CHAPTER - I

CONCEPT OF FOLK AND FOLK CULTURE:
RE-EXAMINED IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first part provides a conceptual clarification of the terms namely 'folk' and 'folk culture'. There is no single universally accepted definition of folk culture. There is even disagreement as to what should be the definition of 'folk'. In this chapter we will discuss some defining examples of folk and folk culture found at different times, in different places, and addressed to different problems in India both overt and covert. These cases form a heterogeneous set which any satisfactory definition of folk and folk culture should encompass. The second part contains the theoretical framework to approach the study of Sambalpuri culture.

Folk-Culture, Folk Life and Folk-lore:

Folklore is commonly believed to be the 'oral literature' that is handed down to us from generation to generation through oral tradition. It generally incorporates folksongs, folkdances, folktales, superstitions, myths, etc. It is only this aspect of folk culture namely the folklore, as defined above, that has become the domain of folklorists. But the scope of folklore is much wider. It includes material and non-material, verbal and non-verbal cultures. Therefore, an attempt to study folk culture in its true sense should thereof include an analysis of
agriculture and agrarian history, settlement patterns, dialectology of folk speech, folk architecture, folk cookery, folk costumes, the notion of time in folk society, i.e., folk year, folk religion, folk medicine, folk recreation, folk literature, folk play and the folk arts and crafts. The list is inexhaustive, but it does suggest the fact that the area of folk-culture, thus, embraces into its fold the total way of life; and in this sense, folklore is only a part of the folk culture. Folklorists, however, have recently introduced a new concept, i.e., 'folklife' to define folk culture in its entirety (Dorson, 1972; Yoder, 1968: 48; Utley, 1968: 5, 13).

Folklorists like Yoder (1968) and Dorson (1972) believe that this difference between 'folklore' and 'folk culture' or 'folklife' is a product of an anthropologist's mind and they maintain that anthropologists have limited the discipline of folklore to merely folk literature. To the students of folk culture, intending to study culture in its totality, folklore can be specialized in meaning, referring to 'literature'. Earlier, the term 'primitive lore' was often used by folklorists to define this total culture. Nonetheless, some still note strongly that folklore as a whole is not merely literature transmitted orally but includes the arts and crafts, beliefs and customs as well. Thus, the use and meaning of folklore is ambiguous. Therefore, a new concept 'folklife' has been introduced by the folklorists to designate folk culture in its entirety. From this it seems clear that they have been trying to preserve their identity as practitioners of a separate discipline, distinguished from that
of 'anthropology', namely 'folk culture'.

As it has been said earlier, the operational definition of folklore refers to the literature orally transmitted. Until 1930s the anthropologists and some folkloristic admirers, including the writers of America, tried to exclude from folklore anything but literature orally transmitted; and they have been neither unanimous nor consistent. Even an anthropologist like Bascom (1953:289) once accepted such a narrow definition but later came to believe that 'verbal art' was a better phrase than folklore, since it did not exclude music or proverbs or weather forecasting. But this preferred term also suffers from limitations, since folk dance is an art but it is not verbal so are the folk painting and sculpture. On the contrary, folk etymology and chants are verbal but not art. Customs, folk games and folk medicines are neither completely verbal, nor art, though they are very much the elements of folklore (Islam, 1984:7). However, Bascom (1955:245-52) clarified his stand for failing to state specifically that verbal art was never intended as a definition of the field which folklore now encompasses; rather it was suggested as a convenient and appropriate form for folktales' myths, legends, proverbs, riddles and other literary forms. Thus, it is clear that 'verbal art' constitutes only a part of folklore and likewise folklore constitutes only one segment of folk culture or folk life studies (Dorson, 1972). This may be seen in the following figure-I.

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A = Verbal Art  
B = Folklore  
C = Folk-culture/Folk life
If we accept this definition of folklore as a part of folk culture then we have to exclude the laws guiding marriage, the sense of right and wrong, folk crafts such as weaving, folk beliefs and customs relating to household affairs and agricultural operations etc. Folklorists are well aware of the value of such expressions of the human spirit. But, analysis of these aspects have been confined to the discipline of social anthropology for systematic description. Nevertheless, folklorists have, now-a-days, shifted their attention to these vital aspects of material and non-material culture and thus 'folklife'.

Oral tradition of Folk-culture:

It has been found that the most common way of defining 'folk culture' is its mode of transmission, i.e., 'oral tradition' (as is generally accepted). But, there arose a controversy about the nature of the oral tradition of folk culture. Bascom (1953:185) tried to put this matter partially in the context of folklore: "All folklore is orally transmitted, but not all that orally transmitted is folklore." Later on, folklorists like Dundes (1966:226-49;1977:17-35) and Islam (1984:1-35) raised the issue: 'whether or not all folklore is orally transmitted.' There is little doubt that many forms of folklore are not transmitted orally at all. A boy or girl may learn to play folk games such as marbles or skip stones by watching others. Non-verbal aspects of folklore such as gesture, games and dance cannot be said to be truly in oral tradition. On the other hand, it would be unwise to mention that all the elements of learning that are passed on
orally from one generation to the other belong to the domain of folklore. For example, the son of a barber learns how to shave a man by watching his father or by receiving oral instruction from him or both. Even in literate societies there exist many learnings which are basically oral. For instance, how to drive a car or tractor, how to plough and plant, the manner one has to brush his teeth and so on. Yet, it is doubtful whether any folklorist would include such learning as an example of folklore. "Since materials other than folklore are also orally transmitted, the criterion of oral transmission by itself is not sufficient to distinguish folklore from non-folklore" (Dundes, 1965:1). However, such learnings are part of folk culture and not of folklore.

Even the dichotomous characterization of the oral as opposed to written can be shown as empirically untenable. There are folklores which have evolved through the written method. For instance, the Baul songs of Bengal, short poems written on the hand-fans made of cloth or palm-leaf, proverbs and riddles used by medieval Bengali poets and also many elements found in the great Indian scriptures and epics. Rigveda is considered to be the oldest known treatise in the world in which one finds the specimens of the earliest folksongs and ballads. The germs of Indian folktales appear in the Rigveda. There are many stories in the Rigveda which may be regarded as the precursors of the Panchatantra, the store-house of fables. Atharvaveda richly contains charms, folk-beliefs, incantations, rites, rituals and superstitions of the common people. In the Grihya Sutra one comes across many folksongs which were sung on auspicious occasions.
like marriage etc. In the **Upansads** one finds the story of Nachiketa and Yama, the philosophic discussion between Yagyavalkya and his learned wife Maitreyi and other interesting tales. The **Jatakas** contain the stories of various incarnations of Lord Buddha. The **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata** are inexhaustible sources of folktales and legends. The **Puranas** may be rightly regarded as the treasure of Indian mythology, legends, popular religion, beliefs and superstitions. The **Brihatkatha** of Gunadhyaya is a great contribution to the folktales and fables of India. The **Hitopadesa** of Narayana Pandit is the most popular book of Sanskrit fables. **Vetal Panchavimshatika** of Slauva Das is a collection of 25 folktales related to king Vikramaditya. **Shukasaptati** is also a good collection of 70 folktales which is translated into Persian under the title of **Tuti-Nama**. **Singhasan-Dwarinkhia** is another book on folktales which has been translated into Hindi as **Singhasan-Battisi** and in other regional languages with different titles (Upadhyaya, 1964:i-iii).

A number of scholars are, now-a-days, involved in collecting, recording, and publication of folklore materials. What is suggested is that it would be difficult to ignore a piece of folk tale or folk song simply on the ground that at some point of time in its life history it has been transmitted by a script or print. We agree with Dundes (1965:1) that if a folk tale or ballad has never been in the oral tradition, then it is not folklore. It might be a literary production based on a folk model. Significantly, in the effort to build up scientific temperament among the people and also to eradicate superstitious
beliefs, a cassette containing science songs based on folk tunes was released in February 1991 by the eminent singer Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. It was an experimental pilot programme of National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC). Many such cassettes in different Indian languages would gradually be produced to stimulate scientific attitude among the common people (H.T., 25-2-1991:7).

Similarly, any impression that all the elements of learning passed through an oral tradition in a society belongs to the domain of folk culture is far from correct. For example a person may learn driving a car, motor cycle, flying a jet plane, loading a gun, etc., by either watching or by receiving oral instructions or both. Here, we doubt whether any scholar of folk culture would include 'loading a gun' as an example of folk culture. Therefore, materials other than folk culture are also passed through oral tradition; the criterion of oral tradition by itself, is not sufficient to distinguish folk culture from non-folk culture.

**Commercialization of Folkculture:**

Unnithan, Singh, and Dev (1965:28-9) write:

"In the folk tradition there was hardly any specialized training in religion, metaphysics, literature, music, etc. One learnt in the ordinary course of life, through participation. In group singing, the differences between the poet and the musician, the composer and the performer, and even the artist and the audience vanished. There was little room for professionalism in the fields of knowledge and arts. It were these characteristics of the folk tradition, themes and symbols that distinguished the folk-cultural sub-structure from the elite."
It has been observed that many novelists, playwrights, poets and lyricists use proverbs, riddles etc., of their folk-culture, in their literary work. We may consider only one item of folk-culture i.e., folk songs. This literary production of many popular literary figures and creative writers, based on folk model, may be preserved through radio, television, audio cassette and video cassette. There may be songs composed in local dialects by the local lyricists based on folk model which differ little from those preserved by oral tradition. Likewise, some urban based cultural associations may compose folk songs to be sung on radio and television and folk dances to be shown on TV mainly for urban audience for which training and practices are made for refinement. These songs and dances, performed before special urban audience and presented through radio, television etc., may be accepted by the people without much hesitation. The endeavour of recreation, refinement and manufacture of folk songs and dances may create urban folk artists too who are professional by nature. In this connection, examples may be cited from numerous folk traditions prevailing in various linguistic regions or sub-regions of India. But the question arises: whether or not a literary production based on a folk model can be included in the folk literature?

In this perspective Dorson (1959:4) coined the term 'Fakelore' which "falsifies the raw data of folklore by invention, selection, fabrication and similar refining processes, but for capitalistic gain rather than for totalitarian conquest." The very nature of oral tradition helps to modify and alter
continuously the folk elements, particularly songs, sayings, tales etc., in the process of transmission. This change is an unconscious process. But the calculating 'money-writers' go to work on them consciously with the help of modern technologies to reach the wider sections of the society for immediate gain. A similar trend is found in Indian textile industry to meet the demand of consumer in the name of fashion and fad i.e., urban sophistication. This may not be the work of the folk but of the capitalistic market oriented popular or mass culture.

It is true that the creative artist employs folk themes imaginatively but he or she makes no claim to present pristine folk culture. Thus, it may be said that an urban form of folk culture which may be termed as pseudo-folk culture has been started in the name of preservation and revival of the folk-culture. It has been found that the chauvinistic and the radical groups in America appropriate folk words to sell medicine, for trade unionism and beatnik ideologies, and to protest against anything one wants to protest about (Dorson, 1959:1-6;214-6;Leach,1968:23). Contrary to this, scholars like Dundes (1977:17-35) and Islam (1984:5) claim that a literary production based on a folk model should be accepted as folk song. They feel that these popular songs, accepted by the folk, would be passed on to the oral tradition in future. To some extent, they are right. In course of time, people may forget the authors of these popular songs and they might become folk songs, a real part of folk. For example, the Baul songs of Bengali folk tradition which have evolved through a written method, have become a part of
Bengali folk tradition (Islam, 1984:4). Some Bhojpuri songs on national unity, composed during the second decade of this century gripped the imagination of the common people and have passed on orally (Gautam, 1973:183).

Despite the fact that folk songs in our time have often been used for commercial purposes, the impression still persists that these folk songs somehow transcend the experience of the individual singer or composer and thereby represent the deeper values, emotions and sentiments of the folk. Be that as it may, one thing is clear from this discussion that folk literature corresponds to the written production of novelists and poets; but they circulate orally and without known authorship. Oral literature, however, may enter into written literature and vice versa.

Problem of Origin:

The origin of most items of the folk culture, particularly myths and tales is difficult to determine. With a number of versions of the same folk tales of myths (because of their oral / tradition) it is really impossible to determine, both at national and international levels, with exactitude the probable origin of that folktale or myth. For instance, the Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm, in the beginning of the 19th century started collecting folk tales to preserve something essentially Teutonic in character. But most of the collected tales were found in other parts of Europe, Asia and North and South America (Dundes, 1968:42). Likewise, some Indian folk tales or myths may be discovered outside India too. Hence, it would be difficult to
speak of these tales as purely Indian. Even if we did find something of Indian origin, it would still be difficult to locate the folk society in which it originated due to pluralistic set-up of Indian society. What we want to suggest here is that many folk festivals, rituals and practices, songs, tales, proverbs and riddles have very wide popularity cutting across many linguistic and culture-areas. In spite of the differences found due to many regional variations and dialectal versions, the piece i.e. cultural item remains the same (Unnithan, Singh and Dev, 1965:25-6). In this regard, mention may be made of some festivals which are observed by almost all the tribals and caste-Hindus of central and eastern India (Singh, 1982).

**Folk-culture and Elite Culture:**

It is generally believed that the folk tradition in India continually interacts with the elite tradition and they are inter-related. However, folk culture has always been characterized as a dependent category which cannot be understood without any reference to the elite tradition. In this perspective the culture of the rural Hindu is the folk version of the elite urban culture. This interaction is not unilinear but circular or mutual. For example, many ideas and themes of folk literature have seeped into written literature (elite literature) and, at the same time, certain elements of elite sub-culture are integrated into the folk sub-culture through a process of refinement, reworking and vice versa. Such an upward (universalization) and downward (parochialization) movements of cultural traits have been going on for a long time. That is why,
sometimes it seems unrewarding to examine whether many items have percolated down from elite tradition or vice-versa (Unnithan, Singh and Dev, 1965:24; Oommen, 1984:12; Islam, 1984:5).

On this ground some scholars argue that the folk tradition in India has a unity of its own. Unnithan, Singh and Dev (1965:25) write: "Even though the outer expressions appear to be very varied, the spirit and the basic patterning in most aspects of culture is fundamentally the same ... the folk tradition has a wide spread - it is almost Pan-Indian like the elite-tradition." One does not mean here that there is no difference between 'folk culture' and 'elite culture' in India; rather, it is indicated that there is a possibility of both folk as well as elite traits existing together in a given situation. Therefore, one cannot be understood without any reference to the other.

A major concern of our poets, writers, scholars and thinkers especially in the 19th century was to establish some relationships between folk and formally organized literary traditions. The purpose of such attempts was to define the essential national character of India. Such attempts can easily be found in the later period also as mentioned earlier. During 1980s attempts have been made by the government through 'Apna Utsav' and 'Bharat Utsav', in and outside India, for the same purpose. This helps to understand the way in which the organizers have visualized and responded to the heritage of folk ideas, reshaping and developing them to serve their needs. In this perspective, it would be impossible to identify and isolate a 'national' folk culture. This difficulty arises out of the
peculiar pluralistic set up of Indian society. This concept of pluralism refers to religious, caste, language and regional cultural pluralism. All of them have a stubborn way of not melting down totally and of remaining separate in some aspects (Oommen, 1983; 1986a:53-74; 1986b:107-29). Therefore, pluralism is equally reflected in the folk culture as well. Deva (1989:1-2) writes:

"The elements of the oral tradition of folk literature are closely related to specific sections of the social structure and to particular aspect of social life ... there are different types of songs ... especially belonging to particular age, sex, occupational and caste groups, some of which are attached to specific occasions and some are not." It is difficult to construct any ideal-typical model of Indian folk culture based on our empirical realities. It is true, just as certain items of folk culture of a particular culture-area are shared by other culture-areas, so also the rest of the items maintain their uniqueness and identify with that culture or culture-area. In view of this, there may be in some sense of the word an Indian folk culture (Vidyarthi, 1973:1-107). But one cannot study a regional culture such as Oriya, Bengali and Bihari or sub-regional culture such as Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magadhi in Bihar with the help of this 'Indian folk culture'.

More precisely, in Bihar there are four cultural linguistic or dialect zones: (1) Bhojpuri, (2) Maithili, (3) Magadhi, and (4) Tribal languages (Vidyarthi, 1973:13). Each dialect may have local variations. For instance, Bhojpuri, Magahi, and Maithili have three sub-dialects each. Even the dialectal difference exists between the social groups of the same village (Vidyarthi, 1964:1-14). Similarly in Orissa the eastern coastal
Plains are characterized by non-tribal Oriya folklore, while the western plateau is said to possess the tribal folklore of a very rich variety (Vidyarthi, 1973:17). However, problems may arise when one talks of 'World folk culture'. In the widest sense of the term, 'folk' may be applied to the whole of humanity (Raghavan, 1964:11). This point may be examined in empirical situations in India.

The universal and particularistic (contextual) approaches to folk-culture are not mutually exclusive. The use of one does not rule out the use of the other. Both approaches should be employed to study the folk culture. Why? For, in order to identify what elements in the folk culture of a folk society are peculiar to that society one has to make a comparative analysis. One must know what the normal and typical form of a folk tale or a ballad or a festival is before one can identify and interpret the significance and importance of the localizations and particularizations of that tale or ballad or festival in a single cultural context. A comparative study may answer more easily how a folk society or perhaps how a single individual has altered a particular cultural trait say from a tale or a festival or a few words from other language to fulfill his own needs and purpose. In this perspective one can also study not only the inter-level cultural differences of folk cultures but also the intra-level cultural differences found in a culture-area.10

Folk Culture and Folk - Lower stratum of the Society:

The folk were understood to be a group of people who constituted the lower stratum in contrast to the upper stratum of
elite of a society. For example, during the late colonial period "the phenomenon of migrant labour" from Bhojpuri speaking area "was directed very significantly towards Calcutta in particular and the Assam tea gardens in general. Naturally enough, 'Birha' would be popular form of literary expression ..." (Gautam, 1973:187) among the Bhojpuri speaking migrant labourers. However, the association of folk culture with lower class is a partial picture of the story. Some 'Birha' songs recorded by Gautam (1973:187) instilled the spirit of nationalism during early periods of this century among the larger section of the society. In his opinion:

"When nationalism triumphs over feminine charm then indeed it has taken deep root ... The spirit of transcending local loyalties with national ones... took the feminine fashion by storm and these folk songs must have been great carriers of ideas to all sections of the community" (Gautam 1973:187).

It has been observed that among the upper classes in the towns women are the active bearers of the folk tradition. Women (of all classes) hardly contribute to the written literature. They have expressed themselves amply and vigorously through the oral tradition. Most probably, the reason is that women, irrespective of their social background, experience some common social situations throughout India. For instance, joking relationship between sister-in-law and brother-in-law, maternal uncle and nephew; conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law; male dominance in the society and so on are found by and large throughout the country. Further, a woman’s barrenness is considered to be her great misfortune along with widowhood. The birth of a son is regarded
as more fortunate than that of a daughter. All these lead to joys and sorrows, disappointment and discontentment in the social life and get reflected ultimately in the folk songs of women (Deva, 1989; Gupta, 1969; Arya, 1975; Srivastava, 1969). Deva (1989:2-3) writes:

"The share of women in its composition, proposition and performance is perhaps much greater than that of men. The control of women over the use of traditional proverbs and idiomatic phrases, and the telling effect with which they employ them to hit an adversary, are matters of envy for menfolk... the songs sung by women ... are largely their own compositions. This is also shown by the stylistic traditions of these genres as reflected in the selection of themes and their treatment."

Folk Culture as Peasant Culture:

Marxist Scholars, however, include both peasant (folk in the countryside) and proletariat (folk in the city) to define the lower stratum of the society, limiting 'folk' to the oppressed as there are rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and landless labourers. The rich peasants constitute the elite section of the village life and the lower peasants along with the landless agricultural workers are included in the relatively oppressed section of the village society. This definition of 'peasant' is based primarily on the economic criterion.

In India one cannot ignore the caste factor to distinguish between 'higher' and 'lower' or rich and poor peasants or other section of the society. However, this does not rule out the possibility that a rich peasant may also belong to a lower caste and a poor peasant to a higher caste. Considering the complexity of social realities it is erroneous to believe in any hard and
A fast rule to distinguish between the folk culture that appeals to the lower caste/peasant/class and those that appeal to the higher caste/peasant/class. For instance,

"Various forms of 'Alpanas' or even small handicrafts show little variation from class to class in its practice and aesthetic quantum... in the various social classes the distinction becomes one of refinement and luxury, but not... of content or style... the differences are measurable in terms of material value, but are neither spiritual nor psychological" (Gautam 1973;187).

From the caste (ideology) point of view, if we consider oppression as a factor of determining 'elite' and 'folk' then untouchables will constitute the 'folk'. On the other hand, Brahmins and other superior castes of a particular village will constitute the elite section of that society. Still, it is ambiguous. While some cultural traits might be shared by the various upper castes in a village, yet considerable difference does exist between them in their mode of life. What is suggested here is that neither caste ideology (purity and pollution) nor class ideology (economic factor) taken independently can be a determining criterion of 'elite' or 'folk'. This may be so as one finds both caste and class intertwined into a very complex social reality in India. The question, "Will the folk culture disappear from the society if it is transformed into a 'classless' or a 'casteless' society?", is also very pertinent in this context.

More precisely, the term 'folk' has for a long time been used synonymously with peasants. Scholars like Redfield (1956) and Deva (1989) have considered the culture of peasant society as folk culture. In defining the characteristics of what Redfield called peasant society, he placed much emphasis on its contrast with what we may call a tribal society. But it creates problems
when one is dealing with the social realities in India. Here tribes, peasantry and gentry constitute elements within one and the same empirical situation. So writes Beteille (1974:49): "There are important sections of people in rural India or in the Indian villages - who do not fit this conception of the peasantry whichever way we look at it."

The most distinguishing and widely accepted characteristic of peasant society is its agrarian economy featured by an intense love of land. The land based agrarian economy is the core aspect of the peasant society (Oommen, 1984:16-9). In India we find a gradual merging of tribes with the caste-Hindu system. The larger tribes like the Santhals, Oraons, Bhils, Mundas and Gonds have become settled agriculturists. These tribes number over a million persons each and have been living for generations side by side with caste-Hindus (Beteille, 1974:18, 64). Anthropologist like Bose (1941) tend to believe the transformation of tribe into peasantry as a kind of natural process of development. It is contended that some of their rituals, belief systems, festivals, folk songs and dances are formed around the land and agricultural activities of the peasants (Singh, 1982). This does not mean that the tribal people will drop their old rituals and practices after their transformation into peasantry. A total transformation or break up from old tradition may not be possible. Factors like personal choice and emotional attachment may not allow to cease all the ties with old tradition. But changes in the central or core aspect i.e., economy are capable of affecting other aspects of the peasant society (Oommen, 1984:16-9).
Folk Culture in Urban and Industrial Context:

A Problem of Creativity

There are contradictory views about changes in folk culture and folklore. For instance, Lang (1884:11) says, "Folklores are of our time but not of it ... which have least been altered by education, which have shared least in progress." It means folklore is related with something past, tradition, a lack of education and progress. This is, of course, the dominant view that persists still among the scholars. For them, the elements of folk culture depend on tradition mainly oral and there is no scope for its creation, recreation or change in the developed societies and the dominant culture always presses in. However, there is a continuous fear that the people of today are forgetting more and more folklore. If this view is accepted then the folk culture will naturally and completely die out soon.

Foster's (1953:171) statement attests this fear:

"Folk cultures will disappear in those places where a high degree of industrialization develops... It also seems improbable, in view of the trends of the modern world toward industrialization in all major areas, that new folk cultures will rise"

This view has been reflected in Redfield's statement also, who says "In a civilization there is a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition of the largely unreflective many" (Redfield, 1956 :70;1963:41).

One may not necessarily agree with the evaluation of the folk implicit in the above remarks. Redfield (1947) has proposed a typology ranging from folk to urban where folk and urban are at the opposite ends of a continuum. Here, it seems to be absurd to
speak of 'urban folk culture' or 'urban folklore'. But Spaulding (1951:26-36) has reported folk songs created by industrial steel workers. What we want to suggest here is that Spaulding's position is closer to reality. Based on urban industrial themes folk songs may be handed down by oral transmission for quite sometime before being collected and written down. Moreover, the creation of folk songs is an expressive behaviour. Although it is a characteristic commonly considered to be 'rural', it is possible in urban and industrial areas too. In this context Spaulding (1951:30-1) writes:

"... when one finds 'folk music' of a similar idiom indigenous to 'urban' and 'rural' areas, one begins to sense that the differences are to be found not in the dynamics of the behaviour of the people but in the manifestations of their behaviour in the environmental context with which they are involved."

In view of this, it would be unwise to maintain that folklore is something produced by a folk in hoary past and that today it consists of fragmented survivals. "From this perspective, it would be absurd to argue that there is no folklore in the United States and that industrialization stamps out folk groups and folklore, e.g., the folklore of computers ... Moreover, as new groups emerge, new folklore is created" (Dundes, 1977:27-8). So, folk culture cannot be considered to be essentially of the nature of a survival of vestige. It does not refer to a bygone age. In this regard, Deva (1989:1) writes: "Though some genres of folk literature undoubtedly show signs of decline as a result of the impact of modern forces, certain new genres grow up to cope with new situations and experience. In India the tradition of folk literature has enough vitality to
absorb new elements."

It is also incorrect to doubt the creativity of folk of today. In this respect, one may refer to Unnithan, Singh and Deva (1965:24-5) who say:

"... some existing elements in the culture of the folk even though brilliant and exquisite in their own way, could hardly have originated among the elite. For instance, many obscene piece of folk-literature shaw an ample amount of imaginativeness and ingenuity, but these could hardly have been composed by the elite. If the folk could by themselves compose these, there appears to be no reason to take for granted that the folk are incapable of composing the other non-obscene ones."

Deva (1978) has also discussed the reflective and aesthetic abilities of the folk. He (Deva, 1989:19) maintains that impressions like 'the unlettered folk are unreflective, uncritical and bereft of aesthetic sensibility' are far from correct.

Therefore, it would be erroneous to say that the folk are completely uncreative. In the previous pages, it has been shown that if the folk have borrowed some cultural traits from elite cultures and sub-cultures, they have also lent some other traits to the latter for their cultural enrichment.

Folk Culture as Rural Culture:

It is also said that folk culture is traditional and transmitted by tradition and is basically rural and pre-industrial. There are different types of villages in India. Some are peasant villages, some are tribal villages, whereas in others, peasants and tribals co-exist. Domination of a group depends on its economic, social...
in a particular village. The problem lies in identifying the folk culture with a particular type of rural setting. Again, the association of folk with rural is to compare it with that of urban. As it has been said earlier, Redfield (1947) has proposed a typology from folk to urban where folk and urban are at opposite ends of a continuum. Folk society is marked by its small size, relative isolation, pre-literacy or non-literacy, high degree of cultural homogeneity with a strong sense of group solidarity and by little or no communication with outsiders. To some extent, a self sufficient village community corresponds to the ideal type of folk society. In this regard, some comments may be made in the context of India. It has to be noted that folk culture is not confined to the villages even though the bulk of the villagers have been bearers of the folk tradition. As it has been mentioned earlier, the women of higher classes and the people as such of lower classes are generally the bearers of the folk tradition. In such a situation it is difficult to comprehend folk culture in contrast to that of urban dwellers. Further, both high and low classes may be found in villages too. Sometimes some villagers may move from a rural area to a town or city and of course bring in there with them some of their folk cultural items. It means, urban centres may constitute a number of folk groups from different culture-areas, each having a set of cultural items of their own for which they are proud of or each of them could be distinguished from that of others.

As Lewis (1951:435) states, Redfield sees urbanization as somehow 'causing' individualization, secularization and
disorganization and these features and processes are both inevitable and evil. Consideration of the city as inherently disruptive and disorganizing may be disproved empirically. Gallagher (1984:13) writes that the urbanizing tribals of villages in Ranchi region are probably not going to experience that disruption of their lives that one would expect in terms of the folk-urban theory given by Redfield. Urbanization and industrialization may cause changes to occur but such changes do not necessarily follow the directions indicated by Redfield. For instance, city-influenced tribals of Ranchi have not secularized but have added Hindu gods and rituals to the tribal fold (Gallagher, 1984:14). Tax (1984:30) also holds the view that cultures are always changing but they do not always change in the direction of another culture. The pressure of the larger societies on the smaller ones is not the disappearance of either the smaller society or their cultures.

Sometimes it has been said that folk culture exists in tension with other aspects of culture in the civilization because it is the opposition of the mass-produced mechanized popular culture of the 20th century (Yorder, 1968:47). But it has been noted earlier that from time immemorial the bearer of the folk and the elite cultures have been living very close to each other. It has also been found that the same person may be the bearer of both the folk as well as the elite culture. Besides, empirical situations give the idea that folk elements are used by the elite cultures in the name of fashion and fad; some observers like Bascom (1959:4) call it fakelore. Therefore, small wonder that
in a family some persons may be active bearers of the elite tradition whereas some others may uphold largely the folk elements. Indeed, many individuals must have been carriers of both the traditions partially. These two sub-cultures could flow side by side without causing much friction and without trying to swallow each other because:

"both of them shared a common world-view. Both were based on the same fundamental values. The folk and the elite subscribed to common metaphysical justifications of the existent social order. The difference between the sub-structures of culture, therefore, is not of viewpoint or of fundamental content but only that of the degree of sophistication, systematization and specialization." (Unnithan, Singh and Dev, 1965:28).

But folklorists say that this type of statement reflects elitist's bias. They maintain that culture cannot be divided on the basis of sophistication, systematization, or specialization since folk culture cannot be treated as unpolished, unsophisticated and uncouth (Dundes, 1977:17-35; Yoder, 1968:47; Islam, 1984:7).

**Folk Culture and Tribal Culture**

It has been contended by scholars that primitive culture is isolated and complete in itself. But the folk-culture cannot be isolated and hence may not be complete in itself. It has always been considered as a part of larger social unit (Foster, 1953). Unnithan, Singh and Dev (1965:18) write: "the folk and the elite elements are complementary and the existence of the one is the pre-requisite of the other." In this sense folk-culture is different from that of the tribal culture. Both are fundamentally different from one another in one respect. The former is
dependent whereas the latter one is independent. For the understanding of a folk-culture the reference to a larger social unit with which it has a symbiotic-spatio-temporal relationship is essential (Foster, 1953). In this sense the culture of the rural Hindu is the folk version of the elite culture. Thus, the term 'folk-culture' has been defined as a dependent rather than an independent entity. In other words, folk culture is defined either in contrast to the elite culture or in opposition to the tribal culture (Unnithan, Singh and Dev, 1965). In the same manner, 'folk' is a group of people contrasted, on the one hand, to the 'elite' people and, on the other hand, it is defined in opposition to the tribal people.

As Foster (1953:162) writes, Redfield in his statement made in 1947 uses the terms primitive and folk as synonymous. The characteristics of a folk typology - distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity and self-sufficiency given by Redfield (1947:293-308) most nearly correspond to that of an ideal tribal society in India (Sinha, 1957:12-14; Naik, 1984:70; Beteille, 1977:7-14). Such tribal societies have been noticed by the early British administrators in India. This point needs a little elaboration here. There were some isolated tribes persisted in forests and hills without having more than casual contacts with the populations of the open plains and the centres of civilization. Now and then, a military campaign would bring the tribals to the notice of kings but for long periods there was frictionless co-existence between some tribal groups and caste-Hindu society in the truest sense of the word (Haimendorf,
On the other hand, there were some tribes who "have been in contact with the encroaching and engulfing plough cultivation based on Brahminic varna-jati civilization and that numerous hitherto isolated and autonomous groups have been absorbed in the body politics of the civilization" (Sinha, 1980:2). Ghurye (1959, 1943) has outlined the natural process of assimilation of the tribes, so far Hinduised, that they have got assimilated as different castes in the caste system. This process of assimilation, however, has been disturbed during the British regime owing to the policy of the government as well as activities of the missionaries. From 1872 onwards, the various census commissioners had also faced great difficulty in precisely demarcating and identifying where tribe as a social category ended and caste began. They had noted down that tribes were being gradually transformed into castes (Sinha, 1980:6; Risley, 1915:72). In this regard, mention may be made of Bose's (1941) most famous idea of 'Hindu mode of tribal absorption'. Gallagher (1984:19-20) writes: "Most Oraon villages seem to have little resemblance to the idyllic folk community portrayed by Redfield, although an observer could, of course, find examples of harmony and cooperation." However, Oommen (1984:11) attempts to solve this problem. He says that considerable differences exist between certain aspects of social structure and culture of Hindus and tribes. He points to "the possibility that the elements of culture attributed to different societal types can exist within a given community at a given moment. Our societal types are not necessarily polar or inimical and hence the co-existence of the different elements of cultures attributed to different
In line with Oommen it may be viewed that folk culture is the pre-dominant (not exclusive) feature of the folk society while recognizing the possibility of the existence of certain elements of folk culture in other societal types such as urban, rural, primitive, peasant etc.

From the above discussion it is clear that the field worker or a social scientist conducting an empirical research in India may be misled by the ideal type of folk society given by Redfield. Gallagher (1984:12) refers to the remarks of Lewis (1951:432-35) that there exists the danger of field data being fitted into the conceptual scheme and in the process be stretched dangerously or distorted. Redfield's conceptual framework of folk society has little relevance for this research. Before saying what we mean by 'folk' and 'folk-culture' we would like to cite two definitions given by Foster and Dundes. According to Dundes (1965:2):

"The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is - it could be a common occupation, language or religion - but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own. In theory, a group must consist of many individuals. A member of the group may not know all other members, but he will probably know the common core of traditions which help the group to have a sense of group identity".

Similarly, to Foster (1953:170): "A folk culture may be thought of as a common way of life which characterizes some or all of the people of many villages, towns and cities within a given area". If the definitions are compared then it is clearly
found that the idea of sharing a culture (at least one common factor) by a group of people has been strongly endorsed. But the idea of cultural identity in terms of 'group feeling' is lacking in the second case; whereas the idea of cultural identity in terms of a particular 'culture-area' is lacking in the first definition.

In our endeavour to define the 'folk' as a distinct category/group in this thesis, three criteria have been used: 1. Sharing of a culture (at least one common factor); 2. Group identity in terms of culture, i.e., cultural identity; 3. Regional identity in terms of culture. Thus, by 'folk' we mean a group of people who shares a particular culture and identify themselves with a particular 'culture-area'. On this ground, a folk may be identified with a nation. Oommen (1988:1) writes: "In the hoary past there were no states in the modern sense of the term; indeed stateless societies continue to exist even today. Human societies were then constituted into nations". When a folk leaves its culture-area and comes out, it becomes an 'ethnie'. The terms 'group' and 'area' are very flexible. Sociologically, two or more persons may form a group. In this sense, a family, a 'peer group', a club, etc. can create their respective folk culture. In case of family all the members who identify themselves with that family share their family culture. But in the family the son may have his own peer group outside the family and form a culture together with his colleagues. Similar is the case with a broader social group like caste and tribe. What is suggested here is that a person may belong to a number of folk groups sharing different
cultures at a time; and in different situations he enjoys different cultural identities and status. Therefore, the concept of folk culture used in this study refers to a common way of life shared by people found in a given culture-area. It creates a cultural awareness or group-feeling or a sense of oneness among the folk.

The term 'folk' is not used as a category distinct from that of peasants or tribes, or rural or urban people, or traditional or modern people or civilized or uncivilized people, sophisticated or unsophisticated people. At the same time, the term is also not restricted to any one of them. Each of them can be a folk and can produce a folk culture of its own in and at a particular context and time which may undergo change with the passage of time due to one reason or other. For example, a peasant group of a particular culture-area can produce a folk culture of its own. That is, there may be a number of peasant groups of various social and regional backgrounds, each of them having a distinct folk culture and cultural identity in relation to other. In other words, it cannot be said that all the peasants of the world or India or Orissa or even Sambalpur can form one folk culture nor can we put all of them in a single category of 'folk'. In this sense, tribal culture of a particular area can be termed as a type of folk culture. The above discussion leads us to think in terms of the following figure.

Folk Society

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Folk culture

| a | b | c |
What we want to suggest is that the folk of a folk society while sharing certain characteristics with the other social types like homogeneity, we-feeling, cultural consciousness, group identity, language and speech, folk beliefs, rituals and practices also have constant interaction with the outside world and share a wider cultural system with them. This wider cultural system is a referent cultural system which may be tribal, rural, ethnic, urban, industrial or all of them. In this sense, folk culture is but a part of and has symbiotic-spatio-temporal relationship with the outside world. This sharing of culture is not at all a new phenomenon. But before the advent of communication network such as railways, roadways, and the spread of modern mass communication network such as TV., radio, newspapers, etc., the sharing of cultures were very limited. It was possible to maintain the distinctiveness of the folk societies more in terms of their cultures. Viewed in this perspective, it is easier to appreciate the position of the earlier thinkers (Dundes, 1965:1-21; Islam, 1984:1-34) who conceived folk culture as a pure form having exclusive elements. For, in those days folk cultures were relatively pure and interactions, between them were less frequent. With increasing interaction between all types of societies the world over the frontiers of different cultures are breaking down. Folk culture has always been in such a vulnerable situation and is constantly open to alien influences. In such a situation, the
distortion of cultural items, its meaning and values are on the rise. But it is important to know whether the distortion is in the 'centre' or in the 'periphery' of the cultural item. Changes in the periphery will not alter the essential character of that item of folk culture but the changes in the 'centre' will lead to the death of a culture. However, sometimes conscious attempts are also made to liquidate a particular culture which may be called 'culturocide', a term recently used by Oommen (1986:53-74) in his study of cultural pluralism.

It is important to know who is sharing a culture and how much. Everybody in a culture of a culture-area will not be equally affected by that culture. Thus, factors contributing to a share in culture may vary from person to person and situation to situation. In such a process of cultural sharing, it would be unwise to take any extreme position that a particular item of folk culture will disappear in course of time. Of course, no known society has been able to free herself from the tides of change. It is difficult to disengage a society from her past cultural heritage and hence its identity.
II

APPROACHES OF SANSKRITIZATION AND TRIBALIZATION: RE-EXAMINED IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

The Brahminical concepts such as Hinduization, Aryanization and Sanskritization were introduced and developed by the scholars with a view to explain cultural change in modern India. Historians and sociologists have studied cultural change in tribal areas also largely with the help of these concepts in the contexts of ancient and medieval periods. Such literature understandably suffers from a bias because it describes social and cultural change in ancient and medieval India necessarily through the Brahminical models. It means that tribals had emulated some customs of the Brahmins and discarded some of their own (Sharma, 1966). However, a number of sociologists and social anthropologists (see for instance, Singh, 1985; Mahapatra, 1987) have studied extensively and drew attention to many social realities. The systematic field studies and explorations of empirical findings have instilled new dimensions and ideas to look into the matter.

So, the Brahminical models cannot be considered to be the only one and adequate in all the situations and in all the times. There are instances whereby one can deduce the antagonistic relationships between the tribal and Hindu communities. Further, emulation of each other has been an important dimension of social life in India throughout the history. But according to Singh (1985:56), "The Brahmins who moved to middle India have...developed an antagonistic form of relationship with local
people. There is a saying in Chhatisgarh that if you see a snake and a brahmin, kill the brahmin first." Similarly, the origin of the Mahima cult in western Orissa during the 19th century was based against the supremacy of the Brahminical cult. The followers of the Mahima cult were against ritualism and caste system. The movement was started by Guru Mahima Swami (1826-76) who had a disciple named Sadananda of Savara tribe. Later on, the movement turned against the worship of the Lord Jagannath because the tribals and the untouchable castes were prohibited from entering into the temple. Also Bhima Bhoi, a mystic poet of the Khond tribe was born in Sonepur of Bolangir district of western Orissa and was one of the foremost exponents of the Mahima cult. His poetry appealed mostly the tribals and the untouchable castes (Singh, 1985:60-7; Eschmann, 1978:375-410).

In view of this, it would be unwise to think that the colonial ethnographers of the 19th century were ignorant or unaware of many realities at the grassroot level. Intending to find out the origin of such a strong tradition to study social realities with the help of brahminical model, Singh (1985:57-60) observes that the British administrators and ethnographers such as Sir John Campbell, Sir Alfred Lyall, Max Muller and H.H. Risley, etc. had made successful efforts "to make out a case for the propagation of Christianity in India by presenting brahminism as a proselytizing religion" (Singh, 1985:37). The theory of proselytizing brahminism had influenced and continues to influence indologists, historians, sociologists and cultural anthropologists (Singh, 1985:60-1). During the 1940s and 1950s of
the present century Indian sociologists became quite active but working under the British tradition they could not liberate themselves completely from the colonial stereotype of analyzing the social reality. In the process 'sanskritization' as a concept emerged in the early 1950s (Chatterjee, 1951; Srinivas, 1952). In the beginning Srinivas (1952;1956:489-96; 1962:42-62) had exaggerated the brahminical model of sanskritization by identifying it with the imitation of the brahminical customs and manners by lower castes (Singh, 1986:7). But Pocock (1955:71-2) pointed to the fact that there existed a Kshatriya model too. Then, Singer (1964:85-119) drew the attention to the existence of a number of models. As a result, Srinivas had to redefine his concept of sanskritization as "a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently 'twice born' caste" (Srinivas, 1966:6). Here, he included other models of sanskritization such as 'Kshatriya', 'Vaisya', and even 'Sudra' which are all varna categories. He has also recognized the role of 'dominant caste' in a region/sub-region which sets the cultural patterns for emulation by others. He has integrated the concept of sanskritization with the phenomena like power and domination (Srinivas, 1966:14).

Tribes such as the Bhils of western India, the Gonds and Oraons of central India and the Pahadis of the Himalayas were reported to imitate the customs of the caste-Hindus (Srinivas, 1962:42;1966:2,7). The existence of a Kshatriya model of
emulation for tribals in early medieval period has been highlighted by scholars. After the downfall of the Gupta empire the tribal chieftains of communities such as Gonds and Nagavansis in Chotanagpur, Rakshels in the Chhatisgarh region, the Bhumij in the jungle mahals of Bengal, the Doms, Bhars, and Cheros in South Bihar, and the Kharwars in the Sone-Damodar valley claimed to be Rajputs and filled the vacuum in the countryside during the medieval period. The founded kingdoms became Hinduised and acted as champions of the brahminism (Singh, 1984:316-17; Sinha, 1962:35-80).

Contrary to this, caste-Hindus have also been influenced by the tribals in different parts of the country throughout the history. One can find pronounced influences of tribal elements in caste culture which may be called as 'Tribalization'. An hypothesis that the incorporation of sanskritic elements was supposed to vest the object and its followers enjoyed greater prestige and respectability had been established at the expense of other dimensions of the reality which, in the process, was denied its due shares in the limited empirical researches in the country. Despite the fact that field studies (Srinivas, 1952) yielded evidence corroborating both sanskritic as well as non-sanskritic elements the former has received more attention16. As a matter of fact, the importance of the phenomenon of sanskritization found in a few places, was blown out of proportion. Interestingly, several regions in central India showed the predominance of tribal people and their cultures. But out of the two processes covered implicitly or explicitly in a
single research work more importance has been given to the analysis of sanskritization. Additionally, there has perhaps been a desire to establish supremacy of this process over the other which has led to endless debates and academic confrontations. During the recent years the study of tribalization has been emphasized perhaps due to change/shift in the orientation and direction of sociological researches. In such researches the process of tribalization has been defined as "acceptance of tribal mores, rituals and beliefs by incoming communities...tribal's participation in coronation ceremonies and their role as custodians and priests at Hindu shrines" (Singh, 1985:87).

This process has been experienced throughout India. The Todas of Nilgiri in Karnataka are found serving as the palanquin bearers of Lord Siva at Bhavaneeshwar temple at Ooty (Singh, 1985:97). The shrine of Lord Siva on the Panchmarhi hills in Madhya Pradesh was under the hereditary guardianship of the Korku chief (Singh, 1985:98). This is not unusual when seen in a historical context.

"Shiva was a tribal deity to begin with and forest dwelling communities, including those who have ceased to be tribals and those who are tribals today, were the custodians of such shrines located in remote areas all over Chotanagpur, Central India and in the western ghats. Some of them still have tribals (and non brahmins too) as custodians and priests" (Singh, 1985:96).

In West Bengal, castes, probably of tribal origin, are entrusted with the worship of local gods and goddesses. Caste-Hindus offer rituals to these local deities through the help of
the so called lower castes (Bose, 1967:202). Theoretically, it seems to be anti-thetical and against the sanskritic tradition. In this sense, there is the problem of making up for the loss of the purity of sanskritic tradition on account of the incorporation of non-sanskritic elements. This could be viewed as 'de-sanskritization' or 'tribalization'. But, no 'pollution' is attached to tribals where the shrines assign a central role to them (Singh, 1985:96). A similar case has been observed among 'Chenchus' of Karnataka. They are attached to the major Hindu shrines at Srisailam. They serve in the temple as palanquin bearers, sweepers and watch-men. They have hereditary rights to only a part of the offerings given by pilgrims (Haimendorf, 1985:167-8). Likewise, Sri Venkateswar temple at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh has been related with Kurumbas. The tribes like Yenadi, Yerukula and Chenchu also worship at this shrine. The Yerukulas have also been associated with Sri Subramanyam temple of Palani and Tiruttani (Singh, 1985:98). However, an interesting point has been made by Singh (1985:98) "most of these temples in central and north India belong, among Hindu gods, to Shiva and mother goddess who are associated with tantra, magic and witchcraft which is widespread in tribal areas".

There are large number of Vaishnava shrines found in Mangalagiri and Akkirapalli in the state of Andhra Pradesh where heads of lions and tigers are worshipped as 'Narasimha'. Out of one hundred and sixty-nine Narasimha temples located in this state roughly seventy percent have an uniconical image, mostly a stone with non-brahmin priests. In some cases the temples are
located at some distances, from the outskirts of the villages, in
the forests or on the top of the hills. It may be suggested here
that the Narasimha has absorbed aboriginal cults (Eschmann,

In Orissa too there was endeavour during medieval time to
assimilate tribal deities into caste society by various rulers.
Examples are many, viz. the Kanta Kumari of Bhuiyans by the king
of Keonjhar; the Jagannath of the Savaras by the Gangavamsi kings
The images originally enshrined in the temple of Jagannath at
Puri were worshiped by the tribals in the hill tracts of Orissa.
The deity sculpted in wood is described by some tribals as a
unique tribal innovation. According to them, the Hindu deities
are, in contrast, in clay or in stone (Singh, 1985:98). It is
also believed that a section of the 'sevayatas' or servants of
the temple of Purushottam at Puri in Orissa originated from the

Similarly, the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar in Orissa,
built in the 11th century A.D., has two classes of priests:
Brahmins and a class called Badus. According to the legend, the
Badus belong to Savara tribe who originally inhabited the place
and worshipped the 'Linga' under a tree. However, their
rank/status is much more lower than that of their counter-parts
i.e. Brahmin priests in the temple. Badus are ranked as Sudras
and are said to be of tribal origin. It may be noted here that
Badus are the personal attendants of the deity. They are only
allowed to bathe 'Lingaraja' and to adorn him. Further, at the
time of festival when the god represented by his 'Chalanti Pratima' leaves the temple, Badus may only carry this movable image. It is believed that god cannot move one step ahead without their assistance. Thus, they are traditionally believed to have close relationships with the god. Moreover, the nature of their duties has brought them in the most intimate contact with the deity. But they are prohibited from carrying/touching the 'bhoga'. They have to leave the 'garbhraga' when it is offered to the deity by a special class of the brahmin attendants (Eschmann, 1986:97).

INTEGRATED APPROACH:

On the basis of the above analysis it can be said that neither sanskritization nor tribalization exclusively is found to be helpful in explaining and understanding the institution of Hindu deity or tribal deity substantially. Both tribal as well as Hindu elements co-exist in the above quoted empirical situations. Therefore, it may be suggested that there is every possibility of tribal and Hindu elements co-existing in a given cultural item such as festival or deity. The coexistence of both tribal as well as caste-Hindu characteristics in a given empirical situation may be due to sanskritization and vice versa. However, the proportions in which the tribal and Hindu elements are found intertwined vary from one item/sub-item of culture to the other. Those cultural items/sub-items can be arranged in a line or in a sequence of increasing or decreasing order considering the proportions of tribal and Hindu elements. This may be viewed as a tribe-caste continuum or caste-tribe continuum. This postulates
two types - caste and tribe - as remaining at the two poles or ends of the continuum. The polar types are one kind of 'ideal types' which referring to a mental construct. Some aspects of observable realities are selected and accentuated in defining the type because of their apparent inter-dependence and theoretical importance.

"However, ideal types are not classifications. No actual society will conform ... completely to such a type ... Ideal types are tools to be used in the analysis of empirical reality "(Sills, 1968:174).

In view of this, it could be inferred that the study of a folk culture in India in the perspective of dichotomous constructions of human society such as rural or urban, peasant or elite, tribal or non-tribal, literate or illiterate, sophisticated or unsophisticated, etc. is problematic because in such a perspective "the two worlds have been viewed as systems with distinctive and often contradistinctive elements "(Oommen, 1984:3). Although the folklorists of today are not ignorant of the realities at the empirical level, they still follow such dichotomous constructions to study folk culture and folk society, and their approach still continues to influence the whole genre of writings in folklore studies. Our thesis here is that the blind support to and dependence on the perspective of 'dichotomous construction' to study folk culture and folk society is an erroneous approach. It is, therefore, profitable to combine all types of elements such as rural, urban, tribal, class, etc., while studying a folk society. Such an integrated approach helps to understand the continuities and/or discontinuities of a folk society and modifications of its various cultural elements that
exist in a given social setting.

The present study:

For our purpose, the contrasting features of both tribal and caste-Hindu cultures have been identified and an attempt has been made in this study to formulate the typologies of tribal rituals (deities/festivals) and those of caste-Hindus. The ideal types of tribal festivals and deities are constructed for a better understanding of the process of tribe-caste continuum and caste-tribe continuum in Sambalpur of Orissa state. The social festivals and deities found in Sambalpur range from tribal to Hindu type. Many of the festivals/rituals are at various stages of transition from ideal tribal pole to that of ideal Hindu pole. Yet, in Sambalpuri society sanskritic and tribal elements vary from festival to festival. In other words, series of gradual changes in the magnitude of sanskritic and tribal characteristics are found and they form a linear increase or decrease order through a series of graduated degrees.

Our hypothesis here is that the process of sanskritization is intimately linked with the process of tribalization, i.e., transformation of a tribal deity/festival into a Hindu one and thereby its admission into the larger Hindu society. It means there is fusion of two processes of sanskritization and tribalization. Although caste-Hindus adopt the tribal rituals (deities and festivals), they do not see it as a case of de-sanskritization or tribalization and thereby decrease in their social status. Rather, they see it as sanskritization by putting
sanskritic elements into the process of transformation. Thus, they call it as the enhancement of status of tribal deities and festivals. It seems that a tradition has been developed in order to look into the social reality only through the angle of caste-Hindus ignoring the tribal angle. Very likely, it is due to a hangover of the sanskritic tradition. Our endeavour is also to study the transformation of a tribal deity into a Hindu one. It may be surmised here that the admission of a tribal deity into Hindu pantheon may come about without any drastic change in the core elements of the institution of a tribal deity.

In order to examine the above formulation two important aspects of Sambalpuri culture, i.e., 'festival' and 'deity' have been selected. A set of three selected festivals namely 'Nuakhai', 'Dalkhai' and 'Karma' and a set of three deities namely 'Samaleswari', 'Jharibudhi' and 'Bhim deota' are taken into account for the purpose of this study. There are three important reasons in limiting the number of our cultural items. These are as follows:

1. There are innumerable local deities and festivals found in Sambalpur district of Orissa.
2. The elements of sanskritization are not measurable quantitatively. On the basis of the above methodological considerations it is not possible to place all the deities and festivals of Sambalpur in a definite tribe-caste or caste-tribe sequence due to the limitation of time.
3. The deities and festivals selected for the purpose of this study exert extra-ordinary influence on the life and culture of the Sambalpurias (the people of Sambalpur). In the determination of the boundaries of culture area of Sambalpur and group identity of Sambalpurias, these typical religious-rituals and practices are certainly not the only criteria though these are perhaps the most important and dominant criteria of Sambalpuri folk culture.

In other words, in a culture-area a population may be
divided into four categories: people who belong to the culture-area and share its culture; people who are outsiders but share its culture; people who belong to that culture-area but do not share its culture. Generally, they all together may be called the people of that area. But in true sense of the term it is the 'we-feeling' or insider/outsider feeling that distinguishes a true 'folk' category.

As said earlier, the purpose of this research is to study the folk culture of Sambalpur in the perspective of rural-urban continuum. Contrary to an administrative unit, Sambalpur refers to a culture-area the people of which share Sambalpuri culture and identify themselves with Sambalpur area. It incorporates in itself roughly the Paschim Odisa, i.e., western parts of modern Orissa. Further, the idea of Sambalpuri folk culture is not used in the proposed study as a part-culture of caste-Hindu society or tribal society. It is assumed here that folk-culture of Sambalpur is a historical product of tribal-Hindu continuum in this area evolved through the process of tribal-Hindu interaction in this area.
NOTES:

1. Even today folkloristic studies in Orissa and most parts of India are confined to an exclusive 'literature orally transmitted', i.e. folksongs, folk tales, folk-sayings, riddles, and proverbs, etc. and also folk-dances.

2. In this regard mention may be made of some children's game observed in Sambalpur area. For instance, 'Bhaunra', 'Gilli-Danda', 'Helbela', 'Chhilolai' and 'Lukchhupani' are some folk games which are learnt by watching peer group playing them.

3. As it has been said earlier, the underlying motive behind the collection, recording and publication of folk materials is to preserve the folk tradition which is purely of an academic interest. Here, we concentrate more on 'lore' while ignoring 'folk' which carries it. Again, we fail to understand what does 'lore' mean for that 'folk'. This question still remains unanswered and will be taken up in the subsequent analysis.

4. For detail see chapter - VII.

5. According to Linguistic survey in India, there are some 15 major cultural linguistic regions. These regions are: (1) Andhra Pradesh, (2) Assam, (3) Bengal, (4) Bihar, (5) Gujrat, (6) Jammu and Kashmir, (7) Karnataka, (8) Kerala, (9) Madhya Pradesh, (10) Maharashtra, (11) Orissa, (12) Punjab, (13) Rajasthan, (14) Tamil Nadu and (15) Uttar Pradesh. Vidyarthi (1964) has studied the cultural linguistic region of Bihar and showed that there are three sub-cultures in Bihar itself, on the basis of three important regional dialects: (1) Bhojpuri, (2) Maithili and (3) Magahi. In a later study he has identified four such zones as discussed in the text above (see his 1973 article).

6. The study of universal attributes of folk-culture based on comparative analysis has a serious weakness. It tends to concentrate more on 'lore' while ignoring 'folk'. Folk tales, myths, ballads and festivals are often tracked down around the world with little or no attention paid to the people who feel for and listen to them, who observe and participate, what a particular folk tale or folk festival means and does for the members of that particular folk society, when it is told or celebrated. In this anthropological-functional approach, the study is not of the wide distribution of a single tale or a myth or a festival also much as the functions it serves to the folk and the particular folk society as a whole. An analysis of anthropological-functional approach to study folklore has been made by Dundes (1968). Islam (1984:401-20) has also analyzed the functional values of folklore materials. Besides, Singh (1982) has made a full length functional
analysis of tribal festivals of Bihar.

7. The intra-regional sub-dialects differences have also been observed in Sambalpur area. For example, the Sambalpuri/Kosali language spoken in Bolangir is slightly different from that of Sambalpur, Baud and Sundargarh.

8. The dialectal difference existing between the social groups in a particular social unit has also been observed in Sambalpur town. For instance, one can easily distinguish the pronunciation and grammatical forms of the residents of Nanda Pada - an old locality or residential settlement in Sambalpur town mainly inhabited by 'Udiya Brahmins' - from that of others. It may be mentioned here that the Udiya Brahmins, otherwise known as 'Utkalis', are the migrants from the coastal areas, mostly from the district of Puri (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:111). Though migration took place long back, it seems they have still retained their uniqueness in their mother tongue.

9. Bahm (1984:194) writes that growing population, rapid transportation and communication networks (including worldwide instantaneous Radio and Television broad-casting via satellites), increasingly intricate economic, political, ecological and military interdependencies, increasing use and share of common scientific knowledge and technology, education and growing awareness of common global crises, etc. have facilitated a process of homogenization of culture. So, "we live more intimately in what some are calling our 'global village' as some customs emerge and spread towards universal participation, observers of folk culture may recognize such common practices as achieving something like a folk, now a world folk, significance."

10. In the case of intra-level cultural differences mention may be made of 'Nuakhai' which is a festival observed by all Sambalpuriyas irrespective of their social backgrounds whether they are caste-Hindus or tribals. Even then the day of observance is not same all over the culture area; it varies always by one or two days from one part of the culture area to the other. The fact is that the festival day in Sambalpur is fixed in the name of 'Samlei', the local reigning deity whereas the festival day in Bolangir is fixed in the name of the goddess 'Pataneswari'. A detailed analysis of the festival has been made in chapter IV in the present study. Further, we have already discussed in the footnote 9 the case of language of Nanda Pada in Sambalpur town.

11. 'Birha' is one of the most lively forms of literary expressions of the Bhojpuri speaking people given to travelling often far and wide for various reasons.

12. Foster (1953:163) says that true primitive cultures are to be excluded from that of folk category. For, they are, in
theory, at least isolated and complete in themselves. Thus, he tries to differentiate between folk culture and folk society as not 'whole society' or an 'isolate' in itself but a half society, a part of a larger social unit (usually a nation). This half society has symbiotic-spatio-temporal relationship with the larger cultures of which it is a part. Unnithan, Singh and Deva (1965:24) have also pointed out that folk culture "is not to be confused with the tribal traditions. It differs from them in one fundamental respect: cultural tradition of a tribe is a self-contained whole, whereas the folk tradition is essentially a part— a sub-structure in the true sense of the word. The folk tradition continually interacts with the elite tradition. The folk tradition would not be itself without this interaction. It can not be adequately understood without reference to the elite tradition."

13. Early British administrator-scholars also discovered that certain human groups remained outside the Brahminic Varna-Jati hierarchy. They lived in hills and forests, or in the plains skirting the forests, in relative isolation from the caste-based peasant villages. But it has also been pointed out that for several thousand years tribals have been in close contact with the Brahminical tradition (Sinha, 1980:2).

14. Some scholars like Elwin (1939:511-19;1952) and Hutton (1931:604-07) came out with their views regarding evil effects of contact on the tribes. Elwin proposed the solution of 'isolationism' in terms of creation of a 'National Park' in which tribals might take refuge. He maintained that their contacts with the outsiders and outside world was to be reduced to the minimum.

15. A nation being "... a people, a folk, held together by some or all of such more or less immutable, characteristics as common descent, territory, history, language, religion, way of life, or other attributes that members of a group have from birth onward" (Paterson, 1975:181, quoted in Oommen, 1988:1).

16. Srinivas (1952:180) writes: "Village deities are an All-India phenomenon ... deities who are worshipped in villages in various parts of India have more or less the same character and attributes, and that the technique for propitiating them is broadly similar." However, he has not elaborated this observation and stresses the 'sanskritic' nature of All-India Hinduism which includes the adoption of vegetarianism, teetotalism in personal habits, sanskritic gods and formulae in religious rites, and espousal of the sanskritic literary tradition. It means Srinivas recognized but does not emphasize the process in opposition to sanskritization. In passing, he (Srinivas, 1952:226) remarks: "The Brahmin too has been influenced by non-Sanskritic modes of worship, and impressed with the power of the village-
deities. In south India it is common to find Brahmins making votive offerings of flowers and fruits and, very rarely, through a non-Brahmin friend, of an animal to the village-deities like Māri during epidemics ..."