The radio play in India is an exclusively twentieth-century phenomenon. It mainly exists because of the need of a new medium of communication. Its form and structure were determined by the constraints of that medium. The brief existence of Madras Presidency radio that was established in 1924 and the installation of broadcasting stations in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras signalled the possibilities of a new performatory genre. In the 1940s, dramatic presentations were seriously considered as important components of radio entertainment programme and the proper history of the radio play in India began. Professional playwrights did not realize its potential, nor was it visualized by drama critics of that time.

Writers were closely associated with the government-owned All India Radio (AIR). Some of them highly gifted literateurs were the first to experiment. Predictably, uncertainties and imperfections marked the first phase of radio drama. It took time to acquire the necessary techniques to exploit intelligently the medium of sound and silence, to compensate for the absence of the visual aspect. Quite often, early producers used existing plays with necessary emendations to meet the requirements, with considerable success. The famous Urdu authors Saadat Hasan Manto and Upendra Nath Ashk, the Gujarati dramatists C. C. Mehta and Shiv Kumar Joshi, the Bengali popular writer Birendrakrishna Bhadra are some of the named that can be mentioned. They significantly contributed to the popularity and development of radio drama.

Its establishment and growth depended on various factors, such as the condition of the theatre in different linguistic areas, etc. Growth was also dependant on the availability of short plays, professional dramatists’ attitude towards the new genre and general standards of entertainment. The success of radio plays in Urdu or Assamese, for example, is mainly because of limited stage activity. One Assamese
critic observed that it was the radio that kept some of their dramatists busy. Bhaben Saikia and Arun Sarma produced scripts prolifically for Assamese radio. Kashmiri did not have any modern drama worth its name before the introduction of the language over the airwaves. Ali Mohammad Lone’s radio serial Ti Vyath rozyipakan i.e. And Quiet Flows the Vitasta was a landmark in Kashmiri theatre history. Radio offered a challenge to Urdu writers like Manto, Kishan Chander, and Rajinder Singh Bedi. Manto’s celebrated play Ao i.e. Come and Kishan Chander’s Darwaza i.e. Door were written specifically for the new medium. Gujarati radio drama owes its origin and sustenance to C.C. Mehta and Shiv Kumar Joshi. The examples can be given as Mehta’s Beti or Daughter and Joshi’s Atra lupta Saraswati i.e. The Saraswati Vanished Here were acclaimed among the finest plays in the language. In Manipuri, the eminent G.C. Tongbra took this form seriously, gave it respectability, and made it a powerful medium to express complex experiences. However, radio drama is yet to gain scholarly attention. Despite the popularity of and critical acclaim for many Bengali and Marathi plays produced by AIR’s Calcutta and Bombay stations, a recognized canon of scripts identified as a new genre has yet to emerge in either of these two important theatre languages. The Hindi radio play, too, depended on noted dramatists like Ram Kumar Verma, but critics raise doubts about its distinctiveness. Many scholars do not even know that Dharamvir Bharati’s trailblazing Andhayug or Blind Age in 1954. This was originally written for radio.

Radio drama made a significant impact on Indian popular culture. In the 1960s, AIR’s commercial channel Vividh Bharati broadcast a short play in Hindi every day. This acquired a huge audience. Some scripts also outlived their immediate utility and left a lasting impression. The names can be mentioned as Va. Rado Iyenger’s Tamil series Sorkattilsampasanai i.e. Dialogues in Heaven. This was produced by AIR’s Madras station in the 1940s and was published in 1964. K.V. Jagannatlian’s Timkkiiralvihikku was another popular radio play in Tamil. This is now available in different Indian languages. AIR requires nearly 4000 dramatic scripts annually as its major stations each broadcast about sixteen plays a month. In 1987, it introduced a national competition to encourage radiogenic scripts. By 1996, the
competition was open to nineteen languages and awards were given in two categories. The categories were general and humorous.

A Necessity

It has already been said that a radio play is a dramatised, entirely acoustic presentation which is broadcast on radio or circulated on audio media, for instance, Tape or CD. Radio play depends on dialogues, music plus sound effects to assist the listener envision the characters and story. As we understand, radio drama has probably been the most unappreciated and understated literary form of the twentieth century. Academics, media theorists and writers in most cultures have greatly failed to realise that the medium of sound has provided an environment in which a new storytelling genre has been born. It has developed with sophistication and explosive energy and now occupies a significant position in the cultural lives of societies throughout the globe. Huge traditions, styles and movements have been established and remain largely undocumented. Even now, radio drama is regarded as an adjunct of radio production practice.

Completely engrossed into the radio drama being performed over radio, the audience forgets about themselves and immerses into the characters of the drama; they have opportunity to laugh with the laughters and shed tears along with sad scenes. Undoubtedly, radio dramas are primarily made to entertain people, however, in the case of our country, they are mainly used to create awareness among people - social, political or cultural. These dramas not only preserve our culture but also provide employment, platform and eminence to people. With the benefits it has provided, radio drama is undoubtedly a sturdy backbone of our society, culture and country at large.

NPPs have also played an influential role in educating people about the social evils prevailing in the country. Radio with its inspiring plays about ghastly effects on social evils and taboos, has raised awareness to people of both urban and rural areas.
Along with providing social awareness, these dramas / plays have been protecting the cultural ornamentation and traditional prosperity of the country. Carrying on the thousand years of tradition, dramas have also entertained and reaped creativity from the raw minds of people along the process. They have indeed become a source of entertainment to Indian people – young and old. Those cultural plays have enthralled the younger generation with the glorious past of our country and made the older generation proud for the antique traditions that are still followed rigorously.

Radio drama has always been an integral part of the Indian community and is still on rise. It has already been stated that broadcasting in India is a national service, developed and operated by the Govt. of India. AIR (also known as Akashvani) operates this service, over a network of broadcasting stations located all over the country.

As a national service, catering to the complex needs of a vast country, AIR seeks to represent in its national and regional programmes, the attitudes, aspirations and attainments of all Indian people and attempts to reflect, as fully and faithfully as possible, the richness of the Indian scene and the reach of the Indian mind.

AIR’s programme pattern combines three main elements: a national channel providing programmes of countrywide interest and significance and NPPs come within this category of programme; a zonal service from each of the 4 (four) metropolitan centers (Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras); and regional services from individual stations catering to the needs and interests of its respective area.

The most significant achievement of AIR in the field of radio drama is its National Programme of Plays. Once a month an outstanding play from one of the main Indian languages is selected and translated into all the other regional languages of the country and broadcast simultaneously by all stations in their respective regional languages. In the interest of improvement of radio programme, All India Radio instituted in 1975 the annual Akashvani Awards for plays, features, music, youth programmes etc. This competition was held during the year and prizes were awarded.
The prize winning important plays of respective languages recognized by the constitution of India are also broadcast through the national channel of AIR under the category of NPPs, which are relayed by different regional stations of AIR. Apart from this, the regional stations produce and broadcast their own radio plays in their own languages.

As we have found that basically there are no differences between radio plays and Hindi NPPs; because they are all in fact radio plays which includes NPPs as specis of this kind of genre. The basic elements of NPPs are almost same as other radio plays broadcast in regional languages. All the elements of radio play, such as language, dialogues, characters, plots, sound effects, music and silence etc. are present in both of them. The production techniques and methods used for broadcasting are also same. Only the differences are found in their aims and objectives to be served areawise or defined territories or locations. The difference also lies in the attitudes of the playwrights they want to make disclosure of issues and highlight problems – socio-economic, political etc. of the area of their concern and so on. Therefore, though NPPs, belong to the same genre of radio plays, still certain differences are well noticed as regards subject - matters, languages, the words and vocabulary they use, the message they want to convey and also the styles of presentation. Hence a comparison of NPPs and regional language radio plays, particularly of Assamese is felt necessary.

There are certain benefits of such a comparison. First of all, comparison makes one’s vision clear about the levels and standards of this dramatic formats, its history and culture, at each level - regional and national.

Regional Language & Radio Plays defined

Prior to having an idea about what signifies a regional language in Indian perspective, let’s have a clear picture about India and its territories. Article 1 (1) of the constitution of India says that India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. Article 1 (2) states that the states and the territories thereof shall be specified in
the First schedule. Article I (3) says / specifies that the territory of India shall comprise -

(a) The territories of the States;
(b) The Union territories specified in the First schedule. and 
(c) Such other territories as may be acquired.

The Union of India is a federal Union, with a distribution of powers, of which the judiciary is the interpreter. Although there has been considerable controversy whether India is or is not a federation and although some writers have called it "quasi-federal", it would seem that essentially the Indian Constitution is a federal one.

Foreign territories which become part of India on acquisition may (i) either be admitted into the union, or (ii) Constituted into new states under Article 2, or (iii) merged into an existing state under Article 3(a) or 3(b), or (iv) formed into a Union territory. Of course, a foreign territory would not come under Article 1 (3) (c) until there is legal transfer of territory to India, so as to constitute its "acquisition" in International Law. While Article 2 of the Constitution of India authorises that Parliament may by law admit into the Union, or establish new States on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, Article 3 permits that Parliament may by law-

(a) form a new State by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States or parts of States or by uniting any territory to a part of any State;

(b) increase the area of any State;

(c) diminish the area of any State;

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, Sec. 2, for Clause (2) (w.e.f. 1-11-1956)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, sec. 2, for sub-clause (b) (w.e.f. 1-11-1956)
(d) alter the boundaries of any State;

(e) alter the name of any State.

At present, there are 29 States in our country, and 7 Union territories. Each State has its own State Government; and the Union territories (UT) are looked after by the Union Government.

Chapter I and Chapter II of Part XVII of Indian Constitution deals with the language of the Union and the languages of States. Article 343 clearly states that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. It is also to be noted that radio NPPs are produced and broadcast in this national language.

Article 345 deals with the regional languages and it states that subject to the provisions of Articles 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may be law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State. Article 347 prescribes that on a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.


Thus, any radio play produced and broadcast in any of the above languages by respective radio stations located in different states and union territories are termed...
as regional language radio plays. Like any play or drama, the regional language radio plays also contain the same elements, such as language, sound effects, music and silence.

Before defining a radio play in regional language term, let's have an idea about a drama. A drama is an essential form of behaviour in all cultures, it is a fundamental human activity. The drama exposes the plight and suffering of humans to its audience.

Drama comes from Greek words meaning “to do” or “to act”. A play is a story acted out. It shows people going through some eventful period in their lives, seriously or humorously. The speech and action of a play recreate the flow of human life. A play comes fully to life only on the stage. On the stage, it combines many arts those of the author, director, actor, designer and others. Dramatic performance involves an intricate process of rehearsal based upon imagery inherent in the dramatic text. A playwright first invents a drama out of mental imagery. The dramatic text presents the drama as a range of verbal imagery. The language of drama can range between great extremes: on the one hand, an intensely theatrical and ritualistic manner, and on the other, an almost exact reproduction of real life. A dramatic monologue is a type lyrical poem or narrative piece that has a person speaking to a select listener and revealing his character in a dramatic situation. A play in verse or prose, is therefore a literary work that is usually written to be performed on stage. It involves actors, writers, set designers, costumers, and array of artists of all disciplines.

A drama may be defined as:

(a) a composition in prose or verse presenting in dialogue or pantomime a story involving conflict or contrast of character, especially one intended to be acted on the stage; a play.

(b) the branch of literature having such compositions as its subject; dramatic art or representation.

(c) the art dealing with the writing and production of plays.
(d) any situation or series of events having vivid, emotional, conflicting or striking interest or results.

(e) the quality of being dramatic.

Thus, drama can be described as many things. It can be a theatrical performance that tells a serious story, or it can be something that has the quality of being very dramatic and that is often seen in human beings.

There are six elements of drama. They are:

1. Thought/Theme/Ideas.
2. Action/Plot
3. Characters
4. Language
5. Music, and

According to Aristotle also, the six elements of drama are:

(1) Plot, (2) Theme, (3) Character, (4) Language, (5) Music, (6) Spectacle

Thus, on many occasions and also in the preceding Chapters, attempts have been made to define and redefine a radio play. It has already been stated that radio plays are only to be heard or listened, and listeners can't see the performers or the artists like on the stage or TV screen, though they have the power to create greater image in the mind of the listeners. An American Radio Romance, Garrison Keillor once remarks, "There's no romance in television; it's just the Wall-Mart of the mind. Radio is infinitely sexier". And so does a radio play; and this is perhaps the power of radio to create imagination and image in listeners' minds greater than any other media of the world.
Radio drama is also called ‘audio play’ or ‘sound drama’. It is called ‘audio play’ since such a play can only be listened to or heard and there is no visual. It is called ‘sound drama’ for the proper use of sound effects to create visibility or images in the mind of the listener about its background, a scene, an environment or even the period of time and so on. Radio play brings together the practical skills needed for radio drama production and broadcasting, such as writing script, acting through voice, directing and sound design, with media history and communication theory. Challenging the belief that sound drama is a “blind medium”, radio drama shows how experimentation in radio narrative has blurred the dividing line between fiction and reality in modern media.

The elements of a radio drama are almost the same as those of stage drama. Elements necessary for a well-produced radio play like NPP consist of: (1) a suitable play, which may be a simple play or an adaptation of a short-story or novel; (2) a radio script which is plausible and feasible within the limitations of radio production; (3) a director / producer who will revise the script readily to provide proper rhythm and dramatic tension as well as promote the acting techniques especially required for radio performance; (4) sound effects which have both verisimilitude and the characteristics needed to establish moods or introduce characters; and (5) the actors capable of assuming various roles.

Radio drama is often considered as incomplete or ‘blind’ artform because it creates words through sound alone. Producing an audio play necessarily defers to the element of time, not unlike a music video or a television commercial. The producer, the writer and the director must develop a fairly close approximation of the final version of the script before casting even begins. From the start of production in the studio, the artistic team has a reasonably clear idea of the final product and therefore can collectively work toward their common goal efficiently and on budget. Ironically, the radio play’s primary mouthpiece, the actor can provide, and often require, an emotional architecture for the character’s journey. With the writer and director, he can be an improvisational tool for dialogue. He can even evoke an image with his voice and intentions that allows the listener to suspend disbelief. The audio
play is successful in production when the story is fully apprehended with all the senses.

The radio play can even be produced by anybody with a microphone and a tape-recorder. The time is auspicious for rebirth of Indian Theatre, and radio could be a good place for it to happen.

**Similarities between NPPs and Regional Language Radio Plays**

The radio drama and NPPs are almost similar in a certain way in their objectives, plans and production techniques as well as broadcasting mechanism. Both of them create images in the mind that can furnish a much more vivid picture that can be produced by even the most sophisticated television production company. Both of them are also an excellent way to learn the mechanics of editing, miking and mixing.

Regional radio plays as well as NPPs are compositions that tell stories through actions and dialogues, music and sound effects. Usually, they involve conflicts: Persons versus persons or persons versus society. They have plots; the plots usually have a beginning, middle and an end.

So far dramatic elements are concerned, they possess the same elements to suit the audio medium. The dramatic elements present in both of the plays are:

* **Action** which must be expressed through sound.

* **Dialogue** which provides most of the information and meaning to a scene.

* **Plot**-all actions and dialogues must advance the plot or storyline.

* **Beginning, Middle and End**- these parts may not be complete, but there is usually some sort of resolution.

* **Conflict** - which highlights the real issues or problems.

* **Suspense**- creating suspense in both of the plays compels us to keep listening.
* Exposition - the process of imparting information commonly found present in both kinds of plays.

The Persons involved in the Production

There is no difference as regards persons involved in production of Regional language radio plays and NPPs.

The size of the radio station and / or the budget often dictates the number of people involved and their job functions, but regardless of whether one person fulfills all the roles, or there is a greater degree of specialisation with different people assigned to each, the main skills and the roles needed to produce a radio play, and there are essentially only four:

1. The scriptwriter - having the writer present at the session often helps clear up any misunderstanding with the written word.
2. The sound Engineer - a good experienced technician with a good pair of ears can make everything work quickly and smoother.
3. The Producer - the person is overall charge of achieving the end result.
4. The Voice Over (s) - Good casting is essential and knowing the capabilities of each voice helps.

Steps before Recording Starts

There are also similarities as regards steps before recording of regional language plays or NPPs starts. Before any recording begins, there are a few steps well worth doing if not essential that will not only save time later as the recording progresses, but will ultimately lead to a better end product. Some of this is preparation and skills and techniques that need practice and experience.

* The script is to be read again and again or needs through reading.

* If the playwright is not available in recording session, it needs to discuss the script with the playwright so that all understand it.
* It becomes essential to look out, or pre-record any sound effects.
* It is necessary to listen to the options, choose and set up music tracks.
* It is important to cast the voice artists carefully, and give them as much information about what’s required and as much encouragement as they need.
* It is also necessary to try and create a good atmosphere in the studio, relax and open for ideas.
* Be prepared to enjoy it.

Recording any audio play is as much about the people involved in the process as it is about the technicalities, technology and equipment.

**The Recording Process**

The recording process of regional language plays is also very similar to that of the NPPs. The recording studio is the sound engineer’s domain and a good sound engineer will have studio skills including both sound recording and editing skills and be familiar with different types of production software and their capabilities. They will add considerably to the whole production and should:

* Contribute ideas including suggesting the sound effects and music available.
* Suggest the best way to record the audio.
* Consider other places to record the audio that might help the final production.
* Ensure all the equipment is working efficiently.
* Pick the right microphones for the number of voices involved.
* Set up the studio and provide all the facilities.
An experienced sound engineer will make a recording session run smoothly and contribute greatly to the production.

**The Purpose of Audio Plays**

Basically, there are no differences between the regional language plays and NPPs as regards their purposes or aims and objectives. The main purpose of both kinds of plays (in fact, they are same and designated as radio plays) is to entertain the people or the target audiences. However, they may be some other secondary purposes of these plays which may very depending on their types and objectives to be achieved.

According to Aristotle, the purpose of drama is to arouse in the audience feeling of Pity and Fear, and to purge these emotions (catharsis), thereby making people stronger emotionally. Through the radio plays, we promote social inclusion in its broadcast sense, freedom of expression and dissemination of information for the benefit of our local and wider communities. We use music of all genre to promote racial and social harmony, embrace social, cultural and economic diversity and promote tolerance, understanding and democracy.

*Radio* drama also offers an opportunity to explore the social and cultural attitudes fueling gender inequality. Inequality is embedded in intimate family relations, involving inter-generational conflict between in-laws and couples. It operates within the arena of power and control and directly engages with volatile issues of sexuality, reproduction, income and gender conflicts. These issues are effectively explored by the radio drama - regional or NPPs.

**Differences between NPPs and Regional Language Plays**

Although NPPs and Regional Language plays are the basic genre of radio plays; and in most of the aspects, they seem to be similar, yet there are certain minor differences found between them. These differences may actually be called the basic problems with the radio plays, since there is no particular set-norms to be followed universally by all the broadcasters in planning and producing them.
They are dependent on the traits and skills, notions and technology available to produce radio plays from preparation stage to broadcasting radio plays.

Radio drama can sometimes get a bad name for itself due to these disimilarities and problems which are more intrinsic to the way that such dramas are produced. Depending on the source, human skills, knowledge, technological advancement and equipments or recording and/or editing mechineries or computers used for production of radio plays, quality differs at local, regional or national level resulting differences in modes and styles both in production and presentation. The language used in such plays also brings certain variations to be judged by the listeners while listening to them. Generally it is observed that the delivery of dialogues and voice modulation in radio Hindi NPPs are more fast than they do in the Assamese radio plays. This is because of the proper use of words and vocabularies to convey expressions and emotions through artistics performance by the performers which is not generally found in Assamese radio plays. Even the most simplest things can, in a better way, expressed and presented in Hindi than in Assamese. That is, the greatest problem in radio plays is about the words depended on the richness of the language in which it is broadcast. Moreover, whenever the words are selected to be used, due consideration is given to easy understanding by listeners listening to them. In most of the cases, the regional language plays have to use local dialects to reach the listeners and satisfy their acceptability with a success. The NPPs consider and look into a broad perspective to serve the interest of the people of wide ranges belonging to the whole nation. For these reasons, to a great extent, radio plays differ in a way as social goods. Depending on sound effects and music also, a vast difference is often found to exist, because they quite often reflect the culture of the region, the habit and taste of the people, their traditions and customs and depending on the context, such sound effects and music are used. For example, in a particular scene of a regional language radio play like Assamese to show the solemnization of a traditional Assamese marriage ceremony, the songs, music and/or sound effects used will be completely different than that of a Gujarati or Punjabi marriage indicating an important difference lying in this respect. The objective may
also be different. The objective of NPPs, apart from entertaining the listeners, may be national development, through co-ordinating or highlighting different cultures, arts, traditions, scientific outlook, life-styles, and/or to ensure unity and integrity of the nation besides boosting of moral standards of the people as a while; while the aims of respective language radio plays remain confined within its areas and localities to serve the needs and aspirations of local people or to enrich the local arts, culture, traditions or to make them aware of local needs and aspirations for regional development. Therefore, difference may be inevitable and inherent in their art-form, styles, and presentation and it is quite natural for a large country like India where unity lies in diversity. The outlook, implication and styles of one like NPPs may be broader than the regional language radio plays like Assamese. Apart from this, through NPPs, the listeners become able to make themself acquainted with different styles, cultures, language and development, level of understanding, thoughts and philosophies of different states in India and their languages alongwith a great treasure of wisdom and knowledge.

**Hindi NPPs and Assamese Radio Plays: A Comparative Study**

Contemporary and regional problems of the society have been reflected in both Assamese radio plays and Hindi NPPs. Our internal and external problems have been intensely growing with the emerging changes taking place day-by-day. The complexity of the changing environment has given birth to new problems at regional, national and international levels and in almost all the fields -- social, economic, cultural, religious and political. The new generation starts losing faith in social and political ideals. They often dream of establishing a new society by breaking all age-old customs and conventions; but their dream is not complete as it is devoid of ideals, convictions, rules and customs. They want freedom in their personal and social life; but after achieving freedom, they are not happy and are suffering from psychological deformities. They are running after individual pleasure and not after social happiness. The Hindi NPPs broadcast during the period of 1990-2000 are more concerned with personal problems than with social ones. Women in their social life, want social and economic freedom and to free themselves from the
clutches of men. Yet, they are unhappy and feel like lonely in their personal life. In Assamese radio plays, the social problems are depicted much more than the individual ones. No doubt, in Hindi NPPs, individual problems are depicted along with social problems. Moreover, in the Hindi NPPs and Assamese radio plays, a vivid picture of dowry, communalism, regionalism, generation gaps, changing of age-old values and infusion of new values, treachery of leaders, corruption and such other problems is depicted. Many Hindi and Assamese radio plays were written and broadcast from time to time.

One can feel a strong impact of the predominance of national feelings in the plays written and broadcast in both Hindi and Assamese inspite of their social, political and economic differences. The radio Hindi NPP ज्ञालामुखी by Anantgopal Sewre, based on facts of Indian history and the Assamese radio serical play, Prabhati Pakshi by Jyoti Prasad Saikia, based on life history of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and freedom movement of India, have created such national feelings like sacrifice, immortal love, patriotism, courage and loyalty among the people. The radio plays of both Hindi and Assamese have tried for the unity among various communities and groups. Hindu-Muslim unity has got preference. The Assamese radio play Siraj by Arun Sarma is a successful play in this respect. The playwrights of both the languages have had recourse to historical and cultural background in order to find out the solutions to communal problems.

Patriotism and the urge to free the country from the foreign rule constitute the main themes of the radio plays written in both Hindi and Assamese. Through these plays, the playwrights have tried to inspire the younger generation of the country from time to time. Among such radio plays in Assamese, Maniram Dewan by Prabin Phukan, Kushal Konwar by Mohesh Kalita, Piyali Phukan presented by Nowgong Natya Samiti (Assam), Lachit Barphukan by Prabin Phukan, Lavita by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Tikendrajit by Atul Chandra Hazarika are remarkable. The main characters of these plays namely Maniram Dewan, Kushal Konwar, Piyali Phukan, Lachit Barphukan, Lavita and Tikendrajit had to suffer a lot and became martyrs by fighting against injustice, exploitation, torture and betrayal of the British
rule. About the ultra patriotism of Maniram in *Maniram Dewan*, Mr. Mill has once remarked that here is a man, the only one in the whole province who carries a burning fire of patriotism in his heart. The historical radio plays of Assamese and Hindi depict some great heroes like Lachit Barphukan and Chhatrapati Shivaji who endanger their lives for the unity, sovereignty, freedom and honour of their country.

Female characters are equally great and ideally presented in both Assamese and Hindi radio plays. They are always ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their motherland. Their courage and confidence are a great source of inspiration to the male characters portrayed in the radio plays written in both the languages. Jija Bai (*Chhatrapati Shivaji* by Atul Chandra Hazarika), Jaimati (*Jerengar Sati* by Uttam Baruah) and Lakshmi Bai in the Hindi NPP *Jhansi Ki Rani* etc. have been portrayed as co-operating in every possible way for the all round development of country. Lakshmi Bai became a martyr by fighting bravely and courageously with the British. Thus, the characters created in these radio plays are inspired with some ideals. Such characters in Assamese and Hindi radio plays are both historical and imaginary with high ideals of humanity, nationality, courage, sacrifice, morality and good sense.

The songs featuring in these radio plays help in expressing the national feelings to a great extent. These songs are more impressive and effective in inculcating national ideas in the mind of the listeners than dialogues and actions. The radio plays, namely, *Kanak Lata, Lavita, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Kushal Konwar, Maniram Dewan, Jhansi Ki Rani* etc. in both Assamese and Hindi, have songs in them which are very effective and evocative in arousing national feelings in the audience. National songs in Hindi and Assamese are not many. There are a great numbers of songs in the radio plays of Atul Chandra Hazarika because of his being a poet and lyricist. We find some similarities in the radio plays of Assamese and Hindi NPPs in this respect.

There are also mythological plays broadcast through AIR national channel and regional AIR stations including AIR, Guwahati. Most of such radio plays are based
on the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. Among the mythological plays written in Assamese and broadcast through AIR, Guwahati, Bhagawan Srikrishna by Lakshyadhar Choudhury; Swarna Lanka, Pandabar Agnipariksha and Bedanidhi—all written by Atul Chandra Hazarika, Sukunir Pratisodh by Ganesh Gogoi, Karna Katha by Naren Patgiri, Akal Bodhan by Sharada Bordoloi and Aholya written by Dr. Birinchi Kumar Medhi are remarkable. The story of Akal Bodhan is related with the defeat of Ravana and salvation or rescuing of Sita. The playwright has a merciful approach towards Ravana. Ravana foresees his ruination or destruction and he makes Rama worship to Rameshwar on the sea-shore. There is an impression of the Bengali Ramayan, Kritibashi Ramayan for worshipping Durga by Ram. There are also many Hindi NPPs written on Vibhishan, Meghnad, Ram, Ravan, Karna, Draupadi, Abhimanyu, etc. broadcast through AIR national channel including the Hindi NPP Anaryavarta which is mainly displaying the real characters of Dwaipayan, Devabrat and Satyabati in the modern context. Mythological playwrights of both the languages—Assamese and Hindi have immense scope to narrate inner feelings, internal conflict, duty and emotion (i.e. Karma and Dharma), and even mental conflict as depicted in the NPP Anaryavarta in respect of Dwaipayan, Devabrat and Satyabati.

There are, however, certain differences in the selection of stories based on the Mahabharat and the Ramayan in Hindi and Assamese. Being impressed by the present socio-economic and political environment, the playwrights of both the languages have written radio plays on different themes. The Assamese playwrights have generally given stress on such characters and events which have direct connection with the stories of the two great epics. In Hindi radio plays and NPPs, the mythological stories or themes are better explained in the perspective of modern age. Assamese radio plays lack this quality. The Assamese playwrights have become still adhered to the philosophy of Ankia dramas and have remained unchangeable in their religious feelings. They could not go ahead from the mythological aspects and no attempts have been made to give new explanation.

It has also been stated earlier that many social plays were broadcast through
AIR national channel as NPPs during 1990 to 2000. In Assamese also, such radio plays have been written and broadcast from time to time highlighting different socio-economic problems like evils of dowry, unemployment, corruption, exploitation and problems relating to sex and married life. The Assamese radio plays, Jautuk and Hamuman Sagar Bandha Chao written by Dr. Bhabendranath Saikia and Promod Das respectively are two most important radio plays displaying socio-economic impacts of evil practices of dowry upon the society. Humorous plays like Gharat Kaun Achhe and Hoine Hera written by Durgeswar Borthakur are still remembered by the listeners. The radio plays on cultural themes were also written in Assamese in the same way the NPP खालमोहन का संसार was written. The Assamese radio plays Mohan Bhawariya and Kailhatir Dhulia written by Binod Bhagawati and Karuna Deka respectively based on Dhulia culture of Assam are duly appreciated by the listeners. Moreover, among the Assamese radio plays, the Ankia Bhaona plays Rukmini Haran, Parijat Haran, Ram Bijay, Kalya Daman of Shri Sankardev have been occupying an important place. The Sutradhar has to play a more important role in Assamese Bhaona plays than those of Hindi radio plays or NPPs. The Sutradhar remains present in the scene with other characters, announces the entry and exit of the characters besides giving hints about the incoming scenario. He serves as the link between the story presented and the listeners.

Like Hindi radio plays or NPPs, many symbolic plays are also written in Assamese and broadcast through AIR, Guwahati. Among such plays, Janma by Mahendra Barthakur, Bagh by Himendra Kumar Borthakur, Kukur by Tarun Saikia, Jiwan Britta by Ram Goswami and Nimati Koina by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala are highly acclaimed by the listeners. Nimati Koina is specially significant in this respect. This play is mention-worthy from the point of view of the subject-matter, craft and symbol. Rupkonwar, a symbol of ever green beauty and dedication i.e. Sadhana is the only person to make Kala Lakshmi Nimati Koina, a dumb girl speak and laugh. He inspires life in her who is awakened to liveliness with laughter, speech and dance. She represents human culture and entertains the earth.1 It also symbolises the political

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1. Bhattacharyya, Dr. H.C.: Asomiya Natya Sahityar Jilingani, P. 328
torture on the dumb motherland by the British rule in India which divided the people into different groups, parties, communities and religions in order to rule over them. But the country became free due to the great efforts and sacrifice made by Rupkonwar i.e. Sadhana of our people.

In this way, certain symbols are being used in the radio plays from time to time to convey some special meaning. Such symbols can be traced in Hindi radio plays or NPPs and Assamese radio plays like those found in the Western plays. Janma is such a radio play in Assamese. Ajay and Avinash, the two educated unemployed young men are greatly and impatiently agitated seeing the moral degradation and superstition of the people. They dream of a new society. They throw away a stinking piece of bone which stands for a society suffering from conservatism and destruction. The gun in their hands is the means for the creation of a new society after demolishing the old one. It is the means to shape their future. They keep it ever ready. In Bagh (written by Himendra Kumar Borthakur), every character stands for a tiger in his or her propensity. This is amply illustrated through the conversation among Shanti Ram, Pradip and Thaneshwar,¹ which deduces that man has adopted the nature of a tiger. In the radio play Jiwan Britta (by Ram Goswami), three toys (dolls) represent father, Tapan; mother, Pratibha and son, Jon Mani. Jon Mani wants to express the tense relation between his mother and father through the toys. Thus, a forceful depiction of the conflicting tendencies has been done in the symbolic radio plays.

The Assamese lyrical plays are, no doubt, inferior to those of Hindi radio plays or NPPs from the point of view of characterisation which has already become evident from the NPP महानिकायण broadcast on 23-07-1992 in the AIR national channel. It is true that there is a dearth of such radio plays in Assamese which project the modern socio-economic and political problems. In the Assamese radio play Jaidrath Badh, the characters of Krishna and Arjuna have been focussed to some extent. The Hindi radio play Andha Yug written by Dharamvir Bharti expresses

¹ Borthakur, Himendra Kumar: Bagh, P-3
the disaster as a result of a world war in future in the context of the *Mahabharat* battle fought between the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*. The story of *Andha Yug* starts from the evening of the eighteenth day of the *Mahabharat* battle and continues till the death of Krishna in *Prayas Tirtha*. In this play, both the internal and external conflicts are equally forceful. It highlights two important aspects – one represents the real truth or the outcome of misdeeds of king Dhritarastra and the other the conflicting mental conditions of the modern age. The ugliness of Aswathama’s mind in *Andha Yug* is that of the modern man. Thus, the Hindi *radio* lyrical plays are multidirectional in their themes whereas those in Assamese are unidirectional. The majority of *radio* plays in Hindi are thought provoking while those in Assamese are sentimental. The former is full of external and internal conflicts whereas the latter lags behind in this respect.

Thus, it is found that almost all types of *radio* plays—historical, mythological, lyrical, social, absurd, propaganda, symbolic including satire and children plays have been written in both the languages—Hindi and Assamese and broadcast from time to time through their respective *AIR* stations. Comparatively, the number of Hindi NPPs would be less than the regional language plays particularly the Assamese *radio* plays broadcast through *AIR*, Guwahati. This is because of the fact that the Hindi NPPs are broadcast once in every month on 4th Thursday at 9.30 p.m. only while Assamese *radio* plays are broadcast on every Sunday at 1.10 p.m., Monday at 9.30 p.m. and Wednesday at 8.00 p.m. respectively. Moreover, regional version of Hindi NPPs are also broadcast from *AIR*, Guwahati as per its scheduled date and time. Therefore, the scope of Assamese *radio* plays to highlight variety of socio-economic, cultural and political problems faced by our society, is more than the Hindi NPPs since their number is few as compared to the number of Assamese *radio* plays broadcast and the listeners are also more acquainted and attached to these local *radio* plays. The playwrights have a great responsibility in serving their proper duties towards the listeners including the children. The Assamese *radio* play *Moi Tunie Tuntunalon* by Navakanta Baruah became more popular among the children.
It is also found that there is no chance of losing originality in respect of the Assamese radio plays as they are produced and broadcast in their original forms the playwrights have written for the medium. But, as opposed to this, there is a major chance of losing the originality of the NPPs mainly when they are adapted into the regional languages and/or translated from the language of their origin. This has often happened and noticed many times when knowingly or unknowingly the words and local dialects are inducted which do not generally match the original ones and provide a different meaning than that of the meaning the original playwrights have assigned. So, a great care and cautions are required to be taken while adapting and translating the Hindi NPPs into other languages.

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