



Regional Music

Resources Performing Arts Regional Music

1. Dances of India

- Classical Dances
 - Bharatnatyam Dance
 - Kathakali Dance
 - Kathak Dance
 - Manipuri Dance
 - Odissi Dance
 - Kuchipudi Dance
 - Sattriya Dance
 - Mohiniyattam Dance

Cultural traditions from various regions of the country reflect the rich diversity of Regional Music of India. Each region has its own particular style.

Tribal and folk music is not taught in the same way that Indian classical music is taught. There is no formal period of apprenticeship where the student is able to devote their entire life to learning the music, the economics of rural life does not permit this sort of thing. The musical practitioners must still attend to their normal duties of hunting, agriculture or whatever their chosen profession is.

2. Music of India

- Hindustani Classical Music
- Carnatic Classical Music
- Regional Music
- Musical Instruments

Music in the villages is learnt from childhood, the music is heard and imbibed along with numerous public activities that allow the villagers to practice and hone their skills.

The music is an indispensable component of functions such as weddings, engagements, and births. There is a plethora of songs for such occasions. There are also many songs associated with planting and harvesting. In these activities the villagers routinely sing of their hopes, fears and aspirations.

3. Theatre Forms of India

- Theatre Forms

4. Puppet Forms of India

- Puppet Forms

Musical instruments are often different from those found in classical music. Although instruments like the *tabla* may sometimes be found it is more likely that cruder drums such as *daf*, *dholak*, or *nal* are used. The *sitar* and *sarod* which are so common in the classical genre are absent in the folk music. One often finds instruments such as the *ektar*, *dotar*, *rabab*, and *santur*. Quite often they are not called by these names, but may be named according to their local dialect. There are also instruments which are used only in particular folk styles in particular regions. These instruments are innumerable.

The instruments of classical music are crafted by artisans whose only job is the fabrication of musical instruments. In contrast the folk instruments are commonly crafted by the musicians themselves.

It is very common to find folk instruments that have been fabricated of commonly available materials. Skin, bamboo, coconut shells, and pots are but a few commonly available materials used to make musical instruments.

Rasiya Geet, Uttar Pradesh

The rich tradition of singing Rasiya Geet flourished in Braj which is the sacred land of Lord Krishna's charming *Jeelas* from time immemorial. This is not confined to any particular festival, but is closely woven into the very fabric of daily life and day to day chores of its people. 'Rasiya' word is derived from the word *rasa* (emotion) because *rasiya* means that which is filled with *rasa* or emotion. It reflects the personality of the singer as well as the nature of the song.

Pankhida, Rajasthan

Sung by the peasants of Rajasthan while doing work in the fields, the peasants sing and speak while playing *algoza* and *manjira*. The literal meaning of the word 'Pankhida' is lover.

Lotia, Rajasthan

'Lotia' is sung in the *chaitra* month during the festival - 'Lotia'. Women bring *lotas* (a vessel to fill water) and *kalash* (a vessel considered to be auspicious to fill water during worship) filled with water from ponds and wells. They decorate them with flowers and come home.

Pandavani, Chhattisgarh

In Pandavani, tales from Mahabharata are sung as a ballad and one or two episodes are chosen for the night's performance. The main singer continuously sits throughout the performance and with powerful singing and symbolic gestures he assumes all the characters of the episode one after another.

Shakunakhar - Mangalgeet, Kumaon

Numberless songs are sung on auspicious occasions in the foothills of Himalaya. Shakunakhar are sung during religious ceremonies of baby-shower, child-birth, Chhati (a ritual done on the sixth day from the birth of a child) Ganesh *pooja* etc. These songs are sung by only ladies, without any instrument.

In Shakunakhar on each auspicious occasion prayer for good health and long life is made

*Shakuna de, Shakuna de
Kaj ye Ati Neeke So Rangeelo
Patlo Anchli Kamloo Ko Phool.....*

Barhamasa, Kumaon

This regional music from Kumaon is describing the twelve months of an year, each with its specific qualities. In one of the songs the Ghughuti bird symbolizes the onset of *chait* month. A girl in her in laws place asks this bird not to speak because she is disturbed with the memories of her mother (Ija) and she is feeling sad.

Mando, Goa

Goan regional music is a treasury of the traditional music of the Indian subcontinent. Mando, the finest creation of Goan song is a slow verse and refrain composition dealing with love, tragedy and both social injustice and political resistance during Portuguese presence in Goa.

Alha, Uttar Pradesh

Alha, typical ballad of Bundelkhand narrates the heroic deeds of Alha and Udal, the two warrior brothers who served Raja Parmal of Majoba. This is the most popular regional music of Bundelkhand which is popular elsewhere in the country as well.

The Alha is full of tales of feudal chivalry, which have appeal to common men. It highlights the high principles of morality, chivalry and nobility prevalent in those times.

Hori, Uttar Pradesh

The history of Hori, its evolution and tradition is quite ancient. It is based on the love pranks of 'Radha-Krishna'. Hori singing is basically associated with the festival of Holi only. In India tradition of singing Hori during spring season and while celebrating Holi has been continuing since ancient times..... '*Braj mein Hari Hori Machayi*.....' .

Sohar, Uttar Pradesh

Social ceremonies have, at times, served as a potent factor for intermingling of different cultures. North India has a strong tradition of singing 'Sohar' songs when a son is born in a family. This has influenced the muslim culture and a form of 'Sohar' song gained currency in the muslim families living in some regions of Uttar Pradesh. 'Sohar' songs unmistakably point to the mingling of two cultures.

Chhakri, Kashmir

Chhakri is a group song which is the most popular form of Kashmir's folk music.

It is sung to the accompaniment of the *noot* (earthen pot) *rababs*, *sarangi* and *tumbaknari* (an earthen pot with high neck).

Laman, Himachal Pradesh

In Laman a group of girls sing a stanza and a group of boys give reply in the song. This continues for hours. Interesting is that the girls singing on one of the peaks of the hill seldom see the faces of the boys singing on another peak. In between is the hill which echoes their love song. Most of these songs are sung especially in Kullu Valley.

Kajri, Uttar Pradesh

Kajri is a folk song sung by women, from Uttar Pradesh and adjacent region, during rainy season. On the third day in the second half of the *bhadra*, women sing Kajri songs all through the night, while dancing in a semi-circle.

Qawwali

Originally, Qawwalis were sung in praise of God. In India Qawwali was brought from Persia around thirteenth century and Sufis enlisted its services to spread their message. Amir Khusro (1254-1325) a Sufi and an innovator contributed to the evolution of Qawwali. It is a mode of singing rather than a form of composition. In performance Qawwali presents a fascinating, interchanging use of the solo and choral modalities.

Tappa, Punjab

Tappa is a form of semi classical vocal music inspired by the folk songs of camel riders in the Punjab area. Tappa, in Punjabi and Pashto language, is set in *ragas* generally used for the semi classical forms. It is characterized by jumpy and flashy tonal movements with rhythmic and rapid notes.

Powada, Maharashtra

Powada is the traditional folk art from Maharashtra. The word Powada itself means "the narration of a story in glorious terms". The narratives are always odes in praise of an individual hero or an incident or place. The chief narrator is known as the *Shahir* who plays the *duff* to keep the rhythm. The tempo is fast and controlled by the main singer who is supported by others in chorus.

The earliest notable Powada was the *Afzal Khanacha Vadh* (The Killing of Afzal Khan) (1659) by Agnidias which recorded Shivaji's encounter with Afzal Khan.

Teej Songs, Rajasthan

Teej is celebrated with great involvement by women of Rajasthan. This is a festival celebrated on the third day after the new moon or *amavasya* of *shraavana* month. The theme of the songs sung during this festival revolve around the union of Shiva and Parvati, the magic of monsoon, greenery, peacock dance etc. One of the song is

*Aakha Teej Aayi Re,
Savan ki Kudti ke Male Mor
Manda De Re.....*

Burrakatha, Andhra Pradesh

Burrakatha is a highly dramatic form of ballad. A bottle shaped drum (*tambura*) is played by the main performer while reciting a story. The ballad singers, like stage actor, wear make up and a highly stylised costume.

Bhakha, Jammu and Kashmir

The Bhakha form of folk music is popular in Jammu region. Bhakha is sung by the villagers when harvesting is done. It is considered to be the regional music with most melodic and harmonious elements. It is sung to the accompaniment of instruments like harmonium.

Bhuta song, Kerala

The basis of Bhuta song is rooted in superstitions. Some communities of Kerala do Bhuta rituals to send away the evil ghost and spirits. This ritual is accompanied with vigorous dancing and the music has a piercing and eerie character.

Daskathia, Odisha

Daskathia is a form of ballad singing prevalent in Odisha. Daskathia is a name derived from a unique musical instrument called "Kathi" or "Ram Tali", wooden clappers used during the presentation. The performance is a form of worship and offering on behalf of the "Das", the devotee.

Bihu songs, Assam

Bihu songs (biyu geet) are the most distinctive type of folk songs of Assam, both for their literary content and for their musical mode. Bihu songs are blessings for a happy new year and the dance is associated with an ancient fertility cult. It is Bihu time when an opportunity is there for marriageable young men and women to exchange their feelings and even to choose their partners. The joyfulness is reflected in song like.....

*'Mikir bore sangot koo koo kuliye binale
Bojai bore rahe koo koo kuliye binale'*

Sana Lamok, Manipur

Manipur's hills and valley-both are fond of music and dance. Sana Lamok is sung at the time of coronation ceremony by the Maaiba (priest). It may also be sung to welcome the king. It is sung to evoke the spirit of Pakhangba, the presiding deity. There is a belief that this song is potent with magical powers.

Songs of Lai Haraoba Festival, Manipur

The meaning of Lai Haraoba is the festival of gods and goddesses. It is performed for the Umang-Lai (forest deity). Ougri Hangen, song of creation and Heijing Hirao a ritualistic song is sung on the last day of Lai Haraoba festival.

Saikuti Zai (songs of Saikuti), Mizoram

Mizo are traditionally known as a 'singing tribe'. The regional folk songs of Mizoram constitute the richest heritage of Mizos. Saikuti, a poetess of Mizoram composed songs in praise of warriors, brave hunters, young men aspiring to be great warriors and hunters etc.

Chai hia (songs of the Chai Dance), Mizoram

As per Mizo custom during the Chapchar Kut festival not only singing, dance should also continue throughout the festival. Special occasion for singing and dancing is called 'chai' and songs are known as 'chai hia' (chai songs).

Basanti/ Basant Geet, Garhwal

Basant or spring season is welcomed in a unique manner in Garhwal. Land is filled with different colourful flowers. On Basant Panchmi floor designs are made with the rice flour and the green oats bundles are used to put impressions with cowdung. Swings are tied on the trees and folk songs are sung. One of the Basanti songs is : -

*'Seeri Panchami Mau ki
Paili Haryali Jau ki'*

Ghasiyari Geet, Garhwal

Young women of mountains have to go in far off forests to get grass for their cattle. They go to the forest dancing and singing in groups. Alongwith entertainment emphasis is laid on the importance of labour in the Ghasiyari Geet.

'Bajli Teri Jhanwar Jham Jham O ho.....'

Sukar ke Biah, Bhojpuri Song

Bhojpuri songs portray a lively picture of common folk. They give expression to the innermost feelings of simple hearts. Village folks have their own interpretations of nature, planets and constellations. The story of Shukra and Brihaspat is sung even today – how Shukra forgets the wedding ornament and comes back to take it, where he finds his mother drinking rice water, which is poor man's food. On asking mother about this, his mother answers that she doesn't know whether Shukra's would be wife will even give her rice water or not. Shukra decides to remain unmarried.

Villu Pattu, "Bow Song", Tamil Nadu

Villu Pattu is a popular folk music of Tamil Nadu. The lead singer also plays the role of the main performer. He also handles the dominating instrument which is bow shaped. The songs revolve around theological themes and the conquest of good over evil is emphasised.

Ammanaivari, Tamil Nadu

Ammanaivari are songs sung in praise of Chola monarch. Ammanai is a wooden ball and the women folk sing appropriate songs while playing the ball. This game of Ammanai is still current in Tamil Nadu.

Regional Music of India
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