

## **The Role of Folklore Ensembles in Preserving and Promoting Local Oral Traditions**

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**Abstract:** In particular, folklore ensembles, where they perform, act as the most alive ceremonial mantles of the cultural heritage. It examines their important place in Uzbekistan—where vocal and folkloric dance ensembles keep oral traditions alive and vibrant via song and narrative. Based on historical, ethnographic, and contemporary sources, the study brings out how these groups retain ancient forms of makom and epic recitation yet evolve by shifting into modern contexts. The results highlight the importance of the ensembles in terms of cultural identity, education, and global recognition, and the need for ongoing efforts to conserve them.

**Keywords:** Folklore ensembles, oral traditions, intangible cultural heritage, Uzbekistan, makom.

### **Introduction**

This is despite oral traditions being a cornerstone of many cultures, carrying knowledge, values and histories through generations without resort to the written word. In Uzbekistan, this is a landlocked country which was situated on the crossroads of Central Asian civilizations, these traditions include epic poems, folk songs, and ritual performances from pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. Folklore ensembles nonprofits that specialize in folkloric performance of music, dance, and narrative are one of the most important vehicles for preserving and sharing those elements. This highlights the challenge for an ensemble in Uzbekistan to maintain oral traditions in the face of modernization and globalization through a case study. Traditionally influenced by Turkic, Persian, and Mongol traditions, Uzbekistan's folklore is rooted in the oral arts of bakhshichilik {epic storytelling} and makom {classical music cycles} that are key proponents of national identity. Amateur and professional ensembles are living archives, keeping these traditions alive. Through examples from history and modern-day, this article will take a look at how they are preserved and promoted.

### **Historical Context**

Oral traditions among the Uzbeks extend far back to the ancient nomadic cultures of the steppe, although archaeological sources from the Stone and Bronze Ages in the local area such as Surkhandarya and Samarkand testify to the very ancient history of these sectors. These were enriched by medieval influences from the Silk Road, intermingling Turkic epic with Persian poetry. During the Timurid period (14th–15th centuries), musicians such as Abdulkadyr Maragi were patronized, and the Shaybanid period (16th century) standardized makom ensembles.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the independence of the republics, revival was even more pronounced, characterized by the founding of more than 300 folklore-ethnographic ensembles to safeguard songs, dances, and rituals. The groups concentrated on the kushik (folk songs), lapar (dialogue songs) and doston (epics) genres presented through dutar, tanbur and doira instruments.

### **Preservation Mechanisms**

Forms of folklore preservation by ensembles that rely on oral traditions:

Ustoz-shogird transmission, i.e., oral transmission, is the way traditions are passed, assuring authenticity. Shashmaqom cycles are taught to performers in Tashkent and Bukhara by makom ensembles, and melodies and lyrics are passed down orally.

Archiving and Documentation: Although oral, ensembles work with places like the Uzbek Academy of Sciences to get recordings. In the face of erosion, ethnographic fieldwork gathers materials from the countryside: epics digitized.

Community Integration: Amateur music ensembles in villages keep rituals alive in everyday life — like weddings and festivals. For instance, schools of female singing preserve the women's folklore, fostering the gender-inclusive heritage.

Katta Ashula (2009) and Bakhshichilik ensembles (2003), reflect enhancing the safeguarding role of ensembles (physical categories) in the context of the International Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (Makagon).

### **Promotion Strategies**

Ensembles promote traditions by:

Myanmar→ Penang International Arts Festival International competitions showcase oral arts to global audiences. Groups such as those led by Yunus Radzhabi perform makom outside Israel, helping to sharpen cultural diplomacy.

Integrating it into school curricula and youth programs creates appreciation. Buying ensembles teaches the national musical heritage and oppose Western influences.

No formal media coverage is available, while tourism in Bukhara and Khiva reveal traditions via digital platforms. These revitalization projects mix traditional with some arranged folk to appeal to contemporary tastes.

Though urbanization, youth culture and the like challenge ensembles, they evolve by including modern practices.

### **Discussion**

The results shed a light on the folklore groups as highly adaptive actors of the cultural environment of Uzbekistan linking past heritage to present challenges. Ustoz-shogird tradition or ensembles preserve intangible heritage today in the face of urbanization and digital influence, multiplying from below 100 in the mid-1980s to over 300 revivals since 1991. This resonates with wider Central Asian patterns of the same genre in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are also based on collective memory, but the support from the state in Uzbekistan offers an institutional advantage in comparison.

Promotion approaches like festivals and media embedding not only augment worldwide existence, however, additionally catalyze discussion between age ranges, opposing age disinterest. But obstacles such as budget limitations and the struggle between remaining authentic versus modernizing do continue, as one arrangement of folk music could risk watering-down a traditional style yet reach more ears. In theory, this buttresses the role of folklore as a medium of historical memory — a place where performative arts transmit social values and identities. Longitudinal studies should be designed for future

research, measuring long-term impact (e.g. loss of cultural identity) and ideally quantifying youth participation through surveys. These insights could be useful for policymakers to enhance ensemble funding and digitized files, so that oral traditions do not fade in an increasingly homogenized world.

### **Conclusion**

To promote oral traditions with its importance, folklore ensembles are one of the main parts of Uzbekistan. They are preserving these ancient traditions by adapting them and keeping them relevant to contemporary life. Policymakers should ensure that there is funding and international collaborations to keep this heritage alive.

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