

THE ROLE OF FOLK EPICS IN THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL LITERATURES

Erkinov Adham Anvar o'g'li

CSPU Tourism faculty

Foreign Languages and Literature stage 3 student

*Scientific advisor: **Matenova Feruza***

Abstract: *India has been a citadel of rich and diverse cultures and religions. Culture is always at the core of all development activities. It gives a society a sense of direction and togetherness and a perception of value and excellence. Folk literature/culture has immense importance for our survival as these are the basis on which we shall have to prepare our future path of development. Folk literature is related with folklore, oral tradition, traditional knowledge and beliefs. It is a great source of entertainment, teaching and preaching to the people. It is worthwhile for recreation, social control, social protest, education, socialization, and transmission of knowledge and character building. Indian English writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Girish Karnad, Habib Tanvir etc. have introduced Indian English and folk element at their best in their works. The present paper purports to examine the role of folk literature in the nation building. It suggests measures for preserving and transmitting cultural traditions and values to the next generation. It plays a pivot role in national integration and conservation of cultural heritage.*

Keywords: *income, status, language, dialect, mobility, Britain.*

Introduction

India has been a citadel of rich and diverse cultures and religions. It is a technological advanced country as having atomic power plants, sky scrapers, super computers and hi-tech cities which serves as a window to the tremendous



potential for modern technology. Apart from it, our country preserve cultural heritage. The University Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the UNESCO maintains that culture is “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” (Social development Notes, 2007). Culture is at the core of all development activities. It gives a society a sense of direction and togetherness and a perception of value and excellence. Folk lore, folk literatures have immense importance for our survival as these are the basis on which we shall have to prepare our future path of development.¹ Over the years, folk literature creates certain impact on Indian tradition. Folk literature is related with folklore, oral tradition, traditional knowledge and beliefs. Folk tales inform us about beliefs, crafts, speech, legends, songs, rituals and stories of a particular culture. It is transmitted by word of mouth and consist both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles and the likes. It is a great source of entertainment to people, teaching and preaching. It has remarkable impact on rural society because of the acceptable idioms, functional significance and the cultural values. Folk media plays an important role in social change and nation building.

Major forms of folk literature

➤ Folk Song: Folk song implies the use of music and the musical tradition which varies greatly from one area to another. It plays an importance role in serving as excitement to war or love or as a part of religious or secular ritual. Nationalists, communists, political parties and other government and private agencies used it effectively to promote their causes. Major folk songs are Alha, Burrakatha, Villupaattu, Puran Bhagat (Punjab), Pandwani (Madhya

¹ Dr. Seemant” „Folk element in Indian English literature“ International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development, Volume 3; Issue 8; August 2016; Page No. 54-55.



Pradesh), and Powada (Maharashtra). They also have further potential in communicating the developmental awareness among rural people.

- Folk Drama: This form is used to transmit dramatically the tradition and the teachings. Dances, many of them elaborate, with masks portraying animal or human characters and sometimes containing speeches or songs, are to be found in many parts of the preliterate world. Indian folk theatre comprises songs, music, dance, and drama which fulfill all the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic needs of its spectators. Folk theatre has functioned as an instrument of social awareness, protest, and change.
- Fable: Fables, whether of the well-known Aesop cycle, with animals acting according to their real natures or those from India, where animals simply act as men and women, are literary in origin.
- Folktale: folktales are hardly to be distinguished from myths, since, especially in tales of tricksters and heroes, they presuppose a background of belief about tribal origin and the relation of men and gods.
- Proverbs, Riddles and Charms: Three of the shorter forms of folk literature- proverbs, riddle and charms –are appeared in written literature. Give and take between oral and written proverbs demands a special investigation. The purpose of the riddle is to deceive the listener about meaning. Charms produces magical effect.
- Folk Dances: The folk dances are performed on every special occasion and festival, to express joy. During the performances of such folk dances, people come from different sections of society together. It provides a chance to address them collectively using the message through these folk dances to improve their status, for example by getting benefited by the government run schemes of their wellbeing and development.

There are some legendary folk literature examples as Hitopadesha, the Jataka tales, folk epics etc. They are intended to impart values such as of self-



sacrifice, morality and honesty. India possesses a large body of heroic ballads and epic poetry preserved in oral tradition, both in Sanskrit and the various vernacular languages of India. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, Upanishads, Panchtantra, Narayana Pandit's Hitopadesa, Somadeva's Kathasaritsagara, Jataka Tales, all these texts are not only the compendia of mythological, religious, spiritual wisdom in written form but also the resource texts to the folklore comprising folk literature, oral tradition and folk performance.

Relevance of folk literature in nation building

The most important question is -can folk form carry modern messages, and if they can, should they; if they cannot, should they be modified so that they can? Since the traditional media or folk form is closer to the hearts and minds of the rural people, its appeal is more personal and intimate. The folk media appears to be the main media of communication for rural people. Storytellers, singers, minstrels and other kinds of folk entertainers have acted for centuries as sources for the transmission and dissemination of news and information through face-to face live communication. The values, attitudes, beliefs and culture of the people are propagated, reinforced and perpetuated through these folk forms. The issues in a society are depicted in the form of satire by the folk artists for curing societal evils. Folk media has greatest appeal to the masses and has qualities of touching the deepest emotions of the illiterate millions. Folk theatre forms like Tamasha, Nautanki, Keertana or Harikatha attract the rural audiences most, so people can be educated through these mediums to bring about desirable changes in their behavior. Folk literature is worthwhile for certain reasons as:

1. Recreation: The various aspects of oral tradition such as folk song, ballad, epic-play, folk tale, myths, proverbs provides recreation or amusement for instance women sing songs while weeding the field. The innumerable folk tales of panchtantra provide both entertainment and worldly wisdom that can help one to navigate through the alleys of modern life.



2. Education: The simple tunes of folk songs are appealing and imparting useful knowledge of history, geography, arithmetic etc. Riddles helps to sharpen the wit and solve mathematical problems easily. It shapes the attitudes, opinions, and belief system of the people and thereby shapes their world view.

3. Socialization: Folk tradition helps in the process of socialization. Folk stories impart some knowledge of value system and belongingness to the society. Folk songs help to inculcate good behavior and adjustment to the social structure according to the need for equilibrium and coherence in a society.

4. Social control: Oral tradition is highly effective in exercising social control. Moral songs help to control the behavior of the people so that they do not neglect the norms and value systems of their community. Myths and epic plays describe mythical persons and emphasis the fact that good always wins. Knowing the characters and situations of folk literature is part of being culturally literate. Through Folk literature, children can develop a sense of morality. It helps children to sort out good and evil in the world and to identify with the good.

5. Social protest: Folk arts serve as a form of social protest against injustice, exploitation and oppression. It helps to release the inner tension caused by injustice and inspires people to unify and fight relentlessly against the injustice and exploitation. During the nationalist movement, folk songs and theatre forms were used in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab to inspire the people to fight against the Britishers.

6. Transmission of knowledge: It serves as a communication channel for transmission of knowledge and beliefs. Folk art provides moral, philosophical and historical knowledge to the people. Folk songs and plays about recent political and social happening provide a perspective and this helps to guide the behavioural pattern of the people. So the folk forms in India are dynamic, responsive, potent and an integral part of the process of living of the people.



Well known literary artists of Indian English Literature have communicated their thoughts through literary performances. For example, the very famous playwright Girish Karnad has explored folk motifs in his play Hayavadana. Nagamandala is a combination of two tales – the tale of a story and a song and the serpent lover. Karnad's adaptation of folktales collected by Ramanujan for his play Nagamandala is an exemplification of the theory of intertextuality. Most of Toru Dutta's poems deal with Indian myths and Legends. Her works are like-Savitri, Lakhman, Jogadhya Uma, The Legend of Dhruva. R. K. Narayan is an eminent Indian English novelist. He makes no attempt to present India in an exotic light for the sake of foreign audience, a failing common to other Indian English Writers. He has brought a collection of legends drawn from the Mahabharata and the Puranas entitled Gods, Demons and others and an English version of the Ramayana based on the Tamil epic by Kamban.² His first novel Swami and Friends shows the presence of Indian culture and customs skillfully. Raja Rao's first novel Kanthapura possesses several Indian folk words in an exquisite manner. Pather Panchali revolves around the lives and events of the people of Nischindipur and thus portrays "the beliefs and customs of ordinary people".³ In the novel, folk elements can be located in diverse layers. An intricate analysis of the lifestyles of the characters, their food habits, rituals, utterance of folklores and sayings, fairs and entertainments and also superstitions point out the presence and prominence of folk elements and their functions in the novel. Folk songs formed an integral part of village tradition and culture and the farmers using songs at harvest time is also a common standard which has been picked up by Raja Rao in the novel. Mythological elements play a vital role in the human life. They have been connected with our daily life.⁴ Raja Rao's Kanthapura reflects the Indian Vedanta tradition and the acumen of age-old Indian scriptures. Raja Rao's Novel Kanthapura is based on the pattern

² Durgadas Mukhopadhyay. The Drum Beat - Issue 393 - "Let's Use Folk Arts and Traditional Media for Development". May 7, 2007.

³ Handoo, Jawaharlal. Folklore in Modern India. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1999. Print.

⁴ Ranganath, H. K. (1980), Using Folk Entertainment to Promote National Development UNESCO.



of the Indian epic Ramayana.⁵ These literary works project folk literature through their writings to inculcate values, moral to develop cultural literary for nation building, The traditional folk performing arts traditions and customs have long lasting impact on society and culture. Though, globalization impacted on folk literature, it has still contributing significantly in social integrity promotion of cultural diversity and nation building. Folk media carries many social issues related to rural development. Therefore, we need to keep our traditional folk literature alive by continuously safeguarding and preserving from the adverse effects of globalization. It is desirable to offer adequate legal protection to folklore. Model provision should be framed for promoting such legal protection at national level.⁶

References:

1. Dr. Seemant“ „Folk element in Indian English literature“ International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development, Volume 3; Issue 8; August 2016; Page No. 54-55.
2. Durgadas Mukhopadhyay. The Drum Beat - Issue 393 - "Let's Use Folk Arts and Traditional Media for Development".May 7, 2007.
3. Handoo, Jawaharlal. Folklore in Modern India. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1999. Print.
4. Karnad, Girish. Nagamandala (Play with Cobra).New Delhi: Oxford India, 1999.
5. Kumar, Dr. Harish. Folk Media and Rural Development India Media Studies journal. Vol. 1. No. 1, July-Dec, 2006.
6. Ranganath, H. K. (1980), Using Folk Entertainment to Promote National Development UNESCO.

⁵ Karnad, Girish. Nagamandala (Play with Cobra).New Delhi: Oxford India, 1999.

⁶ Vatsayan, Kapila M. The traditions of the Performing Theatres" presented at the 1974 Unesco Seminar-cum-Workshop Quoted in H. K. Ranganath, Not Relics of the Past, Communicator, Vol. XV, No. 1, January, 1980. P 24.



7. University news, „A Special issue on Indigenous voices Mapping India“s folk and Tribal Literature,” 51 (05) February 04/10/2013.

8. Vatsayan, Kapila M. The traditions of the Performing Theatres" presented at the 1974 Unesco Seminar-cum-Workshop Quoted in H. K. Ranganath, Not Relics of the Past, Communicator, Vol. XV, No. 1, January, 1980. P 24.

