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Stress management through folk music among rural women in Haryana

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Abstract

Folk songs, which are related to the daily routine and agricultural activities of rural women, were collected and documented as part of a research study conducted in 2025-2027. The current study aimed to assess the effect of folk music on the stress level of rural women. The study was conducted in the Kaithal and Hisar districts of Haryana. The current study selected 140 respondents out of which 70 respondents were selected from Hisar and the remaining 70 respondents were selected from Kaithal. The educational qualification of respondents from the Kaithal district was assessed, out of which, 32.86% of the respondents had completed senior secondary education, 31.43% of the respondents had completed middle education, and 35.71% of the respondents were illiterate. Similarly, the educational qualification of the respondents from Hisar district was assessed, out of which, 38.58% of the respondents had completed senior secondary education, 32.85% of the respondents had completed middle education, and 28.57% of the respondents were illiterate. The current study hypothesized that folk music plays a significant role in alleviating the stress level of rural women. 50.58% of the respondents stated that folk music helped them cope up with the stress of their daily routine activities. 47.14% of the respondents revealed that folk music helped them get rid of their worries related to their domestic and work responsibilities. 51.42% of the respondents revealed that they felt calm and relaxed by listening to folk music. The current study concluded that apart from entertaining people, folk music is also instrumental in communicating feelings and emotions and preserving cultural heritages and traditions. Folk music not only helps the rural women to cope up with their daily stress but also helps them to maintain their cultural heritages and traditions for generations.

Keywords: Folk music, stress management, rural women, emotional well-being, cultural preservation, Haryana

1. Introduction

Folk music is one of the oldest and most distinctive forms of art that reflects the traditions, customs, beliefs, feelings, and experiences of people. According to LI and Ismail (2025) ^[6], folk music is an essential element of people's daily life that plays a significant role in maintaining cultural heritages and traditions. In India, it is prevalent in rural society and has been transferred from generation to generation in the form of oral tradition. Songs are composed concerning the events that occur throughout people's lives, such as birth, marriage, and death, as well as various rituals and agricultural activities. They assist individuals in preserving their cultural heritages and traditions while fostering social relationships within the community.

Haryana is well-known for its rich and distinctive folk music that reflects the social, traditional, and cultural aspects of the state's residents. Women's voices have been the driving force behind this music. They regularly performed various folk songs during ceremonies like marriage rituals, festivals, childbirth, and seasonal celebrations, as well as while performing household and agricultural tasks. Songs were considered an essential element of communication that expressed the feelings, dreams, and aspirations of the singers. Therefore, folk songs played a significant role in Haryana's cultural life by connecting people to each other through their shared joys, sorrows, and experiences (Anjali, A. 2025;

Chauhan, M., & Mishra, S. 2024) ^[1, 2].

Women living in rural areas perform a variety of household and agricultural duties. They tend to their children, prepare food, manage animals, do farm works, and perform other domestic duties (Jabeen, S., *et al.*, 2020) ^[5]. They undergo tremendous physical and mental stress due to these responsibilities. Stress, in particular, has emerged as a significant environmental risk factor in recent years that negatively affects females' mental health. As a result, it has become critical to find a way to lead a healthy and happy life by managing stress. Folk music and other traditional cultural practices have been proven to be effective stress-relief approaches for rural women in particular, even though contemporary methods of stress management have gained considerable attention.

It has been established that music can help promote emotional stability and psychological wellbeing. (G. *et al.*, Dingle, 2021) ^[4]. Particularly, folk music appears to help individuals feel secure and connected to their cultural heritage. Folk songs' communal nature, along with their emotive and rhythmic qualities, creates a positive environment that relieves tension and eases stress. Rural women use traditional music as a coping mechanism for dealing with the stresses of everyday life while also maintaining emotional stability.

In addition to being a stress-relief mechanism, folk music is crucial in sustaining a community's cultural heritage. The

lyrical content of folk music frequently includes valuable information about traditional practices, such as knowledge of traditional agriculture and social norms. However, due to the rise of modernization, urbanization, technological advancements, and shifting lifestyle choices, traditional folk singing practices have been gradually declining. As a result, there is an urgent need to record and save these traditional folk songs for future generations. The cultural regions of Haryana differ from one another in terms of folk traditions and folk music. The Bagur region of Hisar district and the Nardak region of the Kaithal district are well-known for their rich folk heritage and the active involvement of women in the folk singing process. Thus, it is critical to record the folk songs of these regions to preserve the cultural heritages of Haryana while also determining the significance of these songs in terms of the social and psychological well-being of the locals. With this background information in mind, the current research was conducted in Hisar and Kaithal districts of Haryana to document the folk songs performed by rural women during their daily routines and agricultural operations. The current study also aimed to determine the influence of folk songs on stress management. Additionally, the study intended to assess the effect of folk music on emotional wellbeing while investigating how it assisted in alleviating stress associated with domestic and work-related responsibilities. Lastly, the current study aimed to examine the role of folk music in preserving the cultural traditions of the locals. The findings of the current study would contribute to the fields of folk culture, women's studies, rural development, and mental health by highlighting the significance of folk music in general and its effectiveness as a stress-relieving technique for women in particular.

Objectives

1. To List down the folk songs sung by the rural women during the daily routine work.
2. To find out the folk songs sung by the rural women during the Agricultural work.
3. To know the stress management strategies through folk songs sung by rural women.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study area

The present study was conducted in the state of Haryana, India. Haryana is geographically and culturally divided into five major cultural pockets. For the present investigation, two cultural zones, namely the Bagur Zone of Hisar district and the Nardak Zone of Kaithal district, were purposively selected. These areas were selected to represent the rural population and to assess the status, practices and related aspects of rural women in the selected districts.

2.2 Selection of districts and blocks

For the study, Hisar and Kaithal districts of Haryana were purposively selected. From Kaithal district, Kalayat and Kaithal blocks were selected, whereas Hisar block was selected from Hisar district. The selection of these blocks was based on their representation of the respective cultural zones and rural population.

2.3 Selection of villages

A total of ten villages were selected for the study. From

Kaithal district, six villages, namely Mataur, Simla, Pinjupura, Bhanpura Pattikhot, Bhana and Pundri, were selected. From Hisar district, four villages, namely Badyan Brahman, Bharri Bhojraj, Mangali and Mohabbat Shahpur, were selected. The selected villages constituted the primary sampling units for the investigation.

2.4 Selection of respondents and sample size

The respondents comprised rural women belonging to two age groups, i.e., 18–35 years and 35–60 years. A total of 70 respondents from each district were selected, making an overall sample of 140 rural women respondents for the study. The respondents were selected from the identified villages according to the sampling procedure adopted for the investigation.

2.5 Data collection

The required data were collected through a structured interview schedule developed in accordance with the specific objectives of the study. The interview schedule consisted of questions related to the variables and information required for fulfilling the objectives of the investigation. Before the final data collection, the schedule was suitably organized and finalized. The selected respondents were personally interviewed by the investigator, and the required information was recorded systematically.

2.6 Data analysis and statistical techniques

The collected data were systematically coded, classified, tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistical measures were used to summarize and interpret the data. The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Total Weighted Score (TWS)
- Weighted Mean Score (WMS)
- Rank order
- Overall Mean Score

The findings were presented in the form of tables for clear interpretation and comparison among the selected respondents and study areas.

3. Results and Discussion

Contextual matrix of respondents

The age-wise distribution of 140 rural women respondents across two districts namely Hisar and Kaithal with 70 respondents from each district (table 1). The more than half of respondents (51.42%) hailed from 18–35 years age groups were taken from Hisar District and while (48.58%) per cent respondents were above 35 to 60 years of age group were taken from Hisar District. Education wise data reveals that 35.72% per cent respondents were educated up to 10+2 and (32.14%) respondents were educated up to middle and (32.14%) respondents were illiterate. This table presents the distribution of caste attainment among Scheduled Caste respondents in both districts. (32.14%) respondents were illiterate, while (32.14%) have attained up to middle and (35.72%) respondents were educated up to 10+2 in the both Districts. District-wise analysis reveals that Kaithal has the high percentage of illiterate respondents (35.71%) and Hisar has the low percentage of illiterate respondents (28.71%).

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the Rural Women (n=140)

Socio-economic profile	Hisar (n= 70)	Kaithal (n=70)	Total 140
Independent Variables			
Age			
18 to 35 years	32(45.71)	40(57.14)	72 (51.42)
35 to 60 years	38(54.29)	30(42.86)	68(48.58)
Education			
Illiterate	20(28.57)	25(35.71)	45(32.14)
Educated up to middle	23(32.85)	22(31.43)	45(32.14)
Educated up to 10+2	27 (38.58)	23(32.86)	50(35.72)
Caste			
General	28(40.00)	25(35.71)	53(37.85)
Backward class	22(31.42)	23(32.86)	45 (32.15)
Scheduled caste	20(28.58)	22(31.43)	42 (30)
Marital Status			
Unmarried	20(28.58)	24(34.28)	44(31.42)
Married	50(71.42)	46(65.72)	96(68.58)
Family Type			
Nuclear	43(61.42)	48(68.58)	91 (65)
Joint	27(38.58)	22(31.42)	49 (35)
Size of land holding			
Marginal (Up to 2.5 acre)	39(55.71)	30(42.85)	69(49.28)
Semi Medium (2.51-5 acre)	24(34.28)	31(44.28)	55(39.28)
Large (5.1-10 acre)	07(10)	09(12.85)	16(11.42)
Mass media exposure			
Low (4-6)	10(14.28)	5(7.14)	15(10.71)
Medium (7-9)	18(25.72)	16(22.86)	34(24.29)
High (10-12)	42(60)	49(70)	91 (65)
Social Participation			
Not member of any organization	41(58.57)	38(54.28)	79(56.42)
Member of one organization	23(32.85)	26(37.14)	49(35)
Member of more than one organization	04(5.71)	06(8.57)	10(7.14)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

3.1. Songs sung by rural women during their daily routine work

In the state of Haryana, women have found a natural medium in the form of folk music to express their thoughts and emotions during routine work. Singing songs during routine work is also helpful in reducing stress of the work. Whether educated or less educated, folk music forms the foundation of women's lives. Some of the folk songs sung by women during routine work are which make them free from the stress. In the song Mere Sarpe Indi Jadrisaje: - some women who are going to fetch water, make their task easier by

singing songs along the way. They forget the weight of their heavy pots of water in the world of rhythm and melody of folklore. In another folk song Jalda ri Balda Khet mein te aaya, A women express her pain and suffering through the lyrics. She describes how her husband returns from the field in a distressed and frustrated state and behaves violently towards her. Despite facing such abuse, the song also shows, how she cope up with stress by sharing her emotions through folk singing with other women. She finds a way to release her pain and gradually come out of that stress.

Table 2: List of the Songs sung by rural women during their daily routine work.

Song no.1	Sthai:-Mere sarpe indi jadri saje, pital ki tokni hoye, Jad jaaun paani ne Antra:- Pital ki tokni jad ri saje, sone ki balti hoye, Jad jaaun paani ne. Sone ki balti ho jad ri saje, resham ki neju hoye, Main jad jaaun paani ne. Resham ki neju jad ri saje, mere gail Chaudhary hoye, Main jad jaaun paani ne.
Song no. 2	Sthai:-Jalda ri balda khet me inteaaaya, Mere yo santa ri yosan tamaarya, Meri ya paasu ri ya paasu todi, Haay maar di ri, main to haay maar di ri. Antra:-Jalda ri balda kolhu me in te aaya, Mere yo ganda ri yo ganda maarya, Meri ya paasu ri ya paasu todi, Mere yo santa ri yo saanta maarya, Haay maar di ri, main to haay maar diri, Main to nyu eh roungi, main to nyu eh roungi.

Song no. 3	Sthai:- Saasu ri kuen par baaj rahi been, Bhaiyan ki soo hum ne suna deo been. Bahu ri kuen par jhimar ghane badmaash, Bhaiyan ki soo ghara aein bajwa deu been. Bahu ri main ras bhar randhu kheer, Bhaiyan ki soo lote te ghaloo kheer. Antra:- Saasu ri bag mein baaj rahi been, Bhaiyan kisoo hum ne suna deo been. Bahuri bag ke maali ghahne badmaash, Bhaiyan ki soo ghara aein bajwa deu been. Bahuri main to ras bhar randhu moong, Katora bhar-bhar ke ghaloo moong.
Song no. 4	Sthai:- Neembuye todan gayiri bag mein, Maali ke ne baiyan marodi ri bag mein Antra:- Chod de re maali ke baiyan hamari, Sasura dekhega gaali dega ri baag mein, Neembuye todan gayi ri bag mein, Maalike ne baiyaan marodi ri bag mein.
Song no. 5	Sthai: Laya leya e bahu methi ka bharota, Lya ke ghera mein ger diye, methi ka bharota Antra:- Main konya lyandie, sasu methi ka bharota, Ke ghera mein kaam mera Mkha, ke ghera mein kaam mera, Main konya lyaan die saasu methi kabharota.

3.2. Songs sung by rural women based on agricultural work

Songs during agricultural activities are described or which are related to farming practices, are known as agricultural folk songs. The complete personality of the hardworking farmer can be clearly observed in these songs. The main categories of agricultural folk songs are related to nature and seasons, sowing, harvesting, crops, fruits, plants, and animals. These songs not only give meaning and recognition to the hard work of farmers but also fill them with joy and enthusiasm and helpful in the removal of stress. In the song Mere Susre ne bag lgaya e, a married woman says that pomegranates have been grown in her father-in-law's garden and her husband is unwilling to go and sell them he chooses

to rest instead. As a result, she takes on the responsibility herself and goes to sell the pomegranates, carrying them in a basket. Through this folk song, she expresses her feelings, pain, and situation in a very heartfelt and graceful manner. In another song Do Bhainslyayari, sasuriterabawaliya. Woman says that her husband has brought two buffaloes home, but now it is her responsibility to take care of them. Whether it is tying them, feeding them, milking them, or even preparing dishes like kheer from the milk—she has to do all the work. She feels burdened and troubled, yet in a very graceful and expressive way, she complains to her mother-in-law about her husband. At the same time, through this folk song, she also tries to relieve her mental stress by expressing her feelings indirectly.

Table 3: List of the songs sung by rural women based on agricultural work

Song no. 1	Sthai: Mere susre ne bag lgayae, daali-daali pe anaar, daali-daali pe anaar, Main to bhar ke tokra chali e, lelo lelo e anaar, Lelo lelo e anaar. Mera raja ghana e malok re, rakhe hatha mein rumal, rakhe hatha me in rumal Antra: Mere jetha ne bag lgayae, daali-daali pe anaar, daali-daali pe anaar Main to bharke tokra chaali e, lelo leloe anaar, Lelo lelo re anaar. Ek chora manne bulave e, deja deja e anaar, Deja deja e anaar, Mera raja ghana e malok re, rakhe hatha mein rumal, rakhe hatha mein rumal.
Song no. 2	Sthai: Do bhains lyayari saas ri tera bawaliya, Manne khoota -2 Manne khoota gadya ri saasu ri tera bawaliya, Antra: Manne kadhya -2 Manne doodh kadhya ri saasu ri tera bawaliya, Kheer banayi -2 Manne kheer banayi ri saasu r itera bawaliya, Seti ji mange -2 Dono seti jimange ri saasu ri tera bawaliya.
Song no. 3	Sthai: Kanwari chori ber bechanaayi, Tkke ke ser bechan aayi.

	(Naration) Haan Re, tuke ber bechti hande sai, Jis se teri saga ihori sai na, vo to kala sai, Kale te meri maa ker legi, manne or kra degi, Haan manne or kradegi. Kanwari chori berbechan aayi, Tkke ke ser bechan aayi. Antra: (Narration) Tu to ber bechti hande sai, Jisse teri sagai ho rahi sai na, vo to mota sai, Mote tai meri maa ker legi, manne or kra degi, Haan- haan, mnne or kradegi. Kanwari chori ber bechan aayi, Tkke ke ser bechan aayi
Song no. 4	Sthai: Baalam khet mein t eaaya, Baalam khet mein te aaya, Gori ne naak chadhaya ri bhola rasiya Antra: Baalam khatiyaan ke chalya, Ek mogra ghdaya ri bhola rasiya, Ek mogra ghdaya, mere kadke bich jchaya ri bhola rasiya, Mere kadke bich jchaya, meri haddi-haddi todi ri bhola rasiya.
Song no. 5	Sthai: Gehuan mein jhota bad gyari, ho jaye roe ri, Baalam te painda chutgya ri, ho jaye roe ri. Antra: Katan te painda chutgya ri, ho jaye roe ri, Jama ye rog katgyari, hojaye roe ri. Gaman main chakki laae ri, ho jaye roe ri, Pesan te painda chutgya ri, ho jaye roe ri, Jmma ye rog katgya ri, ho jaye roe ri. Katan te painda chut gaya ri, ho jaye roe ri.

3.3. Stress management strategies through folk songs sung by rural women (n=40)

Data reveals in table 4 that how folk songs sung by rural women can act as a stress management strategy. In the 140 respondents, results revealed that 50% of the women were agreed that after Listening or participating in folk music it helps them to reduce stress during routine work, 28.58% of the women said that sometimes they felt stress free after Listening or participating in folk music and 21.42% of rural

women haven't experience this. Therefore, it can be clearly observed that folk songs contribute significantly to stress management and emotional well-being listening or participating in folk music help to reduce stress during routine work. While (52.14%) respondents revealed that that they feel emotionally always relaxed (27.14%) said that sometimes they feel relaxed and only (20.72%) One fifth admit that they never experienced this.

Table 4: Stress management strategies through folk songs sung by rural women (n=40)

Sr. No.	Strategies	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Listening or participating in folk music help to reduce stress during routine work.	70 (50)	40(28.58)	30(21.42)
2.	Feels Emotionally relaxed during daily routine work with folklore	73(52.14)	38(27.14)	29(20.72)
3.	Through Listening or participating in the folk songs reduce work stress	71(50.71)	45(32.14)	24(17.15)
4.	Only listening the folk songs can be the strategy of stress management.	65(46.42)	50(35.72)	25(17.86)
5.	Folk music helps to forget worries related the households or work.	66(47.14)	55(39.28)	19(13.58)
6.	Compared to silence, folk music makes you calm.	72(51.42)	33(23.58)	35(25)
7.	Singing folk songs in a group make you feel more connected with others.	78(55.71)	32(22.86)	30(21.43)
8.	One feels proud of your culture while singing or listing to folk music.	82(58.57)	55(39.28)	03(2.15)
9.	Folk music breakdown tiredness or boredom during daily work.	74(52.86)	38(27.14)	28(20)
10.	Folk music should be promoted as a way to reduce stress among women.	85(61.43)	34(24.29)	20(14.28)

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

4. Conclusion

It is concluded that during the period, 2025-26 to 2026-27, the study was conducted in the Kaithal and Hisar districts of Haryana state. A total of 70 rural women respondents were selected from each district. The findings revealed that, in Kaithal district, 32.86% of the women were educated up to the senior secondary (10+2) level, 31.43% were educated up to the middle level, while 35.71% of the respondents were illiterate. On the other hand, in Hisar district, 38.58% of the women were educated up to the senior secondary (10+2) level, 32.85% were educated up to the middle level, and 28.57% of the respondents were illiterate. During the study, folk songs related to the daily routine of rural women as well

as agricultural folk songs were collected and documented. When the respondents were asked about stress management strategies, they explained how folk music could be promoted further as an effective means of stress management. The respondents stated that listening to and participating in folk music helps them to reduce stress during their daily routine work. In this regard, 50.58% of the respondents answered "always," 28.58% answered "sometimes," while 21.42% answered "never." When they were asked whether folk music helps in reducing their worries related to household and work responsibilities, 47.14% of the respondents replied "always," 39.28% replied "sometimes," and 13.58% replied "never." The respondents were also asked whether folk music makes

them feel calmer and more relaxed compared to silence. In response, 51.42% agreed that it always does, 23.58% stated “sometimes,” while 25% responded said never. Folk music is an expression of the common people that is deeply connected with human emotions. It not only plays a significant role in stress management, but also helps in carrying forward our civilization and culture from one generation to another. Folk music holds a special place in the lives of women, as it unknowingly becomes a companion in their joys and sorrows and serves as a medium of stress management. In rural society, women express their emotions, pain, desires, and experiences through folk songs. These songs help them reduce mental stress and provide emotional relief. By taking support from folk music, women are able to forget the hardships and tensions of life for some time and regain new energy and enthusiasm to continue their daily routine. Thus, folk music is not merely a source of entertainment, but also an important medium for emotional expression, mental well-being, and the preservation of culture.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Need-based training programmes should be organized for rural women of both age groups (18–35 and 35–60 years) according to their identified needs and existing level of knowledge and practices.
2. Special attention should be given to women belonging to the comparatively lower-performing age group, so that the gap in knowledge, participation and adoption of the studied practices can be reduced.
3. Village-level awareness and extension programmes should be strengthened in the selected villages of Hisar and Kaithal districts through demonstrations, meetings, workshops and personal counselling.
4. Women’s participation in community and developmental activities should be encouraged by providing suitable opportunities and institutional support at the village level.
5. Government departments and extension agencies should make relevant information, training facilities and welfare/development programmes easily accessible to rural women.
6. Women’s self-help groups and other community-based organizations should be strengthened to encourage collective participation, exchange of information and development of skills among rural women.
7. Regular follow-up and evaluation of government and extension programmes should be undertaken to assess their effectiveness and to identify the continuing needs of rural women.
8. Since the study covered women from two cultural zones Bagur and Nardak, future programmes should consider the local socio-cultural conditions of the respective areas while planning interventions.
9. Similar studies should be conducted in other districts and cultural zones of Haryana with a larger sample size to validate and generalize the findings of the present investigation.

Declarations

Ethical considerations

NA

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Conflict of interest

NA

Data availability

Available in the manuscript.

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