practices of alternative medicines.

In recent years, India, like many other countries, have witnessed renewed interest of the masses in traditional and eco-friendly life. Organically grown grains, pulses, vegetables are in huge demand. Awareness of the harmful effects of crops grown with toxic pesticides and insecticides have brought about this certain change of attitude. Farming practices with organic wastes (crop, animal and farm wastes, aquatic wastes), use of beneficial microbes and biological materials are an integral part of organic farming. However, some of the interesting practices of folk farming

includes talking to the trees/crops to make them grow faster, use of scarecrows and blue bottle to keep birds away from the farm, effect of moon phase on plants for better growth. None of the practices stated above are part of modern agricultural sciences. Implications of local calendars and consequent use of physical environment in farming practices are certain vital components of indigenous farming methods. Damage caused by various insects to crops across the world is undeniable; however rampant and thoughtless use of expensive and harmful insecticides are not only harmful towards the growth of a healthy crop, but they are also partially effective in the control of pests. Non-chemical pest strategies like crop rotation, suitable tillage practices, encouraging natural enemies and developing biological controls of the pest, the removal and burning of infested plants, selecting resistant varieties, interplanting with aromatic herbs to keep pests at bay, and the development and use of organic insecticides, which were an integral part of traditional farming, are now almost forgotten practices. Systematic archiving, structured dissemination and sensitization of indigenous knowledge practices are only ways forward in the field of agriculture.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

It is extremely difficult to define and categories folklore in watertight compartments. Folk is fluid, dynamic and vibrant. Hence, the pedagogy involving folk requires a flexible approach. Folk can both serve as a tool of teaching, and simultaneously it can itself be the subject to be studied and appreciated. In the past few decades, the renewed interest in folk have opened up new dimensions of thought, appreciation and perception. However, it is now time to sensitize the masses that folk is beyond fairytales, the ritual of storytelling to drowsy children, colourful and rustic performances for some indulgent tourist; it is a way of life, and is as pragmatic and ambiguous as life itself can be. It is because of few grey zones that comes within the purview of folk, that folk is often dismissed as regressive, primitive, superstitious, and fantastical. The Euro-centric world view has taught us to think that elements which can never be defined or explained through scientific empiricism is irrational and hence unacceptable. Inclusion of folk in the syllabus of schools, colleges and universities will not only dispel the fog of misconceptions, it will also revive the interest of the academia in exploring the dialectical, esoteric and radical form of knowledge that folklore stands for.

The discussion above has tried to touch upon the possible dimensions of pedagogical concerns of folklore; there are few other areas of pedagogical approach that could not be discussed within this limited scope, which includes but are not limited to domains like folk performances, folk music, folk and indigenous technology, and use of folklore in management studies. This chapter on pedagogy and folklore has tried to address some recent developments in the study of folk, which includes digital humanities. The chapter has also attempted a rudimentary discussion on folk medicine and importance of folk practices in agriculture. The discussion in this chapter is an attempt to encourage students to renew fresh dialogues in the field of folk studies; these dialogues must move beyond the guarded space of academia with a sense of urgency. The ambitious project of creating an encyclopedia on indigenous methods of farming by the Karnataka Folklore University at Gotagodi in Haveri districtis indeed a good omen for folk as a canon. But, many such ambitious projects like the one

mentioned above are required, not to accentuate our cultural superiority, but to build an alternative system of knowledge, which can restore balance in this market driven world.

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3.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain the advantages of using storytelling as a pedagogical tool?

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2. Discuss how inclusion of jokes as a pedagogical tool can prove beneficial in learning of English as a foreign language?

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3. Why do you think folktales can be an ideal tool for teaching English as a foreign language?

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4. What is Digital Humanities? What are the aims and objectives of Digital Humanities?

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5. How Digital Humanities can prove useful towards the study of folklore?

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6. Choose a folk narrative of your choice and discuss how it can be used for textual analysis in the classroom of cultural studies.

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7. How do you think reproduction of myth, legends and folk narrative through electronic mass media affects folklore?

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8. Discuss the case of Laxmi Purana a feminist and anti-dalit text.

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9. Why do you think there is an urgent requirement of resurgence in the field of folk medicine?

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10. Why do you think there is an urgent need of archiving indigenous folk practices of agriculture?

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UNIT 4 EPISTEMOLOGY OF FOLKLORE

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to

- Read and understand folklore as an oral form, its evolution and study
- Understand folklore as an epistemological system
- Relate the cognitive, conative and affective aspects of folklore
- Understandfolktales as socio-cultural archives of knowledge
- Understand the role of folklore as indigenous knowledge in generating and preserving knowledge

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Storytelling and mythmaking are skills peculiar to the Homo Sapiens. The oldest known folktale is estimated to have been dated back 6,000 years, to the Bronze Age. Symbolic representations of human experience may go back much earlier. Storytelling is a powerful tool, a means for sharing experiences, knowledge, and cultural norms. In indigenous communities, stories are the most important way of passing on knowledge from generation to generation.The apparently humble and marginalized folk-forms are repositories of valuable and intrinsically powerful knowledge and epistemological devices that create, preserve, disseminate and modify knowledge. What appear as mere rituals or stories to outsiders are an intimate part of the life-ways of communities that can trace their ancestry to pre-literate times through the genealogy of the folktale.

In this unit, we are attempting to understand folklore as an epistemological system. Epistemology is the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge. The term is derived from the Greek episteme ("knowledge") and logos ("reason" or study). It studies the what and how of knowledge; the elements and sources of knowledge in any given society or socio-political community. We shall be studying folklore, its origin, nature and structure in order to understand it as a system of knowing. Folklore may be considered as an **intuitive** source of knowledge which isbased on intuition, faith, beliefs etc. Human feelings play a greater role in intuitive knowledge compared to reliance on facts, though it is not always fictional. It is similar to **empirical** knowledge as it depends on observation, experience and articulation of experience, relies on objective facts that have been established and can be demonstrated. It may be distinguished from **authoritarian** knowledge which relies on information that has been obtained from books, research papers, experts, supreme powers etc. It is differentiated from **logical** knowledge, which is the creation of new knowledge through the application of logical reasoning, but that is a binary way of construction of reality. Folklore sees reality and processes it with logic, reasoning, but the appeal is far greater due to its imaginative construction of the everyday. Moreover, it is seen that written and oral forms, the intuitive and the logical, merge in an increasingly interconnected and multi-media world.

Thereare, therefore, two aspects of the epistemology of folklore: folklore as a product of a system of knowledge as an object of knowledge. The folktale is also a knowledge system in itself, both, as a source and a subject.

4.1.1 What is Folklore?

Folklore means stories of common people or folk. The term was coined by William John Thoms in 1846 as an Anglo-Saxon substitute for the previous latinised term, "popular antiquities" and a rough equivalent for the German *volkskunde*, which translated as a "study of the people" with a common culture, language and ancestry. It is a Middle English word, a combination of "folk," meaning "people" and "lore," meaning a collection of stories. In its original sense, the word has a sense of "low culture," the vulgar, even primitive, unsubstantial and unreliable.

According to Alan Dundes, a pioneer folklorist, the word "folk-lore" itself considered as an item of folk speech means fallacy, untruth or error. Folklore and myth are considered as fictional tales. However, myth is but one form or genre of folklore, which consists of a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form. Folklore consists of a variety of genres most of which are found among all peoples of the earth (FMC 473).The term *folklore* literally means traditional knowledge of the common people and thus signifies "a body of material" (stories, songs, beliefs) as well as a "separate science" closely allied with literature and history.

In the beginning, the term *folk* applied only to rural, frequently poor and illiterate peasants. The term was expanded in the nineteenth century toinclude the urban poor, thereby restraining the meaning of folk to an underclass or an marginalised section of society. Today, folk is a flexible concept which can refer to a nation or common people living in a basic social unit such as the family or a social group with common traits, who share distinctive traditions that identify them. The term includes indigenous traditions of Amerindian people in Latin America, Aboriginals of Australia and New Zealand, popular culture in rural and urban areas of Eastern Europe, popular Shintoism in Japan, folk performance re-created on the basis of ethnic traditions anywhere in the world.

4.1.2 Meanings and Definitions

> There are multiple levels in a myth, the first is narrative, a good story; the second is the divine level which concerns mythology as it used to be understood by scholars of the classics: the metaphorical struggles of divine powers and personalities. Next is the cosmic level of the myth, the expression of universal laws and processes, of metaphysical principles and symbolic truths. And below, shading off into the folklore, is the human level, the search for meaning in human life. (O'Flaherty 22)

Folklore is an integral form of our daily lives and reflected prominently in our everyday use of language. Most of the idioms or metaphors that are strewn across any language are related to a folk-tale or verse. Regardless of any particular religious tradition, folk-belief is connected to festivities or rituals. Life-cycle events, such as, birth, death, puberty, marriage or pregnancy, are celebrated by people, ordinary folk or the elite through practices that are part of an inherited system of knowledge in diverse groups of people. Certain incidents are reiterated on special occasions and some great people are remembered as legends on particular days to mark their importance for that group. These form the knowledge structure or epistemology of the group.

According to folklorists Georges and Jones:

The word *folklore* denotes the expressive forms, processes and behaviors

(1) that we customarily learn, teach and utilize or display during face-to-face interactions, and

(2) that we judge to be traditional

   (a) because they are based on known precedents or models, and

   (b) because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief and feeling. (1)

Folklore is an irreplaceable knowledge form. There may be different "expressions of folklore" tangible or intangible, in which traditional culture and knowledge is expressed, appears or manifests. This includes the following forms of expressions or combinations:

   (a) verbal expressions, including stories, epics, legends, poetry, riddles and other narratives, words, signs, names and symbols;

   (b) musical expressions, including songs and instrumental music;

   (c) expressions by movement or incorporating movement, including dances, plays, artistic forms, rituals and other performances, whether or not reduced to a material form;

   (d) tangible expressions, including productions of art, drawings, designs, paintings, body painting, carvings, sculptures, pottery, terracotta, mosaic, woodwork, metal ware, jewelry, baskets, needlework, textiles, glassware, carpets, costumes, handicrafts, musical instruments and architectural forms; and

   (e) any other output of creative and cumulative intellectual activity characteristic of a traditional community's distinctive cultural identity and traditional heritage developed and maintained by that traditional community, individuals or groups who have the right or responsibility to do so in accordance with customary laws and practices.

Performances of folk-form may be purely for entertainment or they may be carried out for religious or other reasons.

4.1.3 Features of Folklore

They are primarily oral and unwritten first drafts of shared experiences of daily life that become a collective memory and belief through repetition in time, and over generations. Secondly, they are pervasive, all around us as a set of practices that are part of the behaviour of any particular people. Thirdly, they perpetuate and attempt the explanation of natural and supernatural events through narrative sequencing. Thus, elements of nature, superstitions, ghost stories, fairy tales, tales of the unknown are included in folklore. Certain values, morals and warnings that have come down to us in the form of adages, jokes or riddles, are part of folklore. Nursery rhymes, wedding songs, marching songs, play songs or jingles are also folklore. Fourthly, folktales are diverse, not only regarding their origin but they also have variants, i.e., several variants of the same tale.

The present use of folklore may be seen in literary works that use folklorist elements to illustrate a point, draw parallels between the past and present or establish intimacy with the reader. Similarly, films, animations, cartons and advertisements make use of known paradigms that come from a common folk tradition to establish contact with their audience. However, these are the language-based folk elements. The non-verbal include games such as hopscotch, hide and seek, blind man's buff; performances like animal antics, juggling, magic, dance; rituals of prayer, food and dress. For instance, there has grown a folklore around cricket as a "gentleman's game," football having originated among "skull-flaunting" primitive tribes, while stories abound regarding the origins of chess.

The study of folklore may be conducted in three ways:

- As a study of genres: folksongs, folktales, legends, folk-speech or folk-art as individual areas of study
- As an academic discipline that interacts with cultural studies, anthropology, ethnomusicology, history, linguistics, psychology or literature.
- As part of folk group tradition, assuming that certain folklore belongs to a specific group. (Georges and Jones 22)

Folklore was transmitted orally, creating variants and diverse versions as it travelled to distant places, in different languages and at different times. With writing, they were available to only a few who could read and recite, memorize or modify them. Collections like the *Panchatantra* by Vishnu Gupt, or *Kathakshirsagar*by Somadeva appeared as written texts as early as the pre-eighth century and eleventh century respectively. However, these written tales were also transmitted by word of mouth to distant places, among the non-literate, and were forever undergoing change. In Europe from the Middle Ages onwards, through the first half of the eighteenth century, these stories would be used by authors in their written work, as if the only way to connect with the readers was through the ubiquitous folktale.

4.2 FOLKLORE AS COGNITIVE, CONATIVE AND AFFECTIVE

Folklore, like all narrative, is cognitive, conative and affective. In the first instance, it helps in developing the rational and logical use of the mind and intellect to process perception and experience through the narrative lens. The conative is the development of an emotional quotient, a striving and awareness to use one's non-rational power. The affective is the letting loose of stress or emotion through the narrative impact. That is why the story of the thirsty crow instills the ideas of using one's skills rationally, an anthropomorphic empathy with non-human life, as well as the valuable lesson of "where there is a will there is a way."

Folklore is a cultural-historical narrative means of communication with children and adults. Certain kinds of experiences and social interactions that children have with adults and their peers help to build complexity of imagination, thinking and concept formation. Secondly, it nurtures children's imagination which can

be evoked through stories to learn and participate within their social and cultural communities. In folk storytelling, children use their imagination to conceptualise the unfamiliar, new or strange, and thereby learn to develop abstract thinking. They develop the cognitive and conative skills to make meaning of strange stories and relate it to real-life situations at the pre-literary stage of development (Joseph et.al. 113). The oral and literary fairy tales enunciated, articulated, and communicated feelings in efficient metaphorical terms that enabled listeners and readers to envision possible solutions to their problems so that they could survive and adapt to their environments. (Zipes WFTS xii-xiii).

4.2.1 An Oral Form

Folklore is an important part of oral tradition and belongs to a pre-literate stage of human development. Writing as is well known was invented by the Sumerians around 3100 BCE. But this writing was limited to royal, administrative and religious matters, by highly trained people who claimed an important place in ancient societies as scribes. It was the oral form of communication that dominated the public and private spheres. Moreover, folklore was the verbal as well as non-verbal form created for and by people living in less complex bio-socio-cultural systems, particularly rural, agrarian or nomadic grazers or artisans. With the advent of literacy among the ordinary citizens in addition to the scribes, the oral form lost its place as a valuable form of art and epistemology.

The increasing proliferation of a "print" culture due to the printing press and export of paper from non-European trade posts and colonies contributed to the rise of the written word over the oral. The twin arts of reading and writing overshadowed the verbal culture and relegated it to the periphery. That is how it has become associated with illiteracy, irrationality, non-scientific temper and faith in non-rational beings and occurrences. The oral forms of literature are therefore considered as rudimentary, unpolished, and "uncultured" compared to written ones, as well as the preserve of the lower classes. The marginal position of folklore stems from this hierarchic dichotomy between the written and the oral form. It is nevertheless notable that genuine lore existed in ancient semi-literate cultures too, forming a continuum in the history of culture.

Walter Ong condemns the term oral literature as "anachronistic and self-contradictory" arguing that "oral art forms which developed during the tens of thousands of years before writing obviously had no connection with writing at all" (10). The memorization and transmission of oral tradition requires a different set of epistemological and pedagogic principles, that required a faithful imitation and repetition, allowing only approved and a limited degree of variation, but no improvisation.

The literate art-form was strongly dependent on the new and the creative that avoided repetition. The power of oral performance is based on the authority, poetics and charm of the spoken word transmitted from mouth to ear in traditional societies. Folklore in its earliest form was most likely for a pre-conditioned audience. This may be seen in some folklore genres where meanings are codified in linguistic structure and communicated via narrative form and performative style that is complex to an unfamiliar listener.

Regarding the oral performance of the Marwari folk form, Auna Roy says:

> Every retelling adds textures, from one generation to the next for hundreds of years." The stories are told by Bijjiji simple but layered. They talk of different castes, the poor, the people who live in havelis, bastis, jhopris, across different time periods.There are the elements, birds and animals, spirits and ghosts co-existing with the human; stories of the clever jackal outsmarting the mighty lion as a poor man's intelligence helps him outsmart an arrogant enemy. These stories contain satire and humour, simplifying abstract concepts for edification of the listeners. Stories about constellations; mathematical solutions the primal mind of man that regards the non-living to be living like itself. (Dethi 64)

Since it is performative, the telling of the tale has a formal structure. The Bengali folktales are told by the narrator who is identified as Shambu's mother who ends with: "Thus my story endeth," The Marwari tales by Bijjiji begin with "The Tale of Tell and Don't Tell." The folk tradition is full of conventions and learning. Ravs and Bhats, who are storytellers also maintain genealogies.Their story telling uses an artful style, colourful language, tonal variations and emotionally charged way of telling the story (Dethi 42). Regarding the mutation of tales into variants and newer ideas, Zipes holds that the first phase of cultural transmission is mutation, or transformation that brings about the creation of a new idea. This phase is the phase of creation or invention. If new ideas are not created, there is also the possibility of another kind of mutation—the loss of an idea or a custom. The innovation will not be transmitted unless there is a desire to teach it, that is, to disseminate it and to learn it. One could say that the transmission passes through two phases: the communication of information, of an idea, by a teacher (transmitter) to a student (transmittee), and the comprehension and acquisition of the idea. This is the act of reproduction of the idea that happens when the idea passes from one brain to another (WFTS xii-xiii).

4.2.2 Origin of Folklore Studies

William Thoms had fabricated the term "folklore" in 1846 for use in an article published in the August 22, 1846 issue of *The Athenaeum*. The new term replaced the earlier terms, "popular antiquities" or "popular literature" to emphasize the study of the rural, mostly illiterate peasantry" (Snyder 22). This was the origin of folkloristics:

> In his published call for help in documenting antiquities, Thoms was echoing scholars from across the European continent to collect artifacts of older, mostly oral cultural traditions still flourishing among the rural populace. (Snyder 22)

4.2.3 Folklore Studies

The roots of folklore studies can be traced to the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, in Europe, though some studies may extend back in time even further. It began with the creation of archives, through retrieval of some known tales, in 1697, with Contes de ma mere L'Oye (the Tales of Mother Goose) and became recognised as the stories or knowledge of the ordinary people. The eighteenth century saw growing collections of folklore in Europe. The efforts by the Brothers Grimms, in Germany, were among the first attempts at reviving an interest in

folklore, with the publication of *Kinder-und-Hausmärchen* in 1812. In Scandinavia, *folkeminde* (Danish) or *folkermimne* (Norwegian) became the term for their studies of their folktales (Snyder 23). A collection of epic Finnish poems published under the title *Kalevala* was the work of Elias Lönnrot. Throughout Europe and America, other early collectors of folklore were at work. Thomas Crofton Croker published fairy tales from southern Ireland and, together with his wife, documented *keening* and other Irish funereal customs. John Fanning Watson in the United States published the *Annals of Philadelphia* (Snyder 24).

In India, the British became instrumental in forming the first collections of folklore. According to records, the first major collection was made by Miss Mary Frere,daughter of the governor of the Bombay Presidency, who took down from the *ayah*, Anna de Souza, the tales in *Old Deccan Days* (1868*).* In the north, Mrs Flora Annie Steel and Major–later Sir–Richard Carnac Temple told and annotated their *Wide-awake Stories* (1884) from Punjab and Kashmir, along with other texts (Sircar 4). In relation to Bengal, an early collection is made by administrator C. Vernieux, *Indian Tales and Anecdotes: Moral and Instructive* from Hindi/ Urdu and Bengali (1864, printed in *Jhurna, or Pearl Spring, 1873*). The Rev. Lal Behari Day, collected folktales helped by Richard Temple (Jr) which were published as *Folk Tales of Bengal (1883).* In the Preface to his collections, Day mentions other collections from Europe—Norse Tales by Dasent; Icelandic Stories by Armason; Highland Stories translated by Campbell.The very first issue of the first India-based journalwith a specific focus on folklore, was the Bombay-based *Indian Antiquary*, which published in 1872, the first to publish H. Damant's sets of folk tales from Dinajpur. Indian journals with folkloric interest began to appear in various parts of India. Miss Maive Stokes took down her *Indian Fairy Tales* (1879) in Calcutta and Simla from two Hindu *aya*s (Sircar 5).

Other Indians, particularly, in Bengal, followed the British in collecting folk materials in local languages in various regions. The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (Bengali Literary Academy) was founded in 1894, and initiated much activity in folklore (including nursery rhymes) during this period. In Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore wrote four essays on folklore between 1885 and 1899 (collected in 1907), and in 1894 in *Chhele Bhulano Chhara (Rhymes to Delight Children)*, he and Abanindranath Tagore worked on another related area relevant to *Kheerer Putul,* folk nursery rhymes – an area taken up by Jogindranath Sarkar in his *Khukumanir Chhara (Precious Lass's Rhymes, 1899, 1902)*. In the 1890s too, Bengali folklorist Sarat Chandra Mitra started his work first on *'North Indian' Folktales* and then on *Many Other Folk Customs*, not just in Bengal but over a very wide area (Sircar 5).

After Independence, scholars like Dr Satyendra, Devendra Satyarthi, Krishnadev Upadhayaya, Jhaberchand Meghani, Prafulla Dutta Goswami, Ashutosh Bhattacharya, Kunja Bihari Dash, Chitrasen Pasayat, Somnath Dhar, Ramgarib Choubey, Jagadish Chandra Trigunayan and many more became pioneers in working on folklore. It was during the 1980s that the Central Institute of Indian Languages and the American Institute of Indian Studies started their systemic study on Folklore and after that many western, as well as eastern scholars, pursued their studies on folklore as a discipline. It was A.K. Ramanujan, whose seminal collection of *Folktales from India,* along with the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko and American Peter J. Claus led Indian folklorists into new areas of study.The pioneer folklorists in contemporary India are Jawaharlal Handoo, Sadhana

Naithani, Kishore Bhattacharjee, Kailash Pattanaik, V.A. Vivek Rai, late Komal Kothari, Raghavan Payyanad, M Ramakrishnan and Nandini Sahu. New folklorists have emerged who are committed to understanding folklore from an Indian point of view, rather than to see the whole subject from the model constructed by western epistemology.

Epistemologically, folklore studies has roots in Europe, against the backdrop of the Scientific Revolution of the 18th century. The European Enlightenment and Reformation led to the rise of a logocentric rationalism, and an increasing dependence on the empirical method of attaining knowledge and created a divide in the methods of learning. The earlier, mostly religious, intuitive or rural way of thinking was steadily marginalised as irrational, superstitious, non-scientific and simplistic. Romanticism, Nationalism and Philological Studies grew in tandem and created a fascination of the educated class with the artistic forms of ordinary peasants. The study of folklore was a nostalgic recovery of the past, as a relic from ancient civilizations.

The 19th century saw an increase in this field due to three major reasons. First, the growing urbanisation of the nation states due to industrialization created a nostalgia for the fast-vanishing past with its simpler belief and knowledge systems. According to Snyder, folklore was considered as the "surviving fragments of a cultural mythology of the region, pre-dating Christianity and rooted in pagan peoples and beliefs" (25). Moreover, folk became the label apart from modern, and folklore became the material specimen, which were meant to be classified in the natural history of civilization (30).

Second, the rising rate of literacy compelled some folklorists to preserve the lore of the rural folk found in their stories and customs. Therefore, "tales, originally dynamic and fluid, were given stability and concreteness by means of the printed page" in this period (Snyder 30).

Third**,** from the eighteenth century onwards, the folktale became a means of combating the scientific model of the universe built along mathematical principles in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. As a reaction against the objective study of a "mechanistic universe," an organic model of the universe was proposed. This theory was based on the perceptive and experiential knowledge of the working of forces that were not separate from, but a part of man, an interconnected "chain of being." Thereby, the study of the past became important, and stories and other objects from the past became important objects of interest as "artifacts" (Georges and Jones 34). The growing interest in folklore was taking the shape of a discipline, and, consequently, the British Folklore Society was established in 1878 and the American Folklore Society was established a decade later to provide an academic framework to the pursuit of folklore.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, folklore studies blossomed into an independent discipline, though it's still strongly allied with cultural anthropology. The discipline attained a separate recognition in the decade, 1950-60, and the first group of students graduated in the academic discipline of Folklore Studies.New Folkloristics grew up in the 1960s.

4.3 ACADEMIC FOLKLORISTICS

Academic folklore studies, also called Folkloristics, is a field of scholarship devoted to the classification, documentation, and interpretation of folklore and

folklife. The discipline has evolved over the last two centuries, and is still in the process of consolidating itself. Though a burgeoning area of study, it is an important and extremely relevant one.

Georges and Jones define folkloristic as:

> ...the discipline devoted to the identification, documentation, characterization and analysis of traditional expressive forms, processes and behaviors. (1)

It defines folklore as a specific part of expressive culture, which is traditional and informally transmitted. Folklore in the academic sense "doesn't have any necessary relationship to truth value." Some folklore genres like folktale are understood to be fictional by their tellers and communities, where others like legend are told as though true. According to Jeana Jorgensen, "the truth value (or lack thereof) isn't what makes them folklore"; it is the way in which they're the non-institutional or non-formal parts of the new culture marks them as folklore.

Folklorists study folklore as a discipline, they engage in grouping folklore by genre and region; classify the folktales whether using the tale type index, motif index, or other classification tools. They study the functions of folklore in relation to the people transmitting and performing it. Scholars believe that folklore exists for a reason and their study documents those reasons. In this sense, folklore studies participates in broader academic discourse with the rest of the social sciences, helping "to demonstrate the links between expressive culture and society as a whole."

Folkloristicscan then be conceptualized and studied in four ways:

(a) Historical artefact

(b) Describable and transmissible entity

(c) Culture

(d) Behaviour (Georges and Jones 22)

4.3.1 The Epistemology of Folklore: Folklore as an Object of Knowledge

The main tradition of European folklore scholarship proceeds in a direct line from the Germans of nineteenth century to the Scandinavians of today. From the folktale collections of brothers Grimm in 1812, to Antti Aarne's Index, identifying major European tale-types. It was first published in 1910 and expanded by Thompson in 1928, and again in 1961. Another Finnish folklorist, Kaarle Krohn, built upon these foundations developed in 1926 his famous exposition on the principles of folklore research, *Die Folkloristische Arbeitsmethode* (Dorson 93-94). Folklore Fellows were a society trying to collect and share material on folktale with scholars. They collected and catalogued a remarkable number of tales The catalogues were arranged according to contents, covering folk literature from different lands that is available in print or as manuscripts.

4.3.2 The Classification of the Folktale

AnttiAarne classified the folktales according to "types to be found in the variegated multitudes of the tales" and "unite them into a well-ordered whole" (7-9). Therefore, he is successful in creating a "systematic catalogue of types" that

provides a common system of classification to aid the scholar of folklore. This was the first classification of this type and would necessarily be small but with scope for massive expansion. Besides, the types have been given concise, yet sufficiently explanatory labels.The three principal groups are: animal tales, regular folktales and humorous tales. The ordinary tales are the largest group and are further divided into tales of magic or wonder, religious stories, romantic stories and stories about the world and stories of the stupid ogre.

Tales sometimes belong to two types, and notes have to be added to clarify the basis on which it is being classified in one type or the other. The other aspect of the folktale are the variants. Cross-cultural transfers of knowledge and consequent hybridization and cross-fertilization between different systems of knowledge seems to have occurred so that one understands that folklore cannot be studied as discrete, pristine or isolated complexes. Aarne marvels at how the folktale travels faster across linguistic boundaries. The same tales are known to different peoples, while some appear to be known almost everywhere (iii). This complication was taken up by Vladimir Propp.

4.4 THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE FOLKTALE

Vladimir Propp, a Russian structuralist/formalist, published his analysis of the folktale as *Morphology of the Folktale* in 1928. He basically analysed "fairy tales," and since fairy tales are considered to be a sub category of folktales in general, therefore his work is applicable to not just folklore genres but all types of narratives. After the publication of *Morphology*, folklorists around the world realized that there is a unique element to folklore in the sense that they can be replicated structurally. Folklore of a particular region or other areas have the same or similar stories. They are often similar with regard to plots, characters and situations.

Propp based his study on Alexander Nikolayevich Afanasyev's collection of Russian folktales (1957). This collection includes more than six hundred folktales, of which Propp used only 102 tales (Number 50-Number 151). His analysis describes certain "functions" of the folktale and defines functions as: "Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action" (Propp 21). His study broke down the fairy tales into thirty-one "functions" that comprised the structure of many of the fairy tales.

Propp's structural model is based on the following criteria:

I. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.

II. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.

III. The sequence of functions is always identical.

IV. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.

Propp also proposed that functions can logically join together into certain spheres. These spheres correspond to their respective performers, such as the sphere of action of the villain, of the hero, the princess or the helper, etc.The basic idea of

Morphology is that the tremendous diversity of details in Russian wonder-tales is reducible to one single plot, that the elements of this plot (thirty-one in number) are always the same and always follow one another in the same order and, finally, that only seven different characters should be taken into consideration. Propp's assertion that hundreds of fairy tales can be reduced to a single structure has been a seminal discovery on folktales.

4.4.1 Interpretation of the Folktale

Propp's *Morphology* has been simultaneously celebrated as a classic text for his morphological approach and criticized for his disregard for the deep structures of the narratives. It was the folklorist Alan Dundes who first defined the need to interpret folklore. He suggested that perhaps the lore, "was separated from folk, and treated or studied as "entities independent of living beings (Dundes IF viii). He lifted the folktale from being a historical artefact to its literary and knowledge structure. However, he proposed a more cogent method of interpretation than the merely speculative that prevailed at the time. Though interpretations are subjective and no one can prove the "validity" of one interpretation over the other, yet he felt interpretation was important. He gave three possibilities that would come out of interpretation:

a) "desirability of multiple interpretations," "folk metaphors" (literary knowledge…or method)

b) "consistent patterns of metaphors in every culture" which may be "cognitive" or "symbolic."

c) That "these patterns both reflect and affect behaviour and thought in a given culture" (x).

Dundes believes that analyzing folklore can help in the discernment of general patterns of culture and the knowledge of such patterns can provide the means for raising levels of consciousness and that this folkloristic patterning acts as a critical cultural force in shaping opinion and prejudice (x).

4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE FOLKTALE

4.5.1 Structural Analysis

In his Introduction to Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, Dundes has noted two distinct types of structural analysis in folklore**: Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic.**

In **syntagmatic analysis,** the structure or formal organization of a folkloristic text is describedfollowing the chronological order of the linear sequence of elements in the text as reported from an informant.

The **paradigmatic** type of structural analysis in folklore "seeks to describe the pattern (usually based upon an a priori binary principle of opposition) which allegedly underlies the folkloristic text. This pattern is not the same as the sequential structure (Dundes/Propp xi-xii).

4.5.2 Symbolic Analysis

It was Jack Zipes, who, like Dundes, pointed out that the morphological study of

Vladimir Propp or the semiotic practice of Algirdas-Julien Greimas are useful for comprehending textual structures and signs of the tales, but they provide no overall methodological framework for locating and grasping the essence of the genre, the substance of the symbolic act as it took form to intervene in the institutionalized literary discourse of society (4). Propp's thesis is that there are a limited number of functions in the magic folktale with an identical succession of events. The structure of every magic folktale conforms to the quest of the hero full of challenges and hardships in order to fulfil a particular duty entrusted to him or to fulfil a lack in himself. The resolution of this trial is achieved through the help of a mate, a male friend, sometimes a female and mostly ends with the marriage of the hero to a prosperous or royal woman.Some theorists see the hero of a magic folktale as a wanderer charged with carrying out a task. Because the answer or solution to this task is known in advance, there is no such thing as chance or coincidence in a folktale. This accounts for the precise, concrete style of all the tales, and their composition is a detailing of the ways in which the hero takes steps to survive and complete his mission. Thus, the folktales give a lot of space to each narrator to alter the functions and tasks of the hero within the fixed schema (5). However, Zipes understood the homogenising tendency of this structuralist approach:

> If all folktales have essentially the same "morphology" (even though the functions may be varied), they all express the same thing, some kind of universal statement about the plight of humanity. The form itself is its meaning, and the historicity of the individual creator (or creators) and society disappears. Such formalist approaches to folk and fairytales account in great part for the reason why we tend to see the tales as universal, ageless, and eternal. The tendency here is to homogenize creative efforts so that the differences of human and social acts become blurred. (5)

Zipes suggests that that any definition of the literary folktale must begin with the premise that the individual tale was indeed a *symbolic act* intended to transform a specific oral folktale (and sometimes a well-known literary tale) and designed to rearrange the motifs, characters, themes, functions, and configurations in such a way that they would address the concerns of the educated and ruling classes of late feudal and early capitalist societies (6).

4.5.3 Theories of Folklore

Richard Dorson has described the various schools, their contributions and limitations, andgiven a detailed account of current trends in the study of folklore:

> A restrained and cautious mood dominates folklore studies of the twentieth century, in reaction to wild and extravagant theories advanced by European folklorists and mythologists in the nineteenth century. (93)

Dorson enumerates the five schools of Folklore theory: The Comparative, the Nationalist, the Anthropological, the Structuralist and the Psychoanalytical. These theories have evolved out of the inter-disciplinary nature of the study of folklore.

4.5.4 Anthropology and Folklore

Anthropologists contributed to world knowledge at the turn of the 19th century by studying the culture and traditional customs and belief systems of indigenous

groups living away from European centres of civilization. They had taken up subjects such as myth, magic, superstition or demonology, as integrated, dynamic and vital components of a belief system. They believed that folktales comprise valuable ethnographic information about the "givens" of material cultureand provide clues to vanished elements of tribal history. They sought folklore as part of the traditional tales that reflect the traits of cosmological system, social arrangements, economic habits, values and symbols. Franz Boas, Claude Levi-Strauss, Sir James Frazer, the anthropologists, and the folklorists, Andrew Lang, Alan Dundes, all attempted to understand the evolution of the cultural history of humans through myth and folklore.

4.5.5 Philology and Folklore

Philology or "a total science of civilization" within a linguistic framework was one of the disciplines connected to folklore. Folklorists adopted their methodology from philology and used two approaches to study folklore, the linguistic or syntagmatic and the metaphoric, symbolic or paradigmatic.

4.5.6 Romanticism and Folklore

Folklore is commonly associated with the rise of romanticism and nationalism, the literary and political movements of the nineteenth century. As a humanistic discipline, folklore referred to the purity of rustic life and oral tradition preserved in self-contained rural communities outside the reach of modern developments. The nostalgic images from a deep-rooted folk culture of the Old World became a cornerstone for the national consciousness and cultural heritage of many established nation states during the 19th and 20th century. However, through the German Romantics, the study of folklore got interpellated in nation-building. Moreover, as the Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin has noted, "The narrow concept of popular character and folklore was born in the pre-Romantic period and was basically completed by von Herder and the Romantics."

4.5.7 Nationalism and Folklore

Many of the German Romantics saw their organic-genetic conception of culture as the expression of the Germanic national soul which had its beginning in the heroic Middle Ages. It was the early Romantics—the Schlegel brothers, Ludwig Tieck, Novalis, Herder, Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher, who associated Romanticism with patriotic fervor, leading the way towards a narrow nationalism that idealized the German nation. The Romantics enriched the imagination by presenting the many-coloured life of other ages and countries, and remained mostly artists and poets, not scholars, philologists, and historians. Like the Romantics, the Grimm Brothers who were seminal in re-creating folklore, issued a plea for the claims of the imagination, of emotion and feeling, of individualism, and above all for a synthetic expression of the national genius in all its manifold aspects of literature, art, religion, and philosophy (Snyder 3).

The nationalistic approach to folklore highlights the unique qualities and representative features of native folk traditions found within one country, and the comparative approach affirms the thematic unity behind the cultural diversity, the common ideas of folk culture in many lands. This however led to negative association of folklore studies with cultural nationalism and racialist ideology. Therefore, since its very beginning, folklore was used as an ideological tool in

the service of a politically unified nation: it could affirm colonialist hegemony or anti-colonialist resistance, a nationalist propaganda or social protest, an unreflective populism or ethnic identity. Nazi Germany harnessed folklorists to buttress the ideology of a master race united through mystical bonds of blood and culture, including folk culture. Soviet Russia has laid down a party line for folklore, conveniently finding in workers' songs and legends the communist spirit of social and revolutionary protest (Dorson 96).

4.6 PSYCHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE

Folk narrative is regarded as a means to project the emotional experiences and socio-cultural attitudes of a group or its members. Psychoanalytical readings of myths and folktales substitute a sexual symbolism for the nineteenth century symbolism of heavenly phenomenon (Dorson 105). Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung studied the symbols in folklore as a means to explore the psychic behaviour of individuals. Consequently, psychologists have turned to myths, dreams, folktales, superstitions, ritual practices and taboos to decipher the latent meanings of repressed sexual desires and primordial images.

Dorson sums up these theories thus:

> Each of these schools of theoretical folklore demonstrates strengths and weaknesses. The comparative folklorists have established the study on a solid empirical footing with their indexes and distribution studies, but questions of function, style and structure remain outside their sphere. Anthropologists insist on the functional role of oral literary forms in the cultures they are investigating, but they are largely oblivious to folklore in literate societies and even in cultures other than the one they have claimed. Hence the ethnologist tends to regard the tales of his culture as a unique reflection of its values, when the same tales reappear throughout the continent. Nationalist folklore scholars concentrate on folklore in the high civilizations, where the cleavage between oral and written forms sets folk tradition in sharpest relief. Their internal interests contribute to knowledge of national imprints on folk materials, but can lead away from scholarship to chauvinism. The new trend to structural analysis follows up theoretical gains registered by the social sciences, but the value of such structural models for folklore materials is yet unproven. Most questionable of all for the scientific folklorist is the psychoanalytical school, so reminiscent of nineteenth-century universalist theories, and yet its probings into the emotional meaning of dreams and fairy tales must at least be pondered. The folklorist of the future may very likely draw upon all these schools in understanding the folklore. (110)

4.6.1 The Epistemology of Folklore: Folklore as a Subject of Knowledge

Epistemology is the study of or theory of knowledge. As a branch of philosophy, it refers to the higher realms of knowledge systems that have gained ascendance in the western epistemic system. However, the study of culture and experience has created another theoretical vein which considers the everyday and the ordinary as an important knowledge system (Raymond Williams). In *Folk Epistemology: An Introduction*, Richard Kitchener defines folk epistemology as the ordinary

(''folk''), common sense theory of knowledge present in the average person. He connects it with its earlier counterparts—folk psychology, folk physics, folk biology, etc.—folk epistemology may be considered to be our ''untutored'' views about the nature of knowledge. Just as folk psychology is our ordinary, common-sense theory of the mind, so folk epistemology is our ordinary, common-sense theory of knowledge. Although fully present in the adult, folk epistemology is thought by most individuals to develop from a more primitive set of views in the child to intermediate forms in middle childhood and adolescence, culminating in its adult form.

Secondly, folk epistemology involves a set of cognitive mechanisms that allows us to evaluate beliefs, inferences, utterances or other products of the mind. Some of these abilities are clearly social in nature.

4.6.2 Folklore as Episteme

Folklore signifies "a body of material" (stories, songs, beliefs) as well as a "separate science" closely allied with literature and history. Folklore thus combines all types of oral narratives and other socio-religious exchanges among people who form a community or a social group. The identity of a combination of people is constructed not just by a politically marked unit, but also with the socio-cultural aspects of a shared life. These include narratives and traditions that are created to unite a loosely knit group into a community. Emile Durkheim studied religion as a form of social cohesion in his seminal text, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. He argued that societies require continuity and connection with the past to preserve social unity and cohesion. His study of traditional narratives and particularly religious traditions led him to understand that rituals were a means of transmitting traditional beliefs, values and norms. Therefore, a common history, language and food that evolved into a shared ritualism provided a sense of "collective effervescence," helping the individual and the everyday reality to transform into a shared sacredness that united the group. Durkheim stated that this collective existence became possible through common experiences that occurred through the physical presence and gatherings of the community. These shared experiences became represented in concrete form as totems or other sacred objects, and in abstract form as memory, a "collective thought," that transmitted the past to the present.

4.6.3 Folklore as Collective Memory

This "collective effervescence "and "collective thought" was termed "collective memory" by Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Durkheim, and used to describe the stories, artifacts, food and drink, symbols, traditions, images, and music that create bonds between the members of any community. This "collective memory" lasts when the group may be dispersed as happened often when humans were in nomadic life or uprooted due to lack of food, danger or disaster, and keeps the history of the group alive. Halbwachs suggested that all individual memory was constructed within social structures and institutions. Individuals organize and understand events and concepts within a social context, and, every collective memory depends upon specific groups that are delineated by space and time; the group constructs the memory and the individuals do the work of remembering.

4.7 FOLKLORE AS ETHNOGRAPHY

As early as 1969, Alan Dundes described the importance of folklore in understanding individuals, groups and peoples through folklore. According to him, "the various forms of folklore: myths, folktales, legends, folksongs, proverbs, riddles, gestures, games, dances and many others can provide a vital resource of knowledge about people and communities." He considered folklore to be "autobiographical ethnography—the way in which a people understood and described themselves." This knowledge about self is different from other descriptions of that people, descriptions made by social workers, sociologists, political scientists or anthropologists.

Folklore as a mirror of culture offers the opportunity to study and analyse collections of folklore in a way that provides a way of seeing another culture "from the inside out instead of from the outside in, "which is the perspective from which social scientists look at other cultures. It is a way of opening oneself to different cultures and out of an "ethnocentrism" which is the inevitable result of cultures living in isolation, whether within the borders of a nation, or outside it.

Traditional customs are part of folklore. The collecting, classifying, and analyzing of other forms of folklore helps in identifying the similarities, the actual historical cognates found in variants of a folktale found among different cultures. This helps in establishing folkloristic parallels which seem to depend upon universal or quasi-universal human experiences (Dundes, FMC 471-472).

"Culture is ordinary," and the everyday is permeated with a daily routine, parts of which may be traced as behaviour inherited from our predecessors and ancestors. Food, language, rituals, festivals, dance, song, music, proverbs and everyday idioms and metaphors are sourced from them. Georges and Owen give several instances of folk behaviour in Folkloristics, including caution to expectant mothers, a "God Bless You," and creation of new folk instances through movies and television, and now the internet.

4.7.1 Folklore as Discourse

Jack Zipes studied the rise of the literary form of the folktale in the eighteenth century as an appropriation of a popular form by the rich and the educated. He argues that though the oral tale had flourished for a long time in villages and nurseries, as part of a popular discourse, and as part of a discourse between governesses and children of the upper class, it was not accepted as a literary form by the aristocratic and bourgeois classes. The mass marketed "blue books" distributed by peddlers for consummation by peasants and the lower classes had already converted the oral tale into its written form, but it was held as an inferior form until it received courtly approval and acceptance at Louis XIV's court and in prominent Parisian salons. "It was not accepted as a respectable form until it could be codified and used to reinforce an accepted discursive mode of social conventions advantageous to the interests of the intelligentsia and ancien regime." The popularisation of the humble folk form gained approval when the elegant art of conversation which was a part of the decorum of social interaction in courtly circles, used folktales as a subject:

> The more folktales could be subjected to the rules of conversation, the more they were ornamented and accepted within the dominant discourse. This was the historical sociogenetic origination of the literary fairy tale for children. Writing fairy tales was a choice, an option exercised within an institution, a manner of imposing one's conversation on the prescribed fairy-tale discourse. (Zipes 3-4).

The genre originated within an oral storytelling tradition and was created and cultivated by adults, and as the fairy tale became an acceptable literary genre first among adults, it was then disseminated in print in the eighteenth century to children. Almost all critics who have studied the emergence of the literary fairy tale in Europe agree that educated writers purposely appropriated the oral folktale and converted it into a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children and adults would become civilized according to the social code of that time. According to Zipes, by the eighteenth century, the writers of fairy tales for children such as Sarah Fielding and Madame Leprince de Beaumont actedideologically by presenting their notions regarding social conditions and conflicts, and they *interacted* with each other and with past writers and storytellers of folklore in a public sphere (3).

4.7.2 Folklore and the Art of Subversion

Canonical tales are not static and stable. Folklore both survives and changes at the hands of its carriers. The many transformations the tales undergo are worth studying because they reflect changing values, morals, and politics in a given society. It is important to remember that there are multiple canons throughout the world that are shared and contested among multiple groups and social forces. The stories themselves are resilient precisely because they open themselves to multiple layers of identification and interpretation. That is, tradition always engenders subversion in a dialectical process. For instance, many legends question the authoritarianism of authority figures. Robin Hood takes from the rich and gives to the poor and tries to pave the way for a just ruler in England. Barbarossa will rise from the dead to revive the fortunes of Germany. Emiliano Zapata, the revolutionary peasant, is celebrated as a hero in numerous Mexican legends. Many fairy tales have mutated so that Red Riding Hoods and Cinderellas take destiny into their own hands (Zipes WFTS 229).

Many times, a retelling of history becomes subversive of current dispensations, of social norms, showing the victory of the marginalised. In many ways, **folklore helps us understand the roots of people's biases.** The Akbar Birbal stories of north India, and the Tenali Rama tales from the south show the role of the wise in challenging and subverting, through humour. It can be used to initiate dialogue between the dominant and the subaltern groups such as the folktales do.

4.7.3 Folklore and Cultural Expression

Folklore may be considered to be important as source material in understanding the worldviews of any group of people who shared some common features. Alan Dundes was the first folklorist to connect folk expression with folk ideas that made up the world view of social groups. To Dundes, worldview generally implied "the way a people perceive the world and its place in it," which could be related to the fundamental units of analysis or "folk ideas." Folk ideas underlaid the thought and action of a given group of people, and, therefore, became markers of

identity. All folk expressions contain folk ideas, which are pervasive in folklore, but are not to be mistaken as genres in themselves. Folk ideas are "underlying assumptions" affecting outlooks as well as expressions:

> By "folk ideas," I mean traditional notions that a group of people have about the natureof humanity, of the world, and of life in the world. Folk ideas would not constitute a genre of folklore but rather would be expressed in a great variety of different genres. Proverbs would almost certainly represent the expression of one or more folk ideas, but the same folk ideas might also appear in folktales, folksongs, and in fact almost every conventional genre of folklore, not to mention non-folkloristic materials. However, insofar as folk ideas are the unstated premises which underlie the thought and action of a given group of people, they are not likely to appear consistently in any fixed-phrase form. (Dundes in Bronner 185)

Dundes also referred to folk ideas as "unstated premises," "existential postulates," "notions," "conceptions," or "cultural axioms" that could be discerned not only in folk culture, but also in popular movies and television, objects, advertising, and other commercial items. He considered it an important duty of folklorists to broadly commit to the study of human thought, rather than follow a natural history model of the collection and classification of items. The worldview was a whole that could be discerned from cultural expressions, or "particles," as Dundes called them. Thus, folklore became especially significant as a comparable, empirical source that acted as a metaphor for the cultures in which it was found (Bronner 179).

In a new collection of Kashmiri folktales, OnaizaDrabu, like Alan Dundes, says, folktales are important to understand oneself, "What our stories say about us Kashmiris. Kashmiris love their stories." "There are Kashmiri legends to explain everything: creation myth, origin stories of the topographical feature, proverbs superstitious. [Kashmiris] enjoy the macabre. They are not satisfied by abstract formlessness, but like superstitions, the macabre. These are not stories; these are a part of life" (ii). Folklore then helps one to understand one's own self, and through that awareness, understand the world.

4.7.4 Folklore and the Environment

Environmental and climate change concerns have mobilised populations of the world against disregarding threats to the planet by human action by nations that have pursued development over the health of the planet. In a sense, they are creating a new folk tradition by sharing knowledge regarding the preservation of the planet among themselves, as a resistance against destructive hegemonic global politics. Gana Kedlaya wrote about the relevance of reviving folktales to recreate the bond between nature and human that has been damaged because of industrialisation and urbanisation. She notes that around the world, a rich oral history of mythical animals and talking trees is being rekindled and used to ignite a new conservation conversation. There are stories of lore around the leopards in Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh where the deity appears in the form of a leopard or about the Tonkean macaques in Indonesia where locals believe it is taboo to harm the macaques, even if they occasionally raid crops. It is the belief system incorporated through the humble tale that has preserved the ecological balance for centuries. One may go so far as to say that the loss of connection of the child from the local folklore has hastened the Anthropocene.

It is important to recognise the role of culturally-informed knowledge found in local tales. The revival of the folktale brings the world closer to the natural world, vegetation, wildlife and ecological balance. Moreover, the stories help the local populations to produce strategies to address human-nature interactions that are most appropriate for themselves and their landscape. This would create a participatory way of life that is more flexible and therefore conducive to conservation than a top-down approach.

Next, the folk traditions of conserving the fertility of the land through rotation or alternative grazing of animals through a nomadic way of life, and the skill of artisans working with natural materials should be respected and not dismissed as a marginalised existence of scheduled tribes or castes. They are preservers of an astonishing set of ancient survival and life skills that are now understood to be important for a sustainable future.

Folklore creates a harmony between the mind, body and spirit without collapsing into impossibly abstract concepts that are sometimes out of touch with our senses. There are stories about our senses and their use in constructing useful knowledge among folklore.

Anthropomorphism in folklore is a valuable way of preserving knowledges about the animal world. The Animation industry has renewed old folklore and synthesised them into relevant new folk knowledge. Movies such as *Finding Nemo*, *The Lion King* and *The Jungle Book* help to make the animal world a part of one integrated world.For centuries, wild animals have been travelling with humans, living in their stories and memories, guiding them through the underworld and at other times, shapeshifting into their partners. It is in these stories that many young scientists are finding hope for conservation. This tradition has been revived in India by authors like Amitav Ghosh in his books on the Sunderbans, particularly *The Gun Island* and recently, *Jungle Nama,* that integrate the folklore around Bon Bibi with the larger world.

Larger populations across the country should think of wild animals as complex and multidimensional beings with many more characteristics than just being "menacing man-eaters." Existing narratives are rooted in "colonial and western conceptions of these animals," so rediscovering and popularising local folklore could also empower the people living with animals.

4.8 FOLKLORE AND INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Stories are interdisciplinary and discursive in nature. They are a repository and source of accumulated wisdom of a group, community or locale. Leon Senghor, in his seminal essay, "Negritude," has successfully presented Africa as a "civilization," as being complex, aesthetically rich and deeply philosophical, with an epistemology based on the rhythms of Nature. It is not an inferior or unequal continent, the "other" of Europe, rather, it has a rich and self-sustainable pre-industrial and pre-literate culture and structures of governance. Other pre-literate cultures that found themselves colonised by the "white" masters in the Americas and the Pacific, as well as in Asia, have begun to assert their identity through their native stories. The African, Native American, Mexican, Caribbean people, and the Maoris of New Zealand and the Australian aboriginals, find their existence

and survival tied to their traditional stories that are a source of traditional knowledge. A lot of research is now going on to understand the invaluable epistemology of folktales. Folklorists are discovering the connections between story, medicine, religion, ritual and philosophy. While some cultures like the Arabic, the Persian and the Indian had developed written forms of story-telling, preserved in their religious texts or epics, several communities of people sustained the oral tradition till recent interventions. While the written texts have borrowed and extensively appropriated large amounts of folk knowledge, the indigenous populations living in the same environments for centuries find in their unwritten stories the source of skills of nurture, pleasure and survival.

Indigenous knowledge or Traditional Knowledge is a form of knowledge which has a traditional link with a certain community: it is knowledge which is developed, sustained and passed on within a traditional community, and is passed between generations, sometimes through specific customary systems of knowledge transmission. A community might see Traditional Knowledge as part of their cultural or spiritual identity. So, it is the relationship with the community that makes it "traditional."

The western concept of folk has been of three types: as a curiosity or as a disappearing relic of the past, a part of childhood of individual as well as a community that would be lost as languages decline and story-tellers disappear. The need to document the oral tales was undertaken as an archival activity. However, the groups of people who have been uprooted and dispossessed by modernity and Euro-centric hegemony, carry these as the sacred words of their ancestors, to be revered, preserved through repetition and followed in spirit. These stories are their spiritual "home." The third concept has been discussed by Jack Zipes with respect to the fairy tale and its European evolution into literary form:

> There were two major tendencies among French fairy-tale writers: either they took the genre seriously and endeavoured to incorporate ideas, norms, and values in the narrative structure that they considered worthy of emulation for both the child and the adult reader or they parodied the genre, especially in the eighteenth century, because they considered it trivial and associated magic and themiraculous with the superstitions of the lower classes who were not to be taken seriously anyway. Both sets of writers demonstrated remarkable finesse and literally transformed conversational tales from the French salons and the common folktale into "high" art. (31-32)

He finds that the folktale formed the foundation from which all the authors sought to engage in an "ongoing institutionalized discourse about mores and manners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (32).

Indian folklorists have found other types of complexities in the epistemology of folklore. The first is the complex relationship of the written to the oral tradition, i.e., the problematic of the unitary discourse against a heteroglossia that exists in different communities. The 1990s saw the documentation of folktales from different parts of India. Every region yielded a rich harvest of inter-related stories, and an equal number of variants. These speak of the antiquity, spread and travel of these tales. The processes of adaptation, assimilation and hybridity have created a vast complex of folktales, folk myths and myths. In the structural mode of analysis adopted by Claude Levi-Strauss, Vladimir Propp and Antti Aarne, there is a tendency to create binaries between the civilized races and the primitive. Day talks about the kinship of humanity found through a study of folklore:

> I believed that the collection suggested [suggested by Captain R.C. Temple] would be a contribution, however slight, to that daily increasing literature of folk-lore and comparative mythology which, like comparative philosophy, proves that the swarthy and half-naked peasant on the banks of the Ganges is a cousin, albeit of the hundredth remove, to the fair skinned and well-dressed Englishman on the banks of the Thames. (Preface)

At the same time, a Eurocentric complex renders the Indian folkloric tradition as a poor cousin to the European counterpart.

There is a secondbinarification between oral folklore and their literary forms. Talking about the European fairy tales for children, Jack Zipes asserts that:

> In the seventeenth century, children of all classes listened to these tales. The peasants did not exclude children when stories were told around the hearth, and lower-class wet nurses and governesses related the same tales to children of the upper classes. Moreover, people of all classes told all types of tales and absorbed them. "Folk" must be understood as "inclusive" not exclusive. The folktale was the staple of what was to become the literary fairy tale for children. (8)

He argues that the transcription of these tales from oral to written brought with it an attempt to employ the transformative power of stories to influence the behaviour, mores and minds of the listeners to the requirements of the age:

> The folktale was the staple of what was to become the literary fairy tale for children. Before this could occur, however, it was necessary to prescribe the form and manner in which the tales would be adapted and used to entertain and instruct children. The adaptation of folk material, an act of symbolic appropriation, was a recodification of the material to make it suitable for the discursive requirements of French court society and bourgeois salons. The first writers of fairy tales had to demonstrate the social value of the genre before literary fairy tales could be printed—for adults and children alike. The morality and ethics of a male-dominated Christian civil order had to becomepart and parcel of the literary fairy tale. This was a given, and it was with this rule in mind, whether one agreed with it or not, that the early French writers of fairy tales began writing—and acted symbolically. (9)

In his study of the fairy tale as a subversive form, he strives to emphasise the construction of meanings that are appropriate to every age as the folklore evolves over time, and the discursiveness of the written form can be understood from the changes that have occurred over time and in space in several of the basic tales. He uses the example of Heide Göttner-Abendroth who managed to show in *Die Göttin und ihr Heros* that the matriarchal worldview and motifs of the original folktales underwent successive stages of patriarchalization. The oral folktales, in circulation since before the Middle Ages, were originally perhaps women-dominated and based on matriarchal mythology, began to be transformed in different ways: the goddess became a witch, an evil fairy, or a stepmother; the active, young princess was changed into an active hero; matrilineal marriage and family ties became patrilineal; the essence of the symbols, based on matriarchal rites, was depleted and made benign; and the pattern of action that concerned maturation and integration was gradually recast to stress domination and wealth (7).

Zipes helps us see how the classical writers of the fairy tales, such as, Giovan Francesco Straparola, Giambattiste Basile, Charles Perrault, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, George MacDonald, Oscar Wilde, and L. Frank Baum, significantly, all male, helped to evolve, expand, and reform the discourse of the European cultural heritage (Zipes 10).

In a similar way, there is a hierarchical binary between tales that find acceptance in the written texts in India, such as the *Veda*s, the epics, the *Puranas* and other such texts, and tales that seem less refined or simpler, belonging to indigenous or tribal cultures, or to the vernaculars. This is the binary of the Great Tradition and Little Tradition that Indian literature has been divided into. The Great Tradition is associated with Sanskritic texts, also marked as *Margi*, while the Little Tradition deals with oral, regional, indigenous and the vernacular, or *Desi*. This division is arbitrary and shows the limitation of the modern epistemic method of classification that is hierarchical. Arjun Appadurai defines the problem as the universalising tendency of western post-enlightenment epistemology. "Modernity belongs to that small family of theories that both declares and desires universal applicability for itself" (1). He defines this as:

One of the most problematic legacies of grand Western social science Here and Now (Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Ferdinand Toennies, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim) is that it has steadily reinforced the sense of some single moment—call it the modern moment—that by its appearance creates a dramatic and unprecedented break between past and present. Reincarnated as the break between tradition and modernity and typologized as the difference between ostensibly traditional and modern societies, this view has been shown repeatedly to distort the meanings of change and the politics of pastness. (2)

This was the age of Structuralism, and the creation of binaries between Civilization and Primitiveness; high and low cultures; literary and folk tradition, and perhaps most importantly, the separation between the artist, audience and art. Thus, a neglect of the folk to whom the artefact belongs led to the legitimacy of appropriation: "A folktale may be tale typed, morphologically dissected or mapped without regard to the fact that it is told from one human being to another" (Dundes IF viii).

One may add that the whole process of transcribing folklore in its written form was a successful literary socialization of children and adults and was one way of disseminating the values and interests of modernity through an internalization of social norms and mores so that they would appear as second nature or habit. This would help in subliminally strengthening the hold on the civilizing process, which was the principal motivator of the project of modernity. New research in this area has been initiated that seeks to provide an alternative methodology/ approach/ perspective.

A more discerning perspective has emerged with the growing field of Folk Studies. Meena Nayar, in her introduction to a collection of folktales and myths in *The Blue Lotus* argues against the artificial divide between the folk tradition and the Sanskritic/mythic. She holds that there is such a complex network of intertextual interconnections between folk and myth in diverse locales/regions of India that the presumed line drawn between the *Margi* and the *Desi* is "chimeral" (xxi). She distinguishes between the myth and folklore on the basis of the subject matter, language and target audience. Myths attempt to create cosmologies, construct

rules of society and lay down moral principles, while folklore reflects the daily life and belief system of ordinary people as held among themselves. It is more "a mirror which reflects the lives of people whose lives are affected by these norms" (xiv). Nevertheless, myth and folk are parallel and intertwining traditions and not separate "as posited by some western scholars" (xv). This theory combines the Sanskrit literatures of the *Shruti*s (texts that are revealed to man by the Divine, such as the *Veda*s and *Vedanta*), and the *Smriti*s (texts that are remembered, such as the epics, the *Purana*s and the *Dharanshastra*s) into the Great Tradition and the regional and vernacular as folk literature, assigning it to the Little Traditions. Nayar argues against this demarcation asserting that, "In India, not only is there more than one Great Tradition, but also both these traditions are inclusive of one another…they are also continuous and heavily interdependent" from their obscure origins (xv).

Some other folklorists also hold this divide to be the consequence of the attempt by the colonial administration that had no real grasp of the complexity of Indian tradition, layered by centuries of continuity into an enormously inter-tangled network of cultural and linguistic connections. The attempts of the colonial administrators at simplifying the inter-connections in order to categorise the vast repository of folktales and their numerous linguistic variations, without understanding their complicated cultural and topographical pluralism, resulted in a "universal Indian tradition" which was not universal. The pioneering Indologists and Sanskrit scholars who translated literature from Sanskrit such as Max Mueller, Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins created a tradition of a comparison between the Indic and European civilisations, looking for parallels and contrasts. The colonial administration used these limited texts to base their understanding of Indic civilization. The promotion of the Anglicists over the Orientalists, further suppressed the vernacular traditions. The contribution of the folk tradition to the formation of the canon was overlooked, and the folk-form became the poor cousin to the Great Tradition, laying waste the magnificent and rich folk tradition.

> Projit Mukharji has brought out some important aspects of the divided tradition through a study of folk narrative built around fevers, specifically in Bengal. He attributes the folk/classical divide to colonial modernity, as Meena Arora also does. He uses the folk culture that grew around *Jwarasur*, the Fever Demon in Bengal due to the proliferation and prevalence of fevers in Bengal as an instance of this divide. *Jwarasur* belongs exclusively to Bengali "folk-medicine," rather than "classical *Ayurveda*," and argues, one, that such a distinction is not correct, and second, "*Jwarasur* was significant to the way Ayurvedic physicians negotiated fever. Modernity, with its emphasis on rational and scientific methods, caused *Ayurveda* to create a more rational and standardised version of itself and purge itself of 'irrational,' 'religious,' and 'superstitious' elements represented by *Jwarasur,* as a demon. "Mukharji claims that gradually *Ayurveda* established itself as trans-regional and "codified," while the folk medicine was considered uncodified and "grounded in ethnicity and ecosystem."

A similar study on "Smallpox as a Knowledge System," has focused on the study of folklore as a knowledge system, and the role of the state, medicine and dominant groups in "the process of accumulating and documenting information about colonial India" which was undertaken by the colonial administration, and "aimed at systematically identifying and classifying knowledge about human and non-

human resources for colonial appropriation" (Satyanath 9). Satyanath takes the case of the treatment of smallpox as a folk form that includes stories, ritual, religion and medicine, a pluralistic knowledge system (2). He draws attention to two very important aspects of folklore. One, that the term folklore has initially been defined and delimited by European folklorists, and secondly, as a consequence, it "acquired the meaning of survivals and was used to designate meanings such as lore of the agrarian, pre-industrial, pre-urban and pre-literate societies" (2). He argues against this as a wrong premise, because many of the cults of goddesses associated with family and disease appear to be pre-agrarian. He, therefore argues that the theoretical discourses and methodologies have failed to look at the cult of smallpox as a knowledge system and have pursued studies in an entirely different direction. The smallpox that was a regular epidemic in parts of the sub-continent, was attributed to the goddess called *Mari* in south India and *Shitala* in the north, along with various other names. The cult of the goddess constituted the medico-religious complex of the system of variolation, involving the economic and social aspects of the disease. Moreover, he claims that the knowledge system of variolation had a high level of efficacy. Along with the cult of goddesses like *Jeshtha* or *Alakshmi*, variolation as part of a cult represents an efficient health system that had managed system nearly 81 percent population, and was also a caste-oriented activity managed by regular visits to villages. Nevertheless, "it was ultimately banned by the British Raj and was substituted by vaccination or inoculation and eventually got destroyed beyond retrieval" (2). He therefore seeks to establish the study of folklore as a knowledge system and specially, smallpox as a knowledge system that has been dominated, appropriated and even denigrated. The paper presents an important turn towards understanding folklore as an indigenous knowledge system that had roots in the pre-agrarian societies, continued and improved with time and were, "in some respects,…as modern, if not more, than the European knowledge system" (9). He holds European colonial modernity as not a singular modernity as it is understood, but as a counter-construction, challenged by alternate modernisms such as vernacular modernisms and non-cosmopolitan modernisms (1).

The charge of appropriation of folkloric knowledge forms by the west, specifically treatment of smallpox by Edward Jenner's vaccination at the cost of indigenous system of treatment is one instance of taking advantage of power in order to claim "new knowledge" and ensuring monopoly by systematically destroying alternate systems (8). A similar appropriation has been hinted at by Amitav Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. The novel presents an alternate story, based on folk belief, regarding the discovery of the Malarial mosquito by Sir Ronald Ross. The novel also draws attention to the use of folk knowledge through the role of the mysterious Lachhman. Satyanath emphasises that:

> The story of denigration and disappearance of such an effective and socio-religiously sensitive health management system is important for us to understand the domination and appropriation of indigenous knowledge systems. (9)

4.9 THE PROBLEMATIC OF FOLKLORE AS KNOWLEDGE: THE CONTINUOUS TRADITION

Indigenous knowledge systems have suffered wherever there has been external intrusion, and their knowledge systems have been exploited without

acknowledgement. As Mukharji and Satyanath have suggested in their papers, the traditional mainstream knowledge is composed of appropriations from native systemswhich were pluralistic in socio-religious terms. What is unfortunate is their attempt to discredit and monopolise the "other" knowledge system. The promotion of Ayurveda, according to them, has been at the cost of native folklore and its relationship to knowledge. A similar attempt is seen in the incorporation of sacred local sites into the Sanskrit scriptures and texts. Since it is difficult to empirically prove the authentic antiquity of any system, it is important to respect all systems that have contributed in forming and modifying a knowledge system. While indigenous knowledge may be informal and a localized system, its usefulness may be felt beyond the group. Secondly, since native populations have been disturbed and dislocated by incursions and invasions, they have been continually remembering, reviving and renewing their folk knowledge. In this sense, what makes knowledge "traditional" is not its antiquity, as therefore Traditional Knowledge is not merely ancient or inert, but is a vital, dynamic part of the contemporary lives of many communities today.It is important to understand that Traditional Knowledge is being created every day, and evolves as individuals and communities respond to the challenges posed by their social environment.

4.9.1 Folklore: Epistemology of Experience and Action

Indigenous learning is based on experience and told and retold in the group one belongs to. Stories were a part of knowledge construction and the more frequently told stories became a repository, an oral library to be consulted when a similar activity was planned, or a similar experience was repeated. Some had the value of lessons, while others also entertained. Story passed on skills of survival and sustenance. They were the means to know methods and dangers of construction, hunting, gathering and taking from the land. The elders shared their experiences, fears, wonders and successes and these were added to and passed down from one generation to the next.

Folklore belongs to the primitive past, before agricultural revolution and maintains linkages with that time. The nomadic life-skills gave way to the settler societies and the folk knowledge increased to add the related skills and experiences. There was and still is, in folklore, a greater, deeper connection to the land, as if it was an extension of one's own life. Older societies were more connected to the land, which is reflected in their verbal and non-verbal folk expressions. The land was also their library, an extension of their language, where they wrote in action, and passed on through oratory storytelling for thousands of years. They had learned to trust one's knowledge of the land, and to listen to the land when it spoke.

These stories once learned, were also tied to a place, which would always be a trigger, or location for them to remember that story, even if they forgot or moved away. This idea would seem odd to urban dwellers, colonials or post-industrial westerners, but quite literally the story-episteme complex ends up being well-acquainted with land, landmarks, forestry, water bodies, ecological interconnections, but on a level that is more intimate than most humans living in cities are familiar with today. This is an oral passing on a deep knowledge about how to survive and thrive, learning to divine the weather, or reading the landscape and topography for the safest and shortest routes. It is an instinctive as well as acquired knowledge, unconsciously imbibed about how to know when a large animal is near through the sounds and movements of birds. Knowledge about

footprints, habitats and roaming patterns of animals, birds and other life forms. It is the knowledge of how to heal wounds with what our natural world offers and what is and is not edible amongst the foliage all around us.

4.10 THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (TK)

Folklore Studies has helped to create an awareness about the vast reserves of knowledge, wisdom and culture that abound in simple folk expressions. Apart from ethical and moral edification, folklore teaches the way of life of a people in a particular locale. This involves knowledge about the land, plants, animals and awareness of biodiversity. Food, clothing, health and aging of the body are factors that are understood as experiential wisdoms. Folklore is also "a body of knowledge built by a group of people through generations living in close contact with nature. It includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use" (Dutfield 19).

Traditional knowledge commonly refers to knowledge associated with the environment rather than knowledge related to, for example, artworks, handicrafts and other cultural works and expressions (which tend to be considered as elements of folklore). And may be understood as, "a body of knowledge built by a group of people through generations living in close contact with nature. It includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use". Traditional knowledge commonly refers to knowledge associated with the environment rather than knowledge related to, for example, artworks, handicrafts and other cultural works and expressions (which tend to be considered as elements of folklore). It also has a strong practical component, since it is often developed in part as an intellectual response to the necessities of life: this means that it can be of direct and indirect benefit to society more broadly. The terms "traditional knowledge" (TK) and "folklore" are frequently used as if they are discrete categories of culturally-specific knowledge. "Since 'folk' means people and 'lore' is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group,' the two are not obviously different in meaning. And yet, for certain reasons the two are differentiated" (Dutfield 19).

It is important to consider how to respect, sustain and protect the development and dissemination of further knowledges that arise from continuing use of the systems. This protection should be in accordance with the customary laws and practices of communities and aimed at making the holders of the knowledge, the indigenous and traditional communities caretakers with the wherewithal to safeguard their knowledge systems. Traditional knowledge, passed on across generations in time and space through customs of food and healing practices, religious rituals and cultural practices, is closely associated with plants and other biological resources, such as medicinal plants, traditional agricultural crops and animal breeds. In *Alternative Modernities*, Andrew Feenberg attempts to dissociate the future of modernity, the conceptual basis of the contemporary world, from a post-industrial focus on the determinism of technology. He vehemently opposes the "catastrophic consequences" (12) that modernity has had for the "indigenous populations," because those who control technology have tilted the balance against

their knowledge systems. He shows how, technology, must be made accountable through public pressure and debate, and persuaded to incorporate ethical and aesthetic values.

Traditional Knowledge is an important chain between the past and future based on human intuition, experience, endeavor and invention that may be threatened by newer technologies, proliferating due to globalization. It is important to preserve them and a protection policy has to be put in place. The onset of industrial/capitalist/privatized modernity has laid waste certain basic rules that were followed by pre-modern societies or indigenous and local communities. Traditional knowledge (TK) is an intricate part of the cultural identities of indigenous and local communities. For many communities, TK forms part of a holistic world-view, and is inseparable from their very ways of life and their cultural values, spiritual beliefs and customary legal systems. This means that it is vital to sustain not merely the knowledge but also the social and physical environment of which it forms an integral part. Maintaining the distinct knowledge systems that give rise to TK can be vital for their future well-being and sustainable development and for their intellectual and cultural vitality. Folklore has held this knowledge sacred for millennia, and the indigenous and traditional knowledge must be safeguarded against appropriation by dominant groups and acquisition by global markets. UNESCO and WIPO were the two institutions where discussions on folklore protection took place. UNESCO provided the "Recommendations on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore," which were adopted by the organisation's members in 1989(Dutfield 27-28).

4.10.1 Folklore Today

Folklore is a knowledge system, a living tradition, rooted in the past and re-created in the present each time it is practiced and performed, ever changing and renewing itself. It maintains collective memories, local knowledge, and traditional aesthetics, but faces a crisis due to the radical changes in environment, society, the economic-culture complex in the contemporary world. There are two challenges to folklore, sustainability and irrelevance. Both are being addressed by the growing institution of Public Folklore.

Public Folklore creates a dialogic engagement with the heteroglossic nature of communities through public folklorists who look to expand the social base of folklore. It is practiced by groups that share a common identity such as ethnicity, occupation, region, and gender. They acquire folklore informally, typically through oral tradition and by example. Practitioners of folklore create innovations within the conventions of their traditions. They safeguard traditions locally and present them to new audiences enabling communities to sustain their traditions on their own terms. They facilitate self-representation by communities of their own history and culture, engage in collaborative documentation projects, and produce interpretive programming. Embracing public folklore opens up new and exciting ways for history museums and other historical organizationsto combine documentation of living traditions with presentations by traditional practitioners. This further helps in collection of the material culture of groups underrepresented in the historical record. In public folklore, as in oral history, narratives provide distinctive perspectives about historical experiences and events. They contest, corroborate, or provide alternative evidence about history. Public historians and public folklorists engage in critical reflection, create dialogue and greater mutual

engagement. They produce and present material culture and performance traditions and these, the performance of legends, narratives of historical experience, and traditional folk songs about historical events helps in cementing community ties through a shared memory and renewed acquaintance with the past.

Globally, there has been an increased awareness about folklore and there is an emphasis on inventorying, recognition of significant traditions, and sustainability initiatives, initiated by UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The convention has been signed by over 175 nations, The principal Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) activities undertaken in association with UNESCO include the inventorying of traditions, at times undertaken through substantive field research, and two globalists: the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Safeguarding.

There is a third challenge which threatens Folklore Studies, dwindling subject matter which can lead to lack of new material to work on. There has been a new mantra regarding re-renewal of folk material: "All knowledge is folk knowledge." It has been proposed that individuals who share at least one common factor become part of a folk group, and the email and internet have created that factor. This means that those who contribute to a common Internet-based project, such as *Wikipedia*, will share their own folk traditions (Blank 1-3, Dundes 406, Westerman 123). These contributors would then be developing folklore content consisting of folk speech, argot, and customs is a given. Westerman has argued that Wikipedia, by an arrangement of a group, there is "knowledge construction and community formation among the editors of the largest encyclopedia the world has ever known, the *Wikipedia* project."

The folklore of yore notwithstanding, the definition of the shared knowledge of a community holds good for all types of communities, which today includes the internet:

> Whether we are concerned with the scientific findings by a Nobel laureate published in an academic journal, the report of the destructive power of a hurricane reported in a local newspaper, gossip about a neighbor spread via the rumor mill, or a local legend, all knowledge is produced within the communication conventions of a particular community and disseminated in ways that are acceptable or trustworthy to a degree held customary by that same group. (Westerman 123)

Wikipedia has therefore become a mutually understood system of knowledge production managed by communities of editors, content writers and users, along with an evolving epistemology—or epistemological methodology—that is shaped by the community and that has been archived in the continually-being-edited pages of the site. (124)

While the western folklorists have defined the rising social media communities as new folk groups, creating common knowledge, there are enough unknown and unrecorded folk-forms in non-Euro-American areas. New material is regularly introduced from all parts of the world, such as studied of folk culture among African populations, Native American, Latin American-Indian, the Caribbean, Asian and particularly Indian. Once the floodgates of collective remembrance have opened, there is no stopping the collections of folktales and songs that are

coming out regularly from all parts of India. There is *Blue Lotus* by Meena Arora Nayar, *The Legend of Himal and Nagari: Greatest Kashmiri Folk Tales* by Onaiza Drabu; *Timeless Tales from Marwar* by Vijaydan Detha in recent years. The verse form that is the original of most folklore is being appreciated. and Amitav Ghosh has attempted to revive it in his 2021 publication, *Jungle Nama,* about the folklore of the Sunderbans.

4.11 LET US SUM UP

The world has a long past which cannot always be measured empirically. Sometimes our ancient heritage is preserved through monuments, ruins or archaeological sites, and the past lives on in our collective memory and subconscious, even if we change place or when the present is vastly different from the present. Mythology and folklore, are a rich body of knowledge which helps us gain insights into the lives and minds of ancient people, and explain the creation of man, nature and natural phenomena. In turn, these become discoveries of a shared heritage and values going back into antiquity, in similarities (and contrasts) among the myths and folklore of the different countries. The world's natural history, intertwines with the cultural history of humans in myth and folklore, allowing us to assess our Anthropocene footprints that have disturbed the human-non-human harmony over millennia.

Folklore is not literature, but it is reappearing mostly in the form of written collections. As such one can see that they perform largely the functions Arjun Appadurai assigns to the creation of localities in a globalised world:

> The large body of literature on techniques for naming places, for protecting fields, animals, and other reproductive spaces and resources, for marking seasonal change and agricultural rhythms, for properly situating new houses and wells, for appropriately demarcating boundaries (both domestic and communal) is substantially literature documenting the socialization of space and time. More precisely, it is a record of the spatiotemporal production of locality. (Appadurai 180)

Therefore, folklore is neither anachronistic nor a weird relic of days gone but an episteme in itself. This episteme converts experience of the senses into cognition and then into knowledge that establishes the neighbour or as it is called, community as a cohesive group. Folklorists are students of folk knowledge and also keen observers of human behaviour. They keep a look out for wisdom arising from the interaction of human with the natural and non-human world. They watch people doing creative things, and document and analysenearly everything, old and new. They make major contributions to the understanding of culture and society.

Folklore furnishes a socially sanctioned outlet for cultural pressure points and individual anxieties, helps to lay moral boundaries, guides for rituals, and for life, becoming archives where colliding worlds exist in harmony. As living tradition, folklore is both rooted in the past and recreated each time it is practiced and performed. It maintains collective memories, local knowledge, and traditional aesthetics but often encounters sustainability challenges in the contemporary world. In direct contrast to high culture, where any single work of a named artist is protected by copyright law, folklore is a function of shared identity within a common social group.

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4.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Write a note on folklore as an epistemological system. What are its different components?

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2. Explain the term "folkloristics."

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3. Write a note on the morphology of the folktale with reference to Propp's structural model.

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4. Explain briefly the syntagmatic and paradigmatic types of structural analysis in folklore.

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5. Write a note on the relationship between anthropology and folklore.

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6. In what ways have the folklorists adopted their methodology from philology? Elaborate.

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7. How did the rise of romanticism and nationalism influence the development of folklore as a humanistic discipline? Explain with examples.

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8. Explain the relative importance of individual and collective memories in folklore research.

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9. Map the growth of folklore as a literary discourse in the eighteenth century. What are its present-day manifestations?

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10. Explore the role of folklore as a medium of cultural expressions.

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11. In what ways has folklore enabled a renewed consciousness regarding the importance of environment and climatic patterns in the human life.

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12. What do you mean by Traditional Knowledge (TK)? Explore the close interface of TK with folklore studies.

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13. Can we talk about an Indian conception of folklore? In what way do you think it departs from the western idea of folk?

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14. Explore the position of folklore as a carrier of new and everyday knowledge about human life and society.

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15. Write a note on the institution of Public Folklore.

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UNIT 5 DOCUMENTATION AND ARCHIVING OF FOLKLORE

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand

- the importance of documentation and archiving for the preservation of dying culture
- language as a dying culture
- the tools and equipments require for recording and collecting folklore
- the role of researchers and institutions for the preservation of folklore

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Human societies of the world have their own culture, folklore, practices and belief system which have special significance or symbolic meaning. Culture is a widely used term with no consensus on its meaning, and has several definitions. In simple sense, it constitutes the worldviews, actions, and products of a given community of people. In order for any human society to preserve and promote their culture, there is a need to collect, document and archive folklore so that they will not be lost. Although there are many cultures such as language, folk religious rites and rituals that are rapidly vanishing and thus urgently need to be documented and archived; culture can also be perceived as continually evolving, and for such culture it is difficult to document and archive them. Culture is a "whole way of life" (Barker 4), and it keeps on expanding, adapting and developing. In a sense, for such ever-changing and adapting culture, documentation and archiving become a problem. However, there is a need to acknowledge the need for preserving dying cultures including language. In this unit, we will be discussing the

importance of documentation and archiving of culture including endangered languages, and also the recording tools, equipments and strategies that are required for collecting folklore materials.

5.2 DOCUMENTATION, ARCHIVE AND PRINT CULTURE

5.2.1 Documentation

Documentation is the essential bridge between the collectors of materials and the archives. It is the written document which accompanies with the acquired materials. For a systematic documentation, every piece of note has great value as the context is not self-evident. The documentation process includes the identification of item, storage location, retrieval, presentation and circulation for the information of users. For instance, in a sound archive, the archivists have very little knowledge of being responsible for the preservation of recordings for the future user without knowing who they will be and what they may need to know. Therefore, all details of the recording should be documented as an "archival holding."

Documentation of folklore and culture seeks to capture and preserve the intangible cultural resources of a given community with audio and video recordings. The goal is to preserve these practices and to make them a focus of study, as a way of valuing people around the world who rightly want to see their unique expressions and identities recognized and valued as part of the human record. Five areas of culture preservation have been identified by UNESCO: oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals, and festive events; knowledge concerning nature and the universe; and knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. In short, documentation of folklore and culture is not only for archiving but this can help educate the public regarding the values of the folklore materials.

5.2.2 Archive

Archive houses non-current records, documents of all formats including paper, sound and recording of collectors for preservation. The materials preserved in the archives have thus a continuing value for future references. Archives are usually maintained by the national governments, universities, research institutes, museums, social organizations, hospitals, etc. Archives are records but not all records are archives. The records are selected for an archive because they have permanent value, either as evidence of transactions, or because of the information they contain about people, places, and things. The decision of selecting records for archives is taken by archivists.

The Oxford Dictionary defines archive as "a place in which public records or other historical documents are kept or preserved." One Italian archivist by the name of Eugenia Casanova defines archives as "the orderly accumulation of documents which were created in the course of its activity by an institution or an individual and which are preserved for the accomplishment of its political, legal or cultural purposes of such an institution or individual." A German historian and archivist, Adolf Brenneke, defines archive as "the whole of the papers and documents growing out of legal or business activities of a physical or legal body which are intended for permanent preservation at a particular place as the sources and the evidence of the past."

Of the documents housed in archives, sound archive is one among the most important formats of archiving. Sound archives are a place where audiovisual recordings are stored for the purpose of both preservation and use. Most often in sound archives, duplicate copies are made as required for the user, so the original recordings remain safe and intact. The origin of sound archives is many but one of the oldest sound archives is broadcasting sound archives. Broadcasting archives came naturally into being because of the primary need for developing storehouse for recording that are used for radio programme. Some types of sound archives are: national sound archives, gramophone record libraries, archives of radio and television stations, and sound departments in scientific research institutes, among others. In India, the National Archives of India (NAI) and National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) are the two national agencies entrusted with the responsibility of treasuring and preserving the invaluable archival records. In short, archives provide the basic for understanding of the past, they help orient users to the present, and they will provide guidance to progress into the future.

5.2.3 Print Culture

Since the dawn of civilization human beings have been in use of print culture in one form or the other. Some suggest that the history of printing culture starts as early as 3500 BCE. Some early forms of printing include block seals, hammered coinage, pottery imprints, and cloth printing. Within a span of about two thousand years, starting from the use of woodblock printing by the Chinese in around AD 200, humankind have invented several printing forms. These include: movable type, intaglio, printing press, etching, lithography, rotary press, hectograph, offset printing, mimeograph, daisy wheel printing, screen printing, xerography, phototypesetting, laser printing, thermal printing, 3D printing, and digital printing, among others. The beginning of the 15th century heralded the use of printed books and journals and of late through electronic media. Human beings have invented several forms of printing and have evolved to the stage where no one would have thought possible a century ago. The era of physical print has had and continues to have a lasting effect on human culture; although some now considered digital text and electronic media including the World Wide Web is seen as an outgrowth of print culture.

5.3 VANISHING CULTURE: LANGUAGE AS A STUDY

Many cultures such as performing arts, social folk custom, religions and languages are gradually dwindling in most societies. Today, thousands of languages have already extinct and many are endangered and will be lost if adequate care is not taken. A language is a scheme of illustration, aural, or perceptible symbol of communication. Along with changes in the society, language also undergoes changes. In the process, some languages die, some survive and flourish. Languages breathe, expire, shift from place to place, and alter with time. Any language that stops growing and changing, initiates the process of dying, and any active language is in a condition of constant transformation.

Language death is the process by which a language stops being used by the people who previously spoke it. In a sense, a language is supposed to be dead when no one speaks it anymore. It may continue to have its survival in an archive, but unless it has confident speakers one would not talk of it as a living language. For instance, Anglo-Saxon (or Old English) language is dead as a spoken language because no Anglo-

Saxon speakers survive today. A range of literary works are still there, but we do not hear it from the mouth of a first-language speaker of Anglo-Saxon. A society does not usually comprehend that its language is in jeopardy until it is too late, and the causes might be many, namely, demographic, sociological, linguistic, psychosomatic, chronological, opinionated, geological, educational, spiritual, financial, and technical.

Of the total 6900 languages recognized by UNESCO, there are about 900 Indian languages in the list. Worldwide, in recent times, more than 750 languages have already vanished. A few others have hardly any known speakers. The United Nations estimates that more than half of the languages spoken today have less than 10,000 speakers and that a quarter has less than 1,000 speakers. Hence, unless some efforts are made to sustain them, over the next few years most of these will be completely wiped out. The Endangered Language Fund (ELF) is a fund committed to the perpetuation and resumption of endangered languages.

Keeping in view the seriousness of language death and the death of culture along with it, language preservation is most important for academia as well as the government of a region. Awareness and apprehension must be cultivated about the crisis as it exists worldwide, because all marginal and dying out languages could be promoted from a common awareness raising about linguistic multiplicity. A constructive approach towards language preservation becomes a necessity, and there needs to be experts accessible to assist with the tasks of language compilation, recording, study, research and training.

Documentation is the best way of preserving language. But no language resources have ever been accumulated immediately by being archived or documented, rather an appraisal of the citation status of a language takes precedence in all conditions, and is a main concern in those cases where there is a real risk of approaching language death. When it comes to the question of preservation, documentation of language in print format is not going to help the endangered language survive in the long run. The primary reason for this is that any language is first and foremost spoken and secondarily written, documented; thus, the imitation of pronunciation is most important. In a sense, there is a need for audio-visual documentation of those endangered languages, because pronunciation is a relatively important concern for the survival of dying languages.

In 2010, UNESCO listed nearly 3000 endangered languages of different degree of endangerment. According to this specialized agency of the United Nations, "vulnerable language" is a language which most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains such as home. "Definitely endangered language" is a language which children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home. "Severely endangered language" is a language which is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, but they do not speak it to children or among themselves. "Critically endangered language" is a language where the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently. Lastly, "extinct language" is a language where there are no speakers left.

There are nearly 200 Indian languages in the UNESCO endangered language list; out of which nearly half of them are from north east India. We now present some of the endangered languages with different degree of endangerment in Asia, including India. It is to be noted that the gravity of the problem of dying languages is more or

less the same in the other continents too. Followings are a few select endangered languages:

- Ainu is a nearly extinct language with a few native speakers amongst the approximately 30,000 Ainu ethnic group. In 2011, it was reported that there were about 304 persons within Japan who were reportedly understood the Ainu language.
- In the Philippines, there are about 4000 Caviteno language speakers and 3000 Ternateno language native speakers.
- Ratagnon language is one of the nearly extinct languages of the Philippines. Out of the ethnic population of 2000 people, it is recorded that less than 10 people speak the Ratagnon language.
- Chong is one endangered language of Thailand with just 500 native speakers approximately.
- Chulym is a nearly extinct language of Russia with just 44 native speakers, according to 2010 census. Ulch is another endangered language with less than 3000 Ulchs in Russia.
- In Nepal, according to 2011 census, there were about 3700 native speakers of Chintang language.
- Khamyang is a critically endangered Tai language of Assam in India; spoken only by about 50 native speakers.
- Aiton language, with 1500 native speakers, and Phake language, with 2000 native speakers, are among the endangered languages of Assam in India.
- Lish and Koro are two endangered languages spoken by about 1500 native speakers in Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- Bangru is a language spoken only by 1500 native speakers of Arunachal Pradesh in India and Tibet in China.
- In Arunachal Pradesh of India, Khowa language and Hruso language are spoken by approximately 1700 and 3000 native speakers respectively.
- Tarao tribe has a population of less than 900 people; an endangered and marginalized tribe of Manipur, India. Tarao language was declared extinct by the UNESCO in 2009.
- Kharam language is a language spoken by about 1150 Kharam Naga native speakers of Manipur, India.
- Purum language has about 278 native speakers in Manipur, India.
- Aimol is one of the Naga tribes with a population of approximately 5000; Aimol language is one of the endangered languages of Manipur, India.
- Moyon language has approximately 2500 native speakers and is one of the Naga tribes of Manipur, India.
- According to 2011 census, there were 2600 Koireng (Koren) language native speakers in Manipur, India.

- There are about 2450 native speakers of Mongsang language in Manipur, India.
- Khoibu language is spoken by approximately 2800 native speakers in Manipur, India.

As mentioned earlier, UNESCO has listed a few thousand endangered languages, but what we need to know is that there are a hundred more distinct dialects spoken by few populations in many tribal areas, including the north eastern region of India and northwestern part of Myanmar. As a case study, one can cite an example of the Tangkhul people who are among the largest of the Naga tribes, and are settled on either side of the India and Myanmar border. Today, the tribe has 261 villages, with 232 in India and 29 in Myanmar. Tangkhul language as a *lingua franca* of this people, particularly on the Indian side of the border, is listed as endangered language by UNESCO. However, what is not listed or probably not known by the agency is that several villages of this community have different and distinct dialects/mother tongues. For instance, Hunphun and Hungpung are two of the largest Tangkhul villages, and the district headquarter of Ukhrul is located in these two villages. Although they share a wide range of boundary, Hunphun and Hungpung speak different mother tongues. Some of their neighbouring villages are Tushen Chanhong, Tungou, Ramva, Lungshang, Khangkhui, Shirui, Halang, Ngainga, Teinem, and Pharung, among others. What is interesting to note is that all these villages speak their own distinct mother tongues; although they settled in close geographical proximity from one other. This, besides Tangkhul language as their *lingua franca*, is also the case in many other Tangkhul villages. Some dialects have a few hundred speakers, and others have some thousand people who can speak fluently.

According to UNESCO's categorization of degree of endangerment, most of their mother tongues are under "vulnerable" category. A generation from now, many of those dialects would be under "definitely endangered" category because of some major factors such as inter-village or inter-tribe marriage system, and migration to urban areas in their search for better education, employment and livelihoods. In the case of inter-village marriage system, as their parents speak different dialects, they often communicate their children with their *lingua franca*, Tangkhul language. In inter-tribe marriage system, parents would often use third languages such as English, Manipuri, Nagamese, Hindi, etc., and the same is transmitted to their children. A large population of the tribe now reside in cities of India and abroad for different reasons. Although those Tangkhuls speak their *lingua franca* in certain restricted domains, there is hardly any domain to speak their distinct village dialects. Because of their social environment and the system they are affiliated with, the Tangkhul diaspora for most part of their time speak English, Hindi or other foreign language. Thus, the end result of such intergenerational language transmission is quite obvious, extinction of several distinct dialects and mother tongues if care is not taken to preserve and to transmit to younger generations. A similar situation of shifting of native speakers to the majority languages such as English, Hindi etc. can be found in many tribal societies, particularly in those marginalized and neglected communities and minorities particularly in North East India. Consequently, the extinction of several dialects and languages in a foreseeable future becomes almost a certainty.

5.4 RECORDING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENTS

Sound recording and reproduction was first recorded in 1877 after the invention of phonograph by Thomas Edison. It is a device for the mechanical recording and

reproduction of sound. In the 1880s, Alexander Graham Bell and his two associates made several improvements and introduced the *graphophone*. In the 1890s, Emile Berliner initiated the transition from phonograph cylinders to flat discs with a spiral groove running from the periphery to near the centre, coining the term *gramophone* for disc record players, which was predominantly used in many languages. In other words, Emil Berliner was the inventor of the gramophone and the shellac record. The disc phonograph record was the dominant audio recording format till the last quarters of the 20th century.

The 78-rpm recording is one relevant tool that was in use for recording for quite some time. Any flat disc record, made between about 1898 and the late 1950s and playing at a speed around 78 revolutions per minute is called a "78" by collectors. It comes in a variety of sizes, the most common being 10-inch and 12-inch diameter, and these were originally sold in either paper or card covers. The older 78 format continued to be massed produced alongside the newer formats into the 1950s, but had faded from the scene by 1955. As late as the 1970s, some children's records were released at the 78 rpm speed.

An LP, which stands for Long Play, is another tool for recording sound. It is an analog sound storage medium and a phonograph record format, which was introduced in Columbia in 1948 and was soon adopted as a new standard by the entire record industry. The LP remained as the standard format for record albums until its gradual replacement from the 1980s and to the early 2000s by other tools like cassettes, compact disc, and then by digital recordings. The LP has experienced a revival in popularity since about 2007.

Since the late 1970s, we began to witness the emergence of cassette culture. In simple sense, cassette culture refers to the practices associated with amateur production and distribution of recorded music and sound art on compact cassettes. Among other factors, the improvements of tape formulations and availability of sophisticated cassette decks in the late 1970s allowed "recordists" to produce high-quality copies of their music inexpensively. However, the invention of more advanced tools like CD resulted to the decline of cassette culture.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, two prominent companies, namely Philips and Sony, co-developed the compact disc (CD) that was first released in 1982 branded as digital audio compact disc. The CD as a digital optical disc data storage format was later adapted for storage of data (CD-ROM). Several others formats were further derived from these, including write-once audio and data storage (CD-R), rewritable media (CD-RW), Video CD (VCD), Super Video CD (SVCD), Photo CD, Picture CD, Compact Disc-Interactive (CD-i), enhanced Music CD (CD+), and VinylDisc, among others. Arrivals of CDs finally enabled engineers to remove the noise that was once introduced with the friction between stylus and storage material. We continue to use those several CD format; although the emergence of other digital recording is slowly taking control of the once dominant CD culture.

Digital recordings as a new way of storing data enabled technicians and scientist to preserve sound in unrivalled quality, and enable permanent preservation of sound in its original state no matter how many times the sound was played. In Japan, it is recorded that the first digital recordings were saved on magnetic tapes and were demonstrated to the public in late 1960s; although the first commercially available digital audio recorder called Sony PCM-1 was released in 1977. Early years of 21st century saw the rise of

digital culture, including digital audio recording which is today the most viable and dominant medium for sound recording or for other purposes.

Researchers would have different equipment needs depending on the types of folklore data, but most documentation will be using the following list below as listed by Winick and Bartis:

1. Notepads, pens, and pencils.
2. A camera with extra memory cards, batteries, charges, and accessories (lenses, lights, tripods, etc).
3. A digital audio or video recorder with 2 microphones, mic cables, extra memory cards, batteries, and a pair of headphones.
4. A laptop, notebook, or tablet computer, with power source or charger, and if possible, a backup hard drive. This can help you take notes as well as process audio, video, and photo files in the field.
5. An extension cord and power strip.
6. A steel tape measure for recording the dimensions of material objects.
7. A GPS or map, so you can get to the rite and find your way around.
8. Release forms.
9. Appropriate dress, which is both comfortable and/ or right for the occasion. (11)

The use of the above-mentioned recording tools, though not exclusive, has helped individuals and institutions in documenting folklore. As mentioned earlier, there is a need to find out the nature of folklore data first, and then one has to select the recording tools accordingly. For instance, we will be required to carry a good audio recorder and high pixel camcorder or video recorder if we are to document folk songs and other folk performances; whereas, for the collection of other folk narratives such as folktales, we may not need advanced recording tools as it is the case in documenting folk performances.

5.5 INSTITUTIONS AND ARCHIVES

Folklore as a study is a new academic discipline in many developing countries. In India, one can find a few institutes and universities which offer Folklore Studies; Indira Gandhi National Open University is one among the few universities. Although the discipline is new, what is interesting to witness is that many academicians, independent researchers, educational institutions, research institutes and museums are now working in documenting folklore materials and to archive them for posterity.

Of the many research institutes around the world, one may find the contribution made by the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research, headquartered in Maine, United States. The Foundation has been sponsoring many academics, independent researchers and affiliated researchers across the globe to document folklore and cultural materials. Interestingly, we find quite a good number of Indian research fellows working on several topics under the sponsorship of this foundation.

Many educational institutions, public organization, broadcasting centres have individual archives as a part of their administrative units. Some of the archives in India, as discussed in the previous year course, include: National Archives of India, National Film Archive of India, and Archives of Research Centre for Ethnomusicology.

The National Archives of India is the repository of the non-current records of the Government of India and is holding them in trust for the use of administrators and scholars. It is an attached office of the Department of Culture under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Their main functions are to collect, preserve and organize Government's records and other materials of historical importance. The National Film Archive of India is a media unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Their objective is to acquire, preserve and restore the rich heritage of National Cinema, and the cream of international cinema. The Archives of Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE) was established by the American Institute of Indian Studies, and their primary objective was to provide a centre in India where collections of Indian music and oral traditions could be centralized and made available, and to stimulate the study of ethnomusicology in India. It is stated that presently ARCE holds 186 collections – voluntarily deposited – which is total nearly 20,000 hours of both audio and video recordings.

5.6 HOW TO DOCUMENT AND PRESERVE

As discussed on the recording tools in the previous section, researchers and institutions have used several recording equipments in their documentation of folklore. We understood the use of gramophone, 78-rpm, LP, cassette, CD, and digital recording for documenting and archiving folklore. One can now safely say most of the tools and equipments are digitalized, and thus it is more convenient and handier to collect folklore materials. All these recording tools and equipments have played a crucial role in the documentation of folklore and were partly responsible in the preservation of several vanishing cultures including dying languages.

Why do we need to document folklore? Every participant may have different opinions, and yet many would agree that folklore is very much an integral part of every human society, and there are folklore materials that need to be recorded before it vanishes completely and to save it for posterity. Kolovos has highlighted six motivations for saving folklore research materials. These include: to rescue a vanishing resource for posterity; for the sake of future research utility; as a function of the creating organization; to address the needs of the creating organization; as a record of the work of the field; and for the sake of the cultural communities documented (59-68).

One objective of many researchers working on folklore studies is often preserving the vanishing folk materials and maintaining it for posterity. Any preserved folk materials would have a future research utility as they will continue to be available for future researchers. It "provides an implicit imprimatur to the researcher who deposits his or her materials by communicating that his or her research is worthy of long-term preservation" (Kolovos 63). There is a need for documenting and archiving folklore as such materials are central to training students in the "practices of folkloristics and part of their enculturation in the discipline." A practice of training young students is a necessity as they would be the main participants in collecting, documenting and archiving folklore data in the future. The folklore data stored in the archives "serves as a resource to community members for accessing cultural knowledge" (Kolovos 68).

It is correct to say that no two situations in the research field are identical, no two collectors will have the same research objectives and skills, and no informant or groups of informants would react to the collecting situation as does any other. A researcher needs to make community connections before the commencement of his or her work. While making such connection, it is always advisable to explain what your research is all about to the community members from whom you would be collecting folklore data. While selecting the informants, the identification and inclusion of "tradition bearers" who are well qualified to talk about your research work will help you in documenting the most "accurate" information of your work.

Many would argue that folklore is everywhere, and so there is always a good idea to have a clear set of goals before you set out to do research. This also includes the selection of the best recording tools and equipments suitable for the collection of folklore data. Recording the questions, comments, and responses provides context and accounts for the reason and logic behind the responses. Although the use of recorder has been a trend, it is a good practice to get used to writing fieldnotes. It is advisable for researchers to transcribe recorded interview to paper at the earliest convenient time, and also to make safety copies of notes and recordings.

The digital files that you collect from the research field need to be preserved in a proper format. The digital collections can be in several categories such as audio, video, photos and word processing documents. For each file, there is a need to have a descriptive tag known as "descriptor" about the file. For each file, enter the filename into the spreadsheet, and then record the following information about it:

1. Identifier: each digital object requires a unique identifier. Filenames are subject to change, so create a scheme for identifying your photographs, audio files and video files.
2. Title: include factual content about who, when, what, and where. Groups of photographers can share the same title.
3. Name of participants: (include year of birth, if possible). Ask what name each person prefers and how to spell it. Include the 'role' of the participants such as interviewer, interviewee, collector, photographer, singer, or person depicted.
4. Place of recording
5. Date of recording or capture
6. Description/ summary: describe the interview in a brief sentence or paragraph.
7. Language: Describe language(s) and dialect(s) of your interviewees, especially if you are using a translator or are not familiar with the language.
8. Format or physical description: Description of the digital files, video, audio, or photos you have captured, and/or of any analog materials you have collected, eg. color slides, photographic prints, clippings, pamphlets, posters, etc.
9. Rights: Note if there are any restrictions placed on the use of the photos and interviews. You should also note if permission forms have been completed.
10. Keywords: Keywords are important topics or subjects covered in your interviews and photos and can help retrieve information after they are recorded. (Winick and Bartis 32-33)

Storage of all the digital collections in a protected environment, and to migrate those files to new storage devices "every 5 years or so" is always a good practice. Of the many options, depositing safety copies of materials and data to an archive, a community library, or a museum is always a good step for security reason and public consumption. Unless your folklore materials are deposited and made available to researchers and other public, it will not serve the purpose of preserving and promoting folk culture. Collected folk materials should pass down to the future generations, and the archive is one good place where the younger and fresh students can make use of the deposited resources in their pursuit for knowledge. Besides storage of folklore data in archives and other platforms, it is always advisable to have thebackup data stored in some private and secured places for future references, and this will become resourceful if in case something happens to the archives where folklore materials were deposited.

5.7 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

There is always a flow of foreign culture inward or a flow of local culture outward, or a combination of both the processes. For which, a group's cultural identity is always to some degree provisional, insecure, conceived as something it can 'lose' (Harrison 10-13). In essence, any culture that is too rigid, does not adapt, or is not dynamic, would be lost. It is not hereditary but something that is learned or imbibed, and thus, culture is the whole way of human life.

In the absence of teaching-learning process, a good number of cultures are bound to vanish from the folklife of a given society. In such a situation, culture can be perceived as vanishing because there is no transmission of cultural belief and practices from the older generation to the younger population. As discussed earlier, language is one culture where we have been witnessing the loss of several hundreds of languages and dialects, and such disappearance of tongues is a continuing process. Besides the dying of several languages and dialects, there are other folk cultures such as performing arts, belief narratives, and religious practices that are on the verge of extinction or have extinct in many parts of the tribal worlds. For instance, the Christian missionaries, in their process of Christianizing the tribals of North East India, prohibited the Christian converts (such as the early Naga Christian converts) from participating in any tribal folk festivals, religious rites and rituals, or in any customary folk practices. In a sense, foreign missionaries perceived any folk elements as against their religion; this was conveniently accepted by the early tribal converts. Consequently, the tribals of the region witnessed the loss of much of their culture.

In the later part of the 20th century, many natives began to think about folklore and its survival. It is at that time people started collecting folklore materials for documentation purpose. This, however, create a tension between writing culture and non-writing culture. In the case of non-writing system, the concept of vanishing is more problematic because it creates a sort of insecurity that something is going to be lost. Documentation, which involves some sort of canonizing process, meaning, writing or sound recording, in a way marginalizes orality. Once oral tradition is transformed into printing, it would provide a sort of stable form to orality; however, culture is never static but it is an ever-changing phenomenon.

The canonizing process of culture and archiving of folklore poses a question on how the folk archive should work when much of their live culture are far from disappearing from a given society. For instance, north east India's folklore is very vibrant and is part and parcel of the activity. Moreover, the process of cultural change is often gradual,

and thus culture could be continually evolving and adapting instead of considering it as on the verge of disappearing or presumed to have disappeared. Arguably, a new form of the supposedly disappeared culture may be found; meaning, instead of vanishing, it may have rejuvenated or have taken its birth again in different form.

One may cite an example of the Naga "feast of merit," wherein an individual would take the responsibility of organising the feast in the pre-Christian periods. In the recent past, however, this once-expensive affair has in many cases become a community affair where all the expenses are borne by the community. The culture of folk-housing is one example wherein many tribal village chiefs would decorate their houses with "crossed wooden horns" particularly on the front side of the house. Today, we see a fewer number of such houses constructed in folk-housing style; whereas, one can observe the use of or a resemblance of "crossed wooden horns" in the construction of village gates, community buildings, and government offices, among others. This clearly is an example of how one culture is gradually evolving and rejuvenating to other forms. Handoo remarked that modernization, new technology and innovations gave rise to new folklore and new traditions (221). Mass media, for example, was at first seen as destroying the "purity" of folklore (Dundes 12) and oral tradition, but it was soon realized that mass media in fact becoming a new carrier of folklore and oral tradition (Handoo 221).

However, this does not mean to downplay the relevance of documenting the dying culture or vanishing folk narratives and belief system of several traditional societies. Dying culture is real, but not all culture is dying or will be lost; instead, some will evolve and transform into another form. In support of the perception of culture being lost, one can recount the loss of several folk religions or traditional religions of the tribals of north east India, and are in no way to let go of their new religions such as Christianity and then to revive their folk religions. Language is one culture where we need to invest more human resources in order to preserve and promote the endangered languages. By now, we know that many original languages and dialects are threatened.

Many languages of north east India are vulnerable, where most children speak the language but restricted to certain domains. We have listed above quite a good number of endangered languages with a few native speakers. Two observable happenings in the above listed tribes/communities, as it is the case in many other societies, is the process of migration to urban areas and shifting of native speakers to the majority language of the area. As the natives move out of their territory and settle in towns and cities, they restrict themselves to speak their native languages to certain domains such as home and community gatherings. Furthermore, children of these tribes/communities stop speaking their native languages and tongues in the educational institutions, as foreign language such as English is made compulsory for any communication and transaction in our educational system. Consequently, many children stop learning their own tongues. In addition to this, mixed tribal (community) marriages could be one major factor that resulted to the loss of native or village dialects. In such marriage system, many parents and children would rather speak a *lingua franca* of the area or a language where both (all) can communicate and understand better. For instance, most mixed tribal/community marriages in Manipur would speak Manipuri, Nagamese and/or English in Nagaland, Hindi in Arunachal Pradesh, English and/or Hindi in Meghalaya, Nepali, Hindi or English in Sikkim, Bengali and/or Hindi in Tripura, and so on. In such a situation, the lifespan of several dialects in the region is just a question of a generation or two.

Language like any other culture can die a natural death when the political actors and institutions marginalize a tribe or community of a few hundred populations. The Tarao tribe of Manipur in India can be one suitable example of being marginalized and given no proper platform and resources to document, preserve, and promote their dying culture. Out of less than 900 Tarao speakers of Manipur in India, it is recorded there is only one man who can sing their folksongs and play their folk music. Further, out of the five villages they inhabit, Sinakeithei is a Tangkhul village wherein a few households are of Tarao origin. Practically, the Tarao population of the village speak their language only in restricted domains, and many times they either speak Tangkhul or Manipuri language. In conclusion, one may suggest that there is a need to document in both written and sound recording formats and to archive the dying culture of the minorities. We now have several technologically advanced recording tools and equipments for collection, documentation and archiving of vanishing culture and folklore materials. Taking advantages of the technological advancement, agencies/ participants such as educational institutions, research institutions and individual researchers can play a dominant role in the process of collecting, documenting and archiving folklore.

5.8 LET US SUM UP

Culture, in simple sense, is the worldviews, actions, and products of a given community of people. There are many cultures such as language that are rapidly vanishing and thus urgently need to document and archive them accordingly. However, there are cultures that keep on expanding, adapting and developing, and documentation and archiving are problematic with those live cultures. We have briefly discussed the meanings of documentation, archive and print culture. Language death especially of the marginalized, neglected and minorities is something we have been observing over the past many years. A constructive approach towards language preservation has become a necessity. We have identified some of the endangered languages which are spoken by a few thousand native speakers. Unless the governments and communities are ready to preserve them, we are likely to witness the extinction of several dialects and languages in the next two-three generations. We have identified some of the recording tools and equipments required for the documentation of folklore data. Although folklore as a discipline is new, there are some research institutes, universities, and archives working in documenting and archiving folklore materials, and also in educating students on the importance of folklore. We briefly discussed on how to document and preserve the folklore materials collected from the fields. The unit ends with a critical assessment on the preservation of dying culture, and the issues involved in documentation and archiving of culture such as the living folk culture.

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5.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is documentation? Why is documentation the essential bridge between the collectors of folk materials and the archives?

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2. Distinguish documentation from archive. Briefly explain the relation between documentation and archiving.

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3. How can culture be considered as a dying culture? Why is language preservation most important for academia and the government of a region?

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4. Mention the five degrees of endangerment categorized by UNESCO. Mention some of the endangered languages in India.

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5. How far has folklore been documented and archived in India?

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6. Briefly elaborate on the evolution of recording tools and equipments for sound recording and reproduction.

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7. Highlight some motivations for saving folklore research materials. Briefly explain how to document and preserve folklore data.

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8. What are the issues associated with documenting living culture?

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9. How are documentation and archiving important for the preservation of any dying culture?

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10. Can culture be perceived as continually evolving? Provide suitable examples in your discussion.

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