

Herald Cafe



WOMEN WHO ARE CHOOSING AUTHENTICITY OVER ANTI-AGEING



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Echoes of Hovyo: Reviving Goa's traditional folk songs

Once sung by women while grinding grain or celebrating weddings, Hovyo were the soulful expressions of everyday life in Goa. Today, a few passionate voices are striving to keep this fading tradition alive

Tanisha Pawar

Hovyo, also known as Hoviyo, Oviyo, Ovyo, or Vovyo, are a traditional form of Goan folk songs primarily sung by women. These songs were typically performed during daily chores such as grinding rice or wheat, as well as during community occasions like pre-wedding rituals and religious festivals. Hovyo served as both an emotional outlet and a form of cultural commentary for women, who historically had few platforms for self-expression. The lyrics often included elements of humour, satire, and reflections on personal or social issues.

Though passed down orally and lacking a formal written structure, Hovyo played a vital role in preserving community identity and offered valuable insights into the lives, thoughts, and creative voices of Goan women across generations.



ANCIENT ROOTS AND HISTORICAL MENTIONS

Hovyo are far from modern inventions. "Their earliest known mentions appear in historical texts like Manasollas and Abhilashitartha Chintamani, dating back to 1051 AD. These works highlight their antiquity and cultural relevance," says Vaishnavi Prithesh Raikar, a language expert and translator at IIT Delhi, based in Margao. She adds, "Folk literature is intrinsically linked to people's lives, thoughts, and emotions, offering insight into their beliefs and language."

REGIONAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Across Goa, Hovyo differ not only in lyrics but also in their style of performance. "There are various ranges from Pernem to Canacona. The style of singing is also different, influenced by the region," says Vaishnavi. Folk artist Ladu Shambal Parwar of Narve-Bicholim elaborates, "Every region has a different custom of saying Hovyo, the words, the rhythm, the accent varies. Hindus don't use any instrument while Christians use the ghumat." Fr Roman Rodrigues, assistant professor of Konkani at Rosary College of Commerce and Arts, Navelim, and a PhD researcher notes that even under colonial rule, Hovyo persisted, often going underground or being sung in metaphors. "In Catholic villages, Hovyo evolved to reflect Christian themes or were performed in contexts such as village feasts or church-related gatherings. For example, Hovyo in Hindu-majority areas included references to local deities and festivals, while those in Christian villages might reference saints and Our Lady. They were not sung or found in elite or urbanised segments of Goan society."

THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

The oral nature of Hovyo is both its beauty and its vulnerability. "Many old songs are no longer in use because they were never documented," says Vaishnavi. "Now, people are making efforts through writing and recordings." One such effort is by Sushmita Subhashchandra Gawas from Valpoi, who conducts workshops to revive the tradition. "People appreciate and listen enthusiastically. Educational institutions and the government should actively support this preservation for future generations," Sushmita urges.

A CALL TO PRESERVE GOAN HERITAGE

As modern life accelerates and traditional spaces disappear, the existence of Hovyo hangs in the balance. "Hovyo are not just songs, they are lived stories, emotions, and experiences in verse. They capture the soul of Goan folk life and the creative resilience of its people, especially women," concludes Fr Roman. If left undocumented, Hovyo may soon become echoes of a forgotten past, a cultural treasure buried beneath the noise of modernisation. Reviving them means honouring the voices of generations and safeguarding the soul of Goa for the future.

PEOPLE WHO KEEP IT ALIVE

Despite its decline, a few passionate individuals continue to preserve this treasured art. Nayana Priolkar and her daughter Vinita Naik from Priol are well-known for performing at weddings. "I started attending weddings and learning Hovyo from elderly women because the words used to be so twisted and humorous," says Nayana. Vinita now follows in her mother's footsteps. "Now that she has passed the baton to me, I sing at weddings too. When singing

Hovyo, one should research the bride and groom, their deities, and family relationships." Ladu shares how emotionally powerful these songs can be. "The best thing that I always experience when I sing Hovyo is when brides challenge me that they won't cry. But once I start singing, no matter how hard they try, they eventually end up crying," he says.



IMPACT OF PORTUGUESE RULE

Portuguese colonisation significantly altered the cultural landscape of Goa. According to Vaishnavi, "The Portuguese prohibited performing folk traditions, causing a cultural decline." The colonisers' linguistic and religious influence is still traceable — some Hovyo include Portuguese and Persian words." Fr Roman, on Hovyo, says, "Portuguese rule, particularly its religious interventions, led to significant cultural shifts. While some Hovyo that contained Hindu mythological or folk elements were suppressed or transformed, others adapted Christian motifs. Despite this, Hovyo remained resilient."



Jennifer Lopez

BILLIE EILISH WINS BIG AT THE 2025 AMAS

The 2025 American Music Awards was a cross-generational celebration, featuring music legends alongside rising stars. The event seamlessly blended iconic acts with fresh talent, showcasing a diverse range of sounds and styles

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Jennifer Lopez kicked off the 2025 American Music Awards with a bang, bringing boundless energy to the stage as she danced to the biggest hits of the year. The star-studded event, held live from Fontainebleau Las Vegas, saw Jennifer host in her signature style, performing an impressive opening sequence that mashed up 23 songs in a bold 6-minute performance.

Billie Eilish sweeps the night with seven awards

This year's big winner was Billie Eilish, who took home all seven awards she was nominated for, despite being absent from the ceremony due to her European tour. The 'Birds of a Feather' singer triumphed in several major categories, including Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Favourite Touring Artist, Favourite Pop Album, and Favourite Pop Song. Beyoncé also made waves, claiming her first-ever win for Best Country Album at the AMAs.

Janet Jackson accepts the ICON Award with humility

Janet Jackson was honoured with the ICON Award. As a ten-time Billboard Hot 100-topping artist and Grammy-winning Rock & Roll Hall of Famer, her legacy is undeniable. Yet, in an emotional moment on stage, she humbly downplayed the "icon" label. "No disrespect in

any way, I don't consider myself an icon," she said, holding the award in her hand. "My family, myself, our dream wasn't ever to be famous. We weren't raised like that. We always had a special love for music, dancing, and singing, and fame came as a result of hard work and dedication. My story, my family's story, is truly an American story. This would have only happened in America. The one thing I hope for is that I've been an inspiration to others, to artists, to follow their dreams and succeed."



Janet Jackson

Rod Stewart receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Rod Stewart received a heart-warming surprise at the 2025 American Music Awards where five of his eight children appeared onstage to help present him with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The British rock legend was honoured ahead of his upcoming farewell tour. His kids -- Kimberly, Ruby, Renee, Sean and Liam -- joined forces for the surprise tribute, with Ruby revealing their affectionate nickname for him, Papa Stew. He graced the AMAs stage for the first time in over two decades.



Rod Stewart

New Artist Of The Year Glabrie Abrams	'Die With A Smile' Favorite Male Pop Artist Bruno Mars	Shady (Coup De Grâce) Favorite Hip-Hop Song Kendrick Lamar
Collaboration Of The Year Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars 'Die with a Smile'	Social Song Of The Year Doechii 'Anxiety'	'Not Like Us' Favorite Male R&B; B Artist
Favorite Music Video Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars	Favorite Female Hip-Hop Artist Megan Thee Stallion	The Weeknd Favorite Female R & B Artist
	Favorite Hip-Hop Album Eminem 'The Death Of Slim	SZA