



# Material Folk Culture of Solan District, Himachal Pradesh

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## Abstract

The present study is upon material folk culture of Solan District, Himachal Pradesh. The study is entirely based on primary data through random sampling technique. The paper revolves around the folk food, folk dress and ornaments, folk medicines, folk art, folk musical instruments, agricultural tools and utensils included in the traditions of a culture, sub-culture, or group. Cultural study encourages the researcher towards the conservation of traditional culture that is still exist but slowly started extinct. The findings based upon the available data shows that the people are still following their culture when the technology and communication systems are changing rapidly in this area.

**Key Words: Material culture, Cultural region, Material Folk Culture.**

## Introduction

Material culture includes all physical, material objects made and used by members of a cultural group, such as clothing, buildings, tools and utensils, instruments, furniture and artwork; the visible aspect of culture (Hussain, 1994: 83). The present study deals with the folk cultures, that describes and analysis the ways, languages, religions, customs, believes and the other cultural phenomenon vary or remain constant from one place to another place. The folk culture geography is mainly concerned with man-made features and explains how they are functioning spatially. The climatic conditions and physical settings help the folk to still maintain their traditional life style and 81.78 percent population lives in the rural areas. Both these aspects prompted the researcher to study this region as a culture region. At present as Solan district emerged as an industrial hub of Himachal Pradesh impact of modernization can be seen on the folk life of the people but still many of its regions are traditionally rich in their culture. They follow their traditions, celebrate their festivals in traditional way and having moral values that pass from generation to generation and are still followed by the people. Few areas are highly modernized and most of the regions or villages have impact of modernization. For example: the regions of Nalagarh, Baddi, Parwanoo, Solan, Sabathu, Arki, Hatkot (Kunihar), Diggal (Ramsher) and Kandaghat are developed regions and the impact of industrialization and modernization can be seen. But folks are still following their traditions. .

## The Study Area

The administrative area of the Solan district is 1936 sq. km. The study area is located between the  $76^{\circ}42''$  and  $77^{\circ}20''$  east longitudes and  $30^{\circ}05''$  and  $31^{\circ}15''$  north latitudes. It is bounded by Shimla district in the north, by Ropar district of Punjab and Ambala district of Haryana in the south, by Sirmour district in the east and Bilaspur district in the west of Himachal Pradesh. Mandi district touches the boundary of Solan district in the north-east. (see figure 1)

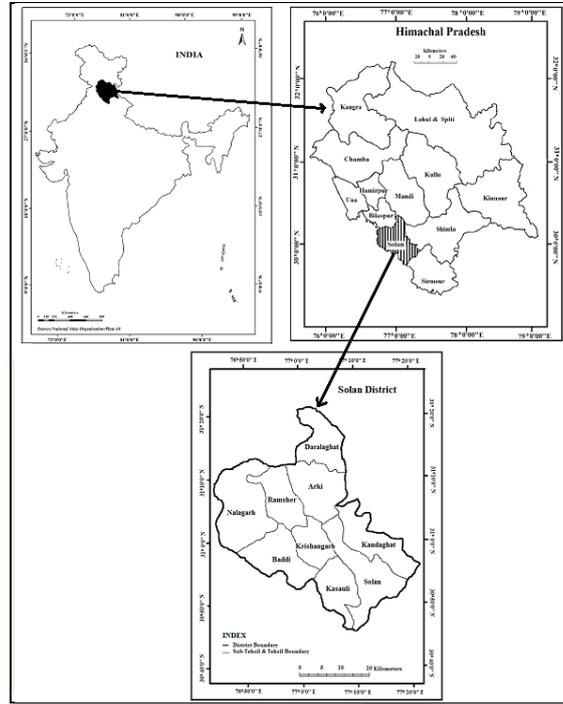
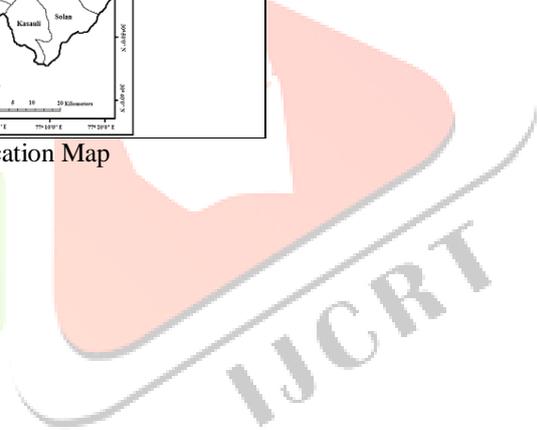
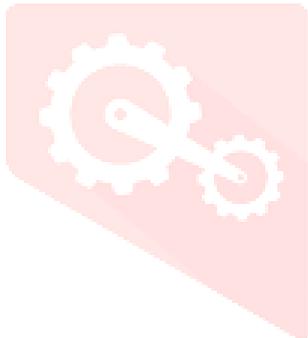
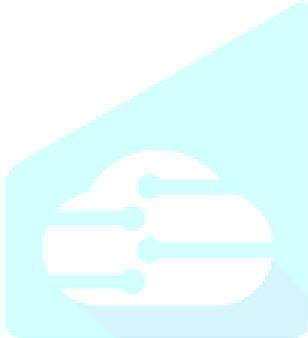


Figure 1: Location Map



## Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are to identify the Solan district as a material folk culture region and to identify the folk cultural materials.

## Data Source and Methodology

The present study mostly uses qualitative data of various aspects of folk culture collected directly from the region. Due to lamentable lack of published information on folk geography of the region the study is totally based on primary data collected through personal field observations and interviews by using stratified sampling technique. Secondary data have also been used in the form of topographical sheet scanning of monograph and Census report. All the information related to the history of the region is collected through interviewing the local residents specially the old age residents. 127 sampled villages were selected which represent different aspects of material folk cultural geography.

## I Folk Dress and Ornaments

Folk dress of the Solan district is 'salwar-kamiz' for women and 'kurta-pajama', half coat and 'topi' for men. The women used to wear 'kurti', 'salwar' and 'chadru' (dupata) to cover their head. Men wear 'kurta' and 'pajama' (trouser) and 'parna' on shoulder. The old age men use to wear 'topi' and 'turban'. Children used to wear 'jhagu'- 'topu'. Bhamins and Charaj used to wear white dress, a 'kurta' and 'dhoti' with a 'parna' (piece of red cloth) on the shoulders while performing ancestor worship. Charaj are the bhamins who seek dan (offerings) in the name of dead by performing death rites. The young men also wear 'kurta'- 'pajama' on special occasions. No heavy clothing is required in Nalagarh and Baddi tehsils because of less cold. The old age people still wear 'saffa', 'turban' and 'Gandhi topi' to cover their head from Sun-stroke. 'Gandhi Topi' (cap) slowly slowly been replaced by a type of 'Kullui Topi' and 'Kinnauri Topi' become popular among the adult people mostly in Darla, Arki, Ramsher, Kasuali, Krishangarh, Solan and Kandaghat along with Kuthar (Krishangarh tehsils). It is evident from the study that the folk in the hilly areas used to wear cap. But cap is not popular in Nalagarh and Baddi tehsil because of the less cold in this region as compared to the hilly areas. 'Saffa' or 'pagari' is mostly popular in Nalagarh, Baddi and some parts of Kasauli tehsils because this region is plain and receives more heat than that of the hilly regions. Nalagarh and Baddi tehsils are the Sikh dominating regions rather than that of the hilly regions such as Kandaghat, Arki, Darla, Kasuali, Kuthar (Krishangarh) and Ramsher tehsils. So the Sikh community used to wear 'pagari' (turban) worn wear by Sikh community and Hindus used to wear 'saffa'. Some people now go more often bare headed. In winters, people used to wear thick clothes. In summers, silk and cotton cloths are used. 'Pattu' and 'loi' used during winters in Solan district. During special occasions like festivals, 'Jataras' or performing arts like 'Karyala', people used to wear traditional and colourful dress. In fact people have no sense to wear cloths. 'Karyala' is organised in Ramsher, Krishgarh, Kandaghat, Solan, Arki and Darla tehsils. It is also called 'Swang' in local language. People used to wear 'pulan' (locally prepared grass or straw shoes). At present the young men put on shirts, pants, and suits and jeans where as the old people still prefer to put on their traditional dress. The folk in higher altitudes used to wear heavy clothing as compare to the lower altitudes areas because of the cold during winters. In Kandaghat tehsil due to harsh climatic conditions and higher altitude people used to wear sweater for almost 11 to 12 months.

In winters heavy clothes of wool put on by the folk 2 months prior, to that of the folks of lower altitudes. They have to put heavy clothes for the whole day. Short and long coat made of goat or sheep wool used during winters by men. Women used hand made short and long woolen cardigan. The folks of Ramsher, Darla, Arki, Krishangarh, Solan and some parts of Kasauli tehsils use to wear wollen clothes during mornings and evenings as days are sunny and warm. In Nalagarh and Baddi tehsils no heavy clothings are worn by folks. It's quite hot even during the month of even in February during day time. People in few parts of the district used to made 'patoo' (shawl) from the wool of sheep and goat. They are used mainly by men. Shawls are mainly is used by women. 'Khaddi wale' used to make 'kambal' or 'gadda' for sitting made of 'bakari' (goat's) wool called 'Bakaracha'. People wear 'patoo', 'kambal' and 'shawl' during winters.

Precious or cheap, love for jewellery and an ornament is a universal phenomenon. The use of precious metals and stones for ornaments started probably when man left his wandering habits and preferred to settle at a place and took to agriculture. The ornaments and jewellery are well sought for and are collected and preserved for good and bad times. Ornaments and jewellery for married women is a sign of marriage. The women prefer ornaments. The silver and the gold ornaments are common among women of Arki. There are ornaments which are of daily use to the women, others related only to the special occasions. Not only women but when a child takes birth and grows by a few days he is adorned with small silver bangles known as 'kanganu' and anklets. In case of girls, when her nose is pierched a gold ring is put into it. At the time of marriage, the bride is given a variety of ornaments by her parents and in laws and relatives. The ornaments include 'chak', 'chiri', 'balis', 'jhumkas', 'bragar', 'bundes', 'kante', 'kan-phul', 'koka', 'phuli', 'laung', 'balu' and 'tilli'. In the necklace category includes 'jai mala', 'chanderhar' and queen's necklace. Popular and widely used bracelets include 'nalian', 'toke', 'bangas', 'kangnu', 'gajru', 'churi', 'band', 'mundris', 'ghungrus', 'jhanjar', 'tora', 'pajeb' and 'anguthari' for toe. The ornaments like 'tabiz', 'tillis', 'pazeb' and 'chanki' are influenced by the Mughal style. Women display jewellery and ornaments at special occasions like marriage, birth ceremony and religious fairs and festivals. Women have instinctive desire for ornaments. The men generally do not use ornaments. Some old people wear earring known as 'murku'. Some men used to wear thick silver or golden chain in neck according to their status. The more the number of ornaments the better is a person economically.

## II Folk Art

Folk art embodies a complete record of man's life, work and experience. Folk art depends on the character of a place as it expresses the physical and cultural environment as well as the distinctive mental perceptions of people. As manifestations of human experience and aspiration, folk art is woven from values and general patterns of life and culture of the people and as such, forms an aesthetic compage that portrays the interactive elements of regional character. Art is viewed as the autobiography of a culture expressing fully and profound the ideas, sentiments and faith of a region. Folk art emphasizes not an individual's expression, but that of a cultural group rooted into its pattern of living and conditioned by its experiential interpretation of the character of place. It represents a fussion of the environment and meta-physical realms. Thus, it portrays the regional personality and serves as a beacon light to

its culture. It also records the cultural heritage, values and attitudes of the area. It expresses the personality of place (Nobel and Dutt, 1982: 165).

In the Arki tehsil, Arki town embraces Arki Kalam Painting which was the old style of painting. The ruler of Baghal who were descendants of the chandelas of Bundelkhand played a great role in patronizing the art of painting and the Basholi School of painting. Soon, Kangra style was adopted. The paintings have been done on the walls of the ancestral home of the Kings of Arki. 'King Kisan Chand' is believed to have joined the Britishers during the revolt of A.D.1851. It is therefore likely that the paintings were made after the revolt during which he came in close contact with the Britishers and can hence, be dated to approximately between A.D.1870-1876. It is evident from a number of scenes represented by the artists. The painters show the time of hunting. Colours have been used extensively symbolically, red for love, yellow for spring and blue for the fertile lands, rains or clouds are used. The paintings at Arki deal with 'Krishna' Legend, 'Shiva-Parvati' scripts and 'Nayak' - 'Nayika' of 'Rasikpriya'. British civilian and military groups interspersed with other themes. It is believed that most of the paintings are copied. According to one of the sources an artist by the name of 'Hastu', was responsible for them. There is no evidence to support this, because 'Hastu' merely means one who works with his hands. The artists were of local origin. It is not therefore, unlikely that the artists of Arki may have belonged to Kangra. All the paintings in the Arki Palace are found in the 'Diwan Khana'. The whole hall divided into eighteen different compartments, each containing two or three panels of paintings. Famous episodes from the epics *Bhagavata Gita* and the *Mahabharata* and scenes depicting god and goddess Shiv and Parvati respectively with god *Ganesha* and the *Siddha* are found painted here. The paintings capture the excitements of groups of people of all ages, waiting at a rural circus, particularly the antics or tricks of 'gaddis' engaged in wrestling, deers and lady, combat, hunting and riding horse. The main purpose of wall painting was to decorate the houses or forts in hilly areas because of the lack of furniture and sculpture. As in the Arki fort and in Kuthar fort also the main door is painted with floral designs. This fort is a magnificent historical monument. The beautiful picture of *Lord Krishna* with his 'Murli' is beautifully painted here. In Nalagarh Fort the designs are carved and painted on the walls. It shows the art from the region of Mughals. The walls are simply coloured with small geometrical designs. Images of folk dance 'Thoda' carved on the wall road of Solan Town shows the cultural identity of the region. Wall paintings are famous in the study area. Not only the Arki palace shows the images of folk paintings but many temples and houses in this region such as the *Jakholi* Goddess temple also have such image. Ladies show a keen interest in wall paintings mostly done during marriage occasions. It is a ritualistic art called "Kandeo".

### **Folk Handicraft**

Folk handicraft is the collective aspiration and expression of people who generally live in rural areas. This tradition and culture are perfectly mirrored through beauty, shape and colour of things used in its daily life. The handicrafts are the part of recreation and for daily use. The handicrafts have great significance in the lives of the rural people. Spinning, weaving, tailoring and making ornaments, making tools and utensils are the folk handicrafts. The professional artists are the black smith, goldsmith, carpenter and mason. In the study area the people make shawl and blankets. The "charkha" is used for the spinning of the thread. They use waste wool to weave the blanket.

There are no weaver castes in the villages. Almost every household does these works. But now a day's mill made clothes like cotton and wollen are more in fashion. Knitting, embroidery, weaving and tailoring are more famous among women. Weaving of 'patoo', 'kambal' and 'shawl' are in Batal, Manju, Sai, Saryanj and Man villages of Arki tehsil; Hawani Kol, Sayar and Mangu of Darla sub-tehsil; Bhiunkhri, Lunas, Malaun Khas villages of Ramsher sub-tehsil; Ser Banera, Shili, Shatal, Burawari, Jabal Jamrot and Rehon of Solan; Damehr, Bisha, Chohra and Rohad villages of Kandaghat tehsil; Chandi, Darwa, Garsi Brahmana and Patta villages of Krishangarh and Dhar ki Ber village of Kasauli tehsil. The rural women also make 'khintoo' from the waste rags of clothes without wasting them and used as mattresses. Rags are also used in making cushions. These are mainly used during marriages or on special occasions when there is maximum gathering. Some rags are used to make 'baithkus' (a small mat to sit) for a single person. These are mostly used in the kitchens or when folks used to sit in the Sun. In Nalagarh tehsil, Sanerh, Karsoli and Ratyor villages of Nalagarh tehsil used to make pots. The pottery is mostly done by *Kumhar*. The *Kumahars* design the different types of mud pots. In many villages people use clay over the pots and paint it with different colours. Shoe making is practised in almost all the villages by the low caste people. Some of them are leaving for cities in search of better prospects. This leads to the decay of village crafts and services. For daily use rural people make broom for cleaning the floor, 'chattai' for be used as mat and 'chaj' for winnowing purposes. All these are made up of locally available date palm leaves. The broom is made up of 'bagado' a type of grass and also from the special long grass used to feed the cows because its top parts are soft. 'Maswartoo' is made of pine leaves or 'bagado' grass. They are used to apply mud on hearth. 'Tokri' (basket) making are also practiced in the study area (Table 1).

Table:1

S.No	Types of basket used in the study area	Number of villages using baskets	Number of villages making baskets
1	Basket made of bamboo	62	34
2	Baskets made of tuntki tree	28	7
3	Kilta made of bamboo	39	14

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

The above table indicates that out of 127 villages 62 villages use the baskets made of bamboo, 28 use baskets made of 'tuntki tree and 39 villages use the kilta made of bamboo. Out of 127 villages 34 villages are engaged in basket makings (basket made of bamboo) for commercial or for own uses in such villages include, Dumehar Bikarampur, Saryanj, Unchagaon, Sai, Man, Jalana, Jaghun, Manjhu, Unchagaon, Kueru Sehrol and Jaiwala villages of Arki tehsil; Hawani Kol, Mangu, Giana, and Daseran Bala villages of Darla sub-tehsil; Garkhal, Dhar ki Ber, Taksal and Dhangyar villages of Kasauli tehsil; Gaddon, Shilli, Rabaun, Shattal, Jabal Jamrot, Burawari, Ser Banera and Nauni Majhgaon of Solan tehsil; Dharmana, Panjali, Kohoo Uperla, Malaun Khas, Soon and Chamdar villages of Ramsher sub tehsil; Chandi, Gharsi Brahmana, Bhaogri, Krishangarh, Patta and Darwa villages of Krishangarh sub-tehsil. Basket made of 'tuntki' tree is made in Majra, Dabhota, Reru Jhiriwala, Bagher and Karsoli villages of Nalagarh tehsil and Krishanpura of Baddi tehsil. Folks also made 'kiltas' (a type of basket). It looks like cone. It is flat at the bottom. The circumference of the bottom is smaller than the circumference of the mouth of the 'kilta'. 'Kiltas' are common in the Banjani, Chail, Bisha, Basha, Rohad, Chohra and Bhuinra villages of Kandaghat tehsil

and Shilli, Ser Banera, Basal and Rebaun villages of Solan tehsil and Garkhal, Dhar ki Ber, Taksal and Dhangyar villages of Kasauli tehsil. It is easy to carry them on back rather to carry basket over the head in higher altitudes. Baskets are commonly found in the areas of lower altitudes in most of the villages of Kandaghat and Solan tehsils. In Nalagarh tehsil and Baddi tehsil basket is made from 'tuntki' tree which is popular for fodder. 'Patal's' are used as plates for the special occasions. 'Patal's' commonly found are made in the Arki tehsil, Darla sub-tehsil, Ramsher tehsil, Kasauli tehsil, Krishangarh sub-tehsil and Solan tehsil. 'Chabdu' for keeping 'chappatis' (bread prepared from wheat flour) or 'Makki ki roti' (bread prepared from maize flour) is also locally made. It is made up of 'bagado' grass and the 'pochal' (cover of the maize). They are made up of 'tauonur' leaves, obtained from plants called 'Tuiru'. These leaves resemble like 'Kachannar' but they are large in size. It's a type of thick climber, mostly found on the steep slopes. The people use 'tuiru' leaves for making of 'patal's'. 'Patal' is made by stitching three leaves together in round shape so it forms the shape of the plate. Small bowls known as 'dunas' are also made from the same leaf. These are used in special occasions such as during birth, death, marriage and other ceremonies. 'Tuiru' leaves are the broad leaves in the study area. So by joining three leaves together folks used these as plates. This is a tradition as in the past to arrange a huge quantity of metal plates were not possible during occasions such as marriages, 'jatra', birth and other functions where there was a maximum gathering. In the past these are the only source. These are specially made by the folks of Manju, Batal, Jalana, Saryanj, Jaghun, Jiawala, Kueru Sehrol, Shakuli, Dumeher Bikarampur and Man villages of Arki tehsil; Mangu, Giana, Hawani Kol villages of Darla sub-tehsil; Kohoo Nichla, Nand, Lunas, Bhiokhri, Kohoo Uperla, Malaun Khas, Soon, Chamdar and Panjali villages of Ramsher Tehsil; Mohal Tiro village of Kasauli tehsil; Patta, Krishangarh, Darwa, Chandi and Arli villages of Krishngarh sub-tehsil (Table 2).

Table 2

S.No	Folk Handicraft	Number of villages engaged in handicraft	Percentage of villages engaged in handicraft
1	Pattal	22	17.32
2	Mat	26	20.47
3	Broom	39	30.70
4	Chaj	8	6.30
5	Basketry	55	43.07

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

The folk handicraft still prevails in the study area although the number of people engaged in this profession is less. Few folk used to make these handicrafts for their own use. In ancient days this was practiced by a special community called 'Dumnas' as a profession. But now a days, most of the ladies in the rural areas used to make broom for their daily use. Mats, baskets and 'chaj' are still used by the folks. The above mentionrd folkart 'patal', 'dumna' and baskets are made from the locally available material. These can be easily degradable without any pollution. Wood work is also an apart of handicraft. The doors and windows in the study area are carved beautifully in various designs. These types of art are found in Arki, Kandaghat and Krishangrah tehsils. Simple doors are made by nailing the thin slab on the flat slab of wood because the wood is locally available. There is no such art in Nalagarh and Baddi tehsils. Doors are of simple design here. Communities still make agricultural implements such

as plough, handle of an axe, spade and other implements made up of wood. They also make agriculture implements of metal especially of iron like axe, spade and plough. Usually all the people who use traditional wooden agricultural implements make them by their own. The implements of iron are made by 'Lohars'. Iron implements are made in Hat Kot, Saryanj, Jalana, Manjhu and Sai villages of Arki tehsil; Hawani Kol, Daseran Bala, Kolka, Rauri and Sayar villages of Darla sub-tehsil; Kohoo Nichla, Kohoo Uperla, Bhiokhri and Soon villages of Ramsher sub-tehsil; Darwa, Jadla, Shit and Bhaogri villages of Krishnagarh sub-tehsil; Dhar ki Ber, Kasauli Gaon and Gahi villages of Kasauli tehsil; Basal, Gaddon, Ber, Burawari, Jabal Jamrot and Damrog of Solan tehsil; Damehr, Bisha, Chohra, Bhuinera and Rohad villages of Kandaghat tehsil; Chandi, Darwa, Garsi Brahmana and Patta villages of Krishnagarh Sub-tehsil; Dabhota, Bhatian, Nanowal, Karsoli and Nawan Garon villages of Nalagarh tehsil and Kunjhal and Bather villages of Baddi tehsil.

### Ritualistic Art

Ritualistic art is mostly practiced in the religious sites associated with the popular traditions and mystical beliefs. In the study area the objects from nature such as stones are picked up and placed as object of worship as a local deity and called 'Deo', 'Devta', 'Isht' or 'Kheshtarpal' in local language. In almost all villages stone images are worshipped. People placed stone as it is or carved images on the stones and worship them as deities. Bataleshwar Shiv, Goddess Baniya Devi, Dharawala Dev and Chandi Devi are few examples where such types of activities are practised. The local artisans have made numerous idols out of local sandstones that are worshipped faithfully in various temples. In every village the idol of folk deity is kept at the highest place to pay respect such as 'Sati' idol in Batal village where a stone is erected as idol. Many more stone images of many deities are quite common in different villages. During *pooja* ceremony priest used to mark 'Ganas' in the prayer places. Women used to paint 'Kandeo' at the time of marriage on the wall at the place of worship on special occasion especially on marriage ceremony. During worship 'Ganas' were painted on the wall by the priest. Ritualistic ceremonial paintings or rangolis are duly executed, during festival and seasonal cycles and during construction of 'Bedi' in marriages. Toran is a special gate made of wood given by *Mamma* (uncle) of bride or bridegroom on the occasion of marriage. In local dialect toran word is derived from the word 'torna' means to pass or to cross. This means people have to cross this gate before entering the 'angan' or 'bedi'. It is well decorated with different colors along with the frill of the mango leaves. This is a special ritual given to the gate on marriage. It is the responsibility of *Mamma* to give 'toran' on the occasion of marriage. In Ramsher, it is made up of bamboo having no colours, but in Arki tehsil it is made up of wood after piling it and colour it yellow, red and green. It is not popular in Nalagarh and Baddi region. 'Toran' is a type of gate having three sticks two of equal size and one is small. The two long sticks are erected vertically and one stick horizontally over the two vertically. The god images such as *Lord Shiva* and *Goddess Parvati* are also made on the occasion of *Shivratri* and *Teej* festivals. 'Rangoli' is made on *Diwali*. 'Rangoli' for the 'bedi' is used to be made by the priests themselves during 'path' or 'katha'. On the occasion of *Diwali* the rangoli is the main art form to be focused on focus in the study area. 'Karuwa' a small pot made of clay is decorated with 'chuna' (lime) or 'kungu' (vermilion) or with different colours on the occasion of 'Karuwa Chauth' celebrated all over the district.

### III Folk Food

The folk groups mostly consume natural foods derived directly from the land like domestic plants (vegetables) and plants from jungle and also products from animals. The region is ideal for vegetables and pulses. Rice, maize and wheat are favourite foods. Milk, curd, butter and cheese are used but not so common. Most of the fruits are obtained from the fields. The Solan district is famous for pulses like maize, 'rajmah', 'mah', 'kulth' and 'bharth' (soyabean). As the district is drained with many big and small streams, the area is good for different crops. The staple food of Solan district is wheat, rice, maize, vegetables and pulses. The people are almost vegetarian and their diet includes, rice, *dal*, and chapatti. Mostly seasonal vegetables are consumed. The people of rural area usually like to consume saag of 'chulai', 'palak', 'sarson' and 'chuch' (mostly found near 'khad'). These are mostly eaten by the folks of Arki tehsil, Ramsher and some parts of Kuthar. Bread of 'Makki' (maize) is commonly used all over Solan district. Here, an attempt is made to study the agricultural products on the basis of the preferences. The crops grown in the study can be determined through the preferences given to the crops. So here the crops are selected on the basis of three preferences first, second and third. Total 127 villages were selected for the study of the food crops grown in the study area. The number of response is considered as the preferences of a particular crop in a particular area (Table 3).

Table 3: Food Crops

S.No	Agri-Cultural Products	First Preference	Second Preference	Third Preference	Total villages
		No. of villages (%)			
1	Maize	59 (46.46)	53 (41.73)	5 (3.93)	117 (92.13)
2	Wheat	49 (38.58)	45 (35.43)	17 (13.39)	111 (87.40)
3	Paddy	1 (0.79)	6 (4.72)	37 (29.13)	44 (34.65)
4	Tomato	11 (8.66)	11 (8.66)	19 (14.96)	41 (32.28)
5	Barley	0	0	21 (16.54)	21 (16.54)
6	Ginger	1 (0.79)	6 (4.72)	5 (3.94)	12 (9.45)
7	Beans	0	0	5 (3.94)	5 (3.94)
8	Vegetables	1 (0.79)	0	2 (1.57)	3 (2.36)
9	Pulses	0	0	2 (1.57)	2 (1.57)
10	Arbi	0	0	1 (0.79)	1 (0.79)
11	Peas	0	0	1 (0.79)	1 (0.79)
12	Potatoes	0	0	1 (0.79)	1 (0.79)
13	Mustard	0	0	1 (0.79)	1 (0.79)

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

It is clear that the preference of the maize is maximum. Wheat, paddy, tomato, barley, ginger, beans, vegetables, pulses, arbi, peas, potatoes and mustard come later. These crops are taken into consideration as per the response of the respondents in the study area. Other groups are also grown according to their need. The people of the study area are fond of taking their meals three times a day. Some people take their meal for two times a day accordingly. They take light breakfast in the morning. In the afternoon, they are fond of taking rice, pulses, vegetables, 'achar' and 'chapatti' or 'makki ki roti'. At night they take 'makki ki roti', vegetable and rice according to their taste. The cooking mediums are vegetable oil, *ghee* and mustard oil. The milk yield is mainly used for the preparation of *lassi* and curd. A food may be taken in different combinations and as such many preparations are made out of these substances along with some other materials to change the taste. Seasonal vegetables such as radish and cucumber

are favourite salad items. Unripe mango fruits, termind, raw onion, some salt and green chillies ground to paste called chatnni are used as appetisers.

The preferred food in Solan mainly consists of vegetarian food, with a generous dose of spices like cardamon, cloves and red chillies. The chillies, cinnamon, onion, garlic, ginger and turmeric are grown in the fields by the local people for self-consumption purpose and few people used to sell these products in the market. In the every day meal, it is the usual pulses, rice, vegetables and chapatti. Beliefs associated with various types of food provide a rich source of folk traditions, which have been as yet little explored. Vegetarianism is preferable and meat avoidance are common through out the study area. Bhramins do not take meat but the non-Bhramin caste take meat of fish, goat, mutton and chicken. On special occasions like *Lohri*, *Baradin* and *Diwali* the folk prepares different food items. The food habit of the folk can be identified on the basis of habit of consumption of food (Table 4).

Table 4

Intake of Folk Food Items			
Daily	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
	Chappati, Vegetable and Makki ki roti	Chappati, Rice, Dal and Salad	Chappati or Makki ki roti and Vegetable,
Weekly	Kheru,		
Monthly	Halwa		
Occasionally Marriages	Rice, Kadi, Kaddu, Bedana, Rongi, Gram, Bedana and others		
Festivals	Halwa, Puri, Pude, Luske, Pachole, Patande, Malpude, Jalebi, Bedana and Baddiyan		
Jatras	Halwa and lunch (Rice, Dal, Kaddi and Kaddu)		

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

The traditional dishes in Solan district are usually prepared on significant occasions. Some of the popular traditional dishes prepared on the special occasions are identified from the study.

'*Siddu*' is a kind of bread made from wheat flour stuffed with dal and spices. The yeast is mixed in the wheat flour and it is allowed to rise for 4-5 hours with a stuffing of fat. It is first browned over a slow fire flames and then steamed. '*Siddu*' is normally eaten with '*ghee*'. Folk also made sweet '*siddu*' made from wheat and jaggery syrups. It is popular in Bisha, Basha, Chohra, Bhuinera, Chohra and Rohad villages of Kandaghat tehsil and Ser Banera and Shill Samlog of Solan tehsil and Taksal, Dhanyar, Mohal Ambota, Kamali Gaon, Mohal Guman and Mohal Tiro villages of Kasauli tehsil. '*Ashakalu*' is made from rice flour in a special stone pan, having small digged holes called '*Ashakali*'. These are prepared on *Diwali*, *Lohri*, *Badadin* and *Sakrant* occasions. '*Tikariyan*' is prepared from wheat and jaggery syrup. It is used to deep fried into the '*ghee*' or oil until it turns brown. It is some what similar to '*malpude*' or '*pude*' but it is small in size, has thick edges and hard to eat. This type of dish is common during marriage cremonies. '*Gujjiyan*' is prepared from the fine wheat flour. The wheat flour is mashed with water and leveled it with paste. It is stuffed with crushed coconut, dry fruits and sugar or jaggery syrup. Then put into the oil for deep frying till it turns brown. '*Bhiarath*' is roasted in the pan by adding some water and salt and is eaten as snacks with tea. These are also roasted without water or sometime with oil and salt. '*Talunye*' is prepared from till and jaggery syrup. These are shaped as small balls. These are common in all over the Solan district. These are usually prepared on '*Lohri*'. '*Chilru*' is made of rice gram and maize flour mixed in water and jaggery syrup or sugar syrup. It is usually prepared on the '*tawa*' (plain pane) by applying little oil or '*ghee*'. '*Baddiya*' are prepared with mash paste. Small balls deep fried in oil or '*ghee*'. After frying in a little oil add spices and water. These are

prepared mostly on 'Sharad' or 'Bara din' or on some special day. 'Jalebi' is prepared from wheat flour is mixed with jaggery syrup. Colour is added. The mixture is put in the clean cotton cloth and tying from the top and used to press slowly into the frying pan and deep fried. The movement of the hand is in a circular form. It is usually prepared during special occasions in Nalagarh, Baddi and Kandaghat regions. 'Pude' a special dish is made from wheat, jaggery syrup ('gud') which is then shallow fried in 'ghee' or oil. Mostly ghee is preferred. It is popular in all over the district. Malpude is similar as 'pude'. The preparation is the same but its circumference is larger than 'pude'. It is popular in Arki, Ramsher and Darla regions. 'Luske' are made from wheat, rice flour with little baking soda and is similar to pancake. 'Patande' is made with wheat, milk, 'ghee' and 'sakkar' on plain pan. It is also made from rice and mash paste. It is used to prepare in Ramsher, Solan, Karishgarh, Kandaghat and some parts of Kasauli regions. 'Pachole' is made from mashed sweet corns with spices, which is steamed and eaten with 'ghee' (clarified butter). It is prepared on the special occasions, such as on 'Baradin'. 'Khichri' is made from rice and 'mah dal' fried in little 'ghee' or oil by adding spices. It is made on Diwali or Lohri festivals all over the district. It is served with pure 'ghee', 'lassi' and sometimes 'chattani'. 'Khichri' is also prepared on 'Malapunya' (a festival of cow) and used to offer to cow. 'Churma' is prepared from the pancake of maize flour. Then it is mashed into small pieces. Pure 'ghee', jaggery or 'sakkar' is added. This is used to prepare on 'Malapunya' (a festival of cow worship). 'Sattu' is prepared from the flour of roasted maize, wheat, beans and grams seeds. Folks used to consume it with lassi or milk according to their taste during summers as it maintains the temperature of the body during summers. It is commonly used in some parts of Arki, Ramsher, Krishgarh, Kandaghat and some parts of Kasauli tehsil. It's used varied from one individual to another. 'Sattu' made from roasted maize flour is preferred in Ramsher, Krishgarh, Arki, some parts of Kasauli and Solan tehsils. 'Sattu' made from roasted wheat, gram and beans flour is commonly used in most of the parts of Solan and Kandaghat tehsil. 'Halwa' is prepared from the coarsed grains of wheat or from maize flour. It is prepared by frying in a pure ghee and when it turns brown, a little 'shakkar' and water is added. It is kept cooking till it observes water. Some dry fruits can be added to it. It is mostly prepared on every occasions but preparation is must during the day of worship of deity. In the study area this dish is offered to all deities. Hindus mostly prefer 'halwa' prepared from wheat in their puja. Sikhs preferred prashad prepared from maize flour on the special occasions. For example in Chail Gurudwara Sahib on 'Guru Parav' the 'prashad' of maize flour is prepared. Now exceptions are there, as some of the cultural groups prepared it with wheat also. 'Gulgule' is made from wheat and sugar or jaggery syrup. It is used to deep fry in the 'ghee' or oil. It is almost spheroid in shape. It is commonly prepared in marriages in Ramsher, Arki, Darla, Krishngarh and some parts of Kasauli tehsils. It is also prepared on the occasion of Shitla Goddess festival in Nalagarh, Baddi and some parts of Kasauli tehsils. 'Puri' is prepared from wheat flour by adding water and by rolling on pastle board like chapatti and then deep frying into ghee or oil. 'Bedana' is prepared with the gram flour. It is mixed in water and different edible colours mainly green, yellow, orange and red are added and then fried in oil. Then after this it is put in the container of syrup of sugar. 'Kheru' is also a tradition dish and consumed with 'makki ki roti'. It is prepared from the 'dahin' (curd) or 'lassi' or 'cha' or 'chach' (purified curd). First spices are added to the oil such as 'mirch', 'daniya', 'jeera', 'pyaj', 'adark' and 'lahasun' according to the taste. Then curd and salt is added. 'Khatta'

is prepared with the citrus fruit called 'galgal' and 'cholang'. It is cut into small pieces. Salt, sugar or jaggery, chilli and coriander are added to it. It is usually prepared by women and eaten in the sunny day. It is good for cough and cold. 'Kachori' is like 'siddu' but 'siddu' is prepared from steam and it is prepared by deep frying. Water is added to the wheat flour. The boiled potatoes or vegetables mixed with spices are stuffed in the wheat bread and then deep fried it. 'Chedara' is prepared with the milk of cow by boiling it on a high flame. When it thickens it is ready to consume. Other important dishes are prepared on the occasion of *Shiv Ratri*, *Navratras* and *Janmashtami* people are fond of 'falahar' like 'khatta mithha kaddu', 'arbi', 'bathau' and 'aloo'. During sharadh days people offer their 'pitras' special food like 'khir', 'bhale', 'rice', 'rajmah', 'kadoo', 'poori' or 'chappati's' with 'ghee'. In marriages the breakfast called 'Nuari' in local dialect is offered to the 'baratis'. For 'dham' rice, 'rajmah', 'kadoo', 'dhoi dal', 'dakh ka mitha' or 'bedana' and 'kaddi' are the special food items in Arki, Kandaghat, Krishangarh, Kasauli, and Ramsher regions. In Baddi and Nalagarh regions 'rajmah', 'chawal', 'Maah ki dal', gram and 'mittha' are common.

Terms associated with the organisation of feast on special occasions in the study area. 'Prashad' or 'Kashar' is a food item in the name of god during 'puja' at home. 'Nuari' a feast prepared in marriages for 'Baratis'. 'Kadai' is prepared by the devotees of the local deity on the fulfillment of wishes. 'Halwa' a 'prashad' prepared and first offered to the god and then distributed among the other devotees. 'Jag' a grand feast is organized for other than the relatives on special occasions like marriage, on retirement or on the birth of a child. 'Badera' is organized for the local deity every sixth month on the flourishing of the new crop. All the devotees of the nearby villages have to get together to organise the function. 'Bhandara' is organised in the temple on the special Hindu days such as *Navrate*, *Shivratri* and *Ashtami*. 'Lungar' is organised in the *Gurudwara* on the occasion of *Guru Nanak Jayanti* and *Prakash Parava*. 'Pojudi' a type of picnic is organised by the group of children in the nearby fields. They used to take food items from their home and cook in the jungle during grazing their cattle. 'Sharadh' is organized for their ancestors in the month of September.

Food gathered from forest or grasslands: People not only take food grown in the field but also enjoy food from nature. For example, fodder crop 'karyal' is consumed by the people as well by the domestic animals. Its buds and flowers are consumed by the people. People are also fond of this food item. The other items are fig leaves (phyogra), symbal and many more are common in Ramshar, Arki, Kandaghat, some parts of Kasauli and Kuthar tehsils. Folks used to prepare dishes from 'bichchu', 'gucchi' and 'lingad'. They are commonly consumed in Kandaghat region in Bisha, Basha, Chail, Banjani, Chohra, Bhuinra and Rohad villages only. 'Rayata', 'pakode', 'bhalle' and 'sabji' is made of 'kathi' plant (Table: 5).

Table: 5

Consumption of Folk Food		
Consumption of food	Number of Villages	Percent of Villages
Food prepared on the special occasion	127	100%
Food prepared by collecting the plants from the jungle	97	76.38%

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

It is evident from the above table that all the villages of the Solan district used to prepare the folk food on the special occasions and 76.38 percent villages consume the food prepared by gathering from the nearby fields and forest area such as '*kachnar*', '*kathi*', '*simbal*' fruit, '*daugla*' etc.

#### IV Folk Medicines

It is common in folk societies to treat diseases and disorders with drugs and medicines derived from the roots, barks, blossoms or fruits of plants. Many of the folk cures have proven effective. Herbs are found in jungle, near rivers and khads, or in gardens near houses and in fields. For example: '*anar*', '*bhang*', '*dhatura*', '*tejpata*', '*basuti*', '*kainth*', '*phyogra*' and many more are found in jungle and in nearby fields. '*Gucchi*', '*lingad*', '*banakasha*' and '*buransh*' (rhododendron) are found mainly in parts of Kandaghat region such as in Banjani, Bisha, Basha, Chail forest area and Rohad. These herbs and shrubs are used for treatment of wounds, cuttings, pimples and burnings. The folk medicines that are used to cure different types of diseases are '*kachnar*', '*ramban*', '*churo*', '*kawar patha*', '*guljo*' (*giloye*), '*alas*', '*chakmoli*', '*basuti*', '*gandela*', '*timbero*', '*banna*', '*bajo*', '*utha chat*', '*ambala*', '*kheir*', '*bodi*', '*symbal*', '*rayan*' and '*bakar*'. These are mainly found in Arki, Ramsher, Krishangarh, Kausali and Solan tehsils and in some parts of Kandaghat tehsil. Folk societies also use folk medicines for common diseases, like '*Dayan*' (witchcraft), '*nazar*' (evil eye) and evil spirit. These are cured with the help of local deities and *Bhramins* by performing some puja. It is believed that a type of puja called '*havan*' is performed to cure the disease. During '*havan*' different varieties of plants and seeds like linseed and '*kher*' plant are used along with '*bhoj*' '*patra*', '*ghee*', '*supari*', '*gari*' and '*chawore*'. They are used at the time of '*havan*' as a '*havan samagri*'. It is believed by the folk group that where the *havan* is performed no evil spirit or ghost exists. Maximum people plant tulsi and worship it as Goddess and take it as medicine to cure cold and fever. The use of medicines are shown in the following table.

Table-6

S.No	Medicines	Number of Villages use Medicines	Percentage
1)	Folk Medicine	21	16.54
2)	Allopathic	41	32.28
3)	Both	65	51.18
	Total	127	100

Source: Field Survey (2015-2016)

The field survey revealed that out of 127 villages, 21 villages give preference to the folk medicines as these are isolated areas. They are familiar with the use of the folk plants and medicines. 41 villages are using allopathics only. They do not know the use of the folk plants for medicinal use. 65 villages are using both folk medicines and allopathic medicines. It is found that the educated folk people having little knowledge about the folk medicines.

#### V Folk Utensils:

People in the study area use the traditional utensils for cooking food. '*Kadda*' and '*kadsi*' (serving spoon) made up of brass, iron, aluminum and steel. '*Degchi*' is used for cooking food. '*Tokanis*' are used for preparing food during big celebrations like marriages, retirements or '*devta agaman*'. They are also made of brass having a thick base. '*Padoo*' made up of brass. This is a small utensil for cooking food. Some people use utensils made up of steel. '*Chaj*' is used to separate chaff from the grains. It is made up of the sticks of the grass, iron or tin. '*Tokri*' and

'Pedu' are made up of locally available bamboo which is used to store grains. It is plastered with mud and cow dung. So the grain could not fall from the openings. It is used mostly in Arki, Ramshar and Kuthar regions. 'Mamjista', 'kundi', 'chaki', 'sill' or 'pinu' are used for grinding grains and spice. 'Ashkaali' is a traditional stone made utensil used to make 'askalu'. 'Phuknala' (blowpipe), 'chimta' (tongs), 'sanshi' (pincers), 'tanthu' (spachula), 'churi' or 'chaku' (knife) and 'tawa' are some of the main items used in the kitchen during cooking on the 'chulla' (hearth).

## VI Agricultural Implements:

People use traditional tools for various agriculture purposes. Folk still use traditional tools for cultivation like 'kudali', 'farua', 'ganti', 'chabal', 'khurpi', 'darat', 'dachi', 'plough', 'plaut', 'meada', axe etc. That reflects the folk culture itself. These implements are made by 'Lohars'. Other than the 'Lohars' the upper caste people also practice these types of activities. They made handles for the agricultural implements. The maximum use of the traditional agricultural tools is in hilly areas like in Arki tehsil, Darla sub-tehsil, Ramsher sub-tehsil, Kandaghat tehsil, Krishangarh sub-tehsil and some parts of Kasauli. Tractors are mostly used in plain areas such as in Nalagarh, Baddi and some parts of Kasauli tehsil. Both traditional agricultural tools and tractor are used in these regions.

## VII Folk Musical Instruments

Musical instruments play a vital role in the display of the dance and drama forms. The songs are accompanied by dance and musical instruments. These are used to pass information and different to make announcements. The traditional instrument includes 'ransingha', 'karnal', 'turhi' (bugle), 'bansuri' (flute), 'shehnai' or 'peepni'. Stringed instruments or memberanophonic instruments are used by the people. There include different types of 'dhol' (drum). 'Dholki' is very popular. It provides rhythm to every type of song and dance. In addition to the 'dhol' and 'dholki' the percussion instruments include 'jhanjh' (large cymbals), 'manjira' (small cymbals), 'chimta' (tongs), 'ghanta' (gongs), 'ghariyal' (large gongs) and 'thali' (platter), bells includes 'ghungrhru' (bells). A variety of drums is used with the name such as 'dhol', 'dholak', 'dholku', 'nagara', 'Punjabi dhol' and 'dammama'. The 'dholaks' are made up of skin of the cow and buffalo. They brought these form the Baddi, Nalagarh, Punjab and Chandigarh. People known as 'Mangte' perform the ritual of playing of the 'nagara' mostly in various marriage and ceremonies. The 'Punjabi Dhol' is popular in Panjali, Chamdar, Bhiokhri, Dharmana and Badhu villages of Ramsher, Nalagarh, Baddi, Kasauli tehsil and it is rarely used in Arki, Solan and Kandaghat tehsils where it is used especially on the occasion of 'chinj' during fairs. These instruments are played according to the importance of occasion. Tradition of instrumental music passes from one generation to another generation in the absence of any formal training institute. The playing pattern of these instruments indicates specific occasions on which they are played. It has given birth too many 'talas'. There are now different styles of playing 'dhol'. 'Dhol' players are very proficient. They change the 'bols', division stress and speed of the 'talas' in accordance to the dance and the song being performed and sung respectively. 'Harmonium' is the instrument which adds melody to the atmosphere.

## Conclusion

Solan district is selected as a study area because majority of population is residing in the rural areas following their traditional culture. They are using the folk material items that are attained by their ancestors. The role of physical factors affecting the folk life is marked especially regarding folk handicraft. The folk people follow their age old practices. In the present study cultural ecological approach has been applied. Moreover, major thrust of the study to identify the folk cultural of the people that they have acquired through the ages.

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