Course Code: FS 801
Course title: Introduction to Indian Folk Culture

Description:

Indian folk culture is a fascinating area of study owing to its multi-cultural and pluralistic composition. This course introduces the student to basic concepts about the Indian folklore and folklife. The subject matter of the course is framed taking into account different culture areas and ethnic groups (tribal and folk) in order to provide some sense of the variety of folk groups living in India and the effect of the cultural and natural environment on folk culture. This course seeks to develop the skills of the student in understanding unfamiliar cultures and also to interpret them from a folkloristic perspective.

Course Objectives:

1. To appreciate how people learn and internalize one’s own culture, and on occasions challenge their own culture.

2. To understand how folk groups represent themselves to the others through their cultural idioms.

3. To gain knowledge of how folklore plays a role in communicating cultural constructs and community expressive behavior.

4. To get insights into the worldview of the folk through the process of ethnographic research—interviewing people and analyzing their folklore.

Course Outline:

1. Definition-Folklore, Folklife-Ethnicity- Family and Kinship.
Who are folk-concept of folklore- folklife-Folkloristics- folklorism-ethnic groups-
family types- natal, conjugal, nuclear, extended (generational), extended
(polyandrous),- types of relationships in family – direct, shared, sexual and descent,
functions of family kinship terms-types of kinship- role of kinship and social
organization in the creation transmission and sustenance of folklore and folklife.

II. Introduction to Indian folk culture --Cultural landscapes—Tribal and folk.
Discourse on culture- behavioural anthropologists, functionalists, structuralists,
cognitive anthropologists, symbolists, folklorists, traits of culture- tradition vs.
culture, landscapes vs. cultural landscapes, types of landscapes–historical, historically
designed, historically vernacular, ethnographic landscapes-ecotypes, arid, semi arid
and wet – environment as a determinant of folklore and folklife in tribal and folk
societies, oicotypification of genres.

III. Genres – Functions of Folklore
Classification and theories of genres- Richard Dorson, , Ben Amos, Richard Bauman,
Roger Abrahams- ethnic and analytical genres,

IV. Social stratification and ethnicity- negotiating identities- Oral narrative reflections
(myth, epic, legend and tale)
Indian social order- varna, jati, emergence of new social groups across the ages and
growth of bard tradition, incorporation and integration of ethnic groups, construction
and sustenance of ethnic identities through oral traditions –caste myths, ballads,
legends, folk tales, personal narratives, ritual narratives, ritual processes etc.,

V. Subsistence patterns and Economic organization-arts and crafts, material culture
reflections.
Hunting and gathering, pastoralism, hoe-agricultural practices in tribal societies,
agrarian practices, domestic crafts for consumption and exchange – basket making,
weaving, dyeing, pottery, work work, metal work, masonry, goldsmithy,
arts –performing and paintings, toy making etc.,material culture-typology of
materials and technology involved in the manufacture of the materials, the
communities connected with the production of the materials and exchange
relationships

VI. Political systems and Conflict resolution- games, amusements, riddles, and
Proverbs.
Polity-types of political institutions –band, tribes, chiefdoms, state, kingship and
kinship, conflict, conflict styles, responses to conflicts, factors contributing for
conflicts, role of folklore in resolving conflicts- games ( Eric Goffman), rituals /
amusements (Victor Turner, Milton singer, Von Gennep), riddles/proverbs, speech
acts (Paul Recoeur, Dell Hymes )

VII. Religion and Ritual practices- belief, worship of gods and goddesses, sacred
Complexes and cult centers.
Definition of religion from folkloric perspective, belief-ritual-worship, ritual ideology and process as metaphors of communities, social groups connected to the cult centers, functioning of sacred spaces, sacred grooves, rituals associated with the cults and cult centers and participation of people.

Suggested Reading:


Ben, Amos, Dan, (Ed) 1976, Folklore genres, Austin University of Texas press

--------1982, “Towards a definition of folklore” in Folklore in context, New Delhi, South Asian publisher

--------1982, Folklore in the context, New Delhi, South Asian publisher,


Bhattacharya N.N. 1979, The Indian Mother Goddess, New Delhi


Claus, Peter. J., and Frank J Korom, 1991, Folkloristic and Indian folklore, Udipi, Regional Resources Centre for Folk-performing Arts


Dorson, Richard, M., 1972, Folklore and Folk life, Chicago, Chicago University press

Dundes, Alan, (Ed), 1965, the study of folklore, Prentice Hall

--------1964, “Text, Texture and Context”, in Southern Folklore (quarterly), vol. 28, pp 251-265

--------1975, Analytical essays in Folklore, The Hague, Mouton

--------1978, Essays in Folkloristic, Meerut, Folklore Institute

Islam, Mazharul, 1985, “Folklore the pulse of the people” in the context of Indian folklore, New Delhi, Concept publishing Company,

______, 1998, The Theoretical study of folklore, Dhakha Bangla Academy

Oring Elliot (Ed) 1990 Folk Groups and Folk lore Genres. Utha: Utha State University


Sontheimer, Gunther Dvetz. 1989, Pastoral Deities in Western India, New York, Oxford University Press.
Course Description

To study folklore, it is not sufficient to collect, classify, publish, document, archive and computerise the material. But folklore should be interpreted from the perspective of the different social groups that have produced and consumed it. Such studies would emerge theoretical paradigms in the epistemology of folklore. On the basis of this theoretical knowledge one can understand folklore at regional, national and international level and develop culture specific models. However, till now Indian folklore studies gave ample space for field work and documentation but not emphasised on the theoretical perspectives of international Folkloristics. Hence, it is need of the day to familiarise the students with the contemporary trends in folklore theories.

Course Objectives:

I. To introduce the world status of knowledge on the theories of Folkloristics  
II. To appreciate the appropriateness of theoretical dimensions in Indian folklore studies  
III. To develop culture specific models that can be emerged basing on the theoretical folklore.

Course Outline:

1. Introduction – Synchronic and Diachronic approaches.
   Evolutionary theories-concept of evolution, cultural evolutionists, myth ritualists,  
   devolutionary theories-Marxists and elitists- merits, demerits and relevance to folklore studies.


Suggested Reading:

Abraham, Roger. D., 1992, “The past in the presence-An overview of Folkloristic in the Late 20th century” in Reimund Kvideland et. Al(ed), Folklore processed, Helsinki, Soumalaisen kirjauisuuden seura (pp. 32-51)

Benedict, Ruth (1934) Patterns of Culture, New York, New American Library.


Sadhana Naitani 1996 (?) *Folklore Research in Colonial India*.


Zipes, Jack, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, University of Texas Press, Austin, (1 979).
The researches in the interdisciplinary subjects like folklore are concerned with describing the patterned relationships that exist among different units of society. In folklore research, the most frequently used basic unit is individual and a more exclusive unit is the collectivity of individuals constituting an ethnic or a folk group. It is because, folklore is deposited in the oral traditions and they have to be retrieved in verbal and nonverbal generic forms, the study requires distinct methodologies to approach the filed. A single method is not sufficient to gather information since the Folklife is as complicated as that of its expressive behaviour. Unlike in other social sciences, filed data becomes primary source of research in folklore studies. The researcher should study the ethnic groups in their performative context, i.e. the field in which they are present. So far the methods used in field studies are mostly monologues and researcher dominated giving less scope for the participation of the cultural communities. It is the time to reorient the field approaches in folklore studies by adopting multiple methods to deal with the interdisciplinary nature of the data.

Course Objectives:

I. To provide a comprehensive knowledge on nature of field research in folklore.

II. To introduce different theoretical concepts that underlies qualitative and qualitative methods.

III. To appreciate contemporary postmodern and post structuralist philosophies interms of field methods in folklore studies.
IV. To create awareness about dynamics of field operations in the wake of globalisation.

**Course Outline:**

1. **Folklore as a Field Study – Historical development.**
   What is field research-qualities of a field researcher, nature of folklore, fieldwork traditions, field theories, emergence of folklore as a distinct field of research.

2. **Introduction – Concepts:**
   Subjectivity/Objectivity, Validity/Reliability, Inductive, Deductive, Abductive, reflexivity, positivism, naturalism, triangulation, Heuristics (competence), hermeneutics (textual criticism), external and internal criticism, content analysis, semantic and semeiotic approaches, Charles Pierce, Ferdinand de Sassaure, Derrida.

3. **Pre-field Operations – Notions on ‘field’ and ‘data’:** Knowledge resources, Technical resources and Human resources.
   What is data, nature of data, thick and thin descriptions, factors influencing fieldwork-epistemological issues-identification, significance of study, survey of literature, aims and objectives, source material, formulation of theory, hypothesis, pilot study, sampling etc, phenomenological-human( gate keepers, sponsors, participants), Materials(financial-stay, transport, audio-video tools, Stationary, filed notes, papers, pen, medical kits).

4. **Field Issues and Ethics**
   Gender issues, copy right, patent, plagiarism.

5. **Field Operations – Quantitative/Qualitative Methods and techniques of data collection, Documentation process.**
   Survey, observation, ethnographic, dialogical methods, questionnaires, check lists, interviews (oral- structured and unstructured), focus group discussions, informal gatherings.

6. **Post Field Operations – Analysis, Synthesis and Interpretation of the data – Perspectival Issues.**

7. **Presentation and Reporting.**

**Suggested Reading:**


Course Description

Review of Literature is of immense value in any field of Research. It not only enlightens the scholars about the existing epistemology on the subject but also brings out the lacunae in the concerned area of study of research. Folklore encompasses dynamics of cultural life of any group or community. Hence, its scope vast. It is imperative to gain knowledge in the area of study through secondary sources. This course would benefit the scholar to cognate the area of study and its limitations.

Course Objectives:

I. To introduce the status of knowledge on Philosophy and Theories connected with the area of study of the scholar.

II. To come up with a proposal in the broad area of study.

III. To develop the outcome of this course as the literature survey material for the first chapter of the thesis.

Course Outline:

Unit I: Introduction – Need for literature survey – Significance – Purpose

Unit II: Philosophy and Theory – Reading List to be organized by Faculty and Research Scholar (3 Seminar Presentations)

Unit III: Review on Global Studies (Topic Related) - Reading List to be organized by Research Scholar (3 Seminar Presentations)

Unit IV: Review on Indian/Vernacular Studies (Topic Related) - Reading List to be organized by Research Scholar (3 Seminar Presentations)

Unit V: Finding Lacunae - Development of Hypothesis – Scope of study – Sources of study

Title of the Course: Review of Literature – Topic Related Course