CHAPTER- I
INTRODUCTION

The problem:

Creative literature is regarded as a bountiful printed source of folklore. Dramatists, novelists and poets employ folk-stuff for artistic purposes. A creative writer very often, introduces and develops characters, motivation, scenes, and tensions form traditional oral form.

History of Assamese drama begins with a type of play called Ankiya Nat associated with the name of the great neo-Vaishnavite leader Sankardeva, who flourished in the 15th century A.D. But several forms of folk drama were current in this region even before the period of Ankiya Nat. It is said that the Ankiya Nat grew out of such indigenous folk drama.

The new era of Assamese drama begins with the social drama Rām Navami written by Gunabhirām Baruā and published in 1858 A.D. In fact, Gunabhirām Baruā's Rām Navami (1858) and Hemchandra Baruā's Kāniyār Kirtan (1861) laid the foundation of modern Assamese drama, though the plays of Ankiya type were still kept alive in the satsra or the Vaishnavite monasteries. Both the plays were social in character. While the story of Rām Navami was built around the theme of widow re-marriage, Kāniyār Kirtan dealt with the moral degeneration brought about by opium addiction.
In the context of Indian theatre, modern Assamese drama is also said to be an outcome of the influence of two source streams i.e., Sanskrit drama and Western drama. But it is equally true that the strong tradition of indigenous folk drama has also played a vital role in the development and presentation of modern Assamese drama. Modern Assamese social plays dealing with the rural life are primarily concern with the folk tradition and elements. This is seen in all spheres of drama, i.e., story, dialogue, songs, character and production. While some narrative folklore is found to be employed in the development of the theme of social drama in one hand, motif and type from folk and traditional characters are also found as working force behind the creation of many dramatic personae -- in some modern Assamese social plays. Moreover, folk speech and songs also have occupied a major part of dialogue and songs of such play. To me there is a scope of study of modern Assamese social drama from this point of view. But no attempt has so far been made for systematic study of Assamese social drama in this light.

Since the study aims to find out the elements of folklore and folklife as reflected in the modern Assamese social drama, such type of study is lacking in this part of the country. The analytical approach of the study will reveal the rich heritage of folk traditions amidst dynamic change of the society with the influence of western culture and helps to maintain the traditional cultural heritage in our dynamic society.
Most of the Assamese plays are not published. It is a very difficult task to survey all modern Assamese social plays. Hence, we have decided to set a limit to our study of the modern period at Circa 1990. Moreover, due to the paucity of materials for study we will confine our endeavour on some major works during this period. In order to judge, generally we will depend upon printed plays. Those manuscript plays considered as very significant will also be included in our study.

In studying the elements of folklore and folklife through modern Assamese social drama systematically and to arrive at the objectives as noted above the hypothesis are taken—

(i) There exists western cultural influences on modern Assamese social drama.

(ii) Though the influence of western culture has reduced the old tradition of Ank Wyn Nat there exists strong current of folk tradition in modern Assamese social drama.

(iii) The folk elements found in modern Assamese social drama act as traditional mass media to preserve the Assamese culture.

In the proposed study we will adopt the descriptive analytic method. In addition, interview and observation methods will also be followed to collect data relating to the past history and production of folk and modern Assamese drama.
Culture:

The suggestiveness of the word culture is very broad. In common parlance the word 'culture' is understood to mean beautiful, refined, or interesting. It was E.B. Tylor, who for the first time used the word 'culture' in 1865. The word 'culture' is derived from the Latin word 'cultus' and the word 'cultus' itself has originated from the French word 'culte' which means a system of religious worship. The origin of the word 'culture' is also attributed to the Latin word 'cultura' meaning growth. The term 'culture' is well defined in our ancient scripts. The Indian term 'Sanskriti' is a Sanskrit word. Both the word Sanskriti and 'Sanskrit' are associated with the meaning of the word 'Samskar'. Samskar means fulfillment of certain actions. The word Samskriti is formed by prefixing Sanskrit 'sam' to 'ka' merged with the beautified version of 'sad' and suffixing 'kti'. Therefore, the embellished perfection or the effort can be called culture. This means embellished and perfect creation. Some writers like Bishnu Rabha used the term 'krsti', and 'Janskriti' synomously. J.K. Chatterjee used the term 'kti' of course latter he used the term 'Sanskriti'. Rabindranath Tagore used the term 'Sanskriti'. However, the Indian use of the term 'Sanskriti' is synomous to the English word 'culture'.

2. Chatterjee, J.K.: Kirata-Jan-Krti, p. 4
Now the question arises, what is culture? How can we define culture? The task is very difficult. Various writer gives various definitions from their own field. E.B. Tylor defines, 'Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.'

According to Tylor culture is a social heritage. It is the gift of society to man. The field of his study was mainly anthropology. Man is born in society. He can not live without society. By nature he is a social being. He attains sociality by going through the Vânskâra. According to Aristotle, individual and society can not be separated. An individuals realises his true nature in and through the society. Man has not only a capacity for social life, he has an intrinsic need for it as well. Man's emotional development, his intellectual maturity, his material comforts etc. can not be thought of without society. As a social being, the whole activities of man's life is an essential part of culture. His physical and organic behaviour plays a vital role in culture. Culture is an element of social structure. Religion, art, emotional sayings and the various kinds of social elements related to social behaviour are comprises in the scope of culture. According to Marrett, Culture is communicable intelligence.

Ruth Benedict tries to give the idea of culture from the formalistic and aesthetic stand points. According to Malinowsky, a culture is a total way of life or a people. Culture comprises

interited artifics, goods technical processes, ideas, habits and values. Social environment and situation are the root of culture. Man acquire cultural traits from their own group and unit through the conscious learning process. Hence, sometimes culture may define as —

'Culture is the man-made part of the environment.'

According to M. Arnold,

'Culture which is the study of perfection, leads us ... to conceive of the true human perfection as a harmonious perfection developing all sides of our humanity; and as a general perfection developing all parts of our society.'

Man uses symbols as their medium of expression from the primitive time. With the evolution of man and society the symbols are also evolving. Leslie White emphasised on symbols. According to him, culture begins at the time of speaking and guestering of man. Due to this unique guestering or symbolic faculty of man, they can easily and willingly transmit culture from one organism to another. The development of culture takes place through symbolization. Culture consists in the accumulated products of symbolization.

The study of the history of culture is the study of the history of human civilization. Though cultural development depends upon the development of civilization they are differ in some respects.

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5. Herskovits, Melville J.: Cultural Anthropology, p. 305
7. White, Leslie: 'Culturological Vs. Psychological Interpretation of Human Behaviour'
8. Merril, F.E.: Society and Culture: An Introduction to Society, p. 114
It is not very easy to acquire culture. We must depend upon intellectual process to derive culture. David Bidney said that culture is the effect of agro-facts-artifacts-sociofacts-manifests. Parson opines that 'system of action' is the fundamental element of culture. He thinks that culture springs from social interaction. A.L. Krober says that the characteristic of culture is superorganic. Krober and Kluckhohn has done a series of long experiments on culture. For the first time they studied about the etymology of the term 'culture' and the different meanings in its linguistic perspectives. After that they divided the various definitions into different groups and they began to surveyed. The sub-divisions are:

(a) Descriptive
(b) Historical
(c) Normative
(d) Psychological
(e) Structural
(f) Genetic.

In this collection there is 164 definitions of culture. This kind of survey open the door of scientists in their vast study. The Marxian thinkers give a different kind of views regarding culture. According to Marxian thinkers, culture is the super-structure which

10. Bidney : Theoretical Anthropology, p. 30
has developed on the socio-economic structure related to productions. As an independent method in the judgement of culture, the Marxism-Leninism treated culture as the activities of the common people and they also regarded it the production of material goods as the basis of spiritual culture.14

In this way, culture includes all that man has acquired in the mental and intellectual sphere of his individual and social life. M. MacIver holds that culture is a dynamic social change.15 In his view there is intimate relation between social change and cultural change.

Characteristics of culture:

(1) Culture is inclusive of those elements which man has created for his improvements.

(2) Culture is universal, of course it has local, provincial, and external expressions.

(3) The introduction of novel elements increases the complexity and qualities of culture.

(4) Culture is dynamic.

(5) It is communicated from one generation to another in a psychic form.

(6) Culture is man's guide. It is idealistic.

(7) Culture is found only in human society.

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14. Rosenthaland, M. &; ^ dictionary of Philosophy, p. 107
Yudin, P. (ed.)

**Classification of culture:**

The scope of culture is very broad. On the basis of its qualitative marks culture may be divided into three classes — (a) elite culture, (b) Tribal culture and (c) Folklore.

**Folklore:**

In the broader sense folklore is an essential and integral part of the broad circle of culture. When theoretical concept of the origin and development of culture is expressed through the synthesis of social life, then the folklife is specially marked.

Hence, the relation between culture and folklore is very closed. But as an academic discipline, folklore is distinguished from the elite culture. There were two types of society emerging with the development of civilization and culture, namely, in the one side primitive society and in the other side the gradually developing higher society. According to this, we find there are two types of culture, namely, primitive culture and elite culture. By mutual understanding and cooperation of folk society created a unique way of life which is called folklore.

"Folklore is a word with a short but turbulent history."[16]

Though the use of the word folklore is novel, yet it is nicely acquainted in the field of learning like Anthropology, Sociology etc. Folklore emerged as a new field of learning in the

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16. Dorson, R.M.: *A Foreword on Folklore/ American Folklore*, p. 1
nineteenth century. In the middle part of the nineteenth century the term 'Folklore' seems to have been coined in 1846 by the English antiquarian William John Thomas (1803-85) to take the place of the awkward term 'Popular antiquities'. By Folklore Thomas meant to denote the traditions, customs and superstitions of the uncultured classes in civilized nations. The meaning of words, however, is prescribed not by definition but by usage and to-day the scope of folklore includes what was deliberately excluded in the earlier definition, popular arts and crafts, i.e., the material as well as the intellectual culture of the peasantry.

The English archeologists and the German phonologist and linguists contributed so much to popularise in this new field of learning. The Grim brothers were the real founders of the science of folklore. The Grim brothers, Jacob Grim and William Grim published 'Grimm's Fairy Tales' in 1812. The Grim brothers used the term 'Volkskunde' to mark the folk-tales and fairy tales and myths of German. The term 'Folklore' seems to be have been translated from the German word 'Volkskunde' which was used in 1806. 'Volk' means folk and 'Skunde' means lore. The term 'Volkskunde' was popular from 1806 upto 1808

20. : The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 9, p. 446
when Brentano and Von Arnim published their collection of folk songs. In Australia the term used first by Johonu Felix Von-Knatfl in 1813. In the Latin American countries, the Greek word 'Demos' was used in place of the word 'folklore'. Before 1880 A.D. in France the terms 'demologie' and 'demopsychologie' was used. In Spain the term 'demologia' or 'demosofia' or 'demotecnografia' was popular. In Italy the term 'demologia' and 'scienzademedica' was used. In Russia the term 'Narodnye Tovrchestva' was used.

In the year 1877 in London 'the Folklore Society' established. From the time of its establishment, the term folklore got a new form, spread all over the world and universally accepted and it ruled out these terms --

'On the whole however, the term folklore has supplanted all these different terms since the turn of the century.'

When folklore comes to academic teaching or discipline the study of its field become important and also at the same time the number of definitions increases.

'Definitions of folklore are more than fingerprints.'

Since the introduction of the word folklore there arose a controversy about its definition. In the Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend there are twentyone selected definitions given by the different scholars. These definition may be

22. Ibid, p. 2
23. Ibid
25. Reaver, J.R. & Boswell, George, W.
divided into three kinds —  (a) Oral literature, (b) Oral literature and customs and (c) Covering all materials. All these definitions more or less reflects different elements of folklife. Archer Taylor defines folklore,

"Folklore is the material that is handed down by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. It may be folk-songs, folk-tales, riddles, proverbs or other materials preserved in words. It may be traditional tools and physical objects like fences or kites, hot cross buns or easter eggs; traditional ornamentations like the walls of Troy; or traditional symbol like the swastika. It may be traditional procedures like throwing salt over one shoulder or knocking on words. It may be traditional beliefs like the motion that elder is good for ailments of the eye. All these are folklore."  

The characteristics of this definition is —  Firstly, the elements of folklore is traditional. But whether it is oral or written it is not clear in this definition. Secondly, it is transmitted.

Y.M. Sokolov defines folklore —

"Literally, translated 'folklore signifies the wisdom of of the people, the people knowledge.' By 'folklore' one should understand the oral poetic creations of broad masses of people. If the term 'literature' is employed not in its literal sense (written materials) but more widely, that is, if we understand by it not only written artistic productions in general, then 'Folklore' is a special branch of literature; and Folkloristics thus is seen to be part of literary


27. Sokolov, Y.M. : Russian Folklore, p. 4
scholarship. 'Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the
same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present.'\textsuperscript{28}
Folklore has been and continues to be a reflection and a
weapon of class conflict.'\textsuperscript{29}

According to this definition, following are the characteristics of folklore — (a) knowledge of people, (b) oral, (c) poetic
and (d) written material.

The use of the term 'folklore' itself created a lot of controversy. In this regard R.M. Dorson writes,

'The term (i.e., folklore) caught on and proved its value
in defining a new area of knowledge and subject of inquiry but has also caused confusion and controversy.'\textsuperscript{30}

This confusion and controversy about the use of the term folklore
and its nature makes it so complex for the problem of the definition of folklore. Hence, it is not possible to make a universally satisfactory definition of folklore.

'The basic definition of folklore has not yet been formulated to any one's complete satisfaction.'\textsuperscript{31}

In spite of all these controversies among the definitions we can arrange the following common features of folklore —

(1) Folklore is traditional;

(2) Folklore is oral or verbal;

(3) Text variation is the third characteristics of folklore;

(4) Transmigration or transmission is the fourth characteristics of folklore.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{28} Ibid
\bibitem{29} Ibid
\bibitem{30} Dorson, R.M., (ed.): \textit{Folklore and Folklife, Introduction}.
p. 1
\bibitem{31} Brunvon, Jon Hurold: \textit{New Directions for the Study of American Folklore/Folklore}, Vo. 82, p.26
\end{thebibliography}
(5) Folklore is the product of collective consciousness. Hence is impersonal;
(6) Folklore is formularised; and
(7) Folklore is anonymous.

The Province of Folklore:

The province or scope of folklore is the range of its subjectmatter. However, there is controversies and disagreement regarding the scope of folklore.

Folklore is a universal topic, its substance includes material from all areas of life; but the particular study of this material as a distinct topic and the methods of this study distinguish folklore from other disciplines, though there is, of course, some overlapping and disagreement among scholars as to the exact provinces of their studies. The various definitions of folklore collected in the Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend, International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology And Folklore etc. give opposite and diverse view about the subjectmatter of folklore. While some folklorologist conceived verbal arts as the only subjectmatter of folklore, other conceived oral literature as the subjectmatter, some considers oral literature and customs as the subjectmatter of folklore, on the other hand some conceives the whole activities of man as the subjectmatter of folklore. According to some anthropologist like W.R. Bascom Folklore is a part of culture.

32. Clarke, Kenneth W. : Introducing Folklore, p. 3 & Clarke, Mary W.
and by folklore they meant only verbal art. Such a conservative and narrow view has discarded by the modern folklorologists. In his 'The Materials of Folklore', Samuel P. Bayard refuted this narrow view. He writes,

.....'Folklore is concerned with all bodies of belief, ceremonies, rites, customs, dramatic or mimetic actions, procedures, techniques, and arts in any form ...... the material of folklore is popular traditional (folk) religion, philosophy, science, art and ethics, a cluster of ideas and a host of their manifestations, inextricably interwoven.' The modern folklorologists opines that the subjectmatter of folklore includes Myth, legend, tales, jokes, riddles, nursery rhymes, proverbs, chant, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue twisters, folk art, folk-crafts, medicine, folk recipes, folk-music, folk instrumental music, folk songs, folk-dance, and folk-drama, folk-literature, folk games, epitaphs, latrinalia, writings on the walls of public bath rooms, limicricks, food recipes, embroidery designs, mnemonic devices etc. Thus folklore covers everything which makes part of the traditional and environmental equipment of the people.

The subjectmatter of folklore may be divided into two kinds —

33. Sascom, W.R.: Contribution to Folkloristics, p. 67
35. Bynum, Alan (ed.): The Study of Folklore, p. 2
36. Goswami, P.: Ballad and Tales of Assam, p. 2
(a) **Material Folklore and**

(b) **Formalised or Non-material folklore**

(a) **Material folklore** deals with the essential material goods i.e., house, tools of house, dress, ornaments, folk art and craft etc. Man produces their various goods without any help of books or any other form by their creative force. Such things are called material folklore. **Material folklore is the real base of folk society.**

(b) **Non-material or formalised folklore** is the beautified, artistic and aesthetic form of folk society. It includes folk-literature, folkart, folk-dance and drama etc.

**What is folk?**

It has already been noted that the term folklore seems to have been translated from the German word 'Volksunde'. 'Volk' means 'Folk and 'skunde' means 'Lore' (experience). In this section, our attempt will be to discuss the implication of folk. Although in the study of folklore the term 'folk' has express a special suggestiveness, still the english term 'folk' is not used by all in the same sense. F.P. Jones used the term **GWEARIN** to take the place of the term folk. He writes,

'There is some difficulty in ensuring that the English word 'folk' means the same thing to everybody who uses it.' The term 'folk' uses by the different scholars in many senses. Attempt has been made to give the meaning of the term 'folk' from different angels. The **Encyclopedia Britannica** gives the following idea of...
In the primitive Community the whole body of persons composing it is the 'folk', and the widest sense of the word at night equally be applied to the whole population of a civilized state. In its common application, however, to civilizations of western type (in such compounds as folk-lore, folk music etc.) it is narrowed down to include only those who are mainly outside the currents of urban culture and systematic education, the unlettered or little-lettered inhabitants of village or countryside. 38

According to International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore, 'Folk in ethnology the common people who share a basic store of old tradition.' 39

Encyclopedia of Anthropology defines folk as,

'A less ethnocentric and broader definition of folk would be any group of people who share at least one common factor (for example, common occupation, religion, or ethnicity). 40

The English word 'folk' flourished in the middle part of eighteenth century in connection with 'folklore'. When the term 'folk' independently used in Anthropology and folkloristics then generally it denoted as Small Group, Backward people, a group bound together by common interests, common people, peasant society etc. Generally

38. The Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol. ix), p. 444
The English term 'folk' was used for the term 'race'. It is synonymous to the Anglo-Saxon term 'Foile'. Hence, 'folk' means —

'The masses of people of the Lower Culture in any homogeneous social Group as contrasted with individual or with any selected class, in a people based together by ties of race, language, religion etc.'

In this sense the meaning of the term folk is very broad. Folk is a part of the mass, it is not whole. Hence, this conception is not satisfactory. In 1846 Thomas used the term folk to denote traditions, customs and superstitions of the uncultured classes in civilized nations, which are basically traditional rural peasant society. On the basis of this theory, Andrew Long and others called folklore as the 'study of survivals.'

According to Oxford Dictionary the meaning of the term folk is people in general, some old folks having peculiar tastes. In this sense the basis of the use of the term folk is 'Nation'. This can not be accepted, because there is a vast difference between the use of the terms folk and people. Hence, the attempt to use the term folk in the sense of 'Nation' is not tenable.

According to some folklorists 'folk' means non-literate people. But this view is too narrow. Everybody more or less celebrates folk rituals. American sociologists sometimes used the term human race to mean the term folk. Some scholars uses

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41. Arya, S.P.: The Genesis of Folklore/Bharatiya Lokayana (ed.) Vol. VI, No. 1

the term primitive people to mean the term folk. They also use the term folk to designate the lower stratum of the society. Many scholars conceived folklore as the culture of the peasant groups.

Folklorists in many parts of the world regarded their discipline as the study of peasant groups. According to their opinion, in the primitive stage there was group life, but group consciousness was not there. Thus the attempt to use the term primitive people to mean the folk is not accurate. Robert Redfield use the term folk is almost synonymous with 'Primitive.' The 'little community' too is conceived as a socio-cultural 'whole'. He writes,

'I shall say that the societies that existed before the rise of cities 'were folk societies', and I shall say that the societies that are found today unaffected by the great civilizations 'are folk societies'.

Redfield himself emphasized in his last major work on Peasant Society and Culture that these earlier concepts are based on the model of isolated and self-contained tribal communities. Peasant villages do not fit in with this model. Redfield writes,

'The culture of a Peasant Community, on the other hand, is not autonomous. It is an aspect of dimension of the civilization of which it is a part. As the peasant society is a half-society, so the peasant culture is a half-culture.'

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43. Americo Paredes: Tributaries To the Main Stream. The Ethnic Groups/Our Living Traditions. Ed. Tristram Potter Coffin, p. 70

44. Redfield, Robert: The Primitive Word, p. xi


46. Deva, Indra: Folk Culture and Peasant Society in India, p.12

47. Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture, p. 40
Peasant villages cannot be regarded as socio-cultural wholes. They are essentially parts of larger peasant civilizations which contain other villages and also non-industrial urban centres. Peasant socio-cultural processes cannot be properly understood without this context. Various social scientists use the term peasant to designate diverse kinds of people. Andrew Belleille pointed out, it also tends to be employed as a residual category so as to include all groups which are neither tribal nor industrial urban. Robert Redfield has used the term 'Peasant' in essentially the same sense in which George M. Foster has used the term folk.

In the nineteenth century some scholars tried to define 'folk'. They maintained that peasants, illiterate, rural, and people of the lower stratum of the society are termed as 'folk'. While on the other hand, in another context the civilized, literate, urban and people of the higher stratum of the society are termed as 'elite'. From this definition, it can be easily infer that folklore or folk society can be developed if and only if there is an elite class. But historically the concept of 'folk' is not dependent upon the concept of 'elite'. Folk-society may arise without the existence of the elite society. Folk-society may also developed

48. Deva, Indra: *Folk-culture and Peasant Society in India*, p. 12
51. Dundes, Alan: *Essays in Folkloristics*, p. 4
without the establishment of any connection with elite society. On the other hand, there are many distinction between folk and peasants. Most of the city-dwellers can be regarded as folk. But the city-dwellers can not be said as peasants. The city dwellers may have rich for their folklore. Hence, the definition given by the British scholars in the nineteenth century are very difficult to accepted without omission and commission. The folk-society has created the materials of folklore in ancient times and these are still kept alive. Now-a-days various items of folklore has been producing. Folklore is a living tradition.

Folklore is the outcome of the creative ideas of people expressed through verbal art as well as material forms. It may originate from a community or an individual. It is transmitted orally or through one written process from one generation to another and from one country to the other. 52 It exchanges its position between written and oral traditions. Folklore may belong to a non-literate or the literate society, to a tribal or non-tribal community, to villagers or town-dwellers. Folklore constitutes a major part of culture. 53 Mazaharul Islam pointed out that culture can not be divided on the basis of sophistication and unsophistication, as folklore cannot be treated as

52. Islam, Mazaharul : Folklore : The Pulse of The People pp. 1-33
53. Ibid
54. Ibid.
unpolished. Education or sophisticated life is not the hindrance of folklore. Allen Dundes clarifies some of the points very clearly. There are still some folklorists who mistakenly identify the folk with peasant society or rural groups. Dundes writes,

'...And equally fallacious view is that folklore was produced by a folk in the hoary past and the folklore still extant today consists solely of fragmentary survivals.'

In modern times the term folk denotes to a group who are common in occupation, language or religion etc. Dundes points out,

'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 common occupation, language or religion — but what is important is that a group for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own.'

What is Folk Life:

Folklore is the expression of folk-society. In other words folk-life and folk-society are inseparable. Now the question may be raise what is the nature of folk-society, what is the basis of its infrastructure?

a) Some scholars think that Peasant Civilization and their life is the basis of folklore. Folklore has no existence out of this society. Hence, the basis of folk-life is agriculture.

55. Dundes, Alan : The Study of Folklore, p. 2
56. _________ : Ibid, p. 2
57. _________ : Essays in Folkloristics, p. 38
Donald Goddard writes,

'The most clear cut and fully developed folk environments are rural or peasant communities that are usually isolated geographically from the principle centres of culture and are therefore able to develop a continuous tradition.'

This conception is too narrow. Because folklore flourishes at the dawn of human civilization. Since men lived in the caves, the tradition of folklore has been flowing. The existence of folk society has been also observed out of peasant society. Though urban civilization has severely impact on it, still it is not destroyed. The unique peculiar group tradition and moving force helps to maintain its existence.

b. Other thinkers think that socialistic system of society is the basis of folk-life and accordingly folklore flourished and develops. They opines that when feudal economic system will be end then there will be no existence of folk-society. This idea is only confined with feudal economic system. All type of social system is the basis of folk-society. Therefore, the fundamental question is not the feudal system, the root basis is economics. The Economic is the root of all-pattern of folk society.

c. According to other thinkers primitive society is the folk society. Their life may be develop and colourful in the social context. This has emphasised only one type of society. Folk-society has several forms.

d. Some other thinkers like Asutosh Bhattacherjee thinks that integrated society is the folk society. This view is also

59. Bhattacherjee, Asutosh: Banglar Loka Sahitya, PP. 1-3
Social systems and structure is changeable. Folk society is that to Robert Redfield has pointed out,

"All societies are alike in some respects, and each differs from others in other respects; the further assumption made here is that folk societies have certain features in common which enable us to think of them as a type."  

The characteristics of Folk Society is that — it is small, alienated, homogenous, mutually connected, simplicity, accustomed with traditional life, internal identity, strong group consciousness, integrated tribe etc. He writes,

"..... and these conventionalized ways have become inter-related within one another to that day constitute a coherent and self-consistent system. Such a system is what we mean in saying that the folk society is characterized by a 'culture'. A culture is an organization or integration of conventional understandings."

George M. Foster reshaped and expanded the concept of folk society and culture as introduced by Robert Redfield. Foster marked the folk-society as 'Half-society' which is vertically and horizontally structured. He writes,

"..... a folk society is not a whole society, an isolate, in itself. It is a 'Half-society', a part of larger social unit (usually a nation) which is vertically and horizontally structured."

61. Ibid, p. 233
To him, folk societies are neither 'primitive' in the usual sense of the word, nor are they 'civilized' in the sense of being integrated into modern industrial cultures. Modern folklorists maintained that ideal folk society denotes a middle position which is distinguished from one side and independent from modern developed society. Elman R. Service writes, '.... a folk society as opposed to a primitive tribe one, the one hand and modern civilization on the other'.

The Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettle, in his analysis of folk music observed that folk music occupies a kind of middle ground between the Primitive and the Cultivated. Folklore or Folk-Society may be regarded as the middle ground between Primitive and modern cultures.

Folklife is the collection of material culture, social folk customs and performing folk-arts. Some folklorists over signifies on verbal forms. According to them, folk-life should be an essential part of folklore. They opines that folk-life reflects the perfect picture of traditional culture and verbal forms. Jon Harold Brunvand, an American folklorist has divided folklore and folk-life on the basis of its existence into three kinds — (a) Verbal, (b) Partially verbal and (c) Non-verbal. Ralph Steel Brog has divided folklore on the basis of its subjectmatter.

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64. Dorson, R.M. (ed.): *Folklore and Folklife An Introduction*, Introduction, p. 2
mode of expression into ten categories. In the first category covers prose Narrative, i.e., tale, myth, legends etc., second category covers Song Narrative, Third category covers elements related to physical and mental sports and games, Fourth category deals with drama, Fifth category concerns with the ritual, rites, festivals, sacrifices and offerings etc., Sixth category covers food, Seventh category covers language, (it includes Folk etymology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, common word, folk name of plants, folk name of animals, personification, formula, place name) etc. A.H. Krappe has divided folklore into eighteen groups. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, folklore of civilized people may be conveniently classified under three main heads : (1) belief and customs, (2) Narrative and Saying and (3) Art. The third head art sub-divides into (a) folk music with ballads and songs (b) folk-drama.

The scope of folklife is very wide. It is not confined within a particular society. Folklife is the whole expression of folklore.

Richard M. Dorson has divided folklore and folklife into four broad categories. e.g. (1) Oral literature, (2) Material Culture, (3) Social folk custom and (4) Performing folk arts.

69. Krappe, Alexander Haggerty: The Science of Folklore(Int.) p. XV
70. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 10, p. 601
71. Chottapadhyay, Tusar: Loka Sanskritir Tattwa Kup O Swarup Sandhan, p. 12
72. Dorson, R.M.(ed.): Folklore and Folklife, An Introduction, p. 2
(1) Oral literature may be regarded as verbal art from the point of its form and structure. W.R. Bascom used the term verbal art to denote oral literature. According to him, unwritten literature, popular literature, folk literature, primitive literature and oral literature etc. emphasises on the relation of verbal art with the relation of literature. We can also easily assume the incoherence of it from written literature, because literature is based on sound and written form, whereas folklore is exception. The term verbal art avoids all confusions and also enables us to distinguish the folktale, proverbs, and related forms. Bascom writes,

'The concept of verbal art avoids all these difficulties, and has the further advantage of emphasizing the essential features which distinguished the folktale, myth, proverbs and related forms.' Sometimes the term 'expressive literature' has used to denote oral literature. Repetitive patterns, sung, verbal auditory form etc. are falls in this category. Its sub-classes are — folktale, narrative, folk-poetry, proverbs, sayings, maxims, riddle, idioms, folk epic, folk-speech etc. Oral literature can and frequently enter into written literature. Folk-speech gradually transmitted into local and provincial form and removes from standard language.

73. Bascom, W.R.: *Contributions to Folkloristics*, p. 67

74. 


76. 


Material folklore comprises the physical folk-life. In a traditional oriented society, how man can produce their various goods, how can they build their house, how they cultivate etc. — these are the chief elements of material culture. Folk crafts, folk-art, folk architecture, folk costume, folk cookery etc, are also the important elements of material culture.

The existence of traditional life resides between oral literature and material culture. Traditional life is the mediator between oral literature and material culture. Traditional life may be said as social folk custom; social folk custom comprises the Festivals and celebrations; recreations and games, folk medicine, folk-religion etc.

The fourth important category of folklore and folk-life is performing folk-arts. Performing folk-arts includes traditional folk-music, folk-dance and folk-drama.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that folk-life is the expression of internal and external activities of man. Folk-life is dynamic and at the same it preserves the tradition and is obviously distinguished from elite culture.

Relation of Folk-life with the Elite Society:

Scholars gives diverse opinion regarding the origin of elite culture. It is a very difficult task to say that elite culture flourished and developed prior to the folklore or is it posterior to the folklore? Comparatively elite culture is more
methodological, systematic, certain and self-conscious than the folklore. In Indian context, elite culture may be said as 'Sanskritic' or 'Vaidiki' culture. In India before 2500 B.C. elite culture has flourished. Robert Reffield used the terms 'Great tradition' and 'Little tradition' to denote the terms elite culture and folklore respectively. Indra Deva pointed out that Peasant Civilization in India, China and elsewhere have comprised two major tiers. These have been variously referred to by pairs such as 'great and little traditions', 'high and low culture', 'aristocratic and peasant culture', and 'elite and folk culture'. The term peasant is often used in contradiction to aristocratic or elite. The peasants and the elites or the peasantry and the gentry of a pre-industrial civilization are parts of the same socio-cultural system. Hence, the distinction between them is not of the same order as the one that exists between groups belonging to different social systems. Indra Deva writes,

'In fact these socio-cultural segments are complementary to each other and form a single whole; and the demarcation between the peasant and the elite is not always clear-cut in terms either of structure or culture.'

George M. Foster has pointed out, folk-culture is not confined to village. The folk component of this larger unit bears a

77. Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture, p. 41
78. Deva India: Folk-culture and Peasant Society in India, p. 13
79. Ibid: pp. 13-14
symbiotic spatial-temporal relationship to the more complex component, which is formed by the upper classes of the pre-industrial urban centre. 'In this sense folk and urban are not polar concepts; rather, they are both integral parts of the definition of certain type of socio-cultural unit in which the pre-industrial city is a focal point ...... folk-culture is found outside peasant societies.'

Folklore and Folklife survives in the large urban areas. Donald Mc Kelvic writes,

'...... folk tradition not only survive, but thrive, in the large urban areas.' I am quite sure that an enormous amount of materials concerning oral tradition and belief and aspects of folklife studies awaits its collectors in these towns and cities.

Peter Opi remarks that time has shown even in a highly urbanised society such as ours local traditions do not necessarily die out.

Richard M. Dorson has also pointed out although industrialisation and technological development appears as the opposite force for the development of folklore, really development of folklore is possible in the mill and factory. Modern technocratic civilisation is not an opposite force for the rising of folklore, Alan Dundes in his article 'who are the folk' writes,

'No technology is not stamping out folklore; rather it is becoming a vital factor in the transmission of folklore and it is providing an exciting source of inspiration for the

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81. Ibid, p. 63
generation of new folklore .... Moreover, the technology itself has become the subject of folklore. Experimental scientists (and Engineers) constitutes a folk group with their own folklore.*85

Stith Thompson points out there is always the tendency to feel that folklore is something that comes out of the country districts. But there is a good deal of folklore that is urban.86 From this point of view the modern folklorist considers folklife may active and creative in the background of urban and rural life.

"Folklore occurs in all societies even the most highly urbanised."87

In India a large part of the people of the non-industrial urban centres have been active bearers of the folk tradition. Folklore and folklife are not only confined to villages. It will be a fallacious idea if we characterise Peasant Civilizations, folk culture and Peasant institutions as rural or agrarian. In the Pre-industrial urban centres, people of the lower classes and women of the upper classes are as active bearers of the oral tradition of folk-literature. People behaves same in the traditional towns. The same songs are sung, the same myths are recounted during Calendaric rituals, the same proverbs are employed to make a point, the same idomatic expressions are used to attack adversaries during quarrels. Of course, there are a difference between the town folk and the village folk — regarding the mode of worship, the pattern of beliefs, and their idea of values.

85. Dundes, Alan: Essays In Folkloristics, p. 18
86. Thompson, Stith: Four Symposium On Folklore, p. 257
In India some village people belong to the upper castes. For example the priestly Brähmans and the land lords are members of the elite stratum and bearers of the classical tradition. Folk and elite strands are almost inextricably interwoven into the fabric. Peasant Civilizations. Folk and elite streams of Culture have existed in close proximity to each other for thousands of years. The traditional elite culture has not in any way threatened the existence of the culture of the folk. The basic difference between the folk and the traditional elite streams of culture has been that of the degree of sophistication and articulation. Literary evidences, musical and religious evidences prove that from the earliest time there has been a continuous process of give and take between the folk and elite streams of culture. Folk culture and elite culture are complementary to each other. They are mutually dependent. They cross fertilize each other.

88. Deva, Indra: Folk-culture and Peasant Society in India, p. 15
89. Ibid.