

Folk Songs of Punjab

Nahar Singh

Punjab University, Chandigarh

R.S. Gill

U.C. Santa Barbara

Punjabi folk songs (*lok git*) are untapped sources for insight into Punjabi history and culture. Different songs are performed in various contexts and contain layers of meaning. This paper provides examples of various types of songs, describes their genres, examines their themes, and presents a sample of life-cycle songs. It concludes by assessing the possibilities for investigating Punjabi folk songs from perspectives of heritage and academics.

The Punjabi folk songs serve as a repository of local culture, beliefs, social structures, and response to historical change.¹ These songs are distinct from those of the bards² and from recorded literature³, as they present a vast arena of experiences – from mundane to extraordinary, material to mystical, desparaging to joyful, from birth to death. The songs we inherit today are part of anonymous and amorphous oral traditions and thereby resist precise historicization, geographical contextualization, and otherwise neat classification. English works on folk songs are scant⁴, and what follows is an attempt to understand what Punjabis sing about, describe genres of these songs, present their major themes, and use them to observe the nuances of Punjabi culture in the context of the life-cycle.⁵

There are various types of Punjabi *lok git* with each having a distinct style, context, social occasion and function that is well understood in the Punjabi folk tradition. The most common type of Punjabi *lok git* is the short form called the *tapa* (pl. *tape*), a couplet which depicts a slice of a particular emotion, mood, idea, or situation. Because of their simplicity, *tape* can be sung in a variety of performative contexts (with or without dance, in a group, or solo), and various Punjabi impulses are preserved in this form. A combination of different *tape* constitutes a *boli* (pl. *bolian*), which is sung by an individual, each verse at increasing pace, and the *boli*'s culminating line is rapidly repeated by a collective. Some genres, like *lambe gaunh* (long songs), are performed by two pairs in a dialogue, where different personas in the songs are represented by different pairs of singers. Songs that are sung for a specific ritual, like

bereavement songs (*kirne* and *alauhnian*), are performed by a collective. Bolian, tape, and proverbs are the genres common to both men and women, while most others (esp. songs of wedding, mourning, and certain festivals like Tian) are sung exclusively by women.

No specialized instruments accompany Punjabi folk songs.⁶ Typically, women's songs are accompanied by domestic utensils, clay pots, or the double-sided hand drum known as *dholak* (only by professional musicians like *mirasans*). Chorus, utensils, clapping hands, and clanging bangles and bells accompany the more festive and dance-oriented songs.

Punjabi folk songs are set in in the complex cultural context of a society in which a remote village is the unit of social institution. In these *git* we also see various types of skilled and unskilled workers fulfill other essential functions. Though discrete kinship patterns maintain rigid tribal, social (caste), and economic (class) distinctions, Punjabi folk culture tells us that village people of all levels interact daily in a manner that demonstrates their mutual codependence. The village's common cultural institutions and the lifestyles (eating habits, rituals, dress codes, etc.) of its people transcend class and caste barriers. The following *tape* inform us of some of the details of Punjabi village life and class stereotypes:

They eat goats and get drunk The sons of the <i>sardars</i> ⁷	ਖਾਣ ਬੱਕਰੇ ਤੇ ਪੀਣ ਸ਼ਰਾਬਾਂ ਪੁੱਤ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ
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In a marriage party of potters squealing donkeys accompany	ਮੇਲ ਘੁਮਿਆਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਗਏ ਹੀਂਗਦੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ
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Lala, don't skimp on the sweets They're for your daughter ⁸	ਲਾਲਾ ਲੱਭੂ ਘੱਟ ਨਾ ਦਈਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਣੇ
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Other songs reveal details about irreverant young men carousing and lovers waiting for letters:

In the high mounds ⁹ We drank liquor and buried the bottles	ਉੱਚਿਆਂ ਟਿੱਬਿਆਂ 'ਚ ਦਾਰੂ ਪੀਕੇ ਬੋਤਲਾਂ ਦੱਬੀਆਂ
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My husband's letter didn't arrive A curse on you, postman!	ਮੇਰੇ ਮਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਨਾ ਆਈ ਮਰ ਜਾਵੇਂ ਤੂੰ ਡਾਕੀਆ
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Many extant Punjabi *lok git* convey the Punjabi defiance to rulers and social change:

They capture and sell virgin daughters Such is the reign of the evil ones	ਧੀਆਂ ਵੇਚਣ ਕੁਆਰੀਆਂ ਫੜ ਕੇ ਰਾਜ ਚੁਗੱਤਿਆਂ ਦਾ
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Our cart moves at its own pace ਸਾਡੇ ਯੱਕੇ ਨੇ ਡਮਾਕ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਰਨਾ
If you're in a rush then get on the train ਕਾਹਲੀ ਐ ਤਾਂ ਰੇਲ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਜਾ

I'll never ride on your train ਤੇਰੀ ਰੇਲ ਤੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਨਾ
I'll ride on the horse carriage ਚੜ੍ਹਨਾ ਟਮਟਮ ਤੇ

Mother, buy me a silk sari ਮਾਏ ਲੈ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਰੇਸ਼ਮੀ ਸਾੜੀ
My in-laws are from the city ਸਹੁਰੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ 'ਚ ਬਣੇ

God is dead and the gods have run off ਰੱਬ ਮੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਭੱਜ ਗਏ
It's the European reign! ਰਾਜ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ

The cosmology of Punjabi folk songs presents God, the most commonly used term is *rab*, as a benevolent, personified protector being – immanent, tangible, and a source of love, strength and justice:

The world labors hard ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਧੰਧ ਪਿੱਟਦੀ
God is the giver for all ਰੱਬ ਸਭਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਾਤਾ

Oh my mind, don't ever worry ਚਿੰਤਾ ਕਰੀ ਨਾ ਕਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਮੇਰਿਆ
The Master worries for you ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਮਾਲਕ ਨੂੰ

In some places, Punjabi folk culture stresses the oneness of divinity to take a stance against religious division, and posit the possibility of transcendent truth:

The brahmins and mullahs throw dust ਖੇਹ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਨੇ ਬਾਹਮਣ ਮੁਲਾਣੇ
Truth is left behind ਸੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ

Allah, Vahiguru, and Khudha's name ਅੱਲਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਖੁਦਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਇਕ ਹੈ
is one. The world is deluded ਭਰਮਾਂ 'ਚ ਪੈ ਗਈ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ

In a world of religious division, Punjabi folk culture sees the cultivation of goodness or virtue (*neki*) as the vital goal:

Acquire virtue, man! ਨੇਕੀ ਖੱਟ ਬੰਦਿਆ
The lord of death awaits¹⁰ ਧਰਮਰਾਜ ਕੋਲ ਜਾਣਾ

Humility, or perhaps the dislike for the seemingly high and mighty, is one of the most emphasized traits in the Punjabi folk tradition, the silk cotton tree (*simbal*), too tall and leafless to provide effective shade, is a common symbol for arrogance and pride:

Flowers bud on low trees	ਫੁੱਲ ਨੀਵਿਆਂ ਰੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਦੇ
Don't be too proud, O <i>simbal</i>	ਸਿੰਬਲਾ ਤੂੰ ਮਾਣ ਨਾ ਕਰੀਂ

Punjabi *lok git* depict life as a short-lived motion towards an inevitable death, which persons should vigorously utilize and enjoy:

We come and go here	ਏਥੇ ਆਉਣਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਬਣਿਆ
The world fair lasts but four days	ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਚਾਰ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੇਲਾ

Don't waver, heart of mine	ਕਿਤੇ ਡੋਲ ਨਾ ਜਾਈਂ ਮਨਾ ਮੇਰਿਆ
When you see mountains of sorrows	ਦੁਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਹਾੜ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ

This world is a waning shadow	ਇਹ ਜੱਗ ਢਲਦਾ ਪਰਛਾਂਵਾ
Life is like a dream	ਸੁਪਨੇ ਸਮਾਨ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ

Let loose and dance, girl!	ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਨੱਚ ਲੈ ਨੀ
Spin with desire	ਦੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੌਂਕ ਦੇ ਗੋੜੇ

Punjabi folk songs are primarily related to the rural, peasant psyche and present agrarian aesthetics:

Scent like a field of mustard	ਆਵੇ ਵਾਸ਼ਨਾ ਸਰ੍ਹੋਂ ਦੇ ਖੇਤ ਵਰਗੀ
Anoints you, fair skinned woman	ਰੰਨੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੋਰੇ ਰੰਗ 'ਚੋਂ

The beauty of a maiden	ਰੂਪ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਦਾ
– like the crimson of the rising dawn	ਦਿਨ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਦੀ ਲਾਲੀ

Fond and loving Earth,	ਧਰਤੀ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰੇਂਦੀਏ
Your brow shines with light –	ਤੇਰਾ ਮੱਥਾ ਨੂਰੋ ਨੂਰ
The gorgeous sun on your head	ਤੇਰੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਸੂਰਜ ਸੋਂਹਦਾ
and your skirt is lush green	ਤੇਰਾ ਘਗਰਾ ਹਰਾ ਕਚੂਰ

Lok git depict activities of an agrarian society; for men these include grazing cattle and farming while women's tasks are more domestic. The absence of men from the home during the day creates space for women to sing while fetching well water or at the spinning wheel:

Rove in hand, wheel on my hip
I'm off to spin in the *trinjhan*¹¹

ਹੱਥ ਪੂਣੀਆਂ ਢਾਕ ਤੇ ਚਰਖਾ
ਤ੍ਰਿੰਜਣਾਂ 'ਚ ਕੱਤਣ ਚੱਲੀ

Punjabi folk culture makes light of renunciate *yogis* who, with men of the house away tending to their work, are lured by the sounds of women:

Hearing the whirring of the wheel
The *yogi* descended from his mountain

ਚਰਖੇ ਦੀ ਘੁੱਕ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ
ਜੋਗੀ ਉਤਰ ਪਹਾੜੋਂ ਆਇਆ

Although many folk songs sing of relations between lovers, kinship relations provide the Punjabi society's fundamental structure. The following example compares the persona's father to a broad, shady pipal tree:

Oh pipal, you yourself are great, your family is great
Your leaves shower down
Pipal, you can't do without your branches
Yours leaves shower down
Oh pipal, you yourself are great, your family is great

ਵੇ ਪਿੱਪਲਾ ਆਪ ਵੱਡਾ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ
ਤੇਰੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਛਹਿਬਰ ਲਾਈ
ਡਾਹਣਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਝ ਪਿੱਪਲਾ
ਤੇਰਾ ਵੀ ਸਰਦਾ ਨਾਹੀਂ
ਤੇਰੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਛਹਿਬਰ ਲਾਈ
ਵੇ ਪਿੱਪਲਾ ਆਪ ਵੱਡਾ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ

If, father, you are great, your family is great
You can't do without your brothers
If, father, you are great, your family is great
You can't do without your uncles,
Oh pipal, you yourself are great, your family is great
Your leaves shower down

ਜੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੂੰ ਵੱਡਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ
ਭਾਈਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਝ ਤੈਂ ਵੀ ਸਰਦਾ ਨਾਹੀਂ
ਜੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੂੰ ਆਪ ਵੱਡਾ
ਚਾਚਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਝ ਸਰਦਾ ਨਾਹੀਂ
ਵੇ ਪਿੱਪਲਾ ਆਪ ਵੱਡਾ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ
ਤੇਰੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਛਹਿਬਰ ਲਾਈ

If, father, you are great, your family is great
You can't do without the clan
Oh pipal, you yourself are great, your family is great
You can't do without your leaves
Your leaves shower down

ਜੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੂੰ ਵੱਡਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ
ਬਾਝ ਸਰੀਕੇ ਸਰਦਾ ਨਾਹੀਂ
ਜੇ ਪਿੱਪਲਾ ਤੂੰ ਆਪ ਵੱਡਾ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡਾ
ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਝ ਤੇਰਾ ਵੀ ਸਰਦਾ ਨਾਹੀਂ
ਤੇਰੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਛਹਿਬਰ ਲਾਈ

Some of the most common pairs of familial relationships emphasized by Punjabi folk songs are brother-sister, mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, maternal uncle (mama)-niece (bhanji), paternal aunt (bhua)-nephew (bhatija).

The following verses feature a sister singing to her brothers of a visit paid by their maternal uncles, who not only represent deep affection, but also play crucial ritual roles in their nieces' nuptial ceremonies:

Our uncles came, my heart grew	ਮਾਮੇ ਆਏ ਸਾਡਾ ਮਨ ਵਧਿਆ
The courtyard grew four yards	ਵਿਹੜਾ ਵਧਿਆ ਗਜ਼ ਚਾਰ
The stovetops each grew a hand	ਗਿੱਠ ਗਿੱਠ ਵੱਧ ਗਏ ਚੌਤਰੇ
And my spirits are on the rise	ਸਾਡੇ ਹੌਂਸਲੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਮਾਰ
Oh brothers of mine!	ਵੇ ਵੀਰੋ ਮੇਰਿਓ

Even the relationship between husband and wife is seen as a mere formal arrangement because it does not reflect blood ties. For females, one's paternal home is depicted as a source of love and nurture while the in-law's house is a source of tyranny and torture.

Daughters are wealth for another	ਧੀਆਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਦੌਲਤਾਂ ਬਿਗਾਨੀਆਂ
Send them off happily, father	ਹੱਸ ਹੱਸ ਤੋਰ ਬਾਬਲਾ
I served jail time at my in-laws'	ਸਹੁਰੇ ਕੈਦ ਕੱਟੀ
Innocent of theft or crime	ਨਾ ਚੋਰੀ ਨਾ ਡਾਕਾ

The following *tapa* is in the form of a complaint from a sister to her brother, and begins to exhibit the specificity of signifiers for familial relations in Punjabi society:

My <i>sass</i> ¹² fights, my <i>jathanhi</i> ¹³ pulls	ਸੱਸ ਲੜਦੀ ਜਠਾਣੀ ਗੁੱਤ ਪੱਟਦੀ
my hair	ਦਿਉਰ ਮਾਰੇ ਮਿਹਣੇ ਵੀਰਨਾ
and my <i>deor</i> ¹⁴ taunts me, brother!	

Rules and interests of the *bhaichara* have dominated Punjabi village life, which is centered around the joint family, clan rules constricting individual freedom.¹⁵ Sexual and moral codes were tightly enforced according to the interests of family and clan.

I really want to fall in love	ਯਾਰੀ ਲਾਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਬੜਾ ਚਿੱਤ ਕਰਦਾ
But I'm afraid of a thrashing	ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਡਰ ਲਗਦਾ
What business do you have, maiden	ਤੇਰਾ ਕੰਮ ਕੀ ਕੁਆਰੀਏ ਕੁੜੀਏ
Playing amongst the boys?	ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ 'ਚ ਖੇਡਣ ਦਾ
We ought not fix our eyeliner	ਧਾਰੀ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਨਾ ਸੁਰਮਾਂ ਪਾਈਏ
Such is the life among the <i>sharika</i> ¹⁶	ਵਸਣ ਸ਼ਰੀਕਾਂ ਦਾ

As they are predominately transmitted by women, songs of Punjabi women express women's hopes, fears, and troubles. Punjabi *lok git* touch questions of women's social existence, unfulfilled dreams and sexual desires, domestic conflicts, and emotional imbalances.

In the Doaba I was born and raised	ਦੁਆਬੇ ਦੀ ਮੈਂ ਜੰਮੀ ਜਾਈ
I was married into the jungle	ਜੰਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਹੀ
I'm a crane departed from home,	ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਛੁੰਨੀ ਕੁੰਜ ਨੀ ਸਹੀਉ
O friends	
My lover is off to war	ਜੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਹੀ
Every moment tears flow from my eyes	ਹਰਦਮ ਨੀਰ ਵਗੇ ਨੈਣਾ 'ਚੋਂ
He hasn't written about his return	
Come home now, soldier!	ਔਣ ਦੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਨਾ ਪਾਈ
My life is wrapped around you	ਮੁੜ ਪੈ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆ ਵੇ ਮੈਂ ਜਿੰਦੜੀ ਘੋਲ ਘੁਮਾਈ

But these songs do not merely register, in passing, women's complaints and gripes. They are also evidence that Punjabi women resist and mock domination, and actively weave rich, responsible, and socially productive lives as youths, wives, mothers, and guardians of culture:

Oh! My heavy red shawl, I knit it of three colors	ਮੇਰਾ ਲਾਲ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਵੇ ਤਿੰਨੇ ਰੰਗ ਬੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ
Oh! My father –king of countries– I used to hear his praise from afar.	ਮੇਰਾ ਬਾਬਲ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਵੇ ਦੂਰੋਂ ਜੱਸ ਸੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ
Oh! My heavy red shawl, I knit it of three colors	ਮੇਰਾ ਲਾਲ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਵੇ ਤਿੰਨੇ ਰੰਗ ਬੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ
Oh! My uncle –king of countries—I used to hear his praise from afar.	ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਮਾ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਵੇ ਦੂਰੋਂ ਜੱਸ ਸੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ
Oh! My heavy red shawl, I knit it of three colors	ਮੇਰਾ ਲਾਲ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਵੇ ਤਿੰਨੇ ਰੰਗ ਬੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ
Oh! My brother –king of countries—I used to hear his praise from afar.	ਮੇਰਾ ਵੀਰ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਵੇ ਦੂਰੋਂ ਜੱਸ ਸੁਣੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ

Kanya dan, the giving of chaste daughters in marriage, is considered an act of charity worthy of the highest merit in the Indian context, and bestows honor and virtue. The following example showcases a bride's active acceptance of the responsibilities and fears that come with entering the unfamiliar social space of her new home:

Give me away, Father, to such a house Where there are sixty buffaloes Father, may merit be yours! One will be ready to milk and another ready to birth	ਦਈਂ ਵੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਓਸ ਘਰੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਬੂਰੀਆਂ ਸੱਠ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਇੱਕ ਚੌਂਦੀ, ਇੱਕ ਜਮਾਂਦੀ
My hands in the churning vessels Father, may merit be yours Merit is yours, it is yours, Great renown will be yours Father, may merit be yours.	ਮੇਰੇ ਚਾਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੱਥ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਵੱਡੜਾ ਜੱਸ ਬਾਬਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ

Although many folk songs and genres endorse social norms and function to acculturate individuals (through various prescriptions and proscriptions), other, non-normative songs present the unfulfilled desires of the individual, male or female, and counter social norms.

Come, my lover, sit my lover I'll keep you more dear than a husband My husband hasn't seen anything You've reaped all the enjoyment That husband of mine trembles Like mercury in a bottle. There was a theft last night And Takhat Hazara was looted! ¹⁷	ਆ ਵੇ ਯਾਰਾ, ਬਹਿ ਵੇ ਯਾਰਾ ਰੱਖਾਂ ਕੰਤ ਤੋਂ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਕੰਤ ਮੇਰੇ ਨੇ ਕੁਛ ਨਾ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਤੈਂ ਰਸ ਲੈ ਲਿਆ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੰਤ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਥਰ ਥਰ ਕੰਬੇ ਜਿਉਂ ਬੋਤਲ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਰਾ ਰਾਤੀਂ ਧਾੜ ਪਈ ਲੁੱਟ ਲਿਆ ਤਖਤ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾ
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Folk songs evolve in historical circumstances, and some express the tragedy and celebrate the bravery of Punjabis in the first and second world war, when many of the region's men enlisted in the British army and fought overseas:

Strike his name from the rolls, Englishman! My mother-in-law has but one son	ਕੱਟ ਦੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਇਕੋ ਪੁੱਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੱਸ ਦਾ
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Sacrifice is one of the most celebrated traits in Punjabi culture, especially in the case of lovers for love/beloved:

Those who know love Happily climb the crucifix	ਯਾਰੀ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਨੇ ਆਈ ਹਸ ਹਸ ਸੂਲੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ
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This tapa refers to the popular love story of Sohini-Mahival; in which the heroine drowns trying to cross the Chanab River to see her lover:

They drown with half baked (pots) ਕੱਚੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਡੁੱਬ ਕੇ ਮਰੇ
In whom love's fire blazes ਅੱਗ ਪਿਆਰ ਦੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਭੜਕੀ

This example refers to the folk hero of the Mirza-Sahiba legend as well as to ballad literature singing of the lovers' sacrifice:

They say beloved Mirza's ਮਿਰਜੇ ਯਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ
ballads are sung from house to house ਘਰ ਘਰ ਛਿੜੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ

Lok git sometimes evoke laughter by presenting absurdities in serious moments, censuring imbalances of power, or stirring up the comical elements of change and novelties in Punjabi society. This example of a women's song paints a greedy mother-in-law who relaxes her strict ways when she can profit from it:

The first time when my "big eyed" ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਜਦ ਅਾਂਡਲ ਮੇਰਾ
[lover] Came to see me ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਨੂੰ ਆਇਆ
He brought for me ਸੇਰ ਰਿਉੜੀਆਂ ਦਰਜਣ ਕੇਲੇ
A kilo of candies and a dozen bananas ਮੇਰੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਲਿਆਇਆ
Leaving he handed my mother-in-law ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੇ ਸੱਸ ਮੇਰੀ ਨੂੰ
A ten rupee note ਦਸ ਦਾ ਨੋਟ ਫੜਾਇਆ
Everyday my mother-in-law asks ਸੱਸ ਮੇਰੀ ਨਿੱਤ ਪੁੱਛਦੀ
When is that fellow of yours visiting ਤੇਰਾ ਅਾਂਡਲ ਫੇਰ ਨਾ ਆਇਆ
again?

The following short *boli* advises a married Jati¹⁸:

If, Jati, you want to beat up your Jat ਜੇ ਜੱਟੀਏ ਜੱਟ ਕੁੱਟਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ
Beat him while he's lying next to you ਨਾਲ ਪਏ ਨੂੰ ਕੁੱਟ ਜੱਟੀਏ
Then ask him what he's full of, O ਕਾਹਦਾ ਭਰਿਆ ਭਰਾਇਆ ਪੁੱਛ ਜੱਟੀਏ
Jati!

Sithnhan are a form of jesting songs sung before a wedding by the women and girls of the bride's side, and address the groom's approaching marriage party. These women are going to lose one of their own to this group, but not before they get a few shots in:

Groom, you've tied a colorful turban ਲਾੜਿਆ ਸਾਫਾ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਿਆ ਰੰਗਦਾਰ
Mounds of black powder in your eyes ਵੇ ਅੱਖੀਂ ਮਣ ਮਣ ਸੁਰਮਾ
Your eyes are squinty ਤੇਰੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਟੀਰਮ ਟੀਰੀਆਂ
What are you looking at so crookedly? ਕੀ ਝਾਕੇ ਟੇਢਮ ਟੇਢਾ
Go wash your face in the pond ਮੂੰਹ ਧੋ ਕੇ ਛੱਪੜ ਤੋ ਆ
Let it shine a little. ਵੇ ਜਰਾ ਚਮਕ ਇਹਦੀ ਵਧਾ

Groom, from what city have you come?	ਲਾੜਿਆ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੋਂ ਆਇਆ
Where mangoes don't even grow!	ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅੰਬ ਹੋਵਣ ਵੀ ਨਾ
Your face is like an ape's	ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਂਦਰ ਵਰਗਾ ਬੁਥਾ
Where teeth don't even grow!	ਮੂੰਹ ਵਿਚ ਦੰਦ ਵੀ ਨਾ

Punjabi preference for fair-skin was given a boost with the import of powder:

Fair skin comes in a little box	ਗੋਰਾ ਰੰਗ ਡੱਬੀਆਂ 'ਚ ਵਿਕਦਾ
Someone tell the dark ones!	ਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਬਰ ਕਰੋ
Today, preventing me from meeting my beloved	ਅੱਜ ਯਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੋਂ ਡਕਿਆ ਮੁੱਕੇ ਹੋਏ ਪੌਡਰ ਨੇ
Was my empty box of powder	

Punjabis incorporate *lok git* into all major phases of the life-cycle; most relate to marriage, but birth, death and occasions in between are also treated. At birth of a boy, women sing *sohilarhe*, which express praise for the newborn and his mother. The following express the societal preference for male children from the persona of an aspirant mother in conversation with another woman:

Oh girl, I'll give 100,000 I'll give 400,000 Buy me a darling son	ਬੀਬਾ ਇਕ ਲੱਖ ਦੇਂਦੀਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਦਿਆਂ ਲੱਖ ਚਾਰ ਲਾਲ ਲਿਆ ਦਿਓ ਜੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਨੂੰ
Fair one, you may give 100,000 You may give it times four Fair one, darling sons aren't bought	ਗੋਰੀਏ ਇਕ ਲੱਖ ਦੇਂਦੀਏ ਤੂੰ ਦੇਵੇਂ ਲੱਖ ਚਾਰ ਗੋਰੀਏ ਲਾਲ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਨੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਨੂੰ
Fair one, those with a son Have to eat his leftovers And you eat only pure food.	ਗੋਰੀਓ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਅੱਧੀ ਜੂਠ ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਖਾਵੇਂ ਨੀ ਸੁੱਚੀਆਂ
Oh girl, away with purity! I'll eat leftovers Buy me a darling son.	ਬੀਬਾ ਪਰ੍ਹੇ ਸੁੱਟ ਸੁੱਚੀਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਖਾਵਾਂ ਅੱਧੀ ਜੂਠ ਲਾਲ ਲਿਆ ਦਿਓ ਜੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਨੂੰ
Fair one, those with sons Have dirty, dirty beds You sleep in white sheets.	ਗੋਰੀਓ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੈਲੀ-ਮੈਲੀ ਸੇਜ ਤੇਰੀਆਂ ਸੇਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਚਿੱਟੀਆਂ

<p>Oh girl, away with whiteness I'll dirty the bed Buy me a darling son.</p>	<p>ਬੀਬਾ ਪਰ੍ਹੇ ਸੁੱਟਾਂ ਚਿੱਟੀਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਰਾਂ ਮੈਲੀ ਸੇਜ ਲਾਲ ਲਿਆ ਦਿਓ ਜੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਨੂੰ</p>
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Typically, no songs are sung at the birth of a girl. Traditionally, families in rural Punjab used to make loud clamor with kitchen utensils (a metaphor for a sign of domestic conflict) to sound the birth of a girl.

An infant's mother, aunts, and elder sisters incorporate music in his or her life by singing lullabies known as lorian:

<p>Swings and things, sugar and puddings, Make me cart of gold On it put a silver grill Seat kaka on top¹⁹ Mothers and sisters! Here comes a storm Mind your pots and squash Feed him a bowl of milk The little one's tufts are long.</p>	<p>ਹੂਟੇ ਮਾਟੇ, ਖੰਡ ਖੀਰ ਖਾਟੇ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਡ ਘੜਾ ਦੇ ਰੁਪੇ ਪਿੰਜ ਪਵਾ ਦੇ ਉਤੇ ਕਾਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਠਾ ਦੇ ਮਾਈਓ ਭੈਣੋ! ਮੀਂਹ ਹਨੇਰੀ ਆਈ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਟੀਡੇ ਸਾਂਭ ਲਉ ਦੁੱਧ ਦਾ ਛੰਨਾ ਪਿਆਲ ਦਿਉ ਕਾਕੇ ਦਾ ਬੋਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ</p>
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<p>Sleep little prince, go to sleep Your father came He brought games and toys Your auntie came She brought a hat and shirt Your grandpa came He brought gold coins.</p>	<p>ਸੌਂ ਜਾ ਰਾਜਾ, ਸੌਂ ਜਾ ਵੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਪੂ ਆਇਆ ਵੇ ਖੇਲ ਖਿਲੋਣੇ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਵੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਭੂਆ ਆਈ ਵੇ ਕੁੜਤਾ ਟੋਪੀ ਲਿਆਈ ਵੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਇਆ ਵੇ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੋਹਰਾਂ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਵੇ</p>
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Such songs, though expressing their themes lightly, present images of a happy domestic situation and close family life.

Songs of childhood and youth. The lyrics, rhythm, and dances of the songs that school-aged children sing reflect their innocence. Consecutive lines of such songs and nursery rhymes seem to have a logic of their own, but express childhood curiosity and imagination:

<p>Two houses, two doors, out comes the police officer The policeman brakes a sugar cake, and out comes the old oil man The old oil man puts a mustard seed in the oil press, and out comes Rali the carpentress</p>	<p>ਦੋ ਕੋਠੜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਰ, ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਠਾਣੇਦਾਰ ਠਾਣੇਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਭੰਨੀ ਭੇਲੀ, ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਤੇਲੀ ਬੁੱਢੇ ਤੇਲੀ ਨੇ ਪਾਈ ਘਾਣੀ, ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲੀ ਰਲੀ ਤਖਾਣੀ ਰਲੀ ਤਖਾਣੀ ਨੇ ਰਿੰਨੀ ਖੀਰ, ਵਿੱਚੋਂ</p>
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Rali the carpentress cooks some pudding, out comes a hermit. ਨਿੱਕਲਿਆ ਇਕ ਫਕੀਰ

Khed git (songs of play) help boys and girls decide turns and teams (*puganha*):

A cart, a little cart, and in the cart a well ਗੱਡਾ ਗਡੋਰੀਆ, ਗੱਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਖੂਹ
 Leave those who are standing ਖੜ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ
 Choose the sitting ones! ਬੈਠਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਹ

A grain of wheat ਕਣਕ ਦਾ ਦਾਣਾ
 It'll hide and disappear ਲੁਕ ਛਿਪ ਜਾਣਾ
 And will never be found. ਫੇਰ ਨਾ ਬਿਆਣਾ

Other children songs like *thal* and *kikali* are sung only by girls and accompany particular dance forms. Although they feature euphonious combinations of words more than sense-making, they express cultural norms and images of cheerful family life, like the good wishes of a sister for her brother:

Our hands are tied in kikali ਕਿੱਕਲੀ ਕਲੀਰ ਦੀ
 The turban of my brother ਪੱਗ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੀਰ ਦੀ
 My brother's headscarf ਦੁਪੱਟਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਦਾ
 Curses on the son-in-law! ਫਿਟੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਜਵਾਈ ਦਾ
 We'll dance and we'll sing ਨੱਚਾਂਗੇ ਤੇ ਗਾਵਾਂਗੇ
 We'll bring *bhabo*²⁰ home! ਭਾਬੇ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਆਵਾਂਗੇ

Our hands are tied in kikali ਕਿੱਕਲੀ ਕਲੀਰ ਦੀ
 The turban of my brother ਪੱਗ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੀਰ ਦੀ
 I went to the Ganga ਗਈ ਸੀ ਮੈਂ ਗੰਗਾ
 I had bangles put on my arms ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਲਿਆਈ ਵੰਗਾਂ
 My skirt is sky blue ਅਸਮਾਨੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਘੱਗਰਾ
 On which hook should I hang it? ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਕਿਲੀ ਟੰਗਾਂ
 Should I hang it on this hook ਨੀ ਮੈਂ ਐਸ ਕਿਲੀ ਟੰਗਾਂ
 Or should I hang it on that hook? ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਐਸ ਕਿਲੀ ਟੰਗਾਂ

When young women congregate at weddings and festivals, or assemble to do their daily chores, they find the cultural space to express themselves candidly, not only about their difficult lives, but also of their desires, lovers, and how it feels to shirk inhibitions:

Dance the giddha, girls! ਗਿੱਧਾ ਪਾਓ ਕੁੜੀਉ
*Savan*²¹ comes once in a while. ਸਾਉਣ ਨੇ ਕਦ ਕਦ ਆਉਣਾ

Oh! My beloved is a four-cornered lamp
 Like the moon of the fourteenth night!

ਮੇਰਾ ਯਾਰ ਚੌਮੁਖੀਆ ਦੀਵਾ
 ਚੌਦਵੀਂ ਦੇ ਚੰਦ ਵਰਗਾ

My Ranjha is fond of flowers
 He spreads out a bed of them
 Oh! He softly wakes me by tugging at
 my scarf

ਰਾਂਝਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ੌਕੀ
 ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਜ ਵਿਛਾਉਂਦਾ ਨੀ
 ਫੱਲਾ ਡੋਰੀਏ ਦਾ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਜਗਾਉਂਦਾ ਨੀ

Bolian typically accompany *giddha* dance in female circles, and large number of *bolian* depict various types of women's social concerns, and express their sexual desires. The following boli expresses the loss of social inhibition that women find when away from the presence of men:

Girl, you say "Giddha, giddha."
 There will be plenty of *giddha*
 There's no one left in the village,
 Not even an old man
 Dance, you pigeon,
 Spin with desire

ਗਿੱਧਾ ਗਿੱਧਾ ਕਰੇਂ ਮੇਲਣੇ
 ਗਿੱਧਾ ਪਉ ਬਥੇਰਾ
 ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਰਿਹਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ
 ਕੀ ਬੁੱਢੜਾ ਕੀ ਠੇਰਾ
 ਨੱਚ ਕਲਬੂਤਰੀਏ
 ਦੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੌਂਕ ਦਾ ਗੇੜਾ

Gathered in the *giddha*
 were like-looking maidens
 In the moonlight they shimmered
 like wires of gold
 Silk garments around their necks
 New dresses underneath
 The girls dance
 Like herds of deer

ਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਈਆਂ ਗਿੱਧੇ ਵਿਚ
 ਇਕੋ ਜਹੀਆਂ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ
 ਚੰਨ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣੇ ਐਕਣ ਚਮਕਣ
 ਜਿਉਂ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰਾਂ
 ਗਲੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੇਸ਼ਮੀ ਲਹਿੰਗੇ
 ਤੇੜ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਸਲਵਾਰਾਂ
 ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਐਂ ਨੱਚਣ
 ਜਿਉਂ ਹਰਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਡਾਰਾਂ

Shorter *bolian*'s lyrics burst energetically in a more fast paced-*giddha* dance, while slower paced dance accompanies longer *bolian*. Short and long *bolian* can also be performed by male singers and dancers, and these address women in their absence, expressing love and desire. The next example of a long *boli*, singing of folk legend and Robin Hood-figure Jiunha Mourh, features a common formula which rhymes the end of the third with an unrelated objected repeated three times in the first line. The theme of the boli shifts, at the end, to a lover's invitation:

A saw, a saw, a saw
 The caravan is on the bridge

ਆਰਾ, ਆਰਾ, ਆਰਾ
 ਗੱਡੀਆਂ ਪੁਲ ਚੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ

Jiunha Mourh lets out a roar!	ਜਿਉਣੇ ਮੌੜ ਨੇ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਲਲਕਾਰਾ
The marriage party scatters off	ਜਾਂਤੀ ਸਭ ਭੱਜ ਗਏ
They've heard of Jiunha, the heavy warrior	ਜਿਉਣਾ ਸੁਣੀਦਾ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਭਾਰਾ
Running, Jiunha	ਭੱਜ ਕੇ ਜਿਉਣੇ ਨੇ
breaks the lock to the safe	ਜਿੰਦਾ ਤੋੜ ਲਿਆ ਰੋਕੜੀ ਵਾਲਾ
He counts the contents	ਰੋਕੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਐਂ ਗਿਣਦਾ
Like he's just sold his prize bull!	ਜਿਉਂ ਬਲਦ ਵੇਚ ਲਿਆ ਨਾਰਾ
In a grove of bushes	ਮਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਝੁੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਵੇ
Encounter me sometime, lover	ਕਦੇ ਟੱਕਰੀ ਜਿਗਰੀਆ ਯਾਰਾ
Oh, when are you going to have made for me a diamond nose stud?	ਵੇ ਕਦ ਬਣਵਾਵੇਗਾ ਲੌਂਗ ਬੁਰਜੀਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ

This boli reveals the Punjabi village custom of locally distilled liquor and the seduction associated with places where that took place:

I dig a round hole (in the ground)	ਗੋਲ ਮੋਲ ਮੈਂ ਪੁੱਟ ਟੋਆ
In it I distill liquors	ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰਾਬਾਂ ਕੱਢਦੀ
You drink the first cup, my lover	ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪੈਗ ਤੂੰ ਪੀ ਵੇ ਆਸ਼ਕਾ
Then I'll put it in bottles.	ਫੇਰ ਬੋਤਲਾਂ ਭਰਦੀ
On the bloodied ground	ਖੂਨਣ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੇ
I tread my feet carefully.	ਬੋਚ ਬੋਚ ਪੱਬ ਧਰਦੀ

Wedding Songs. Most of Punjabi's folk songs are wedding songs of various types. The generic title *lambe gaun* designates a major portion of *lok git* that are typically sung by groups of married and elderly women on the days preceding a wedding. In melancholy tunes, these cathartic songs depict the predicaments of Punjabi women and the following examples carry the common *lok git* metaphor of woman as a crane – a bird far removed from her house. Later in the song, the dialogue between two women who have married into the same village shows one woman reassuringly helping the despondent other regain her sense of purpose:

Oh girl,	ਬੀਬਾ ਵੇ
It's the rainy month and the clouds pour down	ਸਾਉਣ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦਾ ਮੇਘਲਾ ਬਰਸੇ
A crane bathes in a pool	ਕੁੰਜ ਸਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨ੍ਹਾ ਰਹੀ
Oh crane, why are you scrubbing? Why are you repenting?	ਕੁੰਜੇ ਨੀ ਕੀ ਮਲ ਮਲ ਨ੍ਹਾਵੇਂ, ਕੀ ਪਛੋਤਾਵੇਂ
A crane bathes in a pool	ਕੁੰਜ ਸਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨ੍ਹਾ ਰਹੀ
Hey girl, I'm not scrubbing. I'm not repenting.	ਬੀਬੀ ਵੇ ਨਾ ਮਲ ਨ੍ਹਾਵਾਂ, ਨਾ ਪਛੋਤਾਵਾਂ
God has put me on dry land.	ਰੱਬ ਬਰੇਤੀ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ

Oh girl, Why did we have these houses built? Why did we leave these gaps in them?	ਬੀਬਾ ਵੇ ਕਾਹੇ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਮਹਲ ਚਿਣਾਇਆ ਵੇ ਕਾਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਮੋਰੀਆਂ
Hey girl, we built these houses to settle in, And the gaps are for the wind.	ਵਸਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਮਹਲ ਚਿਣਾਇਆ ਹਵਾ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਮੋਰੀਆਂ
Oh girl, why did we get married? Why do we have sisters-in-law?	ਕਾਹੇ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਿਆਹ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਕਾਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਸਾਲੀਆਂ
Hey girl, we got married to live our lives, And the sisters-in-law are for humor.	ਵਸਣ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਵਿਆਹ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਹਸਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਲੀਆਂ

Here are sung in correlation with the different stages and rituals of preparation for marriage in the groom and bride's houses, such as departure of marriage party and its welcoming at the bride's house. In these distinct songs of the Malwa region, the singers address the bride and groom situationally.

Brother, of where are you the headman, Of where are you the chief? Where is your marriage party going to reach, With trumpets blaring? Oh brother of mine	ਕਿੱਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਵੀਰ ਤੂੰ ਚੌਧਰੀ ਵੇ ਕੋਈ ਕਿੱਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਢੁੱਕਣਾ ਕੋਈ ਵਜਦੇ ਵਾਜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੇ ਵੀਰਨ ਮੇਰਿਆ
Join the marriage procession, brother And bring back a damsel wife She ought to be slender-limbed and, She should add to the family grace Oh brother of mine	ਜੰਝ ਵੀ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਜਾ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਵੀਰਾ ਵਹੁਟੀ ਲਿਆਈਂ ਮੁਟਿਆਰ ਅੰਗ ਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਪਤਲੀ ਵੇ ਸੋਹੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਵੇ ਵੀਰਨ ਮੇਰਿਆ

Suhag is a type of nuptial song about the bride (*larhi*), expressing her feelings about departing from her parental home for her in-laws'. In the following examples of *suhag*, societal expectations resound through the anxious and willing persona of a young woman rousing her family to seek her a suitable

match. She addresses her father, his younger brother, her brother and mother, revealing the breadth of players who help to find her a suitable match:

Sleeping father, high are your mansions I'm here waking you Why do you sleep so deeply? You have a maiden daughter at home	ਉੱਚੀ ਮਾੜੀ ਬਾਬਲ ਸੁੱਤਿਆ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਜਗਾ ਐਸੀ ਨੀਂਦ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੁੱਤੜਾ ਵੇ ਘਰ ਧੀ ਹੋਈ ਮੁਟਿਆਰ
Let me sleep, child, let me sleep Let my cane crop ripen Let the cotton flower We'll have something So that your mother can send you off with gifts	ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਜਾਈਏ ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੱਕਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਕਮਾਦ ਕਿ ਨਰਮੇ ਨੂੰ ਖਿੜ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਅੱਸੂ ਰਚਾਵਾਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਾਜ ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਕਰੇ
Sleeping uncle, high are your mansions I'm here waking you Why do you sleep so deeply? You have a maiden daughter at home	ਉੱਚੀ ਮਾੜੀ ਚਾਚਾ ਸੁੱਤਿਆ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਜਗਾ ਐਸੀ ਨੀਂਦ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੁੱਤੜਾ ਵੇ ਘਰ ਧੀ ਹੋਈ ਮੁਟਿਆਰ
Let me sleep, child, let me sleep Let my cane crop ripen Let the cotton flower We'll have something So that your mother can send you off with gifts	ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਜਾਈਏ ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੱਕਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਕਮਾਦ ਕਿ ਨਰਮੇ ਨੂੰ ਖਿੜ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਅੱਸੂ ਰਚਾਵਾਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਾਜ ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਕਰੇ
Sleeping mother in your mansions I'm here waking you Why do you sleep so deeply? You have a maiden daughter at home	ਉੱਚੀ ਤਾਂ ਮਾੜੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੱਤੀਏ ਨੀ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਜਗਾ ਐਸ ਨੀਂਦ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੁੱਤੜੀ ਨੀ ਘਰ ਧੀ ਹੋਈ ਮੁਟਿਆਰ
Let me sleep, child, let me sleep Let my cane crop ripen Let the cotton flower We'll have something So that your mother can send you off with gifts	ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਜਾਈਏ ਸੌਂ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੱਕਣ ਦੇ ਨੀ ਕਮਾਦ ਕਿ ਨਰਮੇ ਨੂੰ ਖਿੜ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਅੱਸੂ ਰਚਾਵਾਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਾਜ ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਕਰੇ

In the following examples of *suhag*, the persona of an aspirant bride is again in conversations with her family members as to what type of husband and in-laws she seeks:

Daughter why are you standing under
the *chandan*²²?
I was standing by father
I ask you, father, we ought to find a
groom.

ਬੇਟੀ ਚੰਦਨ ਦੇ ਓਹਲੇ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਉਂ ਖੜ੍ਹੀ
ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਖੜ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ ਬਾਬਲ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਸ
ਕਰਾਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਬਾਬਲ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਏ

Child, what kind of groom should we
seek?
A moon amongst stars, like my father
Among moons, we should seek a
groom like *Kahn Kanaya*²³.

ਜਾਈਏ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਏ
ਬਾਬਲ ਜਿਉਂ ਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਚੋਂ ਚੰਨ
ਚੰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਾਨੂ ਕਨੱਈਆ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਏ

Sister, why are you standing under the
chandan tree?
I was standing by brother
I ask you, brother, we ought to find a
groom.

ਭੈਣੇ ਚੰਦਨ ਦੇ ਓਹਲੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਖੜ੍ਹੀ
ਮੈਂ ਖੜ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ ਵੀਰਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਸ
ਕਰਾਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵੀਰਨ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਏ

Sister, what kind of groom should we
seek?
Oh! A warrior amongst warriors, like
my brother
We should seek a groom like *Ram
Chandar*²⁴

ਨੀ ਭੈਣੇ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਏ
ਵੇ ਵੀਰਾ ਜਿਉ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀਰ
ਰਾਮ ਚੰਦਰ ਵਰ ਲੋੜੀਓ

The following pleading *suhag* example stands in stark contrast to some of the
tape and *bolian* of the *giddha* dance in female circles where the in-laws are
berated and rebuked:

Give me away, Father, to such a house
Where my mother-in-law is a good
chief
and my father-in-law is a policeman
The relations should invite mother-in-
law
and father-in-law should be the head of
the court²⁵
Father, may merits be yours!
and your charity recognized!
Father, may merits be yours

ਦਈ ਵੇ ਬਾਬਲ ਓਸ ਘਰੇ
ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸੱਸ ਭਲੀ ਪਰਧਾਨ
ਤੇ ਸੋਹਰਾ ਠਾਣੇਦਾਰ
ਸੱਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਦਣ ਸ਼ਰੀਕਣੀਆਂ
ਸਹੁਰਾ ਕਚਿਹਰੀ ਦਾ ਦਾਰ
ਬਾਬਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ
ਤੇਰਾ ਦਿੱਤੜਾ ਦਾਨ ਪਰਵਾਨ
ਬਾਬਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਹੋਵੇ

Ghorhian, the counterpart of the above from the groom's perspective are sung by his sisters and other women in his marriage party:

Brother's gorgeous chaplet
adorned with a plume

ਵੀਰੇ ਦਾ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਿਹਰਾ
ਕਲਗੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਹਾਵੇ

Brother's beautiful necklace
befitting with flowers
Brother's beautiful shoe
embroidered beautifully

ਵੀਰੇ ਦਾ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਕੰਠਾ
ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਹਾਵੇ
ਵੀਰੇ ਦੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਜਹੀ ਜੁੱਤੀ
ਤਿੱਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਹਾਵੇ

Ghorhian center on the actions of the groom on his wedding day, singing of the morning's ceremonial bath, praising his elegant dress, and the princely horse he rides in the marriage party:

Whose grandson shall we call him?
The handsome one bathes
We should call him his *baba's*²⁶
grandson
The handsome groom bathes
A sandalwood stool underneath
My brother bathes, scrubbing
Hands like ornaments of good wishes
and his arms heavy

ਪੋਤਾ ਕੀਦੜਾ ਕਹੀਏ
ਕੌਣ ਸੁਨੱਖੜਾ ਨੀ ਨ੍ਹਾਵੇ
ਪੋਤਾ ਬਾਬੇ ਦਾ ਕਹੀਏ

A silk shirt hangs on his shoulders
and his waist could fit in a fist!
On his head a gold crown
and his waist cloth comes swaying
Velvet shoes on his feet
As if not touching the ground
A blue horse underneath
and the gait of a soldier
In his hands are fresh mulberry twigs,
and they come whipping.

ਮੇਲੂ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਨੀ ਨ੍ਹਾਵੇ
ਹੇਠਾਂ ਚੰਦਨ ਚੌਂਕੀ
ਵੀਰਾ ਮਲ, ਮਲ ਨ੍ਹਾਵੇ
ਹੱਥ ਸ਼ਗਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਗਾਨਾ
ਤੇ ਬਾਂਹ ਲਟਕੇਂਦੜਾ ਆਵੇ
ਗਲ ਰੇਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਕੁੜਤਾ
ਤੇ ਲੱਕ ਮੁਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਵੇ
ਸਿਰ ਸੋਨੇ ਦਾ ਸਿਹਰਾ
ਤੇ ਚਾਦਰ ਝੁੱਲਦੀ ਨੀ ਆਵੇ
ਪੈਰੀਂ ਮਖਮਲ ਦਾ ਜੋੜਾ
ਤੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਪੈਰ ਨਾ ਲਾਵੇ
ਹੇਠਾਂ ਨੀਲੜਾ ਘੋੜਾ
ਤੇ ਚਾਲ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਵੇ
ਹੱਥ ਅੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਛਮਕਾਂ
ਤੇ ਘੂਕ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਨੀ ਆਵੇ

The courtyard is filled with friends,
And mother celebrates²⁷
This day is a fortunate one
It came to the fortunate ones
And mother celebrates.

ਵਿਹੜਾ ਭਰਿਆ ਸਾਜਨਾ,
ਮਾਤਾ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਮਨਾਵੇ
ਇਹ ਦਿਨ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਵਾਲੜਾ
ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਆਵੇ
ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਮਨਾਵੇ

Brother, when you were engaged

ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੇਰੀ ਹੋਈ ਕੁੜਮਾਈ

Your mother received congratulations Brother when your <i>maian</i> ²⁸ were performed Your mother was congratulated	ਤੇਰੀ ਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੀ ਵਧਾਈ ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੂੰ ਪਾਇਆ ਮਾਈਆਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਵਧਾਈਆਂ
Brother when you sat on the mare All your brothers were there Brother you were sitting for washing Your father gave away rupees	ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੂੰ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਘੋੜੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੋੜੀ ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੂੰ ਬੈਠਾ ਖਾਰੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਬਾਪ ਰੁਪਈਏ ਵਾਰੇ
Brother, when you took the rounds I stood nearby singing Brother when your palanquin arrived And in the palanquin were fruits	ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੂੰ ਲਈਆਂ ਲਾਵਾਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਖੜ੍ਹੀ ਮੈਂ ਗਾਵਾਂ ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਈ ਡੋਲੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਡੋਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਮਮੋਲੀ
Brother, when your chariot's bell tinkled we were off to meet our sister-in-law	ਵੀਰਾ ਜਦ ਰਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਜੀਆਂ ਟੱਲੀਆਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਭਾਬੇ ਦੇਖਣ ਚੱਲੀਆਂ
This day is a fortunate one It came to the fortunate ones and mother celebrates the occasion!	ਇਹ ਦਿਨ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਵਾਲੜਾ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਆਵੇ ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਸ਼ਗਨ ਮਨਾਵੇ

Sithnhian are songs of jesting repartee between two sets of families. One form of *Sithnhian* are sung between the women of the maternal and paternal sides of each of the marrying bride and groom in the days leading up to the wedding. The following examples are sung by the women on the bride's side addressing the approaching party of the groom. Juxtaposed with the praise of the groom in *ghorhian*, these songs feature jests made possible by the disparity of social capital when the groom's marriage party come for its counterpart's daughter:

My brother-in-law arrived in a borrowed turban The shirt he brought was stolen The waist cloth is my brother's I'll have it taken off right here! Oh, brother-in-law of mine	ਪੱਗ ਵੀ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਜੀਜਾ ਕੁੜਤਾ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਵੇ ਚੁਰਾ ਚਾਦਰਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਵੀਰ ਦਾ ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਐਥੀ ਲਊਂ ਲੁਹਾ ਵੇ ਜੀਜਾ ਮੇਰਿਆ
Oh groom, what should I ask you? Hey, what should I ask you? You vagabond, you have no beard Nor do you have a mustache Get a beard from a goat	ਕੀ ਗੱਲ ਪੁੱਛਾਂ ਲਾੜਿਆ ਕੀ ਗੱਲ ਪੁੱਛਾਂ ਵੇ ਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਭੌਂਦੂਆਂ ਨਾ ਤੇਰੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਛਾਂ ਵੇ

and the mustache of a mouse!

ਬੋਕ ਦੀ ਲਾ ਲੈ ਦਾੜੀ
ਚੂਹੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਛਾਂ ਲੁਆ

Run! Run off, groom!
Our boys are asking for your sister
The boys have found a wife to share!
They're handing out sweets
Oh groom, fall to our feet
We'll let you off! We'll let you off!
Run! Run off, best man!²⁹
Our old men are asking for your old
lady
The old men have found a wife to
share!
They're handing out sweets
Oh, fall to our feet
We'll let you off!

ਭੱਜ ਜਾ, ਭੱਜ ਜਾ ਲਾੜਿਆ
ਸਾਡੇ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਭੈਣ ਮੰਗਦੇ
ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭ ਗਈ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਜੇਰੂ
ਮੁੰਡੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਲੱਭ ਵੰਡਦੇ
ਲਾੜਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਪੈਰੀਂ ਪੈ
ਛੱਡਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ਤੇਨੂੰ
ਭੱਜ ਜਾ, ਭੱਜ ਜਾ ਸਰਬਾਲਿਆਂ
ਸਾਡੇ ਬੁੜ੍ਹੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਬੇਬੇ ਮੰਗਦੇ
ਬੁੜ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭ ਗਈ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਜੇਰੂ
ਬੁੜ੍ਹੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਲੱਭ ਵੰਡਦੇ
ਸਰਬਾਲਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਪੈਰੀਂ ਪੈ ਜਾ
ਛੱਡਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ਤੇਨੂੰ

In the form of songs known as *chhand parage* (pl.) the women of the bride's side take the groom inside the house, after the solemnization of marriage, where the bridegroom meets his newlywed's friends and sisters after the ceremony. They demand that he should sing a few songs, which are full of joking and teasing, and inspire laughter. The rhyme scheme here is formulaic like *bolian* above, where the first line is repeated in each stanza, the second line ends in an arbitrary word which rhymes with the end of the fourth line:

[Groom]

A heap of songs, we come and go
A grist of songs, life
I'm going to thrust myself among you
Like Krishan among his milkmaids

ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਜਾਨ
ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਅੜ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੂੰ
ਜਿਉਂ ਗੋਪੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੂੰ

[Girls]

A heap of songs, we come and go
A grist of songs, sugar
The milkmaids have enclosed Krishan
Sitting we listen to his verses

ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਖੰਡ
ਗੋਪੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਅੱਜ ਕਾਨੂੰ ਘੇਰਿਆ
ਬਹਿ ਕੇ ਸੁਣਦੀਆਂ ਛੰਦ

[Groom]

A heap of songs, we come and go
A grist of songs, a plate
The next verse I'll only let you hear

ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਥਾਲੀ
ਅਗਲਾ ਛੰਦ ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਣਾਊਂ

If my sister-in-law makes an appeal	ਜੇ ਹੱਥ ਬੰਨ੍ਹੋ ਸਾਲੀ
A heap of songs, we come and go	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
A grist of songs, an ornament	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਗਹਿਣਾ
We're taking one of your girls away	ਇੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਲੈ ਚੱਲੇ ਹਾਂ
We want to take another	ਇੱਕ ਸਾਕ ਹੋਰ ਲੈਣਾ
A heap of songs, we come and go	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
A grist of songs, a platter	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਥਾਲ
This girl is year is too beautiful	ਆਹ ਤਾਂ ਕੁੜੀ ਆ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ
I could take her with me	ਏਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ
A heap of songs, we come and go	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਆਈਏ ਜਾਈਏ
A grist of songs, a cucumber	ਛੰਦ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਖੀਰਾ
We'll keep your daughter so well	ਧੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਨੂੰ ਐਂ ਰੱਖਾਂਗਾ
Like a diamond in a ring!	ਜਿਉਂ ਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੀਰਾ

These songs test the intellectual caliber and creative capacity of the newlywed groom, and inaugurate the special relationship between *jija* (sister's husband) and *sali* (wife's sister).

In Punjabi culture, women always perform *lok git* related to death. *Kirane* and *alaunhian* are the two genres of bereavement songs. *Kirane* are couplets of bereavement, addressed, by name and relation, to the departed. These intensely emotional, solo outbursts express the vacuum in social relations created by the departed's unfulfilled social responsibilities. The types of complaints expressed to the addressee differ depending on the social relationship between the singer and the departed, depending on the departed's age –the most pathetic and tragic coming at the death of a person in her youth.

Oh son, you were born	ਵੇ ਪੁੱਤਾਂ ਤੂੰ ਜੰਮਿਆਂ
In your mother's lap	ਮਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਦੀ ਗੋਦੀ
You didn't play in your father's yard!	ਪਿਉ ਦੇ ਆਂਗਣ ਨਾ ਖੇਡਿਆ ਵੇ
A crane amongst cranes departed	ਕੁੰਜਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁੰਜ ਵਿਛੜੀ
The cranes, standing, await you	ਕੁੰਜਾਂ ਖੜੀਆਂ 'ਡੀਕਦੀਆਂ
But you're not going to turn back	ਤੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਫੇਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਰਨਾ
Oh, my darling daughter	ਨੀ ਮੇਰੀਏ ਲਾਡਲੀਏ ਧੀਏ
Oh! When your essence spilled out	ਜਦ ਤੇਰਾ ਰੰਗ ਡੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਗਿਆ
Oh! Spilled out into the pond	ਡੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਟੁੱਬੇ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਵੇ
The lakes and ponds let out a shriek	ਢਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਟੁੱਬਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਦਿਤੀ ਵੇ ਦੁਹਾਈ

For your goodness, Oh son-born- yesterday	ਤੇਰੀ ਨੇਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੇ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਪੁੱਤਾ
The fish cry in the sea	ਜਲ ਵਿਚ ਰੋਂਦੀਆਂ ਮੱਛੀਆਂ
Oh, the stars cry in the sky!	ਵੇ ਅੰਬਰੀਂ ਰੋਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਤਾਰੇ

Alaunhian are the other category of songs related to death and are articulated under the guidance and leadership of professional female mourners hailing from specific social/caste groups (nain, mirasan, dumni, or mirzadi). *Alaunhian* are performed during the ritual of *siapa*, at graveyards and cremation grounds, where women gather in a circle and beat their foreheads, breasts, and thighs in mourning:

You were a man of the court	ਹੈ ਸੀ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Oh! A man of the court	ਹਾਏ ਹਾਏ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Owner of wells and ponds, a man of the court	ਖੂਹਾਂ ਟੋਬਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Yes sir, a man of the court	ਹਾਂ ਜੀ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Oh! A man of the court	ਹਾਏ ਹਾਏ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Whose commands were obeyed, a man of the court	ਚਲਦੇ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Sitting with a knee lowered, a man of the court	ਬਹਿੰਦਾ ਗੋਡਾ ਨਿਵਾ ਜੀ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Rising after dispensing justice, a man of the court	ਉਠਦਾ ਨਿਆਉਂ ਚੁਕਾ ਜੀ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Giving shelter to the poor, a man of the court	ਕੋਈ ਨੰਗਿਆਂ ਓੜ੍ਹਕ ਦੇਵੇ ਜੀ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
One of many orchards planted, a man of the court	ਲੱਗਿਆਂ ਬਾਗਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Saluting the fathers, a man of the court	ਪਿੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਤਿਹ ਬੁਲਾਵੇਂ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
With gold, silver, and glass, a man of the court	ਕੋਈ ਸੋਨਾ ਰੁੱਪਾ ਕੱਚ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ
Alas, death is certain, a man of the court	ਮਰ ਜਾਣਾ ਪਰ ਸੱਚ ਮੱਲ ਕਚੈਹਰੀ ਦਾ

To sum up, aspects of folk culture that have been left out of this presentation include folk proverbs³⁰, songs related to folk worship³¹, songs singing the bravery of folk heroes³², and the specified songs of Punjab's many festivals³³. Examined were the *tape*, *bolian*, and other popular categories of Punjabi *lok git*, which provide rich data for examining aspects of Punjabi life that are otherwise easily overlooked. Punjab's folk songs provide unique information about village scandals, the enjoyment of alcohol, and the expectations of ruralites. In their *lok git* Punjabis react to social changes like domination by foreign rulers, the coming of the rail system, and urbanization.

Punjabi cosmology, ethics, and social norms come to light in *lok git* in ways that supplement the existing historical record, but also provide new insights into the processes of socializing individuals in Punjabi society. Punjabi *lok git* sing of a defiance to those processes of socialization. Such defiance was not only a natural part of an individual's development, but also a part of Punjabi society.

Lok git are essential to Punjabi culture in that they appear as the fruits of a vague thing like a folk or collective mind, and make real for us the natural, social, ethical, and changing world that Punjabi people inhabited. The Punjabi rebellious spirit, readiness for love or war, sacrifice for clan or lover is among the intangibles of the region's ethos that spontaneously emerge in its folksongs. *Lok git* help us penetrate the Punjabi senses of humor and the absurd. Punjabi preferences for male heirs, fair-skinned girls, and mustard fields are preserved and ready for comparison with other societies' fault lines. In these songs, we rediscover the green excitement of youth and a zeal for life that might be missing in disenchanted modernity.

On the one hand, these songs can be treated as texts for the study of Punjab – captured out of the ether and preserved with pen and paper. Yet the songs are fundamentally *not* texts, in that they are hard to pin down, living, pliable and changing. That these songs have primarily been the realm of women's expression is not trivial: they are the counterparts to written texts, feminine in that they quietly work behind literature's scenes, but yet actively engaged in the processes of production.

For modern Punjabis, the preservation of folk songs is a heritage issue – we do not wish to be poorer in the loss of lessons learned by our predecessors since time immemorial. We might want to gain access to the experiences of people who inhabited the Punjab, but lived in a very different world. Nostalgia and curiosity draw us to folk songs, and their rhythms, themes, and concerns move us in unexpected ways.

Scholars may hope to use folk texts to reconstruct the daily, yearly, and life-cycle concerns of Punjabis and the power dynamics that permeated village life. Folk songs can help us better understand Punjabi written literature, and perhaps literature can help us come to these folk songs with fresh lenses. The songs provide the backdrop and framework out of which literature and history emerge. Folk expressions were captured by the poets, whose writings in turn inspire and become part of Punjabi folk memory.

Just as Punjabi oral and written traditions have enjoyed healthy interaction for centuries, the agendas of heritage seekers and analytic scholars are mutually complementary. Punjabi *lok git* make us aware of how Punjabis navigate problems posed by communal living, untamed natural forces, and historical change, and therefore demand our attention.

¹ One can collapse Punjabi folk culture into a few, though imperfect, categories, which may overlap more than they diverge: **folk cultural modes** (kinship

patterns, class relationships, fairs and festivals, beliefs, values, and ideologies), **arts** (folk dance, decorative clay pottery, wall paintings (*kand chitar*), crafts, and needlework (*phulkari*)), **rituals** (expressions of supplication and gratitude, interaction with superhuman beings, life-cycle rites), **and oral expression** (folk narratives (myths/legends/tales), idioms and proverbs, folk songs (*lok git*)). Punjab's women have been the primary agents in all of these areas of Punjabi folk life.

² Sung by professional bards, the oral legends, stories (*qissa*), ballads (*puratan var* and *dhadi var*) make up a separate tradition of forms that are neither folk songs nor do they fit in the traditions of high literature. Most of the legends are folk narratives and some songs are interwoven in them (stories like Raja Rasalu, Puran Bhagat, Hir-Ranjha, Mirza-Sahiban, Jiaunha Maurh).

³ Written Punjabi literature includes Nath Yogi texts, *Adi Granth* (*bhagats* and Sikh Gurus), Sikh writings (poems, exegesis, prose), Sufi *qalam*, and contemporary literature.

⁴ See R. C. Temple's *The Legends of the Punjab* (1884-1901, three volumes), Devinder Satyarthi's *Meet My People* (1946). Some of the classic Punjabi works on the region's folk songs: Devinder Sathyarthi's *Giddha* (1963), Mohinder Singh Randhawa, Kulvant Singh Virk, and Naurang Singh's *Punjab De Lok Git* (1955), Sukhdev Madhpuri's *Lok-Bujhartan* (1956), Mohinder Singh Randhawa and Devinder Sathyarthi's *Punjabi Lok Git* (1960). Nahar Singh (ten books on the songs of the Malwa region), Karamjit Singh (four books on Doaba folk songs), and Kulwant Singh Aulakh (two books on the folk songs of the Bari Doab region, or "Majha") are the current generation's east Punjabi scholars of folk songs. In west Punjab, the Institute for Folk Heritage and Cultural Traditions (Islamabad) has done commendable work collecting folklore.

⁵ Much of the material for this article was collected by Nahar Singh at festivals and life cycle events in the Malwa (cis-Satluj) sub-region of Punjab. Rigorous work remains to be done comparing sub-regional differences among *lok git*.

⁶ A particular dance form of Malwa (*malwai giddha*) is accompanied by whistling and clapping, and music instruments like *chimta*, *kato*, *sap*, and *dholak*. *Malwai giddha* is the only dance form in Punjab (and perhaps in northern India) in which males have adopted a female dance.

⁷ Refers to the landed elites.

⁸ Lala is an epithet for a Hindu businessman.

⁹ Refers to a sacred spot in the village periphery.

¹⁰ The term for "lord of death" here is *Yama*.

¹¹ Refers to a group of women spinning cloth.

¹² Mother-in-law.

¹³ Husband's older brother's wife.

¹⁴ Husband's younger brother.

¹⁵ *Bhaichara* is literally, "conduct of brothers," these are the wide-ranging rules and interests of clan life.

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- ¹⁶ Refers to a life of competition and jealousy amongst families.
- ¹⁷ Takth Hazara is the village of Ranjha, a prominent Punjabi folk hero and lover.
- ¹⁸ Female member of the peasant Jat tribals.
- ¹⁹ *Kaka* refers to “Little boy.”
- ²⁰ Brother’s bride.
- ²¹ The month associated with the rainy season, during which the women’s festival of Tian is held.
- ²² Sandalwood tree. This tree is not indigenous to Punjab, but is known for its fragrance.
- ²³ Epithets for Krishna.
- ²⁴ Hero of the *Ramayana*.
- ²⁵ A man of influence.
- ²⁶ Paternal grandfather.
- ²⁷ The verb here is *shagan karna*, which connotes the giving of gifts on auspicious occasions.
- ²⁸ A pre-nuptial ceremony.
- ²⁹ In the Punjabi nuptial traditions, a *sarbala* (“best boy”) accompanies the groom on his special day, and is usually a younger relative of the groom.
- ³⁰ Accumulated nodes of knowledge, folk proverbs are part of the non-musical folk oral traditions, and authenticate and endorse cultural norms. They offer ripe fields for more detailed study, along with other indigenous knowledge systems.
- ³¹ Songs of local deities, nature worship, and icons like the goddess, Sakhi Sarvar, and Gugga Pir.
- ³² Some of these songs are closer to the genres sung by professional bards, but their relationship to popular, non-professional culture ought be examined.
- ³³ Though the *bolian* sung at the festival of Tian (the women’s festival during the rainy month of Savanh) were discussed above, other festivals, seasons, and cycles of the moon structure the Punjabi time scheme.

