

## **Melodies of Wisdom: Exploring the Indian Knowledge System and Educational Landscape through Folk Songs**

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### **Abstract**

This research paper delves into the rich tapestry of Indian folk songs and their significant role in the Indian knowledge system and educational landscape. By examining historical evidence, past research, and current data, this study highlights how folk songs have been instrumental in promoting cultural values, social cohesion, and educational narratives in India. Through promoting social collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and public education, we can protect our rich historical and cultural legacy. Previous researches emphasized the necessity to preserve our rich musical legacy for future generations and the delicate balance that needs to be struck between innovation and preservation. This study tries to understand the educational context and indigenous Indian knowledge with full of innovations and spectacular cultural, social knowledge through folk songs and how to preserve them.

**Keywords:** Indian knowledge system, Folk songs, education, social and cultural values.

### **Introduction**

*“Folk music is the original melody of man; it is the musical mirror of the world.”*

*-Friedrich Nietzsche*

India, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse traditions, has long celebrated the wisdom embedded in its folk songs. These melodies, passed down through generations, carry not only musical beauty but also profound insights into life, nature, and human existence. In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the potential of folk pedagogy in enhancing India's educational landscape. This study delves into this intersection of traditional wisdom and modern education. Folk songs have long been a vital component of India's cultural heritage. They serve not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a repository of the country's collective wisdom, traditions, and values. India's rich cultural tapestry is woven with threads of folk songs that resonate across generations (**Rao & Ramanujam, 2009**). These melodies, steeped in tradition, carry profound wisdom and serve as a bridge between the Indian knowledge system and everyday life.

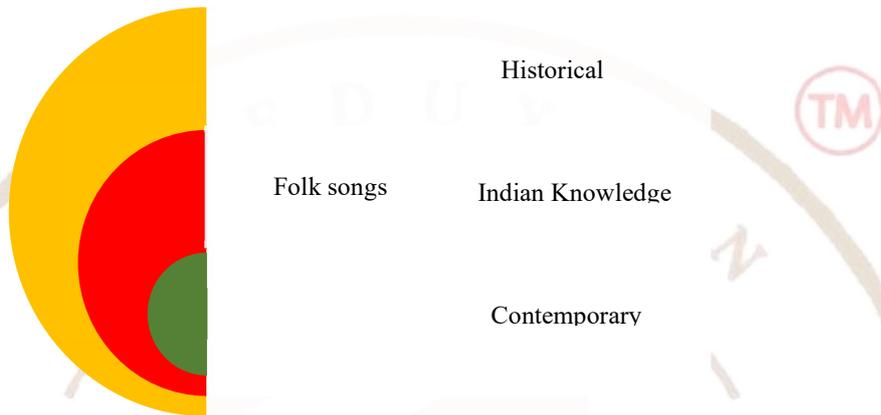
Although Suryakaran Pareek, a connoisseur of Rajasthani folk songs, had made a detailed classification of Sok songs years ago, according to him, folk songs can be divided into 29 categories: Songs of Gods, Goddesses and ancestors, Songs of the seasons, Songs of pilgrimages, Songs of fasting and festivals, Songs of rituals, Wedding songs, Brother-sister love songs, Songs of Saali-Saaleya (Sarhaj), Love songs of husband and wife, Songs of Paniharis, Songs of love, Songs while grinding the mill, Girls' songs, Charkha songs, Morning song, Harjas love songs of Radha-Krishna, Dhamaal - Lyrical song by men on the occasion of Holi, Patriotic songs, State song,

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Songs of Raj Darbar, Majlis, Shikar, Daru, Jambhe songs (brave, in the memory of saints and eminent personalities songs), Cowboy songs, Historical songs, Birds-animals' songs, Peacefull songs, Village songs, Drama songs, Miscellaneous.

Diagram-1: Folk songs are the combination of Historical, Contemporary & Indian Knowledge system



In India some of the places where people sing song on the death occasions. Indian culture is very rich in traditions, values, moral education, rituals and daily life practices which are explored through this study. As we know that National Education Policy 2020 has taken initiative to explore Bhartiya Gyan Prampara aka Indian knowledge system in educational settings. This study tries to investigate the role of folk songs in Indian Knowledge system how to help in development including their significance in fostering social cohesion, community identity, and a sense of belonging and how they contribute to social harmony and inclusivity. From the past decades this tradition is in progress and not only in India, many foreign countries like Czechoslovakia, French Pyrnees etc. for example:



*Diagram-2 Crimination ghats in India (Alamy, 2016)*

1. “घडी कदम को मेलो रे उड जाई म्हारा हंश अकेला  
चुग-चुग कंकरी माया जोड़ी जोड़कर भरियो थेलो  
आसी काळ जै फट ले जासी भरयो रै जासी थैलो रै  
कैत कबीर जी की लड़की सुबरत को दे गई हेल्लो रै  
उड जाई म्हारा हंस अकेला।”.... (Death song)

“This folk song says that no matter how much wealth we accumulate, how much money we accumulate, how much family we build, but one day everyone must go alone. Kabir ji himself says that the most beloved thing also leaves you and goes away, so we should never be proud of our life.”



Diagram-3 God folk song

2. सेवा म्हारी मानो रे देवा, पुजा म्हारी मानो  
खोलो म्हारे हिद्दाय रा ताला जी, गोरी थारा पुत् गणेश मनावा  
जल चडँअऊ देवा नहीं रे अछुतो, जल ने तो मछल्या बिगाडीयो जी  
सेवा म्हारी.....(God song)

“In this bhajan, they are saying that Bhagwan Ji, we have come to worship you, so please open the lock on our hearts, we want to worship you. Please understand our feelings, our worship is respectable. Lord Ganesha is worshipped first, so they are saying that we will first please Lord Ganesha. After that we would offer water. But the water has been spoilt by the fishes, so please just understand the feelings of our hearts.”



*Diagram-4 Panihari folk songs (Alireza, 2011)*

3. सात सखी रल पानी ने चाली तो  
सातु ही एक हुण्यारे हो राम  
भरण गई जल जमना रो पानी  
सागे की साथन यु उत बोल्ली तो  
तुलसा जी कोड कवारा ओ राम,  
भरण गई....(Panihari Song)

*“Through this folk song, we are telling about Panihari that seven friends who have gathered are going to the well to fill water and they walk together. They sing together and they have gone to fill water from Yamuna. While filling water from Yamuna ji, they are talking among themselves. They are laughing and joking and they are saying that our marriage time is not coming yet. We are not getting married yet.”*



*Diagram-5 Wedding folk song*

4. बरना बुलावे बरनी ना आवे  
आजा मोरी प्यारी बरनी  
में कैसे आउ दादा जी खडे है, में कैसे आउ ताउ जी खडे है  
पायल मोरी बाज्नी री, अटरिया सूनी पडी  
पायल को उतार के लम्बा घुघट मार के चालि आओ प्यारी बरनी  
अटरिया सूनी पडी.....(Wedding song)

*“This folk song is a duet song and is about a bride and groom. They are talking to each other. The groom calls his bride and says, come my dear bride. The bride is asking me how can I come. My grandfather is standing. My uncle is standing and my anklets ring very loudly. The sound of ringing is very loud and our roof is lying empty. So, he says, take off the anklets and take out a long veil and then come. Our roof is lying empty. “*



Diagram-6 Jachha folk song

5. जच्चा खडी महाराणी खडी, खर्ची को बटूओ लिया खडी  
जे ओ म्हरे सासुजी जावे पूत तो थानेउ देस्यु मोर् किन छीट  
अछना-पछना जाया पूत ल्यावो ए भवड म्हारे मोराकिन छीट  
नई है सासु जी म्हारे मोराकिन छीट...(Jachha song)

*“In this folk song, when a lady gives birth to a child then she is called Jacha, so this song is about the woman who has given birth to her baby. In the song, the jachha is standing with money for her expenses and her mother-in-law is telling her that if you had given birth to my grandson then I would have given you money but I don't know from where have you brought this baby so I will not give you money and the jachha is saying that no mother-in-law, my son is yours only.”*

The folk songs which have listed above are the examples of different categories identified by investigator in the genre of folk songs specially in Haryana and Rajasthan. Death songs are for the occasion of mourning for the resting soul. God songs are very much full of devotions, prayers and personification of the god in which they often offer their gratitude towards God for giving them and fulfilling their wishes. Next example of folk song in

this study is of panihari songs which were used to sing by females when they go to have water from the well, river, or any water stream available nearby the village or their habitat. Wedding songs are also sung by folks on wedding; for bride it's called barni or banni and for groom they say banna or barna. Again, next example is of jachha song which are used to sung on the birth.

This research explores how folk songs have contributed to the Indian knowledge system and have been used as educational tools across generations. Folk songs are not only educational tools but also promote social cohesion and cultural identity. They often address themes of unity, love, and communal harmony, reflecting the socio-cultural dynamics of the regions they originate from (*Singh, 2015*).

### **Review of related Literature**

(*Manchanda, 2024*) highlighted Indian folk songs starting from the explanation of folk songs in Indian context. Author also revealed that folk songs are as old as Indian civilization and growing up till date. In Indian culture is full of various genre's folk songs and local music in local languages which showed the engagement of social, cultural and educational integration into human life in Indian context.

(*Konyak & Das, 2023*) The preliterate Naga people celebrated their happy and active existence in the remote, mountainous Naga Hills with a rich store of oral traditions and culture, which included folk songs and dances. In the Naga folk culture, themes of nature, ecology, environment, sense of self, and development frequently recur. This study has made an effort to examine the world of the Eastern Nagas using an emic approach that goes much beyond the conventional academic framework and the Western scientific twists that are rife with pre- and post-colonial prejudices. Benefiting from firsthand knowledge of the Konyak and Phom communities as well as fluency in the local tongues and dialects, the researcher has taken the risk of studying a particular Eastern Naga folksong as a way of life. by meticulously listening to the songs and reading the text again that is accessible as the study's primary source. Additionally, it investigates the associated folkloric activities using an interpretive, qualitative, and ethnographic methodology, drawing cues from everyday sociocultural behaviors and the indigenous knowledge system in the area.

(*Akhtar & Farooq, 2023*) highlighted in their study that Rajasthan has a very rich culture in folk dance and music strongly connected to their historical roots. This study also revealed that Rajasthani folk songs and folk music are contributing and preserving its legacy and significance in fairs and festivals. This study also examines the mutually beneficial interaction between Rajasthan's traditional performances in the fairs and festivals that shape the state's calendar.

(*Chaudhary & Parveen, 2023*) explored in the study that with its classic stylish sensibility and believability, India's folk culture has huge economic potential, no question about it. "Oral tradition" music refers to music that has only been passed down orally, such as in the context of folk speech or the Indian tradition. The Indian subcontinent offers the chance to explore a vast array of human musical expressions due to the sheer magnitude of its musical history and cultural variety.

(*Oza, 2020*) The paper explores Indian folk literature, which is transmitted orally and encompasses diverse forms such as narratives, poems, songs, myths, and rituals. Folk literature plays a significant role in shaping regional vernaculars and cultural identity. The paper lacks empirical data or case studies to support its claims. It relies

heavily on theoretical analysis. Future research should include fieldwork, interviews, and comparative studies to validate the connections between folk literature and vernacular development.

*(Mann & Mann, 2015)* concluded in the study that Haryana has a vast contribution in the growth of the country like in agriculture sector, economic development and productivity. Haryana is also sacrificing youth in independence of India and it's also contributed equally in education and literature of Indian history. Haryana is the only state which has been playing the role in producing non-comparable literature like Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta and its preaching in its culture.

*(Singh, 2015)* The study explores the educational significance of folk songs within Indian society. Folk songs have been an integral part of cultural expression, passed down through generations. Folk songs serve as powerful tools for moral and aesthetic education. They transmit cultural values, historical narratives, and social norms. Through folk songs, students learn about their heritage, identity, and community. The study emphasizes that musical culture contributes to spiritual growth. Starting with family exposure, this process extends to schools and higher education. Folk songs foster emotional connections and a sense of belonging. The research methodology is not explicitly mentioned, but it likely involves qualitative analysis. Challenges include documenting oral traditions accurately and capturing their essence. Investigator underscores the educational value of folk songs, emphasizing their impact on cultural preservation, emotional well-being, and spiritual growth.

*(Rao & Ramanujam, 2009)* highlighted the role of folk songs in fostering social cohesion in rural India. Their research showed that communities engaged in collective singing had stronger social bonds and a greater sense of cultural identity. The study aims to explore the role of folk songs in fostering social cohesion within rural Indian communities. It investigates how these traditional oral narratives contribute to community bonding, cultural preservation, and identity formation. The authors likely employed qualitative research methods, such as ethnography or case studies, to collect data. Fieldwork, participant observation, and interviews with folk singers and community members may have been used. The study might have analysed song lyrics, performance contexts, and social interactions. Findings of this studies highlighted that folk songs serve as repositories of cultural memory, transmitting values, history, and shared experiences. They create a sense of belonging, connecting individuals across generations. Social cohesion is enhanced through communal singing, storytelling, and rituals. The study likely highlights the importance of preserving folk traditions for community well-being.

## **Methodology**

This research lies purely based on secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from existing literature, archival records, news articles, research papers, research theses, journals and available books on folk songs, Indian knowledge system, cultural values through folk songs and educational integration.

## **The Research**

**Folk songs:** Folk songs are musical expressions deeply rooted in cultural traditions and passed down orally through generations. Folk songs emerge from local communities, reflecting their history, customs, and daily life. They often have simple melodies, repetitive structures, and relatable lyrics *(Manchanda, 2024)*. Folk songs cover

a wide range of themes like love and heartbreak, nature and landscape, work and labour, social issues and historical events and rituals and celebrations. Folk songs preserve cultural heritage, transmitting values, beliefs, and wisdom. They connect people to their roots and identity. Despite, regional variations, folk songs resonate universally. They evoke emotions, tell stories, and create a sense of community. Folk songs serve as informal educators, teaching history, morals, and life lessons. They enrich our understanding of diverse cultures (*Sharma, 2020*). Folk songs are more than melodies they carry the soul of a community and celebrate the human experience.

**Folk songs and Indian knowledge system:** Folk songs in India date back to ancient times, with references found in Vedic texts and other early scriptures. These songs were often used to pass down knowledge, history, and cultural practices orally from one generation to the next. According to Vedic literature, the use of song and chant was a primary method of preserving sacred texts and rituals. Oral traditions, including folk songs, were crucial in maintaining the continuity of cultural and religious practices in a largely illiterate society. Research indicates that folk songs have played an essential role in the informal education system in India. They were used to teach moral lessons, social norms, and practical skills (*Chaudhary & Parveen, 2023*).

**Relationship between Indian Knowledge System and Folk songs:**

S.N.	Context	Relationship
1.	Oral Tradition and Cultural Transmission	Folk songs are passed down orally from one generation to another. They embody the collective wisdom, values, and beliefs of communities. Through these songs, cultural knowledge is transmitted whether it's agricultural practices, rituals, historical events, or spiritual insights ( <i>Akhtar &amp; Farooq, 2023</i> ).
2.	Local Context and Universal Themes	Folk songs are deeply rooted in local contexts geography, language, customs, and rituals. Yet, their themes often transcend boundaries. Love, nature, struggle, and celebration are universal motifs found in folk songs across India.
3.	Preserving Indigenous Knowledge	Folk songs preserve indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants, ecological balance, and sustainable living. They encode practical wisdom, passed down by ancestors who lived in harmony with nature ( <i>Sharma, 2020</i> ).
4.	Social Commentary and Identity	Folk songs serve as a mirror reflecting societal issues. They critique injustice, inequality, and societal norms. By singing these songs, communities assert their identity and resist cultural erasure ( <i>Konyak &amp; Das, 2023</i> ).

5.	Education Beyond Textbooks	Folk songs are informal educators. They teach history, geography, ethics, and life skills. Children learn about their heritage through these songs, fostering a holistic understanding of the world.
6.	Adaptation and Evolution	Folk songs adapt to changing times. They incorporate contemporary themes-urbanization, technology, and globalization. This evolution ensures their relevance and survival (Oza, 2020).

*Table-1 Relationship between Indian Knowledge System and Folk songs*

### **Role of folk songs in promoting Knowledge and Education:**

The analysis revealed that folk songs are effective in conveying complex ideas and values in an accessible and engaging manner. They are used in both formal and informal educational settings, particularly in rural areas. Folk songs play a vital role in education and knowledge acquisition. Folk songs have an indescribable expressive quality that resonates with students emotionally (Chaudhary & Parveen, 2023). They evoke feelings, memories, and cultural connections, making learning more engaging. Folk songs provide a window into history and culture. By singing these songs, students connect with generations before them and explore diverse traditions. Many folk songs use archaic or unusual vocabulary. Explaining these words enriches students' understanding and broadens their linguistic horizons. Folk songs naturally introduce musical concepts like melody, rhythm, and harmony. Students learn these elements intuitively through singing and repetition. Folk songs are part of our musical heritage. By passing them down, we ensure that cultural treasures endure and enrich future generations. Folk songs are catchy, enjoyable, and often come with games and dances (Mann & Mann, 2015). Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational initiatives incorporate folk songs into their programs to enhance learning and cultural awareness among students. Folk songs contribute to social harmony by promoting shared cultural narratives and fostering a sense of belonging among community members. They serve as a unifying force, particularly in diverse and multi-lingual societies (Singh, 2015).

### **Discussion**

The research underscores the multifaceted role of folk songs in the Indian knowledge system and educational landscape. It highlights the need for preserving and promoting these cultural treasures in contemporary education. Efforts to document and preserve folk songs are crucial in maintaining their educational and cultural value. Initiatives such as digital archiving and community-based workshops are essential in this regard. Cultural heritage encompasses tangible artifacts, intangible traditions, languages, rituals, and knowledge passed down through generations. Digitization plays a pivotal role in preserving this heritage by making it accessible globally. Digital initiatives, such as virtual museums and 3D reconstructions, enhance our connection with the past (Sharma, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Folk songs are a vital part of India's cultural and educational heritage. They play a significant role in promoting knowledge, cultural values, and social cohesion. This research calls for increased recognition and integration of

folk songs into the broader educational framework to preserve and enhance their impact on future generations. By fostering global cooperation, cultural sensitivity, and public awareness, we can safeguard our diverse heritage in the digital era. Past studies highlighted the delicate balance between innovation and preservation, emphasizing the need to protect our rich musical heritage for future generations.

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