

Feminine Trauma, Cultural Resistance, and Pingal-Structured Social Consciousness in Contemporary Haryanvi Ragni Tradition

Anand Kumar Ashodhiya

Independent Researcher, Former Warrant Officer, Indian Air Force, Folk Poet and Cultural Archivist,
Shahpur Turk, Sonipat, Haryana, India

Abstract

The present study examines the representation of feminine trauma, cultural resistance, and ethical consciousness in selected contemporary *Haryanvi Ragnis* composed by Anand Kumar Ashodhiya. Focusing on the compositions “सातमा फेरा,” “निर्भया,” “देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी,” “रील बणावण के चक्कर में,” “कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी,” and “धोखे की गाथा,” the article investigates how the *Haryanvi Saang-Ragni* tradition functions as a performative medium of social critique, moral reflection, and regional cultural memory. The study argues that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni has evolved beyond entertainment-oriented folk expression into a vernacular discourse capable of addressing dowry violence, gender insecurity, institutional apathy, digital exhibitionism, emotional commodification, and the fragmentation of social relationships. The research adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology combining textual interpretation, oral-performance studies, feminist literary criticism, cultural semiotics, and Pingal-based prosodic analysis. Particular attention is given to the interaction between thematic intensity and oral-musical structure. The article demonstrates that *Samamatrik* rhythmic organization, *Yati* placement, refrain systems, cadence patterns, and *Antya-Anupras* structures significantly enhance emotional participation and collective ethical reception during performance. The study further establishes that these Ragnis preserve indigenous oral aesthetics while simultaneously articulating contemporary social anxieties rooted in North Indian rural and semi-urban life. Through close literary and prosodic analysis, the article identifies a significant gap in existing scholarship concerning the integrated study of feminist folk discourse, oral-performance theory, socio-psychological interpretation, and Pingal prosody within *Haryanvi* literary traditions. Consequently, the research positions contemporary *Haryanvi Ragni* as an important archive of regional consciousness, cultural resistance, and vernacular ethical expression within modern Indian folk literature.

Keywords: Haryanvi Ragni, Pingal Shastra, Saang Tradition, Feminist Folk Discourse, Oral Tradition, Cultural Semiotics, Gendered Trauma, Folk Performance, Vernacular Ethics, North Indian Folk Poetics, Social Resistance

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Background Study and Contextual Framework

The oral traditions of North India have historically functioned as important carriers of collective memory, ethical reflection, and regional cultural consciousness. Within this wider folk landscape, the Haryanvi Saang and Ragni tradition occupies a distinctive position because of its ability to transform lived social experience into orally performative poetic discourse. Unlike highly codified classical literary systems that depend primarily upon textual permanence, Haryanvi folk traditions derive their strength from communal participation, oral immediacy, performative flexibility, and emotional accessibility.

Historically, Haryanvi Ragni developed as a participatory oral-poetic form capable of communicating mythology, historical memory, social ethics, and everyday experience within public spaces such as village *chaupals*, fairs, and *Saang* stages. The folk performer traditionally functions not merely as an entertainer but also as a commentator upon social reality, moral conflict, and community life. Through familiar dialect and performative cadence, Ragni creates a shared cultural space where collective anxieties and ethical concerns may be publicly negotiated.

Modern *Haryanvi Ragni* has increasingly incorporated contemporary social realities into its narrative structure. Concerns relating to dowry violence, gender insecurity, institutional failure, digital culture, emotional alienation, and moral fragmentation now appear prominently within folk discourse. This transformation reflects the adaptive nature of Indian oral traditions, which continuously reinterpret inherited cultural forms according to changing social conditions.

The selected compositions from Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's Avikavani corpus represent a significant example of this evolving folk consciousness. In "सातमा फेरा," the sacred symbolism of marriage rituals is reinterpreted through the lens of feminine suffering, dowry pressure, emotional humiliation, and patriarchal expectation. The composition challenges idealized matrimonial imagery by exposing the psychological and social burdens often concealed beneath ritual sanctity.

Similarly, "निर्भया" and "देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी" transform the Ragni tradition into a medium of collective protest against gender violence and institutional insensitivity. "रील बनावण के चक्कर में" addresses the cultural consequences of digital exhibitionism and performative visibility within social media culture. In contrast, "कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी" reconstructs feminine identity through affirmational symbolism rooted in familial affection, creation, and social dignity. "धोखे की गाथा" explores relational distrust, transactional morality, and emotional instability within contemporary social life.

These compositions demonstrate that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni functions not only as folk entertainment but also as a vernacular ethical archive preserving social tensions, cultural anxieties, and collective emotional experiences within regional oral discourse.

Literary Review

Scholarly engagement with Indian oral traditions has increasingly emphasized the relationship between performance, memory, and cultural continuity. Ruth Finnegan's work on oral literature established that oral traditions possess independent aesthetic systems shaped by rhythm, repetition, vocal delivery, and communal reception rather than by written textuality alone. Her observations remain highly relevant to Haryanvi Ragni traditions, where oral-musical performance significantly shapes meaning.

A.K. Ramanujan demonstrated that Indian oral narratives continuously reinterpret inherited cultural material according to local social realities. This perspective helps explain how contemporary Haryanvi Ragnis incorporate present-day concerns such as gender violence, institutional apathy, emotional fragmentation, and digital culture into traditional performative frameworks.

Richard Bauman's performance-centered approach further clarifies that oral literature derives meaning through social enactment and audience participation. In *Haryanvi Ragni*, rhythm, refrain, tonal emphasis, and communal listening collectively transform poetic narration into ethical public discourse. Stuart Blackburn's studies of Indian oral epics similarly emphasize the dynamic and evolving character of regional folk traditions.

Within Indian aesthetic scholarship, Kapila Vatsyayan highlighted the inseparability of movement, rhythm, music, and narration in indigenous performance traditions. Such observations are particularly applicable to the *Saang-Ragni* tradition, where poetic structure functions simultaneously as literary composition and performative expression.

The feminist implications of folk reinterpretation also become significant in the present study. Compositions such as "सातमा फेरा" and "निर्भया" transform oral poetry into a medium of social critique by foregrounding feminine suffering, institutional failure, and psychological trauma. Iravati Karve's sociological insights into kinship structures and gendered familial systems provide an important interpretative framework for understanding these themes.

Despite important contributions to oral tradition studies, detailed interdisciplinary scholarship on contemporary *Haryanvi Ragni* remains limited. Existing research often focuses primarily upon cultural documentation, linguistic description, or historical development without integrating feminist criticism, performance studies, Pingal prosody, and socio-psychological interpretation within a unified analytical framework.

The present study attempts to address this scholarly gap by examining how contemporary *Haryanvi Ragni* combines oral aesthetics, social criticism, feminist consciousness, and Pingal-based rhythmic structure within a single performative system.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary research methodology combining textual interpretation, oral-performance analysis, feminist literary criticism, cultural

semiotics, and Pingal-oriented prosodic examination. The selected Ragnis are approached as performative oral texts whose meaning emerges through the interaction of language, rhythm, cadence, audience participation, and regional cultural symbolism.

The primary corpus consists of selected compositions from Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's Avikavani Ragni corpus, particularly "सातमा फेरा," "निर्भया," "देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी," "रील बणावण के चक्कर में," "कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी," and "धोखे की गाथा." These texts are analysed both as literary compositions and as oral-performance structures embedded within the Haryanvi Saang tradition.

The study employs performance-centered interpretation to examine how oral recitation transforms poetic structure into collective emotional experience. Feminist analysis is used to interpret representations of feminine identity, domestic suffering, institutional insecurity, and cultural resistance. Cultural semiotic reading is applied to recurring symbols such as the "सातमा फेरा," "कैंडल मार्च," "कौरव दरबार," and social-media imagery.

Pingal-oriented analysis focuses upon *Mātrā* balance, *Yati* placement, refrain systems, cadence patterns, end-rhyme continuity, and oral-musical delivery. Rather than treating *Pingal* merely as technical versification, the study investigates how rhythmic organization intensifies emotional communication and performative continuity.

Secondary sources include works related to Indian oral traditions, folk dramaturgy, feminist folklore, performance theory, and Hindi poetics. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the article interprets contemporary Haryanvi Ragni as a multidimensional cultural and performative discourse.

Narrative and Literary Analysis

The selected Ragnis collectively reveal the emergence of a socially interventionist folk consciousness within contemporary Haryanvi oral literature. These compositions engage directly with gendered trauma, institutional breakdown, ethical anxiety, and cultural transformation while remaining firmly rooted in regional linguistic expression and performative accessibility.

Among the selected texts, "सातमा फेरा" occupies a particularly important position because it reinterprets the sacred symbolism of Hindu marriage rituals through the lens of feminine suffering and domestic inequality. The traditional symbolism of the "सात फेरे," usually associated with companionship and sacred continuity, is transformed into a metaphor for emotional dispossession, dowry pressure, patriarchal control, and post-marital erasure of feminine identity.

The female voice within the composition emerges as psychologically conscious and emotionally wounded rather than passively submissive. The Ragni exposes how ritual sanctity may coexist with social coercion and emotional violence. Rather than idealizing sacrifice, the composition interrogates the structural pressures imposed upon women within patriarchal domestic systems.

The emotional intensity deepens further in “निर्भया,” which foregrounds gender violence and institutional failure through highly direct oral imagery:

“वासना के भूखे दरिन्दे, याड़े कदम कदम पै पावें सैं
करकै इज्जत तार तार फेर, मौत के घाट पहुँचावें सैं”

These lines immediately establish an atmosphere of fear and moral collapse where feminine vulnerability becomes socially normalized. The composition’s emotional force intensifies through the child-victim narrative: “मैं तीन साल की बच्ची थी मनै, मौत की नींद सुल्या गया।”

The Ragni transforms personal suffering into collective mourning while simultaneously questioning symbolic public responses to violence: “आज मैं भी निर्भया बणा देइ, मेरी लाश पै कैडल जळावें सैं।”

Here the “कैडल मार्च” becomes a symbol of performative grief lacking structural transformation. The concluding theological interrogation further deepens the composition’s ethical intensity:

“हे पणमेशर तूँ हे बता तनै, यो कुणसा खेल रचाया सैं
के सारी गलती नारी देह की, जो मानव मन भटकाया सैं।”

“देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी” extends this discourse toward collective civic consciousness. Institutional paralysis is condensed into the powerful metaphor: “लँगड़ा लूला पुलिस महकमा, आंधी बहरी है सरकार”

The Ragni critiques not only administrative failure but also media complicity and public silence. The invocation of “कौरव का दरबार” links contemporary injustice with epic moral collapse, thereby integrating regional folk criticism with broader civilizational symbolism.

In contrast, “कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी” functions as an affirmative counter-discourse celebrating feminine dignity, education, affection, and creative power. The refrain: “कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी हो सैं, किसे भागवान घर आती है” repositions the daughter from perceived burden to cultural blessing. The composition traces feminine experience across familial affection, educational achievement, and maternal creation, ultimately elevating feminine existence into a symbol of continuity and renewal.

The satirical composition “रील बणावण के चक्कर में” addresses digital exhibitionism and performative identity culture. Lines such as: “फेसबुक और इंस्टाग्राम पै, एक नया पुवाड़ा होग्या” reflect anxieties surrounding algorithmic visibility, commercialization of selfhood, and erosion of social restraint. The repeated verbal closure “होग्या” produces an atmosphere of irreversible cultural transformation.

Similarly, “धोखे की गाथा” explores relational distrust and emotional commodification within contemporary social structures. The composition repeatedly suggests that materialism has destabilized familial and emotional relationships: “परिवारों के मोल रहे ना इब पैसा ए सब का रब होग्या।”

Collectively, these Ragnis demonstrate that contemporary Haryanvi folk literature has evolved into a sophisticated medium capable of addressing gender politics, institutional anxiety, emotional fragmentation, and cultural resistance within regional oral discourse.

Pingal and Prosodic Analysis

The selected Ragnis reveal a disciplined oral-poetic structure shaped by inherited Pingal principles while remaining adaptable to contemporary themes and performative needs. Although modern Haryanvi Ragni operates within flexible oral traditions rather than rigid classical codification, the selected compositions display consistent rhythmic balance, Yati organization, refrain continuity, and oral-musical cadence.

A dominant feature across these compositions is the recurring use of *Samamatrik* and *Chaubola*-oriented rhythmic structures generally sustaining balanced *Mātrā* patterns suitable for extended oral recitation. These rhythmic frameworks support emotional continuity, audience participation, and mnemonic retention during live performance.

In “सातमा फेरा,” elongated cadence patterns and carefully distributed pauses intensify the emotional atmosphere associated with feminine suffering and domestic pressure. The refrain system repeatedly returns the listener to the psychological burden carried by the female voice. Tonal descent after major pauses often reinforces the emotional sense of helplessness and social suffocation.

“निर्भया” employs a heavier and more forceful oral cadence that supports the *Karuna-Raudra* emotional synthesis of the composition. Repeated rhyme endings such as “पावैं सैं,” “बहावैं सैं,” and “जळावैं सैं” create strong acoustic continuity during performance. Similarly, compressed internal rhyme structures enhance oral momentum and emotional emphasis.

In “देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी,” the comparatively assertive cadence complements the composition’s protest-oriented tone. Yati placement often strengthens rhetorical emphasis, especially within lines associated with institutional critique and civic outrage. Repeated end-rhyme structures create oral cohesion suitable for collective recitation.

The rhythmic character of “रील बणावण के चक्कर में” differs slightly through the use of rapid internal repetition and accelerated oral movement. This heightened rhythmic speed mirrors the overstimulated tempo of digital culture and performative visibility associated with social media environments.

“कन्या रतन लक्ष्मी,” by contrast, adopts softer phonetic textures and comparatively expansive cadence patterns aligned with emotional warmth and familial affection. Its refrain structure functions as an emotionally restorative anchor within the composition.

“धोखे की गाथा” demonstrates the adaptive flexibility of contemporary Haryanvi prosody through the incorporation of Urdu-influenced rhyme textures and conversational rhythmic flow. The composition prioritizes oral impact and performative accessibility while preserving balanced cadence patterns.

Across all selected Ragnis, Pingal functions less as rigid technical ornamentation and more as a performative rhythmic framework that strengthens emotional communication, collective memory, and oral continuity. Yati placement, refrain recurrence, rhyme sequencing, and tonal modulation collectively transform social critique into participatory public experience.

Discussion

The selected Ragnis demonstrate that contemporary Haryanvi folk literature has become an important medium of social introspection and ethical commentary within regional cultural discourse. These compositions move beyond entertainment-oriented folk performance and engage directly with questions of gender justice, institutional accountability, emotional fragmentation, and cultural transition.

Particularly significant is the reinterpretation of patriarchal symbolism within “सातमा फेरा.” By exposing emotional suffering and domestic coercion beneath ritual sanctity, the composition relocates feminist critique from elite theoretical spaces into accessible vernacular oral culture. The Ragni therefore functions simultaneously as literary expression and social testimony.

Similarly, “निर्भया” and “देश की बेटी म्हारी बेटी” transform folk poetry into a medium of collective protest against gender violence and institutional indifference. These compositions portray violence not merely as isolated criminality but as evidence of broader moral and social failure.

The study also reveals growing folk anxiety regarding digital modernity and commodified social life. “रील बणावण के चक्कर में” and “धोखे की गाथा” critique performative identity culture, emotional commercialization, and relational instability emerging within consumerist and algorithm-driven environments. These compositions should not be interpreted as simplistic cultural conservatism alone; rather, they reflect wider concerns regarding moral disorientation and the transformation of human relationships.

Another important finding concerns the continuing relevance of Pingal prosody within contemporary oral traditions. The emotional impact of these Ragnis depends not solely upon thematic content but also upon rhythmic organization, refrain systems, oral cadence, and performative delivery. Prosodic structure significantly shapes audience reception and collective emotional participation.

The study therefore establishes that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni should be understood as a multidimensional cultural form combining literature, oral performance, ethical discourse, and regional knowledge production. Its significance extends beyond folklore documentation into broader discussions concerning vernacular modernity, feminist cultural expression, oral poetics, and regional social consciousness.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni constitutes a significant oral-literary tradition capable of addressing complex social, ethical, and psychological realities within North Indian cultural life. Through the selected compositions of Anand Kumar

Ashodhiya's Avikavani corpus, the article establishes that modern Haryanvi folk poetry has evolved into a performative medium of feminist articulation, social criticism, ethical resistance, and cultural reflection.

Among the selected compositions, "सातमा फेरा" acquires particular importance because it transforms sacred matrimonial symbolism into a critique of dowry violence, emotional dispossession, patriarchal pressure, and post-marital feminine erasure. The composition demonstrates how folk performance traditions may reinterpret inherited cultural symbols in response to contemporary social realities.

The study further reveals that the emotional effectiveness of these Ragnis is deeply connected to their Pingal-oriented rhythmic structure. *Mātrā* balance, *Yati* distribution, refrain systems, cadence patterns, and oral-musical sequencing collectively strengthen emotional immersion and performative continuity. Pingal therefore emerges not merely as a technical metrical framework but as a living oral mechanism supporting collective memory and ethical communication.

Equally important is the way these compositions localize contemporary crises—including gender violence, institutional failure, digital exhibitionism, emotional commodification, and relational instability—within accessible vernacular discourse. The Haryanvi *Saang-Ragni* tradition thus functions simultaneously as literature, performance, social archive, and ethical pedagogy.

The article also identifies the continuing absence of integrated scholarship combining feminist criticism, oral-performance theory, Pingal analysis, cultural semiotics, and socio-psychological interpretation within contemporary Haryanvi literary studies. By addressing this interdisciplinary gap, the present study contributes toward a broader understanding of North Indian folk poetics and regional knowledge systems.

Future research may further explore comparative South Asian oral traditions, digital transformations in folk performance, audience psychology, and evolving regional prosodic structures within contemporary vernacular cultures.

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