

FOLK DANCES OF INDIA: BHAVAI



INTRODUCTION

India is rich in its diverse folk dances. From Jammu and Kashmir in the North to Kerala in the South to Nagaland in the North East to Rann of Kutch in the west, every state has its own folk dances. Bhavai is one of the many folk dances of Rajasthan. Only skilled artists can perform this dance, as it is a very difficult dance form. Here the women dance with 8 to 9 pots (brass or terracotta) in varying sizes on their heads. The whole beauty of the folk dance is into the balancing of the pots with the tapping of their feet when they are perched atop a glass sheet or a brass plate or sometimes for the more skilled ones on a bed of nails or small swords. The dance performance can be made complicated as per the expertise of the artist. The Bhavai folk dance is performed during fairs and festivals. It is occasionally performed during auspicious ceremonies like weddings.

ORIGIN

Though Bhavai is considered as the traditional folk dance of Rajasthan, but it is believed to have its origin in the neighbouring state of Gujarat. The migration of the dance form must have happened with the migration of the cowherds and local tribesmen who gave it a distinctive Rajasthani flavour. Traditionally the women folk belonging to tribes from the Bhil, Meena, Jat, Raigar, Kalbelia and Kumhar communities, performs Bhavai. The dance got its extraordinary quality and capacity of balancing such a composite dance form mainly because of the womenfolk's amazing ability to carry a number of pitchers on the top of their heads over a period of long distance when travelling through desert area. This traditional folk dance involves mind boggling swaying and twirling movements. The highlight of this folk dance apart from the balancing act, is showcasing of human strength, feminine grace, with elegant posture of the women artists.



COSTUME AND PROPS

Bhavai is one of the colourful traditional folk dances of India. The women artists wear bright and vibrant coloured skirt and blouse known as Ghaghra- Choli and cover their heads with cloth known as dupatta. The clothes are mainly in tie- and -dye- print that is another famous textile tradition of Rajasthan. There are number

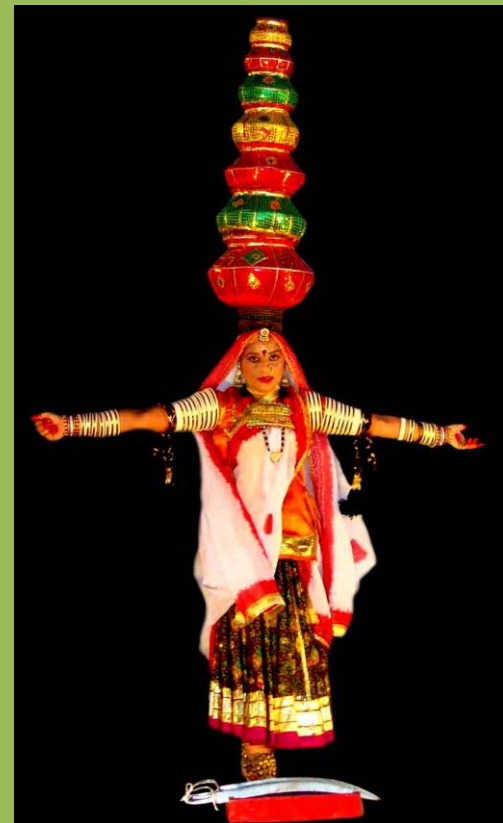


of silver tassels attached to the head cloth called the dupatta. The ghaghra and

choli is heavily embellished with gota patti work and mirrors. Also the tassels stitched on the dupatta aesthetically frames the women artist's face. The women also adorn themselves with heavy silver jewellery. The men in these dance performances provide the music in the background. They mainly play percussion and string instruments. Many instruments like pakhwaj, dholak, jhanjhar, sarangi, and harmonium are played during the Bhavai dance performance. The musicians sing folk songs of Rajasthani culture.

BHAVAI DANCE TODAY...

With rapid urbanization, traditional folk dances do not gain much exposure and slowly are moving towards oblivion. Since it is a part of rich intangible heritage, the state of Rajasthan in collaboration with various like-minded NGOs has set up Bhawai Lokkala Sansthan of Rajasthan so that the folk traditions of Rajasthan continue in future too.



DID YOU KNOW?

In the Bhawai dance performance, the number of earthen or brass vessels balanced on an artist's head can increase up to 12 pitchers from seven.

ACTIVITY

1. Find out the origin of the Bhavai Folk Dance.

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2. What is the main difference between the folk dance Kalbelia and Bhavai?

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3. What do you think is the reason behind a folk dance becoming endangered? What are the steps one should take to revive it?

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4. Identify the folk dances of Rajasthan from the pictures given below.



CREDIT

<http://www.utsavpedia.com/cultural-connections/bhavai-dance/>

<http://www.rajasthandirect.com/culture/dance/bhavai>