

Journey of Traditional Media through Ages: A study of Shumang Leela of Manipur.

Tradition is handing down of beliefs, experiences, and customs from generation to generation through oral form or by a process of traditional performance and communication. Traditional media, i.e. the traditional means of communication and expression exist before the existence of modern mass media. Traditional media are found expression in the daily social life of the people. They are the personal forms of communication and entertainment. India has a long history of using Traditional media for communicating messages among the masses. Traditional performance, such as ritualistic dance, religion song and methodology based on rural are performed which are highly popular among the rural masses and it has become an important tool to convey various messages to the society at a grassroots level. Traditional media is a powerful medium in the society as the medium is simple and the approach is direct.

Traditional media have been in existence in India for long and have been used as a medium of communication. Over the years, rural masses have been using the folk media for expressing their social, ritual, moral and emotional needs. These forms represent the people by giving a glimpse of their style, speech, music, dance, dress, behaviour. Traditional tools of communication are developed from the beliefs, customs and ritual practiced by the people. These are very old and deep rooted. It represents a form of communication employing vocal, verbal, musical and visual folk art forms, transmitted to a society or group of societies from one generation to another. Traditional media comes in different forms and is known by different names in different region of the country.

Traditional media forms are different according to the different religions and communities; it is shaped by cultural heritage and by common ties of existence of the people that is why mass communication in rural India is largely communicated through non-mass media, such as traditional forms of entertainment, situations and institution which includes:

1. Traditional Dance.
2. Drama.
3. Painting.
4. Sculpture.
5. Motif and symbols.
6. Traditional folk theater forms.
7. Puppetry.
8. Oral literature-cum-musical forms (folk music styles, ballads, storytelling, etc.).
9. Fairs and festivals including social, ritual and ceremonial gathering.
10. Traditional youth clubs participating in rural areas.
11. Folk Dance.
12. Sound signals and speech surrogates.
13. Folk songs.

The traditional media are close to the hearts and minds of the people on a personal and intimate level. It satisfies the innate need for expression, for moral instruction which is a combination of entertainment and for the dramatic and the lyrical. Folk art and performances are in a way of reflection of the culture of the society as culture reflects itself through art, jewellery, folk plays, songs and rituals. Its relations with the society and the community to which it belongs is somewhat being different as they are a part of the daily life.

One of the unique features of popular traditional media is the announcement made by it to deliver messages from one village to another. Puppetry is a popular form of

traditional media, which exist in rural areas of India. Shadow puppetry and string puppetry are popular forms. Patachitra Katha refers to stories that have been told through the medium of palm leaf paintings. Storytelling is another interesting format of traditional media, which existed at a time when advance forms of communication such as the written word did not exist. For example, historical stories of various local heroes who fought battles and participated in the freedom struggle were performed through song and drama. These were not written or document instead they were orally passed from one home to another or one village to another they kept the stories live. Storytelling forms such as 'Harikatha' and 'Kabigan' played a critical part in communication historical and epic tales. Story telling is also practiced in traditional youth clubs like the Ghotul of the tribal Murias of Bastar or the Dhumkuria of Oraons of Bihar.

Traditional folk media cultivate the rural lifestyle and culture specifically to match the needs and demand of people who are illiterate and backward. Traditional folk media go with rural masses side by side bringing changes in their growth and development. Although, they furnish so many that contribute to the development significantly. Traditional folk media can command a very strong position in the rural people's mind as it weaves almost of its messages to serve the various needs and purposes as well as entertain the numerous rural people as well. All programmers have the individual criteria and attraction as well, that can render the distinctive taste and flavor to the audiences well.

Folk literature is the lore of unlettered peoples transmitted by word of mouth. It consists of written literature of prose and verse, narrative poems, songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs and riddles. Written Literature was developed in the year between 4000 and 3000 BC in both Egypt and the Mesopotamian civilization of Sumer. Thereafter, from Asia, North Africa and the Mediterranean land the written literature spread rapidly.

Traditional media has played a crucial role in the process of social- economic development in India. It has helped in convincing and influencing people in a very effective ways. During the freedom struggle, folk media played a big part in disseminating the message of patriotism. Jatra a traditional form theater form in Bengal was used during the freedom struggle. Other than that Paala, a traditional form of ballad singing was used for spreading awareness on various social issues by the government of Orissa. The Song and Drama Division of the government of India used various forms of traditional media to spread awareness on a number of social issues like AIDS, Polio Immunization.

The first significant international recognition of the importance of the traditional folk media in communication and development strategies of developing countries came in 1972 when the International Planned Parenthood Federation and UNESCO organized in London a series of meeting on the integrated used of folk and Mass Media in family planning communication programmes. In Indian context the government felt the importance of folk media in communication policies laid down in the first five year plan and then established Song and Drama Division, In 1954 under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and establishment the Department of Traditional Media at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, in 1971. This Department of Traditional Media is devoted in research and training in rural communication through traditional media. Traditional art forms have survived for centuries and they will survive in future for their flexibility. They could be the media for social change and development in rural India. Traditional performing arts being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the messages of changes, development and growth.

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growth. As Rabindranath Tagore aptly puts, “All Traditional Structure of Arts has sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicately or virile, to grow with its growth, to dance with its rhythm.”

Objectives:

- To study the origin, form and structure of Shumang Leela.
- To examine the changes in the forms and structure of traditional media and Shumang Leela
- To assess the change in the effectiveness of traditional media and Shumang Leela after associated with modern mass media.
- To assess the prospects of traditional media in the age of speedy communication and information and communication technology.

Hypothesis:

- The significant changes have been incorporated in the form and structure of the Shumang Leela which have helped in the development and survival of these traditional media.
- Modern mass has influenced the Shumang Leela practices and concurrently Shumang Leela also influenced creative inputs of mass media at the local level.
- Traditional media and its existence are motivated by ethnic, social and emotional factors.

Methodology:

The present study is normative in nature; hence researcher has applied multiple methods for collection of data, analysis and finding of results. According to requirement the following methods were used-

Content Analysis- A comparative content analysis to mark the changes was used. To perform this task periodically the structural inputs and form of the Shumang Leela was selected and comparative analysis was conducted.

Interview- The researcher used interview method to collect information from experts, veterans, professionals and persons who have special knowledge in the field. To conduct the interview a set of question was developed by the researcher herself.

Historical Method- Historical methods are important because past knowledge considered being a prerequisite for present knowledge. Examination of historical records, story, diaries, notes, wood letters, Bhujpatras and pictures etc. were utilized to establish the origin, make the change and development process of Shumang Leela.

Invasion of modern mass media has impacted the traditional form and structure, so this study is significant in presenting the growth patterns of traditional media as well as it would reveal the correlation between the factors of society and the change in the form and structure of traditional media. Such findings will be very important for media planners, the traditional media itself and the further study and research.

The chapter II described about the rich traditional media of India. Every region of the country has its own distinctive features. India has a great treasure of folk and traditional art forms it shows the socio-religious and philosophical dimension woven artistically and aesthetically into a life experience, presented in a creative and innovative manner. Tradition plays an important part in a creative, artistic process, particularly in the study of folk performing arts. Folk art is a functional and spontaneous. Every village has its relevant music, dance or theatre.

The coalition of mass media and existing traditional media creates a process of interaction. The electronic media cannot replace the traditional media fully though each new mode of communication is bound to superimpose itself on the existing mode. Although the new mode takes over certain functions of the existing mode, the basic function is retained because of its local acceptance and association with the social system. Technology has not completely disrupted the undercurrents of our society and community life as the traditional media provide tremendous opportunity to bridge the communication gap by their organized and integrated use.

Integration of folk theatre with modern media has produced interesting results. When a rural theatre form is put on the air, the listeners received it as an audio experience which is quite different from its direct visual impact. All India Radio had introduced Bhavia, Tamasha, Jatra, Yakshagan and other forms; the listeners found it a rare experience. Recordings to Maanch and Noutanki have never failed to establish their impact on its target audience whenever presented. The inherent association of these forms has deep rooted among the people on one hand and the convenience of radio on the other hand, which gave an impact to reach out to the people. Similarly, television and film have multiplied the reach of folk theatre.

Fairs, festivals and Melas undergo a drastic transformation on account of the changes in social and economic conditions of the people. But the utility of fairs, whether an ordinary gathering or a big event has not lessened at all, even today Kumbha Mela at Haridwar or other religious places draw thousands of people. The importance of such gigantic lies in strengthening the bond of unity; it provides opportunity for millions of people to enunciate the codes of social conduct.

In the third Chapter III the traditional media of Manipur has been discussed. The state of Manipur lies in the northeastern part of India covering an area of 22,327 sq km, which lies between 88° E (approx) and 95°E (approx) longitude and 22°N (approx) and 29.5°N (approx) latitude, neighbor of Myanmar in the east, Nagaland in the north, the Cachar district of Assam in the west and Mizoram in the south. It consist of nine districts- Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Senapati, Chandel, Churachanpur, Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Bishnupur. The Meiteis have settled down over the fertile valley of about 700 square miles of Manipur, while the tribal settles in the hill areas. Manipur has around 29 tribes.

The performances of religious origin can be seen through all the cycle of seasons of the year, and they can be divided broadly into two groups based on their religious association and differences in the style of performance. The first is the pre- Hindu forms

of theatrical performances which are associated with the primitive culture, non- Hindu religion of the Meiteis and the second form of performances came into existence after the Meiteis were converted into Hinduism in the 18th century during the reign of King Pamheiba. The first group has purity and a sense of independence in terms of its origin and the milieu which gave rise to its evolution. The second category of theatrical performances is associated with Hindu culture. It is closely related to the pre- Hindu form of theatre in Manipur because its evolution was closely associated with a long process of the social and cultural structures of Manipur.

Manipur has a very powerful tradition of transforming oral text into performances such as the famous performances of Penasakpa (Pena - a musical instrument of Meiteis, sakpa – the person who sings playing the instrument pena), Wari Liba mythological tales, etiological tales, legends, folk dance, ritual and beliefs, customs. During the Penasakpa, the performers used to sing songs based on stories or stories from various sources bringing in the essential qualities of theatre. Lai Haraoba is the main and most important ritual observances of the Meiteis in Manipur. It has evolved into a distinct socio-cultural establishment and a distinguishable pattern of art through a long process of development. It is a ritual performed by the primitive Meiteis with the belief that they could ensure a normal existence by maintaining continued a process of productive relationships between man and nature, man and supernatural forces and among the various dimensions of time in the life of the community.

The vast oral literature supplied by the Penashakpa and the Wari liba became the oral text which had given raised in a creative process resulting in a proliferation of Hindu play performances.

Ethnic tribes residing in the hills of Manipur have numerous ritualistic forms of theatre. Rituals as they are, efficacy remains as a pivot or chief function of theatre inherent in these performances. Shumang Leela is a popular form of Traditional theater of Manipur; it is performed in a courtyard or in an open space of about 18 square feet which is performed without any stage or heavy props. It plays an important role in depicting the

society by performing a play based on the culture, tradition, and history of Manipur. The journey of Shumang Leela has made a significant transmission in every phase of its structure and form. According to the Manipuri, Shumang means 'open courtyard' and Leela is to 'play' or 'performed' so the word Shumang Leela is literary mean as an 'open courtyard play'. It is also known as Jatra or jatrawali by certain scholars, as it is assumed to be an influx from Assam and Bengal due to the result of contact with the mainstream Indian culture. It is performed in an area of 13/13 ft in the center of any open space - courtyard or playground or Mandap (pavilion) or bank of a river.

Historically Shumang Leela was started as Phagee Lila, important for its indigenous tradition of clowning (farce) which was performed during the reign of Maharaja Chandrakirti (1850-1886), but after tracing to its whereabouts, Phagee Lila was adopted from the episode of Tangkhul-Nurabi or Tankhul Saram Pakhang of Laiharaoba festival. Then it was succeeded by plays such as Ramlila, Sabha parba, Kabul Lila etc. But the real form of Shumang Leela was started during the reign of Maharaja Harischandra (1918). It was later followed with some few other plays as Sabitri Satyavan, Meiraba Charan Thok Lila. One of the most successful and popular play of that era was Moirang parba (an epic play based on the legendary lovers- Khamba and Thoibi of Moirang). Shumang Leela was used as a form of communication in giving announcement to the public and the voice of the public by representing the public. Shumang Leela is performed in a very simple style without any proper raised stage or any set designing or heavy props such as curtain, background scenery visual effects etc. It can also be claimed as a theater play through its way of performing as the play is performed in the middle of an audience which is surrounded from all sides, leaving only one passage which serves as both entrance and exit connecting the performance space with the green room. Originally women were not permitted to participate in these events; however the female roles are played by the male artistes or Nupi Shabis (female impersonate) whom it is called male actresses.

The evolution of Shumang Leela started with the change of the society. At the earlier period of the era Shumang Leela performed plays which are connected to religion. The big leap came in 1950 when scripts were introduced with the plays like Puyameithaba and B.A. Mapa Lamboiba (name of a play). It had offered a firm platform in the literature loving people of Manipur to create a bigger perspective of Manipuri Theater professionally. The second major phase came in the 1970s with the introduction of Eshei Lila, an additional add ups of music and playback singing. The later phase was a turning point in the history of Shumang Leela. During this era Shumang Leela performed plays which refer to the contemporary issue of Manipur. Those plays were able to give more entertainment to the audience and at the same time give awareness to the audience. Through the simple play audience were able to acquire more knowledge and about the issues prevailing in the society.

Shumang Leela is known to every aged of people in Manipur the medium does not focus only for a particular area or type of audience it reflects the society, therefore the audience perceived the theme of the play in every locality in which it performed. The script of the play is written in such a manner that it is capable to express its message from the minor to the most senior citizens of the society through the same medium at the particular time. It is a form of entertainment which delivered messages to the audience unknowingly or knowingly. Shumang Leela is one of the effective traditional media, which reflect the image of the society and able to educate the audience at a grassroots level. It is an amalgamation of various society aspects which include tradition, culture, custom and current affairs. New stories are developed which described the society issues. Holding back in view of the general outlook of the society as a whole the theme of the play is based on what the audience desires to perceive. The theme of the plays is based on the current trend of the society such as the oppressive authority of the government, authentic laws of the government, evil drawbacks of religion and custom. The voice of the common working class people is projected in the play. Impact of the Shumang Leela is mainly on rural area since the majority of the audience is from working class people As a matter of fact; Shumang Leela helps in the development of the society such as

spreading message which relates to the public sentiment. In the past few years Shumang Leela performed plays which give awareness to the audience about the social consequences such as AIDS, Leprosy, Cancer, Women Empowerment and issues about the armed conflicts which is a burning issue in Manipur. Shumang Leela is an eye opener in Manipur Society, basically it is used to stir the curiosity and gather public interest which also gives awareness on certain topic without suggesting any conclusion. The main aspect of Shumang Leela play is the script which is basically in for and tailor-made for provoking the thoughts of the audience.

The Shumang Leela season begins from the Yaosang (Holi) festival/ Dol Jatra and continues performing throughout the year except the rainy seasons (June- July- August) and the school board exams (February). Shumang Leela is also associated with the marriage ceremony, the groom sponsor the play a day or two ahead of the ceremony. It is also performed as a part of celebration of new born baby (Soisti Puja), Na-Hutpa (a ceremony of piercing of ears of an infant which occurs in the fifth or six months of the infant), Lukun-thangba (secret threat wearing ceremony, which marks the adult of a boy). Shumang Leela is performed as an entertainment program during carnival time host by the Leikai (community) or khul (village). It is also performed at the Shraadha (death ceremony) and Phiroy (death anniversary).

The troupes believe the green room to be an integral/sacred place since the early period till dated, the troupes treats the green room to be an auspicious place. In the green room, four mats (phak) are placed in the four directions, one on the right (Phamen) of the verandah, another to the opposite of Phamen the left side (Mangshok), and the other two mats are laid at the eastern side (Nongpok) and the southern side (Nongchup). The senior most among the artist of the troupe used the right side (phamen) of the mat, the artist playing the female role used the left side (mangshok) mat and the remaining mats placed on the eastern and southern side of the mat are used by the other artists of the troupe.

Shumang Leela play is performed in a very simple ways with limited props; common props of Shumang Leela consist of two chairs, a small low table, and a flower

pot placed on the table. With the razing of time a telephone set is also placed on the table. The performing space is used to indicate house, hotel, office, bedroom, scenery build up as a metaphor/mime according to the environment created by the script.

The socio-economic, mass media factors and the structure and form of Shumang Leela are explained briefly in Chapter IV. It describes about the influence of Hindu religion which was a deep impact in the Meitei society during that particular period, the society was more confined to the religious activities and practices of Hindu religion. Epics of Mahabharat, Ramayana and stories about good over evil were scared and very important for the Meitei people. The Harichandra play was performed by different groups in almost all the parts of Manipur till the post World War and the evolution of Shumang Leela developed with the changes of the society. It gives a wide description about the form and structure of this art form, its way of presentation, from the set up of the stage to the green room and the type of audiences.

Shumang Leela has a unique ways of delivering the dialogue; it is different from the proscenium theater. Since it is performed at an open space or mandap, the artist makes a full effort to deliver the dialogue in a louder and clearer tone so that it can be heard by the audience. In the early period, it is important for the artist to have a loud voice while giving the performance in order to reach out to the audience, even the dialogue was repeated twice or thrice for the audience to hear. But as time evolves, the microphone has brought to bring more clarity in the presentation. It has made a firm bridge of communication for the artist and the audience.

Acting in Shumang Leela differs from Proscenium Theater, here the actor has to act in all the four directions, and the actors cannot hide anything from the audience, the emotions and the dialogue should be delivered equally to all the directions of the audience. Once the actor is in the performance space he/she is left to its own, which left to the complete mercy of the audience.

Shumang Leela is usually performed at evening, so proper set up of light was indeed necessary for the audience to watch the performance. A bamboo pole is placed at the centre of the stage to hold the lantern, in older days lanterns were used for lighting, at least four lanterns were used for lighting up the stage, and petrolmax was also used by some well off family while hosting the show.

There wasn't an appropriate duration of the Shumang Leela play at the initial period, since there was not a proper script the main purpose of the play was to entertain the audience; it could go on for hours and hours. With the development of the form and the structure of Shumang Leela and also with certain reformation made by the State Kala Academy, which in a way has groomed this art form, the Shumang Leela play is performed for two and half hours. During the Shumang Leela season the troupes usually performed 5 to 6 shows in a day, starting since 10am till morning 2am.

Song and music had been part of Shumang Leela since its origin, Dholak, Ramtal and Kartal are the important music instruments for a Shumang Leela play. The actors used to sing their own song; it is replaced by playback singers. The songs for the female actors are sung by the male playback singers, in a feminine voice, it is indeed one of the unique features of Shumang Leela. Musical instrument such as tabla, harmonium, piano, patdum, violin, guitar, mouth organ, flute, marcus, dulki, pena, saxophone, mandolin etc were later adopted to create more climax to the play and define in creating the emotion of the actors, which completes the whole package of acting according to the situation of the theme. In the two hours of play there are at least two or three songs.

The Shumang Leela troupe consists of a group of artists forming a small group and performing a play. The outcome of a good Shumang Leela play is achieved through the contribution of the each and every member of the troupe. The actors, the musician, the playback singers, the driver in charge of transportation, they cooperate and work together. There are 20 registered groups of Shumang Leela Nupa group (Men's group) and 22 registered Nupi Leela group (women's group) but among the registered group hardly 5 groups are well known by the audience.

The invitation of the Shumang Leela troupes was done in a very simple way earlier, the host goes to the residence of the member representing a particular troupe, whom, the host would like to invite and make the invitation ahead of the days or month of which the host prefers to play. The show it is a tradition for the hosts to place a Dakshina (offering) Rs 1 or Rs 10 along with betle leave and nuts (Kwa tanga) decorated in a banana leaf.

There are 10 to 12 artists in a troupe, in which 4 or 5 of the artist plays the female role know as Nupi Sabi (female impersonators) basically the male actresses. They have various similarities of feminine quality in terms of their looks, bodily gestures and facial expressions.

Shumang Lila was originated at a time when the wave of Hinduism was at its highest peak. Later on the medium had emerged as an important part of the Manipur culture of resistance carrying the voice of their plight for culture and political identity

War had also brought a drastic change to the Manipur society, on the prospect of the lifestyle, the socio-economic status and the political structure. In a paper presented by Dr N Lokendra Singh for the Manipur State Archives 1993, he had explained about the experience of the Second World War as “It brought a rapid but profound change in the consciousness as well as the socio-economic life of the people. These changes have not only paved the way for the emergence of new social forces, but also prepared the necessary pre-conditions for a strong popular movement for being about broad economic and political changes in Manipur during the immediate post Second World War period”, Audience were more keen to observed plays based on the social and economic status of the state. Thus Shumang Leela plays were involved in reflecting the social milieu.

Initially Shumang Leela was truly an entertaining medium; it was focused on entertaining the audience. Various developments could be observed in this phase of Shumang Leela in the manner of costume, dialog, make up, gait, acting style more emphasis was given to the story and the script of the play. The State Kala Academy has

molded this art form by organizing the festival paving an opportunity for the expert and researcher to analysis this art form and attracts them to study on this art form.

With the inauguration of A.I.R, in Imphal in 1963 the dimension of Shumang Leela was more expanded, A.I.R started broadcasting Shumang Leela once in a week in one of the rural program(Khunganggi Thouram). It was aired for half an hour.

The change in the form and structure of Shumang Leela has developed due to the change of the society, in Chapter V it discussed about the changes in the form of Shumang Leela and the acceptance made by the audience by conducting a study on the Shumang Leela audience by giving a set of questionnaire, it also discussed about the prospects of Shumang Leela.

Through the study of this research it has been found that the origin of Shumang Leela is indeed a debatable topic which had been discussed in two ways of interpretation by certain classes of scholars, a group of scholars had stated that “Shumang Leela can be trace back from the Meitei ritual festival the Lai Haraoba (pleasing of God),” Another group of scholar had also given another interpretation about the origin of Shumang Leela, it gives an account on how Shumang Leela was first known as Phagee (fare) Lila and it was performed at the king’s court.

The structure and the form of Shumang Leela evolve with the transformation of the Meitei society. Initially Shumang Leela was started as a form of entertainment in a very simple ways, there was no proper script of Shumang Leela at the earliest period.

A huge wave of modification was made in the journey of Shumang Leela with the incorporation of modern technology, in terms of costume, dialogue and presentation. The Shumang Leela is not able to stick to its own originality with the evolving changes in the society, the influences of theatrical form accustom by the school of the institution and individual gave a change to this art form. Broadcast of films through televisions and other modern modes of entertainment have made the task more competitive. The Shumang Leela has replicated its approach like cinema, the influence of Bollywood has brought a

new wave to the Meitei society where the audience is inducing to this medium and perceived it in every way.

The consequences of the post war gave birth to the new form of Shumang Leela in the Manipuri literature, giving a reflection of the social status. The stories were more realistic projecting the issues of the society.

It highlights the conflict situation of the state, the hardship faced by the public due to the armed conflict, atrocities against civilians by the armed forces, crime against women, corruption, bribery and extortion etc.

Presently, the approaches of Shumang Leela highlights the evil consequences of the modern society, problems on identity crises, and the influence of western culture and effects of degrading the cultural values, cybercrime, etc. Besides entertaining the audience, Shumang Leela has become a medium in educating and reforming the society.

Shumang Leela as a traditional art form has been able to adapt and evolve with the changing times. With the raging popularity of radio and television, the prospect of Shumang Leela was expanded. The scope of reaching out to people could be achieved; apart from showing a live performance it had gained its popularity through the various modes of the medium.

The used of more sophisticated music and sound instruments and techniques has made the plot more realistic such as the background score of the gun firing, sounds of animal, humming of birds, thunder, moving vehicles, airplanes, and water movement. The sound effects are given during the climax scene, opening and closing of door, etc. Dholak, Krital and Ramtal were used as a musical instrument in the early period. At present, the music orchestra used in the Shumang Leela consists of tabla, flute, harmony, keyboard, guitar, Marcus, violin, organ, mandolin, drum. Loudspeakers are installed at the venue to have more sound clarity and audible for the audience, through the used of a microphone which is dangled at the performance space. Earlier one or two lamps or patromax was

dangled from the poles assemble at the centre of the performance space but it have been replaced by tube lights.

By the early 21st century, there was a big impact of Korean culture in the Meitei society, due to the conflict situation of the region, Bollywood was banned in the State by the insurgent groups. The Manipuri digital films and albums made a huge entry for the audience; it was more commercialized marking its replacement of Bollywood. The youngsters watch other mainstream foreign film and serial, Korean film and serial became a trend to the youth. It was also well reflected in the Shumang Leela plays.

The Doordarshan Kendra Imphal had also broadcast the Shumang Leela on television, even broadcast in the private cable operators ISTV (Information Service Television) and Impact Television daily which is the leading cable operators of Manipur. Manipuri films have also produced many films made from the adaptation of the Shumang Leela story, example: Eegi Mahao, Mantri Dolansana, Pizza, Leikang Thambal, Liklai, etc. Shumang Leela play can also be accessed at the convenient modes through the internet at any globe of the world and anytime. The platform of Shumang Leela is able open to various channels through the various modes of modern media through mobile phones, CDs and DVDs. The exposure and its means of gaining popularity have increased rapidly.

It could be stated that, Shumang Leela is no longer confined to the tiny state of Manipur, the work of this art have touched the globe, it has crossed the boundary and the cultural barriers by exposing the platform to another state. The Sanaleibak Nachom Artistes Association has performed the play “Meigi Ching (volcano) at the Maghadoot Open Air Theater of National School of Drama, New Delhi in 2000. The troupe had participated in the 11th Indian People’s theater association (IPTA) in Thrissur (Kerala) held from January 12 to 12. 2001. Besides their performance at the IPTA conference the troupe was able to win the heart of the audience of Kerela by performing the play at remote areas of Kerela. The troupe performs 11 shows at Kerela; they gave their performance at Darwad (Karnataka), Prithvi Theater (Mumbai), and IMA Hall (Pune), all

together performing 24 shows during the journey. The troupe has also marked its place at the International platform, giving a performance at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow (Russia) in 2001. The play, “World Trade Centre” a compilation of 36 min by L.Somi Roy was screened at the 2002 Margaret Mead International Festival these are some of the remarkable achievements made this art form in presenting the state to the nation and to other countries.

Over the ages Shumang Leela has been an integral traditional media, which is very popular among the Meitei society. Till dated, the popularity of this art form has never been compromised by any other modes of entertainment. It still has the charm to grab the attention of the audience, and it can be proved during the Shumang Leela festival. The Shumang Leela festival is usually observed for ten days or a month, and we can find the hall being overcrowded by the audience even in the locality where the performance is shown we can find an audience overcrowded. Popularity of the artist, especially the Nupi Sabi, the womenfolk has even considered them as the fashion icon. The blooming small scale handloom industry promotes their work by giving sponsors to the troupe, through advertisements. The costumes wore by the Nupi Sabi’s are in high demand in the market.

It has been observed that traditional media like Shumang Leela has been an integral part of the society; it has been deeply rooted in the mind of the people through the ages. The family and the society had taken down this art form through generation. Even though there has been a change to the form and structure of Shumang Leela. The society has accepted it and has embraced it as the medium that always highlights the issue of the society. It has become an important tool to express the anxiety and the curiosity of the people. The medium has been grown and transform into a platform which can influence the society, it has given a platform for the youth to expose their talents and earn a livelihood out of it.

Shumang Leela plays are based on the choice of the audience, so for a medium like Shumang Leela to be in the lime time it is very important to grab the attention of the

audience. To come up with a theme that could win over the audience emotionally, to adapt to the evolving status of the society without losing its traditional charm. Though there are certain loopholes and drawbacks faced by Shumang Leela due to the stiff competition with other modes of modern media the popularity of Shumang Leela is not fading and will not be faded, it is familiar to each and every member of the family and has been deeply rooted in our society.

The various reasons for the change and structure of Shumang Leela occur due to the stiff competition with other modes of the medium and also with the raging development of modern technology. People started opting for other medium which leads to the rapid makeover of Shumang Leela losing its originality. People are busy in their own ways; they are more confined to their work, which isolates them from the society. The form of Shumang Leela change with the changes in the society. In order to maintain its popularity among the audience this traditional media has transformed its perspective, according to the trend of the society. At the initial stage it was performed to entertain the public, there was no proper script, but with due course of time and the transformation of the society, this art form has developed and represent a medium which can reflect the events, activities occurring in the society. The audience owns this art form; the troupes have to perform according to the interest of the public. The audience decides the popularity of the play according to the story. The troupes had to do some research to know the trend of the society so that the script could be established to attract the audience. To cope up with the current trend the Shumang Leela form has been compromised; today's audience will hardly watch a Shumang Leela play which is based on the historical or mythological events. Also, due to the stiff competition among the troupes, the script is based upon the trend of the society, to attract the audience. Even though mythological play is performed; it does not receive a good feedback from the audience, thus it makes the troupe to opt for the scripts which is related to the contemporary issues.

Yet this traditional media has never lose its popularity and conserved a large space in the heart of the audience. Till date the charm of Shumang Leela exists in the

society, it cannot be replaced by any other entertainment. Even though, the Shumang Leela play is easily accessible through television, internet or through mobile sharing from any place at any time, regardless of Shumang Leela season, it never compromised with the live performance audience. The impact of live performance audience is still massive, the audience never gets tired of watching live performance play, as it gives an opportunity to meet and interact with everyone, have a leisure time and exchange conversation of their daily life, the youth takes this opportunity to meet their partners, admirer and have a glance, while the elders and old generation watch the play and relates to the themes and the dialogue delivered in the theme laugh to the comedy made by the comedians and cry along with the artist according to the plot of the play. The children watch the play attentively and later imitate it in their playtime or used the dialogue as some new trend thus making the artist popular with the dialogue. Shumang Leela has been one of the best means of entertainment medium of Manipur and it will be the best entertainment medium. The audience has been supporting this medium for decades and will be supporting it in the future; it is the only platform that has given a huge impact to the Manipur society. It is impossible to replace this medium by any other medium, as it has taken its place in the integral part of the Meitei society.

From the study, it has been found that the prospects of traditional media reflect the lifestyle of the society; it still touches the emotional corner of human being through its performance. Every folk and traditional medium are always closed to the society and exist within the society. We are bound to folk media in every stage of our life in nature, social gatherings, in family rituals in our culture; it shows the originality of the society in a simple and intimate ways. Traditional media create the link of human emotion in bringing unity, love and harmony, a connection of closeness through the ritual activities. Traditional media show the ethnic identity, creating an emotional association and love of ethnic identity.

The future of Shumang Leela has positive perspectives, as this traditional medium has the ability to adapt itself to various other modern mass media. It has been able to

maintain its popularity through ages by giving a positive outcome to the audience. It is simple and easy to understand by any group of audience and also entertain the viewers.

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