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Pedagogical Memorials, Vedantic Consciousness And Ethical Selfhood In Contemporary Haryanvi Ragni Tradition

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Abstract

The present research article critically examines selected spiritually, ethically and philosophically oriented Haryanvi Ragnis composed by Anand Kumar Ashodhiya, with special reference to Ragnis गुरू पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि, बुढ़ापा, हरि भजन, हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है, बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन, शिवजी भोळे का नया कांवड़ भजन, दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती and यो बदल गया इन्सान from the thematic corpus identified as “Pedagogical Memorials and Vedantic Metaphysics.” The study investigates how these compositions collectively construct a vernacular philosophical discourse centred upon guru-veneration, collective memory, Bhakti consciousness, ethical anxiety, social fragmentation, Vedantic ontology and moral selfhood within the oral-performative framework of Haryanvi Saang-Shaili traditions.

Employing an interdisciplinary methodology grounded in oral tradition studies, Pingal prosody, folk-performance theory, cultural semiotics, psychological literary criticism and vernacular philosophical hermeneutics, the article argues that these Ragnis function not merely as devotional or commemorative lyrics but as sophisticated oral-literary systems preserving regional epistemology, ethical pedagogy and performative spirituality. The selected corpus demonstrates how contemporary Haryanvi folk literature transforms abstract metaphysical concerns into emotionally accessible vernacular expression through disciplined mātrā architecture, refrain systems, dialogic cadence, tonal gravity, symbolic metaphors and orally adaptive rhythmic structures.

The article further analyses how Pingal Shastra continues to operate as an active structural force shaping emotional intensity, mnemonic continuity and collective participation within oral recitation traditions. Particular attention has been devoted to the integration of Bhakti aesthetics, *Karuna*, *Shanta* and socio-ethical discourse through *Lavani-Mishrit Samamatrik Chhand* structures, *Guru-Laghu* sequencing, *Yati* placement and refrain-oriented performative rhythm.

The study identifies a significant scholarly gap in contemporary Haryanvi literary criticism where integrated analyses combining Pingal studies, oral-performance theory, vernacular Vedantic discourse, feminist interpretation and psychological folk aesthetics remain substantially underdeveloped. By situating these compositions within wider frameworks of Indian folk dramaturgy, oral epistemology and regional literary

modernities, the article establishes Ashodhiya's Avikavani corpus as a major contemporary contribution to North Indian folk poetics, ethical folk consciousness and performative philosophical literature.

Keywords

Haryanvi Ragni, Saang-Shaili, Pingal Shastra, Oral Tradition, Folk Performance, Cultural Memory, Folk Hermeneutics, North Indian Oral Literature, Vernacular Philosophy, Oral Poetics, Ethical Selfhood

Background Study and Contextual Framework

The oral literary traditions of North India have historically functioned as living repositories of collective memory, ethical pedagogy, ritual continuity and vernacular philosophical reflection. Unlike manuscript-centred literary cultures that depend primarily upon textual preservation, oral traditions sustain themselves through performative repetition, rhythmic retention, communal participation and adaptive narration. Within this broader continuum, the Haryanvi Saang-Shaili and Ragni tradition occupies a uniquely important position because it transforms everyday socio-cultural experience into emotionally resonant poetic discourse rooted in regional speech aesthetics.

Haryanvi Ragni is not merely a folk-song tradition but an epistemological system through which communities negotiate morality, spirituality, social transformation, emotional suffering and cultural continuity. Through orally adaptive poetic structures, philosophical abstraction becomes socially accessible and emotionally participatory. Consequently, folk performance emerges not only as entertainment but also as pedagogy, ethical commentary, ritual remembrance and collective introspection.

The selected Ragnis from *Ashodhiya's Avikavani* corpus illustrate this dynamic with remarkable sophistication. "गुरू पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि" transforms memorial remembrance into performative cultural historiography by preserving the artistic legacy of *Mahashay Paleram Dahiya* within oral memory structures. "बुढ़ापा" relocates folk discourse into the domain of sociological and psychological critique, exposing generational alienation and the emotional collapse of familial ethics within rapidly transforming social realities.

Similarly, the devotional compositions "हरि भजन," "बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन," and "शिवजी भोळे का नया कावड़ भजन" extend Bhakti traditions into contemporary oral-musical frameworks where devotional participation operates collectively rather than institutionally. These compositions foreground surrender, moral accountability, pilgrimage consciousness and spiritual refuge through repetitive refrain structures and emotionally accessible vernacular diction.

The philosophically expansive Ragnis "हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है" and "दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती" further demonstrate how Haryanvi oral literature vernacularizes complex Vedantic and Puranic discourse without sacrificing metaphysical depth. Abstract philosophical concepts such as आत्मा, धर्म, करुणा, मोक्ष and cosmic continuity are transformed into orally intelligible emotional structures capable of collective reception.

The socially confrontational composition "यो बदल गया इन्सान" functions as an ethical audit of contemporary society by critiquing ritual hypocrisy, consumerism, caste fragmentation, moral corruption, patriarchal violence and performative religiosity. Folk poetry here becomes an active medium of social introspection and ethical resistance rather than nostalgic cultural preservation.

A.K. Ramanujan's understanding of Indian oral traditions as contextually adaptive rather than textually fixed becomes especially relevant in interpreting these compositions. Likewise, Richard Bauman's formulation of performance as communicative action illuminates how meaning within Ragni traditions emerges through vocality, cadence, tonal modulation, performative pauses and audience interaction. Ruth Finnegan similarly emphasized that oral poetry cannot be reduced to textual transcription because rhythm, repetition and performative realization constitute essential dimensions of semantic production.

Within Haryanvi literary culture, therefore, Ragni emerges simultaneously as poetry, pedagogy, philosophy, performance and ethical discourse. The selected corpus demonstrates how contemporary folk literature continues to preserve collective memory and regional consciousness while negotiating the anxieties of modernity through sophisticated oral-poetic structures.

Literary Review

The academic study of Indian folk literature has evolved significantly through contributions from folklore studies, oral epic theory, performance criticism, cultural anthropology and literary historiography. Earlier folkloristic approaches often reduced oral traditions to anthropological curiosities or pre-modern remnants. However, later scholarship increasingly recognized oral literature as a sophisticated aesthetic and epistemological system possessing independent intellectual legitimacy.

Within Indian literary criticism, Ramchandra Shukla emphasized the social grounding of literary production, while Hazari Prasad Dwivedi foregrounded the democratizing role of Bhakti traditions in vernacular knowledge formation. Vidyanivas Mishra further interpreted regional language traditions as living embodiments of civilizational continuity and cultural memory. These frameworks collectively provide an important foundation for understanding the philosophical and ethical dimensions of Haryanvi Ragni traditions.

A.K. Ramanujan's theoretical intervention regarding the plurality of Indian narrative traditions proved particularly influential in legitimizing regional reinterpretations as culturally autonomous systems rather than derivative distortions of canonical texts. This insight becomes especially relevant for Haryanvi oral traditions, where mythological, devotional and ethical themes are continuously reconfigured according to local emotional and socio-cultural realities.

Richard Bauman's performance theory further contributes to the understanding of Haryanvi Ragni because meaning within oral traditions emerges performatively rather than textually. Gesture, repetition, tonal emphasis, rhythmic acceleration and audience interaction collectively shape semantic reception. Ruth Finnegan similarly demonstrated that oral poetry possesses its own internal aesthetic discipline, prosodic engineering and mnemonic architecture. These theoretical frameworks become particularly important while examining the sophisticated Pingal-oriented structures visible throughout Ashodhiya's compositions.

Kapila Vatsyayan's studies on Indian performance traditions illuminate the interconnectedness of poetry, music, ritual participation and bodily movement within folk culture. Stuart Blackburn's scholarship on oral epics further establishes that regional oral traditions preserve collective identity by localizing historical and mythological memory into performative narrative systems. Alf Hiltebeitel's work on epic and ritual traditions also helps contextualize the theological and cosmological dimensions visible within compositions such as “दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती.”

Within Haryanvi literary scholarship specifically, Saang and Ragni traditions have often been approached from linguistic or performative-historical perspectives. However, detailed interdisciplinary studies integrating Pingal analysis, oral-performance theory, vernacular metaphysics, feminist interpretation and psychological criticism remain comparatively limited.

The scholarly contributions of Anand Kumar Ashodhiya toward Pingal-oriented Haryanvi literary criticism constitute an important development within contemporary regional scholarship. His previously published studies concerning Saang-Shaili, folk prosody, Adharajan traditions and Haryanvi Ragni aesthetics have contributed significantly toward formalizing analytical frameworks for oral literature studies in Haryana. Particularly important is his emphasis upon Pingal Shastra as an active structuring force within oral performance traditions rather than merely an archival poetic science.

Despite these advancements, a major research gap continues to persist. Existing scholarship rarely synthesizes oral-performance theory, Pingal prosody, vernacular Vedantic discourse, psychological folk aesthetics, feminist interpretation and cultural semiotics into a unified interpretative framework. The present study therefore attempts to address this lacuna by examining the selected Avikavani Ragnis as simultaneously performative, philosophical, ethical and prosodic texts.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary and performance-oriented methodology grounded in textual analysis, oral tradition studies, folk-performance theory, Pingal prosody, cultural semiotics, vernacular philosophical hermeneutics and psychological literary criticism. The selected Ragnis are approached not merely as written lyrical artifacts but as orally adaptive performative texts whose semantic force emerges through cadence, vocal modulation, rhythmic continuity, tonal descent and communal participation.

The primary textual corpus consists of selected spiritually and ethically oriented Ragnis authored by Anand Kumar Ashodhiya, namely “गुरू पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि,” “बुढ़ापा,” “हरि भजन,” “हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है,” “बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन,” “शिवजी भोळे का नया कांवड़ भजन,” “दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती,” and “यो बदल गया इन्सान.” Secondary sources include major theoretical works concerning oral traditions, Indian aesthetics, Bhakti literature, Pingal Shastra, folk dramaturgy and performance theory.

Close textual analysis has been employed to examine metaphor systems, emotional layering, symbolic structures, ethical discourse, philosophical vocabulary and narrative architecture. Performance theory is utilized to investigate how refrain systems, oral-musical repetition, tonal gravity, rhythmic compression and performative pauses generate collective emotional participation within Saang-oriented recitation traditions.

Cultural-semiotic methodology assists in interpreting symbolic objects such as कांवड़, दीप, श्राद्ध, चरण, यज्ञ, शक्ति पीठ and हरि-कीर्तन as carriers of collective memory and ritual consciousness. Psychological literary analysis further enables interpretation of grief, existential anxiety, devotional surrender, ethical exhaustion and emotional alienation within compositions such as “बुढ़ापा” and “यो बदल गया इन्सान.”

A feminist interpretative lens has also been selectively employed while examining familial fragmentation, domestic emotionality and gendered ethical structures embedded within the corpus. Although these compositions are not overtly feminist texts, they nevertheless reveal important dimensions of emotional labour, generational neglect and patriarchal social tensions.

Pingal-oriented analysis constitutes a central methodological component of the study. Detailed attention has been devoted to Chhand classification, Samamatrik architecture, Guru-Laghu sequencing, Yati placement, refrain continuity, tonal cadence, oral-musical compression and performative rhythm. Folk prosody is treated here not as decorative formality but as a mnemonic and emotional technology through which oral literature sustains collective memory and participatory experience.

The study ultimately treats Haryanvi Ragni as a legitimate vernacular knowledge system through which communities preserve ethical instruction, spiritual consciousness, historical continuity and philosophical reflection within performative cultural frameworks.

Narrative and Literary Analysis

The selected Ragnis collectively construct a multidimensional ethical and philosophical universe in which memory, devotion, grief, social critique and metaphysical reflection coexist within an orally dynamic literary framework. These compositions are unified not through thematic uniformity but through a shared cultural grammar rooted in Haryanvi folk consciousness.

“गुरू पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि” occupies a foundational position within the corpus because it transforms memorial remembrance into pedagogical historiography. *Guru Paleram Dahiya* is represented not merely as an individual performer but as a civilizational carrier of Haryanvi Saang-Shaili. The line: “सैन शिरोमणि, श्री पालेराम नै, संस्कृति का उत्थान करया” situates the *guru* within a larger framework of regional cultural continuity where artistic identity becomes inseparable from collective memory. The composition further intensifies emotional continuity through the declaration: “कौण कहै सै, पाले मरग्या, वो मेरे हिरदे भीतर नहीं मरया”

Here biological mortality is transcended through oral remembrance, transforming grief into performative immortality. The Ragni therefore functions simultaneously as elegy, archive and cultural pedagogy.

In “बुढ़ापा,” *Ashodhiya* presents one of the most psychologically intense portrayals of generational alienation within contemporary Haryanvi folk literature. The composition critiques not merely individual insensitivity but the structural disintegration of familial ethics under modern socio-economic pressures. The refrain: “बचपन बीत्या, गई जवानी, फेर बैरी बुढ़ापा आवै सै” constructs aging as an existential and emotional condition rather than a biological inevitability. Similarly: “मत भेजै तूँ वृद्ध आश्रम, यो म्हारी ज्यान का गाळा सै” transforms the वृद्धाश्रम into a metaphor of civilizational abandonment. Domestic space itself becomes psychologically destabilized through emotional neglect and intergenerational fragmentation.

The devotional compositions “हरि भजन,” “बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन” and “शिवजी भोळे का नया कांवड़ भजन” extend Bhakti consciousness into localized oral-musical frameworks. In “हरि भजन,” the line: “दिल कहता है पुत्र कमाले, पर लोभ में कदम हटाले” captures the internal conflict between ethical aspiration and material temptation. The recurring refrain: “हिरदे में हरि बसाले” functions as both devotional invocation and sonic meditation stabilizing collective moral consciousness.

Similarly, “बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन” foregrounds surrender-oriented devotional psychology through the refrain: “हारे का सहारा तूँ, दुनिया में निराळा तूँ”

The deity emerges as an emotional refuge for psychologically exhausted individuals navigating social and existential uncertainty. Pilgrimage itself becomes embodied devotion where physical endurance parallels spiritual longing.

“शिवजी भोळे का नया कांवड़ भजन” expands this devotional field into collective ecstasy and participatory ritual culture. The imagery: “डोल नगाड़े बाजे बाजे, लगा शिवजी का दरबार” creates an acoustically expansive communal landscape where individual identity dissolves into rhythmic collective movement. Devotion here is not solitary contemplation but embodied communal participation.

Theologically, “हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है” represents one of the most philosophically mature compositions within the corpus. Rather than reducing Sanatan Dharma to ritual orthodoxy, the Ragni foregrounds ethical universality through compassion, forgiveness and restraint: “शील छमा और दया भाव इकी रग रग बीच समाया है”

Likewise, the metaphysical declaration: “अजर अमर अविनाशी आत्मा, परम ज्योत की परछाई” vernacularizes Vedantic ontology into emotionally accessible oral discourse.

“दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती” further demonstrates the capacity of Haryanvi Ragni to absorb Puranic cosmology into regional performative aesthetics. Mythological narration becomes localized through oral cadence and communal memory structures. The line: “क्यावन शक्ति पीठ बणे, सती के पिण्ड इस धरती पै” transforms cosmological fragmentation into sacred geography, thereby integrating mythic consciousness with regional devotional imagination.

The most socially confrontational composition within the corpus is undoubtedly “यो बदल गया इन्सान.” Here *Ashodhiya* develops an expansive ethical critique targeting ritual hypocrisy, caste fragmentation, corruption, consumerism and patriarchal violence. The line: “मात पिता भूख तै मरज्यां श्राद्ध में कौआ खाज्या सै” condenses moral hypocrisy into a single devastating ethical image. Likewise: “कन्या भ्रूण हत्या बढ़गी, मरवावै सब दे दे दाम” foregrounds gender violence and moral collapse within contemporary society.

Through these compositions, Haryanvi Ragni emerges not merely as cultural preservation but as a dynamic medium of ethical resistance, philosophical reflection and vernacular social criticism.

Pingal Analysis

The selected Avikavani corpus demonstrates a highly disciplined yet orally adaptive engagement with Pingal Shastra. Despite thematic diversity, the Ragnis collectively maintain strong mātrā-consciousness, rhythmic continuity, refrain stability and performative cadence characteristic of advanced Haryanvi Saang-oriented prosody.

Most of the compositions operate within variants of Lavani-Mishrit Dirgha Samamatrik Chaubola structures where Charan distribution generally ranges between twenty-six and thirty mātrās. This metrical elasticity allows emotional expansion without sacrificing rhythmic discipline. Yati placement frequently appears around the fourteenth or sixteenth mātrā, producing controlled oral suspension before terminal rhyme closure.

“गुरू पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि” demonstrates a structurally balanced memorial cadence associated with emotionally resonant oral recitation traditions. Repetitive terminal closures such as “करया,” “धरया,” “भरया,” “तरया” and “मरया” create strong sonic continuity across the composition. The repeated phrasing: “चाचा ताऊ, कुटुम्ब कबीला...” generates acoustic intensification and collective mnemonic retention.

“बुढ़ापा” employs a descending tonal architecture suitable for Karuna-oriented expression. The recurring suffixes “आवै सै,” “लखावै सै,” “रूसावै सै” and “मनावै सै” create cyclical emotional exhaustion through rhythmic repetition. The Yati near the sixteenth mātrā allows psychological hesitation before semantic collapse, intensifying emotional gravity.

“हरि भजन” shifts toward a Laya-Pradhan devotional structure with comparatively lighter mātrā distribution. The refrain: “हिरदे में हरि बसाले” functions simultaneously as rhythmic anchor, meditative return and participatory sonic device. Internal repetition systems accelerate emotional and philosophical intensity during oral recitation.

“हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है” demonstrates remarkable refrain discipline through repeated phonetic closures such as “सनातन है,” “पुरातन है,” “अनुशासन है” and “नारायण है.” These compressed internal rhyme systems generate strong oral-musical cohesion while reinforcing philosophical continuity.

“बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन” exemplifies congregational Bhakti musicality through refrain-driven cyclical rhythm. The repeated invocation: “हारे का सहारा तूँ” creates participatory emotional circulation suitable for collective devotional singing. Similarly, “शिवजी भीळे का नया कांवड़ भजन” employs percussion-oriented rhythmic acceleration where recurring structures such as: “मैं कांवड़ लेवण आया” function as sonic returns stabilizing communal performance rhythm.

“दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती” sustains epic-narrative continuity through expansive Chaubola architecture. Continuous narrative movement without excessive refrain interruption enables mythological chronology to unfold with performative fluidity. Terminal rhyme structures such as “उद्धार किया,” “विस्तार किया,” “संस्कार किया” and “निस्सार किया” reinforce epic tonal gravity.

The most compressed and rhetorically aggressive composition within the corpus is “यो बदल गया इन्सान.” Rapid ethical declarations demand condensed rhythmic delivery supported by sharp internal Yati placement. The terminal rhyme chain “इन्सान,” “अज्ञान,” “भगवान,” “हैवान” and “वरदान” creates forceful rhetorical closure appropriate for socio-ethical critique.

Across the corpus, Pingal operates not as ornamental residue of classical poetics but as the structural nervous system of oral literature. Rhythm becomes emotional architecture; Yati regulates psychological pause; refrain systems encode collective memory; cadence intensifies rasa; and oral-musical compression transforms vernacular speech into participatory poetic experience.

Discussion

The selected Avikavani Ragnis collectively demonstrate that contemporary Haryanvi folk literature continues to function as an intellectually dynamic and culturally responsive literary system. These compositions negotiate the tensions between spirituality and materialism, memory and modernity, ethical continuity and social fragmentation within a deeply rooted oral-performative framework.

One of the most significant contributions of the corpus lies in its construction of pedagogical memory. Guru Paleram Dahiya appears not merely as an individual teacher but as a symbolic stabilizer of artistic continuity, ethical discipline and cultural identity. Through memorial invocation, the Ragni tradition preserves oral genealogies otherwise vulnerable to historical erasure.

The corpus also demonstrates the remarkable adaptability of Haryanvi Ragni as a medium capable of accommodating philosophical abstraction without sacrificing oral accessibility. Vedantic concepts such as आत्मा, माया, धर्म and मोक्ष are vernacularized through emotionally resonant folk idioms, thereby challenging the assumption that metaphysical discourse belongs exclusively to classical textual traditions.

Equally important is the ethical dimension of the selected corpus. Compositions such as “बुढ़ापा” and “यो बदल गया इन्सान” expose ritual hypocrisy, generational neglect, consumerist morality, patriarchal violence and social fragmentation with remarkable emotional sharpness. Folk literature here functions as an oral ethical tribunal where communities confront their own contradictions.

The devotional compositions further reveal that spirituality within Haryanvi oral traditions remains participatory, embodied and communitarian. Pilgrimage, chanting, collective movement and rhythmic recitation transform devotion into a shared emotional experience rather than an exclusively institutional religious practice.

From a prosodic perspective, the selected Ragnis strongly challenge assumptions that folk poetry lacks technical sophistication. The rigorous deployment of Samamatrik balance, Guru-Laghu sequencing, refrain continuity, Yati engineering and tonal cadence demonstrates the continuing vitality of Pingal consciousness within living oral traditions.

The study therefore establishes that Ashodhiya's compositions occupy an important transitional space where indigenous folk aesthetics engage contemporary ethical anxieties while preserving regional linguistic identity and oral-performative continuity.

Conclusion

The present study establishes that the selected Ragnis authored by Anand Kumar Ashodhiya constitute a major contemporary contribution to Haryanvi folk poetics, oral-performance aesthetics and vernacular philosophical literature. Through compositions such as “गुरु पालेराम दहिया श्रद्धांजलि,” “बुढ़ापा,” “हरि भजन,” “हिन्दू धर्म सनातन है,” “बाबा खाटू श्याम का भजन,” “शिवजी भोळे का नया कांवड़ भजन,” “दक्ष प्रजापति जयंती,” and “यो बदल गया इन्सान,” the Avikavani corpus demonstrates the extraordinary ability of Haryanvi Ragni tradition to absorb contemporary moral anxieties while preserving indigenous performative structures and collective memory systems.

The article has shown that these compositions collectively negotiate an extensive ethical and philosophical terrain encompassing guru-veneration, Bhakti consciousness, Vedantic metaphysics, social fragmentation, generational alienation, ritual culture, moral hypocrisy and spiritual introspection. Unlike purely textual literary systems, the Ragni tradition transforms such concerns into orally participatory emotional experiences through cadence, refrain, rhythm, vocality and communal recitation.

The study further confirms that Pingal Shastra continues to function as a living structural foundation within contemporary Haryanvi oral literature. The sophisticated deployment of *Lavani-Mishrit Chhand* structures, Samamatrik architecture, *Guru-Laghu* sequencing, refrain systems, tonal cadence and *Yati* placement

demonstrates that indigenous prosodic science remains deeply embedded within living folk traditions. Emotional intensity within these compositions is inseparable from prosodic engineering itself.

Equally significant is the corpus's ethical and philosophical contribution. The selected Ragnis reveal how oral traditions preserve collective morality, critique social degeneration and vernacularize complex metaphysical ideas without sacrificing emotional accessibility. Folk performance therefore emerges simultaneously as cultural preservation, ethical pedagogy and philosophical discourse.

Ultimately, the Avikavani corpus reaffirms that Haryanvi oral traditions are intellectually sophisticated literary systems capable of preserving regional epistemology, negotiating contemporary anxieties and generating vernacular literary modernity. Future scholarship may further explore comparative Pingal frameworks across North Indian oral traditions, feminist reinterpretations of Saang performance culture, digital transformations of folk performance and computational analysis of oral prosodic systems within regional literary traditions.

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