CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL MEDIA:
MEANING AND
PRACTICES
TRADITIONAL MEDIA: MEANING AND PRACTICES

3.1 Meaning of Traditional Media

The non-electronic medium which is a part of our culture and is used for transmitting tradition from one generation to another generation is called traditional media. Tradition is handling down of beliefs, experiences and customs from generation to generation especially in oral form or by a process of traditional performance and communication. Traditional media i.e. the traditional means of communication and expression exist before the advent of modern mass media. Traditional media is found expression in the daily social life of the people. Since ancient time, the people engage themselves in folk songs and dances, arts and crafts, rituals and festivals, etc. which are part of their daily life. It is a personal form of communication and entertainment which is a way of life of a community. All over the world, folklore has passed on the tradition and customs and has been contributing to national culture. Traditional media is a means of communication and expression that had existed since time immemorial. It is the indigenous channels of communication having inbuilt character of entertainment, which had been made to express the socio-ritual, moral and emotional need of folk such as folk songs, folk arts, folklore, etc. Folk media is a genuine means of communication and a true carrier of culture among the people. It inspires the people to perceive the message or information more effectively. Folk media serves as a means of the ultimate reality.

According to Ravindran (1999) Traditional Folk media is a term used to denote people performances. It describes folk dance, rural drama and musical variety of the village people. This term speaks of those performing arts which are cultural symbols of the people. Traditional media refers to conventional means of mass communication practiced by various communities and cultures, or embodied in local custom or lore. Traditional folk media also represents the traditional way of life based on customs, beliefs and arts that make up a distinctive culture. Traditional folk media draw upon people’s past, present and future providing them with glimpses of reality. Traditional media can be defined as the store house of customs, beliefs, legends, rituals, language etc. which are very close to the people and so followed by them giving much importance to it. This form of media is very popular among the masses regardless of their education standard, social status or financial position. It therefore
has the advantage of familiarity, personal contact, common language, audience participation, repeatability and acceptance.

Traditional media forms are the religion of a community which is based on various beliefs, rites and myths and bear values that have been used for moral, religious and socio-political purposes. Traditional media passes the cultural values of one generation to another in the society and through it the younger generation learns about their culture. Unlike modern media, traditional folk media is the medium which cater to the ethno-rural communities through folk art forms such as dances, songs, drama, folk tales etc. which was passed down in a society from forefather generation. “They are indigenous modes and have served the society as tools of communication for ages. They have been integrated in the complex body of the socio-cultural behaviour, determined by anthropomorphic existence of people to which they belong. The components of traditional media therefore co-exist with rituals and ceremonials functions as well.” (Parmer, 1994)

Traditional means of communication are developed from the beliefs, customs and rituals practiced by the people. These are very old and deep-rooted, Traditional media represents a form of communication employing vocal, verbal, musical and visual folk art forms transmitted to a society or group of societies from old generation. They are indigenous modes and have served the society as tool or medium of communication for ages.

Traditional media was used during the independence movement by different leaders and was used as an instrument of social awakening during those times. And till today, it is very much in practice in different parts of India. Finding the effectiveness of traditional folk media among the masses, the politician also started using this medium for political propaganda. Folk songs, folk dances, folk tales, fairs and festivals, traditional symbols, puppetry, proverbs, sounds, social institutions, drama, etc. are used by different organization both by public and private for disseminating the messages among the masses especially the rural folks.
3.2 Understanding Traditional Media

Traditional means following a custom or ways of behaving that have continued in a group of people or society for a long time and folk means particular groups of people. So, when we say traditional media it means the traditional ways of communication among a group of people. Some people prefer to call it folk media or traditional folk media. They may have a reason for it but it remains the same.

Tradition in the form of history, cultural values and heritages were handed down by word of mouth in the form of songs, proverbs, legends, religious liturgy, ballads and invocations. They are passed on from people to people, from generation to generation, from area to area and become legendary and immortalize with the passage of time. Oral tradition helps in sharing knowledge of environment, interpretation, explication of events occurring in society, transmission of social heritage from one generation to another, socializing new members and entertaining the community or society. Traditional media can be termed as the best means of instruction for the community. Traditional media generally include the presentation of different types of art forms like folk theatre, street theatre, puppetry, fairs and festivals, folk dance, storytelling, folk music and song, paintings, traditional motifs, designs and symbols, proverbs, sound signals, traditional youth clubs or dormitory, traditional games, etc.

When we say, tradition of a country, it includes different types of tradition followed by different folks or group of people. They follow different means of teaching to the younger generation through their own festivals, songs, dances, etc. which is their own means of communication i.e. their traditional media. A particular folks follows or practice particular tradition and that is why this means of communication is called folk media or traditional folk media by the experts.

Traditional media, whatever the form may be, classical or folk and whatever the region, has been imparting informal education and invoking respect for social and ethical values through stories drawn mostly from the same sources, like the Vedas, the Puranas and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata with certain local variations. The mythological characters, the events and situations are the same. The values, moral and codes of social behaviour are also the same. The only difference is that they are in different languages and dialects spoken by different groups living far from each other.
The legends sometimes acquire variations owing to the genius of the people. For example, the story of Vaman, the fifth incarnation of Vishnu and Mahabali, the virtuous Asura king, is a myth which has inspired artistic creations in various traditional forms in different regions of the country.

It is very true that many traditional folk forms are same in many aspects but the way of presenting, languages or dialects are different due to the difference in regions. It was developed in their own ways of tradition and culture and according to their taste. And so, disseminating the development messages with the traditional folk medium found to be more effective among the rural folks.

Folk media in India has contributed a great deal in developing this vast subcontinent into a single cultural entity in spite of the diversities created by linguistic and regional sub-nationalism. Though a large number of cultures blossomed in different regions of this multi-lingual and multi-racial country, they all contributed to an Indian culture representing what is often characterized as ‘unity in diversity’.

3.3 Types of Traditional Media

Traditional media is a very useful form of communication. It exists in numerous forms and practised in different parts of the country. Every community has its own traditional means of communication. Although some of the traditional media maintain its originality, many of it may not be in its original form or contents. Traditional media forms were re-invented to use in modern society.

Different forms of traditional media that are used for social communication and entertainment includes:-

- Folk theatre
- Street theatre
- Puppetry
- Fairs and festivals
- Folk dance
- Story telling
- Folk music and song
- Paintings
- Traditional motifs, designs and Symbols
- Proverbs
- Sound signals
- Traditional youth clubs or dormitory
- Traditional games

### 3.3.1 Folk Theatre

Folk theatre represents the people in their natural habitat. In folk theatre, performance themes are related to the people’s own suffering, daily work, dreams and mythology. The initial aim of the folk theatre is to give the first impact with sound and sight and then slowly open the audiences’ mental eye for the message.

While performing, the actor establishes direct rapport with the audience. Folk theatre has been used as a channel of communication especially for development purposes. Despite of its origin in different regional cultures and languages, it has many common features and continues to retain its distinctive features because of its inbuilt capacity to adjust in the society. Folk theatre like Tamasha of Maharashtra, a religious folk theatre Dashavatara of South Konkan, Nautanki of North India, Yakshagana of Karnataka, Jatra of Bengal and Orissa, Bhavai of Gujarat, Therukoothu of Tamil Nadu, etc. are very popular form of entertainment and are used for disseminating public messages and development themes among the rural masses. It was used to mobilize public opinion on social and political affairs. Satirical comments are also made on current affairs. In present days, government used folk theatre to educate people on different issues like family planning, AIDS awareness, literacy, health, etc. It also exposed and ridiculed the social and political evils existing in the society.
3.3.2 Street theatre

Street theatre is a form of theatrical performance and presentation in outdoor public spaces without a specific audience. These forms are performed in any street corner, street, market place, etc. In such a situation, the audience and the performers are on the same level, emphasizing the fact that the performers are not different from the audience themselves. This also leads to the establishment of a rapport between the performers and the audience. Close eye contact with the audience is an important element in street theatre which keeps them busy with the action of the play. Together they feel a sense of belonging and responsibility to each other. The sole purpose of street theatre is to motivate the audience to take a quick and required action on a particular issue. In India, waysides, streets, village markets, open air grounds, fair sites, country yards and other public areas have remained the ideal spaces to perform street plays. A majority of street plays in India are based on socio-political issues. Some of these are based on current events, others are on subjects like communalism, terrorism, police atrocities, bride burning, dowry, caste inequalities, elections, industrial and agricultural exploitation, alcoholism, illiteracy, drug addiction and female foeticide.

In India, where there is a high degree of illiteracy, poverty and diversity of language and dialects, a theatre form of this sort, versatile and adaptable, cheap and mobile becomes more important and relevant. The mobile form of street theatre helps to reach people who normally do not go to the theatre. This suits the type of audience it tries to reach who are mostly the poorer section for whom theatre is a luxury. The total absence of a proper stage, lights, properties, costumes and make-up makes it even more flexible.

3.3.3 Puppetry

Puppetry is also one of the effective forms of entertainment and communication. It has fascinated children and adults of all ages. In puppetry, puppets are only an instrument and the actual work is done by a puppeteer. In India, four types of puppetry are popular namely- Sutradharika (String puppets), Putul Nauch (Rod puppets), Chhaya Putli (Shadow puppets) and Glove puppets or hand puppets. Puppet shows draw their themes from the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata but now a
days, it had added new themes to it and used for giving developmental messages. For instance, puppetry was used by the Union Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation to arouse the interest of the rural folk in bank savings and insurance policies.

3.3.4 Fairs and Festivals

Fairs and festivals are also an integral part of the cultural life a community where every member participate actively and enjoy together. The festivals speak of rich cultural and traditional background of a community. It has some performances or games related to it or some traditional motifs and paintings. Festivals are also one of the best forms of traditional media. Several festivals worth mentioning are ‘Rathayatra or Gundichayatra of Lord Jagannath Puri, Diwali, Dussehra, Rakhi, Sivaratri, Janmastami’ (Parmer, 1994). Fairs and festivals including social, ritual and ceremonial gatherings created a platform to meet and exchange among the people.

3.3.5 Story Telling

Story telling is another interesting form of traditional media which existed at a time when advanced forms of communication such as a written word did not exist. A story connects us and links the past, present and future by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of our actions. These were not written or documented. Instead they were orally communicated from person to person, a house to another or from a village to another. They kept the stories alive. Story telling involves direct contact between the teller and the listener. It permits the direct presentation of the story by the teller. There are stories like the Panchatantra and stories from mythology like Ramayana and Mahabharata where local heroes have always travelled from one generation to another by word of mouth. Story telling forms such as ‘Harikatha’ and ‘Kabigan’ played a vital role in communicating historical and epic stories. It reflects the local age-old beliefs, customs and rituals. The tales are the bearers of our century’s old culture, perceptions, values and beliefs. It links the older generation with the modern generation.
3.3.6 Music and Song

Folk music is also considered to be an effective medium of communication. Music has played a crucial part in everyday life from time immemorial. ‘Some of the predominant folk musical forms are Baul and Bhatiali of Bengal, Duha and Garba of Gujarat, Powada and Lavani of Maharashtra, Chaiti and Kjari of Uttar Pradesh, Kolkali Pattus of Kerela, Bihu of Assam, Mand and Panihari of Rajasthan, Rauf and Chakri of Kashmir, Sua and Dandari of Madhya Pradesh and Mando and Dhalo of Goa.’ (Parmer, 1994). Every community has a fondness of music and it is the part of their culture. It has been an integral part of marriages, festivals and celebrations. No religious ceremony is complete without music or song. Traditional music of India is the most natural representation of the emotions of the masses. Songs are associated with every event of life like festivals, new seasons, marriages, births, admiring nature or love ones, etc. During the British rule, many folk music and songs were composed by poets and singers to motivate the people against the foreign domination. Till today, we get to hear about the heroic deeds of the past hero in the folk songs. Folk music or songs are used to spread the messages of development as well as for exposing the social evils that exist in the society. Through folk songs and music messages are communicated with a blend of entertainment and education.

Folk songs are transmitted through oral tradition and so are familiar to audiences and have positive feeling about what they hear. The music and songs are often related to national culture and was culturally particular from a particular region or culture. Indigenous Australian like Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders incorporates a variety of distinctive traditional music styles of the indigenous Australian people.

3.3.7 Folk Dance

Dance is among the oldest forms of classical arts with a tradition that dates back to several centuries. Dance is a feature of every significant occasion and event crucial to tribal existence as part of ritual. Early dance exists as a ritual element. Dance puts the rhythm and movement in the play and captures audience attention. Dancing is a way of expressing what cannot be expressed in any other way. It is intimately interwoven with the life of people. Hand gestures, eye movement, posture and steps coordination
with music and posture affect and audience comprehension of the narrative and its meaning. Through history, in all early cultures and societies, dance has been one of the foremost elements of ritual. It was the means of perceiving the gods, of invoking them, recounting their exploits, placating them, appealing to them or communicating with them.

Folk art, music and dance also derived from the elements of nature. For instance, Sri Lankan dances Mayana Wannama (dance of peacock), Hanuman Wannama (the dance of monkey), etc.

3.3.8 Paintings

Early man was unaware of words, but he was able to draw a picture of an animal with a tail, a head and four legs or a human figure. Throughout different periods of history, we find a definite established tradition of painting on various objects, particularly on intimate objects of everyday use, floors and wall, and the depiction being associated with some ritual. Traditional paintings of Madhya Pradesh, especially the wall paintings of Bundelkhand, Chattisgarh, Gondwana, Nimar and Malwa are living expressions of people, closely linked with the socio-cultural environment of the area. They are not mere decorations but also expressions of religious devotion.

3.3.9 Traditional Motifs, Designs and Symbols

Symbols are also a part of everyday life. The beautiful rangoli which are made on the threshold of the house is believed to uplift the spirit, ward off evil energies and give protection. In India, people revere many symbols, ranging from those which are simple to the most complex ones. Indians believe in symbols which are entirely different from the rest of the world, though traces of similarities can be seen. The symbols in India are the outcomes of mythology, religious beliefs, traditions and philosophy. India is a country of motifs and symbols, where traditional art forms, figures and rituals drawings have existed for many centuries. These art forms include symbols, floor motifs, folk murals, traditional textile designs, scroll paintings, etc.

3.3.10 Proverbs

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense on the practical experience of humanity. A
proverb contains wisdom, moral and traditional views which are in a fixed and memorisable form and are handed down from one generation to another. Proverbs are often borrowed from similar languages and cultures and sometimes come down to the present through more than one language. For example, a proverb ‘No flies enter the mouth that is shut’ is currently found in Spain, Ethiopia, and many countries. Proverbs are so much part of the language and culture. So, authors have often used proverbs in their writings more effectively. It can be used for imparting instruction and guidance.

3.3.11 Sound Signals

Sound signals can convey innumerable messages. Although they do not play any role in bringing changes in the society, it gives signals to its members about any happenings or emergency. For instance, drum is used by almost every tribe for disseminating messages. The different ways of beating the drum conveys different meaning. Few examples of instrument which communicates with sound are gongs, horns, drum, etc.

3.3.12 Traditional Dormitory or Youth Clubs

Traditional dormitory or youth club is one of the important social institutions which serve to promote co-operation in the much needed social life of the tribal community. It occupies an important place in the lives of the young boys and girls living in the villages. It also helps them to acquire knowledge about the old customs, rituals and taboos of their society and every aspects of folklore concerning their traditional practices. (Parmer,1994). This is cherished by the community. Youth dormitory is a place where social, political and religious activities and celebration of festivals take place. This type of social institution is popular among the tribal groups like Mizos, Adis, Karbis, Dimasas, Nagas, Misings, etc. The dormitory is not only a place of entertainment but also a place of preparation for future life. It is the training ground for smooth socialization and internalization of culture traits. Example of tribal youth dormitory can be given of Ghotul of the Murias tribe of Bastor or the Dhumkuria of the Oraons of Bihar.
3.4 Traditional Media in India

Traditional media have been in existence in India for long and have been used as a medium of communication in rural areas. Over the years, rural masses have been using the folk media for expressing their social, ritual, moral and emotional needs. During the freedom struggle, traditional media played a great role in spreading the message of patriotism.

Although highly organized medium of mass communication like print, audio and audio-visual medium, internet, etc. are used in excessive manner in today’s parlance, traditional folk media is still popular among the rural masses. Traditional media depict the stories of most common rural dwellers and cultivate the rural lifestyle. Traditional folk media cannot present in glamorous style and colourful manner equally, as compared to other organized sector of mass media but it can reach all sections of people including illiterate and backward classes too. Traditional folk media can command a very strong position in the rural people’s mind, as it weaves its messages in their own style, taste and dialect to serve their various needs and purposes as well as entertain them.

Traditional media comes in different forms and is known by different names in different regions of the country. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, ‘Janapadam’ indicates a village and ‘Janapadulu’ means villagers. The whole art forms of villages, as a whole are known as ‘Janapada Kalalu’. Similarly, Lok Natya or Lok Geet means ‘people’s dance’ or ‘people’s songs’. There are many other forms of folk arts in other states of India. These are used as ‘Jan Madhyamas’ i.e. ‘people’s media. These forms represent the conjured people by giving a glimpse of their style, speech, music, dance, dress, behaviour, etc. All forms of traditional media have its own attraction and can render distinctive taste and flavour to the audiences.
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Some of the popular art forms or folk media which are widely accepted among the people, in different states or region in India for its’ unique presentations of excellence are:-

3.4.1 Tamasha

Tamasha is a folk theatre famous in Maharastra and other part of western India. It was popular in the 18th century during the rule of the Peshwas. Tamasha is most preferred by the village people. Tamasha contains an invocation- Gan-Gavalan, a song on the theme of Krishna and the milkmaid; Lavanis, narrative poetical compositions with a high erotic content, Sawal- Jawab or Jagra, during which Shiva and Parvati or some other celestial pair, pose and answer intricate riddle, Vagnaty or play and Munjra, a homage to saints and gifted writers. It normally starts with a little drama followed by dance and song Gan-gavala. Tamasha consists of eight to ten different performers. Two of them are main singers; one or two dancers, one dholki (drum) player, one joker and rest all are chorus associates. Woman’s role and dancer’s role is usually performed by male only. It is lively, interesting and has inbuilt quality of flexibility.

3.4.2 Bhajan

The literal meaning of Bhajan is a religious song. This folk art is generally performed on religious functions. It consists of six or seven performers. One among them is the main singer and all rest are his associates. Besides religious themes, they also have social themes. Singers can easily modify them according to their need. Musical instruments like dholki (drum), manjira (metal bells), harmonium, tambora (violin) and tabla (kind of drum) are used as accompaniment to make it more pleasing and interesting. The Bhajan programmes are normally held at night. The preferred occasions for holding Bhajans are childbirth, after death, navaratras (festival period) and Ganesh Utsav (festival period).

3.4.3 Kirtan

It is one of the oldest forms of mass media. Narad is believed to be its founder and foremost exponent. It is a traditional form in which there is continuous flow of discourse of religious nature. It is now and then interspersed with prayers or bhajan chanting in unison with the entire crowd of the listeners along with the performer and
in an atmosphere of abundant ecstasy. There is one main singer cum narrator who is supported by six to seven players of musical instruments such as harmonium, tabla, and tambora and manjira. The performer begins his sermon by singing the text of a suitable theme song and goes on elucidating its purpose with pertinent explanation and comments making his own critical observations and providing ample choice quotations from literature and scriptures. This brings the first part of his sermon to a close, as he reverts again to the theme song from where he originally started.

3.4.4 Quawwali

This folk art is the favourite of the Muslim community. It is performed at the time of their social or religious functions. The theme of the songs is related to social situation or prayers to their God. The main attraction in this art is that there is one leading male singer and one leading female singer opposite to him. There are two groups of performers consisting of five to six different artists like harmonium player, dholki player, banjo player, churmura (local musical instrument) player and table player. There is normally questions-answer session in their singing.

3.4.5 Powada or Powala

It is a folk ballad form that is widely accepted by ‘Maharastrian’. It appeared during the 16\textsuperscript{th} century and carries a dramatic form of nature. Powada is presented mostly, by telling the stories of history. Its main feature is singing in accordance with the musical instruments.

3.4.6 Keertana or Harikeertan

It is a kind of monodrama in which the whole presentation is operated or performed by a single actor. An actor enters into the topic by acting different characters lying in it. Here, one actor performs various roles simultaneously at a time, to tell the stories of all characters concerned that create interest and attractive moods among the audience. The uniqueness of Keertana is that the single person carries the entire programme. Such Harikeertana is widely popular in many states in India, like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bengal, etc.
3.4.7 Yakshagana

It is another type of folk drama that is widely popular in Karnataka which is about three hundred years old. It is extremely heroic in character with emphasis on the battle scene and tales of valour. It was originally performed in the temple courtyard but it broadened its scope and style once it moved to the village square. Themes are mostly taken from the great Indian epics, the Ramayan and Mahabharata. It is constituted basically on ‘Bhagavatha’, but presented in addition with local flavour, as to produce more charm in it. Here, the narrator sings and explains the themes to the audiences. It is used as a mass medium for educating and entertaining the people.

3.4.8 Nautanki

Nautanki is a famous form of folk arts involving a mixture of music and dance and is very popular in North India. It was the most popular forms of entertainment before the advent of cinema. Nautanki is a secular form and a blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures. It is generally performed openly without any special arrangement. It starts with the presence of a ‘Sutradhar’ who is a narrator of the story. Themes are sometimes religious but mostly taken from ancient epic or historical events. It renders messages through its presentation, which are both educative and entertaining.

3.4.9 Jatra

A popular folk drama Jatra is principally the folk theatre form of Bengal, but is also found in Orissa, Tripura, Assam and parts of Bihar. It is an organized teamwork and performed by well set-up groups or units, who are professionally engaged for better presentation to the audiences. It became very popular in the 18th century. Towards the 19th century, Jatra is usually in song and verse, but prose portion with dialogue are introduced from time to time. The dialogues are humorous, containing socio-political comments on contemporary themes, often in the form of skits performed by secondary characters. It goes through a chosen story taken from history, ancient epic, social and political matter. The whole programme creates an environment of charming and attractive moods for audiences. The performers usually sing their own parts. Jatra used to contain fifty to sixty songs. It is really educative as well as entertaining form of folk media. It is also adored in urban equally.
3.4.10 Bhavai

A dramatic form Bhavai is extensively adored in Gujarat. It traces its origin to the 15th century, to the Brahmin Asaita Thakar. Asauta, who had been turned out of his caste, expressed a sense of outraged against the caste system and against the social injustice through his play Bhavai, thus began as a form of social protest and retain this character to this present day. Ranglo, the clown figure is considered to be a pivotal character in the present day Bhavai. Naik is a *Sutradhar* (narrator) who delivers the dialogues abundantly in attractive style. The programme starts with devotional song which is dedicated to ‘Amba’. Then her son Ganesh enters into the stage to perform his role by hiding his appearance by a brass plate. At the end of his role, Ganesh faces to the audience as usual form. The total programme carries a lot of varieties like dialogue, songs, music and dances.

Bhavai is deeply a secular form and though it pays the usual respect to the gods, its themes draw on the lives of the common people. And apart from social satires which form a major part of the Bhavai, tales of love, historical themes and a few mythological tales frequently feature in Bhavai performances.

3.4.11 Therukoothu

It is the most popular traditional folk media of Tamil Nadu. Therukoothu existed for a long time but has faded in popularity. It is a charming street theatre, composed in accordance with the music, drama and dances of classical flavour. The presentation takes into account the characters like *koothadi* (clown) and the god ‘Ganesha’. Currently, Therukoothu has significantly been changed from its origin of forms and shapes. It is now being presented on the well-arranged stage or screen in the form of *sangeetha* and *natakan* in attractive form.

3.4.12 Ramlila and Rashlila

Ramlila is performed in both urban and rural areas of North India during the festivals of Dussherra. It is a play based on the Indian epic Ramayana. The tradition of Ramlila began in 17th century. It is presented anywhere in evening hours during the festivals. It presents a series of stories on Lord Rama. It includes the stories, starting from the birth of prince Rama, childhood of Rama, sworn in as a king of Ayodhya, marriage
with Sita and so on. On the last day, huge effigies of the chief villains of the Ramayana, usually stuffed with fireworks are set on fire. It is a long lasted dramatic play that can attract and entertain so many viewers easily.

Rashlila, on the other hand could be seen to be celebrated widely in northern state of India, Maharastra, Kerela and other places in our country. Rashlila is an enchanting play that presents the stories about the relationship matters between Krishna and Radha. The entire play is very interesting and is flavoured with entertainment wrapped with religious feelings and motives.

3.4.13 Ghotul

Ghotul is the social institution exclusively meant for unmarried boys and girls of the Muria tribe living in Bastar. It is a large hut or a group of huts, with an open compound area next to it, where the young Muria assemble after sunset. It is a centre of social and emotional activities which helps the boys and girls to grow in a sort of group discipline. It deepens the sense of social democracy and leads the members to discard jealousies and possessiveness. Individualism finds no place in Ghotul as it intensifies in them the tribal instinct of unity much needed by the tribe to continue and survive. It serves to prevent crimes, for the boys and girls learn to share everything and scorn the desire to acquire. (Parmer, 1994)

3.4.14 Puppetry

This ancient art is one of the most popular as well as adored folk medium. It can attract the children and adults equally. Puppetry is widely seen in Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal. In India, we can find four types of forms of puppets namely *Sutradharika* (string puppets), *Putul Nauch* (rod puppets), *Chhaya Putli* (shadow puppets) and glove puppets.

String puppets are suspended from above and manipulated with the help of strings attached to their limbs. String of its puppet are attached to an iron rings which fits the puppeteer’s hand like a crown and with the help of two rods he operates the hand movements of the puppet. Handling of rod puppet involves a lot of body movement and the puppeteers have to undergo a great deal of physical strength to manipulate them. They are heavy and fixed on bamboo sticks. Shadow puppets are
flat figure. They are made of tent hide cut-out, perforated and painted with vegetable
dyes, illuminated from the back to cast their colour shadow on translucent cotton.
Glove puppets or sleep dolls are associated with the famous characters Punch and Judy
where they thrived for many centuries. The secret of its activity depends on the direct
use of human hand inside it. Only one person manipulates them. (Parmar, 1994)

3.5 Traditional Media of North East

North East has a rich traditional media forms with variety of tribes residing in the
area. Every community have a unique ethnic traditional media forms. Some of the
folk forms of different community are shown in the table 3.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Community/ State</th>
<th>Traditional Media Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Bihu, Bhaona, Ojapali, Sattriya Dance, Bor Geet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bodo</td>
<td>Bagurumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Manipuri</td>
<td>Shumang Leela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Angami Naga</td>
<td>Kruna, Sekrentyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Arunachali (Pailibos)</td>
<td>Ja-Jin-Ja, Baryi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mizo</td>
<td>Cheraw Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Chakma</td>
<td>Biju Dance, Gajan, Hajgiri, Ker Ganga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Manipuri</td>
<td>Lai Haraoba, Sumang Leela, Thoubal Chongba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mizo</td>
<td>Khuallam, Chheihlam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sikkimese</td>
<td>Lu Kangthamo, Enchief Chaama, Rechungma, Ghamto Kito</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Bhutia</td>
<td>Chi Rimu, Be Yu Mista</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Khasi</td>
<td>Pomblang Nongrem, Nongkrem Dance, Behdienkhlam</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Garo</td>
<td>Wangala Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Adi</td>
<td>War Dance, Popir, Pasi Kongki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Mishmi</td>
<td>Igo Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Jaintia</td>
<td>Siat Khnam, Longhai Dance, Shad Pliang, Laho Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Mishing</td>
<td>Ali-Ai-Ligang</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Deori</td>
<td>Bisu, Maghaya Utsava, Suwasani</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Tiwa</td>
<td>Bisus, Sarga Misuana, Lo Ho La Hai, Jone Beel Mela</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Rabha</td>
<td>Hana Ghora</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Khamti</td>
<td>Poi Changkem, Poi Nen Hok, Chumfai</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Tai Phake</td>
<td>Pai-Khatin, Poi-Nen-Chi, Kakong, Kapan, Kachong</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Dimasa</td>
<td>Busu, Ragini, Hari Gabra</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Karbi</td>
<td>Hacha Kekan, Chomangkan</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>Sikpuiruai, Chonlam, Butukhuonglom, Dar lum</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Kuki</td>
<td>Ai-San, Sel Bonchon, Selmei-Lah, Chavangkut, Lom Kivah</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Rengma</td>
<td>Pipe, Nyada, Lotsung Nga</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Pochury Naga</td>
<td>Nazu Festival, Khupielilie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Monpa</td>
<td>Lion and Peacock Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Apatani</td>
<td>Hurkani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Nishing</td>
<td>Roppi, Buiya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.1 Bihu Festivals

Bihu is one of the most important cultural festivals of Assam and is celebrated by the Assamese people around the world. Though they owe their origins and ancient rites and practices, they have taken definite urban features and have become popular festivals in urban and commercialized milieus in the recent decades. In a year, there are three Bihu festivals in Assam. In the month of Bihaag (Baishakh, the middle of April), Maagh (the middle of January), and Kaati (Kartik, the middle of October). The Bihus have been celebrated in Assam since ancient times. The most important and colourful of the three Bihu festivals is the spring festival Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu celebrated in the middle of April. This is also the beginning of the agricultural season. Bihu is celebrated by all Assamese people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, faith and belief. Bihu is secular festival which brings the humanity, peace and brotherhood among the various caste and religion.

3.5.2 Bihu Dance

Bihu dance is a folk dance of Assam related to the festivals of Bihu. This joyous dance is performed by young men and women, and is characterized by brisk dance steps and rapid hand movement. Dancers wear traditionally colourful Assamese clothing. It is a group dance in which males and females dance together but maintain different gender roles. In general, females follow stricter line or circle formations. The male dancers and musicians enter the dancing area first and they maintain their lines and follow synchronized patterns. When the female dancers enter, the male dancers break up their line to mingle with the female dancers, who maintain their stricter formations and order of the dance. The dance is usually characterized by definite postures, movement of the hips, wrists, arms, squats and bends but no jumps. Male and female dance movements are very similar with only subtle differences. The dance is performed in accompaniment with traditional Bihu music. The most important musicians are the drummers (dhulia), who play a particular twin-faced drum, the dhol slung from the neck and played with one stick and palm. There is usually more than one dhulia in performance and they play different rhythms and compositions at different sections of the performance.
3.5.3 Bhaona

Bhaona is a traditional form of entertainment with religious messages prevalent in Assam. It is a performing art form. Bhaona was created by Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardev in the early 16th century. The play is known as Ankiya Nat (one act play) and staging is known as Bhaona. It is a simple drama which shows victory of truth at the climax, generally using fictitious or mythological king, queens, demons, gods, soldiers, etc. The story generally depicts some initial superficial triumphs of evils over good, but it shows the ultimate victory of good with intercession by gods. This plays comprises of an orchestra who are called Gaayan (singer), Baayans (instrumentalists) and actors. There is one Sutradhar (narrator) who begins the play by narrating the story of the play to the audience.

3.5.4 Shumang Leela

Shumang Leela is a popular Manipuri folk theatre which is performed in the courtyards, mandap or sometimes on a raised podium by itinerant groups surrounded on all sides by spectators. The term ‘Shumang’ means open courtyard and ‘Leela’ means play or performance. And the literal meaning of Shumang Leela means ‘play on the open courtyard’. It has two types- Nupa Shumang Leela which is performed by male artists and Nupi Shumang Leela performed by female artists. In earlier days, it was known as Jatra and perhaps it was influenced by Bengal’s Jatra which developed since 16th century A.D. Shumang Leela features stage preliminaries, an invocation at the beginning and benediction at the end of the performance, stylized movements, prominent make-up, etc. The Phagee-puba (clown of Shumang Leela) made it emphatic that jokes and fund should be particular feature of this genre of the theatre. Musical instrument are the small cymbal and dholok.

3.5.5 Hornbill Festival

Nagaland is known as the land of festivals as each tribe celebrates its own festival with dedication and passion. To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland, the Government of Nagaland organizes the Hornbill Festival every year in the first week of December. The tribes of Nagaland celebrate their festivals with great delight and fervour. More than 60% of the population of Nagaland depends on agriculture and therefore most of their festivals revolve round
agriculture. They consider their festivals sacred and so participation in these festivals is compulsory.

Hornbill Festivals is held at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama which is 12 km from Kohima. It showcases a melange of cultural displays under one roof. All the tribes of Nagaland take part in this festival. The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its extravaganza traditions.

The weeklong festival unites one and all in Nagaland and people enjoy colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonies. Traditional arts which include paintings, wood carvings and sculptures are also on display. Festivals highlights include traditional Naga dormitory or morungs, exhibition and sale of arts and crafts, food stalls, herbal medicine stalls, flower shows and sales, cultural medley of songs, dances, fashion shows, beauty contest, traditional archery, Naga wrestling, indigenous games and musical concert.

3.5.6 Folk Songs of Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is not only famous for their arts and crafts, but also for its enchanting folk songs. Here the festivals are not just a sign of the faith of the people of the region but also their belief in the power of nature. Their folk songs and dances are often ritual in nature, as well as celebratory. The themes of the song are like fables involving creatures or the animals and words signifying moral deduction. The folk songs of Pailibos are related to their folk history, mythology and description of their known historic past. The main folk songs of Arunachal Pradesh sung on different festivals and occasion is 

Ja-Jin-Ja, which is sung on the occasion of feasts and merriment during marriages or other social meets. Both men and women actively participate in its singing either individually or as part of the chorus. Baryi is another song which is sung to narrate their history, their religious lore and mythology; it features festivals or occasions of important social or religious gatherings. It takes hours to finish the Baryi folk song. Ja-Jin-Ja and Baryi songs of Arunachal Pradesh are known to produce a nostalgic feeling in the Pailibos community. It sings to glorify their ancestors. Nyioga is a song which is sung when a marriage ceremony is concluded and the bridal party returns leaving the bride in her home. It contains a piece of advice to the bride for her future life.
3.5.7 Bagurumba

Bagurumba is a Bodo folk dance which is the most important feature of the culture of Bodo community. It is usually performed during Bwishagu, a festival of the Bodo in the Bishuba Sankranti or mid-April. This dance is mostly performed by young women singing traditional song. Bodo women in their colourful dokhna, jymgra and aronai (traditional attires) perform the Bagurumba dance. Bagurumba, the Bodo dance is brilliantly beautiful and lively. The Bodo use many musical instruments like serja (a bowe instrument), sifung (flute), tharkha (a piece of split bamboo), kham (a long drum of wood and goatskin) to make the traditional dance more alluring and melodious.

3.5.8 Ambubachi Mela

The Ambubachi Mela is the most important mela celebrated in the Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam. It is held every year during the monsoon season around mid-June in the famous Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati. It is the celebration of the yearly menstruation course of goddess Kamakhya. It is believed that the presiding goddess of the temple, Devi Kamakhya, the mother Shakti, goes through her annual cycle of menstruation during this time. It is also believed that during the monsoon rains the creative and nurturing power of the ‘menses’ of Mother Earth becomes accessible to the devotees at this site during the mela. On the first three days of the festival, gates to Kamakhya Temple are closed for everyone. It is said that the Mother Earth has become impure. All religious ceremonies are put on hold during this period. Even agriculture is not done during these three days in Assam. At the end of three days, the doors are opened after necessary rituals and pujas are performed. It is believed that the Mother Earth has attained complete purity. To witness the mela, pilgrims from all over India come and attend it.

3.5.9 Cheraw or Bamboo Dance

Cheraw or Bamboo Dance is a folk dance of Mizoram, a state in the North east part of India. Men and women perform this dance with bamboos. It is one of the most popular dances of Mizoram. The origins of the dance are not known but ancient folklore has it that Cheraw was performed to pray for the souls of women who passed away during childbirth. Therefore it is a spiritual dance aimed at the redeeming of the
soul. But in recent times it is just a vigorous and energetic dance that is performed by the youth on any given day. Girls dance while the men clap the bamboo poles together.

Long bamboo staves are placed horizontally on the ground. At each end, the bamboos are supported by two bases. Then men squat on the ground facing each other holding the pole at each end and start clapping these poles together, opening and shutting. These clapping of bamboos create a sound that forms the rhythm for the Cheraw. The dancers step in and out of these bamboos with great precision and grace. The bamboos are tapped together in the pulsating rhythm. The dancers as well as the people managing the poles wear colourful ceremonial customs on the occasion. They also wear eye catching head gears like flower crowns. This dance is performed with many different patterns and different kinds of movements. As the people are very close with nature, the dance involves steps imitating the movements of trees, birds, etc.

3.6 Traditional Media of the Zeme Naga and its uses

Some of the traditional media of the Zeme Naga which are still in practice are Hangseuki and Leuseuki (dormitory or morung), Hejuadekung (ritual centre of the village), Hekoakuabe (memorial stones), Mabua kiakkaibe (sign of green leaves indicating ritual is perform), Piterang kaibe (reserving of things), festivals like Hega Ngi, Helei Ngi, Puakpat etc., Helim (folk dance), Heleu (folk songs), Heraasam (folk tales), Samrekum (proverbs), Samrang (adage) dresses and ornaments, musical instruments like ‘Ntuk, ‘Nrabung, ‘Nsum etc., Kererebe ( village fence), Hemitewgaibe (making fire), Designs in the weave shawl, Dekuakuibe etc.

Besides the above traditional media there are other forms of traditional media which are no longer in practice  Heramleusumbe (stone erecting by those who could court many girls in his youth life), Tebatuajube (gutter), Hepietu(watching point practice during war time).
Table 3.3 Traditional Folk Forms of the Zeme Nagas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Folk Form</th>
<th>Nature of the Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><em>Hangseuki</em></td>
<td>It is a youth dormitory which is the most important social institution where a youth learns the art of hunting, folk dance and songs, crafts and also to be self reliant and discipline. It also helps them to understand their mutual rights, social duties and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><em>Heramleusumbe</em></td>
<td>It is a stone erecting in remembrance of a person. It is erected in a line. This type of stone erection is done when an individual is associated sexually with a number of women during his youth life. The number of stone is the number of women he had associated. Although this practice is no more but erected stones are still found in some villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><em>Hekoakuabe</em></td>
<td>It is a putting the stone plates together one after another in memory of a person. It is also done to mark the heroic deeds of a person when they are still alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><em>Dekuakuibe</em></td>
<td>It is digging a well by the family when anyone in the family or clan dies an unnatural death. It was done so because they believed that the soul of the death person may be thirsty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><em>Hejuadekung</em></td>
<td>Tilted erected stone in the centre of the village which is the foundation stone of the village. All the village rituals are performed in this place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><em>Piterang</em></td>
<td>It is a kind of reserving a thing. When a person sees a good land for jhum cultivation or big trees for cutting or anything, he put a mark or sign so that others will not use or take it. By seeing the mark people understand that it is already chosen by someone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><em>Hereilim</em></td>
<td>It is a war dance. It is performed before going out for a war and also after the victory.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Geching Lim</strong></td>
<td>Cricket dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>Herelim</strong></td>
<td>It is folk dance called the hornbill dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>Hekalim</strong></td>
<td>It is a fish dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><strong>Kereh</strong></td>
<td>It is a village fence which is constructed with a stones or a log of a tree. Some village instead of putting a fence dig a deep gauge so that an enemy will not be able to enter it. The village fence also shows the strength of the village man power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td><strong>Heraasam</strong></td>
<td><em>Heraasam</em> means folk tales. There are many folk tales like about the creation, about gods and goddess, fables, god and human relationships, stepmother and orphan, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>Samrekum</strong></td>
<td>It is the proverb. The Zeme Nagas have many proverbs which are used in everyday life. Many of the proverbs are based on the folk tales and people still give so much importance to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td><strong>Samrang</strong></td>
<td>It is an adage which is passed down from forefather generation. It is guidance for everyday life. The community respect it and follow it very strictly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td><strong>Hepietu</strong></td>
<td>It is a watching point which was usually practice during the war time. This type of watching point is constructed in the name of a brave and powerful person who through his bravery protected his people from the enemy. He watches his enemy from this top in order to protect his villager from attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td><strong>Hepua-heni, Heteuheta</strong></td>
<td>It means dresses and ornaments. The Zeme Naga community have variety of dresses and ornaments. Through the dresses and the ornaments, their hairstyle we can know the married and unmarried person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td><strong>Nsum</strong></td>
<td>It is a drum one of the important musical instrument. It is also used in time of festival as well as in time of emergency to warn the people or alarm through different beating.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18.</strong></td>
<td><em>Ntoi</em></td>
<td>It is a cymbal used along with drum in time of festivals while dancing and singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19.</strong></td>
<td><em>Nrabung</em></td>
<td>It is like a guitar. It can be used only at the time when all the harvest is over. It is believed that when a person used this when they are not over with their cultivation, their food production gets over soon. So, after the harvest festival got over, they remove all the strings so that they will not commit a mistake of using it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20.</strong></td>
<td><em>Metiam</em></td>
<td>It is also flute. Like the ‘<em>Nrabung</em>’ it is used only when all the works are over. When one plays a flute in a village, a passerby can understand that the particular village have completed all their works of harvesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21.</strong></td>
<td><em>Tesasaabe</em></td>
<td>When the villager has to observe anything, the village priest will go around the village early in the morning and announce. He can be call as the Village Crier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22.</strong></td>
<td><em>Hekialeu</em></td>
<td>It is a romantic song. A man proposes a girl praising her beauty through a song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23.</strong></td>
<td><em>Keloatdeibeleu</em></td>
<td>It is very long folk songs teaching the fellowmen to live a peaceful life with each other. This type of songs always starts by praising the beauty of the land followed with teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24.</strong></td>
<td><em>Leusangleu</em></td>
<td>This type of song narrates a story of a person life, his heroic deeds etc. The song tells about the whole life story of a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25.</strong></td>
<td><em>Helimleu</em></td>
<td>This type of a song is sung while dancing. It is called a dance song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26.</strong></td>
<td><em>Keloapetbeleu</em></td>
<td>This type of folk song is sung when someone is unsatisfied with something. A man may sing this kind of song when he could not get his lady love, to make known to the people for his unsatisfying and unfulfilled love life. It is also sang when a girl get married off to the other village telling that they could not let her go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Hega Ngi</td>
<td>It is a year ending festival which is celebrated after the harvest is over.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Nsim Ngi</td>
<td>This festival is observed before the year ending festival. It is a festival of merry making and enjoyment especially for the youth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Puakpet</td>
<td>This day is observed before the harvest begins. The priest announced the day and the villager pray and observed this day for a good harvest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Helei Ngi</td>
<td>This day is observed when all the preparation for cultivation is done. After observation of this day with prayer seed sowing will begin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Nchang</td>
<td>This day is observed with prayer giving thanks to god for completion of seed sowing. After this day one cannot sow any seed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Ntuare</td>
<td>It is a place where a grain is sowed before the seed sowing began in the village. Here the seed is sowed by the small girl of land owner (pedeipeu) who did not have her menstrual period yet. This is done in order to know what rituals have to be done before the seed sowing i.e Helei Ngi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6.1 Hangseuki and Leuseuki

The youth dormitory or morung or *Hangseuki* (for boys) and *Leuseuki* (for girls) are important social institution, which sustains the Zeme society, religion and culture. It is unique in nature and is the most outstanding aspect of their social life. Membership of the dormitory is compulsory for both boys and girls. The members of the dormitory
are collectively called Kiangna. To become the members of it, the Kiangna gives an egg to a child’s mother as soon as she gives birth to a child. This social institution meets the defence requirement of the village and the manpower requirement to organize public works, religious ceremonies and cultural festivals. As one dormitory is not enough to accommodate all the youths of the village there may be two or three in some village. The boys learned the art of hunting, dancing, singing, music, art and crafts, customs, traditions and folklore from the senior members. It is the best school for practical life of the Zeme youths. The life spent there make them self reliant and disciplined. The girls practice weaving, making earrings, necklace, folk song and dance, etc. The dormitory or morung also plays the role of a school in the practical life of the Zeme Naga youths. It makes them self-reliant, disciplined and helps them to understand their mutual rights, social duties and responsibilities.

![Figure 3.1: Hangseuki](image)

**Figure 3.1: Hangseuki**

### 3.6.2 Kiangna (Group Member)

The Kiangna is that body of persons of all ages and both sexes who will spend, or are spending, or have spend their years of adolescence in a given hangseuki or young man dormitory or in leuseuki or girls dormitory associated with hangseuki. Since every person must belong to kiangna, the community is divided into two or more kiangna. There are always two kiangna, very rarely more; they are called ‘nrei-kiangna, i.e.
upper group and ‘nkang-kiangna i.e lower group and hangseuki which they are associated are situated as the name indicates in the upper and the lower part of the village respectively. Upper indicates that part of the village nearest to the main hill and the lower part further from it.

The members of the kiangna are recruited by unusual method. When word is received that a child has been born, a party of girls or boys, according to the sex of the child, hurry to the house from leuseuki or hangseuki to claim the baby for the kiangna, the first party to arrive secures the child as a member. Father, son, brothers, sisters are thus found in different kiangna. The division of the members in the same family also prevents inter-kiangna disputes from turning to the serious nature. If any danger in the disputes is recognized, the youths with the close kin in the rival kiangna will usually return from the struggle or avoid and contact with the opposing kinsmen. These kinds of withdrawing participation lessen the inter-kiangna clashes.

At the age of four boy ceases to sleep with his mother on the ‘women’s bed’ of the house and goes to his father and the ‘men’s bed’. He remains at home playing with the same age group and doing things, eating and sleeping in his parental home until the age of seven and till then he has little or no connection with his kiangna. From then on he begins to go to the hangseuki of his kiangna and watch the members’ activities and listen to their talks. At this stage, he will sleep sometimes at home and sometimes in hangseuki, to which is gradually transferring his interests. At about nine or ten he ceases to sleep at home, though he returns there for meals and when ill and need of nursing and from his stage till marriage he sleep in, spends most of his time in, and centres his activities in the hangseuki. A girl also started sleeping in leuseuki at the age of eight or nine and continues to sleep there until marriage but works at home during the day and receives her training from her mother. A girl works more than her brother at home and in the fields.

3.6.3 DekuakuIBE

Dekuakuibe means digging a well. It was done by a family or clan when any one dies an unnatural death like falling from trees, attacked by wild animals, from fire, etc.
The Zeme Nagas believed that such type of person died thirsty and so their soul long for water. So, a well is dug in their name for their soul to drink or else their soul struggle for water.

3.6.4 Hejuadekung

*Hejuadekung* is a tilted erected stone which can be called as the foundation stone of the village. After the selection of the site of the village, a foundation stone has to be erected before an entry with some rituals. Every village had this stone in the centre of their village. It is also the ritual centre of the village and the sport ground of the ritualized long jump. Those people who are expert in long jump can prepare a place for long jump giving their name.
3.6.5 Hekoakuabe: *Hekoakuabe* means putting of stones slates together one after another. *Hekoakuabe* is made by the family in memory of the loved ones.

It was also done to mark the heroic deeds of a person while they are still alive. For this purpose, stones are cut into slates and brought together and placed one after
another placing one big stone in centre in the standing position. While constructing, the villager will help the family in bringing the stone plates from far places. *Hekoakuabe* is still practice by the Zeme Nagas till today. Some people construct in on their way to the village so that the traveller will stop by and take rest sitting on it.

### 3.6.6 Heramleusumbe

*Heramleusumbe* is another kind of stone erecting to remember a person. This can be erected when the person is alive or after death by their family. These types of stones are erected when an individual is had a physical relationship with a number of women during their youth life. The number of stones put up in a line was the number of women he had associated. And if a woman bore his child, another small stone will be attached to that particular stone. This tradition is not followed anymore by the Zeme Nagas but the erected stones are still found in some of the villages in Dima Hasao district.

![Figure 3.5: Heramleusumbe](image)

### 3.6.7 Hepietu (Watching point)

This practice is usually done during the war time. This type of *hepietu* was erected in the name of a powerful and famous person in the village. This was not constructed just for the sake of name and fame but, the person on whose name it was constructed
watches the enemies from that top for the safety of the village. If any danger comes he will warn and also will be the one to face the danger himself and save his village. As far as the information collected there was only one hepietu seen in the village of Hejailo in the whole district of Dima Hasao.

Figure 3.6: Hepietu

3.6.8 Piterang

Piterang is a sign of reserving things like a plot of land for cultivation, or a tree to cut or dried tree for firewood, etc. It is a sign kept by a person to make known to other that he had seen the thing first and is reserved for his purpose. The sign is made by a small stick place on the ground with a cross on top of the stick. If the cross mark is made with a single stick then there is still a chance that he might leave it again. But if a person place two cross stick on top of it then it means a person is surely going to use it. Piterang can be put with a rope as shown in picture below.(Figure 3.7). If a person tie a rope round the tree or place a bamboo piece placed straight in the bark of the tree then it is also another sign of piterang. When a person put piterang in the bark of a tree one should place it straight because if not it will be mistaken as showing direction again. And if a person reserve a hay for cutting, they will not put a sign with a bamboo or rope but they will have to tie a knot with a hay in that place. This sign of
reserving is still followed by all the Zeme Nagas, and if anything is reserved by a person with *piterang*, no one will touch it if it is about to decay also.

Figure 3.7: Piterang

3.6.9 Ntuare

*Ntuare* is made every year before the seed sowing festival *Helei Ngi*. Before observation of the seed sowing festival, a little girl from the family of the landowner
*Pedeipeu*, a virgin who did not get her menstrual period or reach the age of puberty have to sow a seed in the outer part of the village. After the sowing of the grain, it will be protected with the branches until it grows. If the rains falls before the grain grows they will have to perform some rituals or if it falls after the grain grows they have to perform another rituals and only after that the seed sowing festival is celebrated and the work proceed.

![Figure 3.8: Ntuare (A grain sowed and protected with branches)](image)

### 3.6.10 Hengi (Festivals)

The Zeme Naga celebrates various festivals. The festivals of the Zeme Naga are based on different stages of agricultural operations. It marked with the ritual or prayer to supreme God ‘*Tingwang*’ for blessing, for protection of the crops, thanksgiving, etc. In olden days, it last for seven to ten days but now a days it last for three to five days only. *Hangleuteube or Matuibeis* said to be the grandest and biggest of all the festivals of the Zeme Nagas. It is celebrated only when the bumper crops are harvested continuously for some continuously and the death rate of the youth is nil during that period bringing prosperity to the village. It is also considered to be the merry making festival of the youth. Being the prosperity festival it lasted for
seven days. The bachelor and maiden sit together near the fire on a single long bench of the dormitory. They put their hands on each other shoulder and swing to and fro like dancing paddy in the autumn. *Helei Ngi* is seed sowing festival. After the clearing of cultivating land, secondary crops are sowed but the main crop i.e. rice is sowed only after *Helei Bam*. This festival is observed in order to appease god to have a bumper crop. *Hega-Ngi* (the year ending festival) is a post-harvest festival. When the granaries are filled with new stocks and the whole village is free from all agricultural works, and people turn to celebrations and festivity. *Hega-Ngi* being considered as the year ending festival, it has some strict obligations right from the beginning of the festival. Apart from singing and dancing, playing and merry making are the main parts of the festival. *Nchang Ngi* is a festival celebrated after completion of seed sowing. *Nchang* literally meaning ‘over or finish’ thus marks the closing of seed sowing in jhum. (Nriame, 2012). The festivals involved no singing and dancing, but these festivals provide the cultivators needed break from their hard work by enjoying the delicious food and drinks. *Puakpat Ngi* is a festival of feasting and enjoyment looking forward a good harvest. It is celebrated when the new crops is ready to fill the granary. It is also a festival celebrating that the time of scarcity is over as the new stock fills the granary. *‘Nsim Ngi’* is a month long festival with two or three day’s intervals. During this festival, ceremonial rite for the well being of the child is performed. *‘Nkam Ngi’* festival is celebrated in the month end of October or early November. It is believed that the deceased ancestors and other dead members of the family take part in the celebration. Symbolic offering in their honour was made by every household. There are many minor festivals celebrated by the Zeme Nagas like *Hepau-Lia* observed for the health and well being of the male population of the village, *Nchin ‘Nna*, observed to appeal god to free their jhum from *nchin* (insects) like grasshoppers, beetle, spider etc., *Kejai Heliam*, observed when the rice crops with pest and other seasonal deseases, *Makhang, Kedeingei, hemeuriam*, etc.

### 3.6.11 Helim (Folk dance)

Dance is one of the important parts of the Zeme Nagas tradition. The Zeme Nagas are endowed with rich cultural dances which are handed down from their ancestors. Dances are performed by young boys and girls during festivals or any ceremonies. Dance is performed with the combination of song and drum beats and cymbals. It is
said that the Zeme Nagas learnt the art of dancing from the animals, birds, insects, etc. While performing the dance, the dancers carry the hornbill feather in their hand. The dance starts with slow rhythm movement. In slow succession as the dance progresses, the drum beats and the dance steps becomes faster and come to an end when all the dancers lead by the leader forms a straight line and stopped with the stopping drum beat. There are different types of dance like *Hereilim* (war dance), *Herepebelim* (hornbill dance), *Kechinglim* (cricket dance), *Nruirekansaabelim* (cock dance), *Hekalim* (fish dance), *Hechalim* (python dance), *Timphiangbelim* (butterfly dance), *Paimang kapelabelim* (passing of the kilt dance), *Cheutaubelim* (rice pounding dance), etc.

![Dancing and merry making during the festival](image)

**Figure 3.9: Dancing and merry making during the festival**

### 3.6.12 Heraasam (Folk Tales)

Folk tales is one of the important traditional media of the Zeme Naga society. There are many folk tales which teaches the people through its moral. Folk tales have been handed down from one generation to another generation through oral tradition. They have been communicated either by their parents or grandparents or any elders in family gathering sitting around the hearth. Some are re-told by their uncles or aunts or their elders to their nephews or nieces to teach the moral values, good manners and
Folk tales has been imparting informal education and invoking respect for social and ethical values in the community.

One example of folk tales

*Tingche kebe Rasam (Story of prayer for sunshine)*

Long time ago, there was continuous rain not stopping even for a single day. It was the time to burn their jhum for cultivation. So some of the group decided to go and do the mithun sacrifice and ask god to give sunshine. As scheduled they took mithun and went to do the sacrifice. On their way they met an old man, who asked their mithun to give it to him. But they replied, “this is for sacrificing to god, so that he will give us sunshine for burning our jhum, how can we give it away to you.’ And they continued their journey.

Another group decided to go and do the pig sacrifice and ask god to give sunshine. As scheduled they took a pig and went to do the sacrifice. Like the first group, on their way they met an old man, who asked their pig to give it to him. But they also replied, “this is for sacrificing to god, so that he will give us sunshine for burning our jhum, how can we give it away to you.’ And they also continued their journey.

There was an orphan in a village that lived with his mother. His mother asked him to go with cock and do the sacrifice like other and asked god to give sunshine for burning their jhum. He replied his mother, ‘how can we be successful in our sacrifice when others are offering their sacrifices with mithun, pig etc.’ But tired of his mother repeated request he took the cock and went out to do the sacrifice. On his way he met an old man, who asks him his chicken. He replied, ‘Grandfather what you will do with this cock?’ ‘I need it’ said the old man. Then the orphan told him ‘You can take if you need’, and hand it over to him. Then the old man asked him to go to their jhum after four days. The orphan didn’t understand why he told him to go after four days. But he went as asked and found his jhum all dried and so he burned it and returned back very happy when others area are still wet with rains as their sacrifices were not successful.

Moral: Love the strangers, your friends and stranger may be god.
3.6.13 Helew (Folk Songs)

Folk songs play a very significant role in the socio-cultural life of the Zeme Nagas. It is the most important traditional media among the Zeme Nagas. They communicated more through songs than any other means. It is the sources of pleasures and happiness and also the way to express your sorrow, love, etc which brings inspiration to the people. It is an essential accompaniment to any folk dance and festivals. The theme has a wide range of variety like to extol a specific act of heroism, relate a love story or important event of the past or glorify the tradition. They are transmitted from one generation to another orally. There are different kinds of songs like, songs connected with agricultural activities, festivals, romance, rites and rituals, conflicting songs, emotional songs, work songs, marriage songs, children songs, lullaby etc.

Figure 3.10: Zeme old man singing folk song and sharing the story about it.

Some songs tell the life story of a heroic person, tragedy etc. And some speaks about an individual long time back and still lingering with their names. A young boy falling in love with a girl will never propose a girl by meeting and talking like today but, he will express his love through songs and also receive his reply through songs from girl again. Some of the important songs of the Zeme Nagas are- Helim lew (dance song), Hetua leu (Song associated with praise and felicitation of a person), Leukak lew (challenging song), Hemei lew (marriage song), Hekia lew (love song), Heket lew
(Sentry song), *Kelangtewbe Lew* (spinning song), *hekajuabe Lew* (fishing song), *Hegut lew* (song sung during the exchange of work, the Zeme Naga believed that when this song is sung, it gives them stamina to work faster and more efficiently), *Leusang Lew, Hemu Lew, Keriakpakbe lew, Gesumjube Lew* etc. Examples of the Zeme folk songs are given below:

**Song 3.1 Courting song (*Hekialew)*

**Man:** *Mbeutinsang ze akim lui lei.*

*Heleu ningjei kang chun I gut mekhiang,*

*Nang lung rang lau;*

*Heleu gau ningsam seu nei ze rang lei*

**Lady:** *Rehang gau ning ru lei*

*Heleu I ne sui dechi I lu me lei*

*Rehang ningsam yize hai lia le.*

(Man: I want to take this beautiful damsel as my wife. O lady, I came here near your bed to wake you up. Pour out your heart to me and tell. O my lady I am waiting to hear your answer.

Lady: Man you are lying or pretending. When come out and follow you, you will say that you don’t like to marry you. But your words are too sweet that everyone falls for it.)

**Song 3.2 Romantic Song**

(Source- Nakaulang Nriame)

*Apui gau apiak jaulung kai,*

*Suakamle nai je ngau lei,*

*Ngau leseu aria rin,*

*Arai bam dau lulak lei,*

*Duilim keeping kumbam lei Apiak lung kai,*

*Apui gau Apiak jaulung, Suakamle nai je ngau lei.*
(Oh mother! I saw an image beautiful damsel when I look into my cup of rice beer. My heart beats and become restless as soon as I saw it. My cup looks as if it is filled with a sparkling water. Oh mother! I saw an image of a beautiful damsel inside my cup.)

**Song 3.3 Country song**

(Source-Nakaulang Nriame)

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Anui Zeme ram ring gang,
Keta bam ra yi lei,
Heleu gau mei lai,
Heleu gau mei metai lau.
Anui Zeme ramyiseu phuk kumak,
Heleu suakam lanai,
Lakpui keji,
Suakam nai sang nam wang ra je chimak,
Aram Zeme ram yi seu phut kumak.
```

(In the distant upland stands, the centrally located Zeme country. The land of abundance. Come to our abode, oh girls, come to our abode. Do not even talk to depart from Zeme land. Such an adoring is Zeme country. Your conjugal ties may compel you to leave; some may leave for the alien land. But we will never depart from our land.)

**Song 3.4 Samralung Lew (Keloaletdeibe Lew)**

This song was composed by Samralung. This song also teaches the land dwellers for peaceful living with everyone and other neighbours. Without spoiling the beauty of the land with evil thought and motives.

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Nda apau ne henam tewchu
Kedei kam desuak sun ram tinggim geu
Heka nup chu mezin
Keheunam, geku nam, mi kanche nam, tewdiak lui lei
Achu kengen mbeube kelung leine
Aram kin bamdin dia lui lei
```
Gepang ra chi tui le lau  
Paukansiame mie ngau lau  
Tungje nam kedai bamba ge rakum  
Anui tewdi guamie megu su kisim rim bou  
Keho chujeu ahun liang mepeu asuang leng hing je  
Kebam akilluang heranam tewrei ge ngam be nam ge lung lei  
Keta yi tui lei, kedai helung bin chu  
Michikeng sang penam besang  
Aram rachi nrim ra bun getew kum lei  
Tingnaimik pui gesang yi kegut, dinsau me lei akilo  
Naikilo zairing keyi ga zai ramting sung lu zeu  
I neu adit tewsang ahun zeng ne zeu lung geka je  
Nrameng duidi kin kemuang hiam chang lu lak  
Nda apau ram suangdi hun nei zang gui pin tew kam lak  
Ketew mei lak lei duilim  
Luangta ketakum lei abam lung gai  
Meuchi dangwang ge chai pei lau  
Ketuai kegiak gepei ai hejai kajeu ge lung pet  
Nkiangpui jeu kum kilo lung betai nnei chu lung ra  
Chudi di sum ra zeu taguangpau lungchang chu  
Kirui ringbung kuang kebam gaje  
Naiki jeng gai chudi reigai hetun punjeu  
Kiluang jen run tuiwang  
Naikilo mena meneu rim apau sam lei je tingna sam din diak la lei  
Aram mena gau heguang sam jeu kehing bekum peilau  
Apau led a hega lei, mina chi kelang menung  
Hebaiza desam din kemeng gu tesang kengu nsia se lau  
Geching me ai pesing sai di ze tingna samdin puilak lei  
Kedeirei kelung ai minam yinei je tew bam bene  
Patingna tewlu chi kemak me  
Henam nra chu tesam keng pet lipuina liang  
Pebam cham rip che kebam be ju ai njo melei aram sengyi  
Asam seng ai tesam ket led din telui riang nkum
Teningpi kechui kelu kum lei
Aram seng yi lei hepum tew kelung me lung wang lau
Anui ne pepum tewmak puina liang meje
Kelak nsang jaula pun pet je
Gesak benam la cheu lau

(Meaning of the song is- Our grandfather formed a village, lacking nothing, like the clouds in heaven. A land of the rich, a land of the braves, a land which is envied by all. It was built by our grandfather with wisdom. Those who are trying to push me away, all those who are living on the bank of Barak River, the deaf, who did not understand everything, remember this. Those who do not know things clearly and gossip; know and learn from your foolishness. Our land is like a river of fresh water, overflowing with fullness of everything, every fruits are the best. We go hunting; we enjoy and return home very proudly. We live in a land blessed by our heavenly father and we won every battle of life. Everything is perfect in the land we live. Every sunrise and every sunset we cannot stop praising our land. We have a land like living water and like clouds which filled the heaven. I proudly take care of my fellowmen and no bad things will be allowed to flow in. Long time back in our grandparents place, we got everything we wished for and cannot finish up the food and fruits that provides. It’s like water flowing endlessly. We have paddy which we cannot finish up. Early in the morning youths came out like the early birds, all the people are lively and joyful. Our grandparent’s words are kept and pronounce it to publicise among all. My people, respect and fear the word of heavenly king. Our grandparent’s words are diamond. People who didn’t know, do not spoil the words spoken by your elders, they are growing old and cannot say all that they want to teach you. Those who did not respect and take the word of elders pronounce for all are the one who bring illness and deform the land. They speak like children and womenfolk not like a man. They separate people from standing united and peacefully. Our land is good like the necklace where all beads are placed one after another, standing united. The way we live are good, we do not complain each other but share the rice beer that we prepare and drink together.)
Song 3.5: Nkiwangding leu

(Songs which teach the people for peaceful living which is called Keloakalediebe Lew)

Naikilo ai ngeuki di pecheu tewmeje
Geurak pecheu gechen de lai anam ruang gai ramting kum cheng lei
Timbunbe chua je michi che meiramting kehu
Kedei ju mengai gechu naineu
Ketsam lei anam kedi aiju ba lui lei
Sangjeng mepeu pekun ketew lei neu
sam aleu ruang rim nking le lau
I gesia sam din meng je kang se lau
Mipeu kai nteu sam din kemeng be peu je
Kang se lau nau kesia sam ra din du ze
Tingnaimikpui neze lu lau
Tesangpeu sang lei petin sau pebangpui
Peteu riang nggui ze
Ningsam zeng beneu mikdui naikin geu lei
Hegua chinei zai helad rehiam lau
Haume peu pa tebai li lu peteu riang tinggeu
Agim gai hepun geta peu kai
Tesang hang zeu bingkum lai
Redau be lu ra yi rechen lei.

Our land is like a big river with no rough sounds just flowing peacefully. Like the peaceful river, I want our land to be better and bigger than the strangers land with no sounds of disturbances. All strangers who have ears listen to my words. Did I say bad words? Don’t try to resist my saying? My fellowmen do not resist to those whoever comes and speaks on behalf of all. If he had ever spoken bitter words by any chance, keep it only for a day, do not allow yourself to pass to another day with those words in your heart. Think that it is the way of strangers, who leaves his own wife and holding the necklace of the maid. His words will make the eye shed tears. But if you want to learn to live, choose the good and the right path. Like the business man who change his place in search for his living. We should search and live and convince the
strangers and neighbours for peaceful living and living together is much better than separation.

3.6.14 Samrang / Samrekum (Adage and Proverbs)

Proverbs and sayings are short statements of wisdom or advice that are transmitted from generation to generation and have passed into general use. According to Wikipedia, a proverb is a simple and concrete saying, popularly known and repeated, that expresses a truth based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. They are often metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as maxim. Proverbs are often borrowed from similar language. Almost every culture has examples of its own unique proverbs.

A proverb contains wisdom, moral and traditional views which are in affixed and memorisable form and are handed down from generation to generation. Proverbs are found in many parts of the world, but some areas seem to have richer stores than other. The Zeme Nagas have rich proverbs and proverbial sayings which is passed down from their forefather and is used very much by the community till today in a very effective way. Many proverbs and sayings are also derived from the folk tales.

In a Zeme Naga society, when a person cannot tell directly a whole thing or give a long explanation to a person, they prefer to use the proverb to speak about it. All the adages are based on their traditional activities.

Some of the examples that are commonly used among the Zeme Nagas in the present time are given below:-

1. *Nchang gi tew lu mak heleu rie lu mak*. (A person have many things to do and keep on deciding which one to do and ends up doing nothing)

2. *Ariang hemi kamela gum da*. (It is a saying taken from folk tales, it tells about doing things in the wrong direction)

3. *Heramiepai gum da*. ( Tells about a wicked thinking or idea of a person)

4. *Tua taube sua a nsak gitau be ne tew ntew lei*. (Backbiting hurts more than direct words)

5. *Kiangunai zegene tingsumui tew be*. (Getting hurt because of other’s action)
6. *Heleuraume du nneu dau chi lei.* (Workload is lighter if a person is ever ready to do anything)

7. *Keli sua hinglo gamak be.* (There is always an excuse from doing or saying anything, or means of escaping every time)

8. *Tewbe pi bin mak, tew makbe pi binbe.* (taking care of what is unnecessary than the needed one)

9. *Hepo chai ge hetei tangbe.* (Speaking or fighting when it's already gone)

10. *Tei ka mput be kajo dibe.* (Boasting of what is not seen or done)

### 3.6.15 Hepua-Heni, Heteu-Heta (Dresses and Ornaments)

Dresses and ornaments also speak a lot about a community or an individual. The Zeme Nagas have their own traditional attire which is woven by the women folk. They spin the yarn and dyed the yarn with required colour produced by them from herbs available in their forest. They have both common and separate clothes for unmarried and married boys and girls. The Zeme Naga dresses are very beautiful and artistically designed with orchids, cowries, sea shell etc. The most prestigious and expensive men’s shawl is ‘Mpakpai’ which are beautifully designed on both inside and outside, and was beautified more with the skin of orchid of shining yellow called ‘Hekung’. They have a short kilt above the knee in black called ‘Njingni’ and white called ‘Heni’. They use white long cloth called ‘Mikiakak’ meaning waist belt. The old people also wear ‘paitik’.

The women folk wear a white short wrapper while working. They wear ‘Ngiangnine or Limbeni’ while dancing. ‘Ngiangnine’ is worn from waist to just above the knee, and black colth called ‘Paimang’ is worn to cover up the upper part of the body tight around with small long cloth called ‘Pelit’ which is used like a protection from falling off. There are many different shawl or wrapper like Perenpai, loiheapai, Meraipen, ‘Ngumtau, Tekuppai, etc.
Figure 3.11: Man shawl ‘Mpakpai’

Figure 3.12: ‘Kejui’ (Beetle—the head and wings are used to make earring)
Both man and woman like to wear ornaments at all times. Man wear necklace made of sea shells and beads called ‘tebatew and ‘Teluitew’. They also wear round ring necklace made of cowries. Man also wear earing made of several coloured yarn, beads and dried orchid skin called ‘hekung’ which is shining yellow when it is dried. They also put a beetel wing which is hard and shining green called ‘kejui’. Man also wear armblets made of brass metal and anklets made of cane called ‘heke’. Woman wear ‘Telatau’ made of sea shells, beads, cowrie etc. Married women are proud to wear all the time. Even today in some village we can still see woman wearing it all the time. They also wear earring made of several colour yarn, dried orchid skin called.
'Hekung' which is shining yellow in colour, and beads. They also put a beetle wing which is hard and shining green called 'Kejui' which is shown in above picture.

3.6.16 Leumung (Musical Instruments)

The Zeme Nagas have various types of innovative musical instruments that produce beautiful melodies. The musical instruments are made out of indigenous material which is available locally like wood, gourd, animal skin, bamboo, horse or mare hair, etc. *Nsum* or drum is the most important of all the musical instruments of the Zeme Nagas. It was made from the hollow of big tree trunk and animal skin. Drum served as a form of long distance communication. It was also used during the festivals, religious functions etc.

![Figure 3.14: Nsum (Drum)](image)

The different types of drum beat convey different meaning. For example when a drum is beaten in the fast speed continuously, it signifies that something bad is happening in the village and all the villagers who went out for their daily work returns home without questioning. Mouth Organ called 'Ntuk' is an instrument which produces humming sound. The manoeuvring of the note is controlled by air blowing and inhaling. The humming sounds depend on the control of air in the mouth and plays for melodious sounds but it is not accompanied with the song. *Nrabung*, like a violin but with a single string produces melodious notes when gently rub-strike with bow string.
made of hair of horsetail. The body is made with either coconut or gourd. In the olden times, this is played when all the agricultural activities is over. It is believed that if they play that before time, the villager will suffer from bad harvest for the coming year. With the fear of playing by mistake, the villager will take off the string of the instruments until the time to play it came. Metiam is a flute which is made of a bamboo pipe with six key holes. In olden days, flute is also played only after the harvest because they believed that if they play before the harvest, their stock in the granary will be over soon. Trumpets called Kebuikie (made of buffalo or mithun horn) are also used by the Zeme Nagas. Its use is limited to heralding, declaring work time and meal time. It is also used as warning in time of war. Cymbal called ‘Ntoi’ is also used along with the drum in accordance with the song and steps of the dance. Gong called ‘Hemeu’ is also used by the Zeme Nagas during the festivals while singing and dancing. It is also used to inform the death of a person in the village.

There were many traditional media practices of Zeme Nagas that were no more in practice especially those which are usually practiced during the war time. Symbols and signs still stands today in Dima Hasao district. But many forms are still in practice like folk tales, songs, dances, symbols, dresses, festivals etc.

### 3.6.17 Laisong Chaai (Laisong Weekly Market)

![Laisong Market](image-url)
Laisong Village is located in the remote area which is far from main town. Weekly market is very much significant for the village as well as for the neighbouring villages for buying their basic needs. The weekly market is held once a week at Laisong village i.e. on Wednesday. Most of the products are taken from the town and some local products like vegetables, local chicken, handicrafts, etc. are sold by the villagers. Vendors set up small outlets full of colourful clothes, cosmetic products, toys, etc. Drinks like tea, local rice beer, etc are also found. The weekly market is the centre for attraction and fun amongst village and its neighbouring villages. It is also a platform for communication, as people coming to the market not only sell their products and buy their basic needs but exchange information with each other about them, their village, their activities, etc.