CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

At present in India there are many tribal dialects in oral form which are on the verge of becoming extinct. These dialects are spoken by ancient tribes which have a distinct multi-faceted, ancient culture. A large portion of these cultures is reflected in and expressed through their oral literatures. While the tribal communities of India, particularly the Muduvan, are fast shifting towards urban centres, the primary loss is the gradual erasure of their oral literature. Their rich and varied literatures are transferred and sustained orally from one generation to another. In postcolonial agenda, these literatures have to be included to expand the literary canon. The Muduvans are one of the prominent tribal communities of South India. They have several literatures of their own which are related to their life, personal experiences and reminiscences, human imagination and perception and cultural lore and are part of their folklore in unscripted oral form. These are performed appropriately in various situations and contexts of their daily life. The word ‘performed’ can be most appropriately used here in lieu of the word ‘narrated’ or ‘told’ etc., because every expression of an oral form of literature is verily a performance co-opting the performer and the audience and the text stretches wide to include a large semiotic realm that consists of linguistic/ spoken signs, body language, the reaction of and participation of the listener/ audience, all of which are located in the pre-text of the group’s
shared cultural memory. The difficulty of translating this total semiosis into words in a language and then again into English is addressed later in this thesis more elaborately. Suffice it here to say that the oral text is much more complex than the written text when placed before the translator and offers several challenges. Muduvans converse in a language which has a palpable similarity to both Tamil and Malayalam. But many unique and subtle words need to be clarified from the Muduvans themselves. While the imperial epistemological interests designated unscribed literature as inferior to literatures that were written and had a documented history, the postcolonial perspective critiques the former stand and includes these numerous and heterogeneous oratures as worthy of serious attention. However it has to be stated that European/Colonial interest via anthropological studies first brought oratures into the fold of academic concern either because in dialect form they have shifted greatly from narrative forms or are unique at the dialect and does not relate to any of the neighbouring languages. The Muduvan dialect comes from the Proto-South Dravidian language which is the hypothetical origin of all South Dravidian languages and dialects. It is rich, pleasing to ear, and enunciated with a consistent musicality.

So far anthropological studies on tribes and tribal settlements demonstrate a study of the physical features and genealogies, social customs, marriages, food habits, methods of cultivation, hunting and other activities, migratory patterns, clothing, family hierarchy, birth, puberty and
death rituals and domestic and social kinship. In other words, anthropologists concentrate their studies on social, ethnic and racial categories and include oral literatures as one of the aspects of study, especially as providing information on the above. Of these, the pioneers in India were James H. Hutton, Verrier Elwin, Sarat Chandra Roy, Dhirendra Nath and other scholars. On the other end of the same period, studies were undertaken by eminent scholars like Thomas Burrow, M.B. Emeneau, and M.N. Srinivasan on South Indian tribes. These later studies resulted in the production of a series of etymological dictionaries of which Emeneau’s *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* is till date the most widely renowned.

Here the attempt is to approach a dialect locating it in a linguistic map and to study it from that angle in which incidental importance may be given to anthropological details as aiding the main focus of study. In between these two ends, a third perspective has since emerged. Folklore scholars such as Jawaharlal Handoo, A.K Ramanjuan, S. Sakthivel, and Chitrasen Pasayat were among the earliest to collect oral literatures and take the initiative to put them in print. These collections were appreciated outside the proper area of what is studied as literature. Many such scholars have emerged in India since the 1950’s. Printing the oral literature with dialect variations in the last decade via translations have also emerged. So far, these are the predominant approaches or interests in studying the life and culture of tribes. Down the ages, print literature has been acknowledged as a part of
the literary canon and has alone been considered as proper literature. This thesis takes a tentative step towards considering oral literatures as part of what is academically understood as literature. Such an effort begins with innumerable handicaps.

1. The multiple availability of oral texts or its fluidity.

2. The absence of prior critical approaches which could have established a sense of literary criticism about oral literatures.

3. The absence of set parameters that define what is properly the oral literature of a tribe from the speech that permeates their life from morning to night.

This besides, the exercise in accommodating research in oral literature within the academic boundaries where studies in oral literature and language are yet to become a wide spread phenomenon. The viability of this thesis rests on a three-fold claim: (i) incorporating the oral literature of the Muduvan tribe expands the interests of literary studies; (ii) In inscribing them (first in Malayalam script during field work) and transliterating it in the Roman script, a modest attempt is made to preserve it and (iii) This thesis translates them into English while at the same time highlighting the problematic areas. The texts of oral literature collected from the Muduvans are classified genre-wise and the division of the various chapters are based on this classification. Oral texts of Muduvans in their original form are the primary source of study in this thesis. They are collected by intense field
works which include various levels of interaction by staying with them in their settlements and participating in their community life.

The research scholar stayed with them in one of their settlements named Susanikudi in Idukki District in Kerala in the month of February in 2007 and visited adjacent settlements named Theerthamalakudi and Sembatti. Later in the month of February in 2010, the research scholar stayed with them for fifteen days in the same settlement and visited a few other settlements named Periyakudi, Kaavakkudi, Kulthu Kallu Kudi and Nellippatti. In between from 2007 to 2010 many visits were conducted to attend the festivals and ceremonies, of the Muduvans by the research scholar. Several brief visits to the Muduvan settlements were more welcome by the tribe. The research scholar was always careful not to intrude into the work routine and daily round of their life which demands hard-work up the hills. However, during festivals the Muduvans are released and in a celebratory mood and consequently receptive to the request to sing and narrate and readily and generously share their vast repertoire of oral literatures with the visitor. Hence the longer visits were made during the Karthikeri lamp-festival in November and during the post-harvest Pongal festival in January. With the consent of the Muduvans most of the texts were recorded. A large collection of photographs were also taken. The Muduvans were friendly, unselfconscious and never felt the strain of performance while being recorded. The elders and young alike
were forthcoming, while the elders had more songs and tales in their repertoire. This aspect which was noticed by the research scholar only strengthened the conviction that in spite of bringing the living form of the oral literature into the closed form of print/inscription, the effect would ensure the documentation of the same and into continued existence through to invoke a well-known yet appropriate thought from literary theory, ‘thrice removed from reality’, distance by scribing and/or recording, inscriptions in Roman alphabet and finally translation in that order.

The benevolent Muduvans, who hosted the research scholar as a part of their community, enriched him with renderings of their oral forms performed in various situations and contexts. The stay with them enhanced the research scholar to know more, about their culture and tradition and how their life is interrelated with their oral literature, apart from the anthropological and sociological data available that the research scholar is aware of. Scholars like Edgar Thurston, Krishna Iyer, Nettur P. Damodaran, M.V. Vishnunamboothiri, C. K. Karunakaran, Sathyanarayan and others have studied them in the field of anthropology and sociology in a conventional way but they have not studied oral literature as literature per se nor looked at the contradiction. It is also noticed that any print form of Muduvan literature is not available as of now. Hence a sizeable portion of their oral which were inscribed, taped or recorded as and how possible from the spot and transliterated and translated wherever necessary is, it is
hoped, a continuation to the archives of oral literature. The different
genres of the oral literatures of the Muduvan fall into the following genres
taking the one from their context of production and their own identification
of the texts by these names.

1. Āśaippāṭṭu (Love-song)
2. Tālāṭṭu (Lullaby)
3. Kummippāṭṭu
4. Festival Songs
5. Work Songs
6. Oppāri (Death-song)
7. Tales
8. Proverbs
9. Riddles

All the above genres are studied and some of these genres are
categorized under different sub-genres depending upon their theme. Each
genre has its relevance on different occasions. The Muduvans sing songs
mainly at the time of marriage, religious rituals and festivals, during work
and occasions of death etc. Tales are narrated when the day’s work is
done, especially in the evenings. Other oral forms such as proverbs and
riddles appear in daily life in different situations whenever appropriate.
Subsuming the oratures into various genres and sub-genres helps to understand and study their poetics. An ethnopoetics study is envisaged in this thesis by taking the oratures of Muduvans while at the same time considering them as part of their folklore.

This chapter briefly discusses the culture, tradition and geographical location of Muduvan tribe drawn mainly by personal visits. It also discusses various theories and concepts like folklore, orature and ethnopoetics. Although this thesis is an ethnopoetic study of Muduvan oral literature, considerable space has been devoted in this chapter to outline the socio-cultural aspects of Muduvan life because; firstly, this being a pioneering attempt at the study of oral literatures in the literary canon, the producers of this literature have to be introduced and secondly oral literature, being the prime focus, a great deal of attention has been paid to this aspect.

The Muduvan Tribes: Nomenclature, Location, Kinship and Social Structures

This section briefly discusses the Muduvan tribe, their geographical location, culture, daily activities and life. These are collected from field trips to the various Muduvan settlements. But anthropological and sociological data are drawn whenever necessary from secondary sources to substantiate relevant arguments. This section aims to place Muduvan oral
literature within their cultural and social life and subsequently facilitates the following chapters, in the study and the translation of the texts.

Kerala is a coastal southern state of India lying between the imposing Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea and shares its borders with other two states, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The majority of the prominent tribal communities of Kerala live mainly on the summits of the Western Ghats of Kerala-Tamil Nadu Border. The State has a total of thirty five Scheduled Tribes as per 2001 Census of India which comprises 1.14 percent of total population. According to Rajendran (218) and Vishnunamboothiri (776) Muduvans are found in the Idukki district of Kerala. In and around Anamalai (the word might have derived from the words ‘ānai’ and ‘malai’ which means ‘elephant’ and ‘mountain’ respectively in both Malayalam and Tamil languages) hills, the highest peak in western Ghats (2,695 meters), is the main habitat of Muduvans. “Besides Muduvans, some other tribes, such as Kadar, Malasar, Mala Pulayan, Paliyan, Eraavallan, Mannan, Mala Arayan, and Urali also inhabit different parts of the vast ranges of the Anamalai hills” (Sathyanarayanan, 174).

Regarding the peculiarity of the geographical location of this region Sathyanarayanan further states that:

The main range of the Anamalai hills has a general direction of northwest to southwest with elevation ranging from 3000 to 8000 feet above Mean Sea Level. The eastern slopes of the
Anamalai hills fall in the Madurai and Coimbatore districts of Tamil Nadu State while the western slopes descend to the Palghat, Trichur, Ernakulam and Idukki districts of Kerala State. (ibid).

An anomaly prevails in the Census of India records regarding the exact number of Muduvan population right from the beginning of 1901 onwards due to the presence of another tribal community with the name ‘Mudugar’ which is listed together with Muduvans as a single tribe. The term Muduvan and Muduvar are interchangeable, however.

Francis recorded the number of Muduvans as 1,754 in Volume XV of the Census of India, 1902, Madras, and they were named as ‘Mudugar’ and ‘Muduvar’ (168). Aiyar recorded the number of Muduvans as 808 in Volume XXVI of the Census of India, 1901, Travancore. He noted that they were immigrants from the kingdom of Madurai and were named as ‘Mutuvan’ (350). According to 2001 Census of India, in Kerala, Muthuvan, Muduvan and Mudugar were clubbed together with a number of 21,266. Many anthropologists have pointed out that Muduvan and Mudugar are two entirely different tribal communities with different geographical locations and cultural differences. Thomas states that:

Muduvars - meaning Muthuvans - are found mainly in Travancore with only insignificant dispersion into the
neighbouring districts of Coimbatore and Madurai, and Cochin State. The Mudugars, on the other hand, are found only in Malabar, and they are a different tribe altogether (51).

Later, Sathynarayanan clarifies further that the confusion existing with regard of the nomenclature of the community put together in the lists of Census of India:

It should be noted here that the Muduvan or Muthuvan represent one and the same communities while the Mudugar constitute altogether a different tribe. The Attappadi area in the Palghat district of Kerala is the habitat of the Mudugar, which is very much away from the Muduvan habitat. The Muduvan and Mudugar do not have any links with each other. The Census of India list, which has clubbed the Muduvan with Mudugar, therefore does not give the correct population of both these tribes. (175)

According to Conner, Muduvans who were basically cultivators from Madurai, probably came to the hill forests of Travancore accompanying some of the Madurai princes at the time of exodus when the Pandyan Rajas entered South or when the Telugu Naickers took possession of Bodinayakannur in the fourteenth century (1-3). But it is also held that Muduvans migrated from Madurai to the hills forced to do so because of
the Muhammadan invaders probably in the later part of the eighteenth century (Aiyar 350). Regarding these arguments Thurston writes that:

> The approximate time of the exodus from Madurai cannot even be guessed by any of the tribe, but it was probably when the Pandyan Rajas entered the South, or more probably when the Telugu Naickers took possession of Bodinaickenum in the fourteenth century. It has also been suggested that the Muduvans were driven to the hills by the Muhammadan invaders in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Judging from the two distinct types of countenance, their language and their curious mixture of customs, I hazard the conjecture that when they arrived in the hills they found a small tribe in possession with whom they subsequently intermarried, this tribe having affinities with the west coast, while the new arrivals were connected with the east. (87)

Muduvans have a belief that “they belong to the Pandyan dynasty” (Rajendran 219). According to Raman, a thirty-four year old Muduvan of Susanikudi in Idukki district, Muduvans belonged to the royal family of Pandyas of Madurai and royal family of Poonjar of Kerala. He further says that since they had close kinship with Poonjar family for years, it was a custom for them to go through Poonjar when they used to go to Sabarimala, a famous temple in Pathanmthitta district of Kerala. The
relation between Pandyan dynasty and Poonjar royal family and the possible relationship of Muduvans with them are noted by some scholars. Sreedhara Menon (24-251) reports the interaction of Pandyans with Kerala and he states that the descendants of Pandyas of Madurai ruled the principalities of Panthalam and Poonjar in the Kerala region. In volume I and II of *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidian Tribes*, Madhava Menon notes that Poonjar chieftains claimed to be the descendents from the Pandyan dynasty and due consideration is given to Muduvans by them. Thomas examines the brief historical references of Emily Hatch and Shungoonny Menon regarding Poonjar principality and states, “Poonjar Chieftains originally belonged to Madurai and they are either direct or collateral descendants of the Pandyan Kings” and “the family was displaced from native Madurai, and sought refuge in the Travancore hills, due to internal dissensions or foreign aggression” (65-66). By analyzing and relating the oral history of Muduvans with historical data and facts available, Rajendran states that it is possible to say that:

... the descendents of the Pandyan kings of Madurai ruled Panthalam and Poonjar till the 19th century. In between 14th and 19th century owing to the political and and economical problems, internal feuds and foreign invasions, the disgruntled people of Madurai left the place and sought refuge in the sheltering forests of Kerala. Those Pandya princes who left
Madurai after the 12th century and came to Poonjar and Panthalam became the kings of the principalities. Those who came from Madurai after the 14th century got tribalised in the forests near Poonjar. (220)

In Malayalam and in Tamil ‘Muduvan’ refers to those who carry something on their back (Mutugu or Muthuku). Etymologically ‘Muduvan’ means way old or ancient. This is more concerning semantic possibility, though the former interpretation is widely spread and accepted by scholars. It is common among Muduvans to carry their babies on back while climbing up the hills, going for work or even to put them to sleep. This may be one of the reasons why they got the name Muduvan. Many scholars have mentioned about their peculiar way of carrying babies on their back (Iyer 1-48; Damodaran 181). Vishnu Namboothiri has the view that “during their migration from Madurai, they carried the idol of Madurai Meenakshi on their back” and so got the name “Muthuvan” (776). Karunakaran reports that the custom of carrying babies on their back is also seen among Mannan tribes who might have got it due to the interaction with Muduvans for many years (202).

Scholars have observed that Muduvans comprise six matrilineal clans (kūṭṭam): Mēla kūṭṭam, Kāna kūṭṭam, Pūtani kūṭṭam, Tūsani kūṭṭam, Kānayattu kūṭṭam and Ellī kūṭṭam (Nair 7; Vishnu Namboothiri 777; Sathyanarayanan 178). But Karunakaran has reported fourteen clans
among Muduvans (203). These divisions are mainly meant for marriage alliances. Among these clans “the Mela Kottam is considered superior to the other clans and it maintains it alliances only with Kana Kottam. Whereas, the other five clans exchange spouses between themselves” (Sathyanarayanan 178). Matrilineal succession is followed while considering any member to a particular clan. It is noted and said that man’s property goes to his sisters’ children.

The Muduvans’ typical residential hut is one roomed and made up of bamboo, wood sticks, mud and grass. Two or more huts form a kudi or settlement. Kudi is also “the smallest unit of political structure and judicial authority” (Thomas 304). Each family in a particular settlement abides by the rules and regulations of its settlement. At the same time, each family has the freedom to leave the settlement and settle in a different place. This type of migration makes the settlement small or big on the basis of the number of families at a given point of time. All members of a particular settlement participate in any function whether it is a festival or any other rituals. Regarding the pattern of the settlement Sathyanarayanan says:

Every settlement of the Muduvans, whatever be its size consists of a cluster of family-dwelling huts (Saappaattu Voodu), a boys dormitory (or bachelor-hall) called Saavadi Voodu or Saavadi located at the entrance of the settlement, a girls dormitory cum seclusion hut (for menstruating women)
known as Thinna Voodu situated away from the boys dormitory but inside the settlement and a temple hut (Koyilu or Saami Voodu) constructed a little away from the main huts-cluster of the settlement for purity reasons. The family dwelling huts are rectangular in shape and each hut is built separately leaving little space around it. A family hut generally has two compartments, the front one serving as verandah where guests are served tea and food and the inner compartment, which is relatively more spacious, is used as kitchen cum sleeping room. (175)

A notable feature of their settlement is dormitory system for both men and women. The dormitories and bachelor-halls are a unique feature of the communal life of Muduvans. Boys and girls of more than nine or ten years of age, unmarried men and old people sleep in their respective dormitories. The male dormitory is also called as Ilandari Madam which is bigger and rectangular in size and situated mainly at the entrance of the settlement. The eldest unmarried male member of the dormitory is termed as Veli Ilandaari. He wears a title ring that he can wear till he leaves the dormitory to get married. After that the title is conferred to the next eldest unmarried man. Under his leadership and direction that the youngsters do the duties like cleaning the place, bringing water and even helping in agriculture and other businesses of the settlements. In the evenings men gather together
in it around the fire pit and narrate the important incidents and experiences of the day in the forest. It is also a place for giving accommodation for visitors of other settlements and even for outsiders. Separating from the parents from the ninth or tenth year and entry into the dormitory with the peers of the same age gives these boys great freedom of expression, while initiating them into social and communal responsibilities of man-hood. The research scholar visited and stayed with them in the dormitories of Theerthamala, Periyakudi and Kavakudi and heard some of their stories and songs. The women’s dormitory is called as *Kumari Madam* and usually comprises of two compartments. Scholars have indicated on this; in the first compartment women who are free from pollution, those who are unmarried, widows and female guests sleep. The second compartment is for those who are menstruating and those who delivered a baby. (Sathyanarayanan 178; Vishnunamboothiri 778)

One of the significant features of Muduvan’s communal life is their practice of sharing and eating of food known as *Kūti Tinnutu*, literally means ‘Eating Together’. Bachelors of same age form groups and visit each household and eat by sharing from a plate. Muduvans usually cook some extra food for bachelors who visit the household. If food is not available in one house the bachelors, especially under the supervision of *Veli Ilandaari* collect food from other houses and give it to the former. If guests are there in the settlement even married members practice this custom of eating
together. The research scholar could join their group and eat food in this peculiar way that they usually never allow for an outsider. Muduvans eat mainly two times a day; morning around eight and evening around seven.

Each settlement has its own socio-judicial structure to solve problems that arise within and outside of it. The leaderships of the settlement rest on the *mūpan* or *kāni* and the *thalaivar*. In some settlements these two posts are managed by the same person only. *Kāni* is the authority to decide on the internal problems and other matters arise in a settlement. Under his leadership and consent usually rituals and festivals are conducted and celebrated. Thalaivar usually keep the rapport with forest and other government officials. “While kāni is thus a kind of ‘minister of the interior’, talaivar is the ‘minister of exterior’” (Nair 11)

It is said that traditionally Muduvans were shifting cultivators and hunters. They cut down some trees and bushes and make the land ready for cultivating vegetables and millet and sometimes rice-grain. But at present they are not allowed to do so by the Forest Department and hence some land is allotted to them for cultivation. Nowadays they have switched over to cash-crop cultivation like lemon grass, cardamom and pepper. They collect wild fruits, roots and honey for their consumption. Women participate frequently in cultivation; but their main duties are to rear children and run the household works. Women are denied ancestral property. Women are not allowed to involve in social and political activities.
Performance of various rituals and festivals are under the control of men only. Women are confined to household works and hardly come out from their settlements. In such a way Muduvans allow only secondary status to women.

Muduvans have different rituals during different life situations. Scholars like Vishnunamboothiri (776-78) and Karunakaran (199-211) give detailed description about various rituals and customs of Muduvans. For marriage, the preferred mate for the Muduvan is the matrilineal cross cousin. Pre-puberty marriages were practiced in the past, but now-a-days it is infrequent. The mates are acquired generally through negotiation.

When a Muduvan boy attains adolescence, usually at the age of sixteen, they perform a ceremony of tying the turban called *Urumala Kettu*, an adolescent rite for the boy which also indicates that he is old enough to get married. Usually, his maternal uncle is the chief officiator for this ceremony. After the boy is bathed by him, a turban is tied with a cloth of three to four feet long, purchased by the parents or elders. The wearing of the turban symbolizes the passage from boyhood to manhood. After tying the turban he starts growing his hair. Wearing the turban also indicates that he is old enough to marry. A feast follows after the ceremony. For girls the ceremony is known as *Kondakettu* conducted immediately after she attains puberty. She is secluded in the *thennu veedu* and observes a pollution period of five days. After bath her hair is tied in a special manner
and adorned with flowers. She is presented with new dresses and a communal feast follows.

After the sixth month of pregnancy, the husband leaves the house and stays in the Bachelor’s hut. When the pain begins, the woman is lodged in the *thennu veedu* where she is assisted by her elder female relatives who act as midwives. Pollution lasts for thirty days and only after that the male members of the family and community are allowed to see the child. On the thirtieth day, the mother and child are taken to the home. A feast is conducted and the ceremony is called *virunnu* (feast). The naming of the child usually takes place on the day of *virunnu* or on any other day within a year.

Muduvans did not have much interaction with others in the past. But nowadays modern elements have come in their settlements and they interact more with the mainstream society. Once in a week they climb down the hills with vegetables and things to sell in the adjacent market. Only the men folk come out from the settlements and women folk are confined themselves to the settlements. Many settlements have solar panel, television and radio given by governments. Most of the Muduvans are not educated. Boys usually study up to primary level and girls seldom go to school. Earlier, those who went to school were excommunicated. But at present, the situation has changed a lot and there are Tamil medium and Malayalam medium schools in the settlement itself, run by government
agencies. But they speak their own dialect which has apparent affinities with Tamil and Malayalam. There is no written script for their language. They orally transmit their songs, stories, proverbs and other oral forms from one generation to another. These oral forms are an integral part of their life. So to document Muduvan oratures, one has to actually visit the settlement, stay there and inscribe/record and thus acquire the primary sources for study and/or translation.

Folklore: Concepts and Definitions

Intellectual outflow in western countries in the nineteenth century due to romanticism and nationalism resulted in accumulating vast knowledge about various cultures, traditions and civilizations might have resulted in a new branch of systematic and scientific study called ‘folklore studies’. Each country tried to maintain that they had rich and varied literature in those fields which were unnoticed and unexplored till then. The rigorous study of folklore of different countries paved the way for many new interdisciplinary works, especially, in the field of anthropology, sociology, history, literature and linguistics. The translated quotation of Roland Barthes by James Clifford in *Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* states:

> Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let it go). To do something
interdisciplinary it’s not enough to choose a “subject” (theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinary consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one. (1)

The word ‘folklore’ was first introduced to English by William John Thoms in 1846 by combining the words ‘folk’ and ‘lore’. In his letter to the journal ‘The Athenaeum’ by using the name Ambrose Merton, Thoms wrote:

Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though by-the-by it is more a Lore than a literature, and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folklore,—the Lore of the People)—that I am not without hopes of enlisting your aid in garnering the few ears which are remaining, scattered over that field from which our forefathers might have gathered a goodly crop.

No one who has made the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time his study, but must have arrived at two conclusions:—the first how much that is curious and interesting in those matters is now entirely lost—the second, how much may yet be rescued by timely exertion. (4-5)
Here his concern is more to consider folklore as Popular Antiquities. Since then many scholars have tried to define folk and folklore in different ways and have listed the facts, concepts and ideas can be attributed to it. The folk are considered the lower stratum of society in terms of class, education, civilization and progress. In the essay “The Method of Folklore” Andrew Lang states his view on folk and folklore:

There is a form of study, Folklore, which collects and compares the similar but immaterial relics of old races, the surviving superstitions and stories, the ideas which are in our time but not of it. Properly speaking, folklore is only concerned with the legends, customs, beliefs, of the folk, of the people, of the classes which have least been altered by education, which have shared least in progress. But the student of folklore soon finds that these unprogressive classes retain many of the beliefs and ways of savages (11).

Some other older ideas of folklore by experts are mentioned in the article “Definitions of Folklore” in Journal of Folklore Research, reprinted from Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend by Maria Leach. Out of many definitions, some are mentioned below. Stith Thompson is of the view that “The common idea present in all folklore is that of tradition, something handed down from one person to another and preserved either by memory or practice rather than written
record” (263). Archer Taylor states that “Folklore consists of materials that are handed on traditionally from generation to generation without a reliable ascription to an inventor or author” (263). Richard A. Waterman states that “Folklore is that art form, comprising various types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations, and other formulas, which employs spoken language as its medium” (264). Another expert William R. Bascom’s view is that “folklore can be defined as verbal art” (256). Diverse views concerning folklore are incorporated here and many of them try to define folklore in terms of using words like ‘tradition’, ‘spoken’, ‘verbal’, ‘communal’, transmission’, ‘oral’, ‘preserved’ and so on (255-264).

As mentioned above there are different concepts and definitions of folklore and this may be the reason why Alan Dundes says, “Perhaps the most common criterion for definition is the means of the folklore’s transmission. Specifically, folklore is said to be or to be in “oral tradition”” (The Study of Folklore 1). This criterion does not sustain since what all materials which are orally transferred need not be folklore as Bascom says “All folklore is orally transmitted, but not all that is orally transmitted is folklore” (“Folklore and Anthropology” 28). To solve the definitional problem, Alan Dundes uses the approach to break the term ‘folklore’ into ‘folk’ and ‘lore’. In his seminal text The Study of Folklore (1965) he states:

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 still have some traditions which it calls its own. (2)

He then tries to define ‘lore’ by giving a long list. He states:

Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessing, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas (e.g., see you later, alligator). It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g., fiddle tunes), folksongs (e.g., lullabies, ballads), folk speech (e.g., slang), folk similes (e.g., blind as a bat), folk metaphors (e.g., to paint the town red), and names (e.g., nicknames and place names). Folk poetry ranges from oral epics to autograph-book verse, epiths, latrinalia (writings on the walls of public bathrooms), limericks, ball-bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes (to bounce children on the knee), counting-out rhymes (to determine who will be ‘it’ in games) and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers (e.g., graces); practical jokes; folk etymologies... This
list provides a sampling of the forms of folklore. It does not include all the forms. (3)

Even though a long list of customs and social activities are given, he has not defined folklore clearly. Folklore has acquired different meaning depending upon the usage by different people. Jan Harold Brunvand says that “folklore may be defined as those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or by means of customary example” (4) and associates five qualities with folklore. The first point is that folklore is oral; that is, it passes by word of mouth from one person to another and from one generation to another. The second point is that folklore is traditional; it is passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or standard form and it circulates among members of a particular group. The third point associated with folklore is that it exists in different forms; oral transmission creates different versions of the same text. The fourth point is that folklore is usually anonymous; the author’s names never part of texts that are orally transmitted. The fifth point is that most folklore tends to become formularized; it is expressed partly in clichés that may range from simple set phrases and patterns of repetition to elaborate opening and closing devices or whole passages of traditional verbal stereotypes (The Study of American Folklore, 4-6).
The meaning of folklore has changed substantially through the ages. It has become more context and performance based and socially oriented. Dan Ben-Amos in the article “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context” states that “folklore is artistic communication in small groups” (13). For him folklore is an organic phenomenon and it can be a body of knowledge, a mode of thought or a kind of art. As per that folklore has no existence if taken away from the social context. Richard Bauman considers folklore as action. His focus is on folklore as performance; “the real integration between people and lore on the empirical level. This is to conceptualize the social base of folklore, in terms of the actual place of the lore in social relationship and its use in communicative interaction” (33). Performance can be considered as the practical side of folklore. Folklore gets its momentum through the active interaction of individuals or groups by sharing what they have received from others and what they have experienced. Since most of the social interactions are situation oriented, the lively enactment or performance of folklore has its effect in every social group. Roger D. Abrahams states “Folklore is a collective term for those traditional items of knowledge that arise in recurring performances. The concept of folklore is unthinkable without those compositions, for they are the channels of wisdom and entertainment, but for folklore to exist it must be enacted” (195). Even though experts have tried to solve the definitional problems of folklore by giving definitions anew, any clear definition or
description of folklore that suits all aspects has not been stated so far. And a new term like ‘folklife’ has dominated folklore. Richard M. Dorson in his book *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (1972) says:

In recent years another term, Folklife, has vied with and even threatened to dominate folklore. The supporters of folklife studies claim that folklorists are too narrowly preoccupied with verbal forms and neglect the tangible products of folk artisans. They maintain that folklife embraces the whole panorama of traditional culture, including oral folklore. (2)

He is of the view that folklore and folklife may be placed under four groupings; ‘oral literature’, ‘material culture’, ‘social folk custom’ and ‘performing folk art’. Oral literature is sometimes called “verbal art or expressive literature”. Various traditions, songs, tales, sayings, speeches, narratives and utterances come under this grouping. Material culture or physical folklife “responds to techniques, skills, recipes and formulas transmitted across the generations and subject to the same forces of conservative tradition and individual variation as verbal art”. In social folk custom the focus is on “group interaction rather than on individual skills and performances”. Various customs related to marriage, birth, death, religious practices, festivals etc. are put under this grouping. In the fourth grouping, performing folk arts, the emphasis is on traditional music, dance, drama, rendition of folksongs and folktales and other performances. (2-5).
Folklore: Theories

Since folklore is related to diverse subjects, various arguments and theories have been formulated and propounded by scholars in course of time. Folklorists have borrowed various theories, concepts and methods to study and analyse folklore scientifically and systematically. Experts like Richard M. Dorson (7-47) and Mazharul Islam (35-150) have given a brief idea about the various current theories of folklore in their works.

1. The Historical-Geographical

It is a Finnish method used by comparative folklorists to trace the history of folktales and to study how folktales and even folksongs spread geographically. Jacob Grimm, Theoder Benfey, Max Muller, Frazer, Andrew Lang and others have contributed to this method. According to the Finnish method, a tale originates in a particular time and place. Often, quite many versions of the same tale are available in many parts of the world. Ever since the tale originated, it might have spread to different locations as a result of individual or group interactions by travel, trade or any other means, a process called diffusion.

Scholars like Stith Thomson, W.E. Roberts, Archer Taylor and Holger Olof Nygard supported Finnish method by pointing out various tales and ballads to which this method of dispossession can be applied. But there are some scholars who showed the drawbacks of this method. Among them are Albert Wesselski, Carl von Sydow, Raider Christiansen, Laurits Bodker
and Walter Anderson (Islam 66; Dorson 8-12). These critics are of the view that it is not possible practically to gather all the variants of the same tale or song and the “Finnish method reduces tale studies to statistical abstracts, summaries, symbols, tables and maps, ignoring aesthetic and stylistic elements and the human side of the narrator” (Dorson 9).

2. Historical-reconstructional

Historical application of folklore is used in the method. Scattered evidences of historical periods are brought together with the use of folklore and folklife materials. Jacob Grimm was attracted by this method. Dorson gives an example of William Lynwood Montell’s book *The Saga of Coe Ridge* (1970) subitled *A Study in Oral History* which narrates the history of the Negro community established in the foothills of southern Kentucky after the Civil War. Through the oral data, Montell tries to reconstruct folk attitudes and events of local history (15). Ideological theory of folklore tries to identify the ideological aspects and ideals which are expressed in folklore materials of a particular nation, communal group, working class and so on. There are evidences that themes like nationalism, political ideology, class conflicts, Marxist principles etc are expressed in folklore especially in countries like Germany and Russia. Dorson quotes from “folkloristics” written by Sokolov, a Russian academician, "(1) Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the
present. (2) Folklore has been, and continues to be, a reflection and a weapon of class conflict” (17).

3. Functional theory

The role and function of folklore in a particular culture is the main concern in functional theory. Sometimes folklore acts as a tool to teach the members of a particular society and acts as a vehicle to preserve and transfer traditional knowledge and helps the culture to flourish. William Bascom is one of the main articulators of functional role of folklore. In his article “Four Functions of Folklore” Bascom states four main functions of folklore. The first is escape; escape in fancy from frustration and suffering of individuals. The second function is validation; to justify the various customs and rituals of the society. The third function is education; to inculcate values in a society. The fourth function is social control. (333-49).

Regarding Bascom’s functional role Dorson states:

Expanding the viewpoint of Bronislaw Malinowski in *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (1926), Bascom calls attention to various functional role of folklore. Proverbs help settle legal decisions, riddles sharpen wits, myths validate conduct, satirical songs release pent-up hostilities. So the anthropologist searches for context as well as text. A tale is not a dictated text with interlinear translation, but a living recitation delivered to a responsive audience for such cultural purposes as
reinforcement of custom and taboo, release of aggressions through fantasy, pedagogical explanations of the natural world, and application of pressures for conventional behavior. (21)

4. Anthropological theory

Anthropological theories of folklore began by borrowing concepts mainly from scholars like Edward B. Taylor, Andrew Lang and George Frazer. Later this theory flourished through the contributions of scholars like Franz Boas, Malinowski, Ruth Benedict, Bascom, Levi-Strauss and many others in the field of anthropology. Islam talks about the contributions of some of the above mentioned scholars in his work. He states that Boas had the concept of transmission of tale incidents by diffusion from tribe to tribe through cultural contact. Benedict established the concept of the releasing of suppressed tension in the society through oral literature. Malinowski’s concept was regarding the psychological reflection of the primitive man in their myths. Bascom’s concept was regarding the functional role of folklore (122).

5. Psychoanalytical theory

The psychoanalytical theory of folklore is greatly indebted to psychoanalytical theories put forward and developed by scholars like Sigmund Freud, Karl Abraham, Ernest Jones, Carl G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, Geza Rohein and others. These scholars have analysed various folklore genres by looking into the hidden feelings of human mind like love,
fear, desire and sexual impulses. There are chances that human mind suppresses many such feelings and the psychological outpouring of these results in various folklore genres. Dorson and Islam give a brief description of the scholars and their contribution in this field. In his exploration of the unconscious mind Freud relied on myths and fairy tales, taboos and jests and superstitions. In his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) he says that dreams are the results of the hidden wishes and feelings. For him the Oedipus motif is the best example of man’s suppressed impulse. Karl Abraham’s *Dreams and Myth* (1913) is an early work that employs Freudian method.

Three most energetic analyzers of folk traditions, according to Dorson, are Ernest Jones, Erich Fromm and Geza Rohein. Ernest Jones’ seminal work *On the Nightmare* is about folk beliefs and he mentions the relation between infantile fantasies projected in dreams and folklore. Erich Fromm’s *The Forgotten Language* (1951) is an important work which deals with the psychoanalytical explanations and interpretations of dreams, myths and fairy tales. In the notable work *The Gates of the Dream* (1952), Geza Roheim analyzes many myths and tales and sees that dreams are the precursors of myths and tales. Carl Jung also has contributed to the psychoanalytical theory. He was of the view that all human beings share elements of unconscious psyche. The contents of this collective unconscious are called archetypes. Different variants of myths and tales
are prevalent due to this unconscious psyche (Dorson 25-33; Islam 129-141).

6. Structuralist theory

Another theory which influenced folklore studies was structuralism. Notable figures in this field are Russian formalist Vladimir Propp and French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. Propp’s seminal work entitled *Morphology of the Folktale* is an English translation of the Russian one and came out in 1958. He analyzed various Russian fairy tales and put forward thirty one functions in sequential order which formed the morphology of the fairy tale. “The action slots into which variable actors fit Propp called functions, and the generic actors he called the Hero and the Villain” (Dorson 34). Levi-Strauss’ structural analysis of folklore is based on the geographically different myths like Oedipus Myth and North American Indian Myth to find out the inner structure. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* and *The Raw and the Cooked* are his famous works. “The Structural Study of Myth” is his famous article which talks about mythological interpretations. Dorson talks about the two structural analysts; Propp and Levi-Strauss:

The system of Levi-Strauss relies on a sorting out and rearrangement of the narrative features in the myth, to reveal the inherent structure, while that of Propp follows the story line. These are the two basic kinds of structural analysis, for
which Dundes proposes the terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic, since Levi-Strauss aims at a paradigm or conceptual framework behind the myth while Propp considers the syntax, so to speak, of the tale. These and other structural expositions seek to reduce folklore genres to universal models and formulas. (36)

7. Oral-formulaic theory

Another notable theory of folklore studies is Oral-formulaic theory of folk expression. Orally narrated poems, ballads and epics have specific formulas like alliteration, rhythmic patterns, linking of lines, refrains etc. A narrator uses formulas of these kinds at the time of composition and performance. It also helps him to memorize many folk narratives. Well known proponents of oral-formulaic theory are Milman Parry, Albert Lord and David Bynum. Across cultures, human societies have specific history, customs, rituals and values. Cross-cultural theory of folklore looks at various genres of folklore available in a particular culture to look at how they mirror culture.

8. Folk-cultural theory

The Folk-cultural theory looks the folk life subjects and focuses on historical, geographical, traditional, aesthetic and economic elements which are related to the life of the folk and their culture. Dorson states that “the point of view sponsored by the advocates of folklife studies may
conveniently be labeled “folk-cultural”, a favorite adjective in their vocabulary” (40). He further talks about the scholars in this field like Don Yoder, Henry Glassie and Michael O. Jones (40-41). In the wake of industrialization, urbanization and technology, there are chances of changes and deterioration of rural folk cultures. It is seen that mass media uses such vanishing folklore themes in their production. Mass-cultural theory of folklore focuses on consumption and production of such cultures.

9. Hemispheric theory

The Hemispheric theory put forward by Richard M. Dorson talks about the folklore of the Old and New worlds. According to this theory, Dorson says, “the folklore of each New World country needs to be analyzed in terms of its ethnic-racial and historical ingredients” (44).

10. Contextual theory

Another notable theory in folklore is Contextual theory. The thrust of contextual theory is the relevance of a text in its context. Scholars like Roger Abrahams, Dan Ben-Amos, Alan Dundes, Robert Georges and Kenneth Goldstein deal with contextual ideas.

The ten theories introduced briefly here highlight one or other/several other factors of folklore and each has valid points to make.
Folklore: Development

Even though Thoms coined the word folklore in English first, the concept of folklore had been suggested under the category ‘popular antiquities’ and many European scholars collected and studied large amount of oral literary genres. In the early thirteenth century Snorri Sturluson, an Icelander gathered and studied the ancient Germanic people’s oral literary genre, or ‘skaldic’ verse. Many older folklore ideas are put forth by German philanthropist Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who used the term ‘das volk’ in German to refer ‘the folk’. “Herder focused his musings about folk as art and aesthetics, for he saw these items as clear and untainted reflections of each country’s raw national spirit” (Claus and Korom 30). It can be said that German scholars initiated folklore studies as worthy of serious attention and the credit mainly goes to the Grimm Brothers; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. They collected various German folktales and formulated a theory about their origin. Jacob Grimm, who postulated the theory, was of the view that European languages were related and diverged as a result of the migration of Aryan people in the different parts of the continent. In this process their mythology had disintegrated but could be reconstructed by arranging together the broken down narratives. Bascom states:

Jacob Grimm had contributed to this discovery by his formulation of the regularities of phonetic change which
became known as “Grimm’s Law”. And he used the etymological technique in attempting to identify words in German narratives with reconstructed words of the proto-European language. By this method he believed it would be possible to determine the original nature of characters and objects in the narratives, and thus reconcile the differences between existing European variants, and perhaps to explain some of the deviations in narratives from cultural norms.

(Frontiers of Folklore 3)

Jacob Grimm’s one of the famous work is Deutsche Mythologie. (1854) This work traces the mythology and beliefs of the ancient Germanic people and their cultures, traditions and folktales. This particular work is praised by Thoms and in his famous letter to the journal 'The Anthenaeum', he writes:

The present century has scarcely produced a more remarkable book, imperfect as its learned author confesses it to be, than the second edition of the “Deutsche Mythologie:” and, what is it? — a mass of minute facts, many of which, when separately considered, appear trifling and insignificant, —but, when taken in connection with the system into which his master-mind has woven them, assume a value that he who first recorded them never dreamed of attributing to them.(5)
Apart from Germany, Finland contributed much for the growth and study of folklore. In 1831 ‘The Finnish Literary Society’ was formed. It was a turning point in Finnish language and literature and Finnish folklore. The first notable scholar of Finnish folklore, Elias Lonnrot, became the first secretary of ‘The Finnish Literary Society’. He was attracted by the national epic *Kalevala* and made attempts to collect and combine the scattered pieces. Archer Taylor in his article “Characteristics of German Folklore Studies” (1961) states that “the center of Finnish literary studies and the beginning of Finnish literature is the *Kalevala*, an epic which Elias Lonnrot based on folksongs. Since the time of Lonnrot, folklore always has been regarded as the core of Finland's national literature and culture” (293). Lonnrot’s student and scholar Julius Krohn also spent much time studying *Kalevala*. It was under his son Kaarle Krohn’s leadership that an international folklore society named Folklore Fellow was founded.

In England the concept of folklore was prevalent even before Thomas Percy coined the word. In the middle of eighteenth century, Bishop Thomas Percy started collecting the ballads of England and published them as *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). This seminal work was much responsible for the revival of ballad the in English. William Hone was a writer who collected information on manners and antiquities and published as *Every-day Book* (1826), *Table-Book* (1827-28) and *Year-Book* (1829). Sir Walter Scott, the famous Scottish historical novelist, also contributed in
the field of folklore. His important works in this field were *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–1803) and *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1831). “The first book that appeared with ‘folklore’ in its title is the one entitled: *The Dialect and Folklore of Northamptonshire* by T. Sternberg” (Sankar Sen Gupta 38). It was W.J. Thoms who took an initiative to start the Folklore Society of England in 1878. Scholars like Max Muller, Adalbert Kuhn, Andrew Lang, G.L. Gomme and others worked with this society.

Max Muller was the renowned scholar, contributed much for the evolution of folklore. He was a Sanskrit professor in Oxford University and edited ṚīgVēda. The comparative study started by Jacob Grimm was elaborated by Muller. Bascom stated that Muller had the view that “original Aryan religion and mythology was based on sun worship” and he looked on European narratives as “broken down myths whose meanings were further obscured by the mangling of words as a result of what he called the “disease of language”” (*Frontiers of Folklore* 3). Muller’s *Sacred Books of the East* (1879-1910) is a multi volume work on English translations on Asian religions writings. His other notable works are *Lectures on the Science of Language* (1864) and *Chips from a German Workshop* (1867–75). Theoder Benfey, another Sanskrit and vedic scholar, studied Indian stories and held the view that folktales had the origin in India. His greatest contribution was the edition of *Panchatantra* in 1859. Emmanuel Cosquin, a
follower of Benfey, was another scholar who studied folktales and myths of India and other countries.

Walter K. Kelly, a good translator and a follower of Muller, translated a good number of folklore works into English. His works were not confined only on myths. He was the first scholar who studied extensively on proverbs. His important works were *The Proverbs of All Nations; Compared, Explained and Illustrated* (1861) and *European Tradition and Folklore* (1863). Another famous follower of Muller was George W. Cox. His famous works were *The Manual of Mythology* (1867), *The Mythology of the Aryan Nations* (1870) and *An Introduction to the Science of Comparative Mythology and Folklore* (1881). Edward B. Tylor was the formulator of anthropological theory in folklore. But his theory was used fruitfully by Andrew Lang, a strong critic of Max Muller. He held the view that myths were formed from folktales. Edwin Sydney Hartland was another scholar who used anthropological method in folklore. For him folklore was part of anthropology. Sir James George Frazer, a late contemporary of Edward B. Taylor, was a scholar who contributed to the growth of folklore. For a long period he was a professor in Anthropology at Cambridge University and Liverpool University. His famous works in this field were *Golden Bough* (1890), *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910), *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (1918), *The Worship of Nature* (1926), and *Man, God, and Immortality* (1927).
Through the efforts of the above mentioned scholars and their works folklore studies flourished to an extent in Europe in nineteenth century. But there were some the American scholars who made it clear that folklore should be studied scientifically. The establishment of American Folklore Society in 1888 was the initial effort in folklore studies in America. Stith Thompson was the pioneer in this field. He was an English professor in Indiana University and established the First Folklore institute in America. His famous work in the field of folklore was Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (1932–37). After Thomson, it was Richard M. Dorson who contributed much in the study of folklore. His famous works were American Folklore (1959), and Folklore and Folklife (1972). Archer Tylor was a scholar who scientifically studied proverbs and his book, The Proverbs (1931), was an authentic work in this field. Maria Leech was an another famous scholar in folklore and he edited Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend (1959). Alan Dundes was considered as the main folklorist after Dorson and published a number of articles and books related to folklore and folklore studies. Some of his famous books were The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales (1964), Interpreting Folklore (1980), Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: A Portrait of German Culture Through Folklore. (1984) and Folklore Matters (1989).
India’s folklore is rich because of its heterogenous different cultures and traditions and diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious features. Folklore studies in India have got its current status from the very beginning when folklore studies got its momentum in England and in other European countries. Mazharul Islam is of the view that India attained a rich and complicated folklore due to its long and steady history and diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. These characteristics of Indian folklore attracted Western scholars and they studied and examined various myths and folktales and propounded theories like Indianist theory of folktale origin, solar theory of myth origin and linguistic theory of origin of Western, Asian and European languages. Even though these theories could not sustain for long, India’s contributions in the world of folklore materials were widely accepted (118). Peter J. Claus and Frank J. Korom in their book *Folkloristics and Indian Folklore* (1991) states that India has a long history of folk performance tradition that continue to thrive and proliferate. This rich folk culture makes India a notable place for Indian and foreign folklorists to do research. “A resurgence of interest in Indian folklore among Western folklorists has drawn scholars from other disciplines into the field and has challenged them to re-examine many complacently held notions about Indian cultural history” (6).

The initial efforts to collect and analyze folklore materials in India was made by foreign travelers and scholars, British administrators and
missionaries. Evidences of such efforts can be seen in Journals of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay (est. 1804), Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (est. 1829) and in journals like (est. 1872) Indian Antiquary established in 1874 and The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay in 1886, states Indra Deva (198). Recent scholars like Mazharul Islam and S. Sakthivel, in their seminal works, give descriptions about early European scholars and their works. In his monumental work *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829), James Tod studied Indian society by using Indian folkloristic materials. Mary Frere’s *Old Decan Days* (1868), Maive Stokes’ *Indian Fairy Tales* (1879), George Grierson’s *A Bihar Peasant Life* (1885), R.C. Temple’s *Legends of the Panjab* (1884), Charles Swynnerton’s *The Adventures of the Panjab Hero Raja Rasalu and Other Folk tales of the Panjab* (1884) and *Indian Night’s Entertainment* (1892), William Crooke’s *An Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1894), P.O. Bodding’s *Santal Folk Tales* (1925) and *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore* (1925), Hinton Knowles’ *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* (1885) and *Folk Tales of Kashmir* (1888), Verrier Elwin’s *Myths of Middle India* (1949) and *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954), Thomas Hodson’s *The Primitive Culture of India* (1922), Herbert Risley’s *People of India* (1915), Charles Kinkid’s *Decan Nursery Tales: Or, Fairy Tales from the South* (1914), William Rivers’ *Monograph of Toda* (1906), Edward Tuite
Dalton’s *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (1872), G. H. Dument’s *Bengali Folklore from Dinajpur* (1872), Father Dehon’s *The religion and Customs of the Uraons* (1905-07), S.W. Fallan’s *A Dictionary of Hindustani Proverb* (1886), Campbell’s *Santal Folk Tales* (1891), Georgiana Kingscote’s *Tales of the Sun or Folklore of Southern India* (1890), Charles E. Gover’s *The Folk Songs of South India* (1871), James Long’s *Eastern Proverbs and Emblems* (1810, Anderson’s *Collection of Kachari Folklore and Rhymes* (1895) and many others’ contribution to Indian folklore are laudable. (Sakthivel 4-6; Islam 116-17). Crooke’s *Folklore of India* deals with the beliefs, customs, rituals and superstitious practices of Hindu religion. Some selected ancient Indian beliefs and legends like The Golding of Nature, The Golding of Disease, The Worship of the Malevolent Dead, Tree and Serpent Worship, Totemism and Fetishism, Animal Worship, The Black Art etc are described in detail. The last chapter gives a brief description of some rural festivals and ceremonies.

Monumental works of Indian scholars in English and in regional languages has helped the growth of folklore studies in India. Indra Deva and Mazharul Islam give a list of scholars; Natesa Sastri, Lal Bihari Dey, Shobona Devi and Upreti Ganga Datta collected folklore materials and published them in English. Other regional scholars in this field are Ashutosh Bhattacharya, Nirmalendu Bhowmik, Subhash Banerjee, Dulal Chaudhury, Barun Chakravorty, Dinesh Chandra Sen and Shanker Sen Gupta from

Claus and Korom talks about Rabindranath Tagore’s efforts and contribution in the field of folklore of India. In 1894, Tagore along with other Bengali literary figures established Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (The Bengali Literary Society), an organization to preserve the folklore and tradition of Bengal. He tried to revive the oral forms such as rhymes,
ballads and myths by rewriting the works of English civil servants into his own style of literary Bengali (62). Jawaharlal Handoo, Birendranath Dutta, M.D.Muthukumaraswamy, Molly Kaushal, AK Ramanjuan, S. Sakthivel, Vivek Rai, P.C.Pattanaik, B.Reddy, Sadhana Naithani, P Subachary, Shyam Sundar Mahapatra, Dr Bhabagrahi Mishra, Chitrasen Pasayat and Raghavan Payanad are some of the recent notable folklorists of India.

The collection and publication and study of the folk literature of Tamil Nadu are indebted to scholars like N Vanamamalai, Salai Ilanthiraian, S. Shanmugasundaram, V. M. Gnanaprakasham, and Sarasvati Venugopal are noteworthy. The folklore of Kerala is closely associated with daily life. The folk literature of Kerala, available mainly in oral forms, influenced mainstream Malayalam literature too. Regarding the main features of folk literature in Malayalam Ayyappa Panikar states:

Its historical importance is that (1) it links present day written literature to the Dravidian roots of the language and literature of Kerala, thereby providing an unbroken tradition of over one thousand years or more; (2) it preserves the form of the language in its earliest and most primitive manifestations, and (3) it has the broadest basis of contact with the social realities of the life of the people of all caste and ranks. Every group of people that inhabited the land of Kerala has left its indelible stamp on Malayalam folk literature; the tribals, the
untouchables, the upper caste Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims and the Jews. Another distinctive feature of Malayalam folk literature is that it has a very strong dose of secularism in it. While a large section of folk poems is connected with religious rituals, there is an equally large collection of songs, ballads, and folk-tales which deals with the secular aspects of everyday life. (1299)

The collection, editing and publication of folk literature in Kerala is attributed to persons like C.P Govinda Pillai, Chelanant Achyutha Menon, Kanjiramkulam Kochu Krishna Nadar, G. Shankaran Pillai, Chirakal Balakrishna Nair, Kilimanur Viswambaran, Vettiyar Premnath, G. Bharghavan Pillai, Thamattat Govinda Kutty, S.K. Nayar, Chummar Choondal and Anandakuttan Nair. Folklore studies in Kerala are done by scholars like Vishnu Namboothiri and Raghavan Payyanad. Studies on tribal language, literature and folklore are in the initial stages only and the main persons in this field are Dr. Kumaran Vayaleri, Dr. P.G Pathmini and K Velappan. Narayan is the first Tribal writer in Kerala. The short stories of him are the fine example of tribal voice and literature of Kerala. He got Kerala Sahithya Academy award in 2000 for his famous novel Kocherethi. The book C. K. Januvinte jeevithakadha is a biography of C.K.Janu, the Adivasi Leader and social activist in Kerala. It is considered as the first biography about a tribal woman. Both in Kerala and in India there have
been many anthropological and sociological studies on tribes but not many
efforts to study the literature of tribes. Earlier Varrier Elwin collected the
songs and tales of Oriya Tribes. Recently one notable case in this field is
the publication of the book titled *Painted Words* (2002) edited by G.N.
Devy. This book is supposed to be the first anthology of tribal literature
compiled in India. He was the formerly professor of English at the
Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and founder and director of the
Tribal Academy at Tejgadh, Gujarath. Later he became the director of the
Sahitya Akademi’s Project on Literature in Tribal Languages and Oral
Traditions. In the above mentioned book he says that his attempt is to “see
imaginative expression in tribal languages not as ‘folklore’ but as literature
and to hear tribal speech not as a dialect but as a language” (xv)

Orature:

Oral art forms are considered as the basis of any culture, especially
cultures that don’t have written script. Many cultures in the world are rich
with oral art forms which form a main component of their life transferred
mainly from one generation to other through oral performance at various
contexts of life like marriage and other ceremonies, religious festivals,
when people engaged in cultivation and other works, at the time when
they spent leisure time and so on. In the course of time written forms
became prevalent but still the relevance of oral art forms continues as they
clear the void that comes to their daily life. The performance of such oral
art forms in various occasions has an enormous impact on the life of the members of any community. The reason is that they are not just for entertainment but serve as a tool to make unity among members and also helps them to participate in various ways while at the same time teach the members about the culture and tradition that they heard and experienced at various levels of life. Scholars and critics used many technical terminologies to explain the oral pieces of different cultures. The notable and widely used terms among them are oral tradition, oral literature, orality and orature.

Oral tradition is generally considered as a tradition transferred orally. The combination of the words tradition and oral has created many complexities. Tradition as term is used by scholars in anthropology and folklore as a general term to mention the whole of a community or of a cultural group to mention various practices, ideas and values. Finnegansays:

Something called a ‘tradition’ is often taken to somehow belong to the whole of the ‘community’ rather than to specific individuals or interest groups; to be unwritten; to be valuable or (less often) out-dated; or to mark out a group’s identity.

*(Oral Tradition and the Verbal Arts, 7)*

Finnegan further says that the combination of the terms create ambiguity and makes it more complicated. It is quite clear that many
scholars and academicians consider traditional oral verbal pieces only as part of folklore and no due attention has been given or attributed to place them under the term literature. It has been considered that literature is always written. While there are many classifications to categorize ‘written’ literatures like American Literature, Canadian Literature, African Literature, Indian Literature and so on, there are hardly any attempt to place oral forms of many cultures, which are rich with poetic quality, under the title oral literature. Finnegan in the essay “How Oral is Oral literature” says, “Literature is inevitably oral where all literary production, performance, and consumption—indeed all communication—is fully oral and there is a total absence of literacy” (52). She has of the opinion that “oral literary forms can also exist in conditions marked by marginal or even full literacy, and that some coexistence and often interaction with written literature” (59). Later She tries to differentiate oral literature by putting forward four main criteria; mode of composition, mode of transmission, actualization in performance and sources. She says that the criterion of actualization in performance is a relatively straightforward one as one can sees a performance actually taking place (60-62). What she tries to say is that the performance part is more important than the textual part. This aspect is not the usual concern while considering the term ‘oral literature’.

The term ‘orality’ is used nowadays especially in contrast with the term ‘literacy’. These terms got momentum with the publication of the
book titled *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982) by Walter J. Ong. He talks about ‘primary orality’ in terms of a culture entirely untouched by any knowledge of writing or print and ‘secondary orality’ in terms of present-day high-technology culture in which a new orality is sustained with the knowledge of writing and print. He even talks about the importance of digitalizing oral forms for preservation.

Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu introduced the term Orature to make a positive statement and to avoid the definitional problems of oral literature and other terms. Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o says:

> The term orature has been used variously since the Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu coined it in the early seventies of the last century to counter the tendency to see the arts communicated orally and received aurally as an inferior or a lower rung in the linear development of literature. He was rejecting the term oral literature. (4)

It is an umbrella term which is all inclusive in nature and delineates the different forms of languages used in different contexts. And the term orature is apt in societies or communities where written forms of languages are not prevalent but oral forms form the pulse of their life to preserve and transfer various knowledge and vehicle for communication. This thesis uses the positive term orature introduced by Pio Zirimu and hence substantiates the title.
Translation and its Significance in the Context of this Study:

The history of translation dates back to many centuries and the main attempts after printing developed is to translate Bible. The first English translation of Bible was done by John Wycliffe in between 1380 and 1384. Since then translation has emerged as a major branch and influenced various fields like literature, linguistics and cultural studies. The resurgence of interest in translation in the new globalised world has led to explore many languages and literatures which are cut off from mainstream society.

Many scholars have contributed in formulating and advocating various theories in translation. Among them the contributions of J. C. Catford, Roman Jacobson, Eugene A. Nida, Peter Newmark and Lawrence Venuti are remarkable. According to Sharma, Catford defined translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Language and Linguistics 148). Roman Jacobson said about three kinds of translation:

1 Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.

2 Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs. (114)

According to Eugene Nida “Differences in translations can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: (1) the nature of the message, (2) the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience. ("Principles of Correspondence”127) Nida’s contribution is mainly in advocating two types of equivalence; formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. (Munday 41-42). According to the principle of formal equivalence translation tries to retain the language forms of the original but fails to retain meanings. Nida says that formal equivalence translation is “basically source-oriented; that is, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message” (134). But it is not apt to retain some of the textual materials of the source language as it is. In that case what Nida says is that:

One must therefore usually supplement such translations with marginal notes, not only to explain some of the formal features which could not be adequately represented, but also to make intelligible some of the formal equivalents employed, for such expressions may have significance only in terms of the source language or culture. (135)
But in dynamic equivalence the translation is done by keeping the meaning of the original to get the same impact on the target language. Nida says that dynamic equivalence translation is “directed primarily toward equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form.” (136). According to him dynamic equivalence translation is the effective one rather than the formal equivalence translation.

Another approach in the method of translation is advocated by Peter Newmark. He suggested two types of translation approaches; communicative and semantic. Communicative translation attempts to produce what is there in the source text to reader of the target text. Semantic translation attempts to bring the meaning from the original to the semantic and syntactical structure of the target language. Another scholar in the field of translation studies is Lawrence Venuti who advocated his theories based on socio-cultural frame work. He says:

Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there. The foreign text, then, is not so much communicated as inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and interests. The inscription begins with the very choice of a text
for translation, always a very selective, densely motivated choice, and continues in the development of discursive strategies to translate it, always a choice of certain domestic discourses over others. Hence, the domesticating process is totalizing, even if never total, never seamless or final. It can be said to operate in every word of the translation long. (468)

He talks about translation with domestic significance in foreign language text. To understand in a better way he said about two methods in translation; ‘foreignisation’ and ‘domestication’. In the first method the translator is visible and he retains some of the cultural and literary features of the source text in target text. But in the second method the translator is invisible and the target text is devoid of the influence of source text. For him foreignising translation is the best method especially translating culture oriented texts. Munday says that Venuti considers:

...the foreignizing method to be ‘an ethnodevient pressure on (target-language cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad’. It is ‘highly desirable’, he says, in an effort ‘to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation’. In other words, the foreignizing method can restrain the ‘violently’ domesticating cultural values of the English-language world.” (147)
In India there are many traditions which are unnoticed for quite a long time because of language constraints. Because of colonization English language had reached many countries which resulted in the birth of new strains of this language, like American English, Australian English, Caribbean English, African English, Indian English etc. Translation was successfully used in the past as a tool for colonial domination in which one culture dominated and the others were subservient. In this context translation reinforced that power hierarchy. Anuradha Dingwaney says:

The process of translation involved in making another culture comprehensible entail varying degrees of violence, especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the “other”. (4)

In the modern globalised world, translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now considered as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures mediated by the translator. For Susan Basset, in translation, it is the translator who frees the text from the fixed signs of its original shape making it no longer subordinate to the source text but visibly makes a link between source language and eventually target language. She says, “The post-colonial approach to translation is to see linguistic exchange as essentially dialogic, as a process that happens in space that belongs to neither source nor target absolutely”. (6) Translation is the tool to transfer culture with the
help of language, especially cultures which are unexplored much. But it is not possible to attain perfection in translation as there are many cultural facts which are untranslatable. Translating oratures of divergent cultures like Muduvans is more complicated as the text is available only in oral form and the translation of the performance of such oral pieces results in removing the real essence twice or thrice from the original text; first oral to print and then translation. To retain the form and content of oral performance is the most difficult part in translation. By looking at the Zuñi narratives, Dennis Tedlock in his essay “On the Translation of Style in Oral Narrative” suggests a translation of not only various linguistic features of style but many other paralinguistic and other performance features (113-33). The following section on ethnopoetics will help to tackle the issues regarding translation in a better way.

Ethnopoetics:

Jerome Rothenberg, Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock are the main proponents of ethnopoetics. Along with these, the contributions of other scholars like Robert Duncan, George Quasha, Gary Snyder, David Antin, Victor Turner, and Catherine S. Quick are worth considering while tracing the growth and history of ethnopoetics. In 1968, the term ethnopoetics was coined by Jerome Rothenberg who noticed that many oral collections of traditions, especially of Native American oral traditions, are not approached in their own perspective and often end up in mistranslations.

Regarding the relevance of ethnopoetics as an integral part of poetics, language, literature and culture, Rothenberg, again in the preface of the
book Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an

Ethnopoetics, says:

By the end of the 1960’s, I first introduced the term “ethnopoetics” as a necessary part of poetics (an idea of poetry) changed by a century of such experimentation and mapping. A number of often previously involved poets, anthropologists, and critics (Antin, Awoonor, beier, Diamond, Hymes, McClure, Ortiz, Quasha, Snyder, Spanos, Tedlock, Tarn, et al.) responded immediately to the discourse around the term, while others, who remained aloof, were in their own terms implicit contributors to the issues clustered therein. What this marked wasn’t so much a first invention as a recognition that the ethnopoetics, once it had entered our work, altered the nature of that work in all its aspects. And behind it was the century itself and a crisis in language and thought not of our making: an international avant-garde on the one hand, an American opening to history and myth on the other, and a de facto but rarely acknowledged collaboration between poets and scholars by whom the attack on the narrow view of literature (i.e., the “great” tradition) was simultaneously carried on.

... On the one hand, this discourse explored an ongoing “intersection between poetry and anthropology,” in Nathaniel
Tarn’s words, and on the other hand, between contemporary poets as the “marginal” defenders of an endangered human diversity and poets of other times and places who represented that diversity itself and many of the values being uncovered and recovered in the new poetic enterprises. The discourse opened as well to include what Richard Schechner called the “poetics of performance” across the spectrum of the arts, and it also tied in with movements of self-definition and cultural liberation among third world ethnic groups in the United States and elsewhere. (xii-xiii)

The concept ‘ethnopoetics’, a non-conventional, non-western method to look at various divergent cultures and their oratures, is the golden rule to approach this thesis. This section briefly discusses the relevance of ethnopoetics in literary criticism and the origin and growth of ethnopoetics and the views of proponents like Jerome Rothenberg, Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, Gary Snyder and others as a frame for understanding the following chapters. A number of folk/tribal cultures that do not have a written script make use of oral narratives as an indispensable part to establish their identity. Many times there is no authorial attribution to such oral narratives and what matters is the performance of such narratives which makes them alive each time they are performed and forms a platform for others to learn. Ethnopoetics provides
a sophisticated tool to examine the divergent cultures which depend on oral narratives to exhibit their rich and abundant tradition and culture. Ethnopoetics looks at the specific cultural context in which the performance is done. The role of the individual and the community in the given context are also given emphasis in an ethnopoetic analysis. Quick says:

Ethnopoetics must concern itself not only with the text, the words of the poem, but with the performance of the poem within its situational context. These performance elements are central to understanding not only the role of poetry in the society that created it, but also the aesthetic value of the poem. (96)

Ethnopoetics emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century as a movement to trace and explore the verbal expressions of divergent cultures which had been considered as irrelevant to study in the academic field. Ethnopoetics looks at the oral literatures which are unnoticed and unexplored by the academic field and gives emphasis to its liveliness in the oral form and suggests the ways to preserve them, as through translation. Western assumptions and pre-conceptions about what constitutes literature may go wrong while analyzing literatures from the divergent groups or cultures. Ethnopoetics questions and re-examines the traditional way of looking at literatures where oral literatures are widespread. In the postcolonial scenario ethnopoetics has its significant role in America and
elsewhere in the world through its application in different academic fields. It is stated that:

Post-colonial aspirations are evident in Jerome Rothenberg’s remark that a ‘poetics without a concurrent ethnopoetics is stunned, partial, therefore faulty in a time like ours that can only save itself by learning to confront its multiple identities and definitions--- its contradictions, therefore, & its problematics’. (Tedlock and Rothenberg 452)

The Portrayal of many local cultures was, in many cases, slanted towards Euro-centric interests. The nobility and superiority of the west were depicted while an inferior status seemed to characterize other cultures. The result was that a different worldview was formed on such cultures which had been constructed as insignificant. However, attempts are being made to valorize local culture and tradition which have been formerly marginalized and sidelined. Western constructions have been dismissed and the significance of local culture and life has been retrieved. Ethnopoetic discourse has its relevance in such divergent cultures which have a rich and abundant culture and tradition to exhibit, especially through their oral literature. Each culture has its own knowledge that it acquired in the course of time and preserved generation after generation. Ironing out such vast and rich traditional knowledge just because they are not western is rejected in the postcolonial scenario and hence the
ethnopoetic analysis of folk literature helps to have a better means to learn “other” cultures. Turner speaks:

The deep bonds between body and mentality, unconscious and conscious thinking, species and self, have been treated without respect, as though they were irrelevant for analytical purposes. Ethnopoetics is a modality of the renewed recognizance of such ignored bonds. Historically, its resurgence comes at a time when knowledge is being increased of other cultures, other worldviews, other life styles, when Westerners, endeavoring to trap non-Western philosophies and poetries in the corrals of their own cognitive constructions, find that they have caught sublime monsters, eastern dragons, lords of fructile chaos, whose wisdom makes our knowledge look somehow shrunken and inadequate. (585)

When different cultures confront and exchange cultural voices through different performative genres, there are chances that the difference between each culture reduces which may ultimately end up in the destruction of the culture itself. At this point Gary Snyder in "The Politics of Ethnopoetics" writes, “What we are witnessing in the world today is an unparalleled waterfall of destruction of a diversity of human cultures; plant species; animal species; of the richness of the biosphere and the millions of years of organic evolution that have gone into it” (2). The performative
genres of cultures like rituals, art and oratures mirror different aspects as Turner compares culture to hall of mirrors in which some mirrors reverse, some enlarge, some diminish, some distort and some have x-ray properties to receive and reflect different images (Turner 587). Ethnopoetics makes visible the different voices of the same culture and different cultures:

Of course the central idea of ethnopoetic analysis is that every culture has its own poetics, and that it can be described. Initial particles figure in the poetries of many languages, as the Western concept of meter is part of many others. The point is that there are differences; one culture's poetry has different structural and aesthetic standards than another. Ethnopoetics encourages recognition and appreciation of such differences. Poetry from one culture cannot be judged or interpreted on the basis of another culture's poetry. It is the job of the ethnopoeticist to discover within the texts the specific standards for that particular culture. (Quick 98)

Ethnopoetics makes an “attempt to confront the problem not just of representing or preserving the vanishing oral literary legacies of the world, but also of connecting them with living literature” (Tedlock and Rothenberg 453). In an oral tradition, looking at poetry through western poetic concepts may result in foregrounding only the poetic aspects in the poem and may omit the context in which the performance occurred and the
different assumptions of the performer. But ethnopoetic discourse has its relevance in the cultural context in its original language. Quick is of the view that

Rather than forcing such discourse into Western concepts of poetry, proponents of ethnopoetics analyze texts in their original language and context to discover how individual elements function within a cultural performance of that text. Put simply, ethnopoetics charges that Western- and print-oriented scholars have misinterpreted, and thus misjudged, the poetry of "primitive" cultures by failing to appreciate that aesthetic standards are not universal. Poetry from non-Western cultures has even been labeled "not poetry" because it failed to exhibit what scholars typically expect from poetry. (95)

In the beginning, the concept ethnopoetics had its particular emphasis and relevance in the field of anthropology but later there were many growing interests in studying and examining contemporary poetry, literature, and social sciences to make "by scholarly investigations of the contexts and linguistic properties of the traditional works, including the nature of oral poetics and the particularities of translation from oral sources". (Rothenberg, Ethnopoetics). Regarding the growing interests of ethnopoetics, Rothenberg states:
The history of such an ethnopoetics covers at least the last 200 years, during which time it has functioned as a questioning of the culturally bounded poetics and poetry of "high European culture." While the designation "ethnopoetics" is a much later coinage, the interrogation has been carried forward in sometimes separated, sometimes interlocking discourses among philosophers, scholars, poets, and artists. It is clearly linked with impulses toward primitivism in both romanticism and modernism and with avant-garde tendencies to explore new and alternative forms of poetry and to subvert normative views of traditional values and the claims of "civilization" to hegemony over other forms of culture. Yet for all its avant-gardism, the principal ethnopoetic concern has been with classical, even hieratic forms, with fully realized, often long preserved traditions. (Ethnopoetics)

In the preface of the book *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an Ethnopoetics*, ethnopoetics appeared, says Rothenberg, in "the form of what Stanley Diamond, in a recently renewed "critique of civilization," calls "the search for the primitive" or, more precisely, the "attempt to define a primary human potential" (ix). When ethnopoetics as a movement emerged after World War II, western ideologies and concepts were dislocated and various discourses got momentum to explore various
cultures that the west had not discovered. Such discourses acted as a countermovement in the western thought. Rothenberg says:

When the industrial West began to discover --- and plunder--- “new” and “old” worlds beyond its boundaries, an extraordinary countermovement came into being in the West itself. Alongside the official ideologies that shoved European man to the apex of the human pyramid, there were some thinkers and artists who found ways of doing and knowing among other people as complex as any in Europe and often virtually erased from European consciousness. Culture described as “primitive” and “savage”--- a stage below “barbarian”--- were simultaneously the models for political and social experiments, religious and visionary revivals, and forms of art and poetry so different from European norms as to seem revolutionary from a later Western perspective. It was almost, looking back at it, as if every radical innovation in the West were revealing a counterpart---or series of counterparts--- somewhere in the traditional worlds the West was savaging. (Symposium of the Whole ix)

Here Rothenberg stresses the importance of ethnopoetics in the postmodern period and states that tells the “relationship between modernity and plebeianism in slightly different terms” and make “indigenous people so powerful as cultural entities” (Inchausti 137). The
concept of ethnopoetics is also seminal to discussions in the postcolonial agenda, because it shifts the parameters of understanding to the several non-European literatures of the world in all their cultural and social specifications. Ethnopoetics thus co-opts the revised understanding of the cultures of the world and consequently is partially political in purpose. Its fundamental tenets critique the earlier post-Enlightenment Modernist notions of European superiority. The 'other' is now not approached as inferior, but rather as another. The hierarchisation of the peoples of the world, with the colonial European being of self and other is replaced here, but the centeredness of every people, their culture and literature - in the oral form also – is standing in its own right. It is not compared unfavourably with a Western norm.

Rothenberg in his “Pre-Face To A Symposium on Ethnopoetics” looks at ‘ethnos’ as the ‘other’ and ethnopoetics as a performative tool of such ‘other’ cultures in which many are engaged. He says:

...ethnos wasn’t always what we would now take it to be, not an expression of what we are as groups in isolation, centering, orbiting around ourselves, but an expression instead of otherness, a sign that points from what we are or may become to what we aren’t, haven’t thought ourselves to be, may fear or scorn (as in that older “hierarchy of higher forms”), or in the present instance, freed from the myth of our divine election, is
what we long for, need, toward the completion of our being human. At that earlier time then, *ethnos* meant nation, people, group, or race, not as *this nation* ("us") but as *those nations* ("them" or "others"). It was the Greek equivalent for gentiles, goyim, pagan, heathen - that last work (not ethnos itself but a word mistaken for it) meaning people of the heath, the countryside, the wilderness, the unclaimed land, the ones in nature, natural, the lower foreign orders set apart from us, apart from cities, blocks to human progress, ancients, primitives, the fathers or the mothers me must kill, the poets (Plato said) whom we must drive out of our cities, out of our bodies & minds in point of fact, those who scorn the new god, the abstraction, unity, the unconflicted single truth we worship. Ethnopoetics is not a new construction, then, but the reminder of an older truth or linkage: that poetry itself is this, the very langauge of the *ethnoi*, in the equation Plato makes. As poets we are *them*. (60-61)

Regarding the second key term 'poetics' he says:

Poetics is the second key term here, the clincher, which makes of this a far different meeting than it would be with the other term alone. Poetics. Poetry, the process of. To take that as a
process of cognition, of creation in that sense: knowing, coming into knowing where we are. (61)

Ethnopoetics deals with different cultures and their languages in order to understand their poetics outside the realm of western concepts and it reminds one of what “Robert Duncan called a “Symposium of the Whole.” A symposium, that is to say, of all cultures and all members of any culture, including the members which any culture keeps on the margins of what it defines as “normal” and acceptable” (Tarn 91). In his “Pre-Face To A Symposium on Ethnopoetics” Rothenberg duly acknowledges Robert Duncan and quotes his words in the beginning itself (60). The phrase ‘symposium of the whole’ by Robert Duncan is used by Rothenberg in his anthology of essays he edited with Diane Rothenberg; Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an Ethnopoetics (1993). In the essay “Rites of Participation” Robert Duncan “imagines the ”symposium” to be a new collocation that joins human beings in consanguinity not only with animals but with all earthly cells- a coming together in “one fate” brought about by the ecological imperatives of our time” (Fredman 167-68).

Regarding the inclusive nature of the symposium that fits very well for the term and concept ethnopoetics, Duncan says:

The Symposium of Plato was restricted to a community of Athenians, gathered in the common creation of an arete, an aristocracy of spirit, inspired by the homoEros, taking its stand
against lower or foreign orders, not only of men but of nature itself. The intense yearning, the desire for something else, of which we too have only a dark and doubtful presentiment, remains, but our arete, or ideal of vital being, rises not in our identification in a hierarchy of higher forms but in our identification with the universe. To compose such a symposium of the whole, such a totality, all the old excluded order must be included. The female, the proletariat, the foreign; the animal and vegetative; the unconscious and the unknown; the criminal and the failure—all that has been outcast and vagabond must return to be admitted in the creation of what we consider we are. (98)

Dennis Tedlock is a later proponent in the field of ethnopoetics. His main research work was on the narrative poetry of the Zuni people of Mexico. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation* (1983), *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians* (1972), *Popul Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings* (1985) and *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture* (1995) are some of his notable works. He was the cofounder of the magazine *Alcheringa/Ethnopoetics*, the first magazine of this kind which deals with world’s tribal poeties with Rothenberg, started in 1970. This magazine looked at translations and transcripts of verbal performances of divergent
cultures from Africa, Asia and America. “It was keenly focused on developing ethnopoetics, on freeing poetries of all kinds from the “monolithic great tradition” of Western literature, and on exploring new techniques of translating the poetry of tribal societies” (Ivan Brady 546).

Regarding the statement of intention of the magazine, Tedlock and Rothenberg say in the first issue:

As the first magazine of the world’s tribal poetries,

ALCHERINGA will not be a scholarly "journal of ethnopoetics" so much as a place where tribal poetry can appear in English translation & can act (in the oldest & newest of poetic traditions) to change men’s minds & lives. While its sources will be different from other poetry magazines, it will be aiming at the startling & revelatory presentation that has been common to our avant gardes. Along the way we hope

—by exploring the full range of man’s poetries, to enlarge our understanding of what a poem may be

—to provide a ground for experiments in the translation of tribal/oral poetry & a forum to discuss the possibilities & problems of translation from widely divergent cultures

—to encourage poets to participate actively in the translation of tribal/oral poetry
–to encourage ethnologists & linguists to do work increasingly ignored by academic publications in their fields, namely to present the tribal poetries as values in themselves rather than as ethnographic data

–to be a vanguard for the initiation of cooperative projects along these lines between poets, ethnologists, songmen, & others

–to return to complex / "primitive" systems of poetry as (intermedia) performance, etc., & to explore ways of presenting these in translation

–to emphasize by example & commentary the relevance of tribal poetry to where we are today: thus, in Gary Snyder’s words, "to master the archaic & the primitive as models of basic nature-related cultures...knowing that we are the first human beings in history to have all of man’s cultures available to our study, & being free enough of the weight of traditional cultures to seek out a larger identity"

–to assist the free development of ethnic self-awareness among young Indians & others so concerned, by encouraging a knowledgeable, loving respect among them & all people for the
world’s tribal past & present – to combat cultural genocide in all its manifestations. (Alcheringa 5)

In the words of Dennis Tedlock, “ethnopoetics is a decentered study, an attempt to hear and read the poetries of distant others, outside the Western tradition as we know it now” (Tedlock and Rothenberg 453). The poetries which have been isolated from the mainstream language and culture are given special interest and he emphasized the importance of performance in different occasions to understand the peculiar poetic features. In another way Ivan Brady quotes what Tedlock said about ethnopoetics. As per that ethnopoetics is a study of the verbal arts of different languages and cultures in the world and looks at different oral forms like proverbs, riddles, laments and other narratives that are shaped in speech, chant, and song and the vocal-auditory channel of communication involved in such places. Ethnopoetics studies like this has its relevance in preserving oral performances through translation and transcription for further analysis and interpretation (545). Tedlock looks for the performative side of oral narratives and considers these as poetic. He seeks to “demonstrate the artistic significance of various elements in oral performance, including changes in a speaker’s pitch, volume, speed, and oral ordering of pauses in delivery” (Kroeber 24). His attempt is to make a performable text and a proper translation of oral narratives. For Tedlock, features like gestures, facial expressions, pauses, silence and loudness are
all significant for a holistic understanding of anybody of oral poetry in a particular situation when it is performed. But for linguist Dell Hymes such poetic measures and paralinguistic patterns are not so important as such facts cannot be preserved fully in dictated and translated texts. He looks at why such features are used and how these features govern the oral performance in a particular cultural context. He also looks for poetic and structural patterns of oral narratives of a particular culture as each culture has its own poetic features which are different from other culture. While studying and interpreting oral texts of a culture one should need to be closer to the language and languages uses in a sophisticated manner to preserve the aesthetic charm. In his book *In vain I tried to tell you*: *Essays in Native American ethnopoetics*, Hymes says:

If we refuse to consider and interpret the surprising facts of device, design, and performance inherent in the words of the texts, the Indians who made the texts, and those who preserved what they made, will have worked in vain. We will be telling the texts not to speak. We will mistake, perhaps to our cost, the nature of the power of which they speak. (5-6)

Further, in the same book, he says “Mostly what is required is to “listen” to the text in all its details” (7). Regarding the approach Hymes uses to disclose a text, in the same book, Keith H. Basso in his review says:
Hymes's approach is grounded in three sets of assumptions, which can be briefly summarized as follows. First and most obviously, one must work with native texts as they are (the days of abridging and "editing out" are over), and one must acquire a reliable grasp of the grammar of the language(s) in which the texts are fashioned. Second, narratives must be viewed as forms of speech, highly sensitive to social context, whose linguistic elements are chosen to serve both stylistic and referential functions; the former, which often go undetected in Native American narratives, must be understood as thoroughly and exactly as the latter. Third, one must attempt to discover consistent structure at all levels of a text, and the surest way to proceed is through a systematic search for covariation in form and meaning. (374)

Ethnopoetics has its main application in folklore, translation and literature. Performative context is the prime aspect to be taken for consideration in such application. Folklorists usually face difficulties in representing oral art forms into print form. Elizabeth C. Fine in her book *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print* talks about some of the difficulties in putting verbal folklore in written form and how ethnopoetics can solve some of the difficulties in such places (57-112). John William Johnson’s *West African Epic of Son-Jara* (1992) and Susan Slyomovics’s *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance* (1988) are some examples that deal with the concepts of ethnopoetics in translation. In another case Shirley Lim makes use of ethnopoetics in the reading of Asian-American poetry. Lim in the essay “Reconstructing Asian-American Poetry: A Case for Ethnopoetics” says that ethnopoetics functions at least three levels in Asian-American poetry; the first is the level of surface features of style that include figures of speech, imagery etc, The second level is linguistic, particularly in the incorporation of phrases or whole lines of the original language into the English text and the third level where an ethnopoetics is called for lies in the contextual realm, what some theoreticians might call the area of intertextuality (53-55). Lim’s study is focused more on written poetry. Such an application of ethnopoetics clearly shows the connections between folklore and literature. Quick says of this:
Such an application recognizes that writers, especially those who have connections to groups with strong oral traditional elements, may integrate oral traditional elements into their literary works. Understanding such literary works requires that readers appreciate the cultural elements, whether in content, sound, or structure; otherwise, interpretation of the work is skewed "westward as much as were earlier translations of the Native American oral poetries. One must place the literary works in their appropriate contexts, which may include heavy influence from oral traditional elements. This goes not only for written poetries, but for prose writings as well. Folkloric analysis has proved helpful in understanding the folkloric content of numerous novels; ethnopoetic analysis could attune a reader to structural and auditory elements that contribute to a richer reading of such works. (99)

Quick further points out some criticism leveled against the practice and application of ethnopoetics (100). Unless one is good in the original language and fully familiar with the culture in which the performance takes place, the total analysis may go wrong. One should apply the ethnopoetic analysis in original language and not in translated texts as there are chances of mistranslations and perfection cannot be sought in any translation. To a certain extent, there are chances of altered and
stereotyped assumptions regarding certain cultures in some ethnopoetics analysis. Also there are possibilities of misrepresentations of cultures when researchers look at them with certain preconceived notions and assumptions. Such misrepresentations may lead to further future problems when others researchers look into the data for analysis. Looking into one culture based on the knowledge of another culture is against ethnopoetics analysis. There are distinctions in each culture and the researchers should be well aware of such nuances to represent a fair picture of a culture exclusively confined in the original language of a particular culture. In another way ethnopoetics analysis looks for an observational study in original language, situation and culture. Quick’s point of view that ethnopoetics holds good only for the original text needs to be reconsidered. Even when reading a translated text the ethnopoetic perspective cannot be given up because the transfer from one language/culture to another language/culture is effected in the first place, respecting the specificities of the source language culture. Venuti’s concept of translations discussed in the previous section has its relevance here. Translation of ancient literatures into English or any other European languages or even into a normative regional language, that begins in the first place with the ethnopoetic approach to the oral text does not 'demonstrate' the text and rename its language/culture specificities. It retains those factors resulting in what Venuti calls foreignisation. The
ethnopoetic frame has to sustain both the original and the translated text and if removed in the later case would go against the fundamental principles of ethnopoetics.

In an ethnopoetic discourse, oral literature of communities like Muduvans can be examined from their socio-cultural background in their original language, situation and context by foregrounding textual aspects of style. Ethnopoetics does not encourage a comparative study of oral literature with normative regional or European literature. Ethnopoetics insists that a body of oral literature has to be seen as being complete in itself within its socio-cultural production. Such studies are largely descriptive, classificatory and highlight the poetic features of a community’s oral literatures. Although the term ‘poetics’ has been suggested, till date no single theory of poetics has been given by any folklorist for all oral literatures, although all bodies of oral literature are considered to be poetic in their own right. Also many genres of oral literature is included under the description of ‘poetry’ though they may vary for example, as tale-song narrative or riddles, because they are essentially poetic and are memorized and kept alive by singing and repetition. Concluding this brief discussion on ethnopoetics, would be apt to point out the broadened and growing assumptions of ethnopoetics made by Rothenberg:
While the initial focus of ethnopoetics was on orality and performance, the discourse turned as well to the visible aspects of language — writing & inscription — both as a persistent contemporary concern & as an often unacknowledged kingpin of a revitalized & expanded ethnopoetics. In an age of cybernetic breakthroughs, the experimental tradition of modernist poetry & art has expanded our sense of language in all its forms, the written along with the oral. In doing this, it should also have sensitized us to the existence of a range of visual/verbal traditions and practices, not only in literate cultures but in those also that we have named "non"- or "pre"-literate — extending the meaning of literacy beyond a system of (phonetic) letters to the fact of writing itself. But to grasp the actual possibilities of writing (as with any other form of language or of culture), it is necessary to know it in all its manifestations — new & old. It is our growing belief (more apparent now than at the start of the ethnopoetics project) that the cultural dichotomies between writing and speech — the "written" & the "oral" — disappear the closer we get to the source. To say again what seems so hard to get across: there is a primal book as there is a primal voice, & it is the task of our poetry & art to recover it — in our minds & in the world at

The closing line of this quotation not only synopsises the burden of the discussion on ethnopoetics but also ramifies the point made earlier in this thesis regarding the need to widen the parameters of what constitute literature.

**Structure of this Thesis:**

The introduction is followed by the second chapter that is devoted entirely to the study of Muduvan’s Āśaippāṭṭu (Love-song) which are available in large numbers compared to other genres of their literature. In order to understand them more clearly they are classified into different groups depending upon the context and theme.

The third chapter is devoted to the study of the other genres of Muduvan oral literature songs like Tālāṭṭu (Lullaby), Kummippāṭṭu (literally ‘clap-song’ songs sung to rhythmic clapping and communal dancing), Songs sung at the time of work and at work places, Festival songs and Oppāri (Mourning song at the occasion of death). These songs are more context-oriented than Āśaippāṭṭu and are long. These songs are marked by rhythm and rhyme which helps one to memorize and render them easily. The fourth chapter examines the genres of Muduvan tales and other
forms like proverbs and riddles available in Muduvan’s daily life. The fifth chapter is the conclusion. It draws together the findings of the previous chapters and points to areas of further research. Each chapter documents the Muduvan text of the respective genre and translates it as and when the discussion of the text is presented. This researcher used the Malayalam script for inscribing for his research purposes, the following texts. Therefore with transliteration and translation are given for each and every text.