

FOLK ART AND FOLK STORIES OF PUNJAB WITH RESPECT TO SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This abstract explores the intricate relationship between folk art, folk stories, and environmental conservation in Punjab, India. Folk art and stories in Punjab are not merely cultural expressions but also repositories of traditional ecological knowledge, reflecting the deep connection between communities and their natural surroundings. However, these cultural treasures face numerous challenges from environmental degradation, urbanization, and shifting societal values. This study examines various strategies and initiatives aimed at safeguarding Punjab's folk art and stories while promoting environmental sustainability. It discusses the importance of documenting and digitizing these cultural artifacts to create accessible archives without further environmental impact. Education and awareness programs are highlighted as essential tools for integrating traditional ecological knowledge embedded in folk art and stories into contemporary environmental conservation efforts.

Keywords

Folk stories, Folk art, Safeguarding the Environment

Introduction

The cultural heritage of Punjab stands as evidence of the profound relationship between humanity and the environment. For centuries, people of Punjab have shared a close bond with nature, valuing its importance and taking care of it. Rooted in the region's rich agrarian tradition and spiritual ethos, Punjab's folklore and traditional arts offer invaluable insights into sustainable living practices and environmental wisdom. Punjab's cultural landscape is adorned with a diverse array of folk-art forms, each carrying its own unique narrative of human-nature interconnectedness. From the vibrant hues of Phulkari embroidery to the beautiful textures of Punjabi jutties, these artistic expressions serve as windows into the soul of Punjab, reflecting the rhythms of rural life and the cyclical patterns of the natural world. Similarly, the oral traditions of Punjab, passed down through generations in the form of folk stories and legends, which tell us more about the rich heritage, cultures, and practices of our ancestors.

Preserving one's culture is crucial as it serves as a link to our past, connecting us to our ancestors, their traditions, and their way of life. By understanding and cherishing our cultural heritage, we gain a sense of identity and belonging, grounding us in a shared history and collective memory. Furthermore, culture embodies the wisdom, values, and beliefs that have shaped societies over generations. Preserving it allows us to learn from the experiences of those who came before us, guiding our actions and decisions in the present and future.

Cultural preservation also fosters diversity and tolerance, celebrating the richness of human expression in all its forms. It encourages respect for different perspectives, traditions, and

ways of life, promoting social cohesion and harmony within communities and across borders.

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This research endeavors to explore the intricate tapestry of Punjab's cultural heritage through the lens of environmental conservation. By delving into the themes, motifs, and symbolism embedded within folk art and folk stories, we seek to unearth the ecological insights encoded within these cultural expressions. Furthermore, we aim to investigate the contemporary relevance of Punjab's cultural heritage in the context of evolving environmental challenges, examining how traditional knowledge systems can inform and enrich modern conservation practices.

Objectives of the study

- 1) How familiar are people with folk art and folk stories of Punjab?
- 2) Most common folk art and folk story of Punjab.
- 3) Does folk art and stories play a significant role in raising awareness about Environmental conservation.
- 4) Are there any efforts being made to preserve or revitalize traditional folk art and stories related to the environment?

Materials and Methods

The study consists of 50 people from north India 80% females and 20% males. The participants filled in an online questionnaire titled "Folk art and Folk stories with respect to safeguarding the environment." This study was conducted to study whether people are familiar with the folks of Punjab and the importance of it. Lastly, to connect folk stories and folk art of Punjab with the environment and see the awareness of people for the topic. We have also discovered the various sources from which people become aware related to folk stories and folk art of Punjab. The questionnaire was shared online via WhatsApp groups and emails and those who were willing to share information were asked to fill it in.

Results of study

The following are the results that are analyzed based on the collected data:

Number of Respondents:

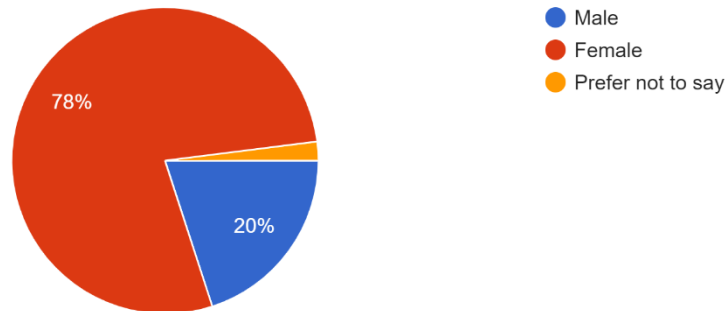
The questionnaire was shared through google form and the responses were received through the same medium and each respondent shared their individual e-mail address. The total number of respondents is 50.

Composition

The respondents are all people from north India. The age of the respondents ranges from 11 years to above 35 years. They all participated in the survey voluntarily. Out of these respondents, 79% are females, 20% are males and 0.1% prefer not to say.

Gender

50 responses

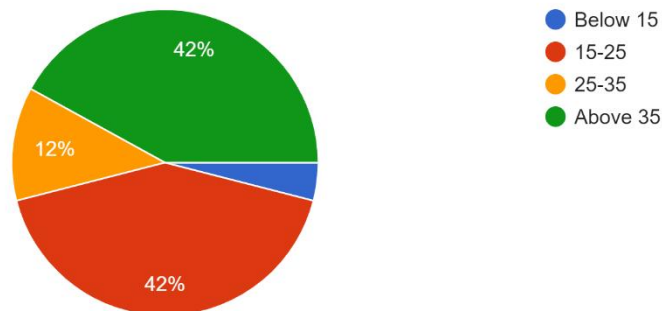


Several questions were asked by the respondents related to Folk art and Folk Stories. The following analysis has been done:

❖ Age of the respondents

Age

50 responses



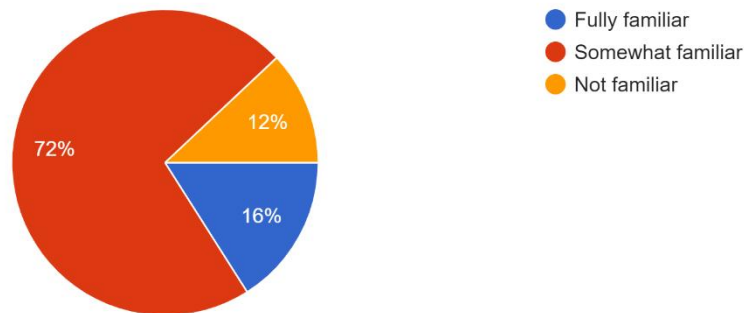
The age of respondents varied from below 15 years and above 30 years, respectively.

❖ How familiar are you with folk art and folk stories from Punjab?

Out of the 50 respondents, about 72% said that they were somewhat familiar, 16% said they were fully familiar and 12% said that they were not at all familiar with the Folk culture of Punjab.

How familiar are you with folk art and folk stories from Punjab?

50 responses

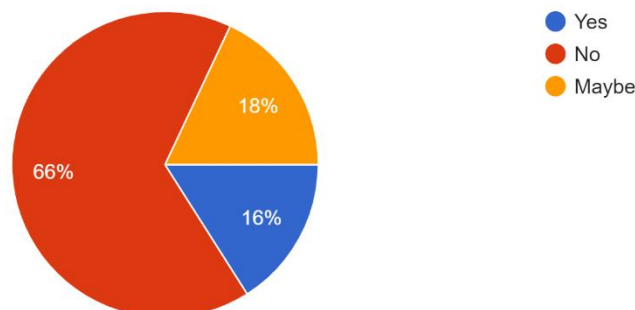


❖ **Have you ever been involved in the creation or preservation of folk art or stories?**

According to the answers of most people, i.e. 66% are not involved in creation and preservation of folk art and stories, 18% are not sure whether they are involved in creation or preservation of folk art and 16% responded with a yes. These may be artists or preservers of any kind.

Have you ever been involved in the creation or preservation of folk art or stories?

50 responses

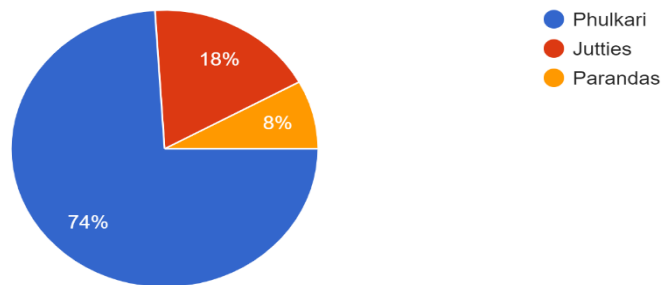


❖ **What is the most common Folk Art of Punjab according to you?**

The 3 most popular Folk art options were given to respondents to choose from, and most of the people chose Phulkari which was 74% and Jutties were chosen by 18% of the people and Parandas were only 8%. This means that most people are aware of Phulkari.

What is the most common Folk Art of Punjab according to you?

50 responses

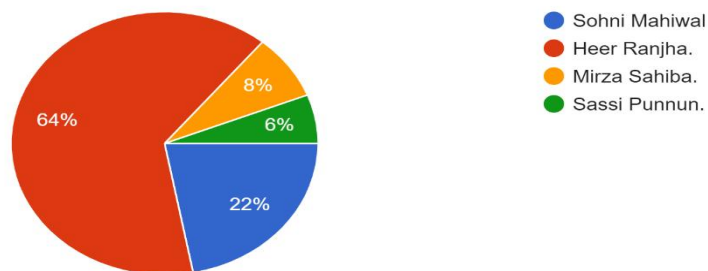


❖ **Which are the most common Folk Stories among people according to you?**

The folk stories of Punjab are often infused with elements of mysticism, heroism, and moral teachings. They feature legendary heroes like Heer-Ranjha, Sohni-Mahiwal, and Mirza-Sahiba, and Sassi Pannu whose tales of love and sacrifice resonate deeply within Punjabi culture. Out of these four options the most common is Heer Ranjha at 64%.

Which is the most common Folk Stories among people according to you?

50 responses

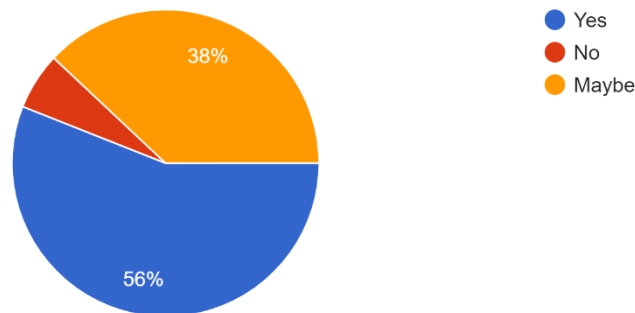


❖ **Do you think traditional folk art and stories have a role to play in raising awareness about environmental issues?**

In this question almost half of the people have responded with a yes which is 56% and 38% have responded with maybe which means people aren't aware of the social concerns raised by traditional folk and stories.

Do you think traditional folk art and stories have a role to play in raising awareness about environmental issues?

50 responses

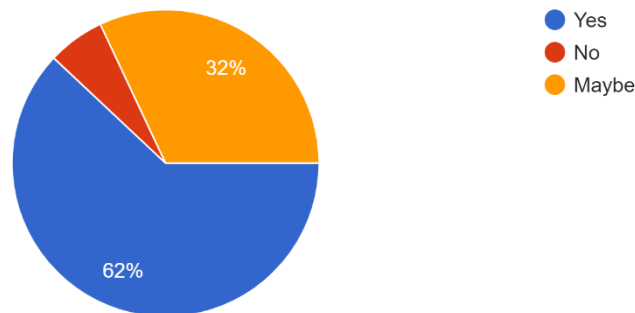


❖ **Do you believe that folk art and stories can influence people's behavior towards environmental conservation?**

Folk art and behavior are mutually reinforcing aspects of cultural expression. Through its diverse forms and functions, folk art shapes behavioral attitudes, fosters community cohesion, preserves cultural heritage, and reflects the evolving identities and values of societies across generations. In this question major chunk of people feel that yes, it does influences people's behavior with a percentage of 62% and 32% have an opinion of maybe.

Do you believe that folk art and stories can influence people's behavior towards environmental conservation?

50 responses

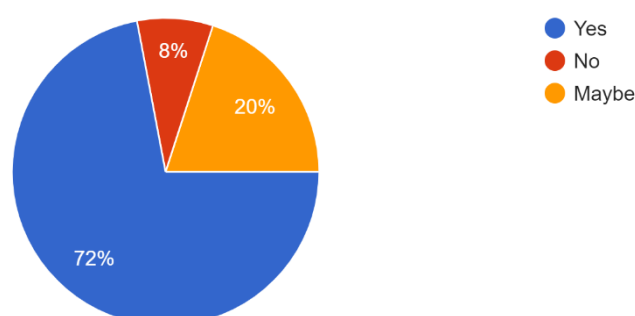


❖ **Do you think environmental values are transmitted through traditional folk art and stories from one generation to the next?**

In this question almost everyone i.e., 72% of people feel that the traditional folk art and stories pass the environmental values such as beliefs, principles, and ethical considerations that individuals, communities, and societies hold regarding the natural environment and its resources from one generation to another. On the other hand, 8% people feel that these values are not transmitted and 20% of the people do not have an opinion on it.

Do you think environmental values are transmitted through traditional folk art and stories from one generation to the next?

50 responses

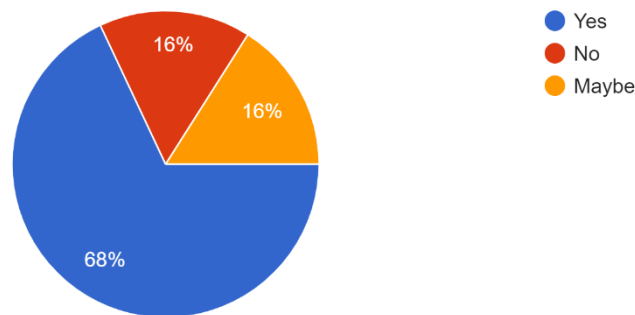


❖ **Do you believe that modern forms of media (e.g., TV, internet) are replacing traditional folk art and stories in conveying environmental messages?**

With the evolvement of technology many things are affected, and folk stories and folk art is one of them. In this question about 68% of people responded with a yes and there is a tie between no and maybe with 16%.

Do you believe that modern forms of media (e.g., TV, internet) are replacing traditional folk art and stories in conveying environmental messages?

50 responses

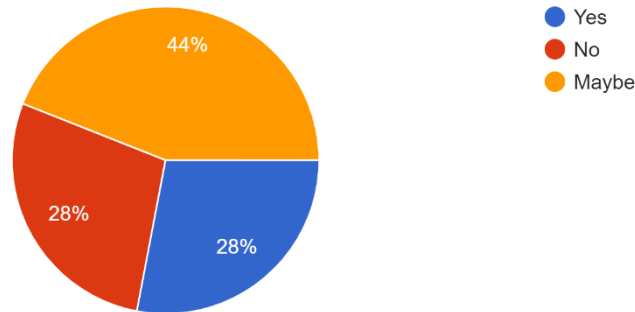


❖ **Are there any efforts made in your community to preserve or revitalize traditional folk art and stories related to the environment?**

Preserving folk art involves documenting traditions, supporting artists, educating the public, and fostering community involvement. Cultural institutions, digital archives, and policy initiatives play key roles in safeguarding these rich cultural expressions for future generations. In the society people about 28% feel that efforts and being done and not being done as yes and no response have a tie. And most people feel maybe it is done or it is not done at 44%.

Are there being any efforts made in your community to preserve or revitalize traditional folk art and stories related to the environment?

50 responses



Conclusions and Solutions

Protecting the folk art and stories of Punjab while safeguarding the environment involves recognizing the cultural and ecological interdependencies. Here's a conclusion and some solutions:

Conclusion:

The folk art and stories of Punjab are not just cultural artifacts but also repositories of traditional ecological knowledge. They reflect the deep connection between the community and its natural surroundings. However, these cultural treasures face threats from environmental degradation, urbanization, and changing lifestyles. Preserving Punjab's folk art and stories alongside protecting the environment requires a holistic approach that respects both cultural heritage and ecological sustainability. The folk art and folk stories of Punjab represent invaluable cultural assets deeply intertwined with the region's natural environment. As custodians of this rich heritage, it is imperative to adopt measures that ensure their preservation while safeguarding the environment they are rooted in. By promoting awareness, documentation, education, and sustainable practices, Punjab can forge a path where cultural richness and ecological harmony coexist harmoniously. This holistic approach not only honors the legacy of the past but also nurtures a sustainable future where cultural heritage and environmental stewardship thrive hand in hand.

Solutions:

1. Documentation and Preservation:

- Digitization: Record and digitize folk stories, songs, and art forms to create accessible archives. This preserves cultural heritage without harming the environment.

- Museum and Cultural Centers: Establish museums or cultural centers dedicated to Punjab's folk art and stories. These can serve as hubs for education and awareness about both culture and environment.

2. Education and Awareness:

- Community Workshops: Conduct workshops that highlight the environmental themes in folk stories and art. This fosters a sense of pride and ownership among communities while promoting eco-friendly practices.
- School Curriculum: Integrate folk art and stories into educational curricula at schools and colleges. Teach students about traditional ecological practices embedded in these cultural forms.

3. Promotion of Sustainable Practices:

- Artisan Support: Provide support and training to artisans involved in traditional crafts. Encourage sustainable sourcing of materials and eco-friendly production techniques.
- Tourism Guidelines: Develop responsible tourism guidelines that promote respect for local culture and environment. This includes showcasing folk art and stories in ways that do not disrupt local ecosystems.

4. Conservation of Natural Resources:

- Ecological Restoration: Partner with environmental organizations to restore and conserve natural habitats mentioned in folk stories. This ensures the continuity of cultural narratives tied to specific landscapes.
- Biodiversity Conservation: Emphasize the role of biodiversity conservation in preserving the settings and characters depicted in folk stories. Promote sustainable agricultural practices to maintain biodiversity.

5. Policy and Advocacy:

- Cultural Policy: Advocate for policies that recognize and protect traditional knowledge systems embedded in folk art and stories. Include cultural heritage considerations in environmental policies.
- Community Involvement: Involve local communities in decision-making processes regarding cultural and environmental conservation efforts. Foster partnerships between cultural custodians and environmental activists.

By integrating these solutions, Punjab can safeguard its rich folk art and stories while promoting environmental sustainability. This approach not only preserves cultural identity but also ensures that future generations inherit a thriving natural environment interconnected with their heritage.

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