

Talking threads: dresses of folk dances of Haryana

■ PREETI SODHI AND JATINDER SOHI

Received: 04.10.2011; Revised: 30.01.2012; Accepted: 01.04.2012

See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

PREETI SODHI

Govt. Home Science College
CHANDIGARH (U.T.) INDIA

Email: preetisodhi22@gmail.com

■ **ABSTRACT** : A solitary endeavour altogether changed the people's look towards folk dances. And celebrating Republic Day or any such other event without Haryanvi dances is like having cake without icing. Haryana is the soil of folk dances; folk music, festivals, fairs and theatre are the mirror of cultural history of this land. Saangs and Raginis are woven into the very fabric of Haryana's folk tradition. Khorias, Phags and Dhamaals are the three major folk dances of Haryana. These folk dances are repositories of traditions handed down from generation to generation with the package of dance tunes and traditional dresses as well. Realizing the need to explore more on this issue, the present paper jotted few objectives –to excavate folk dances of Haryana, to know the dresses worn by folk dancers while performing these dances as well as changes seen in them over the years.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Folk dances, Dresses, Changes

■ **HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER** : Sodhi, Preeti and Sohi, Jatinder (2012). Talking threads: dresses of folk dances of Haryana. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, 7 (1) : 48-52 .

Man cannot live without communication and art. Art is a communication of deepest and most lasting level. Amongst the art, dance was a once the most primitive and most sophisticated. Dancing is an independent art and can exist without audible accomplishment. India has a very rich tradition of folk dances (Hall, 1980). Every region manifests different cultural feature. From Kashmir to Kerala and Gujarat to Manipur, the whole rural India throbs with varied dance rhythms in their respective traditional costumes and dresses.

Dr. Iqbal Singh Saund (1998) has given a sound and elaborate definition of folk dance as follows- "Folk dance is a collective human dance based entirely on frantic joy which is performed spontaneously. This dance form admits no hard and first rules, restrictions of attire, properties, make-up and place."

The folk dances of India reveal not only the individual talents of our people, but the collective tradition of each part of our country side, the characteristic of the community, and a love for rhythms almost as atmosphere have brought about a great variety of rhythms, of musical compositions, of costumes and dance styles (Marg Publications, 1963). And Haryanvi dances too fulfill all the features which have been

mentioned in the former lines. Haryana, one of the youngest and the smallest states of the Indian Union has a chequered history right from antiquity. Haryana is essentially an agricultural tract but it excelled in spiritual development and traditions too. In this land of saints, sages, martyrs, and toiling tillers folk dances and folk songs be fitting all occasions have been composed and continuously practised. Though straight forwards, the deep emotions of Haryana populace find expressions in their folklore (Chibb, 1977). Haryana vividly depicts life in its variegated colour with joys and sorrow, ups and downs in melodious tunes and fascinating ways. It has a wide variety of folk songs for birth, marriage, separation, changing seasons, harvest, rain, fairs and festivals and the folk dances of Haryana, not only provide recreation and amusement to participants and spectators, but also physical exercise to participants and thrill to spectators (Gupta, 2009). The present paper has been taken up with a view to know about the variety of folk dances performed in Haryana and dresses worn while performing them. The study would be giving information regarding the changes seen over the years about these dresses.

Aims and objectives :

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- To locate out the folk dances of Haryana.
- To uncover out the dresses worn for different folk dances.
- To explore the changes seen in them over the years.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

For the purpose of in depth study, the contents have been taken from relevant books and articles from journals. The approach followed in this paper is based on primary as well as secondary data. The materials used have at times been drawn from the websites. For better understanding of dresses, Department of Cultural Affairs at Chandigarh was visited which held responsible to give training for folk dances and providing dresses to perform these folk dances at varied levels.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

Folk dances of Haryana :

Khoria, Phag and Dhamaal are the three major folk dances of Haryana. These folk dances are repositories of traditions handed down from generations to generations. Khoria dance is entirely performed by females only on weddings. Phag is a mixed dance performed by both males and females on the mellow month of Phalguna. Its second name is Holi dance. Dhamaal traces its roots of Mahabharata and performed by males only. Its second name is Daph dance. In their songs are immortalized folk heroes of the past. The songs which accompany the dances have lyrics almost naïve in their directness and are based on the typically Haryanvi folk tunes (Teej Brochure and Fairs and Festivals of Haryana). The musical accompaniment is provided by instruments like the been. The rhythmic is of the Nagara, Dholak and Been. The pleasant tinkling sound is produced by Manjiras, Chimtaas, Thali and Khartals. Some more folk dances had come into existence and were developed from the main folk dances *i.e.* Phag, Khoria and Dhamaal. These were Ghoomar, Loor, Gugga and Chaupia (Saang Brochure).

Dresses worn by folk dancers of Haryana :

Dress of female dancers of Khoria :

The costumes of women included Kurti, Daaman, Chunderi and Leggings.

Kurti :

Kurti was an upper garment. It was a loose fitted shirt like top reaching below waist and was white in colour. It had shirt collar and placket with white shirt buttons. The sleeves were full with cuffs, which facilitated the wrist ornaments to be shown. The hems were round shaped. The most commonly

used fabrics were cotton and terry cot. No decoration was used for this garment as the headdress and the ornaments covered most of it. It had a patch pocket on left hand side at chest level (Fig. 1).

Daaman :

Daaman was a gathered and paneled skirt worn as lower garment. it had gathers which were secured by belt sewn at the waist. It was usually plain but sometimes printed fabric was also used. The length of the Daaman varied between 28'' -40'' in different districts. The width of Daaman ranged between 12- 20 meters. It was in bright colours like red, yellow, blue, green, orange and black. The main decoration in Daaman was 2 contrasting pipings at the hems, which was wider on the wrong side and looked like a fine contrast line on the right side. It was locally

known as Thokar. To have a proper drape at the hems, a 4 inches wide thick fabric like khaddar was stitched. The colour of this thick fabric was generally matched with the Damman. The fabric used for this garment was pure cotton (Fig. 1).

Chunderi :

Chunderi, Chunder or Odnni were the names for the headdress in local language. It was always in bright colours like red, yellow, orange, green, magenta and maroon, purple and was worn as a contrast to Damman. It was 45 inches wide $1\frac{1}{2}$ meters in length. The chunderi was embellished with golden and silver bands (gotas), tikis, nylon laces and sequins 9 sitaras) as make it look more attractive. Voile was used for Chunderi (Fig. 1).

Draping fo chunderi :

- The chunderi was pinned from the corner on the shoulder at the left hand side of the wearer.
- Then it was draped over the head onto the borla from the right side and the rest of the fabric was hanged till left thigh.
- It was carefully pinned at the neck below the neck ornaments as to exhibit the different neck ornaments.



Fig. 1 : Dress of female dancers of Khoria

The most common fabrics used for chunderi were muslin and voile.

Leggings :

Leggings were slacks worn under Daaman to avoid obscenity as during certain dance movements as Daaman was raised high. These were in either black colour or the colour of Daaman. Cotton fabric was used for this garment.

Besides Daaman and Kurti, some dancers performed this dance in Kameez, salwar and chunderi.

Kameez- Salwar :

Kameez was the upper garment. It was a fitted shirt had round neck and full or half sleeves. It had no decoration. It was usually printed and in bright colours. It was between 30" -40" in length in different districts. The slits of the garment started from 18". Salwar was the lower garments, worn with the Kameez. It was simple with medium flare. The colour of Salwar was matched to the colour of Kameez. The width of



Fig. 2 : Dress of female dancers of Khorja

ankle end (Pauncha) varied between 12" -16". The fabric used for this costume was pure cotton.

Chunderi :

Chunderi used with Salwar Kameez was in bright colours like red, yellow, blue, green, orange, purple, magenta and maroon. The colour of chunderi was contrasting to the colour of Salwar-Kameez. The chunderi was decorated with golden and silver bands (goats), tikkis and sequins (Sitaras), voile was used (Fig. 2).

Draping :

The chunderi was pinned on the head and the surplus portion of the fabric was left loose at the

back which reached the knees or the mid- calf level.

Dress of male dhamaal dancers :

The main costume of the men performing Dhamaal included, Kurta, Patka, Dhoti and Khandwa (Pagri).

Kurta :

Kurta was an upper garment (Fig. 3). It was a plain, white



Fig. 3 : Dress of male dhamaal dancers

coloured shirt till knees or little above knees (38" -40" approx.). It had Chinese band and placket till chest with simple white buttons and sometimes with silver buttons (Fig. 4). It was a loose fitted sleeve without cuffs. The shirt had a front patch pocket on the left hand side at chest level and two side seam pockets on both the sides. No decoration was used for this garment. Cotton was the most commonly fabric.

Patka :

Patka was a sash or waist band of one meter long cotton cloth and was tied around waist over the kurta. The ends and sides of the patka were finished with picco or narrow machining. It was in bright colours like red, yellow, green blue, magenta. Besides giving bright contrast to white kurta,

it also helped in keeping the kurta in place during fast dance movements (Fig. 3).

Dhoti :

Dhoti, the lower garment, was in with cotton material usually muslin measuring about 4½ meters in length and 44 inches in width. It had a narrow grey or blue coloured strips on both the selvedges.

Draping of dhoti :

- The dhoti was draped by holding it width wise and a simple knot was made at navel. The dhoti was allowed to hang till ankles.
- The large portion of the dhoti coming over from the right side after making the knot was passed through or in - between the thighs.
- This passed portion made a few oblique and curvilinear folds giving cowl effect on both the thighs. This was known as langar in Haryanvi language.
- The surplus portion of the dhoti was wrapped round the waist and was called aadbandh in Haryanvi language.
- The combination of these two parts i.e. aadbandh and langar was known as dhoti in langar style.

The combination of these two parts i.e. aadbandh and langar was known as dhoti in langar style (Fig. 4).

Khandwa (Pagri) :

Khandwa was the headdress consisting of 5- 7 meters of muslin, in bright colours like red, blue, yellow, green orange and maroon. The colour of patka and khandwa worn by one dancer was not essentially the same and was often different for different dancers (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 : Silver buttons on kurta placket

Draping of Khandwa :

The material of pagri was folded in lengthwise direction. One end of it was then held in the left hand of the wearer, and the other portion was draped around the head. The surplus material in the end was pinned inside the wrapped portion in the centre and was called tura. The end which was held in the left hand of the wearer was allowed to fall down at the back. It was termed as phundana. Some other names for Khandwa used in different districts were Sapha, Pagda, Pagra and Mundasa. Sometimes, the Khandwa was starched with rice water (mand) and glitters (Chamki) to give glittery effect to it. Sometimes it was decorated with plumen (kalgi or tura) to make it look more attractive. Plume had golden, silver (artificial) and white coloured beads with coloured fringes (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 : Draping of Khandwa

Costumes of male and female dancers of Phag :

The costumes of male dancers were the same as those of Dhamaal *i.e.* Kurta as an upper garment, Dhoti as the lower garment, Patka as waistband and khandwa as the headgear. The colours used for the costume were also the same *i.e.* white coloured kurta and dhoti and bright colours like red, yellow, orange, maroon, green and blue for Khandwa (Pagri) and patka. The headgear *i.e.* the khandwa and the waistband *i.e.* the patka were either of the same or different colours. The fabric used for the costume was fine cotton for kurta and patka and muslin for dhoti and pagri.

Dresses for newly developed folk dances *i.e.* Loor, Gugga, Chaupia and Ghoomar were the same as for Khorja, Phag and Dhamaal.

Changes :

- A change in the female dance costume was seen in the villages. The use of traditional costume *i.e.* Daaman, Kurti and Chunderi was being dropped by younger generation who preferred to perform the dance in their daily wear *i.e.* Salwar Kameez and Chunderi
- The main changes seen in Daaman were in terms of variety of colours used and fullness of Daaman. Earlier, only primary colours used for it but now a days a variety of colours like purple, black, peach, orange were also used. The number of panels had decreased from 60 to 40 and hence the fullness of Daaman had decreased. This change in fullness was to mark it comfortable for the dancer as it was easier to dance with a lighter Daaman.

Conclusion :

In a nutshell, it can be said that Phag, Khorja and Dhamaal were the main folk dances of Haryana. The traditional dress comprising of Daaman, Kurti and Chunderi for the females and Dhoti, Kurti, Pagri (Khandwa) and Patka for the males had significant place in the art and culture of Haryana as all the folk dances had traditional dresses as their dance costume. With the changing times, however, the dresses of folk dances were undergoing some changes and the major change was the introduction of Salwar Kameez as a costume for Khorja dance. These folk dances were, therefore, not only reflecting the culture of Haryana but also were serving as the living source of its traditional costumes which otherwise, disappearing from the scene. To revive these dresses and cultural heritage of Haryana Department of Cultural Affairs have been giving their blood and sweat by organizing fairs, exhibitions etc.

Acknowledgement :

We are indebted to the former Deputy Director, Mr. Kamal Tiwari and all the staff members of Cultural Affairs Department of Haryana, Chandigarh for their help and cooperation. We express sincere thanks to Mr. Vikram Kadian, Ms. Leela Saini and Ms. Archana for their kind help. We would like to thank our respondents for their cooperation in the collection of the data for this work.

Authors' affiliations:

JATINDER SOHI, Department of Clothing and Textiles, Govt. Home Science College, CHANDIGARH (U.T.) INDIA
Email: sohijatinder@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Anonymous** (1963). Classical and folk dances of India. Marg Publications, MUMBAI (India).
- Chib, S.S.** (1977). *This beautiful India-Haryana*. New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers.

Department of Public Relations. Fairs and Festivals of Haryana. Brochure: CHANDIGARH, U.T. (India).

Department of Public Relations. Saang .Brochure: CHANDIGARH, U.T. (India).

Department of Public Relations. Teej .Brochure: CHANDIGARH, U.T. (India).

Gupta, S.P. (2009). Haryana- An overview: History, culture and economy. Chandigarh: Ess Pee Publications, CHANDIGARH, U.T. (India)..

Hall, J. (1980). *Dance- A complete guide to social folk and square dancing.* Ayer Company Publication, NEW YORK .

Saund, Iqbal Singh (1998). *Folk dances of Punjab.* National Book Trust of India, DELHI (India).
