

Ram in Everyday Life: A Qualitative Coding of Oral Performance, Devotion, and Mnemonic Landscapes in Haryanvi Women's Folksongs

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Abstract

This paper completes a trilogy examining the presence and evolving interpretations of Ram within Haryanvi folk culture. The earlier studies traced the processes through which epic narratives enter the vernacular domain and how digital media reshape the circulation of folk memory. Building on that foundation, the present study turns to Ram as an everyday, lived presence, with particular attention to women's oral traditions. It investigates how these traditions preserve cultural memory through vernacular forms of devotion, ritualized expression, and the intergenerational transfer of narrative knowledge, while also employing digital coding techniques to support long-term preservation. Across the selected songs, the utterance of "Ram" resonates far beyond its theological or epic genealogy. It mediates affective, ethical, and ritual dimensions of rural experience, allowing singers to articulate moral authority, emotional endurance, and the structuring rhythms of domestic life. To analyse this complexity, the study undertakes qualitative coding of field-based transcriptions and regionally circulated recordings. This method enables a systematic engagement with the textual, performative, and situational nuances of major women's genres—*Kartik Snan, Pathwari, Suhag, Bhaat, Vidaai*, and *Saas-Bahu*—each of which is represented through demonstrative written exemplars. The coding process illuminates recurring thematic patterns: Ram appears as a moral witness to domestic negotiations, as an interlocutor in the labour of kinship, and as a symbolic marker of seasonal, ritual, and familial cycles. Refrains and invocatory phrases operate as repositories of emotional charge and temporal pacing, while material imagery—gardens, ritual implements, sensory cues—anchors devotional expression within embodied, ecological, and household environments. Together, these coded performances form a vernacular archive that safeguards oral knowledge, emotional praxis, and cultural continuity. By foregrounding the interplay of text, texture, and context, the study demonstrates that Haryanvi women's folk songs can be preserved through a rigorous qualitative coding framework capable of capturing region-specific cultural forms. This methodological approach not only contributes to the documentation of oral traditions but also advances wider scholarly conversations on regional religiosity, gendered labour, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords: *folk traditions, qualitative coding, devotion, memory, cultural heritage*

Locating Ram in Vernacular Oralities of Haryana

In the oral traditions of Haryana, particularly those performed by women, the name “राम” (Ram) carries layered cultural, emotional, and ritual significance. These invocations go beyond epic narratives, reflecting meanings shaped by communal memory, seasonal rhythms, and ritual practices. Across domestic, ceremonial, and seasonal contexts, Ram emerges as both a sacred figure and an intimate presence, addressed or evoked in moments of celebration, conflict, and transition. His presence is woven into the collective vocabulary through which rural communities articulate moral values, affective experience, and social norms. Although Ram is widely revered across Haryana, he is seldom worshipped in idol form and village temples rarely house his image (Deswal, 2004, p. 70). Instead, devotion is expressed through song, narrative, and communal practice. This suggests that Ram’s presence is deeply internalized within the hearts and minds of the people, guiding their interpretations of everyday life, including joys, sorrows, domestic affairs, and even natural events such as floods, famines, or storms (Deswal, 2002, p 70).

Building on perspectives such as Kristin Kuutma’s “mnemonic turn” (2014), which emphasizes how oral traditions actively shape communal remembrance, and the frameworks of Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann on socially and ritually framed memory, Haryanvi women’s songs invoking Ram can be understood as embodied mnemonic acts. They archive and ritualize ethical, emotional, and spiritual continuities within everyday life. This study examines key oral song genres of *Kartik snaan*, *Pathwari*, *Bhaat*, *Suhaag*, *Vidai*, and *Saas Bahu* interaction¹. Rather than functioning solely as a devotional refrain, the invocation of ‘Ram’ operates as a symbolic and rhythmic presence, structuring emotion, morality, and social interaction. These songs express regional ethos where memory, identity, and spiritual feeling converge through performance.

Semantic and Emotional Resonance of Ram in Everyday Transition and Ritual

In Haryanvi women’s folk songs, the invocation of Ram is rarely a distant or purely mythological reference; instead, it is woven into the rhythms of daily life, marking emotional, ritual, and seasonal transitions. Within domestic spaces—where women’s devotional agency is

¹ *Kartik Snan*, where Ram is associated with purity, seasonal discipline, and moral resolve; *Bhaat*, representing ancestral blessings and ceremonial fulfilment; *Pathwari* representing divine intervention; *Suhaag*, invoking conjugal stability and marital continuity; *Vidaai*, where Ram witnesses emotional separation and familial transition; *Saas-Bahu* interactions, in which he mediates domestic disputes or serves as a moral interlocutor within kinship dynamics.

often intertwined with household responsibilities—these songs serve as sites where spiritual longing and practical obligations intersect. Folk genres like *Kartik Snan* and *Pathvaari* illustrate how local oral traditions transform religious aspiration into lived, experiential devotion, rooted in rural realities yet spiritually resonant.

In *Kartik Snan* songs, a woman's desire to perform the sacred bathing ritual in the Kartik month—a period associated with purification and moral discipline—is negotiated with her family, reflecting the demands of agricultural and domestic life. Her father may redirect her attention to seasonal work:

“पिरस चढ़ता आपण बाबल पूछा,
कहो तै कातक नहालां हो राम..!
कातक नहावण बेटी बड़ा ए दुहेला,
रह लो नै खेत रुखाली हो राम...”

Rather than diminishing her spiritual intent, these exchanges embed devotion within labour, where fields and household duties become parallel spaces of ritual significance. The same question is directed towards mother, brother, mother-in-law and father-in-law who give their own logic and answers. The father-in-law's guidance, for instance, transforms the ritual into an imaginative domestic exercise, instructing the woman to envision a flourishing home garden adorned with symbolic ornaments:

“कतक नहावण बहुअङ्क बड़ा ए दुहेला
घर में बागीची लातो हो राम...
काहे का घड़वा काहे की झाड़ी,
काहे ते सींचूंगी बागीची हो राम
सोने का घड़वा, चाँदी की झारी, रेशम की डोरी,
सींचो बाग बगीची हो राम
सोने का घड़वा, चाँदी की झारी,
रेशम की डोरी, सींचो बाग बगीची हो राम”

The imagery—though materially unattainable—creates a symbolic ritual space, where inner piety is validated and ritual effort is recognized. Recurrent invocations like “कहो तै कातक नहालां हो राम” act as both supplication and affirmation, situating Ram as a companion to spiritual labor rather than a distant observer.

A similar pattern emerges in *Pathvaari* songs, which accompany transitional life moments—whether moving from maidenhood to marital life, or navigating the thresholds of age and family responsibilities. The *Pathvaari*, a guide figure, is addressed as a guardian of passage:

“ਪਥਵਾਰੀ ਏ ਹੇ ਤੂ ਪਥ ਕੀ ਹੇ ਰਾਨੀ,
ਮੂਲਧਾਂ ਨੈ ਰਾਹ ਤਿਸਾਧਾ ਪਾਨੀ,
ਕਿਛੁਡਾਂ ਨੈ ਆਨ ਮਿਲਾਇਧੇ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ।”
ਪਥਵਾਰੀ ਹੇ ਤੜੇ ਸੀਂਜਗੀ ਬਾਹੜੀ,
ਸਰਕ ਸੁਹਾਗ ਦਇਧੋ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ।”
“ਪਥਵਾਰੀ ਹੇ ਤੜੇ ਸੀਂਜਗੀ ਸਪੂਤੀ,
ਅਵਣ ਜੈਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਤ ਦਇਧੋ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ।”
“ਪਥਵਾਰੀ ਹੇ ਤੜੇ ਸੀਂਜਗੀ ਭੁਫਲਿਧਾ,
ਬੈਠਕੁੰਠ ਮੰਕਸਾ ਦਇਧੋ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ।”

These verses intertwine blessing with invocation, as the woman seeks fulfillment at each stage of life—an ideal spouse, dutiful children, and spiritual completeness. In both, *Kartik Snan* and *Pathvaari* songs, Ram's presence is integrated with life's routines, his repeated name affirming spiritual worth amidst daily responsibilities. The deity is not confined to temples or ritual texts but resides within domestic and social spaces—the courtyard, the field, the doorstep—where women enact their devotion. These songs constitute everyday oral theologies, embedding moral and spiritual significance into ordinary acts such as bathing, departure, and aging. Through repetition, invocation, and lyrical structure, Ram becomes a witness and participant in women's lives, dignifying inner rituals, mediating social transitions, and preserving cultural memory.

Suhag Songs and the Ram Refrain

The *Suhag* songs further illuminate how devotion intersects with emotional aspiration, marital ideals, and desires—revealing the ways Ram is invoked as a symbolic embodiment of the perfect husband and moral exemplar within domestic and ceremonial spaces. Performed during marriage rituals and domestic ceremonies, Ram is more than a divine figure. One such song illustrates this intimate invocation:

“ਹੇ ਸੁਹਾਗ ਸਾਂਗਣ ਲਾਡੀ, ਅਪਨੇ ਦਾਦਾ ਪੇ ਗਏ
ਦਾਦਾ ਦੇ ਦੇ ਨੇ ਸੁਹਾਗ, ਲੜ੍ਹੀ ਕਦੇ ਕੀ ਖਡੀ
ਹੇ ਸੁਹਾਗ ਦੇਗਾ ਰਾਮ, ਜੋਡੀ ਅਜਕ ਬਨੀ

ਤੇਰੇ ਸਾਥੇ ਪੇ ਸਿੰਦੂਰ, ਸਾਂਗ ਸੋਤਿਧੀਂ ਜੜੀ'

Here, Ram is present in the domestic and emotional sphere, blessing the bride and legitimizing her desire for a loving, compatible partner. Another verse emphasizes epic valour as moral ideal, linking marital aspiration with legendary courage:

“ਹੋ ਸ਼ਹਾਰਾ ਕਰ ਛੁੰਢੋ, ਰਾਘਬੀਰ ਧਨੁ਷ ਤੋਡ ਕਗਾ ਦੇ
ਕੇਟੀ ਹੈ ਹਮ ਰਾਮਚਨ੍ਦਰ ਛੁੰਢੇ ਹੋ...
ਹੈ ਅਸ਼ਿ ਕੇ ਚਲਾਵੇ ਤੀਰ, ਧਨੁ਷ ਤੋਡ ਕਗਾ ਦੇ”

These songs repurpose epic episodes to articulate personal and gendered aspirations, blending mythic authority with everyday desire. Such practices reflect a “domestication of the divine,” where myth is reconfigured to local realities (Das, 2006).

Further, the repetition of Ram’s name—“*Ho Ram*”—serves both performative and devotional functions, sanctifying each lyrical expression and allowing women to voice emotions within socially sanctioned spaces. The divine name reiteration in women’s oral traditions acts as, what Kirin Narayan observes, a “strategy of both endurance and expression” (1997, 150). Through these songs, Ram is neither distant nor abstract; he is local, aspirational, and intimately present, inhabiting the emotional landscape of brides, elders, and communities, sanctifying desire while embedding it in moral and social frameworks.

Ram in *Bhaat*, *Vidaai*, and Ritual Performance

In *Bhaat* and *Vidaai* performances, Ram emerges as the ethical and emotional center through which kinship, ritual, and remembrance are woven together. His invocation transforms moments of exchange and separation into acts of moral continuity and sacred memory. The *Bhaat* ceremony—when the maternal family offers gifts to the bride—embodies a convergence of affection, duty, and grief. Women’s songs articulate these layered emotions through the invocation of Ram, as in:

“ਰੈ ਸਤ ਕਰਸੈ ਅੰਕਰਾਜ, / ਮੇਰੀ ਸਾਁ ਕਾ ਜਾਧਾ ਮੀਜੈ, / ਊਪਰ ਤੈ ਰਾਮਜੀ ਕਰਸੈ...”

Here, the singer pleads for the rain to stop so that her brother, arriving with gifts, may not be drenched—an appeal that attributes every natural event to Ram’s will, linking emotion with divine rhythm. In another popular narrative, “*Narsi ka Bhaat*,” the refrain “*Ho Ram*” punctuates the song’s dialogue, marking both labour and devotion as Krishna intervenes to fulfill ritual duties: “ਕੇ ਨਰਸੀ ਧਰਤ ਲਾਵੇ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ... / ਨਰਸੀ ਸੋਹਰ ਲਾਵੇ ਹੋ ਰਾਮ...”. The recurrence of “*Ho Ram*” mediates between human effort and divine acknowledgment, sanctifying the act of giving as both duty and grace. Similarly, *Vidaai* and *Jhakri* songs invoke Ram as a sonic and

ethical thread connecting familial affection, ritual order, and emotional endurance. In *Vidaai* refrains like “राम-राम है कद दे फेर मिल्याँ,” Ram’s name carries the dual weight of blessing and farewell, transforming separation into sanctified memory.

The recurring invocation performs three vital functions—anchoring rhythm, containing emotion, and creating communal voice. Through such refrains, Ram becomes a living presence within domestic and ritual soundscapes—embodied in rhythm, breath, and feeling. These performances preserve faith not as doctrine but as rhythmic devotion, sustaining the moral and mnemonic continuity of everyday life.

Saas-Bahu Songs and Ritual Satire

In *Saas-Bahu* songs, Ram assumes the role of a proximate moral witness and rhythmic facilitator. These songs, performed during weddings or women’s gatherings, dramatize domestic tensions between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, blending satire, humour, and ritualized performance. Rather than airing grievances seriously, performers exaggerate conflicts, using comic timing and expressive gestures to entertain while subtly conveying social expectations. For instance:

“मैं तो माड़ी होगी हो राम,
धंधा करके इस घर का!
वक्त उठ के पीसणा पीसूं
सवा पाथर का तड़का,
मैं तो माड़ी.....!”

Here, Ram’s invocation punctuates the verse, marking stanzas rhythmically and allowing performers to amplify melodrama safely. The name functions as a cultural anchor, transforming complaint into theatrical play and inviting communal engagement—listeners laugh, nod, or join in. By embedding Ram in satire, these songs negotiate domestic morality without direct censure. The divine presence provides a ritually sanctioned space for mockery and exaggeration, maintaining social decorum while enabling emotional and generational commentary. Ram becomes both witness and participant in everyday life, not through doctrinal authority but via rhythm, reiteration, and communal resonance, demonstrating how folk performance mediates humour, ethics, and collective imagination in Haryanvi households.

Framework of Ethics of Orality and Cultural Memory

The vernacular performances discussed above reveal that the moral and emotional life of women in rural Haryana is mediated through sound, rhythm, and shared participation. To understand how such a world of oral devotion organizes thought and preserves collective memory, it is instructive to draw on the frameworks of Walter J. Ong, Jan Assmann, and Marek Tamm, whose reflections on orality, memory, and mnemohistory illuminate the deep ethical and epistemological work done by these songs. Their insights also converge with Kristin Kuutma's "mnemonic turn," which emphasizes remembering as social performance rather than archival retrieval.

Walter J. Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1982) demonstrates that oral traditions do not preserve meaning through textual permanence but through the living act of sound. Orality, for Ong, is participatory, rhythmic, and moral: knowledge survives not as abstraction but as shared utterance, where repetition and communal rhythm sustain continuity. The invocation of "Ram" in Haryanvi women's folksongs embodies this principle. Each spoken "*Ho/O/He/Re Ram*" is not a decorative refrain but a moral event—a renewal of faith and a performative act that binds the singer and her listeners in a shared rhythm of meaning. As Ong reminds us, "words are events, not things" (139). In these songs, the divine name becomes an event of cultural reaffirmation, transforming emotion into memory and sound into ethical coherence. Ong's notion of "secondary orality" (143–44)—the literate re-engagement of the spoken world through writing—clarifies the researcher's own task. Transcription and interpretation of these songs participate in that process: writing does not freeze the oral moment but reanimates it within a new moral medium. Each verse bridges performative immediacy and reflective continuity, allowing oral ethics to survive within academic literacy.

Jan Assmann's theory of mnemohistory further explains how oral remembrance connects past and present. Mnemohistory does not reconstruct what "really happened" but examines how the past is continually reinterpreted in cultural form. In Haryanvi women's songs, memory is enacted through repetition, ritual, and emotion; each invocation of Ram reactivates ancestral feeling and moral knowledge². Assmann's idea of "communicative

² To approach Haryanvi women's folksongs as acts of *mnemonics*, is to understand them as dynamic expressions of cultural memory rather than as inherited relics of the past. These songs embody the processes through which communities continually remember, reinterpret, and re-perform their shared histories. The act of singing becomes a means of preserving experience in sound, rhythm, and emotion—what might be called an *embodied archive*. In this framework, the repeated invocation of *Ram* operates as a mnemonic device that connects personal feeling to collective remembrance. Through ritual occasions, seasonal cycles, and domestic interactions, the singers transform memory into lived continuity, allowing the mythic and the everyday to coexist in a single expressive form. Such a reading highlights how women's oral traditions function as living repositories of social and ethical knowledge, where remembrance is enacted, not merely recalled

memory” makes visible how faith persists as a dialogic inheritance transmitted through sound, gesture, and feminine labor.

Building upon Assmann, Marek Tamm in *Beyond History and Memory: New Perspectives in Memory Studies* (2013) insists that memory is an *active mediation*, not passive recall. Cultural memory operates through performance and affect rather than chronology. Tamm’s emphasis on “plural temporalities of memory” elucidates why these songs defy linear narration: they blend past and present in cyclical time, where ethical lessons re-emerge with each performance. When women sing of Ram during *Kartik Snan*, *Bhaat*, or *Suhag* rituals, they are not recounting bygone customs; they are renewing communal ethics through lived sound.

The discussions of Ong, Assmann, and Tamm make it clear that memory within oral traditions is not static recall but *dynamic continuity*—a lived and transmitted consciousness embedded in collective rhythm. In the Haryanvi context, the figure of Ram travels across this continuum of memory, song, and social performance, not as an abstract divinity but as a mnemonic anchor that sustains moral and emotional belonging. What emerges, therefore, is a cultural phenomenology of devotion where Ram signifies the everyday ethics of endurance, relationality, and identity. The next section explores this cultural continuum in which Ram becomes both presence and process—rooted in ritual, revived in performance, and reimagined in regional belonging.

The Cultural Continuum in Memory, Ritual, and Regional Belonging

Across the diverse genres of Haryanvi folksongs we have seen that the figure of Ram emerges as an intimate, living presence. He is not evoked for transcendence but for endurance, not for theology but for togetherness. Through lyrical refrains and emotional invocations, Ram is vernacularized—woven into the fabric of everyday experience and feminine expression.

Expressions like “*Ram-Ram*”, “*Ram barse*”, “*Ram bharose*”, and “*Ram dega*” are not mere idioms; they are condensed forms of emotional and cultural knowing. They circulate within spoken language and song, carrying meanings that exceed literal translation. *Ram-Ram* becomes a blessing, a farewell, and a subtle critique. *Ram bharose* registers both helplessness and faith. *Ram dega* affirms belief in divine justice but also reflects the gendered wait for fulfilment. These phrases, sung and shared, become vernacular theologies of intimacy—where God is not above but beside, within breath, within the home, within seasonal longing. They construct a sacred idiom that is pedagogical as much as it is poetic. The voice becomes the scripture, the rhythm becomes the ritual, and Ram becomes the remembered, the invoked, the awaited. To document the lyrics is not to capture their breath. To record the melody is not to

reproduce the social moment of singing. Oral performance carries an emotional immediacy and cultural embeddedness that escapes standard formats.

To systematically capture this richness, the study employs qualitative coding of field-based transcriptions and recordings, integrating textual, performative, and contextual dimensions. In oral traditions, meaning is never confined to words; it resides in tonal variation, pauses, and the rhythmic labour of singing itself and one may get apprehensive with the extent to which a software may code or analyse folksongs in reference to texture. But it must be mentioned that the software's ability to work directly with audio and video inputs enables the researcher to code sound events, pauses, and tonal variations as lived expressions of meaning³. In this way, the sensory and rhythmic qualities of performance are retained, not abstracted—each uttered “Ram” remains embedded in its sonic, emotional, and participatory context. When applied to such living performances, coding functions not as a reductive categorization but as a form of rhythmic annotation. Each recurring invocation—particularly the refrain “हो राम”—becomes a node that mirrors the cyclicity of the song’s soundscape, carrying traces of its breath, tempo, and affect. Through this process, coding reconstructs the song’s performative pulse: repetitions register as ritual rhythm, tonal inflections as emotional intensities, and pauses as mnemonic spaces of shared listening. The method, therefore, sustains the texture of performance not by reproducing sound but by indexing its presence through thematic and structural patterns. Coding, thus, situates oral narratives within their social, ritual, and environmental contexts, reflecting how women’s devotional practice is embedded in intergenerational and marital networks. By integrating text, texture, and context, qualitative coding preserves linguistic, performative, and socio-cultural integrity while enabling thematic exploration, cross-textual comparison, and long-term preservation. The approach treats oral folklore as a living, relational phenomenon, ensuring that ephemeral performances are documented as dynamic cultural artifacts and that the knowledge, values, and aesthetics embedded in these songs remain accessible to future generations.

Methodological Exhibit of *Kartik Nahaavan Geet* Coding Table and Hierarchical Node Structure

To preserve this lived epistemology within a rigorous research framework, qualitative coding offers a bridge between oral expressivity and analytical structure. A paradigmatic

³ NVivo can display **waveforms and timestamps**, which allows to link analytical memos to sonic moments. Also **frequency queries**, **word clouds**, or **relationship maps** can be generated that include coded audio segments, showing how performance, emotion, and repetition interact. Therefore, NVivo, may allow qualitative linking of sound and meaning, however Audio-analysis tool like *Praat* or *ELAN*.

example of effective preservation of this lived, relational devotion is of the *Kartik Nahaavan / Snaan Geet*. Through qualitative coding, the song can be analyzed to capture its multi-layered meanings across text, texture, and context. For instance, the refrain “हो राम” functions as a devotional invocation, a temporal marker, and a signal of communal participation. Further, lines describing laborious bathing (line 2), household gardens (lines 4, 7), or familial dialogues (lines 1, 5, 6) can be systematically mapped to thematic nodes, revealing the intricate interplay of ritual, ecology, and gendered experience. The table below is an exemplification of NVivo-style matrix mapping the song’s text followed by node hierarchy and interpretive themes.

Sample Coding Table: *Kartik Nahaavan/Snaan Geet*

| Line | Song Segment | Primary Node | Sub-node | Thematic Interpretation | Interpretive Memo |
|------|--|--------------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| 1 | <i>Piras chadhanta aapan baabal poochha (When the season of Kartik rises, I ask my father)</i> | Familial Dialogue | Kinship Inquiry | Kinship as Religious Ecology | The daughter’s request begins in filial respect, showing ritual knowledge as embedded within social hierarchies of care. |
| 2 | <i>Kaho tai Kaatak nahaalaa ho Ram! (If you permit, can I bathe this Kartik, O Ram?)</i> | Invocation | Divine Permission | Ritual Voice and Ethical Humility | The repeated “ho Ram” converts personal inquiry into communal supplication, where faith is both question and affirmation. |
| 3 | <i>Kaatak nahaavan beti bada e duhela (Bathing in</i> | Endurance | Ritual Labor | Feminine Devotion as Labor and Care | The father’s warning embodies the merging of piety and perseverance, |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| | <i>Kartik, O daughter, is a hard task)</i> | | | | valorising women's ritual labour as moral strength. |
| 4 | <i>Rakh lo nai khet rukhaali ho Ram</i> (<i>There's no rest, even the fields must be tended, O Ram</i>) | Domestic Ecology | Agricultural Rhythm | Faith and Work Rhythms | The agricultural imagery situates devotion within labour, dissolving boundaries between sacred and secular activity. |
| 5 | <i>Dhaar kadhanta apna beera poochha</i> (<i>I ask my brother who is milking the cow...</i>) | Familial Dialogue | Sibling Consultation | Reciprocity and Shared Piety | The brother's presence introduces horizontal kinship networks through which ritual knowledge circulates. |
| 6 | <i>Piras chadhanta apna sasur poochha</i> (<i>When the season of Kartik rises, I ask my father-in-law</i>) | Familial Dialogue | Intergenerational Inquiry | Transmission of Ritual Authority | The shift from natal to marital family marks women's religious agency within changing kin structures. |
| 7 | <i>Ghar mein baagichi laato ho Ram</i> (<i>Yet you must water</i>) | Ecological Symbolism | Garden Metaphor | Domestic Ecology and Fertility | The domestic garden becomes an emblem of feminine stewardship—an |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <i>the garden at home, O Ram)</i> | | | | ecological parallel to moral cultivation. |
| 8 | <i>Kahe ka ghadwa, kahe ki jhaari (What kind of pitcher? What kind of jug?)</i> | Material Inquiry | Ritual Apprenticeship | Material Piety and Learning | The questions about ritual tools highlight the pedagogy of devotion—learning faith through practice. |
| 9 | <i>Sone ka ghadwa, chaandi ki jhaadi, resham ki dori (Golden pitcher, silver jug, silken thread)</i> | Material Description | Aesthetic Ornamentation | The Poetics of Ritual Beauty | The imagery fuses luxury with sanctity; the material world becomes the aesthetic body of devotion. |
| 10 | <i>Sencho baag bagichi ho Ram (Nurture the garden and grove, O Ram)</i> | Care and Cultivation | Nurture and Growth | Ecological Devotion | Watering the garden symbolizes moral and ecological care—the nurturing of life as sacred labor. |
| 11 | <i>Kaho te Kaatak nahaalwa ho Ram (So tell me, shall we bathe this Kartik, O Ram?)</i> | Refrain | Cyclical Invocation | Cultural Continuum of Faith | The recurring refrain anchors collective temporality; memory is renewed each time the song is sung. |

Hierachal Presentation of the Nodes and Themes

Ram in Everyday Life

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- 1. **Ritual Devotion and Labor**
 - Feminine Endurance and Care
 - Ethical Humility and Faith
 - Ritual Labor as Devotion
- 2. **Kinship and Religious Ecology**
 - Father-Daughter Dialogue
 - Sibling Reciprocity
 - Intergenerational Transmission
- 3. **Ecological and Domestic Symbolism**
 - Garden as Moral Ecology
 - Agricultural Rhythms
 - Water as Purification
- 4. **Material Piety and Aesthetic Faith**
 - Ritual Objects and Ornamentation
 - Material Learning and Apprenticeship
- 5. **Mnemonic Rhythm and Continuum**
 - Cyclical Invocation (“Ho Ram”)
 - Seasonal Renewal
 - Memory as Cultural Preservation

Interpretive Memo

The Kartik Nahaavan Geet reflects the interweaving of ecology, devotion, and kinship in Haryanvi women's ritual life. Ram is both witness and participant, linking domestic labor to sacred time. The garden metaphor highlights ecological stewardship, while gold, silver, and silk objects reinforce aesthetic and ritual significance. Kinship structures ensure intergenerational faith transmission, and the labor of bathing embodies resilience and moral discipline. Overall, the song presents a vernacular theology of care, labor, and environmental consciousness.

Through such qualitative coding demonstrated above, the folk songs can be systematically analyzed to uncover their multi-layered meanings. Lines depicting arduous ritual labour—such as “कातक नहावण बेटी बड़ा ए दुहेला” (line 3)—can be coded under “Feminine Devotion as Labor and Care,” while references to household gardens—“घर में बागीची लातो हो राम” (line 7)—can be coded as “Ecological Domesticity.” Dialogues with fathers, brothers, or fathers-in-law, like

“*पिरस चढ़ता आपण बाबल पूछा,*” (line 1) can be mapped to “Kinship as Religious Ecology,” situating women’s devotional practice within intergenerational and marital networks. Similarly, material imagery—gold pots, silver jugs, silk threads (line 9)—can be coded under “Material Piety and Aesthetic Faith,” demonstrating how ritual objects are simultaneously practical, symbolic, and aesthetic.

Such coding framework preserves not only textual content but also the texture of oral performance, including rhythm, repetition, melodic contour, and emotional cadence, while situating the song within social, familial, and seasonal contexts. Organizing the song into hierarchical nodes and thematic categories allows researchers to examine, in this case, the interplay of labor, devotion, ecology, and ritual while retaining performative integrity. Coding thus functions as a tool for archiving living memory, rendering ephemeral performances traceable, analyzable, and comparable without reducing them to decontextualized transcripts.

At a methodological level, the digital environment further enhances preservation by allowing the simultaneous storage of audio, video, and coded text within a single repository. Each recording, transcription, and coded segment retains its contextual association, ensuring that the sensory and semantic dimensions of performance remain connected. This convergence transforms the coding interface into a living archive—one that safeguards not only the lyrical and ritual dimensions of the songs but also their embodied textures of sound, gesture, and collective participation. In this way, the repository sustains both the analytical and affective life of the oral tradition, allowing future researchers to access it as a dynamic cultural ecology rather than a static dataset.

While digitization and textual preservation are crucial, they cannot fully capture the affective and participatory dimensions of oral performance without a correct methodology. Audio-visual recordings document melody and text, and need to be supplemented with qualitative coding that maps the lived, relational, and mnemonic functions of songs, drawing context from both the coded data and the folk milieu in which these songs circulate. Each performance enacts memory, embedding cultural knowledge in participatory and embodied practice. Within this framework, Ram is experienced not merely as an epic figure but as a cultural continuum, present in domestic life, marital rituals, and seasonal observances. His mnemonic force in Haryanvi women’s songs is sustained through orality, social engagement, and embodied repetition, with digital media serving as a complementary archival tool rather than a replacement for living tradition (Snyder, 2010; Finnegan, 2012).

Within this frame, Ram in everyday life emerges not merely as a devotional refrain but as a methodological framework—where qualitative coding, oral performance, and memory converge to map the mnemonic landscapes of Haryanvi women’s folklore. Such a synthesis reaffirms Ram’s presence as a lived, dynamic force embedded in everyday labor, ecological care, and intergenerational devotion, sustaining both the ethics and aesthetics of a living tradition.

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