

## Unit Thirteen: Art and Music, Lesson 02 – Folk Music

Folk music consists of songs and music of a community that are uninfluenced by any sophisticated musical rules or any standard music styles. Bangladesh has a heritage of rich folk music which includes both religious and secular songs. Folk music may be described as that type of ancient music which springs from the heart of a community, based on their natural style of expression uninfluenced by the rules of classical music and modern popular songs. Any mode or form created by the combination of tune, voice and dance may be described as music. Thus, the combination of folk song, folk dance and folk tune may be called folk music. For example, Baul songs are a combination of tune, music and dance.

**Folk music has the following characteristics:** (i) It is composed by rural folk on the basis of ancient rules transmitted orally; (ii) These ancient rules of music have not been influenced by classical or modern music; (iii) Folk songs may be sung in groups or individually; (iv) No regular practice is required for folk music; (v) It is composed and performed by illiterate or semi-literate people; (vi) It is a spontaneous expression in easy language, local dialect, and simple tune; (vii) Both words and tune are appealing; (viii) despite its universal appeal it uses local dialect; (ix) It depends upon nature and the rural environment; (x) It is an explicit manifestation of the joys and sorrows of daily life; (xi) It uses simple and natural rhythms; (xii) It contains a strong emotive expression of human love and separation.

In Bangladesh folk music has great variety, with songs being composed on the culture, festivals, views of life, natural beauty, rivers and rural and riverine life. These songs are also about social inequality and poverty, about the material world and the supernatural. Mystical songs have been composed using the metaphors of rivers and boats. Since the country is basically riverine, the Bhatiyali forms an important genre of folk music. Folk music is formed and develops according to the environment. Differences in the natural environment are reflected in the people of the different regions. The dialects too vary across the different regions. Bangladeshi folk music therefore varies from region to region. Thus there are the northern Bhawaiya, the eastern Bhatiyali and the southwestern Baul songs. The culture and the lifestyle of the different tribes have also influenced folk music. Tribes like the Santal, Garo, Hajong, Chakma, Manipuri, Tripuri, Marma etc. have interacted with ethnic Bengali culture and lifestyle over the years. The interaction has been clearly reflected in the richness of folk music.

Folk songs may be sung individually or in chorus. Folk songs sung individually include Baul, Bhatiyali, Murshidi and Marfati, while songs sung in chorus include Kabigan, Leto, Alkap and Gambhira. Some songs are regional in character, but others are common to both Bangladesh and West Bengal. Similarly, some songs belong distinctively to one religious community, Hindu or Muslim; others cross religious boundaries. Some songs belong exclusively to men, others to women, while some are sung by both men and women. Thus only women compose and sing Bratagan and Meyeli Git, but both men and women participate in the ‘roof-beating’ songs that are sung while beating down and firming rooftops.

**A Choose the correct answer from the alternatives:****1x5=5****(a) The expression “sophisticated” implies-----**

- i. latest                      ii. old                      iii. last                      iv. past

**(b) The word “heritage” mentioned in the passage means -----**

- i. heir                      ii. tradition                      iii. legitimacy                      iv. intimacy

**(c) The word “natural” could be replaced by-----**

- i. artificial                      ii. spontaneous                      iii. deliberate                      iv. wanton

**(d) Folk Music emanates from----- of a community**

- i. heart                      ii. background                      iii. core                      iv. inside

**(e) what does “mystical” means -----**

- i. dull                      ii. material                      iii. classical                      iv. spiritual

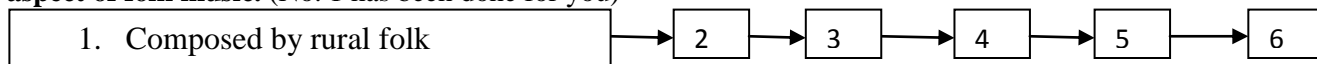
**B. Answer the following Question:****2x5=10**

- a) What do you mean by folk music according to text?
- b) What does folk music reflect?
- c) How are mystical songs composed of?
- d) What makes Bhatially an important genre?
- e) What are the great reasons of great variety in folk music?

**2. Read the passage and complete the table below with the given information.****1x10=10**

what	Community/where	Characteristics/How	When/How long
Hajong, Chakma, Manipuri, Tripuri, etc.	(i)-----	Colourful lifestyle	(ii)-----
Bhatially	(iii)-----	Folk song	While boating fishing
(iv)-----	In Bangladesh and West Bengal	(v)-----	
Roof beating song	(vi)-----	Sung by both men and women	(vii)-----
(viii)-----	Both Hindus and Muslims	(ix)-----	On religious programs and festivals
(X)-----		Composed by only women	At family gatherings

Or Based on your reading of the Passage below, make short notes in each of the boxes in the flow-chart showing the aspect of folk music. (No. 1 has been done for you)

**3. Summarize the text.****10**