

## DELHI SCHOOL of JOURNALISM

University of Delhi

### Sociology of Art, Folklore and Communication Traditions



**A Talk by Prof. Roma Chatterji (Head - Department of Sociology, University of Delhi) held on 06 October 2017 @ DSJ.**

Renowned sociologist Prof. Roma Chatterji of University of Delhi delivered a compelling lecture on "Sociology of Art, Folklore and Communication Traditions" as part of the **Weekly Seminar cum Workshop Series** at the Delhi School of Journalism on Friday, 06 October 2017. Prof. Chatterji started with the interdependence of culture and media and how they influence our daily lives. She explained the sociological dimensions of culture and art, and their vulnerability to changes in the given socio-economic environments.

She traced the origin of narratives as an independent genre of literature in ancient times and observed that narrative inspired works like the *Panchatantra* amongst many other have influenced the culture and moral values of many cultures and have enriched their literature. She asserted that the folk culture forms are prominently responsive to socio-political, economic and above all

aesthetic developments and discourses in the society.

She eloquently spoke on the folklore and narrative traditions of India, citing the significance of the mythological teachings in Ramayana and Mahabharata in shaping our outlook on the world. She observed that 'narrativity' is the art of creating relationships between words and images and was an integral part of the folklore traditions of India. She narrated the significance of folklore in driving the nationalist discourse in the colonial era India and its role in the historical reconstruction of the Indian society. The folklore traditions, in fact, played a crucial role in recasting the aesthetic and classical traditions and cultural unity in the post-independence era too.

She described how the themes in the folklore traditions vary as well overlap in the rural and urban contexts as well as across various countries. The themes may range from the events like happy events, marriage, kidnappings, dacoity, child marriage, dowry, death and even fairy tales. She vividly discussed about the 9/11 attacks and how they were expressed through various modes of folklores and media like comic strips and photographs. Also, from her own research experience, she elaborated the methods of communication employed by poor communities in Maharashtra like puppetry, poems, dohas etc, which have been instrumental in keeping the art of folklore and narratives alive.

She emphasized on the need to harness and document folklore and the narrative traditions from all available means. According to Prof. Chatterji Indian Literature, played a dominant role in the preservation and propagation of narrative traditions and folklores. The role played by women in these efforts is more unique in the Indian context.

She exhorted the students of Journalism to have deeper knowledge of the folklore and oral traditions of India and to become the promoters of these culturally rich traditions. The lecture was concluded with an interactive question answer session with the speaker.

(With inputs from **Shashank Mundru** and **Gandharvi Vaish**, I semester BJ)