INTRODUCTION

Introduced into German folklore discourse in 1962 by Hans Moser, who published his seminal paper *Folklorismus in Our Time*, the term “Folklorismus (English, folklorism; Russian fol'klorizm), has been applied to visually and aurally striking or aesthetically pleasing folk materials, such as costume, festive performance, music art and foods that lend themselves to being extracted from their initial contexts and put to the new uses for different, often larger audiences. The term surfaced at the turn of the 20th century as an analogy to primitivism when *avant-garde* circle took interest in the expressive visual and musical forms of both primitive and modern folk culture. Before the 1960s, the term appeared as *neofolklorism* in French and Russian discussions referring particularly to the adaptation of folkloric materials in the high cultural contexts of music, art, and literature” (Bendix 1988: 5). In short, folklorismus refers to folklore outside its primary context, or commercialized folklore.

According to Moser, it was the upper classes who were the first to cultivate folklorismus, for educational, political, as well as fashionable and romantic reasons. Examples were the 17th century Bavarian aristocracy playing at ‘peasant weddings’ and the Elector Max of Bavaria, who encouraged the performance of folk music, and always wore national dress when travelling. In due course the processes of democracy, aided by the media, the entertainment and the tourist industries, brought it to the whole community. Moser saw folklorismus in the West as the result of expanding industrial markets, in Eastern Europe as performing a politico - cultural function, and in the developing countries as a reaction to progress, which swept away old beliefs and customs, but made possible the posthumous conservation of folklore. Using the first Bavarian
tourist areas for many of his examples, he pointed out that modern mass culture, in the course of cultural leveling, is increasingly interested in regions where life appears to have retained a distinctive, original character that finds its expression in folklore (Newall 1987: 131).

Folklorismus is also known as 'Mass Culture' in India and was defined by Handoo as “the modern mass produced artefacts, a kind of industrial renewal of old traditions shared and circulated in an industrialized society by written, oral or other means of mass communication” (Handoo 2000: 212).

Folklorismus may also be defined as the professional artistic creation of folklore in all its forms: in science and in pedagogy, on the stage, at festivals and during holidays, in the mass media, in recordings and advertisements, in tourism, in crafts, and in everyday life.

It is therefore, this process of modernization and industrialization that has made folklore undergo great change and at the same time faces the threat of disappearance from its use. The researcher’s intention of working on Khasi Folklorismus is therefore, influenced by certain pertinent factors. The face of folk culture in respect of the Khasis has undergone great change under the influence of certain forces, which may be categorized as economic-technique, political-legal and cultural-religious. The oral tradition, one of the strongest discourses among the Khasis, has experienced this change in certain ways. The process of transmission, the form, the structure and the lore of the tradition have been re-shaped and re-molded. In fact, some genres have disappeared from the oral tradition due to the impact of modernization but they continued to live on in other forms of modern media.

It may be mentioned that a good number of works, writings and compositions on Khasi folklore have been produced by local writers, composers, and producers in recent times and
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Khasi folklore have been produced by local writers, composers, and producers in recent
times and transmit their works in the form of modern media communication. Out of them,
one of the important Khasi Folklore collections is the phawar. According to Juanita War,
“Phawar is a traditional Khasi poetic which is composed spontaneously in couplets for
special occasions with a peculiar musical quality which is between a chant and a song”
(War 1994: 24). However, Kynpham Sing Nonkynrih argues against the contention that
holds the Khasi phawar to be a set of couplets, “despite the short and terse lines, it is
neither composed in the English iambic pentameter nor in the rhyme scheme of aabb
which is normally associated with rhyming couplets.” Instead, according to Nongkynrih
“The phawar is a six-line traditional Khasi verse form. It is referred to in the singular as
ka phawar and in the plural as ki phawar. It can be described in three ways: as a limerick
because, although it is not –liner, it is often a humorous poem; as a verse epigram
expressing an ingenious thought with point, usually satirical; and as a gnomic verse
because it comprises pithy and sententious sayings, embodying some moral principle or
precept, some of which can be quite witty” (Nongkynrih 2008: 1).

Some collections of Khasi phawar are ‘Ki Phawar Khasi’ 1994 in Lest We Forget
by Juanita War, Ki Khanatang bad U Sier Lapalang 1937 by P.G. Gatphoh, Ka Pariah
Ka Kot Jingphawar by D. L. Nongbri, Ka Ryngkap ne Ki Poetry Khasi [1966(1978)] by

To the best of her knowledge, the scholar has not come across references to the study of folklorismus in any of the above mentioned works, and the task that this study proposes to take up is to make a detailed investigation on the changing roles of the oral discourse of the Khasis in the spheres of *phawar* singing, the radio, television, documentaries and films.
The Methodology applied in the pursuance of the research involves the collection of data and materials through primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources have been generated from written documents, and *phawar* compositions. From the variety of methods available, the scholar has particularly applied the non-participant observation method and interview method to elicit the required data. Questionnaires have also been served to selected individual *phawar* composers and persons representing the media institutions particularly the All India Radio, Doordarshan Kendra Shillong Station and Media plus.

The scholar has also visited several villages of the Khasi Hills to interview the village folk and she gathered information from the villages like Umroi, Umtrai, in the Ri Bhoi District Smit, Thangsning, Nongkynrih, in the East Khasi Hills District, Lawbyrtun, Tiehnongbah, Pariong, and Nongstoin in the West Khasi Hills District. While in Shillong, the scholar met Station Directors, programme organizers and other staff of the All India Radio and Doordarshan and Media Plus. Besides, she also met some retired Station Directors from where she obtained the relevant data.

Secondary sources have been generated from published books, tapes, spools and compact discs. Other sources are articles, journals, newspapers, magazines, visuals, websites, seminar papers, weeklies, dailies.

Regarding library work the scholar has visited and collected materials from NEHU Library, State Central Library, All India Radio Shillong Library, North Eastern Council Library, Anthropological Survey of India Library Shillong, and Don Bosco
Centre for Indigenous Cultures. Other libraries visited are the Department of Folklore Research Library Guahati University, Film Studies Departmental Library of Jadavpur University, Satyajit Ray’s Film and Television Institute Library, Roopkala Kendro Film and Social Communication Institution Library, and Sahitya Akademi Library Kolkata.

The study is being organized in five chapters.

**Chapter – 1: Tracking folklorismus in the Phawar**

This chapter is devoted to the study of *phawar* as a traditional discourse and its evolution into a genre type which functions beyond the parameters of traditional usage. As a poetic genre, the *phawar* is, perhaps, unique to the Khasis and hence no precise translation is available to offer a definition for the word. Though the *phawar* as a pure form of traditional utterance was used for certain sacerdotal purposes and in association with archery, yet today they are being used by people during public events, students during various academic events, and by government departments for intervention programmes. Even political parties during election time, employ *phawar* singers in trying to woo voters. These *phawar* are different from the traditional ones, in many ways. The mode of presentation, language, contents and events are some of the features that differentiate a traditional from a modern *phawar*. For instance, in the traditional archery *phawar* of the Hima Khyrim and some villages of Hima Mawiang (West Khasi Hills), the leader would begin with a ‘choral invocation’ which is of the form of two types of sounds:

**Leader:** 'E...e...e...e...e...'
Group members reply: \(O \ldots o \ldots o \ldots o \ldots\)

Then again the leader keens out: \(A \ldots h \ldots h \ldots h \ldots\), followed by the phawar as,

\[U \text{ tai ba kum u tai, u tai ba kum u tai},\]
\[U \text{ ba shiri kum u myrsiang;}\]
\[H\text{angta te hai li hai}\]
\[Lah ma ii mo ia u iong.\]

Translation:

A \ldots h \ldots h \ldots h \ldots

There he is, there he is,

Wrinkled like a fox;

There we shall dance nicely

Because we had beaten the black marked.

Then the group members shake their bows to produce a rhythmic sound and simultaneously join him in the chorus of \(hoi\ kiw\). However, in \(phawar\) other than archery \(phawar\), the leader would begin the chant which is Ooooo.... or Ahhhh... followed by the \(phawar\) and conclude by the chorus \(hoi\ kiw\) as in the above.

In earlier days almost every man knew the art of singing a \(phawar\) and they taught their children to follow them. \(Phawar\) that were used during those times are different from today's \(phawar\) because in earlier times as mentioned, they were used only for sacerdotal purposes and in association with archery. Hence it is always applied in a religious context, such as \(phawar\) during the ceremonial dance for the dead (\(ka\ phur\),
phawar that contains moral instruction and social codes of conduct, or, offerings of prayers to Ka lei Hukum (Goddess who gives Orders) such as phawar to celebrate a successful hunt, phawar celebrating victory in battles, phawar sung during the sport of archery and so on. Other types include phawar while working together, such as erecting a memorial stone, or a house pillar, phawar during community dances etc.

As time went by, new changes were ushered in alongside advancement of science and technology and evolution of culture and society. With the development of mass communication particularly the media (both print and electronic media and their combinations) a new way of life was introduced to the people. Thus the tradition of phawar also underwent transformation. And instead of losing its purity of form and content, the changing role of phawar has in turn, given it a new lease of life. This is clearly seen through the modern use of the ancient art of the phawar.

However, it is important to note that the process of reworking and modifying of folklore for modern tastes is not 'fakelore’ or the spurious production of folklore. Fakelore according to R.M. Dorson “is inauthentic, manufactured folklore presented as if it were genuinely traditional. The element of misinterpretation is central; artist who draw on traditional stories in their work are not producing fakelore unless they claim their creations as real folklore. In fact, they are producing folklorismus. It is also to be mentioned here that unlike fakelore, folklorismus however, is not necessarily misleading; it includes any use of a tradition outside the cultural context in which it was created. Professional art based on folklore, TV and film commercials with fairy characters, other
mass products that are traditional based and even academic studies of folklore are all forms of folklorismus” (Dorson 1963: 101).

Similarly, when we consider the above discussion, we can say that the phawar though now in its new form is devoid of the ingredients which can be called traditional elements, yet they continue to be created and used in ways and occasions more varied than before. These phawar are still taken and accepted as part of Khasi life and indeed, folklore by the present generation. Many of the phawar composers compose phawar not for their own interest and benefits, but for reviving the tradition of phawar singing and sometimes, overtly for use in specific events such as political campaigns, annual visit to certain remarkable place by an organization such as Seng Khasi, etc. This is an obvious reaffirmation of the integral role that the tradition of phawar composition and singing to the Khasi community and culture. Thus, it may be maintained that the new evolving phawar are examples of the way in which ancient artistic creations of a community transform and manifest themselves as forms of folklorismus in order to prove their worth and usability.

Today, the traditional use of phawar is disappearing from the practice of the modern Khasis except in some villages where we can still witness its use, as in archery, but even here the tradition has been diluted. This may be due to lack of the original and expert phawar singers, trained in the tradition of its old usage alongside the uninterested attitude of the people who, it has been observed, display lack of curiosity for it. As said before that the traditional use and practice of phawar is a state of evolution, and the
**phawar** today is being practiced with zeal and enthusiasm in contexts that are suitable to the urban lifestyle of today. Few samples will be reproduced below from the study with translation and interpretation in English.

**NEHU Varsity week celebration: Tang Ban Byrngaia, an Entertainment Phawar**

Shynrang:  
Lyngdkhur bad I sikei’  
Jabirthieh ha ka weitdem:  
Ka dur jong phi te thei,  
Ha ka lieh ha ka syndem.  
Hoi... kiw...

Translation:  
Male:  
Wild pigeon and the deer  
Small fish in the whirl pool  
Your face young woman  
Quite fair but your nose quite flat.  
Hoi... kiw...

This verse talks about the facial appearance of a young lady who is fair in complexion but who has a flat nose. Here, the girl is being compared to a pigeon, a deer and even small fish in a pool. Fish here is a symbolic representation for grown up girls who have attained marriageable age. **Leit khwai** or to go fishing is one of the popular sayings amongst the Khasis; fish here stands for the girls. Once the fish is caught in a fishing rod it is difficult for it to free itself. So the same applies to girls; once they got into the net of love they cannot free themselves from it.
Shynrang:  
*Shyllang phyrnai khriak khriak,*  
*I didi na byrnihat;*  
*Nga tang shu iohi liak,*  
*Ia I nga la iapmat.*  

*Hoi... kiw...*

Translation:  
**Male:**  
Forehead that shines so bright  
Didi from byrnihat  
When I had a glimpse  
At once I fell for her.  
Hoi... kiw...

Shynrang:  
*U mama ba bam sohkbia,*  
*U jyndem h’u khiew ranei;*  
*Shisha jingishongkhia,*  
*Ka jainsem jong I kongthei.*  

*Hoi... kiw...*

Translation:  
**Mama who eats cucumber**  
Fermented rice in the earthern pot  
Really! How great it looks  
The Jainsem of that young lady.  
Hoi... kiw...
The concept of beauty does not lie only with the looks of one’s face but it also is in the other parts of the body such as the hair, legs, hands, fingers and even a garment. Here, the singer also narrates to us how he fell in love the moment he saw ‘didi’ (word used to address to a non Khasi lady) at Byrnihat. But, when he saw kongthei (young Khasi girl) with her jainsem he at once forgets the didi he first liked.

Kynthei:  
*Putbikur h’u makashang,*  
*Ban pynhun ia u Baichung:  
Ka dur jong phi te rang,*  
*Shu pyllun la kum u pdung.*  
*Hoi... kiw...*

Translation:

Female:  
Blow a trumpet at the Himalayas  
To pacify the Baichung  
Your face oh young man  
Is just round like a winnowing shield  
Hoi... kiw...

Here, the lines tell about male youths. To blow a trumpet at the Himalayas means to praise the males by raising their status as high as the height of the highest peak in the world so that everyone would know of them. Again, Bhaichung, the Indian football team captain is admired by the football-crazed young people and he has become a household name in Shillong. In a similar manner, skill is admired and this composition goes as an exhortation to youth to make use of their talents. It also implies that appearance here does
not matter, even if the person mentioned in the *phawar* has a face resembling the *pdung* or the sieve.

**Kynthei:**  
*Lyngngong u tyrkhang.*  
*U kiseh bad u sitong;*  
*Ki ong hyndai u rang,*  
*Lyngngeh la ka jainspong.*  
*Hoi... kiw...*

**Translation:**

**Female:**  
Stump of a fern  
Pine tree and a turf  
Long ago, a man they said  
Used to dress nicely with his turban.  
*Hoi... kiw...*

**Kynthei:**  
*U Sla kum u slasha,*  
*U tyrso kum u jatira;*  
*Mynta te la kylla,*  
*Shano u 'nai khatsawsynia?*  
*Hoi... kiw...*

**Translation:**

**Female:**  
A leaf like tea leaves  
Mustard leaf like *jatira* (wild vegetable)  
Now everything has changed  
*Where now the full moon is?*  
*Hoi... kiw...*
Kongthei also reminds him that he should not forget his own traditional dress code that is a dhoti and a turban. She now regrets to see that all these are no more in use by the modern Khasi men whom women used to refer to ‘U Nai Khadsawsynia’ (a full moon). U ‘Nai is a short form for Bnai, the moon, and khadsawsynia means the fourteen nights when the moon takes its full shape, which is also referred as full moon. The darkness of the night will be brightened by the light of the full moon. It is during these nights that the moon shines brightly in the midst of other celestial bodies bringing the attraction and satisfaction of the feelings of those who are struggling to pass the loneliness at the dead hour. It is therefore, this beauty of the full moon that reflects the concept of beauty for a manly and a person with good character. Whatever it is, this kongthei agrees and accepts the changes and development in the society, but she warns the male youths not to get them drawn totally in to these changes.

Political Phawar

A...h...h...h...

Hikai te la hikai – 2 times
Ba kin nang ka khalai wait
Ban talain te la tbit
Dang jakle pat de ban mait.
Hoi....kiw....

Translation:
A...h...h...h...
To teach we have taught- 2 times
For them to wield a sword
Expert whirling they are
Yet still dull they are in striking.
Hoi..... kiw....

To wield a sword, one has to be properly trained so that he will be skilful at wielding it. But since it takes a lot of time, some people are still lacking the skill of wielding, though they may be expert in whirling the sword. This art is also a kind of training the youths of olden days who were preparing for a battle, when the use of firearm was not known to the Khasis. A sword, a shield, a bow and arrow were used as weapons in a battlefield by the Khasis. Here, the singer does not really mean to give training for whirling or striking a real sword when he sings, but he indirectly tries to refer to political leaders who are trying to woo the voters by their sweet promises during campaigning. Every politician, before the election tries to convince the voters to vote for him/her as the representative of their constituencies. Different types of developments, eradication of unemployment, poverty and corruption are some of the issues that every politician uses to lure voters. Their promise is like whirling a sword in every direction. But what surprises and annoys the public is that, when the election is over, promises fade like a dream one has at night. Majority of these politicians woo the voters for their own benefits and forget what they had once promised to the public. A few of them only would fulfill their promises. This is how many of the politicians still do not know to strike their own sword.
A...h...h...h...

Pukni ba kham pei phang- 2times

U 'langkhun u rah shuwa
Tyngab ba shu kwah rhah
Shi syndon da u 'langkpa.
Hoi...kiw...

Translation:
A...h...h...h...

A more confident vulture- 2 times
Carried the lamb first
But a greedy crow
Took the breeding goat at once.
Hoi.... kiw....

In this quatrain, the singer extracts the fable from Aesop’s tales entitled *U Pukni bad Ka Tyngab* (a vulture and a crow) (Tham 1937: 2). In the story, in search of food, the vulture is stronger than the crow and he carries away only the lamb. The weaker yet proud crow trying to compete with the vulture tries to carry the he-goat only to find trouble in getting its claws stuck in the knotted goat’s wool. The singer here likens the wise vulture with the UDP having the hope of getting only a few numbers of seats as the new party, but what they get is beyond their expectation. On the other hand, the Congress as a dominant party was referred to as a greedy crow for its high expectation yet small achievements.
At the present day society, very few people that we could find are free from being involving in corruption be it in an obvious or covert manner. Corruption has now become one of the main hindrances to development. This is why many are suffering from unemployment, and lack of when statistics in paper show numbers which indicate self-sufficiency. In Meghalaya too the situation is the same; innocent people are fed up of the cheating and thieving nature of bureaucratic and government officials. This sentiment is echoed even by the fishes at Wards Lake who are fed up of eating the grams fed to them; they never get a chance to taste different food but only to wait for a time to be caught and served as food for others.
Social issue Phawar: Seng Khasi Phawar

A...h...h...h...

Para kur para kha – 2 times
Wat leit bud dustur thymmai
To ale noh mynta
Sha la ka nongrim tynrai
Hoi..... kiw

Translation:
A...h...h...h...

Clansman and kinsman- 2 times
Do not imitate other’s custom
So come now together
Come back to our own traditional life.
Hoi...kiw...

A...h...h...h...

Ryngkat ka boh ka spong – 2 times
Ia pyrthei ngin ia pyni
Katno ngi sngew sarong
Ba la buh da ki longkni
Hoi ....kiw

Translation:
A...h...h...h...

Along with a dhoti and a turban – 2 times
We will display to the world
How much we are proud of these dresses
Because these were given to us by the maternal uncles.
Hoi...kiw...

The evolution of culture and society brings along with it the inevitable change which decides which customs remain and which become redundant. Khasi society is no different to other societies and it is not new to accepting these changes and developments. Everything is changing, to name a few from food to dress and even the way of life. Yet, with the changing world, the Khasi culture still remains – evolving, adapting to suit the needs of society. Education is another cause of these changes, ushering in new perspectives in ideas and thought. The singer here, fearing the loss of his culture in totality, calls for his compatriot to turn back to their own traditions reiterating his pride in what is their own. He also warns them against imitating other cultures which lead to a loss of the old ways of convention and practices. By taking the traditional dress of the Khasis, the singer hopes it will be the best way to remind modern day youths of their own culture.

A...h...h...h...

_U rang binong bishon - 2 times_
_Ha shap u khun Khasi_
_U dei u saw shyrtong_
_Ha lama ka seng Khasi_
_Hoi... kiw..._

Translation:
A...h...h...h...

Good and noble rooster - 2 times
In the emblem of the Khasis
He is the rooster with red crest
In the flag of the Seng Khasi.
Hoi...kiw...

*Rang binong bishon* in the Khasi context signifies a man who comes from a well to do family. In the Khasi dances such as Shad Suk Mynsiem and Nongkrem, we witness such type of male dancers through their dance attire. Their economic status does not only reflect through dances but in the society as well through their daily life. Practically, every Khasi male is responsible to act as the protector for his clan, the society and the country. Rooster here represents *U rang binong bishon* for its close attachment to the Khasi religion and hence it is symbolically used as the emblem in the flag of the Seng Khasi.

According to the Khasi belief, the rooster is the one who paved the way (*nongprat lynti*) for them. It represents the mediator between god and man since the beginning of time. According to the myth, it is the rooster that amongst other animals including man succeeded in bringing the sun back to the world from her hiding place which was a cave called *Ka Krem Lamet Latang*. In the story, the sun went to hide her face from the world to escape from the insults passed on to her by animals in the dancing arena while she was dancing with her brother moon, thus bringing darkness to the world.

The hiding sun here refers to the Supreme God who turns away with agony from the world for the sins that man has committed. *Ka Krem Lamet Latang* refers to the place far beyond the human reach. The darkness covers the entire world not because the sun was inside the cave, but because of the sin that has entered into man and rule over his life.
When man realized his own guilt, he began thinking of himself as a helpless being without God, i.e. he understood that he should seek God’s forgiveness for his sins. For this, he has to search for a negotiator which he found in the being of the cock. A cock thus, has to sacrifice his own life for man so that man can communicate with God through the signs that can be seen in its intestines (Mawrie 1997: 11). From that time till these days the red crested cock plays a vital role in the Khasi religion (Ka Niam Khasi) and is symbolically been used as the emblem in the flag of the Seng Khasi.

Chapter- 2: The Radio as Narrative

This chapter deals with a study on the radio as one of the media, which has consciously used folklore material for its broadcasting purposes. In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the folklore materials as broadcast by the AIR, Shillong Station, the roles and purpose of using folklore in radio.

Media and communication received a new impetus with the discovery of the radio. Simultaneously broadcasting of the spoken, taped word and music to millions of people in remote places became a reality and the seed for the establishment of a global village was sown. Because of its broadcasting potentiality the radio also helped news, information and education to a distant audience. Historically, the phenomenon of the radio was the result of many scientific endeavours. In 1895, Marconi perfected wireless telegraphy, working on principles developed over the preceding decades. Twelve years later, Lee De Forest in USA invented the vacuum tube which made sustained radio transmission possible. Wireless telegraphy and the radio telephone made rapid strides in
maritime and other uses and received great impetus as a means of military communication and propaganda during the First World War (Malhan 1985: 59-60).

It was this invention (in 1906) by Lee De Forest of an improved vacuum tube for amplifying the incoming signals which enabled the human voice to be first heard over the radio. Within a short time radio technology developed so that in 1922 regular broadcasting began in the United States, Great Britain and other Western countries (Kuppuswamy 1976: 190). Such a broadcast enabled the people to hear news as they happen, instead of having to wait for the newspaper which came eight to ten hours later.

Radio was the only medium which performers were invisible to their audience. It is also popularly known to the public as the 'blind medium'. The popular radio talk (a form of spoken journalism or essay, often excellently composed and delivered) was shorter and more informal in style than that of the “serious” or purely educational talk. Broadcasting offered unique opportunities for bringing the nation’s highest intelligence into the living room of so-called minority audiences who were prepared to listen to concentrate exposition and argument (Benton 1974: 123).

India was among the earliest countries in the world to adopt broadcasting. Its manifestation was first in the form of an experimental broadcast of a special programme of music put out by the Bombay office of the Times of India in collaboration with the Posts and Telegraphs Department on 1 August 1921 (Malhan 1985: 60).

In 1926 a company was floated by private enterprise which obtained a licence for the construction of two radio stations, one in Bombay and the other in Calcutta. In 1927,
when the regular broadcasting began in India there were less than 1,000 receiving sets in the country but in the following three years there were nearly 7,000 radio receiving sets, still the private company (floated and licensed by private enterprise) was not able to meet the mounting expenditure of broadcasting and it went into liquidation in 1930. In response to the popular demand and the pressure of the trade interests the government of India immediately acquired the two stations one in Bombay and the other in Calcutta and started “The Indian State Broadcasting Service”. By 1937, the now familiar name “All India Radio” was given. Further, the broadcasting department was transferred from the Ministry of industries to the newly constituted ministry of Broadcasting and Information in 1941. Soon new stations were opened in Delhi, Lucknow, Madras and Tiruchi. Stations were also opened in Lahore, Peshawar and Dacca which are now located in Pakistan. Another development in this period was the setting up of the short wave transmitters in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras (AIR Manual) (Kuppuswamy 1976: 190-191).

The AIR Shillong was inaugurated by the then Governor of Assam Sir Akbar Hydari on the 1st of July 1948 in the presence of the Chief Minister Shri. Gopinath Bordoloi, the Officials of the Government of Assam, prominent citizens of Shillong, the Director General of All India Radio New Delhi Shri Laxman Narayan and other Senior Engineers from Delhi (Nongpluh 2005: 1). On that memorable day, the first Khasi song sung was *U Sier Lapalang*, a group song rendered by both male and female members and the accompaniment of musical instruments played by many renowned musicians of that time.
From the beginning, the programmes of AIR Shillong were well arranged and scheduled by experienced programme officers like Shri Parimal Choudhury and Shri Bhupen Hazarika who were both famous artists and composers. Their main contributions to the Station were the light and classical music of Bengal and Assam. The Shillong Station aired programmes as scheduled in other stations too which includes Assamese, Bengali, Hindi light Music known as Adhunic Geet, Hindi Classical Music and talks by Government officials, Educational programmes and etc (ibid: 2). Initially Khasi and Jaintia programmes were aired as composite programmes only and broadcast only three times a week, but as time passed many changes have been made from time to time to suit the audiences. At the start, all the programmes from the station were broadcast live with small studios and small transmitters and that too only in the evening till 1974.

AIR Shillong function under Guwahati station till 1969 when it became an independent station. During this time, efforts were made by the Station to cover programmes related to Khasi culture by collecting whatever it get ranging from traditional tunes to songs. The Station sent its staffs to collect materials from the field for its programmes, and it was on one such tour that a group of the staffs were able to collect and record songs like Ka Iam Meikha in relation to Ka Thep Mawbah (the last ritual for the dead while depositing bones at Mawbah). This ritual was performed at Krang village around the seventies when P.R. Rangan was the station Director of AIR Shillong. The station has also been able to record and broadcast other composed songs which were based on folktales, myths, legends and short stories. To name a few, folktales about –Ka Sohlyngngem, Ka Langwyrku Sang khyndew, Ka Tiewlalyngi pep shad, Ka Panshandi
dem lorklah, Ka Sngi bad U Klew, Ka Nam, etc are being kept alive by songs rendered by the melodious voices of old and young artists of AIR Shillong. Similarly, songs based on myths and legends such as *U Khraw Jutang* (the cock, the redeemer), *Jinkeng Ksia*r (golden bridge), *Kshaid Dainthlen, Kshaid Noh Ka Likai, Lum Diengiei, Lum Shillong, Ka Shad Ki Laiphew Mrad* etc are now being archived at the AIR Shillong Station *Ki Sur Tynra* is a programme through which all these folk songs and folk based music are broadcast. Whereas all the Khasi modern songs are aired through a programme called *Ki Sur Bathiang*.

The ‘spoken word’ programme which includes drama, story-telling, poetry recitation, and novel reading are also used by the Radio Shillong Station for its broadcasting programmes. *U Ngat Puri* and *Ki Ummat ha ka Sner* by Webster Devis Jyrwa are the two Khasi novels based on folktales and folksongs to be aired through radio. Translated into Hindi by Alma Sohliya, these novels were broadcast both in Khasi and Hindi programmes from the Station and shared with other AIR Stations as well. The drama on *U Manik Raitong* scripted by Bashan Rai Dohling was aired from the station and it was also translated into Hindi based on the English translation by (L) H.W. Sten. This translated drama was broadcast through many Stations in the country. Radio has been highly creative in the fields of film and documentary broadcast too. *Ka Nong*, produced by Webster Devis Jyrwa for instance, was the first Khasi feature film to be broadcast through the AIR Shillong.

Radio today is considered by media authorities and researchers to have proven its worth and utility both as an informational channel and a development and cultural
activist. Still more it has provided healthy entertainment through its various light and humorous programmes. Its contribution in the form of transmitting useful and timely information, motivation and suggestions for rural development is conceded. One can safely presume that along with TV, documentaries and films, Radio will provide an adequate communication umbrella to the integrated rural programme. This it can do through its rural broadcasts feed back interviews, ‘meet the activists and innovators’ and critics’ series, impacts studies, etc (Malhan 1985: 137). Thus, AIR has an activating role in furthering Khasi’s culture, education, music and other practicing arts. The increasing number of walkman transistors and the growing popularity of listeners are obvious indications, though one may concede that improvements and innovations know no bounds in this very challenging spoken word medium.

The effort made by the Radio Shillong Station in developing Khasi folklore and culture is worth mentioning. For instance, students need not consult story books which are not part of their school curriculum to read a folk story, but can simply listen to radio to narrate it either in the form of songs or story reading programme. In a developed world of today and living in a developed society, the Khasis also are not left behind when compared to other groups. Many families are trying hard to adapt with the developed society and cope with modernity. Life has become so fast paced that even parents are so engaged with their duties that they do not find the time for their children at home. Students spent their nights doing their schoolwork while parents would either help their children in reading or watching television or discuss about the day-to-day life activities to be done. Gone are the nights where the family will gather together after meal to listen to
folk story telling or singing a song to be performed by the parents. Radio has in turn, filled up the empty space in the family, taking the role of the third parent in imparting education to the children and in doing this it has proved itself as one of the most powerful electronic ‘narrative’ in today’s world.

The scholar has conducted a survey in Shillong city and its suburbs on the impact of radio on the people’s life. The study revealed that most of the people today and especially the students think that the music and songs (e.g. U Sier Lapalang) aired through AIR are the original versions of the song without realizing that most of these songs are the product of the anonymous origin and very few of them take the interest of finding out the originality of a song that was heard from the radio. The reason for this may be that since the radio is the only blind medium of communication with its audiences as compared to other electronic media communication, therefore, the radio artist enjoys the advantage of the unseen factor and thus people are inclined to presume that the work is original or at least not far removed from the original.

The radio enjoys the position of antiquity because it has the advantage of being in existence much before than the television. Since the operational transmission is also longer than the television and its portability makes it the only media communication that can reach out to a wider audience. The radio is less intimidating and a person is more user friendly for the reason that since the performer is unseen to the audience while singing a song or giving a talk in the programme, it makes them feels safer than facing the camera in front of them. For this reason the radio has been able to create innovative use of programmes by involving the listeners. The introduction of the Live- phone- programme,
for instance, has enriched the narrative value more than before. Today, listeners can choose their favourite song to listen to through a direct talk with the programme announcer, parents would prefer to know better what are the symptoms of a certain disease and preventive measures for that, farmers would like to know about the new technological methods of irrigation, farming, poultry and so on. Another reason of the radio to be considered as a narrative is that it facilitates multi-tasking job in that it does not take us away from what we are doing. While performing our household works we can at the same time listen to it without needing to present before it in person as it is in the case of television and film.

Chapter- 3: Television as a Narrative

This chapter is an attempt to study television, a comparatively new entrant in the Khasi Hills, which like the radio, uses folklore for its many productions. Most of the Doordarshan Kendra’s (DDK) programmes are folk derived. It was found in the study that in the transmission of its programmes the DDK has effected the transformation in the rendering and perception of the oral tradition. In the light of this study, it is seen as taking up the role of renewing folklore and other forms or oral tradition in today’s society.

Television is one of the most significant inventions of man. It has an edge over other forms of mass media, viz. radio, and newspapers etc. it has overcome the barrier put up by literacy, which is the main hurdle with the print media. It provides a unique communication process in a way helping mass communication becoming simple and speedy. It is a multi-media system predominated by the visual medium. It is recognized
that there is an urgent need for mass education and communication media for accelerating social change, creating awareness and inculcating scientific temper among the masses. It will also inculcate desired attributes and attitudes among the masses necessary for national development (Acharya 1987: 5).

Television, the powerful medium of communication, is a product of the ongoing modern communication revolution. It commands bigger influence on the perceptions, emotions and the outlook of the masses than any other media. The impact of television on the society is often compared with the effect of “water dripping on a stone, steadily, imperceptibly eroding old values and attitudes in favour of new ones” (Doshi 1983: 20). Television is superior to the print media as it reaches both the literate and the illiterate audience. Also it has definite over radio because of its visual content which provides a great help in the trial period during the adoption of a new technique or an idea and can reduce the adoption time to a considerable extent. It combines both visual presentation and sound and therefore becomes very relevant for education (Acharya 1987: 6). McLuhan holds that television is the most appropriate medium for mass communication especially for the developing countries because of its involving and absorbing nature. Marshall McLuhan also noted the difference a world experience through television as opposed to print media, and while critics took McLuhan to task for such unscientific concepts as “cool” and “hot” media, he was on the right track.

Invented by John Baird, Television is associated with the second Industrial revolution of advanced Western countries. Being an expensive tool, mainly of entertainment (as it began), it became part of the affluent lifestyle and culture of the post-
industrial society. In 1936 the first regular public transmission of television started in England. This was closely followed by France in 1938 and the United States of America in 1941. The first regular colour television transmission began in the U.S.A. in 1953. The ‘Eurovision networks’ were set up to link the West European countries by the year 1955. The exchange of television programmes between Europe and America became possible in 1962 (ibid: 7).

Highly influenced by the tremendous potential of television, which was already seen in the advanced countries, the developing and the underdeveloped countries also showed keen interest in television.

In India, television made a humble debut on an experimental basis in the form of a UNESCO’s pilot project on 15 September 1959. Its object was to study the use of TV as a medium of education, rural upliftment and community development. A regular TV service of one-hour duration was started on 15th August 1965. Since that day TV has come to stay in India (Malhan 1985: 139-140). The programmes were telecast twice a week for an hour a day. Twenty-one community TV sets were installed in different parts of Delhi. It started catering to a wide audience although teleclub programmes continued to form a core activity. Keeping in view the interest of the general type of viewers, the programmes were diversified to include news, commentary, music and dance as also programmes for special audiences like children, youth and women. In 1961, with the assistance of the Ford Foundation an educational TV programme was telecast for the children of Delhi schools. The programmes were on Physics, Chemistry, General Science
and English. Teacher training programmes were also telecast on Science and English (Acharya 1987: 17).

Since television has the advantages of the film as well as the radio, it has turned out to be the most powerful medium to disseminate information, educate the people to think and act constructively for the benefit of the society as a whole, and, even more important, to bring about changes in their attitudes to suit the modern conditions of life.

Headed by Ashok Ogra the Doordarshan Kendra started in Shillong in April 1993 under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Programmes, Government of India. When the DDK was first started here in Shillong, there were around 50 (approx.) staff members. It should be mentioned that the service of the DDK Shillong does not have a separate independent channel of its own for operation, it has to share with the same channel from Delhi as the other Kendras do. The DDK Delhi has two channels for transmission of programmes, namely the DD-I and DD-2. The DD-I is a channel where all types of programmes are telecasts while the DD-2 is meant only for telecasting the news bulletin. The DDK Shillong therefore comes under the DD-I channel 12. Since the same channel has to be shared between the National Programmes from Delhi and other Regional Kendras, the time duration also has to be divided accordingly so that each of the station would be given place for transmitting their programmes. The DDK Shillong started its transmission service only in the evening hours i.e. from 5.30 pm to 8.00 pm on weekdays and from 3.00 pm to 8.00 pm on weekends.
From the beginning, the DDK Shillong has been able to transmit its programmes successfully although most of the programmes were pre-recorded for telecasting. However, later the station with technological improvements was able to transmit live telecast also. The primary aim of the Television programme is to disseminate information on specific aspects of science and technology, agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, forestry, cottage and small-scale industries, health, hygiene, family planning, sanitation, environment, etc. The aim of the television programme is to encourage and help the people to develop new attitudes and skills which will enable them to play their part in National development.

Entertainment, mostly on Cultural shows is another programme telecasted by the Shillong Kendra. Among cultural programmes, music is a big chunk. Apart from telecasting of known artistes, Shillong TV stations is striving to dig out new musical talents in these hills, audition them and provide them opportunities to give performances. But mostly, folk performers particularly singers were those brought from the AIR Shillong. The dances of the Khasis (eg. Ka Nongkrem, Ka Sajer, Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem, Ka Lakympong, Ka Rongkhli etc) also find a place of pride in the cultural programmes. All the folk dances that are telecast from the Doordarshan are field-based programmes. Other types of cultural programmes include regular production and telecasting of storytelling under Commissioned Programmes on various themes, mostly on folklore themes which is telecasted on Monday and Tuesday evening from 6.30 pm to 7.00 pm under the Commissioned Programmes. Most of these folk stories were recorded and documented in the form of modern and sophisticated tape library. Examples of such folk stories are Ka
Apot, a tale that tells about the origin of *U Kwai, Tympew, bad Dumasla, Ka Dur Maia U Thlen* a story about the gigantic serpent that fed itself on human flesh and when killed and hacked by man, swore to take a revenge on man. Others are *Ka Khlieh U Syiem Syad Lukhmi, U Marphalangki, Ka Lawei Ki Kamar*, etc to name a few. Well established playwrights were also approached to write for Doordarshan. Besides, novels, stories and plays of famous authors are suitably adapted for use over television. The different Kendras exchange their productions among themselves for providing a varied fare to viewers as also to reduce production expenses.

Telecasting of the story-telling is in the form of docu-drama i.e. the intermixture of enactment and reality when original and real data were not available and when there is a need for shifting of the places for action. The story that was used for discussion in this chapter is the documentary on the myth of *U Thlen* i.e. *Ka Dur Maia U Thlen* produced by Raphael Warjri and presented by Doordarshan Kendra Shillong.

The enigmatic and the mysterious always give rise to a progression of fancy, suspicion, fear and hatred. This is particularly true in the case of the serpent whose strange form and unexplained habits have both intrigued and frightened man since the beginning of recorded history. Even today, we are still not completely familiar with its habits and functions. According to Kaufield, herpetologist wrote, "While we have learned a great deal about snakes during the past century, there is much that is unknown" (Kaufield 1937: xvi). It is, therefore, not surprising that through the ages a mass of folklore material has developed about this creature.
The myth of *U Thlen* is one such material in Khasi folklore study and the core of most folk stories among the Khasi beliefs. The belief is that the *Thlen* correlates with sorcery in the Khasi society. It has to be reared by someone, to be fed with human blood which in return it will make the keeper prosper in wealth. Furthermore, the *Thlen* was considered by its keepers as the god of effortless wealth which is obviously unjust wealth. There are a number of versions with regard to the *Thlen* myth and the origin of sorcery among the Khasis as recorded by writers.

Chapter-4: Films and Folklore

This chapter dwells on the aspect of folklore being incorporated in films and documentaries as an important factor of mass culture. Although, the production of films and documentaries in the Khasi Hills has a relatively recent history, yet the trend here too is no different from the other film producing areas and these films play an important role in the society. It has been recorded in the study that most of the Khasi films follow the same structural features of fairy tales, folktales, legend and myths. In fact, some of these films and documentaries are the direct spin-offs of certain legends and myths of the Khasis.

Before a further discussion, just pause for a moment and let us think for the answers of: (i) what is cinema? (ii) What is film?

For the first part, answers that readily come to our minds are cinema is as what Roberge called “an art form”, “a means of telling stories”, “a business”, “an entertainment”, “a powerful medium”, and possibly several other similar phrases
(Roberge 1992: 4). Alongside these definitions of the cinema there is also the sense that there are that cinema is something at once very personal and very social. That is when we think of the cinema we cannot but be reminded of very deep, personal, moments of love, joy, fear, for instance, which we experienced in the dark of the cinema hall. These experiences often assume a fantasy-like quality of some of our dreams. However, in the cinema hall we are allowed to share in someone else’s dream- a privilege, indeed- and we remain fully awake to the fact that what we are watching is, after all, “only a movie”. Thus, the simple evocation of the cinema arouses deeply personal resonances in us. But that is not all, there is also a feeling that cinema must be quite important in our social life too. It would not be wrong to say that the instrument of the cinema is ‘art’ which as Aristotle has defined as being “an imitation of life”, because a movie does represent life as we want to see it – a beautiful rendition of it or a realistic one.

Now, coming to the second part i.e. the answer to what is film. Roberge writes- “A film is a commodity produced by an industry and circulated among consumers by a trade which itself enjoys the support of public business. Movies are made for the largest possible audiences, as a means of mass communication, the film medium has to compete and collaborate with other media, especially television. Films occupy such an important place in our lives that they are believed to fulfill important social functions, like providing recreation, information and education that is why films are kept under control during and after their making by those who direct it and those who have a say in the evolution of social life, like politicians among others” (ibid: 8).
Films can be regarded as the living embodiment of folk tales of the world held by a particular society at one time. They represent a collective memory in which are sorted out experiences of the past, perception of the present and anticipation of the future. For most people, watching a film is mainly an entertainment giving them intense pleasure. Fortunately, the spread of film culture instills in people an appreciation of films which is conducive to a more responsible use of them.

Although, the making and production of films and documentaries in Meghalaya has a relatively recent history, yet the trend here too is not different from other parts of the country. Prior to the advent of film making, public staging of enactments of plays was produced by the Khasi Cultural Society. The Society in fact started its activities by organizing and staging the first play *U Tirot Sing* at Mawlai and State Auditorium Shillong during the months of February and March 1974. It again staged the play of *U Sngap Syiem* in Shillong in March 1975. Both of these plays are the enactment of the real life story of the two great Syiems of the Khasis famous for freedom fighting against the Colonial powers.

From 1975-79, sets of transparency slides were evolved and made which suited with many themes on the historical and cultural setting - transcribed to the background music and commentary on cassette tape recorder, when shown on screen, and displayed at the large gatherings organized for the shows at Sohiong, Balat, Markasa, Mawkyrwat, Pariong, Umsyiem, Dawki, Jowai, Nongstoin, Mawngap and many places in Shillong (Bareh 1998: 13). These have helped to expose the tremendous potentials in the social and economic systems of creativity of our forefathers.
The first public exhibition of Khasi film was in 1982 with the production of the film *Synjuk Ri Laiphew Syiem* (ibid: 13) directed by Hamlet Bareh - Ngapkynta, produced by the Khasi Cultural Society. The film was first shot in 16mm then blown up 35mm and properly re-edited. Talkies and musical effects were hence integrated in a sound studio, Calcutta during the 1981-82, to fall in with the movie format. In 1987 the film was revised at Chitraban Studio Guwahati to normalize the speed and the blurred portions were removed. The succeeding years show the rapid growth of interests of film making among the Khasis. *I Mei Jong Nga, Ka Nong, Manik Raitong* to name a few were produced during the 80s-90s. The beginning of the twenty-first century saw the proliferation of film making in the Khasi Hills. Today, directors and producers came up with new ideas of film making following the Bollywood and Hollywood style. i.e. besides romance, stunts, horror and humorous situations were introduced adding colour to the pictures, which calls for the attention of the cinema goers particularly the youths.

In this chapter, an attempt was made to interpret the one Khasi film which enjoys the status of a full feature film, with a full cast made professionally and which ran for months altogether to full house capacity at Anjalee cinema in the mid - nineteen eighties. This film was also featured on Doordarshan Kendra, New Delhi at least a couple of times. The film is *U Manik Raitong*, based, as had been mentioned earlier on a popular legend which typifies the undying love shared between two lovers in the face of opposition and love which proves to be fatal to both. Despite being a highly egalitarian society, some Khasi narratives reflect a peculiar sensitivity to disparity created by economic circumstances. This is evident in both tales as well as songs. The legend of *U
Manik Raitong is just another example of the community’s responsiveness to life’s realities and in the legend the situation is made more acute due to the deprivation and loss that the hero undergoes.

In this chapter, the scholar has also made an attempt to study the influence of folklore in documentary film-makers as depicted in *Ka Phor Sorat*, which is the documentation on the unique and dying cremation ceremony of the Lyngngams. This film has also been nominated for few prestigious festivals abroad. The intention here is to study and analyze the death custom of the Lyngngams which is distinct from that of the other sub-tribes of the Khasis.

**Chapter-5: Conclusion**

This chapter specifies the findings that evolved from the previous chapters of the study.

The preceding four chapters have been concerned with showing the Khasi folklore undergoing a change which the scholar has described as folklorismus. Though there are many factors responsible for this change, the major one is due to rapid development and modernization in the society. With the advent of science and technology, there has been a rapid growth of industrialization and urbanization too and different forms of new and powerful technology emerged as tools of mass communication. One such medium is the media both print and electronic. Media is one of the significant influences of our age. Everyone understands that modern urban society turns on mass-mediated information and yet we continually decry its omnipresence,
pretensions and outright excesses. Like the lover, one cannot live with or without; so also mass media is integrated into our activity to the point that it or not modern life without some forms of mass media is impossible. Media also acts as a neutral agent in transmitting information and as a mirror that reflects culture.

Oral tradition and oral transmission have been conventionally accepted as forming the essence of the folklore phenomenon and were also considered as the folk or traditional media. Traditional media of the Khasis was as a result categorized as ritual and traditional. The ritual forms of traditional media are the community dances and other religious acts, while the traditional forms are folk songs, folk poetry or phawar, storytelling and flexible characters like jester and narrative manager etc. which could be used judiciously to absorb and convey contemporary messages. Though the impact of modern media in the Khasi society was seen to be very effective, yet it was also found that the traditional media has not died out totally. They continue to live on albeit in a second existence. It is also natural that there comes about a number of transformations when folklore items are taken over by the modern mass media. For instance, folklore items once confined to particular groups or areas have now been familiarized and popularized beyond the confines of such groups or areas, thanks to the mass media which have absorbed and disseminated them to a much larger audience- often covering the whole nation.

The study reveals that while mass media is good in quickly transmitting farm technology, information and news, the traditional media can supplement these effects by having a comparatively better impact on the motivational, behavioural or attitudinal
aspects of the rural or illiterate people. It was also found that phawar, storytelling, folk songs, folk proverbs, sayings, etc can admirably suit the needs of contemporary communication. It can also be said that comparatively these traditional media can more effectively stir the feelings and affect the attitude of illiterate masses. This is so because they reflect the cultural ethos and are closer to the hearts of the common man in rural areas.

In this study, the scholar has also observed that both the mass media and folk media have developed their own style and forms of communication and that the former could extend the size of audience of the folk artist while the latter had the great advantage of enriching and diversifying the content of the mass media. Obviously radio can translate the message of traditional media into auditory experiences, TV and films can multiply them, camera can add a fourth dimension to their contents. On the other hand, the traditional performing arts can increase the impact because of greater acceptability and credibility of message directed through them and especially through live programmes.

All these brings us to the core of the argument that we can no longer live unaware of the influence of the mass media and mass culture. As parents, teachers and educators we need to react to the role of the media in our lives and acquaint ourselves with the mass culture or the industrialized culture. We no longer believe that industrialization necessarily implies the end of a specific folk culture, but rather we attempt to trace the modifications and mutations undergone by folk culture in the industrialized and urbanized world. Besides, it is well understood that with urbanization and
industrialization folklore changed but it did not die out, in fact it is getting a new lease of life of its existence. With all these developments involving the publicizing and commercializing of folklore, folk culture has been gradually merging into mass culture or folklorismus, or to put it the other way round, mass culture/ folklorismus has been absorbing folk culture.
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