Like religious and moral education the performing artforms play a vital role in imparting social and cultural education among the non-literate rural folk of Assam. Generally in the broad sense religious and moral education are closely attached with social and cultural education in different fields. It is seen that one depends on another for the perfect result. According to Kilpatrick W.H.:

*Religion is a cultural pattern based on relations with the supernatural ..., as conceived by particular people involved.*

On the other hand Bertrand Russel says:

*Religion is the source of a sense of social obligation.*

Therefore it is clear that religion is related to cultural and social ways. Generally for the proper development of the individual every types of education are necessary. Although for the literate person knowledge acquiring is very easy but non-literate people face a big...
problem in this way. Therefore in this situation the performing artforms play active and perfect role to impart education to the non-literate rural folk of Assam from the ancient past. From the past they have been playing their role in the knowledge development with the help of religious institutions. They perform their performances in the religious institutions to impart various types of education to the rural folk who are specially non-literate of the society.

Like religious and moral education the artforms impart social and cultural education to the masses. Generally social education means some social knowledge which are observed by the social being within the human folk in the society. Man is a social being so they should be followed the social ethics of the society. But the non-literate rural folk learns these social ethics with the help of artforms for the proper adjustment in the society. Without being socialization, social education is impossible. So for proper adjustment every body should acquire the socialization process and sociology is the main exponent of socialization. Generally in common sense socialization means a tendency of every being through which people learns to conform in any ways, ethics and practices, to engage in interrelationship. Besides, they learn to behave in socially acceptable manner. For acquiring these knowledge the non-literate rural folk accept the help of performing artforms. Because they learn different kinds of social knowledge from the artforms informally without formal education or institutions.
education. People learn to interact with different social situations, rules, customs, festivals and ceremonies of the society. In this way Lindt era says:

The process of interaction through which an individual learns the habits, skills, beliefs and standards of judgement (required for effective participation in social groups) are collectively called socialization.

Through the social knowledge people may be a efficient member of the society who may contribute the raw materials for social development. So Drever observes:

Socialization is a process by which the individual adapts to his social environment and becomes a recognised, cooperative and efficient member of that environment.

So social education or knowledge are necessary for every person of the society which helps them to create a perfect man of the society and cooperative mind of the people. Whereas man has always been striving to make his life happy so, for their happy life in the social situation they should know the knowledge of society. The literate people may learn anything by teaching process but for non-literate people this system is very difficult. So they learn to cooperative, efficient with the

4. Ibid.
help of performance of the artforms. They learn to accept certain things
acquiring the knowledge of artforms. The artform leads the individual
to learn social adjustment and acquire social maturity. Rightly does
observe Sorokin:

*Socialization as the process of internalisation of ideological and cultural factors.* He says, *socialization is a process of transmission of cultural meanings, which transforms the biological individual into a social being*.5

It is a process which develops the certain modes of behavioral social attitudes, co-operativeness and friendliness of the individual. Without institutional education, non-literate rural folk acquires these knowledge informally from the field of performing artforms. So to say they fulfil their imperfection through the performing artforms which are known as Ojāpāli, Dhuliya, Bhāona, Putalā-nāc and so forth. These artforms perform various performances occasionally among the people. In various contexts performers perform different performances to impart education to the people. Like religious and moral knowledge they impart social education which is very necessary for healthy social environment. It helps in the respect of the healthy growth of the individual and forms good habits, attitudes and behaviours of the individual. From the

performances the people learns the social principles which are necessary for good society. Although full development of the individual takes place in their own family but for the proper social adjustment social knowledge viz., rules, regulations, beliefs, customs ... etc. are very necessary for every person. Therefore it cannot be forget the role of artforms in the life of the rural folk for knowledge development.

Like social education the artforms impart cultural education to the rural folk. Cultural education is also necessary for the new generation for future development. So it is very wide term which is discussed differently by different persons. Generally culture is the funded capital of civilization which is most important sub-system of the social system. Although it is very complex but every person should know it properly to survive the tradition. These traditions are exhibited by the song, dance and drama among the masses specially those who are illiterate they acquire various kinds of knowledge from those artforms. Generally culture is connected with the progress of music, art, architecture, literature etc. Besides it helps in fulfilling the needs of man. Because it includes beliefs, ideas, interests, discipline and economic system etc. of the society. S.B. Taylor observes that:

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs.
art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.⁶

In the words of Mathew Arnold:

Culture is, the way of life, the habits, the manners, the very tone of voices, the literature, the things which give pleasure to community, the words, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds. In a broad sense it is Sweatness and Light.⁷

Besides these, Dictionary gives the meaning of Culture that

Culture is the quality in a person or society that arises from an interest in and an acquaintance with what is generally regarded as excellence in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits etc.⁸

So it is a particular form of civilization. It modifies the mind of the people in their day to day life. So every person should know rightly their own culture then they try to preserve them very sincerely. For the preservation of culture every person should know the traditional culture which are closely attached with the performing artforms. Such cultural values have a great influence on social life of the people. Because it is social inheritance. It brings stability in society. So culture is necessary.

---

⁶ Ibid, p. 223.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid, p. 222.
needs like learned people. Maximum people of Assam accept the
cultivation as the aim of life. For different personal problems they
cannot acquire formal education in their life. So they acquire various
types of knowledge through the song, dance and abhinaya of the
performers. These artforms does not only transmit the culture, it helps
in the reconstruction of our modes of living and helps in developing
new social patterns in the areas of health, leisure, vocation and family
life etc. It may give some ideas, ethics, beliefs, attitudes directly to the
common people. Generally from the immemorial past the performing
artforms have been playing a significant role for the non-elite sections
of the society. They acquire different knowledge which helps them in
their social life and adjustment process.

Therefore specially in Assam the role of performing artforms are
very great for the unlearned group of people of the society. The artforms
such as - Qajapali, Dhuliya, Bhaoana, pultalana performances have
been serving the non-literate folk as song, dance and drama. But
through the song, dance and drama the performers give some social
education to the common people. They play a vital role in social protest
and social pressure as well as social approval and disapproval. Through
the acting, singing and dancing, the artforms play active and effective
role in exercising social control among the non-literate rural folk.
Through exhibition of social, historical and religious story, they try to
give the perfect knowledge of wrong and right to the masses by their
singing, dancing and acting. From these knowledge they learn to control their social behaviour and attitude. The Ojăpăli artforms recite some episodes related to various worships, festivals and ceremonies. The rural folk get a real idea of virtue and vice from these episodes. The acting of Ojă and Păli exhibits distinctly these stories for the rural folk whereas they can understand the main thing. The Ojăpăli artform recites the life history of famous person and his character from the Mahākāyvayas, Purānas, Lokākāyvayas and so forth. This recitation influences the child, adult and old person of the society to take steps in their life. In the word of B. Malinowski:

*Myth serves as a warrant, a charter, and often even a practical guide.*

The Ojăpăli exhibits these stories through their dialogue system and acting movement very softly. The knowledge of these episodes help the common people to create social integration among different groups of people. The rural folk learn from the traditional story some knowledge of humanity. It is clear that the rural folk does not know to write and read, but they know various educative stories based on religious scriptures with the help of performing artforms. This hypothesis

---


can be substantiated with an observation made by Sister Nivedita and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy which goes thus,

*In India mythology is not a mere subject of antiquarian research and disquisition, here it still permeates the whole life of the people as a controlling influence.*

In the Indian situation the performing artforms are not used as the medium of recreation only because they perform their role as school court and discussion centre particularly among the village rural people.

Besides, the Ojāpāli artform uses many proverbs and riddles at the midst of their performances. Such type of proverbs and riddles which may be associated with historical characters or their socio-cultural and political life. This kind of tale (very often the last done of a tale is a proverb) may give a clear idea for leading a religious and pure as well as dedicated life. Such type of knowledge or idea is essential for the better understanding of the society. Generally proverbs and riddles help the people in becoming conscious for any situation through which Ojāpāli, Dhuliyā, Bhāonā express a great episode. Says S. K. Bhuyan:

*In moments of hesitation, dilemma, indesision or excitement, the*
recollection or recital of such a saying or proverb has proved to be the highest value amongst all peoples of the world.  

Through the proverbs the Ojāpāli artform gives some traditional knowledge to the village folk. Generally through the recitation Ojāpāli artform expresses the good and bad ways and good and bad result of the work whereas the rural folk may follow the right path in their life. This artform also plays a vital role in the social protest. This artform recites various myths and legends and amplifies different characters like god, demon and man, their praiseworthy activities and disgraceful activities. Thus the non-elite-rural folk get sufficient scope for consideration of good and bad activities, and they will reject the bad one and will accept the good one. Thus they acquire the courage to protest against the social justice and to give approval to the deeds that base on social justice. Says Betty Wang:

One of the most important functions of folklore is its service as a vehicle for social protest. Wherever there is injustice and oppression, one can be sure that the victims will find some solace in folklore. Through jokes, songs and proverbs, the anger of the folk is vent upon the often frighteningly unassailable individual or institution.

---


Therefore it can be said that folklore is an strong echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present. The study of folklore helps the masses to understand the tradition of man and society. Because it is a museum of memory of primitive illiterate and common people in a civilized society where their original culture tradition and oral literature are strictly preserved for future generation. Therefore every person of the society should know the elements of folklore which are serving the common people in their complex social life. But with the help of media the common people know them. Specially in the rural folk society the different types of artforms play of significant role in the educational field. Like Ojāpāli artform, the Dhuliya, Bhāona Putalā-nāc play vital role ot extend the level of education among the non-literate rural folk. Generally these artforms exhibit some Paurānic social stories from which the illiterate people learn some social principles, social behaviours, rules and regulations of the society.

Observe Notes and Views:

This knowledge may give up mightly tool to motivate the people in the desired manner and induce social change as a developing process in society.16

15. M.Y. Sokolov, Russian Folklore, p. 15.
From the religious episodes the rural folk learns some social beliefs, rules and regulations by the recitation of Ojāpāli.

Generally the Ojāpāli, Dhuliya, Bhāonā and Putalānāc recite some episodes of the Ramayana, Mahābhārata and the Purana. They recite some songs and exhibit dances form to expound themes of the religious scriptures. From religious scriptures the artforms give some effective lessons to the common people which may spiritually and morally uplift their heart and mind. The performer can exhibit distinctly before the audience any social events. The common people learn to integrate their mind with others and learn to interact with other persons of the society. Besides, some social functions are observed occasionally in the society. In that function the Dhuliya, Bhāonā exhibit different dramas which are related to that function whereas the common people may acquire perfect knowledge of that function. In the field of social function the artforms impart some social education among the unlearned people through which the unlearned people learn social behaviour and process of social control. And they learn to preserve the social relationship and social interaction among the people. From this point of view performing artforms can create a perfect person of the society. On the other hand these artforms are survived among the rural folk of the society who are creators, carriers and keepers of the artforms. In this way Borev yuri says:
An actor can reproduce life only through his body, voice and nation; he appropriates the experience of thousands of people and transmits it through the character he portrays. But even playing a part he represents collective experience in the light of his own personality.

The performers of different performing artforms try to change the complex mind of the people through the recitation of mythical episodes. They recite episodes of gods and demons and their various deeds of good and evil. The performers explain that good deeds are to be followed and bad deeds should be rejected. The proverbs and riddles used by the performers may play an important role in this context. From the use of proverbs and riddles the common people learn to adjust various social situations and various moments in their personal life. And thus they learn to behave in social environment properly and they may acquire proper knowledge necessary for social control. Generally to prepare a pure social person, social knowledge must be acquired thoroughly from various points of society. Then these people may try to change the society during the time of development. But they should know exactly different functions which are observed in the society. In this way the artforms try to impart education relating to various social functions informally to the non-elite folk. Rightly does observe W. R. Bascom:

Proverbs are rightly effective in excercising social control.\footnote{W.R. Bascom, ‘Folklore and Anthropology’ in \textit{The Study of Folklore}, ed., Alan Dundee, p. 61.}

Similarly, the performers of different performing artforms may play significant role in imparting social education. Even such traditional folk performing arts may impart sex-education to the rural folk. Without proper knowledge sexual life may be problematic. The non-literate village folk acquire sex knowledge traditionally or from various performing artforms, such as \textit{Ojāpāli}, dramatic performances and Chora singing either of the menfolk or the womenfolk. The \textit{Padma-Puranā} attributed to Narayanadeva (17th C) is a combination of various songs which are sung by the \textit{Ojāpāli} of the \textit{Manasa}-variety in the context of the worship of Snake Goddess \textit{Manasa} or \textit{Bisahari}. Of these songs a few songs are replete with sex-education. It is seen that the womenfolk is more conscious regarding the sex-education than the menfolk.

As for example, Beula - the newly married wife of Lakhindar requested her husband to refrain from sexual union in the house of her father which is regarded as taboo. Secondly, she again requested her husband not to force her for sexual union since the first bridal night was not favourable for such union. Thirdly, a girl who has not attained puberty should not be forced for sexual union. Such type of sex...
education is found in various myths, legends and tales which are sung by the Ojāpāli artform in various ritualistic contexts.

Like other regions of Assam, the performing artforms of Dakshin Kamrup have been playing an important role in imparting informal education among the village people. The rural folk of any society learn to follow a behaviour pattern and to maintain it in their own life, since these artforms are very strong channels of transmission of social values. So to say the education of socialization and reinforcement are possible only with the help of the artforms. The performers associated with artforms during the festivals and ceremonies recite various myths or Paurānic episodes which may act as models for the life of the common people. For example Krishna-yosadā episode represents the ideal relationship between mother and son. This episode represents ideal love and affection of mother Yosadā. From this episode the common people may learn to love their son and daughter and may try to control them from any bad situation whereas they can follow right path from the beginning of their life.

Thus other episodes like Śāvitri-Satyavān, Nala-Damayanti, Raja Harichandra set ideals for conjugal relationship between husband and wife. These episodes may reflect ideas like pāti-parama dharma, pātine nahi āna gati, viz., husband is the main pillar of the life process of a wife. Therefore from the Beula-Lakhindar lore one may acquire
the idea that to a wife, husband is more dearer to heaven, sons and other wealth. Thus Beulā wept after the death of Lakhindar that is

\[
\text{ākāsata chandra nāi, nosobhe tarā} / \\
jito nārir purus nāi jivante marā // \\
sata putrabti jadi pati hinā haya I \\
tathāpito loke tāka abhāgini kay II^{19}
\]

So every woman should follow the path of her husband in various spheres of her life. Such kind of knowledge may inspire the womenfolk of the village to follow the teachings of Beulā. Thus the dramatic performances of *Usha-harana nāta* and the *Rukmini-harana-nāta* may exhibit the ideology of the Hindu society that if an unmarried young girl accepts an unmarried young man as husband in her life for the first time she will not be able to accept other male in her life as husband for the second time. This is the only cause for which a widow preferred *satidāha* practice, i.e., to second marriage. Besides the *Dhuliya, Bhāonā* and *Putalā-nāc* performances perform some historical dramas such as *Satijaimati*, *Gadā pāni* and so forth. Such types of drama may give ideas to the women folk regarding to the devotion of a married woman to her husband and devotion to our nation and our country; since the mother and the mother land is superior to the

---

heaven. Most of the dramatic performances are preceded by one or two dance, dramas which are replete with various social problems like child marriage, dowry and so forth. Such kind of dramatic performances may impart education against such social evils and to give them courage in their heart and mind to revolt against such social evils.

The story of *Rāma* may set example in respect of father-son relationship in the Indian social system. Similarly, the story of the *Pāndavas* may give lesson to the rural folk to that effect that all should work in accordance with the advice of mother or one should obey to the order of one's mother.

Further more, through the recitation of various myths and legends artforms like *Dhuliya* and *Bhāona* try to educate the audience along with various kinds of social education regarding social organisation, social principles, social customs and so forth. Further more, these performances try to make aware of the non-literate rural folk with various social problems such as family planning, birth control, child development, women development plan and so forth. In this way the rural folk may be educated informally with the help of such kinds of artforms. Even these performances encourage the down trodden people to stand on their feet and to face the problems with courage and to meet the social situations with patience.

The performers of these performances sing various kinds of songs
such as marriage songs, ritual songs, which may play important role in respects of social control, social protest and social justice. The recitation of the song entitled Deh-Bicărar git may help in acquiring devotional and philosophical knowledge by the common people. The Bagejāri song or Bagejāri dance is related to some social beliefs of Rabha community of this region. This artform is based on legendary stroy. The Hanāghora dance is another popular artform of Rabha community of this area. This artform is closely connected with a social belief of the Rabha community. They belief that the Hänāghorā dance may create a peaceful environment among them.

Further more the performing artforms may impart cultural education to the non-elite rural folk. This phenomenon is also apparent in this area also. The performing artforms may disseminate ideals about activities concerning all aspects of traditional culture. Younger persons of the society come to know about traditional heritage of the community largely through the performances of the artforms.

Besides traditional artforms may play dominate role in transmitting cultural elements from generation after generation. In this context we may mention the name of Bihu and Huchari songs. These songs have been handed down orally which may create a cultural consciousness in the hearts of the new generation regarding their way of life, dress, ornaments, recepies and so forth. This kind of singing of oral songs by
the performers along with dances may validate the culture of the rural folk of any region.

These artforms sing different spiritual songs in various contexts. This kind of singing may help the listeners in acquiring spiritual and cultural knowledge and thus they learn to lead a spiritual life and to disdain the materialistic view of life. Performing artforms like Ojapah Dhuliya, Putalé-nac and so on sing different mythical stories through which the common people may learn about the cultural norms of a community or a group. The common people get an opportunity to know regarding the traditional dresses, behaviours, food, attitude and discipline. Besides they can see the relationship between Guru (Teacher) and Sisya (Disciple). On the other hand, the unsophisticated rural folk learn the process of nám-prasanga, puja-upasanā and other institutions and everybody tries to maintain the social discipline. Thus the new generation gets cultural knowledge of their society with the help of various types of artforms and try to preserve them very consciously.

Generally the performing artforms recite episodes or stories in accordance with nature and genre of festivals and ceremonies which are replete with cultural motivation. These cultural motivation may help the rural folk to be interested with cultural motivation and thus they may be able to motivate themselves for upholding their cultural life.
Further more, these stories may create solemn reverence in the minds of the people and give more opportunities to know their traditional culture of their society. Besides there is a system of institutional training of the art of playing cymbals, drums and singing of devotional songs and so on. The young generation gets a fillip to learn the art of acting in various dramatic performances which may preserve their own heritage and culture.

*Jakināc* is one of the attractive artforms of this area which have some cultural values in the minds of the people. This dance form is related to the worship of the Snake Goddess *Manasā* or *Bisahari*. In this context the *Ojāpāli* recites songs from the *Manasa* lore. This lore has given emphasis on the religious aspects, since these songs try to educate audience or the listeners that without the regards and faith to the supreme God non can cross the sea of *Manasa*, *Durga*, *Laksmi*, *Jagadāthri*, *Siva* and so forth, are not limited only to the religious education, since these may give cultural education too. The Indian tradition believes that god and goddesses cannot be appeased fully with the help of worships alone, but can be appeased fully by song, dance and drama. This belief has originated from the people’s consciousness towards the culture of their own people irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, status and so forth, love their own culture.

Song, dance and drama are essential part of culture. Since the people love song and dance as well as drama and *abhinaya*, so they commit...
to think that gods and goddesses also love song and dance as well as drama. As such, song and dance as well as drama become essential elements in the context of various worships. Artforms like *Ojapa, Dhuliya*, *Putala-nac* and so on consists of song, dance, drama and *abhinaya*. In many cases the village folk go to the places of worships to witness the performances of such artforms being inspired by cultural consciousness.

From the above discussion it is clear that the performing artforms may impart social and cultural education informally to the non-elite village folk.