CHAPTER IV
Review of Literature

It is learnt that the folk-songs are the soul of folk literature and folk culture. The folk-songs may take various forms such as religious, incantations, musical, lyrics and narrative songs. These songs, sung in various vocations at various places, are classified under many heads: Labour or work songs are some of such classifications. These songs are sung by the workers either to forget their physical strain while doing work or to convey their mental attitude towards their fellow workers and employer. Peasants, agricultural labourers and many people with ancillary occupations, and even household work, sing songs while working or during leisure time. They sing songs depicting sentiments of love, bravery, compassion, comedies and tragedies and of metaphysical and devotional character. These people sing songs while ploughing, drawing water, reaping, harvesting, during festivals etc, and women while making baskets, picking weeds, sowing seeds, during various rituals, ceremonies, festivals etc.

While writing about Folk-Songs of Factory workers of Tamil Nadu, A. Sivasubramanian says, "Theme of the songs is either love or the condition of labour or the status of the labourer..."
or the tyrannical attitude of the employers. The songs of the factory workers have yet to be collected in number. If these songs are collected, analysed and interpreted properly they will certainly help to solve some of the labour problems and organise healthy leisure time activities for the workers with the help of trained social worker/labour welfare officer and thereby bring harmony between labour and management.

In Karnataka folk artists compose and sing 'Lavanis' or ballads and 'Gi, Gi' songs even today. These singers mostly give the critical analysis of human behaviour, immoral values and burning current problems of the society, giving caution and suggestions to improve. The themes of their songs are Family Welfare, Family Planning, Adult education, Population Education and Dowry System etc.

In this connection if we refer Encyclopaedia of Britanica we find vividly and powerfully convincing remarks about folk-songs and authorship. Here "it is not the question of age or authorship that is important in a folk-song but spontaneity and beauty that are important. A folk-song then is always gratifying the new on the old----- A folk-song is

neither new nor old because it is continually taking on a common stem. We can see the importance of folk-songs depicted beautifully in one of the Kannada folk-songs.

I don't want pearl, ruby and wealth
Don't want even the pomp of fort around
O! my mother, I want the folk-songs all around.

Definition, meaning and importance of folk-songs:

A.H.Krappe has defined folk-song, "as a lyric poem with melody which originated anonymously among the unlettered, in currency for a consideration of time as if it were a rule for centuries." According to this definition folk-song is the song of folks. But who are these folks? By general convention the folks are unlettered people who know nothing of alphabets. They are untutored so far as formal education is concerned. However, these folks are the composers of lyrical poems with melody. The word "lyrical" can misguide scholars and students.

1. Encyclopaedia of Britanica 14th edition, page.448. quoted by B.S.Gaddagimath, Kannada Janapada Geetagalu (Kannada), Karnataka University, Dharwad, 1963 page.xi
of classical literature. The folk-songs are not so lyrical and polished as the classical song of any classical language of the world. A classical lyric has a metre in style, music, phrases of ornate words, lyrical themes and sentiment or "Rasa". All these are refined and polished.

A folk-song differs from a classical lyric. It has rhythm and rhyme, sung by folks and it has spoken phraseology. It is generally rendered into dialect, spoken by the folk, while classical lyric is written down by a poet, whose language is chaste and standard with ornatic phrases of traditional style or the language found in the classical books or spoken by the educated and sophisticated with melody, not natural but composed and artificial.

Further Krappe said "that the author of a folk-song is never known to its singers. The creator of a folk-song is always hidden or vēśid, Shri Zaverchand Meghani has put it thus, "No body has found its origin like the origin of a rivulet". But in some kannada, folk-songs called "Lavani" or 'ballad' the name of the composer is mentioned at the end of the song. Even today Lavani songs and Gi,Gi' songs are composed and presented by the folk artists in Karnataka. Some sing in

1. Ibid
praise of composers and others finish their ballad with the name of the deity and sing the songs in the name of deity.

So far as the origin of folk-song is concerned the Eastern and Western scholars of folklore are anonymous. that a folk-song is originated anonymously among unlettered folk.

According Maria Leach, as quoted by Chandervakar, "Folk song comprises the poetry and music of groups whose literature is perpetuated not by written and print but through oral tradition".

So far as the time-dimension in the folk-song is concerned Maria Leach is more scientific, pragmatic and clearer than Krappe.

Better statement than the above on the nature of folk-song is of J.H.Brunvad, which runs: "the folk-song consists of words and music that circulates orally in traditional variants among members of a particular group, like other kinds of oral traditions. Folk-songs have come from various sources, have appeared in various media and have sometimes professional or artistic uses. But all of these which qualify as true folk-songs, have variants found in oral tradition".

2. Ibid.
Some Western scholars have called folk-songs as primitive spontaneous music. In the similar way K.B. Das defined a folk-song as a spontaneous outflow of the life of the people, who live, in a more or less primitive condition. Further the folk-song has been defined in Words-Worthian style i.e. literary critics style. However, the folklore scholar should bear in mind that the folklore is separate social science or discipline. Hence the terminology for its interpretation, analysis and criticism should be evolved as it has been done in the Western countries. The study of folk-songs covers under its scope the application of sociology, psychology, anthropology etc which is most useful inter-disciplinary approach that social work also believes in. So the definition which is more convincing regarding the nature and its relevancy should be accepted.

Salient Features of Folk-Songs:
1. They are mostly anonymous
2. They are traditional
3. They are free from rigid rules of composition.
4. They are lyrical
5. They are melodious
6. Their style is of spoken dialects of unlettered folks
7. They should be on the lips of the folk, for their oral transmission and
8. They must have different variants.
Sometimes popular songs have been taken as folk-songs because of their popularity and many of the salient features of the folk-songs are being traced in them. Such popular songs, sometimes lose their authorship and become traditional and formalised with its folk tunes, rhymes and rhythms, with spoken dialect. The diffusion of folk-songs and popular songs is not difficult. Generally folk-songs have many variants whereas the popular songs hardly have any variants. In language and imagination with its ornate style popular songs differ from folk-songs. In folk-songs, the folk mind is always reflected. It is further analysed to find out that there are elements of collective consciousness. The collective consciousness, generally, is not reflected in popular songs.

Further the well known kannada scholar Dr. H. Tipperudraswamy expressed his opinion when he defined folk-literature as "The natural reflection of the experience of the rural folk who have been engaged in managing day to-day life. And this is not the creation of one individual, but it is the work representing collective mind and common culture. This usually is said to be the folk-literature."  

Classification of Kannada folk-songs

There is a large variety of folk songs in kannada - individual, duet and group songs viz (1) Pregnancy ritual songs (2) Birth pang songs (3) Naming ceremony songs (4) Lullabyies (5) Play and recreational songs (6) Love songs (7) work songs (8) Puberty songs (9) Marriage songs (10) Festival songs (11) Family songs and (12) Religious songs (13) Death songs.

They are called in kannada as (1) Lavani (Ballad) (2) Gī, Gī (Like Lavani with the words “Gī, Gī” at the end of every stanza) (3) Jogula (Lullabyies) (4) Sobana (during marriage, naming ceremony and such occasions) (5) Chowdkipada (Religious songs) (6) Dollina Pada (Drum Songs) (7) Kolata pada (songs of stick dance) (8) Hantipada (Harvest songs) (9) Habbagala Hadu (Festival songs) (10) Fishermen’s song (11) Pranaya, Premada Hadu (Love songs) (12) Hāmudisuva Hadu (Songs of flowering ceremony) (13) Labour pain songs etc.

The Kannada folk-songs are sung in the villages of Karnataka and they are sung far and wide, capturing the minds of all sorts of men/women in Karnataka because they are the songs belonging to collective consciousness.

Now the word "Society" is derived from "the Latin word" Societas" which literally means companion; indeed society
is a union of mutual fellowship and emotional comraderie"1
Likewise in the words of Arnold Van Gennep "A society is
similar to a house divided into rooms and corridors. The
more the society resembles ours in its form of civilization,
the thinner are its internal partitions and wider are its
doors of communication"2 We find the reciprocity or
mutuality on which society exists to continue. Kannada folk
literature made it simple to understand and strengthen the
human relations by using proverbs and songs; e.g. there is
a proverb in Kannada i.e. " ಕೈಲಾವ ಮಳವಾ ಗುಡ್ಡ. ಮಳವಾ ಕೈಲಾವ ಗುಡ್ಡ"). It means, if Kallavva gives baked cake, Mallavva
gives fried cake. Social work studies the formation and
functions of society. It studies various institutions,
patterns, culture, civilisation, traditions, customs, beliefs,
myths, legends and other social elements and values of
society. Literature is the reflection of social behaviour.
And folk-songs are no exception to this. Folk-songs project
the basic, natural unpolluted and real image of the society,
If we want to understand a society, we need to understand
its folk-songs also.

1. B.H.Kennedy - The Revised Latin Primer,
2. Arnold Van Gennep - The rites of passage phoenix
   Books. The University of Chicago
The beauty of the countryside, the charm of the climate, the friendliness of the people is reflected in the folk-songs. Their poetry is often very beautiful both in form and content, in image and symbol. It is impossible to reproduce in a foreign tongue, the delicate artistry of the songs sung by the folk. Yet some attempt must be made to present the remarkable contents of, or literature before it passes from the world in face of spread of education and the decay of tribes.

These songs also are full of poetic and tender associations of the people; many of the songs have the severely condensed form and obscure reference and unusual symbolism characteristics of riddle. "Aristotle identifies the riddle with metaphor."

"The very nature indeed of a riddle in this is to describe a fact in an impossible combination of words (which) cannot be with their metaphorical substitutes——

According to Sankar Sen Gupta, as said earlier, The Vedic riddle is poetic in form and content.

Through a riddler we become highly humanised and get the knowledge about the meaning of life. In riddle we notice not only the beliefs and superstition but also moral teaching."

Further according to Durga Bhagvat, "The riddle incorporates a question, primarily and an answer secondarily. In the question, a fact is concealed in the form of metaphor, while in the answer the hidden meaning is revealed and the real purport of the implied sense is fully expressed. Concealment thus becomes the most vital function of the riddle."

Ultimately riddles impart knowledge or moral instruction in an amusing manner. The main practical purpose of the riddle is educative. The task of translating folk-songs, riddles etc is formidable, let alone the interpretation without a wide knowledge of the social background.

The neglect of the detailed study of the folk-songs in its various aspects both by scientists and artists of the Indian folk-songs is astonishing. Yet the songs are important, not only because of the musical nature; but the content of verse itself is part of a people's life. Even more so because ethnographic culture is expressed in songs, in charms; we have actually fixed and established documents which are the most authentic and unshakable witnesses to the folks.

According to Elwin and others, "the main interest of an Anthropologist is to study the relic of the past of mankind, 1. Sankar Sen Gupta (ed) - Folklore, Vol.3, No.7, British Indian Street, Calcutta, July, 1962, page.220."
but not the natural aspirations and activities of man and
his expression of songs. Hence the anthropologist must
not only be a detective, he must be a magistrate. In making
up his mind, he can have no better evidence than songs. The
songs are not all the evidence, but they are an important
part of it. They round off and complete the picture. They
are much nearer to real life than are the folk tales, for
these seem to represent an escape from life rather than a
reproduction of it".¹ Devendra Satyarthi has pointed out,
here that India's national movement does not seem to have
recognised the importance of India's folk-songs as yet, and
he agrees with Freda Bedi, saying that many things go
towards making a national movement a living entity; the
spirit of common efforts, adequate organisation, leaders and
very important a common tradition. In forming a nation,
this national (folk) literature plays a big role. One of
the Kannada folk-songs depictpatrism to promote the
spirit of patriotism and sense of participation.

1. Verrier Elwin & : Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills
Shamrao Hivale Indian Branch for man in India by
Hamphray Milford, Oxford
There is no superior God to our Nation
Kindly protect the reputation of our Nation
The king, the ruler who takes alcohol and
doesn't leave a prostitute is a debaucherous Man
Brings certainly the misfortune to the Nation.

The above song depicts the spirit of saying, "If the character
is lost everything lost" It means that the rulers or the
leaders must be the men of character otherwise the country
will be ruined within no time. More than that the song gives
the key to open the door of national integration and it is
an eye opener to the National Religion by saying that the
Nation is a superior God.

Further, it should be realised that folk-songs are living
source of happiness for the vast country like India. Govt.
is striving hard to make the life of its countrymen more
acceptable by improving their economic conditions. This great
task could be fulfilled if it is coupled with work songs,
with community songs etc. India is declaring war against
poverty. In this war and the task of the building up of
nation the great energy is lying in folk-songs. They are
energising forces and useful in times of crisis and peace both.
Therefore, folk-songs should be very extensively employed as an important tool for social work training and practice and nation building activities. These folk-songs have manifold advantages. They provide entertainment, enlightenment education, information, easing tensions, exercises above all the insight into the lived experience useful for solving the problems.

Recently the Association of schools of social work in India also conducted the in-country workshop for Social Work Educators and Trainers on the Development of Indigenous Teaching Material for preparing social welfare personnel for working with Rural and Urban poor at Bangalore from 7th to 16th November, 1979 in collaboration with United Nations Social Welfare and Development Centre for Asia and Pacific where the experts and practitioners "felt the need of suitable compositions of songs of various poets tuned to the folk tilts to motivate. In the process, it is realised that what is sung in the essence of their own lives, when one sings of his own life, deeper perception of self can be the only result and that is education".  

Here is a folk-song on 'Jeetada Ranga; a bonded labour.

This is a song accompanied in Kolata (stick dance). "It is a shadow play. The story is played behind the white screen. Infront of the screen eight people play the sticks rhythmically. The song is given below:

Kolu Kolenna Kole, Kolu, Kolenna Kole
Chinnada, Rannad Kolu Kolenna Kole
(Kolanna Kole should be repeated at the end of every line).

The village landlord came Kolanna Kole
The landlord of the village came
He came with his big mustaches
The gold bangle on his wrist
The precious bangle twinkles
He, the big head came
came to the bonded labourer Ranga
stood firmly, and called Ranga.

"You, bugger come out,
come for the bonded labour
come out you, bastard
when he called him like that
Then Ranga who was lying down
got up from the ground
he fell at the feet of the landlord
He is begging, "not possible to come"
Because I am suffering from fever
My mind is filled with grief.
See my wife and children
They are suffering without food
I also laid down suffering without food,
So I can not come for work to-day
Please only today I can not come.

Then the landlord said
'You bonded labourers, bastards
You, the house brokers
You bring interest or the loan
give double the loan
These bastards you see
come to the world to destroy us
If you don't pay the loan and interest
keep your children as bonded labourers
keep your wife with me as a pawn

When he said that Ranga trembled with fear and
requested please don't get angry on me
I will pay the interest, please only for today
employ some other labourer.
At this the landlord got disgusted
The landlord does not care
The landlord got more angry with him.
He kicked Ranga with anger
When he kicked Ranga, Ranga fell on the ground
Ayyayyo Rangayya.

You are facing such difficulties
The landlord said, wait, wait
I will beat you again
I will destroy your hut
I will demolish everything
everything which belongs to you
I will send you out of the village
Your wife and your children
By saying this the landlord
went to his house.

Ranga with great difficulty
got up. Ranga got up
He prayed, please be kind,
please don't send my wife and children away
They are my life and my property.
You are god and you are everything.

I pray you, we will live under your shadow
By saying this Rangappa frets and sobs
weeping all along.

He went to the rich farmer's house
He went to the Patel's house
He went to the merchants
He went to the priests
everybody he approached
None looked at his problems.

No body in the world
looking at my burning problems
The so called great god
He has also closed his eyes
who will look after the poor people
saying like this Rangappa
sat and felt very bad about his life
He looked at the sky
In desperation he grabbed the earth
And put the mud on his head
Ayyayyoo this cruel world
This bloody poverty eats us up
The landlord gets fat on us
There is no chance for the poor
to live on the earth
How the poor will live
What is the way out of our misery

By joining all the poor workers together
By building organisation
Let us, the workers of the world
Join together, join together and resist
We can bring justice
Then only, it is possible for us to live
saying this We put an end
We put an end to the tyranny
We put an end to the song".

1. Mrs. Kalindi S. Muzumdar
&
Dr (Miss) Philomena D'souza (ed)
Working with the poor
United Nations Social
Welfare & Development
Centre for Asia &
Pacific and
Association of Schools
of Social Work in India,
Madras, 1980, page 446.