

# Integration of Folklore in the School Curriculum as Pedagogical Technique

## Perception of Elementary School Teachers in Jammu

RENU NANDA\* AND RASPREET KOUR\*\*

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### Abstract

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*This study was conducted to highlight the various elements of folklore which can be used as pedagogical techniques for elementary school students. It also spotlights the perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding the use of folklore as an effective pedagogical technique. Furthermore, this study suggests ways to integrate folklore into the elementary school curriculum as a pedagogical technique. The study was conducted in five educational zones of the Jammu district in which 50 elementary school teachers were selected. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the study. Self-prepared questionnaire was used by the researchers to understand the perception of teachers regarding the usage of folklore as a pedagogical technique. A descriptive survey method of research was used by the researchers in which a percentage was used to analyse the data given by the teachers. The results of the study reveal that folklore is an umbrella term and its various elements—such as riddles, legends, myths, fables, folk stories, ballads, fairy tales, various foodways and puppetry—can be as pedagogical techniques. The study also confirms that the teachers have favourable perceptions regarding the usage of folklore as a pedagogical technique. Folklore can be utilised across various subjects enhancing children's attentiveness and making teaching-learning more interesting. Besides, it also preserves our traditional culture and values with a focus on the integration of emotional, social, moral, and national development among students.*

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\*Professor, Department of Education, University of Jammu

\*\*Assistant Professor, DAV University, Jalandhar

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The word 'folklore' was coined by the English antiquarian William John Thoms to mean 'popular antiquities' in 1846. Now this word is adopted all over the world. Folklore has two acceptations: firstly, the mass of the unrecorded traditions of the people including popular fiction, i.e., non-literary, custom and belief, magic and ritual; and secondly, the science which proposes to study these materials (Mahapatra, 1966).

The study of numerous parts of folklore can provide solutions to many challenging issues pertaining to a nation's character and cohesiveness. This research shows modern living, outlines traditional behaviour, supports belief systems, and offers a safe haven to let resentments that have been suppressed. It sheds light on many facets of social organisation and offers hints for comprehending how culture and personality development interact (Sharma, 2004).

Folklore includes everything related to folk culture, including literature, tales, proverbs, riddles and details of their behavioural patterns. Folklore comprises folk music, dance, arts, crafts and other creative expressions, as well as traditional practices like house-building, boat making and utensil-crafting alongside agricultural, hunting, fishing activities. It also includes

customs, beliefs, superstitions and magical rituals, religious ceremonies, and festivals.

## **FOLKLORE AND CURRICULUM**

Folklore plays manifold roles in society and curriculum, notably providing socially accepted norms to act and promote group harmony, while also nurturing national and emotional integration. It serves as a vehicle for social protest and converts dull work into a play. The importance of any form of folklore as an educational or pedagogical technique has been documented in many parts of the world (Gupta, 1975).

As per NEP 2020, from the foundational stage onwards, in terms of culture, traditions, heritage, customs, language, philosophy, geography, ancient and contemporary knowledge, societal and scientific needs, indigenous and traditional ways of learning, etc., all curriculum and pedagogy will be completely redesigned to be deeply connected to the Indian and regional context and philosophy. This will guarantee that our students receive instruction, that is as applicable, engaging and productive as possible. Topics including stories, arts, games, sports, issues and situations will be selected with a strong Indian and local geographical perspective whenever feasible. Ideas, abstractions

and creativity will, in reality, flourish greatest when learning is well-anchored (NEP 2020, p.16).

Different elements of folklore are used to train children, youth and adults about the values of life. There are various significant human and moral values lodged in each folklore. For instance, there are numerous lessons on hard work versus laziness, love and mercy versus misconduct, and gratification versus greediness. The importance of folklore in the life of children and society can never be ignored (Kaltsum and Utami, 2016, p. 83).

The NEP 2020 also emphasises the use of folklore pedagogy in schools and curriculum by stating that there should be an integration of art, music, culture, craft, and storytelling at all levels of school education in order to foster in children a sense of identity, belongingness, and an appreciation of other cultures and identities.

### **Various Elements of Folklore: Work as a Pedagogical Technique for Elementary Students**

- **Folk Songs:** A folk song is a short, simple, lyrical, less artistic and rhythmic song of a folk community. The life of the folk living in a particular territory, the environment and the social heritage are reflected in the folk songs. On many occasions like birth, marriage, festivals, first hair-cutting ceremony, special days or during agricultural work, folk songs are sung by the folk

group with no distinction of singer and listener.

- **Riddles:** One of the most interesting forms of folklore is a riddle. A riddle is a concisely formed, metaphorical question that has more than one possible meaning and is difficult to answer or which apparently interpreted, gives a different meaning than it actually incorporates (Srivastava, 1974). The relationship between riddle and education is very close. Riddles are of paramount significance to examine the intelligence and memorisation power of children. Some societies use riddles as an important element in the education of young children. It helps in teaching the characteristic features of animals, nature and society.
- **Myths:** Myths play a significant role in imparting education to the masses. They are engaging stories and sayings, these are deeply associated with the rituals of people and religious beliefs. These often depict the circumstances, events and deeds of God or superhuman beings. Animals, birds and cultural heroes also find their place as characters in these sacred stories (Das, 2017).
- **Proverbs:** Like other forms of folklore, proverbs may serve as impersonal vehicles for personal communication. A proverb is a short spoken sentence that conveys a simple truth in a concise manner. A proverb is

mainly based on experience and the common sense of human experience has given rise to many common proverbs all over the world viz., 'where there is smoke, there is fire' (Bhagwat, 1958).

- **Folk Tales:** Based on oral traditions, a folk tale is a short story full of moral lessons, action and adventure. By listening to folk tales, children learn and share cultural traditions across generations, as these folk tales are filled with important life lessons and skills. Sense of imagination is developing in children when they are listening and reading folk tales and when they are retelling the tales to their peer group or family members, they also develop better communication skills. According to Bascom, folk tales are a form of verbal art that provide various ways to transmit knowledge, attitudes and values from one generation to the next, while also contributing to the preservation and enrichment of cultural communities.
- **Ballads:** A ballad is a comparatively long, impersonal narrative song that depicts a single incident through the content, style and traditions of the folk. It is easily learned and transmitted orally, often passed down from generation to generation. The ballads are of great significance for educating the masses. Through the ballads, historical events are revealed. We

are able to know the history of the heroes of our country which influences the child very much.

- **Legends:** A legend is originally a localised tale. It is based on historical facts related to persons, events and localities. A teller narrates legends keeping in mind the aim to provide important information about facts, educate children and warn against the dangers of ignorance within their environment (Das, 2017).

From the above discussion, it is clear that folklore and its various elements hold great importance and educational value for elementary-level students.

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Dikul and Kiting (2019) revealed that using materials, such as folklore works as a tailor to effective teaching and learning creativity. Students show a full concentration on the teaching process. In fact, this method is also able to diversify teaching methods, so that students are not easily bored during the learning process. Fakhrutdinova et al. (2019) concluded that many people used genres of folklore for educational purposes, especially highlighting significant historical events and increasing the traditions and customs of their own nations and societies. By reading, retelling, examining, or furnishing the stories of folk pedagogies, students involve themselves in the atmosphere of history, knowledge and aesthetics.

Igba et al. (2019) reveals that the content of folklore like fables, jokes and legends can be used to inculcate values among children. They further recommended that teachers and parents are important stakeholders in the upbringing of the child, and they should stand soundly at their duty post by employing folklore, such as legends, dramas, fables, short stories and jokes to inculcate the right type of values and norms in their children which will equip them with the necessary competencies for the development of the society to which they belong. Llic Bojovic (2016) highlighted the findings of theoretical and comparative study of the needfulness and implications of folk pedagogies and they concluded that there is no single definition of folk pedagogies. However, they directly have the power to influence teaching practice, distinguish methods of arousing awareness, and help teachers' professional development and the improvement of the teaching practice to a great extent. Mzimela (2016) revealed that teachers serve as agencies for the transfer of knowledge of this oral tradition because with the help of these genres of oral tradition, children develop an understanding of community beliefs, knowledge of self-identity, better communication skills and also bridging the gap between school and home. Zaid (2016) concluded that proverbs, as one of the important elements of folklore, have educational values that can be applied in daily life. In terms

of character development, proverbs have some instructional value that can be used to help students develop their character.

### **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The influence of science and technology on modern life and education is easy to perceive. When children misuse or overuse technology, their morals are compromised. Unknowingly, people are drawn into the vortex of materialism, which resulted in excessive labour, little free time, and a weakening of the ties that united family members and society as a whole. Every civilisation has its own folklore, which functions as a socially approved framework for the expression of issues that give rise to serious concern as well as a beloved artistic medium for the exchange of values and worldviews.

NEP 2020 argues the significance of folklore for children across the country by stating, "Children will have the opportunity to read and learn from the original stories of the *Panchatantra*, *Jataka*, *Hitopadesh*, and other fun fables and inspiring tales from the Indian tradition and learn about their influences on global literature". These stories help students to visualise the world outside their homes, and help them understand right and wrong, and what behaviour is expected and accepted (NEP 2020, p.16).

This study seeks to highlight the various forms of folklore as a pedagogy for imparting formal education to

children at the elementary level. It examines perceptions of elementary teachers using folklore as a pedagogical technique. The study also provides several recommendations for teachers on how folklore pedagogy can enhance learning, convey moral lessons and integrate everyday life lessons among students.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To highlight the various elements of folklore as a pedagogical technique at the elementary school level.
2. To understand the perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding the use of folklore as a pedagogical technique.

3. To suggest suitable measures for integrating folklore into the elementary school curriculum as a pedagogical technique.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

Out of fourteen educational zones in the Jammu District, the investigators selected five educational zones—Arnia, Akhnoor, Chowki Chaura, Gandhi Nagar and Marh. Fifteen government middle schools from these zones were chosen by using a simple random sampling technique (Lottery method). Fifty elementary school teachers, ten from each selected zone were purposely selected as the study sample. The researchers employed the descriptive survey method for the present study.

**Table 1: Sample profile for the study**

S. No.	Name of Selected Zones	Name of Schools from Selected Zones	Number of Selected Teachers
1.	Arnia	Government Middle School Devigarh Government Middle School Dewangarh Government Middle School Mana	10
2.	Akhnoor	Government Middle School Gurha Brahmana Government Middle School Gurha Mandiala Government Middle School Badiala Chak	10
3.	Chowki Chaura	Government Middle School Salori Government Middle School Khadwani Government Middle School Hardu Malora	10
4.	Gandhi Nagar	Government Middle School Langer Government Middle School Gorkha Nagar Government Middle School Raika	10
5.	Marh	Government Middle School Parwa Government Middle School Patniyal Government Middle School Akalpur	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>

## TOOLS AND STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE

The investigators used self-prepared questionnaire to gather information from teachers. The questionnaire focused on teachers' perceptions of using folklore as a pedagogy and its impact, when used as a pedagogical technique. To ensure validity, the investigator established both content and face validity of the questionnaire by consulting subject specialists, language experts, supervisors and senior research scholars in the development of the questionnaire. Percentage analysis was applied to interpret the data.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 2: Responses of teachers regarding whether they celebrate different traditional and cultural festivals in their school**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	48	2	96	4
50	48	2	96	4

The above table shows that 48 out of 50 respondents stated that they celebrate different traditional and cultural festivals in schools as these form part of the school curriculum. Only 2 respondents stated that they do not celebrate different traditional and cultural festivals in their schools. This could be due to a lack of resources in schools or financial limitations faced by students, making it difficult to arrange resources and material for celebration.

**Table 3: Responses of teachers regarding whether they use role-play technique while teaching in the class**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	43	7	86	14
50	43	7	86	14

The above table depicts that out of 50 respondents, 43 stated using role play techniques in teaching. Teachers highlighted that role-play helps make content easier to understand and provides students with opportunities to practise communication in different social contexts. Furthermore, 7 teachers indicated that they do not use role-play techniques while teaching, which may be due to a lack of initiative on their part to integrate it into every subject.

**Table 4: Responses of teachers regarding whether folklore-related programmes have a positive impact on general classroom teaching and learning environment**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	47	3	94	6
50	47	3	94	6

The above table shows that, 47 out of 50 teachers responded positively, affirming that folklore-related programmes positively influence the educational setting in general classrooms. Such programmes break the monotony of regular classes, making learning more experiential

and engaging. Conversely, 3 teachers responded negatively, possibly because they were unaware of folklore-related programmes that could be beneficial and effective in classroom teaching.

**Table 5: Responses of teachers regarding whether folklore helps in the promotion of the mother tongue**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	49	1	98	2

Out of 50 teachers, 49 agreed that folklore helps in promoting the mother tongue because by using folklore in teaching, teachers can strengthen young learners’ command of their native language. Only 1 teacher did not accept the fact that folklore helps in the promotion of mother tongue. Similar results have been found by Mzimela (2017), who observed that folklore is one of the best pedagogies because it enhances communication skills and plays an essential role towards the advancement of a young learner’s mother tongue.

**Table 6: Responses of teachers regarding whether folklore develops human values among students**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	48	2	96	4

The above table indicates that 48 out of 50 teachers affirmed that folklore develops human values among students. The use of folklore, like folk tales and legends in classrooms serves as an important medium through which students can be taught various human values, such as honesty, peace, truth, loyalty, and love. Igba et al. (2019) in his study revealed that using folklore to inculcate values in students often involves drama, legends, fables, folk tales and jokes. On the other hand, only 2 teachers responded negatively to the fact that folklore develops human values among students because they are not familiar with the human values that can be developed through folklore pedagogy.

**Table 7: Responses of teachers regarding whether folklore plays a vital role in binding the students together**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	50	0	100	0

The above table clearly displays that all the respondents agreed with the fact that folklore acts as a contributor in binding the students together. Likewise, Das (2016, pp. 9–12) revealed that folklore keeps in touch with the heart of every individual. The use of folklore as a subject for mutual understanding

and binding people together is being undertaken throughout the world.

**Table 8: Responses of teachers regarding whether they like to teach their students through folklore pedagogy**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	Yes	No	Yes	No
50	45	5	90	10

The above table clearly exhibits that 45 out of 50 teachers responded that they would like to teach their students through folklore pedagogy, as folklore is a valuable element of teaching. It not only enhances the quality of teaching but also preserves the cultural identity of an individual. However, 5 teachers reported that they do not prefer teaching through folklore pedagogy because it is time-consuming.

**Table 9: Responses of teachers regarding whether the use of various folklore in EVS classroom develops listening and speaking skills of students**

Respondent	Numbers		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	Yes	No	Yes	No
50	48	2	96	4

Above table clearly reveals that the majority of the teachers, i.e., 48 teachers accepted that the use of various forms of folklore, such as folk stories, riddles, proverbs and stories of legends in the EVS classroom develops listening and speaking skills of students as the content can be easily related to real-life experiences through various forms of folklore. However, only 2 teachers did not accept it because they believed that traditional classroom teaching is a more suitable method for teaching and learning.

**Table 10: Teachers' responses regarding the use of folklore as a teaching tool in their EVS classroom, and the topics they would prefer to teach through it**

Respondent	Numbers	Percentage	Responses
Teachers	10	20	Clothing and culture
	10	20	Festival with fun
	8	16	Heritage of India
	7	14	Food-related topics
	6	12	A seed tells a farmer's story
	5	10	Healthy habits
	4	8	Indian culture

Out of 50 teachers, 10 stated that they would like to teach ‘Clothing and Culture’ through folklore as the teaching tool in the EVS classroom. Another 10 preferred ‘Festival with Fun’, 8 respondents wanted to be taught the ‘Heritage of India’, 7 respondents said that the topics related to ‘Food’ will be taught through folklore, 6 respondents preferred ‘A Seed Tells a Farmer’s Story’, 5 respondents would like to teach ‘Healthy Habits’ with the help of various forms of folklore and 4 respondents said that ‘Indian Culture’ would be easily taught through the use of folklore as a teaching tool.

training programmes be organised for teachers. Another 5 respondents suggested inviting local artists to schools to perform and demonstrate different folklore activities. The 8 respondents proposed that there should be one teaching activity per month based on the elements of folklore pedagogy. The 8 respondents recommended the addition of local folk stories, lessons on local leaders, and aspects of art, music and literature in textbooks. The 3 respondents suggested that religious norms and cultural values should be a part of the curriculum. The 4 respondents recommended making

**Table 11: Teachers’ suggestions for integrating folklore as a pedagogical technique in the elementary school curriculum**

Respondent	Numbers	Percentage	Responses
Teachers	10	20	Refresher courses for teachers
	8	16	Addition of local stories
	8	16	Including lessons based on folklore
	5	10	Inviting local artists
	5	10	Allocating extra classes
	4	8	Educational tours
	4	8	Using different forms of folklore
	3	6	Organising monthly activities on folklore
	3	6	Including religious norms and cultural values

The above table indicates that out of 50 respondents, 5 said that extra classes for folk-related activities should be arranged in schools for inculcating folklore in the school curriculum. The 10 respondents suggested that refresher courses or

it compulsory for teachers to use different forms or elements of folklore in their teaching, while another 4 respondents suggested organising educational tours for elementary students to explore folk-related cultures of the country.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The main findings of the study are that 96 per cent of teachers celebrate various traditional and cultural festivals in their schools. The 86 per cent of teachers use role-play techniques while teaching in the class. The 94 per cent of teachers agree that folklore-related programmes have a positive impact on the overall teaching and learning environment. The 98 per cent of teachers agree that folklore helps in the promotion of the mother tongue. The 96 per cent of teachers agree that folklore develops human values among students. It has also been found that 100 per cent of teachers agree that folklore plays an important role in binding the students together. The 90 per cent of teachers teach their students through folklore pedagogy. The 96 per cent of teachers agree that the use of various forms of folklore in the EVS classroom helps develop students' listening and speaking skills. It has also been found that teachers have different choices regarding the topics that they would like to teach through folklore as a pedagogical tool in their EVS classroom. The topics are Indian culture, the heritage of India, clothing and culture, a festival with fun, healthy habits, A Seed Tells a Farmer's Story (Let's Look Around and Learn, 2011, P. 126–133), and topics related to food.

## **Suggestions and Recommendations Based on Research**

1. By using diverse elements of folklore as a pedagogical

technique, the imagination of students can be broadened and their creative abilities can be developed more effectively.

2. Folklore such as stories, riddles and folk tales related to their textbook content can make the teaching and learning process more joyful.
3. When folklore is used as one of the teaching methods in the classroom, it enriches students' vocabulary, as well as their speaking and listening skills.
4. Humane values like courtesy, good conduct, cooperation, love, empathy, honesty and courage can be inculcated in students by using various elements of folklore in the classroom.
5. Since folklore is a very well-grounded pedagogy and primarily relies on a lot of oral communication, so there is a need to include this skill in various training programmes.
6. There should be a provision for educators to familiarise them with the works of folklorists, so that they can use best practices from folklore to create a healthy and enriching school learning atmosphere.
7. Professional development workshops should be organised for teachers on how to incorporate folklore into teaching, how to develop lesson plans and how to use various forms of folklore as teaching material.

8. There should be a provision in every school to celebrate diverse cultures and traditional festivals, identify and invite local folk artists, learn about their life and art, and organise various programmes on multiculturalism. Such initiatives can help both students and teachers, become acquainted with different forms of folklore, which can play a significant role in the teaching and learning process.
9. The NEP 2020 document states that “Outstanding local artists and craftspersons will be hired as guest faculty to promote local music, art, languages and handicrafts, and to ensure that students are aware of the culture and local knowledge where they study”. It is likely the first policy document to explicitly highlight the importance of interaction between education, traditional culture and crafts.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be concluded that folk songs, riddles, myths, proverbs, folk tales, ballads, legends and jokes are the important elements of folklore that can be effectively used as pedagogical techniques at the elementary school level. Moreover, the majority of teachers at the elementary school level have favourable perceptions of using folklore as a pedagogical technique. The teachers simply need to choose key folklore pieces that are relevant to the topic studied in class and are appropriate for the student’s level of understanding. Students will adjust better in the school if they are well-trained through folklore as a pedagogical technique. It is rightly said by L. Frank Baum, “Folklore, legends, myths, and fairy tales have followed childhood through ages, for every healthy youngster has a wholesome and instinctive love for stories—fantastic, marvellous and manifestly unreal”.

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