

RENAISSANCE CALL: FOLK DANCES OF HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

“Every Indian is a dancer” Uday Shankar (qtd. in Bala, Unpublished Thesis)

Amongst the art, dance is the most primeval and classy and scarcely there is any civilization where the wakefulness of human movement as a vehicle of expression, ecstasy and grief is not evident. Perchance, before man begins to verbalize and to paint, he began to dance. Dancing, which is dependent on human habits and action is the most malleable and changeable. India has a very rich tradition of folk dances. Every region manifests different cultural feature. Haryana - the land of raaginis, saangs and swift folk dances, vividly depicts life in its variegated colour with joys and sorrow, ups and downs in melodious tunes and fascinating ways. But this folk art is dialing for renaissance umbrella as it has been replaced by dark and loud clouds named filmy and English songs and dances. The present paper has made an attempt to highlight folk dances of Haryana with its changes over the years. Further author(s) jotted down few efforts made by govt. and assemble youth's insight regarding this folk dance of Haryana. Author(s) came up with handful of suggestions as to pick renaissance call dialed by this folk art.

Key Words: Haryana's Folk Dances, Changes, Role of govt. Youth perspective, Suggestions

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INTRODUCTION

Work of art the symbols through which man communicates what lies beyond ordinary speech. Amongst the art, dance is a once the most primitive and most sophisticated. It is the mother or germinal form with space; time and human bodies as its elements (Walia 17). The dance in India can be classified in 3 groups: the tribal, classical and tribal. The folk dances hold mirror to the cultural, social, religious and ethnic traits of their people. Folk dances have direct relationship with the environment, beauty, enjoyment and joy (Classical and Folk dances of India: Marg Publications, 27)

1. Folk Dances

“Indian folk dances are like the patterns in kaleidoscope- almost impossible to describe”, states Geetika Kalha (Folk dances: Brochure)

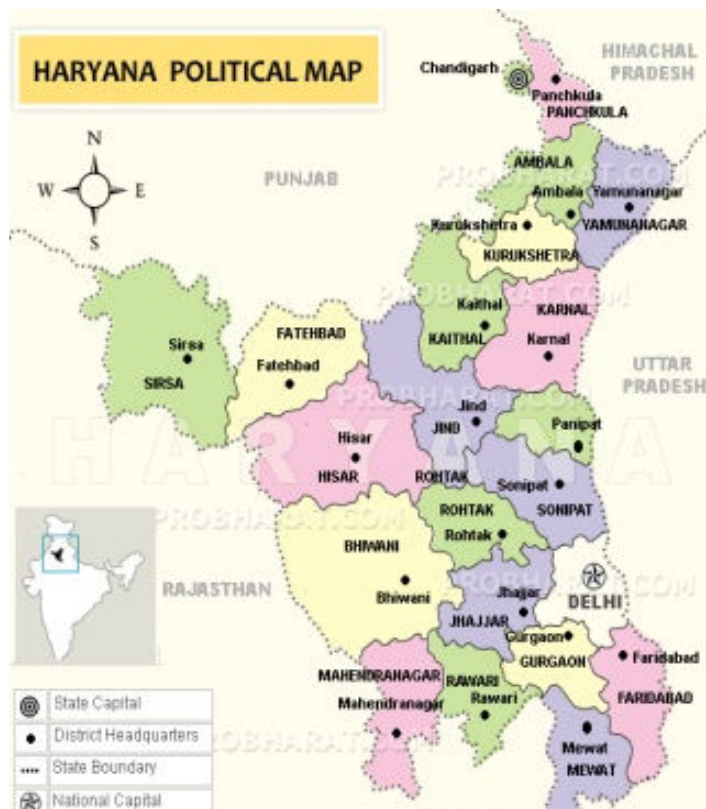
The word folk dance comprises two meaningful words ‘folk’ and ‘dance’ which stands for a comprehensive concept. Evolution of folk dance is intimately connected with the growth of cultural life of the people. The creators of folk dance were the people who would not find it possible to think in abstraction from the process of their daily chores or in isolation from their community life and as Hall (4) concludes, “there is reason to believe many folk dances originated from the activities and events that were upper most in the minds of the people at the time such as war, courtship, weddings, work, occupations, funerals and celebrations. Folk dances originate through natural and super natural forces”. The folk dances of India reveal not only the individual talents of our people, but the collective tradition of each part of our country side, the characteristic of the community, and a love for rhythms almost as atmosphere have brought about a great variety of rhythms, of musical compositions, of costumes and dance styles (.Fairs and festivals of Haryana .Brochure) The Prime Minister of India late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru felt after a couple of Republic day celebrations that rejoicings are possible only when it becomes a source of real happiness for the common masses. It was decided that classical music and dances should be replaced by folk dances, folk music folk lore. Consequent upon this bold decision the first, Folk Dance Festival on the national scale was celebrated on 27th – 28th January, 1953 in the national stadium, New Delhi. This single attempt altogether changed the people’s look towards

folk dances. The folk dances, folk music and folk lore suddenly emerged out of the realm of oblivion and assumed a fore front position (Buddha 29).

1.1 Haryana

Haryana, previously a part of Punjab, came into existence on November 1, 1966 with an area of 44,222 square kms (Figure1), (Chib 3, 5).

Figure 1: Map of Haryana



Source: <http://www.probharat.com/india/states/maps/haryana-political-map.php>

Haryana is the land of folk dances, folk music, festivals, fairs and theatre. The folk dances of Haryana are the mirror of cultural history of this land. Saangs and Raginis are woven into the very fabric of Haryana's folk tradition (Chib 10). The present paper was taken up with a view to know about the varieties of folk dances performed in Haryana and changes seen in them. The paper would be giving information regarding youth's perception and the efforts and role of some agencies that helped in keeping this folk-art alive.

1.2 Aims and Objectives: The aims and objectives of the study are-

To explore

- Folk dances of Haryana and their origin.
- Changes seen in them over the years.
- Role of Govt. initiatives and cultural agencies in keeping this art alive.
- Youth's perspective regarding their folk heritage.

2. Materials and Method

For the purpose of in depth study the contents have been taken from relevant books and articles from Journals. The approach followed in this paper is based on primary as well as secondary data. The materials used have at times been drawn from the websites. To collect youth perception regarding folk dances of Haryana, the sample was selected by stratified random sampling technique. Five districts were selected by dividing the Haryana in five strata's. These districts were Rohtak, Panchkula, Ambala, Faridabad and Mahendragarh. From each selected district, ten college going boys and ten college going girls were selected which leads to making a list of fifty boys and fifty girls i.e. hundred respondents. At the end, raw data was analyzed and for clear understanding graphical representation was used to present the results.

3. Results and Discussion

Haryana has a wide variety of folk songs for birth, marriage, separation, changing seasons, changing seasons, harvest, rain, brought, fairs and festivals; and the folk dances of Haryana, not only provide recreation and amusement to participants and spectators, but also physical exercise to participants and thrill to spectators (Sangwan:Brochure).

3.1 Folk Dances of Haryana

The folk dances of Haryana were as following:

- **Khoria:** Khoria was all female dance performed at the bridegroom's place. This dance was originated by the women who prayed for the safe and sound return of the marriage party with the wedded couple. Initially, they sung prayers but gradually the prayers changed into the folk songs. This dance was performed by women at the house of the bridegroom in the night when the marriage party had gone to the bride's house. Through this dance the women prayed for the safe return of the marriage party along with newly wedded couple. Since the men folk were all away to the bride's house, they also safeguarded their house by dancing and staying awake till late night. Due to the bawdy nature of the songs of this dance, children were generally kept away. The women formed a semi-circle and clapped while singing. They formed a circle and the tempo of the dance was accelerated. The moments were made by holding the weight on one foot and moving forward and backward. The main steps consisted of turning round gradually in a circle with brass or steel pitchers (gharah) on their heads. After this, two girls came in the center enacting as bride and bridegroom and started dancing holding each other's hands. The rest of the dancers sang songs like "*sakhi tera banna re hai chande ki huniyar*" (Oh! Friend your bridegroom is as handsome as the moon itself). Then 2-3 girls become baratis who did not have moustaches, the rest of dancers, cut jokes with marriage party (baraatis) and danced on the song "*Ham ne bullaye moochhon wale, yeh moochkate kyun aye re*" (We invited persons with moustaches, why these whiskers persons have come). They all sang songs like '*bhari dupheri nahin jaoon re, dola pichhware rak do*' (I shall not go at mid-day, keep the palanquin in the backyard of the house. As the tempo increased towards the end of the dance, the dancers whirled around in pairs holding cane sieve (Chhaj) in their hands. The accompanying songs were full of satire and humour. The women often mimed the entire wedding ceremony. Drums (Deru) and Dholak, Metallic twangs (Chimta) strips were used to give beats to the dance. This dance was popular in the central areas of Haryana, i.e. Rohtak, Jind and Jhajjar (Kalha, Folk Dances; Chand) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Female dancers performing Khoria Folk Dance



- **Dhamaal:** Dhamaal was performed since the Mahabharata times when the farmers used to harvest crops. This male dance had an association with harvesting season. When the crop was ripe for harvesting the farmer filled with joy and satisfaction and performed this dance as a celebration of his fruitful efforts. To the tune of orchestra constituting of old musical instruments like oval drum (Dholak), musical pipe (Been), wooden cymbals (Khartals) and clapping, the song sung during this circular dance expressed the common human feelings i.e. celebrating the fruits of their hard work. The musical pipe (Been) player gave the first long note then brass cymbals (Manjiras) and big drum (Nagara) Picked up the beat and the dancers trooped into the arena. Some of the dancers carried large tambourine (Daph) in their hands. These tambourines (Daphs) were edged with frills of bright coloured fabric and painted surfaces to make them attractive. The others carried wooden sticks called shuntis to make them attractive. The others carried wooden sticks called shuntis in local language. They were of medium length, wrapped in tinsel and tasseled at both ends. The dancers first formed a row or semi- circle and bowed their forehead towards the ground seeking the blessings of Lord Ganesha and the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. They straightened up and danced with a gradually increasing tempo. Their torso was always erect as they played the tambourine (Daph) continuously. The very fast moments of the dance were otherwise simple and the main feature was the jumping movement. Individual prowess was exhibited through various solo dance movements in which they made of the wooden sticks (Shuntis) and tambourines (Daphs) to a great extent. A round brass plate (Thali) was tinkled by a wooden stick (Chope) to add tinkling effect to the music. At times they playfully irritated the women of the village who did not participate in this dance. The songs of Dhamaal were mainly about the harvest. This dance was popular all over Haryana (Kalha:Folk Dances; Chib 25) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Male dancers performing Dhamaal Folk Dance



- **Phag:** This dance could be traced back to the times of Lord Krishna when he used to play Holi with his Gopis, his devotees used to follow him and which lead to this vibrant dance. As the name suggests, this dance was performed to celebrate the mellow month of Phalguna, but it attracted by the sounds of tambourine (Daph) and drums (Nagara and Dholak). The women formed a circle around the person with gharah, the dancers started dancing in pairs leading, sometimes to groupings of four and they exhibited simple movements while danced in a circle acting out the spirit of Holi with coloured powder (Gulaal) and coloured water pipes (Pitchkaris). The dancing women then picked up to ropes (Koraras). While the man folk defended themselves as best as they could with wooden sticks (shuntis) and started singing “*Phagan aaya re rang bhara re*” (Here arrives the colourful Phagun). The dance had rhythmic movements synchronizing well with accompanying music which got faster and faster. This dance was popular all over Haryana (Kalha Brochure; Interviewed Ms. Leela Saini).
- **Loor:** Loor, a dance performed by women was either about the birth of a child or about the unsuitability of a marriage tie between the two sides. The dancers formed two teams and taunted each other, with witty exchanges which finally ended in amity and vigorous dancing. This dance was sometimes performed around Holi. This dance was not as popular as the Khorla dance amongst the people of Haryana (Kalha Brochure; Interviewed Ms. Leela Saini).
- **Ghoomar:** Ghoomar was a girl dance performed on various festivals like Holi, Gangor Pooja, and Teej etc. The main step consisted of turning around and gradually moving in a circle. The tempo increased towards the end of the dance while the dancers whirled around in pairs. It was popular in the areas that border Rajasthan (Kalha Brochure, Folk Music of Haryana Brochure; Interviewed Ms.Leela Saini and Ms. Archana).
- **Gugga:** It was ritualistic dance performed in the memory of Gugga Pir by a group of male devotees. They carried their musical instruments like Deru, Thali, Chimta, Nagara etc and danced to the beat creating spiritually charged atmosphere. The male dancers used peacock feathers in their turban and a bunch of feathers were in these hands while performing this dance. A garland (Haar) made of artificial flowers was worn by the dancers during the performance (Teej Brochure, Folk Music of Haryana Brochure; Interviewed Ms.Leela Saini and Ms. Archana).

- **Chaupia:** Chaupia was a four lines lyric with very few dance step performed by men for devotional purpose. Sometimes it was sung during harvesting time also to get the blessings of God (Saang Brochure, Folk Music of Haryana Brochure; Interviewed Ms.Leela Saini and Ms. Archana).

3.1.1 Musical Instruments: Some important musical instruments used in these dances are

- **Oval Drum (Dholak)** is a small percussive instrument often used by women and professional musicians. In fact, the dholak can be used in and musical performance. The main body of the dholak is a shell made of wood and the heads are mounted with skin. A rope or thread is passed around the shell and over the braces to adjust the pitch of the sound produced by striking the faces of the skin with the hands to produce beats. Sometimes two sticks are tied to a finger or a ring is put around the thumb to produce an additional effect (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Oval Drum (Dholak)



- **Small Drum (Deru)** is a dholak type percussive instrument made of a wooden shell and skin mounted on both sides. In fact, it is a large damru which is struck with sticks to produce rhythmic beats. Deru is used by folk performers as well as wandering devotees.
- **Drum (Nagara)** is a round hollow cup-shaped drum having chords on it. These chords are placed to set the rhythm and tune. The Nagara is covered with animal skin and is played with two wooden sticks (Figure 5,6)
- **Wooden Cymbals (Khartals)** are two pieces of hardwood made flat on one side and round on the other. Fixed in the fingers of one hand the flat surfaces are struck with each other to produce percussive sounds. Sometimes small bells or metallic rings are also fixed at the back of each khartal to produce a tinkling effect (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Drum with wooden stick (Nagara), Wooden Cymbals (Khartals)



- Flute (Been) is a wind instrument which is used primarily by the snake charmers but it had found its permanent place in Haryanvi folk dances. Made from dried pumpkin, it has two joint pipes to produce different notes. The player of Been has to provide continuous flow of air by breathing into it (Figure 6)
- Cymbals (Manjiras) are made of brass and are either flat or cup shaped. These are used in pairs of different sizes and shapes. They are played in classical as well as folk and devotional music, as are struck with each other on the front sides to produce very pleasant tinkling sounds (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Cymbals (Manjiras), Plate with stick (Thali), Flute (Been)



- Plate (Thali) is a round edged plate with a wooden stick to add beat and tinkling effect. Thali is made of brass metal (Figure 6)
- Earthen Pitcher (Gharah) is a simple earthen pitcher and is used as an accompaniment to provide rhythm with folk singing. The open mouth is covered with stretched rubber and is played with a small stick. Raagini singers often use it with Nagara and Dholak to complement the musical beat (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Earthen Pitchers



- Drum (Tabla) is a look alike of Nagara but small in size. It was made of wood and hollow from inside. It had wooden blocks at its sides to adjust the beat. The top was made of animal skin from where the beat produced (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Drum (Tabla)



- Harmonium is a rectangular instrument with white and black long keys on the top of it. At the front it has few holes which help the air to move in and out while playing. It is made of wood with helps the air to move in and out while playing. It is made of with 3-4 knobs or screws to adjust the rhythms. It gives a definite volume or base to the lyrics and often used in folk performances (Figure 9)
- Metallic Twang (Chimta) is a twang like instrument made of two long metallic strips joined at one end. The strips are often embellished with rings, which produce tinkling sounds when the chimta is played. To produce percussive sounds, one holds the joint in one hand and plays strips between the fingers by striking one with the other. The chimta is often used as an accompaniment in folk musical performers (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Harmonium and Metallic Twangs



These musical instruments accompany the folk songs and folk dances so as to add beat and rhythm to the performance. The dance steps are based on these musical instruments. The percussive and tinkling sounds are the guidelines to perform the dance. The rhythmic tunes and beats produced by these musical instruments are pleasant to hear and they make the dancers more energetic to perform the dance (Folk Music of Haryana Brochure; Interviewed Ms. Leela Saini and Ms. Archana).

3.1.2 Accessories:

To add variation and variety in the dance accessories were used such net dupatta, Patara (Wooden bench), Shuntis (Wooden stick), Chhaj (Cane sieve), Synthetics, Jute Rope Korara, Fabric Koraras, Steel Pitcher, and Brass Pitcher.

Figure 10: Net Dupatta



Figure 11: Daphs



Figure 12: Wooden sticks (Shuntis), Cane Sieve (Chhaj), Wooden bench (Patara)



Figure 13: Twisted rope ((a) Fabric Korara & Synthetic Korara (b) Jute Korara)

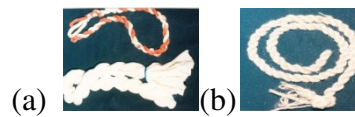


Figure 14: Steel and Brass Pitchers (Gharah)



These accessories were used by the dancers at the time of dance (Figure 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14) (Folk Music of Haryana Brochure; Interviewed Ms. Leela Saini and Ms. Archana).

The folk dances were still very popular among the villagers and were being performed by them on different occasions like marriages, birth of a child and festivals like Holi and Gugga Naumi etc. Earlier these folk dances were performed on particular occasion or festival but today these folk dances had no such limitation. Any folk dance could which were originally their traditional costumes were still famous in old age group as compared to young ones.

3.2 Changes in Folk dances -The folk dances of Haryana had undergone some changes which are as follows:

- Earlier the folk dances served as an outlet for expressing the happiness and were performed to celebrate some happy moment like harvesting or marriage ceremonies. But now this folk art was

becoming professional and commercialized and was gaining popularity in urban areas much more than in the past.

- Initially in villages the folk dances were performed for a number of days preceding the occasion particularly the Phag dance which was performed for 4-5 days but now a day the number of days had decreased to 1 day i.e. the Holi day. Moreover, in villages the dances was accompanied with throwing of muddy water and cow dung which had been substituted with coloured powder (Gulaal) and coloured water.
- Another change regarding the dances was seen in Dhamaal. This harvesting dance was no more performed as the celebration of harvesting time and was rather performed on other occasions like Holi, marriages etc. This was mainly due to modernization, the farmers (younger generation) felt no need to dance as the manual method of harvesting was replaced by modern mechanical techniques or it could be the lack of emotional involvement.

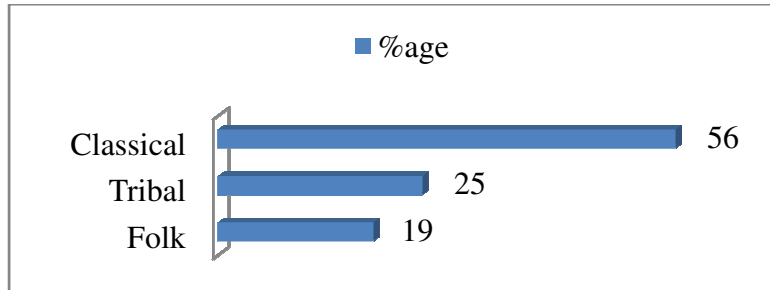
3.3 Role of Govt. Initiatives and cultural agencies -The role of the Cultural Affairs Department, NZCC, Handicraft Department, Tourism Department and private organizations was appreciated by the villagers as they felt that these departments were helping in preserving the culture of Haryana by keeping its folk dances alive.

- Department of Cultural Affairs and Publication Relations trained the dancers and organized dance programmes for different occasions like Independence Days, Republic Day and other State functions.
- North Zone Cultural Center Organization (NZCC) exhibit folk dances at national and international levels which helped in bringing about the competitive spirit among the dancers.
- Private Organizations played an important role by training dancers and instrument players who were engaged by the Public relations department.
- Handicrafts and Tourism Department arranges the fairs and exhibition in different States and hence provided a platform for the folk dances of Haryana. These departments were, therefore, playing a vital role in preserving the culture of Haryana by providing an opportunity to exhibit the State's folk arts to the people of Haryana and the other states which made them familiar with the folk dances and traditional costumes of Haryana

3.4 Youth's Perspective

- Difference between classical dances ,tribal dances and folk dances

Figure 15: Different dance knowledge among youth



19% of the youth were responsive about folk dances of Haryana are existing otherwise 56% of respondents were aware of classical dance form and 25% respondents attentive about tribal dances (Figure 15).

- Awareness of folk dances of Haryana

Figure 16: Awareness of folk dances of Haryana

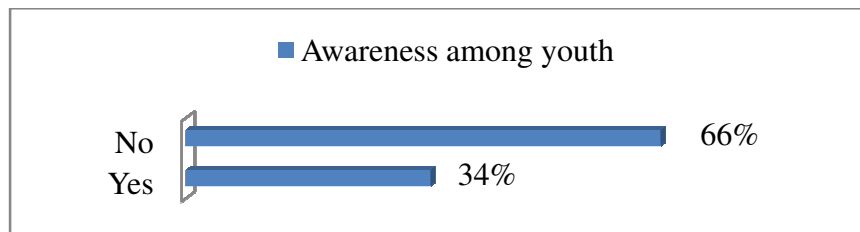
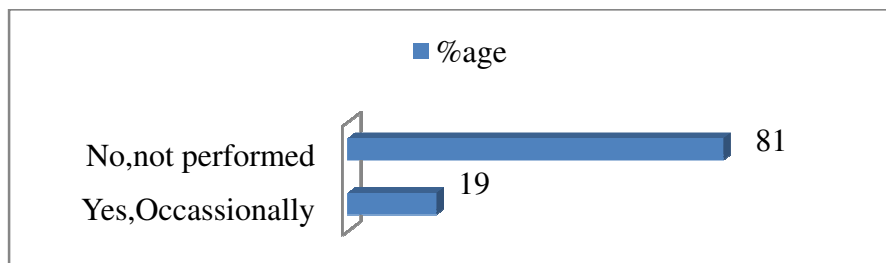


Figure 16 shows that 34% of the respondents were aware of folk dances of Haryana which raises the alarm for India also. 66% of the sample was not even heard of these dances; they knew that their state dance is known as Haryanvi dance only.

- Have you performed any folk dance of Haryana?

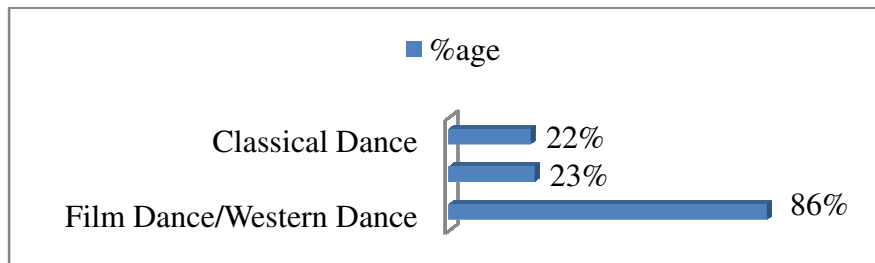
Figure 17: Performed any folk dance of Haryana



Folk dances failed to attract youth- the generation next of our nation. Most (81%) of the sample did not performed folk dances whereas still there is ray of hope to generate cultural heritage of Haryana with having 19% of respondents in the kitty (Figure 17).

- Dance preferences of youth

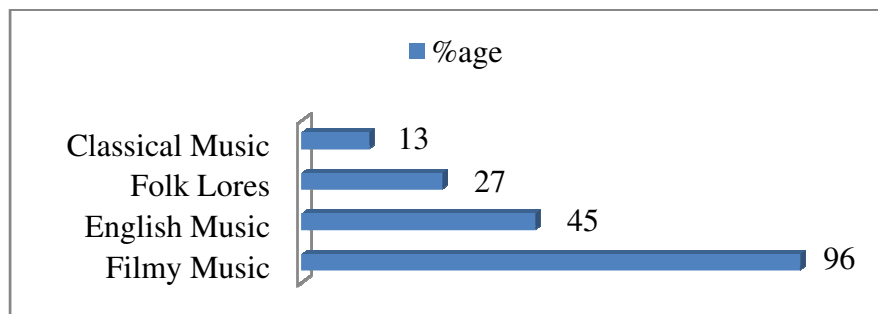
Figure 18: Dance preferences of youth



Film dance (86%) allured youth over folk dances (23%) which has been an important part of Haryana culture (Figure 18).

- Music preferences of youth

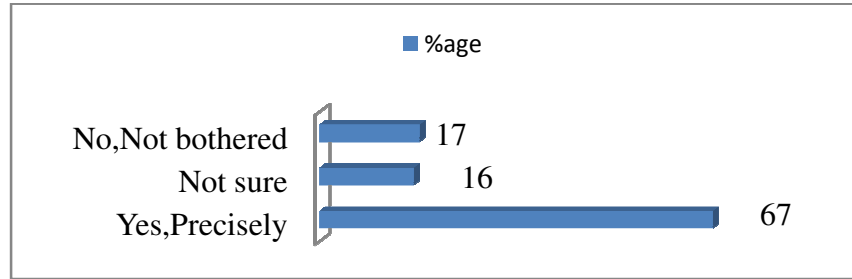
Figure 19: Music preferences of youth



Filmy (96%) and English (45%) music bagged first and second position respectively in the preference list of generation next. It can be seen precisely from the figure 19 that folk lore's and classical music have taken a back seat as with they were preferred by 27% and 13% of youth only.

- Wanted to revive folk dances

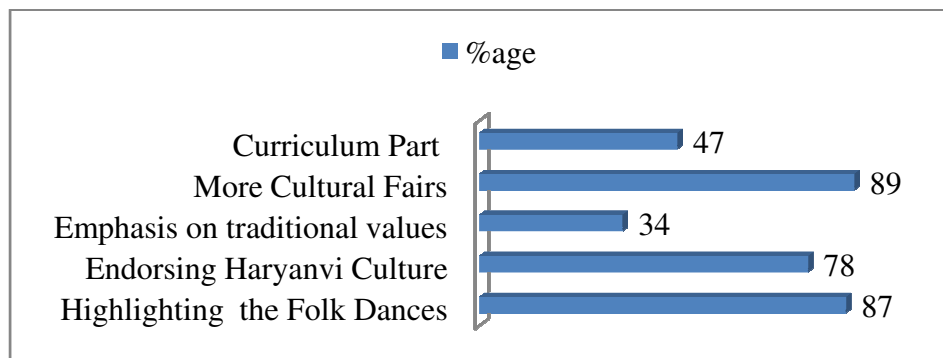
Figure 20: Wanted to revive folk dances



With the turmoil of globalization and westernization, the present day youth was not even bothered (57%) to revive Haryana heritage known for its swiftness and grace-folk dances. But if efforts are made in the right directions these folk dances and folk lore's and culture heritage of Haryana can be renaissance as 27 % youth respondents wanted to revive and refresh Haryana 's folk dances as to preserve for the coming generations (Figure 20).

- Suggestions given by the respondents to revive folk dances of Haryana

Figure 21: Suggestions given by respondents for revival



The above mentioned figure 21 shows the suggestions of the respondents who wanted to revive and wanted to give an ear to renaissance call of folk dances of Haryana. Most of the respondents felt the need to have more of cultural fairs (89%) as well as highlight the folk dances (87%). 78% of the sample favoured to endorse Haryana's culture. Curriculum (47%) should be used as catalyst to promote and blurb about folk dances which will preserve and spread cultural heritage. 34% of the respondents supported to emphasize traditional values which leads to renewal.

3.6 Limitations: Following limitations were faced while conducting the study-

The study was limited to

- Folk dances of Haryana only.

- Five selected districts of Haryana i.e. the core of Haryana (Rohtak) and the bordering districts (Panchkula, Ambala, Mahendragarh and Faridabad) for youth's perspective collection.

4. Suggestions to Revive Folk Dances

- Inculcate patriotism -The feeling of patriotism, the feeling of oneness, should be inculcated impeccably in generation next, if we want to revive our own culture in our own land.
- Inculcate feeling of belongingness-This feeling should be inculcate in the masses i.e. youth as retain, perk up and revitalize the traditions, customs in terms of brushing up the dust from folk dances and folk lore's.
- Integral part of school/college curriculum-Folk art in whatever form it is should be added and included as an integral part of school as well as college curriculum. This will not only help to revive cultural heritage but an opportunity to inculcate our values and traditions in youth genre.
- Govt. initiatives & Cultural agencies-Private cultural agencies should collaborate with govt. once again as to revive and flourish Haryanvi folk dances by showcasing them at national as well as internationally. So that it can be acclaimed not only by domestic Haryana folks but applauded by Haryanvi folks who are residing globally.

5. Conclusion

The dance in India is an eloquent expression of an ancient civilization. Folk dances belong to the villages and are generally associated with the agriculture. Each State of India has its dance so do Haryana. Haryana, an agriculture state is known for its fair, festivals and the folk-art. Today's youth does not miss folk lore's and folk dances; this rings warning bells to the cultural heritage of India. Undoubtedly the dying and fading folk dances of Haryana screams a renaissance call. People in urban as well as rural are not performing folk dances during harvesting, marriages or festivals for which they were developed as their ancestors used to dance to folk lore's. With the impeccable and opulent efforts by govt. as well as private cultural agencies ,the lost and forgotten folk art can be flourished and treasure for the years to come.

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