A Study of Transformation of Awadhi Folk Songs Across Milieu and Media

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Awadhi Folk Songs in Changing Times: Issues and Assumptions

> This seeing which comes before words, and can never be quite covered by them, is not a question of mechanically reacting to stimuli… We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach- though not necessarily within arm's reach. To touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it… We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.
>
> (Berger 1)

The 'continually active, continually moving, continually holding' vision, involving the simultaneous acts of seeing and being seen, depicts quite succinctly the trajectory of a literary text, as also its cinematic and other adaptations, integrally connected to its folk-roots. This established inter-dependence of seeing and looking as 'an act of choice' truly describes the nuances involved in the process of transformation of various folklores, particularly folk songs, from one medium to another as also from one social, cultural, or topographical milieu to the other societies, cultures, and places. For instance, the cinematic adaptation of a folk song, which is essentially associated with rural space and sensibility, lets the urban middle-class audience jive to the tunes of songs like 'Sasural Genda Phool' (*Delhi 6*) and 'Mehngai Dayan' (*Peepli Live*), although more than often the urban spaces choose to define themselves necessarily in opposition

to the rural, and perhaps vice versa. Thus, to choose to ‘see’ such borrowings from the folk art as a viable popular medium of entertainment is primarily to ‘look’ at the interconnections and continuity between the apparently distinct rural and urban cultures as the reflection of a binding psycho-emotional connection with the raw and straight-forward knowledge contained in such avatars of folk cultures. The in-betweenness of these psycho-emotional connections with the rural and urban cultures at the two opposite ends, bringing ‘within our reach’ both the extremes at the same time, manifests itself in various ways around us; the folk wisdom is also conspicuous as jokes, riddles, proverbs, sayings, etc. in urban spaces. By extension of the same argument, even SMS and e-mail chains could be interpreted as the new urban folklore.

Unfortunately, despite being a potent pool of wisdom and knowledge, the hybrid area of folk culture discussed above has been majorly ignored by the researchers and scholars of folklore and culture studies. “The result is a lamentable gap in our understanding of how folklore is revamped to speak to changing social realities in India.” (Narayan 178) This void is felt, more specifically, in the case of Awadhi folklore. As a humble attempt to contribute towards bridging this gap, one has tried to study the “migration” of Awadhi folk songs from rural to urban spaces, along with its transformation into literary texts and popular adaptations. This attempt is coupled with the hope to establish/locate the changing role of folklore in the present times where forces like globalisation, media-explosion, rapid cultural diffusions, and, probably, even education place newer demands on cultural forms.

The aforesaid anxiety of being ignored is made more complex due to the neglect of socio-cultural wisdom of Awadhi folk literature. A sincere and systematic study of folk songs depicts the presence of folk songs in directing the ways of various social institutions. In other words, the folk songs have prevalent roles in shaping the lives of people and directing the ways of social preferences. In the phase of social transition the elements of change get embedded in the folk wisdom, which ultimately gets reflected in the form of newer versions of the same age-old traditional songs. For instance, the metaphor of a train engine is used frequently in the folk songs as a rival of the beloved wife whose husband migrates to distant places in search of a livelihood. Unlike the traditional images of longing in love, the image of a train is closer to the reality of the mobile and rapidly changing modern society. The failure to identify such elements of the contemporary reality is basically the failure to identify the elements of the present in folk songs.

Therefore, the attitude to assign folk songs to an antiquated and unchanging past exudes an ill-informed prejudice. The study of such social changes would facilitate the undoing of this prejudice through an analysis of changing social realities and by extension would provide ways and avenues to predict the future of folk culture. This argument establishes the need to study changes in folklore that are directly related to the changes in the socio-cultural matrix of the respective geographical and linguistic areas.

At this juncture, one feels the need to accept a systematic diachronic study of folk songs instead of a synchronic and mere explanatory or definitional one on questions like what, why, how, when, where and who of folklore. A systematic study of folklore coupled with theoretical postulations may help one predict the 'future' phase of the folk. It is imperative, therefore, that the artists, scholars, folklorists, etc. should realise that the answer to the anxieties and aspirations of folk culture will come from within. To begin with, the study of folk songs in their original form becomes mandatory. It should later be extended to identify the changing patterns in the society. It is indispensable, as indicated earlier, to view folk songs as the reflections of the social practices and institutions dominant in a particular period. For instance, the dominance of work songs and social reforms in folk literature was simultaneous with the era of nation building in India. Thus folk songs become the socio-cultural markers to predict the future of greater social, political, economic and cultural processes, like modernisation, nationalism, and globalisation, etc.

However the mention above of a 'lamentable gap' is made not to claim the deliberate neglect of folklore in rural spaces or urban settings vis-à-vis research based culture studies. In fact, steady and valiant efforts have been already made, albeit too late and too little, to study cities and villages; rural and urban communities vis-à-vis their respective folk wisdom and knowledge have already been explored. What's missing is a thoughtful and sincere academic engagement, which goes beyond mere compilation of primary source materials meant only for the preservation of a particular folk form, towards protecting cultural heritage as also the individual cultures threatened by the contemporary habits of not only following but also adoring anything and everything that is served by the commercial illusionists and wrapped in the exotic covers of new, modern, and alien. This naiveté is infested with the colonial legacy of the middle-class dilemma vis-a-vis tradition and modernity as also with the inhibiting-prohibiting-

appropriating advances of western, global, and cosmopolitan interactions witnessed by our days in the twenty-first century. This presents a situation of inconsistency in our lives today. Apparently, this also intermingles with one's sense of identification or withdrawal from one's own folk culture. As a matter of fact, folk culture is not an uprooted heritage simply brought to the present from the past legacy. It is rather a synchronic manifestation of a culture remaining in its original place/time and at the same time allowing its shoots and roots to flourish and get anchored in an altogether different milieu. It could also be inferred through commonsensical analogy that such a transformation, while still maintaining connections with its place and time of origin, could only be facilitated through the presence of certain factors responsible for the preservation of such traditions in-sync with the requirements of the present cultures. Through this analogy, one can reiterate the fact that sincere efforts to examine such relevant forces of preservation and propagation of cultural legacy will help the concerned communities and societies to adapt themselves as a composite cultural whole in the era of shrinking global village. Therefore, the liminal spaces of the journey across milieu and media, especially pertaining to the folk cultures, will help sustain the forthcoming/advancing new-era challenges. For instance, a study of the 'Qasba' (the Western equivalent of it being the English County) culture, whose dynamism depends not on its territory but on its cultural relevance and folk ways, will inform our insight regarding the flourishing confluence of both rural as well as urban cultures. Every qasba in India, a classic case of liminal space of folk culture, has a cultural coherence where Hindus and Muslims are not distinct; every qasba has a holy shrine or some religious event, where/in which everyone participates. This holds valid even for countless fairs and festivals that are celebrated with pomp, show and fervor by everyone and everywhere in India; participation across religious faiths while religious festivals and fairs are held, is a common pan-Indian phenomenon. As an obvious corollary to the same argument, even songs, music, dance forms, etc. of the folk realm perform the same task. Thus one witnesses the possibility of resilience and unity of people otherwise divided on various grounds. This possibility, if realised at the level of theory and praxis both, could help preserve and propagate various cultural traditions as also the age old tradition of harmonious living. And this harmony can be envisioned at various levels, viz. social, cultural, political, ecological and philosophical.

Coming back to the syncretic tradition of developing art forms, one can cite a crucial example: A qasba model for the development of a particular art form is Handia, a tehsil in the

Allahabad district in the Eastern Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh state in India, which played a vital role in the development of the Kathak dance form. Handia has contributed in the growth of Kathak immensely and has produced many eminent artists. The most legendary amongst these artists is Pandit Birju Maharaj, who was born and raised in the same tehsil. On the same lines, the exploration of various sites that contributed to the development and transformation of Awadhi folk songs may provide the guiding principles of survival and sustenance amidst rapid global changes in the various forms of artistic expressions. Here a term like 'survival' is not used in the theoretical sense alone as much debate and deliberations have already been made on this count. One rather intends to use this term to reflect the process through which folk songs adapt themselves in the face of rapid changes, along with their ability to preserve their basic qualities. They are not merely something new created for a new age; they are organic transformations with their distinct qualities still intact. For example, a major transformation is seen in the following song which belongs to the period of national struggle for independence. In the traditional structure of 'Gari', a folk song sung by the women of the bride's family at the time of marriage to tease the groom and his relatives, nationalist sentiments are infused. Apart from this, the bride's mother also passes comments on the practice of dowry in front of her Samadhi i.e. the groom's father:

Charkha dahejwa ma dehaun Samadhi,

Chhakda ladaaye lai jau.

Ghar peechhe ek charkha ho Samadhi,

Gauan mein dehun batvaaye…

Ghar-ghar chalihai jo Samadhi charakhwa,

Sab dehain tohka asees.

Ohirey aseeswa se ann, dhan, doodh, poot,

Rahihain sukhi parivaar. (Awasthi *Hazara* 13)

I will give charkhas in dowry Samadhi,

Load and take them away on a cart,

There should be a charkha to every household,

Get them distributed in the village.

When a charkha will spin in every household,

All will shower you with blessings.

Those blessings will bring home grain, wealth, milk and sons,

And all the families will prosper.[1]

Such instances of inclusion of socio-political events in folk songs reflect the awakening of the folk psyche in response to major socio-political events. This illustrates how the changes in society and polity of a particular period get naturally embedded in folk songs.

Before I discuss the methodology adopted by me in the present research, I feel the necessity to recall briefly some of the pioneers who contributed to the field of folkloristics/folklore studies in India. Folkloristics in India began as a part of the Orientalist project. The first significant contribution in the field was made by William Jones who founded Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. James Todd's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829) was the first serious and detailed research in the area. Similarly, J. Abbott worked on Punjabi folk songs. R.C. Temple published *Legends of the Punjab* in 1884, Mary Frere wrote *Old Deccan Days, Or Hindoo Fairy Legends Current in Southern India* in 1868. In 1871, Charles E. Gower published *Folk songs of Southern India*, which compiled songs in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. In 1872, Dalton published *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal.* In 1885, Mrs. Steel published *Wide Awake Stories.* Sir George Grierson published in 'Some Bihari Folk songs' and 'Some Bhojpuri Folk songs'. In 1882, Toru Dutt published *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan.* Lal Bihari Dey's *Folktales of Bengal* came in 1883 and *Bengal Peasant Life* in 1908. Ram Naresh Tripathi's seminal text *Gram Git* was published in 1929. Among such a plenty of research on Indian folklore, very little attention has been given to

[1] My translation.

Awadhi folk songs. Only few scholars, like Ram Naresh Tripathi, Devendra Satyarthi, Krsihnadeva Upadhyaya, Sarojini Rohatagi, and Mahesh Narayan Awasthi, have based their research works on Awadhi folk songs. As is evident, this area has not been explored in adequately. These studies are largely explanatory and archival in nature. Moreover, research on the transformation of folk songs across time, space and media still an unexplored area. I intend to fill this gap of sustained neglect of Awadhi folklore in general and Awadhi folk songs in particular. In recent years, many departments of literature in Indian Universities have been encouraging research in folklore. However, not much progress has taken place in the area of Awadhi folk songs, particularly in terms of the changes that get embedded in them. Thus, the changing face of Awadhi folk songs remains unexplored and it still is perceived as the song frozen in time. The contemporariness of such songs goes completely unrecognized.

My research involves a close reading of compiled Awadhi folk songs. It, also, includes the study of folk songs collected through field work, along with the use of interviews and discussions with the contemporary folk singers so as to develop an understanding of the changing face of the Awadhi folk songs. The field work, also, comprises fairs and festivals, for example Kumbh Mela, to explore the contemporary nature of folk culture. Further, detailed critical analyses of some literary and cinematic texts were probed to understand the nature and implications of appropriation of folk elements in them. During my field-work at the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad, I realised the subtle presence of folk songs in our lives. One could find beautiful instances of folk song ‘performances’ on the banks of Sangam (the confluence of three important rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati where Kumbh Mela is organised) in the early hours of day. In fact, very close to the Sangam site, there is a temple called Mankameshwar Mandir where on every Monday, especially in the month of sawan, women-folk sing beautiful songs while performing their puja. Also, during Kumbh and Magh Mela, there is a month long function organised, under the banner of “Chalo Mann Ganga Yamuna Teer”, literally “Oh hearts, let’s go to the banks of Ganga and Yamuna”, to showcase the cultural heritage of India. This event is not exclusively devoted to the folk performances though. But, if such a platform is utilised to bring together various folk singers, artists, and performers from different regions, then certainly the results will be overwhelming. And, if such a project can be extended to thousands of fairs across the state, then certainly the outcome would prove to be revolutionary. Such sites can prove helpful not only in terms of preserving art and culture, but also in bringing back the

harmonious living between people of different faiths, as the artists and performers come from different sections of society and are deep-rooted in the tradition of artistic harmony. At one of the programs organised at "Chalo Mann Ganga Yamuna Teer", I happened to listen to a poem written exclusively on the mela. It is written by Kailash Gautam and is titled "Amausa ka Mela"[2]. The tone and diction of the poem recited by the poet himself, undoubtedly, had all the flavours of Awadhi, but when I went on to search the poem, I found it is a famous Bhojpuri poem. Once again the similarities between Awadhi and Bhojpuri come to the fore. In any case, the poem, in a humorous tone, is an excellent depiction of folk psyche. It, also, depicts the underlying pathos in the lives in of common folk:

Ee bhakti ke rang mein rangal gaon dekha

Dharam mein karam mein sanal gaon dekha

Agal mein bagal mein sagal gaon dekha,

Amausa nahaye chalal gaon dekha.

Ehu haathey jhora, ohu haathey jhora

U Kaanhi par bori, kaparey pe bora

U kamri mein kehu, rajai mein kehu

U kathri mein kehu, dulai mein kehu

U aaji rangavat haeen goud dekha

Hansat hauvein babba tani jod dekha

Ghoonghtvai se poochey patohiya ki aaiya

Gatharia mein ab ka rakhai bataiha…

[2] The fair on the day of Amavasya when pilgrims take holy dip in the Sangam.

Akhadan ka sangat u rangat ee dekha

Bichal hau hazaran ka pangat ee dekha

Kahin raslila kahin parbachan hau

Kahin goshthi hau kahin parbachan hau

Kehu budhiya mai ke kora uthavey

U tirbeni maiya mein gota lagavey

Kalapbaas mein ghar ka chinta lagal hau

Katal dhan kharihaney vaisai paral hau

Amausa ka mela, Amausa ka mela

Eehai hauvey bhaiya Amausa ka mela.

(Gautam in Dixit 62-63)

Look at this village soaked in the colours of devotion

Look at this village merged in religion and duty

Look at this village here and there and everywhere,

Look at this village heading for the holy bath on Amavasya.

A bag in this hand, and a bag in the other,

A sack on the shoulders, and a bigger one on the

head,

Someone wrapped in a blanket, someone in the quilt

Someone wrapped in the bedspread, someone in the shawl

And grandma is getting her feet coloured

Grandpa is laughing, look at the competing couple,

The daughter-in-law enquires from behind the veil,

Oh mother, what is to be kept now in the bundle…

Look at the company and glory of the holy sects

Look at the spread of the queue of thousands of dining people

Here raslila, there sermons happen

Here symposium, there *bhajans* take place

Someone holds the old mother in his arms,

And takes the holy dip in the waters of triveni[3]

In the kalapwaas[4], worries of the household troubles

The harvest of rice is lying open in the barn just like

[3] Sangam.
[4] A month long observance of ascetic living on the banks of sangam.

that

The fair of Amavasya, the fair of Amavasya

This only is the fair of Amavasya.[5]

This poem depicts vividly the peasant culture of India coming in touch with the wider world. While the excitements and desires of the rural world are expressed with its minute details, the underling harsh realities of the daily existence, too, get highlighted. In the search for attaining salvation and paying penance, rural lives get connected to their urban counterparts. The poem in the context makes this rural-urban continuum conspicuous. This is an essential feature of folk songs too. I attempt to explore this continuum inherent in folk songs. Awadhi folk songs, as a bridge between rural and urban spaces, were explored using a two-pronged approach. Firstly, it focussed on the transformations that the folk songs undergo when they travel over time and across different spaces. Secondly, a fresh look at the journey of specific folk songs across media, in order to explore the interconnections between the folk, the literary texts, and the popular texts formed the substantial part of my research. The impact of events like colonialism, independence, wars, westernization, sanskritization, modernisation, and globalisation, etc. on folk songs has been examined with actual examples of folk songs. In the process, the conjunctions and the disjunctions between folk, popular and mass cultures, too, became the matter of investigation.

My research focuses on the analyses of the changes that folk songs undergo when they travel from rural settings to the urban centres and, also, when they 'travel' from performance arena to literary texts to cinematic adaptations. To begin with, my research involved an extensive search and analysis of Awadhi folk songs. As an obvious corollary to this requirement, I searched for some authentic compilations of Awadhi folk songs in English so as to prepare the ground for the actual field-work. I must confess that initially the results were disheartening as I could not find more than just a few such texts. Even the ones I could find, except *1857 in Folk Songs* (1994) by P. C. Joshi and few others, were not so impressive from the research point-of-view. However, I was amazed by the number of such compilations in Hindi. But this pleasant discovery came with an essential 'demand': the need for the translation of those songs from Hindi to English was to be undertaken now. Numerous songs were selected and

[5] My translation.

translated in the process. Some of the selected songs were included in my thesis to substantiate/illustrate the arguments.

In the Introduction of my thesis, titled ‘Awadhi Folk Songs in Changing Times: Issues and Assumptions’, I have attempted to highlight the urgent need for research in Awadhi folk songs. A case is put forward for the study of liminal as well as ‘hybrid’ areas of Awadhi folk songs in the context of changing social realities. The need for exploring the-then social, political, cultural, economic, historical, and psychological realities reflected in folk songs is also established. It was also highlighted that dedicated research on the changing patterns of Awadhi folk songs across time and space is indispensable in the wake of rapid global changes and challenges.

In the second chapter, titled ‘Moorings of Awadhi Folk Songs: A Survey’, various theoretical strands in terms of nomenclature and the processes involved in the transaction and transformation of folk songs have also been charted out. The transformations taking place in the meanings and metaphors of and/or due to the inclusions made in the folk songs, too, got contextualized. Some of the experiences of field-work during my research have also been discussed. The legacy of folk wisdom and knowledge is stressed, along with the folk participation in the turning points of Indian history.

In the third chapter, titled ‘Origin of ‘Tunes’: An Analysis of Awadhi Folk Songs’, a detailed study of the folk songs from all the regions of Awadh has been done. The category wise discussion of Awadhi folk songs has been substantiated with suitable examples, both in the transliterated and translated forms. Also, the changes in the patterns of those songs has aso been discussed.

In the fourth chapter, titled ‘The Journey of Awadhi Folk Songs: From Folk to Text to Popular’, an intensive study of various forms of Awadhi folk songs, their presence in seminal literary texts, and their inclusions in the cinematic adaptations have been seriously perused. Inclusion of folk songs in contemporary Hindi cinema and the politics behind such inclusions have also been deeply discussed. The implications and outcome of such transformations from the performance arena to literary texts to cinema have also been analysed, both textually and

theoretically. The chapter establishes the transformation of folk text as a product of popular imagination.

In the fifth chapter, titled ‘Travelling ‘Tunes’: Various Sites of Awadhi Folk Songs’, a detailed study of transformations from historical, geographical, social issues related, cultural, and other such perspectives has been done. Songs about the contemporary social realities such as inflation, terrorism, migration, political instability, etc have also been discussed. It also focussed on the metamorphosis of folk songs into poetry and film songs and urban folklore.

In the conclusion of my thesis, titled ‘Tracing Newer Trajectories: The Future of Awadhi Folk Songs’, attempts have been made to contextualise Awadhi folk songs in the global world. The changing modes of entertainment and expressions have also been highlighted here. The role of advanced technology in preserving a dignified future of folk songs has been seriously advocated. The future of Awadhi folk songs has also been conjectured in it.

To sum up, my research attempts to highlight the various ways that would facilitate the preservation and propagation of folklore in future. For this, concerted efforts from all sectors are required as also creative methods ought to be developed in educating and sensitizing young people towards their rich oral and cultural heritage. Introducing folklore studies in modern institutions, like schools and colleges/universities, may prove to be a boon in the process of passing on the folk legacy to future generations.

Chapter 2

Moorings of Awadhi Folk Songs: A Survey

> We know that we will create new things and that the new things that emerge will come out of old things. But we can't predict what new things will appear or when. Our minds thus give us a poor ability to see the present clearly, filled as it is with errors great and small. However much we wish it otherwise, they give us an ability to see into the future even more poorly. (Handwerker 52)

The very notion of a 'new' thing invokes something that is 'old'. The recognition of new resting on old has even a greater inter-locking, where future renders the 'present new' as old with the passage of time. Along with the 'poor ability' of the minds to 'see the present clearly' exists a fact that past to present to future is a process that is marked with changes not easily recognisable. Such changes keep precipitating and, thus, facilitate future changes that may ultimately lead to an altogether new entity as a transformed reality. These subtle, temporary, and discrete changes are unpredictable in the opinion of Handwerker. However, such arguments get undercut in the case of folk songs as the changes incorporated in folk songs are quite tangible. They are, in fact, the manifestations of the changes taking place in society. The process of transformation, which is the end-product of sustained changes, through which folk songs get adapted as well as propagated, according to the needs of the coming generations, is woven through intermingling, often tangled, threads of experiences and expressions that ought to be carefully unraveled. In fact, they bear same existence as humans do. Here one is reminded of Cecil Sharp's idea about the process of folk variation where folk forms change on the lines of biological doctrine of natural selection. Ini other words, the most suitable ones survive, the less adapted ones perish. Thus, unless and until folk art forms and even folk wisdom and knowledge suit and adapt according to the demands of the changing social demands as also current trends

vis-à-vis taste and decorum, they cannot survive, i.e. chosen by the singers and artists to be performed, preserved and propagated. This prompts serious investigation into the factors related to appeal and taste that shape the contemporary demands of the society and the perceptions of the folk artists in relation to the presentation of a particular art form. One must identify the forces of choice that allow the ordinary singers, and even, for that matter, every common person, to pick up and propagate certain songs. With the gradual decline, however, in the number of folk singers and also in the commercial viability of their profession, coupled with the effects of westernization, modernity, globalisation etc., the folk artists are forced into a situation of crossroads which engenders dilemma of moving ahead on an untrodden path. Also, the hostile attitude of these artists towards the documentation and representation of their art forms, let alone the attitudinal inclination of spontaneous singing as against the deferred performance, is but obvious, although it poses severe challenges against the preservation of such art forms. In this context, the distinction made by Ashis Nandy in the ways in which the folk artist, the popular artist and the mass artist view and fashion themselves is significant:

> In folk traditions, the artist, if at all he sees himself as a distinct social entity, sees himself as a vehicle of larger social forces. In popular culture, the creative artist is already a clearly identifiable individual, though he still has the option of seeing himself as a vehicle of larger social forces. In mass culture, the artist uses his art as a vehicle of individual self-expression and homogenizes the audience to a passive source of applause and patronage to ensure the art's commercial sustainability…Mass culture cannot make any demand on the audience by way of prior exposure, training or cultivation. (Nandy in Singh 47)

The attitude of the folk artist therefore is not directed towards sustainability as in the case of the mass artist. In the changing times, this attitude threatens certain forms of folk knowledge with annihilation and extinction. An addition to this danger is the fact that unlike mass culture, fok culture depends on its audience and its information base. If the artist allows this audience to slip away from his grip through prolonged periods of professional inactivity, the folk form will die in

public memory before it dies due to the death of the artist himself. A change in the folk artist's attitude towards his art is not only desirable but also the need of the hour. No doubt many folk artists have responded to this need by taking recourse to mass media for archiving and propagating their art. But a concerted, conscious and systematic effort in that direction needs to be made.

Concerted efforts also should be made by the academicians and scholars to shift the attention of folkloristics in India from mere compilation and documentation to the possibilities and avenues of providing all round visibility to folklore. Such a study necessitates, first of all, a complete understanding of folk and culture. To begin with the definition, prior to the eighteenth century when folklore studies actually began, this category was defined as 'popular antiquities' or 'popular literature'. It was only in 1846 that William Thoms used the term folklore for the first time as an equivalent for 'the lore of the people' (Upadhyaya 3). Since then scholars have made repeated attempts to define this slippery category. Not surprisingly, even this process of nomenclature reveals a continuous and consistent change in the establishment and recognition of various terms associated with 'folk'. The term 'lok', a synonym for 'folk', finds mention in *Rigveda* as a reference to the common people as it has been variously described, utilized, and contextualized by the other classical texts too.

Numerous critics and literary figures have made vigorous attempts to define and contextualize the term 'lok'. In the Indian context, a major debate that led to claims and counter-claims vis-à-vis defining this term revolved around the attempts of either associating it exclusively to the villages or denying it any such exclusivity. For Ram Naresh Tripathi, folk is associated exclusively with 'gram' i.e. the village and, therefore, it appears insufficient as it excludes the cities or urban centres completely. In spite of this lacuna in his usage of the term 'gram', for Tripathi folk literature is to be termed "Gram Sahitya", which also happens to be the title of his famous work. The other two preferred terms for 'folk' by Indian scholars are 'lok' and 'jan'. 'Jan' also appears to be inappropriate as a substitute for the term 'folk' as it is too general and it fails to bring in the nuances of folk culture in its entirety. Thus, of all the available options, only 'lok' seems to be the nearest and the best equivalent for 'folk'. Contrary to Tripathi's notion of folk, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi "while expressing his views on the term 'folk' says that the term 'folk' does not mean 'jan-pad' or 'village', rather it refers to that entire community, spread both

in villages and cities, whose practical knowledge is based not on texts. They are comparatively tuned to simple and natural living as against the sophisticated, classy, and "civilized" people of the cities."[1] (Upadhyaya 11) In India, the divide between these two categories, one representing the so-called civilized culture and the other representing the common culture, has existed since beginning. But, they oughtn't to be considered two water-tight compartments at loggerheads with each other; the culture and literature of these two always showed a symbiotic relationship and oft-times the line of distinction between them seemed blurred.

The entire enterprise to find the most suitable or appropriate term, along with the most apt definition, for the terms like "folk", "folklore", and "folk songs" relied on one major doctrine: whether or not it was close to people. In other words, every label, every definition, and even every change related to folk culture and literature rested on, as it also exerted greater force, on its relationship with people, particularly the common ones. At this point one is reminded of two major folklorists mentioned earlier: William J. Thoms and Cecil Sharp.

Thoms gave the term "folk" its modern sense and meaning: it referred to the culture of the common passed on orally from one generation to the other. Not only he coined the term "folklore" in 1846, but also subsequently gave way to many compound terms like folk-song, folk-music, folk-dance, folk-art, etc. However, these terms were generally the extensions of the term "folklore". Later various attempts were made in this regard. From John Aubrey in the seventeenth century to the mid nineteenth century contributors, the study of common lives was known as "Popular Antiquities". "Many dedicated persons, like Dr. Frazer, William and Jacob Grimm (popularly known as Grimm Brothers), et al contributed hugely to this field. The dedication and contribution of various organisations and institutions, like the 'Folklore Society' of England and 'The American Folklore Society', helped immensely in its development". (Upadhyaya 15) In the Indian context, the necessity to find the most appropriate folklore terminologies helped sustain the conceptual assertions as well as the theoretical understandings that have prevailed in the folklore studies since beginning. As accepted by Krishnadeva Upadhyaya, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, and other scholars, 'folklore' is similar to 'lok sanskriti'. This is the most accepted equivalent in Hindi for 'folklore'. There are other views too, but they are not as scientific and as valid as 'lok sanskriti'. Some objections are raised against such a

[1] My translation.

usage as, according to them, ‘lok sanskriti’ is closer to ‘folk culture’ rather than ‘folklore’. But the supporters of the term ‘lok sanskriti’ for ‘folklore’ defend themselves by asserting that “there is no significant difference between ‘folk culture’ and ‘folklore’ and their boundaries touch each other”.[2] (Upadhyaya 18) The other substitute terms for folklore, though catchy, are either too narrow or too general, as was the case with the term ‘folk’ itself. For Vasudev Aggarwal, folklore is similar to ‘lokvarta’, whereas Suniti Kumar Chatterji advocate the term ‘lokyan’ on the lines of Buddhist nomenclature, like Hinayan, Mahayan, and Brajyan.

While grappling with such informations on the appropriateness of usage and translation, I got an opportunity to ‘discuss this issue’ with the professional singers of folk songs in a village named Pakki-Rassolpur of Handia tehsil in Allahabad district. After the performance when everyone was sitting and chatting about this and that in the early hours of the day, I asked those artists what would they prefer their songs to be called as: lokgeet or something else. Interestingly, all of them replied back unanimously that these songs are biraha, kajari, belwariya, etc. and they do not care about generic terms. This was an important insight in the understanding and acceptance or denial of external labels or categorisation of folk arts. While the arm-chair academic prefers to club the art forms in larger generic definitions/categories, the artists at the grassroot level prefer to recognise their art as well as themselves with the specific names or categories. Those artists would like to be known as the singers of kajari, sawan, chaita, or barahmasa, rather than to be recognised as ‘lokgeet gayaks’, i.e. folk singers.

Cecil Sharp asserts that ‘the process of folk variation… *is* akin to biological natural selection’(“Cecil Sharp”). This assertion of organismic analogy where a folk song, for instance, is treated as a living human being and where certain choices are made, mostly by the singers or performers, so as to ensure sustenance and survival. The first inference here would be the fact that both folk songs and human beings undergo definite changes/transformations and for those changes to be favourable one must adapt to most, if not all of them. This will in turn direct the external agents to make choices in favour of those who have adapted to the changing circumstances the most.

[2] My translation.

In the context of folk songs, we ought to ask a crucial question at this juncture: what are the choices that allow or help an ordinary singer to choose, preserve and propagate certain songs? An obvious corollary to this question would be another question: what would be a better policy for picking-up, preserving, and propagating folk songs, particularly from the oft-neglected areas like Awadh? Would it be advisable to assimilate such folk songs into the 'mainstream' culture and literature through a proper guidance for the choices to be made by the ordinary people? Or in contrast to this, would the policy of non-intervention, so as to allow a natural way of choosing and further passing them on to future generations, be apt? In Sharp's opinion this latter assertion seems more possible. As it seems, the process of natural selection, vis-à-vis folk songs, will eventually lead to an aesthetic perfection and an enhanced appeal in the folk songs, attained through collective and community-based chiseling out. This undoubtedly will help sustain and propagate the chosen folk songs, while the ones failing to fall in this chosen category will die out not too late.

In the light of the afore-mentioned debate, it is obvious to feel the necessity of concerted institutional efforts for channelizing the potential of folk knowledge and wisdom, particularly the ones imbibed in folk songs. While several research-based initiatives by the universities and colleges worldwide started in the beginning of the twentieth century, yet even today one feels the need for the institutional initiatives that would contribute to the survival of folklore in particular and oral literature in general. Here one commends the efforts of the initiatives like "The World Oral Literature Project" in handling the issues of survival of folk traditions, where the "areas of cultural disturbance" are of special interest and focus. However, once again in such projects or initiatives, areas like Awadh get neglected for obvious reasons, the chief among them that such areas are not among those experiencing "cultural disturbances". But one wonders over the very notion of "disturbance" or challenge. Does not a disturbance or challenge threaten us if it, to put it through a cliché, comes silently? For instance, an area threatened by the age-old orthodoxy of caste differences and grappling with a huge lack in keeping pace with the social transformations and technological advancements bears some challenges and threats, if not to the same degrees as seen in the most disturbed areas of the world. Needless to say that Awadhi language and region too has its own challenges to cope with in order to preserve its culture and heritage and thus it too attracts academic, social, political, and institutional initiatives. It is also important to reiterate that even political will and wisdom coupled with certain governmental initiatives prove to have

long-lasting impact in this regard. For instance, Britain's Education Act of 1870, while making the elementary education compulsory for everyone between the age group of 5 and 13 also facilitated several structural changes that helped in shaping and preserving 'popular' literature and culture:

> This led to the rapid expansion of a largely unsophisticated literary public, the rise of the popular press, and the mass production of 'popular' literature for a semi-literate 'low-brow' readership… The twentieth century saw more and more of this broadening of artistic trends, extending into the other cultural forms of radio, television, cinema and popular music." (Carter and McRae 320)

The vital links between the changes at political level and the sustenance of common people's art forms remain valid and noteworthy despite India's displacement in terms of time, space and circumstances from the context mentioned above. As seen earlier, the need to bridge the gaps vis-à-vis establishing and extending Awadhi folk songs through concerted efforts and farsighted policies comes to the forefront again. No doubt, various government and non-government institutions are working in the field of Awadhi folk literature and culture, yet any recognizable outcome at national and international level is conspicuously missing. The focus ought to shift to the indigenous cultures and their respective demands and expectations. And such a focus, in my opinion, should be on the basis of various factors and processes involved in sustenance, adaptation, propagation, and survival of folk material. Such a process in folkloristics or folklore studies or folklife studies, as the study of folk literature is variously called, is referred to as "folk process". It involves chiseling out and re-presenting the folk material in a new form by the members of the concerned community. This act of redefining and re-presenting in return defines the changing community itself as it reflects the temporal demands of the community as well as the desires and expectations of its members in the fast changing social and world order. This two-way process of recognizing and defining each other involves social, economic, political, and commercial changes faced by the community, which ultimately get foregrounded in the changing folklore. In India, this fact is reflected through various folk songs on social issues, economic hardships, inter-personal relations, psychological moorings, migrations, etc. This is

foregrounded vividly even in the freedom struggle. For instance, folk songs during the revolt of 1857 are seen as a counter-history to the British documents on the 1857 Revolt of India:

> There is a lamentable lack of sound historical material from the Indian side. The reasons are two. First, it was not the Indian tradition to leave the historical documents behind. Secondly, the conditions of terror that followed the failure of the 1857 struggle were such that any Indian trying to write his version of the story risked his skin. The few contemporary Indians who wrote on the subject did so for the British.
>
> In such circumstances the folk songs of 1857 constitute a very valuable source material. The folk songs are not very reliable for historical details though they are useful in many other ways. Their main and supreme value lies in the fact that they constitute a very authentic record of the outlook of the people whom they portray. For the Indian historians of today these folk songs on 1857 are very important as guides to the political experience, outlook and aspirations of our common people during and soon after the 1857 uprising. With their help one can handle the British source material more competently and confidently. (Joshi ix)

Although the likes of Joshi assert categorically the authenticity of oral 'documents', yet the trajectory of this debate from the two view-points of oral and written is quite complex and uneven. For the dominant western literary traditions and otherwise, only the written documents could be considered authentic, whereas the relevant sources reveal that oral traditions have not only preserved and propagated authentic knowledge but also helped in the emergence of various written texts and histories. It is well-established fact now that the influence of earliest known oral epic, i.e. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (2500 BC) is visible in several written texts, including *The Bible*. It has also influenced several poets and bards like Homer. Thus, the attempts to see oral 'documents' and evidences as inferior and unauthentic medium of knowledge and history would

only prove to be a misplaced injustice. Coming back to the Indian freedom struggle, the people's songs were true manifestations of their angst and desires, hopes and despair. Their narration is a valid counter-historical-claim against the biased historical documents either written by the British historians or for British record. The following picture as narrated in "1857 Flag-Song" seems without doubt authentic and realistic:

> And then came the Firangi
>
> and such magic spell he cast
>
> Pillaging and plundering our motherland
>
> he ruled.
>
> The martyrs call you, O countrymen
>
> do you hear? (Joshi xv)

Not only historical events in particular, but also the entire life of a community gets vividly depicted in such 'lore of the people'. "Common living on a common soil engenders distinctive likeness in the members of a group. The recognition of these in turn reinforces community sentiment… every community, village or city or larger region, has its own marks of some sort, its local customs, its local spots of interest, often its peculiar beliefs and superstitions, its own folk tales and myth *and legends*[3]." (MacIver and Page 294) At the apparent level, this description of folkways divides the communities because of their distinct language and customs. But it, also, unites them because of their sentiments, recognitions, beliefs, and engagements with their fellows; the universal theme of belonging underlies the community living that, also, informs our insights into the ways and customs of the other communities. This is at its acme when one observes the similarities in myths, legends, and folk tales across cultures. In fact, the very nature of these three important categories of belief systems has binding links among different communities. Moreover, the diffusing traits of those myths, legends, and folk tales, too, serve as a bridge between the concerned communities/cultures. In fact, the process through which a society identifies and recognises these three categories becomes an important pedagogical tool in terms of cultural understandings. Through careful explorations of such a process one can locate

[3] Emphasis mine.

the shifting trends in a particular community or culture, and, thus, can provide valuable insights for facing challenges in the ‘modern’ world. There also emerges, in the due process, a parallel between the changes occurring at the societal level, particularly the ones caused through the cultural factors, and the changes that are reflected in the folk songs as well as other expressive art forms. To illustrate this, several examples can be cited from the Indian freedom struggle. During this period major concerns of Indian people revolved around the issues of exploitation of Indians by the whites, economic drain of India’s wealth, a sense of glory in the heroism of Indian freedom fighters, optimism generated through charismatic leadership of Gandhiji, and many such realities which changed the social fabric and shaped the lives of people accordingly. Such changes were reflected vividly in the folk songs too. For example, folk songs were infused with the villainous and treacherous portrayals of gora sahibs, along with the glorification of freedom fighters as they also echoed the charisma of Gandhiji and his charkha. Thus folk songs depicted the changing reality of the-then India. The conventional modes of singing remained same while theme and content of those songs changed to depict the changing social reality as it also portrayed well the psyche of every common Indian. As it happens in the following folk song that is sung in the form of a lullaby:

Oh Babua, the Marathas laid down

their lives

And the Sikhs have fought, till they died

Oh Babua, the sons of Peshwas were

turned into slaves

Oh Babua, the Emperor of Delhi- he too

a pauper became

And we begged and begged but received

no alms!

Oh Babua, that day our grandpa

took up his sword! (Joshi 73)

The lullaby quoted here operates at various levels. First, it depicts the social, political, and economic reality of India where the common people are forced to 'beg' in futility, the descendents of the erstwhile rulers have become slaves, and even the sovereign ruler is no more than a 'pauper' now. Second, it portrays vividly the sacrifices made by the brave martyrs of India against all odds. Third, it describes the expectations of the singer where the young ones must take up the swords as it is done by the old grandpa, who happens to be Kunwar Singh, the great martyr of 1857 revolt. Fourth, and most importantly, it depicts the fears of the singer that the situation is not going to change immediately and, hence, the young ones must prepare for the battle. So does every common Indian felt. The line of distinction between the social reality and the desires expressed in this lullaby gets diminished. Thus, it can be seen as a post-1857 song that also serves as a valid historical document.

The example above helps to analyse the changes that the art forms, folk songs in the present case, undergo and also enable us to predict, at the theoretical level at the least, the course of their journey in changing circumstances. One observation that seems quite obvious is that such art forms not only survive but also take reliable forms of expression to face, tackle, and challenge the advancing changes. In other words, they transform according to the demands of the circumstantial and temporal changes. But, for a folklorist a greater issue is to identify and predict the probable forms and the expected directions in which a folk song may move in future. However, such transformations enable folk songs to survive and propagate in newer forms in future. This, no doubt, is related to the greater issues of preserving historical, cultural, regional, national, and even universal themes, identities, and legacies present in folk wisdom. Such a realization becomes all the more important in the present world that is changing, shrinking much faster than anyone could have imagined few decades ago.

While examining the factors responsible for changes in folk songs one needs to chart out a framework not just to follow a well-structured path but instead to delimit and choose the best available options among them. Further they can be divided into three major categories: external factors of change, internal factors of change, and the shared factors of change. These three categories facilitate changes in the structure, content, and milieu of folk songs at various levels.

Under the external factors come the changes operating at the macro level: social, cultural, historical, geographical, political, economic, religious, technological, etc. The internal factors are majorly at the level of individual artists, in terms of his/her personality, attitude, skill, and abilities, as well as the qualities within the folk songs themselves that could facilitate changes or transformations in the due course of time; linguistic, prosodic, rhythmic, lyrical, and such other qualities, along with comprehensibility and accessibility of the medium used by them, may facilitate or obstruct changes in the concerned folk songs. In the third category, i.e. the shared factors of change, the slippery factors like intertextuality, different ways of performance, newer art forms and modes of expression, such as cinema, and medium of transmission, like radio, television, cassettes, electronic mediums, internet, etc. can be considered. More or less, all these factors operate at either conscious or unconscious level; they are either active or passive agents of change. Needless to mention that an understanding of such factors may help prepare the artists and folklorists as also the societies, communities, and cultures to preserve and propagate their art forms.

The first category of external factors operates at the level of different discourses. For instance, major historical, political, and social events that concern the students of history, polity, and sociology may also attract those of the folkloristics. This is so because such major events get embedded prominently in the folk psyche and thus are documented through folk songs. One observes numerous folk songs on the Revolt of 1857, India's struggle for Independence, the era of nation building, unemployment, migration, family planning, dowry, India-Pakistan war, India-China war, National Emergency, along with those reflecting disasters, epidemics, catastrophes, etc.

Whatever the reasons may be, but the outcome invariably has large scale implications. For instance, the technological advances may help for the betterment of folk forms or lead towards their decline. No doubt, various factors like open or restrictive nature of a society and its people are responsible in formulating the direction of change, yet what is of greater concern is the amount of impact the cumulative forces behind such changes may have. Whether for the betterment or decline, the impact of technological advancements will certainly prove immense on the exposed folk songs. In such a scenario, artists, scholars, academicians, folklorists, and so on should analyse and prepare the grounds for utilising such developments favourably.

Efforts should be made both at the individual as well as the community level to recognise the importance of folk songs as also to preserve the values contained in them. This is indispensable in the wake of rapid changes at several levels, as discussed earlier. This will help preserve our cultural identity in the new world and thus enable us to face the resulting challenges. Referring back to the documentation of major events in folk songs one can say that the narration of such events, say colonization and the fight against it in India for instance, are not the biased and distorted documents to serve the political agenda, rather they are the true manifestations of the struggles and desires of the common people; the folk songs reflect the contemporary realities infused with the desires of escape from the harsh realities and also the resilience of people. Depiction of such realities gives a holistic picture of various social, cultural, political, and historical events. However, the recognition and status of folk songs and their performers or singers, common people from common lives included, in the new age should not shrink to exhibits or tokens, as it unfortunately has become the latest trend in various folk festivals and sponsored events by government and non-government organisations. It should rather reach the farthest and the remotest of people and places with due recognition and reverence.

In the present era, one feels the need to go beyond mere compilations and documentation of folk songs. This is not to deny the importance of field work meant for collection and compilation of such songs. In fact, in my own case valuable insight and information was gathered from the first-hand experience of interacting with artists in the three districts, viz. Allahabad, Mirzapur, and Lucknow of Uttar Pradesh. This information was, however, a supplement of the daily dose of my encounter with the folk songs that were part of my growing up; the indigenous artists in villages, their ‘folksy’ style of interacting with others, various sayings and proverbs that became the part of daily instructions, etc. along with the more aesthetically appealing occasions like fairs, festivals, religious ceremonies, marriages, and even the instances of mourning were basically the occasions of socialization into the folk wisdom and knowledge. But, to the best of my knowledge, it all remained at the unconscious and subconscious level. Even for the performers and the ‘actors’ the recognition was illusionary, except for some dedicated artists and their associates. This all happened when drastic changes started to emerge and, hence, a strong need to come up with resolutions and syntheses for establishing the potential of folk songs in the process of preserving social identity and cultural heritage of common people-cum-performers was realised.

The continual sense of gradual changes in the folk songs, coupled with the change in the desires and attitudes of common people, especially of the women folk singers (except the old and traditional ones) for whom folk songs provided a potent sub-culture of solidarity, vis-à-vis newer forms of expression, cinema especially, was manifested at the larger level of societal attitude. For instance, earlier an important element of a North Indian Hindu wedding was the traditional band, which gradually got replaced by the modern bands playing on the tunes of cinema.

In spite of such attitudinal changes one strongly holds on the belief that every aspect of human existence is reflected in folk songs. Thus, the inclusion of these songs in literary works creates an immediate bond between the audience and the text. For instance, in Keshav Prasad Mishra's *Kohbar Ki Shart* (1965), the Jogira song, related to Holi creates an ambience of playfulness characteristically associated with Holi, with a magnificent lyric, "Jogi ji dheere-dheere, Nadi ke teere-teere, jogi ji wah jogi ji", that is retained as it is in its movie version too. Such folk songs are traditionally sung by both men and women but in distinct spaces and groups. In the novel, it reflects the mirth of the village's men-folk dancing with a cross-dressed man. The scene implicitly relates a sexual situation. But its inclusion in *Nadiya Ke Paar* (1982), based on the novel *Kohbar Ki Shart*, excludes the sexual angle and the aura of license that exists around it in the novel. Though even in the film it hints towards the playful escapades in which men and women indulge during Holi, it functions primarily as a dream sequence where the protagonists Chandan and Gunja imagine playing Holi with each other. The relevance of the song in the film is limited to the personal sphere of Chandan and Gunja. The fact that cinema in the 1980's was predominantly a middle class medium of entertainment seems to have dictated the inclusion of a Holi song for its entertainment value but with a curtailed sense of license to suit the standards of middle class morality. Another instance is the reference to the local deity Deepa Satti that features in *Kohbar ki Shart* and *Nadiya ke Paar* both but is excluded from the urbanized and further middle-class version of the same story, *Hum Apke Hain Kaun* (1994). Deepa Satti is the goddess who fulfils people's desire for an ideal spouse. In the novel and the first film version, it is associated with Gunja's desire for Chandan and there is a song in the film to that effect too. The difference between the two film versions is that while the former version is a tale *for* the middle class, the latter is a tale o*f* and for middle class. The tale of Deepa Satti is therefore suitably modified into a much more personalized version of longing for an ideal husband in the form of the folksy song 'Mai Ne Mai Munder Pe Teri' (*Hum Apke Hain Koun*) where the girl

describes the groom she desires in great detail in front of her family. These illustrations portray the prominence of folk elements in the lives of people, the related literary texts and their cinematic adaptations. However, the same folk song occurs in a different version in all the three forms, refashioning itself according to different demands of different audience.

The tales like those of Deepa Satti and other similar instances, where common belief system gets rooted as well as manifested, emerge as syncretic areas of folk songs, i. e. the places and occasions where folk songs become sites of cultural and social cohesion. Such sites invariably include holy shrines, places of pilgrimage, festivals and fairs (like Kumbh Mela), along with the places of frequent interaction, like markets/haats, work places (both within and outside a household), and such other sites. Let us imagine this scene: in the middle of the Mahakumbh Mela at Allahabad, which is considered the biggest gathering in the world, one observes the daily routine of singing "ganga-geet" (songs sung in the praise of Holy Ganges). This ritual is performed exclusively by women folk, who invariably see these songs as therapeutic as against the monotony and hardships faced by them. Naturally, the mood, emotions, and desires of these women get reflected in their songs. Thus, they also enable a sub-culture of solidarity amongst the groups of women engaged in the performance of this ritual, which begins with the beginning of the day. In fact, this act of performing a ritual and singing songs becomes the part and parcel of their lives. So is true about the various folk artists who keep visiting such experiences during their recitals and performance. This to say that folk songs are indispensable in the lives of people; the elements of folk knowledge are present in some form or the other in the lives of each of us.

Even a cursory look at different creative processes will uphold the above-mentioned views. Many literary figures rely heavily on their experiences and exposures of folk culture. Newer forms of expressions, like cinema etc, borrow heavily from the folk repertoire. Several television shows are based on the folklore. Even advertisement industry worldwide is indebted to folk wisdom; various advertisements are nothing but sayings, proverbs, belief system, legends, tales, etc. that one has 'learnt' from the folk realm. Such a sprinkling of sayings and proverbs are universally seen, be it books or cinema:

> Whether we live in remote areas or in urban centres, folklife pervades our lives. We all tell stories. We celebrate

> events, take part in rituals, and use figurative language. As children we sing jingles, participate in counting out rhymes to determine who will be "it", tell jokes and riddles, and play games… If we watch television, go to movies, or look at ads, we see and hear examples of folklore that have been removed from the interactional setting and incorporated into another context. (Georges and Jones 9)

This 'interactional setting' being 'incorporated into another context' is a continuous process, though the setting and context changes from society to society and culture to culture. The situation becomes more complex when not only the setting and the context changes, but also the human agency too is completely altered. Let us illustrate it through an example. The singers of "ganga-geet" are mostly the women from villages of North India. The emotional attachment and the circumstantial hopes and despair reflected while singing these songs is also essentially rural in nature. However, when such a "geet" is appropriated in cinematic adaptations, all such important ingredients that comprise the song are filtered out as if the husk is being removed from the grains through an "essential" process of "winnowing". Paradoxically, this is done so as to suit the taste of the audience, which is not far removed from the original setting, context, and even the performers. In this context, one is reminded of a famous Bollywood song, "Rang Barsey Bheegey Chunar Wali", which has its roots in Awadhi folk songs.

Such observations are not to deny the possible variations in a folk song that are essential for sustaining diversity in them. In fact, "each version is distinctive because it is generated at a given time and under a unique set of circumstances. Differences among multiple versions of a particular folklore example range from the imperceptible to the obvious. There is usually no difference, for instance, in wording each time the proverb "A rolling stone gathers no mass" is spoken". (Georges and Jones 11)

In the above example, same proverb is spoken in different versions, albeit in the same language, with the differences being imperceptible. The same proverb may be found in different versions across languages and cultures, which leads to variation in folklore. "Folklore learned in one era or language and perpetuated in another time or tongue also results in variation. The English proverb "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush", for example, has been

documented in such historically earlier variant forms as “A birdie in the hand is worth ten in the wood” (1530). Equivalents in other languages include “Better a sparrow in the hand than two flying” (Portuguese), “Better one bird in the pot than ten in the wood” (Swedish-Finnish), and “Better a hawk in the hand than two in the flight” (Icelandic)” (George and Jones 11-12) Thus, with the introduction of certain cultural markers, like hawk and sparrow, the newer versions impart variety to the same proverb.

Not at the level of language and culture alone, such variations also occur prominently in the narration of important events and historical facts. This is conspicuous in the case of legends. For instance, Alha, whose original Bundelkhandi form does not exist today, is available in its several other versions, like those of Bhojpuri and Kannauji. The folktales of Raja Gopichand and Bhartrihari are sung throughout North India. Similarly, Dhola Maru’s tale of love is sung from Rajasthan to the Bhojpuri regions. Any study of the various versions of these tales/songs would reveal the changes taking place in their form, appeal, reception and impact on the region specific standards and demands.

Contrary to the belief of some eminent folklorists, the difference in several versions of same legend is not due to the fact that they are preserved and passed on through memory. In fact, memory is as authentic as the written documents. Although surprising, also shocking to some, yet the variations in the process of memorialising add to the truthfulness of narration. The oral narrations are flexible in methodology, but firm in the guiding principles of truthfulness and honesty; oral traditions rely on the sustenance of details passed on from one generation to the next and, therefore, unquestionable historical data becomes their subject matter so as to ensure the glory in their cultural heritage. But a pertinent question arises here: how the transmission of folklore data from one culture to another help preserve and propagate the cultural heritage and the communal glory of an “alien” culture or community? Answer lies in the fact that folk culture and heritage is self-perpetuating:

> Folklore is self-perpetuating too when aspects of specific traditions are incorporated into other folklore examples. A given musical score, for instance, may serve as the tune for several songs with entirely different words; and the words

> of a particular song may be sung to different tunes. (Georges and Jones 13)

This applies to the transmission of folk songs from one medium to another and also from one milieu to the other. Examples of this are in plethora: “Sone ki Thari Mein Javna Parosa”, Jogira Song, and many such other songs.

This belief in self-perpetuating attributes of folk culture is the continuity of the age-old debate on meticulous attempts to define various aspects of folk. In the following lines the views of two folklorists are reflected. “Barbeau states flatly that folk-lore "is the born opponent of the serial number, the stamped product, and the patented standard," and Harmon remarks that "anything which tends to break down the cohesion of a group-communications, diversity of knowledge, specialization, etc. - tends to scatter its folklore." (Utley 194) Clearly both the views are sceptical of any inclusion that is novel to the receiving folk community. Here two concerns emerge: First, the alien standards of judgement can’t be applied to assess the folk cultures. Second, the group cohesion and solidarity among its members is ultimate doctrine of their living together. The counter-views too exist in excess. These two extreme ends are somewhat related to the policy debates on the development of tribal areas. In India after Independence, policy makers were divided in two ‘camps’: those who advocated the policy of assimilation and the ones who strongly believed in the policy of non-intervention. The first group believed in bringing positive changes through a two-way process of mainstreaming the isolated areas in the development at the national level, whereas the second group feels the need not to interfere in the affairs of such people and such areas and let them flourish by their own ways and world-views. No doubt, the models of the so-called mainstream society cannot be forced on such areas, but one can’t even ignore them completely. Therefore, a middle-path should be evolved judiciously at all the possible levels.

One potent way of overcoming the neglect of folklore could be to introduce it to the students, at least at the university level. Therefore, a serious consideration is required on the part of academia to introduce folklore studies. The issues of immediate concern in such efforts are many. Here, I wish to discuss some of the important ones in the Indian context, a context ripe with multilingualism and multiculturalism and, therefore, a multiplicity of folklores. In a multilingual and multicultural environment, teaching texts from Indian literature is a complicated

pedagogical act. An instructor needs to evolve ways to reconcile differences and changes infused in folk spaces, with their shifting definitions, changing vocabulary and evolving repertoire of issues addressed.

The paradigms which define literary studies most often- the author, the context and the historicity of the text- are conspicuously missing in the case of texts from folklore. The first challenge in front of the instructor is to convey to an eager student the idea that there *is* indeed literature which operates without these 'essential' parameters of literary studies and that the study of such literature is no less valid or relevant than that of material they have become used to deal with. Evolving some new parameters in this case could shift the students' focus from the rigmarole of literary studies and make them aware of some newer aspects of literature seen in oral texts only. The teacher needs to make his/her students aware about the presence of folk texts in the "literary texts"; students and scholars must be sensitized towards the intertextuality between folk literature and other canonical texts. The teacher also needs to facilitate a process of unlearning as the most commonplace understanding of the folk is picked up by students from sources (such as Bollywood cinema) which usually present a distorted picture of folklore. One could seek as examples numerous film songs, which claim roots in the folk culture, with sound and effect of folk songs but which at best have only cosmetic sprinklings of peppy folk elements. A picture of folklore, particularly folk songs as texts with a serious and set agenda, needs to be firstly impressed on a student's mind to prepare the ground for further negotiation. This is to traverse the complex trajectory of folk from performance to text to cinema, which ultimately provides insights into the ubiquitous presence of folk elements.

To reach a common ground of understanding in multilingual, multi-ethnic Indian classrooms, as is the case with India, is the basic minimum requirement. It takes the shape of a complicated practical problem when one thinks of including a folk text, say a folk tale or a folk song in translation, in a syllabus catering to students coming from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The heterogeneous matrix is rendered even more complicated when each student is considered as a carrier of not just a different language but a unique folklore too which both unites as well as divides. While the universality of some basic issues in folklore may bring people together, the differences in language, ideology and culture often prevent any accession for mutual dialogue between diverse folklores. It is indeed a herculean task to address this

heterogeneity in a university classroom which has more often than not, its own power dynamics and changing realities.

The biggest challenge is that of authenticity. With numerous versions available of the same piece in the oral field, any mention of authenticity sounds not just tough to tackle but also preposterous. The fact that folklore is essentially communal in nature and therefore attributing a folk-text to one particular author is impossible, adds to the academician's woes. The questions which arise thus are- How to project the chosen text not as *the* definitive text but as a representative one? How to convey to the class that all its versions though outside the purview of the syllabus, are as valid and good? In the words of Ramanujan, "no text is original, yet no telling is a mere retelling"? (Ramanujan 158) In the study of folklore, one automatically confronts the issues of translation, the obvious vehicle for the transaction of folklore in English classrooms, does address the problems related to heterogeneity. While the inclusion of a song or a tale in English translation eases out many practical knots, it also foregrounds the diversity of folk culture itself. These are some questions on which one needs clarity before entering the class with that one folk text. Having the ground with these pertinent issues, it is best to assess their veracity through a critical reading of folk texts, in this case folk songs, in detail.

Chapter 3

Origin of 'Tunes': An Analysis of Awadhi Folk Songs

In general perception, the preservation, performance and propagation of folk songs are associated with the village community. This is more valid in the case of a state like Uttar Pradesh where more than three-fourth of the population still resides in rural areas. Even those living in the cities are connected to villages in some or the other way. The connection between rural and urban India is a two-way link facilitating exchange through interaction and inter-dependence. This, in fact, is a pan-Indian reality; in spite of the sprawling city culture in India, most of India's population still resides in villages. People in the urban centres also try to hold on to their rural roots as tightly as possible. This is one reason why, in terms of folklore in general and the folk songs in particular, urban India is indebted to its rural counterpart for the maintenance of a steady stream or influx of cultural, especially folk, artifacts. No doubt, specific regions help preserve folk songs, but since one region differs from the other, folk songs from those regions too differ. Also, even geographical regions are exposed to constant change, and, therefore, folk songs too differ in their form and content. Thus, there exist inter-regional as well as intra-regional differences in folk songs. It is noteworthy that prolonged exposure to such changes may ultimately lead to the transformation of these folk songs. Even time has such transformational effect on folk songs. Therefore, this difference or change or transformation (these three terms are not to be considered similar in their meanings and implications though) in the folk songs due to the difference and change in locale or setting or time requires a concerned analysis vis-à-vis different regions as well as different time periods in which particular genres are upheld or undercut.

A discussion on challenges and possibilities related to folk songs of different regions and across time periods should be accompanied by a brief survey of folk songs. In India, through the efforts of the pioneers like the Orientalist scholars and Christian missionaries, various studies were conducted on the folklores in Bengali, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. Attempts were also made to study North Indian Folklore, especially in Bhojpuri. However, little scholarly attention was paid to the regions where Awadhi was spoken. As a result of this neglect, the considerable body of knowledge

and wisdom of this extensive region was excluded from the area of academic activity. The irony of the situation of Awadhi is that despite its matchless contributions to the canon of Hindi literature like *Padmavat* (1540) by Malik Muhammad Jayasi and *Ramcharitmanas* (1574) by Tulsidas, it is considered even today a mere dialect of Hindi. Even the formidable stature of these literary works in Hindi literature has been unable to prompt a serious perusal of folklore in Awadhi. This is in spite of the fact that elements of Awadhi folklore, particularly folk songs, are strewn across major literary works. But this presence is hardly ever examined as a concrete and complete area of research, although some contributors like Satyavrat Awasthi, Indu Prakash Pandey, Sarojini Rohatgi, Vidya Vindu Singh, Krishnadeva Upadhyaya and Mahesh Pratap Narayan Awasthi have made sincere efforts in preservation of Awadhi language, compilation of its folklore and archiving the culture corresponding to it.

Awadhi language is spoken much beyond the geographical and political limits of Awadh region. It is divided into following three types:

1) Eastern Awadhi- It is spoken in Gonda, Faizabad, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Allahabad, Bhadohi, Chitrakut, Jaunpur (except Kerakat), Mirzapur (includes North-Western part of Mirzapur, Chunar, and North-Eastern part of Lalganj), Sonbhadra (includes Ghorawal and Western part of Robertsganj), Basti (includes Harraiya), Banda (includes some parts of North and East), Ambedkarnagar (major parts), and Varanasi (includes Gyanpur).

2. Central Awadhi- It is spoken in Raebareli, Barabanki and Bahraich.

3. Western Awadhi- It is spoken in Khiri, Sitapur, Lucknow, Unnao, Fatehpur, Hardoi (except Shahabad) and Kanpur (except Akbarpur and Derapur).

There are four sub-dialects of Awadhi:

1) Baiswari of Raebareli,

2) Banaodhi of Western Jaunpur,

3) Mirzapuri of Western Mirzapur, and

4) Bihari Awadhi of Saran region of Bihar.

Although the theme and content of Awadhi folk songs in each sub-genre are similar, yet regional specificities prevail. Therefore, each part of Awadh has a distinct flair for and flavour of folk songs. Awadhi folk songs are mostly classified as follows:

1) Songs of the rites of passage/life-cycle.

2) Songs of the different seasons.

3) Songs of various caste-based occupations.

4) Songs of socio-political events.

5) Work Songs.

6) Miscellaneous songs.

Folk songs related to the rites of passage cover all the sixteen ceremonies mentioned in the Hindu tradition, but the most common ones are related to Jatakarm, Mundan, Janeu, and Vivah (these terms are to be discussed later). Folk songs related to seasons are sung as Sawan, Kajri, Hori, Chaita, Barahmasa. Work songs include Ropai, Nirauni, Katwahi and Jatsari. Caste-based folk songs include unique community-based occupational songs. Other types are Nirgun or mystical songs, songs sung during journey, songs exuding national consciousness, songs on war, and such songs that are generally clubbed under the category of miscellaneous songs.

The songs related to various rituals serve not only as active agents of automatic socialization but also as tools to propagate social integration. Major events of a person's life, if not all, are guided by the prescribed ceremonies which are chiefly public in nature. Participation of people from outside the immediate family is mandatory in these ceremonies and this participation is rendered meaningful by song and dance. According to the folklorist Laxmi Ganesh Tewari, in Hindu tradition, these ceremonies can be classified into five groups according to the occasions of their celebration. In his book *Folk Songs from Uttar Pradesh* (2006), he presents these categories as follows:

I. Ceremonies prior to birth:

1) *Garbhadhan*- performed when it is known that a woman has become pregnant.

2) *Punasavan*- performed in the third month of pregnancy, in order to assure that a male child will be born.

3) *Simantonayan*- performed in the fourth, sixth, or eighth month of pregnancy, to protect the pregnant woman from the evil spirits.

II. Ceremonies related to birth and childhood:

4) *Jatakarm*- birth of the child.

5) *Namakarana*- naming the child: time varies.

6) *Nishkraman*- taking the child out of the house for the first time, at the age of four months.

7) *Annaprashan* (commonly known as *pasani*)- first feeding of solid food (most often kheer- rice and sugar cooked in milk), usually when a child is six months old.

8) *Cudakaran* (commonly known as *mundan*)- shaving of the child's hair, between one and three years of age. Many families maintain the traditional time and place practiced in their household.

9) *Karnavedh* (commonly known as *chedan*)- piercing of the child's ears: time varies.

III. Ceremonies related to the commencement of education:

10) *Vidyarambh*- commencement of reading and writing the alphabet: time varies.

11) *Yajnopavit* (commonly known as *upanayan* or *janeu*)- the sacred thread ceremony, which is performed by the three upper castes of Hindus: time varies.

12) *Vedarambh*- beginning of Vedic studies, performed by the three upper castes of Hindus: number of years varies for each caste.

13) *Kesant* or *Godan*- shaving the beard and/or giving the gift of a cow as a token fee to a spiritual preceptor, near the end of Vedic studies.

14) *Samavartan* or *Snan*- end of Vedic studies, performed when a son returns home after finishing his studies.

IV. Marriage and related ceremonies:

15) *Vivah* (commonly known as *Shadi*)- marriage.

V. Death and related ceremonies:

16) *Antakarm*- death. (2-3)

Of all the sixteen ceremonies, only few are performed now-a-days; in the present time, only those ceremonies related to birth, marriage and death are generally observed. With changing times and evolving caste, gender and power relations, several rites of passage have been rendered obsolete. The relevance of the three main ceremonies of birth, marriage and death however has remained the same even though they have undergone many changes. Ceremonies related to birth are still performed and those related to vivah/shadi/marriage are still celebrated with full gaiety and enthusiasm, with meticulous care in the performance of all the rituals. Folk songs related to marriage still remain popular on all the rungs of social ladder. Although the physical aspects of marriage ceremonies have changed drastically, yet even today the basic structure remains same. Such continuity is visible even in the marriage related folk songs.

The folk songs related to life-cycle have been carried down from ancient times to the present, albeit with certain modifications and inclusions. As mentioned earlier, folk songs related to Jatakarm (birth of the child), Cudakarm (shaving of the child's hair), Upanayan (sacred thread ceremony), and Vivah (marriage) are the most common as well as the most important ones. These four are the important rituals in Awadh region and, therefore, there are numerous folk songs for all these occasions.

Jatakarm comprises major ceremonies of which "Sirvant" is the first one. It is generally performed in the seventh month of pregnancy, but in exceptional cases it is observed in the ninth month. On this occasion the songs of sirvant (called sohar) are sung. The content of such songs varies. It may depict the declining health of the expecting mother or may describe her desires to eat certain fruits, delicacies, etc. An example of sirvant from Sultanpur region is mentioned below in its transliterated form, along with its English translation next to it:

Banswa ki kothari se nikari hai goriya,

Uss gori main katahun na dekhyon,

Dekhyon toh dekhyon falaney raja sej.

Ang patari munh dhurhuri gori.

Pahli sadh mori sasu puravein,

Sasur balaya mori baat chalavein.

Dusari sadh mori sasur puravein,

Pundita balaya mori saita dharavein.

Tisri sadh mori jeth puravein,

Nauva balaya morey naihar pathavein.

Chauthi sadh morey baba puravein,

Haat bazaar se peri lain aavein.

Panchai sadh mori maya puravein,

Hardi pisai mori peri rangavein.

Chathai sadh morey bhaiyan puravein,

Landi-fandi morey ghar ka aavein.

Satai sadh mori nanadi puravein,

Gulari ke gadiya ke haar pahiravein.

Athai sadh morey devara puravein,

Kanwan lagai morey kingari bajavein. (Mishra *Badhaiya Bajey Angana* 51-52)

The fair one has come out from the bamboo hut,

Nowhere have I seen such a beauty,

I have seen her only on so and so Rama's bed.

Slender is her body and beautiful the face.

The fair one says, my mother-in-law fulfills my first desire,

She calls my father-in-law to tell about my condition.

My father-in-law fulfills my second desire,

He calls the priest to determine the auspicious time for me to leave.

My elder brother-in-law fulfills my third desire,

He calls the barber to send the message to my natal home.

My father fulfills my fourth desire,

He gets from the market propitious sari for me.

My mother fulfills my fifth desire,

She gets my sari dyed yellow with the ground turmeric.

My brother fulfills my sixth desire,

He comes with the loads of stuff to my home.

My younger sister-in-law fulfills my seventh desire,

She makes a garland of the raw fruits of *gular* for me.

My younger brother-in-law fulfills my eighth desire,

He plays kingari[1] near my ears.[2]

After sirvant, janm (birth of the child) is celebrated. The rituals on this occasion reflect immense happiness and joy in the family and begin immediately after the birth. Earlier, only the birth of a son was desired and, thus, the birth of a daughter was not celebrated. Fortunately, this tendency is changing fast, although much is yet to be achieved. The birth of a child is accompanied with the singing of several types of folk songs, viz. 'sariya', 'devi geet', 'sohar', 'cherua', 'peepari', 'rochna', 'palang', 'palna', 'ghunghuna', 'kathula', 'badhai', and 'ashish'. "On the birth of a son, first a 'sariya' is sung. On the basis of meter and rhythm, a sariya-song is different from sohar, but they are quite similar in terms of their subject matter."[3] (Awasthi *Hazara* 32) Sariya is followed by 'devi-geet'. Next 'sohar' is sung. Generally, 'sohar' is considered a generic term for all songs related to birth. However, there are different kinds of birth songs that are sung in a particular order. Sohar

[1] A musical instrument.
[2] My translation.
[3] My translation.

narrates various events and depicts vividly different issues, like the labour pain that the mother has undergone, the great pleasure one finds in seeing the new-born for the first time, analogies to describe the beautiful face of the child as also his actions, and such other things. In Awadhi folk songs, sohars depict the birth of Lord Ram in various ways. So is the case with the birth of Shri Krishna. In fact, most of the sohar songs in Awadhi address the new-born as either Ram or Krishna, as in the following example from Barabanki region:

> *Dhanni Awadh jahan Ram bhaye hain.*
>
> *Jau ui Ram garabh aayein hain, tab jiyara behal bhaye hai…*
>
> *Navain mahina Ramji jalmein, tab nagari anand bhaye hain.* (Awasthi *Hazara* 215)
>
> Fortunate is Awadh where Ram is born.
>
> Since Ram came in my womb, my heart has been ill at ease…
>
> In the ninth month Ramji is born, the entire town is filled with joy"[4]

After sariya and sohar, the songs related to 'cherua' and 'peepari' are sung. While 'cherua' is a drink prepared by the mother-in-law of the new mother on the day of delivery or the day next to it, 'peepari' is a medicinal powder prepared by the elder sister-in-law and given with milk. "In folk songs, both cherua and peepari are mentioned together" (Awasthi *Hazara* 35) In the tradition of folk songs related to birth, next come the songs associated with 'rochna' (sung when the message of the birth of the child is sent to either of the grandparents' household), 'palang' (cot), 'palana' (cradle), 'ghunghuna' (a toy for the new born), 'badhai' (greetings/wishes), and 'ashish' (blessings).

Next ceremony is called "chhatthi". On the sixth day of the birth of the child, goddess Shashthi is worshipped and songs are sung on this occasion. This is the first time after the birth of the child when the mother is given food to eat; until this day the mother is given special sweets called 'sethaura' and drinks of medicinal value.

After chhatthi, "barahi" is celebrated. It is the ritual performed on the twelfth day of the birth of the child. It is, also, called 'Nikasan' as on this day itself both mother and the new

[4] My translation.

born child come out from their room called as ‘saur griha or sauri’. The songs sung on this occasion are sohar and uthan. Following is an example of uthan:

Lalna kai barahi janya piya.

Sasu jo aihein unhein kau debya,

Piyari dai darya janya piya.…

Pisua pisan ka devaraniya jo aihein,

Kakna dai darya janya piya.

Kajra de ka nanadiya jo aihein,

Kathvatiya dai darya janya piya.

Tupka chhodan ke devarva jo aihein,

Cycle dai darya janya piya.…

Sab kuch dai darya na morey saley,

Kathvatiya saley kareje piya. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lokgeet* 45)

It is the barahi of our beloved son, Remember dear husband.

When my mother-in-law comes, what’ll you offer her?

Remember dear husband to give her a yellow sari…

To grind the flour when the younger sister-in-law comes,

Remember dear husband to give her bangles of gold.

To put *kajal* in the eyes of our son when *nanad* comes,

Remember dear husband to give her a wooden bowl.

When to drop you the younger brother-in-law comes,

Remember dear husband to give him the cycle…

Give everything, it’ll not affect me,

But the wooden bowl troubles my heart a lot.[5]

This song is sung in a teasing mood. The new mother does not mind giving away expensive gifts of clothes and gold to her in-laws. But she minds giving away an ordinary wooden bowl, a mundane kitchenware, to her nanad. The bhabhi-nanad relationship is generally a joking one and such songs highlight this aspect of their bonding.

Next comes "pasani", which is the first instance of feeding the child with solid food. In the scriptures, pasani is referred to as Annaprasan, which is performed in the sixth month. However, in general practice, pasani is performed in the fifth or seventh month. On this occasion different kinds of sohar are sung.

After pasani, "chhitani and anniversary" are celebrated. Chhitani, a custom founded in superstitious beliefs, is the practice of warding off the evil forces that have previously caused the death of babies of a particular woman. It is done yearly from the birth till the marriage of the concerned child. On the other hand, 'anniversary' of the child is a life-long affair. On both these occasions sohar and uthan are sung.

Once all the rituals related to Jatakarm are over, the ceremonies related to "Chudakarm" (shaving of the child's hair) and "Upanayan" (sacred thread ceremony) begin. Chudakarm and Upanayan comprise various folk songs, among which Manchhuha, Tel, Maen, and Janeu related songs are famous. After these ceremonies, comes 'Vivah', which is celebrated with all joy as well as show and pomp. Although there have been drastic social and economic changes vis-a-vis marriage ceremonies, yet the ritualistic aspects by and large remain same. Thus, one observes even today the detailed performance of various rituals related to marriage. Interestingly, in spite of the excessive 'exploitation' of marriage songs in Hindi films, even today one can find many of those adapted songs sung in different regions in their original forms. In Awadhi, folk songs related to marriage are broadly classified into five categories corresponding to the five major events/occasions: tilak, manchhuha, tel, maen, and vivah.

'Tilak' literally means 'applying a mark on the forehead'. Ritualistically, it refers to the act of applying vermillion, sandalwood or any other auspicious liquid or powder on the forehead of the groom by the members of bride's side called 'tilakhar'. However, socially it refers to the elaborate function, which marks the beginning of relationship between the

[5] My translation.

families of the groom and the bride, wherein gifts are given in full display to the groom. Unfortunately, tilak has become a cover for dowry and a site for conspicuous consumption and show off. Even such negative changes in society get mentioned in the songs sung at the time of tilak ceremony. Apart from this, various songs are sung on both the sides. The songs sung on the bride's side are different from the ones sung on the groom's side. An example of a tilak song on the groom's side follows:

> *Soney ke kheraunwan kavney Rama, Aaji ke mahal gaye,*
>
> *Aaji! Mukh bhar detu asees, chauk chadhi baithaun.*
>
> *Amva ki nai naati baurau, amili uss far liyau,*
>
> *Naati, dubuiya ki nai chhailau, chandan uss mahkau.*(Awasthi *Hazara* 35)
>
> These golden sleepers belong to whom Rama, He who went to his grandma's palace,
>
> Grandma! Give me your blessings plenty, I'll sit on the sacred dais.
>
> Flower like the mango tree, dear grandson, bear fruits like the tamarind,
>
> Dear grandson, spread like the grassland, and smell like the sandalwood tree.[6]

After tilak is performed, three important rituals before the actual marriage ceremony are manchhuha, tel and maen similar to the 'sacred thread ceremony'. But unlike the thread ceremony songs, in the case of marriage, both bride and groom are addressees. These ceremonies are performed with the accompaniment of elaborate folk songs. Next comes the final day of marriage ceremony, i.e. the actual day of marriage called 'vivah' ('biah' in Awadhi). On this day, every ritual is accompanied by elaborate songs related to the specific events. This is the day on which the groom leaves from his home, accompanied by his relatives and friends, for the bride's place to get married. The groom's party is referred to as 'barati' and the marriage 'procession' led by the groom is called 'barat'. Elaborate rituals

[6] My translation.

follow on this day; right from bathing the groom to getting him dressed up to him being showered with blessings till he leaves for the bride's place are some of the important rituals meticulously performed on this day. There are some old rituals, too, that are still observed, like applying kajal on the groom's eyes, and 'examination' of the groom ready for departure. The barat is sent off with much pomp and fanfare. These are the rituals performed on the groom's side. Here is a famous song sung while the groom is getting dressed:

> *Dulhey teri ankhiyan surmedani.*
>
> *Dulhey tora Maura lakh kai re, dulhey teri mauri nau hazari.*
>
> *Dulhey torey bala lakh kai re, dulhey tore kundal nau hazari…*
>
> *Dulhey tora moja lakh kai re, dulhey tori lariya nau hazari.* (Mishra 110)
>
> Oh groom, your eyes are like a kohl case.
>
> Oh groom, your turban is of lakhs, and the headdress of nine thousand.
>
> Oh groom, your earrings are of lakhs, and the danglers of nine thousand.
>
> Oh groom, your socks are of lakhs, and the strings of nine thousand.[7]

The rituals performed on the bride's side are different and, thus, the accompanying songs too differ. Some of the most important ceremonies and the corresponding songs on the bride's side are "suhag-geet" (songs depicting the importance of married women called 'suhagins'), "songs to seek suhag", "dwarchar-geet" (songs sung when the barat arrives in the evening at the bride's door), "vivah-geet", "kanyadan-geet" (songs sung when the daughter is given away by the parents to the groom), "phera-geet" (songs sung during saptapadi, i.e. the seven rounds of the sacred fire), "kohbar-geet" (songs sung when the bride and groom are taken to the kohbar, i.e. the room meant for immediate post-marriage games and worship), "kaleva-geet" (songs sung on the next morning of the marriage when groom and his brothers are invited for breakfast), and "vidai-geet" (songs sung while bidding farewell to the bride).

[7] My translation.

Most of the songs on the bride's side are quite emotional in their tone and lyric as also they describe the glory of the groom and his barat. An example of dwarchar-geet from Fatehpur region is as follows:

Bajan bajey duarey, rangeela dulha byahan aaya.

Sir par kalash dharey hai gujariya, gawat mangal char…

Samadhi thhadey humare duarey, pahirey foolan ke haar,

Jug-jug jeevaiy yah jori, yahey asees humar. (Mishra *Badhaiya Bajey Angana* 121)

Bands play at the door, handsome groom has come to marry.

With the sacred urn kept on her head, the beautiful one sings auspicious songs…

The groom's father stands at my door, wearing the garland of flowers,

May this couple live for ages, this is the blessing of ours.[8]

Another example of a saptapadi-geet:

Pahili bhawanriya ke ghumat, baba abahin tumhari…

Chathhin bhawanriya ke ghumat, baba abahin tumhari,

Satain bhawanriya ke ghumat, baba ab bhaiyun parari. (Mishra *Badhaiya Bajey Angana* 128)

With the completion of the first round, oh dear father, I'm still yours…

With the completion of the sixth round, Oh dear father, I'm still yours,

With the completion of the seventh round, oh dear father, I don't belong to you anymore.[9]

[8] My translation.

Among the marriage songs, “banna” (groom) and “banni” (bride) songs are quite famous in all regions. One can see these songs in all modes of entertainment involving marriage celebrations. A famous banni-banna song from Faizabad region goes as follows:

> *Jhuki jao tanik Raghuvir, Siya mori chhoti.*
>
> *Siya pyari ke mathey bindia sohey,*
>
> *Tilak diye raghuvir, Siya mori chhoti.* (Awasthi *Hazara* 40)
>
> Bow down a little *Raghuvir*, my *Siya* is too short.
>
> The vermillion looks beautiful on the forehead of *Siya*,
>
> And *Raghuvir* has put a mark on his forehead, my *Siya* is too short.[10]

A unique and interesting sub-genre of marriage songs is “gari” (songs of abuse to tease the groom and his relatives). Seen as sites of carnivalesque release of tension for the bride’s side, these folk songs involve a great degree of license. Mostly ripe with explicit sexual content, these songs stand apart from all the other folk songs related to marriage ceremony. An example of gari from Banda will illustrate the joy, mirth, and teasing behind such songs:

> *Sookh-pakh kaise khayau re dularey Rama, doodh dahiu se na khau.*
>
> *Apni amma ka pathvau ahirwa ke, doodh dahiu se khau.*
>
> *Apni mausi ka pathvau halwaiya ke, meeth bhat se khau.*
>
> *Apni bahini ka pathvau kunjarwa ke, saag bhat se khau.* (Awasthi *Hazara* 185)
>
> How would you eat such bland and dry food, dear Rama, Eat it with milk and curd.
>
> Send your mother to the milkman’s house, eat it with milk and curd.

---

[9] My translation.
[10] My translation.

> Send your aunt to the sweet vendor, eat it with sweet rice.
>
> Send your sister to the vegetable vendor, eat it with greens and rice.[11]

The afore-mentioned categories of folk songs accompany the most important rituals of life-cycle. Apart from these, the songs related to the last of the life-cycle ceremonies, called antakarm (rituals related to death), are also present though not very common among folk songs. Although they are devoid of any enthusiasm or native cheerfulness, yet they contain pragmatic thoughtfulness and wisdom. Generally, the folk songs related to death are of two types. "In the first type, the qualities of the deceased person are mentioned and in the second type the hardships that are the outcome of his death are narrated. If a little child passes away, then his beauty, innocence and simplicity is the content of such songs. If the sole bread-winner of a family dies, then the financial hardships faced by the family due to his absence are depicted. Some of these songs are spontaneous."[12] (Upadhyaya 75) Such songs are similar to the dirges prevalent in the West. In India, in certain languages, Rajasthani, Braj, and Bhojpuri for instance, there is a strong tradition of these songs which are replete with powerful manifestation of emotions. However, such songs are not common; only a particular period of lamentation by the dear and near ones of the deceased person is observed and generally no songs are sung on such occasions. "Particularly in Awadhi folk songs these occur seldom. In fact, day by day such songs are becoming rare. In all the… nations of the world the tradition of death-songs is present, but it is on a gradual decline." (Upadhyaya 82) It is realised that folk songs cover every stage of human life cycle and they are true manifestations of people's joy, happiness, and desires as well as the norms, mores, customs, tradition, expectations, etc. of the society on the whole. Therefore, folk songs can be considered a ubiquitous presence in our lives.

The second category of folk songs comprises the songs related to different seasons and the festivals associated with them. In fact, festivals in India are based on the perceptions and practices associated with different seasons. When the season changes, life too changes and "everyone is happy; this happiness manifests itself in the chain of festivals every season brings with itself. There is a saying that the Tij festival comes and sows the seeds of festivals; Holi comes and takes away the festivals in her shawl. Tij, Savan, Jhula, Kajari, Gudiya, Nag

[11] Translation mine.
[12] My translation.

Panchami, Janmashtmi, Ramnavami, Shivaratri, Dashahra, Jhonjhi, Tesu, Deepawali, Kataki, Makar Sankranti, Holi and so forth are performed with rejoicing. Singing of bhajan-kirtan, devi-geet, chaiti, kajari, phagua, barahmasa, and caumasa become routine in neighbourhood temples and households." (Tewari 9) Thus, it doesn't seem hyperbolic to consider folk songs related to different seasons and those with the festivals as complementary, in fact synonymous to each other. Most popular folk songs related to seasons are "sawan", "kajari", "phag", "chaita", "barahmasa", and "chaumasa".

The month of Sawan brings with it the rainy season and fills the relieved hearts with either joy or a sense of deprivation and longing; the month of sawan is infused with mixed feelings. For instance, in the month of sawan, a married woman feels immense joy if someone from her natal home comes to take her, whereas the same woman feels sorrowful if no one from her natal family shows up. The lament of being left out or ignored by her own dear ones is often coupled with the shattering of dreams of some freedom from the daily grind of household chores in her in-laws' home. A classic example of this lament finding voice in a soulful song is the "Ab ke Baras" sawan in *Bandini* (1963). A typical sawan written by Shailendra under powerful folk influence he found in Phanishwarnath Renu's company, the song remains to date a testimony of the pain of separation from their family felt by married women:

Ab ke baras bhej bhaiya ko babul,
Sawan mein lijo bulaaye re,
Lautengi jab mere bachapan ki sakhiyaan,
Deejo sandesaa bhijaay re,
Ab ke baras bhej bhaiya ko babul.

Ambuvaa taley phir se jhuley padenge
Rimjhim padengi phuhaarein
Lautengi phir tere aangan me baabul
Sawan ki thandi bahaarein
Chhalake nayan, moraa kasake re jiyaraa
Bachapan ki jab yaad aaye re
Ab ke baras bhej bhaiya ko baabul
Bairan javaani ne chheeney khilauney
aur meri gudiyaa churaai

baabul thi mae tere naazon ki paali
phir kyon hui mae paraai
Beetey re jug koi chithiyaa na paati
Na koi naihar se aaye re
Ab ke baras bhej bhaiya ko babul. (*Bandini*)
This year dear father, send bhaiya

To take me home for sawan

When my childhood friends return

Send my message to them

This year dear father, send bhaiya

Once again there would be swings under the mango tree,

And soft showers of rain will wet them.

Tears spill from my eyes, my heart swells with pain

When I remember my childhood again.

This year dear father, send bhaiya

Youth, my enemy, snatched my toys away

And did steal my doll.

O father, you brought me up with such love,

Why did I become a stranger to you then?

Eons roll by without a letter or news from you

And no one from my home comes to see me anymore.

This year dear father, send bhaiya.[13]

It is remarkable that many women-centric festivals such as Rakshabandhan and Sawan ki Teej, fall in the month of sawan. These festivals, revolving around a married

[13] My translation.

woman's relationship with her natal home, allow her to stay with her family at least once a year. sawan is therefore the month when women are expected and allowed to visit their parents. One must note that sawan is the month of relaxation when neither sowing nor reaping is to be done. Women are free of their agricultural roles, and hence probably, this is the time of the year when they can rightfully proceed to their parents' homes. The theme of relaxation and enjoyment, of vacation is reinforced through rituals like wearing green glass bangles, wearing mehendi, swinging in the orchard, and of course, singing sawan. All these acts signify a temporary closure of physical labour and a mood of rest, socializing and holiday. Even in today's post-industrialised context, sawans have retained these meanings and metaphors though the social practices and characteristics associated with them may be becoming irrelevant.

Sawan is a month of many moods. And thus, within the genre of sawan, one finds songs which are extremely sexually aggressive and explicit, bordering on transgression and one also finds songs conforming to the given patriarchal notions of matrimony, chastity, domination and control. I came across an example of a sawan expressing desire for sexual union while collecting data in Lucknow. Following is the version sung for me by an artist who is considered a great knower of Awadhi folk songs:

Barse kaari re badariya, mori chunariya bheegi jaay.

Dhaani re chunariya, laal rang choliya, boond padat dhoomil hui jaay

Paiyaan padoon main baanke chhayalwa, leejo garwa lagaye…

The dark clouds have brought rain, my chunri is soaked.

My green chunri and red blouse are becoming dull due to the rain drops on them

I touch your feet and request you my handsome beloved,

Please embrace me.[14]

[14] My translation.

Contrary to the sexual content in the above song, there are also sawans which completely negate sexual desire. One such instance takes place in Kishkindha Kand of *Ramcharitmanas* where Tulsidas turns the sawan theme around into a Niti Updesh from Ram to Laxman:

> *Mahabrishti chali futi kiaarin, jimi sutantra bhayin bigarahin naari.*
>
> *Krishi niravahin chatur kisana, jimi budh tajahin moh mad maana.* (Tulsidas in Srivastava 11)
>
> As excessive freedom spoils women,
>
> So does excessive rain spoil the flowerbeds.
>
> Clever farmers are weeding their fields
>
> Just as wise men weed out worldly desires, pride and ego from
>
> their lives.[15]

There are various reasons to feel happy or sad in the month of sawan. Among those reasons, the absence of the beloved husband who is gone far away for employment is the commonest theme of sawan folk songs. Sawan also encompasses the love between consanguines, say the intimate bond between the brother and the sister. It also depicts the spiritual yearnings mixed with the worldly desires as in the songs that address the beloved as the source of spiritual bliss and knowledge. The following sawan from Allahabad portrays the feelings of an anxious and sad wife:

> *Sawan aaye, saiyan nahin aaye,*
>
> *Nahin aaye nanadi ke bhai ho.*
>
> *Angana toh morey lekha madhuban,*
>
> *Dehri toh hoigain apaadh ho.*
>
> *Sejia toh morey lekhe nagin,*
>
> *Bin piya dasi-dasi khai ho.* (Awasthi *Hazara* 137)

[15] My translation.

The month of Sawan is here but not my beloved,

Oh my Nanadi's brother isn't here.

The courtyard seems a forest to me,

Threshold has become impossible to cross.

The bed seems teeming with snakes,

Stinging me to death in my beloved's absence.[16]

One must note that the sense of loss or separation depicted here is very different from that portrayed in the 'Ab ke Baras' song. Though both the songs convey suffering and longing, the experience of these emotions as also the cause, are very distinct. Sawan, with the showers of rain and rejuvenation of nature, gives rise to such sorrow and nostalgia along with happiness and joy. These differing shades of sawan are covered by the genre of sawan folk songs. Another point to be noted is that sawan as a genre in folklore is mostly women-centric. "Genders are genres. The world of women is not the world of men." (Ramanujan 53) This statement aptly puts sawan songs in perspective. Folklore is the space where fantasies, wishes and desires of women find an articulation. Even those women, who belong to the lowest substratum of society and who have no language or medium of self-expression, take recourse to folk tradition to articulate their desires.

Like sawan, in the same month kajari, too, is sung. It is the most popular among the Awadhi folk songs. In fact, Mirzapur region is recognised for the best of compositions of kajari which are known as 'Mirzapuri Kajari' (the Kajari of Mirzapur). One of the chief characteristics of Mirzapuri Kajari is its refrain. Also, kajari is much wider in its choice of subject matter than sawan. It includes the depiction of the birth and life of Ram and Krishna, along with the narration of common lives of people. "The area of 'sawan' songs is limited, but that of kajari is vast. In kajari songs, one finds the varied transactions of life. In it is seen the life of Ram and the actions of Krishna, and it includes the common events of general public as well as the philosophical dimensions of the knowledge attained through a preceptor." (Awasthi *Hazara* 62) However, kajari generally portrays the desires and complaints of common lives, as depicted in the following kajari from Mirzapur:

[16] My translation.

Kaise khelai jaibu sanwan ma kajaria,

badariya gheri aai nanadi.

Tu toh jaat hau akeli, keu sang na saheli,

Kattau bhuli jaihau rahiya-dagariya,

Badariya gheri aai nanadi…

Kaisey khelab hum kajariya, Mori bheeji re chunariya,

Nanadi tana marey kahihai fuhuriya,

Badariya gheri aai nanadi. (Chaturvedi *Unchi Atariya* 136)

How would you go to play kajari in the month of sawan,

Oh nanadi, the clouds have come.

You are going alone, no friends are with you,

What if you forget the way,

The clouds have come….

How would I play kajari, my chunari is wet,

Nanadi taunts me by calling me uncouth,

The clouds have come.[17]

Another important category of songs related to seasons is "Phaag", which comes in the month of Falgun. In the colloquial terminology, it is also called 'fagua'. Another name of phaag is "Hori" as it is sung on the occasion of Holi. However, there is a slight difference between phaag and hori. While the former is sung exclusively by men, the latter is sung by both men and women. The choice of content and theme of these songs is quite vast; from religious and philosophical allusions to the slangs and abuses in a teasing manner find mention in such songs. Phaag is sung in various styles, with changing rhythms and tunes. The following example of Hori from Pratapgarh is quite famous in different regions and other inter-artistic adaptations:

[17] My translation.

Awadh ma Hori khelain Raghubira.

O, kekrey hathey dholak bhal sohaiy, kekrey hathey manjira.

Aye, Ram ke hathey dholak bhal sohaiy, lachhiman hathey manjira.

Aye, kekrey hathey kanak pichkari, kekrey hathey abira.

Aye, Bharat ke hathey kanak pichkari, Shatrughan hathey abira. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lokgeet* 174)

In Awadh plays Hori Raghubira.

Oh, who adorns the *dholak* in his hands, who holds the cymbals?

Hey, dholak is adorned in the hands of Ram, and manjira in the hands of Laxman.

Hey, who adorns the golden *pichkari* , and who holds *abir*?

Hey, the golden pichkari is adorned in the hands of Bharat, and abir in the hands of Shatrughan.[18]

This folk song was adapted into a film song by Sameer and composed by Aadesh Srivastav for the 2003 film *Baghban*:

Hori khelein Raghubira awadh mein hori khelain Raghubira

Haan, hilmil aavein log-lugai,

Bhai mehlan mein bheera,

Awadh mein hori khelain Raghubira. (*Baghban*)

Raghubira plays Hori in Awadh, Raghubra plays Holi

Yes, men and women come together,

The palaces are crowded,

[18] My translation.

Raghubira plays Hori in Awadh.[19]

Though the structure of the stanzas has been modified in this popular film song, the tune and the refrain are largely borrowed from the folk version. Another immensely famous example of Hori from Lucknow is mentioned below:

Aaj biraj mein hori re rasiya…

Ith tey aavain Kunwar kanhaiya, uth tey kuanri kishori re rasiya.

Nandgaon ke jurey sakha sab, barsaney ki gori re rasiya.

Hili-mili phag paraspar khelain, kahi-kahi hori-hori re rasiya. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lokgeet* 179)

It is Holy today in Braj, Oh *Rasiya*…

From this way comes young Kanhaiya, from that way young Radha, Oh Rasiya.

All the friends of Nand village have gathered, and the fair ones of Barsana, Oh Rasiya.

They all play Holi together, by saying holi-holi, Oh Rasiya.[20]

The songs sung in the month of Chait are called "Chaita" or "Chaiti". Although the terms chaita and chaiti are used inter-changeably, yet experts assign them to the categories of those sung by men and women respectively. In any case, these songs are known for their melody and soft rhythms. They include both the varieties of shringar rasa, i.e. sanyog (union) and viyog (separation/longing). Like sawan, kajari, and phaag/hori, they too frequently describe the birth and life of Ram.

"Barahmasa" are the songs that describe all the twelve months and are generally sung in the rainy season. When instead of twelve months, only four and six months are described in a barahmasa, they are referred to as "chaumasa" and "chhahmasa" respectively. Apart from this "pure" barahmasa, there are different types that are sung under other sub-

[19] My translation.
[20] My translation.

genres like sawan, kajari, phaag, etc. Such types of barahmasa are named after the sub-genre in which they are sung, for instance kajari-barahmasa means the barahmasa in the kajari form. Barahmasa has been favourite of sufi and saint poets like Malik Muhammad Jayasi who used it in his *Padmavat*. Basically, barahmasa is the song of viyog, i.e. tragic separation and, thus, it depicts the woes of the separated lovers. Most often, the barahmasa is narrated from a female protagonist's point-of-view. An example of barahmasa from Gonda region is as follows:

Udhau, abke gae kab aiho?

Sawan sakhiyan sej lagaye, bhadaun bhool na jaiho.

Kwar maas jab aihau, kapti mitra kahaiho...

Poos maas tan jaad satavat, kehi ke galey laptaiho?

Magh maas basant janavat, jethai tapani bujhaiho.

Chat maas ban fuli chameli, kehi bidhi haar guthaiho?

Baisak maas baisaakh janavat, jethai tapani bujhaiho.

Asadh maas ghan garjan lagey, kehi bidhi bangla chhavaiho? (Awasthi *Hazara* 19)

Udhau, while you leave this time, when will you come back?

In the month of sawan your companions make the bed, do not forget in the month of bhadaun.

If you come in the month of kwar, you will be called a cunning friend…

In the month of poos winter troubles the body, whom will you embrace?

The month of magh seems to be basant, you can quench the scorching heat of jeth.

In the month of chait flowers chameli in the forest, how would you make the garland?

> The month of baisakh seems to be baisakh, you can quench the scorching heat of jeth.
>
> In the month of Asadh the clouds start thundering, how would you build your bungalow?[21]

The third category of folk songs comprises the work songs. In Awadhi folklore, work songs generally revolve around either agro-pastoral or occupational calendar, coupled with household activities; folk songs in Awadh are based on agricultural activities like sowing, weeding, and harvesting as well as household activities like grinding and pounding. Thus, the work songs are basically a medium of entertainment or respite amidst the hard, laborious and otherwise monotonous daily routine. They are essentially rural in their tone and flavour. The same tone and flavour is retained even in the urban versions of those songs that are a powerful medium of entertainment and respite for the low economic class. The singers of such work songs in the urban areas come mostly from the unorganized sector of economy and, hence, singing of their folk songs can be considered as an atonement to the sense of loss and relative deprivation they feel in spite of their hard work and labour. The major forms of Awadhi work songs are “Lagwahi” (the songs of sowing), “Nirwahi” (the songs of weeding), “Katwahi” (the harvest songs), “Jatsari” (the songs of grinding), and “Kolhu-Geet” (the songs of mill).

Lagwahi is also known as “Ropai” or “Ropani”. These songs are sung while planting paddy in the fields. Obviously, the issues related to farming, especially the rice farming, get featured in such songs. Therefore, prayers for rain, sunshine, and favourable weather conditions are frequent in such songs. However, these songs are not confined to such themes. In fact, various social, household, and familial issues also get frequently mentioned in these songs.

Nirwahi, also known as “sohani”, songs are sung while weeding the fields. These songs revolve around the domestic themes, like the relationship between the bride and her in-laws. Katwahi songs are sung during the harvest. These songs are full of joy and happiness as they reflect the outcome of hard work and ceaseless labour.

Jatsari songs are sung while grinding the grains in a stone-mill at home. These songs are known with the names that bear slight modifications in the term jatsar. These songs are of

[21] My translation.

three types: Titira, Jhagara, and Bhajan. Titira songs are the most common of all the jatsari songs. They exploit various events of domestic life as their subject matter. Jhagara are the songs that depict the *maya* of Lord Krishna. They generally describe the sadness of the Gokul girls that is caused due to Krishna's absence. Bhajans are the songs with religious and spiritual allusions in the context of daily routine. Thus, these songs narrate the stories of Ram, Sita, Krishna and other gods/goddesses.

Kolhu songs are the songs sung while extracting oil from the oil-seeds. They are also sung while sugarcane juice is extracted in villages. They are mostly sung in groups.

The culture of singing work songs is deeply embedded in the caste system as work itself in rural India, even today, is not caste neutral. Work songs are generally accompanied by the caste and genre specific instruments. For instance, mill songs are specific to the caste engaged in the occupation of extracting oil and the instruments accompanying those songs are the instruments used by the community members of this occupation. Also, the work songs are known to exist in all societies and cultures. Although they vary in degrees of physical hardships and mental stress, yet the basic themes of these songs remain same. Thus, work songs in an agricultural setting in India are comparable to those of the American plantation slaves, albeit not in the same context and same circumstances. An example of a work song sung while digging a well is as follows:

> Kavan singh intiya pathavein, pajauva lagavein.
>
> Kavan singh sagra khodavein, jagatiya badhavein.
>
> Raja Dashrath intiya pathavein, pajauva lagavein.
>
> Siri Ramchandra sagra khodavein, jagatiya badhavein.
>
> Arey, hotthey Ajodiya mein sor tau jaggi rachavein. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lokgeeton ke Anokhey Swar* 143)

> Who is this rich one sending the bricks, who establishes the brick-kiln?
>
> Who is this rich one digging the ocean, who is erecting the boundary?

> King Dashrath sends the bricks, and establishes the brick-kiln.
>
> Shri Ramchandra diggs the ocean, and erects the boundary.
>
> Oh, there is a big talk in Ayodhya that he is conducting a yajna.[22]

In contrast to this example, here follows a typical women's work song sung while making *puris*:

> Devra bhaye Patwari, likhanwarey.
>
> Baaga likhheingey, bagaichau likheingey, nebulau likheingey ninarey.
>
> Kuanna likheingey, jagatiau likheingey, gagriyau likheingey ninarey…
>
> Seja likheingey, supetiau likheingey, takiyau likheingey ninarey. (Awasthi *Hazara* 189)
>
> My younger brother-in-law is now a *Patwari*, the legal granter.
>
> He will grant me the gardens, orchards and lemon groves will also be granted for free.
>
> He will grant me the well, the space around it and the clay-pot will also be granted for free…
>
> He will grant me the bed, the cot and the pillows will also be granted for free.[23]

The fourth category of folk songs comprises the songs associated to different castes and communities. They are quite similar to community-based work songs as the castes in India are almost always associated with their occupations. Thus, there is a visible overlap in recognition of such songs through nomenclature. In terms of nomenclature, in my opinion, these songs can also be called occupational songs as the reflection of the world-view in these

[22] My translation.
[23] My translation.

songs is much more occupation-specific rather than that of a particular caste. Whatever the case be, but these songs are recognised through the caste which holds the monopoly of a particular sub-genre in which it is sung. For instance, although biraha is sung by the shepherd community too, yet it is generally associated with the milkman community, known as "Aheer" or "Yadav", alone. Aheer/Yadav caste is the same to which Lord Krishna belonged. Thus, it is obvious to find plenty of biraha songs depicting Krishna's life. These songs include the other gods and goddesses too. Biraha also portrays the nature and its relevance in the agricultural and pastoral societies. An example of biraha, meant for the school kids, from Lucknow, illustrates this aptly:

Karta khad ka bakhan, Sun lo babu dharike dhyan.

Le lo inka bhi pahichan, Ye hain kai tarah ki.

Sabse sundar hari khad, Dejai khetan ko ye khad…

Bhaiya, hari khad ka bovao, Chahey panv pasari ke sovao,

Khetwa ann dehain khoob, Rakhihau kothila bhari ke.

Dekhao larikan ki kisani, Khet ma kartey pahalwani.

Bharihain Bharat ke bhandar, Ee schooli larikai. (Awasthi *Hazara* 298-299)

I praise the qualities of fertilizers, listen to it carefully.

Understand well all these too, these are of many kinds.

The most beautiful is the green one, mix it in the fields…

Oh brother, mix the green fertilizer in your fields, and go to sleep without any tension.

Your fields will yield plenty, your granary will always be full.

Look at the agriculture of the kids, they do wrestling in the field.

They will fill the granary of India, these kids from school.[24]

Another famous variety of caste-based or occupational songs is those sung by the boatmen community (known as "Kevat") and the palanquin bearers (known as "Kahar"). These songs are known as "Kaharwa" songs, which include various themes investigating religious, social, political, economic, and national issues and challenges.

Among other caste-based songs, are the unique songs from the potter, washermen, and dalit communities. These songs are rich repertoire of wisdom, wit and humour. They, also, contain religious and spiritual yearnings. One famous variety of folk songs from potter community is "Jhoomar" which is sung with a lot of swaying movement. 'Jhoomna' literally means 'swaying' and the genre derives its name from that word. In fact, every caste in India has its own representative folk songs. All of them have underlying similarities as well as differences among each other. But, they all essentially unravel the same threads thematically. In other words, the concerns of the different kinds of caste-based folk songs almost always remain same.

Apart from these important categories, there are other songs that are regarded as miscellaneous songs, among which "Purvi", "Nirgun", "Bhajan", "Journey Songs", "National Songs", "Children's Play Songs", "Lachari", "Katha Songs", "Songs while Digging Wells", "Mela Songs", "Hindola Songs", "Gadar Songs", and "War Songs" get preserved", etc. are some important forms. Purvi refers to the songs prevalent in the Eastern parts, i.e. the eastern Awadh and Bhojpuri regions. Nirgun are the philosophical and mystical songs sung primarily by the saint poets. The concerns in such songs are the 'other-worldly' bliss and the attainment of true knowledge through a guru, i.e. a preceptor. An example follows:

Bina re khivaiya, naiya kaisey lagai paar ho.

Bhava waley sagarba pai guru mallahwa yaar ho.

Gahiri nadiya, naav purani, lahar uthain gumkar ho

Ketaneu niguda karam ke heeney, baandhein jamkey dwar ho…

Santan keri boli bani, rahni apar ho.

[24] My translation.

Saheb Kabir guru gyan batavain, kaya ma kartar ho. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lokgeeton ke anokhey Swar* 139)

How can my boat reach the bank without a boatman?

In the ocean of this world, the Guru is the boatman and friend.

The river is deep, my boat is old, and the waves are terrible,

Many vile and worthless people are tied to the gates of hell.

The words of the saints are beyond doubt

Saheb Kabir Guru tells us that God lives in our own bodies.[25]

Bhajan refers to the devotional songs that guide the mortal beings on the path of dedication and devotion. They are addressed mostly to the gods, goddesses, and spiritual and legendary figures, among which Ram and Krishna are the favourites. Journey songs cover various themes, like the struggle with the corporal self, the hardships faced during pilgrimages, ensuing joy and happiness, possibility of overcoming the sins of 'this-world', and, most importantly, the mortality of human body. Children's play songs include various rhymes and poems recited while playing different games. They, also, include lullabies and such other songs to play and 'tickle' babies. Lachari refers to the songs that are sung to cure a person, especially a child, from small-pox. There are songs meant for initiating various works or projects, especially the construction related works. Mela songs are the ones sung while going for a fair. Hindola refers to the songs sung on giant-wheels, swings, etc. Miscellaneous songs also include the songs of national consciousness as well as the war songs, especially the ones on India-Pakistan and India-China wars. In fact, this category of miscellaneous songs is like a thread that joins all the 'beads' of other categories of folk songs. To change the assertion, one may say that the miscellaneous songs are those songs that are picked up as 'quite distinct' as well as 'quite similar' type of songs in each category.

The afore-mentioned songs are mere 'tips' of the tradition of folk songs that exists as the submerged 'iceberg' in folk psyche. This tradition is the witness as well as the manifestation of our lives; one finds the singer of these songs to be a representative as well as

[25] My translation.

the custodian of our relations and our lives. Thus, one needs to preserve the harmony of folk songs in an otherwise disharmonious existence. This echoes precisely the following words of Devendra Satyarthi, an eminent folklorist from India, “I said- my companion, my friend, my poet, my critic! Do not fight among yourselves. Long live the folk songs! Let us raise the slogan together- Keep singing, Hindustan.”[26] (Satyarthi 30)

[26] My translation.

Chapter 4

The Journey of Awadhi Folk Songs: From Folk to Text to Popular

> The first talking feature, the Hindi music drama *Alam Ara*…, might well have plunged the industry into chaos. But instead the film was a huge success- as indeed were all early Indian sound films- heralding an unprecedented boom. The reason was grounded deep in Indian culture: sound permitted a revival of the vastly popular folk-music drama of the nineteenth century itself based on centuries old religious myths), which had been, quite literally, "all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing." Between 1931 and 1932, the resurgence of this form on the screen played an enormous role in winning widespread acceptance for the Indian sound film despite language barriers. Although most Indian sound films were produced for domestic consumption and seemed to exist mainly as an excuse for musical performance and representation…, the Indian film industry nevertheless became a powerful entity during the transition to sound: from producing twenty-eight films in 1931- twenty-three of which were in Hindi, three in Bengali, and one each in Tamil and Telugu- it was producing 233 in 1935 in ten different languages. (Cook 861)

Folklore has made an immense contribution towards the success of Indian cinema. The journey of today's largest film industry in the world, as conspicuous in the afore-mentioned argument, began rather humbly. But the rapid growth of this industry owes a lot to the rich and

diverse oral, folk, and indigenous art traditions that have formed the bedrock of cinematic output from the very beginning. Within this broad framework of borrowing generously from folklore, Awadhi folklore has played a very significant role. In fact, one could even say that the most remarkable and perhaps also the most memorable contribution of Awadhi folk to the modern Indian cultural sensibility is through its participation in Hindi mainstream cinema. Some of the most successful films in the history of Hindi cinema have had not only an Awadhi context but also a generous sprinkling of dialogue in Awadhi. Some examples which spontaneously come to one's mind are *Mother India* (1957), *Ganga Jumna* (1961), *Teesri Kasam* (1966), *Pakeezah* (1972), *Jai Santoshi Maa* (1975), *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (1977), *Gaman* (1978), *Yaarana* (1981), *Nadiya Ke Paar* (1982), and *Umrao Jaan* (1982). Of late with the coming of films like *Sardari Begum* (1996) and *Welcome to Sajjanpur* (2008) the focus shifts occasionally back to the Awadhi dialect. Apart from these there are hundreds of super hit songs composed in Awadhi and included in Hindi films which have been roaring success at the box-office. The question that comes to one's mind after looking at this list is, why did Awadhi become so integral to 'Bollywood' cinema? Another related question is how Bhojpuri cinema, also an offshoot of Hindi cinema, was impacted by films with Awadhi content in its initial years? Apart from finding answers to these questions, one also needs to trace the trajectory of some literary texts which have been appropriated, in a couple of cases, more than once, by film directors precisely because of their folk underpinnings. Also of interest in this context, is the intimate history of sharing between Awadhi and Bhojpuri, its eastern sibling. This sharing of popular space by folklore in both the prominent dialects of Hindi may be attributed to their geographical proximity which renders linguistic and cultural diffusion commonplace. Classic examples of this diffusion are Phanishwar Nath Renu's short story 'Teesri Kasam, or Marey Gaye Gulfaam', Keshav Prasad Mishra's novel *Kohbar ki Shart* and the film versions of both these: *Teesri Kasam*, *Nadiya ke Paar* and *Hum Apke Hain Koun* (1994). Renu's story, though based in Bihar, is written in a mix of 'Khari Boli', Bhojpuri and Awadhi. Heera Bai, one of the main protagonists, belongs to Kanpur and has worked in Nautanki companies of 'Paschim' according to Hiraman- meaning, she has spent a lot of time in central Uttar Pradesh or Awadh- the centre of high culture in the 1960s. Willy-nilly, several of the songs mentioned in the story are in Awadhi and the film, produced by Shailendra, for whom it was a tribute to his home district of Arah in Bihar, conveniently weaves in a lot of Awadhi dialogue into the linguistically complicated matrix of the

original text. One reason behind the use of Awadhi in the film could be that ultimately, the film had to reach out to a much larger Hindi-speaking belt and Awadhi, with a greater grammatical proximity with Hindi made the film more accessible to this large audience. The same is true of Mishra's novel also which belongs to the eastern Uttar Pradesh region- a zone where the use of Bhojpuri is dominant and that of Awadhi is residual. Though the novel has more generous helpings of Khari Boli, the songs and a lot of dialogue takes place in a mix of the two dialects, perfectly comprehensible to readers and speakers of both. The first film that was based on this novel, *Nadiya ke Paar*, sticks to this technique and the repartee exchanged by characters here sounds more Awadhi than Bhojpuri to a trained ear. Though several actors of this film went on to become famous Bhojpuri film stars, and later many attempts were made by the emergent Bhojpuri cinema to appropriate this blockbuster film into its fold, the truth remains that the language used in the film is mostly Awadhi. Once again, the status of Awadhi as a closer cousin of Hindi, contributed to the huge success of this classic film. But the later film version of the same novel, *Hum Apke Hain Koun* gave up the dialect framework entirely and reworked *Nadiya ke Paar* into the tale of an urban upper middle class, yet traditional family, rendered in colloquial Hindi.

Both 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam' and *Kohbar ki Shart* are literary texts which lie very close to the rural folk context they emerge from. Replete with folk songs and legends extracted from folk imagination, these two pieces may be read as folk manifestoes of rural dialects of Hindi. 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam' is part of Renu's much larger repertoire of short stories revolving around village life. While the relationship of a Nautanki actress with a village bullock cart puller is at the centre of 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam', 'Raspriya' deals with the failures of an excellent Mridang-player Panchkaudi and 'Laal Paan ki Begum' relates the story of a family's eagerness to go and watch 'Naach', an old folk dance form. One can easily say that Renu's fascination for folk performances has guided him in his exploration of the performer-spectator dynamics of folk theatre in great detail in his works. It is therefore justified to read 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam' in conjunction with these other stories which peruse some other aspects of the same relationship. 'Laal Paan ki Begum' is about Birju's mother whose ardent wish is to go and see naach in the Balrampur Mela or fair. But her wish is not limited to just visiting the 'mela' or the fair. She wants to go there with her children in style- on a bullock cart. Her husband, who has been courageous enough to

oppose the landlord and claim land in the Settlement Survey, recently bought a pair of oxen and is in need of a cart to fulfill his family's dream. While he struggles to borrow a cart from his neighbours, it gets late and his wife and children lose hope of going on the trip. Birju's mother, angered by the taunts of other women, decides to fight with her husband when he returns. But to their surprise, he comes back with a cart and they get ready immediately to leave. Renu captures their eagerness to go on a trip in the list of their preparations. Birju's mother makes sweet roti, Champiya, her ten-year old daughter, gets to wear a printed sari and Birju gets to wear pants though without a belt (he has to use a string to keep his pants from slipping). Birju's mother wears a real Rupa bindi. The story ends with birju's mother forgiving the women who passed comments on her when her husband did not return with the cart. She offers them place on the cart and takes them also to the mela. The mela and the naach are rightly portrayed as luxuries for the villagers who, even today have very limited means of entertainment. These luxuries also have an aspirational value. Not being able to go to the mela indicates a loss of status and the only person not going there is the widow Makhni Fua who guards Birju's house while they are out for the mela. The story is of great interest to anyone who seeks to explore what goes on in the spectators mind. Why is the spectator present at the scene of the mela? What does the mela stand for? And, therefore, how an entire folk genre develops around the theme of going to the mela? The mela or fair in the Awadhi region is more than just an economic or cultural activity. Coinciding with the free time of the peasants, these fairs shape the social fabric of villages. They serve many purposes- social and religious gatherings, entertainment trips for children, platform to showcase regional art and culture, a place where one can make easy money, a junction where one can buy clothes of latest fashion and a symbol of the only free time women get, often in years, from the daily grind of household chores. A mere mention of a mela, therefore, in these texts incites excitement and joy. Conversely, as it happens in 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam', the mela culture is also associated in the average villager's mind with subversive debauchery. Hiraman's village looks down upon Nautanki as they feel that exposure to such bacchanalia may lead their young men astray. Hiraman is afraid of these traditionalists who base their judgments about people on such assumptions.

In 'Raspriya', Renu takes a peek into the life history of Panchkaudi Mridangiya, a mridang-player who has dedicated his life to the art of performing Raspriya, a folk form. Panchkaudi is a performer whose successful career came to a grinding halt when his finger

became twisted while playing the mridang in the Gulaab Baag Mela. Ever he has been on the lookout for a handsome effeminate boy to whom he can pass down his art of performing 'Vidyapati' (known as 'Vidapat' colloquially) and singing raspriya. The story goes on to reveal that his finger got twisted as he lied and slandered about Rampatiya (his Guru Jodhan's daughter, whom he pretended to be in love with to gain a prominent position in the Mandali) and Nandubabu from Kamalpur. But the turning point comes in the story when he realises on seeing Mohana, Rampatiya's son, that what he said about her relationship with Nandubabu was not a lie and that Nandubabu is indeed the father of Mohana. Hoping that his twisted finger will straighten now due to this revelation, he gives his life-long savings to Mohana as a reward for keeping raspriya alive. The story catalogues several folksongs, the first one being a farmer's work song. But Renu encloses this song in a context of nostalgia which adds a different layer of meaning to it:

> Even those working in the blazing heat of afternoons in the month of May, don't sing any songs now. …Will the cuckoo also forget her song after some time? How can one work quietly in such hot afternoons! There remained a longing to sing in people's hearts till only five years back. …The green saplings of the earth soaked by the first rainy showers of the season exude a unique fragrance. The branches laden with sap melt like wax in the blazing afternoon. They would start singing Biraha, Chanchar and Lagni then. Even these songs of work are sung keeping in mind the rules of propriety of time and season. Barahamasa to the beats of rain, Biraha for the sweltering sun, Chanchar and Lagni…
>
> 'O, yes…hey, ploughman plies the plough hey….'
>
> The labourer brandishes a hoe!

> This way did my sulking wife go, hey…[1]
>
> …But now the afternoons have lost all flavour, as if nobody has even a single word to utter.[2] (Renu 11)

Such reflections in a story written in 1955 seem odd to the twenty-first century reader who presumes that back then folklore must have been much more vibrant than it is today. But keeping in mind the changes which rapidly overtook the Indian countryside after independence, these observations of Panchkaudi do not seem to be out of place. Written in the thick of nation-building era and at the initial stage of massive urbanization and migration from rural areas, the story laments the fall of the folk culture which not so long ago seemed inseparable from the rural ethos. Panchkaudi's mad search for a disciple, therefore, is justified in times when his art holds no value at all. As an aging artist, his only anxiety is to pass on what he has in himself as an artist to a worthy boy, an ideal 'natua':

> The research on the dancer 'natua' by the performers of vidapat is no child's play. Girlish-looking boys are seldom born in low-caste homes, let alone the families of high-caste people. If at all, they actually incarnate from time to time and age to age…
>
> The vidapat performers are greatly respected in the homes of Maithil Brahmins, Kayasthas and Rajputs. They are exhilarated on hearing 'janam avadhi hum roop niharil' (I'll behold you beauty throughout my life[3]) from the natua's mouth in their own language- Mithilaam. That is why, the 'mulgain' or leader of every mandali would wander from village to village in the search of natua- a boy who, when made up and sent onstage, can stir a sensation among the audience. (Renu 12)

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[1] *'Haan…re, hal jotey hawaha bhaiya re…'*
Khurpi re chalave ma-z-doo-r!
Ehi panthey, dhani mora he rusli…

[2] My translation.

[3] My translation.

A similar folk form, Chhokra Naach, is mentioned in 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam also. Although chhokra naach was meant for the entertainment of common people and not an elite audience like in vidapat, the performer was similar to the vidapat natua- a young girlish-looking boy with extra-ordinary talent for music and dance.

The next song one hears in 'Raspriya' is actually a raspriya:

Nav vrindavan, nav tarugan, nav-nav vikasit phool…

nadi bah nayanak neer!

aho..palali bahey tahi teer! (Renu 16)

New Vrindavan, new trees, newly blooming flowers…

The tears of the eye become a river!

Aah, and it flows along your shores![4]

This song is formally different from the earlier work song. While the work song aims at alleviating lethargy and exhaustion with its wit, jokes and tempo, raspriya operates in the realm of total entertainment- a song aimed at the leisure time of the audience. It is, therefore, more abstract and steeped in viyog shringar Ras. It is contrasted by another song in sanyog shringar rasa within the story: "Nav anuragini Radha, kichhu nahi maaney baadha" (Renu 15) or 'Radha, newly smitten by love, does not care for any hurdles'[5]. Renu's apt narration gives the reader a hint that raspriya is accompanied by dexterous mridang beats and the performer is generally a professional, unlike the untrained, unskilled voices singing work songs in the fields in afternoons. In fact, it is through narration only that Renu unveils many facts about the performative culture of the countryside. His fascination with the exploration of the spectator-performer relationship, explored in some detail in raspriya, reaches its maturity in his 1956 story 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam.' The plot of the story is quite simple- a bullock cart puller, named Hiraman, comes across a strange customer one day- Heerabai, an actress in a theatre company. She is going to Gulaab Baag mela to play the lead role in the nautanki presented by Rauta Theatre Company. On the way, she develops a special bond with Hiraman

[4] My translation.
[5] My translation.

who sings many folk songs in his rural tongue at her request. Hiraman in turn is attracted to her and secretly admires her beauty, grace and sophistication. When they reach their destination, Heerabai asks him to attend the nautanki and gives him and his friends special 'passes' for entry into the nautanki tent. Despite several misgivings about his reputation back home (those who took interest in and patronized nautanki were looked down upon), Hiraman goes to see Heerabai's performance everyday for ten days. In the idle he fights with people who call Heerabai a whore. Just as he decides that he should go and tell Heerabai to work in a circus and leave this nautanki business because of which people misunderstand her, he gets to know that she is going back to Mathuramohan Company, to which she was originally associated. After seeing her off with a heavy heart, he vows that he will never take on a passenger who is "company ki aurat" (Renu 145) or an actress in a theatre company.

This story is replete with folk songs extracted from various folk traditions of eastern Uttar Pradesh and North Bihar. Most of the songs mentioned in the story are in Awadhi though the first song which finds mention here is a Bhojpuri vandana Geet from Bidesiya Naach:

> *Jai maiya Sarosati, arji karat baani;*
>
> *hamra par hokhu sahai hey maiya, hamra par hokhu sahai!*
>
> (Renu 124)
>
> Praise be to you mother Saraswati, I request you
>
> To lend me support, to lend me support![6]

This song is part of a legend recounted by Hiraman for Heerabai. This legend is about the fall of the king of Naamnagar, a minor princely state they pass by on their way to the mela. Hiraman introduces the legend cleverly to forge a long conversation with Heerabai:

> Hiraman raised her curiosity by saying 'gone are those days'. Heerabai tucked the curtain of the shed sideways.
>
> "What days?" she asked pleadingly with her hand on her chin.

[6] My translation.

> "The days of Naamlagar Dyodhi! What it used to be and what it has come to!"
>
> Hiraman knows the secret art of flavouring gossip. Heerabai said, "Have you seen those days?"
>
> "I didn't see, but I've heard…How the king fell, it's a terrible story."[7] (Renu 123)

Thus, Renu introduces the "terrible" tale of the king of Naamnagar in whose house, God took birth as his son and who could not serve this God well. As a result, God left his kingdom with the curse that no one in that kingdom will ever have more than one son. All the other gods also left with him. They took away all the wealth with them, leaving behind only skills and art. So only goddess Saraswati, the patron deity of skill and learning remained behind and she continues to be the local deity there. Though Shailendra drops this legend in the film based on the same short story, here its use is apt in establishing the character of Hiraman as a compulsive singer and story-teller. The resilience of skill and art and their patron Saraswati is also significant in a story which focuses on two artists: Hiraman and Heerabai. It also brings to the forefront human propensity to weave tales around events which cannot be explained through logic. Indeed through these legends, one witnesses the formation of folklore around not just kings and princes but also poor people. The next legend, related to Mahua Ghatwarin, is about a poor motherless girl. But before that, Hiraman mentions another song from chhokra naach:

> *Sajanwa bairi ho gaye humaro! Sajanwa…!*
>
> *Arrey, chithiya ho toh sab koi baanchey; chithiya ho toh…*
>
> *Hai! Karamwa, hoye karamwa.* (Renu 125)
>
> My beloved is cross with me! My beloved…!
>
> O, if it were a letter all could have read it, if it were a letter…
>
> Alas, my fate, it is my fate.[8]

[7] My translation.

The memory of this song invokes Hiraman's nostalgia for the gone by days of chhokra naach and his favourite Manua natua. He feels that Heerabai resembles Manua. He misses those days when a new Naach would come to the village and whip up frenzy and excitement in all hearts. This nostalgia links up with Panchkaudi's nostalgia and in 'Raspriya'. As noted earlier there is already a sense of loss visible in these stories around the role played by folklore in the lives of villagers in the past and its decline in the 1950s and 1960s. Hiraman criticizes film songs as the killers of dance forms like chhokra naach. But 'Raspriya' adds another dimension to the slow death of these forms- the non-availability of young feminine looking boys to maintain an artistic continuity. In fact the story is more about the inability of an artist to pass on his art to a deserving disciple than about the decline of Panchkaudi Mirdangiya.

The next song that appears in 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam' is about a new bride:

> The road goes through Tegachhia village. When children in the village saw a covered cart, they started clapping and singing memorized lines-
>
> 'In a red palanquin,
>
> There goes a blushing bride…'[9]
>
> Hiraman laughed….Bride…in a red palanquin. The bride chews paan and wipes her mouth in the groom's turban. O bride, remember the children of Tegachhia. Bring jaggery laddus on your way back. May your groom live for thousands of years!... Such a long cherished dream of Hiraman stood fulfilled. How many such dreams he had![10] (Renu 128)

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[8] My translation.
[9] *Laali-laali doliya mein*
Laali re dulhaniya.
[10] My translation.

The dreams Renu talks about are related to marriage. In fact, the song becomes even more poignant in the film where it relates not just Hiraman's dreams but also those of Heerabai. The children's folk song triggers a unique emotional response from the protagonists both in the film and the story. But the content of the song varies in both the versions. While in the story, the bride is portrayed as a mischievous one in this song, in the film version, her grace and delicateness are highlights and the children request the bridegroom to keep her happy and smiling forever. But the essence of the song lies in the fact that the stranger children of a stranger village participate in what they think is a 'bidagi' ceremony- the journey of a girl from her natal place to her in-laws'. It brings into focus the integrated rural culture of the Awadhi-Bhojpuri belt where a happy event is celebrated not just by people directly involved in it but also those who just happen to learn about it.

At this point, the story takes an important turn. Hiraman chooses to sing a song in Khari Boli. A song about the fear of the day of judgment, this one has very strong moral overtones:

Sajan re jhooth mat bolo, Khuda ke paas jaana hai.

Nahi haathi, nahi ghoda, nahi gaadi-

Wahan paidal hi jana hai. Sajan re… (Renu 128)

My friend, do not lie, you have to face God one day,

There would be no elephants, no horses, no carts,

You have to walk to all the way. My friend…[11]

This song is distinct from all the other songs sung by Hiraman in the story. Three reasons for this seem crucial: Firstly, it does not relate a story- it is not a narrative song. Its value comes from the moral lesson of truthfulness it conveys. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, it is neither in Awadhi nor in Bhojpuri. It is composed purely in Khari Boli, i.e. Hindi spoken in towns and cities. Thirdly, it shows very strong influence of Islam on the folk imagination. It is a good mix of the Hindu concept of Karma and the Islamic concept of Qayamat or the day of final judgment. Portraying providence as an egalitarian force which does not discriminate between the rich and

[11] My translation.

the poor, it urges the listener to tread the path of truth. Within the story, it occurs rather as a prop- Heerabai requests Hiraman to sing something in his own tongue rather than Khari Boli which she is habitual of hearing. With this, the story switches to the famous Mahua Ghatwarin legend even as Hiraman himself switches from the main road to a more leisurely side path to buy some more time to relate the long and sorrowful tale of the beautiful Ghatwarin whose profession by caste was to look after the ghats (shores) of the river and attend to those merchants who passed by the ghats in her care.

Brought up without any love by a drunkard father and a ruthless stepmother, Mahua of unparalleled beauty missed her dead mother all the time. There are several songs to that effect in her ballad therefore. Two of these are included in the story:

Hey aaaa sawana-bhadava keyr umdil nadiya ge maiyo-o-o

Maiyo ge bhayavani hey-ey-ey

Tadka-tadkey dhadkey karej-aa-aa mora

Ki humhoon je baar naanhi re-e-e. (Renu 130)

Oh mother the river swells with the waters brought by Bhadon and Sawan

O mother the night is fearsome

The lightening strikes and my heart beats like a drum

As I too am small and young.[12]

While here Mahua pities herself on being sent for errands even in stormy nights because her stepmother does not care for her, in the next song, she curses the moment when she was born only to be separated from her mother forever:

Hoon-un-un-re dainiyan maiyo mori-ee-ee,

Nonva chatai kahey nahi maarali sauri ghar-a-a.

[12] My translation.

Ehi dinwa khatir chhinro dhiya

Tehun posali ki nenu-doodh ugtan.…(Renu 130)

O you witch of a mother mine

Why didn't you kill me by feeding me salt as soon as I was born?

You left your daughter alive to see this day

For this day you raised me with butter, milk and *ubtan.*[13]

Hiraman's ballad of Mahua Ghatwarin is rendered in poetic prose around these two songs. The bottom-line of the legend is that eventually Mahua was sold to a merchant by her stepmother and she jumped into the river from his ship to escape from her ill fate. A servant of the merchant, who fell in love with Mahua on first seeing her, also jumped after her. But he could not catch her as she drowned in the swelling river. At this moment there is beautiful convergence of Mahua's story with that of the solitary Hiraman whose longing for love finds words in Mahua's ballad:

> This is Hiraman's favourite song. While singing Mahua Ghatwarin, he can visualize the river swelling dangerously in Sawan-Bhadon, the dark moonless night and lightening striking from the dense clouds. In that strike of lightening, he gets a glimpse of the virgin Mahua fighting the waves. The speed of the swimming fish increases. He feels that he himself is the merchant's servant. Mahua does not listen to him. Does not even pretend to. Does not even look back once. And he is tired of swimming….
>
> This time it feels as if Mahua has turned herself over. She herself has come in his grip. That he has touched Mahua, found her, his exhaustion is over. His heart, after swimming against the current in the swelling river for

[13] My translation.

> fifteen-twenty years, has found a shore. Tears of happiness do not observe any restrictions. (Renu 131)

Mahua's legend thus becomes Hiraman's own and he sees Heerabai as Mahua in his own story- a Mahua for whom he has been looking incessantly in the waters of life and who has all of a sudden willingly fallen into his embrace. The oft-repeated folktale or ballad becomes part of Hiraman's life in a new way when he recounts it this time. Later, when Heerabai repeats snatches of the song for him, he is dumbfounded: "Such a sharp mind! Just like Mahua Ghatwarin! And with this they reach ForbesGunjaj, their destination. The second part of the story begins here. In this part, the reader is not only given a glimpse of the mela culture but also is introduced to some nuances and songs of the nautanki theatrical form.

Renu follows the nautanki form from the beginning to the end, though in a nutshell, through the characters of Hiraman and his companions Laalmohar, Palatdas, Dhunniram and Laalmohar's servant Lahsanwa. The journey of Rauta Company's nautanki begins with a typical nautanki song used for advertising the 'Gulbadan', the first play to be presented by the company:

> *Teri Baanki adaa par mein khud hoon fida,*
>
> *Teri chaahat ko dilbar bayaan kya karoon!*
>
> *Yahi khwahish hai ki tu mujhko dekha karey*
>
> *Aur dilojaan mein tumko dekha karoon.* (Renu 137)
>
> I'm enticed by your flirtatious looks
>
> How shall I express my yearning for you!
>
> My only desire is that you gaze at me
>
> And I gaze back at you with my heart and soul.[14]

In fact this is the only nautanki song that is presented in some detail in the text. The rest of the nautanki is related in prose, mostly through the medium of the protagonists' response to it. The title of a famous nautanki song is mentioned: "Marey Gaye Gulfaam" (Renu 142) or 'Gulfaam

[14] My translation.

was unfortunate'. The story derives its subtitle from this song as it happens to be Hiraman's favourite and he is shown humming its tune. This song sheds light on Hiraman's own suffering in his relationship with Heerabai. Another song which finds a mere mention, "chiraiya tohnke leke naa jaive narhat ki bajaria" (Renu 142), i.e. 'O bird I wouldn't take you to the market of Narhat'[15], is a joker's song which becomes Lahsanwa's favourite. The story, now nearing completion, chronicles Hiraman's complicated emotions regarding his relationship with Heerabai- he is peeved by people's repeated allegations that she is a whore and he contemplates telling her to leave the company and join a circus instead. Right at that moment, he gets to know that Heerabai is leaving. She is going back to her 'des' or hometown to join back the Mathuramohan Theatre Company. At this point, the parallel between Mahua Ghatwarin and Heerabai, till now felt and voiced only by Hiraman, comes a full circle as Heerabai herself compares her own life with that of poor Mahua's: "You have taken it to heart. Why meeta?...Its because Mahua Ghatwarin has been bought by the merchant guru ji!"[16] (Renu 144) The folk legend of Mahua Ghatwarin becomes part of the lives of the protagonists. This indeed is a fitting end for a story which borrows heavily from the folklore of the region it is based in. Renu weaves a tapestry of song, dance, legends, ballads and proverbs here which gives an insight into the folk rural psyche.

In 1966, ten years after it was written by Renu, 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam' was adapted into a full-length ambitious film by Shailendra. Linda Hutcheon's ideas on adaptation as translation and re-mediation facilitate the reading of the film text of *Teesri Kasam*: "In many cases, because adaptations are to a different medium, they are re-mediations, that is, specifically translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images). This is translation but in a very specific sense: as transmutation or transcoding, that is, as necessarily a recoding into a new set of conventions as well as signs." (Hutcheon 16) *Teesri Kasam* may be read as translation across media because the signs and symbols from the story are lifted as it were, and projected in a different medium here. The film, though re-interpreting, re-arranging and re-detailing the story almost all the time, largely adds a new dimension to the text- the dimension of the visual. The best way to

[15] My translation.

[16] My translation.

understand the film, one feels, is to study it not as an adaptation but as a translation, or better still, an extension of the literary text. One reason behind this proximity between the two 'texts' could be that the Renu, the writer of the short story and Shailendra, the dreamer who thought of transporting it to the screen, shared a close friendship. The film was directed by Basu Bhattacharya and the story and dialogue were written by Renu himself. In fact, Renu was closely involved in the production of the film and he developed a long-standing with Shailendra as a result.

Song and music played a significant role in Renu and Shailendra's friendship. It is believed that Shailendra's composition of the 'Ab ke Baras' song in Bandini (1963) was influenced by a composition he heard from Renu's sister, around the same theme of a woman's longing for her natal home. In one of his autobiographical essays, Renu recounted the particulars of his friendship with Shailendra where he talks about one song in particular: the first nauṭanki song from his story Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam', 'Teri baanki ada par': "For the past three years, whenever the two of us are extremely happy about something, we sing those very lines from the nautanki in the same way, looking at each other, heart and soul for several minutes. Then we collapse in a roaring laughter."[17] (Yayavar 4: 117)

The film is rearrangement and re-interpretation of events in the short story. The same songs occur in the film but at different places altogether. Renu also makes some drastic changes in the characters of Hiraman and Heerabai. Some characters are introduced too, the main one being Thakur Vikram Singh, Hiraman's rival for Heerabai's attention. Most of the dialogue in the story is retained in the film also. But many big chunks are added to add greater detail to the denouement. The film begins with the song 'Sajan re jhooth mat bolo'. Shailendra expands the lyrics of most of the songs originally mentioned in the story. So is true about this song too. Though both the film and the story begin with the first two vows taken by Hiraman, the treatment of his character is very different in both the texts. While in Renu's story, Hiraman transports black marketed goods many times knowingly before being caught by police finally, in the film version, he is portrayed as being completely unaware of the crime he is committing. So while the story begins with Hiraman's practical wisdom and daring escapades, the film depicts him as an innocent and gullible man whose truthfulness knows no bounds. The film actually

[17] My translation.

begins on note of irony- Hiraman is very critical of lying, cheating and fraud in the song he sings just before being labelled as a thief and criminal. This irony adds to the audience's sympathy for the honest cart-puller.

One reason for the shift in Hiraman's character in the film could be that the mainstream Hindi cinema, of which *Teesri Kasam* was a part, rests precariously even today on the idea of the hero: the protagonist must necessarily be heroic to be accepted by the audience. Also, Raj Kapoor, in lead role here as Hiraman had an established image which had crystallized through his performances in *Awaara* (1951), *Boot Polish* (1954), *Anari* (1959), *Jis desh Mein Ganga Behti hai* (1960), and *Chhalia* (1960)- the image of an innocent for hi age, cheerful even in the face of adversities, vulnerable, and honest man. A violation of this image would have meant the automatic demise for the film. Despite these changes however, the film did not do very well at the box office mainly because of its off-beat storyline and the tragic end marred by cruel separation of Hiraman and Heerabai. One can safely say that back in 1960s the Hindi cinemagoer was not yet ready for folk fantasies like *Teesri Kasam*. Though the film went on to win the National Film Award that year and today it is hailed as a great classic, its commercial failure decimated the finances and career of Shailendra, who died the same year when the film was released.

At the very beginning, Hiraman's Bhauji is also introduced in the film. His family is only alluded to in the story but the film explicitly shows the audience his brother, brother's wife and brother's daughter. Hiraman's bhuaji is presented deliberately as an anti-thesis of Heerabai- she is a village woman who wears her only sari with a 'seedha pallu', whose appearance is unattractive and colourless and whose primary job is to clean the house, cook and feed everybody including the oxen and to worry relentlessly about the welfare of all the family members. Even the assertiveness given to her by Renu in the story where he states that Hiraman is scared of his Bhabhi (122) is taken away from her in the film which presents her as loving but docile. On the other spectrum of the feminine roles stands Heerabai, who dresses and speaks like a typical urban woman, who has a career rather than a family and who, in her own words, has the whole world swooning at her feet, but no real family to call her own. The film also showcases the rural life of Araria district from the very beginning, showing scenes from the village market, harvest in fields, the village square, etc. But the most curious fact about the film, as mentioned earlier, is that despite being set in Araria, Bihar, the language used is Awadhi. Also noteworthy

is a scene in which a Maithili speaker and a Bhojpuri one are made to shut up when they describe film actresses and their maiden experience of watching a film to their fellow customers in a tea shop in the mela. The praises they shower on film actresses are seen by others as an insult to Heerabai who is about to perform in the mela nautanki. To my mind, this is a significant though very short scene. Renu in his story does not explicitly use the dialect spoken in Araria, and somehow, the politics of language and dialect does not foreground itself there. While reading 'Teesri Kasam or Marey Gaye Gulfaam', one is actually reading a story in Hindi which incorporates some folk texts in Awadh and Bhojpuri. In short, the language question does not arise while reading the story. But the film explicitly places itself in a distinct Awadhi milieu linguistically, if not geographically. The difference in comprehensibility of Bhojpuri and Awadhi is foregrounded in this scene. One therefore gets a glimpse into the ideological choices both Renu, as the dialogue writer and Shailendra as the producer and lyricist make to ensure that the film is commercially viable.

The film chronicles most of the means of entertainment available to the rural population of north India in 1960s. From folk-inspired mela, Ramlila, madari ka khela, chhokra naach, nautanki, theatre, ghazal, ballad, and legends to the more popular and commercial circus and films; all the performative media of entertainment most accessible to an average villager are brought into the narrative somewhere or the other. One remarkable fact about all these is that the audience is predominantly male. In fact, Renu cleverly draws one's attention to this when the announcer of the nautanki's advertisement corrects himself by addressing the crowd as "Bhaiyon" (brothers) instead of "bhaiyon aur behenon" (brothers and sisters). He also introduces a sequence in the film, not originally present in the story, in which Hiraman asks Heerabai what she will do in the mela to which she replies- what work is there to do in a mela? He clearly perceives mela to be a space of only entertainment for women. If they go to the mela at all, they do so either to shop or for an outing. What woman would *work* in a mela? Moreover, what work is there to be done by women in a mela? The scene sheds light on the general perception regarding gender roles in North Indian villages.

An extension of the same line of thought is seen in Dhunniram's observation: "But Hiraman bhai, I have heard that prostitutes go into Companies!"[18] (*Teesri Kasam*). This is a classic case of considering all women who operate in the public domain as lacking in character

[18] My translation.

and good-breeding. Heerabai's declaration at the end that Mahua Ghatwarin has been bought by the merchant, stems partly out of the distinct binary which characterizes patriarchal society's approach towards women: she can either be a respectable wife adorning the home or a whore roaming the streets. Though the story does not depict the dilemma of Heerabai clearly, the film spells it out clearly. The company owner and the nautanki cast convinces her that she is valued by Hiraman because in his mind he perceives her as Heera Devi and not as Heera Bai. This difference is not only cruelly stark, but also deeply indicative of the above-mentioned binary. In his screenplay, Nabendu Ghosh elaborates many such angles presented in concise form in the short story.

Another instance where the film becomes an extension/explanation of the story is the scene in which Heerabai rehearses the dialogue of 'Gulbadan or Ishq-e-Gulfaam' in Hiraman's cart:

Kahin bhi koi bhi apna nahi zamane mein
Na ashianey ke bahar na ashianey mein. (*Teesri Kasam*)
Nowhere no-one is mine
Neither outside the home nor inside.[19]

The telling couplet is followed immediately by Hiraman's song 'Sajanwa bairi'. Though in the short story it occurs as part of Hiraman's memories of the famous chhokra naach, its occurrence in the film neatly ties some loose ends. It binds together the loneliness of both Hiraman and Heerabai and provides a rationale for their friendship and camaraderie. The lyrics of the song also point distinctly towards the respective sufferings of the two protagonists.

Sajanwa bairi ho gaye hamaar
Chithiya ho toh har koi baanchey, bhaag na baanchey koi
Karamwa bairi ho gaye hamaar
Jaye basey pardes sajanwa sautan ke bharmaye
Na sandes na koi khabariya, rut aaye, rut jaaye
Doob gaye hum beech bhanwar mein, karkey sola paar,
O Sajanwa bairi ho gaye hamaar
Sooni sej, goud mori sooni, maram na janey koi,
Chhatpat tadpey preet bechari, mamta aansu roye

[19] My translation.

Na koin iss paar humara, noa koi uss paar,
Sajanwa bairi ho gaye hamaar. (*Teesri Kasam*)
My beloved is cross with me! My beloved…!

A letter is read by all, but who can read the fate

My fate is cross with me.
Swayed by the *sautan* my beloved lives away abroad
Neither a letter, nor a message does he send,
Seasons come and go.
I drowned mid-current after walking over embers.
O my beloved is cross with me.
Bare is the bed, and empty my womb,
The meaning of it all is known to none.
Restless is my ill-fated love for him,
The mother in me sheds tears
No one is mine on this side of the churning river
And none on that
O my beloved is cross with me.[20]

The sentiments infused into the folk song by Shailendra voice the predicament of both Hiraman and Heerabai. Extracted from the Bidesiya folk song tradition, the song works extremely well as a lament of loneliness. Viyog, the reigning emotion of this song is heightened by the couplet recited by Heerabai just before the beginning of the song. The cinematography of the song, also, highlights the solitariness of the journey undertaken by Hiraman and Heerabai: a lone bullock cart plying on a long and winding lonely path is symptomatic of the journey of life which is perforce lonely for people like Hiraman and Heerabai, who have no family, no love in their lives, and nothing to hold on to other than their respective professions. One could argue that the film offers a much mature and well-thought out denouement for the growing warmth between the two protagonists; they not only have similar names but their fates are similar too.

The short story portrays in distinct colours the attraction that Hiraman feels for Heerabai. He is, in fact, already testing the waters when he relates the tale of Naamnagar. But Heerabai's

[20] My translation.

attraction for Hiraman is not made explicitly clear in the short story. On the contrary, the acerbic tone adopted by Renu in describing some of his fantasies often leads one to believe that Hiraman's love for Heerabai is completely one-sided and fantastical. But the film conveys the perspectives of both the protagonists. Moreover, through the physical intimacy solicited by her while Hiraman watches Laila-Majnu along with her from the wings and the exchange, at the end, between Heerabai and all the employees of the company, the audience gets a clear indication that Heerabai had all plans to quit acting and settle down with Hiraman. Her desires and intentions are drawn into a balance against the reality of her life only when Vikram Singh tries to rape her. Her insistence that she can only play the part of Laila and not become Laila in real life also reveals her emotions regarding Hiraman. In fact, if at all the film denies a voice to Hiraman's love for Heerabai. Between themselves, Renu and Shailendra rework the story considerably not just to provide greater clarity about the turn of events but also to modify the plot to suit the demands of the audience; in a film some things need to be stated outright.

The next song in the film is "Duniya bananewaley". Hiraman tells Heerabai that the song is about Mahua Ghatwarin. While the Naamnagar legend is given a miss in the film completely, the rustic folk songs of Mahua Ghatwarin in the short story are converted into a mainstream Bollywood song rendered by Mukesh in Khari Boli. Once again, one witnesses the screenplay compromising on the folk value of the text. The song is interspersed with the legend of Mahua. The film version of the legend is quite different. Here Mahua falls in love with a traveler who comes to her ghat. When the village gets to know of their love, Mahua's stepmother sells her to a merchant out of anger and spite. The legend is made quite straightforward in the film and the focus is more on the song than on the legend.

Once the duo reaches the mela, however, a completely new folk song is added to the film: "Chalat Musafir". This traveler's song is a typical folk song with all its elements of repetition and improvisation. It is deeply rooted in the Awadhi folk culture and the rendering is also as close to a real life folk song as possible. The rich use of Harmonium and Dholak, the two chief musical instruments used generally while singing folk songs, makes the experience of the song delectable. The pattern followed in the song is that of repetition in every stanza with minor changes every time. For instance, if we look at all the three stanzas,

Chalat musfir moh liya re pinjade wali muniya.
Ud-ud baithi ***halwaiya*** *dukaniya,*

Arrey, ***barfi*** *ke sab ras le liya re pinjade wali muniya.*
Chalat musfir moh liya re pinjade wali muniya.
Ud-ud baithi ***bajajwa*** *dukaniya,*
Arrey, ***kapda*** *ke sab ras le liya re pinjade wali muniya.*
Chalat musfir moh liya re pinjade wali muniya.
Ud-ud baithi ***panvadiya*** *dukaniya,*
Arrey, ***beeda*** *ke sab ras le liya re pinjade wali muniya.*
Chalat musfir moh liya re pinjade wali muniya. (*Teesri Kasam*)

- the basic structure of the stanza remains the same throughout, except for the change in one word (indicated here in bold). The profession changes in every stanza: sweets shop-owner in first stanza, cloth-seller in the second, and paan-seller in the last one. And accordingly, the target of the bird's passion also changes: it is barfi or sweets in the first stanza of the song, cloth in the second, and beeda or paan in the last. This is, in fact, the formulaic structure followed by most folk songs in Awadhi and even elsewhere mainly because this structure is easy to remember and also re-member. In this song, one can keep adding stanzas till the list of professions gets exhausted.

Since the source of all folklore is essentially oral, the like examples of the afore-mentioned structures survive the test of time mainly due to their simplicity and flexibility. All one needs to memorize is the pattern in which lines are supposed to recur. Another famous example, which comes to one's mind while talking of this particular pattern, is "Inhi Logon Ne Le Leenha Dupatta Mera" from *Pakeezah,* which also waltzes through a list of professions and the actions associated with them which affect the singer:

Inhi logon ne, inhi logon ne, inhi logon ne le leenha dupatta mera
Hamri na mano, ***bajajwa*** *se poochho,*
Jisne ***asharfi gaj deenha*** *dupatta mera.*
Hamri na mano ***rangrejwa*** *se poochho,*
Jisne ***gulaabi rang deenha*** *dupatta mera.*
Hamri na mano, ***sipahiya*** *se poochho,*
Jisne ***bajariya mein chheena*** *dupatta mera.*

Though this song, with its emphasis on phrases and not mere words in the stanzas is a little more complicated than "Chalat Musafir", the pattern of repetition and the scope for elaboration are the same. But "Chalat Musafir" is the only song in the film which sticks to this pattern of repetition at all. The rest of the songs, as noted also in the case of "Sajanwa bairi", follow a completely different structure wherein only the refrain is borrowed from an extant folk song, not the stanzas. This is also true of "Paan Khaye Saiyan Hamaro" song, which has a folkloric refrain but the stanzas are a complicated mesh of images in Khari Boli, which cannot be transmitted orally easily.

The film includes "Marey Gaye Gulfaam", the song which lends the story its subtitle, in an elaborated form. As a part of the nautanki performance, the song conveys a narrative about the sufferings of Gulfaam, the protagonist of the nautanki. The importance of the song in the film is based on its timing. It takes place when Hiraman is disillusioned by Heerabai's response to his protective attitude towards her. He does not attend the nautanki that day and the tragic mood of the song suits the situation.

One remarkable thing which happens in the film is the extensive coverage of the nautanki. While the story pays greater attention to the journey and wraps up the nautanki part in a jiffy, the film pays equal attention to both the parts of the story. The nautanki-half of the film has been developed with five full-fledged songs: "Paan Khaye Saiyan Hamaro", "Marey Gaye Gulfaam", "Hai Mohabbat Bahut Kuchh Hi", "Haye Gajab Kahin Tara Toota" and "Aa Aa Bhi Jaa". These songs, also, carry forward the narrative while also being indicative of the mood of the protagonists. The audience does not get to see the nautanki at all. In the name of nautanki, we have only these five songs and the ambience created backstage by the nautanki crew. But it is also true that these songs have been composed keeping in mind the milieu of nautanki- the costumes, gestures, dance, instruments, musical notes, and even the style of singing is indeed very nautanki-like. Though all these songs do not follow any folksy pattern, they definitely succeed in creating a folksy ambience at least. The only song that follows the repetitive pattern mentioned above is "Haye Gazab Kahin Tara Toota". Though its structure is again much more complex than "Chalat musafir", it falls very much within the conventions of the Awadhi folk song:

Haye ghazab kahin tara toota,
Loota re loota mere saiyan ne loota.

*Pehela tara **atariya** pe toota,*
Danto tale mainne daba agoontha,
*Loota re loota **savariyan** ne loota.*
Haye ghazab kahin tara toota.
*Doosra tara **bariya** mein toota,*
Dekha hai sabane mera daman chhoota,
*Loota re loota **sipahiya** ne loota.*
Haye ghazab kahin tara toota.
*Teesra tara **phulbagiya** mein toota,*
Phoolon se poochhe koi, hai kaun jhootha,
*Loota re loota **darogwa** ne loota.*
Haye ghazab kahin tara toota. (*Teesri Kasam*)

As is evident, the second line of every stanza is totally different. But the pattern of repetition makes it easy to memorize. The folk song structure is kept intact in this particular song by Shailendra.

The music of the film was highly successful though the film itself performed less than average on the box office. Renu's conceptualization of the folk space reached some kind of fruition with the film reaching out to a large audience ultimately through its music and later, with its inclusion in the Hindi cinema classics. One can say that the film acted as a vehicle for the folk elements incorporated by Renu in the short story which it conveyed to the realm of the popular. This transition is of great importance as the folk is a localized space while the popular, due to its collusion or association with mass media, has a far bigger mass base.

A similar transition from folk to text to the realm of the popular is seen in case of Keshav Prasad Mishra's novel *Kohbar ki Shart.* It is not a well-known fact that two of the all-time biggest Hindi super-hit films: *Nadiya ke Paar* and *Hum Apke Hain Koun* were based on this rather obscure and extremely tragic Hindi novel. Though the fact that both these films are based on the same literary text is not a very widely known one, it is fairly common knowledge that the later film is based on the earlier one. This commonplace knowledge springs from the fact that both the films were produced under the same banner, Rajshri Pictures. Both the films acknowledge Keshav Prasad Mishra for the story. While in *Nadiya ke Paar* gives him the credit for the story, *Hum Apke Hain Koun* acknowledges him for the 'story idea'. But it is remarkable

that both the films are not portrayed as adaptations. The credits do not state that the story comes from Mishra's novel. One can say that both the films seek for themselves not the status of adaptation but that of an original screenplay with an indebtedness to a particular individual for the story. Also remarkable is the fact that the later film makes no mention of its predecessor. As a reader of cultural texts, one assumes that the 1982 film must have served as a reference text for the 1994 film. But *Hum Apke Hain Koun* begins as if with a new clean slate. The earlier film is not even mentioned anywhere. Such a lapse may be seen as strategic and also justifiable because the same production house produced both the films and, therefore, the political correctness one expects around cases involving artistic credit may not be required here. Yet one can be sure of one thing: adaptation into two majorly successful films did not do much for the novel itself, which remains obscured even today.

Kohbar ki Shart, as the name suggests clearly deals with a chain of events which springs out of a wedding ceremony. Kohbar is the room to which the newly-wed couple is taken immediately after the wedding for worship and playful teasing and games initiated by the unwed sisters of the bride. The principle characters in the novel, brothers Omkar and Chandan, and sisters Rupa and Gunjaja, are first seen together in this kohbar after the marriage of Omkar with Rupa. In the midst of naughty repartee, Chadan is defeated in a game by Gunjaja. When he asks what he should do as a part of the bet, Gunjaja leaves it for later. She realizes that she has fallen in love with Chandan. So she saves her victory and promises to redeem her win some other time. This, in short, is 'Kohbar ki shart'. The fact that she never really gets to redeem that victory forms the ironic and tragic bedrock of the story.

The novel is based in the Balia district of Uttar Pradesh. Omkar and his brother Chandan live with their uncle, Tiwari Kaka, in Balihaar village. Rupa and Gunjaja live with their father, who is the Vaidya of the entire region, in Chaubey Chhapra village. The two villages are separated by the Sona river. Once when Kaka falls sick, Chandan goes to Chaubey Chhapra to get Vaidyaji to Balihaar. He meets Gunja there first. Vaidyaji cures Kaka and instead of his fees, asks for Omkar's hand in marriage for Rupa, his elder daughter. Kaka readily agrees and the marriage taks place soon after. When Rupa gets pregnant, due the lack of any women in Omkar's family, Gunja is called to Balihaar to help her in the household chores. The love story of Chandan and Gunja unfolds now and by the time Rupa's son is born and she recovers, she also gets to know of their love for each other. She shares this information with her father. But around

this time, Kaka dies a heroic death, trying to save a field, which belongs to the whole village from the clutches of the new and affluent landlord from the next village. Due to his death, Rupa does not disclose the happy news of Chandan's affair with Gunja to Omkar. She sends Gunja back to Chaubey Chhapra. She also tells her father, who is impatient to get Gunja also married soon, to wait for the appropriate time. But in the middle, she herself dies of a dangerous miscarriage. Omkar is shattered by this misfortune and he loses all interest in farming and family. Gunja becomes Ramu's (Rupa's son) foster mother.

After observing a minimal period of mourning and seeing Omkar and Chandan suffering due the lack of a woman in the house, Gunja's father proposes that Omkar should marry again. After some deliberation, Omkar agrees, basically, for the sake of his son. Then, in his hurry to get rid of the burden of an unmarried daughter and also to save an expensive wedding and dowry, Vaidyaji proposes Gunja's name for him. Chandan is shocked to hear this. His shock and disbelief deepens when Omkar agrees to the match. Indebted to his elder brother who brought him up like a mother would have, Chandan also gives his consent to the match. Gunja, as a girl has no say in the matter of her own matrimony. Thus, she comes to Balihaar again, not as Chandan's wife but as his Bhauji (Bhabhi). Chandan starts avoiding the house completely. He starts staying the nights in the fields. He even develops a carnal relationship with Baala, a pretty girl from a lower caste. But an attack of small pox on the village brings an end to this affair too: Baala loses her beauty and one eye to small pox. Even Omkar dies in the sweep of the disease. Chandan and Gunja are left alone to care for each other. Chandan's refusal to get married and Gunja's worry that society may censure them for staying in the same house without getting Chandan married respectably to someone, cause great consternation. Gunja also falls sick and eventually perishes. Chandan is left alone to care for Ramu. Vaidyaji loses both his daughters and Omkar. The entire family is decimated because of the mistake that Gunja's marriage to Omkar was.

Kohbar ki Shart is replete with folk songs. The novel chronicles the events in the lives of its characters through songs, legends, and rural customs. The rural culture of singing folk songs and holding singers in high esteem is celebrated even in the novel:

> Gunja had a melodious voice, and she also knew numerous songs. So, every afternoon, girls from the neighbourhood would gather in the courtyard where the grinding stone was

> kept. If there was no work to be done at home, they would take her to their own homes. Jhoomer, Kajri, Biah, Mado, Sanjha, Prabhati, Gunja would start singing whatever came to her mind whenever. Neighbours developed such love for her that soon, it seemed Gunja was a daughter of Balihaar only.[21] (Mishra 48)

This accomplishment of Gunja is celebrated in both the films also. Gunja in *Nadiya ke Paar* and Nisha in *Hum Apke Hain Koun* are also portrayed as excellent singers and dancers. The author introduces folk tunes into the narrative for the first time at the time of Holi in Balihaar. Two types of Holi songs are highlighted in the novel: those sung by men and then those sung by women. The "Jogira" song, sung by men is part of a long folk tradition of commenting on contemporaneous issues by inserting them into a set pattern of refrain, tune, and rhythm. The jogira song in this novel does not, however, have any political content. Uttima Gond, a forty-five years old man from Balihaar, cross dresses as a woman and dances to the fast beats of the jogira while teasing Kaka:

> *Jogiji, bah jogiji,*
> *Jogiji, dheere-dheere,*
> *Nadi ke teere-teere.*
> *Suno rey Kabir…*
> *Jogiji, bah jogiji…*
> *Jogiji dekhi-suni key*
> *Majey mein aankh muni key*
> *Chali , taak dhinadhin,*
> *Jogiji sarr jogiji!*
> *Jogiji deh chhori key. (Mishra 55)*
> Jogiji, wah jogiji,
> Jogiji slowly-slowly,
> by the riverside,
> O listen Kabir…
> Jogiji, wah jogiji…

[21] My translation.

Jogiji, checks out properly,
Jogiji with closed eyes,
Go on, tak dhinadhin,
Jogiji sarr jogiji!
Jogiji lose yourself.[22]

Though not a complete jogira song, it gives some sense of the musical and dance frenzy it can create. One can get the complete flavour of the jogira song from the one Renu included in his 1954 novel *Maila Aanchal.* Though operating within the context of freedom struggle, the song exhibits the potential of the jogira form to transform itself according to the times. In the garb of the license Holi gives, this song directly attacks the politics of Congress:

Jogira sara-ra-ra
Jogiji taal na tootey
Teen taal par dholak bajey…
Holi hai! Koi bura na maney Holi hai!
Barsa mein gaddhey jab jatey hain bhar,
Baeing hazaron usme kartey hain tarr
Vaisey hi raaj aaj Congress ka hai
Leader baney hain sabhi kal key geedar…jogi ji sarrrr!
Jogi ji, taal na tootey
Jogi ji, teen taal par dholak baajey
Jogi ji, tak dhina dhin!
Charkha kaato, khaddar pehno, rahey haath mein jholi
Din daharey karo dakaiti bol suraji boli…
Jogi ji sarrrr! (Renu, *Maila Aanchal* 125)
Jogira sararara…
Jogi ji don't break the taal,
The dholak plays teen taal,
It's Holi! Don't mind, it's Holi!
When in the rain ditches get choked
Thousands of frogs in them croak

[22] My translation.

Same is the rule of Congress today
Leaders did become ckals born yesterday!
Jogi ji don't break the taal,
The dholak plays teen taal,
Jogi ji tak dhina dhin
Weave the charkha, wear the khaddar, keep a bag in hand
Rob others in broad daylight while praising swaraj for motherland…
Jogi ji sarrrr![23]

While men indulge in such debauchery, women also sing and dance while playing Holi. Mishra recounts two such songs in the novel:

Bam bholey baba, Bam bholey baba,
Kahnwa rangbal paagariya. (Mishra 54)
Bam bholey baba, bam bholey baba,
Where did you get your turban dyed?[24]

The other song of Holi sung by women is "Kamaldal Khol, Tanik Hansi ke Bol" (Mishra 54) or 'open your lips, say something with a smile'. Different folk songs are traditionally sung by both men and women in distinct spaces and groups. In the novel, the jogira song exudes with mirth of the village's menfolk dancing with a cross-dressed man: a palpably sexual situation from which women are absent. The effeminate Uttima Gond behaves like a wife with Kaka who is a bachelor. The scene in the novel is, therefore, ripe with sexual tension. The absence of women not only increases the licentious freedom, but also protects them in a way from the licentiousness arising from the excuse of Holi. In turn, the womenfolk also cross-dress and indulge in fun-filled banter. This separation is observed in *Nadiya ke Paar*, too. But the difference is that the jogira song is common here both for men and women. Though the atmosphere of license is maintained in the jogira song in *Nadiya Ke Paar*, it excludes the sexual angle between Uttima and Kaka. The relevance of the song in the film is further limited to the personal sphere of Chandan and Gunja by introducing a dream sequence in which both the protagonists imagine themselves dancing with each other- something which is not possible in realty due to the strict separation of the male

[23] My translation.
[24] My translation.

and the female spheres in the public domain. The lyrics of the song also lack any folk-pattern. Though written in Awadhi, the song is as good as a poem on love. The jogira element in the song is limited to the refrain and the tune of the song. The dance steps performed by Chandan and Uttima's substitute in the film are also extracted from the folk realm. Ironically, the dream sequence at the end of the song about union is immediately followed by separation as Gunja is sent back to Chaubey Chhapra when Rajjo (a character introduced in the film, who is in love with Chandan and, thus, jealous of Gunja) reproaches Kaka about the violation of social codes due to Gunja's overstaying.

In many ways, the jogira song is the last indication of happy times in the novel. It is followed by a teasing song sung by Chandan's friend Dashrath when they are going to drop Gunja back:

Paakal paakal paanwa
Khiawey gopichaanwa
Piritiya lagawey,
Laa re be-imanwa,
Piritiya lagawey- (Mishra 67)
Ripe paan
Is served by Gopichaand
He is falling in love
Give it here you cheat,
He is falling in love-[25]

This song is sung by Dashrath to tease Chandan and Gunja and bring a smile to their faces as they are sad on this day of their parting after months of togetherness. Quite in contrast to this one is the song Dashrath chooses to sing the next time when the same three people are on the boat and Gunja is going back after Rupa's death to Chaubey Chhapra with Ramu. This time Dashrath chooses a 'Gauna' song, the song of separation sung when a married girl leaves her natal home forever to go with her husband. The naughtiness, the mischief of teasing, and the joy of seeing two young people in love is replaced by the pain of separation:

Kichhu din kheley pavani hum naiharwa,
Saiyan, maangela gawanwa, bala jori sey

[25] My translation.

Naahin mora luri dhang, naahi mora gahanwa
Bala jori sey. (Mishra 87)
I got to play in my father's home only for a few days,
My husband asked them to send me, O dear by force
Neither are my clothes ready, nor my jewels,
O dear by force.[26]

This is, in fact, an example of Nirgun, which portrays the 'journey' of mortal beings after their death. It suits precisely the occasion in the novel. This sequence of suffering and pain is carried forward by the song sung by Gunja's relatives to welcome Omkar's baraat. Gunja's marriage with Omkar blights all the happiness of the family in the novel. This moment in the novel is announced by the ironic song of welcome:

Kahi tu tae beti, chatter chhavaitin.
Naahi ta tanaitin auhar ho,
Kahit tut tae beti, suraj alopitin
Sundar badan na kumhlai ho
Kahey key aey baba, chhattar chhavaibu
Kahey key tanaibey, auhar ho, aaju key diney baba, taharey madauaa
Bahaney sunnar bar, saath ho. (Mishra 97)
Had you asked my daughter, I would have made a canopy
Or erected a tent for you
Had you asked my daughter, I would have hidden the sun so that
Your beauty would not get tanned.
Why would you make a canopy O father,
Why would you erect a tent,
Today, dear father, in your courtyard,
I wed a handsome husband.[27]

[26] My translation.
[27] My translation.

Gunja's father overlooks all her love for Chandan and gets her married to Omkar. The above-mentioned song about a protective and loving father adds to the tragic irony here. The emotions presented in the song are overridden by Vaidyaji himself. The tragedy is deepened at the end of the novel when the author associates Gunja's funeral with the lines from a folk song of Bidai (when a daughter leaves her father's house to be with her husband forever): "Le babul ghar aapno, mein chali piya ke desh" (Mishra 155) or 'here my dear father, take care of your household, I proceed to my husband's home and hearth'.[28] The song symbolically marks her journey to the other world but the undertone is full of sorrow- Gunja's bidai from her father's house ultimately led to her bidai from the world itself.

In many ways both the films based on this novel absolve Vaidyaji for his grave mistake. In both the adaptations, Rupa dies taking away with her the secret knowledge of the affair between Chandan and Gunja in *Nadiya ke Paar* and Prem and Nisha in *Hum Apke Hain Koun.* Her father does not share this knowledge at all and therefore cannot be held responsible for the tragedy that was about to take place. In fact, in both the versions no one can be held squarely responsible for the mix-up. The turn of events just before the wedding reveals the reality of the relationship shared by Gunja and Chandan in the first film and Nisha and Prem in the second. Both the films avoid the tragic events that follow in the novel after Rupa's death. In fact, the films act in a way to enhance the trust of the audience on providence while the novel characterizes Mishra's deep distrust on the same providence. One instance in which this distrust manifests itself is the recounting of the legend of Deepasatti, a local deity who is worshipped with great devotion by Gunja. The legend is narrated by Gunja to Chandan while she is returning to Chaube Chhapra after her first trip to Balihaar:

> Listen Chandan, there used to a Chaube in our village. His daughter was Deepa. It is said that she was fourteen years old at time of her marriage. After the wedding, Deepa saw her husband while she sat in the kohbar- he was forty-five years old. When the kohbar rituals were done, Deepa left the house from the window in the backyard and jumped into Sona river. In the morning her dead body was found stuck in the roots of this tree. Earlier, Sona used to be a

[28] My translation.

> perennial river. But since then, it dries up in the summers. From then onwards, this tree has been known as Deepasatti. It is a custom in this village that every girl on getting married, comes with her husband to worship Deepasatti before leaving for her in-laws home.[29] (Mishra 67)

The legend finds due place in *Nadiya ke Paar* also. What is remarkable is the fact that Deepasatti, known for fulfilling her devotees' desires, does not help the cause of Chandan and Gunja in the novel. Her glory fails her devotees in this instance. The story is transformed in one with a happy-ending in the film where the lovers are united in the end after many twists and turns, thus restoring the audience's faith in folk deities like Deepasatti.

A quick look at the lists of songs in both the film versions sheds light on their indebtedness to the original text. *Nadiya ke Paar* has four songs apart from the jogira song. Of these the first one is a saptapadi based on the Awadhi folk song model.

> *Jab tak poorey nah on phere saat*
> *Ho tab tak dulahin nahi dulaha ki*
> *He tab tak babuni nahi babua ki*
> *Abahin toh babua pehli bhanwar padi hai*
> *Abahin toh pahuna dilli door badi hai*
> *Karni hogi tapasya saari raat*
> *Jab tak poorey nah on phere saat,*
> *Ho tab tak dulahin nahi dulaha ki.*
> *Jaise-jaise bhanwar padey mann angana ko chhode*
> *Ek-ek bhanwar naata anjano se jodey*
> *Sukh ki badri aansoon ki barsaat*
> *Jab tak poorey nah on phere saat*
> *Ho tab tak dulahin nahi dulaha ki.* (*Nadiya ke Paar*)
> Until seven rounds of fire aren't done,
> The bride does not belong to the groom,
> The lady does not belong to the gentleman.
> You have finished only the first round sir!

[29] My translations.

Delhi is still very far dear guest,
You will have to do penance all night
Until seven rounds of fire aren't done,
The bride does not belong to the groom.
As you take the rounds, the heart leaves the father's home
Every round deepens the ties with strangers
Clouds of joy, rain of tears
Until seven rounds of fire aren't done,
The bride does not belong to the groom.[30]

The song goes on thus to describe the progress of rituals from the first to the seventh round of the sacred fire. Though the pattern of this song is much more complex than the typical saptapadi song, its basic structure is the same. The original folk song is transformed to suit the needs of cinema in the 1980s. The song includes a lot of Khari Boli and new proverbs like "dilli door badi hai." The music and the mode of singing (largely solo, with no dholak in sight) also point towards the attempts to address the demands of a fast changing audience of cinema. This audience accepted modernity at a stable pace and yet kept its roots intact in tradition. This balance is maintained in *Nadiya ke Paar.* Even the other two songs with heavy folk influence, "Kaun disa mein leke chala re batohiya" and "Saanchi kahen torey aawan se hamrey angna mein aayi bahaar", while following the original folk song structure closely, have a rich weaving of Khari Boli and liberal pattern of lyrics so as to suit the urban as well as the rural sensibility.

Produced twelve years after *Nadiya ke Paar,*in 1994, *Hum Apke Hain Koun* was a completely different venture. As mentioned earlier, though it was widely known that it was based on Rajshri Productions' earlier major hit film *Nadiya ke Paar*, the fact that it was based on a novel was hardly ever acknowledged. *Hum Apke Hain Koun* was therefore mostly taken as a adaptation of the earlier film. "For the reader, spectator, or listener, adaptation *as adaptation* is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality *if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text.* It is an ongoing dialogical process, as Mikhail Bakhtin would have said, in which we compare the work we already know with the one we are experiencing... Part of both the pleasure and the frustration of experiencing an adaptation is the familiarity bred through repetition and memory." (Hutcheon 21) the audience of both the film must have experienced this pleasure as well as frustration on

[30] My translation.

encountering the similarities as well as numerous changes in the later film. Though the storyline remains the same, the names and professions of all the characters have been changed except that of Pooja. From farmers in the novel, the two brothers, Rajesh and Prem, are made industrialists. Vaidyaji becomes a professor and Gunja transforms into Nisha- a Computer Science student. The bare family of Kaka, Omkar and Chandan is expanded to include Mamaji, Mamiji, their adopted child Rita, the Doctors- their family friends, servants Lallu and Chameli and a pet dog Tuffy. The opening of the film with a cricket match pretty much sets the tone. This is no simple, rural, tragic affair of early 1980s. This is rather a rich and colourful saga of post-liberalization, post-computers, post-modern India. Everything thus perforce blows up. This family does not find entertainment in riddles and phaag. Instead they play cricket and organize kitty parties on Sundays and musical chairs on other holidays. Men wear suits and women wear chiffons, silks and a lot of gold even at home. They have hobbies like painting and music. They enjoy their vacations in hill stations and sometimes pilgrim places. They go to office instead of fields and they ardently worship Krishna and Ram. 'Tradition' is clothed not in folk-tunes or native wisdom or worship of local deities here but in overtly explicit middle-class religiosity curiously absent from the *Kohbar ki Shart* and *Nadiya ke Paar.* Quite distinctly, as Ashis Nandy notes, the times have changed:

> The changes which are not so obvious at the level of aggregate data- for instance the proportion of Indians living in the cities has increased by only 5%, from 20% five decades ago to 25% now- give no clue to the way urban middle-class culture has begun to flex its muscle and dominate the social and political scene today. Such domination would have been unthinkable only two decades ago. For the first time since independence, India has a popular culture which includes not only folk form such as *jatra*, *katha* and *Ramlila* but also a whole range of identifiable products having a number of common characteristics. Within the range fall television serials, commercial Hindi films, cricket (particularly one-day cricket), ghazals and urban *gurus.* (Nandy in Singh 43)

These observations, made in 1992, seem passé now as one-day cricket has been replaced by Twenty-twenty matches, ghazals by Punjabi rap, television serials by reality shows and 'info-tainment'; and as all these activities of the middle-class wrapped in the jazzy wrapper of the exhibitionist facebook culture. Yet, for the early nineties in which the final version of *Kohbar ki Shart* is located, Nandy's observations are absolutely right. The power of the middle class suddenly seems to swell what with the coming of liberalization and the awakening of a vast service sector economy. Agriculture and villages were out of vogue and so were the art forms associated with them.

No wonder then that *Hum Apke Hain Koun,* one of the biggest blockbusters in the history of Hindi cinema, steers away from the rural roots of the story it relates. It is richly strewn with songs, some of which have distant roots in the folk rituals and lore seen in the novel. But the context and treatment of these songs is very modern. Some such songs are "Dhik tana, dhik tana", which though only remotely, resembles the "Hamaar Bhauji" song sung by Chandan in *Nadiya ke Paar*; "Jootey de do paise le lo" song, which refers to the age-old tradition of stealing of the shoes by the groom's sisters-in-law; "Babul jo tumney sikhaya, jo tumse paaya, sajan ghar le chali" which is typical bidai song; "Maen re maen", a young girl's song with distinct roots in folklore; "Didi tera dewar deewana" with roots in Jatakarm songs; and "Lo chali mein", a song with very clear influence of Laavani, a folk music and dance form. These songs, though related to folk songs, do not follow any folk stanza pattern or even repetition or improvisation. One can safely say that they gesture towards folk roots but their context and denouement are only distantly related to folklore. The folk songs thus get so transformed that they are barely recognizable to an untrained and uninitiated eye. However, to those who understand the intricacies of folklore and folk songs, these songs are urban extensions of the rural bearing of the folk. In a way these songs participate in the urban folklore as parts of popular cinema which has a deep impact on the urban psyche- a psyche caught between the two opposite pulls of modernity and tradition. Film like *Hum Apke Hain Koun* at best can be read as seeking to balance these two elements.

Ashis Nandy's stand on the link between folk and popular culture, as explained in his paper 'An Intelligent Critic's Guide to Indian Cinema' sees to explain this psyche:

> There is a sliding scale of audience participation from folk to mass culture. As is well known, folk culture encourages

> bilateral and multilateral modes of communication. The folk artist is never a purely professional entertainer and the audience never a passive receiver of messages…The popular culture of the urban middle class inherited something of this tradition. It too had about it an apparent predictability and repeatability. It, too, spoke the language of continuity. Most of the commercial films still represent something of this popular culture, even though they are increasingly influenced by the principles of mass culture. (Nandy in Singh 47)

As is evident, the popular is in continuity with the folk. But the influx of a practice of mass consumption and homogenization of tradition, both characteristics of mass culture, may be on the verge of engulfing the folk and the popular. Signs of this encroachment are visible in *Hum Apke Hain Koun* also which homogenizes aspects of folklore in a now 'typical' and identifiable Bollywood style. But the fact remains that dangers of mass culture notwithstanding, folklore, through its journey across media, has managed to survive, at times through assertion and at other times through transformation in these times of globalization.

Chapter 5

Travelling 'Tunes': Various Sites of Awadhi Folk Songs

> Their Performance certainly has a tradition, most often a very long tradition, but they, as performers, are part of today's folk. Even their travelling routes have changed and expanded: from villages to towns to metropolitan cities and to international cosmopolitan centres, the so-called folk performers have undertaken journeys through various modes of transport and performed their 'traditional' arts in post-modern situations. They carry in their personal albums photographs of state dignitaries, prime ministers and cultural commissars. How about some artistic recognition now? (Naithani in Charlsey and Kadekar 119-120)

Folk artists and performers have travelled through various 'spaces' and at major 'milestones' on their journey, across the changing and expanding 'travelling routes', have created newer versions, accepted adapted variants, and lived the transformed forms. Unfortunately, their creativity remains unrecognised, while their 'personal albums' get infested with celebrities and dignitaries. Such a situation of status inconsistency, of being important yet not valued, leads to crisis not only in their lives, but also in the legacy that they leave behind. A serious perusal of such a peregrination of folklore across time and space informs our insights about our own age that is embalmed with folk sensibilities in the manner the evolving sedimentary layers cover a river-bed. The reasons for this assertion form the core of the present chapter, with a special focus on folk songs, along with an attempt to throw light on the greater issues beyond the immediate concerns of 'travelling' and transforming folk artists/arts in the twenty-first century. No doubt, the preservation of folklore is indispensable in all societies and cultures, but limiting oneself to this task alone would be to deny the various possible forms that folklore adopts in changing times. Validity to various versions of folk songs is imparted through accepting deviations and digressions present in them. Folklore has a unique quality: the wisdom and knowledge contained in it leads to some

other kind of wisdom and knowledge. It is quite dynamic and, thus, not restricted to the traditional forms of expressions alone. For instance, folk legacy is conspicuous in various forms like jokes, riddles, songs, advertisements, SMS, e-mail chains, netlore, etc. in the shrinking global 'village'. Native wisdom and knowledge, therefore, demands recognition, utilisation, and re-working in the creation of an artistic medium of expression for the 'generation next'. Various sites of convergence of folk sensibilities should, thus, be explored in establishing a new discourse on folklore. This would be a step ahead of compilation and preservation of folklore in general and folk songs in particular.

From the efforts of British folklorists, both officials and missionaries included, to the patriotic attempts of the Indians during the freedom struggle to the post-independence policies of the Indian governments, various attempts were made to preserve and propagate folklore in India. But in all these attempts, the concern was limited either to "save" the vanishing tradition or to utilize it as a tool for showcasing cultural heritage. For the Britishers, it was limited to compilation of folklore from selected areas of strategic relevance, along with attempts to understand the 'mystic ways' of the east. This Orientalist intention was countered by the Indian revolutionaries, who saw folk songs as an apt medium for establishing and upholding cultural nationalism. For the various governments of independent India, folklore was an essential 'ingredient' of the nation-building as it also portrayed distinct colours of cultural heritage worthy of alluring and impressing the rest of the world. As if towing along in jiffy to the government, cinema flooded itself with the resources of joie de vivre in folklore, especially folk songs, suitable for the masses and, thus, ensuring commercial viability. There came a surge of movies rapt with the theme of nation-building, of which many went on to be classics and are loved and watched even today. Such was the potential of folk sensibilities transported to a medium traditionally alien to them. The attempts of the government are, no doubt, commendable so far as intention is considered. But, they become instances of drastic failures in terms of the outcome. There are various reasons behind such failures, among which bureaucratic apathy and rampant corruption are easily recognisable. A narrow misapplication of folklore and the associated policies across different time-periods and completely distinct spaces would have hardly yielded positive results, as revealed in the following observation:

> It was almost a hundred years since the folk performers had first played a role in the construction of the image of India. First, for the image created by the colonial rulers

> at the great European exhibitions from 1851 onwards, then by their opponents, and finally by the independent governments of India. While the British collectors in return offered food, and/or opium, the governments of free India had in an essentially indifferent ways doled out subsidies for the promotion of folk culture through their institutions. They never bothered to check whether or not the subsidies had reached the intended recipients... Most of these centres are now defunct, without ever having made any difference. The most obvious reason cited is lack of resources, but the more likely cause of failure is the complete lack of vision after the centres were established, the bureaucratic ways of 'managing' culture, and apathetic officials." (Naithani in Charsley and Kadekar 115)

This argument throws light on the gaps and lacuna in the strategies and policies adopted for folk forms and folk artists/performers. Ultimately, one feels the need for concerted efforts afresh.

The most accessible form of folklore is perhaps folk song, primarily because of its close proximity to the basic qualities of human speech, i.e. the ability to express joys and sorrows in spontaneous rhythmic language. Folk songs are more accommodating and inclusive of changing 'tastes' and choices in a particular period. These songs reflect the development and progress taking place in the modern society. For instance, various songs, as in many marriage songs, reflect completely new choices among the ones available and accessible to people. For instance, with the coming of electricity, the grandmother of the groom in a marriage song is described as laying down the electricity wires in her house:

> Banna aaye andheri raat, roshani bijulin ki.
>
> Baba unkey bijuli lagavein, aaji lagavein taru. (Awasthi *Hazara* 322)
>
> The groom has come in the dark of the night, in the glow of electric lights.

> His grandpa fixes the bulbs and grandma connects the wires.[1]

At another occasion, groom is anticipated to leave for his marriage in a motor car instead of the traditional palaki, i.e. the palanquin, "Simla ke oonch pahaad, banna mor motor se jaihein" (Awasthi *Hazara* 117) or 'The hills of Shimla are high, my groom will go in a motor car'.[2] The terms like electric wires and motor cars are not stray inclusions in these folk songs, rather they are the expressions of evolving attitudes and desires of common people in the wake of modernity. This, in fact, is the process through which the terms related to modernity and technology make inroads into the folk psyche as well as folk expressions.

These processes of subtle yet valid inclusions do not change the folk material per se. They are the links between past and present so far as the folk songs are concerned. This is the way they uphold the continuity of tradition, bridging the past with the present. A folkloristic interpretation here reveals it as the first phase of the process through which the folk material gets transformed into new versions on its passage or transmission through generations, in which both individuals and communities play their roles as active agents. In the folkloristic terminology, it is the part of "folk process", the term coined and succinctly defined by Charles Seeger as the process through which folk material gets transformed in newer forms on its transmission from one person or place to the other person or place. Folk process, as suggested by Cecil Sharp, involves two more stages: variation and selection. "Variation" involves the creative intervention of individuals who make new changes in folk materials to ensure their 'suitability' to the changed milieu and time, whereas "selection" refers to the actual choices made, by the community situated in the matrix of the very same milieu and time, out of the newer versions of folk songs available. So there is a beginning stage of transformation of folk songs, which is connected to the past, followed by the intermediate stage of variation, involving new and innovative interventions in them, and finally the stage of selection where the folk community chooses the best of the folk songs available and passes them on to the future generations. This is directly related to the commercial utilisation of folk songs, and for that matter of all the other folk forms. We have already seen that the most appealing versions of folk songs are chosen and the ones not so appealing are discarded in a particular age. Such selections and omissions rely on the premise of 'new songs for new generations'. The exploitation of folk songs, guided by the commercial motives alone, leads

[1] My translation.
[2] My translation.

to its transformation into a mass or popular commodity. The results are not so encouraging for the folk tradition and its maintenance and sustenance. The accessibility and viability of folk songs is coupled with the ability to retain its uniqueness even in its transmission from one medium to the other as also its ability to overcome the challenges on account of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and regional differences. Through a careful analysis of folk songs one can identify the changes that have taken place in a particular society, and vice versa. The impetus behind the resilience of folk songs from the threats of its annihilation in an alien "milieu" across ages comes invariably from within. This again is the uniqueness of folk songs that makes them so flexible and so reliable simultaneously. What is required of folklorists today is to understand and utilise such processes through which folk forms get transformed into new and more suitable forms for the future. The attempts made to contextualise folk songs in a particular historical milieu involves treading with dedication on this trajectory of transformation and making sincere efforts in developing methods for its suitability in future. Similar views are advocated while reconciling the folk history of a society with the present challenges, like environmental degradation, it faces:

> These exogenous changes affect the way they conceptualize their past. They use their folk history to come to terms with a new situation marked by both new opportunities and new threats to security, to relate the changes to the perceived values of the past, and also to try to influence the present course of events. It is as if they were trying to cope with and shape reality by ideational devices... members of the community do not simply distort history in order to use the "past" as a corrective for the present, but rather they use the same facts to construct different folk histories at different times. (Schwartz 339)

This alternate history-telling is integral to Awadhi folk songs too. The tendency is generally to narrate history from the point of view of the people who are generally left out when mainstream historical records are documented. One will explore this tendency of folklore later in this chapter.

Folklore in our times operates at various levels: socio, political, religious, economic, psychological, philosophical, professional, literary, and individual. Interestingly, one single entity operates at all these levels simultaneously. This explains all pervasive nature of folk sensibilities around our existence. In spite of such a strong presence of folk in our shared lives, when it comes to changes in folk realm, only the factors associated with the lives of individual folk artists and performers, even that too in a random and selected manner, are scanned through, which takes no cognisance of that entire process through which the folk existence and expressions survive, revive, and regenerate as newer forms of expressions. It is intensely desired, therefore, to observe and elicit those occasions and opportunities through which a holistic approach towards, say documentation of folk songs for instance, future of folklore can be ensured:

> While opportunities to discern examples of folklore arise spontaneously and unexpectedly whenever and wherever human beings interact... They are also generated at predetermined times or predetermined places. (Georges and Jones 14)

In the context of Awadhi folk songs, such 'predetermined times' or 'predetermined places' are many where opportunities to observe, elicit, and document folk songs are limitless, due to their bonding with the life itself. The most effective instances of such opportunities are the thousands of fairs and festivals prevalent in Awadh regions. On such occasions of mass gatherings, one finds the folk songs in their various avatars and that too in plenty. Such fairs, festivals, celebrations, etc. are the suitable sites not only for eliciting and documenting folk songs, but also in inventing new 'touchstones' for analysing the folk aesthetics and developing new methodology for folkloristics in India. There are numerous festivals in Awadh regions: Ramnavami Mela nad Sawan Jhula in Ayodhya, Govind Mela in Azamgarh, Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, Deva Mela in Barabanki, Dadri Mela in Ballia, Kartik Purnima Mela (aka Dev Deepawali) in Varanasi, and Shravan Kshetra Mela in Faizabad are only few names to mention from an exhaustive list. Among all of these, the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad is a cosmic representation of transforming folk world: here folk songs in particular are in excess, amidst the loudspeakers thundering filmy bhajans, while tech-savvy sadhus and affluent babas fiddle with their laptops and land in their personal choppers respectively. Along with them are common folk immersed in their own world, chiming, singing, reviving their world and world-views through the various folk songs they have been learning since

their childhood. Like a grain of sand submerged in the vast expanse of this-worldly desires and the other-worldly renunciations, the folk voices gather at the ganga-ghats all the time in the form of chants and prayers, on the pantoon bridges as the journey songs shared with the unknown fellow-travellers heading to the same destination and sharing the same goals, as the songs of season at various moments of a day, as the work songs while straying from this tent to that in collecting things of daily requirements, and many more such occasions present a folk world in itself. One needs to see these sites as the opportune platforms for synthesis of folk songs.

In focussing on such sites, two concerns emerge as urgent: the long-term concerns of treating such fairs and festivals as cultural centres and the immediate concerns of documenting and analysing folk materials through them. The long-term concerns involve the efforts to make such sites as recurring and consistent phenomenon. The immediate concerns will focus on giving opportunities to various artists and performers to come together at a common 'platform' for further improvisations to enrich their art. Such initiatives are of utmost importance in a society where artists come mostly from low economic backgrounds and are dispersed in unorganised sectors of labour and semi-skilled classes. While interviewing various artists from such 'groups', I met a performer who has played the lead role in Ramlilas for more than three decades, along with singing folk songs regularly at mandali (troupe) performances in different parts of Awadh. At the time I met him, he was working as a cobbler in Allahabad. On being asked what made him to come in this profession, pat comes the reply, "it pays better. Moreover, there are no spaces for such performances. No one bothers any more. With the death of our patron guruji, who himself was a singer and musician and who struggled throughout his life to sustain his mandali, in spite of severe economic crisis, we all entered into the professions suited to ourselves." He seemed no more interested, but when I told him that I knew his guruji very well and his descendents are close friends of mine, he felt excited and narrated how they used to gather at various festivals like Janmasthmi to perform. On my suggestion, 'why don't you use Kumbh Mela as a site for propagating your art forms', he answered with an incomprehensible smile and silence. Answer is yet to be sought.

Amidst all these issues of visibility, continuity and perils of tokenism entering the folk arena, one common thread that runs among all artists/performers is that of their resilience. The difference between mass culture and folk culture, as noted earlier, is that the former derives its raison d'être from the market it targets. When the demand in the market

slackens, the mass cultural artefact also dies. There are ample number of films, songs, advertisements, games, television serials and fashion statements which become a rage suddenly so that everyone wants to jump on their bandwagon and then they die out after whipping up a huge frenzy. Quite in contrast to these artefacts which inspire surges and which follow the trough and crest phases of a wave, folk artefacts have a longer and much more stable life due to the reason that they are rooted in tradition and they have a greater propensity to hold on to the psyche of their subjects than mass cultural artefacts, which mostly skim the surface. The cycle of birth, growth, evolution and demise of a mass culture is a rather quick affair. The crest and the trough are spread over just a few days or months or years. But in case of folk art, the spread is over decades and often even centuries. This aspect of folklore compels one to comprehend the nature of the folk artefacts which reach us through long and eventful journeys. Do these artefacts change on the way? Do they evolve in unexpected ways? Do they also make gestures to the times in which they travel by transforming themselves accordingly? Do they adapt themselves in order to avoid a premature death? And finally, do they transform themselves by disguising- in another tongue/medium/form? Do they metamorphose into a completely different artefact, changing their course of travel altogether? These are some questions which come to one's mind while considering the nature of survival of folklore. One way to seek answers to these questions is to study the dynamic nature folk songs and locate the transformations they go through over an extended period of time. These transformations may be divided into four categories: transformations which are event-centric and therefore respond to particular historical changes; transformations which are geography-centric and arise due to change in geography; transformations which take place due to changing social scenario; and finally, transformations which change the context and definitions of folklore- like the emergence of urban folklore, the incorporation of folk songs in the visual medium of cinema and the written medium of poetry.

History plays a crucial role in transforming most art forms. An art form generally addresses some social issues and, therefore, it is inextricably meshed into its context. Any event which disturbs the equilibrium of this context spawns rapid and fierce response in the field of art. This holds true in case of folklore also. In the last century and a half, all major historical events have incited responses in Awadhi folk songs. The Revolt of 1857 seems like a good starting point not only because it was the first event which aroused patriotic sentiment from most quarters in north India, but also because written records of folk songs in Awadhi

started appearing only in late nineteenth century and most of these records hail the revolt as the first moment of awakening of the folk psyche against the oppressive colonial rule. “In Oudh, which was a storm centre of the Revolt, the *taluqdars* lost all their power and privileges. About 21,000 *taluqdars* whose estates were confiscated suddenly found themselves without a source of income, ‘unable to work, ashamed to beg, condemned to penury.’ These dispossessed *taluqdars* smarting under the humiliation heaped on them, seized the opportunity presented by the Sepoy Revolt to oppose the British and regain what they had lost.” (Chandra 36) A revolt which had a large mass base, therefore, was bound to enter the folklore of the region resoundingly. The reason behind the popularity of the Revolt in Awadh, or Oudh as it was called by the British, was greater than the penury of the *taluqdars*. There was more to the anger of the people of Awadh:

> What was Oudh like on the eve of 1857? Gubbins who was the Revenue Commissioner of Oudh put the situation in these words. ‘The greedy and rapacious Government official could and did inflict infinite injury on the villagers, by enhancing to an exorbitant the amount for land-revenue. Possessed of the most superior natural resources, I have never met with such evidence of general poverty as in Oudh. Miserable and starved cattle, unable to drag the wretched implements of husbandry in use, squalid and deserted villages, ruined wells and naked and starved peasantry are sufficiently the evidence of the wretchedness which prevails’... A contemporary British chronicler Cave Brown wrote, ‘Oudh has been the focus of a rebellion, deeper and more desperate because it was essentially popular.’ (Joshi 18)

This wretchedness of their existence prompted the people of Oudh to revolt against the oppressive revenue regime. The general public of Oudh bunched behind some popular leaders from different areas. The people of and around Lucknow followed as their leader, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and later his wife, Begum Hazrat Mahal. The following folk song, composed by Raghunath Kunwar whose name appears in it towards the end, and tracing the

colonial geography of Lucknow, expresses people's grief for their deposed Nawab and courageous Begum who paid heavily for participating in the revolt:

O Ram!

Save us from this calamity.

When will my lord the king

Return to our land.

Their first halt was at

Kanpur

And the second at Banaras

The third was at Calcutta

O the Begums fled to the hills.

Bullets fly in Alam Bagh

And the cannons roar in

Machchi Bhawan.

And swords are drawn

In Baillie Guard

It is all dark

with the arrows.

Outside the soldiers are

all crying

The Kotwal weeps

At the gate.

And the Begums weep

In the palaces-

With their hair dishevelled

And hanging loose.

Guns are fired from

The artillery base.

And elephants are let loose

From the elephants' yard.

And the horses trot off from their satbles.

And Oh, our comrades rush off

From their quarters.

In Kaiser Bagh the Begums cry

With their hair dishevelled

And hanging loose.

Said Raghunath Kunwar,

The Firangi's anger has turned

Our palace into a place of exile. (Joshi 31)

While this folk song is about loss and grief of those who lost much in the Revolt, another song sings the praises of Rana Bahadur, a brave *taluqdar* who refused to be bribed by the

British and continued to fight them. It is a “very good documentary evidence of how the thought of the people of Oudh developed from what it was to what it became through the experience of 1857-58 Revolt.” (Joshi 36)

Sepoys of Rana Bahadur in Oudh, O Ram!

Led what a wild storm!

Over and over again in his overtures thus

Did the Lat implore: “Oh, come, Brother Rana, join us.”

Martial honours from London

I’ll get you in its lieu,

A Suba in Oudh, I’ll carve out, and place it under you!

But to all such messages wrote the Rana in reply:

“Don’t be too clever with me! Oh Lat, don’t you try!

As long as I breathe, my only resolve you must know

Is to dig at your foundations and throw You out!”

The Zamindars all unite and make

The Angrez before them tremble and shake

Without their unity they would fall one by one

And the fortress of their strength will forever be gone. (Joshi 37)

The ‘Lat’ mentioned in the song is the revenue officer known commonly in Awadhi as ‘Lat Sahib’. Rana Bahadur’s bravery must have sounded extremely impressive to the singers and the listeners as in those days, it was no mean task to reply back to a personnel as powerful as the ‘Lat Sahib’.

Apart from such songs which chronicle one or two aspects of the Revolt, there are ballads also which sing praises of many local heroes who do not find mention in history books. In recording their bravery, the folk song acts as alternate historiography worth studying and analysing. One such ballad, popular in the Gonda district of Uttar Pradesh, records the bravery and courage of Raja Devibaksh Singh:

Raja bakhanon main Gonda ke debibakas mahraj rahey,

Asi chaar chourasi kos ma, jehikey danka baaj rahey.

Gonda te paati gaye Jhansi, Jhansi ke raja Ramlala,

Saath humara deejo raja, hamrey raaj ma chor hala.

Kahaun-kahaun ka chalain saariaan, kahaun-kahaun chaligey haathi,

Des-des aur gaon-gaon ka raja likhi bhejen paati.

Yakdam te dhaavan pahunchigay, manau yakeen hai,

Gonda nagar te Jhansi bhaiva, maijil teen hai.

Gonda nagar te paltan chaligai, Lamti kahe lukaay rahe,

Tambu gadigay tambu uppar, tanbu-tanbu chhaye rahe.

Jaai fauj Lamhi ma pahunchi, maar-maar didiyaay rahey,

Pukka yak-yam mann kai gola, saancha maha dharaay rahe.

Fauj ke maalik Maan Singh au taup kai Puraiya,

Daagai tope daiu uss garjai, phaati kagaara naiya.

Hajjaran gora bahi gaye, chillaney bappa daiya,

Angrezan ki memain bolin, dhani dhani Raja bhaiya.

Bhagi chalo billaiti sahib, hiyaan paar na paiya.

Bhaiya, parmesur ke lambe haath. (Awasthi *Awadhi Lok Geeton ke* 146)

I sing the praise of Maharaj Devibaksh Singh of Gonda,

Whose power extends to four times eighty four miles.

A letter reached Jhansi, the king of Jhansi was a blessed child,

Lend us support Maharaj, a thief has entered our kingdom.

Camels went in some directions, and elephants in others,

The king sent messages to every kingdom and every villages.

Of a sudden, messengers reached, believe me,

From Gonda city to Jhansi, it's a three day trip.

An army started from Gonda and hid itself in Lamti,

Tents were erected as if on top of each other, tents were there all over.

When the army reached Lamahi, there noise of 'Kill them, kill them',

Cannon balls weighing a 'mann' each were being moulded there.

The army was led by Maan Singh and the cannon by Puraiya,

The cannon fired by him roared like angry Gods ready to tear the riverside.

Thousands of ‘Goras’ drowned in the river screaming for their lives,

The English ladies exclaimed ‘hail to the king Raja Bhaiya!

Imploring their husbands to head back to ‘vilayat’, for Gonda was too much for them.

Brother, God’s hands are long and reach everywhere.[3]

As is evident from this simple yet impressive ballad, the impulse to sing praises of those who openly revolted against the all-powerful British regime was very strong among the common people who suffered the most under colonial oppression. The courage of these heroes was expressed in hyperbolic terms often on the lines of poetry of Veer Rasa or heroism. Also remarkable is the fact that the ballad records the history of a *Taluqdar* who held on to his anti-British attitude till the end. It is believed that finally when the Government raised the revenue rates to an unprecedented high to punish the people of Gonda for participating in the Revolt, Raja Devibaksh Singh sold his estate and abandoned Gonda. Barring the details of his victory and the killing of ‘thousands’ of Britishers the song presents a picture which could easily have been real.

Another part of the freedom struggle majorly covered by folk songs is the Gandhian phase. There are ample number of songs which praise the concepts of Swadeshi and Swaraj and which describe the Gandhian doctrine:

Khadi ke chunaria rang de

Chhapedar re rangrezba,

Bahut dinan se laagal ba

Mann hamar re rangrezba.

Kahin pe chhapo Gandhi mahatma,

Charkha mast chalatey hain.

Kahin pe chhapo veer Jamahir,

[3] My translation.

Jail ke bheetar jate hain.

Anchra pe chhapo jhanda teranga,

Baanka leherdar re rangrazba.

(Renu *Maila Aanchal* 228)

Dye my khadi chunari

Colourful O dyer,

Since many days I've been

Wanting one O dyer.

In some places print Mahatma Gandhi,

Spinning khadi on the charkha.

In some places print brave Jamahir,

Going into the

prison.

On the aanchal print the tricolour flag,

Handsome and wavy O dyer.[4]

This song conveys many messages at the same time: it sings praise of khadi; encourages women to wear khadi and not dismiss it as a coarse fabric; it also encourages them to take part in the freedom struggle; and finally, it instils a sense of respect for khadi, Swaraj and leaders like Gandhi and Nehru in the hearts of the listeners and singers. Many songs also describe 15th of August, 1947, the day India became independent:

Kathi par chadhi aayin Bharathmata,

Kathi chadhi suraaj,

Kathi par chadhi aaye beer Jamahir

[4] My translation.

Kathi par Gandhi mahraj!

Haathi chadhi aayin Bharathmata.

Doli ma baithi suraaj! Chalo sakhi dekhan ko.

Ghoda chadhi aaye beer Jamahir,

Paidal Gandhi mahraj, chalo sakhi dekhan ko. (Renu *Maila Aanchal* 224)

How did by Bharathmata come?

And how did Suraaj arrive?

How did brave Jamahir come?

And how did Gandhi maharaj arrive?

Bharathmata came on an elephant.

And Suraaj came in a palanquin! Friend let's go and see.

Brave Jamahir came mounted on a horse,

Gandhi Maharaj did walk, friend let's go and see.[5]

Another example of a song of independence follows. The song lays emphasis on reform and Hindu-Muslim unity.

Hum bharatvasi, paye suraaj sahi re sahi,

Miley Gandhi Jawahir, eik baat kahi re kahi.

Sab katahu charakhwa, sukh kar mool yahi re yahi,

Chhodo kapda bidesi, khaddar lehu gahi re gahi.

[5] My translation.

Chhodo phuhad gari, Lala Bhawani kai baat sahi re sahi,

Sundar charkha chalawo, ab ghar-bar sabhi re sabhi.

Pahirao khaddar motiya, sunao nar-nari sabhi re sabhi,

Pyare Hindu-Musalmaan, aapus mein meil chahi re chahi. (Awasthi *Hazara* 335)

We the people of India got Swaraj deservedly.

If I meet Gandhi and Jawahar, I'd tell them just one thing,

Charkha everywhere- this motto is the root of all happiness.

Abandon foreign cloth, wear only khadi,

Abandon vulgar abuses, the right thing says Lal Bhawani.

The beautiful charkha should spin in every household,

Wear the coarse khadi, listen all you men and women,

Hindus and Musalman, all are good and unity is the need of the hour.[6]

Apart from these patriotic songs celebrating the independence of India, there others too which indicate the awareness of the people about events like the great Bengal Famine of 1942-43:

Bar julum kailak akalwa re

Bangal mulukwa mein

Chaar karod aadmi maral. (Renu *Maila Aanchal* 177)

Great havoc has the Famine wrecked

[6] My translation.

In the state of Bengal,

Where four crore people have died.[7]

Some folk songs even seek to quell the sad and violent memories of the Partition:

Arrey, chamke mandirwa mein chaand

Masjidwa mein bansi baje!

Mili rahu Hindu-Musalman

Maan-apmaan tajo! (Renu *Maila Aanchal* 232)

Arrey, the auspicious moon shines over the temple

The flute plays in the mosque!

Stay together Hindus and Musalmans

Forgetting your ego![8]

A diversion into the Awadhi folklore of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh is apt here. The Awadhi dialect belongs as much to the Muslim populace of Awadh as it does to the Hindus. Though in popular representation of Awadh, this aspect is mostly conveyed by the glorification of the famous courtesan culture of Awadh, in truth, Muslim folklore in Awadhi is an area in itself worth studying in detail. With the advent of the Nawabi rule in Awadh, references to Shia and Sufi religious observances, rituals and ideas seeped into th existinf framework of Awadhi folk songs. In his book *Vanishing Culture of Lucknow* (1990), Amir Hasan states:

> Avadh being the land of Rama, its folk songs were naturally rich in Hindu mythology revolving round the characters from the *Ramayana.* Krishna-Gopi themes too occupied an important place in the folk songs of Avadh...Their most pronounced impact was on Muslim oral literature in general and folk songs in particular. Not only were composed many new folk songs based on

[7] My translation.
[8] My translation.

> Muslim religious allusions on the analogy of hindu mythology but many old folk songs were redrafted to suit Muslim tastes and religious needs. A large number of Persian and Arabic words found their way into these songs. Out of these also arose a number of songs which were sung by Hindus and Muslims alike on festive occasions. (141)

This syncretism of Islam and Hinduism is best illustrated in the following song:

> Sitting together, are talking nanad and bhauji
>
> "If you are blessed with a son bhauji, a pair of kangans, I'll have".
>
> They had a bath and side by side they squatted
>
> They invoked Allah, they invoked the Sun,
>
> They touched the feet of the Sun
>
> "O'God, bless her with a son
>
> For a pair of kangans I'll get." (Hasan 143)

The following 'nauha', a sub-genre of Muslim Awadhi folk songs describing the battle of Qarbala, is illustrative of their cadence:

> Jab joojhan ko gaye Kasim, dal maar ke sagro bhagaye diyo,
>
> Pag pachhe dharo na jara hat ke
>
> Talwaran se tan choor bhayo aur paag ke pench girey kat ke
>
> Gorey much pe lehrawat hain sab log kahen sehra latke
>
> Jyon sawan mein jhad laagey- teeran ki bauchhar

Bhuja bali chin-chhin girain, mahabali ke yaar. (Haider 217)

When Kasim reached to scene of fight, the gang was beaten away.

They did not step back even an inch.

Their bodies were slashed by swords, and their turbans opened up

Hanging on the fair faces, like the groom's *sehra* , people say,

The way rain pours in sawan- arrows poured in the battlefield.

Strongest of men, the friends of Hazrat Ali, were dropping dead every moment.[9]

Such folk songs add to the cultural matrix of Awadhi folklore as they reflect not just the diversity in the tradition but also the fact that cultural diffusion across religious lines has given rise to a unique feature of syncretism in these songs.

Then there are folk songs related to nation-building also. 1950s and 1960s were replete with cultural references to the process of building a strong, honest, truthful and truly democratic nation. Even the cinema of these two decades had numerous allusions to this process. Films like *Mother India* and *Naya Daur*, both of which were released in 1957, commented strongly on the issue. *Naya Daur* gave India one of its most popular patriotic songs- 'Ye desh hai veer jawanon ka' which is heard even today in barat processions. Another song from *Sikandar-e-Azam* (1965), 'Jahan daal daal par sone ki chidiya karti hai basera' also left a permanent imprint on the north Indian psyche. Then came the patriotic film *Shaheed* (1965) which harked back at the events of 1923 when Bhagat Singh was executed. These songs and films prepared the popular psyche for a disciplined and industrious role in the process of making India prosperous. They also sought to instil in their viewers a sense of

[9] My translation.

self-confidence. For instance, the Awadhi rural context of *Mother India* with all its songs submerged in the Awadhi folk culture, acted as a fillip for common people to relate to Green Revolution, to the high ideals of honesty and morality expected of them in the exhausting process of constructing India, literally. A similar impulse is seen in folk songs also:

Bharat phin se huihai soney kai suganwa,

Watanwa phin se cham-cham chamke na.

Gaon-gaon ma sadak banati ba, gawane-gawane madarsa.

Sahi azadi aawai ma ab, nahi tanikau arsa,

Jab kisaan ke ghar hoihain raja ke bhawanwa,

Watanwa phin se cham-cham chamke na.

Phin ee Bharat ke aangan ma bahe doodh kai dhara,

Sukh se jeevan beeti, kartey 'Naval' bayanwa,

Watanwa phin se cham-cham chamke na. (Awasthi *Hazara* 144)

Bharat will become a golden bird once again,

The country will shine once again.

In every village, roads are being laid,

In every hamlet schools are being made,

Not much time is left now in the coming of true freedom,

When the peasants' huts will turn into Raja's palaces.

The country will shine once again.

Once again, in the courtyard of Bharat, rivers of milk will flow,

Says poet 'Naval' that we will live our days in happiness.

The country will shine once again.[10]

The sense of optimism exhibited in this song seems only ironic today when we have the benefit of hindsight. The truth remains that the villages still remain the bastion of underdevelopment, lack of education and opportunities and disparate gender and caste equations. But this song belongs to a phase in which optimism about the newly-born nation ran high. It is also true however that the optimism shown in this song was not shared by all even in the 1960s. Progressive artist groups such as Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) were already questioning the corrupt system put in place by the Government to look into the problems of the masses. Their songs, rooted in folklore, like 'Kekara kekara naam bataayen, Iss jag bade luterwa ho' or 'Whose names to disclose, this world is full of robbers my friend', depict the flip side of democracy and independence which held any meaning only for the powerful and elite.

Another major event covered by the Awadhi folk songs extensively is the 1962 Indo-China war. The dispute over the McMahon line which among many other reasons, sparked off, saw adequate cultural response in India. Between themselves, the Indo-China war and the first Indo-Pak of 1965 inspired several folk, literary and cinematic representations. Of these, one folk song, which tells of a mother proudly sending off her son to the border as a soldier, follows:

Rann ma hoi dusman se samanwa,

Gumanwa jin torey lalna.

[10] My translation.

Navae maas tak kokh mei rakha, kasht saha ati bhari,

Doodh piyay-piyay le laalan, dehoya kasa tumhari,

Aaj dudhwa kai de re urinwa.

Gumanwa jin torey lalna.

Makemohan rekha te rattiu bhumi diheu na jaai,

Khopri forayu tum dusman ke, Ganga leu uthai,

Tabahin purihain morey armanwa,

Gumanwa jin torey lalna.

Haad-maans ki ee dehiyan ma, dharaa nahi kuchh baatey,

Saan banayo ran khetey ma, chini laundey kaatey,

Tabahi bachihai Bharat ke abhimanwa,

Gumanwa jin torey lalna. (Awasthi *Hazara* 325)

In the battlefield, you'll confront the enemy,

Don't lose your confidence, my son.

For nine months I kept you in my womb, and lived through the pain,

I fed you with milk and made your body strong,

Today you have to pay the debt of my milk,

Don’t lose your confidence, my son.

Not an inch beyond the McMahon line shall we let them take,

Swear by the holy Ganga, you’ll break the skulls of the enemies,

Only then will my heart’s wish be fulfilled,

Don’t lose your confidence, my son.

This body made of flesh and bones has no real worth,

Do well in the battlefield, kill those Chinese boys,

Only then will India’s pride be safe,

Don’t lose your confidence, my son.[11]

What becomes distinct from this exercise is the fact that the folk song evolves with times and adapts itself as well as it can with the demands of the times. One must also keep in mind that the folk song does not arise and exist in isolation. It is generally a product of the creativity of not one mind but many minds and tongues simultaneously. The evolution of the folk song therefore points towards the evolution of society as a whole. No wonder then that responses to changing social scenario are also part of the folk repertoire. While dramatic forms such as nautanki have adopted newer socially oriented themes such as female foeticide, caste discrimination, dowry and illiteracy, the folk songs are also evolving fast to accommodate lyrics expressing social consciousness. These songs also have an educative value. For instance, *Maila Aanchal* includes a song criticising the hypocrisy of Brahmanism:

Arrey ho budhbak babhna, arrey ho budhbak babhna

Chumma levey mein jaat nahi re jaae...

Jolha dhuniya teli teliniya ke piye na chhual paniya

[11] My translation.

Natini ke jobana ke Ganga-Jamunwa mein dubki laga ke nahaniya

Din bhar puja par aasan lagake pothi-puraan banchaniya

Raat ke tatamatoli ke galiyan mein jothkhi ji patra gananiya. (Renu 126)

O dimwit Brahmin, O dimwit Brahmin,

Kissing does not pollute your caste or what?

You proclaim that water touched by weavers, washermen,

Oil-grinders and their women is no good for you.

But you love to dive in the Ganga-Jamuna of

The Natni's[12] beauty and youth.

All day you sit cross-legged for worship and read

Scriptures and Puraanas

And in the night the revered astrologer prowls the streets

Of Tatmatoli, taking stock of horoscopes.[13]

This song strikes at the core of the pollution argument of caste. The Brahmin in the earlier part of the song, refuses to give water from his well to the same Natni who has to rush to the river for a sip. The song also reveals the sexual politics of caste. While the lowly professionals were traditionally considered 'untouchable', their womenfolk were always considered as sexually available to the men of the upper castes. The prowling sexuality of the astrologer in the song is critiqued directly. The question 'kissing does not pollute your caste

[12] Woman belonging to the Nat caste whose traditional profession has been to entertain through acrobatics. People belonging to this caste also are considered 'polluted' by upper caste Hindus.
[13] My translation.

or what?' is actually a double-edged weapon in the hands of the folk singer who presents a critique of the notions of caste purity here.

There are numerous songs criticising evil practices such as child marriage, dowry, drug and alcohol abuse and female foeticide. A song attacking child marriage follows:

Baal biyah jani karau morey baba ho,

Baal biyah dukh kai khan.

Gaiya se bachharu na jorau morey baba ho,

Maanahu binti hamaar.

Jab beti huihain sayani morey baba ho,

Khojeo sayan bar jae.

Dharma-karam aur sewa satkarga ho,

Deswa kae jaaney beuhar.

Padhi-likhi gun-dhang sikhi lehi baba ho,

Tak kiyehu beti ke biyah. (Awasthi *Hazara* 11)

Please don't choose child marriage for me O father,

Child marriage is a deep mine of sorrows.

Don't match a calf with a cow O father,

Please listen to my plea.

When your daughter grows up O father,

Look for a grown up groom for her.

One who knows the rules of religion and service,

And the ways of the world.

Let me study and learn some skills and etiquettes,

Before you marry me off.[14]

The daughter in this song is aware of her rights and also of the pitfalls associated with child marriage. A similar awareness of the pitfalls of over-population is seen in the following song which recounts the merits of family planning.

Suni le kaan kholi ke Bharat ke jawanwa,

Santanwa kam upjao beerna...

Rowain bakhri bheetar aath-aath lalanwa,

Ihai burai ahai badi, ekai lebai dhoye...

Thoren lariken ka kai detu, haajir sab saamaan,

Khelte-khaten, padhten-likhten, Hoten ser jawan.

Jetna chadra dekhao bhaiya, otnai paer badhawo,

Kahain kasyap logan se jaldi nasbandi karvawo. (Awasthi *Hazara* 179)

Listen carefully you youth of Bharat,

Produce fewer children my brothers.

[14] My translation.

As many as eight children cry inside one hut,

This indeed is the only disgrace, we will remove it.

For fewer children you can present all amenities,

They could eat, play, read and write, and grow into lion-like youths,

Stretch your legs only as much as your sheet allows,

Says Kashyap the poet, O people, get your vasectomy done soon.[15]

Apart from the problems which have far reaching impact on society, folk songs also respond to problems which are more immediate and political in nature. For instance, there are songs about disillusionment with politicians who disappear from their constituencies after winning the elections with public support. There are also numerous songs on inflation. One example of a folk song commenting on inflation follows:

Mahangi ke maarey birha bisari ga,

Bhuli gae kajri dhamaar.

Dekhi ke gori kai jobna,

Ab uthai na karejwa ma peer. (Awasthi *Hazara* 297)

Beaten by inflation, I forgot all Birha songs

I forgot Kajri and Dhamaar too.

Now when I see the beauty of a young lass

No heart ache rises, nor a wish to woo.[16]

[15] My translation.

The singer here comments tongue in cheek about the link between his well-being and his desire to woo young girls. Inflation seems to have affected both adversely.

Apart from the transformations prompted by social issues, folk songs also undergo changes from region to region. The same theme, indeed even the same subject may solicit different responses from people belonging to even slightly different background. Therefore, very frequently, a song with the same refrain, general meaning and even tone, may vary in some aspects. Folk songs travel easily and on their journeys, they pick up and shed luggage. One has tried to trace the journey of a very common folk song here over almost the whole of the Awadh terrain. A Kajri, the song appears in different avatars in different regions. For instance, in Gonda district, it is sung as follows:

Khirki khuli rahi saari ratiya,

Ratiya kahan ganvayo na.

Soney ke thara ma jevna paroseu,

Jevna para raha sari ratiya.

Jhanjhar, gendua, gangajal paani,

Gendua para raha sari ratiya.

Seja safeda galaicha bichhayo,

Sejiya pari rahi sari ratiya. (Awasthi *Hazara* 16)

The window was open all night long

O where did you waste the night?

I served dinner on a plate of gold

The dinner lay there all night

Water from Ganga, in a pitcher in the trellis,

The pitcher lay there all night.

[16] My translation.

I prepared the bed with a white bedspread

The bed lay there all night.[17]

The same kajri, when sung in Sultanpur district loses its theme of separation and assumes the garb of a teasing song in which the singer hints towards an illicit affair she has with her younger brother-in-law:

Arrey Rama, bela phule adhi rati, chameli bhinsare re haari.

Sone ki tharia ma jyona paroseu,

Arrey Rama, balma jewain adhi rati, dewar bhinsare re haari.

Jhanjhar, gendua, gangajal paani,

Arrey Rama, balma ghutain adhi rati, dewar bhinsare re haari.

Paanch paan, panchbiriya lagayun,

Arrey Rama, balma kuchain adhi rati, dewar bhinsare re haari.

Phula newari kai seja lagayon,

Arrey Rama, balma sutain adhi rati, dewar bhinsare re haari. (Awasthi *Hazara* 81)

O Rama, Bela flowers in the night, and Chameli in the morning.

I served dinner on a plate of gold,

O Rama, my husband eats in the night, and brother-in-law in the morning.

[17] My translation.

A pitcher in the trellis, Gangajal water,

O Rama, my husband drinks in the night, and brother-in-law in the morning.

With five paan leaves, I made a beeda,

O Rama, my husband chews in the night, and brother-in-law in the morning.

I made a soft bed with flowers,

O Rama, my husband sleeps in the night, and brother-in-law in the morning.[18]

The sexual content of the song becomes very explicit in the version mentioned above. The same song however, takes a spiritual turn in the Pratapgarh region:

Satguru aawa mori nagariya, goriya maas sawanwa na.

Sone ki thari ma jevna banawa, jevna arrey banawa na,

Eik din jenwa mori nagariya, goriya maas sawanwa na.

Jhanjhare geduwa ganga jal paani, geduwa arrey le aaye na,

Ek din ghuta mori nagariya, goriya maas sawanwa na.

Laung ilaichi ke birwa jodawa, birwa arrey jodawa na,

Ek din Kuncha mori nagariya, goriya maas sawanwa na.

Chuni-chuni phulwa ke sejiya lagawa, sejiya arrey lagawa na,

Ek din suta mori nagariya, goriya maas sawanwa na. (Awasthi *Hazara* 118)

[18] My translation.

O Preacher of truth, come to my place, friends it is the month of sawan.

Cook dinner in a plate of gold, arrey cook dinner na,

Just once dine at my place, friends it is the month of sawan.

A pitcher in the trellis with gangajal water, arrey bring the pitcher na,

Just once drink at my place, friends it is the month of sawan.

Trees of clove and cardamom grow, arrey grow the trees na,

Just once chew at my place, friends it is the month of sawan.

I picked flowers to lay your bed, arrey lay the bed na,

Just once sleep at my place, friends it is the month of sawan.[19]

In Lucknow, this song is sung not as a Kajri but as a Natka (parody) in an all-female space. Natkas are performed generally when all the men of the family leave for a boys wedding as part of the baraat. Women cross-dress and indulge in playacting and joking all night. Following is the natka version of the same song:

Yahi angana ma khoi hamari bindiya.

Sone ki thari ma javna parosa, jenvo na jenvo raja dhoondo bindiya.

Sone ke genduwa ma jal bhari lai, ghuto na ghuto raja dhoondo bindiya.

[19] My translation.

Paan-pachasi ke beeda lagayo, kuncho na kuncho raja dhoondo bindiya.

Sone ki seenk Bareli ke surma, reejho na reejho raja dhoondo bindiya.

Phoolan ki sej moti jhaalar ke takiya, suto na suto raja dhoondo bindiya. (Awasthi *Hazara* 289)

In this very courtyard, I lost my Bindiya.

I served dinner in a plate of gold, eat O dear eat Raja, look for my bindiya.

I filled water in a golden pitcher, drink O drink Raja, look for my bindiya.

I made a beeda with eighty-five paans, chew O chew Raja, look for my bindiya.

I put surma from Bareilly with a golden sprig, fall in love Raja, look for my bindiya.

I made the bed with flowers and a lacy pillow, sleep O sleep Raja, look for my bindiya.[20]

Apart from these disparate versions, there are Jantsaar (work song) and Kaharwa versions of the same song found in Unnao and Faizabad regions. In addition to these, there is a Holi version also from Allahabad which was picked up and modified into a film song, 'Rang Barse' for the film *Silsila* (1981). Similar more or less to the kajri from Pratapgarh region, it replaces the brother-in-law with "gori ka yaar" or the 'wife's lover.' The semantic trajectory of this particular song across geographical spaces is symptomatic of many such folk songs and their transformative journeys. The unexpected ways in which folk songs evolve and transform, indicate the differences which encapsulate within themselves similarities too. The changes and the continuities in geographical transformations are equally strong and they also point towards cultural diffusion within the Awadh region.

[20] My translation.

In recent times, Awadhi folk songs have undergone transformations to such extents that they stand completely changed and disguised under new garbs of form and location. This metamorphosis is seen mostly in case of cinematic songs and poetry. As the two havens of folklore- reel and ink have contributed towards a popularization and also preservation of Awadhi folklore. The journey of the Awadhi folk song in particular, in both these media has been long, eventful and beneficial. Written records of poetry in Awadhi go back to the fourteenth century according to some critics. In any case, as noted in the Chapter 1, *Padmavat* and *Ramcharitmanas* are the most influential written texts in Awadhi. But poetry in Awadhi is not limited to an antiquated age. Modern poetry also has been written in Awadhi. This poetry is steeped in the folkloric style often seen in Awadhi folk songs. , a major Hindi poet, wrote many poems in Awadhi which showcase his deep knowledge of the folklore of the language. Considered as the poet of the pedestrians and the hungry, his poetry in Awadhi negotiates with images culled out of the folk space. For instance, in his poem 'Trees', he chronicles the beauty of different trees in different seasons:

Nao-nao pallawo taambaran vistaar,

Amwa faguney etnai kihesi singaar.

Bejhi ke kahesi pawan basant ritu aai,

Peepar chlbil, mahua gaye nangaaye. (Dikshit 41)

New leaves, copper in colour, spread out,

That's all the toilette of mango tree in Falgun.

When the breeze sent for the season of spring,

Peepal swayed and Mahua became naked.[21]

The images in this poem are extracted straight from the folk arena: the personification of the mango tree as a beautiful yet simple young girl, imagining Peepal tree as a restless child waving its leaves in the breeze of spring and the Mahua tree as a naked boy, drip with the poetic beauty of the folklore. The language is the same but the difference arises out of the fact that the poetic sensibility refines and chisels out the raw folk motif into a much more distinct representation of trees and seasons.

[21] My translation.

Another poet worth mentioning is Doodhnath Sharma ‘Shrish’ whose poem ‘Anjoria mein Gaon’ or ‘The Village in Twilight’ follows the folk song pattern of rhymed stanza and refrain:

Bada neek lagai anjoria mein gaon,

Dheerey–dheerey utari ke chali hai anjoria;

Uss neek lagai jaise sajal sugoria,

Chali aavay dheerey-dheerey dhai dhai paanv

Bada neek lagai anjoria mein gaon... (Dikshit 32)

The village looks beautiful in the twilight,

Anjoria descends slowly and walks in,

She looks beautiful like an adorned wench,

Walking in slowly, light-footed,

The village looks beautiful in the twilight.[22]

The poem works through repetition of the refrain which adds to the tonal appeal of the composition. The personification of Anjoria or twilight as a pretty young girl helps him to engage the reader in a prolonged and detailed metaphor.

The use of Awadhi folk songs, as discussed in the preceding chapter, by cinema has been extensive. With a wide folk base, Hindi cinema has greatly relied on the folklore of its dialects since the very beginning. The value of this reliance can be judged from the number and quality of film songs, both classical and semi-classical which have, influenced by Awadhi folk songs. Some films stand apart in this crowded set of films influenced by Awadhi folklore. *Mother India, Pakeezah* and *Ganga Jumna* are three blockbusters which reaped the benefits of having direct adaptations of Awadhi folk songs in them. *Mother India,* set in a north Indian village in 1950s, utilized extensively the potential of Awadhi music in the form of songs like ‘Chundariya Katati Jaye’, ‘nagari nagari dware dware’, ‘O gaadiwaley’,

[22] My translation.

'matwala jiya doley piya', 'dukh bhare din beetey re bhaiya', 'holi ayi re kanhai', and 'Pee ke ghar aaj pyari dulhaniya chali', drawn directly from Awadhi folk milieu. And then came *Ganga Jumna* with songs like 'Dagaabaz tori batiyaan', 'Dhoondo dhoondo re sajna', 'Do hanson ka joda, Nain lad jaihain' and 'Tora mann bada paapi'. The basic difference between the compositions of *Mother India* and *Ganga Jumna* was that while the earlier film stuck more or less to the traditional instruments and singing style, the latter gave the Awadhi folk song a cinematic twist. The soundtrack was modern but the lyrics and tunes traditional. These films had almost all their songs in Awadhi. The Awadhi folk song structure was followed, as discussed earlier, in songs of *Pakeezah* too. Focussed on the Awadhi courtesan culture, the film could not have done well without moorings in Awadhi music. Courtesan culture just like nautanki culture, had deep roots in Hindustani classical music and its low-brow avatar, Awadhi semi-classical music. The cultural centres of courtesans were Lucknow, Kanpur and Faizabad. The film owed its success in many ways to memorable melodies composed in Awadhi such as 'Inhi Logon Ne', 'Nazariya Ki Mari', 'Thare Rahiyo', 'Mora Saajan Sauten Ghar Jaye' and 'Kaun Gali Gayo Shyam'.

In a way it would be right to say that these three film gave the most prominent coverage to Awadhi language and its folk songs. Though throughout the 1960s and 1970s it was a trend to have a dance number or a Holi song in every potboiler, these films engaged with Awadhi not just at the notional level. Other films of the era worth mentioning are *Amar Prem* (1972) with songs like 'Doli mein Bithai ke kahaar', 'Raina beeti jaye' and 'Bada natkhat hai yeh', *Guide* (1965) with 'Piya tose naina lagey re' (an adaptation of the Kajri form), 'Wahan kaun hai tera' (a traveller's song) and 'Allah megh de paani de' (a prayer fro rain), *Phagun* (1973) with 'Piya sang khelo hori phagun aayo re', 'Bedardi ban gaye koi jaao manaao more saiyyaan', 'Laali mere laal ki jit dekhoo tit laal', and *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (1978) with 'Bhor bhaye panghat par' and 'Saiyan nikas gaye.'

Two types of Awadhi songs became regular features in Hindi films- Holi (mostly picturised as fun-filled dance number) and Mujras which were generally modifications of the Kajri form (mostly performed by tawaifs or courtesans, abundant in the Hindi cinema of 1960s and 1970s). Though the courtesan song got dropped from favour by late eighties, the Holi song continues to resurface every now and then in films even today. It is an exercise in itself to trace the trajectory of the song of Holi in Hindi cinema. One has tried to list out here, in chronological order, some of the most prominent Holis: 'Holi aayi re kanhai' (*Mother India*), 'Arre ja re hat natkhat' (*Navrang* 1959), 'Tan rang lo ji aaj mann rang lo'(*Kohinoor*

1960), ‘Aaj na chhodenge bas humjoli, khelenge hum holi’ (*Kati Patang* 1970), ‘Piya sang khelo hori phagun aayo re’ (*Phagun* 1973), Holi ke din (*Sholay* 1975), Rang Barse (*Silsila*1981), Mal de gulal mohe, aayi holi aayi re (*Kaamchor* 1982), Jogi ji dheerey-dheerey (*Nadiya ke Paar*1982), Apne hi rang mein rang le mujhko (*Aakhir Kyon* 1985), Ang se ang lagana sajan (*Darr* 1993), Hori khelein Raghuveera (*Baghban* 2003), Dekho aayi holi (*Mangal Pandey* 2005), and the latest, ‘Balam pichkari (*Yeh Jawani hai Deewani* 2013). One look at this list makes the continuity of the Holi trend in Hindi cinema. Though purely commercial in nature this sustained engagement of the film industry with one folk form is remarkable. One must note that the list would be equally exhaustive if one were to list out Mujras with considerable Awadhi influence.

One can safely propose that through these extremely popular adaptations, the Awadhi folk song has stepped into the arena of urban folklore. Bollywood popular cinema fashions the urban psyche just as folklore influences the rural. As stated several times in this research, it is true that when it comes to folklore, the general perception is to associate it with rural sensibility. But while doing so we forget how much of folklore surrounds people in urban centres too. In fact, folklore refurnishes a new version of itself for the urban populace through its forays into cinema and pop music. This is true of folklore in most languages in India, with Punjabi folklore currently topping the list of commercial transformations perhaps. But the unique contribution of Awadhi folklore lies in the consistency of its interaction with mainstream Hindi cinema over the last seven decades.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Tracing Newer Trajectories: The Future of Awadhi Folk Songs

> Can one speak of the Italian folktale? Or must the question of folktale be dealt with in terms of a remote age that is not only prehistoric but also pregeographic?
>
> ... Was the birth and development of folklore a parallel and similar phenomenon throughout the world as the proponents of polygenesis claim? In view of the complexity of certain types that explanation may be too simple. Can ethnology explain every motif, every narrative complex throughout the world? Evidently not. Therefore, quite apart from the question of the ancient sources of folktales, the importance of the life which every folktale has had during a historical period must be recognised: storytelling as entertainment means the passage of the tale from narrator to narrator, from country to country, often by means of written version, a book, until the story has spread over the entire area where it is to be found today. (Calvino xxvii)

While treading on the customary path of introducing his hugely popular *Italian Folktales* (1980), Italo Calvino, thus, reconciles various issues associated with the folk in our times. Firstly, he attempts to establish folktales in today's world, which is replete with distinct characteristics that are amazingly shared by different nations. Secondly, he deliberates on the "Italianness" of such tales and suggests that in the present world such categories of uniqueness-markers do not hold valid. Thirdly, as an extension to the second argument, he states that one cannot use the "prehistoric" and "pregeographic" touchstones to accept the valid sources of origin of folktales. This observation indicates that source or origin of a folktale is not dependent on its space and time. But it is an assertion made against the feverish attempts to locate folktales in relation to their origins alone. Calvino goes on further

to say that the process behind this origin has been distinct and the similar and parallel phenomenon in the birth and development of folklore, as suggested by some ethnologists, is only a myth. In other words, folklores have distinct origins and they follow distinct journey on their development route. It is evident through the complexity in certain types of folklore; the complex folklore traditions have distinct roots. The complexity and distinctiveness, however, slip to second rung in the contemporary folkloristics, and their "lives" in a particular place at a particular time get the prime focus. What is of utmost importance today in folkloristics is to recognise 'the life of every folktale' in the period it is contextualised. The value and inherent qualities of folklore get reflected in their age and the characteristics of that particular age find mention in its folklore. This has been substantiated with examples in the previous chapters.

What is the status and role of folklore in and/or for in the globalised world today? The status and role suggested above is not only applicable to the global world and beyond, but also has various factors helping for its concretisation. The issues raised by Calvino above forms the gist of my conclusion. Rest of it is mere illustration. The relevance of folklore with its novel responsibility and position becomes all the more important in present times as the social, cultural, national, and other identities/realities are changing faster than one could have imagined few decades earlier; the society, today, is changing incredibly fast, and, thus, facilitating transformed attitudes and other such realities vis-a-vis choices and 'tastes' that willy-nilly everyone adopts. It is surprising to hear from the college going youngsters that even those who are few years younger to them do not belong to their generation. It is shell-shocking in the first instance. However, thoughtful analysis reveals the pace of such attitudinal changes brought about by the cyber revolution: through the web-based modes of entertainment children today have shrunken from indoors to "in indoors" where within their own homes, they create a sub-culture, sometimes even contra-culture, to share solidarity with those having common choices, tastes, and even fantasies, but with whom they share no physical contact and, probably, they never will. The following incident would suffice to illustrate this: I was surprised to get as a reply for my usual and simple query on his hobbies and interests, from a kid of five or so, that he has great interest in gardening. For a child of five this was too much and too early for a hobby. May be it wasn't? That's of no great concern, anyway. What alarmed me was an actual visit to his "garden", which was a web portal on which through a game he did some "gardening". This certainly isn't gardening at least the way we have known. Some sort of "cyber gardening", perhaps it is! That's precisely

not belonging to the preceding generation. No doubt, this incident is quite a limited phenomenon in India that has a long way to go to attain cent percent internet accessibility, but my concern here is an alarming change in the choices made and options availed in our times, especially in terms of recreational activities. All I mean to say here is that the possibility of diffusion of such choices and options to distant and untouched quarters can't be denied.

Such drastic changes in recreational as well as artistic activities highlight two important issues: technology has become the most potent vehicle for providing platforms for entertainment and the globalisation-borne challenges plus external forces have risen against the traditional modes of entertainment. If tackled appropriately, the same challenges can be utilised as opportunities for passing on the legacy of folk tradition that has already witnessed several transformations. For instance, the same "in indoor spaces" can be utilised to further the age old tradition of grandma fairy tales that seem the most beautiful and the most impressive to every child. This analogy here may appear only a digression, but it can be seen as a point of departure from the traditional methods of tackling the issues of folkloristics; folklorists in a tradition like India must locate and contextualise folklore in the global/glocal world and, thus, come up with creative methods to help preserve them for their dignified future. The following example of the accumulated knowledge in folk psyche, with a direct reference to Ghagh, an influential eighteenth century Awadhi poet, whose proverbs and sayings are full of wit and wisdom, still informs about the daily requirements of the villagers in India:

Chadhat asdhwa dhumadi ghan garjai, ki ghumi ghumi ho,

Bhal det noticewa, ki ghumi ghumi ho.

Saaju saaju baila piyawa kisanwa, ki aai gae ho,

Girhatiya ke dinwa, ki aai gae ho...

Daru-daru-daru piya biyawa biyadwa, ki taku mati ho,

Jaat hatwa se takwa ki taku matt ho...

Ghagh ker updeswa, ki jani lehu ho.

Lagat chiraiya ropau piya dhanwa, ki tab bharihain ho,

Kothila aur dhanserwa ki tab bharihain ho.

Musaran dhol piya tab bhal bajohain, ki hoi jaihe ho,

Ghar ghar surajwa, ki hoi jaihain ho. (Awasthi *Hazara* 20)

With the approaching *Asad*[1], clouds thunder roaming round- round, ho.

Sending lovely messages roaming round-round, ho.

Adorned oxen and the beloved farmer have come, ho,

Days of labour have come, ho...

Sow-sow-sow the seeds, oh dear, don't stare blank, ho,

The opportunity slips from your hand, don't stare blank, ho...

Know the sermons of Ghagh, ho.

With the beginning of *Chiraiya*[2] plant paddy, then only will the rice be abundant, ho,

Only then will the granaries be full, ho.

The pestle and the drums will beat beautifully,

Every household will glow like the sun, ho.[3]

[1] The fourth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding with the month of July. It is generally associated with the rainy season.
[2] A nakshatra associated with compulsory rains.
[3] My translation.

The folk songs like this are the repository of the day-to-day actions and scientific knowledge on agriculture. These songs act as a bridge between generations in passing on valuable knowledge preserved in the folk communities. This tradition of knowledge o seasons, environment, and the occupations like agriculture has preserved even in classical writings, for instance in the writings of Varahmihir who flourished in the sixth century India. Many other saints and poets, like Garg, Kashyap, Vatsya, et al, have contributed immensely to this tradition. In fact, this vast and composite body of knowledge was utilised by the farmers intelligently. They, also, transformed it in the form of folk songs and, thus, helped preserve them for the future generations. Even today such songs, sayings, and proverbs are common among the villagers in India. As already mentioned, various sayings and proverbs, riddles, anecdotes, and stray couplets contribute to this composite body of knowledge. These proverbs, sayings, etc. are available for every occasion and every aspect of human well-being. For instance, there are various proverbs/sayings on social, economic, political, psychological, and even on health and other such issues. Few examples of some of the social sayings/proverbs that are still relevant are given below:

> Paani peejai chhani ke, Guroor kijai jaani ke. (Tripathi *Gram Sahitya* 196)
>
> Drink water after filtering it, Develop pride after knowing the enemy and the consequences well.[4]
>
> Kabul gaye Mughal bani aaye, Bolain Mughali bani.
>
> Aab Aab kahi baba mari gaye, katiya tar rah paani (Tripathi *Gram Sahitya* 144)
>
> Returning from Kabul, the grandpa has turned a complete Mughal.

[4] My translation.

> He died wailing ab ab[5], although water was there under his cot.[6]

Such witty and aphoristic proverbs and saying are common in village settings. They often contain a satirical tone and, hence, hold corrective intentions as well.

Coming back to the threats and challenges in the global world, one must realise that to censure the external forces leading to drastic changes does not seem a definitive treatment to the forthcoming problems. In all possibility, the entertainment medium of the 'next generation' will completely be dependent on advanced technology and cybernetics. This poses a challenge to the folklore. This, also, provides an opportunity to folklore. Challenge: because the ultra-modern and highly sophisticated technology media does not gel with the traditional modes of performance or singing as also it is not accessible to everyone, as mentioned earlier, particularly in the countries like India. Opportunity: because the very same technology can be utilised to fill the gaps, as already said , in preservation, propagation, survival, and re-creation of folk wisdom and knowledge in the new era. It can, also, facilitate greater transparency in the implementation of policies etc, an issue that still remains the greatest of hindrance in making the efforts of governments and organisations yield fruitful results.

Technology can also be utilised to bring together folk arts and cultures from different regions otherwise divided on several counts. Such moves can make folklore from across the country available to students at all levels. Focussing on students, both in schools and universities/colleges, will yield multiple results for transforming folk arts. On the one hand, it will bring the folklore to the initial spaces of socialisation where a child will learn and adapt various folk forms according to his/her temporal and circumstantial requirements, whereas on the other hand, it will elevate folk arts and artists to from the puny state of being exhibits or exhibiting the tokens of culture and heritage. Above all, such a move will bring in a paradigm shift in placing the onus and responsibility of preserving and passing on the folk tradition to all those who participate, rather than confining it to traditional artists/performers and their families alone. If materialised, the study of folklore in schools and other educational institutions will prepare future folk artists from all sections of society. The democratic institutions, like schools etc, will certainly help folklore to face the challenges in the

[5] Water.
[6] My translation.

cosmopolitan, global age. As echoed in the following lines in Sadhna Naithani's enthusiastic and brilliant analysis on the expectations, demands, and requirements of folk artists in the present age:

> Aesthetic appreciation and artistic recognition are their due. This means not subsidy but popularisation, not a life in slums, but the right to a life conducive to performance. It would mean not decorative use of them, but appreciation of their cultural contribution, and not only for their own offspring but, through democratic institutions like schools, for other youngsters as well. If we see them as students, artists and teachers of their art, then the folk performers and their arts would be integrated into modernity and their lives and forms may change more out of artistic choice and knowledge than as strategies of survival. (Naithani in Charsley and Kadekar 119)

Not just the 'strategies of survival', but an overall integration in the modern/metropolitan/cosmopolitan/global/glocal world will prove an atonement to what was amiss in our past efforts vis-a-vis folkloristics. Integration in its sociological and theoretical sense; integration of folklore in the global world will transform it into a new form in-sync with the dominant mainstream reality. This transformed form will also maintain its uniqueness while assuming new roles at par with other forms of expression.

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