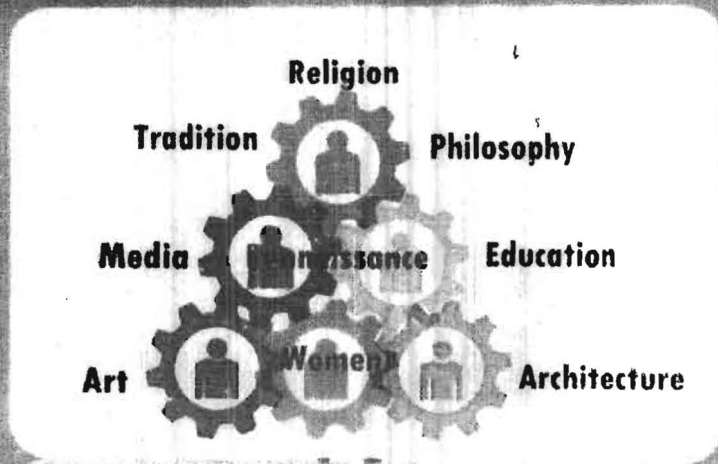


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# Historical Importance of Folklore Material Culture of Bidar

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**Introduction:** Karnataka is home to innumerable and unique folk forms that spread across the state. These distinctly exquisite forms continue to evolve and represent the cultural identity and regional flavor. Historically, the region has been a cradle for several flourishing religious and has created a haven of folk forms.

Folklore is the traditional knowledge, culture and practices of commoners mainly rural inhabitants which are passed orally from individual to individual. Folklore of a society is rarely written or published. Folklore is the mother root of a nation's culture – Karnataka has a rich folklore repository in the form of ballads, riddles, legends, stories, proverbs, dance forms, customs festivals, sports and medicinal remedies.

Folklore is all about human sufferings & pains which are transmitted in the forms of folk narrative materials culture, social folk customs & performs folk arts. Not with standing disparate ethnicity, people also shared at least one important cultural thing in common i.e., tradition. This tradition renders communities to share some common elements like folk arts & so on. This facilitates to generate a shared identity for the groups.

**Bidar :** Bidar has a glorious history. This district was ruled by various dynasties Maurayas, Satavahanas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas of Kalyana, Kalachuris, Khiljis, Bahamanis and Mughals. The Bahamanis made Bidar as their capital.<sup>1</sup> Bidar district is known for its spiritual activities. Bidar has 5 Talukas and 541 villages. Kannada is the main language spoken by the people, while Urdu is the second language. Telugu and Marathi are used for occupational purposes, commerce and trade, whereas Hindi has the sub-language status. Bidar is known as multiple cultural district.

Bidar is the crown of Karnataka.<sup>2</sup> Bidar also called as Dharinadu. Dhari means the tall region. Folk artisans of Bidar brought name and fame to Bidar.<sup>3</sup> We find multiple (mixed) folklores. The folklore system is very old in Bidar. In Bidar, people from different castes, communities and backward communities are involved in folklore. Most of the folk artist, musician, stage performers and literary persons are trying to preserve this folk art, culture, medicine and is passed to the new generation. Few artisans of Bidar district got State level award.<sup>4</sup> But looking at the impact of globalization on folklore very soon folklore will only be seen in museums.

<sup>1</sup> See for detail Hasoon Khan Sherwani, The Bahmanis of the Deccan, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, 1985, pp.34-52. •

<sup>2</sup> G.Yazdani, Bidar : Its History and Monuments, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1995, pp.91-101.

<sup>3</sup> The Gazetteer of Bidar District, Government of Karnataka, 1977.

<sup>4</sup> Virendra Simpi and others (ed), Basavaprabhe, Souvenir of the All India 72<sup>nd</sup> Kannada Sahitya Sammelana held at Bidar on 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2006, Karnataka Sahitya sangh, Bidar, 2006, pp.171-175.

To study the folk culture of any society, it is necessary to understand the material culture as well. Folk culture is a complex structure, interesting and surprising. Folk people's life is different than commoners. It teaches life lessons that even science failed to understand. This special physical characteristic is termed as 'Material Culture' (Bhautika Sanskruti).

Physical surrounding of the folk artisans includes life, houses, environment, climate, animals, plants, activities, yearly activities, practises, customs and agricultural activities. These are broadly divided into three sections.<sup>5</sup>

1. Household material
2. Professional tools
3. Metals and ornaments
- 4.

#### **Household material:**

House is the most aspect of material culture. Houses depict the life style, culture and dignity of the people. Houses in Bidar are constructed as per vastu-shastra. These houses suffice every need of the localites. These homes have small rooms or sections for various purposes like God's room meant for puja and other religious activities, kitchen, bathrooms, drawing room for meeting and discussion, rooms for animals, room for keeping agricultural tools and other equipments. The folk artists follow social customs of birth, death, marriage, sobana, namakaran in their own style. For this purpose they build their houses as per vastu-shastra. Doors and windows are given utmost importance as they are considered God's representatives. Doors are worshipped, everyday in the morning and evening, with Haladi and kumkum on it. It is believed that bad things will not enter the house if haladi and kumkum is put on the door.

Utensils, stove, broom, plates, etc are worshipped everyday before using them. Mane (stool) is considered auspicious and is used in worshipping God, during marriage and namakaran. Mane kept every person in their house.

The household grinding wheel (Bhisuva Kalu). It is used to grind grains. It is a good sign to keep this at home. It is considered as mahalaxmi. By using this Bhisuva kalu food remains in abundance in the house and the house will never face scarcity of food.

Pan leaf is an integral part of the folk life. They use pan leaf for every programme, worship, marriage, festivals, cooking and also eaten as a digestive supplement. Pan is offered to a guest. It is also mandatory to use pan leaf in every social and religious activities as it is considered pure.

Khawadi is a blanket made up of the clothes of ancestors' clothes. It is considered auspicious and pure and is mainly found in North Karnataka it is generally found in a farmer's house. Folk artisan whether rich or poor use Khawadi.

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<sup>5</sup> See for detail Channa Basappa (ed) Loksiri—All India Folklore Conference, Bidar. 2011.pp.185-189.

## 2. Professional tools<sup>6</sup>:

These are multiple things and goods that are required for agricultural activities. Yuga is considered as the best time for folk people. They worship the Negelu in the time Yugadi and also worship other materials which are used in agricultural activities. People worship Earth as it gives good crops or cultivation; cow, sheep, ox, are worshipped they bring richness to family. During Allamavase they worship God and land.

Farmers worship rain, sun, stars, etc daily all throughout the year. They believe palmistry and astrology. They check the positions of sun, moon and stars to know the time of rainfall and suitability of season for cultivation. Folk culture gives equal importance to animals, birds and trees. Tulsi, bilva and ala leaves are worshipped. Bilva leaf is believed to be incarnation of Goddess Kali and so it is distributed at the times VijayaDashmi. Bell (neem) leaf is a symbol of power, goodness and purity. Devotees Ellamma and Amba Bai worship neem tree.<sup>7</sup> Neem leaves cure diseases, give strength and purify blood. Festivals are celebrated with the view to worship leaves and vegetables. For ex: shingi, humise, ala amavase, bhaka hunema, etc.

## 3. Metals and ornaments:

Since ancient times Indians have formulated their own way of making and using tools they are made of silver, gold, bronze, iron, and copper. These tools were used for Yajur Tantra and preparing Tayata. Gold and silver are used to cure disease. Stones, gemstones, diamonds, gold rings are worn by people to strengthen physical and emotional health of a person. Gems restore mental peace and de-stress mind. Some metals and minerals are used to cope up with weaknesses; and so gold, silver, pearls, etc are used by ayurvedic doctors as medicines.

Further, it is believed that by using Panchaloha (mix of five metals) one can get rid of evil things in life. Salt, camphor and soil are used in different ways to cure disease, cover up weakness and illness. Rangoli is another such useful thing. It is a white powder used to decorate floor. Scientifically, it is said that rangoli cleans the floor, kills insects, allergy and also poison from the floor. Therefore, rangoli is used every day to decorate the floor.

## 4. Importance of Panchaloha:

Gold and silver play an important role in human life. People who wear gold and silver are protected from problems of heat and infections. Rich or poor Indians wear gold and silver in more or less amount. It also indicates one's social status. A married woman has to wear gold mangalsutra for her good health.

Followers of occult practises use silver taveez. Taveez is said to cure disease and in getting rid of evils. Babies are adorned with silver anklets and bracelets to ensure good health. People of Lambhani community make copper and bronze statues of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.190.

<sup>7</sup> Somanatha Yalavaru and Prema Sirshe (ed), Bidar Zilla Darshan, Prasaranga Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, 2005. Pp.204-213



and Goddesses,<sup>8</sup> wear copper and bronze ornaments and utensils. Women also wear copper and bronze ornaments. In this way metals are used for various purposes by the folk artisan.<sup>9</sup>

The physical and cultural identity depicts one's culture and social values. Today with the advent of science we can understand and pass on the usage of metals and gems to our next generation. However, the new generation needs to preserve and propagate such cultural aspects; and this can be done only by passing the culture to the next generation. Otherwise cultural food, jewellery, clothing will soon be found only in museums. The social scientists term folklore as 'Little Culture'. But it ought to be called 'Basic Culture' or 'Great Culture' since it is the origin and source of knowledge. If it is not studied comprehensively in all seriousness the social science, anthropology and history will remain incomplete. Moreover, the contribution of folklore for the history of human culture is immense and invaluable. In view of this, we have to infer that the apathy of the social scientists, anthropologists and historians is absolutely inexcusable. Even the scientists must find the origin of their respective branches in folklore. The knowledgeable people must realize that a tree without the roots can hardly survive.

**Conclusion:** Most of the practices of folk life are being adopted and followed in some villages of only. Some Hindu families follow these blindly without trying to understand the scientific reasoning behind the customs. The material culture of Bidar in particular and rural India in general is far more rich scientifically, and a logical explanation of all these is possible. However, the modern educated man of India fails to understand this, while the uneducated or scarcely educated rural part of India follows it. The villagers know the importance of trees, animals, five elements on earth and also the ecosystem. Hence, to bring this culture to the notice and practice of the new modern India has become crucial. Environment protection also a part of material culture of folk community. Therefore, it is very important for new researchers to take up cultural studies in a systematic manner and documentation of these studies can be done. The folklore movement is absolutely necessary to revive and develop Desi Culture and a united nation. Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Kannada Janapada Academy, and few Universities of Karnataka are trying hard to preserve and propagate Folklore culture in Karnataka and India.

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<sup>8</sup> Hamsakavi, Dhari-Siri, Kikkeri publication, Bangalore, 2011, pp.181-187.

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