

ISSN 2395-6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN 2395-6224 (ONLINE VERSION)

Volume 9 Number 2 April - September 2019

Centurion Journal of Multidisciplinary Research



Centurion
UNIVERSITY

*Shaping Lives...
Empowering Communities...*

centurion university of technology and management

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<https://cutm.ac.in/cjmr/centurion-journal-of-multidisciplinary-research/>

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Annual Subscription: Rs 300 (within India) excluding postage charges. Outside India USD 30, excluding postage charges. See website for details.

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Published by:

Registrar, Centurion University of Technology and Management
R. Sitapur, Parlakhemundi, Gajapati, Odisha
Pin – 761211

Printer:

Srimandira Publication
EPF Colony, E-Block, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751007

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CENTURION UNIVERSITY PRESS, ODISHA, INDIA

About the Journal

Centurion Journal of Multi-disciplinary Research

Centurion Journal of Multi-disciplinary Research is a refereed journal, which serves as a platform for exploring the current issues, challenges and linkages in the broad areas of development, technology, engineering and management. There is a special focus on skill development and education, its recognition and promotion in the country, especially with the 'Make in India' initiative by the government of India. The objective of the journal is to facilitate bringing together research based contributions in science, technology, management and skills that has direct implication for the development of under-privileged communities and empowering them. The journal links theory and practice in the above areas so as to have policy and programme implications, particularly in under-developed contexts. In addition to articles from individuals or collectives, the journal publishes book reviews.

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Centurion Journal of Multi-disciplinary Research aims at:

- Providing a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, conceptual developments and new research areas and techniques that promise to change analyses and perspectives on science and technology, development, management, skill in developing societies;
- Disseminating and promoting research, good practice and innovation in all aspects of science, technology, management and skill development to its main audiences, including educators, researchers, graduate students, policy makers, and practitioners; and
- Encouraging multi-disciplinary cooperation and understanding, and enhancing quality research.

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Editorial

The Journey

"The simple things are also the most extraordinary things, and only the wise can see them."

- Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist

The journey of life starting with a cry moves from cradle to graveyard. It is a journey of our achievements of laughter and tears and a story of our contributions towards society. Everyone in this journey of life wants to write their story with the beauty of effective expression. Thus from the very beginning, the urge to communicate remains as a basic need. The journey of becoming a part of the society starts with syllabic and non-syllabic words. The need to understand the society then moves ahead to fall in love with the fantasy of folktales in granny's lap. Such fascination towards stories makes life beautiful. Such temptation towards stories developed great literatures of the world. They may be the stories of Arabian Nights or may be other moral stories but folk literature or folk wisdom has always tried to preserve the value system and knowledge system of a particular society to educate, entertain and socialize its individuals.

In the modern cyber era, when life is moving from speech to text, and translator app from google has become a part of life to overcome the language barriers, even at the same time we are at the need of preserving our traditional knowledge system. Folktales and folklore are not only a fantasy at granny's lap or contribution of a traditional society but also a great source of knowledge. This great treasure of knowledge helps to

redefine the identity of individual or community in the society and lead it towards a better tomorrow. Similarly, the deep rooted folk cultural system which is associated with us from birth to death can talk about our life patterns. The knowledge of this cultural pattern derived from rituals and folk theatres contributes in a better way to the knowledge system for a better tomorrow. As the journey of knowledge never ends that is why the journey of human imagination moves ahead to meet the technological blessing of silver screen and there it finds how the complexities of society gets reflected on the screen. It tries to understand the realities of life through this powerful medium. Amid all these changes to understand the society in a better manner, Man has to face the challenge of language learning and acquiring skills of language and communication. In such journey towards completeness, Man reaches to a state of awakening to establish its socio political identity by critically looking into his relationship with the state and governance system. He becomes conscious about his political identity and starts looking into the promises made to him by political institutions of the society for designing a better tomorrow.

In this edition, the scholars through their research contributions have tried to critically look into this journey of mankind. The edition has placed an opportunity before us to redesign our lens to look into the search of knowledge. This has left questions for other researchers to find ways to build a bridge between traditional and modern knowledge system for a fusion of knowledge to establish a true knowledge society.

While writing this editorial, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Mukti Kanta Mishra and Prof. D.N. Rao, President and Vice President of the University, Prof. Anita Patra Registrar of the University for their support and encouragement to move ahead in the academic life. I am expressing my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Supriya Pattanayak, Vice

Chancellor of the University for her continuous guidance and support to complete this task and for considering me worthy to undertake this responsibility. I am thankful to Prof. Dipankar Bhattacharyay, Chief editor of the Journal, Prof. Smita Mishra Panda, Director Research of the University for their support. Finally I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues Dr. Ajit Kumar Pradhan, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sahoo, Ms. Taneeva Das and Dr. Biswanandan Dash for their support in the editorial process. I sincerely thank all the authors for making this edition possible. Last but not the least I am thankful to Mr. Susil Kumar Sahu, my colleague, for all his support in designing the journal.

Dr. Ambika Sankar Mishra

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Agenda of Feudalizing Oral Narratives towards Identity - Reconstruction: A Folkloristic Assessment

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
Odisha, India

Samuel Dani¹

The basic premise on which the concept of Identity is built involves, inter alia, folklore. Folkloric resources, both tangible and intangible, help folk carve out an identity that could be singularistic and pluralistic. Identity – discourse based on culture involving myriad dimensions of folkloric engagement tends to be representative not only for an individual but also for the communitarian existential experiences. For instance, origin narrative or social ascendancy narrative, an inevitable component of folklore has been used for the forceful articulation of identity-reconstruction. As is often stated, identity-reconstruction does not take place in a social vacuum, the very process of reconstruction entails the assertion of ‘the self’ in relation to ‘the other.’ It could be conflictual or/ as well as complimentary depending on the interactive process between the communities. ‘Identity acquired’ and ‘Identity-imposed’ are polarized domains shaped up by the cultural-material process. Parity in cultural experiences of two communities does not necessitate analogous social positions. For instance, sharing identical origin narrative/s by two communities living in closer proximity could entail asymmetrical social experiences, given their material possessions

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and hegemonic role. Further, oral origin narrative could be used by one community as a potent tool to dominate 'the other.' In the feudal system, the politics of scripting orality undermines 'oral-scripting' as the legitimization of oral narrative is orchestrated by the feudal authority.

I intend to deal with two communities origin narratives in this brief paper: the Chauhan² and the Kamar³ of Western Odisha in India. It may not be called origin narrative in the strict sense because it tells about the history (rather oral history) of social ascending, which I prefer to call 'ascendancy narrative.' It opens up folkloristic possibilities to reconstruct the oral history of the feudal order and how narratives are manipulated and legitimized to justify the feudal agenda. Western Odisha itself is a micro-cultured zone,⁴ given its topological distinctiveness and high concentration of tribal-Dalit habitats, in Eastern India. Historically known as South Kosala,⁵ the entire region had been ruled by the Nalas, Vakatakas, Sarabhapuriyas, Somavamsi, Kalachuri, and Chauhans. Spreading over the riverine Mahanadi-basin, this micro-civilizational zone witnessed the emergence of tribal chiefs. In due course of time, the tribal-nontribal interaction gave rise to a peasant nation's economy. Of course, the pastoral hunting economy got integrated and existed side by side.⁶ The coming of the Brahmins brought about a structural change in the society and accelerated the process of Kshatriyanization, which, of course, had a bearing on the folklore domain. In other words, 'folklore' was feudalized, and departments of oral narratives underwent mythification under the aegis of the feudal system. In an attempt to legitimize mythified narratives, a paramount determining factor was 'the caste.'

Consequently, 'chiefdom' morphed into 'Kingship' and 'Orality' was undermined as well as replaced by 'canonization.' The ruler's oral history was manipulated, authorized, and scripted by a particular section of chroniclers sponsored by the feudal authority. Therefore, the politics of genealogical studies begin with and under sociological strain and

stress. It is in this context that 'who writes for whom?' obviously becomes a pertinent question.

How did the Chauhans take over South Kosala (Western Odisha) have been narrativized in many works? With the rich corpus of literature available to us, the author has taken up a few. The four literary sources which provide genealogical accounts have drawn upon oral narratives. These four are 1) Kosalananda Kavya by Gangadhar Mishra⁷, 2) Jayachandrika by Prahalad Dube⁸, 3) Nrusihma Mahatmya by Rajendra Singh Bariha and ⁹, 4) Ravana Angada Ubacha by Sibnarayan Deo ¹⁰.

Composers of all these works were either court-poets or themselves part of the ruling families. Gangadhar Mishra, who was the court-poet at Sambalpur, wrote Kosalananda kavya around 1660 ¹¹. Written in Sanskrit, Kosalananda Kavya is replete with eulogies of the Chauhan dynasty founder in Western Odisha. It legitimizes the mythic origin of the Chauhan as having been born out of the sacrificial fire (Agnikula). That the founder Ramai Dev is of Rajput origin, having descended from Prithviraj III of Delhi, is the central concern of the Kavya. When the Muslims defeated Prithviraj, his descendants migrated to Garha-Sambhar in Rajasthan, where they ruled for ten generations. When the Muslim killed the last of the ruling Chauhan, his wife, who was pregnant at that time, escaped from Rajasthan to Western Odisha and took refuge in the Brahmin house of Chakradhar Panigrahi. The Chauhan queen gave birth to a son christened Ramai Dev, who grew up in strength. Once, he killed a lioness¹² and relieved the locality's terror-stricken people who made him their King. The 'Kavya' refers to the Chauhan to be Chandravamsi (descended from lunar lineage).

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, another court-poet named Prahalad Dube of Sarangarh composed the Chauhan ascendancy narrative called Jayachandrika, which means 'The Beams of Victory.' He composed in the *Raso* style, a famous literary style current in northern

India then. It comprised seven cantos. The work is in Awadhi dialect in Devanagari Script, replete with Oriya, Chhatishgarhi, and Bhojpuri words. Prahald Dube also harps on the same story of the Chauhan having descended from Prithviraj Chauhan. He mentions the Agnikula myth and weaves into the text the oral narrative of how a widowed queen took shelter in the house of a Brahmin named Chakradhar Panigrahi and later gave birth to a male child named Ramai Dev who in the course of time, with the help of the Brahmin, became the ruler of South Kosala. Dube writes that an oligarchy system of government prevailed. Eight Mullick (military Chiefs) ruled the region successively, and one of the Mullick was Chakradhar Panigrahi. With the help of Chakradhar Panigrahi, Ramai Dev bribed the soldiers and killed the seven Mullicks. He spared the Brahmin Mullick and became the King.

The third literary source, 'Nrushimha Mahatmya' written by Rajendra Singh Bariha, the tribal Zamindar of Borasambar-Padampur, reads more like an oral folk narrative. The story goes like this: A Chauhan Rajput named Humer, driven out by Ala-ud-din, escaped to Gandhagiri in Western Odisha, where he built a fort. Some years went by and Humer, one day, decided to take revenge against Al-ud-din. He told his seven wives that he was taking the two talking birds (Sua and Sari) with him, and in case the birds flew back without him, they should know for sure about his death. Humer fought against Ala-ud-din, and one day while he was drinking water from a pond, the two talking birds set themselves free from the cage and flew back to Gandhagiri. On seeing the birds without their husband, six queens killed themselves by jumping into a well, but the youngest queen decided to stay alive for she was pregnant then. The pregnant queen left Gandhagiri and went to a village called Ramud, where she got shelter in the village headman's house. The headman belonged to the Binjhal tribe. The queen gave birth to a son. He was called Ramai Dev. He was tutored by a Brahmin. The young man bloomed with extraordinary power. At that time Patna region was ruled

by eight Mullicks ¹³ (Military Chiefs) in turns. With the Binjhal Ramai Dev's support, the eight mullicks continued to rule in rotation. The Binjhal chief of the village put the turban on Ramai Dev at the time of the coronation. In acknowledging the help he and his mother received from the Binjhal tribe, Ramai elevated the Binjhal head to a Zamindar.

The last literary source '*Ravana Angada Ubacha*' written by Shibnarayan Deo, also repeats the identical story of how Hamir Dev took shelter in Western Odisha's forest but later was killed in a battle. The return of the pigeon confirmed his death. His six wives jumped into a pool and committed suicide, but the youngest queen being pregnant, took shelter in a Binjhal house, and later gave birth to a son named Ramai Dev. The boy grew up, showed extraordinary valor and intelligence. With the Binjhal tribe's help, he killed the eight mullicks (Chiefs) ruling the region in rotation.

Besides the four ascendancy narratives, there are also many historical notes by the colonial administrators. The colonial masters also had to rely on the canonized sources from the feudal authorities. The British administrators who have left such accounts include T. Motte ¹⁴, Major H.B. Impey ¹⁵, Charles Grant ¹⁶, and L.S.S.O'Malley. ¹⁷

T. Motte visited Sambalpur in 1776, then a center of commerce in Western Odisha. He has an altogether different story to offer, which is out and out an oral account of the Chauhan's origin. He writes, "Sumbhulpoor was founded by Balram Dakee of whom they relate the following history. About two centuries are passed since a company of Hindoos set out from the banks of the river Sommer in the Province of Azmir on a pilgrimage to the temple of Juggernaut. On their return, the whole party was murdered except one woman who made her escape to Patna, a place thirty coss south from hence, at that time the capital of this part of the country. She supported herself with begging until her son grew up and showed such a happy genius forbearing and

dexterity at these exercises that the Rajah adopted him. When he succeeded, he built this place and made it his residence calling it Sumbhalpoor from his father's country. Had his family come from the Sommer, he would have called it Sommerpoor; whereas I should think he came from Sumbhal, a large city in the Rohilla country."

On closer scrutiny, one finds discrepancies in all accounts, even in the colonial masters who stressed the same authorized literary sources. However, the following points show how mythification works at different levels in reconstructing the ascendancy narratives or history of the Chauhans of Western Odisha:

- a) That the Chauhan ruler was born out of the sacrificial fire,
- b) That the Chauhans were Kshatriyas even though one text calls them Chandravamsi and other suryavamshi.
- c) That a pregnant queen from elsewhere took shelter in the tribal region where a tribal/ Brahmin adopted her son.
- d) That Ramai Dev Killed a lioness in Western Odisha
- e) That he killed the eight mullicks to usurp the throne.

When we juxtapose such grand cannons of origin narrative of a powerful ruling class with another aborigine tribe called the Kamar, which lived in close proximity, one is struck, of course, by the striking similarities in the two narratives that constitute 'identity-discourse.' And when these narratives are put together what emerges is a greater picture of the history of the region, which is sustained by oral tradition. The Kamar alias Paharia inhabit most of the border of Western Odisha and Chhatisgarh. For the first time in 1880, a book called "The Jungle

life in India” written by John Ball, throws light on the ethnographic life of the tribe. Ball categorizes the Kamar as Troglodytes in the habit. It is followed by “The Tribe and Castes of the Central Provinces of India” (1916) by R.V. Russel and Hira Lal. The collaborators- ethnographers devote eight pages to the Kamar life. But in 1942, S.C. Dube did a monograph on the Kamar. It was also his doctoral thesis, which he submitted in 1947 to Nagpur University. Both Russel-Lal and Dube provide the narratives appropriating oral traditions. Russel writes:

“They tell a Story of their ascendancy, saying that a Kamar was the original ruler of Bindranawagarh. One day, a member of Kamars killed the bhimraj bird, which had been tamed by a foreigner from Delhi. He demanded satisfaction, and when it was refused, went to Delhi and brought man-eating soldiers from there, who ate up all the Kamars except one pregnant woman. She took refuge in a Brahmin’s hut in Patna, and there had a son, whom she exposed on a dung-heap for fear of scandal, as she was a widow at the time. Hence the boy was called Kachra-Dhurwa or rubbish and dust. This may be a token of the belief of the Kamars that they were born from the earth as insects generate in dung and decaying organisms.”

Similarly, one great subtribe of the Gonds is called Dhur or dust Gonds. Kachra-Dhurwa was endowed with divine strength and severed the head of a goat made of iron with a bamboo stick. On growing up, he collected his fellow tribes’ men and slaughtered all the cannibal soldiers, regaining his ancestral seat in Bindranawagarh.”¹⁸

This is not a verbatim account that Russel has recorded. Still, he had to rewrite himself on the papers drawn up by his assistant Hira Lal, Pyrelal Mishra (Ethnographic clerk), and Ganapati Giri (Manager of Bindranawagarh). What is intriguing is that the oral narration is limited by the written account for which S.C. Dube dismisses it as “a careless official compilation.”¹⁹ Of course, pedagogic practices of ethno-

folkloristics are more field-based, and Dube himself undertook, but the original narrative he collected could not be called final and decisive. Though some erroneous data crept into Russel's work yet the origin narrative is still alive in the Kamar society. Dube found in his field-work that Kachra-Dhurwa was not a Kamar but a Gond.²⁰ Dube does not explain how identical origin narratives can survive among tribes having similar cultural experiences living in the same geo-cultural context. Neither does he tell us how 'oral origin narrative' changes the time-space continuum. The drifting away of folk from its 'oral origin narrative' may also take place in a sociologically strained situation. Dube gives an altogether different oral version compared to what Russel and Hira Lal do. He writes:

"The Nawalgarh-raj was initially inhabited by the Karmas. Although they had no king of their own, they were the undisputed Lord of the land."

Then gradually, the power of the Bhunjias increased. China Bhunjia, a great fighter, became the ruler of the land. China was the King, and the Chaukhtias were *Paik* (footman). Then came the Dhurwa Gonds from Lanji, and they fought against China. China was treacherously killed. Thus, the way was paved for the supremacy of the Dhur in this land.

During this period, two Kamars from a distant raj in Odisha came to this part. Their names were Niriya and Kariya. In Sunabeda, they halted with Thutwa Mahajan, who was the *phul* of their father. 'Where are you going, boys?' asked Mahajan. 'To Nawalgarh,' answered the boys. When they were ready to depart, they requested Mahajan to give them some money. Mahajan gave them the money and said, " Sons, you must give me twelve mounds each of wax, horns, leather, and honey."

In Bengrapalli, they asked the Dhurwa Gonds to give them some land and shelter. The Dhurwa directed them to settle in Amatpalli near Martha. The two brothers went to Amatpalli. There they constructed a small *Kundra* (temporary hut) for themselves and lived in it.

One day they went hunting in the hills near Bengrapalli. There they saw a small *Bhengraj* bird on top of a tree. They took it out from its nest and took it to their shelter. The next day, as they woke up, they found that the *Bhengraj* bird spoke to them. "Come, father, let us go for hunting", it said to one. "Come, father, let us go for hunting," it said to the other. The two brothers went with the bird into the jungle. The birds knew where the animals were in the jungle and could even bring them near the Karmas. Every day the Kamars got plenty of *shikars*. So much so that in a few days, they sent to Thutwa Mahajan, their father's *phul*, twelve mounds each of horns and leather.

The Dhurwas did not get any shikar in the jungle.

'What is the reason? We must find it out,' they said.

The Dhurwa –raja of Milcowa, asked them to find out the reason. When they discovered the secret of *Bhengraj*, they decided to kill it. In the forest near Martha, as the bird was coming on the back of a wild animal, the Dhurwas shot it.

The two Kamar brothers were furious when they learned about the death of their pet *Bhengraj*. They resolved to avenge their loss. They left the Nawalgarh-raj and went back to make *tokna, supā, charity*, etc., for him. The King was very much pleased with them and gave them a good reward.

The two brothers had not yet forgotten the loss of their dear *Bhengraj* bird at the hands of the Dhurwas, nor had they given up their determination to avenge it. With the money they got from the King in reward, they went to the North, and from there, they brought the forces of man-eating *Mongols*.

The man-eaters created havoc in the Nawalgarh-raj. The Dhurwas did not know what to do. They ran to the Kamara for help. When armed

Kamars came in large numbers to help them, the Dhurwas were inspired to fight the enemy. The jungle-folks organized themselves and, armed with their bows and arrows, *barchhi*, Ballam, etc, they began fighting the man-eaters.

The man-eaters were not very brave, but they were treacherous and cunning. Half the Munguls fought the Kamars, and the other half went in units to the Kamar settlements to eat their women and children; when a parrot brought the news of their wives and children's deaths, the fighting Kamars became desperate. They began fighting the enemy without any care for their lives.

In one of these battles, Singal Sah, the chief of the Dhurwas, was killed. His queen, Gangi Darwin, who was pregnant, was alone in the village. When she found the town surrounded by the enemy on all sides, she jumped from a high hill-top, intending to commit suicide. But destiny had something different in store for her. Like a flower, she fell on a rock; her body was not injured, not even slightly.

Mara Maijhi (Kamar) came to know about it and decided to rescue the queen and take her to a place of safety. He went to her and said, "O Queen, in your womb, you have the King of our land. Come with me. I will take you to someplace where you and your child will be safe."

Mara Maijhi took her to the Patna-raj and kept her in the house of a Brahmin. He then made a little wooden sword, and giving it to the queen; he said, "Take it, Queen mother. When our King is born, present it to him on my behalf."

The queen worked as a maidservant in the house of the Brahmin. One Day as she was taking out *Kachra* (rubbish) to throw it on the *ghurwa* (the place where dust and debris are thrown), she delivered a male child. The child was called Kachra Dhurwa.

In the Nawalgarh-Raj, at this time, the Kamars were desperately fighting the man-eaters. They gradually drove them away. On the Pairi river bank near Baraka, all the surviving man-eaters surrendered themselves to the Kamar. On the *dand-ghat*, the heads of all of them were cut-off. From that day, man-eaters do not cross the border of the Bindranawagarh-raj and never enter its territory.

Having killed all the *Mongols*, the Kamars went into the Dhamtari-raj to find wives for themselves as the wives and children of most of them had been eaten by the Mongols.

In Patna, Kachra slowly began to grow. He was the son of a King and had martial blood in his veins. As a child, he was very naughty.

When the women-folk went out to fetch water, he used to break their earthen pots with his *gullet*. When they took out brass vessels, he broke them with iron arrows.

The complaint reached the King of Patna. He summoned the boy to his court.

‘Who are you?’ asked the King.

‘He is the son of a poor woman,’ said Gangi Dhurwin, the queen. But the King knew that such an extraordinary boy could not be the son of an ordinary woman. He asked the same question again. When the question was put to him thrice, Kachina Dhurwa boldly came forward and said,

‘I am Kachra Dhurwa, son of the Dhurwa King of Nawalgarh’, ‘You will have to prove that,’ said the King.

On the seventh day, the King summoned Kachra Dhurwa to his court. He had kept a plantain tree in the middle of the court into which a thick iron rod had been inserted.

'If you are Kachra Dhurwa, cut through this plantain tree with one stroke of the sword,' said the King.

Kachra Dhurwa smiled. He took up the wooden sword made for him by Mara Maijhi (Kamar), and with only one stroke of it, he cut the tree into two pieces.

The King was very much pleased with Kachra Dhurwa and gave him the Kingdom of Bindranawagarh. "Here, Kachra Dhurwa lived and ruled for many years. He fought and won many battles, until at last he was killed by Bhilai Mata, with whose sister he fell in love. His headless body still lies in Dabha-Karachi while his head is in Nawalgarh."²¹

Interestingly enough, the official versions of the quasi-literary sources on the history of Chauhans have certain commonalities with that of the Kamar and the Gond. With its dense forest coverage and undulating hills, Western Odisha was home to the Kamar and the Gond tribals. One is assailed with pertinent questions such as why the Rajput Chauhans have origin narratives that have striking similarities with the tribals. The broader features of identical events/ incidents constituting the narratives could be projected as below:

The Chauhan

- i) A Pregnant queen takes shelter in West Odisha (All four versions attest it.)
- ii) One Brahmin gives her shelter.
- iii) She gives birth to a son.
- iv) Ramai Dev is groomed under the care of the Brahmin.
- v) He shows his physical power by killing a lioness
- vi) He became the King of Patna.

The Kamar/ The Dhur-Gond

- i) A pregnant queen takes shelter in West Odisha.
- ii) She is given shelter in the house of a Brahmin.
- iii) She gives birth to a son
- iv) Kachra Dhurwa/ Kachina Dhurwa shows his physical prowess by killing a goat made of iron/ cutting a plantain that had an iron rod inserted in it
- v) He became the King of Bindranawagarh

One notices in the canonized versions of the Chauhan are the legitimization of the Agnikula myth. In contrast, in the Kamar/ Gond oral narratives, one does not find such hinduised caste-centric mythification. From the palace-sponsored Sanskrit narratives to the oral narratives in the language of the tribal, one can mark the categories of myth-creation, and in the entire process of myth-reconstruction, motifs and symbols carry the markers of identity.

Reconstructing history out of the (Oral) ascendancy narratives is not only the acknowledged preoccupation of the practitioners of historiography but also of the folklorists who seek to locate the “myth-history interface or continuum” as Malinowski would have us believe. Regarding oral history, ‘scripting orality’ or ‘oral - scripting’ de-hegemonizes the idiosyncratic vision of history, but at the same time, ‘oral narrative’ can be employed, incorporated, textualized, and mutated to meet feudal agendas. Mythification serves as a deep-seated necessity. How does an origin narrative evolve through phases of mythifications is an exciting study in folkloristics. Malinowski writes:

“It is clear that myth functions especially where there is a sociological strain, such as in matters of a great difference in rank and power, matter of precedence and subordination, and unquestionably where profound historical changes have taken place.”²²

In 'Myth and Meaning', Levi-Strauss raises specific questions on the meaning of myth vis-à-vis history. He deals with pertinent questions like 'What is the difference between the conceptual organization of mythological thinking and that of history? Does the mythological telling of the story deal with historical facts; then transform them and use them in another way?' ²³

Levi-Strauss writes: " History has replaced mythology and fulfills the same function, that for societies without writing and without archives the aim of mythology is to ensure that as closely as possible complete closeness is impossible – the future will remain faithful to the present and the past. For us, however, the future should always be different, and evermore different, from the present, the same difference depending, of course, on our political preference. Nevertheless, the gap which exists in our mind to the same extent between mythology and history can probably be breached by studying histories which are conceived as not at all separated from but as a continuation of mythology". ²⁴

But what is of interest to the discipline of folkloristics is how under sociological strains, mythography takes shape in the folk's common destiny. In the Chauhan and Kamar /Gond's ascendancy narratives, the recurrent theme of how the founder, having been groomed and sheltered by a Brahmin, comes to power is the pointer to the sociological strain. The tribal rulers in the pre-Muslim period welcomed the Brahmins to their courts to obtain spiritual authority and Kshatriya status. The Brahmins who became the scribe cooked up mythologies and genealogical accounts to legitimize the feudal agenda, which benefited their socio-economic position. Written (Sanskritized) narratives were privileged over the oral narratives, and concocted myths were recreated into the grand mythology, which had much to do with caste mobility. In this context, the oral-written dichotomy regarding narrativization of history is key to understanding how mythologizing could be a factor in

identity-reconstruction. The origin narratives of the Chauhan (Rajput) and the Kamar (Tribal) are cases in point.

Endnotes

- 1) The concept of 'Oral-Scripting' is well developed through a collection of Prof. Esther Syiem's poems anthologized '*Oral-Scripting*' wherein one finds lyric elucidation scripting orality as opposed and complementary to canonization.
- 2) See J. P. Singh Deo: *Cultural Profile of South Kosala*, Delhi Gian Publicity House-1987, B.C. Majumdar: *The Chohan Ruler of Sonpur*, Calcutta 1925, Siba Prasad Das: *History of Sambalpur (Oriya)* Sambalpur-1962. S.C. Mallick: *Short History of Kosala (Oriya)* Bolangir 1931. J. K. Sahu: *Ancestry of Ramai Dev*. Sambalpur University Journal Vol. IV. 1971. N. K. Sahu, P.K. Mishra, and J.K. Sahu: *History of Odisha*, Nalanda 1980.
- 3) The Kamars of Odisha do not come under the Schedule Tribe Category in Odisha now, whereas their brethren in neighboring Chhatisgarh are reckoned to be an endangered tribe. It is due to the flawed demographic undertakings during the census.
- 4) See Ramila Thapar: "Ethics, Religion, and Social Protest in the First Millenium B.C. in Northern India" In *Dissent, Protest and Reform in Indian Civilization*. Ed. S.C. Malik. Single. IAS. 1977. P-115.
- 5) The Present Western Odisha had been known as Daksina Kosala, Mahakantaraka, Hirakhanda, Kaunri Patana, Patna Rajya and Sambalaka in ancient periods.
- 6) See F. Deo: *Roots of Poverty – A Social History*, Bhubaneswar, Amandeus Press. 2009. P-13
- 7) Gangadhar Mishra was a court-poet of Baliar Singh, the King of Sambalpur. "He belonged to the family of Sambhukara and Vidya

Kara, two renowned Smriti writers of Odisha. The Mishra family in Sambalpur is called Utkali Brahmana”, writes F. Deo in “Roots of Poverty – A Social History.”

- 8) Prahald Dube was also a court poet of Sarangarh darbar. Sarangarh was under Sambalpur. Dube’s preference for a language over Sanskrit is an attempt at emulating the Rajputana narratives such as ‘Prithviraj Vijaya’.
- 9) Rajendra Singh Bariha was himself the Zamindar of Borasambar-Padampur. He was a tribal Zamindar of the Bariha tribe. It is more of a genealogical account wherein the author gives a successions list of 34 generations. In *Kosalanda Kavya* and *Jaya Chandrika*, we do not find the role played by the tribe in establishing Ramai Dev as King.
- 10) Shibanarayan Deo is from the Chauhan ruling family of Khariar. He was younger brother of Raja Bir Bikram Deo, and a littérateur in Oriya and Kosali languages.
- 11) See J. K. Sahu: “Ancestry of Ramai Deo,” *Sambalpur University Journal*, Vol. IV December. P. 57.
- 12) F. Deo does not take the lioness literally, given the absence of the species in the region, and calls it “the symbol of chaos in the absence of a king in a kingdom.” See F. Deo, *Roots of Poverty – A Social History*.
- 13) The eight mullicks or military chiefs were of different castes and tribes. They included:- (1) Chakradhar Panigrahi (Brahmin), (2) Jhadua Keut (Fisherman) (3) Semli Keut (Fisherman) (4) Binjhal (Tribal) (5) Tanla Paik (Militia) (6) Gour (Milkman) and (7) Paik (Militia). A system of oligarchy prevailed in South Kosala (Western Odisha). Each of the mallick ruled for one day by turn.
- 14) T. Motte visited Sambalpur in 1776 C.E. His report, “A Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sambalpur in the Province of Odisha” was published in ‘*Asiatic Annual Register*, 1779. Mottle’s oral account has been dismissed by J. K. Sahu in most of his writings such as ‘Ancestry of Ramai Dev,’ *Sambalpur University*

- Journal*, Vol. IV. December 1971, wherein Sahu seems to have scant reliance on oral narratives.
- 15) Major H.B. Impey was the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur. His 'Notes on Gurhjat States of Patna' is based on the darbari literary sources. See it in *Odisha Historical Research Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, July 1958.
 - 16) See Charles Grant: *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of India*".
 - 17) See L. SS O' Malley: 'Bengal District Gazetteer: P.-21
 - 18) See R.V. Russell and Hira Lal: 'The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India' (1916). Macmillan and Co. London. (Reprint 2003) Low Price Publications Delhi. PP 323-324.
 - 19) See S. C. Dube: *The Kamar*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, P.-6
 - 20) S. C. Dube writes, "Kachna Dhurwa was not a Kamar; he was a Gond'. (P. 6). Dube collected the version from the Kamar community and also from the Gond. What is of interest to folkloristics is how 'Oral Origin Narrative' undergoes mutation given certain sociological strains. Elsewhere in the book (see page 14), he writes, "The Children of the Soil," who were once the 'Kings of the Jungle', are now degenerated and are gradually becoming human drudges". It is such marginalization that causes narratological mutations in the oral tradition. Therefore, Russell's interpretation is somewhat logically objective in the sense that 'the king of the jungle' has become Kachna/Kachra meaning thereby born out of the soil, whereas the court-bards such as Gangadhar Mishra and Prahallad Dube create mythologies to legitimize certain feudal agenda as regards Chauhan ascendancy narratives.
 - 21) *Ibid.* Pp. 158-161
 - 22) See Brawnislav Malinowski; *Myth in Primitive Society*. 1926, New York, W.W. Norton, and Co. P. 59.

- 23) See Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*. 1978 (Reprint 2006) Routledge Classics. Oxon P. IX.
- 24) *Ibid* Pp. 36-37.

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Folktales and Narrativization of Conceptual Structure with Examples From Death Lore

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
Odisha, India

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Introduction

History of folklore customarily begins with the coinage of the term 'folklore' in 1846 by William Thoms, who, in the name of Ambrose Merton, proposed the term to *The Athenaeum* in the place of Popular Antiquities and Popular Literature. However, folklore collection, including folklore application for various purposes, has a long history beyond two thousand years. When the term was proposed, William Thoms had the conception of folklore as 'manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, and so forth' (Thoms 1965:4). However, it has now emerged as a scientific field of inquiry with full-fledged theories, methodology, and academic definitions. Currently, approaching folklore has not been restricted to the fulfillment of a set of purposes, and, as different genres are already known for unfolding and unknitting of mysteries, in a similar way, not as an exaggeration of glorifying one's own field of inquiry, the folklore has emerged to the level of offering solutions

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for “everything.” However, this tall claim holds its foundations on two streams of developments: the first refers to the systematic explorations on the role and functions of folklore either by folklorists or by scholars from the other disciplinary boundaries intersecting disciplinary possibilities, and the second stream highlights the nature of human society being engulfed and entangled in the web of crises that need to be addressed on the priority. The shift from the age-old stereotypical questions, such as “what is folklore?” and “what does a folklorist do?” (Dorson 1972: ix), to the appropriation of folklore in every field of studies could be seen as a “folkloristic turn.” While the “folkloristic turn” also inclines to accommodate those studies that identify the elements that reflect the folk knowledge systems of the community for meeting the larger goal set by their respective disciplines, it is still necessary, on the other hand, to deal with the core field of folklore. There is an extensive list of folklore items that are grouped under the four broader categories of folklore such as oral traditions, material culture, performing arts, and social customs and beliefs, and many of the items can also be seen having divisions and sub-divisions.

Functionally, each of the folklore items has been assigned with a task and/ or created for fulfilling a certain purpose, in the words of Sokolov, “... an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present.” (quoted in Dorson 1972:17) This understanding made in folklore ‘to its place alongside literature, music, and the arts as a controlled expression of proletarian ideals.’ In the case of children of Yorkshire, as William Thoms points out, the invocation song, ‘Cuckoo, Cherry-tree, / Come down and tell me / How many years I have to live’ playfully reflects ‘the prophetic attributes’ that is, “[w]hen each child then shook the tree, - and the number of cherries which fell betokened the years of its future life.” (Thoms 1965: 5-6) Thus, the functional approach to folklore can explore a new way of looking at the materials from the chosen perspectives. It can also demonstrate the origin and

distribution along with the socio-cultural dimension of the item. More importantly, the developments in the field of folklore and, or other cognate disciplines could also explore the new dimension of the folk form, particularly from the functional point of view. In this study, the cognitive function of folktales 'having died' as a motif or theme, thus fall under the category of 'death lore', is explored to understand the folktales function through its narrative structure. Further, folktales also narrativize the concept for the purpose communication, transmission, and preservation. By citing folk narrative scholars, Linda Dégh asks few questions, which need to be remembered here: "What is the message of folktales? What are the forces that create, launch, disseminate, maintain, vary, corrupt, and reinforce them? What do they mean to their performers and their audiences?" (1972: 54). This article attempts to provide a cognitive perspective following in the footsteps of devoted and dedicated folklorists through their intensive collections and methodical classification and analysis.

Oral Narratives: On the folktale tradition, Linda Dégh points out that "the impulse to tell a story and the need to listen to it have made narrative the natural companion of man throughout the history of civilization." (1972: 53) Narration denotes the act of presentation or description of an event, either in chronological or non-chronological order. The ability to produce and understand a narrative structure could have contributed to creating various forms of narratives. The development of language and the development of media have played a significant role in constructing and shaping "realities" conditioned by narratives. Thus, narratives could be seen as reflecting the dichotomy of a relationship on the temporal lines that being considered as the relics of the past, it is celebrated for having relevance for the present and future generations. However, each of the narrative forms' structural frameworks are constant with open-endedness for accommodating any content, added spontaneously and out of creativeness. The

advantage of the oral narratives is that an unlimited number of versions and variations could be seen from their oral existence. The oral existence of narratives helps both the narrators and audiences maximize their language creativity and imaginations. Significantly, by taking or borrowing the abstractions from every reality, they construct or reproduce them as a narrative reality that has a foundation on imaginary constructs. Similarly, the variable is a characteristic feature of the orality. While some forms have different content with different functions within a single folktale and simultaneously, there are accidental similarities of many of the themes of different forms of different folktales. Other salient features of the oral narratives are: subject to changes; adjustable to cultures; sensitive to groups and individuals; inconsistency due to popularity; no 'final' form; become stiff and froze when not told; acceptability in another medium; ready for transformation and change; reflects the narrators' language proficiency, experience, and imagination; etc. (Dégh, 1972:59-60).

Folktales: Among the oral narratives, the folktale genre is a highly simplified and necessary form, and it is found in all societies across the world. While the form is universal, it takes diversified contents. The simple and straightforward method of story-telling could be considered the elementary form of narration that makes it suitable for children who can comprehend the less-complex structure of narrative. Indeed, the form creates an impression that it is primarily meant for entertaining children, with secondary purposes. Nevertheless, to pay careful attention to the folktale genre's structure and function, the important cognitive role it is playing for children could be realized. In this context, the entertainment aspect of the folktale must be seen to get acceptability from the children, who have to be informed about the moral values and ethical principles of the society. That is to say that the obligation and responsibility of nurturing children with moral and ethical values, without giving burden to their less developed brain, folktales are taking

the mask of entertainment. The exciting aspect of the folktale genre is that the universal form carries the culturally specific contents – including narrator specific socio-cultural and linguistic elements. In the actual storytelling events, which involve culturally identified, recognized, and efficient storytellers, one could reflect local elements as the characters, settings, events, and other narrative elements (Ramakrishnan, 1994). The shift from universal to cultural and vice versa could be reflected in the discussion on universal grammar. Similarly, the universal narrative grammar with cultural-specific expressions could be understood in the shift. As it is revealed in the works of Propp (1968) and Greimas (1983, 1987) and while the former proposed a set of thirty-one functions within which any folktale can operate, the latter worked on the narrative grammar including the potential models (with six actants and three axes – the axis of power, the axis of desire and the axis of transmission) for understanding narrative and non-narrative texts.

The folktales are often taken lightly, and the characters that appear in the folktales do not reflect any complexity and their deeds are easy for comprehension, even for children. However, there are instances to show that some of the complex issues or concepts are being dealt with by a simple narrative framework which is consisting of three parts such as beginning, middle, climax or end. The trajectory of the narrative events in folktales can be compared with that of complex emotion, a move from equilibrium to disequilibrium to the regaining of the equilibrium. (Ramakrishnan, 2002) Its explicit presence could be seen as the beginning of the folklore that promises to be exciting and moves forward to end with a happy ending. While the beginning of the story-telling could be seen as the presence of equilibrium of emotion or mood, but the happy end does not mean the regaining of the equilibrium but the implications of the narrative. The disturbances in the equilibrium could be seen as the universal nature of folktales, but socio-culturally specific contents fill them. The storytellers play a significant role in bringing

their social realities into the tales to entice the audience by personalizing the story to reflect their consciousness. For example, the storyteller Karusamuthu of Uremelalagian in her narration had repeatedly used “like us’ to refer to the status of poor and picked up characters’ names from the audience (Ramakrishnan 1994). Linda Dégh says that “Personal intrusions by the teller form a third formulaic bridge between the reality of the performance scene and the fantasy of the told narrative. He [story teller] interjects comments at turning points of the story, announces and highlights thrilling episodes, and makes smart allusions to the rewards he deserves, all in the tradition of medieval court entertainers” (1972: 61).

With the emergence of narratology as a separate branch of the study of literary narratives, the role of folk narratives in modern life has been highlighted. Thus, this includes the introduction of narrators as characters and part of the narrative, repetition, foretelling, inducting supernatural elements for the sake of meeting the narrative demand, such as heroism, villainy, false hero, the accomplishment of impossible tasks, animals and anthropomorphic elements speak human language, magico-realism, self-degrading technique, a combination of different forms, etc. But it is to be noted that while the narrative is part of everyday life and it is the life-line for narrative as a form, that is, the former is the description of events while the latter is the presentation of a story. The folktale as a narrative form, can be seen in different types. Among the folk tale types, etiological tales occupy an important segment within the oral tradition and the purpose of telling or sharing the tales could be seen not as amusement but for fulfilling sociological and cultural aspirations of the people.

The word, etiological, is derived from the Late Latin and Geek word, *aetiologia*, and it is used to mean the process of description or explanation of the things for their present condition, that is, how things came to be. Thus, the etiological tales are known as the tales of ‘cause’

description or the explanation of occurrences in the world or 'striking natural phenomena, unusual geological formations, and the nature of plants and animals closely observed by man' for example, why the squirrels have lines on their back. Apart from the tales, the etiological contents can also be found in myths, legends, and sometimes in folk beliefs. Because of the social and cultural values or attributes associated with the etiological narratives, they are treated seriously by both the narrators and audiences. As Linda Dégh mentions that "this material is usually considered as folk-wisdom accumulated by oral transmission through many generations." (1972: 76) Though not confused with the belief tales in terms of content, the etiological tales help the people relieve themselves of certain anxieties, manage supernatural beings and cope with death or any kind of loss. However, this study focuses particularly on the etiological tales that deal with death's concept or notion. Having motif on death, these tales have been put under the popular group known as 'death lore' – broad enough to accommodate all types of folklore on death. Further, for convenience, among other items, this study pays attention to the folktales that are available in print as well as online. Before looking at the nature of death lore, a brief note on the functional approach needs to be given.

Functional Approach and Folklore: An interesting aspect of folklore lies in the fact that it is (over)loaded with multiple definitions. Each one of them promises to offer a new perspective and dimension to understand folklore material - thus making each one as irreplaceable. The twenty-one definitions of folklore can be found in Maria Leach's *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Folklore* (1949, 1950), but with the developments in various fields of study in humanities and social sciences, and also with the growing demand for trans-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary explorations on the socio-cultural life: it could be seen as contributory in understanding the nature, function and the relevance of folklore. And,

it reflects the fact that the folklore materials have been approached by the scholars from various fields of study, which could mount pressure on folklorists to rethink the existing definitions and keep them updated. However, unlike the earlier attempts at defining folklore in segments, the definitions that offer a unified and holistic way for accommodating all forms of folklore must be encouraged. The developments in the theories of culture could minimize the task of identifying the appropriate definitions. For instance, William Bascom mentions that 'folklore, to the anthropologist is a part of culture but not the whole of culture' (Bascom 1953) and many definitions proposed earlier had to encounter the dichotomy of relationships such as rural and urban, illiterate and literate; civilized and uncivilized, traditional and modern great tradition and little tradition, etc. The need for overcoming the conceptual division between these dichotomies is visible in the words of Francis Lee Utley who says that "[c]ertainly there is contact between the two traditions of the dominant society and the various varieties of "folk," but folklorists cannot abandon the field of traditional morals, cosmology, and aesthetics wholly to the "little traditions." This would be to identify ourselves romantically with our subject matter and to reject our debt to the written culture which has provided us with the techniques by which we study folklore itself." (1961:195) In the case of texts used in this study, for instance, they show the interaction between folklore and different media, that is, the shift from the orality to other forms of presentations.

In continuation of the discussion, scholars, who had shown great interest in culture, came up with different theories, and some of them are noteworthy. For instance, the theory that has seen culture as an adaptive system had the following components: (a) Cultures are systems (of socially transmitted behaviour patterns) that relate human communities to their ecological settings. These ways-of-life-of-communities include technologies and modes of economic organization, settlement patterns, modes of social grouping and political organization, religious beliefs and

practices, and so on; (b) Cultural change is primarily a process of adaptation and what amount to natural selection; (c) Technology, subsistence economy, and elements of the social organization directly tied to production are the most adaptively central realms of culture. It is in these realms that adaptive changes usually begin and from which they usually ramify; and (d) The ideational components of cultural systems may have adaptive consequences in controlling the population, contributing to subsistence, maintaining the ecosystem, etc.. These, though often subtle, must be carefully traced out wherever they lead (Keesing 1974: 74-77). However, those who had proposed cultures as ideational systems had been seen in three approaches: culture as a cognitive system; culture as a structural system; and culture as a symbolic system. Treating culture as a cognitive system could be useful not only to accommodate all the definitions of folklore but also to validate their relevance even for the modern life.

Culture as a cognitive system is well articulated in the definition given by Ward Goodenough (1957: 167. Quoted in Keesing 1974: 77) :“A society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them. It further clarifies that “Culture... consists of standards for deciding what is,.. .for deciding what can be, ...for deciding what one feels about it... “or deciding what to do about it, and ...for deciding how to go about doing it (Goodenough, 1961:522. Quoted in Keesing 1974: 77). But the approach that viewed culture as a structural system could be understood from the works of Levi-Strauss (as quoted in Keesig 1974:78-79), who viewed cultures as the “cumulative creations of mind” and “the physical world humans live in provides the raw materials universal processes of mind

elaborate into substantively diverse but formally similar patterns. The mind imposes culturally patterned order, the logic of binary contrast, of relations, and transformations, on a continuously changing and often random world". Finally, the third approach within the ideational theories considers cultures as symbolic systems; that is, the culture is seen as the shared symbols and meanings. Clifford Geertz (as quoted in Keesing 1974: 79) "finds these [ethnographic] particularities in the richness of real people in real life..." and for him, the "texts are not disembodied and decontextualized myths or customs, but humans engaging in symbolic action." Further, David Schneider's (Schneider 1972: 38. Quoted in Keesing 1974: 81) conception of culture is worth mentioning here as it adds a normative aspect to the definition that says that "By symbols and meanings I mean the basic premises which a culture posits for life: what its units consist in; how those units are defined and differentiated; how they form an integrated order or classification; how the world is structured; in what parts it consists and on what premises it is conceived to exist, the categories and classifications of the various domains of the world of man and how they relate one with another, and the world that man sees himself living in."

Irrespective of nature of the research framework, it is the obligatory question the folklorists used to ask for contemplating an appropriate answer on the role of folklore in a given culture. (Dorson 1972: 20) Does it seem logical to have anticipation of answering from the nonliterate societies on the function of the material they possess or disseminate in their cultures? Dorson recalls the contribution of Ruth Benedict, then editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* (1935), who propounded the functional use of folklore in her *Zuñi Mythology*, claimed that "the tribal narratives mirrored the ethnography of the culture." (Dorson 1972: 21) Further, she noted that "folklore often violated the cultural norms as a means of gratifying fantasies and expressing the hostilities of the culture-bound" (ibid). It highlights that understanding

folklore's role in a given society is not an easy task; that is, it requires an in-depth study guided by more than one research tool. The paradox is that the society in which the folklore is manifested does not necessarily have to answer the role of those items disseminated in the given time. Whatever is reflected in particular society's folklore is not necessarily the reflection of society's social realities. Instead, it could manifest the unconscious violation or suppression or transformed expression of socially conditioned realities. Many of the Black American folklore that construct blacks as dominant, violent, longing for white women, violators, etc., must be seen in the light of their many hundred years of slavery, suffering, humiliation and inhuman treatment by the dominant whites. (Dance 1978) Thus, to know about folklore's role, there must be a change in the folklore's traditional perspective. At least, some of the definitions must be seen. One of such definitions comes from William Bascom (as quoted in Dorson 1972: 21), who called folklore as 'verbal arts', understand folklore as 'the creative compositions of a functioning society, dynamic not static, integrated not isolated, central not peripheral components of the culture.'

The folklore function can be fully comprehended when there are enough details on the context in which the folklore items exist. So the functional approach to folklore could be best applied to those texts that have been collected in the 'natural' context. However, the functional approach gives a broader scope to see that many of the folk forms having associated with a fixed set of functions, and here, contextual detail is essential to understand, by whom and for whom the form is used. Thus, the cultural functioning of universal form may be unearthed when integrated fieldwork is carried out; and it helps to identify specific cultural uniqueness of function amidst the universality of forms. Conventionally, some of the forms are uniformly known for certain functions, for example, while proverbs are used for settling legal decisions, criticize, warn and advice and also to request; the satirical

songs are to release pent-up hostilities; myth narratives for validation; mythical and fictional tales are used for providing solutions and suggestions; etc. (cf. Bascom 1926, Dégh 1969, Bogatyrev 1962, Oring 1976, Dorson 1972). It is apt to quote Alan Dundes who, in his seminal essay "Folklore as a Mirror of Culture" (2007), says that "In order to understand and utilize folklore more fully, one must have some idea of the functions of folklore. Folklore reflects (and thereby reinforces) the value configurations of the folk, but at the same time folklore provides a sanctioned form of escape from these very same values." (as quoted in Bronner 2007: 59) The symbolic functions are also part of different folk forms, and they can help us understand the world and the human conditions expressed in terms of symbolic elements. As far as symbolism in folklore is concerned, it needs a lengthy discussion, but it is given here in the words of Alan Dundes who says that "folklore is one way for both adults and children to deal with the crucial problems in their lives. If our folklore sometimes deals with sexuality and the interrelationships between family members, this is a problem area in our daily lives. We know that folklore in all cultures tends to cluster around the critical points in the life cycle of the individual (e.g., birth, initiation, marriage, death) and the calendrical cycle of the community (e.g., sowing, harvesting, etc.)" (ibid.: 64) But this study attempts to go beyond to see another dimension of the function of the death lore.

Death lore - folktales

Death is inseparable from human beings' socio-cultural, literary and spiritual lives. Equally, it has occupied an important place in philosophical traditions worldwide. For example, the stoic philosopher, Epictetus, in *The Encheiridion* (1983), insisted on the need for 'keeping death and dying in one's consciousness.' And regarding death, each one of us, irrespective of any sort of gradation and level of occupancy, has an idea of death; a model of death and to extreme, a wish of how to die. The idea one has about death, whether scientific or philosophical or

commonsensical can be seen as a model/framework of reference on death. For instance, Epictetus says that “Did your child die? It was given back. Did your wife die? She was given back. How does the way the giver asked for it back concern you? As long as he gives it, take care of it as something that is not your own, just as the travelers treat an inn.” (quoted in James Sexton 1997: 334) The statement given by Epictetus offers more than one metaphorical expression, to be discussed later, in the way of describing the process of death. Before anyone get closer to the understanding of death, they tend to realize that death becomes a critical issue and the dialogue needs to be stopped thinking that it requires personal and cultural understanding. Another metaphorical expression found in Dr. Kubler-Ross’s comments that “in a society where death is regarded as a taboo, discussion of it is regarded as morbid, and children are excluded with the presumption and pretext that it would be ‘too much’ for them.” (1969: 6, quoted in James Sexton 1997: 335) Death is not just a death because it is associated with customs, sentiments, beliefs, anecdotes (personal and cultural experiences), stories, myths, songs, proverbs, material cultures, performances, a set of behavioral patterns, etc., but it is also a major component of language use, that is, it produces a number of metaphorical and metonymical expressions. For example, in the Ho community of Jharkhand, when someone enquires of a person without knowing about his/her death, instead of hurting the person’s feelings by telling directly about the death of the person, the members of family or community use the proverb, *Bulung bepar te seno yana* (in Ho) (*Namak beyaper kare gya hai* – in Hindi) that is, the person has gone away to sell salt. (Seema Banra, 2018: 42). Indeed, death is undeniably a universal phenomenon and it is mysterious too. It occurs to persons by overcoming the so-called cultural boundaries or beyond any social factors. While birth does fill the heart with completeness and add an element to the family or community as a whole, the death creates emptiness or vacuum by the absence or disappearance of the member. The sudden loss or

disappearance, not to be seen forever, could have been the reason for the accumulation of fear over death that has moved human beings to have its reflection in every stage of their socio-cultural, literary, spiritual life. It is an unanswered question: Is it the death that impelled humans to develop such a complex emotion? Bertram Puckle says that “fear of the dead is the origin of almost every funeral custom which has come down to us today; from the pomp of the procession to the laudatory epitaph on the tombstone, to propitiate the acute sensibility of the departed.” (1926: 173, quoted in Untiedt 2009: 4)

Both traditional and modern societies are not free from the lore and customs associated with the death, which is thus considered a leveller or balancer of human disparities. Nevertheless, many religious systems proffer philosophical outlook by convincing their members that death is not the end but the beginning of new life. When the curiosity is the common factor for the creation of death lore, but the cultural uniqueness that has made distinctions in content among the cultures, that enables scholars to have a number of comparative studies on the death-related lore. Like birth, death also reminds us that humans are both universal as well culturally and individually unique – it is the reason why we possess more lore on death – to grieve; mourn; relief; protest; and celebrate. The modern man can treat many of the death lore under the category of superstitions. Still, they need to be studied for understanding the logics and the combination of associated ideas. However, modern science has also made us believe that death is inevitable and inescapable, and it also offers a more scientific way of prediction and ‘death warnings.’ Community’s role is inevitable in the ideas associated with death, and that include the following: the nature of death, warnings of death, signs and indicators of death, natural and unnatural death, good and bad death, defying and confronting death, overcoming attempts at death, Lord of death, purification of a corpse, burial procedures, beliefs related to the corpse, the spirit of the person,

the life of spirit after the cremation, people related to rituals, ghosts, nights, etc. And, irrespective of changes in the society due to modernization, our strong beliefs associated with death have played a significant role in retaining the death lore unchanged. That is, the fear of death has not ceased with the development of science and technology, instead the fear is complicated, paving the way for the contemporary folklorists to collect and study the death lore.

The beliefs associated with death could be studied with rituals, customs, performances, material cultures, and oral traditions. However, some of the folktales that deal with death elements have been taken up here for further discussion.

Tale 1: The Lord of Death (Steel: 1894: 207-210)

There was a road, and everyone who travelled along it died. Some said they were killed by a snake, others said by a scorpion, but certain it is they all died. A very old man travelling along the road, being tired, sat down on a stone to rest. Suddenly, there appeared a scorpion beside him, and it was as big as a cock. Then the scorpion changed into a horrible snake and started gliding away. The older man followed the snake with curiosity. The snake sped on day and night and the old man followed it as a shadow. Once the snake went into an inn, and killed several travellers; another time it slid into the King's house and killed him, went to the Queen's palace and killed the King's youngest daughter. So it passed on. Wherever it went the sound of weeping and wailing arose. Suddenly, the road became a deep river. On the banks were some poor travellers who longed to cross over, but had no money for ferry. The snake turned into a beautiful buffalo with a brass necklace and bells around its neck and came to the stream and showed as if it wanted to go to the other side. The poor traveller climbed on its back and the buffalo swayed away with them bravely. When it reached the middle of the river, it dropped all and all were drowned. On the other

side, the buffalo turned into an ox. The older man was also there as a shadow. Struck with covetousness, the peasant lured the ox to his home. In the dead night, it turned into a snake and killed all the flocks and herds, and sleeping, folks. Moreover, the snake crept away, and the old man followed it as a shadow. Then it came to another river and turned into a beautiful young girl, fair to see and covered with costly jewels. Two soldiers – brothers came by.

Seeing them approaching her, she cried bitterly. When they asked her the matter, she replied them her husband drowned in the river and had no one to look after her. Moreover, enamoured by her beauty, the elder brother promised marriage to her. Agreed with the proposal, she asked the elder brother to get water from the river. Then she provoked the younger brother by telling him that she intended to marry him. However, when he refused citing his loyalty to his brother, she started to cry. The elder brother arrived by the time and enquired about matter. She told the elder brother that his younger brother wanted her to fly with him and leave him. On this, the elder brother became angry and both the brothers fought bitterly with swords until they lay dead on the field. Now the girl turned into a snake once more and the older man followed her. After some time, the snake changed into an older man with white-beard. The man who followed as a shadow now caught the old man with white-beard and asked him “who and what were you?” He answered “some call me the Lord of Death, because I go about and bring death to the world.” “Give me death! I have followed you far, silent as a shadow, and I am weary” the other man pleaded. “Not so! I only give death to those whose years are full, and you have sixty years of life to come!” the Lord of Death said and then vanished.

Tale 2: The Fate (Bompas 2010)

Once there was a childless couple. The couple met a Sadhu and he blessed them with a child. Though the parents were very happy but

saddened by the condition given by the Sadhu that boy would be killed by a tiger living in the nearby forest when he attain the age of twenty. Twenty years – a long period and things might change – thought the couple. They provided training in all the martial arts, archery, swords fighting, etc. However, 20 years was not long period. But the boy was confident and courageous to meet any dangers. On the arrival of twentieth year the boy wanted to go to his aunt's house which was on the other side of the forest. Since he was prepared to go to his aunt's house through the forest and he carried sword, bow and arrow, other weapons. With full preparation he entered into the forest. After some distance he crossed, he could see the tiger coming. He understood that it was the one by which his life would be decided. He quickly climbed on a tree and kept his bow and arrow ready. The tiger came and looked above and made a big sound. Waited for the tiger, he released the arrow and the arrow killed the tiger. With the thundering sound the tiger fell on the ground mouth wide open. He came down from the tree and kicked the tiger in its mouth and said this is the tiger going to kill me! He started walking through the forest with the excitement over the defeat of his fate. But the moment he reached his aunt's house he fell down and died. When he kicked the tiger in its mouth, the teeth made a strong wound on his feet. While walking he failed to notice the bleeding.

Tale 3. No one wants to die (Ashliman 1997-2013)

An old woodcutter, too weary of picking up his load of sticks, exclaimed: "I wish that Death would take me!" Even as he spoke, Death appeared, but seeing him, the old man changed his mind. Now his only request was: "Would you help me lift this load to my shoulders?"

Tale 4: Death's approach should surprise no one (Ashliman. 1997-2013).

Death promised a man that he would not take him without first sending messengers. The man's youth soon passed and he became miserable.

One day Death arrived, but the man refused to follow him, because the promised messengers had not yet appeared. Death responded: "Have you not been sick? Have you not experienced dizziness, ringing in your ears, toothache, and blurred vision? These were my messengers." The man, at last recognizing the truth, quietly yielded and went away.

Tale 5: Attempts to trick death (Ashliman. 1997-2013)

A poor man with a large family could find no one to be godfather for his latest son. Finally, Death appeared, and the poor man chose him, saying: "You make no distinction between high and low." Years later, on the godson's wedding night, Death called him from his bed and took him to a cave where countless candles were burning. "Whose light is that?" asked the godson, pointing to a candle that was flickering out. "Your own," answered the godfather. The godson pleaded with Death to put a new candle in his holder, but the godfather did not answer. The light flickered and went out and the godson fell dead. We find from this that you can neither persuade nor cheat Death.

Tale 6: Why older people are no longer put to death (Ashliman 1997-2013).

Once it was so on earth that the older people were killed. When a person got old, they take him and kill him. "He is old," they say, "what good is he? Why should we feed him bread for nothing?" However, one son had pity on his father and instead of killing him, as required by law, he hid him in the cellar and continued to feed him. A famine came to the land and the people ate all the stored grain, even that which had been set aside for seed. The old father, seeing a great need, told the son to thresh the straw from their roof and to plant the seed thus gleaned. The son did as he was advised, and the seed grew immediately, miraculously yielding a quick and bountiful harvest. Everyone saw that it was the old man's wisdom and God's blessing that brought the

unexpected crop, and from that time forth, people have been allowed to die their death.

Tale 7: Death as a divine release (Ashliman 1997-2013)

Once there was a poor woman with two children. The youngest one had to go into the forest every day to find wood. Once a little child helped him gather the wood, carried it to the house, and then disappeared. The child told his mother about the helper, but she didn't believe him. One day the helper child brought a rose and told the child that when the rose was in full blossom he would come again. The mother put the rose into some water. One morning the child did not get up; the mother went to his bed and found him lying there dead. On that same morning the rose came into full blossom.

Tale 8: The voice of Death (Romanian Folktale - *The Titi Tudorancea Bulletin*)

A man prayed to God to grant him riches. Finally, the Lord listened to them. When the man had grown rich, he did not want to die, so he resolved to go from country to country and settle wherever he heard that the people lived forever. He arrived in a land where the inhabitants said they did not know what dying meant. The traveller asked: "But are there not immense crowds of people here, if none of you die?" They replied: "No, there are no immense crowds, for you see, now and then somebody comes and calls one after another, and whoever follows him, never returns." The traveller asked them "And do people see the person who calls them?" They answered: "Why shouldn't they see him?" He had therefore firmly resolved that neither he nor his family would ever follow anybody who called them, no matter who it might be. They spent several years without any problem. But one day, his wife suddenly began to shout: "I'm coming, I'm coming!" And she looked around the room for her fur jacket. Her husband instantly started up, seized her by the hand, and began to reproach her: "So you don't heed my advice?"

Stay here, if you don't want to die." She shouted: "Don't you hear how he is calling me? I'll only see what he wants and come back at once. Let me alone, husband, I don't care about going now." Again she said loudly: "I'm coming, I'm coming." When he could see her no longer, the husband collected his senses, went back to the house. Years passed and the peace of the man's household was not disturbed again.

But at last one morning, when he went to his barber's, as usual, to be shaved, just as he had the soap on his chin, and the shop was full of people, he began to shout: "I won't come, do you hear, I won't come!" The barber and his customers all stared in amazement. The man, looking toward the door, said again: "Take notice, once for all, that I won't come, and go away from there." Afterwards, he cried: "Go away, do you hear, if you want to get off with a whole skin, for I tell you a thousand times I won't come." Then, as if someone was standing at the door constantly calling him, he grew angry and raved at the person for not leaving him in peace. At last, he snatched the razor from the barber's hand, shouted: "Give it to me, that I may show him what it is to annoy people continually." And he ran at full speed after the person who, he said, was calling him, but whom nobody else could see. The poor barber, who did not want to lose his razor, followed. The man ran, the barber pursued, till they passed beyond the city limits, and, just outside of the town, the man fell into a chasm from which he did not come out again, so he also, like all the rest, followed the voice that called him. Now the barber told everybody what had happened. So the belief spread through the country that the people, who had gone away and not returned, had fallen into that gulf.

Tale 9: Godfather Death from Germany (Ashliman 1998-2013)

An old man who already had twelve children got the thirteenth one. Good God appeared to help him to take care of the child. But the old man refused by saying the Good God gives to rich and starves the poor. Then, appeared the Death and wanted to be the godfather and make him a doctor. The old man was satisfied with Death because it

never made any distinction between rich and poor. So the child was baptized on the next day and Death promised to make the child a doctor in future. After the child grew up, Death made the child Doctor and gave the power to cure any sick person in the instructed way. If death is at the head of the sick person, he can anoint the foot of the person who will be cured immediately. If death is at the foot of the sick person, death will take sick person with him, and he must avoid curing. On some occasions the doctor deceived Death. Once it happened when the King's daughter was ill. But Death was at the foot of the princess. Astonished at her beauty, he defied Death's warning and cured her. When he returned home, Death took the doctor to an underground cavern where many thousand lights were burning. Death said "Here is a light that will burn only a little longer, and then go out. This is your life! Take heed!"

Tale 10: In a similar story from Austria (Ashliman 1998-2013)

Dr. Urssenbeck who deceived Death got the wrath of it suddenly found himself in a large room where thousands of candles were burning. Death said to him, "Each of these candles represents someone's life. This tiny stump that is about to go out is yours." Terrified, Dr. Urssenbeck reached for a taller candle, wanting to take some wax from it to replenish his stump, but in so doing he touched his own candle, and it went out, and he fell to the floor dead.

Tale 11: The Boy with the Ale Keg from Norway. (Ashliman 1998-2013)

A boy got a keg of Yule-ale as his pay and he carried it home. On the way, the keg became heavier and heavier. The boy looked for the way to lighten keg, and for that he wanted someone to drink with him. The Lord from Heaven appeared in front of the boy and wanted to have a drink with him. But the boy refused by saying that the Lord of heaven made a distinction between rich and poor and divide rights unevenly. Then he started walking with the keg, which was again growing further.

After some distance, the Devil wanted to have a drink with the boy, but he refused by saying that he tormented and plagued poor folk only. Finally, Death appeared and wanted to drink with the boy. The boy agreed because Death used to treat all alike, both rich and poor. Finally, they decided to drink together and drink to each other's health. Then boy was rewarded with the power of curing with the warning of not defying Death's condition. He became famous for curing people. Finally he had to deceive Death's order because of a King's daughter's illness. The furious Death wanted to end the boy's life. But the boy wanted time to read the Lord's Prayer. Though Death agreed to give the boy time to read the text, the boy read other things not the Lord's Prayer. The boy managed to escape from Death by not reading the Lord's Prayer. Since the boy's time was up, Death was worried about the delay. One night, Death went to the boy's house and put up a large tablet with the Lord's Prayer painted on it. When the boy woke up, and began to read the tablet. Without realizing it, the boy finished the last line and it was too late for him and Death had him.

Conceptual structures and folktales

The folktales presented here are to be seen for having a function that is beyond the level of amusement and entertainment, and the simple form of folktale designated as suitable for children has to be understood as it is having some inevitable role to the humanity. The human society that constantly involves in the pursuit of knowledge is guided by a set of epistemological frameworks, other than the one provided by the scientific paradigm, that is having a trailing of experiences of the past generations. The epistemological continuity of human experience has continuously been achieved through telling and retelling facilitated mainly by the creative forms of oral and literary traditions.

The experience that humanity is having with birth and death is pervasive and constant in different times and societies. Unlike birth, the death is often kept in the realm of the forbidden category with a lot of euphemism

about it. Though it is fearsome and scary, it is most wanted, in philosophical and spiritual sense, by mankind. James Sexton (1997:338) gives Socrates' address regarding the fear of death as found in Plato's *Apology*: "To fear death, my friends, is only to think ourselves wise, without being wise: for it is to think that we know what we do not know. For anything that men can tell, death may be the greatest good that can happen to them: but they fear it as if they knew quite well that it was the greatest of evils. And what is this but that shameful ignorance of thinking that we know what we do not know?" While fear has forced mankind to forbid death, but on the other hand, it has produced more and more euphemistic reflections on the subject. Thus, the euphemism is the way, not as a response, that mankind made a lot of constructions of death that can be discussed in the public, consumed as a commodity and shared as the knowledge and transmitted as information. However, all the euphemistic reflections such as jokes, anecdotes, tales, proverbs, myths, crafts, customary practices, etc., could be seen as the facilitators of conceptual structures that play a vital role in the construction and conceptualization of death in everyday life. To put it another way, the reluctance to handle the subject of death in everyday communicative situations is overcome by the culturally designed mechanisms that include euphemistic reflections and figurative language use. However, the subject of death is conceptualized in folklore and cultural expressions with the help of conceptual metaphors which attribute the cognitive value of folklore, figurative language and paralinguistic elements. Despite the fact that there are works on the metaphorical conceptualization of mortality (Arrese 1996, Sexton 1997, Bultnick 1998, Fernandez 2006), this study proceeds further in delineating the role and function of narrativization of the attributes of death.

The folktales on death given here present a narrative structure that represents a universal pattern of trajectory with which some of the events are arranged in chronological order with conceptual ascension

towards the fulfilment of the task. The structure of a folktale must be seen either as a cognitive model that has to be filled with the contents in the ways conditioned by the model in order to be meaningful or as a locutionary act. The linguistic elements are arranged on syntactic relationship to be carried away in the wave of narrative structure. Both linear and chronological ascending orders produce conceptual clarity and precision in conveying the message that is assembled through the participation of various elements of significance. The forbidden notion of death is the subject of narration and also to be narrated to children. Here the dichotomy is that if the natural death is the matter of old age, then why do the children at the early age of childhood have to acquire some kind of knowledge about death, or is it a way to get away from the innate fear or is it to develop a kind of familiarity with death? However, there is no doubt that death, not to mean the process of dying, is a cultural construct and the notion or concept of death must be learnt by each and every one as members of a society.

The tales presented here are gathered randomly from various print and online sources and also from different countries so that the notion of death could be comprehended. The twelve propositions that can be compiled (given elsewhere) from the different tales collectively represent the subject of death for mankind. Despite the fact that the narrative form is universal, the cultural experiences of people facilitate the construction of the notion of death as universal expression. The complementary relationship between the conceptual structure and narrative structure could be seen from the constituent elements of both structures. The narrative structure, being universal and guided by universal narrative grammar, is filled with the local elements that make the narratives specific to certain culture but keeping the message universally agreeable. Use of buffalo, ox, orphaned beautiful girl, the loyal younger brother, keg of Yule-ale, baptisms, candle, have to be seen in the context of local culture. Some of the elements in the second tale,

the childlessness, blessed by a sadhu, forest, tiger, martial art, archery, use of bow and arrow for attacking the tiger are drawn from the tribal settings. The third tale is the reflection of the biblical moral and it is to insist the point that no one wants to die, but their burden needs to be shared. However, the stories progress towards constructing the message, which has universal value and acceptance, the form minimizes the usage of elements that are too specific to particular culture. In all the tales presented here, the death is mediated through various narrative elements, such as snake, buffalo, ox, beautiful girl, tiger, etc., and similarly, they have used both lamp and rose to symbolize life.

Conceptual structure of death reflected in the folktales and other folk forms need discussion. The nature of conceptual structure and its role in our everyday life must be seen as a way to proceed to understand the important death lore. Our conceptual structure is the result of network or combination of concepts or ideas and they participate collectively as a way of guiding us for having meaningful experiences with the existing and non-existing entities. Thus, concepts are the fundamental building blocks of thoughts and beliefs. For instance, having a curiosity to know about something unknown or to know more from the lesser known is the matter of the cognitive ability that facilitates the possibility for having such a curiosity on something. The concepts are not just distributed randomly but in the conceptual order of hierarchy of superordinates and subordinates, and they are inter-linked for the fulfillment of the cognitive tasks. Similarly, the concepts are arranged into basic-level categories and image schemas. Further, the concepts can be seen as mental representations and abstract objects. Among them the mental representation, also known as cognitive representation, is a hypothetical internal cognitive symbol that represents external reality (Morgan, 2014) and it is also understood as the mental imagery of things that are not actually present to the senses. (Mckellar 1957). The role of mental representation (mental imagery)

could be seen in representing the unexperienced things or things that do not exist. Thus, mental representation or mental imagery is inevitable for experiencing the things that are not present in front. The personification of death is an example and this conceptualization gives us better experience of death. In the case of abstracts as abstract objects that are created by human than the mental representation. Here, a concept could be considered as a name or label that regards or treats an abstraction as if it had concrete or material existence. For example, a concept can represent a natural object or an artificial object and abstract ideas and knowledge domains. Thus a concept is merely a symbol, a representation of the abstraction. Therefore, conceptual representations are essential, because of them the information about the world is understood and expressed, and moreover, they also ensure the feasibility of capturing a rich variety of knowledge about our surroundings and also the relationships and interconnectedness among the things could be comprehended. Within the conceptual systems, semantic structures are simply a subset of conceptual structures which can be verbally expressed (Jackendoff 1983). According to Kant, concepts are generated with the help of three processes of comparison, reflection and abstraction. In the first process, the mental images are compared with another in the unity of consciousness, the second process refers to the going back to different mental images so as to comprehend them under one consciousness, and finally, the third is a kind of segregation of everything else to show each other's differences. Seeing them, comparing them for finding the similarities and dissimilarities and finally make abstraction from them to form a concept that will be a referential one (*Logic*, 6). The creation of death lore is an immediate example and it emerges through the process of identifying the common features, comparing it with the available examples and going for the abstraction for the establishment of death lore with acceptable definition.

It is generally understood that the concepts are not learned in isolation, but rather are learned as a part of our experiences with the world around us. The sensory-motor processes are necessary for concept formation. The human embodiment, that is, having bodily experiences, is important for cognition and our perceptual information helps us to have conceptual understanding. And similarity and relatedness are other important factors that could be seen playing vital role in the process of object categorization. In the case of both similarities and relatedness, identification of components of the proto-types is essential. In the conceptual process, both shapes and visual characteristics – components of perpetual process, are playing insignificant role in the creation of conceptual structure, instead plays a central role. However, studies in cognitive sciences (Casson 1981 & 1983, D'Andrade 1987, Holland & Quinn 1987, Gardner 1987, Lakoff, 1987, Johnson 1987, Schneider 1972, Jakondoff 1983) could tell us that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical and metonymical, then we can say that what we think and perceive are metaphorical and metonymical. The discussion presented here gives a glimpse of the nature and formation of concept and its role in governing our thought.

The concepts are an essential part of our communication and also for normal functioning. While the concepts shed new light on mundane items, the strange things are being understood with known things. It is very much clear that what we perceive is structured by our concepts and thus they help us to get meaning out of our surroundings. Moreover, they help us to relate ourselves to others in our everyday life. Our everyday realities are meaningful because of the concepts that guide us to perceive them meaningfully. In fact, the conceptual system is shaping our everyday life, but we are generally unaware of its existence or manifestation. The conceptual system is guiding and shaping our perception without paying conscious attention to it, that is, the way conceptual system functions, it helps us to think and act automatically

on some framework. Since the conceptual system is not visible and apparent, and most of our activities are mediated through language, language becomes an essential evidence source. It is in line with the discussion. It is apt to quote Lakoff and Johnson (1980:104), who say that “primarily based on linguistic evidence, we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical. And we have found a way to begin to identify in detail just what the metaphors are that structure how we perceive, how we think, and what we do.” If concepts are metaphorical and metonymical and are shaping every day activities, then, there are two ways to collect the evidences for discussion: either to focus on linguistic expressions i.e., metaphors and metonymies, and to focus on the oral and literary forms that are the narrative structures of the conceptual systems. Thus, both the narrative and non-narrative linguistic expressions must be studied in order to understand how the concepts are manifested and transmitted for the purpose of preservation. Particularly, as the conceptual structures are associated with human embodiment in the process of conceptualization, bodily experiences associated with the metaphors and metonymies cannot be ignored. Here is the point that both the linguistic expressions and oral and literary forms are not merely the part of language activity but a way to transmit and also to preserve the perceptual and conceptual experiences of the people who have created them with the purpose of guiding and shaping the human society.

Oral and literary forms, as examples for linguistic expressions, can be treated as rich sources for identifying the manifestations of the conceptual systems. While many of the non-narrative linguistic expressive forms such as proverbs, poems, jokes, anecdotes, etc. employ metaphors and metonymies to reflect the concept of death, the narrative structures such as folk tales, stories, myths, legends, ballads, etc., utilize narrative strategies to portray aesthetically. For written literature, *Tirukkural*, the ancient Tamil text, considered as written by

saint Thiruvalluvar during the post-Sangam age before the sixth century, is taken up. *Tirukkural* in its 33 chapter on “Instability” offers few couplets that describe the ancient wisdom of death:

1. The most dishonourable thing is the ignorance that considers unstable as stable. (*Kural* 331) (Life is unstable)
2. Like a saw that cuts tree, day cuts down life. (*Kural* 334)
(Day is saw, as life is tree)
3. Like bird flies away from the nests forever, life leaves the body. (*Kural* 338) (Death is bird flying away from nest)
4. Death is like sleep; birth is like awaking from it. (*Kural* 339)
5. The soul that had not attained a home, has taken temporary shelter in the body (*Kural* 340) (Body is a temporary shelter for soul)

Another literary example that can be suitable for discussion comes from Shakespeare’s “As you like it” (Act II, Scene VII Line 139) is noteworthy: “All the world’s a stage, / And all the men and women merely players; / They have their exits and their entrances, / And one man in his time plays many parts. ...”

The conceptual system of death is the combination of interlinked concepts. Each one of the concepts, though complete in itself, participates in the process of constituting a structure that tends to represent the mankind’s understanding and cognitive response to death. And, there are few things that need to be remembered while handling conceptual structure: human thought as essentially involving a kind of structured bodily based experiences; meaning as essentially involving imaginative projection, including metaphor and metonymy; a small number of general cognitive processes whose applications to abstract, highly structured cognitive models constitute reason; categorization becomes possible based on conceptually complex prototypes and their

metaphoric and metonymic extensions through image-schemas; metaphor is a pervasive mode of understanding in which we project patterns from one domain of experience to another domain of a different kind; and similarly, in metonymic thinking people use one well-understood or easy concepts to perceive aspects of something for representing either the thing as a whole or some other aspects or parts of it. (Ortony 1979, Schank and Abelson 1977, Johnson 1987, Gardner 1987). The folktales presented here offer a list of conceptions that can be put together to constitute a conceptual system of death. Death is conceptualized in each society as forbidden and taboo, but irrespective of their access to modernity or not, all the societies have a vast amount of folklore and literary expressions dealing with death. While going through the definition of culture with the framework given by the ideational theorists, one can decipher why all the taboo and forbidden items have to be taught to children. When the cultural categories are on a continuum of good and bad, the society has the responsibility to convey all the meanings, that is, unless children of any society learn all the elements of death, they will not be in a position to experience and conceptually respond to the notion of death. (Folktales and proverbs become examples and function as metaphor for many concepts and moral values and ethics: cleverness, intelligentsia, foolishness, cheating, theft, reward, punishment, care, love, concern, friendship, bad friendship, good friendship, evil friendship, honesty, dishonesty, thankfulness, thanklessness, misery, etc.). Thus, the folk forms display functions that are more cognitive in nature, that is, they help community members to get knowledge about all the cultural categories and constructs. In other words, euphemistic aspect of folklore enables the delineation of the concept with the help of universal narrative grammar filled with local cultural elements. So the unspeakable concepts, forbidden topics, inauspicious issue find a way in the public domain which can minimize fear about death.

People's constant fear about mortality has created a kind of discomfort and discomposure with the subject of death and this state of mind or the experience has been translated into the innate quality of human beings which resulted in the creation of folklore and cultural expressions on the concerned matter. The concepts drawn from the tales clearly point out that they are not the reflection of any culture, but belong to mankind. Though the list of concepts that appear from tales of different culture, but they are inter-linked to represent the subject of death. However, the tales with simple and defined narrative structures can accommodate only a few concepts for narration, and it helps us to claim that there are multiple tales and forms that can be collected under the category of death lore. So compilation of death lore from different cultures around globe could provide a clear picture on what is death for mankind. Among the folk forms, the simple and elegant narrative structure with linear story telling pattern make folktales that mankind has created suitable for transmission to its future generations. (Apart from folktales, proverbs carry certain responsibility of passing the knowledge structure to the future generations.) Thus, folktales play an important role in narrativizing the concepts of death so that the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next is facilitated. Death is expressed in different communicative situations with the usage of metaphors, metonymies (dead person's objects and other belongings), proverbs, symbolic forms (garlanded photographs kept along with gods and deities, lamp in front of photographs), with fixed and minimal set of words, but sufficient for conveying the message or intended meaning. But in the case of stories, the message is conveyed through the presentation of sequentially ordered narrative events. The cognitive model or cultural model of story/folktale appears as simple as possible, but narrativization is a difficult task. For instance, uttering that 'no one can escape from death' or 'death is pre-ordained'; it needs few words with semantic and

syntactical arrangement. However, the narrativization of the utterances, 'death happens to all' or 'death happens to those whose life span is over' or 'no one wants to die' or 'the Lord of Death is Just' is more complex. For instance, one must be aware of more concepts associated with the narrative structure and individual skills related to language proficiency, characterization, narrative logic, aesthetics, poetics, imagination, socio-cultural customs and sentiments, etc. Making a narrative acceptable to community members is another difficult task. Finally, the narration and narrative help us to overcome the fear of death (of not only self but also the loved ones) by generating acceptability and familiarizing us to aspects of death, creating awareness, warning us of human problem, signifying moral values, ensuring community participation, etc.

The metaphorical conceptualization of death as reflected in the folktales needs to be discussed here: Metaphorical thinking has great advantages for human beings as it help us to overcome the deficiency of language by providing a kind of projection from the well-known source domain to the unknown-target domain. Thus, use of metaphors, a way to create, organize and understand reality, or a mode of thinking and reasoning, cannot be merely treated as a result of linguistic expression or a figure of speech. The popular metaphor of 'death is to sleep' is also expressed directly or indirectly in various tales. The well-understood sleep is used to mean death – a unidirectional projection of source domain to the target domain is achieved through the constant observation of both the processes of sleep and death. 'Death is a journey' is another popular metaphor that is very subtly reflected through folktale one and eight. A journey that leads to the final destination is symbolized as a road and those who walk on the road meet death. The final destination or home is also found reflected in the *Kural* 340. One must either accept or not be worried of death as mankind is ordained to attain its final destination. Similarly, metaphors such as 'death is a rest', 'death is a reward (divine release)', 'death is the end', and 'death is a loss' are also found exhibited

through some of the tales separately. In the second example, for instance, the boy's life ends with his death to fulfill the fate (pre-ordained). The source-path-goal schema proposed by Lakoff (1987: 275) can be seen here as a way to understand the metaphor. Like a folk tale, everyday activity is organized as starting and ends with a time span. When the time span is over, we have to return to the final destination. Most of the tales given here as examples have the similar connotation, and the *Kural* 334 and 338 can be highlighted here. Interestingly, the tale six presents an example for the loss – not only the loss of beloved ones but also the loss of a vast amount of knowledge. The kind of descriptions or narration the tales are presenting, it appears that that itself performs as a kind of metaphor of 'death as a joyful life' – may be in the post-death scenario or in the folk games. The tales eight and ten can be seen as examples for how negative connotation is associated with death. Those who gained material wealth (refer to *Kural* - 331 on instability of material wealth and human life) do not want to die, but ought to die as death cannot be either defied or contested and defeated. Here, one could see the emergence of a metaphor, 'death is an enemy' and metonymy, 'the effects of death stand for death' out of the negative connotation. Whether 'the life as a theatre' used by Shakespeare, and other metaphors that emanate from given examples, one could see a complex system of conceptualization that holds the logics of metaphorical conceptualization:

The propositional model that emerges from the folktales can be given as follows: Deadly/mysterious road to cause death– Death happens when life span is over – Unpredictable means of death – Means are social, cultural and individual - God of death – Death don't have distinction - Death not to be defied or defeated or persuaded - Death is ordained ("fate") – Day of death decided - No one wants to die - People have their own death - Death as a relief - Death as a divine release - Arrival of death not be surprised – Death as a loss – Death as a gain ["The parents' death is often the children's good fortune." (Jente,

Proverbia Communia, nos. 28, 102. Quoted in Ashliman 1997-2013)] While the propositional model offers holistic perspective on the human understanding of death, the metaphorical model can offer a systematic and structured dimension of conceptual systems. With the three types of metaphors provided by Lakoff and Johnson, structural, orientational, and ontological, the metaphorization of death could be understood. (Zach 2003). The structural metaphors, that conceive one concept in terms of another concept, can be seen from above examples such as 'Death is to sleep', 'life is to awake', 'Body as a temporary shelter', 'Death is a journey', 'World life is a theatre,' etc. But the orientational metaphors help us to organize a whole system of concepts in terms of physical orientation, for example, 'Day is a saw to cut down life of tree', 'Death is to exit from world of stage', 'Death as a divine release' etc. And the ontological metaphors are used to give incorporeal things a sense of boundary and substance - making them as objects and bounded spaces, and extended by giving the object or substance certain characteristics, for example, 'Death as a loss', 'Death as a gain', 'Death as a loss', 'Death a gain', 'Death is bird flying away from nest', 'Death as enemy', etc. Similarly, container schema, image –schema, event schema, orientation schema can also be applied to explain the metaphorical structure.

Conclusion

Perceiving life as a story, we rely on the properties of narrative structure that begins with the emotional equilibrium and moves on to the construction of disequilibrium and climbs down to the climax for regaining the equilibrium to end as an accomplished task. The use of metaphor and metonymy and other figures of speech is an everyday linguistic activity, and people are comfortably using them as tools to make their daily life meaningful without being conscious about their structure and function. This paper delineates the role of metaphor and metonymy in the constitution of conceptual structure. The role and function of folktale concerning the narrativization of concepts and ideas have also been discussed and to facilitate the discussion and drive home

the points, some of the folktales related to death (death lore) have been referred. Apart from regular functions that have been discussed in the conventional essays on folktales, this paper portrays the importance of folktale for the narrativization of concepts, created by the people through their cognitive encounter with their surroundings, to be passed on to the generation to come, in order to guide them in their cognitive tasks.

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Contemporary Folk Theatre of Bengal: Crises and Concerns

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
Odisha, India

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I

Folk theatres belong to poor communities; like their audiences, they must use ingenuity to survive. Whether it is *Chhau* dancers slogging away at the CM's trade show, or *Therukoothu* actors improvising dialogue about current political events, these performers are always on their toes, satisfying their public. (Hollander, 2007: 189)

Actor-audience chemistry has always been the most salient feature of folk theatre. Negotiating the complex social dynamics of rural audience base is always a great challenge to the consummate folk artiste. The dialogue with audience expectations forms the basis of improvisations adopted by the performer to add a new dimension to the performance as a whole. However, those days of actor-audience interactions are over. Agents of change in the age of globalization have radically altered the matrix of audience-actor dialogue. Rather, modern technological innovations have alienated the audience from the performing world of the actor to a large extent. This paper focuses on the Bengali folk theatre

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traditions with special references to Alkap and Gambhira. It also mentions cursorily a few other threatened folk drama forms that had been experiencing an acute crisis in the domain of actor-audience relationship and the place of folk theatre in the collective psyche of rural theatergoers. But, at the outset, it is customary to introduce Bengali folk theatre in the larger theatrical conventions of India. At the same time, the global engagement with performance dynamics in relation to the audience-actor interface should also be highlighted in the larger context of the paper.

II

Drama in India has a very rich heritage; *Natya Shastra* by Bharata Muni is one of the earliest texts in the world on dramatic theory and stagecraft. Kalidasa composed his immortal plays way back during the Gupta period. Later, alongside written plays, folk-plays also emerged and grabbed increasing popularity. Particularly fifteenth century onwards different folk-theatres flourished in different parts of India — Koodiyattam in Kerala, Yakshagana in Karnataka, Jatra in Bengal, so on and so forth. They often narrated stories from myths and epics to the accompaniment of song and dance. These folk-theatres thrived even during the British rule. By the mid-twentieth century, street theatre also became popular, especially in the urban areas, conveying social and political messages and seeking active participation from the audience. Group theatre flourished in Calcutta in the 1940s, thanks to luminaries like Bijan Bhattacharya, Sambhu Mitra, Utpal Dutt et al. It actively engaged with the socio-political upheavals of the times, particularly the Bengal famine of 1943.

However, gone are the days when folk-plays and road-side dramatic performances would attract a sizeable audience who would be taken in by the immediacy of the theatrical performance. In this age of commercial movies, video parlours and YouTube, theatre in general and

folk-theatre in particular has become a casualty. The loss of interest in theatre has been exacerbated by a capitalist and consumerist zeitgeist which does not find theatre a profitable business. Walter Benjamin elucidated in his 1935 essay- *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*- how the advent of photography had diminished the 'aura' that paintings earlier commanded. In today's age of simulacra, simulation and hyper-reality; of television soaps and glossy advertisements; mobile-phones and online streaming; good old theatre has almost become a relic of the past. It continues to draw scholarly admiration, but little popular attention. With forces of globalization gushing into the erstwhile secluded bastion of rural India, folk-theatres are staring at an uncertain future, and possibly gradual extinction. The decline of Indian folk-plays is even more saddening as these plays constitute rich areas of cultural studies. After all, folk-theatres bring to life local flavour and local colour. Storehouses of regional dialects and indigenous rituals are often associated with local festivals, unique costumes and colourful masques. They bespeak of a way of life commensurate with the rhythms of nature and fundamental human values. For centuries, they have operated as unifying socio-cultural forces across vast stretches of rural and marginalized India.

Interestingly, while critical theories and methods like poststructuralism and deconstruction, psycho-analysis and feminist criticism continue to flourish vis-a-vis drama, both in the Western and Indian academic circles, the focus is primarily on treating the drama as a text and not so much on treating it as 'play' — as a theatrical performance that is evanescent. In *The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction*, Peggy Phelan emphasizes this unique quality of performance: "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance." (Phelan, 1993:146) However,

thanks to the structuralist and poststructuralist thrust, for the better part of the twentieth century, a play was treated more as an ensemble of linguistic signs. Fortunately, the rise of phenomenology in the Western academia in the 1970s and 1980s has brought some critical attention back to the performance of a play, its reception by the audience and the concomitant evocation of meaning. Bert O. States writes in his essay *The Phenomenological Attitude*: “Phenomenological criticism ... posits a stopping place, as it were at the starting place, not of all possible meanings but of meaning and feeling as they arise in a direct encounter with the art object.” (States, 1992:370) This phenomenological perspective is particularly critical to theatre and folk-plays because it is this immediacy that specially separates theatre from movies or recorded videos. In his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin had expressed the view that cinematography lacked the ‘aura’ of theatre: “The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes....” (Benjamin, 1968:229)

While folk-theatres languish in rural parts of India, the urban middle-class of the country now overwhelmingly prefer cinema to theatre. What Mark Poster observes in his introduction to the book *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* is pertinent: “In an important sense individuals are no longer citizens, eager to maximize their civil rights; nor proletarians, anticipating the onset of communism. They are rather consumers, and hence the prey of objects as defined by the code.” (Poster, 2001:7) Commercialism and consumerism have meant that while Bollywood and Hollywood movies rule the roost, our own theatre struggles to find a place in our weekend routine, let alone daily one. The ubiquitous multiplexes draw crowds with the promise of an entertaining evening inside a pleasant ambience and ‘cool’ interior. One recalls Jean

Baudrillard's words in *Consumer Society*: "The concepts of 'environment' and 'ambiance' have undoubtedly become fashionable only since we have come to live in less proximity to other human beings...and more under the silent gaze of deceptive and obedient objects..." (Baudrillard, 2001:29) The larger-than-life Goliath on-screen presence of the film-superstars, backed by the elaborate paraphernalia of TRP-driven electronic media, page three journalism and predatory advertisement, has made the lonely actor on the theatre-stage look paltry in comparison. The glitz of postmodernism has made our theatrical roots distant, sense of community fragile and direct- actor-audience communion a passé.

III

Folk theatre in the twenty-first century is endangered on various counts. First, the unifying magic of folk drama with regard to conflicting socio-cultural forces is lost in the postmodern political imbroglio. There is no homogeneous idea of a 'rural' theatre now. What is the most striking feature of endangerment? Is it a total erasure of performances at the local level? Or is it, more probably, a dilution of the unique essence of folk tradition? Probably, the second question is closer to the heart of the problem than the first one. The aura of brilliance enveloping the main performer on evanescent moments of histrionic display on the rural theatrical platform contained an innately indigenous style that determined the folk character of drama- an essential trait that distinguished it from the urban modes of performance. But globalization has ushered in a radical change in the role of performer and audience with regard to the aesthetic of appreciation. In the metropolitan context, viewers are re-christened as consumers and performances are reduced to products. As a result, cinematic final products are more coveted than stage performances. This digital manoeuvring of performance aesthetic percolates into the rural grassroots in the form of video parlours dishing out alien tradition to ruin indigenous performance traditions. The lonely actor on the evanescent stage-play grows

insignificant with the passage of time. Rather, the owners/patrons of folk drama in the countryside began a sick struggle to ape the glitz and glamour of the packaged product which they received from the metropolitan cinema. Vulgar display of pelvic gyrations, blind imitation of sensual music, profane dialogues in inappropriate contexts and many other attendant vices gradually aggravated a highly fragile sense of community disintegration- dissolution of bonding- which could be very apparent in the re-structuring of folk performances. The roots of native theatre are systematically uprooted to cater to the call of globalization. This rootless, deracinated form also cuts off the vibrant actor-audience dialogue- once valued greatly due to its choric function. This paper intends to focus on the dying folk drama forms in the rural heartland of Bengal with special reference to Alkap and Gambhira. It also attempts to bring out the spectacular efforts of the doyen of Alkap, Jhaksu, so as to construct an aesthetic of actor-audience communion in the twentieth century. Finally, the paper critiques the contemporary disjuncture of commercial stage and indigenous norms and its bearings upon actor-audience dynamics. The main argument is centred on the pernicious influence of globalization in transforming actor-audience relationship in the most unnatural way and the resultant endangerment in identity formation with regard to folk performance.

IV

It is always challenging to document the life of the folk artistes- the performers in the endangered folk drama forms. No written documents are available and most of the time the brilliant artistes used to be illiterate or semi-literate. In all such cases intensive field work and numerous interviews of the community elders helped to develop the dynamics between the artist's life and the audience's response to the actors on stage.

Dhananjay Mandal or Alkap¹ is the living legend of Alkap, a folk drama form of Murshidbad district. His nickname- Jhaksu has been immortalized

in the domain of Alkap. Once upon a time Jhaksu and his fellow artistes re-affirmed the glory of Bangla folk drama.

Alkap folk drama form is a valuable folk performance tradition in Gour Banga². It is secular art form embracing performers and audiences of various caste and creed. Even different linguistic groups have freely participated in this open theatre form. We do not have any stage; nor do we have any background. The actors do not use any costume too. The most important feature of this folk drama form is free and undisturbed exchange of ideas among the actors and spectators. The actors claim support, cooperation and money from the audience. In the Bolan Jatra form of Burdwan and Birbhum the main actor enters the stage with his diseased wife and seeks money from the audience. In Alkap actors stop acting and start a conversation with the spectators. There is no predetermined script; rather the oral character of the performance is retained throughout. Instant dialogues, joint collaboration in making the script before public, arranging the chain of events- all these activities endorse the essential orality of folk drama. The structure of Alkap heavily depends on the rough plains of indigenous dramaturgy- a dramatic aesthetic which is homespun and freewheeling in its scope and movement. However, the public networking capacity of Alkap is quite astounding. In due course, Alkap has experienced profound degeneration in form and expression. It has been reduced to *Pancharas*³ in its most perverse manifestation. Cheap and vulgar elements of Hindi cinema and commercial Jatra palas are gradually pushing this folk art form to suicidal ways. Yet the mainstream *Pancharas* operas still have their niche viewership- earning handsome amount and providing facilities to numerous artistes. The comic theatre, 'Kap' is still alive in these commercial enterprises. Extraordinary dancers, singers, comedians, actors and actresses have flocked into these flourishing theatre companies. Twenty-first century spells the doom for non-commercial folk traditions of performance. On the other hand, the commercial

ventures in the age of globalization, liberalization and privatization have paid rich dividends. Pure performance forms suffer while the 'hybrid' productions thrive. 'Value for money' is the mantra of the new regime.

There was a renaissance of the Alkap form in the decades following India's independence. Jhaksu was the main driving force behind this resuscitation of performance. Jhaksu belonged to Chnai caste⁴- a dalit community of Jangipur-Dhanapatnagar in Murshidabad district. The present century is marked by social and cultural disintegration. Refined cultural forms of the mainstream have lost contact with the larger population of the nation. The rift is widening over the last few years with the advent of social media in myriad manifestations. Commercial productions are preferred over traditional modes. In the southern part of Bengal various myth-based palas have also imported crude and vulgar extraneous influences to cater to the ravenous appetite of mostly illiterate village folk. In the public shows, artistes of Manasa Mangal, Sasthi Mangal, Chandi Mangal and Krishna Jatra often dilute the original musical score with large doses of Hindi film tunes- mostly borrowed from the Bollywood musical tradition of 1960s and 1970s.

The disjuncture between performers of the yesteryears and the new age theatergoers becomes a prominent characteristic of the endangered folk theatre. Many folk artistes have died due to sheer neglect and chilling poverty. However, some of them get an incredible afterlife in the serious research works of eminent scholars. Jhaksu was such a performer- a living legend in the folk imagination. He formed a strong performance team at his residence in Dhanapatnagar Murshidabad and invested his last bit of savings to strengthen his team further. He had grown old and solitary. It was a time of gradual disappearance of original Alkap form in the rural heartland of Bengal. The new rich section in villages began a raunchy celebration of female body through the induction of the Pancharas opera. Radio, video and blue films invaded the rotten cultural space in the countryside. The 'Chhokras'⁵ of *Alkap*

performance failed to attract the imagination of the viewers. These boy actors in female attire could not retain the spectators anymore. They became laughing stock instead of causing enticement. Jhaksu, along with the necessary cast of Chhokras, had gradually lapsed into oblivion. In fact, a marked decadence in the folk performance domain is clearly visible in all the performance forms of Bengal.

Alkap shares the same ontological profile with Gambhira, Domni, Khan and Leto. It spreads over the districts of Malda, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Dinajpur and adjacent Bihar. It developed mainly as comedies on folk life. 'Alkap' etymologically suggests unbridled comicality- uproarious fun laced with bawdy humour and exceeding all limits of civility. Conjugal quarrels of Shiva and Parvati also form a staple theme of Alkap. Even the dissimulations and masks used by the artistes to evoke laughter and entertain the poor village viewers may be another signification of Alkap. The evil nexus of Kuleen Brahmins and their collective misdeeds were popularly known as 'Kap'. In U.R. Ananthamurthy's novella 'Samskara' we find this propensity to evil deeds in the character of Naranappa and other brahmins in the Agrahara⁶ flouting the moral norms set by them. The compulsory purgation of libidinal energy through secret visits to dalit women's huts and maintaining a veneer of respectability would define the core hypocrisy of these brahmins. All these 'sinful' actions of a group of people were described by the moralists as 'Alkap'. The non-Vedic Domacharys⁷ were also skilled in Alkap performances. In Caryapada⁸ the ancient Dom race and their penchant for unrestricted celebratory performance habits are frequently alluded to. Bhavadeb Bhatta has categorized these artistes of 'low' performance traditions as untouchables. In 'Arthasastra' the performers are equated with prostitutes. They were declared unfit for heaven and they were debarred from entering the villages of other castes. In 'Domkach' folk drama, prevalent among caste Hindus and adivasis, women disguise themselves as men and participate in comedies.

In Muslim society, women disguise as men in farces during marriage and other festivals. This, too, is known as 'Kap'. The Abdal group of Jangipur, Murshidabad participates in such folk drama forms. In the dalit Chnai community of Malda and Murshidabad women dress as men and indulge in buffoonery during marriage. The bride's team and the groom's team compete for supremacy through song and dance sequences. The practice is also extended to the Adivasi society. In Santali language, 'kap' means earring. During festive dance sessions many women dress as men. At the time of marriage the newlywed bride wash the feet of the revered people. Many men parade as women and indulge in buffoonery to enliven the situation. Before Durga Puja, many Santals make up as Bhuang⁹ or Jugi. In Dasai¹⁰ festival the artistes wear sack cloth, smear black paint and tickle the audience. In fact, the liberated comic environment of Alkap thus, has a great mass support base in the mixed population of Santals, dalit Muslims, dalit Hindus and other minority groups over a vast geographical area of Mithila, Purnea, Gangetic Bengal and the coal-belt regions.

Folklorist Dilip Ghosh opines that the two words 'al' and 'kap' are ontologically indigenous. It means a farcical presentation with loads of fun. Phani Pal, another folklorist describes 'alkap' as a modern satire. Prodyot Ghosh, on the other hand, traces the origin to Arabic, but reduces the meaning to satire. Alkap is classified under 'palagan', folk musical opera, bearing intimate links with Gambhira. Satire is more visible in Gambhira while Alkap has greater dose of comicality, fun and frolic. Any palagan or folk opera has different parts- Bandana, Tappa, Baroari, Sal tamami, Dhua, Majamara, Khemta and Alkap. The first ritual finds expression in Gambhira while the last part merges with alkap performance. In Malda, scriptwriter, musician and place of performance of Alkap and Gambhira overlap. Especially after the First World War the character of Shiva, political consciousness and folk tunes of leisurely pace pushed Gambhira into the broad domain of political state. Alkap,

on the other hand, was confined to the crude humour of rural family centric incongruities and bawdy Khemta dance. In the word 'alkap' there is an admixture of Indian and foreign cultures. The core performers are the buffoons and the boy actors. Gradually, the elaborate dress code of the buffoon went out of vogue. Greater emphasis was laid on verbal and gestural acting. In Alkap only boy actors use elaborate disguise while others do not have any dress code. Individuals used to declare publicly the role he was going to play. The stage was most unostentatious with bare minimum details. Men used to play the role of chair, table and pets.

'Baitalik', a contemporary novel, describes Alkap as a song of scandals. The ills of society and indecencies of the influential people are exposed in this folk drama form. However, scathing attack is not the only artistic response. Hypocrisies are exposed also through light bantering, gestural excesses and funny songs. But Alkap is not predominantly sensual in its appeal; rather it is replete with satiric laughter. In fact, 'Bhnar Jatra', another very popular folk drama form of South Bengal, developed as a scathing folk satire on the immorality and profaneness of the zamindars and other landowners. 'Machhani', a folk satire of the Kurmi indigenous community, also portrays the inconsistencies of the landed gentry and the terrible sufferings of the landless Kurmi peasants. It is a sad commentary on the hard grind of the bourgeoisie perpetuating the miseries of the rural masses.

Folk satires with elaborate dress code and indiscriminate buffoonery are part of a global folk culture. It is also observed in various corners of the Indian subcontinent. In Bengal, many accomplished mainstream playwrights used to script the songs and dialogues of the farces and folk satires. But the acting was done by the proletariat people- the back-bent workmen. In Kolkata and other urban areas, mostly Muslim drummers and crooners used to join. Such dramatic materials of folk performances were borrowed freely by Michael Madhusudan Dutt in 'Buro Saliker Ghare Rno' (1860).

In ancient India, a special genre of folk theatre, known as 'Bhaan', used to expose the secret misdoings of the social mandarins with a liberal mix of dance, song, musical instrument, comic costumes and buffoonery. These plays were mostly performed by buffoons and prostitutes. Considering the social norms of the time, the performances projected loose morals and bawdy farces. In fact, throughout the north-eastern part of the country, exposure of the misdeeds and corrupt practices of the rulers in folk drama became a perennial favourite with the lower caste audience. In Bengal, 'Bhnar Jatra' is a brilliant specimen of this type of folk satire. In several districts of south Bengal the artistes perform this folk satire in an organized way, mostly to cater to the demands of the village folk. This tradition is also followed by other major forms- Alkap, Gambhira, Khan, Chorchurnir Gaan, Domni, Rang Panchal etc. Throughout the 19th century bawdy and raucous comedies of buffoons became a staple technique of many folk drama forms. In fact, the buffoons and the spectators participated in an open forum. Even before that, in the biography of Lord Chaitanya, the play-acting of 'Hora Panchami' at Neelachal and the theatrical performances of 'Natua' were earlier remnants of folk drama.

In fact, a significant number of low caste actors would participate in immortal folk cultural texts- from 'Caryapada' to 'Annadamangal'. In the modern times Hunter and Risley, two noted British anthropologists, have described the 'Natuas' (performers) as semi-migrant Bedes, Byadh, Chandala, Dom and Pakhmar. A section of these actors also embraced Islam. However, both Hindus and Muslims used to look down upon them as low caste, marginal figures. They were evicted from forests and riversides and would finally form mobile performance units. Thus, the vagrant actors used to visit rural householders, especially during the harvesting season, and act in folk dramas in an intimately interactive manner. An adolescent boy of the playing company would play the female role and was known as 'Chhokra' or 'Dhaturia'. He had to leave his

home and hearth in sheer poverty. Dhaturia is well-versed in the folk dance forms of different regions. He can perform effortlessly the dance forms of 'Nanichora' and dances linked to 'Chhat' festival. This disguised gender dance is popularly known as 'Chhakkarbaji'. Dhaturia mastered it from his native Gaya district. But there were no takers- and he had to commit suicide due to chill penury. In fact, the backward castes of the Bengal and Bihar border, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion, joined in a large scale revolt against the landed gentry. But the insurgency fails and the impotent anger is vented through the form of folk satire. A bandit or a burglar becomes a representative of the suffering proletariat against the unjust rule of zamindar. Even the counterfeiter, who cheats the feudal lord to teach him a lesson, gets moral support from the lay people. The foolish buffoon raises many uncomfortable questions against social injustice and inequalities as a representative of the suffering masses. In the final estimate, the governing ideology of the ruling class is defeated. In folk drama forms like Alkap there is no defeat or disappointment. However, the narrow worldview of the scriptwriters and poets cannot conceptualize the larger state-sponsored network of exploitation. The targets of attack are rather localized figures- village chief, moneylender, rich businessmen, priest, Haji, rich women, bad mother-in-law and garrulous wife. The divergent traditions of rural satire merge in Alkap from different geographical locales. Bolan, Gambhira and some other folk drama forms were gradually appropriated by the Hindu Brahminical ideology. Hence, the Muslim and untouchable Hindus congregated in the dramatic arena of Alkap- an essentially secular form of performance. According to the famous folk drama critic Dilip Ghosh, the artistes ineligible for performing in Gambhira would often assume a leading creative role in Alkap. In Bolan, Gambhira and Gajon, artistes of the untouchable castes could never play the role of a mendicant monk. So Alkap became a cultural melting pot of the lower caste Hindus and Muslims. Hindu lawgivers did not like the bawdiness of Alkap performances. The conservative Muslim society, too, does not approve

lewd song and dance sequences of Alkap presentations. But the 'Chhokra' of Alkap is an all-pervasive presence in 'Rang Panchal', 'Man Panchal', 'Leto', 'Krishna Jatra', 'Imam Jatra' and many other forms.

Alkap came into existence in the late nineteenth century. Bona Kana, the first creator, was born around 1865. All great performers of the initial years- Safruddin, Maqbul Hossein, Nes Mohammad and many others were mostly inhabitants of Malda and the Rajmahal Hills. The drummers and dancers of this group were often selected from the untouchable castes- Dom, Methor and Hazra were prominent among them. The disciple group of Bona Kana in Malda and the most prominent follower in Murshidabad- Basanta Dhanuk- played a major role in the spread of the Alkap folk drama form. In the next generation, Basanta Sarkar (Dhanuk) tutored a rare dramatic genius- Jhaksu or Dhananjoy Mondal. Jhaksu brought in significant changes in the form and content of Alkap to render unique flavour to this folk drama. He chastened the form to create Pancharaas. Later, it turned into expensive theatrical jatra palas. The rich owners invested a lot and recruited handsome actors and pretty actresses with consummate skills in song and dance sequences. Posters and hand bills were circulated with the seductive images of pretty women. Attractions of female body also brought in liquor, gambling, hooliganism and police excesses. Thus, Pancharaas lost its universality and got immersed in decadent cultural practices. This new wave of theatricality was detrimental to the indigenous forms of Jhaksu who became gradually irrelevant in the larger context. In later years, Syed Mustafa Siraj penned a novel, *Mayamridanga*, on the life and career of Jhaksu. Pradip Bhattacharya produced a play, *Maya*, on the theme of the same novel.

In the comic improvisations of Alkap plots, Jhaksu was unparalleled. He used Hindi, Chnai hybrid tongue and regional variation of Jangipur to create the comic effect. Hindi songs and dialogue sequences made Alkap quite popular in Chhotonagpur and Santal Pargana regions. Presence

of mind and the power to understand the expectations of the viewers made him a unique creator who felt the pulse of the folk audience. He had an uncanny ability to strike an intimate chord of friendship with the audience. He was unforgettable in the depiction of tragic situations and would often leave the spectators in tears. One English rendering of an Alkap song would throw ample light on the social stigma of the creator, perpetual experience of poverty and a hearty surrender to the invisible forces of destiny. The spectators were very much involved in the changing pattern of dramatic contents. It was a famous composition of Jhaksu:

Born in a low caste of Chnai
Mother tongue a derided Khotta
Occupation a meagre farming
Nestled on the bank of Mother Janhabi-
My playhouse was drowned in deluge;
I don't know where to stay and continue my song-
O cruel River! Why did you devastate me?
I don't have any friends to rebuild my playhouse.
God sealed my fate
None else can undo it;
Like the petrified Ahalya's passionate pleas
I invoke the Lord for his benediction. (Jha 63)

▼

To conclude, audience-performer interaction is an old convention of folk drama in any part of the globe. Actually, in the old Miracle cycle of English plays, the devil was beaten up on the stage as a retributive form of justice. The audience would often join in the comic drubbing of the

buffoon-like devil. In Odia folk drama form of Mughal Tamasha, the audience would sometimes intervene and attack the dishonest landlord or the hypocritical Mughal Subedar. It would hold a live demonstration of protest against oppression. But the crisis is very genuine. An echo could be found in Julia Hollander's book titled *Indian Folk Theatres*:

Away from the cities, in the rural hinterland that makes up the major part of the sub-continent, there existed a radically different type of performance art. In recent decades it had started disintegrating, threatened by the accessibility of other entertainments and a general trend towards Westernisation. (Hollander, 2007:1-2)

Thus, folk theatre has been experiencing a major change in form and content. The purity of form is hard to find in the twenty-first century. Entire performance rituals have been gradually taken away from the open stage to the close confines of urbanised and westernised stages. Audience participation, in the course of such changes, has also been excluded by the new playwrights and directors. This paradigmatic shift has aggravated the crisis of folk performance traditions as the original character of performance dynamics is changed and modified to the alien taste of urban viewers. The process of endangerment, in this way, becomes irreversible.

Endnotes

1. Alkap – Alkap is a form of Bengali folk performance. It is a fusion of music, dance and theatrical presentation. It is popular across the districts of Malda, Murshidabad and Birbhum in West Bengal as well as in parts of Bangladesh. Although this art-form was invented by Basanta Sarkar, it was perfected and made famous by Dhananjay Mondal.
2. Gour Banga – Gour is a ruined city on the Indo-Bangladesh border. Gour came into prominence in the seventh century

as the capital of King Shashanka. It remained the capital of ancient Bengal for several centuries. 'Banga' means Bengal & 'Gour Banga' primarily denotes the present-day Malda district of West Bengal and its adjoining areas. At present there is a university at Malda town which has been named Gour Banga University.

3. Pancharas – It is bawdy representation of folk humour and sexual practices on stage.
4. Chnai caste – It is a cultivating and fishing caste found in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The people of this caste are Hindus and they are now recognized as a sub-group within the Kewat community. Most of these people are agriculturists while some continue to be boatmen in the Ganga.
5. Chhokras – An Alkap group comprises ten to twelve performers. They are led by a sarkar or master and include two or three young men who are called chhokras.
6. Agrahara – Agrahara was a grant of land and royal income from it, typically by a king or noble family to Brahmins. Born in Thirthahalli, Karnataka, U. R. Ananthamurty spent his boyhood in an 'agrahara', which was basically the Brahmin quarter of the village. His acclaimed novel *Samskara* has as its theme the story of a decaying Brahmin agrahara in the old Konkan region.
7. Domacharys – They were non-Vedic *Dom* artistes who had developed great skill in song-and-dance sequences.
8. Caryapada – Caryapada is a collection of mystical poems. These are songs of realisation in the Vajrayana tradition of Buddhism and derive from the tantric tradition of Bengal. Caryapada was composed between 8th and 12th centuries and its poems

are the earliest extant Bangla poems. The Abahatta in which it is written is considered to be the common ancestor of Bengali, Assamese, Odia and Maithili.

9. Bhuang – It is a beautiful folk-dance of the Santals, particularly in the districts of Jhargram and Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal. Only male artists perform this dance; they wear dhoties and decorate their heads with peacock-feathers. This dance-form is performed from afternoon till night particularly on the day of Vijaya-dasami – the last day of Durga Puja. This dance-form is named after a peculiar musical instrument called ‘bhuang’ which is made of pumpkin.
10. Dasai – Dasai is essentially a male dance item. It is performed just before Durga Puja. Santali men visit neighbouring villages to sing and dance, and collect donations of rice and alms. Although it is an aggressive dance-form, it is beautiful to watch. It narrates the tale of two brave Santali girls – Kajal and Ayan – who were kidnapped by enemies of Santals and how they were rescued by two male warriors – Durga and Debi. (Source: The Telegraph; Nov 22, 2017)

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Women in Hindi Cinema: The Appendix in ICU

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
Odisha, India

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Abstract

Indian Cinema plays a vital role in every Indian's life. Typical Hindi Cinema is not meant only for entertainment, it has a strong social and economic impact on society. Many Hindi Cinema themes these days are floating towards social issues, but still there are many film professionals who follow the conventional theme and approach. From olden days to today's modern cinema women have played an indispensable role. But the way women in Hindi cinema are projected may adversely affect the mindset and thought process of people in the society. In this paper an attempt has been made to examine the role of women in Indian Hindi cinemas. Raja Harishchandra to present day contemporary movies, the dynamic role of women, how they are portrayed in various role and its impact on the basis of few case studies. The results discussed are on types of role women usually play in Bollywood movies, their dialogues, presentation and storyline in relation to their male protagonist.

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Introduction

Cinema is considered as the most powerful medium for mass communication in India. Cinema has the ability to entertain and influence people. Cinema is the mirror of nation's personality. It has the potential to appeal to its audience. It leaves all other forms of media far behind in making such appeal. It is a powerful weapon, affecting the minds and emotions of mankind. Cinema depicts all aspects of our society. Lights, sounds, cameras, dialogues, costume of different character born new thoughts, hopes, aspiration, dreams and sometimes fear, frustration and ego among its audience. Fiction stories of cinema force the audience to relate their real life situation with screen characters.

Hindi film stories mainly based on Indian Culture and Indian society. But it's appalling to see the stature of women actors in the cine storyline. Though Indian cinema has completed its 100 years of journey, woman in Indian cinema is still considered as an embellishment only. Bollywood is still dominated by masculinity and macho heroes. From the very beginning of Indian Cinema, women have been engaged in off centric roles. Most of the films' name in Bollywood itself suggests that it is dominated by male protagonist. Like Hero no I, Khiladi no I, Mard, Kalia, BaapBete, Sharabi, Mardkabadla, Son of Sardar, PatiParmeshwar, Rajkumar, Beta etc. There are very rare films which present women as active character who can raise their voice against injustice, who can rebel in their own way. There are hardly such movies that represent women playing strong characters or role. Mother India, Mardani, Damini, Kahani, Lajja, Shakti, Zubeida, No one killed Jesica, Chak de India and English Vinglish are some of the exceptions.

In most of Hindi cinema, women play the role of supporting actor. They are portrayed as submissive, lenient, soft spoken and fragile. Actress with high heels, bold make up, western getup and outspoken are considered to be dominating, stubborn and morally degraded.

Women actress wearing saree, chudi, soft spoken and submissive are considered to be ideal women. From the first Indian film Raja Harishchandra to present contemporary movies whether it's a romantic, action or a family drama, Indian Cinema is led by male actors. Actresses in Bollywood are hired for their beauty and stature. Camera in cinema focus more on woman's face and attire than the role they play. The leading actresses of Bollywood Meena Kumari to Madhubala, Rekha to Hemamalini even contemporary heroine Madhuri Dixit to Priyanka Chopra are popular more for their dance and face. Zeenat Aman, Juhi Chawla, Aishwarya Rai, Sushmita Sen, Priyanka Chopra, Lara Dutta, Dia Mirza, Namrata Shirodkar all the leading actresses of Bollywood entered the cine industry as a winner of Beauty contest either Miss India or Miss Universe Title. It shows that beauty always plays an important role in Bollywood industry. In male centric Bollywood industry women are always used for their physical beauty and sensuality.

There are hardly any cinemas which present ordinary women. Films which predominantly focus on marriage, love and family depict women as either revengeful or stubborn. Female actresses are mostly used for eye candy and dancing around trees. In most films women are just dumb and mindless, they are used for only sexual fulfillment. Even in maximum films female actresses are there, but they are only used for songs and item song sequence. In films like Karan Arjun, Agneepath, Singham, Once upon a time in Mumbai, Holiday, Baby, Bajrangi Bhaijan women actress play meagre roles. Females in most cinemas are used to sprinkle some entertainment in the middle of grave sequence. There are countless movies which showcase love interest of heroines. The actress is always portrayed as the hero's love interest. Mostly heroines have little else to do in the movie except please the hero with her beauty and romance. Item number is another common term in contemporary movies. There are many films which even fill up the female

protagonist role just by using an item number. There are untold films which do not have strong female protagonists but get commercial success from its item songs popularity. This is nothing but absolute obscenity on screen.

Cinema is a powerful visual medium and movies are a part of our daily lives. Cinema has different meaning for different people and it has a great impact on our minds and perception.

The study on Women in Indian Hindi Cinema was conducted with the the main objectives of:

- Examining the changing portrayal of women in Bollywood.
- Finding out the dialogue and sequence related to women which is objectionable and inappropriate, and
- Studying the portrait of women in some highly successful movies.

This study is based on case studies of three selected popular Hindi movies through which attempt is made to understand the role and character of women in Hindi cinema.

The Lunch Box

The Lunch Box movie directed by Ritesh Batra released on 20th September 2013. This film stars Irrfan Khan, Nimrat Kaur and Nawazuddin Siddiqui. In this movie the lead role is played by Irrfan Khan as Saajan Fernandes who is a widower, about to retire from his job as an accountant. The supporting role is played by Nimrat Kaur as Ila. Ila is a housewife, seeking her husband's attention, looking for ways to put romance back in to her marriage. She is attempting to prepare delicious food for her husband, putting make-up to grab her husband's attention, trying old dresses to put old romance in her life. Whereas

Ila's husband in this film is having an extra marital affair and stopped paying any attention to his wife and responsibilities. Knowing the reality that her husband is having an extra marital affair Ila still loves her neglectful husband and performs all family responsibilities. By mistake one day Ila's prepared Lunchbox is delivered to Saajan instead of her husband by the 'Dabbawala'. Though it was her husband's favorite food he didn't respond to it, Ila put little notes into the lunchbox, hoping to get to the bottom of the mystery. As the story continues both Ila and Saajan started talking to each other with the help of notes inside the lunch box and eventually they develop feelings for each other. But when Saajan realized that he has become too old to fall in love once again with Ila who is still young and beautiful, he refused to continue the talk with Ila and finally left for another city.

The movie 'Lunch box' is an uncomplicated story written and executed wonderfully by Director Ritesh Batra. But if you dig in to the character of the leading lady of the cinema, she is portrayed as an ignored and overlooked house wife. Disappointed with her boring and uninteresting life she is searching for some substitute. She has a school going child, still willfully she is ready to start a new life with a stranger whom she has not even seen. This film has also showcased the role of typical housewife. Though the heroine in this movie stays in Bombay which is a metropolitan city she is doing all the house hold work starting from washing clothes to cooking and even shopping. Ila's husband is good looking and well-dressed where as Ila takes food after her husband leaves for the office and she even does not take proper care of herself. She spends most of her time inside the kitchen and taking suggestion from her neighbor aunty as to how to impress her husband. There is another character in this film and he is Saajan's colleague Shaikh. This role was played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui. Where he says in a dialogue "iska baap mujhe shadi mein scooter de rahe hai, bola promotion ka

tofa hai". This statement shows the tradition of dowry in the name of gift. This movie showcases the role and responsibility of a typical house wife, who is bound by family responsibility and social system. Though she is well aware about her husband's extra marital affair it is not that easy on her part to escape from family obligation towards her husband. She started dreaming when someone paid her slight attention apart from her husband.

Laga Chunari Me daag

Another film that sends a very negative message to the society is "Lagachunari me daag". This film is Directed by Pradeep Sarkar. The film is based on the story of a girl called Badki. The female protagonist Badki's role is played by one of the leading actresses of Bollywood Rani Mukharjee, who belongs to a family which was once very rich: Anupam Kher Badki's father is jobless and suffering from cardiac problem. Jaya Bachchan played the role of Badki's mother. Konkana Sen played the role of Badki's younger sister Chutki.

The story is about the struggle of Badki for her family who has gone through critical financial crisis. The film has shown how the family is facing various problems in the medical treatment of her father, advocate and court case fee and Younger sister's education. Seeing the prolonged struggle of her family at last Badki decided to join a job in the city. Her Father Anupam Kher always demoralizes her daughter saying "Beti kabhi bête ka jagah nahi le sakti". "Aaj agar mera ek beta hota to ye din dekhne ko na milla hota" etc... Badki tried hard to get a suitable job for her in the city but failed as she was a matriculate. Finally her situation compelled her to prostitution. She not only became a prostitute but battled a lot to change herself into a high class escort. In this film Jaya Bachchan who had played the role of Badki's Mother also knew the dark secret of her daughters, but felt helpless from beginning to end of the film because of her family situation.

Yash Raj Banner's this film had won many Award for its success. But at the same time this movie sends a very negative message that the modern Indian woman can do nothing except fall back on prostitution to save the family.

Hamari Adhuri Kahani

Hamari Adhuri Kahani released on 12 June 2015. The film was directed by Mohit Suri and produced by talented Mahesh Bhatt. The film stars Emraan Hashmi, Vidya Balan, and Rajkumar Rao. The story is about Vasudha (Vidya Balan), a florist and single mother whose husband acted by Raj Kumar Rao is missing since last five years. She has been waiting for him since he left her alone. Vasudha meets Aarav Ruparel (Emraan Hashmi) in one hotel, who is a multi-millionaire business tycoon. The very moment Aarav saw Vasudha he fell in love with her. It was a love at first sight. Vasudha came to know from police that her husband Hari was a member of a terrorist group and had killed five journalists. At the same time Aarav offered Vasudha a job in Dubai. Vasudha takes of the job and love blossoms between Aarav and Vasudha. Then she suddenly realized the truth of her life that she is married and belongs to someone else. In spite of knowing that her husband is a terrorist who left her and her child for five years. She asked Aarav to save Hari. But unfortunately to save his love Aarav lost his life in a blast. Finally Vasudha died as she wanted to be reunited with Aarav where he died.

The mother of a 5-year-old, Vasudha is struggling to strike a balance between her cursed past and shining future. From the beginning to the end, the film has shown how a woman scarifies her whole life for her husband. Some of the dialogues of this movie which are commentary on women's stature. Dialogue by Emran Hashmi "Ye ek aurat hoke bhi

mujhe bachane aayi lekin tum logo ne kuch nahi kiya”. Similarly Vidya Balan said “Radha marne ke baad kahan jayegi ?” Rajkumar Rao replied “Apne kishan me samajaayegi”. Another dialogue Vasudha’s father in this film said to her daughter “Teremuuh se ye shabd nikle hi kaise..? “Hum logo me pehele byar hota hai, uske baad ye Phir vyas sab.. pidhi se hamare sanskaro me yahi chaal raha hai aur ye hi chalte rahenge.” Another dialogue Vidya Balan said to her mother in law “Iss mangal sutra koutar fek dene ki himmat nahi hai mujh main. Hamari Param parayenash nash me daudti hai ishe kaise phak de... ab to ye mere chita par hi jalengi.

Discussion

Women have played a number of roles in Hindi movies: the Sati Savitri, the rebel, the victim and victimizer. There are some positive portrayals of rebels in the Hindi movies like *Mirch Masala*, *Damini*, *Zubeida*, *No one killed Jessica*, *Mardani*, *NH 10* and several others. But there are very few cinema released every year that can truly inspire and deliver a positive message to women.

Reel life portrays real life. But sometimes, people get inspired by movies. And not always in a good way. Perceptions of viewers differ. When some viewers catch the positive aspects of film many grasp the negative ones. Film like *Bombay to Goa*, *Dhoom*, *Special 26*, *Darr*, *Khosla ka Ghosla* are some such movies which have encouraged many crimes. Likewise films that portrayed women in negative, submissive and lenient manner, also force women to behave in similar manner.

Sabana Azmi, Nandita Das, Madhuri Dixit, Konkona Sen, Vidya Balan, Kangana Ranaut are some of the actresses who have played many challenging roles in Bollywood. But except these few actresses all other

are just used for sexual gratification. There are countless cinema released every year which shows complete vulgarity and obscenity onscreen. Film like Jullie, Grand masti, Hunter, The Dirty picture, Murder, Jism, Nasha are some of the movies which grab the viewer only for their songs, dances and romantic sequences. These types of movies cross the barricades of Censor Board and even become successful in recovering at least the production cost. These types of cinemas not only degrade the status of women but also change the perception of male viewers.

Most writers, producers, directors and actors, are men. There are a handful female producers and directors making entries to Bollywood. So they give priority to male centric film, where women are only used as decorative objects. It is good to see that talented and creative women director and producer are making their entries to film industry. In almost all cinema whether it is male centric or female centric film male actors occupy the maximum space on screen.

Conclusion

Indian cinema has gone through a lot of transition since the release of India's first feature film Raja Harish Chandra in the year 1913. The role of women in Indian Cinema has also gone through changes from traditional cinema to today's contemporary films. Women in Indian cinema had played very important role in the success of Bollywood industry. Despite the fact that without women characters a complete film is impractical, women are still assigned stereotypical roles. They are portrayed as neglected, disrupted, submissive, defenseless and lenient. Women in most cinemas are considered as a supporting role of male protagonist. Predominately cinema in Bollywood, projects the story of the main protagonist who fights for his nation, fights for his family, fights

for his lover and becomes a hero. Indian films are watched even in many foreign countries. As films are the mirror of our society, culture and tradition, it also showcases the status and role of women in society.

Cinema has remained the most powerful medium for mass communication in India. Due to its emotional appeal it has a profound influence on all age groups. As visual images last for a long period of time, it has a deep-rooted impact on the mind of the viewers. It illustrates events in such a way that leaves an impact on the coming generation.

As the number of films increases, competition and budget in each cinema is blooming, male central character is occupying more space than the female counterpart. Though Bollywood has crossed its hundred years of journey, man in cinema is still projected as the breadwinner and woman as homemaker. Women who fail to make his love life are shown to take up career as aim of their lives. Women are shown to become rebellious and revolutionary only after a long struggle.

It is always good to see good subjects and story line in cinema. There are many inspiring films which have a very positive and long-lasting effect on the minds of viewers. Whereas cheap and meaningless movies affect the tender minds of audience very badly. To conclude, women in Hindi cinema are like appendix in ICU, they appear in fragile situations.

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Enhancing English Speaking Proficiency of Engineering Students through Different Teaching Methodologies

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
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Abstract

Before we start speaking our native language, we listen to it first, then speak, read, and finally write. We have four basic skills in English- Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing; all we need to develop to make our communication complete. Among these four skills, Listening and Reading are receptive skills, whereas Speaking and Writing are Productive skills. However, it is quite difficult for second language learners to speak a foreign language, especially English. Reasons are many. It may be due to lack of or absence of ideas, lack of vocabulary, lack of exposure to speaking, or maybe lack of impressive teaching methodology. Speaking is essential for everyone to express their opinions, thoughts, and communicate with people. Students' poor speaking skill can be solved by providing them opportunities to practice English. For this, the teacher needs to implement innovative methods to make the speaking practice more interesting and improve the students' speaking abilities.

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On the other hand, the students need to be more proactive and actively participate in each activity conducted in English classrooms or Language Labs. They should also remain active during interaction with their friends and teachers. This study's objective is to- implement innovative teaching methods in the classrooms to improve the students' speaking skills and, secondly, to enhance the confidence level of the students in speaking skills and develop fluency in speaking.

Key Words: Speaking, Vocabulary, Implement, Language Labs, Innovative

Introduction

In most Engineering Colleges and Universities in India English has remained an integral part of the medium of education and curriculum in the last few decades. It plays a vital role in finding a good job through on-campus placements in many popular organizations. This is due to British Colonization; English has become the second language to many Indians. Thus, it is very difficult to separate the English language from India. English is a language that connects people throughout India. People all over India speak different languages in different states. Only English can unite them in sharing their ideas, thoughts, and expressions. English plays a prominent role in Higher education, Public and Private sector organizations, Media, and the like. In the last few decades, there has been a mushroom growth of Engineering Colleges in India. Every year thousands of students graduate from each institution. This has caused a big problem in the job market, and Placement has become a severe issue in this present era. Today, there is cut-throat competition in the job market. Thus the students are expected to fight for their survival by making themselves ready for the challenge and meet their requirements. Prospective candidates are required to open up and present their ideas and thoughts fluently without any ambiguity and fear. Communication skill is the main requirement for getting into a job.

But it is disappointing to see that graduates in India find it a herculean task to speak or write English with fluency and accuracy.

Basic Communication in English is taught in the first two semesters, i.e., 1st year of graduation in most Govt. and private Engineering colleges in India. The objective of this course is to improve the basic four communication skills. Though many seminars, conferences, and workshops are conducted on new language teaching methodologies, the real story is different due to several reasons. This may be due to lack of exposure for English Professors, students from other regions present in the same class in large number, limited time to complete the syllabus, giving more importance to written exams, pressure on teachers to produce toppers in English by the end of the final semester, lack of support from college management, or it may be due to less focus on English – traded as an optional or yet another subject to study. The traditional teaching method is one of the drawbacks for students' proper exposure to speak English fluently. Faculty are under pressure to complete the syllabus in time, and in this process, they do not focus on practicing English in the classroom. As a result, majority of the students fail to make progress in speaking skills. There is a paper on the advanced English level called "business communication" from the 4th semester onwards in many Engineering Colleges and Universities. Students have to go through listening skills, writing business letters, proper CV writing, mock interviews, and focussed Group discussions. Despite the effort, the lack of speaking skills has been a big challenge for many students.

Importance of Speaking Skill

In private Engineering Colleges or Universities, teaching English communication is a challenging task for many teachers as the curriculum design is made so that there is no scope for them to deliver traditional teaching methods. Moreover, teaching speaking skill is more difficult

though important. Teachers make every effort to help their students to improve their speaking fluency. This is important for many reasons. The students should be able to communicate with others comfortably. It is common in most colleges that most students are better at reading and writing, but they are poor at speaking and listening. Therefore teaching the students speaking skills is very important for the teachers.

Different Methods of teaching speaking

To make the English classroom more attractive and engaging, the teacher must prepare some tasks and innovative techniques to deliver the lecture. Students should find themselves engaged and enjoying the class. Following are a few teaching methods where the teachers can make a difference in the classroom.

Roleplays in real-life situations

To develop speaking skills, this is one of the best activities that the teacher can do. He/she asks the students to act from a given script. The script may be a scene from plays, textbooks, or maybe from a movie. The students are instructed to present it with dialogues. In this way, the participants' speaking skill will improve as well as it will boost confidence in him/her and reduce stage fright. During the role-play, the teacher acts as a Director, drawing attention of the students towards the stress, intonation, as well as to test fluency. Students are allotted time for preparation before the final performance. Students' should be encouraged to speak as much as possible.

Just a Minute (JAM)

This activity is the advanced level of speaking as students are given topics on the spot and asked to speak for a minute continuously. It's quite a challenging task for a student to speak without any previous preparation and within one minute. But if it is done with proper

guidance by the teacher; this will boost confidence among the learners and reduce their stage fright. The topics will be, for example- “A Red Rose,” “A Rainy Day,” “an evening with my friend,” “The movie I like most” and the like where the average students also can feel comfortable to speak at least a few words. Grammatical errors may be excused as this activity is focused more on their fluency level.

Storytelling

The teacher can adopt this oldest yet effective art form in the classroom. Storytelling is regarded as the original form of teaching since time immemorial. This can be done to increase the performance of the speaking skill. It also helps the students fostering emotional intelligence and provides useful information on human behavior and attitude. It also promotes language learning. There are many advantages that the students can get from this activity - It provokes curiosity and creates interest among the learners; it makes one’s vocabulary and comprehension strong. It teaches human values, attitude, and behavior, and it develops one’s speaking and listening skills.

Communication Games: There are numerous communication games and icebreakers to develop a student’s speaking ability. The students are given pieces of a picture and tell them to join it. When they get the pieces’ full image, they are asked to make a short oral presentation on it. It will generate interest and fun among the learners. This can be effective in groups.

Students are also asked to have a truth and dare game where they get an opportunity to open up. They speak about their personal experiences in life. Activities like a prepared talk, Newspaper reading are some of the useful tools to develop speaking skills. They are given some newspaper articles or any written material to go through and speak on it after the allotted time. The teacher checks time duration, pronunciation, tone and reading speed, and communication style.

Audio visual aids

There are different types of audiovisual aids that can be used in the classroom to improve speaking skills. The audiovisual aids are essential tools as they facilitate both learning and teaching. They provide enough scope for students to speak fluently and fearlessly. It also includes much information about the use of Grammar, vocabulary, intonation, and pronunciation. Moreover, it motivates them to understand the concept and perform well when they speak.

Audiovisual aids are supplementary devices where the teachers can clarify, establish, interpret, and appreciate. Language Lab using laptops, PCs, headphones, projector, and screen have proved highly beneficial. Showing a good video is an essential mode of delivery as it helps students learn the language through viewing and hearing. The teacher can make his/her class enjoyable by showing good videos. Take, for example, short movie clips, and students are asked to review them. Ted Talks by famous speakers are shown and students asked to analyse the same. Youtube videos on effective communication skills, mock interviews, and Group Discussions are also useful. Students are given topics to discuss similarly. Showing videos have a positive impact on enhancing their speaking skills. It is observed that male students make wrong use of body language, eye contact, posture, and gesture. These videos will help them a lot in rectifying these.

There are other ways to show videos in the classroom. The teacher can display the video in a fast forward mode and ask the students to guess the video clip's theme. In another context, the teacher can mute the video, and students have to predict the dialogues in that scene, and it can be played with sound to know the exact answer. The students are also asked to speak something on a picture displayed on the screen. It can be a pair or group activity to make it more interesting.

Students are asked to listen to music or speech or any voice without a picture or video, and students have to guess the theme of the speech and make an oral presentation for two minutes. They may be asked to sum up and finally get feedback from other participants.

Challenges faced by students in speaking skill

As the course is designed for first-year students, most of the students experience anxiety in the classroom. They have just graduated from school and find all these things tough, impacting students speaking skills. It may decrease students' self-confidence, for which they feel reluctant to speak anything. Therefore the teacher should create a relaxed and comfortable environment in the class.

To get a result-oriented class, the students must be motivated - the driving force behind a learner. Motivation is possible by three elements, i.e., effort, desire, and affect. The learners must put much effort into learning a language and improve their skills. They must have a desire to succeed in learning the second language, and they must have a positive affect towards learning.

Most of the students in English classes have a lack of self-confidence. As they are in the 1st year, they feel awkward in speaking before a large audience. There is a great deal of stage fright and a low confidence level. They think they may be criticised by the teacher if they speak wrong English. The teacher should boost confidence in them and make them feel comfortable in the classroom.

As the class consists of many students from different backgrounds and different regions, some feel it is unnecessary to listen to everything taught, and it is also not vital for them to learn. They neglect listening skill exercises and activities. As a result, they fail to utter a word before others. Their level of understanding is also poor, for which they cut a sorry figure during the class.

Role of the teacher

The English teacher has a prominent role to play during the session to develop speaking skills and reach the desired level. The teacher may act as a participant in the first instance. The teacher should participate in the activities, join in the discussions, and role-plays too. They can add some more information, keep students engaged, and maintain an innovative classroom environment. The teacher should see that there is no domination in speaking. More and more opportunities should be given to students and draw all attention to the classroom. The teacher may also act as a prompter during a classroom. It is often observed that students who do not progress get lost, and find it difficult to speak. They cannot think what to say next. At this time, the teacher could help them go ahead, provide tips, encourage them to start speaking. By doing this, the students feel comfortable and start speaking, avoiding stage fright. Feedback is essential to develop the speaking ability of the students. The teacher should assess the students carefully and provide accurate feedback, which will help the students to do better in the next activity.

In Audiovisual aid, the role of the teacher is not only important but also very effective. The teacher has to select appropriate video clips for viewing. He/she should think about integrating it in the curriculum, preparing tasks, Planning activities, and making the sessions active, engaging, and enjoyable for students

Conclusion and Recommendation

It has been observed that activities to test speaking skills can make students nervous. This study has shown that the role of teachers is more important than learners. Other conclusions drawn from the study are as follows:

- Activities like icebreakers, communication games, role-plays, JAM, and storytelling should be used more to ensure speaking ability exposure. Through this, students get an opportunity to interact with their friends and teachers.
- Students should be given more time to speak, participate in each activity assigned to them. Even storytelling and JAM should be preferred.
- The use of Audiovisual aids can make the class more interesting. It will draw attention to many students, especially the oral presentation, which makes them develop their speaking skills.
- Students get more knowledge during audiovisual class as they witness the real-life situation on screen, and it encourages them to open up and come forward to speak. The materials and tools used in the Audiovisual class help them a lot to build their confidence.

In this digitalization era, teaching English has become more interesting, more innovative, and more enjoyable. To make teaching and learning effective, students should be proactive, involved in every activity, and continue to practice on the task even after class. On the other hand, the teachers should be friendly towards students. They should feel the students' needs and interests before planning the materials for speaking skills. As far as possible, the teachers should speak less and more time should be given to students to speak more. The teachers should be attentive during the audiovisual aids for a successful speaking session.

This study is based on the Indian scenario and takes the example of a few engineering colleges and universities in India. It is a limited study to determine the students' difficulties in speaking skills and implement few techniques to help the students develop their speaking skills. Further research on this topic should be undertaken to expand the scope.

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Political Communication for Social Change: A Study on Election Manifesto (2019) of Biju Janata Dal, Odisha

Centurion Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
ISSN: 2395 6216 (PRINT VERSION)
ISSN: 2395 6224 (ONLINE VERSION)
Centurion University of Technology
and Management
At - Ramchandrapur
P.O. - Jatni, Bhubaneswar
Dist: Khurda – 752050
Odisha, India

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Abstract

In a democratic society, political communication and social change are like the two sides of the same coin. In electoral politics, manifestos of political parties not only appear to be the tool in the election campaign but constitutes a set of promises that demonstrates the indicators of wider social change.

Social changes occur due to various factors. One of the predominant factors of social change is the existing political system of a country. The ideology of political parties is often reflected in the election manifesto. Political Party's Manifesto, a tool of political communication expresses promises of social changes. Indeed, party's manifesto is a political communication of promises whereas the social change fulfilment of party's manifesto.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the party in power for last twenty one years in the state of Odisha has regularly evolved new policies to position the

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party as a progressive and pro-people political party. The 2019 general election manifesto of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has promised various popular schemes which showcase the aspiration of bringing socio-economic changes in the state of Odisha.

The paper aims to explore how a manifesto of a political party is an important tool of political communication which brings social change. The study analyses the content from 2019 general election manifesto of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) for analysis.

Keywords: Election Manifesto, Political communication, Social Change, Electoral Politics.

Introduction

Norris and Sanders (2003) exhort a central claim that the value of democratic elections is their potential for civic education. They also urge that the message, not the medium, matters. Through a structured and pre-decided political communication process the political parties pass their messages to the voters to have an effective voter's turnout in favour of political parties.

Political communication is an interactive system regarding the transmission of facts amongst politicians, the news media, and the voters (Norris 2001). Norris (2001) also emphasises the system that operates downward from governing establishments toward public, linkage among political leaders, and opinion towards office bearer.

Elections are considered as a link within citizen and political actors, in polity and society, also with individuals and state (Palmer, 1975: 1). Importantly, an election works as means of political involvement and socialization within the electoral region (Palmer, 1975).

Manifesto of a political party represents the party ideology and stand points about policy (Trent and Friedenber, 2008). It is a direct communication to the voters about the philosophy and vision of the party.

Electoral Manifestos are important across the democratic world. An electoral manifesto is defined as a document published and ratified by a political party before an election which contains a detailed policy plan and the vision of the party for the voters communicated to voters during election.

Researchers have shown that electoral manifestos do in fact provide many cues on parties' policy-making. Electoral manifestos provide cues for how a party would deal with socio-economic development when elected into government.

While many public discourses on parties and politicians seen as being pledge breakers and liars, on the other hand the parties discharge the majority of the pledges made in their electoral manifesto upon gaining office (Thomson et al., 2016; Bara, 2005).

Finally, electoral programs are not only relevant for parties in government, but also indicative for a party's behaviour in opposition, as shown by a large congruence between positions of parties in electoral manifesto and speeches delivered in parliament (Louwerse, 2011; Lehmann, 2016; Nicolas, 2017). One can summarize this body of research in two words: manifestos matter (Brouard et al., 2018).

Objectives

- i) To explore into the elements of the election manifesto (2019 general election) of Biju Janata Dal.
- ii) To analyse the content/message of social change in the manifesto (2019 general election) of Biju Janata Dal.

Methodology

To conduct a detailed study on the election manifesto we have to go through the content thoroughly because political parties use manifesto as an effective tool of communication during election. Therefore the methodology adopted here is purely a content analysis method and

the content of the election manifesto of Biju Janata Dal 2019 has been painstakingly analysed.

Social Change through Political Communication

Each society is unique and any changes that take place are likely to result from a set of complex interacting factors: environment, technology, personal, cultural, political, religious, economic, and so on.

Political communication techniques and strategies allow policy advocates, public relations officers, speechwriters, campaign executives, political consultants, political marketers, elected officials and other political professionals to create, shape, and distribute messages that can influence the political process.

Some of the most important factors of social change are as under (1) Physical Environment (2) Demographic (biological) Factor, (3) Cultural Factor (4) Ideational Factor (5) Economic Factor (6) Political Factor.

Media, Democracy and Social Change puts politics back into political communications. It shows how within a digital media ecology, the wider context of neoliberal capitalism remains essential for understanding what political communications is and can hope to be. Tackling broad themes of structural inequality, technological change, political realignment and social transformation, the paper explores political communications as it relates to debates around the state, infrastructures, elites, populism, political parties, activism, the legacies of colonialism, and more.

Political messaging can take many forms, including speechwriting, social and online media, television and radio, interpersonal communication between candidates and prospective voters, policy studies, press releases and more.

Election manifesto is a documented promise of communication by a political party to woo the voters. Political party's election manifesto is a

vision document for social change and also implementation of party's ideology to bring social changes.

Elements of Election Manifesto

The 2019 Election Manifesto of BJD highlights points with 20 issues with four major areas like i) Empowerment of Farmers ii) Empowerment of youth iii) Empowerment of Women, iv) JUHAR: Joint Upliftment of Habitations and Regions.

Out of four major areas there are three points where the empowerment word is used. And predominantly the word upliftment which is often used in the context of the socio- economic development of the state.

An election manifesto spells out aims, policies, values, and principles for which a political party stands for and has worked in the past years. A manifesto also gives reasons for the voters why they should consider a particular party as their choice.

An Overview of the BJD Party Manifestos 2019

To fulfil the dream of late Biju Patnaik (former Chief Minister of the state and father of incumbant Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik), Biju Janata Dal, the political party formed in his name asserts that it is working to achieve late Biju Patnaik's vision of a Odisha where every citizen of the state has a decent roof over his head, every family gets drinking water and all – weather protection. They must have all-weather roads and bridges, schools properly manned with able teachers and hospitals with adequate number of excellent doctors, proper healthcare, schooling, roads and communication systems like telephones, like electronics-all that the modern science has given, the average villagers must have.

Party's Self-Appraisal of 2014 Election Manifesto

Biju Janata Dal coming into the foray of the 2019 general election has deliberately placed a report card of its last tenure (2014-2019). The

party has placed an overall statistics of its successful schemes from 2014 to 2019.

An ambitious state government brought its own Food Security Act side lining the then Food Security Act of Central Government. The state government Act provides food security to all recognised beneficiaries. This popular scheme helped all deserving families to get secured under the state's own food security Act. Probably this act has a good impact on the rural poor, which converted into votes in the 2019 election.

In a welfare state, it is the responsibility of the government to provide basic needs to its citizen. Under the universal Social Security Act 48 lakhs (4 8 , 2 2 , 0 7 5 according to the sspd.gov.in/ on 14 Nov 2020) beneficiaries were provided benefits. Under Pension S c h e m e s beneficiaries including the aged, widows, destitute and differently-abled received a monthly pension.

Government of Odisha

EVERYONE MAKES PROMISES

DID WE FULFILL OUR PROMISES MADE IN 2014?

SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha

OUR REPORT CARD TO THE PEOPLE

- ADDITIONAL 10 LAKH HECTARE IRRIGATION POTENTIAL** > 9 lakh hectares created, will cross 10 lakh hectares by May 2019. From a food deficit state to a major contributor to food security of the country.
- UNIVERSAL HEALTH SECURITY** > Implemented through Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana. Free medicines, diagnostics and treatment from PHCs to Medical colleges for entire population. 45 lakh cases treated per month.
- UNIVERSAL FOOD SECURITY** > State's own Food Security Scheme covers all deserving families.
- UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SECURITY** > 48 lakh beneficiaries including old people, widows, destitute and differently abled. The State with the highest beneficiary to population ratio.
- SHELTER SECURITY FOR ALL** > A roof of 22 lakh families provided with pucca houses. 10 lakh slum dwellers getting land rights under the historic JAGA mission
- INDUSTRY INVESTMENT** > Top most state in aluminium, steel and stainless steel production. A mammoth Rs. 4,19,274cr investment through the Make in Odisha program leading to creating 30 lakh job potential.
- YOUTH EMPOWERMENT** > Skilled in Odisha Program - Global Brand. The Best State in skill development.
- WOMEN EMPOWERMENT** > 70 Lakh women part of socio-economic empowerment movement - Mission Shakti. The first Legislative Assembly to have passed resolution for 33% reservation for women in Parliament and Assemblies.
- MODEL SCHOOL IN ALL BLOCKS** > 190 Adarsh Vidyalayas functional.
- 1% INTEREST LOANS FOR FARMERS, STUDENTS, WOMEN** > Implemented from 2015. Currently, Zero interest loans to farmers and women.

www.odisha.gov.in

Website details:
 *Details on projects on Water Resources Department website - <http://www.dwaterresources.gov.in/>
 **List of beneficiaries with photogged photos hosted at <http://162.172.58.209/foodhub/>

Picture-1: BJD performance report.
Source www.odisha.gov.in

This benefit scheme initiated under the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for the disabled, old age persons in the state of Odisha is one of the top four programmes mentioned in the report card, which brought self-reliance for beneficiaries, the state with highest beneficiaries to population ratio. Obviously, this vast number of beneficiaries may have an inclination towards the ruling party which translates to votes.

Under women empowerment scheme, 'Mission Shakti', which is one of the unique programmes of the Naveen Patnaik led Biju Janata Dal government; around 70 lakh rural women have been successfully made self-reliant. The state government provides financial support to these SHGs through bank loans to encourage the rural women to take up various livelihood activities. Odisha Legislative Assembly is the first to have passed a resolution for 33% reservation for women in parliament and assembly to showcase government pro-women policy.

The party has laid a vast confidence among women as result of which the percentage of women who vote in favour of the party is increasing in every general election.

Odisha is recognized as one of the top ranked states in the country in terms of live investments attracted by the manufacturing sector, as per a recent study by ASSOCHAM.

The state has become one of the attractive destinations for investors because of a conducive environment for industrialisation. Amid sluggish economic activities due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Odisha Cabinet has approved amendments to the state's industrial policy 2015 and labour laws to revive various sectors (ET Auto.com, the Economic time, PTI, August 14, 2020).

The makeinIndia.com reports the state has undertaken several initiatives over the past few months in terms of implementation of ease of doing business, creating an enabling policy framework and development of state-of-the-art industrial infrastructure facilities to make it easy for companies to set up and do business in the state.

The Biju Janata Dal led government in its 2019 general election manifesto claims that the promise made in 2014 has been fulfilled through social welfare schemes for its entire citizen from womb to tomb. The report card of 2014-2019 term of the Biju Janata Dal led Government which might have translated into work as result the party got a resounding victory in 2019 assembly election. Again the 2019 general election manifesto promises the people of Odisha to serve them in better way to keep the pace of development in track. Even the Naveen Patnaik government started a campaign that his government believes in work, not words.

Naveena Odisha, Sashakta Odisha, Samastanka Odisha

(Focus on Women, Youth, Farmers and Tribals in 2019 Manifesto)

The conch party in its poll manifesto, apart from reiterating its long-standing demand of the Special Category Status for Odisha, has given focus on women, youth and farmers.

The 2019 Election Manifesto highlights points with 20 issues with four major divisions like, i) Empowerment of Farmers ii) Empowerment of youth iii) Empowerment of Women, iv) JUHAR: Joint Upliftment of Habitations and Regions.

The inclusion of innovative, radical and progressive references stands out in the election manifesto of a party truly becoming a key player in

Odisha political and social life. Election manifesto becomes a tangible guide for the growth of the state through social change.

To reduce regional disparities and increase the pace of development, Odisha has started Special Development Councils in 9 predominantly tribal districts that have ensured representation of all tribal and PVTGs in the State of Odisha. These Councils have ensured protection and preservation of tribal cultural heritage. In the same lines, Special Councils will be formed for communities not represented such as Kudumi, Scheduled Caste and economically backward classes for the welfare and preservation of unique skills, art and cultural heritage.

It is the endeavour to ensure 'Nabeena Odisha Sashakta Odisha' is 'Samastanka Odisha'.

The party in its manifesto promised to set up world class community centre in identified clusters. The Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal, currently which is in power has promised to set up a state Youth Innovation Fund.

The BJD could also gauge the sentiments of women and allow more women to participate in the electoral politics under the party banner. Coincidentally, the development comes a decade after a constitutional amendment guaranteeing 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was stalled.

Conclusion

The lacunae with manifestos is that many do not read it, so it fails as major political communication for campaign. Sometime announcement of issues by the political leaders during the campaign become more effective than the printed manifesto. To attract the voters to vote for a particular party due to technology advancement it is easier for the party to communicate through other digital platform. There are also

instances where it has been noticed that a strong and viable election manifesto helps political parties to win election.

Overall analysis of manifesto content shows that the contents are quite important for political actors to communicate the social change issues to the voters during the election. Opponent political parties very cleverly communicate to woo the voters in their favour which is supposed to be one of the best forms of political communication in electoral politics. Starting from Europe to North America, from Asia to Africa; all elected governments, the political parties, and political actors use the manifesto as a tool of political communication.

The study shows that the Biju Janata Dal, which is in the power for last 21 years has won five consecutive elections. The study also reveals that Biju Janata Dal has always been in a front foot regarding the publication and circulation of election manifesto as compared to other parties.

Naveen, who is not good at Odia, during his 2019 election campaign most often seen pronouncing a punch line “*Apana mane Khusi to Mu bi Khusi*”, which means ‘if you all are happy, then I am also happy’ was very popular among voters. This punch line can be considered as a case study in electoral politics because someone like Naveen who is not comfortable with his mother tongue attracts voters with a single typical Odia punch line.

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Centurion Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (India)
Volume 9 Number 2 April - September 2019

