

**PUNJABI FOLKLORE "BALLAD"**

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The term folk include all those persons living within a given area, who are conscious of a common cultural heritage, and have some common traits e.g. Occupation, languages and religion. The way of life of the group of the people is more traditional, more natural, less systematic and less specialized in comparison to the so called civilized people. The behavioral knowledge is based on oral tradition & not on written scriptures. The group have a sense of identity & belongingness regardless of its numerical strength.

According to William Bascom , "folk lore means folk learning which comprehends all meaning that is transmitted by word of mouth and all crafts & techniques that are learnt by imitation or example, as well as the products of these crafts. Folk lore includes folk art folk crafts, folk costumes folk belief folk medicine, folk music, folk dance, folk games folk gestures." It also includes folk literature with such forms as folk tales, Legends, Ballads, Myths, Epic lays, Proverbs & Riddles, culture, complex traditions & social beliefs.

According to Malinowski & Radcliffe Brown-"folklore is a vital element in a living culture".

Folklorist Richard A. Waterman says, "Folklore is that art form, comprising various type of stories, proverbs, saying, spells, songs, incantations and many more things, which employs spoken language as its medium".

Charles Francis Potter in his definition states that Folklore is a lively fossil which refuses to die. It is precipitate of the scientific & cultural lag of centuries & millennia of human experience.

Customs of the common people of yesteryears are carried from one generation to another and gradually shaped into folklores. Folklores in the different parts of India are available in abundance and speaks about our rich legacy.

If we are constantly surprised by a strange mixture of the familiar and miraculous in Indian folklore, we are equally surprised by its vitality, folklore is a kind of heritage from a dying past.

Ballad type folk song varies considerably with time and place, but certain characteristics remain fairly constant and seemingly fundamental. A Ballad is narrative, it is sung, belongs to the folk in content, style and designation, Ballad focuses on a single incident, it is impersonal. In any narrative, four elements are common, so in Ballad emphasizes is on action, setting is casual, theme is often implied and characters are usually types &

even more individual and undeveloped. Action carries the interest. Ballad takes a single incident ,as does the short story, brings that into sharp and economical focus.

Ballad in different parts of world:

The best known of all the English Ballads are the Robin Hood Ballads, the main body of English and Scottish Ballads is to be found in the great collection of F. J. Child (1882-1898). The Dumi (Ballad )of Ukraine are different, their ballads are more conventional in form and subject -historical themes, recounting battles against Turks and Poles.

The Ballads of Yugoslavia are shorter narrative form, heroic and narrative, the Ballad of Marco and Andrija, many of the Ballads particularizes events of the battle, goodly number Ballads dealing with religious story, some seem very like folktales translated into Ballad form.

In Bulgaria most of the Ballads are concerned with supernatural characters and themes. Donna Lombarda is probably the most famous of Italian ballads.

Ballads of Punjab:

The land of five rivers was partitioned in 1947, population were exchanged the waters were divided, its assets were shared but one thing which escaped division is the folklore of the people of the Punjab. Even today a visit to the grave of Muslim saint in Indian Punjab is believed to heal the sufferings of the Hindus and Sikhs and in the

Pakistan part of Punjab Muslim women sing folk songs ballads in which a Punjabi maiden wishes for bridegroom as beautiful as Krishna. (translations from Punjabi Language)

“If u go to the battle field, oh rider of the blue horse!

Carry me in your haversack and wherever the night falls, oh rider of the blue horse!

Pull me out & take me in your arms “

This Ballad echoes the heart cry of the Punjabi people. The life of a Punjabi damsel is usually a long tale of longings even today. Circumstances made the Punjabi women fearless, she is bold, she asks her lover to carry her along ever to the battle field. This spells separation and endless waiting ,every day dawns with a new hope, every night passes with a loving dream seasons come& seasons go ,but spring has its own charm, its own magic(translations from Punjabi Language).

The vine is in blossom! The vine is in blossom!

Parrots are nibbling away at the blossoms

The vine is in blossom!

The vine is in fruit! The vine is in fruit!

But he who should eat it far, far away

The vine is in fruit!

I go & ask the priest, I go and ask priest

With a tray full of pearls,

I go & ask the priest

Open the patri, oh priest, open the patri  
When will my jewel return?  
Pray open the patri  
The priest open the patri, the priest opens the patri  
In the month of sawan will your jewel return,  
The priest opens the patri  
False is your patri, oh priest false is your patri,  
It's the month of sawan and my jewel hasn't come  
false is your patri, oh priest  
The vine is in blossom! The vine is in blossom!

The Punjabi sweet heart is not needlessly scared, if her lover has not returned in the month of sawan as promised by the priest, she tells that his patri is fake and his readings are faulty, she is not worried about her faith or convictions.

This is perhaps the reason unlike Bengal & Assam whose folklore is noted for magic & witchcraft, Uttar Pradesh & MP for superstitious beliefs & practices, south and Maharashtra for fair and festivals, the Punjab is known for folk songs and folk romances. In the folk songs of the Punjab there is hardly any reference to the sea, they tell the tales of battles, brave warriors and sing praises of the swords and spear. There are stories of spotted scarfs, silken skirts and swelling turbans, fond lovers & fairy like sweet heart festivals and fairs, fearless competition in wrestling bouts and horse races ,stories of large hearted farmers and of rains which are usually kind and of crops which seldom let the peasant down, the love lorn protagonist Heer met Ranjha on a river

bank, Saheban met Mirza in a madrasa, Sohni met Mahiwal in her father's pottery , while drawing water from the well women used to sing songs of love. Another popular theme of the Punjab folk lore is a sister's love for her brother.

Mahya songs and bolian are particularly the favorites of the men folk.

The Punjabi songs can be divided into two main classes:

#### 1. Songs

A folk song is a lyrical, short, rhythmic song of a folk community. It is created and composed by the folk for their own entertainment, education or emotional outlet, it is sung on occasions like birth, marriage & death ceremonies or during agricultural work or their activities. It is transmitted and perpetuated spontaneously through oral tradition from person to person or from generation to generation. There is scope for improvisation and there is very little distinction between the performer and the audience.

#### 1. Short Ballads

Ballad is a long impersonal narrative song which depicts a single incident through the content & style of the folk. It is learnt and transmitted through word of mouth from singer to singer. They are usually a couplet or a single or a single verse complete in itself though capable of forming a link in a chain. Couplet after couplet is thus linked to the chain and the song lengthens out. Most folk songs of the Punjab are loosely knit. There is always room for addition of fresh verses with the passage of time the more beautiful lines are retained and the less beautiful lines are discarded and forgotten.

There is a slender like connecting these verses with one another and this keeps most of the songs up to date so that they reflect the changing times with surprising authenticity. Short ballads generally consist of two or more lines and are in the form of exhortations or emotional outbursts of a women's heart.

They are generally sung in chorus to the accompaniment of some crude musical instrument generally "Dholak"(a drum). Men have their own ballads which they sing on the occasion of fairs like Baisakhi.

Most of the ballads are sung in the adoration of "Ranjha "the idol of love and an ideal sweet heart in the Punjab. "Heer" adores her cowherd lover in various forms. This love story attained so great a reputation in the Punjab that saints and fakirs also gave it a place in their compositions.

The Great Govind Singh wrote (translations from Punjabi Language):

"Go and narrate the story of the worshippers to the beloved friend. Without thee, it is painful to be covered with a quilt. I live the life of Nagas, the naked. The Goblet is a spear and the cup like a sword without thee, O beloved, I always suffer the life-cutting pain of a butcher's knife .

Ballads of Hussain and Bullah illustrates the assertion(translations from Punjabi Language):

Bullah: The beloved has stolen my heart away and deserted me. My mother is angry, my father beats me, my brother taunts me. He played his Tablet at my door. I fell in love and my peace of mind is gone.

Husaain: To whom should I reveal this secret pain of separation? Pricking of long thorns has turned me mad. Pangs of separation always pay attention to me, to whom should I explain this. I am roaming about in the jungles, seeking my beloved, but he has not appeared as yet, to whom should I tell this?

Before partition Punjab was in two parts Western & Eastern, so most of the songs have western Punjabi predominates. It was western Punjab rich in Ballads. All Punjabi romance sticks to the Chenab the eastern boundary of western Punjab, its proximity to Lahore the capital of Punjab, naturally brought the romantic spirit of the song to the central Punjab but the eastern part Punjab remained barren in this respect .

Short Ballads which are generally sung in chorus to the Accompaniment of Dholak (translations from Punjabi Language).

1. O young man with a red turban, the clouds have made the weather pleasant, it is time for the lovers to meet.
2. O my love, you are always talking of going. Go some day, my dear, what anxiety you have caused me.

Ata boys marriage a proper "Ghori" song is sung in the form of an exhortation from a sister.

3. O my brother ,thy sister has spun this very fine thread for thy turban which enhances thy beauty.

The son of a weaver friend of my beloved brother whom he loves much has brought these "Jora & Chuni" coat and a wrapper wear them O my brother, wear them. Similarly, the Washer man, tailor, etc. are treated in the song.

Again, when the nuptials of a daughter are to be celebrated the woman sings (translations from Punjabi Language);

O daughter, why were thou standing behind the sandal tree?

I was standing near papa. Saying "Papa speak, thy daughter has become of marriageable age & needs a consort."

O daughter what sort of husband thou desire? O papa (I want a husband who may be) like a moon amongst the stars, and a Krishna amongst the moons (handsome persons); I want a kanhaiya- like husband.

The above song has succinctly put forth the emotions of a girl's heart.

Another popular song "Sohag" (translations from Punjabi Language)

A daughter implores her father: Papa, send me into that house, where masons build palaces.

These songs show what women think the best choice of a family into which to give their girls. It is difficult to decide with certainty the authorship of such ballads, these songs are probably the composition of women themselves

In lighter strain the women sing several songs or ballads called "Sithni" which are mostly meant to tease one another & sometimes these are couched in bad languages. Excepting the ceremonial songs all others are nothing else if not love songs and some of them are full of beauty, pathos and the emotions of a woman's heart. The full significance of these type of Ballad can only appreciated by those who know the great love stories of Punjab.

Following song is put in the month of Sohni while she was getting droned in the Chenab in her wild attempt to see her sweet -heart Mahiwal (translations from Punjabi Language):

"O care taker of the she-buffaloes, O love-intoxicated Fakeer, thy Sohni is dying by drowning. On the Yonder Bank stands my sweet-heart and lover, while I am being drowned by the waves. If this life is gone, let it be sacrificed over my lover, but let my love remain untarnished, if God is not pleased to allow my raft 'Katcha Gharra'(unburnt Pitcher) to reach the bank of safety (where my lover stands)."

Another ballad describing the love of Heer and Ranjha (translations from Punjabi Language):

“On the bough of a mango tree, speaks a parrot, O my sweet-heart ,it has got red beak and black eyes. Ranjha, thou art loved by all women. O my love, after all Ranjha is the son of Unfriendly parents.

Come on, Omian Ranjha. Let us build a house ; and we may make therein a window”.

The above ballad with incoherent and unanimated ideas, put together.

These ballads depict a feminine heart deeply in love. In some ballads, one finds other side of a feminine nature. A Raja has fallen in love with a “Jatti,” a peasant girl, while Rani resents it. This becomes a dialogue (translations from Punjabi Language).

Raja: O dear Jatti, weighed with flowers, you should not give up visiting your lover.

Jatti: O Raja. what way should I come and how go back? All doors are watched by sentinels.

Such songs seem to be based on some historical facts ,but the origin cannot be traced.

The Raja is of weak character ,while the Rani has played her part with strength and revenge on the Poor Jatti.

Punjabi Dialect is as rich in its Ballads as her sister languages, Hindi, Bengali or Gujarati.

In the Punjabi poetry, love of a woman for her lover or husband is the most intense known, when the expressions of love had to be depicted in poetry none could think of a better or purer symbol than the woman's love for her lover.

This phase of the expression of love was borrowed from the great 'Bhagats' – Lovers of God. Who in their exhortations to him depicted themselves as a lady and adored to praise their God in the form of a husband or sweetheart.

The communication potential of this Indian traditional performing art (Ballad) has been proved time and again by many instances of national importance. Alha, the popular ballad of Uttar Pradesh and its counterparts, like Laavani of Maharashtra, Gee-gee of Karnataka, Villupaattu of Tamil Nadu and Kabigan of Bengal which changed their content and focus depending on the contemporary need were effective in arousing the conscience of the people against colonial rule of the British.

We also find Punjabi Ballads by Attar Singh representing the feelings of an old sikh warrior appeared in an Indian Newspaper in 1880s, another Ballad lamenting the death of Brigadier Nicholson during the fight for Delhi in 1857, both these Ballads were

included by David Ross in his book *The Land of the five Rivers & Sindh*, Lahore (1882, Reprint 1970). Two Punjabi Ballads 'Ghadar Di Waran' is incomplete and anonymous, 'Jangnama Dili 'by Khazan Singh were edited by Shamsheer Singh 'Varante Jangname' by S S Ashok (1947). A Punjabi Ballad on the Revolt OF 1857, An Analysis by K S Bajwa is available as historical fact.

Oral tradition is important because of the social function it fulfills, there are many diverse function of oral traditions in folk societies they are recreation, education, Socialization, Social control, Social protest.

Folklore is a reliable index to study and understand the background of the people. These are passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth before it came to be reduced to writing. Traditional art forms have survived for centuries and they will survive in the future due to their flexibility, they could be the media for social change. In rural India, being functional interpersonal and having a contextual base, folk lore would be able to carry the message of change development & environmental awareness, as Rabindranath Tagore put it aptly "All traditional structure of arts must have sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicate or visible to grow with its growth to dance with its rhythm."

Main importance of the ballad is not in furnishing material for folklorist, it is of great intrinsic importance, it is often magnificent poetry with beauty and definitiveness, the

felicity of its lines, moving stories, suggestiveness and evocations are all of the high order of poetry, It is the expression of the people when they were close to one another and to the community, a homogeneous and largely classless group living in close integration, it was an expression of their unity and likewise, it was a force making for the unity. Ballads long ago became a permanent part of our general cultural heritage. Almost without exception Ballads were sung, tunes are traditional and probably as old as words but of the two story and melody, story is basic but Ballad is not simply recited or told, its interpretation and emotional power gets momentum and strength by accompanying melody.

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