

**MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH (MEG-16)**

***INDIAN FOLK LITERATURE***

**ASSIGNMENT**

**Course Code: MEG-16**

**Assignment Code: MEG-16/TMA/2020-21**

**Max. Marks: 100**

Attempt any **five** of the following. Question 8 is compulsory.

1. Give a brief overview of the growth of folklore studies in India. 20
2. What is Contextual Theory of folklore? Elucidate. 20
3. Categorize the 'Great' and 'Little' traditions in the study of folklore. 20
4. Are cave paintings a part of our folk paintings and folk narratives? Attempt a critical review of folk paintings. 20
5. *Tales Told by Mystics* bases itself on the rich indigenous mythological properties. Discuss. 20
6. Attempt a critical note on the ethnographic details and eco-systems of the tribes of India on the basis of Sitakant Mahapatra's *The Awakened Wind: The Oral Poetry of the Indian Tribes*. 20
7. Discuss Girish Karnad's pivotal role in the development of folk theatre and modern Indian drama.

8. Write short notes on any two:

(10x2=20)

- a. *Desha, Kshetra, Nadu, Rajya*
- b. Jatra, Kathakali, Tamasha
- c. Folk music
- d. Folk cuisine

# ASSIGNMENT SOLUTIONS GUIDE (2020-2021)

## MEG-16: INDIAN FOLK LITERATURE

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**Attempt any five of the following. (Question 8 is compulsory)**

**Q1. Give a brief overview of the growth of folklore studies in India.**

**Ans.** However, the study of folklore on Indian soil, in modern systematic ways, began only after the coming of the British. Jawaharlal Handoo, one of the foremost scholars of folklore studies from India, has divided the growth of folklore studies in India into three periods: the Missionary Period, the Nationalistic Period and the Academic Period.

The missionary period

The Christian missionaries, who started their mission of spreading Christianity in India since the time of early nineteenth century, were eventually the first batch of collectors and publishers of the first-hand resources of Indian traditional cultural lives at various regions. These missionaries, who visited the remotest corners of the country for preaching the Christian faith amongst the rural Indians, came in contact with the hitherto unexplored rural traditional settings of the diverse Indian communities. As J. Handoo noted, "These Anglo-Saxon fathers recorded all kinds of information – habits, manners, customs, oral traditions, rituals etc. – about their subjects. They used some of this information in spreading the Christian faith and were successful in delivering their main message through the native symbols. Most of these writings were published and form a part of the great treasures of folklore we [the Indians] possess about our own past. Looked from this viewpoint, these works of missionaries are of great historical value to a student of Indian folklore" (Handoo 1989: 135)

Though those publications of the missionaries were void of theoretical analysis of pure academics, their works were, and still are, valuable because of their highly informative contents. Some of such publications were Mary Frere's *Old Deccan Days* or *Hindoo Fairy Legends Current in Southern India* (1886), A. J. Duboi's *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* (1897), J. Hinton Knowels' *Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings Explained and Illustrated from the Rich and Interesting Folk-Lore of the Valley* (1885) and *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (1893), Aurel Stein's *Hatim's Tales* (1937), Charles E. Grover's *The Folk Songs of Southern India* (1894), John Lazarus' *A Dictionary of Tamil Proverbs* (1894).

Parallel to the drives of the missionaries, few western philologists and orientalist took significant steps of establishing academic societies and starting important periodicals that contributed immensely in the

intellectual attention of the Indian cultural resources during this time. The Asiatic Society was founded by William Jones in 1784; and the journals like the Indian Antiquary and the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay gave spaces for "brief articles on oral narratives and other genres of folklore" (Handoo 1989: 134-5).

#### The nationalist period

Towards the late nineteenth century, a sense of Indian nationalism began to grow under the leadership of newly emerging Indian intellectual groups who were enlightened with the western education and initiated a renewed nationalistic attitude towards their own societies and traditions. Also, the works of the missionaries and civil servants, who brought a bulk of textual production on Indian local traditions, indirectly contributed to a sense of nationalistic consciousness amongst the Indian intellectuals. Such sentiments got momentum along with the Indian struggle, which began in 1857, to achieve independence from the British. Indian scholars and intellectuals began to search and establish their cultural roots by exploring their own culture and tradition. Some of the major works of this period are: Lakshminath Bezbaruah's *Burhi Ait Sashu* (1911); Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Sati* (1917) and *The Folk Literature of Bengal* (1920); Zeverchand Meghani's *Halardan* (1928); Dadajini Vato (1933); *Lok Sahitya and Kankavati* (1947); Suryakaran Pariks and Narottam Swamy's *Dhola Maru ra Doha* (1947), Ramnaresh Tripathi's *Hamara Gram Sahitya* (1940); Devendra Satyarthi's *Bela Phule Adhi Rat* (1948), Dhart Gatt Hai (1948), Dhire Baho Ganga (1948) and many many others. Besides straight collections and anthologies of folklore materials, many Indian creative writers brought literary productions, in the forms of novel, drama, poetry and short stories, that were either based on or highlighting the local folklore themes. Besides the Indian scholars and authors, few western scholars also contributed heavily in the collection and study of Indian folklore during this time. Specially noteworthy is the works of Verrier Elwin whose important books were *Songs of the Forest: The Folk Poetry of the Gonds*(1935), *Folktales of Mahakosal* (1944), *Folksongs of Maikal Hills*, *Folksongs of Chattisgarh* (1946), *Myths of Middle India* (1949), *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954) and *Myths of the Tribal Frontier Agency* (1958). The treatment of the local folklore materials in India by the Indians during this time is significant in many ways. Firstly, for the first time an Indian perspective began to work on the study of Indian folklore during this period. Prior to that, it was either the distant foreign Indologists, or Christian Missionaries or the Colonial British Administrators who put the data of Indian folklore with their non-Indian viewpoints. Secondly folkloric resources began to be associated with national unity and identity which was apparent all throughout the Indian freedom movement. The discourse of the Khadi costumes and Mahatma Gandhi's spinning wheel are the most visible examples of it. Folklore played the crucial role of the medium of spreading Indian national unity both in pre- and post-independence times.

#### The academic period

The academic period of Indian folklore studies, when one would see the formal study and research in institutionalized settings such as colleges and universities, began after the Indian independence in 1947. The necessary stimulus required for this was gained in the spirit of the nationalistic period. If the missionary period was marked with collection of raw data on Indian folklore and the Nationalistic period was filled with patriotic emotions, the academic period was featured with objectives of truth-finding about, and scientific analysis and preservation of, Indian folklore by the Indians. Like the case in many other countries, study of folklore in Indian educational institutions remained annexed with the

departments like anthropology, history and literary studies. In 1955, Gauhati University started a Folklore Archive which was later converted to the Department of Tribal Culture and Folklore Research – the first department of folklore in an Indian university. Many other Indian universities in later times opened their departments for offering M.A., M. Phil. and Ph. D. courses in folklore studies. Besides governmental colleges and universities, non-governmental centres, like the National Folklore Support Centre, also grew up for promotion and dissemination of folklore scholarship in India. Interdisciplinary approach, international collaborations and applications of contemporary theories and perspectives in the field of humanities and social sciences mark the folklore studies in India of this period. Some of the notable folklore scholars of this time are Birinchi Kumar Baruah, A. K. Ramanujan, Jawaharlal Handoo, Praphulladatta Goswami, Birendranath Datta, etc.

**Q2. What is Contextual Theory of folklore? Elucidate.**

**Ans.** The oral-formulaic theory of Parry and Lord, for the first time in the long history of folklore scholarship, attached great significance to the context of folklore texts. Attention to context, as we are aware, was a biproduct of their main quest: to search for the formulas that singers learn and memorize to continue the tradition of the art of story-telling. Therefore, despite the significance this theory attached to the context of epic singing traditions, oral formulaic theory remains primarily a text-oriented theory. However, one should not lose sight of the emphasis this theory laid on studying context which eventually gained momentum and appeared in the form of a separate and forceful theoretical tool known as the "Contextual Theory". Besides this contribution of the oral-formulaic theory, the rapid growth and diversification of social sciences in Europe and the U.S.A. has also been responsible for the changes that have occurred in theoretical folkloristics.

Text-orientedness, as most of us are aware, has been one of the unpleasant things that caused the theoretical lag in folkloristics. Most of the theoretical orientation in folklore indicates towards the fossil-nature of folklore, in which case text became the most important thing. These traditional theories subsumed that the golden age of folklore occurred in the past and therefore collection and preservation of the survivals and reconstruction of the original forms was the ultimate aim of folklore studies. Most of these theories ignored the dynamic character of folklore. But the changes which are occurring in linguistics, psychology, anthropology and other social sciences began influencing the text-oriented folklore scholarship as well. For example it was argued, and rightly so, that if the dynamics of oral tradition is a fact then the text-oriented folklore theories are too narrow and too shallow to recognize this fact. Moreover, there was also a growing feeling among the scholars that even the folklore-text does not have a fixed status and in fact goes on changing according to the needs of the time and situation or the context. In fact the oral-formulaic theory had proved this beyond doubt. These theoretical constraints brought a group of young scholars together and their contributions began to be inspired by the "contextual-theory". These scholars, unlike their predecessors, as is evidenced by their contributions, did not only depend on the theoretical knowledge amassed in folkloristics proper. Guided by the holistic realities of the cultures, they seem to have grasped whatever was useful to them from other equally important and related disciplines. "From linguistics", writes Dorson, "they have drawn the concept have drawn the concept of behaviour, from anthropology of functionalism, from sociology of role-playing,

from psychology of ego mechanisms, and they seek to apply these perspectives to the folklore traditions" (1972 :45).

Contextualists insist that the concept of folklore apply not to a text but to an event in time in which a tradition is performed or communicated. Therefore the whole performance or communicative act must be recorded. The collector can no longer simply write down or tape-record a text for the text is only part of each unique event. To circumvent this difficulty, literary and ethnographic methods, which complement each other, and emphasis on rigorous fieldwork are considered keys to successful contextual studies. "The shift from the library to the field not only adds new supplementary information, but also changes the perspectives of the text from linear narration to multidimensional performance, which forms the essential background of all folkloric events, that the contextualists refuse to extrapolate the text from its context "in language behaviour, communication expression and performance" (Dorson, 1972 : 45) and be guided by the old static typology of folklore texts.

The founders of the contextual theory have not yet produced by monolithic work which could express their thought systematically. However, some highly theoretical papers have been published 52, which speak of the theoretical and methodological dimensions of this growing school of thought. These theoretical articles "reveal dimensions of folklore often obscured from the student who is reading texts alone. For years we have known that the written page is but a pale reproduction of the spoken word, that a tale hardly reflects that, no matter how carefully we record oral texts, much is left unprinted, even more is not understood" (Ben-Ammons, 1976 : xi).

Since contextualists' insights go beyond the text into the holistic aspects of a folkloric event - be it a storytelling event or a dance performance - they take into consideration the multidimensional paradigm of the context of such an event. For instance a story-telling event to contextualists means, besides the text, the narrator, the occasion, the style of narration, the audience, the interaction between the narrator and the audience and the entire cultural background which forms the event. For obvious reasons this means recording the text and the whole circumstances (even gestures) in which the text was delivered by the narrator and received by the audience. This entails, ideally speaking, besides the use of tape recorder and other traditional methods of data collection, the sophisticated video equipment for capturing the contextual essence of the event. And many contextualists do use such sophisticated devices.

Whatever the future of the contextual theory, one thing seems certain that this theory is a clear departure from the text-oriented folklore theories and as such has great potential for analyzing the much neglected non-text forms - folk dance, drama, etc. - folklore. These forms were hardly studied rigorously in the past. The theoretical tools developed in folklore studies over the years were designed primarily for the text-oriented materials.

### **Q3. Categorize the 'Great' and 'Little' traditions in the study of folklore.**

**Ans.** In India, we always talk of Margi and Desi, Vaidic and Laukik, i.e., classical and folk traditions, which are theoretically named as the Great and Little Traditions. But in the Indian context, the loka and shastra (folk and elite) contrast is contrary to the western contrast between the Great and Little Tradition. India does not believe that non-literate cultures are 'knowledge blanks' which need to be filled in with the modern knowledge of different disciplines and dominant cultures. In reality, traditional Indian mind thinks that loka or desi and shastra or margi contrast represent two different expressions of the same

tradition and not of different traditions. In this way, classical Sanskrit literature describes, on one side, the core regions, Dakshina-patha, Kuru-Panchala, Madhyadesa, Gandhara and on the other peripheries like Naga, Shabara, Dasa and Kirata to share the making of Indian literature. The main narrative view point of Indian literature consists of a classical core trinity. But there is no denial of the fact that the periphery in Indian literature is very vital and hence in Banabhatta's Kadambari or Bharavi's Kiratarjuniam, the periphery always comes and speaks in classical texts. For example, in classical literature, Shiva appears as Shabara in Kiratarjuniam. Bana has a Chandala girl as an important character woven in his story. The focus of classical regional trinity was to create something vital with the help of the periphery, and in the process, both the geographical region and the social sense were brought into focus, but by keeping it outside the framework of the caste system in society. These two literary expressions of core and periphery are always taken together in Indian literary context but of course not as a monolithic unity but as diverse structures complementing each other. The complementariness of loka and shastra (folk and elite) is very deep and intricate in Indian context. Orality or folk is never marginalized in India; it is always an alternative tradition and alternative is not to be understood as "the opposite". Alternative modernity doesn't mean in contrast to modernity. If you want to draw a white line, you need dark colour as background, but it is a mistake to say white is the opposite of black or grey or blue. We have to make use of black or grey or any dark colour to bring out white in all its distinction. Thus, in India the glory of the mainstream literature rests not by marginalizing but by accepting oral or folk as its complementary. The loka and shastra (folk and elite) are complementary and they enable us to understand the range and the entirety of Indian aesthetic tradition and negotiate the whole issue of marginality in the context of shastra.

**Q4. Are cave paintings a part of our folk paintings and folk narratives? Attempt a critical review of folk paintings.**

**Ans.** The subject of Indian folk paintings is as diverse as the Indian cultural milieu itself. Indian folk art painting includes a brilliant battery of calendar and wall paintings, oil, canvas and cloth paintings, cave paintings, miniatures and so on. The most famous types of Indian folk art paintings hence include various ancient Indian art forms such as Madhubani, Phad, Kalamkari, Orissa Paata, Warli paintings and so on.

Indian folk art paintings usually deal with pictorial depictions of popular Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Additionally, we can also find Madhubani paintings of the sun, the moon and even some plants and flowers used in daily rituals, such as tulusi (basil) and so on. Many paintings also depict daily village life, common customs and rituals, birds, animals and the elements of nature. Folk paintings are very fetching and a visual treat, as they employ vibrant and natural colors and papers, clothes, leaves, earthen pots, mud walls and so on, as their canvas to paint on.

Folk art is the creative expression of those who uninfluenced by princely ostentation and ecclesiastic conservatism, revealed in lines and forms what they had within and around. Her ten-twelve thousand years old creative culture and a wide-spread art geography apart, India has hundreds of ethnic groups, each with its own taste, aspirations, joys, sorrows, struggles and a creative talent. Not in 'word', they discovered in 'form' their diction, their ultimate means to discourse mutually and with the 'divine'. Education or training wasn't their tool. They had instead massive imagination, passion to embellish, and inborn ability to give to routine forms symbolic dimensions, and to things, scattered around, status of art imagery - all that transformed into artists, not just individuals but communities, generations after generations. In a world every minute seeking means to distort and destroy they have kept along their own tenor singing to their own tunes, dancing to the notes of their hearts, and discovering in jumble of things, rough crude lines, and raw colors, a world that breathed purity, harmony, respect and concern for life, and a strange stoicism.

#### **People's Art As Against Ecclesiastic And Court Art**

As against the art of class - imperial or ecclesiastic, Gurushaday Datta's phrase identifies folk art as the art of indigenous common masses, whose first specimen was the nomad. Nomad's rock-shelter art preceded the earliest examples of priestly or princely art by nine-eight thousand years. Even the painted Indus wares or terracotta figurines, the transforms of the nomad's art, preceded the art of court and temples by many centuries, though subsequently the latter completely isolated the former. Around 11th-12th centuries the illustrative Jain painting revived some of its elements - irrational anatomy, angularity, bold lines, over gesticulation. Then onward, elements of this common man's art continued to have, except in the imperial Mughal painting, a perceptible presence in Indian painting, even the Sultanate, and the contemporary.

#### **Q5. Tales Told by Mystics bases itself on the rich indigenous mythological properties. Discuss.**

**Ans.** Tales Told by Mystics authenticates Manoj Das a seeker of truth, justice and enlightenment. Life, for him, changes, and so do his thought, perception and writing. Born in Shankhari in Balasore, Odisha, Manoj Das grew up as a staunch supporter of Marxism in his student career. He was a radical thinker who believed in social action and its impact on the world. Later on, however, he was transformed into a seeker of realism, and is now an ardent quester of spiritualism. In this collection, Manoj Das has attempted to compile a hundred short stories from the mystics against the backdrop of the rich resource of Indian mythology – the Puranas, the Vedas, the Upanishads, among others. Das writes in the preface: The India of yore, evidently, was an astoundingly fertile ground for the growth of several genres of fiction. Parallel to the chronological development of its mythology (the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Itihasa or the epics and the Puranas) , there grew a solid ethical, moral pragmatic and purely earthly tradition of literature consisting of the Brihatkatha (only a part of which is available to us as the Kathasarit-Sagar), a compilation of lively tales of wisdom, wit and delight; the Jataks, the world's first compilation of fables, apart from stories based on dramatic events and characters of a remote past, like those of Savitri and Satyavan, Dushyanta and Shakuntala, Nala and Damayanti, king Hariskhandra etc. some of which were in corporate in the Mahabharata and came to be regarded as aspects of our mythological lore. (ix) Whatever themes he takes in his stories, one thing is sure that nostalgia/ memory haunts him to the very core. Manoj Das has a different kind of artistic form and style from other famous short story writers like Ruskin Bond, O'Henry, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekov and R. K. Narayan. His stories usually begin with innocence, and recreate credibly the distant horizons through folk, mysticism and divinity. In an interview with Sachidananda Mohanty, Manoj Das validates his fondness for Odishan background and indigenous art from: Our indigenous can find appreciation in pastures new around the world, similarly, Indian literature, to whatever region it might belong, must remain Indian. With the knowledge about



India growing in the world, it should find wider appreciation. The best Indian literature is to be found in regional languages. Manoj Das's *Tales Told by Mystics* is an accumulation of short stories and tales from different sources collected over the past four decades – told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Nigamananda, Sri Vijay Krishna Goswami, Swami Ramdas, Swami Ram Tirth, Yogiji Maharaj and many others. These stories are the part of our culture and heritage. The collection is published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. The significance of the stories lies in the fact that they are appreciated not just within the culture in which they are located, but also beyond it. The reason behind this is the universal significance of these stories, and the honesty and faithfulness maintained by Manoj Das when he writes: "To the best of my conviction, the theme and the spirit of the stories have been faithfully projected (xii)."

Manoj Das's use of a number of images, symbols and allegories make the short stories an impressive exercise in addressing mental blindness or hollowness and directing it towards truth, honesty and reality. Another aspect of the story-writer that has a deep significance is that freedom of choice without wisdom is valueless and meaningless. This short story collection makes Manoj Das traverse a journey from earthly life to ascetic life, worldly life to spiritual life, esoteric life to divine life. The varied paths of mystic lore are laid before the reader as the author explores the path of renunciation to attain the goal. What Manoj Das verily believes in is that one can change one's fate by promise and determination. Human commitment is an important determinant. In one of the stories, the writer narrates about maya, which has two ways – vidya and avidya, deed and misdeed, acceptance and non-acceptance, action and non-action. The parables behind the stories are rare and immensely significant. Each story illustrated in this collection emphasizes two things – inner being and outer being, inner action and outer action, inwardness and outwardness. One can seek the inner self by prayer and meditation to reach the ultimate destination of life. Acquiring knowledge cannot alone help one to cross the river of life. What is necessary is to have strong faith in God. There is a difference between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is more important than the theoretical one. Thus to know the inner self and to work accordingly is the best remedial step for this world of crises. It is the inner self that always works like a true friend. It never allows ego and envy to live within and to ruin us.

**Q6. Attempt a critical note on the ethnographic details and eco-systems of the tribes of India on the basis of Sitakant Mahapatra's *The Awakened Wind: The Oral Poetry of the Indian Tribes*.**

**Ans.** Sitakant Mahapatra, the eminent poet from Odisha, has, over the years, collected a vast array of oral poems from various tribal communities. He had travelled extensively to different parts of Odisha in his capacity as an administrator, and during his journeys, he collected oral poetry from various tribal communities like the Kondhs, the Mundas, the Santals, the Parajas, the Hos, the Oraons and the Koyas.

The oral songs that he collected are on wide-ranging themes like birth, death, love, sex marriage, misery and tragedy of human life, the concept of time, eternity, spirituality, various rites, rituals, and celebrations that are different from clan to clan, village to village.

The oral poetry reflects the socio-cultural, religious and economic life patterns of the communities and thus its documentation is an authentic source of knowledge. Oral poetry, as is obvious from the nomenclature, is passed from generation to generation vocally and is rich in meanings, allusions, references, images, symbols and metaphors.

Sitakant Mahapatra in his introduction to the volumes of oral poetry writes, "Most tribal languages are unwritten; conventional from the point of view of us aged but fresh and inventive. They are also highly musical. They contain a large number of symbols. It is necessary to retain in translation as much as possible of the symbolism as it is the essence of poetry. It is also necessary to preserve, as far as possible, the line – structure of the original." (5)

There are about one hundred tribal communities in the three states of Odisha, Bihar and West Bengal and a large number of them – sixty two tribal communities to be precise – are from Odisha. But unfortunately, their oral poetry had not only been sidelined but also quite often been distorted and misinterpreted, as it is very difficult to retain the originality of the tribal songs in transliteration. In transliteration, the original poetry often gets twisted. A translator requires a thorough understanding of their language as well as the cultural traditions of the said communities. As regard to Indian tribal poetry, Verrier Elwin's Folk Songs of Chhattisgarh, his Folk Songs of Maikal Hills with Shamrao Hivale, W. G. Archer's The Blue Grove: The Poetry of the Oraons, The Dove and The Leopard and The Hill of Flutes are significant contributions towards understanding and appreciating folk songs and poems. Verrier Elwin had made extensive use of songs as sociological "documents" in his ethnographic monograph, The Baiga, in which poetry and ethnography are inseparable. Archer's translations of Oraon songs in the two anthologies referred to follow the technique of Arthur Waley's brilliant transcriptions of Chinese poems. Many believe that The Blue Grove contained some of the finest translations of Indian tribal poetry and they reflect his deep sense of appreciation for the Oraon way of life and their sensibilities. Mention may also be made of Hem Barua and Gopinath Mohanty's contribution in this field. However, barring these and a few other works, the picture, unfortunately, remains as bleak today as it was in the forties. (11) Oral songs can be classified into four categories: life cycle songs, ritual songs, festival songs and cosmological songs. Narrative poetry relates to the community's perspective about cosmology, and also about their historical origins and migration in historical times. There are poets and writers who are engaged in bringing the tribal poetry and songs to the forefront, to preserve and promote their perspective on the importance and sacredness of nature, as well as to enrich the existing literature. Oral poetry expresses their joy and ecstasy relating to the cycle of seasons, festivals, rituals and ceremonies and also conveys their anguish about poverty, undernourishment and exploitation. The different motifs of myths, symbols, religious faith and traditional values have appeared in their poetry from time to time. The composition of songs differs from tribe to tribe. It has been noticed that the songs of the Kondh and the Koya are longer in nature. The rituals of their everyday life have an artistic aspect. The singers decide the emotive aspect of each song. The songs emanating from the Kondh community reveal a greater tragic sense of life compared to Santali, Munda and Oraon songs. Sitakant Mahapatra is highly moved by the tribal communities – their poise and simplicity, naturalness and elegance that get reflected in their songs.

**Q7. Discuss Girish Karnad's pivotal role in the development of folk theatre and modern Indian drama.**

**Ans.** Quite often, scholars identify playwrights such as Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi and Girish Karnad in Kannada as the makers of modern dramatic literature in India, but the genesis of modern Indian drama needs to be mapped in the colonial encounter that eventually resulted in the influence of Western and European models on local theatrical traditions. British theatre formed part of cultural life as early as 1757. When Bengal came under the rule of East India Company, it saw a proliferation of playhouses, prominent among them being the Calcutta Theatre (built

in 1775), Chowringhee Theatre (built in 1813), and the Sans Souci Theatre (opened in 1839), which flourished under the patronage of colonial officials. Initially restricted to sahibs and memsahibs (British men and women respectively, as referred by Indians), theatrical activity spread among the local literati and men of wealth, who began staging European plays at local theatre, schools and colleges and by the late nineteenth century, resulted in the emergence of a stream of urban drama that was influenced by Anglo-European traditions. Even though it remained the not-so-popular aesthetic form as compared to the novel and poetry, by the late nineteenth century, theatre had developed into a broad-based entertainment in urban centres such as Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and attracted the largest middle class audience.

If one intends to locate Girish Karnad and his work in the category of Modern Indian Drama, the suggested 'cultural past', 'colonial past' and the 'historical context' and its contradictions vis-à-vis the idea of "Modernity" of the Modern Indian Drama will be essential to probe into the issue further. Karnad, like many of his contemporaries such as Dharamvir Bharti, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Habib Tanvir, Utpal Dutt, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, GP Deshpande, is a playwright whose work reveals a determined and self-conscious effort towards a new Indian drama. The members of Karnad's theatrical generation therefore share a number of significant qualities that distinguish them from their predecessors. In varying degree, these authors approach playwriting as a serious literary activity and drama as a complex verbal art, potentially connected to, but also independent of, theatre practice: the play-as-meaningful-text is thus detached equally from the genre of commercialized entertainment and topical political performance. Each playwright is committed to an indigenous language (rather than English) as his medium of original composition, and hence to the literary and performative traditions of the region where the respective language is dominant. Besides, each one has also participated actively in the process of inter-lingual translation which has resulted in lending international visibility. In another framework, Karnad and his contemporaries have rendered the role of 'dramatic author' largely synonymous with that of 'theorist' and 'critic'. By advancing theoretical and polemical arguments about form, language, style, purpose and influence in a range of rhetorical genres, they have offered the first fully developed, often antithetical, theories of dramatic representations and reception in the modern period in India, and formulated competing conceptions of the role of theatre in cultural and national life.

**Q8. Write short notes on any two:**

**(a) Desha:** Brahmarsi-**desha**, land of the rsi, or sages. Historically, the Sanskrit term was used to describe the second region of Indo-European occupation in India—the area eastward from Sirhind, including the tract between the Yamuna (Jumna) and Ganges (Ganga) rivers as far south as Mathura.

**Kshetra:** The **Kshetra** or the field refers to the body which is material, mutable, transitory and perishable, the Kshetrajna refers to the conscious knower of the body who is of the same essence as Knowledge, immutable, eternal and imperishable, the knower of the body is the soul residing in the body

**Nadu:** **Nadu** a term used to mean land, place, domicile etc. in South Indian languages.

**Kamma Nadu or Kammanadu, also Kammarashtra, is a home land of Kammas**

**Rajya :** The **Rajya** Sabha or Council of States is the upper house of the Parliament of India. Twelve of the members are nominated by the President of India for their contributions to art, literature, science, and social services. ... The rest of the house is elected by the state and territorial legislatures

**(b) Jatra: Jatras** are usually epic four-hour-long plays, preceded by a musical concert often lasting an hour, used to attract audiences. ... The cast is predominantly male, whose members also play the female parts, though since the 19th century, female actors started joining the cast.

**Kathakali:** Kathakali is the **dance** from the southernmost state of India its centre has been the region of Kerala and Malabar. This tradition of dance-drama has been popular in the Malabar region primarily in the form of Krishna and Rama ballets. Even female roles in the story line are performed to perfection by male artists. These dance postures are more complex than those used in Bharatnatyam. One of the peculiarities of this dance form is its costume and very elaborate make-up of the face. The headdress in Kathakali is of special significance as it also defines the hierarchical status of different artists participating in the performance.

The beginning of the performance is preceded by Chaidakaran, a ritual playing of drums. Traditionally the stage presentation of this dance was immediately preceded by a practice session called sevakali and undertaken in the precincts of a temple. Late Shankaram Namboodiri and Gopinath have been Kathakali artists of repute.

**Tamasha :** Tamasha has been the folk theatre and popular entertainment of Maharashtra state of India. It is extensively lively and female artists sing the favourite songs of the patrons. The form had originally no religious or social message to convey except those of refined type which raised philosophical and moral questions.

**(c) Folk music:** Folk music is music that is played or sung by ordinary people (not professional musicians). It is traditional music that people learn by listening to other people playing it and then copying them. We say that the tradition is “orally transmitted” or “handed down orally”, meaning that the music is not written down but taught by speaking (“oral” means “belonging to the mouth”). Every country has its own traditional music. Folk song is part of folk music. A folksinger is a person who sings folk songs.

In the 1960s a new type of music was started by a book Bob Dylan who mixed traditional folk song with rock and roll. This music is sometimes called “folk rock” .

Folk music is music for everybody to play and listen to. In this way it is different from classical music which is mainly developed by professional musicians for a smaller group of people. Folk music is part of a popular culture, although the term “popular music” or “pop music” today refers to a kind of music which people can hear through television, radio and other means of recording.

In many parts of the world nearly all music is folk music. The term “folk music” is usually used for European and American music which is part of an oral tradition. Folk music as an oral tradition, is much less important than before, in part because of new technology (radio, television etc, and recordings of music). Folk tunes are now often written down, and they have influenced other kinds of music, so that the differences between various types of music are harder to see.

**(d) Folk cuisine:** Traditional **foods** and **dishes** are traditional in nature, and may have a historic precedent in a national dish, regional **cuisine** or local **cuisine**. Traditional **foods** and beverages may be produced as homemade, by **restaurants** and small manufacturers, and by large **food** processing plant facilities.