



INTACH

FOLK DANCES OF INDIA: ROUF



Rouf is a folk dance which is found in Kashmir region. One of the most known dances of Jammu and Kashmir, Rouf is pronounced as 'ruf' in villages and as 'row' in cities. It is a dance performed during the onset of spring season and has always been an integral part of Kashmiri people since time immemorial. The dance is performed by group of women facing each other but the most notable feature of this dance form is the footwork of the dancers.

Origin

The word "Rouf" has originated from "dwarf-dance" as per vedic language, it means a bee, which develops further as stated in *Ali Syed. Tarikhi Kashmir, Srinagar Kashmir.*

The dance form originated in the Muslim community of Kashmir and gradually, it was adopted by every house in the valley. The dance originated to celebrate the harvesting season of spring and welcoming the good weather after the harsh winter season of the valley, it is also performed during Eid and Ramazan.

About the Dance

Rouf dance is famous and appreciated folk dance form of the Kashmir valley. During the dance, the women make two rows and face each other to dance. There are two or four groups consisting of 2 to 3 women. They stand facing each other and hold the hand of the adjacent partner. On rhythmic beats they come one step forward and on the next go one step backward in swaying motion. The song that is sung during the performance is in the form of question and answer where one group questions and the other group replies while dancing and swaying in a rhythmic pattern. The footwork, also termed as the Chakri in the local language is the highlight or mainstay of the dance.



Costume and Instruments

The women are dressed in colorful costumes during a Rouf performance. They wear colourful pharans (the traditional dresses of Kashmiri women) and Kasaba (the head gear).

Traditionally, there wasn't any musical accompaniment but while performing on stage or in an informal gathering, folk musical instruments like Noet, Tumbakhnari, Rabab etc are used.



Rouf dance is one of the major folk dances of Kashmir and it has earned huge appreciation nationally and internationally. But, in the recent years its popularity has faded like is the case with many such traditional practices in other parts of the country too.

DID YOU KNOW...

In earlier days, Rouf was performed during marriages, during the holy month of Ramzan and on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr and Bakrid, as well as during the harvest.

ACTIVITY

1. Make a list of other dances of Jammu and Kashmir region.
2. The tradition of Rouf dance is slowly fading away. What do you think can be done to revive this tradition and also other such traditions in your own area which may soon be lost?
3. Explain about the footwork in Rouf dance. Do you think this dance has been portrayed in films too? Find out some films where it has been showcased.

References

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